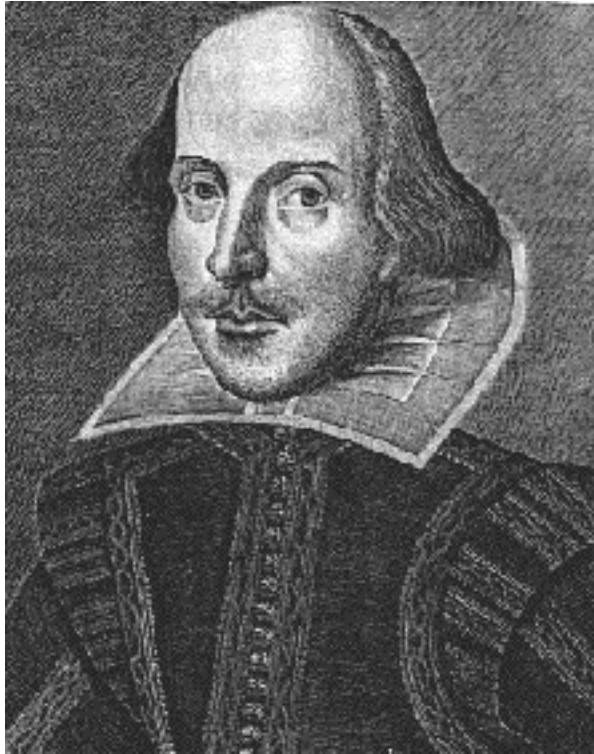


# The Complete Works of William Shakespeare



Welcome to the Web's first edition of the Complete Works of William Shakespeare. This site has offered Shakespeare's plays and poetry to the Internet community since 1993.

**Announcement:** The restoration of the site following a disk failure has been delayed. The text of the plays is available now. The poetry and other services, including the search engine and forums, will return shortly. (Nov. 13, 2000)

For other Shakespeare resources, visit the [Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet](#) Web site.

The original electronic source for this server is the [Complete Moby\(tm\) Shakespeare](#), which is freely available online. The HTML versions of the plays provided here are placed in the public

domain.

[Older news items](#)

**Comedy**

**History**

**Tragedy**

**Poetry**

<a href="#">All's Well That Ends Well</a> <a href="#">As You Like It</a> <a href="#">The Comedy of Errors</a> <a href="#">Cymbeline</a> <a href="#">Love's Labours Lost</a> <a href="#">Measure for Measure</a> <a href="#">The Merry Wives of Windsor</a> <a href="#">The Merchant of Venice</a> <a href="#">A Midsummer Night's Dream</a> <a href="#">Much Ado About Nothing</a> <a href="#">Pericles, Prince of Tyre</a> <a href="#">Taming of the Shrew</a> <a href="#">The Tempest</a> <a href="#">Troilus and Cressida</a> <a href="#">Twelfth Night</a> <a href="#">Two Gentlemen of Verona</a> <a href="#">Winter's Tale</a>	<a href="#">Henry IV, part 1</a> <a href="#">Henry IV, part 2</a> <a href="#">Henry V</a> <a href="#">Henry VI, part 1</a> <a href="#">Henry VI, part 2</a> <a href="#">Henry VI, part 3</a> <a href="#">Henry VIII</a> <a href="#">King John</a> <a href="#">Richard II</a> <a href="#">Richard III</a>	<a href="#">Antony and Cleopatra</a> <a href="#">Coriolanus</a> <a href="#">Hamlet</a> <a href="#">Julius Caesar</a> <a href="#">King Lear</a> <a href="#">Macbeth</a> <a href="#">Othello</a> <a href="#">Romeo and Juliet</a> <a href="#">Timon of Athens</a> <a href="#">Titus Andronicus</a>	<i>The Sonnets</i> <i>A Lover's Complaint</i> <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i> <i>Venus and Adonis</i> <i>Funeral Elegy by W.S.</i>
--	---	---	---

Created by [Jeremy Hylton](#), <jeremy@alum.mit.edu>

Operated by [The Tech](#), MIT's oldest and largest newspaper



# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | All's Well That Ends Well

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [Paris. The KING's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Paris. The KING's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [Paris. The KING's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Paris. The KING's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [Paris. The KING's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Florence. The DUKE's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Florence. Before the DUKE's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [Florence. Without the walls. A tucket afar off.](#)

Act 3, Scene 6: [Camp before Florence.](#)

Act 3, Scene 7: [Florence. The Widow's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Without the Florentine camp.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Florence. The Widow's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The Florentine camp.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [Florence. The Widow's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Marseilles. A street.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Rousillon. Before the COUNT's palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

*Enter BERTRAM, the COUNTESS of Rousillon, HELENA, and LAFEU, all in black*

**COUNTESS**

In delivering my son from me, I bury a second husband.

**BERTRAM**

And I in going, madam, weep o'er my father's death anew: but I must attend his majesty's command, to whom I am now in ward, evermore in subjection.

**LAFEU**

You shall find of the king a husband, madam; you, sir, a father: he that so generally is at all times good must of necessity hold his virtue to you; whose worthiness would stir it up where it wanted rather than lack it where there is such abundance.

**COUNTESS**

What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?

**LAFEU**

He hath abandoned his physicians, madam; under whose practises he hath persecuted time with hope, and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time.

**COUNTESS**

This young gentlewoman had a father,--O, that

'had'! how sad a passage 'tis!--whose skill was almost as great as his honesty; had it stretched so far, would have made nature immortal, and death should have play for lack of work. Would, for the king's sake, he were living! I think it would be the death of the king's disease.

**LAFEU**

How called you the man you speak of, madam?

**COUNTESS**

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

**LAFEU**

He was excellent indeed, madam: the king very lately spoke of him admiringly and mourningly: he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality.

**BERTRAM**

What is it, my good lord, the king languishes of?

**LAFEU**

A fistula, my lord.

**BERTRAM**

I heard not of it before.

**LAFEU**

I would it were not notorious. Was this gentlewoman the daughter of Gerard de Narbon?

**COUNTESS**

His sole child, my lord, and bequeathed to my overlooking. I have those hopes of her good that her education promises; her dispositions she inherits, which makes fair gifts fairer; for where an unclean mind carries virtuous qualities, there commendations go with pity; they are virtues and traitors too; in her they are the better for their simpleness; she derives her honesty and achieves her goodness.

**LAFEU**

Your commendations, madam, get from her tears.

**COUNTESS**

'Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in. The remembrance of her father never approaches her heart but the tyranny of her sorrows takes all livelihood from her cheek. No more of this, Helena; go to, no more; lest it be rather thought you affect a sorrow than have it.

**HELENA**

I do affect a sorrow indeed, but I have it too.

**LAFEU**

Moderate lamentation is the right of the dead, excessive grief the enemy to the living.

**COUNTESS**

If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal.

**BERTRAM**

Madam, I desire your holy wishes.

**LAFEU**

How understand we that?

**COUNTESS**

Be thou blest, Bertram, and succeed thy father  
In manners, as in shape! thy blood and virtue  
Contend for empire in thee, and thy goodness  
Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few,  
Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy  
Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend  
Under thy own life's key: be cheque'd for silence,  
But never tax'd for speech. What heaven more will,  
That thee may furnish and my prayers pluck down,  
Fall on thy head! Farewell, my lord;  
'Tis an unseason'd courtier; good my lord,  
Advise him.

**LAFEU**

He cannot want the best  
That shall attend his love.

**COUNTESS**

Heaven bless him! Farewell, Bertram.

*Exit*

**BERTRAM**

[To HELENA] The best wishes that can be forged in  
your thoughts be servants to you! Be comfortable  
to my mother, your mistress, and make much of her.

**LAFEU**

Farewell, pretty lady: you must hold the credit of  
your father.

*Exeunt BERTRAM and LAFEU*

## HELENA

O, were that all! I think not on my father;  
And these great tears grace his remembrance more  
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?  
I have forgot him: my imagination  
Carries no favour in't but Bertram's.  
I am undone: there is no living, none,  
If Bertram be away. 'Twere all one  
That I should love a bright particular star  
And think to wed it, he is so above me:  
In his bright radiance and collateral light  
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.  
The ambition in my love thus plagues itself:  
The hind that would be mated by the lion  
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, though plague,  
To see him every hour; to sit and draw  
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls,  
In our heart's table; heart too capable  
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour:  
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy  
Must sanctify his reliques. Who comes here?

*Enter PAROLLES*

*Aside*

One that goes with him: I love him for his sake;  
And yet I know him a notorious liar,  
Think him a great way fool, solely a coward;  
Yet these fixed evils sit so fit in him,  
That they take place, when virtue's steely bones  
Look bleak i' the cold wind: withal, full oft we see  
Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly.

## PAROLLES

Save you, fair queen!

## HELENA

And you, monarch!

**PAROLLES**

No.

**HELENA**

And no.

**PAROLLES**

Are you meditating on virginity?

**HELENA**

Ay. You have some stain of soldier in you: let me ask you a question. Man is enemy to virginity; how may we barricado it against him?

**PAROLLES**

Keep him out.

**HELENA**

But he assails; and our virginity, though valiant, in the defence yet is weak: unfold to us some warlike resistance.

**PAROLLES**

There is none: man, sitting down before you, will undermine you and blow you up.

**HELENA**

Bless our poor virginity from underminers and blowers up! Is there no military policy, how virgins might blow up men?

**PAROLLES**



Virginity being blown down, man will quicklier be blown up: marry, in blowing him down again, with the breach yourselves made, you lose your city. It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature to preserve virginity. Loss of virginity is rational increase and there was never virgin got till virginity was first lost. That you were made of is metal to make virgins. Virginity by being once lost may be ten times found; by being ever kept, it is ever lost: 'tis too cold a companion; away with 't!

## HELENA

I will stand for 't a little, though therefore I die a virgin.

## PAROLLES

There's little can be said in 't; 'tis against the rule of nature. To speak on the part of virginity, is to accuse your mothers; which is most infallible disobedience. He that hangs himself is a virgin: virginity murders itself and should be buried in highways out of all sanctified limit, as a desperate offendress against nature. Virginity breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring, and so dies with feeding his own stomach. Besides, virginity is peevish, proud, idle, made of self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon. Keep it not; you cannot choose but loose by't: out with 't! within ten year it will make itself ten, which is a goodly increase; and the principal itself not much the worse: away with 't!

## HELENA

How might one do, sir, to lose it to her own liking?

## PAROLLES

Let me see: marry, ill, to like him that ne'er it likes. 'Tis a commodity will lose the gloss with

lying; the longer kept, the less worth: off with 't  
while 'tis vendible; answer the time of request.  
Virginity, like an old courtier, wears her cap out  
of fashion: richly suited, but unsuitable: just  
like the brooch and the tooth-pick, which wear not  
now. Your date is better in your pie and your  
porridge than in your cheek; and your virginity,  
your old virginity, is like one of our French  
withered pears, it looks ill, it eats drily; marry,  
'tis a withered pear; it was formerly better;  
marry, yet 'tis a withered pear: will you anything with it?

## HELENA

Not my virginity yet [ ]  
There shall your master have a thousand loves,  
A mother and a mistress and a friend,  
A phoenix, captain and an enemy,  
A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,  
A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;  
His humble ambition, proud humility,  
His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,  
His faith, his sweet disaster; with a world  
Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms,  
That blinking Cupid gossips. Now shall he--  
I know not what he shall. God send him well!  
The court's a learning place, and he is one--

## PAROLLES

What one, i' faith?

## HELENA

That I wish well. 'Tis pity--

## PAROLLES

What's pity?

## HELENA

That wishing well had not a body in't,  
Which might be felt; that we, the poorer born,  
Whose baser stars do shut us up in wishes,  
Might with effects of them follow our friends,  
And show what we alone must think, which never  
Return us thanks.

*Enter Page*

**Page**

Monsieur Parolles, my lord calls for you.

*Exit*

**PAROLLES**

Little Helen, farewell; if I can remember thee, I  
will think of thee at court.

**HELENA**

Monsieur Parolles, you were born under a charitable star.

**PAROLLES**

Under Mars, I.

**HELENA**

I especially think, under Mars.

**PAROLLES**

Why under Mars?

**HELENA**

The wars have so kept you under that you must needs  
be born under Mars.

**PAROLLES**

When he was predominant.

**HELENA**

When he was retrograde, I think, rather.

**PAROLLES**

Why think you so?

**HELENA**

You go so much backward when you fight.

**PAROLLES**

That's for advantage.

**HELENA**

So is running away, when fear proposes the safety;  
but the composition that your valour and fear makes  
in you is a virtue of a good wing, and I like the wear well.

**PAROLLES**

I am so full of businesses, I cannot answer thee  
acutely. I will return perfect courtier; in the  
which, my instruction shall serve to naturalize  
thee, so thou wilt be capable of a courtier's  
counsel and understand what advice shall thrust upon  
thee; else thou diest in thine unthankfulness, and  
thine ignorance makes thee away: farewell. When  
thou hast leisure, say thy prayers; when thou hast  
none, remember thy friends; get thee a good husband,  
and use him as he uses thee; so, farewell.

*Exit*

## HELENA

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,  
Which we ascribe to heaven: the fated sky  
Gives us free scope, only doth backward pull  
Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull.  
What power is it which mounts my love so high,  
That makes me see, and cannot feed mine eye?  
The mightiest space in fortune nature brings  
To join like likes and kiss like native things.  
Impossible be strange attempts to those  
That weigh their pains in sense and do suppose  
What hath been cannot be: who ever strove  
So show her merit, that did miss her love?  
The king's disease--my project may deceive me,  
But my intents are fix'd and will not leave me.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Paris. The KING's palace.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING of France, with letters, and divers Attendants*

**KING**

The Florentines and Senoys are by the ears;  
Have fought with equal fortune and continue  
A braving war.

**First Lord**

So 'tis reported, sir.

**KING**

Nay, 'tis most credible; we here received it  
A certainty, vouch'd from our cousin Austria,  
With caution that the Florentine will move us  
For speedy aid; wherein our dearest friend  
Prejudicates the business and would seem  
To have us make denial.

**First Lord**

His love and wisdom,  
Approved so to your majesty, may plead  
For amplest credence.

**KING**

He hath arm'd our answer,  
And Florence is denied before he comes:  
Yet, for our gentlemen that mean to see  
The Tuscan service, freely have they leave  
To stand on either part.

## **Second Lord**

It well may serve  
A nursery to our gentry, who are sick  
For breathing and exploit.

## **KING**

What's he comes here?

*Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES*

## **First Lord**

It is the Count Rousillon, my good lord,  
Young Bertram.

## **KING**

Youth, thou bear'st thy father's face;  
Frank nature, rather curious than in haste,  
Hath well composed thee. Thy father's moral parts  
Mayst thou inherit too! Welcome to Paris.

## **BERTRAM**

My thanks and duty are your majesty's.

## **KING**

I would I had that corporal soundness now,  
As when thy father and myself in friendship  
First tried our soldiership! He did look far  
Into the service of the time and was  
Disciplined of the bravest: he lasted long;  
But on us both did haggish age steal on  
And wore us out of act. It much repairs me  
To talk of your good father. In his youth  
He had the wit which I can well observe  
To-day in our young lords; but they may jest  
Till their own scorn return to them unnoted



Ere they can hide their levity in honour;  
So like a courtier, contempt nor bitterness  
Were in his pride or sharpness; if they were,  
His equal had awaked them, and his honour,  
Clock to itself, knew the true minute when  
Exception bid him speak, and at this time  
His tongue obey'd his hand: who were below him  
He used as creatures of another place  
And bow'd his eminent top to their low ranks,  
Making them proud of his humility,  
In their poor praise he humbled. Such a man  
Might be a copy to these younger times;  
Which, follow'd well, would demonstrate them now  
But goes backward.

## **BERTRAM**

His good remembrance, sir,  
Lies richer in your thoughts than on his tomb;  
So in approof lives not his epitaph  
As in your royal speech.

## **KING**

Would I were with him! He would always say--  
Methinks I hear him now; his plausible words  
He scatter'd not in ears, but grafted them,  
To grow there and to bear,--'Let me not live,'--  
This his good melancholy oft began,  
On the catastrophe and heel of pastime,  
When it was out,--'Let me not live,' quoth he,  
'After my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff  
Of younger spirits, whose apprehensive senses  
All but new things disdain; whose judgments are  
Mere fathers of their garments; whose constancies  
Expire before their fashions.' This he wish'd;  
I after him do after him wish too,  
Since I nor wax nor honey can bring home,  
I quickly were dissolved from my hive,  
To give some labourers room.

## **Second Lord**

You are loved, sir:  
They that least lend it you shall lack you first.

**KING**

I fill a place, I know't. How long is't, count,  
Since the physician at your father's died?  
He was much famed.

**BERTRAM**

Some six months since, my lord.

**KING**

If he were living, I would try him yet.  
Lend me an arm; the rest have worn me out  
With several applications; nature and sickness  
Debate it at their leisure. Welcome, count;  
My son's no dearer.

**BERTRAM**

Thank your majesty.

*Exeunt. Flourish*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

*Enter COUNTESS, Steward, and Clown*

### COUNTESS

I will now hear; what say you of this gentlewoman?

### Steward

Madam, the care I have had to even your content, I wish might be found in the calendar of my past endeavours; for then we wound our modesty and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them.

### COUNTESS

What does this knave here? Get you gone, sirrah: the complaints I have heard of you I do not all believe: 'tis my slowness that I do not; for I know you lack not folly to commit them, and have ability enough to make such knaveries yours.

### Clown

'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor fellow.

### COUNTESS

Well, sir.

### Clown

No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor, though many of the rich are damned: but, if I may have

your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel  
the woman and I will do as we may.

**COUNTESS**

Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

**Clown**

I do beg your good will in this case.

**COUNTESS**

In what case?

**Clown**

In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no  
heritage: and I think I shall never have the  
blessing of God till I have issue o' my body; for  
they say barnes are blessings.

**COUNTESS**

Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

**Clown**

My poor body, madam, requires it: I am driven on  
by the flesh; and he must needs go that the devil drives.

**COUNTESS**

Is this all your worship's reason?

**Clown**

Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons such as they  
are.

**COUNTESS**

May the world know them?

**Clown**

I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you and all flesh and blood are; and, indeed, I do marry that I may repent.

**COUNTESS**

Thy marriage, sooner than thy wickedness.

**Clown**

I am out o' friends, madam; and I hope to have friends for my wife's sake.

**COUNTESS**

Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

**Clown**

You're shallow, madam, in great friends; for the knaves come to do that for me which I am aweary of. He that ears my land spares my team and gives me leave to in the crop; if I be his cuckold, he's my drudge: he that comforts my wife is the cherisher of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves my flesh and blood is my friend: ergo, he that kisses my wife is my friend. If men could be contented to be what they are, there were no fear in marriage; for young Charbon the Puritan and old Poysam the Papist, howsome'er their hearts are severed in religion, their heads are both one; they may jowl horns together, like any deer i' the herd.

**COUNTESS**

Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and calumnious knave?

## **Clown**

A prophet I, madam; and I speak the truth the next way:

For I the ballad will repeat,  
Which men full true shall find;  
Your marriage comes by destiny,  
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

## **COUNTESS**

Get you gone, sir; I'll talk with you more anon.

## **Steward**

May it please you, madam, that he bid Helen come to you: of her I am to speak.

## **COUNTESS**

Sirrah, tell my gentlewoman I would speak with her; Helen, I mean.

## **Clown**

Was this fair face the cause, quoth she,  
Why the Grecians sacked Troy?  
Fond done, done fond,  
Was this King Priam's joy?  
With that she sighed as she stood,  
With that she sighed as she stood,  
And gave this sentence then;  
Among nine bad if one be good,  
Among nine bad if one be good,  
There's yet one good in ten.

## **COUNTESS**

What, one good in ten? you corrupt the song, sirrah.

**Clown**

One good woman in ten, madam; which is a purifying o' the song: would God would serve the world so all the year! we'd find no fault with the tithe-woman, if I were the parson. One in ten, quoth a'! An we might have a good woman born but one every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well: a man may draw his heart out, ere a' pluck one.

**COUNTESS**

You'll be gone, sir knave, and do as I command you.

**Clown**

That man should be at woman's command, and yet no hurt done! Though honesty be no puritan, yet it will do no hurt; it will wear the surplice of humility over the black gown of a big heart. I am going, forsooth: the business is for Helen to come hither.

*Exit*

**COUNTESS**

Well, now.

**Steward**

I know, madam, you love your gentlewoman entirely.

**COUNTESS**

Faith, I do: her father bequeathed her to me; and she herself, without other advantage, may lawfully make title to as much love as she finds: there is more owing her than is paid; and more shall be paid her than she'll demand.



## Steward

Madam, I was very late more near her than I think she wished me: alone she was, and did communicate to herself her own words to her own ears; she thought, I dare vow for her, they touched not any stranger sense. Her matter was, she loved your son: Fortune, she said, was no goddess, that had put such difference betwixt their two estates; Love no god, that would not extend his might, only where qualities were level; Dian no queen of virgins, that would suffer her poor knight surprised, without rescue in the first assault or ransom afterward. This she delivered in the most bitter touch of sorrow that e'er I heard virgin exclaim in: which I held my duty speedily to acquaint you withal; sithence, in the loss that may happen, it concerns you something to know it.

## COUNTESS

You have discharged this honestly; keep it to yourself: many likelihoods informed me of this before, which hung so tottering in the balance that I could neither believe nor misdoubt. Pray you, leave me: stall this in your bosom; and I thank you for your honest care: I will speak with you further anon.

*Exit Steward*

*Enter HELENA*

Even so it was with me when I was young:  
If ever we are nature's, these are ours; this thorn  
Doth to our rose of youth rightly belong;  
Our blood to us, this to our blood is born;  
It is the show and seal of nature's truth,  
Where love's strong passion is impress'd in youth:  
By our remembrances of days foregone,  
Such were our faults, or then we thought them none.  
Her eye is sick on't: I observe her now.

**HELENA**

What is your pleasure, madam?

**COUNTESS**

You know, Helen,  
I am a mother to you.

**HELENA**

Mine honourable mistress.

**COUNTESS**

Nay, a mother:  
Why not a mother? When I said 'a mother,'  
Methought you saw a serpent: what's in 'mother,'  
That you start at it? I say, I am your mother;  
And put you in the catalogue of those  
That were enwombed mine: 'tis often seen  
Adoption strives with nature and choice breeds  
A native slip to us from foreign seeds:  
You ne'er oppress'd me with a mother's groan,  
Yet I express to you a mother's care:  
God's mercy, maiden! does it curd thy blood  
To say I am thy mother? What's the matter,  
That this distemper'd messenger of wet,  
The many-colour'd Iris, rounds thine eye?  
Why? that you are my daughter?

**HELENA**

That I am not.

**COUNTESS**

I say, I am your mother.

**HELENA**

Pardon, madam;  
The Count Rousillon cannot be my brother:  
I am from humble, he from honour'd name;  
No note upon my parents, his all noble:  
My master, my dear lord he is; and I  
His servant live, and will his vassal die:  
He must not be my brother.

## COUNTESS

Nor I your mother?

## HELENA

You are my mother, madam; would you were,--  
So that my lord your son were not my brother,--  
Indeed my mother! or were you both our mothers,  
I care no more for than I do for heaven,  
So I were not his sister. Can't no other,  
But, I your daughter, he must be my brother?

## COUNTESS

Yes, Helen, you might be my daughter-in-law:  
God shield you mean it not! daughter and mother  
So strive upon your pulse. What, pale again?  
My fear hath catch'd your fondness: now I see  
The mystery of your loneliness, and find  
Your salt tears' head: now to all sense 'tis gross  
You love my son; invention is ashamed,  
Against the proclamation of thy passion,  
To say thou dost not: therefore tell me true;  
But tell me then, 'tis so; for, look thy cheeks  
Confess it, th' one to th' other; and thine eyes  
See it so grossly shown in thy behaviors  
That in their kind they speak it: only sin  
And hellish obstinacy tie thy tongue,  
That truth should be suspected. Speak, is't so?  
If it be so, you have wound a goodly clew;  
If it be not, forswear't: howe'er, I charge thee,  
As heaven shall work in me for thine avail,  
Tell me truly.

**HELENA**

Good madam, pardon me!

**COUNTESS**

Do you love my son?

**HELENA**

Your pardon, noble mistress!

**COUNTESS**

Love you my son?

**HELENA**

Do not you love him, madam?

**COUNTESS**

Go not about; my love hath in't a bond,  
Whereof the world takes note: come, come, disclose  
The state of your affection; for your passions  
Have to the full appeach'd.

**HELENA**

Then, I confess,  
Here on my knee, before high heaven and you,  
That before you, and next unto high heaven,  
I love your son.  
My friends were poor, but honest; so's my love:  
Be not offended; for it hurts not him  
That he is loved of me: I follow him not  
By any token of presumptuous suit;  
Nor would I have him till I do deserve him;  
Yet never know how that desert should be.  
I know I love in vain, strive against hope;  
Yet in this captious and intenible sieve

I still pour in the waters of my love  
And lack not to lose still: thus, Indian-like,  
Religious in mine error, I adore  
The sun, that looks upon his worshipper,  
But knows of him no more. My dearest madam,  
Let not your hate encounter with my love  
For loving where you do: but if yourself,  
Whose aged honour cites a virtuous youth,  
Did ever in so true a flame of liking  
Wish chastely and love dearly, that your Dian  
Was both herself and love: O, then, give pity  
To her, whose state is such that cannot choose  
But lend and give where she is sure to lose;  
That seeks not to find that her search implies,  
But riddle-like lives sweetly where she dies!

### COUNTESS

Had you not lately an intent,--speak truly,--  
To go to Paris?

### HELENA

Madam, I had.

### COUNTESS

Wherefore? tell true.

### HELENA

I will tell truth; by grace itself I swear.  
You know my father left me some prescriptions  
Of rare and proved effects, such as his reading  
And manifest experience had collected  
For general sovereignty; and that he will'd me  
In heedfull'st reservation to bestow them,  
As notes whose faculties inclusive were  
More than they were in note: amongst the rest,  
There is a remedy, approved, set down,  
To cure the desperate languishings whereof  
The king is render'd lost.

## COUNTESS

This was your motive  
For Paris, was it? speak.

## HELENA

My lord your son made me to think of this;  
Else Paris and the medicine and the king  
Had from the conversation of my thoughts  
Haply been absent then.

## COUNTESS

But think you, Helen,  
If you should tender your supposed aid,  
He would receive it? he and his physicians  
Are of a mind; he, that they cannot help him,  
They, that they cannot help: how shall they credit  
A poor unlearned virgin, when the schools,  
Embowell'd of their doctrine, have left off  
The danger to itself?

## HELENA

There's something in't,  
More than my father's skill, which was the greatest  
Of his profession, that his good receipt  
Shall for my legacy be sanctified  
By the luckiest stars in heaven: and, would your honour  
But give me leave to try success, I'd venture  
The well-lost life of mine on his grace's cure  
By such a day and hour.

## COUNTESS

Dost thou believe't?

## HELENA

Ay, madam, knowingly.

## COUNTESS

Why, Helen, thou shalt have my leave and love,  
Means and attendants and my loving greetings  
To those of mine in court: I'll stay at home  
And pray God's blessing into thy attempt:  
Be gone to-morrow; and be sure of this,  
What I can help thee to thou shalt not miss.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Paris. The KING's palace.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the KING, attended with divers young Lords taking leave for the Florentine war; BERTRAM, and PAROLLES*

**KING**

Farewell, young lords; these warlike principles  
Do not throw from you: and you, my lords, farewell:  
Share the advice betwixt you; if both gain, all  
The gift doth stretch itself as 'tis received,  
And is enough for both.

**First Lord**

'Tis our hope, sir,  
After well enter'd soldiers, to return  
And find your grace in health.

**KING**

No, no, it cannot be; and yet my heart  
Will not confess he owes the malady  
That doth my life besiege. Farewell, young lords;  
Whether I live or die, be you the sons  
Of worthy Frenchmen: let higher Italy,--  
Those bated that inherit but the fall  
Of the last monarchy,--see that you come  
Not to woo honour, but to wed it; when  
The bravest questant shrinks, find what you seek,  
That fame may cry you loud: I say, farewell.

**Second Lord**

Health, at your bidding, serve your majesty!

**KING**

Those girls of Italy, take heed of them:  
They say, our French lack language to deny,  
If they demand: beware of being captives,  
Before you serve.

**Both**

Our hearts receive your warnings.

**KING**

Farewell. Come hither to me.

*Exit, attended*

**First Lord**

O, my sweet lord, that you will stay behind us!

**PAROLLES**

'Tis not his fault, the spark.

**Second Lord**

O, 'tis brave wars!

**PAROLLES**

Most admirable: I have seen those wars.

**BERTRAM**

I am commanded here, and kept a coil with  
'Too young' and 'the next year' and 'tis too early.'

**PAROLLES**

An thy mind stand to't, boy, steal away bravely.

**BERTRAM**

I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,  
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,  
Till honour be bought up and no sword worn  
But one to dance with! By heaven, I'll steal away.

**First Lord**

There's honour in the theft.

**PAROLLES**

Commit it, count.

**Second Lord**

I am your accessory; and so, farewell.

**BERTRAM**

I grow to you, and our parting is a tortured body.

**First Lord**

Farewell, captain.

**Second Lord**

Sweet Monsieur Parolles!

**PAROLLES**

Noble heroes, my sword and yours are kin. Good  
sparks and lustrous, a word, good metals: you shall  
find in the regiment of the Spinii one Captain  
Spurio, with his cicatrice, an emblem of war, here  
on his sinister cheek; it was this very sword  
entrenched it: say to him, I live; and observe his  
reports for me.

**First Lord**

We shall, noble captain.

*Exeunt Lords*

**PAROLLES**

Mars dote on you for his novices! what will ye do?

**BERTRAM**

Stay: the king.

*Re-enter KING. BERTRAM and PAROLLES retire*

**PAROLLES**

[To BERTRAM] Use a more spacious ceremony to the noble lords; you have restrained yourself within the list of too cold an adieu: be more expressive to them: for they wear themselves in the cap of the time, there do muster true gait, eat, speak, and move under the influence of the most received star; and though the devil lead the measure, such are to be followed: after them, and take a more dilated farewell.

**BERTRAM**

And I will do so.

**PAROLLES**

Worthy fellows; and like to prove most sinewy sword-men.

*Exeunt BERTRAM and PAROLLES*

*Enter LAFEU*

**LAFEU**

[Kneeling] Pardon, my lord, for me and for my tidings.

**KING**

I'll fee thee to stand up.

**LAFEU**

Then here's a man stands, that has brought his pardon.  
I would you had kneel'd, my lord, to ask me mercy,  
And that at my bidding you could so stand up.

**KING**

I would I had; so I had broke thy pate,  
And ask'd thee mercy for't.

**LAFEU**

Good faith, across: but, my good lord 'tis thus;  
Will you be cured of your infirmity?

**KING**

No.

**LAFEU**

O, will you eat no grapes, my royal fox?  
Yes, but you will my noble grapes, an if  
My royal fox could reach them: I have seen a medicine  
That's able to breathe life into a stone,  
Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary  
With spritely fire and motion; whose simple touch,  
Is powerful to araise King Pepin, nay,  
To give great Charlemain a pen in's hand,  
And write to her a love-line.

**KING**

What 'her' is this?

**LAFEU**

Why, Doctor She: my lord, there's one arrived,  
If you will see her: now, by my faith and honour,  
If seriously I may convey my thoughts  
In this my light deliverance, I have spoke  
With one that, in her sex, her years, profession,  
Wisdom and constancy, hath amazed me more  
Than I dare blame my weakness: will you see her  
For that is her demand, and know her business?  
That done, laugh well at me.

**KING**

Now, good Lafeu,  
Bring in the admiration; that we with thee  
May spend our wonder too, or take off thine  
By wondering how thou took'st it.

**LAFEU**

Nay, I'll fit you,  
And not be all day neither.

*Exit*

**KING**

Thus he his special nothing ever prologues.

*Re-enter LAFEU, with HELENA*

**LAFEU**

Nay, come your ways.

**KING**

This haste hath wings indeed.

**LAFEU**

Nay, come your ways:  
This is his majesty; say your mind to him:  
A traitor you do look like; but such traitors  
His majesty seldom fears: I am Cressid's uncle,  
That dare leave two together; fare you well.

*Exit*

**KING**

Now, fair one, does your business follow us?

**HELENA**

Ay, my good lord.  
Gerard de Narbon was my father;  
In what he did profess, well found.

**KING**

I knew him.

**HELENA**

The rather will I spare my praises towards him:  
Knowing him is enough. On's bed of death  
Many receipts he gave me: chiefly one.  
Which, as the dearest issue of his practise,  
And of his old experience the oily darling,  
He bade me store up, as a triple eye,  
Safer than mine own two, more dear; I have so;  
And hearing your high majesty is touch'd  
With that malignant cause wherein the honour  
Of my dear father's gift stands chief in power,  
I come to tender it and my appliance  
With all bound humbleness.

**KING**

We thank you, maiden;

But may not be so credulous of cure,  
When our most learned doctors leave us and  
The congregated college have concluded  
That labouring art can never ransom nature  
From her inaidible estate; I say we must not  
So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,  
To prostitute our past-cure malady  
To empirics, or to dissever so  
Our great self and our credit, to esteem  
A senseless help when help past sense we deem.

**HELENA**

My duty then shall pay me for my pains:  
I will no more enforce mine office on you.  
Humbly entreating from your royal thoughts  
A modest one, to bear me back a again.

**KING**

I cannot give thee less, to be call'd grateful:  
Thou thought'st to help me; and such thanks I give  
As one near death to those that wish him live:  
But what at full I know, thou know'st no part,  
I knowing all my peril, thou no art.

**HELENA**

What I can do can do no hurt to try,  
Since you set up your rest 'gainst remedy.  
He that of greatest works is finisher  
Oft does them by the weakest minister:  
So holy writ in babes hath judgment shown,  
When judges have been babes; great floods have flown  
From simple sources, and great seas have dried  
When miracles have by the greatest been denied.  
Oft expectation fails and most oft there  
Where most it promises, and oft it hits  
Where hope is coldest and despair most fits.

**KING**



I must not hear thee; fare thee well, kind maid;  
Thy pains not used must by thyself be paid:  
Proffers not took reap thanks for their reward.

**HELENA**

Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd:  
It is not so with Him that all things knows  
As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows;  
But most it is presumption in us when  
The help of heaven we count the act of men.  
Dear sir, to my endeavours give consent;  
Of heaven, not me, make an experiment.  
I am not an impostor that proclaim  
Myself against the level of mine aim;  
But know I think and think I know most sure  
My art is not past power nor you past cure.

**KING**

Are thou so confident? within what space  
Hapest thou my cure?

**HELENA**

The great'st grace lending grace  
Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring  
Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring,  
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp  
Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp,  
Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass  
Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,  
What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,  
Health shall live free and sickness freely die.

**KING**

Upon thy certainty and confidence  
What darest thou venture?

**HELENA**

Tax of impudence,  
A strumpet's boldness, a divulged shame  
Traduced by odious ballads: my maiden's name  
Sear'd otherwise; nay, worse--if worse--extended  
With vilest torture let my life be ended.

**KING**

Methinks in thee some blessed spirit doth speak  
His powerful sound within an organ weak:  
And what impossibility would slay  
In common sense, sense saves another way.  
Thy life is dear; for all that life can rate  
Worth name of life in thee hath estimate,  
Youth, beauty, wisdom, courage, all  
That happiness and prime can happy call:  
Thou this to hazard needs must intimate  
Skill infinite or monstrous desperate.  
Sweet practiser, thy physic I will try,  
That ministers thine own death if I die.

**HELENA**

If I break time, or flinch in property  
Of what I spoke, unpitied let me die,  
And well deserved: not helping, death's my fee;  
But, if I help, what do you promise me?

**KING**

Make thy demand.

**HELENA**

But will you make it even?

**KING**

Ay, by my sceptre and my hopes of heaven.

**HELENA**

Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand  
What husband in thy power I will command:  
Exempted be from me the arrogance  
To choose from forth the royal blood of France,  
My low and humble name to propagate  
With any branch or image of thy state;  
But such a one, thy vassal, whom I know  
Is free for me to ask, thee to bestow.

**KING**

Here is my hand; the premises observed,  
Thy will by my performance shall be served:  
So make the choice of thy own time, for I,  
Thy resolved patient, on thee still rely.  
More should I question thee, and more I must,  
Though more to know could not be more to trust,  
From whence thou camest, how tended on: but rest  
Unquestion'd welcome and undoubted blest.  
Give me some help here, ho! If thou proceed  
As high as word, my deed shall match thy need.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

*Enter COUNTESS and Clown*

### COUNTESS

Come on, sir; I shall now put you to the height of your breeding.

### Clown

I will show myself highly fed and lowly taught: I know my business is but to the court.

### COUNTESS

To the court! why, what place make you special, when you put off that with such contempt? But to the court!

### Clown

Truly, madam, if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court: he that cannot make a leg, put off's cap, kiss his hand and say nothing, has neither leg, hands, lip, nor cap; and indeed such a fellow, to say precisely, were not for the court; but for me, I have an answer will serve all men.

### COUNTESS

Marry, that's a bountiful answer that fits all questions.

### Clown

It is like a barber's chair that fits all buttocks, the pin-buttock, the quatch-buttock, the brawn buttock, or any buttock.

## **COUNTESS**

Will your answer serve fit to all questions?

## **Clown**

As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffeta punk, as Tib's rush for Tom's forefinger, as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday, a morris for May-day, as the nail to his hole, the cuckold to his horn, as a scolding queen to a wrangling knave, as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth, nay, as the pudding to his skin.

## **COUNTESS**

Have you, I say, an answer of such fitness for all questions?

## **Clown**

From below your duke to beneath your constable, it will fit any question.

## **COUNTESS**

It must be an answer of most monstrous size that must fit all demands.

## **Clown**

But a trifle neither, in good faith, if the learned should speak truth of it: here it is, and all that belongs to't. Ask me if I am a courtier: it shall do you no harm to learn.

## **COUNTESS**

To be young again, if we could: I will be a fool in question, hoping to be the wiser by your answer. I pray you, sir, are you a courtier?

**Clown**

O Lord, sir! There's a simple putting off. More, more, a hundred of them.

**COUNTESS**

Sir, I am a poor friend of yours, that loves you.

**Clown**

O Lord, sir! Thick, thick, spare not me.

**COUNTESS**

I think, sir, you can eat none of this homely meat.

**Clown**

O Lord, sir! Nay, put me to't, I warrant you.

**COUNTESS**

You were lately whipped, sir, as I think.

**Clown**

O Lord, sir! spare not me.

**COUNTESS**

Do you cry, 'O Lord, sir!' at your whipping, and 'spare not me?' Indeed your 'O Lord, sir!' is very sequent to your whipping: you would answer very well to a whipping, if you were but bound to't.

**Clown**

I ne'er had worse luck in my life in my 'O Lord,  
sir!' I see things may serve long, but not serve ever.

**COUNTESS**

I play the noble housewife with the time  
To entertain't so merrily with a fool.

**Clown**

O Lord, sir! why, there't serves well again.

**COUNTESS**

An end, sir; to your business. Give Helen this,  
And urge her to a present answer back:  
Commend me to my kinsmen and my son:  
This is not much.

**Clown**

Not much commendation to them.

**COUNTESS**

Not much employment for you: you understand me?

**Clown**

Most fruitfully: I am there before my legs.

**COUNTESS**

Haste you again.

*Exeunt severally*

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Paris. The KING's palace.

*Enter BERTRAM, LAFEU, and PAROLLES*

**LAFEU**

They say miracles are past; and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.

**PAROLLES**

Why, 'tis the rarest argument of wonder that hath shot out in our latter times.

**BERTRAM**

And so 'tis.

**LAFEU**

To be relinquish'd of the artists,--

**PAROLLES**

So I say.

**LAFEU**

Both of Galen and Paracelsus.

**PAROLLES**



So I say.

**LAFEU**

Of all the learned and authentic fellows,--

**PAROLLES**

Right; so I say.

**LAFEU**

That gave him out incurable,--

**PAROLLES**

Why, there 'tis; so say I too.

**LAFEU**

Not to be helped,--

**PAROLLES**

Right; as 'twere, a man assured of a--

**LAFEU**

Uncertain life, and sure death.

**PAROLLES**

Just, you say well; so would I have said.

**LAFEU**

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

**PAROLLES**

It is, indeed: if you will have it in showing, you shall read it in--what do you call there?

**LAFEU**

A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor.

**PAROLLES**

That's it; I would have said the very same.

**LAFEU**

Why, your dolphin is not lustier: 'fore me, I speak in respect--

**PAROLLES**

Nay, 'tis strange, 'tis very strange, that is the brief and the tedious of it; and he's of a most facinerious spirit that will not acknowledge it to be the--

**LAFEU**

Very hand of heaven.

**PAROLLES**

Ay, so I say.

**LAFEU**

In a most weak--

*pausing*

and debile minister, great power, great transcendence: which should, indeed, give us a further use to be made than alone the recovery of the king, as to be--

*pausing*

generally thankful.

## **PAROLLES**

I would have said it; you say well. Here comes the king.

*Enter KING, HELENA, and Attendants. LAFEU and PAROLLES retire*

## **LAFEU**

Lustig, as the Dutchman says: I'll like a maid the better, whilst I have a tooth in my head: why, he's able to lead her a coranto.

## **PAROLLES**

Mort du vinaigre! is not this Helen?

## **LAFEU**

'Fore God, I think so.

## **KING**

Go, call before me all the lords in court.  
Sit, my preserver, by thy patient's side;  
And with this healthful hand, whose banish'd sense  
Thou hast repeal'd, a second time receive  
The confirmation of my promised gift,  
Which but attends thy naming.

*Enter three or four Lords*

Fair maid, send forth thine eye: this youthful parcel  
Of noble bachelors stand at my bestowing,  
O'er whom both sovereign power and father's voice  
I have to use: thy frank election make;  
Thou hast power to choose, and they none to forsake.

**HELENA**

To each of you one fair and virtuous mistress  
Fall, when Love please! marry, to each, but one!

**LAFEU**

I'd give bay Curtal and his furniture,  
My mouth no more were broken than these boys',  
And writ as little beard.

**KING**

Peruse them well:  
Not one of those but had a noble father.

**HELENA**

Gentlemen,  
Heaven hath through me restored the king to health.

**All**

We understand it, and thank heaven for you.

**HELENA**

I am a simple maid, and therein wealthiest,  
That I protest I simply am a maid.  
Please it your majesty, I have done already:  
The blushes in my cheeks thus whisper me,  
'We blush that thou shouldst choose; but, be refused,  
Let the white death sit on thy cheek for ever;  
We'll ne'er come there again.'

**KING**

Make choice; and, see,  
Who shuns thy love shuns all his love in me.

**HELENA**

Now, Dian, from thy altar do I fly,  
And to imperial Love, that god most high,  
Do my sighs stream. Sir, will you hear my suit?

**First Lord**

And grant it.

**HELENA**

Thanks, sir; all the rest is mute.

**LAFEU**

I had rather be in this choice than throw ames-ace  
for my life.

**HELENA**

The honour, sir, that flames in your fair eyes,  
Before I speak, too threateningly replies:  
Love make your fortunes twenty times above  
Her that so wishes and her humble love!

**Second Lord**

No better, if you please.

**HELENA**

My wish receive,  
Which great Love grant! and so, I take my leave.

**LAFEU**

Do all they deny her? An they were sons of mine,  
I'd have them whipped; or I would send them to the  
Turk, to make eunuchs of.

**HELENA**

Be not afraid that I your hand should take;  
I'll never do you wrong for your own sake:  
Blessing upon your vows! and in your bed  
Find fairer fortune, if you ever wed!

**LAFEU**

These boys are boys of ice, they'll none have her:  
sure, they are bastards to the English; the French  
ne'er got 'em.

**HELENA**

You are too young, too happy, and too good,  
To make yourself a son out of my blood.

**Fourth Lord**

Fair one, I think not so.

**LAFEU**

There's one grape yet; I am sure thy father drunk  
wine: but if thou be'st not an ass, I am a youth  
of fourteen; I have known thee already.

**HELENA**

[To BERTRAM] I dare not say I take you; but I give  
Me and my service, ever whilst I live,  
Into your guiding power. This is the man.

**KING**

Why, then, young Bertram, take her; she's thy wife.

**BERTRAM**

My wife, my liege! I shall beseech your highness,  
In such a business give me leave to use  
The help of mine own eyes.

**KING**

Know'st thou not, Bertram,  
What she has done for me?

**BERTRAM**

Yes, my good lord;  
But never hope to know why I should marry her.

**KING**

Thou know'st she has raised me from my sickly bed.

**BERTRAM**

But follows it, my lord, to bring me down  
Must answer for your raising? I know her well:  
She had her breeding at my father's charge.  
A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain  
Rather corrupt me ever!

**KING**

'Tis only title thou disdain'st in her, the which  
I can build up. Strange is it that our bloods,  
Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,  
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off  
In differences so mighty. If she be  
All that is virtuous, save what thou dislikest,  
A poor physician's daughter, thou dislikest  
Of virtue for the name: but do not so:  
From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,  
The place is dignified by the doer's deed:  
Where great additions swell's, and virtue none,  
It is a dropsied honour. Good alone  
Is good without a name. Vileness is so:  
The property by what it is should go,  
Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;  
In these to nature she's immediate heir,  
And these breed honour: that is honour's scorn,

Which challenges itself as honour's born  
And is not like the sire: honours thrive,  
When rather from our acts we them derive  
Than our foregoers: the mere word's a slave  
Debosh'd on every tomb, on every grave  
A lying trophy, and as oft is dumb  
Where dust and damn'd oblivion is the tomb  
Of honour'd bones indeed. What should be said?  
If thou canst like this creature as a maid,  
I can create the rest: virtue and she  
Is her own dower; honour and wealth from me.

**BERTRAM**

I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't.

**KING**

Thou wrong'st thyself, if thou shouldst strive to choose.

**HELENA**

That you are well restored, my lord, I'm glad:  
Let the rest go.

**KING**

My honour's at the stake; which to defeat,  
I must produce my power. Here, take her hand,  
Proud scornful boy, unworthy this good gift;  
That dost in vile misprision shackle up  
My love and her desert; that canst not dream,  
We, poisoning us in her defective scale,  
Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know,  
It is in us to plant thine honour where  
We please to have it grow. Cheque thy contempt:  
Obey our will, which travails in thy good:  
Believe not thy disdain, but presently  
Do thine own fortunes that obedient right  
Which both thy duty owes and our power claims;  
Or I will throw thee from my care for ever  
Into the staggers and the careless lapse



Of youth and ignorance; both my revenge and hate  
Loosing upon thee, in the name of justice,  
Without all terms of pity. Speak; thine answer.

**BERTRAM**

Pardon, my gracious lord; for I submit  
My fancy to your eyes: when I consider  
What great creation and what dole of honour  
Flies where you bid it, I find that she, which late  
Was in my nobler thoughts most base, is now  
The praised of the king; who, so ennobled,  
Is as 'twere born so.

**KING**

Take her by the hand,  
And tell her she is thine: to whom I promise  
A counterpoise, if not to thy estate  
A balance more replete.

**BERTRAM**

I take her hand.

**KING**

Good fortune and the favour of the king  
Smile upon this contract; whose ceremony  
Shall seem expedient on the now-born brief,  
And be perform'd to-night: the solemn feast  
Shall more attend upon the coming space,  
Expecting absent friends. As thou lovest her,  
Thy love's to me religious; else, does err.

*Exeunt all but LAFEU and PAROLLES*

**LAFEU**

[Advancing] Do you hear, monsieur? a word with you.

**PAROLLES**

Your pleasure, sir?

**LAFEU**

Your lord and master did well to make his recantation.

**PAROLLES**

Recantation! My lord! my master!

**LAFEU**

Ay; is it not a language I speak?

**PAROLLES**

A most harsh one, and not to be understood without bloody succeeding. My master!

**LAFEU**

Are you companion to the Count Rousillon?

**PAROLLES**

To any count, to all counts, to what is man.

**LAFEU**

To what is count's man: count's master is of another style.

**PAROLLES**

You are too old, sir; let it satisfy you, you are too old.

**LAFEU**

I must tell thee, sirrah, I write man; to which

title age cannot bring thee.

## **PAROLLES**

What I dare too well do, I dare not do.

## **LAFEU**

I did think thee, for two ordinaries, to be a pretty wise fellow; thou didst make tolerable vent of thy travel; it might pass: yet the scarfs and the bannerets about thee did manifoldly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burthen. I have now found thee; when I lose thee again, I care not: yet art thou good for nothing but taking up; and that thou't scarce worth.

## **PAROLLES**

Hadst thou not the privilege of antiquity upon thee,--

## **LAFEU**

Do not plunge thyself too far in anger, lest thou hasten thy trial; which if--Lord have mercy on thee for a hen! So, my good window of lattice, fare thee well: thy casement I need not open, for I look through thee. Give me thy hand.

## **PAROLLES**

My lord, you give me most egregious indignity.

## **LAFEU**

Ay, with all my heart; and thou art worthy of it.

## **PAROLLES**

I have not, my lord, deserved it.

**LAFEU**

Yes, good faith, every dram of it; and I will not  
bate thee a scruple.

**PAROLLES**

Well, I shall be wiser.

**LAFEU**

Even as soon as thou canst, for thou hast to pull at  
a smack o' the contrary. If ever thou be'st bound  
in thy scarf and beaten, thou shalt find what it is  
to be proud of thy bondage. I have a desire to hold  
my acquaintance with thee, or rather my knowledge,  
that I may say in the default, he is a man I know.

**PAROLLES**

My lord, you do me most insupportable vexation.

**LAFEU**

I would it were hell-pains for thy sake, and my poor  
doing eternal: for doing I am past: as I will by  
thee, in what motion age will give me leave.

*Exit*

**PAROLLES**

Well, thou hast a son shall take this disgrace off  
me; scurvy, old, filthy, scurvy lord! Well, I must  
be patient; there is no fettering of authority.  
I'll beat him, by my life, if I can meet him with  
any convenience, an he were double and double a  
lord. I'll have no more pity of his age than I  
would of--I'll beat him, an if I could but meet him again.

*Re-enter LAFEU*

**LAFEU**

Sirrah, your lord and master's married; there's news for you: you have a new mistress.

**PAROLLES**

I most unfeignedly beseech your lordship to make some reservation of your wrongs: he is my good lord: whom I serve above is my master.

**LAFEU**

Who? God?

**PAROLLES**

Ay, sir.

**LAFEU**

The devil it is that's thy master. Why dost thou garter up thy arms o' this fashion? dost make hose of sleeves? do other servants so? Thou wert best set thy lower part where thy nose stands. By mine honour, if I were but two hours younger, I'd beat thee: methinks, thou art a general offence, and every man should beat thee: I think thou wast created for men to breathe themselves upon thee.

**PAROLLES**

This is hard and undeserved measure, my lord.

**LAFEU**

Go to, sir; you were beaten in Italy for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate; you are a vagabond and no true traveller: you are more saucy with lords and honourable personages than the commission of your birth and virtue gives you heraldry. You are not

worth another word, else I'd call you knave. I leave you.

*Exit*

**PAROLLES**

Good, very good; it is so then: good, very good;  
let it be concealed awhile.

*Re-enter BERTRAM*

**BERTRAM**

Undone, and forfeited to cares for ever!

**PAROLLES**

What's the matter, sweet-heart?

**BERTRAM**

Although before the solemn priest I have sworn,  
I will not bed her.

**PAROLLES**

What, what, sweet-heart?

**BERTRAM**

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

**PAROLLES**

France is a dog-hole, and it no more merits  
The tread of a man's foot: to the wars!

**BERTRAM**

There's letters from my mother: what the import is,

I know not yet.

## **PAROLLES**

Ay, that would be known. To the wars, my boy, to the wars!  
He wears his honour in a box unseen,  
That hugs his kicky-wicky here at home,  
Spending his manly marrow in her arms,  
Which should sustain the bound and high curvet  
Of Mars's fiery steed. To other regions  
France is a stable; we that dwell in't jades;  
Therefore, to the war!

## **BERTRAM**

It shall be so: I'll send her to my house,  
Acquaint my mother with my hate to her,  
And wherefore I am fled; write to the king  
That which I durst not speak; his present gift  
Shall furnish me to those Italian fields,  
Where noble fellows strike: war is no strife  
To the dark house and the detested wife.

## **PAROLLES**

Will this capriccio hold in thee? art sure?

## **BERTRAM**

Go with me to my chamber, and advise me.  
I'll send her straight away: to-morrow  
I'll to the wars, she to her single sorrow.

## **PAROLLES**

Why, these balls bound; there's noise in it. 'Tis hard:  
A young man married is a man that's marr'd:  
Therefore away, and leave her bravely; go:  
The king has done you wrong: but, hush, 'tis so.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Paris. The KING's palace.

*Enter HELENA and Clown*

**HELENA**

My mother greets me kindly; is she well?

**Clown**

She is not well; but yet she has her health: she's very merry; but yet she is not well: but thanks be given, she's very well and wants nothing i', the world; but yet she is not well.

**HELENA**

If she be very well, what does she ail, that she's not very well?

**Clown**

Truly, she's very well indeed, but for two things.

**HELENA**

What two things?

**Clown**

One, that she's not in heaven, whither God send her quickly! the other that she's in earth, from whence God send her quickly!

*Enter PAROLLES*

## **PAROLLES**

Bless you, my fortunate lady!

## **HELENA**

I hope, sir, I have your good will to have mine own good fortunes.

## **PAROLLES**

You had my prayers to lead them on; and to keep them on, have them still. O, my knave, how does my old lady?

## **Clown**

So that you had her wrinkles and I her money, I would she did as you say.

## **PAROLLES**

Why, I say nothing.

## **Clown**

Marry, you are the wiser man; for many a man's tongue shakes out his master's undoing: to say nothing, to do nothing, to know nothing, and to have nothing, is to be a great part of your title; which is within a very little of nothing.

## **PAROLLES**

Away! thou'rt a knave.

## **Clown**

You should have said, sir, before a knave thou'rt a knave; that's, before me thou'rt a knave: this had been truth, sir.

## PAROLLES

Go to, thou art a witty fool; I have found thee.

## Clown

Did you find me in yourself, sir? or were you taught to find me? The search, sir, was profitable; and much fool may you find in you, even to the world's pleasure and the increase of laughter.

## PAROLLES

A good knave, i' faith, and well fed.  
Madam, my lord will go away to-night;  
A very serious business calls on him.  
The great prerogative and rite of love,  
Which, as your due, time claims, he does acknowledge;  
But puts it off to a compell'd restraint;  
Whose want, and whose delay, is strew'd with sweets,  
Which they distil now in the curbed time,  
To make the coming hour o'erflow with joy  
And pleasure drown the brim.

## HELENA

What's his will else?

## PAROLLES

That you will take your instant leave o' the king  
And make this haste as your own good proceeding,  
Strengthen'd with what apology you think  
May make it probable need.

## HELENA

What more commands he?

## PAROLLES

That, having this obtain'd, you presently  
Attend his further pleasure.

**HELENA**

In every thing I wait upon his will.

**PAROLLES**

I shall report it so.

**HELENA**

I pray you.

*Exit PAROLLES*

Come, sirrah.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Paris. The KING's palace.

*Enter LAFEU and BERTRAM*

**LAFEU**

But I hope your lordship thinks not him a soldier.

**BERTRAM**

Yes, my lord, and of very valiant approof.

**LAFEU**

You have it from his own deliverance.

**BERTRAM**

And by other warranted testimony.

**LAFEU**

Then my dial goes not true: I took this lark for a bunting.

**BERTRAM**

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

**LAFEU**

I have then sinned against his experience and transgressed against his valour; and my state that way is dangerous, since I cannot yet find in my heart to repent. Here he comes: I pray you, make

us friends; I will pursue the amity.

*Enter PAROLLES*

**PAROLLES**

[To BERTRAM] These things shall be done, sir.

**LAFEU**

Pray you, sir, who's his tailor?

**PAROLLES**

Sir?

**LAFEU**

O, I know him well, I, sir; he, sir, 's a good workman, a very good tailor.

**BERTRAM**

[Aside to PAROLLES] Is she gone to the king?

**PAROLLES**

She is.

**BERTRAM**

Will she away to-night?

**PAROLLES**

As you'll have her.

**BERTRAM**

I have writ my letters, casketed my treasure,  
Given order for our horses; and to-night,

When I should take possession of the bride,  
End ere I do begin.

**LAFEU**

A good traveller is something at the latter end of a  
dinner; but one that lies three thirds and uses a  
known truth to pass a thousand nothings with, should  
be once heard and thrice beaten. God save you, captain.

**BERTRAM**

Is there any unkindness between my lord and you, monsieur?

**PAROLLES**

I know not how I have deserved to run into my lord's  
displeasure.

**LAFEU**

You have made shift to run into 't, boots and spurs  
and all, like him that leaped into the custard; and  
out of it you'll run again, rather than suffer  
question for your residence.

**BERTRAM**

It may be you have mistaken him, my lord.

**LAFEU**

And shall do so ever, though I took him at 's  
prayers. Fare you well, my lord; and believe this  
of me, there can be no kernel in this light nut; the  
soul of this man is his clothes. Trust him not in  
matter of heavy consequence; I have kept of them  
tame, and know their natures. Farewell, monsieur:  
I have spoken better of you than you have or will to  
deserve at my hand; but we must do good against evil.

*Exit*

**PAROLLES**

An idle lord. I swear.

**BERTRAM**

I think so.

**PAROLLES**

Why, do you not know him?

**BERTRAM**

Yes, I do know him well, and common speech  
Gives him a worthy pass. Here comes my clog.

*Enter HELENA*

**HELENA**

I have, sir, as I was commanded from you,  
Spoke with the king and have procured his leave  
For present parting; only he desires  
Some private speech with you.

**BERTRAM**

I shall obey his will.  
You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,  
Which holds not colour with the time, nor does  
The ministration and required office  
On my particular. Prepared I was not  
For such a business; therefore am I found  
So much unsettled: this drives me to entreat you  
That presently you take our way for home;  
And rather muse than ask why I entreat you,  
For my respects are better than they seem  
And my appointments have in them a need



Greater than shows itself at the first view  
To you that know them not. This to my mother:

*Giving a letter*

'Twill be two days ere I shall see you, so  
I leave you to your wisdom.

**HELENA**

Sir, I can nothing say,  
But that I am your most obedient servant.

**BERTRAM**

Come, come, no more of that.

**HELENA**

And ever shall  
With true observance seek to eke out that  
Wherein toward me my homely stars have fail'd  
To equal my great fortune.

**BERTRAM**

Let that go:  
My haste is very great: farewell; hie home.

**HELENA**

Pray, sir, your pardon.

**BERTRAM**

Well, what would you say?

**HELENA**

I am not worthy of the wealth I owe,  
Nor dare I say 'tis mine, and yet it is;

But, like a timorous thief, most fain would steal  
What law does vouch mine own.

**BERTRAM**

What would you have?

**HELENA**

Something; and scarce so much: nothing, indeed.  
I would not tell you what I would, my lord:  
Faith yes;  
Strangers and foes do sunder, and not kiss.

**BERTRAM**

I pray you, stay not, but in haste to horse.

**HELENA**

I shall not break your bidding, good my lord.

**BERTRAM**

Where are my other men, monsieur? Farewell.

*Exit HELENA*

Go thou toward home; where I will never come  
Whilst I can shake my sword or hear the drum.  
Away, and for our flight.

**PAROLLES**

Bravely, coragio!

*Exeunt*

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Florence. The DUKE's palace.

*Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence attended; the two Frenchmen, with a troop of soldiers.*

**DUKE**

So that from point to point now have you heard  
The fundamental reasons of this war,  
Whose great decision hath much blood let forth  
And more thirsts after.

**First Lord**

Holy seems the quarrel  
Upon your grace's part; black and fearful  
On the opposer.

**DUKE**

Therefore we marvel much our cousin France  
Would in so just a business shut his bosom  
Against our borrowing prayers.

**Second Lord**

Good my lord,  
The reasons of our state I cannot yield,  
But like a common and an outward man,  
That the great figure of a council frames  
By self-unable motion: therefore dare not  
Say what I think of it, since I have found  
Myself in my incertain grounds to fail  
As often as I guess'd.

**DUKE**

Be it his pleasure.

**First Lord**

But I am sure the younger of our nature,  
That surfeit on their ease, will day by day  
Come here for physic.

**DUKE**

Welcome shall they be;  
And all the honours that can fly from us  
Shall on them settle. You know your places well;  
When better fall, for your avails they fell:  
To-morrow to the field.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

*Enter COUNTESS and Clown*

### COUNTESS

It hath happened all as I would have had it, save that he comes not along with her.

### Clown

By my troth, I take my young lord to be a very melancholy man.

### COUNTESS

By what observance, I pray you?

### Clown

Why, he will look upon his boot and sing; mend the ruff and sing; ask questions and sing; pick his teeth and sing. I know a man that had this trick of melancholy sold a goodly manor for a song.

### COUNTESS

Let me see what he writes, and when he means to come.

*Opening a letter*

### Clown

I have no mind to Isbel since I was at court: our old ling and our Isbels o' the country are nothing like your old ling and your Isbels o' the court:

the brains of my Cupid's knocked out, and I begin to love, as an old man loves money, with no stomach.

**COUNTESS**

What have we here?

**Clown**

E'en that you have there.

*Exit*

**COUNTESS**

[Reads] I have sent you a daughter-in-law: she hath recovered the king, and undone me. I have wedded her, not bedded her; and sworn to make the 'not' eternal. You shall hear I am run away: know it before the report come. If there be breadth enough in the world, I will hold a long distance. My duty to you. Your unfortunate son,

**BERTRAM.**

This is not well, rash and unbridled boy.  
To fly the favours of so good a king;  
To pluck his indignation on thy head  
By the misprising of a maid too virtuous  
For the contempt of empire.

*Re-enter Clown*

**Clown**

O madam, yonder is heavy news within between two soldiers and my young lady!

**COUNTESS**

What is the matter?

**Clown**

Nay, there is some comfort in the news, some comfort; your son will not be killed so soon as I thought he would.

**COUNTESS**

Why should he be killed?

**Clown**

So say I, madam, if he run away, as I hear he does: the danger is in standing to't; that's the loss of men, though it be the getting of children. Here they come will tell you more: for my part, I only hear your son was run away.

*Exit*

*Enter HELENA, and two Gentlemen*

**First Gentleman**

Save you, good madam.

**HELENA**

Madam, my lord is gone, for ever gone.

**Second Gentleman**

Do not say so.

**COUNTESS**

Think upon patience. Pray you, gentlemen,  
I have felt so many quirks of joy and grief,  
That the first face of neither, on the start,  
Can woman me unto't: where is my son, I pray you?

**Second Gentleman**

Madam, he's gone to serve the duke of Florence:  
We met him thitherward; for thence we came,  
And, after some dispatch in hand at court,  
Thither we bend again.

**HELENA**

Look on his letter, madam; here's my passport.

*Reads*

When thou canst get the ring upon my finger which  
never shall come off, and show me a child begotten  
of thy body that I am father to, then call me  
husband: but in such a 'then' I write a 'never.'  
This is a dreadful sentence.

**COUNTESS**

Brought you this letter, gentlemen?

**First Gentleman**

Ay, madam;  
And for the contents' sake are sorry for our pain.

**COUNTESS**

I prithee, lady, have a better cheer;  
If thou engrossest all the griefs are thine,  
Thou robb'st me of a moiety: he was my son;  
But I do wash his name out of my blood,  
And thou art all my child. Towards Florence is he?

**Second Gentleman**

Ay, madam.

**COUNTESS**

And to be a soldier?



**Second Gentleman**

Such is his noble purpose; and believe 't,  
The duke will lay upon him all the honour  
That good convenience claims.

**COUNTESS**

Return you thither?

**First Gentleman**

Ay, madam, with the swiftest wing of speed.

**HELENA**

[Reads] Till I have no wife I have nothing in France.  
'Tis bitter.

**COUNTESS**

Find you that there?

**HELENA**

Ay, madam.

**First Gentleman**

'Tis but the boldness of his hand, haply, which his  
heart was not consenting to.

**COUNTESS**

Nothing in France, until he have no wife!  
There's nothing here that is too good for him  
But only she; and she deserves a lord  
That twenty such rude boys might tend upon  
And call her hourly mistress. Who was with him?

**First Gentleman**

A servant only, and a gentleman  
Which I have sometime known.

**COUNTESS**

Parolles, was it not?

**First Gentleman**

Ay, my good lady, he.

**COUNTESS**

A very tainted fellow, and full of wickedness.  
My son corrupts a well-derived nature  
With his inducement.

**First Gentleman**

Indeed, good lady,  
The fellow has a deal of that too much,  
Which holds him much to have.

**COUNTESS**

You're welcome, gentlemen.  
I will entreat you, when you see my son,  
To tell him that his sword can never win  
The honour that he loses: more I'll entreat you  
Written to bear along.

**Second Gentleman**

We serve you, madam,  
In that and all your worthiest affairs.

**COUNTESS**

Not so, but as we change our courtesies.

Will you draw near!

*Exeunt COUNTESS and Gentlemen*

**HELENA**

'Till I have no wife, I have nothing in France.'  
Nothing in France, until he has no wife!  
Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France;  
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is't I  
That chase thee from thy country and expose  
Those tender limbs of thine to the event  
Of the none-sparing war? and is it I  
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou  
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark  
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,  
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,  
Fly with false aim; move the still-peering air,  
That sings with piercing; do not touch my lord.  
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there;  
Whoever charges on his forward breast,  
I am the caitiff that do hold him to't;  
And, though I kill him not, I am the cause  
His death was so effected: better 'twere  
I met the ravin lion when he roar'd  
With sharp constraint of hunger; better 'twere  
That all the miseries which nature owes  
Were mine at once. No, come thou home, Rousillon,  
Whence honour but of danger wins a scar,  
As oft it loses all: I will be gone;  
My being here it is that holds thee hence:  
Shall I stay here to do't? no, no, although  
The air of paradise did fan the house  
And angels officed all: I will be gone,  
That pitiful rumour may report my flight,  
To console thine ear. Come, night; end, day!  
For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.

*Exit*

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Florence. Before the DUKE's palace.

*Flourish. Enter the DUKE of Florence, BERTRAM, PAROLLES, Soldiers, Drum, and Trumpets*

**DUKE**

The general of our horse thou art; and we,  
Great in our hope, lay our best love and credence  
Upon thy promising fortune.

**BERTRAM**

Sir, it is  
A charge too heavy for my strength, but yet  
We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake  
To the extreme edge of hazard.

**DUKE**

Then go thou forth;  
And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm,  
As thy auspicious mistress!

**BERTRAM**

This very day,  
Great Mars, I put myself into thy file:  
Make me but like my thoughts, and I shall prove  
A lover of thy drum, hater of love.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

*Enter COUNTESS and Steward*

### COUNTESS

Alas! and would you take the letter of her?  
Might you not know she would do as she has done,  
By sending me a letter? Read it again.

### Steward

[Reads]  
I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone:  
Ambitious love hath so in me offended,  
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,  
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.  
Write, write, that from the bloody course of war  
My dearest master, your dear son, may hie:  
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far  
His name with zealous fervor sanctify:  
His taken labours bid him me forgive;  
I, his spiteful Juno, sent him forth  
From courtly friends, with camping foes to live,  
Where death and danger dogs the heels of worth:  
He is too good and fair for death and me:  
Whom I myself embrace, to set him free.

### COUNTESS

Ah, what sharp stings are in her mildest words!  
Rinaldo, you did never lack advice so much,  
As letting her pass so: had I spoke with her,  
I could have well diverted her intents,  
Which thus she hath prevented.

## Steward

Pardon me, madam:  
If I had given you this at over-night,  
She might have been o'erta'en; and yet she writes,  
Pursuit would be but vain.

## COUNTESS

What angel shall  
Bless this unworthy husband? he cannot thrive,  
Unless her prayers, whom heaven delights to hear  
And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath  
Of greatest justice. Write, write, Rinaldo,  
To this unworthy husband of his wife;  
Let every word weigh heavy of her worth  
That he does weigh too light: my greatest grief.  
Though little he do feel it, set down sharply.  
Dispatch the most convenient messenger:  
When haply he shall hear that she is gone,  
He will return; and hope I may that she,  
Hearing so much, will speed her foot again,  
Led hither by pure love: which of them both  
Is dearest to me. I have no skill in sense  
To make distinction: provide this messenger:  
My heart is heavy and mine age is weak;  
Grief would have tears, and sorrow bids me speak.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Florence. Without the walls. A tucket afar off.

*Enter an old Widow of Florence, DIANA, VIOLENTA, and MARIANA, with other Citizens*

### Widow

Nay, come; for if they do approach the city, we shall lose all the sight.

### DIANA

They say the French count has done most honourable service.

### Widow

It is reported that he has taken their greatest commander; and that with his own hand he slew the duke's brother.

*Tucket*

We have lost our labour; they are gone a contrary way: hark! you may know by their trumpets.

### MARIANA

Come, let's return again, and suffice ourselves with the report of it. Well, Diana, take heed of this French earl: the honour of a maid is her name; and no legacy is so rich as honesty.

### Widow

I have told my neighbour how you have been solicited by a gentleman his companion.

## MARIANA

I know that knave; hang him! one Parolles: a filthy officer he is in those suggestions for the young earl. Beware of them, Diana; their promises, enticements, oaths, tokens, and all these engines of lust, are not the things they go under: many a maid hath been seduced by them; and the misery is, example, that so terrible shows in the wreck of maidenhood, cannot for all that dissuade succession, but that they are limed with the twigs that threaten them. I hope I need not to advise you further; but I hope your own grace will keep you where you are, though there were no further danger known but the modesty which is so lost.

## DIANA

You shall not need to fear me.

## Widow

I hope so.

*Enter HELENA, disguised like a Pilgrim*

Look, here comes a pilgrim: I know she will lie at my house; thither they send one another: I'll question her. God save you, pilgrim! whither are you bound?

## HELENA

To Saint Jaques le Grand.  
Where do the palmers lodge, I do beseech you?

## Widow

At the Saint Francis here beside the port.

## HELENA



Is this the way?

**Widow**

Ay, marry, is't.

*A march afar*

Hark you! they come this way.  
If you will tarry, holy pilgrim,  
But till the troops come by,  
I will conduct you where you shall be lodged;  
The rather, for I think I know your hostess  
As ample as myself.

**HELENA**

Is it yourself?

**Widow**

If you shall please so, pilgrim.

**HELENA**

I thank you, and will stay upon your leisure.

**Widow**

You came, I think, from France?

**HELENA**

I did so.

**Widow**

Here you shall see a countryman of yours  
That has done worthy service.

**HELENA**

His name, I pray you.

**DIANA**

The Count Rousillon: know you such a one?

**HELENA**

But by the ear, that hears most nobly of him:  
His face I know not.

**DIANA**

Whatsome'er he is,  
He's bravely taken here. He stole from France,  
As 'tis reported, for the king had married him  
Against his liking: think you it is so?

**HELENA**

Ay, surely, mere the truth: I know his lady.

**DIANA**

There is a gentleman that serves the count  
Reports but coarsely of her.

**HELENA**

What's his name?

**DIANA**

Monsieur Parolles.

**HELENA**

O, I believe with him,  
In argument of praise, or to the worth  
Of the great count himself, she is too mean

To have her name repeated: all her deserving  
Is a reserved honesty, and that  
I have not heard examined.

**DIANA**

Alas, poor lady!  
'Tis a hard bondage to become the wife  
Of a detesting lord.

**Widow**

I warrant, good creature, wheresoe'er she is,  
Her heart weighs sadly: this young maid might do her  
A shrewd turn, if she pleased.

**HELENA**

How do you mean?  
May be the amorous count solicits her  
In the unlawful purpose.

**Widow**

He does indeed;  
And brokes with all that can in such a suit  
Corrupt the tender honour of a maid:  
But she is arm'd for him and keeps her guard  
In honestest defence.

**MARIANA**

The gods forbid else!

**Widow**

So, now they come:

*Drum and Colours*

*Enter BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and the whole army*

That is Antonio, the duke's eldest son;  
That, Escalus.

**HELENA**

Which is the Frenchman?

**DIANA**

He;  
That with the plume: 'tis a most gallant fellow.  
I would he loved his wife: if he were honester  
He were much goodlier: is't not a handsome gentleman?

**HELENA**

I like him well.

**DIANA**

'Tis pity he is not honest: yond's that same knave  
That leads him to these places: were I his lady,  
I would Poison that vile rascal.

**HELENA**

Which is he?

**DIANA**

That jack-an-apes with scarfs: why is he melancholy?

**HELENA**

Perchance he's hurt i' the battle.

**PAROLLES**

Lose our drum! well.

**MARIANA**

He's shrewdly vexed at something: look, he has spied us.

**Widow**

Marry, hang you!

**MARIANA**

And your courtesy, for a ring-carrier!

*Exeunt BERTRAM, PAROLLES, and army*

**Widow**

The troop is past. Come, pilgrim, I will bring you  
Where you shall host: of enjoin'd penitents  
There's four or five, to great Saint Jaques bound,  
Already at my house.

**HELENA**

I humbly thank you:  
Please it this matron and this gentle maid  
To eat with us to-night, the charge and thanking  
Shall be for me; and, to requite you further,  
I will bestow some precepts of this virgin  
Worthy the note.

**BOTH**

We'll take your offer kindly.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Camp before Florence.

*Enter BERTRAM and the two French Lords*

### Second Lord

Nay, good my lord, put him to't; let him have his way.

### First Lord

If your lordship find him not a hilding, hold me no more in your respect.

### Second Lord

On my life, my lord, a bubble.

### BERTRAM

Do you think I am so far deceived in him?

### Second Lord

Believe it, my lord, in mine own direct knowledge, without any malice, but to speak of him as my kinsman, he's a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, the owner of no one good quality worthy your lordship's entertainment.

### First Lord

It were fit you knew him; lest, reposing too far in his virtue, which he hath not, he might at some great and trusty business in a main danger fail you.

## **BERTRAM**

I would I knew in what particular action to try him.

### **First Lord**

None better than to let him fetch off his drum,  
which you hear him so confidently undertake to do.

### **Second Lord**

I, with a troop of Florentines, will suddenly surprise him; such I will have, whom I am sure he knows not from the enemy: we will bind and hoodwink him so, that he shall suppose no other but that he is carried into the leaguer of the adversaries, when we bring him to our own tents. Be but your lordship present at his examination: if he do not, for the promise of his life and in the highest compulsion of base fear, offer to betray you and deliver all the intelligence in his power against you, and that with the divine forfeit of his soul upon oath, never trust my judgment in any thing.

### **First Lord**

O, for the love of laughter, let him fetch his drum; he says he has a stratagem for't: when your lordship sees the bottom of his success in't, and to what metal this counterfeit lump of ore will be melted, if you give him not John Drum's entertainment, your inclining cannot be removed. Here he comes.

*Enter PAROLLES*

### **Second Lord**

[Aside to BERTRAM] O, for the love of laughter, hinder not the honour of his design: let him fetch off his drum in any hand.

## **BERTRAM**

How now, monsieur! this drum sticks sorely in your disposition.

## **First Lord**

A pox on't, let it go; 'tis but a drum.

## **PAROLLES**

'But a drum!' is't 'but a drum'? A drum so lost!  
There was excellent command,--to charge in with our horse upon our own wings, and to rend our own soldiers!

## **First Lord**

That was not to be blamed in the command of the service: it was a disaster of war that Caesar himself could not have prevented, if he had been there to command.

## **BERTRAM**

Well, we cannot greatly condemn our success: some dishonour we had in the loss of that drum; but it is not to be recovered.

## **PAROLLES**

It might have been recovered.

## **BERTRAM**

It might; but it is not now.

## **PAROLLES**

It is to be recovered: but that the merit of service is seldom attributed to the true and exact performer, I would have that drum or another, or



'hic jacet.'

**BERTRAM**

Why, if you have a stomach, to't, monsieur: if you think your mystery in stratagem can bring this instrument of honour again into his native quarter, be magnanimous in the enterprise and go on; I will grace the attempt for a worthy exploit: if you speed well in it, the duke shall both speak of it. and extend to you what further becomes his greatness, even to the utmost syllable of your worthiness.

**PAROLLES**

By the hand of a soldier, I will undertake it.

**BERTRAM**

But you must not now slumber in it.

**PAROLLES**

I'll about it this evening: and I will presently pen down my dilemmas, encourage myself in my certainty, put myself into my mortal preparation; and by midnight look to hear further from me.

**BERTRAM**

May I be bold to acquaint his grace you are gone about it?

**PAROLLES**

I know not what the success will be, my lord; but the attempt I vow.

**BERTRAM**

I know thou'rt valiant; and, to the possibility of

thy soldiership, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.

## **PAROLLES**

I love not many words.

*Exit*

## **Second Lord**

No more than a fish loves water. Is not this a strange fellow, my lord, that so confidently seems to undertake this business, which he knows is not to be done; damns himself to do and dares better be damned than to do't?

## **First Lord**

You do not know him, my lord, as we do: certain it is that he will steal himself into a man's favour and for a week escape a great deal of discoveries; but when you find him out, you have him ever after.

## **BERTRAM**

Why, do you think he will make no deed at all of this that so seriously he does address himself unto?

## **Second Lord**

None in the world; but return with an invention and clap upon you two or three probable lies: but we have almost embossed him; you shall see his fall to-night; for indeed he is not for your lordship's respect.

## **First Lord**

We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we case him. He was first smoked by the old lord Lafeu: when his disguise and he is parted, tell me what a sprat you shall find him; which you shall see this

very night.

**Second Lord**

I must go look my twigs: he shall be caught.

**BERTRAM**

Your brother he shall go along with me.

**Second Lord**

As't please your lordship: I'll leave you.

*Exit*

**BERTRAM**

Now will I lead you to the house, and show you  
The lass I spoke of.

**First Lord**

But you say she's honest.

**BERTRAM**

That's all the fault: I spoke with her but once  
And found her wondrous cold; but I sent to her,  
By this same coxcomb that we have i' the wind,  
Tokens and letters which she did re-send;  
And this is all I have done. She's a fair creature:  
Will you go see her?

**First Lord**

With all my heart, my lord.

*Exeunt*



# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Florence. The Widow's house.

*Enter HELENA and Widow*

**HELENA**

If you misdoubt me that I am not she,  
I know not how I shall assure you further,  
But I shall lose the grounds I work upon.

**Widow**

Though my estate be fallen, I was well born,  
Nothing acquainted with these businesses;  
And would not put my reputation now  
In any staining act.

**HELENA**

Nor would I wish you.  
First, give me trust, the count he is my husband,  
And what to your sworn counsel I have spoken  
Is so from word to word; and then you cannot,  
By the good aid that I of you shall borrow,  
Err in bestowing it.

**Widow**

I should believe you:  
For you have show'd me that which well approves  
You're great in fortune.

**HELENA**

Take this purse of gold,  
And let me buy your friendly help thus far,

Which I will over-pay and pay again  
When I have found it. The count he wooes your daughter,  
Lays down his wanton siege before her beauty,  
Resolved to carry her: let her in fine consent,  
As we'll direct her how 'tis best to bear it.  
Now his important blood will nought deny  
That she'll demand: a ring the county wears,  
That downward hath succeeded in his house  
From son to son, some four or five descents  
Since the first father wore it: this ring he holds  
In most rich choice; yet in his idle fire,  
To buy his will, it would not seem too dear,  
Howe'er repented after.

## **Widow**

Now I see  
The bottom of your purpose.

## **HELENA**

You see it lawful, then: it is no more,  
But that your daughter, ere she seems as won,  
Desires this ring; appoints him an encounter;  
In fine, delivers me to fill the time,  
Herself most chastely absent: after this,  
To marry her, I'll add three thousand crowns  
To what is passed already.

## **Widow**

I have yielded:  
Instruct my daughter how she shall persevere,  
That time and place with this deceit so lawful  
May prove coherent. Every night he comes  
With musics of all sorts and songs composed  
To her unworthiness: it nothing steads us  
To chide him from our eaves; for he persists  
As if his life lay on't.

## **HELENA**

Why then to-night  
Let us assay our plot; which, if it speed,  
Is wicked meaning in a lawful deed  
And lawful meaning in a lawful act,  
Where both not sin, and yet a sinful fact:  
But let's about it.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 3, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Without the Florentine camp.

*Enter Second French Lord, with five or six other Soldiers in ambush*

### Second Lord

He can come no other way but by this hedge-corner.  
When you sally upon him, speak what terrible  
language you will: though you understand it not  
yourselves, no matter; for we must not seem to  
understand him, unless some one among us whom we  
must produce for an interpreter.

### First Soldier

Good captain, let me be the interpreter.

### Second Lord

Art not acquainted with him? knows he not thy voice?

### First Soldier

No, sir, I warrant you.

### Second Lord

But what linsey-woolsey hast thou to speak to us again?

### First Soldier

E'en such as you speak to me.

### Second Lord



He must think us some band of strangers i' the adversary's entertainment. Now he hath a smack of all neighbouring languages; therefore we must every one be a man of his own fancy, not to know what we speak one to another; so we seem to know, is to know straight our purpose: choughs' language, gabble enough, and good enough. As for you, interpreter, you must seem very politic. But couch, ho! here he comes, to beguile two hours in a sleep, and then to return and swear the lies he forges.

*Enter PAROLLES*

## **PAROLLES**

Ten o'clock: within these three hours 'twill be time enough to go home. What shall I say I have done? It must be a very plausible invention that carries it: they begin to smoke me; and disgraces have of late knocked too often at my door. I find my tongue is too foolhardy; but my heart hath the fear of Mars before it and of his creatures, not daring the reports of my tongue.

## **Second Lord**

This is the first truth that e'er thine own tongue was guilty of.

## **PAROLLES**

What the devil should move me to undertake the recovery of this drum, being not ignorant of the impossibility, and knowing I had no such purpose? I must give myself some hurts, and say I got them in exploit: yet slight ones will not carry it; they will say, 'Came you off with so little?' and great ones I dare not give. Wherefore, what's the instance? Tongue, I must put you into a butter-woman's mouth and buy myself another of Bajazet's mule, if you prattle me into these perils.

**Second Lord**

Is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?

**PAROLLES**

I would the cutting of my garments would serve the turn, or the breaking of my Spanish sword.

**Second Lord**

We cannot afford you so.

**PAROLLES**

Or the baring of my beard; and to say it was in stratagem.

**Second Lord**

'Twould not do.

**PAROLLES**

Or to drown my clothes, and say I was stripped.

**Second Lord**

Hardly serve.

**PAROLLES**

Though I swore I leaped from the window of the citadel.

**Second Lord**

How deep?

**PAROLLES**

Thirty fathom.

**Second Lord**

Three great oaths would scarce make that be believed.

**PAROLLES**

I would I had any drum of the enemy's: I would swear  
I recovered it.

**Second Lord**

You shall hear one anon.

**PAROLLES**

A drum now of the enemy's,--

*Alarum within*

**Second Lord**

Throca movousus, cargo, cargo, cargo.

**All**

Cargo, cargo, cargo, villiando par corbo, cargo.

**PAROLLES**

O, ransom, ransom! do not hide mine eyes.

*They seize and blindfold him*

**First Soldier**

Boskos thromuldo boskos.

**PAROLLES**

I know you are the Muskos' regiment:  
And I shall lose my life for want of language;  
If there be here German, or Dane, low Dutch,  
Italian, or French, let him speak to me; I'll  
Discover that which shall undo the Florentine.

**First Soldier**

Boskos vauvado: I understand thee, and can speak  
thy tongue. Kerely bonto, sir, betake thee to thy  
faith, for seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.

**PAROLLES**

O!

**First Soldier**

O, pray, pray, pray! Manka revania dulce.

**Second Lord**

Oscorbidulchos volivorco.

**First Soldier**

The general is content to spare thee yet;  
And, hoodwink'd as thou art, will lead thee on  
To gather from thee: haply thou mayst inform  
Something to save thy life.

**PAROLLES**

O, let me live!  
And all the secrets of our camp I'll show,  
Their force, their purposes; nay, I'll speak that  
Which you will wonder at.

**First Soldier**

But wilt thou faithfully?

## **PAROLLES**

If I do not, damn me.

### **First Soldier**

Acordo linta.  
Come on; thou art granted space.

*Exit, with PAROLLES guarded. A short alarum within*

### **Second Lord**

Go, tell the Count Rousillon, and my brother,  
We have caught the woodcock, and will keep him muffled  
Till we do hear from them.

### **Second Soldier**

Captain, I will.

### **Second Lord**

A' will betray us all unto ourselves:  
Inform on that.

### **Second Soldier**

So I will, sir.

### **Second Lord**

Till then I'll keep him dark and safely lock'd.

*Exeunt*

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Florence. The Widow's house.

*Enter BERTRAM and DIANA*

**BERTRAM**

They told me that your name was Fontibell.

**DIANA**

No, my good lord, Diana.

**BERTRAM**

Titled goddess;  
And worth it, with addition! But, fair soul,  
In your fine frame hath love no quality?  
If quick fire of youth light not your mind,  
You are no maiden, but a monument:  
When you are dead, you should be such a one  
As you are now, for you are cold and stem;  
And now you should be as your mother was  
When your sweet self was got.

**DIANA**

She then was honest.

**BERTRAM**

So should you be.

**DIANA**

No:  
My mother did but duty; such, my lord,

As you owe to your wife.

**BERTRAM**

No more o' that;  
I prithee, do not strive against my vows:  
I was compell'd to her; but I love thee  
By love's own sweet constraint, and will for ever  
Do thee all rights of service.

**DIANA**

Ay, so you serve us  
Till we serve you; but when you have our roses,  
You barely leave our thorns to prick ourselves  
And mock us with our bareness.

**BERTRAM**

How have I sworn!

**DIANA**

'Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,  
But the plain single vow that is vow'd true.  
What is not holy, that we swear not by,  
But take the High'st to witness: then, pray you, tell me,  
If I should swear by God's great attributes,  
I loved you dearly, would you believe my oaths,  
When I did love you ill? This has no holding,  
To swear by him whom I protest to love,  
That I will work against him: therefore your oaths  
Are words and poor conditions, but unseal'd,  
At least in my opinion.

**BERTRAM**

Change it, change it;  
Be not so holy-cruel: love is holy;  
And my integrity ne'er knew the crafts  
That you do charge men with. Stand no more off,  
But give thyself unto my sick desires,

Who then recover: say thou art mine, and ever  
My love as it begins shall so persever.

**DIANA**

I see that men make ropes in such a scarre  
That we'll forsake ourselves. Give me that ring.

**BERTRAM**

I'll lend it thee, my dear; but have no power  
To give it from me.

**DIANA**

Will you not, my lord?

**BERTRAM**

It is an honour 'longing to our house,  
Bequeathed down from many ancestors;  
Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world  
In me to lose.

**DIANA**

Mine honour's such a ring:  
My chastity's the jewel of our house,  
Bequeathed down from many ancestors;  
Which were the greatest obloquy i' the world  
In me to lose: thus your own proper wisdom  
Brings in the champion Honour on my part,  
Against your vain assault.

**BERTRAM**

Here, take my ring:  
My house, mine honour, yea, my life, be thine,  
And I'll be bid by thee.

**DIANA**



When midnight comes, knock at my chamber-window:  
I'll order take my mother shall not hear.  
Now will I charge you in the band of truth,  
When you have conquer'd my yet maiden bed,  
Remain there but an hour, nor speak to me:  
My reasons are most strong; and you shall know them  
When back again this ring shall be deliver'd:  
And on your finger in the night I'll put  
Another ring, that what in time proceeds  
May token to the future our past deeds.  
Adieu, till then; then, fail not. You have won  
A wife of me, though there my hope be done.

## **BERTRAM**

A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee.

*Exit*

## **DIANA**

For which live long to thank both heaven and me!  
You may so in the end.  
My mother told me just how he would woo,  
As if she sat in 's heart; she says all men  
Have the like oaths: he had sworn to marry me  
When his wife's dead; therefore I'll lie with him  
When I am buried. Since Frenchmen are so braid,  
Marry that will, I live and die a maid:  
Only in this disguise I think't no sin  
To cozen him that would unjustly win.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The Florentine camp.

*Enter the two French Lords and some two or three Soldiers*

### First Lord

You have not given him his mother's letter?

### Second Lord

I have delivered it an hour since: there is something in't that stings his nature; for on the reading it he changed almost into another man.

### First Lord

He has much worthy blame laid upon him for shaking off so good a wife and so sweet a lady.

### Second Lord

Especially he hath incurred the everlasting displeasure of the king, who had even tuned his bounty to sing happiness to him. I will tell you a thing, but you shall let it dwell darkly with you.

### First Lord

When you have spoken it, 'tis dead, and I am the grave of it.

### Second Lord

He hath perverted a young gentlewoman here in Florence, of a most chaste renown; and this night he fleshes his will in the spoil of her honour: he hath

given her his monumental ring, and thinks himself  
made in the unchaste composition.

### **First Lord**

Now, God delay our rebellion! as we are ourselves,  
what things are we!

### **Second Lord**

Merely our own traitors. And as in the common course  
of all treasons, we still see them reveal  
themselves, till they attain to their abhorred ends,  
so he that in this action contrives against his own  
nobility, in his proper stream o'erflows himself.

### **First Lord**

Is it not meant damnable in us, to be trumpeters of  
our unlawful intents? We shall not then have his  
company to-night?

### **Second Lord**

Not till after midnight; for he is dieted to his hour.

### **First Lord**

That approaches apace; I would gladly have him see  
his company anatomized, that he might take a measure  
of his own judgments, wherein so curiously he had  
set this counterfeit.

### **Second Lord**

We will not meddle with him till he come; for his  
presence must be the whip of the other.

### **First Lord**

In the mean time, what hear you of these wars?

**Second Lord**

I hear there is an overture of peace.

**First Lord**

Nay, I assure you, a peace concluded.

**Second Lord**

What will Count Rousillon do then? will he travel higher, or return again into France?

**First Lord**

I perceive, by this demand, you are not altogether of his council.

**Second Lord**

Let it be forbid, sir; so should I be a great deal of his act.

**First Lord**

Sir, his wife some two months since fled from his house: her pretence is a pilgrimage to Saint Jaques le Grand; which holy undertaking with most austere sanctimony she accomplished; and, there residing the tenderness of her nature became as a prey to her grief; in fine, made a groan of her last breath, and now she sings in heaven.

**Second Lord**

How is this justified?

**First Lord**

The stronger part of it by her own letters, which makes her story true, even to the point of her

death: her death itself, which could not be her office to say is come, was faithfully confirmed by the rector of the place.

**Second Lord**

Hath the count all this intelligence?

**First Lord**

Ay, and the particular confirmations, point from point, so to the full arming of the verity.

**Second Lord**

I am heartily sorry that he'll be glad of this.

**First Lord**

How mightily sometimes we make us comforts of our losses!

**Second Lord**

And how mightily some other times we drown our gain in tears! The great dignity that his valour hath here acquired for him shall at home be encountered with a shame as ample.

**First Lord**

The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.

*Enter a Messenger*

How now! where's your master?

**Servant**

He met the duke in the street, sir, of whom he hath taken a solemn leave: his lordship will next morning for France. The duke hath offered him letters of commendations to the king.

## **Second Lord**

They shall be no more than needful there, if they were more than they can commend.

## **First Lord**

They cannot be too sweet for the king's tartness. Here's his lordship now.

*Enter BERTRAM*

How now, my lord! is't not after midnight?

## **BERTRAM**

I have to-night dispatched sixteen businesses, a month's length a-piece, by an abstract of success: I have congied with the duke, done my adieu with his nearest; buried a wife, mourned for her; writ to my lady mother I am returning; entertained my convoy; and between these main parcels of dispatch effected many nicer needs; the last was the greatest, but that I have not ended yet.

## **Second Lord**

If the business be of any difficulty, and this morning your departure hence, it requires haste of your lordship.

## **BERTRAM**

I mean, the business is not ended, as fearing to hear of it hereafter. But shall we have this dialogue between the fool and the soldier? Come, bring forth this counterfeit module, he has deceived

me, like a double-meaning prophesier.

**Second Lord**

Bring him forth: has sat i' the stocks all night,  
poor gallant knave.

**BERTRAM**

No matter: his heels have deserved it, in usurping  
his spurs so long. How does he carry himself?

**Second Lord**

I have told your lordship already, the stocks carry  
him. But to answer you as you would be understood;  
he weeps like a wench that had shed her milk: he  
hath confessed himself to Morgan, whom he supposes  
to be a friar, from the time of his remembrance to  
this very instant disaster of his setting i' the  
stocks: and what think you he hath confessed?

**BERTRAM**

Nothing of me, has a'?

**Second Lord**

His confession is taken, and it shall be read to his  
face: if your lordship be in't, as I believe you  
are, you must have the patience to hear it.

*Enter PAROLLES guarded, and First Soldier*

**BERTRAM**

A plague upon him! muffled! he can say nothing of  
me: hush, hush!

**First Lord**

Hoodman comes! Portotartarosa

**First Soldier**

He calls for the tortures: what will you say  
without 'em?

**PAROLLES**

I will confess what I know without constraint: if  
ye pinch me like a pasty, I can say no more.

**First Soldier**

Bosko chimurcho.

**First Lord**

Boblibindo chicurmurco.

**First Soldier**

You are a merciful general. Our general bids you  
answer to what I shall ask you out of a note.

**PAROLLES**

And truly, as I hope to live.

**First Soldier**

[Reads] 'First demand of him how many horse the  
duke is strong.' What say you to that?

**PAROLLES**

Five or six thousand; but very weak and  
unserviceable: the troops are all scattered, and  
the commanders very poor rogues, upon my reputation  
and credit and as I hope to live.



**First Soldier**

Shall I set down your answer so?

**PAROLLES**

Do: I'll take the sacrament on't, how and which way you will.

**BERTRAM**

All's one to him. What a past-saving slave is this!

**First Lord**

You're deceived, my lord: this is Monsieur Parolles, the gallant militarist,--that was his own phrase,--that had the whole theoretic of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practise in the chape of his dagger.

**Second Lord**

I will never trust a man again for keeping his sword clean. nor believe he can have every thing in him by wearing his apparel neatly.

**First Soldier**

Well, that's set down.

**PAROLLES**

Five or six thousand horse, I said,-- I will say true,--or thereabouts, set down, for I'll speak truth.

**First Lord**

He's very near the truth in this.

**BERTRAM**

But I con him no thanks for't, in the nature he delivers it.

## **PAROLLES**

Poor rogues, I pray you, say.

## **First Soldier**

Well, that's set down.

## **PAROLLES**

I humbly thank you, sir: a truth's a truth, the rogues are marvellous poor.

## **First Soldier**

[Reads] 'Demand of him, of what strength they are a-foot.' What say you to that?

## **PAROLLES**

By my troth, sir, if I were to live this present hour, I will tell true. Let me see: Spurio, a hundred and fifty; Sebastian, so many; Corambus, so many; Jaques, so many; Guiltian, Cosmo, Lodowick, and Gratii, two hundred and fifty each; mine own company, Chitopher, Vaumond, Bentii, two hundred and fifty each: so that the muster-file, rotten and sound, upon my life, amounts not to fifteen thousand poll; half of the which dare not shake snow from off their cassocks, lest they shake themselves to pieces.

## **BERTRAM**

What shall be done to him?

## **First Lord**

Nothing, but let him have thanks. Demand of him my

condition, and what credit I have with the duke.

**First Soldier**

Well, that's set down.

*Reads*

'You shall demand of him, whether one Captain Dumain be i' the camp, a Frenchman; what his reputation is with the duke; what his valour, honesty, and expertness in wars; or whether he thinks it were not possible, with well-weighing sums of gold, to corrupt him to revolt.' What say you to this? what do you know of it?

**PAROLLES**

I beseech you, let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories: demand them singly.

**First Soldier**

Do you know this Captain Dumain?

**PAROLLES**

I know him: a' was a botcher's 'prentice in Paris, from whence he was whipped for getting the shrieve's fool with child,--a dumb innocent, that could not say him nay.

**BERTRAM**

Nay, by your leave, hold your hands; though I know his brains are forfeit to the next tile that falls.

**First Soldier**

Well, is this captain in the duke of Florence's camp?

## **PAROLLES**

Upon my knowledge, he is, and lousy.

## **First Lord**

Nay look not so upon me; we shall hear of your lordship anon.

## **First Soldier**

What is his reputation with the duke?

## **PAROLLES**

The duke knows him for no other but a poor officer of mine; and writ to me this other day to turn him out o' the band: I think I have his letter in my pocket.

## **First Soldier**

Marry, we'll search.

## **PAROLLES**

In good sadness, I do not know; either it is there, or it is upon a file with the duke's other letters in my tent.

## **First Soldier**

Here 'tis; here's a paper: shall I read it to you?

## **PAROLLES**

I do not know if it be it or no.

## **BERTRAM**

Our interpreter does it well.

## **First Lord**

Excellently.

## **First Soldier**

[Reads] 'Dian, the count's a fool, and full of gold,'--

## **PAROLLES**

That is not the duke's letter, sir; that is an advertisement to a proper maid in Florence, one Diana, to take heed of the allurements of one Count Rousillon, a foolish idle boy, but for all that very ruttish: I pray you, sir, put it up again.

## **First Soldier**

Nay, I'll read it first, by your favour.

## **PAROLLES**

My meaning in't, I protest, was very honest in the behalf of the maid; for I knew the young count to be a dangerous and lascivious boy, who is a whale to virginity and devours up all the fry it finds.

## **BERTRAM**

Damnably both-sides rogue!

## **First Soldier**

[Reads] 'When he swears oaths, bid him drop gold, and take it;  
After he scores, he never pays the score:  
Half won is match well made; match, and well make it;  
He ne'er pays after-debts, take it before;  
And say a soldier, Dian, told thee this,  
Men are to mell with, boys are not to kiss:  
For count of this, the count's a fool, I know it,  
Who pays before, but not when he does owe it.'

Thine, as he vowed to thee in thine ear,  
PAROLLES.'

**BERTRAM**

He shall be whipped through the army with this rhyme  
in's forehead.

**Second Lord**

This is your devoted friend, sir, the manifold  
linguist and the armipotent soldier.

**BERTRAM**

I could endure any thing before but a cat, and now  
he's a cat to me.

**First Soldier**

I perceive, sir, by the general's looks, we shall be  
fain to hang you.

**PAROLLES**

My life, sir, in any case: not that I am afraid to  
die; but that, my offences being many, I would  
repent out the remainder of nature: let me live,  
sir, in a dungeon, i' the stocks, or any where, so I may live.

**First Soldier**

We'll see what may be done, so you confess freely;  
therefore, once more to this Captain Dumain: you  
have answered to his reputation with the duke and to  
his valour: what is his honesty?

**PAROLLES**

He will steal, sir, an egg out of a cloister: for  
rapes and ravishments he parallels Nessus: he

professes not keeping of oaths; in breaking 'em he is stronger than Hercules: he will lie, sir, with such volubility, that you would think truth were a fool: drunkenness is his best virtue, for he will be swine-drunk; and in his sleep he does little harm, save to his bed-clothes about him; but they know his conditions and lay him in straw. I have but little more to say, sir, of his honesty: he has every thing that an honest man should not have; what an honest man should have, he has nothing.

**First Lord**

I begin to love him for this.

**BERTRAM**

For this description of thine honesty? A pox upon him for me, he's more and more a cat.

**First Soldier**

What say you to his expertness in war?

**PAROLLES**

Faith, sir, he has led the drum before the English tragedians; to belie him, I will not, and more of his soldiership I know not; except, in that country he had the honour to be the officer at a place there called Mile-end, to instruct for the doubling of files: I would do the man what honour I can, but of this I am not certain.

**First Lord**

He hath out-villained villany so far, that the rarity redeems him.

**BERTRAM**

A pox on him, he's a cat still.

**First Soldier**

His qualities being at this poor price, I need not to ask you if gold will corrupt him to revolt.

**PAROLLES**

Sir, for a quart d'ecu he will sell the fee-simple of his salvation, the inheritance of it; and cut the entail from all remainders, and a perpetual succession for it perpetually.

**First Soldier**

What's his brother, the other Captain Dumain?

**Second Lord**

Why does he ask him of me?

**First Soldier**

What's he?

**PAROLLES**

E'en a crow o' the same nest; not altogether so great as the first in goodness, but greater a great deal in evil: he excels his brother for a coward, yet his brother is reputed one of the best that is: in a retreat he outruns any lackey; marry, in coming on he has the cramp.

**First Soldier**

If your life be saved, will you undertake to betray the Florentine?

**PAROLLES**



Ay, and the captain of his horse, Count Rousillon.

**First Soldier**

I'll whisper with the general, and know his pleasure.

**PAROLLES**

[Aside] I'll no more drumming; a plague of all drums! Only to seem to deserve well, and to beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy the count, have I run into this danger. Yet who would have suspected an ambush where I was taken?

**First Soldier**

There is no remedy, sir, but you must die: the general says, you that have so traitorously discovered the secrets of your army and made such pestiferous reports of men very nobly held, can serve the world for no honest use; therefore you must die. Come, headsman, off with his head.

**PAROLLES**

O Lord, sir, let me live, or let me see my death!

**First Lord**

That shall you, and take your leave of all your friends.

*Unblinding him*

So, look about you: know you any here?

**BERTRAM**

Good morrow, noble captain.

**Second Lord**

God bless you, Captain Parolles.

**First Lord**

God save you, noble captain.

**Second Lord**

Captain, what greeting will you to my Lord Lafeu?  
I am for France.

**First Lord**

Good captain, will you give me a copy of the sonnet  
you writ to Diana in behalf of the Count Rousillon?  
an I were not a very coward, I'd compel it of you:  
but fare you well.

*Exeunt BERTRAM and Lords*

**First Soldier**

You are undone, captain, all but your scarf; that  
has a knot on't yet

**PAROLLES**

Who cannot be crushed with a plot?

**First Soldier**

If you could find out a country where but women were  
that had received so much shame, you might begin an  
impudent nation. Fare ye well, sir; I am for France  
too: we shall speak of you there.

*Exit with Soldiers*

**PAROLLES**

Yet am I thankful: if my heart were great,

'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more;  
But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft  
As captain shall: simply the thing I am  
Shall make me live. Who knows himself a braggart,  
Let him fear this, for it will come to pass  
that every braggart shall be found an ass.  
Rust, sword? cool, blushes! and, Parolles, live  
Safest in shame! being fool'd, by foolery thrive!  
There's place and means for every man alive.  
I'll after them.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Florence. The Widow's house.

*Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA*

### HELENA

That you may well perceive I have not wrong'd you,  
One of the greatest in the Christian world  
Shall be my surety; 'fore whose throne 'tis needful,  
Ere I can perfect mine intents, to kneel:  
Time was, I did him a desired office,  
Dear almost as his life; which gratitude  
Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,  
And answer, thanks: I duly am inform'd  
His grace is at Marseilles; to which place  
We have convenient convoy. You must know  
I am supposed dead: the army breaking,  
My husband hies him home; where, heaven aiding,  
And by the leave of my good lord the king,  
We'll be before our welcome.

### Widow

Gentle madam,  
You never had a servant to whose trust  
Your business was more welcome.

### HELENA

Nor you, mistress,  
Ever a friend whose thoughts more truly labour  
To recompense your love: doubt not but heaven  
Hath brought me up to be your daughter's dower,  
As it hath fated her to be my motive  
And helper to a husband. But, O strange men!  
That can such sweet use make of what they hate,

When saucy trusting of the cozen'd thoughts  
Defiles the pitchy night: so lust doth play  
With what it loathes for that which is away.  
But more of this hereafter. You, Diana,  
Under my poor instructions yet must suffer  
Something in my behalf.

## DIANA

Let death and honesty  
Go with your impositions, I am yours  
Upon your will to suffer.

## HELENA

Yet, I pray you:  
But with the word the time will bring on summer,  
When briars shall have leaves as well as thorns,  
And be as sweet as sharp. We must away;  
Our wagon is prepared, and time revives us:  
All's well that ends well; still the fine's the crown;  
Whate'er the course, the end is the renown.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

*Enter COUNTESS, LAFEU, and Clown*

**LAFEU**

No, no, no, your son was misled with a snipt-taffeta fellow there, whose villanous saffron would have made all the unbaked and doughy youth of a nation in his colour: your daughter-in-law had been alive at this hour, and your son here at home, more advanced by the king than by that red-tailed humble-bee I speak of.

**COUNTESS**

I would I had not known him; it was the death of the most virtuous gentlewoman that ever nature had praise for creating. If she had partaken of my flesh, and cost me the dearest groans of a mother, I could not have owed her a more rooted love.

**LAFEU**

'Twas a good lady, 'twas a good lady: we may pick a thousand salads ere we light on such another herb.

**Clown**

Indeed, sir, she was the sweet marjoram of the salad, or rather, the herb of grace.

**LAFEU**

They are not herbs, you knave; they are nose-herbs.

**Clown**

I am no great Nebuchadnezzar, sir; I have not much skill in grass.

**LAFEU**

Whether dost thou profess thyself, a knave or a fool?

**Clown**

A fool, sir, at a woman's service, and a knave at a man's.

**LAFEU**

Your distinction?

**Clown**

I would cozen the man of his wife and do his service.

**LAFEU**

So you were a knave at his service, indeed.

**Clown**

And I would give his wife my bauble, sir, to do her service.

**LAFEU**

I will subscribe for thee, thou art both knave and fool.

**Clown**

At your service.

**LAFEU**

No, no, no.

**Clown**

Why, sir, if I cannot serve you, I can serve as  
great a prince as you are.

**LAFEU**

Who's that? a Frenchman?

**Clown**

Faith, sir, a' has an English name; but his fisnomy  
is more hotter in France than there.

**LAFEU**

What prince is that?

**Clown**

The black prince, sir; alias, the prince of  
darkness; alias, the devil.

**LAFEU**

Hold thee, there's my purse: I give thee not this  
to suggest thee from thy master thou talkest of;  
serve him still.

**Clown**

I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a  
great fire; and the master I speak of ever keeps a  
good fire. But, sure, he is the prince of the  
world; let his nobility remain in's court. I am for  
the house with the narrow gate, which I take to be  
too little for pomp to enter: some that humble  
themselves may; but the many will be too chill and  
tender, and they'll be for the flowery way that  
leads to the broad gate and the great fire.

**LAFEU**



Go thy ways, I begin to be weary of thee; and I tell thee so before, because I would not fall out with thee. Go thy ways: let my horses be well looked to, without any tricks.

**Clown**

If I put any tricks upon 'em, sir, they shall be jades' tricks; which are their own right by the law of nature.

*Exit*

**LAFEU**

A shrewd knave and an unhappy.

**COUNTESS**

So he is. My lord that's gone made himself much sport out of him: by his authority he remains here, which he thinks is a patent for his sauciness; and, indeed, he has no pace, but runs where he will.

**LAFEU**

I like him well; 'tis not amiss. And I was about to tell you, since I heard of the good lady's death and that my lord your son was upon his return home, I moved the king my master to speak in the behalf of my daughter; which, in the minority of them both, his majesty, out of a self-gracious remembrance, did first propose: his highness hath promised me to do it: and, to stop up the displeasure he hath conceived against your son, there is no fitter matter. How does your ladyship like it?

**COUNTESS**

With very much content, my lord; and I wish it happily effected.

**LAFEU**

His highness comes post from Marseilles, of as able  
body as when he numbered thirty: he will be here  
to-morrow, or I am deceived by him that in such  
intelligence hath seldom failed.

**COUNTESS**

It rejoices me, that I hope I shall see him ere I  
die. I have letters that my son will be here  
to-night: I shall beseech your lordship to remain  
with me till they meet together.

**LAFEU**

Madam, I was thinking with what manners I might  
safely be admitted.

**COUNTESS**

You need but plead your honourable privilege.

**LAFEU**

Lady, of that I have made a bold charter; but I  
thank my God it holds yet.

*Re-enter Clown*

**Clown**

O madam, yonder's my lord your son with a patch of  
velvet on's face: whether there be a scar under't  
or no, the velvet knows; but 'tis a goodly patch of  
velvet: his left cheek is a cheek of two pile and a  
half, but his right cheek is worn bare.

**LAFEU**

A scar nobly got, or a noble scar, is a good livery

of honour; so belike is that.

**Clown**

But it is your carbonadoed face.

**LAFEU**

Let us go see your son, I pray you: I long to talk  
with the young noble soldier.

**Clown**

Faith there's a dozen of 'em, with delicate fine  
hats and most courteous feathers, which bow the head  
and nod at every man.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 4, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Marseilles. A street.

*Enter HELENA, Widow, and DIANA, with two Attendants*

**HELENA**

But this exceeding posting day and night  
Must wear your spirits low; we cannot help it:  
But since you have made the days and nights as one,  
To wear your gentle limbs in my affairs,  
Be bold you do so grow in my requital  
As nothing can unroot you. In happy time;

*Enter a Gentleman*

This man may help me to his majesty's ear,  
If he would spend his power. God save you, sir.

**Gentleman**

And you.

**HELENA**

Sir, I have seen you in the court of France.

**Gentleman**

I have been sometimes there.

**HELENA**

I do presume, sir, that you are not fallen  
From the report that goes upon your goodness;  
An therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions,  
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to

The use of your own virtues, for the which  
I shall continue thankful.

**Gentleman**

What's your will?

**HELENA**

That it will please you  
To give this poor petition to the king,  
And aid me with that store of power you have  
To come into his presence.

**Gentleman**

The king's not here.

**HELENA**

Not here, sir!

**Gentleman**

Not, indeed:  
He hence removed last night and with more haste  
Than is his use.

**Widow**

Lord, how we lose our pains!

**HELENA**

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL yet,  
Though time seem so adverse and means unfit.  
I do beseech you, whither is he gone?

**Gentleman**

Marry, as I take it, to Rousillon;

Whither I am going.

**HELENA**

I do beseech you, sir,  
Since you are like to see the king before me,  
Commend the paper to his gracious hand,  
Which I presume shall render you no blame  
But rather make you thank your pains for it.  
I will come after you with what good speed  
Our means will make us means.

**Gentleman**

This I'll do for you.

**HELENA**

And you shall find yourself to be well thank'd,  
Whate'er falls more. We must to horse again.  
Go, go, provide.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Rousillon. Before the COUNT's palace.

*Enter Clown, and PAROLLES, following*

### PAROLLES

Good Monsieur Lavache, give my Lord Lafeu this letter: I have ere now, sir, been better known to you, when I have held familiarity with fresher clothes; but I am now, sir, muddied in fortune's mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.

### Clown

Truly, fortune's displeasure is but sluttish, if it smell so strongly as thou speakest of: I will henceforth eat no fish of fortune's buttering. Prithee, allow the wind.

### PAROLLES

Nay, you need not to stop your nose, sir; I spake but by a metaphor.

### Clown

Indeed, sir, if your metaphor stink, I will stop my nose; or against any man's metaphor. Prithee, get thee further.

### PAROLLES

Pray you, sir, deliver me this paper.

### Clown

Foh! prithee, stand away: a paper from fortune's close-stool to give to a nobleman! Look, here he comes himself.

*Enter LAFEU*

Here is a purr of fortune's, sir, or of fortune's cat,--but not a musk-cat,--that has fallen into the unclean fishpond of her displeasure, and, as he says, is muddied withal: pray you, sir, use the carp as you may; for he looks like a poor, decayed, ingenious, foolish, rascally knave. I do pity his distress in my similes of comfort and leave him to your lordship.

*Exit*

**PAROLLES**

My lord, I am a man whom fortune hath cruelly scratched.

**LAFEU**

And what would you have me to do? 'Tis too late to pare her nails now. Wherein have you played the knave with fortune, that she should scratch you, who of herself is a good lady and would not have knaves thrive long under her? There's a quart d'ecu for you: let the justices make you and fortune friends: I am for other business.

**PAROLLES**

I beseech your honour to hear me one single word.

**LAFEU**

You beg a single penny more: come, you shall ha't; save your word.



## **PAROLLES**

My name, my good lord, is Parolles.

## **LAFEU**

You beg more than 'word,' then. Cox my passion!  
give me your hand. How does your drum?

## **PAROLLES**

O my good lord, you were the first that found me!

## **LAFEU**

Was I, in sooth? and I was the first that lost thee.

## **PAROLLES**

It lies in you, my lord, to bring me in some grace,  
for you did bring me out.

## **LAFEU**

Out upon thee, knave! dost thou put upon me at once  
both the office of God and the devil? One brings  
thee in grace and the other brings thee out.

*Trumpets sound*

The king's coming; I know by his trumpets. Sirrah,  
inquire further after me; I had talk of you last  
night: though you are a fool and a knave, you shall  
eat; go to, follow.

## **PAROLLES**

I praise God for you.

*Exeunt*



# All's Well That Ends Well

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [All's Well That Ends Well](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE III. Rousillon. The COUNT's palace.

*Flourish. Enter KING, COUNTESS, LAFEU, the two French Lords, with Attendants*

**KING**

We lost a jewel of her; and our esteem  
Was made much poorer by it: but your son,  
As mad in folly, lack'd the sense to know  
Her estimation home.

**COUNTESS**

'Tis past, my liege;  
And I beseech your majesty to make it  
Natural rebellion, done i' the blaze of youth;  
When oil and fire, too strong for reason's force,  
O'erbears it and burns on.

**KING**

My honour'd lady,  
I have forgiven and forgotten all;  
Though my revenges were high bent upon him,  
And watch'd the time to shoot.

**LAFEU**

This I must say,  
But first I beg my pardon, the young lord  
Did to his majesty, his mother and his lady  
Offence of mighty note; but to himself  
The greatest wrong of all. He lost a wife  
Whose beauty did astonish the survey  
Of richest eyes, whose words all ears took captive,  
Whose dear perfection hearts that scorn'd to serve

Humbly call'd mistress.

**KING**

Praising what is lost  
Makes the remembrance dear. Well, call him hither;  
We are reconciled, and the first view shall kill  
All repetition: let him not ask our pardon;  
The nature of his great offence is dead,  
And deeper than oblivion we do bury  
The incensing relics of it: let him approach,  
A stranger, no offender; and inform him  
So 'tis our will he should.

**Gentleman**

I shall, my liege.

*Exit*

**KING**

What says he to your daughter? have you spoke?

**LAFEU**

All that he is hath reference to your highness.

**KING**

Then shall we have a match. I have letters sent me  
That set him high in fame.

*Enter BERTRAM*

**LAFEU**

He looks well on't.

**KING**

I am not a day of season,  
For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail  
In me at once: but to the brightest beams  
Distracted clouds give way; so stand thou forth;  
The time is fair again.

**BERTRAM**

My high-repented blames,  
Dear sovereign, pardon to me.

**KING**

All is whole;  
Not one word more of the consumed time.  
Let's take the instant by the forward top;  
For we are old, and on our quick'st decrees  
The inaudible and noiseless foot of Time  
Steals ere we can effect them. You remember  
The daughter of this lord?

**BERTRAM**

Admiringly, my liege, at first  
I stuck my choice upon her, ere my heart  
Durst make too bold a herald of my tongue  
Where the impression of mine eye infixing,  
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,  
Which warp'd the line of every other favour;  
Scorn'd a fair colour, or express'd it stolen;  
Extended or contracted all proportions  
To a most hideous object: thence it came  
That she whom all men praised and whom myself,  
Since I have lost, have loved, was in mine eye  
The dust that did offend it.

**KING**

Well excused:  
That thou didst love her, strikes some scores away  
From the great compt: but love that comes too late,  
Like a remorseful pardon slowly carried,

To the great sender turns a sour offence,  
Crying, 'That's good that's gone.' Our rash faults  
Make trivial price of serious things we have,  
Not knowing them until we know their grave:  
Oft our displeasures, to ourselves unjust,  
Destroy our friends and after weep their dust  
Our own love waking cries to see what's done,  
While shame full late sleeps out the afternoon.  
Be this sweet Helen's knell, and now forget her.  
Send forth your amorous token for fair Maudlin:  
The main consents are had; and here we'll stay  
To see our widower's second marriage-day.

## **COUNTESS**

Which better than the first, O dear heaven, bless!  
Or, ere they meet, in me, O nature, cesse!

## **LAFEU**

Come on, my son, in whom my house's name  
Must be digested, give a favour from you  
To sparkle in the spirits of my daughter,  
That she may quickly come.

*BERTRAM gives a ring*

By my old beard,  
And every hair that's on't, Helen, that's dead,  
Was a sweet creature: such a ring as this,  
The last that e'er I took her at court,  
I saw upon her finger.

## **BERTRAM**

Hers it was not.

## **KING**

Now, pray you, let me see it; for mine eye,  
While I was speaking, oft was fasten'd to't.  
This ring was mine; and, when I gave it Helen,

I bade her, if her fortunes ever stood  
Necessitated to help, that by this token  
I would relieve her. Had you that craft, to reave  
her  
Of what should stead her most?

## **BERTRAM**

My gracious sovereign,  
Howe'er it pleases you to take it so,  
The ring was never hers.

## **COUNTESS**

Son, on my life,  
I have seen her wear it; and she reckon'd it  
At her life's rate.

## **LAFEU**

I am sure I saw her wear it.

## **BERTRAM**

You are deceived, my lord; she never saw it:  
In Florence was it from a casement thrown me,  
Wrapp'd in a paper, which contain'd the name  
Of her that threw it: noble she was, and thought  
I stood engaged: but when I had subscribed  
To mine own fortune and inform'd her fully  
I could not answer in that course of honour  
As she had made the overture, she ceased  
In heavy satisfaction and would never  
Receive the ring again.

## **KING**

Plutus himself,  
That knows the tinct and multiplying medicine,  
Hath not in nature's mystery more science  
Than I have in this ring: 'twas mine, 'twas Helen's,  
Whoever gave it you. Then, if you know

That you are well acquainted with yourself,  
Confess 'twas hers, and by what rough enforcement  
You got it from her: she call'd the saints to surety  
That she would never put it from her finger,  
Unless she gave it to yourself in bed,  
Where you have never come, or sent it us  
Upon her great disaster.

**BERTRAM**

She never saw it.

**KING**

Thou speak'st it falsely, as I love mine honour;  
And makest conjectural fears to come into me  
Which I would fain shut out. If it should prove  
That thou art so inhuman,--'twill not prove so;--  
And yet I know not: thou didst hate her deadly,  
And she is dead; which nothing, but to close  
Her eyes myself, could win me to believe,  
More than to see this ring. Take him away.

*Guards seize BERTRAM*

My fore-past proofs, howe'er the matter fall,  
Shall tax my fears of little vanity,  
Having vainly fear'd too little. Away with him!  
We'll sift this matter further.

**BERTRAM**

If you shall prove  
This ring was ever hers, you shall as easy  
Prove that I husbanded her bed in Florence,  
Where yet she never was.

*Exit, guarded*

**KING**

I am wrapp'd in dismal thinkings.



*Enter a Gentleman*

**Gentleman**

Gracious sovereign,  
Whether I have been to blame or no, I know not:  
Here's a petition from a Florentine,  
Who hath for four or five removes come short  
To tender it herself. I undertook it,  
Vanquish'd thereto by the fair grace and speech  
Of the poor suppliant, who by this I know  
Is here attending: her business looks in her  
With an importing visage; and she told me,  
In a sweet verbal brief, it did concern  
Your highness with herself.

**KING**

[Reads] Upon his many protestations to marry me  
when his wife was dead, I blush to say it, he won  
me. Now is the Count Rousillon a widower: his vows  
are forfeited to me, and my honour's paid to him. He  
stole from Florence, taking no leave, and I follow  
him to his country for justice: grant it me, O  
king! in you it best lies; otherwise a seducer  
flourishes, and a poor maid is undone.  
DIANA CAPILET.

**LAFEU**

I will buy me a son-in-law in a fair, and toll for  
this: I'll none of him.

**KING**

The heavens have thought well on thee Lafeu,  
To bring forth this discovery. Seek these suitors:  
Go speedily and bring again the count.  
I am afeard the life of Helen, lady,  
Was foully snatch'd.

## **COUNTESS**

Now, justice on the doers!

*Re-enter BERTRAM, guarded*

## **KING**

I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to you,  
And that you fly them as you swear them lordship,  
Yet you desire to marry.

*Enter Widow and DIANA*

What woman's that?

## **DIANA**

I am, my lord, a wretched Florentine,  
Derived from the ancient Capilet:  
My suit, as I do understand, you know,  
And therefore know how far I may be pitied.

## **Widow**

I am her mother, sir, whose age and honour  
Both suffer under this complaint we bring,  
And both shall cease, without your remedy.

## **KING**

Come hither, count; do you know these women?

## **BERTRAM**

My lord, I neither can nor will deny  
But that I know them: do they charge me further?

## **DIANA**

Why do you look so strange upon your wife?

**BERTRAM**

She's none of mine, my lord.

**DIANA**

If you shall marry,  
You give away this hand, and that is mine;  
You give away heaven's vows, and those are mine;  
You give away myself, which is known mine;  
For I by vow am so embodied yours,  
That she which marries you must marry me,  
Either both or none.

**LAFEU**

Your reputation comes too short for my daughter; you  
are no husband for her.

**BERTRAM**

My lord, this is a fond and desperate creature,  
Whom sometime I have laugh'd with: let your highness  
Lay a more noble thought upon mine honour  
Than for to think that I would sink it here.

**KING**

Sir, for my thoughts, you have them ill to friend  
Till your deeds gain them: fairer prove your honour  
Than in my thought it lies.

**DIANA**

Good my lord,  
Ask him upon his oath, if he does think  
He had not my virginity.

**KING**

What say'st thou to her?

**BERTRAM**

She's impudent, my lord,  
And was a common gamester to the camp.

**DIANA**

He does me wrong, my lord; if I were so,  
He might have bought me at a common price:  
Do not believe him. O, behold this ring,  
Whose high respect and rich validity  
Did lack a parallel; yet for all that  
He gave it to a commoner o' the camp,  
If I be one.

**COUNTESS**

He blushes, and 'tis it:  
Of six preceding ancestors, that gem,  
Conferr'd by testament to the sequent issue,  
Hath it been owed and worn. This is his wife;  
That ring's a thousand proofs.

**KING**

Methought you said  
You saw one here in court could witness it.

**DIANA**

I did, my lord, but loath am to produce  
So bad an instrument: his name's Parolles.

**LAFEU**

I saw the man to-day, if man he be.

**KING**

Find him, and bring him hither.

*Exit an Attendant*

**BERTRAM**

What of him?  
He's quoted for a most perfidious slave,  
With all the spots o' the world tax'd and debosh'd;  
Whose nature sickens but to speak a truth.  
Am I or that or this for what he'll utter,  
That will speak any thing?

**KING**

She hath that ring of yours.

**BERTRAM**

I think she has: certain it is I liked her,  
And boarded her i' the wanton way of youth:  
She knew her distance and did angle for me,  
Madding my eagerness with her restraint,  
As all impediments in fancy's course  
Are motives of more fancy; and, in fine,  
Her infinite cunning, with her modern grace,  
Subdued me to her rate: she got the ring;  
And I had that which any inferior might  
At market-price have bought.

**DIANA**

I must be patient:  
You, that have turn'd off a first so noble wife,  
May justly diet me. I pray you yet;  
Since you lack virtue, I will lose a husband;  
Send for your ring, I will return it home,  
And give me mine again.

**BERTRAM**

I have it not.

**KING**

What ring was yours, I pray you?

**DIANA**

Sir, much like  
The same upon your finger.

**KING**

Know you this ring? this ring was his of late.

**DIANA**

And this was it I gave him, being abed.

**KING**

The story then goes false, you threw it him  
Out of a casement.

**DIANA**

I have spoke the truth.

*Enter PAROLLES*

**BERTRAM**

My lord, I do confess the ring was hers.

**KING**

You boggle shrewdly, every feather stars you.  
Is this the man you speak of?

**DIANA**

Ay, my lord.

**KING**

Tell me, sirrah, but tell me true, I charge you,  
Not fearing the displeasure of your master,  
Which on your just proceeding I'll keep off,  
By him and by this woman here what know you?

**PAROLLES**

So please your majesty, my master hath been an  
honourable gentleman: tricks he hath had in him,  
which gentlemen have.

**KING**

Come, come, to the purpose: did he love this woman?

**PAROLLES**

Faith, sir, he did love her; but how?

**KING**

How, I pray you?

**PAROLLES**

He did love her, sir, as a gentleman loves a woman.

**KING**

How is that?

**PAROLLES**

He loved her, sir, and loved her not.

**KING**

As thou art a knave, and no knave. What an  
equivocal companion is this!

**PAROLLES**

I am a poor man, and at your majesty's command.

**LAFEU**

He's a good drum, my lord, but a naughty orator.

**DIANA**

Do you know he promised me marriage?

**PAROLLES**

Faith, I know more than I'll speak.

**KING**

But wilt thou not speak all thou knowest?

**PAROLLES**

Yes, so please your majesty. I did go between them, as I said; but more than that, he loved her: for indeed he was mad for her, and talked of Satan and of Limbo and of Furies and I know not what: yet I was in that credit with them at that time that I knew of their going to bed, and of other motions, as promising her marriage, and things which would derive me ill will to speak of; therefore I will not speak what I know.

**KING**

Thou hast spoken all already, unless thou canst say they are married: but thou art too fine in thy evidence; therefore stand aside.  
This ring, you say, was yours?

**DIANA**



Ay, my good lord.

**KING**

Where did you buy it? or who gave it you?

**DIANA**

It was not given me, nor I did not buy it.

**KING**

Who lent it you?

**DIANA**

It was not lent me neither.

**KING**

Where did you find it, then?

**DIANA**

I found it not.

**KING**

If it were yours by none of all these ways,  
How could you give it him?

**DIANA**

I never gave it him.

**LAFEU**

This woman's an easy glove, my lord; she goes off  
and on at pleasure.

**KING**

This ring was mine; I gave it his first wife.

**DIANA**

It might be yours or hers, for aught I know.

**KING**

Take her away; I do not like her now;  
To prison with her: and away with him.  
Unless thou tell'st me where thou hadst this ring,  
Thou diest within this hour.

**DIANA**

I'll never tell you.

**KING**

Take her away.

**DIANA**

I'll put in bail, my liege.

**KING**

I think thee now some common customer.

**DIANA**

By Jove, if ever I knew man, 'twas you.

**KING**

Wherefore hast thou accused him all this while?

**DIANA**

Because he's guilty, and he is not guilty:  
He knows I am no maid, and he'll swear to't;  
I'll swear I am a maid, and he knows not.  
Great king, I am no strumpet, by my life;  
I am either maid, or else this old man's wife.

**KING**

She does abuse our ears: to prison with her.

**DIANA**

Good mother, fetch my bail. Stay, royal sir:

*Exit Widow*

The jeweller that owes the ring is sent for,  
And he shall surety me. But for this lord,  
Who hath abused me, as he knows himself,  
Though yet he never harm'd me, here I quit him:  
He knows himself my bed he hath defiled;  
And at that time he got his wife with child:  
Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick:  
So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick:  
And now behold the meaning.

*Re-enter Widow, with HELENA*

**KING**

Is there no exorcist  
Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes?  
Is't real that I see?

**HELENA**

No, my good lord;  
'Tis but the shadow of a wife you see,  
The name and not the thing.

**BERTRAM**

Both, both. O, pardon!

**HELENA**

O my good lord, when I was like this maid,  
I found you wondrous kind. There is your ring;  
And, look you, here's your letter; this it says:  
'When from my finger you can get this ring  
And are by me with child,' & c. This is done:  
Will you be mine, now you are doubly won?

**BERTRAM**

If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,  
I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly.

**HELENA**

If it appear not plain and prove untrue,  
Deadly divorce step between me and you!  
O my dear mother, do I see you living?

**LAFEU**

Mine eyes smell onions; I shall weep anon:

*To PAROLLES*

Good Tom Drum, lend me a handkercher: so,  
I thank thee: wait on me home, I'll make sport with thee:  
Let thy courtesies alone, they are scurvy ones.

**KING**

Let us from point to point this story know,  
To make the even truth in pleasure flow.

*To DIANA*

If thou be'st yet a fresh uncropped flower,  
Choose thou thy husband, and I'll pay thy dower;

For I can guess that by thy honest aid  
Thou keep'st a wife herself, thyself a maid.  
Of that and all the progress, more or less,  
Resolvedly more leisure shall express:  
All yet seems well; and if it end so meet,  
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.

*Flourish*

EPILOGUE

**KING**

The king's a beggar, now the play is done:  
All is well ended, if this suit be won,  
That you express content; which we will pay,  
With strife to please you, day exceeding day:  
Ours be your patience then, and yours our parts;  
Your gentle hands lend us, and take our hearts.

*Exeunt*

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | As You Like It

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Orchard of Oliver's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [Lawn before the Duke's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [A room in the palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [The Forest of Arden.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A room in the palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [Before OLIVER'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [The Forest of Arden.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [The Forest.](#)

Act 2, Scene 6: [The forest.](#)

Act 2, Scene 7: [The forest.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A room in the palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The forest.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [The forest.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [The forest.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [Another part of the forest.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The forest.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [The forest.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The forest.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [The forest.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The forest.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [The forest.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [The forest.](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Orchard of Oliver's house.

*Enter ORLANDO and ADAM*

### ORLANDO

As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion bequeathed me by will but poor a thousand crowns, and, as thou sayest, charged my brother, on his blessing, to breed me well: and there begins my sadness. My brother Jaques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit: for my part, he keeps me rustically at home, or, to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept; for call you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth, that differs not from the stalling of an ox? His horses are bred better; for, besides that they are fair with their feeding, they are taught their manage, and to that end riders dearly hired: but I, his brother, gain nothing under him but growth; for the which his animals on his dunghills are as much bound to him as I. Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me his countenance seems to take from me: he lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and, as much as in him lies, mines my gentility with my education. This is it, Adam, that grieves me; and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude: I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it.

### ADAM

Yonder comes my master, your brother.

### ORLANDO

Go apart, Adam, and thou shalt hear how he will shake me up.

*Enter OLIVER*

**OLIVER**

Now, sir! what make you here?

**ORLANDO**

Nothing: I am not taught to make any thing.

**OLIVER**

What mar you then, sir?

**ORLANDO**

Marry, sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours, with idleness.

**OLIVER**

Marry, sir, be better employed, and be naught awhile.

**ORLANDO**

Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them?  
What prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to such penury?

**OLIVER**

Know you where your are, sir?

**ORLANDO**

O, sir, very well; here in your orchard.



**OLIVER**

Know you before whom, sir?

**ORLANDO**

Ay, better than him I am before knows me. I know you are my eldest brother; and, in the gentle condition of blood, you should so know me. The courtesy of nations allows you my better, in that you are the first-born; but the same tradition takes not away my blood, were there twenty brothers betwixt us: I have as much of my father in me as you; albeit, I confess, your coming before me is nearer to his reverence.

**OLIVER**

What, boy!

**ORLANDO**

Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.

**OLIVER**

Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

**ORLANDO**

I am no villain; I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys; he was my father, and he is thrice a villain that says such a father begot villains. Wert thou not my brother, I would not take this hand from thy throat till this other had pulled out thy tongue for saying so: thou hast railed on thyself.

**ADAM**

Sweet masters, be patient: for your father's remembrance, be at accord.

**OLIVER**

Let me go, I say.

**ORLANDO**

I will not, till I please: you shall hear me. My father charged you in his will to give me good education: you have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it: therefore allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes.

**OLIVER**

And what wilt thou do? beg, when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in: I will not long be troubled with you; you shall have some part of your will: I pray you, leave me.

**ORLANDO**

I will no further offend you than becomes me for my good.

**OLIVER**

Get you with him, you old dog.

**ADAM**

Is 'old dog' my reward? Most true, I have lost my teeth in your service. God be with my old master! he would not have spoke such a word.

*Exeunt ORLANDO and ADAM*

**OLIVER**

Is it even so? begin you to grow upon me? I will  
physic your rankness, and yet give no thousand  
crowns neither. Holla, Dennis!

*Enter DENNIS*

**DENNIS**

Calls your worship?

**OLIVER**

Was not Charles, the duke's wrestler, here to speak with me?

**DENNIS**

So please you, he is here at the door and importunes  
access to you.

**OLIVER**

Call him in.

*Exit DENNIS*

'Twill be a good way; and to-morrow the wrestling is.

*Enter CHARLES*

**CHARLES**

Good morrow to your worship.

**OLIVER**

Good Monsieur Charles, what's the new news at the  
new court?

**CHARLES**

There's no news at the court, sir, but the old news:

that is, the old duke is banished by his younger brother the new duke; and three or four loving lords have put themselves into voluntary exile with him, whose lands and revenues enrich the new duke; therefore he gives them good leave to wander.

**OLIVER**

Can you tell if Rosalind, the duke's daughter, be banished with her father?

**CHARLES**

O, no; for the duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her. She is at the court, and no less beloved of her uncle than his own daughter; and never two ladies loved as they do.

**OLIVER**

Where will the old duke live?

**CHARLES**

They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England: they say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world.

**OLIVER**

What, you wrestle to-morrow before the new duke?

**CHARLES**

Marry, do I, sir; and I came to acquaint you with a matter. I am given, sir, secretly to understand that your younger brother Orlando hath a disposition to come in disguised against me to try a fall.

To-morrow, sir, I wrestle for my credit; and he that escapes me without some broken limb shall acquit him well. Your brother is but young and tender; and, for your love, I would be loath to foil him, as I must, for my own honour, if he come in: therefore, out of my love to you, I came hither to acquaint you withal, that either you might stay him from his intendment or brook such disgrace well as he shall run into, in that it is a thing of his own search and altogether against my will.

## **OLIVER**

Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite. I had myself notice of my brother's purpose herein and have by underhand means laboured to dissuade him from it, but he is resolute. I'll tell thee, Charles: it is the stubbornest young fellow of France, full of ambition, an envious emulator of every man's good parts, a secret and villanous contriver against me his natural brother: therefore use thy discretion; I had as lief thou didst break his neck as his finger. And thou wert best look to't; for if thou dost him any slight disgrace or if he do not mightily grace himself on thee, he will practise against thee by poison, entrap thee by some treacherous device and never leave thee till he hath ta'en thy life by some indirect means or other; for, I assure thee, and almost with tears I speak it, there is not one so young and so villanous this day living. I speak but brotherly of him; but should I anatomize him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep and thou must look pale and wonder.

## **CHARLES**

I am heartily glad I came hither to you. If he come to-morrow, I'll give him his payment: if ever he go alone again, I'll never wrestle for prize more: and so God keep your worship!

## OLIVER

Farewell, good Charles.

*Exit CHARLES*

Now will I stir this gamester: I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he. Yet he's gentle, never schooled and yet learned, full of noble device, of all sorts enchantingly beloved, and indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised: but it shall not be so long; this wrestler shall clear all: nothing remains but that I kindle the boy thither; which now I'll go about.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Lawn before the Duke's palace.

*Enter CELIA and ROSALIND*

**CELIA**

I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

**ROSALIND**

Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you yet I were merrier? Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

**CELIA**

Herein I see thou lovest me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the duke my father, so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine: so wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously tempered as mine is to thee.

**ROSALIND**

Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours.

**CELIA**

You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have: and, truly, when he dies, thou shalt be his heir, for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in

affection; by mine honour, I will; and when I break that oath, let me turn monster: therefore, my sweet Rose, my dear Rose, be merry.

**ROSALIND**

From henceforth I will, coz, and devise sports. Let me see; what think you of falling in love?

**CELIA**

Marry, I prithee, do, to make sport withal: but love no man in good earnest; nor no further in sport neither than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honour come off again.

**ROSALIND**

What shall be our sport, then?

**CELIA**

Let us sit and mock the good housewife Fortune from her wheel, that her gifts may henceforth be bestowed equally.

**ROSALIND**

I would we could do so, for her benefits are mightily misplaced, and the bountiful blind woman doth most mistake in her gifts to women.

**CELIA**

'Tis true; for those that she makes fair she scarce makes honest, and those that she makes honest she makes very ill-favouredly.

**ROSALIND**

Nay, now thou goest from Fortune's office to Nature's: Fortune reigns in gifts of the world,



not in the lineaments of Nature.

*Enter TOUCHSTONE*

**CELIA**

No? when Nature hath made a fair creature, may she not by Fortune fall into the fire? Though Nature hath given us wit to flout at Fortune, hath not Fortune sent in this fool to cut off the argument?

**ROSALIND**

Indeed, there is Fortune too hard for Nature, when Fortune makes Nature's natural the cutter-off of Nature's wit.

**CELIA**

Peradventure this is not Fortune's work neither, but Nature's; who perceiveth our natural wits too dull to reason of such goddesses and hath sent this natural for our whetstone; for always the dulness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits. How now, wit! whither wander you?

**TOUCHSTONE**

Mistress, you must come away to your father.

**CELIA**

Were you made the messenger?

**TOUCHSTONE**

No, by mine honour, but I was bid to come for you.

**ROSALIND**

Where learned you that oath, fool?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Of a certain knight that swore by his honour they were good pancakes and swore by his honour the mustard was naught: now I'll stand to it, the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good, and yet was not the knight forsworn.

## **CELIA**

How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?

## **ROSALIND**

Ay, marry, now unmuzzle your wisdom.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Stand you both forth now: stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave.

## **CELIA**

By our beards, if we had them, thou art.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

By my knavery, if I had it, then I were; but if you swear by that that is not, you are not forsworn: no more was this knight swearing by his honour, for he never had any; or if he had, he had sworn it away before ever he saw those pancakes or that mustard.

## **CELIA**

Prithee, who is't that thou meanest?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

One that old Frederick, your father, loves.

**CELIA**

My father's love is enough to honour him: enough!  
speak no more of him; you'll be whipped for taxation  
one of these days.

**TOUCHSTONE**

The more pity, that fools may not speak wisely what  
wise men do foolishly.

**CELIA**

By my troth, thou sayest true; for since the little  
wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery  
that wise men have makes a great show. Here comes  
Monsieur Le Beau.

**ROSALIND**

With his mouth full of news.

**CELIA**

Which he will put on us, as pigeons feed their young.

**ROSALIND**

Then shall we be news-crammed.

**CELIA**

All the better; we shall be the more marketable.

*Enter LE BEAU*

Bon jour, Monsieur Le Beau: what's the news?

**LE BEAU**

Fair princess, you have lost much good sport.

**CELIA**

Sport! of what colour?

**LE BEAU**

What colour, madam! how shall I answer you?

**ROSALIND**

As wit and fortune will.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Or as the Destinies decree.

**CELIA**

Well said: that was laid on with a trowel.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Nay, if I keep not my rank,--

**ROSALIND**

Thou lovest thy old smell.

**LE BEAU**

You amaze me, ladies: I would have told you of good wrestling, which you have lost the sight of.

**ROSALIND**

You tell us the manner of the wrestling.

**LE BEAU**

I will tell you the beginning; and, if it please your ladyships, you may see the end; for the best is yet to do; and here, where you are, they are coming to perform it.

**CELIA**

Well, the beginning, that is dead and buried.

**LE BEAU**

There comes an old man and his three sons,--

**CELIA**

I could match this beginning with an old tale.

**LE BEAU**

Three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence.

**ROSALIND**

With bills on their necks, 'Be it known unto all men by these presents.'

**LE BEAU**

The eldest of the three wrestled with Charles, the duke's wrestler; which Charles in a moment threw him and broke three of his ribs, that there is little hope of life in him: so he served the second, and so the third. Yonder they lie; the poor old man, their father, making such pitiful dole over them that all the beholders take his part with weeping.

**ROSALIND**

Alas!

**TOUCHSTONE**

But what is the sport, monsieur, that the ladies  
have lost?

**LE BEAU**

Why, this that I speak of.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Thus men may grow wiser every day: it is the first  
time that ever I heard breaking of ribs was sport  
for ladies.

**CELIA**

Or I, I promise thee.

**ROSALIND**

But is there any else longs to see this broken music  
in his sides? is there yet another dotes upon  
rib-breaking? Shall we see this wrestling, cousin?

**LE BEAU**

You must, if you stay here; for here is the place  
appointed for the wrestling, and they are ready to  
perform it.

**CELIA**

Yonder, sure, they are coming: let us now stay and see it.

*Flourish. Enter DUKE FREDERICK, Lords, ORLANDO, CHARLES, and Attendants*

**DUKE FREDERICK**

Come on: since the youth will not be entreated, his  
own peril on his forwardness.

**ROSALIND**

Is yonder the man?

**LE BEAU**

Even he, madam.

**CELIA**

Alas, he is too young! yet he looks successfully.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

How now, daughter and cousin! are you crept hither  
to see the wrestling?

**ROSALIND**

Ay, my liege, so please you give us leave.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

You will take little delight in it, I can tell you;  
there is such odds in the man. In pity of the  
challenger's youth I would fain dissuade him, but he  
will not be entreated. Speak to him, ladies; see if  
you can move him.

**CELIA**

Call him hither, good Monsieur Le Beau.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

Do so: I'll not be by.

**LE BEAU**

Monsieur the challenger, the princesses call for you.

## **ORLANDO**

I attend them with all respect and duty.

## **ROSALIND**

Young man, have you challenged Charles the wrestler?

## **ORLANDO**

No, fair princess; he is the general challenger: I come but in, as others do, to try with him the strength of my youth.

## **CELIA**

Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years. You have seen cruel proof of this man's strength: if you saw yourself with your eyes or knew yourself with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise. We pray you, for your own sake, to embrace your own safety and give over this attempt.

## **ROSALIND**

Do, young sir; your reputation shall not therefore be misprised: we will make it our suit to the duke that the wrestling might not go forward.

## **ORLANDO**

I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts; wherein I confess me much guilty, to deny so fair and excellent ladies any thing. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial: wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that was willing to be so: I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me, the world no injury, for in it I have nothing; only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better



supplied when I have made it empty.

**ROSALIND**

The little strength that I have, I would it were with you.

**CELIA**

And mine, to eke out hers.

**ROSALIND**

Fare you well: pray heaven I be deceived in you!

**CELIA**

Your heart's desires be with you!

**CHARLES**

Come, where is this young gallant that is so  
desirous to lie with his mother earth?

**ORLANDO**

Ready, sir; but his will hath in it a more modest working.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

You shall try but one fall.

**CHARLES**

No, I warrant your grace, you shall not entreat him  
to a second, that have so mightily persuaded him  
from a first.

**ORLANDO**

An you mean to mock me after, you should not have  
mocked me before: but come your ways.

**ROSALIND**

Now Hercules be thy speed, young man!

**CELIA**

I would I were invisible, to catch the strong  
fellow by the leg.

*They wrestle*

**ROSALIND**

O excellent young man!

**CELIA**

If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can tell who  
should down.

*Shout. CHARLES is thrown*

**DUKE FREDERICK**

No more, no more.

**ORLANDO**

Yes, I beseech your grace: I am not yet well breathed.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

How dost thou, Charles?

**LE BEAU**

He cannot speak, my lord.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

Bear him away. What is thy name, young man?

**ORLANDO**

Orlando, my liege; the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

I would thou hadst been son to some man else:  
The world esteem'd thy father honourable,  
But I did find him still mine enemy:  
Thou shouldst have better pleased me with this deed,  
Hadst thou descended from another house.  
But fare thee well; thou art a gallant youth:  
I would thou hadst told me of another father.

*Exeunt DUKE FREDERICK, train, and LE BEAU*

**CELIA**

Were I my father, coz, would I do this?

**ORLANDO**

I am more proud to be Sir Rowland's son,  
His youngest son; and would not change that calling,  
To be adopted heir to Frederick.

**ROSALIND**

My father loved Sir Rowland as his soul,  
And all the world was of my father's mind:  
Had I before known this young man his son,  
I should have given him tears unto entreaties,  
Ere he should thus have ventured.

**CELIA**

Gentle cousin,  
Let us go thank him and encourage him:  
My father's rough and envious disposition

Sticks me at heart. Sir, you have well deserved:  
If you do keep your promises in love  
But justly, as you have exceeded all promise,  
Your mistress shall be happy.

**ROSALIND**

Gentleman,

*Giving him a chain from her neck*

Wear this for me, one out of suits with fortune,  
That could give more, but that her hand lacks means.  
Shall we go, coz?

**CELIA**

Ay. Fare you well, fair gentleman.

**ORLANDO**

Can I not say, I thank you? My better parts  
Are all thrown down, and that which here stands up  
Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block.

**ROSALIND**

He calls us back: my pride fell with my fortunes;  
I'll ask him what he would. Did you call, sir?  
Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown  
More than your enemies.

**CELIA**

Will you go, coz?

**ROSALIND**

Have with you. Fare you well.

*Exeunt ROSALIND and CELIA*

## ORLANDO

What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?  
I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.  
O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown!  
Or Charles or something weaker masters thee.

*Re-enter LE BEAU*

## LE BEAU

Good sir, I do in friendship counsel you  
To leave this place. Albeit you have deserved  
High commendation, true applause and love,  
Yet such is now the duke's condition  
That he misconstrues all that you have done.  
The duke is humorous; what he is indeed,  
More suits you to conceive than I to speak of.

## ORLANDO

I thank you, sir: and, pray you, tell me this:  
Which of the two was daughter of the duke  
That here was at the wrestling?

## LE BEAU

Neither his daughter, if we judge by manners;  
But yet indeed the lesser is his daughter  
The other is daughter to the banish'd duke,  
And here detain'd by her usurping uncle,  
To keep his daughter company; whose loves  
Are dearer than the natural bond of sisters.  
But I can tell you that of late this duke  
Hath ta'en displeasure 'gainst his gentle niece,  
Grounded upon no other argument  
But that the people praise her for her virtues  
And pity her for her good father's sake;  
And, on my life, his malice 'gainst the lady  
Will suddenly break forth. Sir, fare you well:  
Hereafter, in a better world than this,

I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.

**ORLANDO**

I rest much bounden to you: fare you well.

*Exit LE BEAU*

Thus must I from the smoke into the smother;  
From tyrant duke unto a tyrant brother:  
But heavenly Rosalind!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in the palace.

*Enter CELIA and ROSALIND*

**CELIA**

Why, cousin! why, Rosalind! Cupid have mercy! not a word?

**ROSALIND**

Not one to throw at a dog.

**CELIA**

No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs; throw some of them at me; come, lame me with reasons.

**ROSALIND**

Then there were two cousins laid up; when the one should be lamed with reasons and the other mad without any.

**CELIA**

But is all this for your father?

**ROSALIND**

No, some of it is for my child's father. O, how full of briars is this working-day world!

**CELIA**

They are but burs, cousin, thrown upon thee in

holiday foolery: if we walk not in the trodden  
paths our very petticoats will catch them.

**ROSALIND**

I could shake them off my coat: these burs are in my heart.

**CELIA**

Hem them away.

**ROSALIND**

I would try, if I could cry 'hem' and have him.

**CELIA**

Come, come, wrestle with thy affections.

**ROSALIND**

O, they take the part of a better wrestler than myself!

**CELIA**

O, a good wish upon you! you will try in time, in  
despite of a fall. But, turning these jests out of  
service, let us talk in good earnest: is it  
possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so  
strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?

**ROSALIND**

The duke my father loved his father dearly.

**CELIA**

Doth it therefore ensue that you should love his son  
dearly? By this kind of chase, I should hate him,  
for my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate  
not Orlando.



**ROSALIND**

No, faith, hate him not, for my sake.

**CELIA**

Why should I not? doth he not deserve well?

**ROSALIND**

Let me love him for that, and do you love him  
because I do. Look, here comes the duke.

**CELIA**

With his eyes full of anger.

*Enter DUKE FREDERICK, with Lords*

**DUKE FREDERICK**

Mistress, dispatch you with your safest haste  
And get you from our court.

**ROSALIND**

Me, uncle?

**DUKE FREDERICK**

You, cousin  
Within these ten days if that thou be'st found  
So near our public court as twenty miles,  
Thou diest for it.

**ROSALIND**

I do beseech your grace,  
Let me the knowledge of my fault bear with me:  
If with myself I hold intelligence

Or have acquaintance with mine own desires,  
If that I do not dream or be not frantic,--  
As I do trust I am not--then, dear uncle,  
Never so much as in a thought unborn  
Did I offend your highness.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

Thus do all traitors:  
If their purgation did consist in words,  
They are as innocent as grace itself:  
Let it suffice thee that I trust thee not.

**ROSALIND**

Yet your mistrust cannot make me a traitor:  
Tell me whereon the likelihood depends.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

Thou art thy father's daughter; there's enough.

**ROSALIND**

So was I when your highness took his dukedom;  
So was I when your highness banish'd him:  
Treason is not inherited, my lord;  
Or, if we did derive it from our friends,  
What's that to me? my father was no traitor:  
Then, good my liege, mistake me not so much  
To think my poverty is treacherous.

**CELIA**

Dear sovereign, hear me speak.

**DUKE FREDERICK**

Ay, Celia; we stay'd her for your sake,  
Else had she with her father ranged along.

## **CELIA**

I did not then entreat to have her stay;  
It was your pleasure and your own remorse:  
I was too young that time to value her;  
But now I know her: if she be a traitor,  
Why so am I; we still have slept together,  
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together,  
And wheresoever we went, like Juno's swans,  
Still we went coupled and inseparable.

## **DUKE FREDERICK**

She is too subtle for thee; and her smoothness,  
Her very silence and her patience  
Speak to the people, and they pity her.  
Thou art a fool: she robs thee of thy name;  
And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous  
When she is gone. Then open not thy lips:  
Firm and irrevocable is my doom  
Which I have pass'd upon her; she is banish'd.

## **CELIA**

Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege:  
I cannot live out of her company.

## **DUKE FREDERICK**

You are a fool. You, niece, provide yourself:  
If you outstay the time, upon mine honour,  
And in the greatness of my word, you die.

*Exeunt DUKE FREDERICK and Lords*

## **CELIA**

O my poor Rosalind, whither wilt thou go?  
Wilt thou change fathers? I will give thee mine.  
I charge thee, be not thou more grieved than I am.

## **ROSALIND**

I have more cause.

**CELIA**

Thou hast not, cousin;  
Prithee be cheerful: know'st thou not, the duke  
Hath banish'd me, his daughter?

**ROSALIND**

That he hath not.

**CELIA**

No, hath not? Rosalind lacks then the love  
Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one:  
Shall we be sunder'd? shall we part, sweet girl?  
No: let my father seek another heir.  
Therefore devise with me how we may fly,  
Whither to go and what to bear with us;  
And do not seek to take your change upon you,  
To bear your griefs yourself and leave me out;  
For, by this heaven, now at our sorrows pale,  
Say what thou canst, I'll go along with thee.

**ROSALIND**

Why, whither shall we go?

**CELIA**

To seek my uncle in the forest of Arden.

**ROSALIND**

Alas, what danger will it be to us,  
Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!  
Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.

**CELIA**

I'll put myself in poor and mean attire  
And with a kind of umber smirch my face;  
The like do you: so shall we pass along  
And never stir assailants.

**ROSALIND**

Were it not better,  
Because that I am more than common tall,  
That I did suit me all points like a man?  
A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,  
A boar-spear in my hand; and--in my heart  
Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will--  
We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,  
As many other mannish cowards have  
That do outface it with their semblances.

**CELIA**

What shall I call thee when thou art a man?

**ROSALIND**

I'll have no worse a name than Jove's own page;  
And therefore look you call me Ganymede.  
But what will you be call'd?

**CELIA**

Something that hath a reference to my state  
No longer Celia, but Aliena.

**ROSALIND**

But, cousin, what if we assay'd to steal  
The clownish fool out of your father's court?  
Would he not be a comfort to our travel?

**CELIA**

He'll go along o'er the wide world with me;

Leave me alone to woo him. Let's away,  
And get our jewels and our wealth together,  
Devise the fittest time and safest way  
To hide us from pursuit that will be made  
After my flight. Now go we in content  
To liberty and not to banishment.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The Forest of Arden.

*Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, and two or three Lords, like foresters*

### DUKE SENIOR

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,  
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet  
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods  
More free from peril than the envious court?  
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,  
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang  
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,  
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,  
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say  
'This is no flattery: these are counsellors  
That feelingly persuade me what I am.'  
Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;  
And this our life exempt from public haunt  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones and good in every thing.  
I would not change it.

### AMIENS

Happy is your grace,  
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune  
Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

### DUKE SENIOR

Come, shall we go and kill us venison?  
And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools,  
Being native burghers of this desert city,

Should in their own confines with forked heads  
Have their round haunches gored.

### **First Lord**

Indeed, my lord,  
The melancholy Jaques grieves at that,  
And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp  
Than doth your brother that hath banish'd you.  
To-day my Lord of Amiens and myself  
Did steal behind him as he lay along  
Under an oak whose antique root peeps out  
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:  
To the which place a poor sequester'd stag,  
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,  
Did come to languish, and indeed, my lord,  
The wretched animal heaved forth such groans  
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat  
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears  
Coursed one another down his innocent nose  
In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool  
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,  
Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,  
Augmenting it with tears.

### **DUKE SENIOR**

But what said Jaques?  
Did he not moralize this spectacle?

### **First Lord**

O, yes, into a thousand similes.  
First, for his weeping into the needless stream;  
'Poor deer,' quoth he, 'thou makest a testament  
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more  
To that which had too much:' then, being there alone,  
Left and abandon'd of his velvet friends,  
'Tis right:' quoth he; 'thus misery doth part  
The flux of company:' anon a careless herd,  
Full of the pasture, jumps along by him  
And never stays to greet him; 'Ay' quoth Jaques,



'Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens;  
'Tis just the fashion: wherefore do you look  
Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?'  
Thus most invectively he pierceth through  
The body of the country, city, court,  
Yea, and of this our life, swearing that we  
Are mere usurpers, tyrants and what's worse,  
To fright the animals and to kill them up  
In their assign'd and native dwelling-place.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

And did you leave him in this contemplation?

## **Second Lord**

We did, my lord, weeping and commenting  
Upon the sobbing deer.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Show me the place:  
I love to cope him in these sullen fits,  
For then he's full of matter.

## **First Lord**

I'll bring you to him straight.

*Exeunt*

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in the palace.

*Enter DUKE FREDERICK, with Lords*

### DUKE FREDERICK

Can it be possible that no man saw them?  
It cannot be: some villains of my court  
Are of consent and sufferance in this.

### First Lord

I cannot hear of any that did see her.  
The ladies, her attendants of her chamber,  
Saw her abed, and in the morning early  
They found the bed untreasured of their mistress.

### Second Lord

My lord, the roynish clown, at whom so oft  
Your grace was wont to laugh, is also missing.  
Hisperia, the princess' gentlewoman,  
Confesses that she secretly o'erheard  
Your daughter and her cousin much commend  
The parts and graces of the wrestler  
That did but lately foil the sinewy Charles;  
And she believes, wherever they are gone,  
That youth is surely in their company.

### DUKE FREDERICK

Send to his brother; fetch that gallant hither;  
If he be absent, bring his brother to me;  
I'll make him find him: do this suddenly,  
And let not search and inquisition quail  
To bring again these foolish runaways.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Before OLIVER'S house.

*Enter ORLANDO and ADAM, meeting*

**ORLANDO**

Who's there?

**ADAM**

What, my young master? O, my gentle master!  
O my sweet master! O you memory  
Of old Sir Rowland! why, what make you here?  
Why are you virtuous? why do people love you?  
And wherefore are you gentle, strong and valiant?  
Why would you be so fond to overcome  
The bonny priser of the humorous duke?  
Your praise is come too swiftly home before you.  
Know you not, master, to some kind of men  
Their graces serve them but as enemies?  
No more do yours: your virtues, gentle master,  
Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.  
O, what a world is this, when what is comely  
Envenoms him that bears it!

**ORLANDO**

Why, what's the matter?

**ADAM**

O unhappy youth!  
Come not within these doors; within this roof  
The enemy of all your graces lives:  
Your brother--no, no brother; yet the son--  
Yet not the son, I will not call him son

Of him I was about to call his father--  
Hath heard your praises, and this night he means  
To burn the lodging where you use to lie  
And you within it: if he fail of that,  
He will have other means to cut you off.  
I overheard him and his practises.  
This is no place; this house is but a butchery:  
Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.

**ORLANDO**

Why, whither, Adam, wouldst thou have me go?

**ADAM**

No matter whither, so you come not here.

**ORLANDO**

What, wouldst thou have me go and beg my food?  
Or with a base and boisterous sword enforce  
A thievish living on the common road?  
This I must do, or know not what to do:  
Yet this I will not do, do how I can;  
I rather will subject me to the malice  
Of a diverted blood and bloody brother.

**ADAM**

But do not so. I have five hundred crowns,  
The thrifty hire I saved under your father,  
Which I did store to be my foster-nurse  
When service should in my old limbs lie lame  
And unregarded age in corners thrown:  
Take that, and He that doth the ravens feed,  
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,  
Be comfort to my age! Here is the gold;  
And all this I give you. Let me be your servant:  
Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;  
For in my youth I never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,  
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo

The means of weakness and debility;  
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,  
Frosty, but kindly: let me go with you;  
I'll do the service of a younger man  
In all your business and necessities.

## ORLANDO

O good old man, how well in thee appears  
The constant service of the antique world,  
When service sweat for duty, not for meed!  
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,  
Where none will sweat but for promotion,  
And having that, do choke their service up  
Even with the having: it is not so with thee.  
But, poor old man, thou prunest a rotten tree,  
That cannot so much as a blossom yield  
In lieu of all thy pains and husbandry  
But come thy ways; well go along together,  
And ere we have thy youthful wages spent,  
We'll light upon some settled low content.

## ADAM

Master, go on, and I will follow thee,  
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.  
From seventeen years till now almost fourscore  
Here lived I, but now live here no more.  
At seventeen years many their fortunes seek;  
But at fourscore it is too late a week:  
Yet fortune cannot recompense me better  
Than to die well and not my master's debtor.

*Exeunt*

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The Forest of Arden.

*Enter ROSALIND for Ganymede, CELIA for Aliena, and TOUCHSTONE*

**ROSALIND**

O Jupiter, how weary are my spirits!

**TOUCHSTONE**

I care not for my spirits, if my legs were not weary.

**ROSALIND**

I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel and to cry like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat: therefore courage, good Aliena!

**CELIA**

I pray you, bear with me; I cannot go no further.

**TOUCHSTONE**

For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you; yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you, for I think you have no money in your purse.

**ROSALIND**

Well, this is the forest of Arden.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Ay, now am I in Arden; the more fool I; when I was  
at home, I was in a better place: but travellers  
must be content.

**ROSALIND**

Ay, be so, good Touchstone.

*Enter CORIN and SILVIUS*

Look you, who comes here; a young man and an old in  
solemn talk.

**CORIN**

That is the way to make her scorn you still.

**SILVIUS**

O Corin, that thou knew'st how I do love her!

**CORIN**

I partly guess; for I have loved ere now.

**SILVIUS**

No, Corin, being old, thou canst not guess,  
Though in thy youth thou wast as true a lover  
As ever sigh'd upon a midnight pillow:  
But if thy love were ever like to mine--  
As sure I think did never man love so--  
How many actions most ridiculous  
Hast thou been drawn to by thy fantasy?

**CORIN**

Into a thousand that I have forgotten.

**SILVIUS**



O, thou didst then ne'er love so heartily!  
If thou remember'st not the slightest folly  
That ever love did make thee run into,  
Thou hast not loved:  
Or if thou hast not sat as I do now,  
Wearying thy hearer in thy mistress' praise,  
Thou hast not loved:  
Or if thou hast not broke from company  
Abruptly, as my passion now makes me,  
Thou hast not loved.  
O Phebe, Phebe, Phebe!

*Exit*

**ROSALIND**

Alas, poor shepherd! searching of thy wound,  
I have by hard adventure found mine own.

**TOUCHSTONE**

And I mine. I remember, when I was in love I broke  
my sword upon a stone and bid him take that for  
coming a-night to Jane Smile; and I remember the  
kissing of her batlet and the cow's dugs that her  
pretty chopt hands had milked; and I remember the  
wooing of a peascod instead of her, from whom I took  
two cods and, giving her them again, said with  
weeping tears 'Wear these for my sake.' We that are  
true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is  
mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly.

**ROSALIND**

Thou speakest wiser than thou art ware of.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Nay, I shall ne'er be ware of mine own wit till I  
break my shins against it.

**ROSALIND**

Jove, Jove! this shepherd's passion  
Is much upon my fashion.

**TOUCHSTONE**

And mine; but it grows something stale with me.

**CELIA**

I pray you, one of you question yond man  
If he for gold will give us any food:  
I faint almost to death.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Holla, you clown!

**ROSALIND**

Peace, fool: he's not thy kinsman.

**CORIN**

Who calls?

**TOUCHSTONE**

Your betters, sir.

**CORIN**

Else are they very wretched.

**ROSALIND**

Peace, I say. Good even to you, friend.

**CORIN**

And to you, gentle sir, and to you all.

## **ROSALIND**

I prithee, shepherd, if that love or gold  
Can in this desert place buy entertainment,  
Bring us where we may rest ourselves and feed:  
Here's a young maid with travel much oppress'd  
And faints for succor.

## **CORIN**

Fair sir, I pity her  
And wish, for her sake more than for mine own,  
My fortunes were more able to relieve her;  
But I am shepherd to another man  
And do not shear the fleeces that I graze:  
My master is of churlish disposition  
And little recks to find the way to heaven  
By doing deeds of hospitality:  
Besides, his cote, his flocks and bounds of feed  
Are now on sale, and at our sheepcote now,  
By reason of his absence, there is nothing  
That you will feed on; but what is, come see.  
And in my voice most welcome shall you be.

## **ROSALIND**

What is he that shall buy his flock and pasture?

## **CORIN**

That young swain that you saw here but erewhile,  
That little cares for buying any thing.

## **ROSALIND**

I pray thee, if it stand with honesty,  
Buy thou the cottage, pasture and the flock,  
And thou shalt have to pay for it of us.

## **CELIA**

And we will mend thy wages. I like this place.  
And willingly could waste my time in it.

**CORIN**

Assuredly the thing is to be sold:  
Go with me: if you like upon report  
The soil, the profit and this kind of life,  
I will your very faithful feeder be  
And buy it with your gold right suddenly.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The Forest.

*Enter AMIENS, JAQUES, and others*

SONG.

**AMIENS**

Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And turn his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
Here shall he see No enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

**JAQUES**

More, more, I prithee, more.

**AMIENS**

It will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jaques.

**JAQUES**

I thank it. More, I prithee, more. I can suck  
melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs.  
More, I prithee, more.

**AMIENS**

My voice is ragged: I know I cannot please you.

**JAQUES**

I do not desire you to please me; I do desire you to sing. Come, more; another stanza: call you 'em stanzos?

**AMIENS**

What you will, Monsieur Jaques.

**JAQUES**

Nay, I care not for their names; they owe me nothing. Will you sing?

**AMIENS**

More at your request than to please myself.

**JAQUES**

Well then, if ever I thank any man, I'll thank you; but that they call compliment is like the encounter of two dog-apes, and when a man thanks me heartily, methinks I have given him a penny and he renders me the beggarly thanks. Come, sing; and you that will not, hold your tongues.

**AMIENS**

Well, I'll end the song. Sirs, cover the while; the duke will drink under this tree. He hath been all this day to look you.

**JAQUES**

And I have been all this day to avoid him. He is too disputable for my company: I think of as many matters as he, but I give heaven thanks and make no boast of them. Come, warble, come.

SONG.

Who doth ambition shun

*All together here*

And loves to live i' the sun,  
Seeking the food he eats  
And pleased with what he gets,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither:  
Here shall he see No enemy  
But winter and rough weather.

## **JAQUES**

I'll give you a verse to this note that I made  
yesterday in despite of my invention.

## **AMIENS**

And I'll sing it.

## **JAQUES**

Thus it goes:--  
If it do come to pass  
That any man turn ass,  
Leaving his wealth and ease,  
A stubborn will to please,  
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame:  
Here shall he see  
Gross fools as he,  
An if he will come to me.

## **AMIENS**

What's that 'ducdame'?

## **JAQUES**

'Tis a Greek invocation, to call fools into a  
circle. I'll go sleep, if I can; if I cannot, I'll  
rail against all the first-born of Egypt.

## **AMIENS**

And I'll go seek the duke: his banquet is prepared.

*Exeunt severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The forest.

*Enter ORLANDO and ADAM*

**ADAM**

Dear master, I can go no further. O, I die for food!  
Here lie I down, and measure out my grave. Farewell,  
kind master.

**ORLANDO**

Why, how now, Adam! no greater heart in thee? Live  
a little; comfort a little; cheer thyself a little.  
If this uncouth forest yield any thing savage, I  
will either be food for it or bring it for food to  
thee. Thy conceit is nearer death than thy powers.  
For my sake be comfortable; hold death awhile at  
the arm's end: I will here be with thee presently;  
and if I bring thee not something to eat, I will  
give thee leave to die: but if thou diest before I  
come, thou art a mocker of my labour. Well said!  
thou lookest cheerly, and I'll be with thee quickly.  
Yet thou liest in the bleak air: come, I will bear  
thee to some shelter; and thou shalt not die for  
lack of a dinner, if there live any thing in this  
desert. Cheerly, good Adam!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. The forest.

*A table set out. Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, and Lords like outlaws*

### DUKE SENIOR

I think he be transform'd into a beast;  
For I can no where find him like a man.

### First Lord

My lord, he is but even now gone hence:  
Here was he merry, hearing of a song.

### DUKE SENIOR

If he, compact of jars, grow musical,  
We shall have shortly discord in the spheres.  
Go, seek him: tell him I would speak with him.

*Enter JAQUES*

### First Lord

He saves my labour by his own approach.

### DUKE SENIOR

Why, how now, monsieur! what a life is this,  
That your poor friends must woo your company?  
What, you look merrily!

### JAQUES

A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' the forest,  
A motley fool; a miserable world!

As I do live by food, I met a fool  
Who laid him down and bask'd him in the sun,  
And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms,  
In good set terms and yet a motley fool.  
'Good morrow, fool,' quoth I. 'No, sir,' quoth he,  
'Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune:'  
And then he drew a dial from his poke,  
And, looking on it with lack-lustre eye,  
Says very wisely, 'It is ten o'clock:  
Thus we may see,' quoth he, 'how the world wags:  
'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,  
And after one hour more 'twill be eleven;  
And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,  
And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;  
And thereby hangs a tale.' When I did hear  
The motley fool thus moral on the time,  
My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,  
That fools should be so deep-contemplative,  
And I did laugh sans intermission  
An hour by his dial. O noble fool!  
A worthy fool! Motley's the only wear.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

What fool is this?

## **JAQUES**

O worthy fool! One that hath been a courtier,  
And says, if ladies be but young and fair,  
They have the gift to know it: and in his brain,  
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit  
After a voyage, he hath strange places cramm'd  
With observation, the which he vents  
In mangled forms. O that I were a fool!  
I am ambitious for a motley coat.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Thou shalt have one.

## **JAQUES**

It is my only suit;  
Provided that you weed your better judgments  
Of all opinion that grows rank in them  
That I am wise. I must have liberty  
Withal, as large a charter as the wind,  
To blow on whom I please; for so fools have;  
And they that are most galled with my folly,  
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?  
The 'why' is plain as way to parish church:  
He that a fool doth very wisely hit  
Doth very foolishly, although he smart,  
Not to seem senseless of the bob: if not,  
The wise man's folly is anatomized  
Even by the squandering glances of the fool.  
Invest me in my motley; give me leave  
To speak my mind, and I will through and through  
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,  
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

**DUKE SENIOR**

Fie on thee! I can tell what thou wouldst do.

**JAQUES**

What, for a counter, would I do but good?

**DUKE SENIOR**

Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin:  
For thou thyself hast been a libertine,  
As sensual as the brutish sting itself;  
And all the embossed sores and headed evils,  
That thou with licence of free foot hast caught,  
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world.

**JAQUES**

Why, who cries out on pride,  
That can therein tax any private party?  
Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea,

Till that the weary very means do ebb?  
What woman in the city do I name,  
When that I say the city-woman bears  
The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?  
Who can come in and say that I mean her,  
When such a one as she such is her neighbour?  
Or what is he of basest function  
That says his bravery is not of my cost,  
Thinking that I mean him, but therein suits  
His folly to the mettle of my speech?  
There then; how then? what then? Let me see wherein  
My tongue hath wrong'd him: if it do him right,  
Then he hath wrong'd himself; if he be free,  
Why then my taxing like a wild-goose flies,  
Unclaim'd of any man. But who comes here?

*Enter ORLANDO, with his sword drawn*

**ORLANDO**

Forbear, and eat no more.

**JAQUES**

Why, I have eat none yet.

**ORLANDO**

Nor shalt not, till necessity be served.

**JAQUES**

Of what kind should this cock come of?

**DUKE SENIOR**

Art thou thus bolden'd, man, by thy distress,  
Or else a rude despiser of good manners,  
That in civility thou seem'st so empty?

**ORLANDO**

You touch'd my vein at first: the thorny point  
Of bare distress hath ta'en from me the show  
Of smooth civility: yet am I inland bred  
And know some nurture. But forbear, I say:  
He dies that touches any of this fruit  
Till I and my affairs are answered.

## **JAQUES**

An you will not be answered with reason, I must die.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

What would you have? Your gentleness shall force  
More than your force move us to gentleness.

## **ORLANDO**

I almost die for food; and let me have it.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table.

## **ORLANDO**

Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you:  
I thought that all things had been savage here;  
And therefore put I on the countenance  
Of stern commandment. But whate'er you are  
That in this desert inaccessible,  
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,  
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time  
If ever you have look'd on better days,  
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church,  
If ever sat at any good man's feast,  
If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear  
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,  
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be:  
In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

True is it that we have seen better days,  
And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church  
And sat at good men's feasts and wiped our eyes  
Of drops that sacred pity hath engender'd:  
And therefore sit you down in gentleness  
And take upon command what help we have  
That to your wanting may be minister'd.

## **ORLANDO**

Then but forbear your food a little while,  
Whiles, like a doe, I go to find my fawn  
And give it food. There is an old poor man,  
Who after me hath many a weary step  
Limp'd in pure love: till he be first sufficed,  
Oppress'd with two weak evils, age and hunger,  
I will not touch a bit.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Go find him out,  
And we will nothing waste till you return.

## **ORLANDO**

I thank ye; and be blest for your good comfort!

*Exit*

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy:  
This wide and universal theatre  
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene  
Wherein we play in.

## **JAQUES**

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:

They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.  
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel  
And shining morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,  
In fair round belly with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances;  
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,  
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,  
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

*Re-enter ORLANDO, with ADAM*

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Welcome. Set down your venerable burthen,  
And let him feed.

## **ORLANDO**

I thank you most for him.

## **ADAM**

So had you need:  
I scarce can speak to thank you for myself.



## DUKE SENIOR

Welcome; fall to: I will not trouble you  
As yet, to question you about your fortunes.  
Give us some music; and, good cousin, sing.  
SONG.

## AMIENS

Blow, blow, thou winter wind.  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude;  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.  
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!  
This life is most jolly.  
Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,  
That dost not bite so nigh  
As benefits forgot:  
Though thou the waters warp,  
Thy sting is not so sharp  
As friend remember'd not.  
Heigh-ho! sing, & c.

## DUKE SENIOR

If that you were the good Sir Rowland's son,  
As you have whisper'd faithfully you were,  
And as mine eye doth his effigies witness  
Most truly limn'd and living in your face,  
Be truly welcome hither: I am the duke  
That loved your father: the residue of your fortune,  
Go to my cave and tell me. Good old man,  
Thou art right welcome as thy master is.  
Support him by the arm. Give me your hand,  
And let me all your fortunes understand.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 2, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in the palace.

*Enter DUKE FREDERICK, Lords, and OLIVER*

### DUKE FREDERICK

Not see him since? Sir, sir, that cannot be:  
But were I not the better part made mercy,  
I should not seek an absent argument  
Of my revenge, thou present. But look to it:  
Find out thy brother, wheresoe'er he is;  
Seek him with candle; bring him dead or living  
Within this twelvemonth, or turn thou no more  
To seek a living in our territory.  
Thy lands and all things that thou dost call thine  
Worth seizure do we seize into our hands,  
Till thou canst quit thee by thy brothers mouth  
Of what we think against thee.

### OLIVER

O that your highness knew my heart in this!  
I never loved my brother in my life.

### DUKE FREDERICK

More villain thou. Well, push him out of doors;  
And let my officers of such a nature  
Make an extent upon his house and lands:  
Do this expediently and turn him going.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The forest.

*Enter ORLANDO, with a paper*

### ORLANDO

Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love:  
And thou, thrice-crowned queen of night, survey  
With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,  
Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway.  
O Rosalind! these trees shall be my books  
And in their barks my thoughts I'll character;  
That every eye which in this forest looks  
Shall see thy virtue witness'd every where.  
Run, run, Orlando; carve on every tree  
The fair, the chaste and unexpressive she.

*Exit*

*Enter CORIN and TOUCHSTONE*

### CORIN

And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?

### TOUCHSTONE

Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life, but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now, in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As is it a spare life, look you, it fits my humour well; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much

against my stomach. Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

**CORIN**

No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means and content is without three good friends; that the property of rain is to wet and fire to burn; that good pasture makes fat sheep, and that a great cause of the night is lack of the sun; that he that hath learned no wit by nature nor art may complain of good breeding or comes of a very dull kindred.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Such a one is a natural philosopher. Wast ever in court, shepherd?

**CORIN**

No, truly.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Then thou art damned.

**CORIN**

Nay, I hope.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Truly, thou art damned like an ill-roasted egg, all on one side.

**CORIN**

For not being at court? Your reason.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Why, if thou never wast at court, thou never sawest good manners; if thou never sawest good manners, then thy manners must be wicked; and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.

**CORIN**

Not a whit, Touchstone: those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behavior of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court, but you kiss your hands: that courtesy would be uncleanly, if courtiers were shepherds.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Instance, briefly; come, instance.

**CORIN**

Why, we are still handling our ewes, and their fells, you know, are greasy.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Why, do not your courtier's hands sweat? and is not the grease of a mutton as wholesome as the sweat of a man? Shallow, shallow. A better instance, I say; come.

**CORIN**

Besides, our hands are hard.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Your lips will feel them the sooner. Shallow again. A more sounder instance, come.

**CORIN**

And they are often tarred over with the surgery of our sheep: and would you have us kiss tar? The courtier's hands are perfumed with civet.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Most shallow man! thou worms-meat, in respect of a good piece of flesh indeed! Learn of the wise, and perpend: civet is of a baser birth than tar, the very uncleanly flux of a cat. Mend the instance, shepherd.

## **CORIN**

You have too courtly a wit for me: I'll rest.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Wilt thou rest damned? God help thee, shallow man! God make incision in thee! thou art raw.

## **CORIN**

Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my harm, and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

That is another simple sin in you, to bring the ewes and the rams together and to offer to get your living by the copulation of cattle; to be bawd to a bell-wether, and to betray a she-lamb of a twelvemonth to a crooked-pated, old, cuckoldly ram, out of all reasonable match. If thou beest not damned for this, the devil himself will have no shepherds; I cannot see else how thou shouldst 'scape.

## **CORIN**

Here comes young Master Ganymede, my new mistress's brother.

*Enter ROSALIND, with a paper, reading*

## **ROSALIND**

From the east to western Ind,  
No jewel is like Rosalind.  
Her worth, being mounted on the wind,  
Through all the world bears Rosalind.  
All the pictures fairest lined  
Are but black to Rosalind.  
Let no fair be kept in mind  
But the fair of Rosalind.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners and  
suppers and sleeping-hours excepted: it is the  
right butter-women's rank to market.

## **ROSALIND**

Out, fool!

## **TOUCHSTONE**

For a taste:  
If a hart do lack a hind,  
Let him seek out Rosalind.  
If the cat will after kind,  
So be sure will Rosalind.  
Winter garments must be lined,  
So must slender Rosalind.  
They that reap must sheaf and bind;  
Then to cart with Rosalind.  
Sweetest nut hath sourest rind,  
Such a nut is Rosalind.  
He that sweetest rose will find  
Must find love's prick and Rosalind.  
This is the very false gallop of verses: why do you  
infect yourself with them?



## ROSALIND

Peace, you dull fool! I found them on a tree.

## TOUCHSTONE

Truly, the tree yields bad fruit.

## ROSALIND

I'll graff it with you, and then I shall graff it  
with a medlar: then it will be the earliest fruit  
i' the country; for you'll be rotten ere you be half  
ripe, and that's the right virtue of the medlar.

## TOUCHSTONE

You have said; but whether wisely or no, let the  
forest judge.

*Enter CELIA, with a writing*

## ROSALIND

Peace! Here comes my sister, reading: stand aside.

## CELIA

[Reads]  
Why should this a desert be?  
For it is unpeopled? No:  
Tongues I'll hang on every tree,  
That shall civil sayings show:  
Some, how brief the life of man  
Runs his erring pilgrimage,  
That the stretching of a span  
Buckles in his sum of age;  
Some, of violated vows  
'Twixt the souls of friend and friend:  
But upon the fairest boughs,  
Or at every sentence end,

Will I Rosalinda write,  
Teaching all that read to know  
The quintessence of every sprite  
Heaven would in little show.  
Therefore Heaven Nature charged  
That one body should be fill'd  
With all graces wide-enlarged:  
Nature presently distill'd  
Helen's cheek, but not her heart,  
Cleopatra's majesty,  
Atalanta's better part,  
Sad Lucretia's modesty.  
Thus Rosalind of many parts  
By heavenly synod was devised,  
Of many faces, eyes and hearts,  
To have the touches dearest prized.  
Heaven would that she these gifts should have,  
And I to live and die her slave.

## **ROSALIND**

O most gentle pulpiter! what tedious homily of love  
have you wearied your parishioners withal, and never  
cried 'Have patience, good people!'

## **CELIA**

How now! back, friends! Shepherd, go off a little.  
Go with him, sirrah.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Come, shepherd, let us make an honourable retreat;  
though not with bag and baggage, yet with scrip and scrippage.

*Exeunt CORIN and TOUCHSTONE*

## **CELIA**

Didst thou hear these verses?

## **ROSALIND**

O, yes, I heard them all, and more too; for some of them had in them more feet than the verses would bear.

**CELIA**

That's no matter: the feet might bear the verses.

**ROSALIND**

Ay, but the feet were lame and could not bear themselves without the verse and therefore stood lamely in the verse.

**CELIA**

But didst thou hear without wondering how thy name should be hanged and carved upon these trees?

**ROSALIND**

I was seven of the nine days out of the wonder before you came; for look here what I found on a palm-tree. I was never so be-rhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember.

**CELIA**

Trow you who hath done this?

**ROSALIND**

Is it a man?

**CELIA**

And a chain, that you once wore, about his neck.  
Change you colour?

**ROSALIND**

I prithee, who?

**CELIA**

O Lord, Lord! it is a hard matter for friends to meet; but mountains may be removed with earthquakes and so encounter.

**ROSALIND**

Nay, but who is it?

**CELIA**

Is it possible?

**ROSALIND**

Nay, I prithee now with most petitionary vehemence, tell me who it is.

**CELIA**

O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful! and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all hooping!

**ROSALIND**

Good my complexion! dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition? One inch of delay more is a South-sea of discovery; I prithee, tell me who is it quickly, and speak apace. I would thou couldst stammer, that thou mightst pour this concealed man out of thy mouth, as wine comes out of a narrow-mouthed bottle, either too much at once, or none at all. I prithee, take the cork out of thy mouth that may drink thy tidings.

**CELIA**

So you may put a man in your belly.

**ROSALIND**

Is he of God's making? What manner of man? Is his head worth a hat, or his chin worth a beard?

**CELIA**

Nay, he hath but a little beard.

**ROSALIND**

Why, God will send more, if the man will be thankful: let me stay the growth of his beard, if thou delay me not the knowledge of his chin.

**CELIA**

It is young Orlando, that tripped up the wrestler's heels and your heart both in an instant.

**ROSALIND**

Nay, but the devil take mocking: speak, sad brow and true maid.

**CELIA**

I' faith, coz, 'tis he.

**ROSALIND**

Orlando?

**CELIA**

Orlando.

**ROSALIND**

Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose? What did he when thou sawest him? What said he? How looked he? Wherein went he? What makes him here? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? and when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.

**CELIA**

You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first: 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism.

**ROSALIND**

But doth he know that I am in this forest and in man's apparel? Looks he as freshly as he did the day he wrestled?

**CELIA**

It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover; but take a taste of my finding him, and relish it with good observance. I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn.

**ROSALIND**

It may well be called Jove's tree, when it drops forth such fruit.

**CELIA**

Give me audience, good madam.

**ROSALIND**

Proceed.

**CELIA**

There lay he, stretched along, like a wounded knight.

**ROSALIND**

Though it be pity to see such a sight, it well  
becomes the ground.

**CELIA**

Cry 'holla' to thy tongue, I prithee; it curvets  
unseasonably. He was furnished like a hunter.

**ROSALIND**

O, ominous! he comes to kill my heart.

**CELIA**

I would sing my song without a burden: thou bringest  
me out of tune.

**ROSALIND**

Do you not know I am a woman? when I think, I must  
speak. Sweet, say on.

**CELIA**

You bring me out. Soft! comes he not here?

*Enter ORLANDO and JAQUES*

**ROSALIND**

'Tis he: slink by, and note him.

**JAQUES**

I thank you for your company; but, good faith, I had

as lief have been myself alone.

**ORLANDO**

And so had I; but yet, for fashion sake, I thank you too for your society.

**JAQUES**

God be wi' you: let's meet as little as we can.

**ORLANDO**

I do desire we may be better strangers.

**JAQUES**

I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love-songs in their barks.

**ORLANDO**

I pray you, mar no more of my verses with reading them ill-favouredly.

**JAQUES**

Rosalind is your love's name?

**ORLANDO**

Yes, just.

**JAQUES**

I do not like her name.

**ORLANDO**

There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened.



**JAQUES**

What stature is she of?

**ORLANDO**

Just as high as my heart.

**JAQUES**

You are full of pretty answers. Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned them out of rings?

**ORLANDO**

Not so; but I answer you right painted cloth, from whence you have studied your questions.

**JAQUES**

You have a nimble wit: I think 'twas made of Atalanta's heels. Will you sit down with me? and we two will rail against our mistress the world and all our misery.

**ORLANDO**

I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.

**JAQUES**

The worst fault you have is to be in love.

**ORLANDO**

'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.

## **JAQUES**

By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.

## **ORLANDO**

He is drowned in the brook: look but in, and you shall see him.

## **JAQUES**

There I shall see mine own figure.

## **ORLANDO**

Which I take to be either a fool or a cipher.

## **JAQUES**

I'll tarry no longer with you: farewell, good Signior Love.

## **ORLANDO**

I am glad of your departure: adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy.

*Exit JAQUES*

## **ROSALIND**

[Aside to CELIA] I will speak to him, like a saucy lackey and under that habit play the knave with him. Do you hear, forester?

## **ORLANDO**

Very well: what would you?

## **ROSALIND**

I pray you, what is't o'clock?

**ORLANDO**

You should ask me what time o' day: there's no clock in the forest.

**ROSALIND**

Then there is no true lover in the forest; else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of Time as well as a clock.

**ORLANDO**

And why not the swift foot of Time? had not that been as proper?

**ROSALIND**

By no means, sir: Time travels in divers paces with divers persons. I'll tell you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal and who he stands still withal.

**ORLANDO**

I prithee, who doth he trot withal?

**ROSALIND**

Marry, he trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se'nnight, Time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven year.

**ORLANDO**

Who ambles Time withal?

**ROSALIND**

With a priest that lacks Latin and a rich man that hath not the gout, for the one sleeps easily because he cannot study, and the other lives merrily because he feels no pain, the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning, the other knowing no burden of heavy tedious penury; these Time ambles withal.

**ORLANDO**

Who doth he gallop withal?

**ROSALIND**

With a thief to the gallows, for though he go as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there.

**ORLANDO**

Who stays it still withal?

**ROSALIND**

With lawyers in the vacation, for they sleep between term and term and then they perceive not how Time moves.

**ORLANDO**

Where dwell you, pretty youth?

**ROSALIND**

With this shepherdess, my sister; here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat.

**ORLANDO**

Are you native of this place?

**ROSALIND**

As the cony that you see dwell where she is kindled.

**ORLANDO**

Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.

**ROSALIND**

I have been told so of many: but indeed an old religious uncle of mine taught me to speak, who was in his youth an inland man; one that knew courtship too well, for there he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it, and I thank God I am not a woman, to be touched with so many giddy offences as he hath generally taxed their whole sex withal.

**ORLANDO**

Can you remember any of the principal evils that he laid to the charge of women?

**ROSALIND**

There were none principal; they were all like one another as half-pence are, every one fault seeming monstrous till his fellow fault came to match it.

**ORLANDO**

I prithee, recount some of them.

**ROSALIND**

No, I will not cast away my physic but on those that are sick. There is a man haunts the forest, that abuses our young plants with carving 'Rosalind' on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles, all, forsooth, deifying the name of

Rosalind: if I could meet that fancy-monger I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the quotidian of love upon him.

**ORLANDO**

I am he that is so love-shaked: I pray you tell me your remedy.

**ROSALIND**

There is none of my uncle's marks upon you: he taught me how to know a man in love; in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner.

**ORLANDO**

What were his marks?

**ROSALIND**

A lean cheek, which you have not, a blue eye and sunken, which you have not, an unquestionable spirit, which you have not, a beard neglected, which you have not; but I pardon you for that, for simply your having in beard is a younger brother's revenue: then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied and every thing about you demonstrating a careless desolation; but you are no such man; you are rather point-device in your accoutrements as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.

**ORLANDO**

Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love.

**ROSALIND**

Me believe it! you may as soon make her that you love believe it; which, I warrant, she is apter to do than to confess she does: that is one of the

points in the which women still give the lie to  
their consciences. But, in good sooth, are you he  
that hangs the verses on the trees, wherein Rosalind  
is so admired?

**ORLANDO**

I swear to thee, youth, by the white hand of  
Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

**ROSALIND**

But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?

**ORLANDO**

Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.

**ROSALIND**

Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you, deserves  
as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do: and  
the reason why they are not so punished and cured  
is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers  
are in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.

**ORLANDO**

Did you ever cure any so?

**ROSALIND**

Yes, one, and in this manner. He was to imagine me  
his love, his mistress; and I set him every day to  
woo me: at which time would I, being but a moonish  
youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing  
and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow,  
inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles, for every  
passion something and for no passion truly any  
thing, as boys and women are for the most part  
cattle of this colour; would now like him, now loathe

him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness; which was, to forswear the full stream of the world, and to live in a nook merely monastic. And thus I cured him; and this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in't.

**ORLANDO**

I would not be cured, youth.

**ROSALIND**

I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cote and woo me.

**ORLANDO**

Now, by the faith of my love, I will: tell me where it is.

**ROSALIND**

Go with me to it and I'll show it you and by the way you shall tell me where in the forest you live. Will you go?

**ORLANDO**

With all my heart, good youth.

**ROSALIND**

Nay you must call me Rosalind. Come, sister, will you go?

*Exeunt*



# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The forest.

*Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY; JAQUES behind*

### TOUCHSTONE

Come apace, good Audrey: I will fetch up your goats, Audrey. And how, Audrey? am I the man yet? doth my simple feature content you?

### AUDREY

Your features! Lord warrant us! what features!

### TOUCHSTONE

I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.

### JAQUES

[Aside] O knowledge ill-inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatched house!

### TOUCHSTONE

When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child Understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room. Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical.

### AUDREY

I do not know what 'poetical' is: is it honest in deed and word? is it a true thing?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

No, truly; for the truest poetry is the most feigning; and lovers are given to poetry, and what they swear in poetry may be said as lovers they do feign.

## **AUDREY**

Do you wish then that the gods had made me poetical?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

I do, truly; for thou swearest to me thou art honest: now, if thou wert a poet, I might have some hope thou didst feign.

## **AUDREY**

Would you not have me honest?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

No, truly, unless thou wert hard-favoured; for honesty coupled to beauty is to have honey a sauce to sugar.

## **JAQUES**

[Aside] A material fool!

## **AUDREY**

Well, I am not fair; and therefore I pray the gods make me honest.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Truly, and to cast away honesty upon a foul slut were to put good meat into an unclean dish.

## **AUDREY**

I am not a slut, though I thank the gods I am foul.

## TOUCHSTONE

Well, praised be the gods for thy foulness! sluttishness may come hereafter. But be it as it may be, I will marry thee, and to that end I have been with Sir Oliver Martext, the vicar of the next village, who hath promised to meet me in this place of the forest and to couple us.

## JAQUES

[Aside] I would fain see this meeting.

## AUDREY

Well, the gods give us joy!

## TOUCHSTONE

Amen. A man may, if he were of a fearful heart, stagger in this attempt; for here we have no temple but the wood, no assembly but horn-beasts. But what though? Courage! As horns are odious, they are necessary. It is said, 'many a man knows no end of his goods:' right; many a man has good horns, and knows no end of them. Well, that is the dowry of his wife; 'tis none of his own getting. Horns? Even so. Poor men alone? No, no; the noblest deer hath them as huge as the rascal. Is the single man therefore blessed? No: as a walled town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honourable than the bare brow of a bachelor; and by how much defence is better than no skill, by so much is a horn more precious than to want. Here comes Sir Oliver.

*Enter SIR OLIVER MARTEXT*

Sir Oliver Martext, you are well met: will you dispatch us here under this tree, or shall we go

with you to your chapel?

**SIR OLIVER MARTEXT**

Is there none here to give the woman?

**TOUCHSTONE**

I will not take her on gift of any man.

**SIR OLIVER MARTEXT**

Truly, she must be given, or the marriage is not lawful.

**JAQUES**

[Advancing]  
Proceed, proceed I'll give her.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Good even, good Master What-ye-call't: how do you, sir? You are very well met: God 'ild you for your last company: I am very glad to see you: even a toy in hand here, sir: nay, pray be covered.

**JAQUES**

Will you be married, motley?

**TOUCHSTONE**

As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires; and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling.

**JAQUES**

And will you, being a man of your breeding, be married under a bush like a beggar? Get you to church, and have a good priest that can tell you

what marriage is: this fellow will but join you  
together as they join wainscot; then one of you will  
prove a shrunk panel and, like green timber, warp, warp.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

[Aside] I am not in the mind but I were better to be  
married of him than of another: for he is not like  
to marry me well; and not being well married, it  
will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife.

## **JAQUES**

Go thou with me, and let me counsel thee.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

'Come, sweet Audrey:  
We must be married, or we must live in bawdry.  
Farewell, good Master Oliver: not,--  
O sweet Oliver,  
O brave Oliver,  
Leave me not behind thee: but,--  
Wind away,  
Begone, I say,  
I will not to wedding with thee.

*Exeunt JAQUES, TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY*

## **SIR OLIVER MARTEXT**

'Tis no matter: ne'er a fantastical knave of them  
all shall flout me out of my calling.

*Exit*

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The forest.

*Enter ROSALIND and CELIA*

**ROSALIND**

Never talk to me; I will weep.

**CELIA**

Do, I prithee; but yet have the grace to consider  
that tears do not become a man.

**ROSALIND**

But have I not cause to weep?

**CELIA**

As good cause as one would desire; therefore weep.

**ROSALIND**

His very hair is of the dissembling colour.

**CELIA**

Something browner than Judas's marry, his kisses are  
Judas's own children.

**ROSALIND**

I' faith, his hair is of a good colour.

**CELIA**

An excellent colour: your chestnut was ever the only colour.

**ROSALIND**

And his kissing is as full of sanctity as the touch  
of holy bread.

**CELIA**

He hath bought a pair of cast lips of Diana: a nun  
of winter's sisterhood kisses not more religiously;  
the very ice of chastity is in them.

**ROSALIND**

But why did he swear he would come this morning, and  
comes not?

**CELIA**

Nay, certainly, there is no truth in him.

**ROSALIND**

Do you think so?

**CELIA**

Yes; I think he is not a pick-purse nor a  
horse-stealer, but for his verity in love, I do  
think him as concave as a covered goblet or a  
worm-eaten nut.

**ROSALIND**

Not true in love?

**CELIA**

Yes, when he is in; but I think he is not in.

## ROSALIND

You have heard him swear downright he was.

## CELIA

'Was' is not 'is:' besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster; they are both the confirmer of false reckonings. He attends here in the forest on the duke your father.

## ROSALIND

I met the duke yesterday and had much question with him: he asked me of what parentage I was; I told him, of as good as he; so he laughed and let me go. But what talk we of fathers, when there is such a man as Orlando?

## CELIA

O, that's a brave man! he writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover; as a puisny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose: but all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides. Who comes here?

*Enter CORIN*

## CORIN

Mistress and master, you have oft inquired  
After the shepherd that complain'd of love,  
Who you saw sitting by me on the turf,  
Praising the proud disdainful shepherdess  
That was his mistress.

## CELIA



Well, and what of him?

**CORIN**

If you will see a pageant truly play'd,  
Between the pale complexion of true love  
And the red glow of scorn and proud disdain,  
Go hence a little and I shall conduct you,  
If you will mark it.

**ROSALIND**

O, come, let us remove:  
The sight of lovers feedeth those in love.  
Bring us to this sight, and you shall say  
I'll prove a busy actor in their play.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the forest.

*Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE*

### SILVIUS

Sweet Phebe, do not scorn me; do not, Phebe;  
Say that you love me not, but say not so  
In bitterness. The common executioner,  
Whose heart the accustom'd sight of death makes hard,  
Falls not the axe upon the humbled neck  
But first begs pardon: will you sterner be  
Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?

*Enter ROSALIND, CELIA, and CORIN, behind*

### PHEBE

I would not be thy executioner:  
I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.  
Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye:  
'Tis pretty, sure, and very probable,  
That eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things,  
Who shut their coward gates on atomies,  
Should be call'd tyrants, butchers, murderers!  
Now I do frown on thee with all my heart;  
And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee:  
Now counterfeit to swoon; why now fall down;  
Or if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,  
Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers!  
Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee:  
Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains  
Some scar of it; lean but upon a rush,  
The cicatrice and capable impessure  
Thy palm some moment keeps; but now mine eyes,  
Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not,  
Nor, I am sure, there is no force in eyes

That can do hurt.

## SILVIUS

O dear Phebe,  
If ever,--as that ever may be near,--  
You meet in some fresh cheek the power of fancy,  
Then shall you know the wounds invisible  
That love's keen arrows make.

## PHEBE

But till that time  
Come not thou near me: and when that time comes,  
Afflict me with thy mocks, pity me not;  
As till that time I shall not pity thee.

## ROSALIND

And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,  
That you insult, exult, and all at once,  
Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty,--  
As, by my faith, I see no more in you  
Than without candle may go dark to bed--  
Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?  
Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?  
I see no more in you than in the ordinary  
Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,  
I think she means to tangle my eyes too!  
No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it:  
'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,  
Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,  
That can entame my spirits to your worship.  
You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,  
Like foggy south puffing with wind and rain?  
You are a thousand times a properer man  
Than she a woman: 'tis such fools as you  
That makes the world full of ill-favour'd children:  
'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;  
And out of you she sees herself more proper  
Than any of her lineaments can show her.  
But, mistress, know yourself: down on your knees,

And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love:  
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,  
Sell when you can: you are not for all markets:  
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:  
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.  
So take her to thee, shepherd: fare you well.

**PHEBE**

Sweet youth, I pray you, chide a year together:  
I had rather hear you chide than this man woo.

**ROSALIND**

He's fallen in love with your foulness and she'll  
fall in love with my anger. If it be so, as fast as  
she answers thee with frowning looks, I'll sauce her  
with bitter words. Why look you so upon me?

**PHEBE**

For no ill will I bear you.

**ROSALIND**

I pray you, do not fall in love with me,  
For I am falser than vows made in wine:  
Besides, I like you not. If you will know my house,  
'Tis at the tuft of olives here hard by.  
Will you go, sister? Shepherd, ply her hard.  
Come, sister. Shepherdess, look on him better,  
And be not proud: though all the world could see,  
None could be so abused in sight as he.  
Come, to our flock.

*Exeunt ROSALIND, CELIA and CORIN*

**PHEBE**

Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,  
'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?'

**SILVIUS**

Sweet Phebe,--

**PHEBE**

Ha, what say'st thou, Silvius?

**SILVIUS**

Sweet Phebe, pity me.

**PHEBE**

Why, I am sorry for thee, gentle Silvius.

**SILVIUS**

Wherever sorrow is, relief would be:  
If you do sorrow at my grief in love,  
By giving love your sorrow and my grief  
Were both exterminated.

**PHEBE**

Thou hast my love: is not that neighbourly?

**SILVIUS**

I would have you.

**PHEBE**

Why, that were covetousness.  
Silvius, the time was that I hated thee,  
And yet it is not that I bear thee love;  
But since that thou canst talk of love so well,  
Thy company, which erst was irksome to me,  
I will endure, and I'll employ thee too:  
But do not look for further recompense  
Than thine own gladness that thou art employ'd.

## SILVIUS

So holy and so perfect is my love,  
And I in such a poverty of grace,  
That I shall think it a most plenteous crop  
To glean the broken ears after the man  
That the main harvest reaps: loose now and then  
A scatter'd smile, and that I'll live upon.

## PHEBE

Know'st now the youth that spoke to me erewhile?

## SILVIUS

Not very well, but I have met him oft;  
And he hath bought the cottage and the bounds  
That the old carlot once was master of.

## PHEBE

Think not I love him, though I ask for him:  
'Tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well;  
But what care I for words? yet words do well  
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.  
It is a pretty youth: not very pretty:  
But, sure, he's proud, and yet his pride becomes him:  
He'll make a proper man: the best thing in him  
Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue  
Did make offence his eye did heal it up.  
He is not very tall; yet for his years he's tall:  
His leg is but so so; and yet 'tis well:  
There was a pretty redness in his lip,  
A little riper and more lusty red  
Than that mix'd in his cheek; 'twas just the difference  
Between the constant red and mingled damask.  
There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him  
In parcels as I did, would have gone near  
To fall in love with him; but, for my part,  
I love him not nor hate him not; and yet  
I have more cause to hate him than to love him:

For what had he to do to chide at me?  
He said mine eyes were black and my hair black:  
And, now I am remember'd, scorn'd at me:  
I marvel why I answer'd not again:  
But that's all one; omittance is no quittance.  
I'll write to him a very taunting letter,  
And thou shalt bear it: wilt thou, Silvius?

## **SILVIUS**

Phebe, with all my heart.

## **PHEBE**

I'll write it straight;  
The matter's in my head and in my heart:  
I will be bitter with him and passing short.  
Go with me, Silvius.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 3, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The forest.

*Enter ROSALIND, CELIA, and JAQUES*

**JAQUES**

I prithee, pretty youth, let me be better acquainted with thee.

**ROSALIND**

They say you are a melancholy fellow.

**JAQUES**

I am so; I do love it better than laughing.

**ROSALIND**

Those that are in extremity of either are abominable fellows and betray themselves to every modern censure worse than drunkards.

**JAQUES**

Why, 'tis good to be sad and say nothing.

**ROSALIND**

Why then, 'tis good to be a post.

**JAQUES**

I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation, nor the musician's, which is fantastical,



nor the courtier's, which is proud, nor the soldier's, which is ambitious, nor the lawyer's, which is politic, nor the lady's, which is nice, nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry's contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.

## **ROSALIND**

A traveller! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad: I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's; then, to have seen much and to have nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

## **JAQUES**

Yes, I have gained my experience.

## **ROSALIND**

And your experience makes you sad: I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad; and to travel for it too!

*Enter ORLANDO*

## **ORLANDO**

Good day and happiness, dear Rosalind!

## **JAQUES**

Nay, then, God be wi' you, an you talk in blank verse.

*Exit*

## **ROSALIND**

Farewell, Monsieur Traveller: look you lisp and

wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola. Why, how now, Orlando! where have you been all this while? You a lover! An you serve me such another trick, never come in my sight more.

## **ORLANDO**

My fair Rosalind, I come within an hour of my promise.

## **ROSALIND**

Break an hour's promise in love! He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts and break but a part of the thousandth part of a minute in the affairs of love, it may be said of him that Cupid hath clapped him o' the shoulder, but I'll warrant him heart-whole.

## **ORLANDO**

Pardon me, dear Rosalind.

## **ROSALIND**

Nay, an you be so tardy, come no more in my sight: I had as lief be wooed of a snail.

## **ORLANDO**

Of a snail?

## **ROSALIND**

Ay, of a snail; for though he comes slowly, he carries his house on his head; a better jointure, I think, than you make a woman: besides he brings his destiny with him.

**ORLANDO**

What's that?

**ROSALIND**

Why, horns, which such as you are fain to be beholding to your wives for: but he comes armed in his fortune and prevents the slander of his wife.

**ORLANDO**

Virtue is no horn-maker; and my Rosalind is virtuous.

**ROSALIND**

And I am your Rosalind.

**CELIA**

It pleases him to call you so; but he hath a Rosalind of a better leer than you.

**ROSALIND**

Come, woo me, woo me, for now I am in a holiday humour and like enough to consent. What would you say to me now, an I were your very very Rosalind?

**ORLANDO**

I would kiss before I spoke.

**ROSALIND**

Nay, you were better speak first, and when you were gravelled for lack of matter, you might take occasion to kiss. Very good orators, when they are out, they will spit; and for lovers lacking--God warn us!--matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.

**ORLANDO**

How if the kiss be denied?

**ROSALIND**

Then she puts you to entreaty, and there begins new matter.

**ORLANDO**

Who could be out, being before his beloved mistress?

**ROSALIND**

Marry, that should you, if I were your mistress, or  
I should think my honesty ranker than my wit.

**ORLANDO**

What, of my suit?

**ROSALIND**

Not out of your apparel, and yet out of your suit.  
Am not I your Rosalind?

**ORLANDO**

I take some joy to say you are, because I would be  
talking of her.

**ROSALIND**

Well in her person I say I will not have you.

**ORLANDO**

Then in mine own person I die.

**ROSALIND**

No, faith, die by attorney. The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person, videlicet, in a love-cause. Troilus had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club; yet he did what he could to die before, and he is one of the patterns of love. Leander, he would have lived many a fair year, though Hero had turned nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont and being taken with the cramp was drowned and the foolish coroners of that age found it was 'Hero of Sestos.' But these are all lies: men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.

**ORLANDO**

I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind, for, I protest, her frown might kill me.

**ROSALIND**

By this hand, it will not kill a fly. But come, now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on disposition, and ask me what you will. I will grant it.

**ORLANDO**

Then love me, Rosalind.

**ROSALIND**

Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays and all.

**ORLANDO**

And wilt thou have me?

**ROSALIND**

Ay, and twenty such.

**ORLANDO**

What sayest thou?

**ROSALIND**

Are you not good?

**ORLANDO**

I hope so.

**ROSALIND**

Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing?  
Come, sister, you shall be the priest and marry us.  
Give me your hand, Orlando. What do you say, sister?

**ORLANDO**

Pray thee, marry us.

**CELIA**

I cannot say the words.

**ROSALIND**

You must begin, 'Will you, Orlando--'

**CELIA**

Go to. Will you, Orlando, have to wife this Rosalind?

**ORLANDO**

I will.

**ROSALIND**

Ay, but when?

**ORLANDO**

Why now; as fast as she can marry us.

**ROSALIND**

Then you must say 'I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.'

**ORLANDO**

I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.

**ROSALIND**

I might ask you for your commission; but I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband: there's a girl goes before the priest; and certainly a woman's thought runs before her actions.

**ORLANDO**

So do all thoughts; they are winged.

**ROSALIND**

Now tell me how long you would have her after you have possessed her.

**ORLANDO**

For ever and a day.

**ROSALIND**

Say 'a day,' without the 'ever.' No, no, Orlando; men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen,

more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey: I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when thou art inclined to sleep.

**ORLANDO**

But will my Rosalind do so?

**ROSALIND**

By my life, she will do as I do.

**ORLANDO**

O, but she is wise.

**ROSALIND**

Or else she could not have the wit to do this: the wiser, the waywarder: make the doors upon a woman's wit and it will out at the casement; shut that and 'twill out at the key-hole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney.

**ORLANDO**

A man that had a wife with such a wit, he might say 'Wit, whither wilt?'

**ROSALIND**

Nay, you might keep that cheque for it till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbour's bed.

**ORLANDO**

And what wit could wit have to excuse that?



## **ROSALIND**

Marry, to say she came to seek you there. You shall never take her without her answer, unless you take her without her tongue. O, that woman that cannot make her fault her husband's occasion, let her never nurse her child herself, for she will breed it like a fool!

## **ORLANDO**

For these two hours, Rosalind, I will leave thee.

## **ROSALIND**

Alas! dear love, I cannot lack thee two hours.

## **ORLANDO**

I must attend the duke at dinner: by two o'clock I will be with thee again.

## **ROSALIND**

Ay, go your ways, go your ways; I knew what you would prove: my friends told me as much, and I thought no less: that flattering tongue of yours won me: 'tis but one cast away, and so, come, death! Two o'clock is your hour?

## **ORLANDO**

Ay, sweet Rosalind.

## **ROSALIND**

By my troth, and in good earnest, and so God mend me, and by all pretty oaths that are not dangerous, if you break one jot of your promise or come one minute behind your hour, I will think you the most pathological break-promise and the most hollow lover

and the most unworthy of her you call Rosalind that may be chosen out of the gross band of the unfaithful: therefore beware my censure and keep your promise.

**ORLANDO**

With no less religion than if thou wert indeed my Rosalind: so adieu.

**ROSALIND**

Well, Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders, and let Time try: adieu.

*Exit ORLANDO*

**CELIA**

You have simply misused our sex in your love-prate: we must have your doublet and hose plucked over your head, and show the world what the bird hath done to her own nest.

**ROSALIND**

O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love! But it cannot be sounded: my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal.

**CELIA**

Or rather, bottomless, that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out.

**ROSALIND**

No, that same wicked bastard of Venus that was begot of thought, conceived of spleen and born of madness, that blind rascally boy that abuses every one's eyes

because his own are out, let him be judge how deep I  
am in love. I'll tell thee, Aliena, I cannot be out  
of the sight of Orlando: I'll go find a shadow and  
sigh till he come.

**CELIA**

And I'll sleep.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The forest.

*Enter JAQUES, Lords, and Foresters*

**JAQUES**

Which is he that killed the deer?

**A Lord**

Sir, it was I.

**JAQUES**

Let's present him to the duke, like a Roman conqueror; and it would do well to set the deer's horns upon his head, for a branch of victory. Have you no song, forester, for this purpose?

**Forester**

Yes, sir.

**JAQUES**

Sing it: 'tis no matter how it be in tune, so it make noise enough.

SONG.

**Forester**

What shall he have that kill'd the deer?  
His leather skin and horns to wear.  
Then sing him home;

*The rest shall bear this burden*

Take thou no scorn to wear the horn;  
It was a crest ere thou wast born:  
Thy father's father wore it,  
And thy father bore it:  
The horn, the horn, the lusty horn  
Is not a thing to laugh to scorn.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The forest.

*Enter ROSALIND and CELIA*

### ROSALIND

How say you now? Is it not past two o'clock? and here much Orlando!

### CELIA

I warrant you, with pure love and troubled brain, he hath ta'en his bow and arrows and is gone forth to sleep. Look, who comes here.

*Enter SILVIUS*

### SILVIUS

My errand is to you, fair youth;  
My gentle Phebe bid me give you this:  
I know not the contents; but, as I guess  
By the stern brow and waspish action  
Which she did use as she was writing of it,  
It bears an angry tenor: pardon me:  
I am but as a guiltless messenger.

### ROSALIND

Patience herself would startle at this letter  
And play the swaggerer; bear this, bear all:  
She says I am not fair, that I lack manners;  
She calls me proud, and that she could not love me,  
Were man as rare as phoenix. 'Od's my will!  
Her love is not the hare that I do hunt:  
Why writes she so to me? Well, shepherd, well,

This is a letter of your own device.

**SILVIUS**

No, I protest, I know not the contents:  
Phebe did write it.

**ROSALIND**

Come, come, you are a fool  
And turn'd into the extremity of love.  
I saw her hand: she has a leathern hand.  
A freestone-colour'd hand; I verily did think  
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands:  
She has a huswife's hand; but that's no matter:  
I say she never did invent this letter;  
This is a man's invention and his hand.

**SILVIUS**

Sure, it is hers.

**ROSALIND**

Why, 'tis a boisterous and a cruel style.  
A style for-challengers; why, she defies me,  
Like Turk to Christian: women's gentle brain  
Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention  
Such Ethiopie words, blacker in their effect  
Than in their countenance. Will you hear the letter?

**SILVIUS**

So please you, for I never heard it yet;  
Yet heard too much of Phebe's cruelty.

**ROSALIND**

She Phebes me: mark how the tyrant writes.

*Reads*

Art thou god to shepherd turn'd,  
That a maiden's heart hath burn'd?  
Can a woman rail thus?

**SILVIUS**

Call you this railing?

**ROSALIND**

[Reads]

Why, thy godhead laid apart,  
Warr'st thou with a woman's heart?  
Did you ever hear such railing?  
Whiles the eye of man did woo me,  
That could do no vengeance to me.  
Meaning me a beast.  
If the scorn of your bright eyne  
Have power to raise such love in mine,  
Alack, in me what strange effect  
Would they work in mild aspect!  
Whiles you chid me, I did love;  
How then might your prayers move!  
He that brings this love to thee  
Little knows this love in me:  
And by him seal up thy mind;  
Whether that thy youth and kind  
Will the faithful offer take  
Of me and all that I can make;  
Or else by him my love deny,  
And then I'll study how to die.

**SILVIUS**

Call you this chiding?

**CELIA**

Alas, poor shepherd!

**ROSALIND**



Do you pity him? no, he deserves no pity. Wilt thou love such a woman? What, to make thee an instrument and play false strains upon thee! not to be endured! Well, go your way to her, for I see love hath made thee a tame snake, and say this to her: that if she love me, I charge her to love thee; if she will not, I will never have her unless thou entreat for her. If you be a true lover, hence, and not a word; for here comes more company.

*Exit SILVIUS*

*Enter OLIVER*

**OLIVER**

Good morrow, fair ones: pray you, if you know,  
Where in the purlieus of this forest stands  
A sheep-cote fenced about with olive trees?

**CELIA**

West of this place, down in the neighbour bottom:  
The rank of osiers by the murmuring stream  
Left on your right hand brings you to the place.  
But at this hour the house doth keep itself;  
There's none within.

**OLIVER**

If that an eye may profit by a tongue,  
Then should I know you by description;  
Such garments and such years: 'The boy is fair,  
Of female favour, and bestows himself  
Like a ripe sister: the woman low  
And browner than her brother.' Are not you  
The owner of the house I did inquire for?

**CELIA**

It is no boast, being ask'd, to say we are.

## **OLIVER**

Orlando doth commend him to you both,  
And to that youth he calls his Rosalind  
He sends this bloody napkin. Are you he?

## **ROSALIND**

I am: what must we understand by this?

## **OLIVER**

Some of my shame; if you will know of me  
What man I am, and how, and why, and where  
This handkercher was stain'd.

## **CELIA**

I pray you, tell it.

## **OLIVER**

When last the young Orlando parted from you  
He left a promise to return again  
Within an hour, and pacing through the forest,  
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,  
Lo, what befell! he threw his eye aside,  
And mark what object did present itself:  
Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age  
And high top bald with dry antiquity,  
A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,  
Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck  
A green and gilded snake had wreathed itself,  
Who with her head nimble in threats approach'd  
The opening of his mouth; but suddenly,  
Seeing Orlando, it unlink'd itself,  
And with indented glides did slip away  
Into a bush: under which bush's shade  
A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,  
Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch,  
When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis  
The royal disposition of that beast

To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead:  
This seen, Orlando did approach the man  
And found it was his brother, his elder brother.

**CELIA**

O, I have heard him speak of that same brother;  
And he did render him the most unnatural  
That lived amongst men.

**OLIVER**

And well he might so do,  
For well I know he was unnatural.

**ROSALIND**

But, to Orlando: did he leave him there,  
Food to the suck'd and hungry lioness?

**OLIVER**

Twice did he turn his back and purposed so;  
But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,  
And nature, stronger than his just occasion,  
Made him give battle to the lioness,  
Who quickly fell before him: in which hurtling  
From miserable slumber I awaked.

**CELIA**

Are you his brother?

**ROSALIND**

Wast you he rescued?

**CELIA**

Was't you that did so oft contrive to kill him?

## **OLIVER**

'Twas I; but 'tis not I I do not shame  
To tell you what I was, since my conversion  
So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am.

## **ROSALIND**

But, for the bloody napkin?

## **OLIVER**

By and by.  
When from the first to last betwixt us two  
Tears our recountments had most kindly bathed,  
As how I came into that desert place:--  
In brief, he led me to the gentle duke,  
Who gave me fresh array and entertainment,  
Committing me unto my brother's love;  
Who led me instantly unto his cave,  
There stripp'd himself, and here upon his arm  
The lioness had torn some flesh away,  
Which all this while had bled; and now he fainted  
And cried, in fainting, upon Rosalind.  
Brief, I recover'd him, bound up his wound;  
And, after some small space, being strong at heart,  
He sent me hither, stranger as I am,  
To tell this story, that you might excuse  
His broken promise, and to give this napkin  
Dyed in his blood unto the shepherd youth  
That he in sport doth call his Rosalind.

*ROSALIND swoons*

## **CELIA**

Why, how now, Ganymede! sweet Ganymede!

## **OLIVER**

Many will swoon when they do look on blood.

**CELIA**

There is more in it. Cousin Ganymede!

**OLIVER**

Look, he recovers.

**ROSALIND**

I would I were at home.

**CELIA**

We'll lead you thither.  
I pray you, will you take him by the arm?

**OLIVER**

Be of good cheer, youth: you a man! you lack a  
man's heart.

**ROSALIND**

I do so, I confess it. Ah, sirrah, a body would  
think this was well counterfeited! I pray you, tell  
your brother how well I counterfeited. Heigh-ho!

**OLIVER**

This was not counterfeit: there is too great  
testimony in your complexion that it was a passion  
of earnest.

**ROSALIND**

Counterfeit, I assure you.

**OLIVER**

Well then, take a good heart and counterfeit to be a man.

## **ROSALIND**

So I do: but, i' faith, I should have been a woman by right.

## **CELIA**

Come, you look paler and paler: pray you, draw  
homewards. Good sir, go with us.

## **OLIVER**

That will I, for I must bear answer back  
How you excuse my brother, Rosalind.

## **ROSALIND**

I shall devise something: but, I pray you, commend  
my counterfeiting to him. Will you go?

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The forest.

*Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY*

**TOUCHSTONE**

We shall find a time, Audrey; patience, gentle Audrey.

**AUDREY**

Faith, the priest was good enough, for all the old gentleman's saying.

**TOUCHSTONE**

A most wicked Sir Oliver, Audrey, a most vile Martext. But, Audrey, there is a youth here in the forest lays claim to you.

**AUDREY**

Ay, I know who 'tis; he hath no interest in me in the world: here comes the man you mean.

**TOUCHSTONE**

It is meat and drink to me to see a clown: by my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for; we shall be flouting; we cannot hold.

*Enter WILLIAM*

**WILLIAM**

Good even, Audrey.

**AUDREY**

God ye good even, William.

**WILLIAM**

And good even to you, sir.

**TOUCHSTONE**

Good even, gentle friend. Cover thy head, cover thy head; nay, prithee, be covered. How old are you, friend?

**WILLIAM**

Five and twenty, sir.

**TOUCHSTONE**

A ripe age. Is thy name William?

**WILLIAM**

William, sir.

**TOUCHSTONE**

A fair name. Wast born i' the forest here?

**WILLIAM**

Ay, sir, I thank God.

**TOUCHSTONE**

'Thank God;' a good answer. Art rich?

**WILLIAM**

Faith, sir, so so.



## **TOUCHSTONE**

'So so' is good, very good, very excellent good; and yet it is not; it is but so so. Art thou wise?

## **WILLIAM**

Ay, sir, I have a pretty wit.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Why, thou sayest well. I do now remember a saying, 'The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.' The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth; meaning thereby that grapes were made to eat and lips to open. You do love this maid?

## **WILLIAM**

I do, sir.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Give me your hand. Art thou learned?

## **WILLIAM**

No, sir.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Then learn this of me: to have, is to have; for it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other; for all your writers do consent that ipse is he: now, you are not ipse, for I am he.

## **WILLIAM**

Which he, sir?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

He, sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon,--which is in the vulgar leave,--the society,--which in the boorish is company,--of this female,--which in the common is woman; which together is, abandon the society of this female, or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage: I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel; I will bandy with thee in faction; I will o'errun thee with policy; I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways: therefore tremble and depart.

## **AUDREY**

Do, good William.

## **WILLIAM**

God rest you merry, sir.

*Exit*

*Enter CORIN*

## **CORIN**

Our master and mistress seeks you; come, away, away!

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Trip, Audrey! trip, Audrey! I attend, I attend.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The forest.

*Enter ORLANDO and OLIVER*

### ORLANDO

Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her? that but seeing you should love her? and loving woo? and, wooing, she should grant? and will you persever to enjoy her?

### OLIVER

Neither call the giddiness of it in question, the poverty of her, the small acquaintance, my sudden wooing, nor her sudden consenting; but say with me, I love Aliena; say with her that she loves me; consent with both that we may enjoy each other: it shall be to your good; for my father's house and all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland's will I estate upon you, and here live and die a shepherd.

### ORLANDO

You have my consent. Let your wedding be to-morrow: thither will I invite the duke and all's contented followers. Go you and prepare Aliena; for look you, here comes my Rosalind.

*Enter ROSALIND*

### ROSALIND

God save you, brother.

### OLIVER

And you, fair sister.

*Exit*

**ROSALIND**

O, my dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see thee  
wear thy heart in a scarf!

**ORLANDO**

It is my arm.

**ROSALIND**

I thought thy heart had been wounded with the claws  
of a lion.

**ORLANDO**

Wounded it is, but with the eyes of a lady.

**ROSALIND**

Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited to  
swoon when he showed me your handkerchief?

**ORLANDO**

Ay, and greater wonders than that.

**ROSALIND**

O, I know where you are: nay, 'tis true: there was  
never any thing so sudden but the fight of two rams  
and Caesar's thrasonical brag of 'I came, saw, and  
overcame:' for your brother and my sister no sooner  
met but they looked, no sooner looked but they  
loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner  
sighed but they asked one another the reason, no

sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage which they will climb incontinent, or else be incontinent before marriage: they are in the very wrath of love and they will together; clubs cannot part them.

## **ORLANDO**

They shall be married to-morrow, and I will bid the duke to the nuptial. But, O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

## **ROSALIND**

Why then, to-morrow I cannot serve your turn for Rosalind?

## **ORLANDO**

I can live no longer by thinking.

## **ROSALIND**

I will weary you then no longer with idle talking. Know of me then, for now I speak to some purpose, that I know you are a gentleman of good conceit: I speak not this that you should bear a good opinion of my knowledge, insomuch I say I know you are; neither do I labour for a greater esteem than may in some little measure draw a belief from you, to do yourself good and not to grace me. Believe then, if you please, that I can do strange things: I have, since I was three year old, conversed with a magician, most profound in his art and yet not damnable. If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your gesture cries it out, when your brother marries Aliena, shall you marry her: I know into what straits of fortune she is driven; and it is not impossible to me, if it appear not inconvenient

to you, to set her before your eyes tomorrow human  
as she is and without any danger.

**ORLANDO**

Speakest thou in sober meanings?

**ROSALIND**

By my life, I do; which I tender dearly, though I  
say I am a magician. Therefore, put you in your  
best array: bid your friends; for if you will be  
married to-morrow, you shall, and to Rosalind, if you will.

*Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE*

Look, here comes a lover of mine and a lover of hers.

**PHEBE**

Youth, you have done me much ungentleness,  
To show the letter that I writ to you.

**ROSALIND**

I care not if I have: it is my study  
To seem spiteful and ungentle to you:  
You are there followed by a faithful shepherd;  
Look upon him, love him; he worships you.

**PHEBE**

Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love.

**SILVIUS**

It is to be all made of sighs and tears;  
And so am I for Phebe.

**PHEBE**

And I for Ganymede.

**ORLANDO**

And I for Rosalind.

**ROSALIND**

And I for no woman.

**SILVIUS**

It is to be all made of faith and service;  
And so am I for Phebe.

**PHEBE**

And I for Ganymede.

**ORLANDO**

And I for Rosalind.

**ROSALIND**

And I for no woman.

**SILVIUS**

It is to be all made of fantasy,  
All made of passion and all made of wishes,  
All adoration, duty, and observance,  
All humbleness, all patience and impatience,  
All purity, all trial, all observance;  
And so am I for Phebe.

**PHEBE**

And so am I for Ganymede.

**ORLANDO**



And so am I for Rosalind.

**ROSALIND**

And so am I for no woman.

**PHEBE**

If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

**SILVIUS**

If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

**ORLANDO**

If this be so, why blame you me to love you?

**ROSALIND**

Who do you speak to, 'Why blame you me to love you?'

**ORLANDO**

To her that is not here, nor doth not hear.

**ROSALIND**

Pray you, no more of this; 'tis like the howling  
of Irish wolves against the moon.

*To SILVIUS*

I will help you, if I can:

*To PHEBE*

I would love you, if I could. To-morrow meet me all together.

*To PHEBE*

I will marry you, if ever I marry woman, and I'll be married to-morrow:

*To ORLANDO*

I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfied man, and you shall be married to-morrow:

*To SILVIUS*

I will content you, if what pleases you contents you, and you shall be married to-morrow.

*To ORLANDO*

As you love Rosalind, meet:

*To SILVIUS*

as you love Phebe, meet: and as I love no woman, I'll meet. So fare you well: I have left you commands.

**SILVIUS**

I'll not fail, if I live.

**PHEBE**

Nor I.

**ORLANDO**

Nor I.

*Exeunt*

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The forest.

*Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY*

### TOUCHSTONE

To-morrow is the joyful day, Audrey; to-morrow will we be married.

### AUDREY

I do desire it with all my heart; and I hope it is no dishonest desire to desire to be a woman of the world. Here comes two of the banished duke's pages.

*Enter two Pages*

### First Page

Well met, honest gentleman.

### TOUCHSTONE

By my troth, well met. Come, sit, sit, and a song.

### Second Page

We are for you: sit i' the middle.

### First Page

Shall we clap into't roundly, without hawking or spitting or saying we are hoarse, which are the only prologues to a bad voice?

## Second Page

I'faith, i'faith; and both in a tune, like two  
gipsies on a horse.

SONG.

It was a lover and his lass,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
That o'er the green corn-field did pass  
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,  
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:  
Sweet lovers love the spring.  
Between the acres of the rye,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino  
These pretty country folks would lie,  
In spring time, & c.  
This carol they began that hour,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,  
How that a life was but a flower  
In spring time, & c.  
And therefore take the present time,  
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino;  
For love is crowned with the prime  
In spring time, & c.

## TOUCHSTONE

Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great  
matter in the ditty, yet the note was very  
untuneable.

## First Page

You are deceived, sir: we kept time, we lost not our time.

## TOUCHSTONE

By my troth, yes; I count it but time lost to hear  
such a foolish song. God be wi' you; and God mend  
your voices! Come, Audrey.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# As You Like It

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [As You Like It](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The forest.

*Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, JAQUES, ORLANDO, OLIVER, and CELIA*

### DUKE SENIOR

Dost thou believe, Orlando, that the boy  
Can do all this that he hath promised?

### ORLANDO

I sometimes do believe, and sometimes do not;  
As those that fear they hope, and know they fear.

*Enter ROSALIND, SILVIUS, and PHEBE*

### ROSALIND

Patience once more, whiles our compact is urged:  
You say, if I bring in your Rosalind,  
You will bestow her on Orlando here?

### DUKE SENIOR

That would I, had I kingdoms to give with her.

### ROSALIND

And you say, you will have her, when I bring her?

### ORLANDO

That would I, were I of all kingdoms king.

### ROSALIND

You say, you'll marry me, if I be willing?

**PHEBE**

That will I, should I die the hour after.

**ROSALIND**

But if you do refuse to marry me,  
You'll give yourself to this most faithful shepherd?

**PHEBE**

So is the bargain.

**ROSALIND**

You say, that you'll have Phebe, if she will?

**SILVIUS**

Though to have her and death were both one thing.

**ROSALIND**

I have promised to make all this matter even.  
Keep you your word, O duke, to give your daughter;  
You yours, Orlando, to receive his daughter:  
Keep your word, Phebe, that you'll marry me,  
Or else refusing me, to wed this shepherd:  
Keep your word, Silvius, that you'll marry her.  
If she refuse me: and from hence I go,  
To make these doubts all even.

*Exeunt ROSALIND and CELIA*

**DUKE SENIOR**

I do remember in this shepherd boy  
Some lively touches of my daughter's favour.

## **ORLANDO**

My lord, the first time that I ever saw him  
Methought he was a brother to your daughter:  
But, my good lord, this boy is forest-born,  
And hath been tutor'd in the rudiments  
Of many desperate studies by his uncle,  
Whom he reports to be a great magician,  
Obscured in the circle of this forest.

*Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY*

## **JAQUES**

There is, sure, another flood toward, and these  
couples are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of  
very strange beasts, which in all tongues are called fools.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

Salutation and greeting to you all!

## **JAQUES**

Good my lord, bid him welcome: this is the  
motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in  
the forest: he hath been a courtier, he swears.

## **TOUCHSTONE**

If any man doubt that, let him put me to my  
purgation. I have trod a measure; I have flattered  
a lady; I have been politic with my friend, smooth  
with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have  
had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.

## **JAQUES**

And how was that ta'en up?

## **TOUCHSTONE**



Faith, we met, and found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause.

**JAQUES**

How seventh cause? Good my lord, like this fellow.

**DUKE SENIOR**

I like him very well.

**TOUCHSTONE**

God 'ild you, sir; I desire you of the like. I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives, to swear and to forswear: according as marriage binds and blood breaks: a poor virgin, sir, an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own; a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that that no man else will: rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house; as your pearl in your foul oyster.

**DUKE SENIOR**

By my faith, he is very swift and sententious.

**TOUCHSTONE**

According to the fool's bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases.

**JAQUES**

But, for the seventh cause; how did you find the quarrel on the seventh cause?

**TOUCHSTONE**

Upon a lie seven times removed:--bear your body more seeming, Audrey:--as thus, sir. I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard: he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the

mind it was: this is called the Retort Courteous. If I sent him word again 'it was not well cut,' he would send me word, he cut it to please himself: this is called the Quip Modest. If again 'it was not well cut,' he disabled my judgment: this is called the Reply Churlish. If again 'it was not well cut,' he would answer, I spake not true: this is called the Reproof Valiant. If again 'it was not well cut,' he would say I lied: this is called the Counter-cheque Quarrelsome: and so to the Lie Circumstantial and the Lie Direct.

## **JAQUES**

And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

I durst go no further than the Lie Circumstantial, nor he durst not give me the Lie Direct; and so we measured swords and parted.

## **JAQUES**

Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?

## **TOUCHSTONE**

O sir, we quarrel in print, by the book; as you have books for good manners: I will name you the degrees. The first, the Retort Courteous; the second, the Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Countercheque Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct. All these you may avoid but the Lie Direct; and you may avoid that too, with an If. I knew when seven justices could not take up a quarrel, but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an If, as, 'If you said so, then I said so;' and they shook hands and swore brothers. Your If is the only peacemaker; much virtue in If.

## **JAQUES**

Is not this a rare fellow, my lord? he's as good at any thing and yet a fool.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

He uses his folly like a stalking-horse and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

*Enter HYMEN, ROSALIND, and CELIA*

*Still Music*

## **HYMEN**

Then is there mirth in heaven,  
When earthly things made even  
Atone together.  
Good duke, receive thy daughter  
Hymen from heaven brought her,  
Yea, brought her hither,  
That thou mightst join her hand with his  
Whose heart within his bosom is.

## **ROSALIND**

[To DUKE SENIOR] To you I give myself, for I am yours.

*To ORLANDO*

To you I give myself, for I am yours.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.

## **ORLANDO**

If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.

## **PHEBE**

If sight and shape be true,  
Why then, my love adieu!

## **ROSALIND**

I'll have no father, if you be not he:  
I'll have no husband, if you be not he:  
Nor ne'er wed woman, if you be not she.

## **HYMEN**

Peace, ho! I bar confusion:  
'Tis I must make conclusion  
Of these most strange events:  
Here's eight that must take hands  
To join in Hymen's bands,  
If truth holds true contents.  
You and you no cross shall part:  
You and you are heart in heart  
You to his love must accord,  
Or have a woman to your lord:  
You and you are sure together,  
As the winter to foul weather.  
Whiles a wedlock-hymn we sing,  
Feed yourselves with questioning;  
That reason wonder may diminish,  
How thus we met, and these things finish.

SONG.

Wedding is great Juno's crown:  
O blessed bond of board and bed!  
'Tis Hymen peoples every town;  
High wedlock then be honoured:  
Honour, high honour and renown,  
To Hymen, god of every town!

## **DUKE SENIOR**

O my dear niece, welcome thou art to me!  
Even daughter, welcome, in no less degree.

## **PHEBE**

I will not eat my word, now thou art mine;  
Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine.

*Enter JAQUES DE BOYS*

## **JAQUES DE BOYS**

Let me have audience for a word or two:  
I am the second son of old Sir Rowland,  
That bring these tidings to this fair assembly.  
Duke Frederick, hearing how that every day  
Men of great worth resorted to this forest,  
Address'd a mighty power; which were on foot,  
In his own conduct, purposely to take  
His brother here and put him to the sword:  
And to the skirts of this wild wood he came;  
Where meeting with an old religious man,  
After some question with him, was converted  
Both from his enterprise and from the world,  
His crown bequeathing to his banish'd brother,  
And all their lands restored to them again  
That were with him exiled. This to be true,  
I do engage my life.

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Welcome, young man;  
Thou offer'st fairly to thy brothers' wedding:  
To one his lands withheld, and to the other  
A land itself at large, a potent dukedom.  
First, in this forest, let us do those ends  
That here were well begun and well begot:  
And after, every of this happy number  
That have endured shrewd days and nights with us  
Shall share the good of our returned fortune,  
According to the measure of their states.  
Meantime, forget this new-fall'n dignity  
And fall into our rustic revelry.  
Play, music! And you, brides and bridegrooms all,  
With measure heap'd in joy, to the measures fall.

## JAQUES

Sir, by your patience. If I heard you rightly,  
The duke hath put on a religious life  
And thrown into neglect the pompous court?

## JAQUES DE BOYS

He hath.

## JAQUES

To him will I : out of these convertites  
There is much matter to be heard and learn'd.

*To DUKE SENIOR*

You to your former honour I bequeath;  
Your patience and your virtue well deserves it:

*To ORLANDO*

You to a love that your true faith doth merit:

*To OLIVER*

You to your land and love and great allies:

*To SILVIUS*

You to a long and well-deserved bed:

*To TOUCHSTONE*

And you to wrangling; for thy loving voyage  
Is but for two months victuall'd. So, to your pleasures:  
I am for other than for dancing measures.

## DUKE SENIOR

Stay, Jaques, stay.

## **JAQUES**

To see no pastime I what you would have  
I'll stay to know at your abandon'd cave.

*Exit*

## **DUKE SENIOR**

Proceed, proceed: we will begin these rites,  
As we do trust they'll end, in true delights.

*A dance*

## **EPILOGUE**

## **ROSALIND**

It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue;  
but it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord  
the prologue. If it be true that good wine needs  
no bush, 'tis true that a good play needs no  
epilogue; yet to good wine they do use good bushes,  
and good plays prove the better by the help of good  
epilogues. What a case am I in then, that am  
neither a good epilogue nor cannot insinuate with  
you in the behalf of a good play! I am not  
furnished like a beggar, therefore to beg will not  
become me: my way is to conjure you; and I'll begin  
with the women. I charge you, O women, for the love  
you bear to men, to like as much of this play as  
please you: and I charge you, O men, for the love  
you bear to women--as I perceive by your simpering,  
none of you hates them--that between you and the  
women the play may please. If I were a woman I  
would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased  
me, complexions that liked me and breaths that I  
defied not: and, I am sure, as many as have good  
beards or good faces or sweet breaths will, for my  
kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell.

*Exeunt*



# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Comedy of Errors

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [A hall in DUKE SOLINUS'S palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The Mart.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A public place.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [A public place.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [A public place.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [A street.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [A street before a Priory.](#)

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A hall in DUKE SOLINUS'S palace.

*Enter DUKE SOLINUS, AEGEON, Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants*

### AEGEON

Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall  
And by the doom of death end woes and all.

### DUKE SOLINUS

Merchant of Syracuse, plead no more;  
I am not partial to infringe our laws:  
The enmity and discord which of late  
Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke  
To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,  
Who wanting guilders to redeem their lives  
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,  
Excludes all pity from our threatening looks.  
For, since the mortal and intestine jars  
'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,  
It hath in solemn synods been decreed  
Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,  
To admit no traffic to our adverse towns  
Nay, more,  
If any born at Ephesus be seen  
At any Syracusian marts and fairs;  
Again: if any Syracusian born  
Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,  
His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose,  
Unless a thousand marks be levied,  
To quit the penalty and to ransom him.  
Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,  
Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;  
Therefore by law thou art condemned to die.

### AEGEON

Yet this my comfort: when your words are done,  
My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

Well, Syracusan, say in brief the cause  
Why thou departed'st from thy native home  
And for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.

## **AEGEON**

A heavier task could not have been imposed  
Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable:  
Yet, that the world may witness that my end  
Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,  
I'll utter what my sorrows give me leave.  
In Syracuse was I born, and wed  
Unto a woman, happy but for me,  
And by me, had not our hap been bad.  
With her I lived in joy; our wealth increased  
By prosperous voyages I often made  
To Epidamnum; till my factor's death  
And the great care of goods at random left  
Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse:  
From whom my absence was not six months old  
Before herself, almost at fainting under  
The pleasing punishment that women bear,  
Had made provision for her following me  
And soon and safe arrived where I was.  
There had she not been long, but she became  
A joyful mother of two goodly sons;  
And, which was strange, the one so like the other,  
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.  
That very hour, and in the self-same inn,  
A meaner woman was delivered  
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike:  
Those,--for their parents were exceeding poor,--  
I bought and brought up to attend my sons.  
My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,  
Made daily motions for our home return:  
Unwilling I agreed. Alas! too soon,  
We came aboard.

A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,  
Before the always wind-obeying deep  
Gave any tragic instance of our harm:  
But longer did we not retain much hope;  
For what obscured light the heavens did grant  
Did but convey unto our fearful minds  
A doubtful warrant of immediate death;  
Which though myself would gladly have embraced,  
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,  
Weeping before for what she saw must come,  
And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,  
That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,  
Forced me to seek delays for them and me.  
And this it was, for other means was none:  
The sailors sought for safety by our boat,  
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us:  
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,  
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast,  
Such as seafaring men provide for storms;  
To him one of the other twins was bound,  
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other:  
The children thus disposed, my wife and I,  
Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,  
Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast;  
And floating straight, obedient to the stream,  
Was carried towards Corinth, as we thought.  
At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,  
Dispersed those vapours that offended us;  
And by the benefit of his wished light,  
The seas wax'd calm, and we discovered  
Two ships from far making amain to us,  
Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this:  
But ere they came,--O, let me say no more!  
Gather the sequel by that went before.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

Nay, forward, old man; do not break off so;  
For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

## **AEGEON**

O, had the gods done so, I had not now

Worthily term'd them merciless to us!  
For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,  
We were encounter'd by a mighty rock;  
Which being violently borne upon,  
Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst;  
So that, in this unjust divorce of us,  
Fortune had left to both of us alike  
What to delight in, what to sorrow for.  
Her part, poor soul! seeming as burdened  
With lesser weight but not with lesser woe,  
Was carried with more speed before the wind;  
And in our sight they three were taken up  
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.  
At length, another ship had seized on us;  
And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,  
Gave healthful welcome to their shipwreck'd guests;  
And would have reft the fishers of their prey,  
Had not their bark been very slow of sail;  
And therefore homeward did they bend their course.  
Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss;  
That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd,  
To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

And for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,  
Do me the favour to dilate at full  
What hath befall'n of them and thee till now.

## **AEGEON**

My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,  
At eighteen years became inquisitive  
After his brother: and importuned me  
That his attendant--so his case was like,  
Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name--  
Might bear him company in the quest of him:  
Whom whilst I labour'd of a love to see,  
I hazarded the loss of whom I loved.  
Five summers have I spent in furthest Greece,  
Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,  
And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus;  
Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought

Or that or any place that harbours men.  
But here must end the story of my life;  
And happy were I in my timely death,  
Could all my travels warrant me they live.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

Hapless AEgeon, whom the fates have mark'd  
To bear the extremity of dire mishap!  
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,  
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,  
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,  
My soul would sue as advocate for thee.  
But, though thou art adjudged to the death  
And passed sentence may not be recall'd  
But to our honour's great disparagement,  
Yet I will favour thee in what I can.  
Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day  
To seek thy life by beneficial help:  
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus;  
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,  
And live; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.  
Gaoler, take him to thy custody.

## **Gaoler**

I will, my lord.

## **AEGEON**

Hopeless and helpless doth AEgeon wend,  
But to procrastinate his lifeless end.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The Mart.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, DROMIO of Syracuse, and First Merchant*

### First Merchant

Therefore give out you are of Epidamnum,  
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.  
This very day a Syracusian merchant  
Is apprehended for arrival here;  
And not being able to buy out his life  
According to the statute of the town,  
Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.  
There is your money that I had to keep.  
ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

Go bear it to the Centaur, where we host,  
And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.  
Within this hour it will be dinner-time:  
Till that, I'll view the manners of the town,  
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,  
And then return and sleep within mine inn,  
For with long travel I am stiff and weary.  
Get thee away.

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Many a man would take you at your word,  
And go indeed, having so good a mean.

*Exit*

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

A trusty villain, sir, that very oft,  
When I am dull with care and melancholy,  
Lightens my humour with his merry jests.  
What, will you walk with me about the town,  
And then go to my inn and dine with me?

### First Merchant

I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,  
Of whom I hope to make much benefit;  
I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,  
Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart  
And afterward consort you till bed-time:  
My present business calls me from you now.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

Farewell till then: I will go lose myself  
And wander up and down to view the city.

### First Merchant

Sir, I commend you to your own content.

*Exit*

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

He that commends me to mine own content  
Commends me to the thing I cannot get.  
I to the world am like a drop of water  
That in the ocean seeks another drop,  
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,  
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself:  
So I, to find a mother and a brother,  
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.



*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus*

Here comes the almanac of my true date.  
What now? how chance thou art return'd so soon?

### **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Return'd so soon! rather approach'd too late:  
The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit,  
The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell;  
My mistress made it one upon my cheek:  
She is so hot because the meat is cold;  
The meat is cold because you come not home;  
You come not home because you have no stomach;  
You have no stomach having broke your fast;  
But we that know what 'tis to fast and pray  
Are penitent for your default to-day.  
ANTIPHOLUS

### **OF SYRACUSE**

Stop in your wind, sir: tell me this, I pray:  
Where have you left the money that I gave you?

### **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

O,--sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last  
To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper?  
The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.  
ANTIPHOLUS

### **OF SYRACUSE**

I am not in a sportive humour now:  
Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?  
We being strangers here, how darest thou trust  
So great a charge from thine own custody?

### **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

I pray you, air, as you sit at dinner:  
I from my mistress come to you in post;

If I return, I shall be post indeed,  
For she will score your fault upon my pate.  
Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock,  
And strike you home without a messenger.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season;  
Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.  
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

To me, sir? why, you gave no gold to me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Come on, sir knave, have done your foolishness,  
And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

My charge was but to fetch you from the mart  
Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner:  
My mistress and her sister stays for you.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

In what safe place you have bestow'd my money,  
Or I shall break that merry sponce of yours  
That stands on tricks when I am undisposed:  
Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me?

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,  
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,  
But not a thousand marks between you both.

If I should pay your worship those again,  
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Thy mistress' marks? what mistress, slave, hast thou?

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

Your worship's wife, my mistress at the Phoenix;  
She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,  
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,  
Being forbid? There, take you that, sir knave.

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

What mean you, sir? for God's sake, hold your hands!  
Nay, and you will not, sir, I'll take my heels.

*Exit*

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Upon my life, by some device or other  
The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.  
They say this town is full of cozenage,  
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,  
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,  
Soul-killing witches that deform the body,  
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,  
And many such-like liberties of sin:  
If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.  
I'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave:  
I greatly fear my money is not safe.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

**ADRIANA**

Neither my husband nor the slave return'd,  
That in such haste I sent to seek his master!  
Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

**LUCIANA**

Perhaps some merchant hath invited him,  
And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.  
Good sister, let us dine and never fret:  
A man is master of his liberty:  
Time is their master, and, when they see time,  
They'll go or come: if so, be patient, sister.

**ADRIANA**

Why should their liberty than ours be more?

**LUCIANA**

Because their business still lies out o' door.

**ADRIANA**

Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.

**LUCIANA**

O, know he is the bridle of your will.

**ADRIANA**

There's none but asses will be bridled so.

**LUCIANA**

Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.  
There's nothing situate under heaven's eye  
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:  
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,  
Are their males' subjects and at their controls:  
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,  
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,  
Indued with intellectual sense and souls,  
Of more preeminence than fish and fowls,  
Are masters to their females, and their lords:  
Then let your will attend on their accords.

**ADRIANA**

This servitude makes you to keep unwed.

**LUCIANA**

Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.

**ADRIANA**

But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.

**LUCIANA**

Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.

**ADRIANA**

How if your husband start some other where?

**LUCIANA**

Till he come home again, I would forbear.

## **ADRIANA**

Patience unmoved! no marvel though she pause;  
They can be meek that have no other cause.  
A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,  
We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;  
But were we burdened with like weight of pain,  
As much or more would we ourselves complain:  
So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,  
With urging helpless patience wouldst relieve me,  
But, if thou live to see like right bereft,  
This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.

## **LUCIANA**

Well, I will marry one day, but to try.  
Here comes your man; now is your husband nigh.

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus*

## **ADRIANA**

Say, is your tardy master now at hand?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that my two ears  
can witness.

## **ADRIANA**

Say, didst thou speak with him? know'st thou his mind?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear:  
Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

## **LUCIANA**

Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel his meaning?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well feel his blows; and withal so doubtfully that I could scarce understand them.

## **ADRIANA**

But say, I prithee, is he coming home? It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

## **ADRIANA**

Horn-mad, thou villain!

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

I mean not cuckold-mad;  
But, sure, he is stark mad.  
When I desired him to come home to dinner,  
He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold:  
'Tis dinner-time,' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he;  
'Your meat doth burn,' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he:  
'Will you come home?' quoth I; 'My gold!' quoth he.  
'Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?'  
'The pig,' quoth I, 'is burn'd;' 'My gold!' quoth he:  
'My mistress, sir' quoth I; 'Hang up thy mistress!  
I know not thy mistress; out on thy mistress!'

## **LUCIANA**

Quoth who?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Quoth my master:  
'I know,' quoth he, 'no house, no wife, no mistress.'



So that my errand, due unto my tongue,  
I thank him, I bare home upon my shoulders;  
For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

**ADRIANA**

Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

Go back again, and be new beaten home?  
For God's sake, send some other messenger.

**ADRIANA**

Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

And he will bless that cross with other beating:  
Between you I shall have a holy head.

**ADRIANA**

Hence, prating peasant! fetch thy master home.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

Am I so round with you as you with me,  
That like a football you do spurn me thus?  
You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither:  
If I last in this service, you must case me in leather.

*Exit*

**LUCIANA**

Fie, how impatience loureth in your face!

**ADRIANA**

His company must do his minions grace,  
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.  
Hath homely age the alluring beauty took  
From my poor cheek? then he hath wasted it:  
Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?  
If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,  
Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard:  
Do their gay vestments his affections bait?  
That's not my fault: he's master of my state:  
What ruins are in me that can be found,  
By him not ruin'd? then is he the ground  
Of my defeatures. My decayed fair  
A sunny look of his would soon repair  
But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale  
And feeds from home; poor I am but his stale.

## **LUCIANA**

Self-harming jealousy! fie, beat it hence!

## **ADRIANA**

Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.  
I know his eye doth homage elsewhere,  
Or else what lets it but he would be here?  
Sister, you know he promised me a chain;  
Would that alone, alone he would detain,  
So he would keep fair quarter with his bed!  
I see the jewel best enamelled  
Will lose his beauty; yet the gold bides still,  
That others touch, and often touching will  
Wear gold: and no man that hath a name,  
By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.  
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,  
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

## **LUCIANA**

How many fond fools serve mad jealousy!

*Exeunt*



# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A public place.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse*

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up  
Safe at the Centaur; and the heedful slave  
Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out  
By computation and mine host's report.  
I could not speak with Dromio since at first  
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

How now sir! is your merry humour alter'd?  
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.  
You know no Centaur? you received no gold?  
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?  
My house was at the Phoenix? Wast thou mad,  
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

What answer, sir? when spake I such a word?

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

I did not see you since you sent me hence,

Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,  
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner;  
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeased.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I am glad to see you in this merry vein:  
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth?  
Think'st thou I jest? Hold, take thou that, and that.

*Beating him*

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Hold, sir, for God's sake! now your jest is earnest:  
Upon what bargain do you give it me?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Because that I familiarly sometimes  
Do use you for my fool and chat with you,  
Your sauciness will jest upon my love  
And make a common of my serious hours.  
When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport,  
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.  
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,  
And fashion your demeanor to my looks,  
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Sconce call you it? so you would leave battering, I  
had rather have it a head: an you use these blows  
long, I must get a sconce for my head and ensconce  
it too; or else I shall seek my wit in my shoulders.  
But, I pray, sir why am I beaten?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Dost thou not know?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Shall I tell you why?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath  
a wherefore.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why, first,--for flouting me; and then, wherefore--  
For urging it the second time to me.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,  
When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme  
nor reason?  
Well, sir, I thank you.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Thank me, sir, for what?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No, sir; I think the meat wants that I have.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

In good time, sir; what's that?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Basting.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Your reason?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Lest it make you choleric and purchase me another  
dry basting.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a  
time for all things.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

By what rule, sir?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald  
pate of father Time himself.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Let's hear it.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

There's no time for a man to recover his hair that  
grows bald by nature.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

May he not do it by fine and recovery?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig and recover the



lost hair of another man.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is,  
so plentiful an excrement?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts;  
and what he hath scanted men in hair he hath given them in wit.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why, but there's many a man hath more hair than wit.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

The plainer dealer, the sooner lost: yet he loseth  
it in a kind of jollity.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

For what reason?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

For two; and sound ones too.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Nay, not sound, I pray you.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Sure ones, then.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Certain ones then.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Name them.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

The one, to save the money that he spends in  
trimming; the other, that at dinner they should not  
drop in his porridge.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

You would all this time have proved there is no  
time for all things.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, and did, sir; namely, no time to recover hair  
lost by nature.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

But your reason was not substantial, why there is no time to recover.

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Thus I mend it: Time himself is bald and therefore to the world's end will have bald followers.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

I knew 'twould be a bald conclusion:  
But, soft! who wafts us yonder?

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

## ADRIANA

Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown:  
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects;  
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.  
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow  
That never words were music to thine ear,  
That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,  
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to thee.  
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,  
That thou art thus estranged from thyself?  
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,  
That, undividable, incorporate,  
Am better than thy dear self's better part.  
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me!  
For know, my love, as easy mayest thou fall  
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,  
And take unmingled that same drop again,  
Without addition or diminishing,  
As take from me thyself and not me too.  
How dearly would it touch me to the quick,  
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious

And that this body, consecrate to thee,  
By ruffian lust should be contaminate!  
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me  
And hurl the name of husband in my face  
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow  
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring  
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow?  
I know thou canst; and therefore see thou do it.  
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot;  
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust:  
For if we too be one and thou play false,  
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,  
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.  
Keep then far league and truce with thy true bed;  
I live unstain'd, thou undishonoured.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not:  
In Ephesus I am but two hours old,  
As strange unto your town as to your talk;  
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,  
Want wit in all one word to understand.

## **LUCIANA**

Fie, brother! how the world is changed with you!  
When were you wont to use my sister thus?  
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

By Dromio?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

By me?

## **ADRIANA**

By thee; and this thou didst return from him,  
That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,  
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?  
What is the course and drift of your compact?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I, sir? I never saw her till this time.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Villain, thou liest; for even her very words  
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I never spake with her in all my life.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

How can she thus then call us by our names,  
Unless it be by inspiration.

## **ADRIANA**

How ill agrees it with your gravity  
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,  
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!  
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt,  
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.  
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:  
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,  
Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,  
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:  
If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,

Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss;  
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion  
Infect thy sap and live on thy confusion.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme:  
What, was I married to her in my dream?  
Or sleep I now and think I hear all this?  
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?  
Until I know this sure uncertainty,  
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

## **LUCIANA**

Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.  
This is the fairy land: O spite of spites!  
We talk with goblins, owls and sprites:  
If we obey them not, this will ensue,  
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

## **LUCIANA**

Why pratest thou to thyself and answer'st not?  
Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I am transformed, master, am I not?  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Thou hast thine own form.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No, I am an ape.

## **LUCIANA**

If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

'Tis true; she rides me and I long for grass.

'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be

But I should know her as well as she knows me.

## **ADRIANA**

Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,  
To put the finger in the eye and weep,  
Whilst man and master laugh my woes to scorn.

Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.

Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day

And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.

Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,

Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.

Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?

Sleeping or waking? mad or well-advised?

Known unto these, and to myself disguised!

I'll say as they say and persevere so,

And in this mist at all adventures go.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

## **ADRIANA**

Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

## **LUCIANA**

Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before the house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, DROMIO of Ephesus, ANGELO, and BALTHAZAR*

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF EPHEBUS

Good Signior Angelo, you must excuse us all;  
My wife is shrewish when I keep not hours:  
Say that I linger'd with you at your shop  
To see the making of her carcanet,  
And that to-morrow you will bring it home.  
But here's a villain that would face me down  
He met me on the mart, and that I beat him,  
And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,  
And that I did deny my wife and house.  
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this?

### DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know;  
That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand to show:  
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave were ink,  
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.  
ANTIPHOLUS

### OF EPHEBUS

I think thou art an ass.

### DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Marry, so it doth appear  
By the wrongs I suffer and the blows I bear.  
I should kick, being kick'd; and, being at that pass,

You would keep from my heels and beware of an ass.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

You're sad, Signior Balthazar: pray God our cheer  
May answer my good will and your good welcome here.

**BALTHAZAR**

I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your  
welcome dear.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish,  
A table full of welcome make scarce one dainty dish.

**BALTHAZAR**

Good meat, sir, is common; that every churl affords.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

And welcome more common; for that's nothing but words.

**BALTHAZAR**

Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Ay, to a niggardly host, and more sparing guest:  
But though my cates be mean, take them in good part;  
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.  
But, soft! my door is lock'd. Go bid them let us in.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cichel, Gillian, Ginn!

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] Mome, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb,  
idiot, patch!

Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch.

Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st  
for such store,

When one is one too many? Go, get thee from the door.

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

What patch is made our porter? My master stays in  
the street.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] Let him walk from whence he came, lest he  
catch cold on's feet.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

Who talks within there? ho, open the door!

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] Right, sir; I'll tell you when, an you tell  
me wherefore.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

Wherefore? for my dinner: I have not dined to-day.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] Nor to-day here you must not; come again  
when you may.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

What art thou that keepest me out from the house I owe?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] The porter for this time, sir, and my name  
is Dromio.

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

O villain! thou hast stolen both mine office and my name.  
The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.  
If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,  
Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name or thy  
name for an ass.

## **LUCE**

[Within] What a coil is there, Dromio? who are those  
at the gate?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Let my master in, Luce.

## **LUCE**

[Within] Faith, no; he comes too late;  
And so tell your master.

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

O Lord, I must laugh!  
Have at you with a proverb--Shall I set in my staff?

## **LUCE**

[Within] Have at you with another; that's--When?  
can you tell?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] If thy name be call'd Luce--Luce, thou hast answered him well.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Do you hear, you minion? you'll let us in, I hope?  
OF EPHESUS

**LUCE**

[Within] I thought to have asked you.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] And you said no.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

So, come, help: well struck! there was blow for blow.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHESUS**

Thou baggage, let me in.

**LUCE**

[Within] Can you tell for whose sake?

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

Master, knock the door hard.

**LUCE**

[Within] Let him knock till it ache.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the door down.

## **LUCE**

[Within] What needs all that, and a pair of stocks in the town?

## **ADRIANA**

[Within] Who is that at the door that keeps all  
this noise?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] By my troth, your town is troubled with  
unruly boys.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

Are you there, wife? you might have come before.

## **ADRIANA**

[Within] Your wife, sir knave! go get you from the door.

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

If you went in pain, master, this 'knave' would go sore.

## **ANGELO**

Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome: we would  
fain have either.

## **BALTHAZAR**

In debating which was best, we shall part with neither.

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

They stand at the door, master; bid them welcome hither.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHESUS**

There is something in the wind, that we cannot get in.

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

You would say so, master, if your garments were thin.  
Your cake there is warm within; you stand here in the cold:  
It would make a man mad as a buck, to be so bought and sold.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHESUS**

Go fetch me something: I'll break ope the gate.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] Break any breaking here, and I'll break your  
knave's pate.

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

A man may break a word with you, sir, and words are but wind,  
Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] It seems thou want'st breaking: out upon  
thee, hind!

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

Here's too much 'out upon thee!' I pray thee,  
let me in.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

[Within] Ay, when fowls have no feathers and fish have no fin.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF EPHEBUS

Well, I'll break in: go borrow me a crow.

## DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

A crow without feather? Master, mean you so?  
For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather;  
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF EPHEBUS

Go get thee gone; fetch me an iron crow.

## BALTHAZAR

Have patience, sir; O, let it not be so!  
Herein you war against your reputation  
And draw within the compass of suspect  
The unviolated honour of your wife.  
Once this,--your long experience of her wisdom,  
Her sober virtue, years and modesty,  
Plead on her part some cause to you unknown:  
And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse  
Why at this time the doors are made against you.  
Be ruled by me: depart in patience,  
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner,  
And about evening come yourself alone  
To know the reason of this strange restraint.  
If by strong hand you offer to break in  
Now in the stirring passage of the day,  
A vulgar comment will be made of it,  
And that supposed by the common rout  
Against your yet ungalled estimation  
That may with foul intrusion enter in  
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead;  
For slander lives upon succession,  
For ever housed where it gets possession.



ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHESUS**

You have prevailed: I will depart in quiet,  
And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry.  
I know a wench of excellent discourse,  
Pretty and witty; wild, and yet, too, gentle:  
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,  
My wife--but, I protest, without desert--  
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal:  
To her will we to dinner.

*To Angelo*

Get you home  
And fetch the chain; by this I know 'tis made:  
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine;  
For there's the house: that chain will I bestow--  
Be it for nothing but to spite my wife--  
Upon mine hostess there: good sir, make haste.  
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,  
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

**ANGELO**

I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHESUS**

Do so. This jest shall cost me some expense.

*Exeunt*

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same.

*Enter LUCIANA and ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse*

### LUCIANA

And may it be that you have quite forgot  
A husband's office? shall, Antipholus.  
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?  
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?  
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,  
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness:  
Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth;  
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness:  
Let not my sister read it in your eye;  
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;  
Look sweet, be fair, become disloyalty;  
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger;  
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted;  
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint;  
Be secret-false: what need she be acquainted?  
What simple thief brags of his own attain?  
'Tis double wrong, to truant with your bed  
And let her read it in thy looks at board:  
Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed;  
Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word.  
Alas, poor women! make us but believe,  
Being compact of credit, that you love us;  
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve;  
We in your motion turn and you may move us.  
Then, gentle brother, get you in again;  
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife:  
'Tis holy sport to be a little vain,  
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

Sweet mistress--what your name is else, I know not,  
Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine,--  
Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not  
Than our earth's wonder, more than earth divine.  
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;  
Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,  
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,  
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.  
Against my soul's pure truth why labour you  
To make it wander in an unknown field?  
Are you a god? would you create me new?  
Transform me then, and to your power I'll yield.  
But if that I am I, then well I know  
Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,  
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe  
Far more, far more to you do I decline.  
O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,  
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears:  
Sing, siren, for thyself and I will dote:  
Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,  
And as a bed I'll take them and there lie,  
And in that glorious supposition think  
He gains by death that hath such means to die:  
Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink!

## **LUCIANA**

What, are you mad, that you do reason so?  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Not mad, but mated; how, I do not know.

## **LUCIANA**

It is a fault that springeth from your eye.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.

**LUCIANA**

Gaze where you should, and that will clear your sight.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

As good to wink, sweet love, as look on night.

**LUCIANA**

Why call you me love? call my sister so.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Thy sister's sister.

**LUCIANA**

That's my sister.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

No;  
It is thyself, mine own self's better part,  
Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,  
My food, my fortune and my sweet hope's aim,  
My sole earth's heaven and my heaven's claim.

**LUCIANA**

All this my sister is, or else should be.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee.

Thee will I love and with thee lead my life:  
Thou hast no husband yet nor I no wife.  
Give me thy hand.

## **LUCIANA**

O, soft, air! hold you still:  
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good will.

*Exit*

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Why, how now, Dromio! where runn'st thou so fast?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Do you know me, sir? am I Dromio? am I your man?  
am I myself?

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Thou art Dromio, thou art my man, thou art thyself.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I am an ass, I am a woman's man and besides myself.

## **ANTIPHOLUS**

What woman's man? and how besides thyself? besides thyself?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due to a woman; one  
that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

What claim lays she to thee?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry sir, such claim as you would lay to your horse; and she would have me as a beast: not that, I being a beast, she would have me; but that she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

What is she?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

A very reverent body; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of without he say 'Sir-reverence.' I have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

How dost thou mean a fat marriage?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, sir, she's the kitchen wench and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to but to make a lamp of her and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags and the tallow in them will burn a Poland winter: if she lives till doomsday, she'll burn a week longer than the whole world.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

What complexion is she of?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing half so  
clean kept: for why, she sweats; a man may go over  
shoes in the grime of it.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

That's a fault that water will mend.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No, sir, 'tis in grain; Noah's flood could not do it.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

What's her name?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Nell, sir; but her name and three quarters, that's  
an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from  
hip to hip.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Then she bears some breadth?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip:  
she is spherical, like a globe; I could find out  
countries in her.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

In what part of her body stands Ireland?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, in her buttocks: I found it out by the bogs.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Where Scotland?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I found it by the barrenness; hard in the palm of the hand.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Where France?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

In her forehead; armed and reverted, making war  
against her heir.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Where England?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no  
whiteness in them; but I guess it stood in her chin,  
by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Where Spain?



## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Where America, the Indies?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Oh, sir, upon her nose all o'er embellished with  
rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich  
aspect to the hot breath of Spain; who sent whole  
armadoes of caracks to be ballast at her nose.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this  
drudge, or diviner, laid claim to me, call'd me  
Dromio; swore I was assured to her; told me what  
privy marks I had about me, as, the mark of my  
shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my  
left arm, that I amazed ran from her as a witch:  
And, I think, if my breast had not been made of  
faith and my heart of steel,  
She had transform'd me to a curtal dog and made  
me turn i' the wheel.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Go hie thee presently, post to the road:  
An if the wind blow any way from shore,  
I will not harbour in this town to-night:  
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,

Where I will walk till thou return to me.  
If every one knows us and we know none,  
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack and be gone.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

As from a bear a man would run for life,  
So fly I from her that would be my wife.

*Exit*

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

There's none but witches do inhabit here;  
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.  
She that doth call me husband, even my soul  
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,  
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,  
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,  
Hath almost made me traitor to myself:  
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,  
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

*Enter ANGELO with the chain*

## **ANGELO**

Master Antipholus,--  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Ay, that's my name.

## **ANGELO**

I know it well, sir, lo, here is the chain.  
I thought to have ta'en you at the Porpentine:  
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

What is your will that I shall do with this?

**ANGELO**

What please yourself, sir: I have made it for you.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

**ANGELO**

Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you have.

Go home with it and please your wife withal;

And soon at supper-time I'll visit you

And then receive my money for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

I pray you, sir, receive the money now,

For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

**ANGELO**

You are a merry man, sir: fare you well.

*Exit*

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

What I should think of this, I cannot tell:

But this I think, there's no man is so vain

That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.

I see a man here needs not live by shifts,  
When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.  
I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay  
If any ship put out, then straight away.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A public place.

*Enter Second Merchant, ANGELO, and an Officer*

### Second Merchant

You know since Pentecost the sum is due,  
And since I have not much importuned you;  
Nor now I had not, but that I am bound  
To Persia, and want guilders for my voyage:  
Therefore make present satisfaction,  
Or I'll attach you by this officer.

### ANGELO

Even just the sum that I do owe to you  
Is growing to me by Antipholus,  
And in the instant that I met with you  
He had of me a chain: at five o'clock  
I shall receive the money for the same.  
Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,  
I will discharge my bond and thank you too.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus from the courtezan's*

### Officer

That labour may you save: see where he comes.  
ANTIPHOLUS

### OF EPHEBUS

While I go to the goldsmith's house, go thou  
And buy a rope's end: that will I bestow  
Among my wife and her confederates,  
For locking me out of my doors by day.

But, soft! I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone;  
Buy thou a rope and bring it home to me.

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

I buy a thousand pound a year: I buy a rope.

*Exit*

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

A man is well help up that trusts to you:  
I promised your presence and the chain;  
But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.  
Belike you thought our love would last too long,  
If it were chain'd together, and therefore came not.

## **ANGELO**

Saving your merry humour, here's the note  
How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,  
The fineness of the gold and chargeful fashion.  
Which doth amount to three odd ducats more  
Than I stand debted to this gentleman:  
I pray you, see him presently discharged,  
For he is bound to sea and stays but for it.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

I am not furnish'd with the present money;  
Besides, I have some business in the town.  
Good signior, take the stranger to my house  
And with you take the chain and bid my wife  
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof:  
Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

## **ANGELO**

Then you will bring the chain to her yourself?

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

No; bear it with you, lest I come not time enough.

**ANGELO**

Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about you?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

An if I have not, sir, I hope you have;  
Or else you may return without your money.

**ANGELO**

Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain:  
Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,  
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Good Lord! you use this dalliance to excuse  
Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.  
I should have chid you for not bringing it,  
But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

**Second Merchant**

The hour steals on; I pray you, sir, dispatch.

**ANGELO**

You hear how he importunes me;--the chain!  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Why, give it to my wife and fetch your money.

**ANGELO**

Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.  
Either send the chain or send me by some token.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Fie, now you run this humour out of breath,  
where's the chain? I pray you, let me see it.

**Second Merchant**

My business cannot brook this dalliance.  
Good sir, say whether you'll answer me or no:  
If not, I'll leave him to the officer.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

I answer you! what should I answer you?

**ANGELO**

The money that you owe me for the chain.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

I owe you none till I receive the chain.

**ANGELO**

You know I gave it you half an hour since.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

You gave me none: you wrong me much to say so.



**ANGELO**

You wrong me more, sir, in denying it:  
Consider how it stands upon my credit.

**Second Merchant**

Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

**Officer**

I do; and charge you in the duke's name to obey me.

**ANGELO**

This touches me in reputation.  
Either consent to pay this sum for me  
Or I attach you by this officer.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Consent to pay thee that I never had!  
Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.

**ANGELO**

Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer,  
I would not spare my brother in this case,  
If he should scorn me so apparently.

**Officer**

I do arrest you, sir: you hear the suit.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

I do obey thee till I give thee bail.  
But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear

As all the metal in your shop will answer.

## **ANGELO**

Sir, sir, I will have law in Ephesus,  
To your notorious shame; I doubt it not.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse, from the bay*

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Master, there is a bark of Epidamnum  
That stays but till her owner comes aboard,  
And then, sir, she bears away. Our fraughtage, sir,  
I have convey'd aboard; and I have bought  
The oil, the balsamum and aqua-vitae.  
The ship is in her trim; the merry wind  
Blows fair from land: they stay for nought at all  
But for their owner, master, and yourself.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

How now! a madman! Why, thou peevish sheep,  
What ship of Epidamnum stays for me?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a rope;  
And told thee to what purpose and what end.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

You sent me for a rope's end as soon:  
You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark.

ANTIPHOLUS

## OF EPHEBUS

I will debate this matter at more leisure  
And teach your ears to list me with more heed.  
To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight:  
Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk  
That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry,  
There is a purse of ducats; let her send it:  
Tell her I am arrested in the street  
And that shall bail me; hie thee, slave, be gone!  
On, officer, to prison till it come.

*Exeunt Second Merchant, Angelo, Officer, and Antipholus of Ephesus*

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

To Adriana! that is where we dined,  
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband:  
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.  
Thither I must, although against my will,  
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The house of ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus.

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

**ADRIANA**

Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so?  
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye  
That he did plead in earnest? yea or no?  
Look'd he or red or pale, or sad or merrily?  
What observation madest thou in this case  
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face?

**LUCIANA**

First he denied you had in him no right.

**ADRIANA**

He meant he did me none; the more my spite.

**LUCIANA**

Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

**ADRIANA**

And true he swore, though yet forsworn he were.

**LUCIANA**

Then pleaded I for you.

**ADRIANA**

And what said he?

**LUCIANA**

That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

**ADRIANA**

With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

**LUCIANA**

With words that in an honest suit might move.  
First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

**ADRIANA**

Didst speak him fair?

**LUCIANA**

Have patience, I beseech.

**ADRIANA**

I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still;  
My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.  
He is deformed, crooked, old and sere,  
Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere;  
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind;  
Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

**LUCIANA**

Who would be jealous then of such a one?  
No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

**ADRIANA**

Ah, but I think him better than I say,  
And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.

Far from her nest the lapwing cries away:  
My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Here! go; the desk, the purse! sweet, now, make haste.

**LUCIANA**

How hast thou lost thy breath?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

By running fast.

**ADRIANA**

Where is thy master, Dromio? is he well?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No, he's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.  
A devil in an everlasting garment hath him;  
One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel;  
A fiend, a fury, pitiless and rough;  
A wolf, nay, worse, a fellow all in buff;  
A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that  
countermands  
The passages of alleys, creeks and narrow lands;  
A hound that runs counter and yet draws dryfoot well;  
One that before the judgement carries poor souls to hell.

**ADRIANA**

Why, man, what is the matter?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I do not know the matter: he is 'rested on the case.

**ADRIANA**

What, is he arrested? Tell me at whose suit.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I know not at whose suit he is arrested well;  
But he's in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can I tell.  
Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money in his desk?

**ADRIANA**

Go fetch it, sister.

*Exit Luciana*

This I wonder at,  
That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.  
Tell me, was he arrested on a band?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Not on a band, but on a stronger thing;  
A chain, a chain! Do you not hear it ring?

**ADRIANA**

What, the chain?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No, no, the bell: 'tis time that I were gone:  
It was two ere I left him, and now the clock  
strikes one.

**ADRIANA**

The hours come back! that did I never hear.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

O, yes; if any hour meet a sergeant, a' turns back for very fear.

**ADRIANA**

As if Time were in debt! how fondly dost thou reason!

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Time is a very bankrupt, and owes more than he's worth, to season.

Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say That Time comes stealing on by night and day? If Time be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way, Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

*Re-enter LUCIANA with a purse*

**ADRIANA**

Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear it straight;  
And bring thy master home immediately.  
Come, sister: I am press'd down with conceit--  
Conceit, my comfort and my injury.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A public place.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse*

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

There's not a man I meet but doth salute me  
As if I were their well-acquainted friend;  
And every one doth call me by my name.  
Some tender money to me; some invite me;  
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;  
Some offer me commodities to buy:  
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop  
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,  
And therewithal took measure of my body.  
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles  
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

*Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE*

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, here's the gold you sent me for. What, have  
you got the picture of old Adam new-apparelled?  
ANTIPHOLUS

### OF SYRACUSE

What gold is this? what Adam dost thou mean?

### DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Not that Adam that kept the Paradise but that Adam  
that keeps the prison: he that goes in the calf's

skin that was killed for the Prodigal; he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

I understand thee not.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

No? why, 'tis a plain case: he that went, like a bass-viol, in a case of leather; the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a sob and 'rests them; he, sir, that takes pity on decayed men and gives them suits of durance; he that sets up his rest to do more exploits with his mace than a morris-pike.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

What, thou meanest an officer?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band, he that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band; one that thinks a man always going to bed, and says, 'God give you good rest!'

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since that the bark Expedition put forth to-night; and then were you hindered by the sergeant, to tarry for the hoy Delay. Here are the angels that you sent for to

deliver you.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

The fellow is distract, and so am I;  
And here we wander in illusions:  
Some blessed power deliver us from hence!

*Enter a Courtezan*

## Courtezan

Well met, well met, Master Antipholus.  
I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now:  
Is that the chain you promised me to-day?  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

Satan, avoid! I charge thee, tempt me not.

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Master, is this Mistress Satan?  
ANTIPHOLUS

## OF SYRACUSE

It is the devil.

## DROMIO OF SYRACUSE

Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam; and here  
she comes in the habit of a light wench: and thereof  
comes that the wenches say 'God damn me;' that's as  
much to say 'God make me a light wench.' It is  
written, they appear to men like angels of light:  
light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn;  
ergo, light wenches will burn. Come not near her.

## **Courtezan**

Your man and you are marvellous merry, sir.  
Will you go with me? We'll mend our dinner here?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat; or bespeak a  
long spoon.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Why, Dromio?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Marry, he must have a long spoon that must eat with  
the devil.

ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Avoid then, fiend! what tell'st thou me of supping?  
Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress:  
I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

## **Courtezan**

Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,  
Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised,  
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,  
A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,  
A nut, a cherry-stone;  
But she, more covetous, would have a chain.  
Master, be wise: an if you give it her,  
The devil will shake her chain and fright us with it.

## **Courtezan**

I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain:  
I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Avaunt, thou witch! Come, Dromio, let us go.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

'Fly pride,' says the peacock: mistress, that you know.

*Exeunt Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse*

## **Courtezan**

Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad,  
Else would he never so demean himself.  
A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,  
And for the same he promised me a chain:  
Both one and other he denies me now.  
The reason that I gather he is mad,  
Besides this present instance of his rage,  
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,  
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.  
Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,  
On purpose shut the doors against his way.  
My way is now to hie home to his house,  
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,  
He rush'd into my house and took perforce  
My ring away. This course I fittest choose;  
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

*Exit*

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A street.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and the Officer*

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF EPHEBUS

Fear me not, man; I will not break away:  
I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,  
To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.  
My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,  
And will not lightly trust the messenger  
That I should be attach'd in Ephesus,  
I tell you, 'twill sound harshly in her ears.

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus with a rope's-end*

Here comes my man; I think he brings the money.  
How now, sir! have you that I sent you for?

### DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all.

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF EPHEBUS

But where's the money?

### DROMIO OF EPHEBUS

Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

ANTIPHOLUS

### OF EPHEBUS

Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

To a rope's-end, sir; and to that end am I returned.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

And to that end, sir, I will welcome you.

*Beating him*

**Officer**

Good sir, be patient.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in adversity.

**Officer**

Good, now, hold thy tongue.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

I would I were senseless, sir, that I might not feel your blows.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and so is an ass.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

I am an ass, indeed; you may prove it by my long ears. I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with beating; I am waked with it when I sleep; raised with it when I sit; driven out of doors with it when I go from home; welcomed home with it when I return; nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a beggar wont her brat; and, I think when he hath lamed me, I shall beg with it from door to door.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

*Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and PINCH*

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Mistress, 'respice finem,' respect your end; or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, 'beware the rope's-end.'

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**



Wilt thou still talk?

*Beating him*

**Courtezan**

How say you now? is not your husband mad?

**ADRIANA**

His incivility confirms no less.  
Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer;  
Establish him in his true sense again,  
And I will please you what you will demand.

**LUCIANA**

Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks!

**Courtezan**

Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy!

**PINCH**

Give me your hand and let me feel your pulse.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

There is my hand, and let it feel your ear.

*Striking him*

**PINCH**

I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,  
To yield possession to my holy prayers  
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight:  
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven!  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

Peace, doting wizard, peace! I am not mad.

## **ADRIANA**

O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul!  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

You minion, you, are these your customers?  
Did this companion with the saffron face  
Revel and feast it at my house to-day,  
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut  
And I denied to enter in my house?

## **ADRIANA**

O husband, God doth know you dined at home;  
Where would you had remain'd until this time,  
Free from these slanders and this open shame!  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

Dined at home! Thou villain, what sayest thou?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

Were not my doors lock'd up and I shut out?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Perdie, your doors were lock'd and you shut out.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

And did not she herself revile me there?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Sans fable, she herself reviled you there.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Certes, she did; the kitchen-vestal scorn'd you.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

And did not I in rage depart from thence?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

In verity you did; my bones bear witness,  
That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

**ADRIANA**

Is't good to soothe him in these contraries?

**PINCH**

It is no shame: the fellow finds his vein,  
And yielding to him humours well his frenzy.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

**ADRIANA**

Alas, I sent you money to redeem you,  
By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

Money by me! heart and goodwill you might;  
But surely master, not a rag of money.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHESUS**

Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats?

**ADRIANA**

He came to me and I deliver'd it.

**LUCIANA**

And I am witness with her that she did.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

God and the rope-maker bear me witness  
That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

**PINCH**

Mistress, both man and master is possess'd;  
I know it by their pale and deadly looks:  
They must be bound and laid in some dark room.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHESUS**

Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth to-day?  
And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

**ADRIANA**

I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

And, gentle master, I received no gold;  
But I confess, sir, that we were lock'd out.

**ADRIANA**

Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all;  
And art confederate with a damned pack  
To make a loathsome abject scorn of me:  
But with these nails I'll pluck out these false eyes  
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

*Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He strives*

**ADRIANA**

O, bind him, bind him! let him not come near me.

**PINCH**

More company! The fiend is strong within him.

**LUCIANA**

Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks!  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

What, will you murder me? Thou gaoler, thou,

I am thy prisoner: wilt thou suffer them  
To make a rescue?

**Officer**

Masters, let him go  
He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

**PINCH**

Go bind this man, for he is frantic too.

*They offer to bind Dromio of Ephesus*

**ADRIANA**

What wilt thou do, thou peevish officer?  
Hast thou delight to see a wretched man  
Do outrage and displeasure to himself?

**Officer**

He is my prisoner: if I let him go,  
The debt he owes will be required of me.

**ADRIANA**

I will discharge thee ere I go from thee:  
Bear me forthwith unto his creditor,  
And, knowing how the debt grows, I will pay it.  
Good master doctor, see him safe convey'd  
Home to my house. O most unhappy day!  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

O most unhappy strumpet!

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Master, I am here entered in bond for you.

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Out on thee, villain! wherefore dost thou mad me?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Will you be bound for nothing? be mad, good master:  
cry 'The devil!'

**LUCIANA**

God help, poor souls, how idly do they talk!

**ADRIANA**

Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with me.

*Exeunt all but Adriana, Luciana, Officer and Courtezan*

Say now, whose suit is he arrested at?

**Officer**

One Angelo, a goldsmith: do you know him?

**ADRIANA**

I know the man. What is the sum he owes?

**Officer**

Two hundred ducats.

**ADRIANA**

Say, how grows it due?

**Officer**

Due for a chain your husband had of him.

**ADRIANA**

He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it not.

**Courtezan**

When as your husband all in rage to-day  
Came to my house and took away my ring--  
The ring I saw upon his finger now--  
Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

**ADRIANA**

It may be so, but I did never see it.  
Come, gaoler, bring me where the goldsmith is:  
I long to know the truth hereof at large.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse with his rapier drawn, and DROMIO of Syracuse*

**LUCIANA**

God, for thy mercy! they are loose again.

**ADRIANA**

And come with naked swords.  
Let's call more help to have them bound again.

**Officer**

Away! they'll kill us.

*Exeunt all but Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse*

**ANTIPHOLUS**

**OF SYRACUSE**

I see these witches are afraid of swords.



## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

She that would be your wife now ran from you.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

Come to the Centaur; fetch our stuff from thence:  
I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Faith, stay here this night; they will surely do us  
no harm: you saw they speak us fair, give us gold:  
methinks they are such a gentle nation that, but for  
the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of  
me, I could find in my heart to stay here still and  
turn witch.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

I will not stay to-night for all the town;  
Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Comedy of Errors

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Comedy of Errors](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE I. A street before a Priory.

*Enter Second Merchant and ANGELO*

**ANGELO**

I am sorry, sir, that I have hinder'd you;  
But, I protest, he had the chain of me,  
Though most dishonestly he doth deny it.

**Second Merchant**

How is the man esteemed here in the city?

**ANGELO**

Of very reverend reputation, sir,  
Of credit infinite, highly beloved,  
Second to none that lives here in the city:  
His word might bear my wealth at any time.

**Second Merchant**

Speak softly; yonder, as I think, he walks.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO of Syracuse*

**ANGELO**

'Tis so; and that self chain about his neck  
Which he forswore most monstrously to have.  
Good sir, draw near to me, I'll speak to him.  
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much  
That you would put me to this shame and trouble;  
And, not without some scandal to yourself,  
With circumstance and oaths so to deny

This chain which now you wear so openly:  
Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,  
You have done wrong to this my honest friend,  
Who, but for staying on our controversy,  
Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day:  
This chain you had of me; can you deny it?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

I think I had; I never did deny it.

**Second Merchant**

Yes, that you did, sir, and forswore it too.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Who heard me to deny it or forswear it?

**Second Merchant**

These ears of mine, thou know'st did hear thee.  
Fie on thee, wretch! 'tis pity that thou livest  
To walk where any honest man resort.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

Thou art a villain to impeach me thus:  
I'll prove mine honour and mine honesty  
Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

**Second Merchant**

I dare, and do defy thee for a villain.

*They draw*

*Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and others*

**ADRIANA**

Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake! he is mad.  
Some get within him, take his sword away:  
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Run, master, run; for God's sake, take a house!  
This is some priory. In, or we are spoil'd!

*Exeunt Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse to the Priory*

*Enter the Lady Abbess, AEMILIA*

**AEMELIA**

Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you hither?

**ADRIANA**

To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.  
Let us come in, that we may bind him fast  
And bear him home for his recovery.

**ANGELO**

I knew he was not in his perfect wits.

**Second Merchant**

I am sorry now that I did draw on him.

**AEMELIA**

How long hath this possession held the man?

**ADRIANA**

This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,

And much different from the man he was;  
But till this afternoon his passion  
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

**AEMELIA**

Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea?  
Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye  
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?  
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,  
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.  
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?

**ADRIANA**

To none of these, except it be the last;  
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.

**AEMELIA**

You should for that have reprehended him.

**ADRIANA**

Why, so I did.

**AEMELIA**

Ay, but not rough enough.

**ADRIANA**

As roughly as my modesty would let me.

**AEMELIA**

Haply, in private.

**ADRIANA**

And in assemblies too.

## **AEMELIA**

Ay, but not enough.

## **ADRIANA**

It was the copy of our conference:  
In bed he slept not for my urging it;  
At board he fed not for my urging it;  
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;  
In company I often glanced it;  
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

## **AEMELIA**

And thereof came it that the man was mad.  
The venom clamours of a jealous woman  
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.  
It seems his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing,  
And therefore comes it that his head is light.  
Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy upbraidings:  
Unquiet meals make ill digestions;  
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;  
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?  
Thou say'st his sports were hinderd by thy brawls:  
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue  
But moody and dull melancholy,  
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,  
And at her heels a huge infectious troop  
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life?  
In food, in sport and life-preserving rest  
To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast:  
The consequence is then thy jealous fits  
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

## **LUCIANA**

She never reprehended him but mildly,  
When he demean'd himself rough, rude and wildly.  
Why bear you these rebukes and answer not?

**ADRIANA**

She did betray me to my own reproof.  
Good people enter and lay hold on him.

**AEMELIA**

No, not a creature enters in my house.

**ADRIANA**

Then let your servants bring my husband forth.

**AEMELIA**

Neither: he took this place for sanctuary,  
And it shall privilege him from your hands  
Till I have brought him to his wits again,  
Or lose my labour in assaying it.

**ADRIANA**

I will attend my husband, be his nurse,  
Diet his sickness, for it is my office,  
And will have no attorney but myself;  
And therefore let me have him home with me.

**AEMELIA**

Be patient; for I will not let him stir  
Till I have used the approved means I have,  
With wholesome syrups, drugs and holy prayers,  
To make of him a formal man again:  
It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,  
A charitable duty of my order.  
Therefore depart and leave him here with me.

**ADRIANA**

I will not hence and leave my husband here:  
And ill it doth beseem your holiness

To separate the husband and the wife.

**AEMELIA**

Be quiet and depart: thou shalt not have him.

*Exit*

**LUCIANA**

Complain unto the duke of this indignity.

**ADRIANA**

Come, go: I will fall prostrate at his feet  
And never rise until my tears and prayers  
Have won his grace to come in person hither  
And take perforce my husband from the abbess.

**Second Merchant**

By this, I think, the dial points at five:  
Anon, I'm sure, the duke himself in person  
Comes this way to the melancholy vale,  
The place of death and sorry execution,  
Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

**ANGELO**

Upon what cause?

**Second Merchant**

To see a reverend Syracusian merchant,  
Who put unluckily into this bay  
Against the laws and statutes of this town,  
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

**ANGELO**

See where they come: we will behold his death.



## LUCIANA

Kneel to the duke before he pass the abbey.

*Enter DUKE SOLINUS, attended; AEGEON bareheaded; with the Headsman and other Officers*

## DUKE SOLINUS

Yet once again proclaim it publicly,  
If any friend will pay the sum for him,  
He shall not die; so much we tender him.

## ADRIANA

Justice, most sacred duke, against the abbess!

## DUKE SOLINUS

She is a virtuous and a reverend lady:  
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

## ADRIANA

May it please your grace, Antipholus, my husband,  
Whom I made lord of me and all I had,  
At your important letters,--this ill day  
A most outrageous fit of madness took him;  
That desperately he hurried through the street,  
With him his bondman, all as mad as he--  
Doing displeasure to the citizens  
By rushing in their houses, bearing thence  
Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.  
Once did I get him bound and sent him home,  
Whilst to take order for the wrongs I went,  
That here and there his fury had committed.  
Anon, I wot not by what strong escape,  
He broke from those that had the guard of him;  
And with his mad attendant and himself,  
Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,  
Met us again and madly bent on us,

Chased us away; till, raising of more aid,  
We came again to bind them. Then they fled  
Into this abbey, whither we pursued them:  
And here the abbess shuts the gates on us  
And will not suffer us to fetch him out,  
Nor send him forth that we may bear him hence.  
Therefore, most gracious duke, with thy command  
Let him be brought forth and borne hence for help.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

Long since thy husband served me in my wars,  
And I to thee engaged a prince's word,  
When thou didst make him master of thy bed,  
To do him all the grace and good I could.  
Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate  
And bid the lady abbess come to me.  
I will determine this before I stir.

*Enter a Servant*

## **Servant**

O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself!  
My master and his man are both broke loose,  
Beaten the maids a-row and bound the doctor  
Whose beard they have singed off with brands of fire;  
And ever, as it blazed, they threw on him  
Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair:  
My master preaches patience to him and the while  
His man with scissors nicks him like a fool,  
And sure, unless you send some present help,  
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

## **ADRIANA**

Peace, fool! thy master and his man are here,  
And that is false thou dost report to us.

## **Servant**

Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true;

I have not breathed almost since I did see it.  
He cries for you, and vows, if he can take you,  
To scorch your face and to disfigure you.

*Cry within*

Hark, hark! I hear him, mistress. fly, be gone!

**DUKE SOLINUS**

Come, stand by me; fear nothing. Guard with halberds!

**ADRIANA**

Ay me, it is my husband! Witness you,  
That he is borne about invisible:  
Even now we housed him in the abbey here;  
And now he's there, past thought of human reason.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus*

ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Justice, most gracious duke, O, grant me justice!  
Even for the service that long since I did thee,  
When I bestrid thee in the wars and took  
Deep scars to save thy life; even for the blood  
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

**AEGEON**

Unless the fear of death doth make me dote,  
I see my son Antipholus and Dromio.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Justice, sweet prince, against that woman there!  
She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,

That hath abused and dishonour'd me  
Even in the strength and height of injury!  
Beyond imagination is the wrong  
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

Discover how, and thou shalt find me just.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

This day, great duke, she shut the doors upon me,  
While she with harlots feasted in my house.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

A grievous fault! Say, woman, didst thou so?

**ADRIANA**

No, my good lord: myself, he and my sister  
To-day did dine together. So befall my soul  
As this is false he burdens me withal!

**LUCIANA**

Ne'er may I look on day, nor sleep on night,  
But she tells to your highness simple truth!

**ANGELO**

O perjured woman! They are both forsworn:  
In this the madman justly chargeth them.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

My liege, I am advised what I say,  
Neither disturbed with the effect of wine,  
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,

Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.  
This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner:  
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with her,  
Could witness it, for he was with me then;  
Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,  
Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,  
Where Balthazar and I did dine together.  
Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,  
I went to seek him: in the street I met him  
And in his company that gentleman.  
There did this perjured goldsmith swear me down  
That I this day of him received the chain,  
Which, God he knows, I saw not: for the which  
He did arrest me with an officer.  
I did obey, and sent my peasant home  
For certain ducats: he with none return'd  
Then fairly I bespoke the officer  
To go in person with me to my house.  
By the way we met  
My wife, her sister, and a rabble more  
Of vile confederates. Along with them  
They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,  
A mere anatomy, a mountebank,  
A threadbare juggler and a fortune-teller,  
A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,  
A dead-looking man: this pernicious slave,  
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer,  
And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,  
And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me,  
Cries out, I was possess'd. Then all together  
They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence  
And in a dark and dankish vault at home  
There left me and my man, both bound together;  
Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,  
I gain'd my freedom, and immediately  
Ran hither to your grace; whom I beseech  
To give me ample satisfaction  
For these deep shames and great indignities.

## ANGELO

My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with him,  
That he dined not at home, but was lock'd out.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

But had he such a chain of thee or no?

## **ANGELO**

He had, my lord: and when he ran in here,  
These people saw the chain about his neck.

## **Second Merchant**

Besides, I will be sworn these ears of mine  
Heard you confess you had the chain of him  
After you first forswore it on the mart:  
And thereupon I drew my sword on you;  
And then you fled into this abbey here,  
From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF EPHEBUS**

I never came within these abbey-walls,  
Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me:  
I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven!  
And this is false you burden me withal.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

Why, what an intricate impeach is this!  
I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup.  
If here you housed him, here he would have been;  
If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly:  
You say he dined at home; the goldsmith here  
Denies that saying. Sirrah, what say you?

## **DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Sir, he dined with her there, at the Porpentine.

## **Courtezan**

He did, and from my finger snatch'd that ring.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

'Tis true, my liege; this ring I had of her.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey here?

**Courtezan**

As sure, my liege, as I do see your grace.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

Why, this is strange. Go call the abbess hither.  
I think you are all mated or stark mad.

*Exit one to Abbess*

**AEGEON**

Most mighty duke, vouchsafe me speak a word:  
Haply I see a friend will save my life  
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou wilt.

**AEGEON**

Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus?  
And is not that your bondman, Dromio?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Within this hour I was his bondman sir,  
But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords:

Now am I Dromio and his man unbound.

**AEGEON**

I am sure you both of you remember me.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Ourselves we do remember, sir, by you;  
For lately we were bound, as you are now  
You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir?

**AEGEON**

Why look you strange on me? you know me well.

**ANTIPHOLUS**

I never saw you in my life till now.

**AEGEON**

O, grief hath changed me since you saw me last,  
And careful hours with time's deformed hand  
Have written strange defeatures in my face:  
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Neither.

**AEGEON**

Dromio, nor thou?

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

No, trust me, sir, nor I.

**AEGEON**



I am sure thou dost.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Ay, sir, but I am sure I do not; and whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him.

**AEGEON**

Not know my voice! O time's extremity,  
Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue  
In seven short years, that here my only son  
Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares?  
Though now this grained face of mine be hid  
In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,  
And all the conduits of my blood froze up,  
Yet hath my night of life some memory,  
My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,  
My dull deaf ears a little use to hear:  
All these old witnesses--I cannot err--  
Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

I never saw my father in my life.

**AEGEON**

But seven years since, in Syracuse, boy,  
Thou know'st we parted: but perhaps, my son,  
Thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

The duke and all that know me in the city  
Can witness with me that it is not so  
I ne'er saw Syracuse in my life.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

I tell thee, Syracusian, twenty years  
Have I been patron to Antipholus,  
During which time he ne'er saw Syracuse:  
I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

*Re-enter AEMILIA, with ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO of Syracuse*

**AEMELIA**

Most mighty duke, behold a man much wrong'd.

*All gather to see them*

**ADRIANA**

I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

One of these men is Genius to the other;  
And so of these. Which is the natural man,  
And which the spirit? who deciphers them?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

I, sir, am Dromio; command him away.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

I, sir, am Dromio; pray, let me stay.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

AEgeon art thou not? or else his ghost?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

O, my old master! who hath bound him here?

## **AEMELIA**

Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds  
And gain a husband by his liberty.  
Speak, old AEgeon, if thou be'st the man  
That hadst a wife once call'd AEmilia  
That bore thee at a burden two fair sons:  
O, if thou be'st the same AEgeon, speak,  
And speak unto the same AEmilia!

## **AEGEON**

If I dream not, thou art AEmilia:  
If thou art she, tell me where is that son  
That floated with thee on the fatal raft?

## **AEMELIA**

By men of Epidamnum he and I  
And the twin Dromio all were taken up;  
But by and by rude fishermen of Corinth  
By force took Dromio and my son from them  
And me they left with those of Epidamnum.  
What then became of them I cannot tell  
I to this fortune that you see me in.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

Why, here begins his morning story right;  
These two Antipholuses, these two so like,  
And these two Dromios, one in semblance,--  
Besides her urging of her wreck at sea,--  
These are the parents to these children,  
Which accidentally are met together.  
Antipholus, thou camest from Corinth first?  
ANTIPHOLUS

## **OF SYRACUSE**

No, sir, not I; I came from Syracuse.

## **DUKE SOLINUS**

Stay, stand apart; I know not which is which.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

I came from Corinth, my most gracious lord,--

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

And I with him.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Brought to this town by that most famous warrior,  
Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.

**ADRIANA**

Which of you two did dine with me to-day?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

I, gentle mistress.

**ADRIANA**

And are not you my husband?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

No; I say nay to that.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

And so do I; yet did she call me so:  
And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,

Did call me brother.

*To Luciana*

What I told you then,  
I hope I shall have leisure to make good;  
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

**ANGELO**

That is the chain, sir, which you had of me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

I think it be, sir; I deny it not.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHESUS**

And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

**ANGELO**

I think I did, sir; I deny it not.

**ADRIANA**

I sent you money, sir, to be your bail,  
By Dromio; but I think he brought it not.

**DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

No, none by me.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

This purse of ducats I received from you,  
And Dromio, my man, did bring them me.  
I see we still did meet each other's man,

And I was ta'en for him, and he for me,  
And thereupon these errors are arose.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

These ducats pawn I for my father here.

**DUKE SOLINUS**

It shall not need; thy father hath his life.

**Courtezan**

Sir, I must have that diamond from you.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

There, take it; and much thanks for my good cheer.

**AEMELIA**

Renowned duke, vouchsafe to take the pains  
To go with us into the abbey here  
And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes:  
And all that are assembled in this place,  
That by this sympathized one day's error  
Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,  
And we shall make full satisfaction.  
Thirty-three years have I but gone in travail  
Of you, my sons; and till this present hour  
My heavy burden ne'er delivered.  
The duke, my husband and my children both,  
And you the calendars of their nativity,  
Go to a gossips' feast and go with me;  
After so long grief, such festivity!

**DUKE SOLINUS**

With all my heart, I'll gossip at this feast.

*Exeunt all but Antipholus of Syracuse, Antipholus of Ephesus, Dromio of Syracuse and Dromio of Ephesus*

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Master, shall I fetch your stuff from shipboard?  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF EPHEBUS**

Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou embark'd?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Your goods that lay at host, sir, in the Centaur.  
ANTIPHOLUS

**OF SYRACUSE**

He speaks to me. I am your master, Dromio:  
Come, go with us; we'll look to that anon:  
Embrace thy brother there; rejoice with him.

*Exeunt Antipholus of Syracuse and Antipholus of Ephesus*

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

There is a fat friend at your master's house,  
That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner:  
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

**DROMIO OF EPHEBUS**

Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother:  
I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.  
Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

**DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

Not I, sir; you are my elder.

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

That's a question: how shall we try it?

## **DROMIO OF SYRACUSE**

We'll draw cuts for the senior: till then lead thou first.

## **DROMIO OF EPHESUS**

Nay, then, thus:

We came into the world like brother and brother;

And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

*Exeunt*



# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Cymbeline

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Britain. The garden of Cymbeline's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The same. A public place.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [A room in Cymbeline's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [Rome. Philario's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 5: [Britain. A room in Cymbeline's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 6: [The same. Another room in the palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Britain. Before Cymbeline's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Imogen's bedchamber in Cymbeline's palace:](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Rome. Philario's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [Another room in Philario's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Britain. A hall in Cymbeline's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Another room in the palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Wales: a mountainous country with a cave.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [Country near Milford-Haven.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [A room in Cymbeline's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 6: [Wales. Before the cave of Belarius.](#)

Act 3, Scene 7: [Rome. A public place.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Wales: near the cave of Belarius.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Before the cave of Belarius.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [A room in Cymbeline's palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [Wales: before the cave of Belarius.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Britain. The Roman camp.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Field of battle between the British and Roman camps.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [A British prison.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Cymbeline's tent.](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Britain. The garden of Cymbeline's palace.

*Enter two Gentlemen*

### First Gentleman

You do not meet a man but frowns: our bloods  
No more obey the heavens than our courtiers  
Still seem as does the king.

### Second Gentleman

But what's the matter?

### First Gentleman

His daughter, and the heir of's kingdom, whom  
He purposed to his wife's sole son--a widow  
That late he married--hath referr'd herself  
Unto a poor but worthy gentleman: she's wedded;  
Her husband banish'd; she imprison'd: all  
Is outward sorrow; though I think the king  
Be touch'd at very heart.

### Second Gentleman

None but the king?

### First Gentleman

He that hath lost her too; so is the queen,  
That most desired the match; but not a courtier,  
Although they wear their faces to the bent  
Of the king's look's, hath a heart that is not  
Glad at the thing they scowl at.

## **Second Gentleman**

And why so?

## **First Gentleman**

He that hath miss'd the princess is a thing  
Too bad for bad report: and he that hath her--  
I mean, that married her, alack, good man!  
And therefore banish'd--is a creature such  
As, to seek through the regions of the earth  
For one his like, there would be something failing  
In him that should compare. I do not think  
So fair an outward and such stuff within  
Endows a man but he.

## **Second Gentleman**

You speak him far.

## **First Gentleman**

I do extend him, sir, within himself,  
Crush him together rather than unfold  
His measure duly.

## **Second Gentleman**

What's his name and birth?

## **First Gentleman**

I cannot delve him to the root: his father  
Was call'd Sicilius, who did join his honour  
Against the Romans with Cassibelan,  
But had his titles by Tenantius whom  
He served with glory and admired success,  
So gain'd the sur-addition Leonatus;  
And had, besides this gentleman in question,  
Two other sons, who in the wars o' the time  
Died with their swords in hand; for which  
their father,

Then old and fond of issue, took such sorrow  
That he quit being, and his gentle lady,  
Big of this gentleman our theme, deceased  
As he was born. The king he takes the babe  
To his protection, calls him Posthumus Leonatus,  
Breeds him and makes him of his bed-chamber,  
Puts to him all the learnings that his time  
Could make him the receiver of; which he took,  
As we do air, fast as 'twas minister'd,  
And in's spring became a harvest, lived in court--  
Which rare it is to do--most praised, most loved,  
A sample to the youngest, to the more mature  
A glass that feated them, and to the graver  
A child that guided dotards; to his mistress,  
For whom he now is banish'd, her own price  
Proclaims how she esteem'd him and his virtue;  
By her election may be truly read  
What kind of man he is.

## **Second Gentleman**

I honour him  
Even out of your report. But, pray you, tell me,  
Is she sole child to the king?

## **First Gentleman**

His only child.  
He had two sons: if this be worth your hearing,  
Mark it: the eldest of them at three years old,  
I' the swathing-clothes the other, from their nursery  
Were stol'n, and to this hour no guess in knowledge  
Which way they went.

## **Second Gentleman**

How long is this ago?

## **First Gentleman**

Some twenty years.

## **Second Gentleman**

That a king's children should be so convey'd,  
So slackly guarded, and the search so slow,  
That could not trace them!

## **First Gentleman**

Howsoe'er 'tis strange,  
Or that the negligence may well be laugh'd at,  
Yet is it true, sir.

## **Second Gentleman**

I do well believe you.

## **First Gentleman**

We must forbear: here comes the gentleman,  
The queen, and princess.

*Exeunt*

*Enter the QUEEN, POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and IMOGEN*

## **QUEEN**

No, be assured you shall not find me, daughter,  
After the slander of most stepmothers,  
Evil-eyed unto you: you're my prisoner, but  
Your gaoler shall deliver you the keys  
That lock up your restraint. For you, Posthumus,  
So soon as I can win the offended king,  
I will be known your advocate: marry, yet  
The fire of rage is in him, and 'twere good  
You lean'd unto his sentence with what patience  
Your wisdom may inform you.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Please your highness,

I will from hence to-day.

**QUEEN**

You know the peril.  
I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying  
The pangs of barr'd affections, though the king  
Hath charged you should not speak together.

*Exit*

**IMOGEN**

O  
Dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant  
Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,  
I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing--  
Always reserved my holy duty--what  
His rage can do on me: you must be gone;  
And I shall here abide the hourly shot  
Of angry eyes, not comforted to live,  
But that there is this jewel in the world  
That I may see again.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

My queen! my mistress!  
O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause  
To be suspected of more tenderness  
Than doth become a man. I will remain  
The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth:  
My residence in Rome at one Philario's,  
Who to my father was a friend, to me  
Known but by letter: thither write, my queen,  
And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send,  
Though ink be made of gall.

*Re-enter QUEEN*

**QUEEN**

Be brief, I pray you:

If the king come, I shall incur I know not  
How much of his displeasure.

*Aside*

Yet I'll move him  
To walk this way: I never do him wrong,  
But he does buy my injuries, to be friends;  
Pays dear for my offences.

*Exit*

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Should we be taking leave  
As long a term as yet we have to live,  
The loathness to depart would grow. Adieu!

## **IMOGEN**

Nay, stay a little:  
Were you but riding forth to air yourself,  
Such parting were too petty. Look here, love;  
This diamond was my mother's: take it, heart;  
But keep it till you woo another wife,  
When Imogen is dead.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

How, how! another?  
You gentle gods, give me but this I have,  
And sear up my embracements from a next  
With bonds of death!

*Putting on the ring*

Remain, remain thou here  
While sense can keep it on. And, sweetest, fairest,  
As I my poor self did exchange for you,  
To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles  
I still win of you: for my sake wear this;  
It is a manacle of love; I'll place it

Upon this fairest prisoner.

*Putting a bracelet upon her arm*

**IMOGEN**

O the gods!  
When shall we see again?

*Enter CYMBELINE and Lords*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Alack, the king!

**CYMBELINE**

Thou basest thing, avoid! hence, from my sight!  
If after this command thou fraught the court  
With thy unworthiness, thou diest: away!  
Thou'rt poison to my blood.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

The gods protect you!  
And bless the good remainders of the court! I am gone.

*Exit*

**IMOGEN**

There cannot be a pinch in death  
More sharp than this is.

**CYMBELINE**

O disloyal thing,  
That shouldst repair my youth, thou heap'st  
A year's age on me.

**IMOGEN**



I beseech you, sir,  
Harm not yourself with your vexation  
I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare  
Subdues all pangs, all fears.

**CYMBELINE**

Past grace? obedience?

**IMOGEN**

Past hope, and in despair; that way, past grace.

**CYMBELINE**

That mightst have had the sole son of my queen!

**IMOGEN**

O blest, that I might not! I chose an eagle,  
And did avoid a puttock.

**CYMBELINE**

Thou took'st a beggar; wouldst have made my throne  
A seat for baseness.

**IMOGEN**

No; I rather added  
A lustre to it.

**CYMBELINE**

O thou vile one!

**IMOGEN**

Sir,  
It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus:

You bred him as my playfellow, and he is  
A man worth any woman, overbuys me  
Almost the sum he pays.

**CYMBELINE**

What, art thou mad?

**IMOGEN**

Almost, sir: heaven restore me! Would I were  
A neat-herd's daughter, and my Leonatus  
Our neighbour shepherd's son!

**CYMBELINE**

Thou foolish thing!

*Re-enter QUEEN*

They were again together: you have done  
Not after our command. Away with her,  
And pen her up.

**QUEEN**

Beseech your patience. Peace,  
Dear lady daughter, peace! Sweet sovereign,  
Leave us to ourselves; and make yourself some comfort  
Out of your best advice.

**CYMBELINE**

Nay, let her languish  
A drop of blood a day; and, being aged,  
Die of this folly!

*Exeunt CYMBELINE and Lords*

**QUEEN**

Fie! you must give way.

*Enter PISANIO*

Here is your servant. How now, sir! What news?

**PISANIO**

My lord your son drew on my master.

**QUEEN**

Ha!

No harm, I trust, is done?

**PISANIO**

There might have been,  
But that my master rather play'd than fought  
And had no help of anger: they were parted  
By gentlemen at hand.

**QUEEN**

I am very glad on't.

**IMOGEN**

Your son's my father's friend; he takes his part.  
To draw upon an exile! O brave sir!  
I would they were in Afric both together;  
Myself by with a needle, that I might prick  
The goer-back. Why came you from your master?

**PISANIO**

On his command: he would not suffer me  
To bring him to the haven; left these notes  
Of what commands I should be subject to,  
When 't pleased you to employ me.

## QUEEN

This hath been  
Your faithful servant: I dare lay mine honour  
He will remain so.

## PISANIO

I humbly thank your highness.

## QUEEN

Pray, walk awhile.

## IMOGEN

About some half-hour hence,  
I pray you, speak with me: you shall at least  
Go see my lord aboard: for this time leave me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. A public place.

*Enter CLOTEN and two Lords*

### First Lord

Sir, I would advise you to shift a shirt; the violence of action hath made you reek as a sacrifice: where air comes out, air comes in: there's none abroad so wholesome as that you vent.

### CLOTEN

If my shirt were bloody, then to shift it. Have I hurt him?

### Second Lord

[Aside] No, 'faith; not so much as his patience.

### First Lord

Hurt him! his body's a passable carcass, if he be not hurt: it is a thoroughfare for steel, if it be not hurt.

### Second Lord

[Aside] His steel was in debt; it went o' the backside the town.

### CLOTEN

The villain would not stand me.

### Second Lord

[Aside] No; but he fled forward still, toward your face.

**First Lord**

Stand you! You have land enough of your own: but he added to your having; gave you some ground.

**Second Lord**

[Aside] As many inches as you have oceans. Puppies!

**CLOTEN**

I would they had not come between us.

**Second Lord**

[Aside] So would I, till you had measured how long a fool you were upon the ground.

**CLOTEN**

And that she should love this fellow and refuse me!

**Second Lord**

[Aside] If it be a sin to make a true election, she is damned.

**First Lord**

Sir, as I told you always, her beauty and her brain go not together: she's a good sign, but I have seen small reflection of her wit.

**Second Lord**

[Aside] She shines not upon fools, lest the reflection should hurt her.

**CLOTEN**

Come, I'll to my chamber. Would there had been some hurt done!

**Second Lord**

[Aside] I wish not so; unless it had been the fall of an ass, which is no great hurt.

**CLOTEN**

You'll go with us?

**First Lord**

I'll attend your lordship.

**CLOTEN**

Nay, come, let's go together.

**Second Lord**

Well, my lord.

*Exeunt*

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in Cymbeline's palace.

*Enter IMOGEN and PISANIO*

**IMOGEN**

I would thou grew'st unto the shores o' the haven,  
And question'dst every sail: if he should write  
And not have it, 'twere a paper lost,  
As offer'd mercy is. What was the last  
That he spake to thee?

**PISANIO**

It was his queen, his queen!

**IMOGEN**

Then waved his handkerchief?

**PISANIO**

And kiss'd it, madam.

**IMOGEN**

Senseless Linen! happier therein than I!  
And that was all?

**PISANIO**

No, madam; for so long  
As he could make me with this eye or ear  
Distinguish him from others, he did keep  
The deck, with glove, or hat, or handkerchief,  
Still waving, as the fits and stirs of 's mind



Could best express how slow his soul sail'd on,  
How swift his ship.

**IMOGEN**

Thou shouldst have made him  
As little as a crow, or less, ere left  
To after-eye him.

**PISANIO**

Madam, so I did.

**IMOGEN**

I would have broke mine eye-strings; crack'd them, but  
To look upon him, till the diminution  
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle,  
Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from  
The smallness of a gnat to air, and then  
Have turn'd mine eye and wept. But, good Pisanio,  
When shall we hear from him?

**PISANIO**

Be assured, madam,  
With his next vantage.

**IMOGEN**

I did not take my leave of him, but had  
Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him  
How I would think on him at certain hours  
Such thoughts and such, or I could make him swear  
The shes of Italy should not betray  
Mine interest and his honour, or have charged him,  
At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,  
To encounter me with orisons, for then  
I am in heaven for him; or ere I could  
Give him that parting kiss which I had set  
Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father  
And like the tyrannous breathing of the north

Shakes all our buds from growing.

*Enter a Lady*

**Lady**

The queen, madam,  
Desires your highness' company.

**IMOGEN**

Those things I bid you do, get them dispatch'd.  
I will attend the queen.

**PISANIO**

Madam, I shall.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Rome. Philario's house.

*Enter PHILARIO, IACHIMO, a Frenchman, a Dutchman, and a Spaniard*

### IACHIMO

Believe it, sir, I have seen him in Britain: he was then of a crescent note, expected to prove so worthy as since he hath been allowed the name of; but I could then have looked on him without the help of admiration, though the catalogue of his endowments had been tabled by his side and I to peruse him by items.

### PHILARIO

You speak of him when he was less furnished than now he is with that which makes him both without and within.

### Frenchman

I have seen him in France: we had very many there could behold the sun with as firm eyes as he.

### IACHIMO

This matter of marrying his king's daughter, wherein he must be weighed rather by her value than his own, words him, I doubt not, a great deal from the matter.

### Frenchman

And then his banishment.

### IACHIMO

Ay, and the approbation of those that weep this

lamentable divorce under her colours are wonderfully to extend him; be it but to fortify her judgment, which else an easy battery might lay flat, for taking a beggar without less quality. But how comes it he is to sojourn with you? How creeps acquaintance?

## **PHILARIO**

His father and I were soldiers together; to whom I have been often bound for no less than my life. Here comes the Briton: let him be so entertained amongst you as suits, with gentlemen of your knowing, to a stranger of his quality.

*Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS*

I beseech you all, be better known to this gentleman; whom I commend to you as a noble friend of mine: how worthy he is I will leave to appear hereafter, rather than story him in his own hearing.

## **Frenchman**

Sir, we have known together in Orleans.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Since when I have been debtor to you for courtesies, which I will be ever to pay and yet pay still.

## **Frenchman**

Sir, you o'er-rate my poor kindness: I was glad I did atone my countryman and you; it had been pity you should have been put together with so mortal a purpose as then each bore, upon importance of so slight and trivial a nature.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

By your pardon, sir, I was then a young traveller;

rather shunned to go even with what I heard than in my every action to be guided by others' experiences: but upon my mended judgment--if I offend not to say it is mended--my quarrel was not altogether slight.

**Frenchman**

'Faith, yes, to be put to the arbitrement of swords, and by such two that would by all likelihood have confounded one the other, or have fallen both.

**IACHIMO**

Can we, with manners, ask what was the difference?

**Frenchman**

Safely, I think: 'twas a contention in public, which may, without contradiction, suffer the report. It was much like an argument that fell out last night, where each of us fell in praise of our country mistresses; this gentleman at that time vouching--and upon warrant of bloody affirmation--his to be more fair, virtuous, wise, chaste, constant-qualified and less attemptable than any the rarest of our ladies in France.

**IACHIMO**

That lady is not now living, or this gentleman's opinion by this worn out.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

She holds her virtue still and I my mind.

**IACHIMO**

You must not so far prefer her 'fore ours of Italy.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Being so far provoked as I was in France, I would abate her nothing, though I profess myself her adorer, not her friend.

**IACHIMO**

As fair and as good--a kind of hand-in-hand comparison--had been something too fair and too good for any lady in Britain. If she went before others I have seen, as that diamond of yours outlustres many I have beheld. I could not but believe she excelled many: but I have not seen the most precious diamond that is, nor you the lady.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I praised her as I rated her: so do I my stone.

**IACHIMO**

What do you esteem it at?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

More than the world enjoys.

**IACHIMO**

Either your unparagoned mistress is dead, or she's outprized by a trifle.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

You are mistaken: the one may be sold, or given, if there were wealth enough for the purchase, or merit for the gift: the other is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods.

**IACHIMO**

Which the gods have given you?

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Which, by their graces, I will keep.

## **IACHIMO**

You may wear her in title yours: but, you know, strange fowl light upon neighbouring ponds. Your ring may be stolen too: so your brace of unprizable estimations; the one is but frail and the other casual; a cunning thief, or a that way accomplished courtier, would hazard the winning both of first and last.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Your Italy contains none so accomplished a courtier to convince the honour of my mistress, if, in the holding or loss of that, you term her frail. I do nothing doubt you have store of thieves; notwithstanding, I fear not my ring.

## **PHILARIO**

Let us leave here, gentlemen.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Sir, with all my heart. This worthy signior, I thank him, makes no stranger of me; we are familiar at first.

## **IACHIMO**

With five times so much conversation, I should get ground of your fair mistress, make her go back, even to the yielding, had I admittance and opportunity to friend.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

No, no.

## **IACHIMO**

I dare thereupon pawn the moiety of my estate to your ring; which, in my opinion, o'ervalues it something: but I make my wager rather against your confidence than her reputation: and, to bar your offence herein too, I durst attempt it against any lady in the world.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

You are a great deal abused in too bold a persuasion; and I doubt not you sustain what you're worthy of by your attempt.

## **IACHIMO**

What's that?

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

A repulse: though your attempt, as you call it, deserve more; a punishment too.

## **PHILARIO**

Gentlemen, enough of this: it came in too suddenly; let it die as it was born, and, I pray you, be better acquainted.

## **IACHIMO**

Would I had put my estate and my neighbour's on the approbation of what I have spoke!

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

What lady would you choose to assail?

## **IACHIMO**



Yours; whom in constancy you think stands so safe.  
I will lay you ten thousand ducats to your ring,  
that, commend me to the court where your lady is,  
with no more advantage than the opportunity of a  
second conference, and I will bring from thence  
that honour of hers which you imagine so reserved.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I will wage against your gold, gold to it: my ring  
I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it.

**IACHIMO**

You are afraid, and therein the wiser. If you buy  
ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot  
preserve it from tainting: but I see you have some  
religion in you, that you fear.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

This is but a custom in your tongue; you bear a  
graver purpose, I hope.

**IACHIMO**

I am the master of my speeches, and would undergo  
what's spoken, I swear.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Will you? I shall but lend my diamond till your  
return: let there be covenants drawn between's: my  
mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your  
unworthy thinking: I dare you to this match: here's my ring.

**PHILARIO**

I will have it no lay.

**IACHIMO**

By the gods, it is one. If I bring you no sufficient testimony that I have enjoyed the dearest bodily part of your mistress, my ten thousand ducats are yours; so is your diamond too: if I come off, and leave her in such honour as you have trust in, she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours: provided I have your commendation for my more free entertainment.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I embrace these conditions; let us have articles betwixt us. Only, thus far you shall answer: if you make your voyage upon her and give me directly to understand you have prevailed, I am no further your enemy; she is not worth our debate: if she remain unseduced, you not making it appear otherwise, for your ill opinion and the assault you have made to her chastity you shall answer me with your sword.

## **IACHIMO**

Your hand; a covenant: we will have these things set down by lawful counsel, and straight away for Britain, lest the bargain should catch cold and starve: I will fetch my gold and have our two wagers recorded.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Agreed.

*Exeunt POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and IACHIMO*

## **Frenchman**

Will this hold, think you?

## **PHILARIO**

Signior Iachimo will not from it.  
Pray, let us follow 'em.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Britain. A room in Cymbeline's palace.

*Enter QUEEN, Ladies, and CORNELIUS*

**QUEEN**

Whiles yet the dew's on ground, gather those flowers;  
Make haste: who has the note of them?

**First Lady**

I, madam.

**QUEEN**

Dispatch.

*Exeunt Ladies*

Now, master doctor, have you brought those drugs?

**CORNELIUS**

Pleaseth your highness, ay: here they are, madam:

*Presenting a small box*

But I beseech your grace, without offence,--  
My conscience bids me ask--wherefore you have  
Commanded of me those most poisonous compounds,  
Which are the movers of a languishing death;  
But though slow, deadly?

**QUEEN**

I wonder, doctor,  
Thou ask'st me such a question. Have I not been  
Thy pupil long? Hast thou not learn'd me how  
To make perfumes? distil? preserve? yea, so  
That our great king himself doth woo me oft  
For my confections? Having thus far proceeded,--  
Unless thou think'st me devilish--is't not meet  
That I did amplify my judgment in  
Other conclusions? I will try the forces  
Of these thy compounds on such creatures as  
We count not worth the hanging, but none human,  
To try the vigour of them and apply  
Allayments to their act, and by them gather  
Their several virtues and effects.

## CORNELIUS

Your highness  
Shall from this practise but make hard your heart:  
Besides, the seeing these effects will be  
Both noisome and infectious.

## QUEEN

O, content thee.

*Enter PISANIO*

*Aside*

Here comes a flattering rascal; upon him  
Will I first work: he's for his master,  
An enemy to my son. How now, Pisanio!  
Doctor, your service for this time is ended;  
Take your own way.

## CORNELIUS

[Aside] I do suspect you, madam;  
But you shall do no harm.

## QUEEN

[To PISANIO] Hark thee, a word.

**CORNELIUS**

[Aside] I do not like her. She doth think she has  
Strange lingering poisons: I do know her spirit,  
And will not trust one of her malice with  
A drug of such damn'd nature. Those she has  
Will stupefy and dull the sense awhile;  
Which first, perchance, she'll prove on  
cats and dogs,  
Then afterward up higher: but there is  
No danger in what show of death it makes,  
More than the locking-up the spirits a time,  
To be more fresh, reviving. She is fool'd  
With a most false effect; and I the truer,  
So to be false with her.

**QUEEN**

No further service, doctor,  
Until I send for thee.

**CORNELIUS**

I humbly take my leave.

*Exit*

**QUEEN**

Weeps she still, say'st thou? Dost thou think in time  
She will not quench and let instructions enter  
Where folly now possesses? Do thou work:  
When thou shalt bring me word she loves my son,  
I'll tell thee on the instant thou art then  
As great as is thy master, greater, for  
His fortunes all lie speechless and his name  
Is at last gasp: return he cannot, nor  
Continue where he is: to shift his being  
Is to exchange one misery with another,

And every day that comes comes to decay  
A day's work in him. What shalt thou expect,  
To be depend on a thing that leans,  
Who cannot be new built, nor has no friends,  
So much as but to prop him?

*The QUEEN drops the box: PISANIO takes it up*

Thou takest up  
Thou know'st not what; but take it for thy labour:  
It is a thing I made, which hath the king  
Five times redeem'd from death: I do not know  
What is more cordial. Nay, I prethee, take it;  
It is an earnest of a further good  
That I mean to thee. Tell thy mistress how  
The case stands with her; do't as from thyself.  
Think what a chance thou changest on, but think  
Thou hast thy mistress still, to boot, my son,  
Who shall take notice of thee: I'll move the king  
To any shape of thy preferment such  
As thou'lt desire; and then myself, I chiefly,  
That set thee on to this desert, am bound  
To load thy merit richly. Call my women:  
Think on my words.

*Exit PISANIO*

A sly and constant knave,  
Not to be shaked; the agent for his master  
And the remembrancer of her to hold  
The hand-fast to her lord. I have given him that  
Which, if he take, shall quite unpeople her  
Of liegers for her sweet, and which she after,  
Except she bend her humour, shall be assured  
To taste of too.

*Re-enter PISANIO and Ladies*

So, so: well done, well done:  
The violets, cowslips, and the primroses,  
Bear to my closet. Fare thee well, Pisanio;  
Think on my words.

*Exeunt QUEEN and Ladies*

**PISANIO**

And shall do:

But when to my good lord I prove untrue,  
I'll choke myself: there's all I'll do for you.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The same. Another room in the palace.

*Enter IMOGEN*

**IMOGEN**

A father cruel, and a step-dame false;  
A foolish suitor to a wedded lady,  
That hath her husband banish'd;--O, that husband!  
My supreme crown of grief! and those repeated  
Vexations of it! Had I been thief-stol'n,  
As my two brothers, happy! but most miserable  
Is the desire that's glorious: blest be those,  
How mean soe'er, that have their honest wills,  
Which seasons comfort. Who may this be? Fie!

*Enter PISANIO and IACHIMO*

**PISANIO**

Madam, a noble gentleman of Rome,  
Comes from my lord with letters.

**IACHIMO**

Change you, madam?  
The worthy Leonatus is in safety  
And greets your highness dearly.

*Presents a letter*

**IMOGEN**

Thanks, good sir:  
You're kindly welcome.

## IACHIMO

[Aside] All of her that is out of door most rich!  
If she be furnish'd with a mind so rare,  
She is alone the Arabian bird, and I  
Have lost the wager. Boldness be my friend!  
Arm me, audacity, from head to foot!  
Or, like the Parthian, I shall flying fight;  
Rather directly fly.

## IMOGEN

[Reads] 'He is one of the noblest note, to whose  
kindnesses I am most infinitely tied. Reflect upon  
him accordingly, as you value your trust--  
LEONATUS.'

So far I read aloud:  
But even the very middle of my heart  
Is warm'd by the rest, and takes it thankfully.  
You are as welcome, worthy sir, as I  
Have words to bid you, and shall find it so  
In all that I can do.

## IACHIMO

Thanks, fairest lady.  
What, are men mad? Hath nature given them eyes  
To see this vaulted arch, and the rich crop  
Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt  
The fiery orbs above and the twinn'd stones  
Upon the number'd beach? and can we not  
Partition make with spectacles so precious  
'Twixt fair and foul?

## IMOGEN

What makes your admiration?

## IACHIMO

It cannot be i' the eye, for apes and monkeys  
'Twixt two such shes would chatter this way and

Contemn with mows the other; nor i' the judgment,  
For idiots in this case of favour would  
Be wisely definite; nor i' the appetite;  
Sluttery to such neat excellence opposed  
Should make desire vomit emptiness,  
Not so allured to feed.

**IMOGEN**

What is the matter, trow?

**IACHIMO**

The cloyed will,  
That satiate yet unsatisfied desire, that tub  
Both fill'd and running, ravening first the lamb  
Longs after for the garbage.

**IMOGEN**

What, dear sir,  
Thus raps you? Are you well?

**IACHIMO**

Thanks, madam; well.

*To PISANIO*

Beseech you, sir, desire  
My man's abode where I did leave him: he  
Is strange and peevish.

**PISANIO**

I was going, sir,  
To give him welcome.

*Exit*

**IMOGEN**

Continues well my lord? His health, beseech you?

**IACHIMO**

Well, madam.

**IMOGEN**

Is he disposed to mirth? I hope he is.

**IACHIMO**

Exceeding pleasant; none a stranger there  
So merry and so gamesome: he is call'd  
The Briton reveller.

**IMOGEN**

When he was here,  
He did incline to sadness, and oft-times  
Not knowing why.

**IACHIMO**

I never saw him sad.  
There is a Frenchman his companion, one  
An eminent monsieur, that, it seems, much loves  
A Gallian girl at home; he furnaces  
The thick sighs from him, whiles the jolly Briton--  
Your lord, I mean--laughs from's free lungs, cries 'O,  
Can my sides hold, to think that man, who knows  
By history, report, or his own proof,  
What woman is, yea, what she cannot choose  
But must be, will his free hours languish for  
Assured bondage?'

**IMOGEN**

Will my lord say so?

**IACHIMO**

Ay, madam, with his eyes in flood with laughter:  
It is a recreation to be by  
And hear him mock the Frenchman. But, heavens know,  
Some men are much to blame.

**IMOGEN**

Not he, I hope.

**IACHIMO**

Not he: but yet heaven's bounty towards him might  
Be used more thankfully. In himself, 'tis much;  
In you, which I account his beyond all talents,  
Whilst I am bound to wonder, I am bound  
To pity too.

**IMOGEN**

What do you pity, sir?

**IACHIMO**

Two creatures heartily.

**IMOGEN**

Am I one, sir?  
You look on me: what wreck discern you in me  
Deserves your pity?

**IACHIMO**

Lamentable! What,  
To hide me from the radiant sun and solace  
I' the dungeon by a snuff?

**IMOGEN**

I pray you, sir,

Deliver with more openess your answers  
To my demands. Why do you pity me?

## IACHIMO

That others do--  
I was about to say--enjoy your--But  
It is an office of the gods to venge it,  
Not mine to speak on 't.

## IMOGEN

You do seem to know  
Something of me, or what concerns me: pray you,--  
Since doubling things go ill often hurts more  
Than to be sure they do; for certainties  
Either are past remedies, or, timely knowing,  
The remedy then born--discover to me  
What both you spur and stop.

## IACHIMO

Had I this cheek  
To bathe my lips upon; this hand, whose touch,  
Whose every touch, would force the feeler's soul  
To the oath of loyalty; this object, which  
Takes prisoner the wild motion of mine eye,  
Fixing it only here; should I, damn'd then,  
Slaver with lips as common as the stairs  
That mount the Capitol; join gripes with hands  
Made hard with hourly falsehood--falsehood, as  
With labour; then by-peeping in an eye  
Base and unlustrous as the smoky light  
That's fed with stinking tallow; it were fit  
That all the plagues of hell should at one time  
Encounter such revolt.

## IMOGEN

My lord, I fear,  
Has forgot Britain.

## IACHIMO

And himself. Not I,  
Inclined to this intelligence, pronounce  
The beggary of his change; but 'tis your graces  
That from pay mutest conscience to my tongue  
Charms this report out.

## IMOGEN

Let me hear no more.

## IACHIMO

O dearest soul! your cause doth strike my heart  
With pity, that doth make me sick. A lady  
So fair, and fasten'd to an empery,  
Would make the great'st king double,--to be partner'd  
With tomboys hired with that self-exhibition  
Which your own coffers yield! with diseased ventures  
That play with all infirmities for gold  
Which rottenness can lend nature! such boil'd stuff  
As well might poison poison! Be revenged;  
Or she that bore you was no queen, and you  
Recoil from your great stock.

## IMOGEN

Revenged!  
How should I be revenged? If this be true,--  
As I have such a heart that both mine ears  
Must not in haste abuse--if it be true,  
How should I be revenged?

## IACHIMO

Should he make me  
Live, like Diana's priest, betwixt cold sheets,  
Whiles he is vaulting variable ramps,  
In your despite, upon your purse? Revenge it.  
I dedicate myself to your sweet pleasure,  
More noble than that runagate to your bed,

And will continue fast to your affection,  
Still close as sure.

## **IMOGEN**

What, ho, Pisanio!

## **IACHIMO**

Let me my service tender on your lips.

## **IMOGEN**

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have  
So long attended thee. If thou wert honourable,  
Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not  
For such an end thou seek'st,--as base as strange.  
Thou wrong'st a gentleman, who is as far  
From thy report as thou from honour, and  
Solicit'st here a lady that disdains  
Thee and the devil alike. What ho, Pisanio!  
The king my father shall be made acquainted  
Of thy assault: if he shall think it fit,  
A saucy stranger in his court to mart  
As in a Romish stew and to expound  
His beastly mind to us, he hath a court  
He little cares for and a daughter who  
He not respects at all. What, ho, Pisanio!

## **IACHIMO**

O happy Leonatus! I may say  
The credit that thy lady hath of thee  
Deserves thy trust, and thy most perfect goodness  
Her assured credit. Blessed live you long!  
A lady to the worthiest sir that ever  
Country call'd his! and you his mistress, only  
For the most worthiest fit! Give me your pardon.  
I have spoke this, to know if your affiance  
Were deeply rooted; and shall make your lord,  
That which he is, new o'er: and he is one  
The truest manner'd; such a holy witch



That he enchants societies into him;  
Half all men's hearts are his.

**IMOGEN**

You make amends.

**IACHIMO**

He sits 'mongst men like a descended god:  
He hath a kind of honour sets him off,  
More than a mortal seeming. Be not angry,  
Most mighty princess, that I have adventured  
To try your taking a false report; which hath  
Honour'd with confirmation your great judgment  
In the election of a sir so rare,  
Which you know cannot err: the love I bear him  
Made me to fan you thus, but the gods made you,  
Unlike all others, chaffless. Pray, your pardon.

**IMOGEN**

All's well, sir: take my power i' the court  
for yours.

**IACHIMO**

My humble thanks. I had almost forgot  
To entreat your grace but in a small request,  
And yet of moment to, for it concerns  
Your lord; myself and other noble friends,  
Are partners in the business.

**IMOGEN**

Pray, what is't?

**IACHIMO**

Some dozen Romans of us and your lord--  
The best feather of our wing--have mingled sums  
To buy a present for the emperor

Which I, the factor for the rest, have done  
In France: 'tis plate of rare device, and jewels  
Of rich and exquisite form; their values great;  
And I am something curious, being strange,  
To have them in safe stowage: may it please you  
To take them in protection?

**IMOGEN**

Willingly;  
And pawn mine honour for their safety: since  
My lord hath interest in them, I will keep them  
In my bedchamber.

**IACHIMO**

They are in a trunk,  
Attended by my men: I will make bold  
To send them to you, only for this night;  
I must aboard to-morrow.

**IMOGEN**

O, no, no.

**IACHIMO**

Yes, I beseech; or I shall short my word  
By lengthening my return. From Gallia  
I cross'd the seas on purpose and on promise  
To see your grace.

**IMOGEN**

I thank you for your pains:  
But not away to-morrow!

**IACHIMO**

O, I must, madam:  
Therefore I shall beseech you, if you please

To greet your lord with writing, do't to-night:  
I have outstood my time; which is material  
To the tender of our present.

## **IMOGEN**

I will write.  
Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept,  
And truly yielded you. You're very welcome.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 1, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Britain. Before Cymbeline's palace.

*Enter CLOTEN and two Lords*

**CLOTEN**

Was there ever man had such luck! when I kissed the jack, upon an up-cast to be hit away! I had a hundred pound on't: and then a whoreson jackanapes must take me up for swearing; as if I borrowed mine oaths of him and might not spend them at my pleasure.

**First Lord**

What got he by that? You have broke his pate with your bowl.

**Second Lord**

[Aside] If his wit had been like him that broke it, it would have run all out.

**CLOTEN**

When a gentleman is disposed to swear, it is not for any standers-by to curtail his oaths, ha?

**Second Lord**

No my lord;

*Aside*

nor crop the ears of them.

**CLOTEN**

Whoreson dog! I give him satisfaction?  
Would he had been one of my rank!

**Second Lord**

[Aside] To have smelt like a fool.

**CLOTEN**

I am not vexed more at any thing in the earth: a  
pox on't! I had rather not be so noble as I am;  
they dare not fight with me, because of the queen my  
mother: every Jack-slave hath his bellyful of  
fighting, and I must go up and down like a cock that  
nobody can match.

**Second Lord**

[Aside] You are cock and capon too; and you crow,  
cock, with your comb on.

**CLOTEN**

Sayest thou?

**Second Lord**

It is not fit your lordship should undertake every  
companion that you give offence to.

**CLOTEN**

No, I know that: but it is fit I should commit  
offence to my inferiors.

**Second Lord**

Ay, it is fit for your lordship only.

**CLOTEN**

Why, so I say.

**First Lord**

Did you hear of a stranger that's come to court to-night?

**CLOTEN**

A stranger, and I not know on't!

**Second Lord**

[Aside] He's a strange fellow himself, and knows it not.

**First Lord**

There's an Italian come; and, 'tis thought, one of Leonatus' friends.

**CLOTEN**

Leonatus! a banished rascal; and he's another, whatsoever he be. Who told you of this stranger?

**First Lord**

One of your lordship's pages.

**CLOTEN**

Is it fit I went to look upon him? is there no derogation in't?

**Second Lord**

You cannot derogate, my lord.

**CLOTEN**

Not easily, I think.

## Second Lord

[Aside] You are a fool granted; therefore your issues, being foolish, do not derogate.

## CLOTEN

Come, I'll go see this Italian: what I have lost to-day at bowls I'll win to-night of him. Come, go.

## Second Lord

I'll attend your lordship.

*Exeunt CLOTEN and First Lord*

That such a crafty devil as is his mother  
Should yield the world this ass! a woman that  
Bears all down with her brain; and this her son  
Cannot take two from twenty, for his heart,  
And leave eighteen. Alas, poor princess,  
Thou divine Imogen, what thou endurest,  
Betwixt a father by thy step-dame govern'd,  
A mother hourly coining plots, a wooer  
More hateful than the foul expulsion is  
Of thy dear husband, than that horrid act  
Of the divorce he'd make! The heavens hold firm  
The walls of thy dear honour, keep unshaked  
That temple, thy fair mind, that thou mayst stand,  
To enjoy thy banish'd lord and this great land!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Imogen's bedchamber in Cymbeline's palace:

a trunk in one corner of it.

*IMOGEN in bed, reading; a Lady attending*

**IMOGEN**

Who's there? my woman Helen?

**Lady**

Please you, madam

**IMOGEN**

What hour is it?

**Lady**

Almost midnight, madam.

**IMOGEN**

I have read three hours then: mine eyes are weak:  
Fold down the leaf where I have left: to bed:  
Take not away the taper, leave it burning;  
And if thou canst awake by four o' the clock,  
I prithee, call me. Sleep hath seized me wholly

*Exit Lady*

To your protection I commend me, gods.  
From fairies and the tempters of the night  
Guard me, beseech ye.



*Sleeps. IACHIMO comes from the trunk*

## IACHIMO

The crickets sing, and man's o'er-labour'd sense  
Repairs itself by rest. Our Tarquin thus  
Did softly press the rushes, ere he waken'd  
The chastity he wounded. Cytherea,  
How bravely thou becomest thy bed, fresh lily,  
And whiter than the sheets! That I might touch!  
But kiss; one kiss! Rubies unparagon'd,  
How dearly they do't! 'Tis her breathing that  
Perfumes the chamber thus: the flame o' the taper  
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids,  
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied  
Under these windows, white and azure laced  
With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design,  
To note the chamber: I will write all down:  
Such and such pictures; there the window; such  
The adornment of her bed; the arras; figures,  
Why, such and such; and the contents o' the story.  
Ah, but some natural notes about her body,  
Above ten thousand meaner moveables  
Would testify, to enrich mine inventory.  
O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!  
And be her sense but as a monument,  
Thus in a chapel lying! Come off, come off:

*Taking off her bracelet*

As slippery as the Gordian knot was hard!  
'Tis mine; and this will witness outwardly,  
As strongly as the conscience does within,  
To the madding of her lord. On her left breast  
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops  
I' the bottom of a cowslip: here's a voucher,  
Stronger than ever law could make: this secret  
Will force him think I have pick'd the lock and ta'en  
The treasure of her honour. No more. To what end?  
Why should I write this down, that's riveted,  
Screw'd to my memory? She hath been reading late  
The tale of Tereus; here the leaf's turn'd down

Where Philomel gave up. I have enough:  
To the trunk again, and shut the spring of it.  
Swift, swift, you dragons of the night, that dawning  
May bare the raven's eye! I lodge in fear;  
Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here.

*Clock strikes*

One, two, three: time, time!

*Goes into the trunk. The scene closes*

### **Scene III**

An ante-chamber adjoining Imogen's apartments.

*Enter CLOTEN and Lords*

#### **First Lord**

Your lordship is the most patient man in loss, the  
most coldest that ever turned up ace.

#### **CLOTEN**

It would make any man cold to lose.

#### **First Lord**

But not every man patient after the noble temper of  
your lordship. You are most hot and furious when you win.

#### **CLOTEN**

Winning will put any man into courage. If I could  
get this foolish Imogen, I should have gold enough.  
It's almost morning, is't not?

#### **First Lord**

Day, my lord.

## CLOTEN

I would this music would come: I am advised to give  
her music o' mornings; they say it will penetrate.

*Enter Musicians*

Come on; tune: if you can penetrate her with your  
fingering, so; we'll try with tongue too: if none  
will do, let her remain; but I'll never give o'er.  
First, a very excellent good-conceited thing;  
after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich  
words to it: and then let her consider.

*SONG*

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,  
And Phoebus 'gins arise,  
His steeds to water at those springs  
On chaliced flowers that lies;  
And winking Mary-buds begin  
To ope their golden eyes:  
With every thing that pretty is,  
My lady sweet, arise:  
Arise, arise.

## CLOTEN

So, get you gone. If this penetrate, I will  
consider your music the better: if it do not, it is  
a vice in her ears, which horse-hairs and  
calves'-guts, nor the voice of unpaved eunuch to  
boot, can never amend.

*Exeunt Musicians*

## Second Lord

Here comes the king.

## CLOTEN

I am glad I was up so late; for that's the reason I was up so early: he cannot choose but take this service I have done fatherly.

*Enter CYMBELINE and QUEEN*

Good morrow to your majesty and to my gracious mother.

**CYMBELINE**

Attend you here the door of our stern daughter?  
Will she not forth?

**CLOTEN**

I have assailed her with music, but she vouchsafes no notice.

**CYMBELINE**

The exile of her minion is too new;  
She hath not yet forgot him: some more time  
Must wear the print of his remembrance out,  
And then she's yours.

**QUEEN**

You are most bound to the king,  
Who lets go by no vantages that may  
Prefer you to his daughter. Frame yourself  
To orderly soliciting, and be friended  
With aptness of the season; make denials  
Increase your services; so seem as if  
You were inspired to do those duties which  
You tender to her; that you in all obey her,  
Save when command to your dismissal tends,  
And therein you are senseless.

**CLOTEN**

Senseless! not so.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

So like you, sir, ambassadors from Rome;  
The one is Caius Lucius.

**CYMBELINE**

A worthy fellow,  
Albeit he comes on angry purpose now;  
But that's no fault of his: we must receive him  
According to the honour of his sender;  
And towards himself, his goodness forespent on us,  
We must extend our notice. Our dear son,  
When you have given good morning to your mistress,  
Attend the queen and us; we shall have need  
To employ you towards this Roman. Come, our queen.

*Exeunt all but CLOTEN*

**CLOTEN**

If she be up, I'll speak with her; if not,  
Let her lie still and dream.

*Knocks*

By your leave, ho!  
I know her women are about her: what  
If I do line one of their hands? 'Tis gold  
Which buys admittance; oft it doth; yea, and makes  
Diana's rangers false themselves, yield up  
Their deer to the stand o' the stealer; and 'tis gold  
Which makes the true man kill'd and saves the thief;  
Nay, sometime hangs both thief and true man: what  
Can it not do and undo? I will make  
One of her women lawyer to me, for  
I yet not understand the case myself.

*Knocks*

By your leave.

*Enter a Lady*

**Lady**

Who's there that knocks?

**CLOTEN**

A gentleman.

**Lady**

No more?

**CLOTEN**

Yes, and a gentlewoman's son.

**Lady**

That's more  
Than some, whose tailors are as dear as yours,  
Can justly boast of. What's your lordship's pleasure?

**CLOTEN**

Your lady's person: is she ready?

**Lady**

Ay,  
To keep her chamber.

**CLOTEN**

There is gold for you;  
Sell me your good report.

**Lady**

How! my good name? or to report of you  
What I shall think is good?--The princess!

*Enter IMOGEN*

**CLOTEN**

Good morrow, fairest: sister, your sweet hand.

*Exit Lady*

**IMOGEN**

Good morrow, sir. You lay out too much pains  
For purchasing but trouble; the thanks I give  
Is telling you that I am poor of thanks  
And scarce can spare them.

**CLOTEN**

Still, I swear I love you.

**IMOGEN**

If you but said so, 'twere as deep with me:  
If you swear still, your recompense is still  
That I regard it not.

**CLOTEN**

This is no answer.

**IMOGEN**

But that you shall not say I yield being silent,  
I would not speak. I pray you, spare me: 'faith,  
I shall unfold equal discourtesy  
To your best kindness: one of your great knowing  
Should learn, being taught, forbearance.

## CLOTEN

To leave you in your madness, 'twere my sin:  
I will not.

## IMOGEN

Fools are not mad folks.

## CLOTEN

Do you call me fool?

## IMOGEN

As I am mad, I do:  
If you'll be patient, I'll no more be mad;  
That cures us both. I am much sorry, sir,  
You put me to forget a lady's manners,  
By being so verbal: and learn now, for all,  
That I, which know my heart, do here pronounce,  
By the very truth of it, I care not for you,  
And am so near the lack of charity--  
To accuse myself--I hate you; which I had rather  
You felt than make't my boast.

## CLOTEN

You sin against  
Obedience, which you owe your father. For  
The contract you pretend with that base wretch,  
One bred of alms and foster'd with cold dishes,  
With scraps o' the court, it is no contract, none:  
And though it be allow'd in meaner parties--  
Yet who than he more mean?--to knit their souls,  
On whom there is no more dependency  
But brats and beggary, in self-figured knot;  
Yet you are curb'd from that enlargement by  
The consequence o' the crown, and must not soil  
The precious note of it with a base slave.  
A hilding for a livery, a squire's cloth,  
A pantler, not so eminent.



**IMOGEN**

Profane fellow  
Wert thou the son of Jupiter and no more  
But what thou art besides, thou wert too base  
To be his groom: thou wert dignified enough,  
Even to the point of envy, if 'twere made  
Comparative for your virtues, to be styled  
The under-hangman of his kingdom, and hated  
For being preferred so well.

**CLOTEN**

The south-fog rot him!

**IMOGEN**

He never can meet more mischance than come  
To be but named of thee. His meanest garment,  
That ever hath but clipp'd his body, is dearer  
In my respect than all the hairs above thee,  
Were they all made such men. How now, Pisanio!

*Enter PISANIO*

**CLOTEN**

'His garment!' Now the devil--

**IMOGEN**

To Dorothy my woman hie thee presently--

**CLOTEN**

'His garment!'

**IMOGEN**

I am sprited with a fool.

Frighted, and anger'd worse: go bid my woman  
Search for a jewel that too casually  
Hath left mine arm: it was thy master's: 'shrew me,  
If I would lose it for a revenue  
Of any king's in Europe. I do think  
I saw't this morning: confident I am  
Last night 'twas on mine arm; I kiss'd it:  
I hope it be not gone to tell my lord  
That I kiss aught but he.

**PISANIO**

'Twill not be lost.

**IMOGEN**

I hope so: go and search.

*Exit PISANIO*

**CLOTEN**

You have abused me:  
'His meanest garment!'

**IMOGEN**

Ay, I said so, sir:  
If you will make't an action, call witness to't.

**CLOTEN**

I will inform your father.

**IMOGEN**

Your mother too:  
She's my good lady, and will conceive, I hope,  
But the worst of me. So, I leave you, sir,  
To the worst of discontent.

*Exit*

**CLOTEN**

I'll be revenged:  
'His meanest garment!' Well.

*Exit*

**CYMBELINE**

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Rome. Philario's house.

*Enter POSTHUMUS and PHILARIO*

### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Fear it not, sir: I would I were so sure  
To win the king as I am bold her honour  
Will remain hers.

### PHILARIO

What means do you make to him?

### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Not any, but abide the change of time,  
Quake in the present winter's state and wish  
That warmer days would come: in these sear'd hopes,  
I barely gratify your love; they failing,  
I must die much your debtor.

### PHILARIO

Your very goodness and your company  
O'erpays all I can do. By this, your king  
Hath heard of great Augustus: Caius Lucius  
Will do's commission throughly: and I think  
He'll grant the tribute, send the arrearages,  
Or look upon our Romans, whose remembrance  
Is yet fresh in their grief.

### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

I do believe,  
Statist though I am none, nor like to be,

That this will prove a war; and you shall hear  
The legions now in Gallia sooner landed  
In our not-fearing Britain than have tidings  
Of any penny tribute paid. Our countrymen  
Are men more order'd than when Julius Caesar  
Smiled at their lack of skill, but found  
their courage  
Worthy his frowning at: their discipline,  
Now mingled with their courages, will make known  
To their approvers they are people such  
That mend upon the world.

*Enter IACHIMO*

**PHILARIO**

See! Iachimo!

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

The swiftest harts have posted you by land;  
And winds of all the comers kiss'd your sails,  
To make your vessel nimble.

**PHILARIO**

Welcome, sir.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I hope the briefness of your answer made  
The speediness of your return.

**IACHIMO**

Your lady  
Is one of the fairest that I have look'd upon.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

And therewithal the best; or let her beauty

Look through a casement to allure false hearts  
And be false with them.

**IACHIMO**

Here are letters for you.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Their tenor good, I trust.

**IACHIMO**

'Tis very like.

**PHILARIO**

Was Caius Lucius in the Britain court  
When you were there?

**IACHIMO**

He was expected then,  
But not approach'd.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

All is well yet.  
Sparkles this stone as it was wont? or is't not  
Too dull for your good wearing?

**IACHIMO**

If I had lost it,  
I should have lost the worth of it in gold.  
I'll make a journey twice as far, to enjoy  
A second night of such sweet shortness which  
Was mine in Britain, for the ring is won.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

The stone's too hard to come by.

**IACHIMO**

Not a whit,  
Your lady being so easy.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Make not, sir,  
Your loss your sport: I hope you know that we  
Must not continue friends.

**IACHIMO**

Good sir, we must,  
If you keep covenant. Had I not brought  
The knowledge of your mistress home, I grant  
We were to question further: but I now  
Profess myself the winner of her honour,  
Together with your ring; and not the wronger  
Of her or you, having proceeded but  
By both your wills.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

If you can make't apparent  
That you have tasted her in bed, my hand  
And ring is yours; if not, the foul opinion  
You had of her pure honour gains or loses  
Your sword or mine, or masterless leaves both  
To who shall find them.

**IACHIMO**

Sir, my circumstances,  
Being so near the truth as I will make them,  
Must first induce you to believe: whose strength  
I will confirm with oath; which, I doubt not,  
You'll give me leave to spare, when you shall find  
You need it not.

## POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Proceed.

## IACHIMO

First, her bedchamber,--  
Where, I confess, I slept not, but profess  
Had that was well worth watching--it was hang'd  
With tapestry of silk and silver; the story  
Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman,  
And Cydnus swell'd above the banks, or for  
The press of boats or pride: a piece of work  
So bravely done, so rich, that it did strive  
In workmanship and value; which I wonder'd  
Could be so rarely and exactly wrought,  
Since the true life on't was--

## POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

This is true;  
And this you might have heard of here, by me,  
Or by some other.

## IACHIMO

More particulars  
Must justify my knowledge.

## POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

So they must,  
Or do your honour injury.

## IACHIMO

The chimney  
Is south the chamber, and the chimney-piece  
Chaste Dian bathing: never saw I figures  
So likely to report themselves: the cutter  
Was as another nature, dumb; outwent her,  
Motion and breath left out.



## POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

This is a thing  
Which you might from relation likewise reap,  
Being, as it is, much spoke of.

## IACHIMO

The roof o' the chamber  
With golden cherubins is fretted: her andirons--  
I had forgot them--were two winking Cupids  
Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely  
Depending on their brands.

## POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

This is her honour!  
Let it be granted you have seen all this--and praise  
Be given to your remembrance--the description  
Of what is in her chamber nothing saves  
The wager you have laid.

## IACHIMO

Then, if you can,

*Showing the bracelet*

Be pale: I beg but leave to air this jewel; see!  
And now 'tis up again: it must be married  
To that your diamond; I'll keep them.

## POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Jove!  
Once more let me behold it: is it that  
Which I left with her?

## IACHIMO

Sir--I thank her--that:  
She stripp'd it from her arm; I see her yet;  
Her pretty action did outsell her gift,  
And yet enrich'd it too: she gave it me, and said  
She prized it once.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

May be she pluck'd it off  
To send it me.

## **IACHIMO**

She writes so to you, doth she?

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

O, no, no, no! 'tis true. Here, take this too;

*Gives the ring*

It is a basilisk unto mine eye,  
Kills me to look on't. Let there be no honour  
Where there is beauty; truth, where semblance; love,  
Where there's another man: the vows of women  
Of no more bondage be, to where they are made,  
Than they are to their virtues; which is nothing.  
O, above measure false!

## **PHILARIO**

Have patience, sir,  
And take your ring again; 'tis not yet won:  
It may be probable she lost it; or  
Who knows if one of her women, being corrupted,  
Hath stol'n it from her?

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Very true;  
And so, I hope, he came by't. Back my ring:  
Render to me some corporal sign about her,

More evident than this; for this was stolen.

## **IACHIMO**

By Jupiter, I had it from her arm.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Hark you, he swears; by Jupiter he swears.  
'Tis true:--nay, keep the ring--'tis true: I am sure  
She would not lose it: her attendants are  
All sworn and honourable:--they induced to steal it!  
And by a stranger!--No, he hath enjoyed her:  
The cognizance of her incontinency  
Is this: she hath bought the name of whore  
thus dearly.  
There, take thy hire; and all the fiends of hell  
Divide themselves between you!

## **PHILARIO**

Sir, be patient:  
This is not strong enough to be believed  
Of one persuaded well of--

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Never talk on't;  
She hath been colted by him.

## **IACHIMO**

If you seek  
For further satisfying, under her breast--  
Worthy the pressing--lies a mole, right proud  
Of that most delicate lodging: by my life,  
I kiss'd it; and it gave me present hunger  
To feed again, though full. You do remember  
This stain upon her?

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Ay, and it doth confirm  
Another stain, as big as hell can hold,  
Were there no more but it.

**IACHIMO**

Will you hear more?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Spare your arithmetic: never count the turns;  
Once, and a million!

**IACHIMO**

I'll be sworn--

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

No swearing.  
If you will swear you have not done't, you lie;  
And I will kill thee, if thou dost deny  
Thou'st made me cuckold.

**IACHIMO**

I'll deny nothing.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

O, that I had her here, to tear her limb-meal!  
I will go there and do't, i' the court, before  
Her father. I'll do something--

*Exit*

**PHILARIO**

Quite besides  
The government of patience! You have won:  
Let's follow him, and pervert the present wrath

He hath against himself.

**IACHIMO**

With an my heart.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another room in Philario's house.

*Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS*

### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Is there no way for men to be but women  
Must be half-workers? We are all bastards;  
And that most venerable man which I  
Did call my father, was I know not where  
When I was stamp'd; some coiner with his tools  
Made me a counterfeit: yet my mother seem'd  
The Dian of that time so doth my wife  
The nonpareil of this. O, vengeance, vengeance!  
Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd  
And pray'd me oft forbearance; did it with  
A pudency so rosy the sweet view on't  
Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that I thought her  
As chaste as unsunn'd snow. O, all the devils!  
This yellow Iachimo, in an hour,--wast not?--  
Or less,--at first?--perchance he spoke not, but,  
Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German one,  
Cried 'O!' and mounted; found no opposition  
But what he look'd for should oppose and she  
Should from encounter guard. Could I find out  
The woman's part in me! For there's no motion  
That tends to vice in man, but I affirm  
It is the woman's part: be it lying, note it,  
The woman's; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;  
Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;  
Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,  
Nice longing, slanders, mutability,  
All faults that may be named, nay, that hell knows,  
Why, hers, in part or all; but rather, all;  
For even to vice  
They are not constant but are changing still  
One vice, but of a minute old, for one

Not half so old as that. I'll write against them,  
Detest them, curse them: yet 'tis greater skill  
In a true hate, to pray they have their will:  
The very devils cannot plague them better.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 2, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Britain. A hall in Cymbeline's palace.

*Enter in state, CYMBELINE, QUEEN, CLOTEN, and Lords at one door, and at another, CAIUS LUCIUS and Attendants*

### CYMBELINE

Now say, what would Augustus Caesar with us?

### CAIUS LUCIUS

When Julius Caesar, whose remembrance yet  
Lives in men's eyes and will to ears and tongues  
Be theme and hearing ever, was in this Britain  
And conquer'd it, Cassibelan, thine uncle,--  
Famous in Caesar's praises, no whit less  
Than in his feats deserving it--for him  
And his succession granted Rome a tribute,  
Yearly three thousand pounds, which by thee lately  
Is left untender'd.

### QUEEN

And, to kill the marvel,  
Shall be so ever.

### CLOTEN

There be many Caesars,  
Ere such another Julius. Britain is  
A world by itself; and we will nothing pay  
For wearing our own noses.

### QUEEN

That opportunity



Which then they had to take from 's, to resume  
We have again. Remember, sir, my liege,  
The kings your ancestors, together with  
The natural bravery of your isle, which stands  
As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in  
With rocks unscalable and roaring waters,  
With sands that will not bear your enemies' boats,  
But suck them up to the topmast. A kind of conquest  
Caesar made here; but made not here his brag  
Of 'Came' and 'saw' and 'overcame: ' with shame--  
That first that ever touch'd him--he was carried  
From off our coast, twice beaten; and his shipping--  
Poor ignorant baubles!-- upon our terrible seas,  
Like egg-shells moved upon their surges, crack'd  
As easily 'gainst our rocks: for joy whereof  
The famed Cassibelan, who was once at point--  
O giglot fortune!--to master Caesar's sword,  
Made Lud's town with rejoicing fires bright  
And Britons strut with courage.

## **CLOTEN**

Come, there's no more tribute to be paid: our  
kingdom is stronger than it was at that time; and,  
as I said, there is no moe such Caesars: other of  
them may have crook'd noses, but to owe such  
straight arms, none.

## **CYMBELINE**

Son, let your mother end.

## **CLOTEN**

We have yet many among us can gripe as hard as  
Cassibelan: I do not say I am one; but I have a  
hand. Why tribute? why should we pay tribute? If  
Caesar can hide the sun from us with a blanket, or  
put the moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute  
for light; else, sir, no more tribute, pray you now.

## **CYMBELINE**

You must know,  
Till the injurious Romans did extort  
This tribute from us, we were free:  
Caesar's ambition,  
Which swell'd so much that it did almost stretch  
The sides o' the world, against all colour here  
Did put the yoke upon 's; which to shake off  
Becomes a warlike people, whom we reckon  
Ourselves to be.

### **CLOTEN Lords**

We do.

### **CYMBELINE**

Say, then, to Caesar,  
Our ancestor was that Mulmutius which  
Ordain'd our laws, whose use the sword of Caesar  
Hath too much mangled; whose repair and franchise  
Shall, by the power we hold, be our good deed,  
Though Rome be therefore angry: Mulmutius made our laws,  
Who was the first of Britain which did put  
His brows within a golden crown and call'd  
Himself a king.

### **CAIUS LUCIUS**

I am sorry, Cymbeline,  
That I am to pronounce Augustus Caesar--  
Caesar, that hath more kings his servants than  
Thyself domestic officers--thine enemy:  
Receive it from me, then: war and confusion  
In Caesar's name pronounce I 'gainst thee: look  
For fury not to be resisted. Thus defied,  
I thank thee for myself.

### **CYMBELINE**

Thou art welcome, Caius.  
Thy Caesar knighted me; my youth I spent

Much under him; of him I gather'd honour;  
Which he to seek of me again, perforce,  
Behoves me keep at utterance. I am perfect  
That the Pannonians and Dalmatians for  
Their liberties are now in arms; a precedent  
Which not to read would show the Britons cold:  
So Caesar shall not find them.

## **CAIUS LUCIUS**

Let proof speak.

## **CLOTEN**

His majesty bids you welcome. Make  
pastime with us a day or two, or longer: if  
you seek us afterwards in other terms, you  
shall find us in our salt-water girdle: if you  
beat us out of it, it is yours; if you fall in  
the adventure, our crows shall fare the better  
for you; and there's an end.

## **CAIUS LUCIUS**

So, sir.

## **CYMBELINE**

I know your master's pleasure and he mine:  
All the remain is 'Welcome!'

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another room in the palace.

*Enter PISANIO, with a letter*

**PISANIO**

How? of adultery? Wherefore write you not  
What monster's her accuser? Leonatus,  
O master! what a strange infection  
Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian,  
As poisonous-tongued as handed, hath prevail'd  
On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal! No:  
She's punish'd for her truth, and undergoes,  
More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults  
As would take in some virtue. O my master!  
Thy mind to her is now as low as were  
Thy fortunes. How! that I should murder her?  
Upon the love and truth and vows which I  
Have made to thy command? I, her? her blood?  
If it be so to do good service, never  
Let me be counted serviceable. How look I,  
That I should seem to lack humanity  
so much as this fact comes to?

*Reading*

'Do't: the letter  
that I have sent her, by her own command  
Shall give thee opportunity.' O damn'd paper!  
Black as the ink that's on thee! Senseless bauble,  
Art thou a feodary for this act, and look'st  
So virgin-like without? Lo, here she comes.  
I am ignorant in what I am commanded.

*Enter IMOGEN*

## IMOGEN

How now, Pisanio!

## PISANIO

Madam, here is a letter from my lord.

## IMOGEN

Who? thy lord? that is my lord, Leonatus!  
O, learn'd indeed were that astronomer  
That knew the stars as I his characters;  
He'ld lay the future open. You good gods,  
Let what is here contain'd relish of love,  
Of my lord's health, of his content, yet not  
That we two are asunder; let that grieve him:  
Some griefs are med'cinable; that is one of them,  
For it doth physic love: of his content,  
All but in that! Good wax, thy leave. Blest be  
You bees that make these locks of counsel! Lovers  
And men in dangerous bonds pray not alike:  
Though forfeiters you cast in prison, yet  
You clasp young Cupid's tables. Good news, gods!

*Reads*

'Justice, and your father's wrath, should he take me  
in his dominion, could not be so cruel to me, as  
you, O the dearest of creatures, would even renew me  
with your eyes. Take notice that I am in Cambria,  
at Milford-Haven: what your own love will out of  
this advise you, follow. So he wishes you all  
happiness, that remains loyal to his vow, and your,  
increasing in love,

LEONATUS POSTHUMUS.'

O, for a horse with wings! Hear'st thou, Pisanio?  
He is at Milford-Haven: read, and tell me  
How far 'tis thither. If one of mean affairs  
May plod it in a week, why may not I  
Glide thither in a day? Then, true Pisanio,--  
Who long'st, like me, to see thy lord; who long'st,--

let me bate,-but not like me--yet long'st,  
But in a fainter kind:--O, not like me;  
For mine's beyond beyond--say, and speak thick;  
Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing,  
To the smothering of the sense--how far it is  
To this same blessed Milford: and by the way  
Tell me how Wales was made so happy as  
To inherit such a haven: but first of all,  
How we may steal from hence, and for the gap  
That we shall make in time, from our hence-going  
And our return, to excuse: but first, how get hence:  
Why should excuse be born or e'er begot?  
We'll talk of that hereafter. Prithee, speak,  
How many score of miles may we well ride  
'Twi't hour and hour?

## PISANIO

One score 'twixt sun and sun,  
Madam, 's enough for you:

*Aside*

and too much too.

## IMOGEN

Why, one that rode to's execution, man,  
Could never go so slow: I have heard of  
riding wagers,  
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands  
That run i' the clock's behalf. But this is foolery:  
Go bid my woman feign a sickness; say  
She'll home to her father: and provide me presently  
A riding-suit, no costlier than would fit  
A franklin's housewife.

## PISANIO

Madam, you're best consider.

## IMOGEN

I see before me, man: nor here, nor here,  
Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them,  
That I cannot look through. Away, I prithee;  
Do as I bid thee: there's no more to say,  
Accessible is none but Milford way.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Wales: a mountainous country with a cave.

*Enter, from the cave, BELARIUS; GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS following*

### BELARIUS

A goodly day not to keep house, with such  
Whose roof's as low as ours! Stoop, boys; this gate  
Instructs you how to adore the heavens and bows you  
To a morning's holy office: the gates of monarchs  
Are arch'd so high that giants may jet through  
And keep their impious turbans on, without  
Good morrow to the sun. Hail, thou fair heaven!  
We house i' the rock, yet use thee not so hardly  
As prouder livers do.

### GUIDERIUS

Hail, heaven!

### ARVIRAGUS

Hail, heaven!

### BELARIUS

Now for our mountain sport: up to yond hill;  
Your legs are young; I'll tread these flats. Consider,  
When you above perceive me like a crow,  
That it is place which lessens and sets off;  
And you may then revolve what tales I have told you  
Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war:  
This service is not service, so being done,  
But being so allow'd: to apprehend thus,  
Draws us a profit from all things we see;  
And often, to our comfort, shall we find



The sharded beetle in a safer hold  
Than is the full-wing'd eagle. O, this life  
Is nobler than attending for a cheque,  
Richer than doing nothing for a bauble,  
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk:  
Such gain the cap of him that makes 'em fine,  
Yet keeps his book uncross'd: no life to ours.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Out of your proof you speak: we, poor unfledged,  
Have never wing'd from view o' the nest, nor know not  
What air's from home. Haply this life is best,  
If quiet life be best; sweeter to you  
That have a sharper known; well corresponding  
With your stiff age: but unto us it is  
A cell of ignorance; travelling a-bed;  
A prison for a debtor, that not dares  
To stride a limit.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

What should we speak of  
When we are old as you? when we shall hear  
The rain and wind beat dark December, how,  
In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse  
The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing;  
We are beastly, subtle as the fox for prey,  
Like warlike as the wolf for what we eat;  
Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage  
We make a quire, as doth the prison'd bird,  
And sing our bondage freely.

## **BELARIUS**

How you speak!  
Did you but know the city's usuries  
And felt them knowingly; the art o' the court  
As hard to leave as keep; whose top to climb  
Is certain falling, or so slippery that  
The fear's as bad as falling; the toil o' the war,  
A pain that only seems to seek out danger

I' the name of fame and honour; which dies i'  
the search,  
And hath as oft a slanderous epitaph  
As record of fair act; nay, many times,  
Doth ill deserve by doing well; what's worse,  
Must court'sy at the censure:--O boys, this story  
The world may read in me: my body's mark'd  
With Roman swords, and my report was once  
First with the best of note: Cymbeline loved me,  
And when a soldier was the theme, my name  
Was not far off: then was I as a tree  
Whose boughs did bend with fruit: but in one night,  
A storm or robbery, call it what you will,  
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my leaves,  
And left me bare to weather.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Uncertain favour!

## **BELARIUS**

My fault being nothing--as I have told you oft--  
But that two villains, whose false oaths prevail'd  
Before my perfect honour, swore to Cymbeline  
I was confederate with the Romans: so  
Follow'd my banishment, and this twenty years  
This rock and these demesnes have been my world;  
Where I have lived at honest freedom, paid  
More pious debts to heaven than in all  
The fore-end of my time. But up to the mountains!  
This is not hunters' language: he that strikes  
The venison first shall be the lord o' the feast;  
To him the other two shall minister;  
And we will fear no poison, which attends  
In place of greater state. I'll meet you in the valleys.

*Exeunt GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS*

How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!  
These boys know little they are sons to the king;  
Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive.

They think they are mine; and though train'd  
up thus meanly  
I' the cave wherein they bow, their thoughts do hit  
The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them  
In simple and low things to prync it much  
Beyond the trick of others. This Polydore,  
The heir of Cymbeline and Britain, who  
The king his father call'd Guiderius,--Jove!  
When on my three-foot stool I sit and tell  
The warlike feats I have done, his spirits fly out  
Into my story: say 'Thus, mine enemy fell,  
And thus I set my foot on 's neck;' even then  
The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,  
Strains his young nerves and puts himself in posture  
That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal,  
Once Arviragus, in as like a figure,  
Strikes life into my speech and shows much more  
His own conceiving.--Hark, the game is roused!  
O Cymbeline! heaven and my conscience knows  
Thou didst unjustly banish me: whereon,  
At three and two years old, I stole these babes;  
Thinking to bar thee of succession, as  
Thou reft'st me of my lands. Euriphile,  
Thou wast their nurse; they took thee for  
their mother,  
And every day do honour to her grave:  
Myself, Belarius, that am Morgan call'd,  
They take for natural father. The game is up.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Country near Milford-Haven.

*Enter PISANIO and IMOGEN*

### IMOGEN

Thou told'st me, when we came from horse, the place  
Was near at hand: ne'er long'd my mother so  
To see me first, as I have now. Pisanio! man!  
Where is Posthumus? What is in thy mind,  
That makes thee stare thus? Wherefore breaks that sigh  
From the inward of thee? One, but painted thus,  
Would be interpreted a thing perplex'd  
Beyond self-explication: put thyself  
Into a havior of less fear, ere wildness  
Vanquish my staid senses. What's the matter?  
Why tender'st thou that paper to me, with  
A look untender? If't be summer news,  
Smile to't before; if winterly, thou need'st  
But keep that countenance still. My husband's hand!  
That drug-damn'd Italy hath out-craftied him,  
And he's at some hard point. Speak, man: thy tongue  
May take off some extremity, which to read  
Would be even mortal to me.

### PISANIO

Please you, read;  
And you shall find me, wretched man, a thing  
The most disdain'd of fortune.

### IMOGEN

[Reads] 'Thy mistress, Pisanio, hath played the  
strumpet in my bed; the testimonies whereof lie  
bleeding in me. I speak not out of weak surmises,

but from proof as strong as my grief and as certain  
as I expect my revenge. That part thou, Pisanio,  
must act for me, if thy faith be not tainted with  
the breach of hers. Let thine own hands take away  
her life: I shall give thee opportunity at  
Milford-Haven. She hath my letter for the purpose  
where, if thou fear to strike and to make me certain  
it is done, thou art the pandar to her dishonour and  
equally to me disloyal.'

## **PISANIO**

What shall I need to draw my sword? the paper  
Hath cut her throat already. No, 'tis slander,  
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue  
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath  
Rides on the posting winds and doth belie  
All corners of the world: kings, queens and states,  
Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave  
This viperous slander enters. What cheer, madam?

## **IMOGEN**

False to his bed! What is it to be false?  
To lie in watch there and to think on him?  
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep  
charge nature,  
To break it with a fearful dream of him  
And cry myself awake? that's false to's bed, is it?

## **PISANIO**

Alas, good lady!

## **IMOGEN**

I false! Thy conscience witness: Iachimo,  
Thou didst accuse him of incontinency;  
Thou then look'dst like a villain; now methinks  
Thy favour's good enough. Some jay of Italy  
Whose mother was her painting, hath betray'd him:  
Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion;

And, for I am richer than to hang by the walls,  
I must be ripp'd:--to pieces with me!--O,  
Men's vows are women's traitors! All good seeming,  
By thy revolt, O husband, shall be thought  
Put on for villany; not born where't grows,  
But worn a bait for ladies.

**PISANIO**

Good madam, hear me.

**IMOGEN**

True honest men being heard, like false Aeneas,  
Were in his time thought false, and Sinon's weeping  
Did scandal many a holy tear, took pity  
From most true wretchedness: so thou, Posthumus,  
Wilt lay the leaven on all proper men;  
Goodly and gallant shall be false and perjured  
From thy great fall. Come, fellow, be thou honest:  
Do thou thy master's bidding: when thou see'st him,  
A little witness my obedience: look!  
I draw the sword myself: take it, and hit  
The innocent mansion of my love, my heart;  
Fear not; 'tis empty of all things but grief;  
Thy master is not there, who was indeed  
The riches of it: do his bidding; strike  
Thou mayst be valiant in a better cause;  
But now thou seem'st a coward.

**PISANIO**

Hence, vile instrument!  
Thou shalt not damn my hand.

**IMOGEN**

Why, I must die;  
And if I do not by thy hand, thou art  
No servant of thy master's. Against self-slaughter  
There is a prohibition so divine  
That cravens my weak hand. Come, here's my heart.

Something's afore't. Soft, soft! we'll no defence;  
Obedient as the scabbard. What is here?  
The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus,  
All turn'd to heresy? Away, away,  
Corrupters of my faith! you shall no more  
Be stomachers to my heart. Thus may poor fools  
Believe false teachers: though those that  
are betray'd  
Do feel the treason sharply, yet the traitor  
Stands in worse case of woe.  
And thou, Posthumus, thou that didst set up  
My disobedience 'gainst the king my father  
And make me put into contempt the suits  
Of princely fellows, shalt hereafter find  
It is no act of common passage, but  
A strain of rareness: and I grieve myself  
To think, when thou shalt be disedged by her  
That now thou tirest on, how thy memory  
Will then be pang'd by me. Prithee, dispatch:  
The lamb entreats the butcher: where's thy knife?  
Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,  
When I desire it too.

## **PISANIO**

O gracious lady,  
Since I received command to do this business  
I have not slept one wink.

## **IMOGEN**

Do't, and to bed then.

## **PISANIO**

I'll wake mine eye-balls blind first.

## **IMOGEN**

Wherefore then  
Didst undertake it? Why hast thou abused  
So many miles with a pretence? this place?

Mine action and thine own? our horses' labour?  
The time inviting thee? the perturb'd court,  
For my being absent? whereunto I never  
Purpose return. Why hast thou gone so far,  
To be unbent when thou hast ta'en thy stand,  
The elected deer before thee?

**PISANIO**

But to win time  
To lose so bad employment; in the which  
I have consider'd of a course. Good lady,  
Hear me with patience.

**IMOGEN**

Talk thy tongue weary; speak  
I have heard I am a strumpet; and mine ear  
Therein false struck, can take no greater wound,  
Nor tent to bottom that. But speak.

**PISANIO**

Then, madam,  
I thought you would not back again.

**IMOGEN**

Most like;  
Bringing me here to kill me.

**PISANIO**

Not so, neither:  
But if I were as wise as honest, then  
My purpose would prove well. It cannot be  
But that my master is abused:  
Some villain, ay, and singular in his art.  
Hath done you both this cursed injury.

**IMOGEN**



Some Roman courtezan.

**PISANIO**

No, on my life.  
I'll give but notice you are dead and send him  
Some bloody sign of it; for 'tis commanded  
I should do so: you shall be miss'd at court,  
And that will well confirm it.

**IMOGEN**

Why good fellow,  
What shall I do the where? where bide? how live?  
Or in my life what comfort, when I am  
Dead to my husband?

**PISANIO**

If you'll back to the court--

**IMOGEN**

No court, no father; nor no more ado  
With that harsh, noble, simple nothing,  
That Cloten, whose love-suit hath been to me  
As fearful as a siege.

**PISANIO**

If not at court,  
Then not in Britain must you bide.

**IMOGEN**

Where then  
Hath Britain all the sun that shines? Day, night,  
Are they not but in Britain? I' the world's volume  
Our Britain seems as of it, but not in 't;  
In a great pool a swan's nest: prithee, think  
There's livers out of Britain.

## PISANIO

I am most glad  
You think of other place. The ambassador,  
Lucius the Roman, comes to Milford-Haven  
To-morrow: now, if you could wear a mind  
Dark as your fortune is, and but disguise  
That which, to appear itself, must not yet be  
But by self-danger, you should tread a course  
Pretty and full of view; yea, haply, near  
The residence of Posthumus; so nigh at least  
That though his actions were not visible, yet  
Report should render him hourly to your ear  
As truly as he moves.

## IMOGEN

O, for such means!  
Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,  
I would adventure.

## PISANIO

Well, then, here's the point:  
You must forget to be a woman; change  
Command into obedience: fear and niceness--  
The handmaids of all women, or, more truly,  
Woman its pretty self--into a waggish courage:  
Ready in gibes, quick-answer'd, saucy and  
As quarrelous as the weasel; nay, you must  
Forget that rarest treasure of your cheek,  
Exposing it--but, O, the harder heart!  
Alack, no remedy!--to the greedy touch  
Of common-kissing Titan, and forget  
Your laboursome and dainty trims, wherein  
You made great Juno angry.

## IMOGEN

Nay, be brief  
I see into thy end, and am almost  
A man already.

## PISANIO

First, make yourself but like one.  
Fore-thinking this, I have already fit--  
'Tis in my cloak-bag--doublet, hat, hose, all  
That answer to them: would you in their serving,  
And with what imitation you can borrow  
From youth of such a season, 'fore noble Lucius  
Present yourself, desire his service, tell him  
wherein you're happy,--which you'll make him know,  
If that his head have ear in music,--doubtless  
With joy he will embrace you, for he's honourable  
And doubling that, most holy. Your means abroad,  
You have me, rich; and I will never fail  
Beginning nor supplyment.

## IMOGEN

Thou art all the comfort  
The gods will diet me with. Prithee, away:  
There's more to be consider'd; but we'll even  
All that good time will give us: this attempt  
I am soldier to, and will abide it with  
A prince's courage. Away, I prithee.

## PISANIO

Well, madam, we must take a short farewell,  
Lest, being miss'd, I be suspected of  
Your carriage from the court. My noble mistress,  
Here is a box; I had it from the queen:  
What's in't is precious; if you are sick at sea,  
Or stomach-qualm'd at land, a dram of this  
Will drive away distemper. To some shade,  
And fit you to your manhood. May the gods  
Direct you to the best!

## IMOGEN

Amen: I thank thee.

*Exeunt, severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. A room in Cymbeline's palace.

*Enter CYMBELINE, QUEEN, CLOTEN, LUCIUS, Lords, and Attendants*

**CYMBELINE**

Thus far; and so farewell.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Thanks, royal sir.  
My emperor hath wrote, I must from hence;  
And am right sorry that I must report ye  
My master's enemy.

**CYMBELINE**

Our subjects, sir,  
Will not endure his yoke; and for ourself  
To show less sovereignty than they, must needs  
Appear unkinglike.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

So, sir: I desire of you  
A conduct over-land to Milford-Haven.  
Madam, all joy befall your grace!

**QUEEN**

And you!

**CYMBELINE**

My lords, you are appointed for that office;  
The due of honour in no point omit.

So farewell, noble Lucius.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Your hand, my lord.

**CLOTEN**

Receive it friendly; but from this time forth  
I wear it as your enemy.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Sir, the event  
Is yet to name the winner: fare you well.

**CYMBELINE**

Leave not the worthy Lucius, good my lords,  
Till he have cross'd the Severn. Happiness!

*Exeunt LUCIUS and Lords*

**QUEEN**

He goes hence frowning: but it honours us  
That we have given him cause.

**CLOTEN**

'Tis all the better;  
Your valiant Britons have their wishes in it.

**CYMBELINE**

Lucius hath wrote already to the emperor  
How it goes here. It fits us therefore ripely  
Our chariots and our horsemen be in readiness:  
The powers that he already hath in Gallia  
Will soon be drawn to head, from whence he moves  
His war for Britain.

## QUEEN

'Tis not sleepy business;  
But must be look'd to speedily and strongly.

## CYMBELINE

Our expectation that it would be thus  
Hath made us forward. But, my gentle queen,  
Where is our daughter? She hath not appear'd  
Before the Roman, nor to us hath tender'd  
The duty of the day: she looks us like  
A thing more made of malice than of duty:  
We have noted it. Call her before us; for  
We have been too slight in sufferance.

*Exit an Attendant*

## QUEEN

Royal sir,  
Since the exile of Posthumus, most retired  
Hath her life been; the cure whereof, my lord,  
'Tis time must do. Beseech your majesty,  
Forbear sharp speeches to her: she's a lady  
So tender of rebukes that words are strokes  
And strokes death to her.

*Re-enter Attendant*

## CYMBELINE

Where is she, sir? How  
Can her contempt be answer'd?

## Attendant

Please you, sir,  
Her chambers are all lock'd; and there's no answer  
That will be given to the loudest noise we make.

## QUEEN

My lord, when last I went to visit her,  
She pray'd me to excuse her keeping close,  
Whereto constrain'd by her infirmity,  
She should that duty leave unpaid to you,  
Which daily she was bound to proffer: this  
She wish'd me to make known; but our great court  
Made me to blame in memory.

## CYMBELINE

Her doors lock'd?  
Not seen of late? Grant, heavens, that which I fear  
Prove false!

*Exit*

## QUEEN

Son, I say, follow the king.

## CLOTEN

That man of hers, Pisanio, her old servant,  
have not seen these two days.

## QUEEN

Go, look after.

*Exit CLOTEN*

Pisanio, thou that stand'st so for Posthumus!  
He hath a drug of mine; I pray his absence  
Proceed by swallowing that, for he believes  
It is a thing most precious. But for her,  
Where is she gone? Haply, despair hath seized her,  
Or, wing'd with fervor of her love, she's flown  
To her desired Posthumus: gone she is  
To death or to dishonour; and my end  
Can make good use of either: she being down,



I have the placing of the British crown.

*Re-enter CLOTEN*

How now, my son!

**CLOTEN**

'Tis certain she is fled.  
Go in and cheer the king: he rages; none  
Dare come about him.

**QUEEN**

[Aside] All the better: may  
This night forestall him of the coming day!

*Exit*

**CLOTEN**

I love and hate her: for she's fair and royal,  
And that she hath all courtly parts more exquisite  
Than lady, ladies, woman; from every one  
The best she hath, and she, of all compounded,  
Outsells them all; I love her therefore: but  
Disdaining me and throwing favours on  
The low Posthumus slanders so her judgment  
That what's else rare is choked; and in that point  
I will conclude to hate her, nay, indeed,  
To be revenged upon her. For when fools Shall--

*Enter PISANIO*

Who is here? What, are you packing, sirrah?  
Come hither: ah, you precious pander! Villain,  
Where is thy lady? In a word; or else  
Thou art straightway with the fiends.

**PISANIO**

O, good my lord!

**CLOTEN**

Where is thy lady? Or, by Jupiter,--  
I will not ask again. Close villain,  
I'll have this secret from thy heart, or rip  
Thy heart to find it. Is she with Posthumus?  
From whose so many weights of baseness cannot  
A dram of worth be drawn.

**PISANIO**

Alas, my lord,  
How can she be with him? When was she missed?  
He is in Rome.

**CLOTEN**

Where is she, sir? Come nearer;  
No further halting: satisfy me home  
What is become of her.

**PISANIO**

O, my all-worthy lord!

**CLOTEN**

All-worthy villain!  
Discover where thy mistress is at once,  
At the next word: no more of 'worthy lord!'  
Speak, or thy silence on the instant is  
Thy condemnation and thy death.

**PISANIO**

Then, sir,  
This paper is the history of my knowledge  
Touching her flight.

*Presenting a letter*

**CLOTEN**

Let's see't. I will pursue her  
Even to Augustus' throne.

**PISANIO**

[Aside] Or this, or perish.  
She's far enough; and what he learns by this  
May prove his travel, not her danger.

**CLOTEN**

Hum!

**PISANIO**

[Aside] I'll write to my lord she's dead. O Imogen,  
Safe mayst thou wander, safe return again!

**CLOTEN**

Sirrah, is this letter true?

**PISANIO**

Sir, as I think.

**CLOTEN**

It is Posthumus' hand; I know't. Sirrah, if thou  
wouldst not be a villain, but do me true service,  
undergo those employments wherein I should have  
cause to use thee with a serious industry, that is,  
what villany soe'er I bid thee do, to perform it  
directly and truly, I would think thee an honest  
man: thou shouldst neither want my means for thy  
relief nor my voice for thy preferment.

**PISANIO**

Well, my good lord.

**CLOTEN**

Wilt thou serve me? for since patiently and constantly thou hast stuck to the bare fortune of that beggar Posthumus, thou canst not, in the course of gratitude, but be a diligent follower of mine: wilt thou serve me?

**PISANIO**

Sir, I will.

**CLOTEN**

Give me thy hand; here's my purse. Hast any of thy late master's garments in thy possession?

**PISANIO**

I have, my lord, at my lodging, the same suit he wore when he took leave of my lady and mistress.

**CLOTEN**

The first service thou dost me, fetch that suit hither: let it be thy lint service; go.

**PISANIO**

I shall, my lord.

*Exit*

**CLOTEN**

Meet thee at Milford-Haven!--I forgot to ask him one thing; I'll remember't anon:--even there, thou

villain Posthumus, will I kill thee. I would these garments were come. She said upon a time--the bitterness of it I now belch from my heart--that she held the very garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble and natural person together with the adornment of my qualities. With that suit upon my back, will I ravish her: first kill him, and in her eyes; there shall she see my valour, which will then be a torment to her contempt. He on the ground, my speech of insultment ended on his dead body, and when my lust hath dined,--which, as I say, to vex her I will execute in the clothes that she so praised,--to the court I'll knock her back, foot her home again. She hath despised me rejoicingly, and I'll be merry in my revenge.

*Re-enter PISANIO, with the clothes*

Be those the garments?

**PISANIO**

Ay, my noble lord.

**CLOTEN**

How long is't since she went to Milford-Haven?

**PISANIO**

She can scarce be there yet.

**CLOTEN**

Bring this apparel to my chamber; that is the second thing that I have commanded thee: the third is, that thou wilt be a voluntary mute to my design. Be but duteous, and true preferment shall tender itself to thee. My revenge is now at Milford: would I had wings to follow it! Come, and be true.

*Exit*

## PISANIO

Thou bid'st me to my loss: for true to thee  
Were to prove false, which I will never be,  
To him that is most true. To Milford go,  
And find not her whom thou pursuest. Flow, flow,  
You heavenly blessings, on her! This fool's speed  
Be cross'd with slowness; labour be his meed!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Wales. Before the cave of Belarius.

*Enter IMOGEN, in boy's clothes*

**IMOGEN**

I see a man's life is a tedious one:  
I have tired myself, and for two nights together  
Have made the ground my bed. I should be sick,  
But that my resolution helps me. Milford,  
When from the mountain-top Pisanio show'd thee,  
Thou wast within a ken: O Jove! I think  
Foundations fly the wretched; such, I mean,  
Where they should be relieved. Two beggars told me  
I could not miss my way: will poor folks lie,  
That have afflictions on them, knowing 'tis  
A punishment or trial? Yes; no wonder,  
When rich ones scarce tell true. To lapse in fulness  
Is sorer than to lie for need, and falsehood  
Is worse in kings than beggars. My dear lord!  
Thou art one o' the false ones. Now I think on thee,  
My hunger's gone; but even before, I was  
At point to sink for food. But what is this?  
Here is a path to't: 'tis some savage hold:  
I were best not to call; I dare not call:  
yet famine,  
Ere clean it o'erthrow nature, makes it valiant,  
Plenty and peace breeds cowards: hardness ever  
Of hardness is mother. Ho! who's here?  
If any thing that's civil, speak; if savage,  
Take or lend. Ho! No answer? Then I'll enter.  
Best draw my sword: and if mine enemy  
But fear the sword like me, he'll scarcely look on't.  
Such a foe, good heavens!

*Exit, to the cave*

*Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS*

**BELARIUS**

You, Polydote, have proved best woodman and  
Are master of the feast: Cadwal and I  
Will play the cook and servant; 'tis our match:  
The sweat of industry would dry and die,  
But for the end it works to. Come; our stomachs  
Will make what's homely savoury: weariness  
Can snore upon the flint, when resty sloth  
Finds the down pillow hard. Now peace be here,  
Poor house, that keep'st thyself!

**GUIDERIUS**

I am thoroughly weary.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I am weak with toil, yet strong in appetite.

**GUIDERIUS**

There is cold meat i' the cave; we'll browse on that,  
Whilst what we have kill'd be cook'd.

**BELARIUS**

[Looking into the cave]  
Stay; come not in.  
But that it eats our victuals, I should think  
Here were a fairy.

**GUIDERIUS**

What's the matter, sir?

**BELARIUS**

By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not,



An earthly paragon! Behold divineness  
No elder than a boy!

*Re-enter IMOGEN*

## **IMOGEN**

Good masters, harm me not:  
Before I enter'd here, I call'd; and thought  
To have begg'd or bought what I have took:  
good troth,  
I have stol'n nought, nor would not, though I had found  
Gold strew'd i' the floor. Here's money for my meat:  
I would have left it on the board so soon  
As I had made my meal, and parted  
With prayers for the provider.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Money, youth?

## **ARVIRAGUS**

All gold and silver rather turn to dirt!  
As 'tis no better reckon'd, but of those  
Who worship dirty gods.

## **IMOGEN**

I see you're angry:  
Know, if you kill me for my fault, I should  
Have died had I not made it.

## **BELARIUS**

Whither bound?

## **IMOGEN**

To Milford-Haven.

## **BELARIUS**

What's your name?

## **IMOGEN**

Fidele, sir. I have a kinsman who  
Is bound for Italy; he embark'd at Milford;  
To whom being going, almost spent with hunger,  
I am fall'n in this offence.

## **BELARIUS**

Prithee, fair youth,  
Think us no churls, nor measure our good minds  
By this rude place we live in. Well encounter'd!  
'Tis almost night: you shall have better cheer  
Ere you depart: and thanks to stay and eat it.  
Boys, bid him welcome.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Were you a woman, youth,  
I should woo hard but be your groom. In honesty,  
I bid for you as I'd buy.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

I'll make't my comfort  
He is a man; I'll love him as my brother:  
And such a welcome as I'd give to him  
After long absence, such is yours: most welcome!  
Be sprightly, for you fall 'mongst friends.

## **IMOGEN**

'Mongst friends,  
If brothers.

*Aside*

Would it had been so, that they  
Had been my father's sons! then had my prize  
Been less, and so more equal ballasting  
To thee, Posthumus.

## **BELARIUS**

He wrings at some distress.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Would I could free't!

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Or I, whate'er it be,  
What pain it cost, what danger. God's!

## **BELARIUS**

Hark, boys.

*Whispering*

## **IMOGEN**

Great men,  
That had a court no bigger than this cave,  
That did attend themselves and had the virtue  
Which their own conscience seal'd them--laying by  
That nothing-gift of differing multitudes--  
Could not out-peer these twain. Pardon me, gods!  
I'd change my sex to be companion with them,  
Since Leonatus's false.

## **BELARIUS**

It shall be so.  
Boys, we'll go dress our hunt. Fair youth, come in:  
Discourse is heavy, fasting; when we have supp'd,  
We'll mannerly demand thee of thy story,

So far as thou wilt speak it.

**GUIDERIUS**

Pray, draw near.

**ARVIRAGUS**

The night to the owl and morn to the lark  
less welcome.

**IMOGEN**

Thanks, sir.

**ARVIRAGUS**

I pray, draw near.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Rome. A public place.

*Enter two Senators and Tribunes*

### First Senator

This is the tenor of the emperor's writ:  
That since the common men are now in action  
'Gainst the Pannonians and Dalmatians,  
And that the legions now in Gallia are  
Full weak to undertake our wars against  
The fall'n-off Britons, that we do incite  
The gentry to this business. He creates  
Lucius preconsul: and to you the tribunes,  
For this immediate levy, he commends  
His absolute commission. Long live Caesar!

### First Tribune

Is Lucius general of the forces?

### Second Senator

Ay.

### First Tribune

Remaining now in Gallia?

### First Senator

With those legions  
Which I have spoke of, whereunto your levy  
Must be supplyant: the words of your commission  
Will tie you to the numbers and the time  
Of their dispatch.

## First Tribune

We will discharge our duty.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 3, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Wales: near the cave of Belarius.

*Enter CLOTEN*

**CLOTEN**

I am near to the place where they should meet, if Pisanio have mapped it truly. How fit his garments serve me! Why should his mistress, who was made by him that made the tailor, not be fit too? the rather--saving reverence of the word--for 'tis said a woman's fitness comes by fits. Therein I must play the workman. I dare speak it to myself--for it is not vain-glory for a man and his glass to confer in his own chamber--I mean, the lines of my body are as well drawn as his; no less young, more strong, not beneath him in fortunes, beyond him in the advantage of the time, above him in birth, alike conversant in general services, and more remarkable in single oppositions: yet this imperceiverant thing loves him in my despite. What mortality is! Posthumus, thy head, which now is growing upon thy shoulders, shall within this hour be off; thy mistress enforced; thy garments cut to pieces before thy face: and all this done, spurn her home to her father; who may haply be a little angry for my so rough usage; but my mother, having power of his testiness, shall turn all into my commendations. My horse is tied up safe: out, sword, and to a sore purpose! Fortune, put them into my hand! This is the very description of their meeting-place; and the fellow dares not deceive me.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before the cave of Belarius.

*Enter, from the cave, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, and IMOGEN*

### BELARIUS

[To IMOGEN] You are not well: remain here in the cave;  
We'll come to you after hunting.

### ARVIRAGUS

[To IMOGEN] Brother, stay here  
Are we not brothers?

### IMOGEN

So man and man should be;  
But clay and clay differs in dignity,  
Whose dust is both alike. I am very sick.

### GUIDERIUS

Go you to hunting; I'll abide with him.

### IMOGEN

So sick I am not, yet I am not well;  
But not so citizen a wanton as  
To seem to die ere sick: so please you, leave me;  
Stick to your journal course: the breach of custom  
Is breach of all. I am ill, but your being by me  
Cannot amend me; society is no comfort  
To one not sociable: I am not very sick,  
Since I can reason of it. Pray you, trust me here:  
I'll rob none but myself; and let me die,  
Stealing so poorly.

## **GUIDERIUS**

I love thee; I have spoke it  
How much the quantity, the weight as much,  
As I do love my father.

## **BELARIUS**

What! how! how!

## **ARVIRAGUS**

If it be sin to say so, I yoke me  
In my good brother's fault: I know not why  
I love this youth; and I have heard you say,  
Love's reason's without reason: the bier at door,  
And a demand who is't shall die, I'd say  
'My father, not this youth.'

## **BELARIUS**

[Aside] O noble strain!  
O worthiness of nature! breed of greatness!  
Cowards father cowards and base things sire base:  
Nature hath meal and bran, contempt and grace.  
I'm not their father; yet who this should be,  
Doth miracle itself, loved before me.  
'Tis the ninth hour o' the morn.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Brother, farewell.

## **IMOGEN**

I wish ye sport.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

You health. So please you, sir.

## **IMOGEN**

[Aside] These are kind creatures. Gods, what lies  
I have heard!  
Our courtiers say all's savage but at court:  
Experience, O, thou disprovest report!  
The imperious seas breed monsters, for the dish  
Poor tributary rivers as sweet fish.  
I am sick still; heart-sick. Pisanio,  
I'll now taste of thy drug.

*Swallows some*

## **GUIDERIUS**

I could not stir him:  
He said he was gentle, but unfortunate;  
Dishonestly afflicted, but yet honest.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Thus did he answer me: yet said, hereafter  
I might know more.

## **BELARIUS**

To the field, to the field!  
We'll leave you for this time: go in and rest.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

We'll not be long away.

## **BELARIUS**

Pray, be not sick,  
For you must be our housewife.

## **IMOGEN**

Well or ill,

I am bound to you.

**BELARIUS**

And shalt be ever.

*Exit IMOGEN, to the cave*

This youth, how'er distress'd, appears he hath had  
Good ancestors.

**ARVIRAGUS**

How angel-like he sings!

**GUIDERIUS**

But his neat cookery! he cut our roots  
In characters,  
And sauced our broths, as Juno had been sick  
And he her dieter.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nobly he yokes  
A smiling with a sigh, as if the sigh  
Was that it was, for not being such a smile;  
The smile mocking the sigh, that it would fly  
From so divine a temple, to commix  
With winds that sailors rail at.

**GUIDERIUS**

I do note  
That grief and patience, rooted in him both,  
Mingle their spurs together.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Grow, patience!  
And let the stinking elder, grief, untwine

His perishing root with the increasing vine!

**BELARIUS**

It is great morning. Come, away!--  
Who's there?

*Enter CLOTEN*

**CLOTEN**

I cannot find those runagates; that villain  
Hath mock'd me. I am faint.

**BELARIUS**

'Those runagates!'  
Means he not us? I partly know him: 'tis  
Cloten, the son o' the queen. I fear some ambush.  
I saw him not these many years, and yet  
I know 'tis he. We are held as outlaws: hence!

**GUIDERIUS**

He is but one: you and my brother search  
What companies are near: pray you, away;  
Let me alone with him.

*Exeunt BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS*

**CLOTEN**

Soft! What are you  
That fly me thus? some villain mountaineers?  
I have heard of such. What slave art thou?

**GUIDERIUS**

A thing  
More slavish did I ne'er than answering  
A slave without a knock.

## **CLOTEN**

Thou art a robber,  
A law-breaker, a villain: yield thee, thief.

## **GUIDERIUS**

To who? to thee? What art thou? Have not I  
An arm as big as thine? a heart as big?  
Thy words, I grant, are bigger, for I wear not  
My dagger in my mouth. Say what thou art,  
Why I should yield to thee?

## **CLOTEN**

Thou villain base,  
Know'st me not by my clothes?

## **GUIDERIUS**

No, nor thy tailor, rascal,  
Who is thy grandfather: he made those clothes,  
Which, as it seems, make thee.

## **CLOTEN**

Thou precious varlet,  
My tailor made them not.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Hence, then, and thank  
The man that gave them thee. Thou art some fool;  
I am loath to beat thee.

## **CLOTEN**

Thou injurious thief,  
Hear but my name, and tremble.

## **GUIDERIUS**

What's thy name?

**CLOTEN**

Cloten, thou villain.

**GUIDERIUS**

Cloten, thou double villain, be thy name,  
I cannot tremble at it: were it Toad, or  
Adder, Spider,  
'Twould move me sooner.

**CLOTEN**

To thy further fear,  
Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know  
I am son to the queen.

**GUIDERIUS**

I am sorry for 't; not seeming  
So worthy as thy birth.

**CLOTEN**

Art not afeard?

**GUIDERIUS**

Those that I reverence those I fear, the wise:  
At fools I laugh, not fear them.

**CLOTEN**

Die the death:  
When I have slain thee with my proper hand,  
I'll follow those that even now fled hence,  
And on the gates of Lud's-town set your heads:  
Yield, rustic mountaineer.

*Exeunt, fighting*

*Re-enter BELARIUS and ARVIRAGUS*

**BELARIUS**

No companies abroad?

**ARVIRAGUS**

None in the world: you did mistake him, sure.

**BELARIUS**

I cannot tell: long is it since I saw him,  
But time hath nothing blurr'd those lines of favour  
Which then he wore; the snatches in his voice,  
And burst of speaking, were as his: I am absolute  
'Twas very Cloten.

**ARVIRAGUS**

In this place we left them:  
I wish my brother make good time with him,  
You say he is so fell.

**BELARIUS**

Being scarce made up,  
I mean, to man, he had not apprehension  
Of roaring terrors; for the effect of judgment  
Is oft the cause of fear. But, see, thy brother.

*Re-enter GUIDERIUS, with CLOTEN'S head*

**GUIDERIUS**

This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse;  
There was no money in't: not Hercules  
Could have knock'd out his brains, for he had none:  
Yet I not doing this, the fool had borne



My head as I do his.

**BELARIUS**

What hast thou done?

**GUIDERIUS**

I am perfect what: cut off one Cloten's head,  
Son to the queen, after his own report;  
Who call'd me traitor, mountaineer, and swore  
With his own single hand he'ld take us in  
Displace our heads where--thank the gods!--they grow,  
And set them on Lud's-town.

**BELARIUS**

We are all undone.

**GUIDERIUS**

Why, worthy father, what have we to lose,  
But that he swore to take, our lives? The law  
Protects not us: then why should we be tender  
To let an arrogant piece of flesh threat us,  
Play judge and executioner all himself,  
For we do fear the law? What company  
Discover you abroad?

**BELARIUS**

No single soul  
Can we set eye on; but in all safe reason  
He must have some attendants. Though his humour  
Was nothing but mutation, ay, and that  
From one bad thing to worse; not frenzy, not  
Absolute madness could so far have raved  
To bring him here alone; although perhaps  
It may be heard at court that such as we  
Cave here, hunt here, are outlaws, and in time  
May make some stronger head; the which he hearing--  
As it is like him--might break out, and swear

He'ld fetch us in; yet is't not probable  
To come alone, either he so undertaking,  
Or they so suffering: then on good ground we fear,  
If we do fear this body hath a tail  
More perilous than the head.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Let ordinance  
Come as the gods foresay it: howsoe'er,  
My brother hath done well.

## **BELARIUS**

I had no mind  
To hunt this day: the boy Fidele's sickness  
Did make my way long forth.

## **GUIDERIUS**

With his own sword,  
Which he did wave against my throat, I have ta'en  
His head from him: I'll throw't into the creek  
Behind our rock; and let it to the sea,  
And tell the fishes he's the queen's son, Cloten:  
That's all I reck.

*Exit*

## **BELARIUS**

I fear 'twill be revenged:  
Would, Polydote, thou hadst not done't! though valour  
Becomes thee well enough.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Would I had done't  
So the revenge alone pursued me! Polydore,  
I love thee brotherly, but envy much  
Thou hast robb'd me of this deed: I would revenges,  
That possible strength might meet, would seek us through

And put us to our answer.

## **BELARIUS**

Well, 'tis done:  
We'll hunt no more to-day, nor seek for danger  
Where there's no profit. I prithee, to our rock;  
You and Fidele play the cooks: I'll stay  
Till hasty Polydote return, and bring him  
To dinner presently.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Poor sick Fidele!  
I'll weringly to him: to gain his colour  
I'd let a parish of such Clotens' blood,  
And praise myself for charity.

*Exit*

## **BELARIUS**

O thou goddess,  
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st  
In these two princely boys! They are as gentle  
As zephyrs blowing below the violet,  
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,  
Their royal blood enchafed, as the rudest wind,  
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,  
And make him stoop to the vale. 'Tis wonder  
That an invisible instinct should frame them  
To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,  
Civility not seen from other, valour  
That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop  
As if it had been sow'd. Yet still it's strange  
What Cloten's being here to us portends,  
Or what his death will bring us.

*Re-enter GUIDERIUS*

## **GUIDERIUS**

Where's my brother?  
I have sent Cloten's clotpoll down the stream,  
In embassy to his mother: his body's hostage  
For his return.

*Solemn music*

**BELARIUS**

My ingenious instrument!  
Hark, Polydore, it sounds! But what occasion  
Hath Cadwal now to give it motion? Hark!

**GUIDERIUS**

Is he at home?

**BELARIUS**

He went hence even now.

**GUIDERIUS**

What does he mean? since death of my dear'st mother  
it did not speak before. All solemn things  
Should answer solemn accidents. The matter?  
Triumphs for nothing and lamenting toys  
Is jollity for apes and grief for boys.  
Is Cadwal mad?

**BELARIUS**

Look, here he comes,  
And brings the dire occasion in his arms  
Of what we blame him for.

*Re-enter ARVIRAGUS, with IMOGEN, as dead, bearing her in his arms*

**ARVIRAGUS**

The bird is dead

That we have made so much on. I had rather  
Have skipp'd from sixteen years of age to sixty,  
To have turn'd my leaping-time into a crutch,  
Than have seen this.

## **GUIDERIUS**

O sweetest, fairest lily!  
My brother wears thee not the one half so well  
As when thou grew'st thyself.

## **BELARIUS**

O melancholy!  
Who ever yet could sound thy bottom? find  
The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare  
Might easiliest harbour in? Thou blessed thing!  
Jove knows what man thou mightst have made; but I,  
Thou diedst, a most rare boy, of melancholy.  
How found you him?

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Stark, as you see:  
Thus smiling, as some fly hid tickled slumber,  
Not as death's dart, being laugh'd at; his  
right cheek  
Reposing on a cushion.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Where?

## **ARVIRAGUS**

O' the floor;  
His arms thus leagued: I thought he slept, and put  
My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness  
Answer'd my steps too loud.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Why, he but sleeps:  
If he be gone, he'll make his grave a bed;  
With female fairies will his tomb be haunted,  
And worms will not come to thee.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

With fairest flowers  
Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,  
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack  
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor  
The azured harebell, like thy veins, no, nor  
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,  
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath: the ruddock would,  
With charitable bill,--O bill, sore-shaming  
Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie  
Without a monument!--bring thee all this;  
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,  
To winter-ground thy corse.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Prithee, have done;  
And do not play in wench-like words with that  
Which is so serious. Let us bury him,  
And not protract with admiration what  
Is now due debt. To the grave!

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Say, where shall's lay him?

## **GUIDERIUS**

By good Euriphile, our mother.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Be't so:  
And let us, Polydore, though now our voices  
Have got the mannish crack, sing him to the ground,  
As once our mother; use like note and words,

Save that Euriphile must be Fidele.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Cadwal,  
I cannot sing: I'll weep, and word it with thee;  
For notes of sorrow out of tune are worse  
Than priests and fanes that lie.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

We'll speak it, then.

## **BELARIUS**

Great griefs, I see, medicine the less; for Cloten  
Is quite forgot. He was a queen's son, boys;  
And though he came our enemy, remember  
He was paid for that: though mean and  
mighty, rotting  
Together, have one dust, yet reverence,  
That angel of the world, doth make distinction  
Of place 'tween high and low. Our foe was princely  
And though you took his life, as being our foe,  
Yet bury him as a prince.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Pray You, fetch him hither.  
Thersites' body is as good as Ajax',  
When neither are alive.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

If you'll go fetch him,  
We'll say our song the whilst. Brother, begin.

*Exit BELARIUS*

## **GUIDERIUS**

Nay, Cadwal, we must lay his head to the east;  
My father hath a reason for't.

**ARVIRAGUS**

'Tis true.

**GUIDERIUS**

Come on then, and remove him.

**ARVIRAGUS**

So. Begin.

*SONG*

**GUIDERIUS**

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

**ARVIRAGUS**

Fear no more the frown o' the great;  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
The sceptre, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

**GUIDERIUS**

Fear no more the lightning flash,

**ARVIRAGUS**



Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;

**GUIDERIUS**

Fear not slander, censure rash;

**ARVIRAGUS**

Thou hast finish'd joy and moan:

**GUIDERIUS ARVIRAGUS**

All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

**GUIDERIUS**

No exorciser harm thee!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nor no witchcraft charm thee!

**GUIDERIUS**

Ghost unlaid forbear thee!

**ARVIRAGUS**

Nothing ill come near thee!

**GUIDERIUS ARVIRAGUS**

Quiet consummation have;  
And renowned be thy grave!

*Re-enter BELARIUS, with the body of CLOTEN*

**GUIDERIUS**

We have done our obsequies: come, lay him down.

## BELARIUS

Here's a few flowers; but 'bout midnight, more:  
The herbs that have on them cold dew o' the night  
Are strewings fitt'st for graves. Upon their faces.  
You were as flowers, now wither'd: even so  
These herblets shall, which we upon you strew.  
Come on, away: apart upon our knees.  
The ground that gave them first has them again:  
Their pleasures here are past, so is their pain.

*Exeunt BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS*

## IMOGEN

[Awaking] Yes, sir, to Milford-Haven; which is  
the way?--  
I thank you.--By yond bush?--Pray, how far thither?  
'Ods pittikins! can it be six mile yet?--  
I have gone all night. 'Faith, I'll lie down and sleep.  
But, soft! no bedfellow!--O god s and goddesses!

*Seeing the body of CLOTEN*

These flowers are like the pleasures of the world;  
This bloody man, the care on't. I hope I dream;  
For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,  
And cook to honest creatures: but 'tis not so;  
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing,  
Which the brain makes of fumes: our very eyes  
Are sometimes like our judgments, blind. Good faith,  
I tremble stiff with fear: but if there be  
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity  
As a wren's eye, fear'd gods, a part of it!  
The dream's here still: even when I wake, it is  
Without me, as within me; not imagined, felt.  
A headless man! The garments of Posthumus!  
I know the shape of's leg: this is his hand;  
His foot Mercurial; his Martial thigh;  
The brawns of Hercules: but his Jovial face  
Murder in heaven?--How!--'Tis gone. Pisanio,

All curses madd'd Hecuba gave the Greeks,  
And mine to boot, be darted on thee! Thou,  
Conspired with that irregulous devil, Cloten,  
Hast here cut off my lord. To write and read  
Be henceforth treacherous! Damn'd Pisanio  
Hath with his forged letters,--damn'd Pisanio--  
From this most bravest vessel of the world  
Struck the main-top! O Posthumus! alas,  
Where is thy head? where's that? Ay me!  
where's that?  
Pisanio might have kill'd thee at the heart,  
And left this head on. How should this be? Pisanio?  
'Tis he and Cloten: malice and lucre in them  
Have laid this woe here. O, 'tis pregnant, pregnant!  
The drug he gave me, which he said was precious  
And cordial to me, have I not found it  
Murderous to the senses? That confirms it home:  
This is Pisanio's deed, and Cloten's: O!  
Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood,  
That we the horrider may seem to those  
Which chance to find us: O, my lord, my lord!

*Falls on the body*

*Enter LUCIUS, a Captain and other Officers, and a Soothsayer*

## **Captain**

To them the legions garrison'd in Gailia,  
After your will, have cross'd the sea, attending  
You here at Milford-Haven with your ships:  
They are in readiness.

## **CAIUS LUCIUS**

But what from Rome?

## **Captain**

The senate hath stirr'd up the confiners  
And gentlemen of Italy, most willing spirits,  
That promise noble service: and they come

Under the conduct of bold Iachimo,  
Syenna's brother.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

When expect you them?

**Captain**

With the next benefit o' the wind.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

This forwardness  
Makes our hopes fair. Command our present numbers  
Be muster'd; bid the captains look to't. Now, sir,  
What have you dream'd of late of this war's purpose?

**Soothsayer**

Last night the very gods show'd me a vision--  
I fast and pray'd for their intelligence--thus:  
I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, wing'd  
From the spongy south to this part of the west,  
There vanish'd in the sunbeams: which portends--  
Unless my sins abuse my divination--  
Success to the Roman host.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Dream often so,  
And never false. Soft, ho! what trunk is here  
Without his top? The ruin speaks that sometime  
It was a worthy building. How! a page!  
Or dead, or sleeping on him? But dead rather;  
For nature doth abhor to make his bed  
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.  
Let's see the boy's face.

**Captain**

He's alive, my lord.

## CAIUS LUCIUS

He'll then instruct us of this body. Young one,  
Inform us of thy fortunes, for it seems  
They crave to be demanded. Who is this  
Thou makest thy bloody pillow? Or who was he  
That, otherwise than noble nature did,  
Hath alter'd that good picture? What's thy interest  
In this sad wreck? How came it? Who is it?  
What art thou?

## IMOGEN

I am nothing: or if not,  
Nothing to be were better. This was my master,  
A very valiant Briton and a good,  
That here by mountaineers lies slain. Alas!  
There is no more such masters: I may wander  
From east to occident, cry out for service,  
Try many, all good, serve truly, never  
Find such another master.

## CAIUS LUCIUS

'Lack, good youth!  
Thou movest no less with thy complaining than  
Thy master in bleeding: say his name, good friend.

## IMOGEN

Richard du Champ.

*Aside*

If I do lie and do  
No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope  
They'll pardon it.--Say you, sir?

## CAIUS LUCIUS

Thy name?

**IMOGEN**

Fidele, sir.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Thou dost approve thyself the very same:  
Thy name well fits thy faith, thy faith thy name.  
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say  
Thou shalt be so well master'd, but, be sure,  
No less beloved. The Roman emperor's letters,  
Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner  
Than thine own worth prefer thee: go with me.

**IMOGEN**

I'll follow, sir. But first, an't please the gods,  
I'll hide my master from the flies, as deep  
As these poor pickaxes can dig; and when  
With wild wood-leaves and weeds I ha' strew'd his grave,  
And on it said a century of prayers,  
Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep and sigh;  
And leaving so his service, follow you,  
So please you entertain me.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Ay, good youth!  
And rather father thee than master thee.  
My friends,  
The boy hath taught us manly duties: let us  
Find out the prettiest daisied plot we can,  
And make him with our pikes and partisans  
A grave: come, arm him. Boy, he is preferr'd  
By thee to us, and he shall be interr'd  
As soldiers can. Be cheerful; wipe thine eyes  
Some falls are means the happier to arise.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in Cymbeline's palace.

*Enter CYMBELINE, Lords, PISANIO, and Attendants*

### CYMBELINE

Again; and bring me word how 'tis with her.

*Exit an Attendant*

A fever with the absence of her son,  
A madness, of which her life's in danger. Heavens,  
How deeply you at once do touch me! Imogen,  
The great part of my comfort, gone; my queen  
Upon a desperate bed, and in a time  
When fearful wars point at me; her son gone,  
So needful for this present: it strikes me, past  
The hope of comfort. But for thee, fellow,  
Who needs must know of her departure and  
Dost seem so ignorant, we'll enforce it from thee  
By a sharp torture.

### PISANIO

Sir, my life is yours;  
I humbly set it at your will; but, for my mistress,  
I nothing know where she remains, why gone,  
Nor when she purposes return. Beseech your highness,  
Hold me your loyal servant.

### First Lord

Good my liege,  
The day that she was missing he was here:  
I dare be bound he's true and shall perform  
All parts of his subjection loyally. For Cloten,



There wants no diligence in seeking him,  
And will, no doubt, be found.

## CYMBELINE

The time is troublesome.

*To PISANIO*

We'll slip you for a season; but our jealousy  
Does yet depend.

### First Lord

So please your majesty,  
The Roman legions, all from Gallia drawn,  
Are landed on your coast, with a supply  
Of Roman gentlemen, by the senate sent.

## CYMBELINE

Now for the counsel of my son and queen!  
I am amazed with matter.

### First Lord

Good my liege,  
Your preparation can affront no less  
Than what you hear of: come more, for more  
you're ready:  
The want is but to put those powers in motion  
That long to move.

## CYMBELINE

I thank you. Let's withdraw;  
And meet the time as it seeks us. We fear not  
What can from Italy annoy us; but  
We grieve at chances here. Away!

*Exeunt all but PISANIO*

## PISANIO

I heard no letter from my master since  
I wrote him Imogen was slain: 'tis strange:  
Nor hear I from my mistress who did promise  
To yield me often tidings: neither know I  
What is betid to Cloten; but remain  
Perplex'd in all. The heavens still must work.  
Wherein I am false I am honest; not true, to be true.  
These present wars shall find I love my country,  
Even to the note o' the king, or I'll fall in them.  
All other doubts, by time let them be clear'd:  
Fortune brings in some boats that are not steer'd.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Wales: before the cave of Belarius.

*Enter BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS.*

### GUIDERIUS

The noise is round about us.

### BELARIUS

Let us from it.

### ARVIRAGUS

What pleasure, sir, find we in life, to lock it  
From action and adventure?

### GUIDERIUS

Nay, what hope  
Have we in hiding us? This way, the Romans  
Must or for Britons slay us, or receive us  
For barbarous and unnatural revolts  
During their use, and slay us after.

### BELARIUS

Sons,  
We'll higher to the mountains; there secure us.  
To the king's party there's no going: newness  
Of Cloten's death--we being not known, not muster'd  
Among the bands--may drive us to a render  
Where we have lived, and so extort from's that  
Which we have done, whose answer would be death  
Drawn on with torture.

## **GUIDERIUS**

This is, sir, a doubt  
In such a time nothing becoming you,  
Nor satisfying us.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

It is not likely  
That when they hear the Roman horses neigh,  
Behold their quarter'd fires, have both their eyes  
And ears so cloy'd importantly as now,  
That they will waste their time upon our note,  
To know from whence we are.

## **BELARIUS**

O, I am known  
Of many in the army: many years,  
Though Cloten then but young, you see, not wore him  
From my remembrance. And, besides, the king  
Hath not deserved my service nor your loves;  
Who find in my exile the want of breeding,  
The certainty of this hard life; aye hopeless  
To have the courtesy your cradle promised,  
But to be still hot summer's tamings and  
The shrinking slaves of winter.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Than be so  
Better to cease to be. Pray, sir, to the army:  
I and my brother are not known; yourself  
So out of thought, and thereto so o'ergrown,  
Cannot be question'd.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

By this sun that shines,  
I'll thither: what thing is it that I never  
Did see man die! scarce ever look'd on blood,  
But that of coward hares, hot goats, and venison!

Never bestrid a horse, save one that had  
A rider like myself, who ne'er wore rowel  
Nor iron on his heel! I am ashamed  
To look upon the holy sun, to have  
The benefit of his blest beams, remaining  
So long a poor unknown.

## **GUIDERIUS**

By heavens, I'll go:  
If you will bless me, sir, and give me leave,  
I'll take the better care, but if you will not,  
The hazard therefore due fall on me by  
The hands of Romans!

## **ARVIRAGUS**

So say I amen.

## **BELARIUS**

No reason I, since of your lives you set  
So slight a valuation, should reserve  
My crack'd one to more care. Have with you, boys!  
If in your country wars you chance to die,  
That is my bed too, lads, an there I'll lie:  
Lead, lead.

*Aside*

The time seems long; their blood  
thinks scorn,  
Till it fly out and show them princes born.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Britain. The Roman camp.

*Enter POSTHUMUS, with a bloody handkerchief*

### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Yea, bloody cloth, I'll keep thee, for I wish'd  
Thou shouldst be colour'd thus. You married ones,  
If each of you should take this course, how many  
Must murder wives much better than themselves  
For wrying but a little! O Pisanio!  
Every good servant does not all commands:  
No bond but to do just ones. Gods! if you  
Should have ta'en vengeance on my faults, I never  
Had lived to put on this: so had you saved  
The noble Imogen to repent, and struck  
Me, wretch more worth your vengeance. But, alack,  
You snatch some hence for little faults; that's love,  
To have them fall no more: you some permit  
To second ills with ills, each elder worse,  
And make them dread it, to the doers' thrift.  
But Imogen is your own: do your best wills,  
And make me blest to obey! I am brought hither  
Among the Italian gentry, and to fight  
Against my lady's kingdom: 'tis enough  
That, Britain, I have kill'd thy mistress; peace!  
I'll give no wound to thee. Therefore, good heavens,  
Hear patiently my purpose: I'll disrobe me  
Of these Italian weeds and suit myself  
As does a Briton peasant: so I'll fight  
Against the part I come with; so I'll die  
For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life  
Is every breath a death; and thus, unknown,  
Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril  
Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know  
More valour in me than my habits show.  
Gods, put the strength o' the Leonati in me!

To shame the guise o' the world, I will begin  
The fashion, less without and more within.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Field of battle between the British and Roman camps.

*Enter, from one side, LUCIUS, IACHIMO, and the Roman Army: from the other side, the British Army; POSTHUMUS LEONATUS following, like a poor soldier. They march over and go out. Then enter again, in skirmish, IACHIMO and POSTHUMUS LEONATUS he vanquisheth and disarmeth IACHIMO, and then leaves him*

### IACHIMO

The heaviness and guilt within my bosom  
Takes off my manhood: I have belied a lady,  
The princess of this country, and the air on't  
Revengingly enfeebles me; or could this carl,  
A very drudge of nature's, have subdued me  
In my profession? Knighthoods and honours, borne  
As I wear mine, are titles but of scorn.  
If that thy gentry, Britain, go before  
This lout as he exceeds our lords, the odds  
Is that we scarce are men and you are gods.

*Exit*

*The battle continues; the Britons fly; CYMBELINE is taken: then enter, to his rescue, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS*

### BELARIUS

Stand, stand! We have the advantage of the ground;  
The lane is guarded: nothing routs us but  
The villany of our fears.

### GUIDERIUS ARVIRAGUS

Stand, stand, and fight!

*Re-enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS, and seconds the Britons: they rescue CYMBELINE,*



*and exeunt. Then re-enter LUCIUS, and IACHIMO, with IMOGEN*

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

Away, boy, from the troops, and save thyself;  
For friends kill friends, and the disorder's such  
As war were hoodwink'd.

**IACHIMO**

'Tis their fresh supplies.

**CAIUS LUCIUS**

It is a day turn'd strangely: or betimes  
Let's reinforce, or fly.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another part of the field.

*Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and a British Lord*

**Lord**

Camest thou from where they made the stand?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I did.

Though you, it seems, come from the fliers.

**Lord**

I did.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

No blame be to you, sir; for all was lost,  
But that the heavens fought: the king himself  
Of his wings destitute, the army broken,  
And but the backs of Britons seen, all flying  
Through a straight lane; the enemy full-hearted,  
Lolling the tongue with slaughtering, having work  
More plentiful than tools to do't, struck down  
Some mortally, some slightly touch'd, some falling  
Merely through fear; that the straight pass was damm'd  
With dead men hurt behind, and cowards living  
To die with lengthen'd shame.

**Lord**

Where was this lane?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Close by the battle, ditch'd, and wall'd with turf;  
Which gave advantage to an ancient soldier,  
An honest one, I warrant; who deserved  
So long a breeding as his white beard came to,  
In doing this for's country: athwart the lane,  
He, with two striplings-lads more like to run  
The country base than to commit such slaughter  
With faces fit for masks, or rather fairer  
Than those for preservation cased, or shame--  
Made good the passage; cried to those that fled,  
'Our Britain's hearts die flying, not our men:  
To darkness fleet souls that fly backwards. Stand;  
Or we are Romans and will give you that  
Like beasts which you shun beastly, and may save,  
But to look back in frown: stand, stand.'  
These three,  
Three thousand confident, in act as many--  
For three performers are the file when all  
The rest do nothing--with this word 'Stand, stand,'  
Accommodated by the place, more charming  
With their own nobleness, which could have turn'd  
A distaff to a lance, gilded pale looks,  
Part shame, part spirit renew'd; that some,  
turn'd coward  
But by example--O, a sin in war,  
Damn'd in the first beginners!--gan to look  
The way that they did, and to grin like lions  
Upon the pikes o' the hunters. Then began  
A stop i' the chaser, a retire, anon  
A rout, confusion thick; forthwith they fly  
Chickens, the way which they stoop'd eagles; slaves,  
The strides they victors made: and now our cowards,  
Like fragments in hard voyages, became  
The life o' the need: having found the backdoor open  
Of the unguarded hearts, heavens, how they wound!  
Some slain before; some dying; some their friends  
O'er borne i' the former wave: ten, chased by one,  
Are now each one the slaughter-man of twenty:  
Those that would die or ere resist are grown  
The mortal bugs o' the field.

This was strange chance  
A narrow lane, an old man, and two boys.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Nay, do not wonder at it: you are made  
Rather to wonder at the things you hear  
Than to work any. Will you rhyme upon't,  
And vent it for a mockery? Here is one:  
'Two boys, an old man twice a boy, a lane,  
Preserved the Britons, was the Romans' bane.'

**Lord**

Nay, be not angry, sir.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

'Lack, to what end?  
Who dares not stand his foe, I'll be his friend;  
For if he'll do as he is made to do,  
I know he'll quickly fly my friendship too.  
You have put me into rhyme.

**Lord**

Farewell; you're angry.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Still going?

*Exit Lord*

This is a lord! O noble misery,  
To be i' the field, and ask 'what news?' of me!  
To-day how many would have given their honours  
To have saved their carcasses! took heel to do't,  
And yet died too! I, in mine own woe charm'd,  
Could not find death where I did hear him groan,  
Nor feel him where he struck: being an ugly monster,

'Tis strange he hides him in fresh cups, soft beds,  
Sweet words; or hath more ministers than we  
That draw his knives i' the war. Well, I will find him  
For being now a favourer to the Briton,  
No more a Briton, I have resumed again  
The part I came in: fight I will no more,  
But yield me to the veriest hind that shall  
Once touch my shoulder. Great the slaughter is  
Here made by the Roman; great the answer be  
Britons must take. For me, my ransom's death;  
On either side I come to spend my breath;  
Which neither here I'll keep nor bear again,  
But end it by some means for Imogen.

*Enter two British Captains and Soldiers*

### **First Captain**

Great Jupiter be praised! Lucius is taken.  
'Tis thought the old man and his sons were angels.

### **Second Captain**

There was a fourth man, in a silly habit,  
That gave the affront with them.

### **First Captain**

So 'tis reported:  
But none of 'em can be found. Stand! who's there?

### **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

A Roman,  
Who had not now been drooping here, if seconds  
Had answer'd him.

### **Second Captain**

Lay hands on him; a dog!  
A leg of Rome shall not return to tell  
What crows have peck'd them here. He brags

his service

As if he were of note: bring him to the king.

*Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Soldiers, Attendants, and Roman Captives. The Captains present POSTHUMUS LEONATUS to CYMBELINE, who delivers him over to a Gaoler: then exeunt omnes*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A British prison.

*Enter POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and two Gaolers*

### First Gaoler

You shall not now be stol'n, you have locks upon you;  
So graze as you find pasture.

### Second Gaoler

Ay, or a stomach.

*Exeunt Gaolers*

### POSTHUMUS LEONATUS

Most welcome, bondage! for thou art away,  
think, to liberty: yet am I better  
Than one that's sick o' the gout; since he had rather  
Groan so in perpetuity than be cured  
By the sure physician, death, who is the key  
To unbar these locks. My conscience, thou art fetter'd  
More than my shanks and wrists: you good gods, give me  
The penitent instrument to pick that bolt,  
Then, free for ever! Is't enough I am sorry?  
So children temporal fathers do appease;  
Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent?  
I cannot do it better than in gyves,  
Desired more than constrain'd: to satisfy,  
If of my freedom 'tis the main part, take  
No stricter render of me than my all.  
I know you are more clement than vile men,  
Who of their broken debtors take a third,  
A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again  
On their abatement: that's not my desire:

For Imogen's dear life take mine; and though  
'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life; you coin'd it:  
'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;  
Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake:  
You rather mine, being yours: and so, great powers,  
If you will take this audit, take this life,  
And cancel these cold bonds. O Imogen!  
I'll speak to thee in silence.

*Sleeps*

*Solemn music. Enter, as in an apparition, SICILIUS LEONATUS, father to Posthumus Leonatus, an old man, attired like a warrior; leading in his hand an ancient matron, his wife, and mother to Posthumus Leonatus, with music before them: then, after other music, follow the two young Leonati, brothers to Posthumus Leonatus, with wounds as they died in the wars. They circle Posthumus Leonatus round, as he lies sleeping*

### **Sicilius Leonatus**

No more, thou thunder-master, show  
Thy spite on mortal flies:  
With Mars fall out, with Juno chide,  
That thy adulteries  
Rates and revenges.  
Hath my poor boy done aught but well,  
Whose face I never saw?  
I died whilst in the womb he stay'd  
Attending nature's law:  
Whose father then, as men report  
Thou orphans' father art,  
Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him  
From this earth-vexing smart.

### **Mother**

Lucina lent not me her aid,  
But took me in my throes;  
That from me was Posthumus ript,  
Came crying 'mongst his foes,  
A thing of pity!

### **Sicilius Leonatus**



Great nature, like his ancestry,  
Moulded the stuff so fair,  
That he deserved the praise o' the world,  
As great Sicilius' heir.

### **First Brother**

When once he was mature for man,  
In Britain where was he  
That could stand up his parallel;  
Or fruitful object be  
In eye of Imogen, that best  
Could deem his dignity?

### **Mother**

With marriage wherefore was he mock'd,  
To be exiled, and thrown  
From Leonati seat, and cast  
From her his dearest one,  
Sweet Imogen?

### **Sicilius Leonatus**

Why did you suffer Iachimo,  
Slight thing of Italy,  
To taint his nobler heart and brain  
With needless jealousy;  
And to become the geck and scorn  
O' th' other's villany?

### **Second Brother**

For this from stiller seats we came,  
Our parents and us twain,  
That striking in our country's cause  
Fell bravely and were slain,  
Our fealty and Tenantius' right  
With honour to maintain.

### **First Brother**

Like hardiment Posthumus hath  
To Cymbeline perform'd:  
Then, Jupiter, thou king of gods,  
Why hast thou thus adjourn'd  
The graces for his merits due,  
Being all to dolours turn'd?

### **Sicilius Leonatus**

Thy crystal window ope; look out;  
No longer exercise  
Upon a valiant race thy harsh  
And potent injuries.

### **Mother**

Since, Jupiter, our son is good,  
Take off his miseries.

### **Sicilius Leonatus**

Peep through thy marble mansion; help;  
Or we poor ghosts will cry  
To the shining synod of the rest  
Against thy deity.

### **First Brother Second Brother**

Help, Jupiter; or we appeal,  
And from thy justice fly.

*Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning, sitting upon an eagle: he throws a thunderbolt.  
The Apparitions fall on their knees*

### **Jupiter**

No more, you petty spirits of region low,  
Offend our hearing; hush! How dare you ghosts  
Accuse the thunderer, whose bolt, you know,  
Sky-planted batters all rebelling coasts?  
Poor shadows of Elysium, hence, and rest

Upon your never-withering banks of flowers:  
Be not with mortal accidents opprest;  
No care of yours it is; you know 'tis ours.  
Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,  
The more delay'd, delighted. Be content;  
Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift:  
His comforts thrive, his trials well are spent.  
Our Jovial star reign'd at his birth, and in  
Our temple was he married. Rise, and fade.  
He shall be lord of lady Imogen,  
And happier much by his affliction made.  
This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein  
Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine:  
and so, away: no further with your din  
Express impatience, lest you stir up mine.  
Mount, eagle, to my palace crystalline.

*Ascends*

### **Sicilius Leonatus**

He came in thunder; his celestial breath  
Was sulphurous to smell: the holy eagle  
Stoop'd as to foot us: his ascension is  
More sweet than our blest fields: his royal bird  
Prunes the immortal wing and cloys his beak,  
As when his god is pleased.

**All**

Thanks, Jupiter!

### **Sicilius Leonatus**

The marble pavement closes, he is enter'd  
His radiant root. Away! and, to be blest,  
Let us with care perform his great behest.

*The Apparitions vanish*

### **Posthumus Leonatus**

[Waking] Sleep, thou hast been a grandsire, and begot  
A father to me; and thou hast created  
A mother and two brothers: but, O scorn!  
Gone! they went hence so soon as they were born:  
And so I am awake. Poor wretches that depend  
On greatness' favour dream as I have done,  
Wake and find nothing. But, alas, I swerve:  
Many dream not to find, neither deserve,  
And yet are steep'd in favours: so am I,  
That have this golden chance and know not why.  
What fairies haunt this ground? A book? O rare one!  
Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment  
Nobler than that it covers: let thy effects  
So follow, to be most unlike our courtiers,  
As good as promise.

*Reads*

'When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown,  
without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of  
tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be  
lopped branches, which, being dead many years,  
shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock and  
freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries,  
Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.'  
'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen  
Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing;  
Or senseless speaking or a speaking such  
As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,  
The action of my life is like it, which  
I'll keep, if but for sympathy.

*Re-enter First Gaoler*

**First Gaoler**

Come, sir, are you ready for death?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Over-roasted rather; ready long ago.

## **First Gaoler**

Hanging is the word, sir: if  
you be ready for that, you are well cooked.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

So, if I prove a good repast to the  
spectators, the dish pays the shot.

## **First Gaoler**

A heavy reckoning for you, sir. But the comfort is,  
you shall be called to no more payments, fear no  
more tavern-bills; which are often the sadness of  
parting, as the procuring of mirth: you come in  
flint for want of meat, depart reeling with too  
much drink; sorry that you have paid too much, and  
sorry that you are paid too much; purse and brain  
both empty; the brain the heavier for being too  
light, the purse too light, being drawn of  
heaviness: of this contradiction you shall now be  
quit. O, the charity of a penny cord! It sums up  
thousands in a trice: you have no true debtor and  
creditor but it; of what's past, is, and to come,  
the discharge: your neck, sir, is pen, book and  
counters; so the acquittance follows.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I am merrier to die than thou art to live.

## **First Gaoler**

Indeed, sir, he that sleeps feels not the  
tooth-ache: but a man that were to sleep your  
sleep, and a hangman to help him to bed, I think he  
would change places with his officer; for, look you,  
sir, you know not which way you shall go.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Yes, indeed do I, fellow.

**First Gaoler**

Your death has eyes in 's head then; I have not seen him so pictured: you must either be directed by some that take upon them to know, or do take upon yourself that which I am sure you do not know, or jump the after inquiry on your own peril: and how you shall speed in your journey's end, I think you'll never return to tell one.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I tell thee, fellow, there are none want eyes to direct them the way I am going, but such as wink and will not use them.

**First Gaoler**

What an infinite mock is this, that a man should have the best use of eyes to see the way of blindness! I am sure hanging's the way of winking.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Knock off his manacles; bring your prisoner to the king.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Thou bring'st good news; I am called to be made free.

**First Gaoler**

I'll be hang'd then.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Thou shalt be then freer than a gaoler; no bolts for the dead.

*Exeunt POSTHUMUS LEONATUS and Messenger*

## **First Gaoler**

Unless a man would marry a gallows and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone. Yet, on my conscience, there are verier knaves desire to live, for all he be a Roman: and there be some of them too that die against their wills; so should I, if I were one. I would we were all of one mind, and one mind good; O, there were desolation of gaolers and gallowses! I speak against my present profit, but my wish hath a preferment in 't.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Cymbeline

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Cymbeline](#) | Act 5, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. Cymbeline's tent.

*Enter CYMBELINE, BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, ARVIRAGUS, PISANIO, Lords, Officers, and Attendants*

### CYMBELINE

Stand by my side, you whom the gods have made  
Preservers of my throne. Woe is my heart  
That the poor soldier that so richly fought,  
Whose rags shamed gilded arms, whose naked breast  
Stepp'd before larges of proof, cannot be found:  
He shall be happy that can find him, if  
Our grace can make him so.

### BELARIUS

I never saw  
Such noble fury in so poor a thing;  
Such precious deeds in one that promises nought  
But beggary and poor looks.

### CYMBELINE

No tidings of him?

### PISANIO

He hath been search'd among the dead and living,  
But no trace of him.

### CYMBELINE

To my grief, I am  
The heir of his reward;



*To BELARIUS, GUIDERIUS, and ARVIRAGUS*

which I will add  
To you, the liver, heart and brain of Britain,  
By whom I grant she lives. 'Tis now the time  
To ask of whence you are. Report it.

## **BELARIUS**

Sir,  
In Cambria are we born, and gentlemen:  
Further to boast were neither true nor modest,  
Unless I add, we are honest.

## **CYMBELINE**

Bow your knees.  
Arise my knights o' the battle: I create you  
Companions to our person and will fit you  
With dignities becoming your estates.

*Enter CORNELIUS and Ladies*

There's business in these faces. Why so sadly  
Greet you our victory? you look like Romans,  
And not o' the court of Britain.

## **CORNELIUS**

Hail, great king!  
To sour your happiness, I must report  
The queen is dead.

## **CYMBELINE**

Who worse than a physician  
Would this report become? But I consider,  
By medicine life may be prolong'd, yet death  
Will seize the doctor too. How ended she?

## **CORNELIUS**

With horror, madly dying, like her life,  
Which, being cruel to the world, concluded  
Most cruel to herself. What she confess'd  
I will report, so please you: these her women  
Can trip me, if I err; who with wet cheeks  
Were present when she finish'd.

## **CYMBELINE**

Prithee, say.

## **CORNELIUS**

First, she confess'd she never loved you, only  
Affected greatness got by you, not you:  
Married your royalty, was wife to your place;  
Abhorr'd your person.

## **CYMBELINE**

She alone knew this;  
And, but she spoke it dying, I would not  
Believe her lips in opening it. Proceed.

## **CORNELIUS**

Your daughter, whom she bore in hand to love  
With such integrity, she did confess  
Was as a scorpion to her sight; whose life,  
But that her flight prevented it, she had  
Ta'en off by poison.

## **CYMBELINE**

O most delicate fiend!  
Who is 't can read a woman? Is there more?

## **CORNELIUS**

More, sir, and worse. She did confess she had  
For you a mortal mineral; which, being took,

Should by the minute feed on life and lingering  
By inches waste you: in which time she purposed,  
By watching, weeping, tendance, kissing, to  
O'ercome you with her show, and in time,  
When she had fitted you with her craft, to work  
Her son into the adoption of the crown:  
But, failing of her end by his strange absence,  
Grew shameless-desperate; open'd, in despite  
Of heaven and men, her purposes; repented  
The evils she hatch'd were not effected; so  
Despairing died.

## CYMBELINE

Heard you all this, her women?

### First Lady

We did, so please your highness.

## CYMBELINE

Mine eyes  
Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;  
Mine ears, that heard her flattery; nor my heart,  
That thought her like her seeming; it had  
been vicious  
To have mistrusted her: yet, O my daughter!  
That it was folly in me, thou mayst say,  
And prove it in thy feeling. Heaven mend all!

*Enter LUCIUS, IACHIMO, the Soothsayer, and other Roman Prisoners, guarded;  
POSTHUMUS LEONATUS behind, and IMOGEN*

Thou comest not, Caius, now for tribute that  
The Britons have razed out, though with the loss  
Of many a bold one; whose kinsmen have made suit  
That their good souls may be appeased with slaughter  
Of you their captives, which ourself have granted:  
So think of your estate.

## CAIUS LUCIUS

Consider, sir, the chance of war: the day  
Was yours by accident; had it gone with us,  
We should not, when the blood was cool,  
have threaten'd  
Our prisoners with the sword. But since the gods  
Will have it thus, that nothing but our lives  
May be call'd ransom, let it come: sufficeth  
A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer:  
Augustus lives to think on't: and so much  
For my peculiar care. This one thing only  
I will entreat; my boy, a Briton born,  
Let him be ransom'd: never master had  
A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,  
So tender over his occasions, true,  
So feat, so nurse-like: let his virtue join  
With my request, which I make bold your highness  
Cannot deny; he hath done no Briton harm,  
Though he have served a Roman: save him, sir,  
And spare no blood beside.

## **CYMBELINE**

I have surely seen him:  
His favour is familiar to me. Boy,  
Thou hast look'd thyself into my grace,  
And art mine own. I know not why, wherefore,  
To say 'live, boy:' ne'er thank thy master; live:  
And ask of Cymbeline what boon thou wilt,  
Fitting my bounty and thy state, I'll give it;  
Yea, though thou do demand a prisoner,  
The noblest ta'en.

## **IMOGEN**

I humbly thank your highness.

## **CAIUS LUCIUS**

I do not bid thee beg my life, good lad;  
And yet I know thou wilt.

## IMOGEN

No, no: alack,  
There's other work in hand: I see a thing  
Bitter to me as death: your life, good master,  
Must shuffle for itself.

## CAIUS LUCIUS

The boy disdains me,  
He leaves me, scorns me: briefly die their joys  
That place them on the truth of girls and boys.  
Why stands he so perplex'd?

## CYMBELINE

What wouldst thou, boy?  
I love thee more and more: think more and more  
What's best to ask. Know'st him thou look'st on? speak,  
Wilt have him live? Is he thy kin? thy friend?

## IMOGEN

He is a Roman; no more kin to me  
Than I to your highness; who, being born your vassal,  
Am something nearer.

## CYMBELINE

Wherefore eyest him so?

## IMOGEN

I'll tell you, sir, in private, if you please  
To give me hearing.

## CYMBELINE

Ay, with all my heart,  
And lend my best attention. What's thy name?

## **IMOGEN**

Fidele, sir.

## **CYMBELINE**

Thou'rt my good youth, my page;  
I'll be thy master: walk with me; speak freely.

*CYMBELINE and IMOGEN converse apart*

## **BELARIUS**

Is not this boy revived from death?

## **ARVIRAGUS**

One sand another  
Not more resembles that sweet rosy lad  
Who died, and was Fidele. What think you?

## **GUIDERIUS**

The same dead thing alive.

## **BELARIUS**

Peace, peace! see further; he eyes us not; forbear;  
Creatures may be alike: were 't he, I am sure  
He would have spoke to us.

## **GUIDERIUS**

But we saw him dead.

## **BELARIUS**

Be silent; let's see further.

## **PISANIO**

[Aside] It is my mistress:  
Since she is living, let the time run on  
To good or bad.

*CYMBELINE and IMOGEN come forward*

**CYMBELINE**

Come, stand thou by our side;  
Make thy demand aloud.

*To IACHIMO*

Sir, step you forth;  
Give answer to this boy, and do it freely;  
Or, by our greatness and the grace of it,  
Which is our honour, bitter torture shall  
Winnow the truth from falsehood. On, speak to him.

**IMOGEN**

My boon is, that this gentleman may render  
Of whom he had this ring.

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

[Aside] What's that to him?

**CYMBELINE**

That diamond upon your finger, say  
How came it yours?

**IACHIMO**

Thou'lt torture me to leave unspoken that  
Which, to be spoke, would torture thee.

**CYMBELINE**

How! me?

## IACHIMO

I am glad to be constrain'd to utter that  
Which torments me to conceal. By villany  
I got this ring: 'twas Leonatus' jewel;  
Whom thou didst banish; and--which more may  
grieve thee,  
As it doth me--a nobler sir ne'er lived  
'Twixt sky and ground. Wilt thou hear more, my lord?

## CYMBELINE

All that belongs to this.

## IACHIMO

That paragon, thy daughter,--  
For whom my heart drops blood, and my false spirits  
Quail to remember--Give me leave; I faint.

## CYMBELINE

My daughter! what of her? Renew thy strength:  
I had rather thou shouldst live while nature will  
Than die ere I hear more: strive, man, and speak.

## IACHIMO

Upon a time,--unhappy was the clock  
That struck the hour!--it was in Rome,--accursed  
The mansion where!--'twas at a feast,--O, would  
Our viands had been poison'd, or at least  
Those which I heaved to head!--the good Posthumus--  
What should I say? he was too good to be  
Where ill men were; and was the best of all  
Amongst the rarest of good ones,--sitting sadly,  
Hearing us praise our loves of Italy  
For beauty that made barren the swell'd boast  
Of him that best could speak, for feature, laming  
The shrine of Venus, or straight-pight Minerva.  
Postures beyond brief nature, for condition,



A shop of all the qualities that man  
Loves woman for, besides that hook of wiving,  
Fairness which strikes the eye--

## CYMBELINE

I stand on fire:  
Come to the matter.

## IACHIMO

All too soon I shall,  
Unless thou wouldst grieve quickly. This Posthumus,  
Most like a noble lord in love and one  
That had a royal lover, took his hint;  
And, not dispraising whom we praised,--therein  
He was as calm as virtue--he began  
His mistress' picture; which by his tongue  
being made,  
And then a mind put in't, either our brags  
Were crack'd of kitchen-trolls, or his description  
Proved us unspeaking sots.

## CYMBELINE

Nay, nay, to the purpose.

## IACHIMO

Your daughter's chastity--there it begins.  
He spake of her, as Dian had hot dreams,  
And she alone were cold: whereat I, wretch,  
Made scruple of his praise; and wager'd with him  
Pieces of gold 'gainst this which then he wore  
Upon his honour'd finger, to attain  
In suit the place of's bed and win this ring  
By hers and mine adultery. He, true knight,  
No lesser of her honour confident  
Than I did truly find her, stakes this ring;  
And would so, had it been a carbuncle  
Of Phoebus' wheel, and might so safely, had it  
Been all the worth of's car. Away to Britain

Post I in this design: well may you, sir,  
Remember me at court; where I was taught  
Of your chaste daughter the wide difference  
'Twixt amorous and villanous. Being thus quench'd  
Of hope, not longing, mine Italian brain  
'Gan in your duller Britain operate  
Most vilely; for my vantage, excellent:  
And, to be brief, my practise so prevail'd,  
That I return'd with simular proof enough  
To make the noble Leonatus mad,  
By wounding his belief in her renown  
With tokens thus, and thus; averting notes  
Of chamber-hanging, pictures, this her bracelet,--  
O cunning, how I got it!--nay, some marks  
Of secret on her person, that he could not  
But think her bond of chastity quite crack'd,  
I having ta'en the forfeit. Whereupon--  
Methinks, I see him now--

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

[Advancing] Ay, so thou dost,  
Italian fiend! Ay me, most credulous fool,  
Egregious murderer, thief, any thing  
That's due to all the villains past, in being,  
To come! O, give me cord, or knife, or poison,  
Some upright justicer! Thou, king, send out  
For torturers ingenious: it is I  
That all the abhorred things o' the earth amend  
By being worse than they. I am Posthumus,  
That kill'd thy daughter:--villain-like, I lie--  
That caused a lesser villain than myself,  
A sacrilegious thief, to do't: the temple  
Of virtue was she; yea, and she herself.  
Spit, and throw stones, cast mire upon me, set  
The dogs o' the street to bay me: every villain  
Be call'd Posthumus Leonitus; and  
Be villany less than 'twas! O Imogen!  
My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,  
Imogen, Imogen!

## **IMOGEN**

Peace, my lord; hear, hear--

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page,  
There lie thy part.

*Striking her: she falls*

**PISANIO**

O, gentlemen, help!  
Mine and your mistress! O, my lord Posthumus!  
You ne'er kill'd Imogen til now. Help, help!  
Mine honour'd lady!

**CYMBELINE**

Does the world go round?

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

How come these staggers on me?

**PISANIO**

Wake, my mistress!

**CYMBELINE**

If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me  
To death with mortal joy.

**PISANIO**

How fares thy mistress?

**IMOGEN**

O, get thee from my sight;  
Thou gavest me poison: dangerous fellow, hence!

Breathe not where princes are.

**CYMBELINE**

The tune of Imogen!

**PISANIO**

Lady,  
The gods throw stones of sulphur on me, if  
That box I gave you was not thought by me  
A precious thing: I had it from the queen.

**CYMBELINE**

New matter still?

**IMOGEN**

It poison'd me.

**CORNELIUS**

O gods!  
I left out one thing which the queen confess'd.  
Which must approve thee honest: 'If Pisanio  
Have,' said she, 'given his mistress that confection  
Which I gave him for cordial, she is served  
As I would serve a rat.'

**CYMBELINE**

What's this, Cornelius?

**CORNELIUS**

The queen, sir, very oft importuned me  
To temper poisons for her, still pretending  
The satisfaction of her knowledge only  
In killing creatures vile, as cats and dogs,  
Of no esteem: I, dreading that her purpose

Was of more danger, did compound for her  
A certain stuff, which, being ta'en, would cease  
The present power of life, but in short time  
All offices of nature should again  
Do their due functions. Have you ta'en of it?

**IMOGEN**

Most like I did, for I was dead.

**BELARIUS**

My boys,  
There was our error.

**GUIDERIUS**

This is, sure, Fidele.

**IMOGEN**

Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?  
Think that you are upon a rock; and now  
Throw me again.

*Embracing him*

**POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Hang there like a fruit, my soul,  
Till the tree die!

**CYMBELINE**

How now, my flesh, my child!  
What, makest thou me a dullard in this act?  
Wilt thou not speak to me?

**IMOGEN**

[Kneeling] Your blessing, sir.

## **BELARIUS**

[To GUIDERIUS and ARVIRAGUS] Though you did love  
this youth, I blame ye not:  
You had a motive for't.

## **CYMBELINE**

My tears that fall  
Prove holy water on thee! Imogen,  
Thy mother's dead.

## **IMOGEN**

I am sorry for't, my lord.

## **CYMBELINE**

O, she was nought; and long of her it was  
That we meet here so strangely: but her son  
Is gone, we know not how nor where.

## **PISANIO**

My lord,  
Now fear is from me, I'll speak troth. Lord Cloten,  
Upon my lady's missing, came to me  
With his sword drawn; foam'd at the mouth, and swore,  
If I discover'd not which way she was gone,  
It was my instant death. By accident,  
had a feigned letter of my master's  
Then in my pocket; which directed him  
To seek her on the mountains near to Milford;  
Where, in a frenzy, in my master's garments,  
Which he enforced from me, away he posts  
With unchaste purpose and with oath to violate  
My lady's honour: what became of him  
I further know not.

## **GUIDERIUS**

Let me end the story:  
I slew him there.

## **CYMBELINE**

Marry, the gods forfend!  
I would not thy good deeds should from my lips  
Pluck a bard sentence: prithee, valiant youth,  
Deny't again.

## **GUIDERIUS**

I have spoke it, and I did it.

## **CYMBELINE**

He was a prince.

## **GUIDERIUS**

A most incivil one: the wrongs he did me  
Were nothing prince-like; for he did provoke me  
With language that would make me spurn the sea,  
If it could so roar to me: I cut off's head;  
And am right glad he is not standing here  
To tell this tale of mine.

## **CYMBELINE**

I am sorry for thee:  
By thine own tongue thou art condemn'd, and must  
Endure our law: thou'rt dead.

## **IMOGEN**

That headless man  
I thought had been my lord.

## **CYMBELINE**

Bind the offender,

And take him from our presence.

## **BELARIUS**

Stay, sir king:

This man is better than the man he slew,  
As well descended as thyself; and hath  
More of thee merited than a band of Clotens  
Had ever scar for.

*To the Guard*

Let his arms alone;  
They were not born for bondage.

## **CYMBELINE**

Why, old soldier,  
Wilt thou undo the worth thou art unpaid for,  
By tasting of our wrath? How of descent  
As good as we?

## **ARVIRAGUS**

In that he spake too far.

## **CYMBELINE**

And thou shalt die for't.

## **BELARIUS**

We will die all three:  
But I will prove that two on's are as good  
As I have given out him. My sons, I must,  
For mine own part, unfold a dangerous speech,  
Though, haply, well for you.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

Your danger's ours.



## **GUIDERIUS**

And our good his.

## **BELARIUS**

Have at it then, by leave.  
Thou hadst, great king, a subject who  
Was call'd Belarius.

## **CYMBELINE**

What of him? he is  
A banish'd traitor.

## **BELARIUS**

He it is that hath  
Assumed this age; indeed a banish'd man;  
I know not how a traitor.

## **CYMBELINE**

Take him hence:  
The whole world shall not save him.

## **BELARIUS**

Not too hot:  
First pay me for the nursing of thy sons;  
And let it be confiscate all, so soon  
As I have received it.

## **CYMBELINE**

Nursing of my sons!

## **BELARIUS**

I am too blunt and saucy: here's my knee:  
Ere I arise, I will prefer my sons;

Then spare not the old father. Mighty sir,  
These two young gentlemen, that call me father  
And think they are my sons, are none of mine;  
They are the issue of your loins, my liege,  
And blood of your begetting.

## CYMBELINE

How! my issue!

## BELARIUS

So sure as you your father's. I, old Morgan,  
Am that Belarius whom you sometime banish'd:  
Your pleasure was my mere offence, my punishment  
Itself, and all my treason; that I suffer'd  
Was all the harm I did. These gentle princes--  
For such and so they are--these twenty years  
Have I train'd up: those arts they have as I  
Could put into them; my breeding was, sir, as  
Your highness knows. Their nurse, Euriphile,  
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children  
Upon my banishment: I moved her to't,  
Having received the punishment before,  
For that which I did then: beaten for loyalty  
Excited me to treason: their dear loss,  
The more of you 'twas felt, the more it shaped  
Unto my end of stealing them. But, gracious sir,  
Here are your sons again; and I must lose  
Two of the sweet'st companions in the world.  
The benediction of these covering heavens  
Fall on their heads like dew! for they are worthy  
To inlay heaven with stars.

## CYMBELINE

Thou weep'st, and speak'st.  
The service that you three have done is more  
Unlike than this thou tell'st. I lost my children:  
If these be they, I know not how to wish  
A pair of worthier sons.

## **BELARIUS**

Be pleased awhile.  
This gentleman, whom I call Polydore,  
Most worthy prince, as yours, is true Guiderius:  
This gentleman, my Cadwal, Arviragus,  
Your younger princely son; he, sir, was lapp'd  
In a most curious mantle, wrought by the hand  
Of his queen mother, which for more probation  
I can with ease produce.

## **CYMBELINE**

Guiderius had  
Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star;  
It was a mark of wonder.

## **BELARIUS**

This is he;  
Who hath upon him still that natural stamp:  
It was wise nature's end in the donation,  
To be his evidence now.

## **CYMBELINE**

O, what, am I  
A mother to the birth of three? Ne'er mother  
Rejoiced deliverance more. Blest pray you be,  
That, after this strange starting from your orbs,  
may reign in them now! O Imogen,  
Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

## **IMOGEN**

No, my lord;  
I have got two worlds by 't. O my gentle brothers,  
Have we thus met? O, never say hereafter  
But I am truest speaker you call'd me brother,  
When I was but your sister; I you brothers,  
When ye were so indeed.

## CYMBELINE

Did you e'er meet?

## ARVIRAGUS

Ay, my good lord.

## GUIDERIUS

And at first meeting loved;  
Continued so, until we thought he died.

## CORNELIUS

By the queen's dram she swallow'd.

## CYMBELINE

O rare instinct!  
When shall I hear all through? This fierce  
abridgement  
Hath to it circumstantial branches, which  
Distinction should be rich in. Where? how lived You?  
And when came you to serve our Roman captive?  
How parted with your brothers? how first met them?  
Why fled you from the court? and whither? These,  
And your three motives to the battle, with  
I know not how much more, should be demanded;  
And all the other by-dependencies,  
From chance to chance: but nor the time nor place  
Will serve our long inter'gatories. See,  
Posthumus anchors upon Imogen,  
And she, like harmless lightning, throws her eye  
On him, her brother, me, her master, hitting  
Each object with a joy: the counterchange  
Is severally in all. Let's quit this ground,  
And smoke the temple with our sacrifices.

*To BELARIUS*

Thou art my brother; so we'll hold thee ever.

## **IMOGEN**

You are my father too, and did relieve me,  
To see this gracious season.

## **CYMBELINE**

All o'erjoy'd,  
Save these in bonds: let them be joyful too,  
For they shall taste our comfort.

## **IMOGEN**

My good master,  
I will yet do you service.

## **CAIUS LUCIUS**

Happy be you!

## **CYMBELINE**

The forlorn soldier, that so nobly fought,  
He would have well becomed this place, and graced  
The thankings of a king.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

I am, sir,  
The soldier that did company these three  
In poor beseeming; 'twas a fitment for  
The purpose I then follow'd. That I was he,  
Speak, Iachimo: I had you down and might  
Have made you finish.

## **IACHIMO**

[Kneeling] I am down again:  
But now my heavy conscience sinks my knee,  
As then your force did. Take that life, beseech you,

Which I so often owe: but your ring first;  
And here the bracelet of the truest princess  
That ever swore her faith.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Kneel not to me:  
The power that I have on you is, to spare you;  
The malice towards you to forgive you: live,  
And deal with others better.

## **CYMBELINE**

Nobly doom'd!  
We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law;  
Pardon's the word to all.

## **ARVIRAGUS**

You help us, sir,  
As you did mean indeed to be our brother;  
Joy'd are we that you are.

## **POSTHUMUS LEONATUS**

Your servant, princes. Good my lord of Rome,  
Call forth your soothsayer: as I slept, methought  
Great Jupiter, upon his eagle back'd,  
Appear'd to me, with other spritely shows  
Of mine own kindred: when I waked, I found  
This label on my bosom; whose containing  
Is so from sense in hardness, that I can  
Make no collection of it: let him show  
His skill in the construction.

## **CAIUS LUCIUS**

Philarmonus!

## **Soothsayer**

Here, my good lord.

## CAIUS LUCIUS

Read, and declare the meaning.

### Soothsayer

[Reads] 'When as a lion's whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embraced by a piece of tender air; and when from a stately cedar shall be lopped branches, which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.'

Thou, Leonatus, art the lion's whelp;  
The fit and apt construction of thy name,  
Being Leonatus, doth import so much.

### *To CYMBELINE*

The piece of tender air, thy virtuous daughter,  
Which we call 'mollis aer;' and 'mollis aer'  
We term it 'mulier:' which 'mulier' I divine  
Is this most constant wife; who, even now,  
Answering the letter of the oracle,  
Unknown to you, unsought, were clipp'd about  
With this most tender air.

## CYMBELINE

This hath some seeming.

### Soothsayer

The lofty cedar, royal Cymbeline,  
Personates thee: and thy lopp'd branches point  
Thy two sons forth; who, by Belarius stol'n,  
For many years thought dead, are now revived,  
To the majestic cedar join'd, whose issue  
Promises Britain peace and plenty.

## CYMBELINE

Well

My peace we will begin. And, Caius Lucius,  
Although the victor, we submit to Caesar,  
And to the Roman empire; promising  
To pay our wonted tribute, from the which  
We were dissuaded by our wicked queen;  
Whom heavens, in justice, both on her and hers,  
Have laid most heavy hand.

### Soothsayer

The fingers of the powers above do tune  
The harmony of this peace. The vision  
Which I made known to Lucius, ere the stroke  
Of this yet scarce-cold battle, at this instant  
Is full accomplish'd; for the Roman eagle,  
From south to west on wing soaring aloft,  
Lessen'd herself, and in the beams o' the sun  
So vanish'd: which foreshow'd our princely eagle,  
The imperial Caesar, should again unite  
His favour with the radiant Cymbeline,  
Which shines here in the west.

## CYMBELINE

Laud we the gods;  
And let our crooked smokes climb to their nostrils  
From our blest altars. Publish we this peace  
To all our subjects. Set we forward: let  
A Roman and a British ensign wave  
Friendly together: so through Lud's-town march:  
And in the temple of great Jupiter  
Our peace we'll ratify; seal it with feasts.  
Set on there! Never was a war did cease,  
Ere bloody hands were wash'd, with such a peace.

*Exeunt*



# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Love's Labour's Lost

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [The king of Navarre's park.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [The same.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [The same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [The same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The same.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [The same.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The same.](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. 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*

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same.

*Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and MOTH*

DON

**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.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**MOTH**

No, no; O Lord, sir, no.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**MOTH**

By a familiar demonstration of the working, my tough senior.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Why tough senior? why tough senior?

**MOTH**

Why tender juvenal? why tender juvenal?

DON

**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.

DON ADRIANO DE

**ARMADO**

Pretty and apt.

**MOTH**

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

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Thou pretty, because little.

**MOTH**

Little pretty, because little. Wherefore apt?

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

And therefore apt, because quick.

**MOTH**

Speak you this in my praise, master?  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

In thy condign praise.

**MOTH**

I will praise an eel with the same praise.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

What, that an eel is ingenious?

**MOTH**

That an eel is quick.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**MOTH**

I am answered, sir.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I love not to be crossed.

**MOTH**

[Aside] He speaks the mere contrary; crosses love not him.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I have promised to study three years with the duke.

**MOTH**

You may do it in an hour, sir.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Impossible.

**MOTH**

How many is one thrice told?

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**MOTH**

You are a gentleman and a gamester, sir.

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

It doth amount to one more than two.

**MOTH**

Which the base vulgar do call three.

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

A most fine figure!

**MOTH**

To prove you a cipher.

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Of what complexion?

**MOTH**

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

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Tell me precisely of what complexion.

**MOTH**

Of the sea-water green, sir.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Is that one of the four complexions?

**MOTH**

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

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

My love is most immaculate white and red.

**MOTH**

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

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**



Define, define, well-educated infant.

**MOTH**

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

DON

**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.  
DON

**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.  
DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Sing, boy; my spirit grows heavy in love.

**MOTH**

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

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!

**JAQUENETTA**

Man?  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I will visit thee at the lodge.

**JAQUENETTA**

That's hereby.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I know where it is situate.

**JAQUENETTA**

Lord, how wise you are!  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I will tell thee wonders.

**JAQUENETTA**

With that face?  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I love thee.

**JAQUENETTA**

So I heard you say.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

And so, farewell.

**JAQUENETTA**

Fair weather after you!

**DULL**

Come, Jaquenetta, away!

*Exeunt DULL and JAQUENETTA*

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Thou shalt be heavily punished.

**COSTARD**

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

DON

**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*

DON

**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*

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. 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 unseeming to confess receipt  
Of that which hath so faithfully been paid.

**FERDINAND**

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

**PRINCESS**

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

**FERDINAND**

Satisfy me so.

**BOYET**

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

**FERDINAND**

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

**PRINCESS**

Sweet health and fair desires consort your grace!

**FERDINAND**

Thy own wish wish I thee in every place!

*Exit*

**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*

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The same.

*Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and MOTH*

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Warble, child; make passionate my sense of hearing.

**MOTH**

Concolinel.

*Singing*

DON

**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?

DON

**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.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

How hast thou purchased this experience?

**MOTH**

By my penny of observation.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

But O,--but O,--

**MOTH**

'The hobby-horse is forgot.'  
DON

**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?  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Almost I had.

**MOTH**

Negligent student! learn her by heart.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

By heart and in heart, boy.

**MOTH**

And out of heart, master: all those three I will prove.  
DON

**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.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I am all these three.

**MOTH**

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

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

The way is but short: away!

**MOTH**

As swift as lead, sir.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**MOTH**

Minime, honest master; or rather, master, no.

DON

**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?  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**MOTH**

Thump then and I flee.

*Exit*

DON

**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.  
DON

**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!  
DON

**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?  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**MOTH**

I will add the l'envoy. Say the moral again.  
DON

**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.  
DON

## **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.  
DON

## **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.  
DON

**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.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

We will talk no more of this matter.

**COSTARD**

Till there be more matter in the shin.  
DON

**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.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty,

enfreedoming thy person; thou wert immured,  
restrained, captivated, bound.

**COSTARD**

True, true; and now you will be my purgation and let me loose.  
DON

**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 whimped, 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 perjured, which is worst of all;  
And, among three, to love the worst of all;  
A wightly 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*

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. 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 indubitable 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 titles? 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 pathological nit!  
Sola, sola!

*Shout within*

*Exit COSTARD, running*

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. 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 preylful 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 stanza, 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 ben venuto; 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*

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. 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 perjurer, 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 triumvirate, 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 Ethiopie 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 wenchs may prove plagues to men forsworn;  
If so, our copper buys no better treasure.

*Exeunt*

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. 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 without heresy. I did converse this quondam day with a companion of the king's, who is intituled, nominated, 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 phantasimes, 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*

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Chirrah!

*To MOTH*

**HOLOFERNES**

Quare chirrah, not sirrah?

DON

**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.  
DON

**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.  
DON

## **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.  
DON

## **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.  
DON

## **ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain.

## **HOLOFERNES**

I do, sans question.

DON

## **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.

DON

## **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, illustrious, 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,--  
DON

## **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.  
DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

For the rest of the Worthies?--

**HOLOFERNES**

I will play three myself.

**MOTH**

Thrice-worthy gentleman!

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Shall I tell you a thing?

**HOLOFERNES**

We attend.

DON

**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*

## **LOVE'S LABOURS LOST**

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Loves Labours Lost

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Love's Labour's Lost](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE II. 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, wench, 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 majestic 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 plain statute-caps.  
But will you hear? the king is my love sworn.

**PRINCESS**

And quick Biron hath plighted faith to me.

**KATHARINE**

And Longaville was for my service born.

**MARIA**

Dumain is mine, as sure as bark on tree.

**BOYET**

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

**PRINCESS**

Will they return?

**BOYET**

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

**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*

DON

**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.

DON

**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 couplement!

*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 afeard 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 Troyan 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.

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

What meanest thou?

**COSTARD**

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

DON

**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.  
DON

**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.

DON

**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.

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Sweet bloods, I both may and will.

**BIRON**

What reason have you for't?

DON

**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*

**MERCADE**

God save you, madam!

**PRINCESS**

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

**MERCADE**

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

**PRINCESS**

Dead, for my life!

**MERCADE**

Even so; my tale is told.

**BIRON**

Worthies, away! the scene begins to cloud.  
DON

**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 unbecoming 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.

**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*

DON

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Sweet majesty, vouchsafe me,--

**PRINCESS**

Was not that Hector?

**DUMAIN**

The worthy knight of Troy.  
DON

**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.  
DON

## 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.  
DON

## **ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

*Exeunt*



# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Measure for Measure

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [An apartment in the DUKE'S palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [A Street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [A monastery.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [A nunnery.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A hall In ANGELO's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Another room in the same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A room in a prison.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [A room in ANGELO's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A room in the prison.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The street before the prison.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The moated grange at ST. LUKE's.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [A room in the prison.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Another room in the same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [A room in ANGELO's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Fields without the town.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [Street near the city gate.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [The city gate.](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. An apartment in the DUKE'S palace.

*Enter DUKE VINCENTIO, ESCALUS, Lords and Attendants*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Escalus.

**ESCALUS**

My lord.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Of government the properties to unfold,  
Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse;  
Since I am put to know that your own science  
Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice  
My strength can give you: then no more remains,  
But that to your sufficiency as your Worth is able,  
And let them work. The nature of our people,  
Our city's institutions, and the terms  
For common justice, you're as pregnant in  
As art and practise hath enriched any  
That we remember. There is our commission,  
From which we would not have you warp. Call hither,  
I say, bid come before us Angelo.

*Exit an Attendant*

What figure of us think you he will bear?  
For you must know, we have with special soul  
Elected him our absence to supply,  
Lent him our terror, dress'd him with our love,  
And given his deputation all the organs  
Of our own power: what think you of it?

## ESCALUS

If any in Vienna be of worth  
To undergo such ample grace and honour,  
It is Lord Angelo.

## DUKE VINCENTIO

Look where he comes.

*Enter ANGELO*

## ANGELO

Always obedient to your grace's will,  
I come to know your pleasure.

## DUKE VINCENTIO

Angelo,  
There is a kind of character in thy life,  
That to the observer doth thy history  
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings  
Are not thine own so proper as to waste  
Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.  
Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,  
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues  
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike  
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd  
But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends  
The smallest scruple of her excellence  
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines  
Herself the glory of a creditor,  
Both thanks and use. But I do bend my speech  
To one that can my part in him advertise;  
Hold therefore, Angelo:--  
In our remove be thou at full ourself;  
Mortality and mercy in Vienna  
Live in thy tongue and heart: old Escalus,  
Though first in question, is thy secondary.  
Take thy commission.

## ANGELO

Now, good my lord,  
Let there be some more test made of my metal,  
Before so noble and so great a figure  
Be stamp'd upon it.

## DUKE VINCENTIO

No more evasion:  
We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice  
Proceeded to you; therefore take your honours.  
Our haste from hence is of so quick condition  
That it prefers itself and leaves unquestion'd  
Matters of needful value. We shall write to you,  
As time and our concernings shall importune,  
How it goes with us, and do look to know  
What doth befall you here. So, fare you well;  
To the hopeful execution do I leave you  
Of your commissions.

## ANGELO

Yet give leave, my lord,  
That we may bring you something on the way.

## DUKE VINCENTIO

My haste may not admit it;  
Nor need you, on mine honour, have to do  
With any scruple; your scope is as mine own  
So to enforce or qualify the laws  
As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand:  
I'll privily away. I love the people,  
But do not like to stage me to their eyes:  
Through it do well, I do not relish well  
Their loud applause and Aves vehement;  
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion  
That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

## ANGELO

The heavens give safety to your purposes!

**ESCALUS**

Lead forth and bring you back in happiness!

**DUKE**

I thank you. Fare you well.

*Exit*

**ESCALUS**

I shall desire you, sir, to give me leave  
To have free speech with you; and it concerns me  
To look into the bottom of my place:  
A power I have, but of what strength and nature  
I am not yet instructed.

**ANGELO**

'Tis so with me. Let us withdraw together,  
And we may soon our satisfaction have  
Touching that point.

**ESCALUS**

I'll wait upon your honour.

*Exeunt*

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A Street.

*Enter LUCIO and two Gentlemen*

**LUCIO**

If the duke with the other dukes come not to composition with the King of Hungary, why then all the dukes fall upon the king.

**First Gentleman**

Heaven grant us its peace, but not the King of Hungary's!

**Second Gentleman**

Amen.

**LUCIO**

Thou concludest like the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the table.

**Second Gentleman**

'Thou shalt not steal'?

**LUCIO**

Ay, that he razed.

**First Gentleman**

Why, 'twas a commandment to command the captain and  
all the rest from their functions: they put forth  
to steal. There's not a soldier of us all, that, in  
the thanksgiving before meat, do relish the petition  
well that prays for peace.

**Second Gentleman**

I never heard any soldier dislike it.

**LUCIO**

I believe thee; for I think thou never wast where  
grace was said.

**Second Gentleman**

No? a dozen times at least.

**First Gentleman**

What, in metre?

**LUCIO**

In any proportion or in any language.

**First Gentleman**

I think, or in any religion.

**LUCIO**

Ay, why not? Grace is grace, despite of all  
controversy: as, for example, thou thyself art a  
wicked villain, despite of all grace.

**First Gentleman**

Well, there went but a pair of shears between us.

**LUCIO**

I grant; as there may between the lists and the velvet. Thou art the list.

**First Gentleman**

And thou the velvet: thou art good velvet; thou'rt a three-piled piece, I warrant thee: I had as lief be a list of an English kersey as be piled, as thou art piled, for a French velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

**LUCIO**

I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most painful feeling of thy speech: I will, out of thine own confession, learn to begin thy health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.

**First Gentleman**

I think I have done myself wrong, have I not?

**Second Gentleman**

Yes, that thou hast, whether thou art tainted or free.

**LUCIO**

Behold, behold. where Madam Mitigation comes! I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to--

**Second Gentleman**

To what, I pray?

**LUCIO**

Judge.



**Second Gentleman**

To three thousand dolours a year.

**First Gentleman**

Ay, and more.

**LUCIO**

A French crown more.

**First Gentleman**

Thou art always figuring diseases in me; but thou art full of error; I am sound.

**LUCIO**

Nay, not as one would say, healthy; but so sound as things that are hollow: thy bones are hollow; impiety has made a feast of thee.

*Enter MISTRESS OVERDONE*

**First Gentleman**

How now! which of your hips has the most profound sciatica?

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

Well, well; there's one yonder arrested and carried to prison was worth five thousand of you all.

**Second Gentleman**

Who's that, I pray thee?

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

Marry, sir, that's Claudio, Signior Claudio.

**First Gentleman**

Claudio to prison? 'tis not so.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

Nay, but I know 'tis so: I saw him arrested, saw him carried away; and, which is more, within these three days his head to be chopped off.

**LUCIO**

But, after all this fooling, I would not have it so.  
Art thou sure of this?

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

I am too sure of it: and it is for getting Madam Julietta with child.

**LUCIO**

Believe me, this may be: he promised to meet me two hours since, and he was ever precise in promise-keeping.

**Second Gentleman**

Besides, you know, it draws something near to the speech we had to such a purpose.

**First Gentleman**

But, most of all, agreeing with the proclamation.

**LUCIO**

Away! let's go learn the truth of it.

*Exeunt LUCIO and Gentlemen*

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk.

*Enter POMPEY*

How now! what's the news with you?

**POMPEY**

Yonder man is carried to prison.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

Well; what has he done?

**POMPEY**

A woman.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

But what's his offence?

**POMPEY**

Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

What, is there a maid with child by him?

**POMPEY**

No, but there's a woman with maid by him. You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

What proclamation, man?

**POMPEY**

All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

And what shall become of those in the city?

**POMPEY**

They shall stand for seed: they had gone down too,  
but that a wise burgher put in for them.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be  
pulled down?

**POMPEY**

To the ground, mistress.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

Why, here's a change indeed in the commonwealth!  
What shall become of me?

**POMPEY**

Come; fear you not: good counsellors lack no  
clients: though you change your place, you need not  
change your trade; I'll be your tapster still.

Courage! there will be pity taken on you: you that  
have worn your eyes almost out in the service, you  
will be considered.

**MISTRESS OVERDONE**

What's to do here, Thomas tapster? let's withdraw.

## **POMPEY**

Here comes Signior Claudio, led by the provost to prison; and there's Madam Juliet.

*Exeunt*

*Enter Provost, CLAUDIO, JULIET, and Officers*

## **CLAUDIO**

Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to the world?  
Bear me to prison, where I am committed.

## **Provost**

I do it not in evil disposition,  
But from Lord Angelo by special charge.

## **CLAUDIO**

Thus can the demigod Authority  
Make us pay down for our offence by weight  
The words of heaven; on whom it will, it will;  
On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just.

*Re-enter LUCIO and two Gentlemen*

## **LUCIO**

Why, how now, Claudio! whence comes this restraint?

## **CLAUDIO**

From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:  
As surfeit is the father of much fast,  
So every scope by the immoderate use  
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,  
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,

A thirsty evil; and when we drink we die.

**LUCIO**

If could speak so wisely under an arrest, I would send for certain of my creditors: and yet, to say the truth, I had as lief have the foppery of freedom as the morality of imprisonment. What's thy offence, Claudio?

**CLAUDIO**

What but to speak of would offend again.

**LUCIO**

What, is't murder?

**CLAUDIO**

No.

**LUCIO**

Lechery?

**CLAUDIO**

Call it so.

**Provost**

Away, sir! you must go.

**CLAUDIO**

One word, good friend. Lucio, a word with you.

**LUCIO**

A hundred, if they'll do you any good.

Is lechery so look'd after?

**CLAUDIO**

Thus stands it with me: upon a true contract  
I got possession of Julietta's bed:  
You know the lady; she is fast my wife,  
Save that we do the denunciation lack  
Of outward order: this we came not to,  
Only for propagation of a dower  
Remaining in the coffer of her friends,  
From whom we thought it meet to hide our love  
Till time had made them for us. But it chances  
The stealth of our most mutual entertainment  
With character too gross is writ on Juliet.

**LUCIO**

With child, perhaps?

**CLAUDIO**

Unhappily, even so.  
And the new deputy now for the duke--  
Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,  
Or whether that the body public be  
A horse whereon the governor doth ride,  
Who, newly in the seat, that it may know  
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur;  
Whether the tyranny be in his place,  
Or in his emmence that fills it up,  
I stagger in:--but this new governor  
Awakes me all the enrolled penalties  
Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by the wall  
So long that nineteen zodiacs have gone round  
And none of them been worn; and, for a name,  
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act  
Freshly on me: 'tis surely for a name.

**LUCIO**

I warrant it is: and thy head stands so tickle on

thy shoulders that a milkmaid, if she be in love,  
may sigh it off. Send after the duke and appeal to  
him.

**CLAUDIO**

I have done so, but he's not to be found.  
I prithee, Lucio, do me this kind service:  
This day my sister should the cloister enter  
And there receive her approbation:  
Acquaint her with the danger of my state:  
Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends  
To the strict deputy; bid herself assay him:  
I have great hope in that; for in her youth  
There is a prone and speechless dialect,  
Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art  
When she will play with reason and discourse,  
And well she can persuade.

**LUCIO**

I pray she may; as well for the encouragement of the  
like, which else would stand under grievous  
imposition, as for the enjoying of thy life, who I  
would be sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a  
game of tick-tack. I'll to her.

**CLAUDIO**

I thank you, good friend Lucio.

**LUCIO**

Within two hours.

**CLAUDIO**

Come, officer, away!

*Exeunt*





# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A monastery.

*Enter DUKE VINCENTIO and FRIAR THOMAS*

### DUKE VINCENTIO

No, holy father; throw away that thought;  
Believe not that the dribbling dart of love  
Can pierce a complete bosom. Why I desire thee  
To give me secret harbour, hath a purpose  
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends  
Of burning youth.

### FRIAR THOMAS

May your grace speak of it?

### DUKE VINCENTIO

My holy sir, none better knows than you  
How I have ever loved the life removed  
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies  
Where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps.  
I have deliver'd to Lord Angelo,  
A man of stricture and firm abstinence,  
My absolute power and place here in Vienna,  
And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;  
For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,  
And so it is received. Now, pious sir,  
You will demand of me why I do this?

### FRIAR THOMAS

Gladly, my lord.

### DUKE VINCENTIO

We have strict statutes and most biting laws,  
The needful bits and curbs to headstrong weeds,  
Which for this nineteen years we have let slip;  
Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,  
That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,  
Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch,  
Only to stick it in their children's sight  
For terror, not to use, in time the rod  
Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,  
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;  
And liberty plucks justice by the nose;  
The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart  
Goes all decorum.

### **FRIAR THOMAS**

It rested in your grace  
To unloose this tied-up justice when you pleased:  
And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd  
Than in Lord Angelo.

### **DUKE VINCENTIO**

I do fear, too dreadful:  
Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,  
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them  
For what I bid them do: for we bid this be done,  
When evil deeds have their permissive pass  
And not the punishment. Therefore indeed, my father,  
I have on Angelo imposed the office;  
Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home,  
And yet my nature never in the fight  
To do in slander. And to behold his sway,  
I will, as 'twere a brother of your order,  
Visit both prince and people: therefore, I prithee,  
Supply me with the habit and instruct me  
How I may formally in person bear me  
Like a true friar. More reasons for this action  
At our more leisure shall I render you;  
Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise;  
Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses  
That his blood flows, or that his appetite

Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see,  
If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A nunnery.

*Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA*

**ISABELLA**

And have you nuns no farther privileges?

**FRANCISCA**

Are not these large enough?

**ISABELLA**

Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more;  
But rather wishing a more strict restraint  
Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.

**LUCIO**

[Within] Ho! Peace be in this place!

**ISABELLA**

Who's that which calls?

**FRANCISCA**

It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,  
Turn you the key, and know his business of him;  
You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn.  
When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men  
But in the presence of the prioress:  
Then, if you speak, you must not show your face,  
Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.  
He calls again; I pray you, answer him.

*Exit*

**ISABELLA**

Peace and prosperity! Who is't that calls

*Enter LUCIO*

**LUCIO**

Hail, virgin, if you be, as those cheek-roses  
Proclaim you are no less! Can you so stead me  
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,  
A novice of this place and the fair sister  
To her unhappy brother Claudio?

**ISABELLA**

Why 'her unhappy brother'? let me ask,  
The rather for I now must make you know  
I am that Isabella and his sister.

**LUCIO**

Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets you:  
Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

**ISABELLA**

Woe me! for what?

**LUCIO**

For that which, if myself might be his judge,  
He should receive his punishment in thanks:  
He hath got his friend with child.

**ISABELLA**

Sir, make me not your story.

## LUCIO

It is true.  
I would not--though 'tis my familiar sin  
With maids to seem the lapwing and to jest,  
Tongue far from heart--play with all virgins so:  
I hold you as a thing ensky'd and sainted.  
By your renouncement an immortal spirit,  
And to be talk'd with in sincerity,  
As with a saint.

## ISABELLA

You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

## LUCIO

Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus:  
Your brother and his lover have embraced:  
As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time  
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings  
To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb  
Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

## ISABELLA

Some one with child by him? My cousin Juliet?

## LUCIO

Is she your cousin?

## ISABELLA

Adoptedly; as school-maids change their names  
By vain though apt affection.

## LUCIO

She it is.

**ISABELLA**

O, let him marry her.

**LUCIO**

This is the point.

The duke is very strangely gone from hence;  
Bore many gentlemen, myself being one,  
In hand and hope of action: but we do learn  
By those that know the very nerves of state,  
His givings-out were of an infinite distance  
From his true-meant design. Upon his place,  
And with full line of his authority,  
Governs Lord Angelo; a man whose blood  
Is very snow-broth; one who never feels  
The wanton stings and motions of the sense,  
But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge  
With profits of the mind, study and fast.  
He--to give fear to use and liberty,  
Which have for long run by the hideous law,  
As mice by lions--hath pick'd out an act,  
Under whose heavy sense your brother's life  
Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it;  
And follows close the rigour of the statute,  
To make him an example. All hope is gone,  
Unless you have the grace by your fair prayer  
To soften Angelo: and that's my pith of business  
'Twixt you and your poor brother.

**ISABELLA**

Doth he so seek his life?

**LUCIO**

Has censured him  
Already; and, as I hear, the provost hath  
A warrant for his execution.

**ISABELLA**



Alas! what poor ability's in me  
To do him good?

**LUCIO**

Assay the power you have.

**ISABELLA**

My power? Alas, I doubt--

**LUCIO**

Our doubts are traitors  
And make us lose the good we oft might win  
By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,  
And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,  
Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,  
All their petitions are as freely theirs  
As they themselves would owe them.

**ISABELLA**

I'll see what I can do.

**LUCIO**

But speedily.

**ISABELLA**

I will about it straight;  
No longer staying but to give the mother  
Notice of my affair. I humbly thank you:  
Commend me to my brother: soon at night  
I'll send him certain word of my success.

**LUCIO**

I take my leave of you.

**ISABELLA**

Good sir, adieu.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A hall In ANGELO's house.

*Enter ANGELO, ESCALUS, and a Justice, Provost, Officers, and other Attendants, behind*

### ANGELO

We must not make a scarecrow of the law,  
Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,  
And let it keep one shape, till custom make it  
Their perch and not their terror.

### ESCALUS

Ay, but yet  
Let us be keen, and rather cut a little,  
Than fall, and bruise to death. Alas, this gentleman  
Whom I would save, had a most noble father!  
Let but your honour know,  
Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue,  
That, in the working of your own affections,  
Had time cohered with place or place with wishing,  
Or that the resolute acting of your blood  
Could have attain'd the effect of your own purpose,  
Whether you had not sometime in your life  
Err'd in this point which now you censure him,  
And pull'd the law upon you.

### ANGELO

'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,  
Another thing to fall. I not deny,  
The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,  
May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two  
Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice,  
That justice seizes: what know the laws  
That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very pregnant,

The jewel that we find, we stoop and take't  
Because we see it; but what we do not see  
We tread upon, and never think of it.  
You may not so extenuate his offence  
For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,  
When I, that censure him, do so offend,  
Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,  
And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.

## **ESCALUS**

Be it as your wisdom will.

## **ANGELO**

Where is the provost?

## **Provost**

Here, if it like your honour.

## **ANGELO**

See that Claudio  
Be executed by nine to-morrow morning:  
Bring him his confessor, let him be prepared;  
For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage.

*Exit Provost*

## **ESCALUS**

[Aside] Well, heaven forgive him! and forgive us all!  
Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall:  
Some run from brakes of ice, and answer none:  
And some condemned for a fault alone.

*Enter ELBOW, and Officers with FROTH and POMPEY*

## **ELBOW**

Come, bring them away: if these be good people in a commonweal that do nothing but use their abuses in common houses, I know no law: bring them away.

**ANGELO**

How now, sir! What's your name? and what's the matter?

**ELBOW**

If it Please your honour, I am the poor duke's constable, and my name is Elbow: I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honour two notorious benefactors.

**ANGELO**

Benefactors? Well; what benefactors are they? are they not malefactors?

**ELBOW**

If it? please your honour, I know not well what they are: but precise villains they are, that I am sure of; and void of all profanation in the world that good Christians ought to have.

**ESCALUS**

This comes off well; here's a wise officer.

**ANGELO**

Go to: what quality are they of? Elbow is your name? why dost thou not speak, Elbow?

**POMPEY**

He cannot, sir; he's out at elbow.

**ANGELO**

What are you, sir?

**ELBOW**

He, sir! a tapster, sir; parcel-bawd; one that serves a bad woman; whose house, sir, was, as they say, plucked down in the suburbs; and now she professes a hot-house, which, I think, is a very ill house too.

**ESCALUS**

How know you that?

**ELBOW**

My wife, sir, whom I detest before heaven and your honour,--

**ESCALUS**

How? thy wife?

**ELBOW**

Ay, sir; whom, I thank heaven, is an honest woman,--

**ESCALUS**

Dost thou detest her therefore?

**ELBOW**

I say, sir, I will detest myself also, as well as she, that this house, if it be not a bawd's house, it is pity of her life, for it is a naughty house.

**ESCALUS**

How dost thou know that, constable?

**ELBOW**

Marry, sir, by my wife; who, if she had been a woman  
cardinally given, might have been accused in  
fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness there.

**ESCALUS**

By the woman's means?

**ELBOW**

Ay, sir, by Mistress Overdone's means: but as she  
spit in his face, so she defied him.

**POMPEY**

Sir, if it please your honour, this is not so.

**ELBOW**

Prove it before these varlets here, thou honourable  
man; prove it.

**ESCALUS**

Do you hear how he misplaces?

**POMPEY**

Sir, she came in great with child; and longing,  
saving your honour's reverence, for stewed prunes;  
sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very  
distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit-dish, a  
dish of some three-pence; your honours have seen  
such dishes; they are not China dishes, but very  
good dishes,--

**ESCALUS**

Go to, go to: no matter for the dish, sir.

**POMPEY**

No, indeed, sir, not of a pin; you are therein in the right: but to the point. As I say, this Mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great-bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and having but two in the dish, as I said, Master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly; for, as you know, Master Froth, I could not give you three-pence again.

**FROTH**

No, indeed.

**POMPEY**

Very well: you being then, if you be remembered, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes,--

**FROTH**

Ay, so I did indeed.

**POMPEY**

Why, very well; I telling you then, if you be remembered, that such a one and such a one were past cure of the thing you wot of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you,--

**FROTH**

All this is true.

**POMPEY**

Why, very well, then,--

**ESCALUS**



Come, you are a tedious fool: to the purpose. What was done to Elbow's wife, that he hath cause to complain of? Come me to what was done to her.

**POMPEY**

Sir, your honour cannot come to that yet.

**ESCALUS**

No, sir, nor I mean it not.

**POMPEY**

Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honour's leave. And, I beseech you, look into Master Froth here, sir; a man of four-score pound a year; whose father died at Hallowmas: was't not at Hallowmas, Master Froth?

**FROTH**

All-hallond eve.

**POMPEY**

Why, very well; I hope here be truths. He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower chair, sir; 'twas in the Bunch of Grapes, where indeed you have a delight to sit, have you not?

**FROTH**

I have so; because it is an open room and good for winter.

**POMPEY**

Why, very well, then; I hope here be truths.

**ANGELO**

This will last out a night in Russia,  
When nights are longest there: I'll take my leave.  
And leave you to the hearing of the cause;  
Hoping you'll find good cause to whip them all.

**ESCALUS**

I think no less. Good morrow to your lordship.

*Exit ANGELO*

Now, sir, come on: what was done to Elbow's wife, once more?

**POMPEY**

Once, sir? there was nothing done to her once.

**ELBOW**

I beseech you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife.

**POMPEY**

I beseech your honour, ask me.

**ESCALUS**

Well, sir; what did this gentleman do to her?

**POMPEY**

I beseech you, sir, look in this gentleman's face.  
Good Master Froth, look upon his honour; 'tis for a  
good purpose. Doth your honour mark his face?

**ESCALUS**

Ay, sir, very well.

**POMPEY**

Nay; I beseech you, mark it well.

**ESCALUS**

Well, I do so.

**POMPEY**

Doth your honour see any harm in his face?

**ESCALUS**

Why, no.

**POMPEY**

I'll be supposed upon a book, his face is the worst thing about him. Good, then; if his face be the worst thing about him, how could Master Froth do the constable's wife any harm? I would know that of your honour.

**ESCALUS**

He's in the right. Constable, what say you to it?

**ELBOW**

First, an it like you, the house is a respected house; next, this is a respected fellow; and his mistress is a respected woman.

**POMPEY**

By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.

**ELBOW**

Varlet, thou liest; thou liest, wicked varlet! the time has yet to come that she was ever respected

with man, woman, or child.

**POMPEY**

Sir, she was respected with him before he married with her.

**ESCALUS**

Which is the wiser here? Justice or Iniquity? Is this true?

**ELBOW**

O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked Hannibal! I respected with her before I was married to her! If ever I was respected with her, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor duke's officer. Prove this, thou wicked Hannibal, or I'll have mine action of battery on thee.

**ESCALUS**

If he took you a box o' the ear, you might have your action of slander too.

**ELBOW**

Marry, I thank your good worship for it. What is't your worship's pleasure I shall do with this wicked caitiff?

**ESCALUS**

Truly, officer, because he hath some offences in him that thou wouldst discover if thou couldst, let him continue in his courses till thou knowest what they are.

**ELBOW**

Marry, I thank your worship for it. Thou seest, thou wicked varlet, now, what's come upon thee: thou art

to continue now, thou varlet; thou art to continue.

**ESCALUS**

Where were you born, friend?

**FROTH**

Here in Vienna, sir.

**ESCALUS**

Are you of fourscore pounds a year?

**FROTH**

Yes, an't please you, sir.

**ESCALUS**

So. What trade are you of, sir?

**POMPHEY**

Tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

**ESCALUS**

Your mistress' name?

**POMPHEY**

Mistress Overdone.

**ESCALUS**

Hath she had any more than one husband?

**POMPEY**

Nine, sir; Overdone by the last.

## **ESCALUS**

Nine! Come hither to me, Master Froth. Master Froth, I would not have you acquainted with tapsters: they will draw you, Master Froth, and you will hang them. Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you.

## **FROTH**

I thank your worship. For mine own part, I never come into any room in a tap-house, but I am drawn in.

## **ESCALUS**

Well, no more of it, Master Froth: farewell.

*Exit FROTH*

Come you hither to me, Master tapster. What's your name, Master tapster?

## **POMPEY**

Pompey.

## **ESCALUS**

What else?

## **POMPEY**

Bum, sir.

## **ESCALUS**

Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about you; so that in the beastliest sense you are Pompey the Great. Pompey, you are partly a bawd, Pompey,

howsoever you colour it in being a tapster, are you not? come, tell me true: it shall be the better for you.

**POMPEY**

Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow that would live.

**ESCALUS**

How would you live, Pompey? by being a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? is it a lawful trade?

**POMPEY**

If the law would allow it, sir.

**ESCALUS**

But the law will not allow it, Pompey; nor it shall not be allowed in Vienna.

**POMPEY**

Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?

**ESCALUS**

No, Pompey.

**POMPEY**

Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will to't then. If your worship will take order for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds.

**ESCALUS**

There are pretty orders beginning, I can tell you: it is but heading and hanging.

## **POMPEY**

If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten year together, you'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads: if this law hold in Vienna ten year, I'll rent the fairest house in it after three-pence a bay: if you live to see this come to pass, say Pompey told you so.

## **ESCALUS**

Thank you, good Pompey; and, in requital of your prophecy, hark you: I advise you, let me not find you before me again upon any complaint whatsoever; no, not for dwelling where you do: if I do, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and prove a shrewd Caesar to you; in plain dealing, Pompey, I shall have you whipt: so, for this time, Pompey, fare you well.

## **POMPEY**

I thank your worship for your good counsel:

*Aside*

but I shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall better determine.

Whip me? No, no; let carman whip his jade:  
The valiant heart is not whipt out of his trade.

*Exit*

## **ESCALUS**

Come hither to me, Master Elbow; come hither, Master constable. How long have you been in this place of constable?

## **ELBOW**

Seven year and a half, sir.



## **ESCALUS**

I thought, by your readiness in the office, you had continued in it some time. You say, seven years together?

## **ELBOW**

And a half, sir.

## **ESCALUS**

Alas, it hath been great pains to you. They do you wrong to put you so oft upon 't: are there not men in your ward sufficient to serve it?

## **ELBOW**

Faith, sir, few of any wit in such matters: as they are chosen, they are glad to choose me for them; I do it for some piece of money, and go through with all.

## **ESCALUS**

Look you bring me in the names of some six or seven, the most sufficient of your parish.

## **ELBOW**

To your worship's house, sir?

## **ESCALUS**

To my house. Fare you well.

*Exit ELBOW*

What's o'clock, think you?

## **Justice**

Eleven, sir.

**ESCALUS**

I pray you home to dinner with me.

**Justice**

I humbly thank you.

**ESCALUS**

It grieves me for the death of Claudio;  
But there's no remedy.

**Justice**

Lord Angelo is severe.

**ESCALUS**

It is but needful:  
Mercy is not itself, that oft looks so;  
Pardon is still the nurse of second woe:  
But yet,--poor Claudio! There is no remedy.  
Come, sir.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another room in the same.

*Enter Provost and a Servant*

**Servant**

He's hearing of a cause; he will come straight  
I'll tell him of you.

**Provost**

Pray you, do.

*Exit Servant*

I'll know  
His pleasure; may be he will relent. Alas,  
He hath but as offended in a dream!  
All sects, all ages smack of this vice; and he  
To die for't!

*Enter ANGELO*

**ANGELO**

Now, what's the matter. Provost?

**Provost**

Is it your will Claudio shall die tomorrow?

**ANGELO**

Did not I tell thee yea? hadst thou not order?  
Why dost thou ask again?

**Provost**

Lest I might be too rash:  
Under your good correction, I have seen,  
When, after execution, judgment hath  
Repented o'er his doom.

**ANGELO**

Go to; let that be mine:  
Do you your office, or give up your place,  
And you shall well be spared.

**Provost**

I crave your honour's pardon.  
What shall be done, sir, with the groaning Juliet?  
She's very near her hour.

**ANGELO**

Dispose of her  
To some more fitter place, and that with speed.

*Re-enter Servant*

**Servant**

Here is the sister of the man condemn'd  
Desires access to you.

**ANGELO**

Hath he a sister?

**Provost**

Ay, my good lord; a very virtuous maid,  
And to be shortly of a sisterhood,  
If not already.

## ANGELO

Well, let her be admitted.

*Exit Servant*

See you the fornicatress be removed:  
Let have needful, but not lavish, means;  
There shall be order for't.

*Enter ISABELLA and LUCIO*

## Provost

God save your honour!

## ANGELO

Stay a little while.

*To ISABELLA*

You're welcome: what's your will?

## ISABELLA

I am a woeful suitor to your honour,  
Please but your honour hear me.

## ANGELO

Well; what's your suit?

## ISABELLA

There is a vice that most I do abhor,  
And most desire should meet the blow of justice;  
For which I would not plead, but that I must;  
For which I must not plead, but that I am  
At war 'twixt will and will not.

**ANGELO**

Well; the matter?

**ISABELLA**

I have a brother is condemn'd to die:  
I do beseech you, let it be his fault,  
And not my brother.

**Provost**

[Aside] Heaven give thee moving graces!

**ANGELO**

Condemn the fault and not the actor of it?  
Why, every fault's condemn'd ere it be done:  
Mine were the very cipher of a function,  
To fine the faults whose fine stands in record,  
And let go by the actor.

**ISABELLA**

O just but severe law!  
I had a brother, then. Heaven keep your honour!

**LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] Give't not o'er so: to him  
again, entreat him;  
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown:  
You are too cold; if you should need a pin,  
You could not with more tame a tongue desire it:  
To him, I say!

**ISABELLA**

Must he needs die?

**ANGELO**

Maiden, no remedy.

**ISABELLA**

Yes; I do think that you might pardon him,  
And neither heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.

**ANGELO**

I will not do't.

**ISABELLA**

But can you, if you would?

**ANGELO**

Look, what I will not, that I cannot do.

**ISABELLA**

But might you do't, and do the world no wrong,  
If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse  
As mine is to him?

**ANGELO**

He's sentenced; 'tis too late.

**LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] You are too cold.

**ISABELLA**

Too late? why, no; I, that do speak a word.  
May call it back again. Well, believe this,  
No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,  
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,  
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,  
Become them with one half so good a grace

As mercy does.  
If he had been as you and you as he,  
You would have slept like him; but he, like you,  
Would not have been so stern.

**ANGELO**

Pray you, be gone.

**ISABELLA**

I would to heaven I had your potency,  
And you were Isabel! should it then be thus?  
No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge,  
And what a prisoner.

**LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA]  
Ay, touch him; there's the vein.

**ANGELO**

Your brother is a forfeit of the law,  
And you but waste your words.

**ISABELLA**

Alas, alas!  
Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;  
And He that might the vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy. How would you be,  
If He, which is the top of judgment, should  
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;  
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,  
Like man new made.

**ANGELO**

Be you content, fair maid;  
It is the law, not I condemn your brother:



Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,  
It should be thus with him: he must die tomorrow.

**ISABELLA**

To-morrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him!  
He's not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens  
We kill the fowl of season: shall we serve heaven  
With less respect than we do minister  
To our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you;  
Who is it that hath died for this offence?  
There's many have committed it.

**LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] Ay, well said.

**ANGELO**

The law hath not been dead, though it hath slept:  
Those many had not dared to do that evil,  
If the first that did the edict infringe  
Had answer'd for his deed: now 'tis awake  
Takes note of what is done; and, like a prophet,  
Looks in a glass, that shows what future evils,  
Either new, or by remissness new-conceived,  
And so in progress to be hatch'd and born,  
Are now to have no successive degrees,  
But, ere they live, to end.

**ISABELLA**

Yet show some pity.

**ANGELO**

I show it most of all when I show justice;  
For then I pity those I do not know,  
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall;  
And do him right that, answering one foul wrong,  
Lives not to act another. Be satisfied;  
Your brother dies to-morrow; be content.

## **ISABELLA**

So you must be the first that gives this sentence,  
And he, that suffer's. O, it is excellent  
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant.

## **LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] That's well said.

## **ISABELLA**

Could great men thunder  
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,  
For every pelting, petty officer  
Would use his heaven for thunder;  
Nothing but thunder! Merciful Heaven,  
Thou rather with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt  
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak  
Than the soft myrtle: but man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,  
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,  
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

## **LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] O, to him, to him, wench! he  
will relent;  
He's coming; I perceive 't.

## **Provost**

[Aside] Pray heaven she win him!

## **ISABELLA**

We cannot weigh our brother with ourself:

Great men may jest with saints; 'tis wit in them,  
But in the less foul profanation.

**LUCIO**

Thou'rt i' the right, girl; more o, that.

**ISABELLA**

That in the captain's but a choleric word,  
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.

**LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] Art avised o' that? more on 't.

**ANGELO**

Why do you put these sayings upon me?

**ISABELLA**

Because authority, though it err like others,  
Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself,  
That skins the vice o' the top. Go to your bosom;  
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know  
That's like my brother's fault: if it confess  
A natural guiltiness such as is his,  
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue  
Against my brother's life.

**ANGELO**

[Aside] She speaks, and 'tis  
Such sense, that my sense breeds with it. Fare you well.

**ISABELLA**

Gentle my lord, turn back.

**ANGELO**

I will bethink me: come again tomorrow.

**ISABELLA**

Hark how I'll bribe you: good my lord, turn back.

**ANGELO**

How! bribe me?

**ISABELLA**

Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with you.

**LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] You had marr'd all else.

**ISABELLA**

Not with fond shekels of the tested gold,  
Or stones whose rates are either rich or poor  
As fancy values them; but with true prayers  
That shall be up at heaven and enter there  
Ere sun-rise, prayers from preserved souls,  
From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate  
To nothing temporal.

**ANGELO**

Well; come to me to-morrow.

**LUCIO**

[Aside to ISABELLA] Go to; 'tis well; away!

**ISABELLA**

Heaven keep your honour safe!

## ANGELO

[Aside] Amen:

For I am that way going to temptation,  
Where prayers cross.

## ISABELLA

At what hour to-morrow  
Shall I attend your lordship?

## ANGELO

At any time 'fore noon.

## ISABELLA

'Save your honour!

*Exeunt ISABELLA, LUCIO, and Provost*

## ANGELO

From thee, even from thy virtue!  
What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine?  
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?  
Ha!  
Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is I  
That, lying by the violet in the sun,  
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,  
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be  
That modesty may more betray our sense  
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,  
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary  
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!  
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?  
Dost thou desire her foully for those things  
That make her good? O, let her brother live!  
Thieves for their robbery have authority  
When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,  
That I desire to hear her speak again,  
And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?

O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,  
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous  
Is that temptation that doth goad us on  
To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,  
With all her double vigour, art and nature,  
Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid  
Subdues me quite. Even till now,  
When men were fond, I smiled and wonder'd how.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in a prison.

*Enter, severally, DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as a friar, and Provost*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Hail to you, provost! so I think you are.

**Provost**

I am the provost. What's your will, good friar?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Bound by my charity and my blest order,  
I come to visit the afflicted spirits  
Here in the prison. Do me the common right  
To let me see them and to make me know  
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister  
To them accordingly.

**Provost**

I would do more than that, if more were needful.

*Enter JULIET*

Look, here comes one: a gentlewoman of mine,  
Who, falling in the flaws of her own youth,  
Hath blister'd her report: she is with child;  
And he that got it, sentenced; a young man  
More fit to do another such offence  
Than die for this.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

When must he die?

**Provost**

As I do think, to-morrow.  
I have provided for you: stay awhile,

*To JULIET*

And you shall be conducted.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?

**JULIET**

I do; and bear the shame most patiently.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience,  
And try your penitence, if it be sound,  
Or hollowly put on.

**JULIET**

I'll gladly learn.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Love you the man that wrong'd you?

**JULIET**

Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

So then it seems your most offenceful act  
Was mutually committed?



**JULIET**

Mutually.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

**JULIET**

I do confess it, and repent it, father.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

'Tis meet so, daughter: but lest you do repent,  
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,  
Which sorrow is always towards ourselves, not heaven,  
Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,  
But as we stand in fear,--

**JULIET**

I do repent me, as it is an evil,  
And take the shame with joy.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

There rest.  
Your partner, as I hear, must die to-morrow,  
And I am going with instruction to him.  
Grace go with you, Benedicite!

*Exit*

**JULIET**

Must die to-morrow! O injurious love,  
That respites me a life, whose very comfort  
Is still a dying horror!

**Provost**

'Tis pity of him.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A room in ANGELO's house.

*Enter ANGELO*

**ANGELO**

When I would pray and think, I think and pray  
To several subjects. Heaven hath my empty words;  
Whilst my invention, hearing not my tongue,  
Anchors on Isabel: Heaven in my mouth,  
As if I did but only chew his name;  
And in my heart the strong and swelling evil  
Of my conception. The state, whereon I studied  
Is like a good thing, being often read,  
Grown fear'd and tedious; yea, my gravity,  
Wherein--let no man hear me--I take pride,  
Could I with boot change for an idle plume,  
Which the air beats for vain. O place, O form,  
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,  
Wrench awe from fools and tie the wiser souls  
To thy false seeming! Blood, thou art blood:  
Let's write good angel on the devil's horn:  
'Tis not the devil's crest.

*Enter a Servant*

How now! who's there?

**Servant**

One Isabel, a sister, desires access to you.

**ANGELO**

Teach her the way.

*Exit Servant*

O heavens!  
Why does my blood thus muster to my heart,  
Making both it unable for itself,  
And dispossessing all my other parts  
Of necessary fitness?  
So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons;  
Come all to help him, and so stop the air  
By which he should revive: and even so  
The general, subject to a well-wish'd king,  
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness  
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love  
Must needs appear offence.

*Enter ISABELLA*

How now, fair maid?

**ISABELLA**

I am come to know your pleasure.

**ANGELO**

That you might know it, would much better please me  
Than to demand what 'tis. Your brother cannot live.

**ISABELLA**

Even so. Heaven keep your honour!

**ANGELO**

Yet may he live awhile; and, it may be,

**As long as you or I**

yet he must die.

**ISABELLA**

Under your sentence?

**ANGELO**

Yea.

**ISABELLA**

When, I beseech you? that in his reprieve,  
Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted  
That his soul sicken not.

**ANGELO**

Ha! fie, these filthy vices! It were as good  
To pardon him that hath from nature stolen  
A man already made, as to remit  
Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven's image  
In stamps that are forbid: 'tis all as easy  
Falsely to take away a life true made  
As to put metal in restrained means  
To make a false one.

**ISABELLA**

'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in earth.

**ANGELO**

Say you so? then I shall pose you quickly.  
Which had you rather, that the most just law  
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,  
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness  
As she that he hath stain'd?

**ISABELLA**

Sir, believe this,  
I had rather give my body than my soul.

**ANGELO**

I talk not of your soul: our compell'd sins  
Stand more for number than for accompt.

**ISABELLA**

How say you?

**ANGELO**

Nay, I'll not warrant that; for I can speak  
Against the thing I say. Answer to this:  
I, now the voice of the recorded law,  
Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life:  
Might there not be a charity in sin  
To save this brother's life?

**ISABELLA**

Please you to do't,  
I'll take it as a peril to my soul,  
It is no sin at all, but charity.

**ANGELO**

Pleased you to do't at peril of your soul,  
Were equal poise of sin and charity.

**ISABELLA**

That I do beg his life, if it be sin,  
Heaven let me bear it! you granting of my suit,  
If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer  
To have it added to the faults of mine,  
And nothing of your answer.

**ANGELO**

Nay, but hear me.  
Your sense pursues not mine: either you are ignorant,  
Or seem so craftily; and that's not good.

**ISABELLA**

Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good,  
But graciously to know I am no better.

**ANGELO**

Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright  
When it doth tax itself; as these black masks  
Proclaim an enshield beauty ten times louder  
Than beauty could, display'd. But mark me;  
To be received plain, I'll speak more gross:  
Your brother is to die.

**ISABELLA**

So.

**ANGELO**

And his offence is so, as it appears,  
Accountant to the law upon that pain.

**ISABELLA**

True.

**ANGELO**

Admit no other way to save his life,--  
As I subscribe not that, nor any other,  
But in the loss of question,--that you, his sister,  
Finding yourself desired of such a person,  
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,  
Could fetch your brother from the manacles  
Of the all-building law; and that there were  
No earthly mean to save him, but that either  
You must lay down the treasures of your body  
To this supposed, or else to let him suffer;  
What would you do?

**ISABELLA**

As much for my poor brother as myself:  
That is, were I under the terms of death,  
The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,  
And strip myself to death, as to a bed  
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield  
My body up to shame.

**ANGELO**

Then must your brother die.

**ISABELLA**

And 'twere the cheaper way:  
Better it were a brother died at once,  
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,  
Should die for ever.

**ANGELO**

Were not you then as cruel as the sentence  
That you have slander'd so?

**ISABELLA**

Ignomy in ransom and free pardon  
Are of two houses: lawful mercy  
Is nothing kin to foul redemption.

**ANGELO**

You seem'd of late to make the law a tyrant;  
And rather proved the sliding of your brother  
A merriment than a vice.

**ISABELLA**

O, pardon me, my lord; it oft falls out,  
To have what we would have, we speak not what we mean:



I something do excuse the thing I hate,  
For his advantage that I dearly love.

**ANGELO**

We are all frail.

**ISABELLA**

Else let my brother die,  
If not a feodary, but only he  
Owe and succeed thy weakness.

**ANGELO**

Nay, women are frail too.

**ISABELLA**

Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves;  
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.  
Women! Help Heaven! men their creation mar  
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;  
For we are soft as our complexions are,  
And credulous to false prints.

**ANGELO**

I think it well:  
And from this testimony of your own sex,--  
Since I suppose we are made to be no stronger  
Than faults may shake our frames,--let me be bold;  
I do arrest your words. Be that you are,  
That is, a woman; if you be more, you're none;  
If you be one, as you are well express'd  
By all external warrants, show it now,  
By putting on the destined livery.

**ISABELLA**

I have no tongue but one: gentle my lord,  
Let me entreat you speak the former language.

**ANGELO**

Plainly conceive, I love you.

**ISABELLA**

My brother did love Juliet,  
And you tell me that he shall die for it.

**ANGELO**

He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

**ISABELLA**

I know your virtue hath a licence in't,  
Which seems a little fouler than it is,  
To pluck on others.

**ANGELO**

Believe me, on mine honour,  
My words express my purpose.

**ISABELLA**

Ha! little honour to be much believed,  
And most pernicious purpose! Seeming, seeming!  
I will proclaim thee, Angelo; look for't:  
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,  
Or with an outstretch'd throat I'll tell the world aloud  
What man thou art.

**ANGELO**

Who will believe thee, Isabel?  
My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life,  
My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,  
Will so your accusation overweigh,  
That you shall stifle in your own report

And smell of calumny. I have begun,  
And now I give my sensual race the rein:  
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;  
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,  
That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother  
By yielding up thy body to my will;  
Or else he must not only die the death,  
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out  
To lingering sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,  
Or, by the affection that now guides me most,  
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,  
Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.

*Exit*

## **ISABELLA**

To whom should I complain? Did I tell this,  
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths,  
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue,  
Either of condemnation or approval;  
Bidding the law make court'sy to their will:  
Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,  
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother:  
Though he hath fallen by prompture of the blood,  
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour.  
That, had he twenty heads to tender down  
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up,  
Before his sister should her body stoop  
To such abhorr'd pollution.  
Then, Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:  
More than our brother is our chastity.  
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,  
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest.

*Exit*

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in the prison.

*Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before, CLAUDIO, and Provost*

### DUKE VINCENTIO

So then you hope of pardon from Lord Angelo?

### CLAUDIO

The miserable have no other medicine  
But only hope:  
I've hope to live, and am prepared to die.

### DUKE VINCENTIO

Be absolute for death; either death or life  
Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with life:  
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing  
That none but fools would keep: a breath thou art,  
Servile to all the skyey influences,  
That dost this habitation, where thou keep'st,  
Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death's fool;  
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun  
And yet runn'st toward him still. Thou art not noble;  
For all the accommodations that thou bear'st  
Are nursed by baseness. Thou'rt by no means valiant;  
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork  
Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,  
And that thou oft provokest; yet grossly fear'st  
Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;  
For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains  
That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not;  
For what thou hast not, still thou strivest to get,  
And what thou hast, forget'st. Thou art not certain;  
For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,

After the moon. If thou art rich, thou'rt poor;  
For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,  
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,  
And death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none;  
For thine own bowels, which do call thee sire,  
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,  
Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,  
For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth nor age,  
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,  
Dreaming on both; for all thy blessed youth  
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms  
Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,  
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,  
To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this  
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life  
Lie hid more thousand deaths: yet death we fear,  
That makes these odds all even.

## **CLAUDIO**

I humbly thank you.  
To sue to live, I find I seek to die;  
And, seeking death, find life: let it come on.

## **ISABELLA**

[Within] What, ho! Peace here; grace and good company!

## **Provost**

Who's there? come in: the wish deserves a welcome.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Dear sir, ere long I'll visit you again.

## **CLAUDIO**

Most holy sir, I thank you.

*Enter ISABELLA*

**ISABELLA**

My business is a word or two with Claudio.

**Provost**

And very welcome. Look, signior, here's your sister.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Provost, a word with you.

**Provost**

As many as you please.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Bring me to hear them speak, where I may be concealed.

*Exeunt DUKE VINCENTIO and Provost*

**CLAUDIO**

Now, sister, what's the comfort?

**ISABELLA**

Why,  
As all comforts are; most good, most good indeed.  
Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,  
Intends you for his swift ambassador,  
Where you shall be an everlasting leiger:  
Therefore your best appointment make with speed;  
To-morrow you set on.

**CLAUDIO**

Is there no remedy?

**ISABELLA**

None, but such remedy as, to save a head,  
To cleave a heart in twain.

**CLAUDIO**

But is there any?

**ISABELLA**

Yes, brother, you may live:  
There is a devilish mercy in the judge,  
If you'll implore it, that will free your life,  
But fetter you till death.

**CLAUDIO**

Perpetual durance?

**ISABELLA**

Ay, just; perpetual durance, a restraint,  
Though all the world's vastidity you had,  
To a determined scope.

**CLAUDIO**

But in what nature?

**ISABELLA**

In such a one as, you consenting to't,  
Would bark your honour from that trunk you bear,  
And leave you naked.

**CLAUDIO**

Let me know the point.

**ISABELLA**

O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,  
Lest thou a feverous life shouldst entertain,  
And six or seven winters more respect  
Than a perpetual honour. Darest thou die?  
The sense of death is most in apprehension;  
And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,  
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great  
As when a giant dies.

**CLAUDIO**

Why give you me this shame?  
Think you I can a resolution fetch  
From flowery tenderness? If I must die,  
I will encounter darkness as a bride,  
And hug it in mine arms.

**ISABELLA**

There spake my brother; there my father's grave  
Did utter forth a voice. Yes, thou must die:  
Thou art too noble to conserve a life  
In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy,  
Whose settled visage and deliberate word  
Nips youth i' the head and follies doth emmew  
As falcon doth the fowl, is yet a devil  
His filth within being cast, he would appear  
A pond as deep as hell.

**CLAUDIO**

The prenzie Angelo!

**ISABELLA**

O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell,  
The damned'st body to invest and cover  
In prenzie guards! Dost thou think, Claudio?  
If I would yield him my virginity,  
Thou mightst be freed.

**CLAUDIO**



O heavens! it cannot be.

**ISABELLA**

Yes, he would give't thee, from this rank offence,  
So to offend him still. This night's the time  
That I should do what I abhor to name,  
Or else thou diest to-morrow.

**CLAUDIO**

Thou shalt not do't.

**ISABELLA**

O, were it but my life,  
I'd throw it down for your deliverance  
As frankly as a pin.

**CLAUDIO**

Thanks, dear Isabel.

**ISABELLA**

Be ready, Claudio, for your death tomorrow.

**CLAUDIO**

Yes. Has he affections in him,  
That thus can make him bite the law by the nose,  
When he would force it? Sure, it is no sin,  
Or of the deadly seven, it is the least.

**ISABELLA**

Which is the least?

**CLAUDIO**

If it were damnable, he being so wise,  
Why would he for the momentary trick  
Be perdurably fined? O Isabel!

**ISABELLA**

What says my brother?

**CLAUDIO**

Death is a fearful thing.

**ISABELLA**

And shamed life a hateful.

**CLAUDIO**

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;  
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;  
This sensible warm motion to become  
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;  
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
Of those that lawless and uncertain thought  
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!  
The weariest and most loathed worldly life  
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.

**ISABELLA**

Alas, alas!

**CLAUDIO**

Sweet sister, let me live:  
What sin you do to save a brother's life,

Nature dispenses with the deed so far  
That it becomes a virtue.

**ISABELLA**

O you beast!  
O faithless coward! O dishonest wretch!  
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?  
Is't not a kind of incest, to take life  
From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?  
Heaven shield my mother play'd my father fair!  
For such a warped slip of wilderness  
Ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance!  
Die, perish! Might but my bending down  
Relieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed:  
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,  
No word to save thee.

**CLAUDIO**

Nay, hear me, Isabel.

**ISABELLA**

O, fie, fie, fie!  
Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade.  
Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd:  
'Tis best thou diest quickly.

**CLAUDIO**

O hear me, Isabella!

*Re-enter DUKE VINCENTIO*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but one word.

**ISABELLA**

What is your will?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Might you dispense with your leisure, I would by and by have some speech with you: the satisfaction I would require is likewise your own benefit.

**ISABELLA**

I have no superfluous leisure; my stay must be stolen out of other affairs; but I will attend you awhile.

*Walks apart*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Son, I have overheard what hath passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her; only he hath made an essay of her virtue to practise his judgment with the disposition of natures: she, having the truth of honour in her, hath made him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true; therefore prepare yourself to death: do not satisfy your resolution with hopes that are fallible: tomorrow you must die; go to your knees and make ready.

**CLAUDIO**

Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out of love with life that I will sue to be rid of it.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Hold you there: farewell.

*Exit CLAUDIO*

Provost, a word with you!

*Re-enter Provost*

**Provost**

What's your will, father

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

That now you are come, you will be gone. Leave me awhile with the maid: my mind promises with my habit no loss shall touch her by my company.

**Provost**

In good time.

*Exit Provost. ISABELLA comes forward*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

The hand that hath made you fair hath made you good: the goodness that is cheap in beauty makes beauty brief in goodness; but grace, being the soul of your complexion, shall keep the body of it ever fair. The assault that Angelo hath made to you, fortune hath conveyed to my understanding; and, but that frailty hath examples for his falling, I should wonder at Angelo. How will you do to content this substitute, and to save your brother?

**ISABELLA**

I am now going to resolve him: I had rather my brother die by the law than my son should be unlawfully born. But, O, how much is the good duke deceived in Angelo! If ever he return and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or discover his government.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

That shall not be much amiss: Yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation; he made trial of you only. Therefore fasten your ear on my advisings: to the love I have in doing good a remedy presents itself. I do make myself believe that you may most uprightly do a poor wronged lady a merited benefit; redeem your brother from the angry law; do no stain to your own gracious person; and much please the absent duke, if peradventure he shall ever return to have hearing of this business.

**ISABELLA**

Let me hear you speak farther. I have spirit to do anything that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful. Have you not heard speak of Mariana, the sister of Frederick the great soldier who miscarried at sea?

**ISABELLA**

I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

She should this Angelo have married; was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed: between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederick was wrecked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman: there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural; with him, the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her combinate husband, this well-seeming Angelo.

**ISABELLA**

Can this be so? did Angelo so leave her?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them  
with his comfort; swallowed his vows whole,  
pretending in her discoveries of dishonour: in few,  
bestowed her on her own lamentation, which she yet  
wears for his sake; and he, a marble to her tears,  
is washed with them, but relents not.

**ISABELLA**

What a merit were it in death to take this poor maid  
from the world! What corruption in this life, that  
it will let this man live! But how out of this can she avail?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

It is a rupture that you may easily heal: and the  
cure of it not only saves your brother, but keeps  
you from dishonour in doing it.

**ISABELLA**

Show me how, good father.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

This forenamed maid hath yet in her the continuance  
of her first affection: his unjust unkindness, that  
in all reason should have quenched her love, hath,  
like an impediment in the current, made it more  
violent and unruly. Go you to Angelo; answer his  
requiring with a plausible obedience; agree with  
his demands to the point; only refer yourself to  
this advantage, first, that your stay with him may  
not be long; that the time may have all shadow and  
silence in it; and the place answer to convenience.  
This being granted in course,--and now follows  
all,--we shall advise this wronged maid to stand up

your appointment, go in your place; if the encounter acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense: and here, by this, is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled. The maid will I frame and make fit for his attempt. If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it?

## **ISABELLA**

The image of it gives me content already; and I trust it will grow to a most prosperous perfection.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

It lies much in your holding up. Haste you speedily to Angelo: if for this night he entreat you to his bed, give him promise of satisfaction. I will presently to Saint Luke's: there, at the moated grange, resides this dejected Mariana. At that place call upon me; and dispatch with Angelo, that it may be quickly.

## **ISABELLA**

I thank you for this comfort. Fare you well, good father.

*Exeunt severally*



# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The street before the prison.

*Enter, on one side, DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before; on the other, ELBOW, and Officers with POMPEY*

### ELBOW

Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that you will needs buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall have all the world drink brown and white bastard.

### DUKE VINCENTIO

O heavens! what stuff is here

### POMPEY

'Twas never merry world since, of two usuries, the merriest was put down, and the worser allowed by order of law a furred gown to keep him warm; and furred with fox and lamb-skins too, to signify, that craft, being richer than innocency, stands for the facing.

### ELBOW

Come your way, sir. 'Bless you, good father friar.

### DUKE VINCENTIO

And you, good brother father. What offence hath this man made you, sir?

### ELBOW

Marry, sir, he hath offended the law: and, sir, we take him to be a thief too, sir; for we have found

upon him, sir, a strange picklock, which we have sent to the deputy.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Fie, sirrah! a bawd, a wicked bawd!  
The evil that thou causest to be done,  
That is thy means to live. Do thou but think  
What 'tis to cram a maw or clothe a back  
From such a filthy vice: say to thyself,  
From their abominable and beastly touches  
I drink, I eat, array myself, and live.  
Canst thou believe thy living is a life,  
So stinkingly depending? Go mend, go mend.

## **POMPEY**

Indeed, it does stink in some sort, sir; but yet,  
sir, I would prove--

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for sin,  
Thou wilt prove his. Take him to prison, officer:  
Correction and instruction must both work  
Ere this rude beast will profit.

## **ELBOW**

He must before the deputy, sir; he has given him  
warning: the deputy cannot abide a whoremaster: if  
he be a whoremonger, and comes before him, he were  
as good go a mile on his errand.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

That we were all, as some would seem to be,  
From our faults, as faults from seeming, free!

## **ELBOW**

His neck will come to your waist,--a cord, sir.

## **POMPEY**

I spy comfort; I cry bail. Here's a gentleman and a friend of mine.

*Enter LUCIO*

## **LUCIO**

How now, noble Pompey! What, at the wheels of Caesar? art thou led in triumph? What, is there none of Pygmalion's images, newly made woman, to be had now, for putting the hand in the pocket and extracting it clutch'd? What reply, ha? What sayest thou to this tune, matter and method? Is't not drowned i' the last rain, ha? What sayest thou, Trot? Is the world as it was, man? Which is the way? Is it sad, and few words? or how? The trick of it?

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Still thus, and thus; still worse!

## **LUCIO**

How doth my dear morsel, thy mistress? Procures she still, ha?

## **POMPEY**

Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.

## **LUCIO**

Why, 'tis good; it is the right of it; it must be so: ever your fresh whore and your powdered bawd: an unshunned consequence; it must be so. Art going to prison, Pompey?

**POMPEY**

Yes, faith, sir.

**LUCIO**

Why, 'tis not amiss, Pompey. Farewell: go, say I sent thee thither. For debt, Pompey? or how?

**ELBOW**

For being a bawd, for being a bawd.

**LUCIO**

Well, then, imprison him: if imprisonment be the due of a bawd, why, 'tis his right: bawd is he doubtless, and of antiquity too; bawd-born. Farewell, good Pompey. Commend me to the prison, Pompey: you will turn good husband now, Pompey; you will keep the house.

**POMPEY**

I hope, sir, your good worship will be my bail.

**LUCIO**

No, indeed, will I not, Pompey; it is not the wear. I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage: If you take it not patiently, why, your mettle is the more. Adieu, trusty Pompey. 'Bless you, friar.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

And you.

**LUCIO**

Does Bridget paint still, Pompey, ha?

**ELBOW**

Come your ways, sir; come.

**POMPEY**

You will not bail me, then, sir?

**LUCIO**

Then, Pompey, nor now. What news abroad, friar?  
what news?

**ELBOW**

Come your ways, sir; come.

**LUCIO**

Go to kennel, Pompey; go.

*Exeunt ELBOW, POMPEY and Officers*

What news, friar, of the duke?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I know none. Can you tell me of any?

**LUCIO**

Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia; other  
some, he is in Rome: but where is he, think you?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I know not where; but wheresoever, I wish him well.

**LUCIO**

It was a mad fantastical trick of him to steal from the state, and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence; he puts transgression to 't.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

He does well in 't.

**LUCIO**

A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him: something too crabbed that way, friar.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it.

**LUCIO**

Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred; it is well allied: but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down. They say this Angelo was not made by man and woman after this downright way of creation: is it true, think you?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

How should he be made, then?

**LUCIO**

Some report a sea-maid spawned him; some, that he was begot between two stock-fishes. But it is certain that when he makes water his urine is congealed ice; that I know to be true: and he is a motion generative; that's infallible.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You are pleasant, sir, and speak apace.

**LUCIO**

Why, what a ruthless thing is this in him, for the rebellion of a codpiece to take away the life of a man! Would the duke that is absent have done this? Ere he would have hanged a man for the getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing a thousand: he had some feeling of the sport: he knew the service, and that instructed him to mercy.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I never heard the absent duke much detected for women; he was not inclined that way.

**LUCIO**

O, sir, you are deceived.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

'Tis not possible.

**LUCIO**

Who, not the duke? yes, your beggar of fifty; and his use was to put a ducat in her clack-dish: the duke had crotchets in him. He would be drunk too; that let me inform you.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You do him wrong, surely.

**LUCIO**

Sir, I was an inward of his. A shy fellow was the duke: and I believe I know the cause of his withdrawing.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

What, I prithee, might be the cause?

**LUCIO**

No, pardon; 'tis a secret must be locked within the teeth and the lips: but this I can let you understand, the greater file of the subject held the duke to be wise.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Wise! why, no question but he was.

**LUCIO**

A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Either this is the envy in you, folly, or mistaking: the very stream of his life and the business he hath helmed must upon a warranted need give him a better proclamation. Let him be but testimonied in his own bringings-forth, and he shall appear to the envious a scholar, a statesman and a soldier. Therefore you speak unskillfully: or if your knowledge be more it is much darkened in your malice.

**LUCIO**

Sir, I know him, and I love him.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Love talks with better knowledge, and knowledge with dearer love.

**LUCIO**



Come, sir, I know what I know.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I can hardly believe that, since you know not what you speak. But, if ever the duke return, as our prayers are he may, let me desire you to make your answer before him. If it be honest you have spoke, you have courage to maintain it: I am bound to call upon you; and, I pray you, your name?

**LUCIO**

Sir, my name is Lucio; well known to the duke.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

He shall know you better, sir, if I may live to report you.

**LUCIO**

I fear you not.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

O, you hope the duke will return no more; or you imagine me too unhurtful an opposite. But indeed I can do you little harm; you'll forswear this again.

**LUCIO**

I'll be hanged first: thou art deceived in me, friar. But no more of this. Canst thou tell if Claudio die to-morrow or no?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Why should he die, sir?

**LUCIO**

Why? For filling a bottle with a tundish. I would  
the duke we talk of were returned again: the  
ungenitured agent will unpeople the province with  
contineny; sparrows must not build in his  
house-eaves, because they are lecherous. The duke  
yet would have dark deeds darkly answered; he would  
never bring them to light: would he were returned!  
Marry, this Claudio is condemned for untrussing.  
Farewell, good friar: I prithee, pray for me. The  
duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on  
Fridays. He's not past it yet, and I say to thee,  
he would mouth with a beggar, though she smelt brown  
bread and garlic: say that I said so. Farewell.

*Exit*

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

No might nor greatness in mortality  
Can censure 'scape; back-wounding calumny  
The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong  
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?  
But who comes here?

*Enter ESCALUS, Provost, and Officers with MISTRESS OVERDONE*

## **ESCALUS**

Go; away with her to prison!

## **MISTRESS OVERDONE**

Good my lord, be good to me; your honour is accounted  
a merciful man; good my lord.

## **ESCALUS**

Double and treble admonition, and still forfeit in  
the same kind! This would make mercy swear and play  
the tyrant.

## **Provost**

A bawd of eleven years' continuance, may it please  
your honour.

## **MISTRESS OVERDONE**

My lord, this is one Lucio's information against me.  
Mistress Kate Keepdown was with child by him in the  
duke's time; he promised her marriage: his child  
is a year and a quarter old, come Philip and Jacob:  
I have kept it myself; and see how he goes about to abuse me!

## **ESCALUS**

That fellow is a fellow of much licence: let him be  
called before us. Away with her to prison! Go to;  
no more words.

*Exeunt Officers with MISTRESS OVERDONE*

Provost, my brother Angelo will not be altered;  
Claudio must die to-morrow: let him be furnished  
with divines, and have all charitable preparation.  
if my brother wrought by my pity, it should not be  
so with him.

## **Provost**

So please you, this friar hath been with him, and  
advised him for the entertainment of death.

## **ESCALUS**

Good even, good father.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Bliss and goodness on you!

## **ESCALUS**

Of whence are you?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Not of this country, though my chance is now  
To use it for my time: I am a brother  
Of gracious order, late come from the See  
In special business from his holiness.

**ESCALUS**

What news abroad i' the world?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

None, but that there is so great a fever on  
goodness, that the dissolution of it must cure it:  
novelty is only in request; and it is as dangerous  
to be aged in any kind of course, as it is virtuous  
to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce  
truth enough alive to make societies secure; but  
security enough to make fellowships accurst: much  
upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This  
news is old enough, yet it is every day's news. I  
pray you, sir, of what disposition was the duke?

**ESCALUS**

One that, above all other strifes, contended  
especially to know himself.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

What pleasure was he given to?

**ESCALUS**

Rather rejoicing to see another merry, than merry at  
any thing which professed to make him rejoice: a  
gentleman of all temperance. But leave we him to  
his events, with a prayer they may prove prosperous;

and let me desire to know how you find Claudio prepared. I am made to understand that you have lent him visitation.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

He professes to have received no sinister measure from his judge, but most willingly humbles himself to the determination of justice: yet had he framed to himself, by the instruction of his frailty, many deceiving promises of life; which I by my good leisure have discredited to him, and now is he resolved to die.

## **ESCALUS**

You have paid the heavens your function, and the prisoner the very debt of your calling. I have laboured for the poor gentleman to the extremest shore of my modesty: but my brother justice have I found so severe, that he hath forced me to tell him he is indeed Justice.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

If his own life answer the straitness of his proceeding, it shall become him well; wherein if he chance to fail, he hath sentenced himself.

## **ESCALUS**

I am going to visit the prisoner. Fare you well.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Peace be with you!

*Exeunt ESCALUS and Provost*

He who the sword of heaven will bear  
Should be as holy as severe;  
Pattern in himself to know,

Grace to stand, and virtue go;  
More nor less to others paying  
Than by self-offences weighing.  
Shame to him whose cruel striking  
Kills for faults of his own liking!  
Twice treble shame on Angelo,  
To weed my vice and let his grow!  
O, what may man within him hide,  
Though angel on the outward side!  
How may likeness made in crimes,  
Making practise on the times,  
To draw with idle spiders' strings  
Most ponderous and substantial things!  
Craft against vice I must apply:  
With Angelo to-night shall lie  
His old betrothed but despised;  
So disguise shall, by the disguised,  
Pay with falsehood false exacting,  
And perform an old contracting.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The moated grange at ST. LUKE's.

*Enter MARIANA and a Boy*

*Boy sings*

Take, O, take those lips away,  
That so sweetly were forsworn;  
And those eyes, the break of day,  
Lights that do mislead the morn:  
But my kisses bring again, bring again;  
Seals of love, but sealed in vain, sealed in vain.

### MARIANA

Break off thy song, and haste thee quick away:  
Here comes a man of comfort, whose advice  
Hath often still'd my brawling discontent.

*Exit Boy*

*Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before*

I cry you mercy, sir; and well could wish  
You had not found me here so musical:  
Let me excuse me, and believe me so,  
My mirth it much displeas'd, but pleas'd my woe.

### DUKE VINCENTIO

'Tis good; though music oft hath such a charm  
To make bad good, and good provoke to harm.  
I pray, you, tell me, hath any body inquired  
for me here to-day? much upon this time have  
I promised here to meet.

**MARIANA**

You have not been inquired after:  
I have sat here all day.

*Enter ISABELLA*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I do constantly believe you. The time is come even  
now. I shall crave your forbearance a little: may  
be I will call upon you anon, for some advantage to yourself.

**MARIANA**

I am always bound to you.

*Exit*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Very well met, and well come.  
What is the news from this good deputy?

**ISABELLA**

He hath a garden circummured with brick,  
Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd;  
And to that vineyard is a planched gate,  
That makes his opening with this bigger key:  
This other doth command a little door  
Which from the vineyard to the garden leads;  
There have I made my promise  
Upon the heavy middle of the night  
To call upon him.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

But shall you on your knowledge find this way?

**ISABELLA**



I have ta'en a due and wary note upon't:  
With whispering and most guilty diligence,  
In action all of precept, he did show me  
The way twice o'er.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Are there no other tokens  
Between you 'greed concerning her observance?

**ISABELLA**

No, none, but only a repair i' the dark;  
And that I have possess'd him my most stay  
Can be but brief; for I have made him know  
I have a servant comes with me along,  
That stays upon me, whose persuasion is  
I come about my brother.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

'Tis well borne up.  
I have not yet made known to Mariana  
A word of this. What, ho! within! come forth!

*Re-enter MARIANA*

I pray you, be acquainted with this maid;  
She comes to do you good.

**ISABELLA**

I do desire the like.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?

**MARIANA**

Good friar, I know you do, and have found it.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Take, then, this your companion by the hand,  
Who hath a story ready for your ear.  
I shall attend your leisure: but make haste;  
The vaporous night approaches.

## **MARIANA**

Will't please you walk aside?

*Exeunt MARIANA and ISABELLA*

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

O place and greatness! millions of false eyes  
Are stuck upon thee: volumes of report  
Run with these false and most contrarious quests  
Upon thy doings: thousand escapes of wit  
Make thee the father of their idle dreams  
And rack thee in their fancies.

*Re-enter MARIANA and ISABELLA*

Welcome, how agreed?

## **ISABELLA**

She'll take the enterprise upon her, father,  
If you advise it.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

It is not my consent,  
But my entreaty too.

## **ISABELLA**

Little have you to say  
When you depart from him, but, soft and low,

'Remember now my brother.'

**MARIANA**

Fear me not.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all.  
He is your husband on a pre-contract:  
To bring you thus together, 'tis no sin,  
Sith that the justice of your title to him  
Doth flourish the deceit. Come, let us go:  
Our corn's to reap, for yet our tithe's to sow.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in the prison.

*Enter Provost and POMPEY*

**Provost**

Come hither, sirrah. Can you cut off a man's head?

**POMPEY**

If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can; but if he be a married man, he's his wife's head, and I can never cut off a woman's head.

**Provost**

Come, sir, leave me your snatches, and yield me a direct answer. To-morrow morning are to die Claudio and Barnardine. Here is in our prison a common executioner, who in his office lacks a helper: if you will take it on you to assist him, it shall redeem you from your gyves; if not, you shall have your full time of imprisonment and your deliverance with an unpitied whipping, for you have been a notorious bawd.

**POMPEY**

Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd time out of mind; but yet I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to receive some instruction from my fellow partner.

**Provost**

What, ho! Abhorson! Where's Abhorson, there?

*Enter ABHORSON*

**ABHORSON**

Do you call, sir?

**Provost**

Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you to-morrow in your execution. If you think it meet, compound with him by the year, and let him abide here with you; if not, use him for the present and dismiss him. He cannot plead his estimation with you; he hath been a bawd.

**ABHORSON**

A bawd, sir? fie upon him! he will discredit our mystery.

**Provost**

Go to, sir; you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale.

*Exit*

**POMPEY**

Pray, sir, by your good favour,--for surely, sir, a good favour you have, but that you have a hanging look,--do you call, sir, your occupation a mystery?

**ABHORSON**

Ay, sir; a mystery

**POMPEY**

Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery; and your whores, sir, being members of my occupation, using painting, do prove my occupation a mystery:

but what mystery there should be in hanging, if I should be hanged, I cannot imagine.

**ABHORSON**

Sir, it is a mystery.

**POMPEY**

Proof?

**ABHORSON**

Every true man's apparel fits your thief: if it be too little for your thief, your true man thinks it big enough; if it be too big for your thief, your thief thinks it little enough: so every true man's apparel fits your thief.

*Re-enter Provost*

**Provost**

Are you agreed?

**POMPEY**

Sir, I will serve him; for I do find your hangman is a more penitent trade than your bawd; he doth oftener ask forgiveness.

**Provost**

You, sirrah, provide your block and your axe to-morrow four o'clock.

**ABHORSON**

Come on, bawd; I will instruct thee in my trade; follow.

**POMPEY**

I do desire to learn, sir: and I hope, if you have occasion to use me for your own turn, you shall find me yare; for truly, sir, for your kindness I owe you a good turn.

**Provost**

Call hither Barnardine and Claudio:

*Exeunt POMPEY and ABHORSON*

The one has my pity; not a jot the other,  
Being a murderer, though he were my brother.

*Enter CLAUDIO*

Look, here's the warrant, Claudio, for thy death:  
'Tis now dead midnight, and by eight to-morrow  
Thou must be made immortal. Where's Barnardine?

**CLAUDIO**

As fast lock'd up in sleep as guiltless labour  
When it lies starkly in the traveller's bones:  
He will not wake.

**Provost**

Who can do good on him?  
Well, go, prepare yourself.

*Knocking within*

But, hark, what noise?  
Heaven give your spirits comfort!

*Exit CLAUDIO*

By and by.  
I hope it is some pardon or reprieve  
For the most gentle Claudio.

*Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before*

Welcome father.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

The best and wholesomest spirits of the night  
Envelope you, good Provost! Who call'd here of late?

**Provost**

None, since the curfew rung.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Not Isabel?

**Provost**

No.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

They will, then, ere't be long.

**Provost**

What comfort is for Claudio?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

There's some in hope.

**Provost**

It is a bitter deputy.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**



Not so, not so; his life is parallel'd  
Even with the stroke and line of his great justice:  
He doth with holy abstinence subdue  
That in himself which he spurs on his power  
To qualify in others: were he meal'd with that  
Which he corrects, then were he tyrannous;  
But this being so, he's just.

*Knocking within*

Now are they come.

*Exit Provost*

This is a gentle provost: seldom when  
The steeled gaoler is the friend of men.

*Knocking within*

How now! what noise? That spirit's possessed with haste  
That wounds the unsisting postern with these strokes.

*Re-enter Provost*

**Provost**

There he must stay until the officer  
Arise to let him in: he is call'd up.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Have you no countermand for Claudio yet,  
But he must die to-morrow?

**Provost**

None, sir, none.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

As near the dawning, provost, as it is,

You shall hear more ere morning.

**Provost**

Happily  
You something know; yet I believe there comes  
No countermand; no such example have we:  
Besides, upon the very siege of justice  
Lord Angelo hath to the public ear  
Profess'd the contrary.

*Enter a Messenger*

This is his lordship's man.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

And here comes Claudio's pardon.

**Messenger**

[Giving a paper]  
My lord hath sent you this note; and by me this  
further charge, that you swerve not from the  
smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or  
other circumstance. Good morrow; for, as I take it,  
it is almost day.

**Provost**

I shall obey him.

*Exit Messenger*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

[Aside] This is his pardon, purchased by such sin  
For which the pardoners himself is in.  
Hence hath offence his quick celerity,  
When it is born in high authority:  
When vice makes mercy, mercy's so extended,

That for the fault's love is the offender friended.  
Now, sir, what news?

**Provost**

I told you. Lord Angelo, belike thinking me remiss  
in mine office, awakens me with this unwonted  
putting-on; methinks strangely, for he hath not used it before.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Pray you, let's hear.

**Provost**

[Reads]

'Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let  
Claudio be executed by four of the clock; and in the  
afternoon Barnardine: for my better satisfaction,  
let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let  
this be duly performed; with a thought that more  
depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail  
not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril.'  
What say you to this, sir?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

What is that Barnardine who is to be executed in the  
afternoon?

**Provost**

A Bohemian born, but here nursed un and bred; one  
that is a prisoner nine years old.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

How came it that the absent duke had not either  
delivered him to his liberty or executed him? I  
have heard it was ever his manner to do so.

**Provost**

His friends still wrought reprieves for him: and,  
indeed, his fact, till now in the government of Lord  
Angelo, came not to an undoubtful proof.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

It is now apparent?

**Provost**

Most manifest, and not denied by himself.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Hath he born himself penitently in prison? how  
seems he to be touched?

**Provost**

A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully but  
as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless  
of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of  
mortality, and desperately mortal.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

He wants advice.

**Provost**

He will hear none: he hath evermore had the liberty  
of the prison; give him leave to escape hence, he  
would not: drunk many times a day, if not many days  
entirely drunk. We have very oft awaked him, as if  
to carry him to execution, and showed him a seeming  
warrant for it: it hath not moved him at all.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

More of him anon. There is written in your brow,  
provost, honesty and constancy: if I read it not  
truly, my ancient skill beguiles me; but, in the  
boldness of my cunning, I will lay myself in hazard.  
Claudio, whom here you have warrant to execute, is  
no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath  
sentenced him. To make you understand this in a  
manifested effect, I crave but four days' respite;  
for the which you are to do me both a present and a  
dangerous courtesy.

**Provost**

Pray, sir, in what?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

In the delaying death.

**Provost**

A lack, how may I do it, having the hour limited,  
and an express command, under penalty, to deliver  
his head in the view of Angelo? I may make my case  
as Claudio's, to cross this in the smallest.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

By the vow of mine order I warrant you, if my  
instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine  
be this morning executed, and his head born to Angelo.

**Provost**

Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favour.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

O, death's a great disguiser; and you may add to it.  
Shave the head, and tie the beard; and say it was  
the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his  
death: you know the course is common. If any thing

fall to you upon this, more than thanks and good fortune, by the saint whom I profess, I will plead against it with my life.

**Provost**

Pardon me, good father; it is against my oath.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Were you sworn to the duke, or to the deputy?

**Provost**

To him, and to his substitutes.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You will think you have made no offence, if the duke avouch the justice of your dealing?

**Provost**

But what likelihood is in that?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Not a resemblance, but a certainty. Yet since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will go further than I meant, to pluck all fears out of you. Look you, sir, here is the hand and seal of the duke: you know the character, I doubt not; and the signet is not strange to you.

**Provost**

I know them both.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

The contents of this is the return of the duke: you shall anon over-read it at your pleasure; where you shall find, within these two days he will be here. This is a thing that Angelo knows not; for he this very day receives letters of strange tenor; perchance of the duke's death; perchance entering into some monastery; but, by chance, nothing of what is writ. Look, the unfolding star calls up the shepherd. Put not yourself into amazement how these things should be: all difficulties are but easy when they are known. Call your executioner, and off with Barnardine's head: I will give him a present shrift and advise him for a better place. Yet you are amazed; but this shall absolutely resolve you. Come away; it is almost clear dawn.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another room in the same.

*Enter POMPEY*

**POMPEY**

I am as well acquainted here as I was in our house of profession: one would think it were Mistress Overdone's own house, for here be many of her old customers. First, here's young Master Rash; he's in for a commodity of brown paper and old ginger, ninescore and seventeen pounds; of which he made five marks, ready money: marry, then ginger was not much in request, for the old women were all dead. Then is there here one Master Caper, at the suit of Master Three-pile the mercer, for some four suits of peach-coloured satin, which now peaches him a beggar. Then have we here young Dizy, and young Master Deep-vow, and Master Copperspur, and Master Starve-lackey the rapier and dagger man, and young Drop-heir that killed lusty Pudding, and Master Forthlight the tilter, and brave Master Shooty the great traveller, and wild Half-can that stabbed Pots, and, I think, forty more; all great doers in our trade, and are now 'for the Lord's sake.'

*Enter ABHORSON*

**ABHORSON**

Sirrah, bring Barnardine hither.

**POMPEY**

Master Barnardine! you must rise and be hanged.  
Master Barnardine!



**ABHORSON**

What, ho, Barnardine!

**BARNARDINE**

[Within] A pox o' your throats! Who makes that noise there? What are you?

**POMPEY**

Your friends, sir; the hangman. You must be so good, sir, to rise and be put to death.

**BARNARDINE**

[Within] Away, you rogue, away! I am sleepy.

**ABHORSON**

Tell him he must awake, and that quickly too.

**POMPEY**

Pray, Master Barnardine, awake till you are executed, and sleep afterwards.

**ABHORSON**

Go in to him, and fetch him out.

**POMPEY**

He is coming, sir, he is coming; I hear his straw rustle.

**ABHORSON**

Is the axe upon the block, sirrah?

**POMPEY**

Very ready, sir.

*Enter BARNARDINE*

**BARNARDINE**

How now, Abhorson? what's the news with you?

**ABHORSON**

Truly, sir, I would desire you to clap into your prayers; for, look you, the warrant's come.

**BARNARDINE**

You rogue, I have been drinking all night; I am not fitted for 't.

**POMPEY**

O, the better, sir; for he that drinks all night, and is hanged betimes in the morning, may sleep the sounder all the next day.

**ABHORSON**

Look you, sir; here comes your ghostly father: do we jest now, think you?

*Enter DUKE VINCENTIO disguised as before*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart, I am come to advise you, comfort you and pray with you.

**BARNARDINE**

Friar, not I I have been drinking hard all night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or they

shall beat out my brains with billets: I will not consent to die this day, that's certain.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

O, sir, you must: and therefore I beseech you  
Look forward on the journey you shall go.

**BARNARDINE**

I swear I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

But hear you.

**BARNARDINE**

Not a word: if you have any thing to say to me,  
come to my ward; for thence will not I to-day.

*Exit*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Unfit to live or die: O gravel heart!  
After him, fellows; bring him to the block.

*Exeunt ABHORSON and POMPEY*

*Re-enter Provost*

**Provost**

Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

A creature unprepared, unmeet for death;  
And to transport him in the mind he is

Were damnable.

**Provost**

Here in the prison, father,  
There died this morning of a cruel fever  
One Ragozine, a most notorious pirate,  
A man of Claudio's years; his beard and head  
Just of his colour. What if we do omit  
This reprobate till he were well inclined;  
And satisfy the deputy with the visage  
Of Ragozine, more like to Claudio?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

O, 'tis an accident that heaven provides!  
Dispatch it presently; the hour draws on  
Prefix'd by Angelo: see this be done,  
And sent according to command; whiles I  
Persuade this rude wretch willingly to die.

**Provost**

This shall be done, good father, presently.  
But Barnardine must die this afternoon:  
And how shall we continue Claudio,  
To save me from the danger that might come  
If he were known alive?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Let this be done.  
Put them in secret holds, both Barnardine and Claudio:  
Ere twice the sun hath made his journal greeting  
To the under generation, you shall find  
Your safety manifested.

**Provost**

I am your free dependant.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Quick, dispatch, and send the head to Angelo.

*Exit Provost*

Now will I write letters to Angelo,--  
The provost, he shall bear them, whose contents  
Shall witness to him I am near at home,  
And that, by great injunctions, I am bound  
To enter publicly: him I'll desire  
To meet me at the consecrated fount  
A league below the city; and from thence,  
By cold gradation and well-balanced form,  
We shall proceed with Angelo.

*Re-enter Provost*

**Provost**

Here is the head; I'll carry it myself.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Convenient is it. Make a swift return;  
For I would commune with you of such things  
That want no ear but yours.

**Provost**

I'll make all speed.

*Exit*

**ISABELLA**

[Within] Peace, ho, be here!

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

The tongue of Isabel. She's come to know  
If yet her brother's pardon be come hither:

But I will keep her ignorant of her good,  
To make her heavenly comforts of despair,  
When it is least expected.

*Enter ISABELLA*

**ISABELLA**

Ho, by your leave!

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Good morning to you, fair and gracious daughter.

**ISABELLA**

The better, given me by so holy a man.  
Hath yet the deputy sent my brother's pardon?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

He hath released him, Isabel, from the world:  
His head is off and sent to Angelo.

**ISABELLA**

Nay, but it is not so.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

It is no other: show your wisdom, daughter,  
In your close patience.

**ISABELLA**

O, I will to him and pluck out his eyes!

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You shall not be admitted to his sight.

## **ISABELLA**

Unhappy Claudio! wretched Isabel!  
Injurious world! most damned Angelo!

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

This nor hurts him nor profits you a jot;  
Forbear it therefore; give your cause to heaven.  
Mark what I say, which you shall find  
By every syllable a faithful verity:  
The duke comes home to-morrow; nay, dry your eyes;  
One of our convent, and his confessor,  
Gives me this instance: already he hath carried  
Notice to Escalus and Angelo,  
Who do prepare to meet him at the gates,  
There to give up their power. If you can, pace your wisdom  
In that good path that I would wish it go,  
And you shall have your bosom on this wretch,  
Grace of the duke, revenges to your heart,  
And general honour.

## **ISABELLA**

I am directed by you.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

This letter, then, to Friar Peter give;  
'Tis that he sent me of the duke's return:  
Say, by this token, I desire his company  
At Mariana's house to-night. Her cause and yours  
I'll perfect him withal, and he shall bring you  
Before the duke, and to the head of Angelo  
Accuse him home and home. For my poor self,  
I am combined by a sacred vow  
And shall be absent. Wend you with this letter:  
Command these fretting waters from your eyes  
With a light heart; trust not my holy order,  
If I pervert your course. Who's here?

*Enter LUCIO*

**LUCIO**

Good even. Friar, where's the provost?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Not within, sir.

**LUCIO**

O pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart to see  
thine eyes so red: thou must be patient. I am fain  
to dine and sup with water and bran; I dare not for  
my head fill my belly; one fruitful meal would set  
me to 't. But they say the duke will be here  
to-morrow. By my troth, Isabel, I loved thy brother:  
if the old fantastical duke of dark corners had been  
at home, he had lived.

*Exit ISABELLA*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Sir, the duke is marvellous little beholding to your  
reports; but the best is, he lives not in them.

**LUCIO**

Friar, thou knowest not the duke so well as I do:  
he's a better woodman than thou takest him for.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Well, you'll answer this one day. Fare ye well.

**LUCIO**

Nay, tarry; I'll go along with thee  
I can tell thee pretty tales of the duke.



**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You have told me too many of him already, sir, if they be true; if not true, none were enough.

**LUCIO**

I was once before him for getting a wench with child.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Did you such a thing?

**LUCIO**

Yes, marry, did I but I was fain to forswear it; they would else have married me to the rotten medlar.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Sir, your company is fairer than honest. Rest you well.

**LUCIO**

By my troth, I'll go with thee to the lane's end: if bawdy talk offend you, we'll have very little of it. Nay, friar, I am a kind of burr; I shall stick.

*Exeunt*

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A room in ANGELO's house.

*Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS*

**ESCALUS**

Every letter he hath writ hath disvouched other.

**ANGELO**

In most uneven and distracted manner. His actions show much like to madness: pray heaven his wisdom be not tainted! And why meet him at the gates, and redeliver our authorities there

**ESCALUS**

I guess not.

**ANGELO**

And why should we proclaim it in an hour before his entering, that if any crave redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street?

**ESCALUS**

He shows his reason for that: to have a dispatch of complaints, and to deliver us from devices hereafter, which shall then have no power to stand against us.

**ANGELO**

Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaimed betimes i' the morn; I'll call you at your house: give

notice to such men of sort and suit as are to meet  
him.

## ESCALUS

I shall, sir. Fare you well.

## ANGELO

Good night.

*Exit ESCALUS*

This deed unshapes me quite, makes me unpregnant  
And dull to all proceedings. A deflower'd maid!  
And by an eminent body that enforced  
The law against it! But that her tender shame  
Will not proclaim against her maiden loss,  
How might she tongue me! Yet reason dares her no;  
For my authority bears of a credent bulk,  
That no particular scandal once can touch  
But it confounds the breather. He should have lived,  
Save that riotous youth, with dangerous sense,  
Might in the times to come have ta'en revenge,  
By so receiving a dishonour'd life  
With ransom of such shame. Would yet he had lived!  
A lack, when once our grace we have forgot,  
Nothing goes right: we would, and we would not.

*Exit*

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Fields without the town.

*Enter DUKE VINCENTIO in his own habit, and FRIAR PETER*

### DUKE VINCENTIO

These letters at fit time deliver me

*Giving letters*

The provost knows our purpose and our plot.  
The matter being afoot, keep your instruction,  
And hold you ever to our special drift;  
Though sometimes you do blench from this to that,  
As cause doth minister. Go call at Flavius' house,  
And tell him where I stay: give the like notice  
To Valentinus, Rowland, and to Crassus,  
And bid them bring the trumpets to the gate;  
But send me Flavius first.

### FRIAR PETER

It shall be speeded well.

*Exit*

*Enter VARRIUS*

### DUKE VINCENTIO

I thank thee, Varrius; thou hast made good haste:  
Come, we will walk. There's other of our friends  
Will greet us here anon, my gentle Varrius.

*Exeunt*



# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Street near the city gate.

*Enter ISABELLA and MARIANA*

**ISABELLA**

To speak so indirectly I am loath:  
I would say the truth; but to accuse him so,  
That is your part: yet I am advised to do it;  
He says, to veil full purpose.

**MARIANA**

Be ruled by him.

**ISABELLA**

Besides, he tells me that, if peradventure  
He speak against me on the adverse side,  
I should not think it strange; for 'tis a physic  
That's bitter to sweet end.

**MARIANA**

I would Friar Peter--

**ISABELLA**

O, peace! the friar is come.

*Enter FRIAR PETER*

**FRIAR PETER**

Come, I have found you out a stand most fit,  
Where you may have such vantage on the duke,

He shall not pass you. Twice have the trumpets sounded;  
The generous and gravest citizens  
Have hent the gates, and very near upon  
The duke is entering: therefore, hence, away!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 4, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Measure for Measure

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Measure for Measure](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE I. The city gate.

*MARIANA veiled, ISABELLA, and FRIAR PETER, at their stand. Enter DUKE VINCENTIO, VARRIUS, Lords, ANGELO, ESCALUS, LUCIO, Provost, Officers, and Citizens, at several doors*

### DUKE VINCENTIO

My very worthy cousin, fairly met!  
Our old and faithful friend, we are glad to see you.

### ANGELO ESCALUS

Happy return be to your royal grace!

### DUKE VINCENTIO

Many and hearty thankings to you both.  
We have made inquiry of you; and we hear  
Such goodness of your justice, that our soul  
Cannot but yield you forth to public thanks,  
Forerunning more requital.

### ANGELO

You make my bonds still greater.

### DUKE VINCENTIO

O, your desert speaks loud; and I should wrong it,  
To lock it in the wards of covert bosom,  
When it deserves, with characters of brass,  
A fortified residence 'gainst the tooth of time  
And razure of oblivion. Give me your hand,  
And let the subject see, to make them know  
That outward courtesies would fain proclaim



Favours that keep within. Come, Escalus,  
You must walk by us on our other hand;  
And good supporters are you.

*FRIAR PETER and ISABELLA come forward*

**FRIAR PETER**

Now is your time: speak loud and kneel before him.

**ISABELLA**

Justice, O royal duke! Vail your regard  
Upon a wrong'd, I would fain have said, a maid!  
O worthy prince, dishonour not your eye  
By throwing it on any other object  
Till you have heard me in my true complaint  
And given me justice, justice, justice, justice!

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Relate your wrongs; in what? by whom? be brief.  
Here is Lord Angelo shall give you justice:  
Reveal yourself to him.

**ISABELLA**

O worthy duke,  
You bid me seek redemption of the devil:  
Hear me yourself; for that which I must speak  
Must either punish me, not being believed,  
Or wring redress from you. Hear me, O hear me, here!

**ANGELO**

My lord, her wits, I fear me, are not firm:  
She hath been a suitor to me for her brother  
Cut off by course of justice,--

**ISABELLA**

By course of justice!

**ANGELO**

And she will speak most bitterly and strange.

**ISABELLA**

Most strange, but yet most truly, will I speak:  
That Angelo's forsworn; is it not strange?  
That Angelo's a murderer; is 't not strange?  
That Angelo is an adulterous thief,  
An hypocrite, a virgin-violator;  
Is it not strange and strange?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Nay, it is ten times strange.

**ISABELLA**

It is not truer he is Angelo  
Than this is all as true as it is strange:  
Nay, it is ten times true; for truth is truth  
To the end of reckoning.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Away with her! Poor soul,  
She speaks this in the infirmity of sense.

**ISABELLA**

O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believest  
There is another comfort than this world,  
That thou neglect me not, with that opinion  
That I am touch'd with madness! Make not impossible  
That which but seems unlike: 'tis not impossible  
But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,  
May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute  
As Angelo; even so may Angelo,  
In all his dressings, characts, titles, forms,

Be an arch-villain; believe it, royal prince:  
If he be less, he's nothing; but he's more,  
Had I more name for badness.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

By mine honesty,  
If she be mad,--as I believe no other,--  
Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense,  
Such a dependency of thing on thing,  
As e'er I heard in madness.

## **ISABELLA**

O gracious duke,  
Harp not on that, nor do not banish reason  
For inequality; but let your reason serve  
To make the truth appear where it seems hid,  
And hide the false seems true.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Many that are not mad  
Have, sure, more lack of reason. What would you say?

## **ISABELLA**

I am the sister of one Claudio,  
Condemn'd upon the act of fornication  
To lose his head; condemn'd by Angelo:  
I, in probation of a sisterhood,  
Was sent to by my brother; one Lucio  
As then the messenger,--

## **LUCIO**

That's I, an't like your grace:  
I came to her from Claudio, and desired her  
To try her gracious fortune with Lord Angelo  
For her poor brother's pardon.

## **ISABELLA**

That's he indeed.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You were not bid to speak.

**LUCIO**

No, my good lord;  
Nor wish'd to hold my peace.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I wish you now, then;  
Pray you, take note of it: and when you have  
A business for yourself, pray heaven you then  
Be perfect.

**LUCIO**

I warrant your honour.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

The warrants for yourself; take heed to't.

**ISABELLA**

This gentleman told somewhat of my tale,--

**LUCIO**

Right.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

It may be right; but you are i' the wrong  
To speak before your time. Proceed.

**ISABELLA**

I went  
To this pernicious caitiff deputy,--

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

That's somewhat madly spoken.

**ISABELLA**

Pardon it;  
The phrase is to the matter.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Mended again. The matter; proceed.

**ISABELLA**

In brief, to set the needless process by,  
How I persuaded, how I pray'd, and kneel'd,  
How he refell'd me, and how I replied,--  
For this was of much length,--the vile conclusion  
I now begin with grief and shame to utter:  
He would not, but by gift of my chaste body  
To his concupiscible intemperate lust,  
Release my brother; and, after much debatement,  
My sisterly remorse confutes mine honour,  
And I did yield to him: but the next morn betimes,  
His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant  
For my poor brother's head.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

This is most likely!

**ISABELLA**

O, that it were as like as it is true!

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

By heaven, fond wretch, thou knowist not what thou speak'st,  
Or else thou art suborn'd against his honour  
In hateful practise. First, his integrity  
Stands without blemish. Next, it imports no reason  
That with such vehemency he should pursue  
Faults proper to himself: if he had so offended,  
He would have weigh'd thy brother by himself  
And not have cut him off. Some one hath set you on:  
Confess the truth, and say by whose advice  
Thou camest here to complain.

## **ISABELLA**

And is this all?  
Then, O you blessed ministers above,  
Keep me in patience, and with ripen'd time  
Unfold the evil which is here wrapt up  
In countenance! Heaven shield your grace from woe,  
As I, thus wrong'd, hence unbeliev'd go!

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

I know you'd fain be gone. An officer!  
To prison with her! Shall we thus permit  
A blasting and a scandalous breath to fall  
On him so near us? This needs must be a practise.  
Who knew of Your intent and coming hither?

## **ISABELLA**

One that I would were here, Friar Lodowick.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

A ghostly father, belike. Who knows that Lodowick?

## **LUCIO**

My lord, I know him; 'tis a meddling friar;  
I do not like the man: had he been lay, my lord  
For certain words he spake against your grace

In your retirement, I had swunged him soundly.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Words against me? this is a good friar, belike!  
And to set on this wretched woman here  
Against our substitute! Let this friar be found.

**LUCIO**

But yesternight, my lord, she and that friar,  
I saw them at the prison: a saucy friar,  
A very scurvy fellow.

**FRIAR PETER**

Blessed be your royal grace!  
I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard  
Your royal ear abused. First, hath this woman  
Most wrongfully accused your substitute,  
Who is as free from touch or soil with her  
As she from one ungot.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

We did believe no less.  
Know you that Friar Lodowick that she speaks of?

**FRIAR PETER**

I know him for a man divine and holy;  
Not scurvy, nor a temporary meddler,  
As he's reported by this gentleman;  
And, on my trust, a man that never yet  
Did, as he vouches, misreport your grace.

**LUCIO**

My lord, most villanously; believe it.

**FRIAR PETER**

Well, he in time may come to clear himself;  
But at this instant he is sick my lord,  
Of a strange fever. Upon his mere request,  
Being come to knowledge that there was complaint  
Intended 'gainst Lord Angelo, came I hither,  
To speak, as from his mouth, what he doth know  
Is true and false; and what he with his oath  
And all probation will make up full clear,  
Whensoever he's convented. First, for this woman.  
To justify this worthy nobleman,  
So vulgarly and personally accused,  
Her shall you hear disproved to her eyes,  
Till she herself confess it.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Good friar, let's hear it.

*ISABELLA is carried off guarded; and MARIANA comes forward*

Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo?  
O heaven, the vanity of wretched fools!  
Give us some seats. Come, cousin Angelo;  
In this I'll be impartial; be you judge  
Of your own cause. Is this the witness, friar?  
First, let her show her face, and after speak.

**MARIANA**

Pardon, my lord; I will not show my face  
Until my husband bid me.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

What, are you married?

**MARIANA**

No, my lord.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**



Are you a maid?

**MARIANA**

No, my lord.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

A widow, then?

**MARIANA**

Neither, my lord.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Why, you are nothing then: neither maid, widow, nor wife?

**LUCIO**

My lord, she may be a punk; for many of them are  
neither maid, widow, nor wife.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Silence that fellow: I would he had some cause  
To prattle for himself.

**LUCIO**

Well, my lord.

**MARIANA**

My lord; I do confess I ne'er was married;  
And I confess besides I am no maid:  
I have known my husband; yet my husband  
Knows not that ever he knew me.

**LUCIO**

He was drunk then, my lord: it can be no better.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

For the benefit of silence, would thou wert so too!

**LUCIO**

Well, my lord.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

This is no witness for Lord Angelo.

**MARIANA**

Now I come to't my lord  
She that accuses him of fornication,  
In self-same manner doth accuse my husband,  
And charges him my lord, with such a time  
When I'll depose I had him in mine arms  
With all the effect of love.

**ANGELO**

Charges she more than me?

**MARIANA**

Not that I know.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

No? you say your husband.

**MARIANA**

Why, just, my lord, and that is Angelo,  
Who thinks he knows that he ne'er knew my body,  
But knows he thinks that he knows Isabel's.

**ANGELO**

This is a strange abuse. Let's see thy face.

**MARIANA**

My husband bids me; now I will unmask.

*Unveiling*

This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,  
Which once thou sworest was worth the looking on;  
This is the hand which, with a vow'd contract,  
Was fast belock'd in thine; this is the body  
That took away the match from Isabel,  
And did supply thee at thy garden-house  
In her imagined person.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Know you this woman?

**LUCIO**

Carnally, she says.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Sirrah, no more!

**LUCIO**

Enough, my lord.

**ANGELO**

My lord, I must confess I know this woman:  
And five years since there was some speech of marriage  
Betwixt myself and her; which was broke off,  
Partly for that her promised proportions  
Came short of composition, but in chief

For that her reputation was disvalued  
In levity: since which time of five years  
I never spake with her, saw her, nor heard from her,  
Upon my faith and honour.

## **MARIANA**

Noble prince,  
As there comes light from heaven and words from breath,  
As there is sense in truth and truth in virtue,  
I am affianced this man's wife as strongly  
As words could make up vows: and, my good lord,  
But Tuesday night last gone in's garden-house  
He knew me as a wife. As this is true,  
Let me in safety raise me from my knees  
Or else for ever be confixed here,  
A marble monument!

## **ANGELO**

I did but smile till now:  
Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice  
My patience here is touch'd. I do perceive  
These poor informal women are no more  
But instruments of some more mightier member  
That sets them on: let me have way, my lord,  
To find this practise out.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Ay, with my heart  
And punish them to your height of pleasure.  
Thou foolish friar, and thou pernicious woman,  
Compact with her that's gone, think'st thou thy oaths,  
Though they would swear down each particular saint,  
Were testimonies against his worth and credit  
That's seal'd in approbation? You, Lord Escalus,  
Sit with my cousin; lend him your kind pains  
To find out this abuse, whence 'tis derived.  
There is another friar that set them on;  
Let him be sent for.

## **FRIAR PETER**

Would he were here, my lord! for he indeed  
Hath set the women on to this complaint:  
Your provost knows the place where he abides  
And he may fetch him.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Go do it instantly.

*Exit Provost*

And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin,  
Whom it concerns to hear this matter forth,  
Do with your injuries as seems you best,  
In any chastisement: I for a while will leave you;  
But stir not you till you have well determined  
Upon these slanderers.

## **ESCALUS**

My lord, we'll do it thoroughly.

*Exit DUKE*

Signior Lucio, did not you say you knew that  
Friar Lodowick to be a dishonest person?

## **LUCIO**

'Cucullus non facit monachum:' honest in nothing  
but in his clothes; and one that hath spoke most  
villanous speeches of the duke.

## **ESCALUS**

We shall entreat you to abide here till he come and  
enforce them against him: we shall find this friar a  
notable fellow.

**LUCIO**

As any in Vienna, on my word.

**ESCALUS**

Call that same Isabel here once again; I would speak with her.

*Exit an Attendant*

Pray you, my lord, give me leave to question; you shall see how I'll handle her.

**LUCIO**

Not better than he, by her own report.

**ESCALUS**

Say you?

**LUCIO**

Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she would sooner confess: perchance, publicly, she'll be ashamed.

**ESCALUS**

I will go darkly to work with her.

**LUCIO**

That's the way; for women are light at midnight.

*Re-enter Officers with ISABELLA; and Provost with the DUKE VINCENTIO in his friar's habit*

**ESCALUS**

Come on, mistress: here's a gentlewoman denies all

that you have said.

**LUCIO**

My lord, here comes the rascal I spoke of; here with the provost.

**ESCALUS**

In very good time: speak not you to him till we call upon you.

**LUCIO**

Mum.

**ESCALUS**

Come, sir: did you set these women on to slander Lord Angelo? they have confessed you did.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

'Tis false.

**ESCALUS**

How! know you where you are?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Respect to your great place! and let the devil  
Be sometime honour'd for his burning throne!  
Where is the duke? 'tis he should hear me speak.

**ESCALUS**

The duke's in us; and we will hear you speak:  
Look you speak justly.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Boldly, at least. But, O, poor souls,  
Come you to seek the lamb here of the fox?  
Good night to your redress! Is the duke gone?  
Then is your cause gone too. The duke's unjust,  
Thus to retort your manifest appeal,  
And put your trial in the villain's mouth  
Which here you come to accuse.

## **LUCIO**

This is the rascal; this is he I spoke of.

## **ESCALUS**

Why, thou unreverend and unhallow'd friar,  
Is't not enough thou hast suborn'd these women  
To accuse this worthy man, but, in foul mouth  
And in the witness of his proper ear,  
To call him villain? and then to glance from him  
To the duke himself, to tax him with injustice?  
Take him hence; to the rack with him! We'll touse you  
Joint by joint, but we will know his purpose.  
What 'unjust'!

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Be not so hot; the duke  
Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he  
Dare rack his own: his subject am I not,  
Nor here provincial. My business in this state  
Made me a looker on here in Vienna,  
Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble  
Till it o'er-run the stew; laws for all faults,  
But faults so countenanced, that the strong statutes  
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,  
As much in mock as mark.

## **ESCALUS**

Slander to the state! Away with him to prison!



**ANGELO**

What can you vouch against him, Signior Lucio?  
Is this the man that you did tell us of?

**LUCIO**

'Tis he, my lord. Come hither, goodman baldpate:  
do you know me?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I remember you, sir, by the sound of your voice: I  
met you at the prison, in the absence of the duke.

**LUCIO**

O, did you so? And do you remember what you said of the duke?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Most notably, sir.

**LUCIO**

Do you so, sir? And was the duke a fleshmonger, a  
fool, and a coward, as you then reported him to be?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You must, sir, change persons with me, ere you make  
that my report: you, indeed, spoke so of him; and  
much more, much worse.

**LUCIO**

O thou damnable fellow! Did not I pluck thee by the  
nose for thy speeches?

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I protest I love the duke as I love myself.

**ANGELO**

Hark, how the villain would close now, after his  
treasonable abuses!

**ESCALUS**

Such a fellow is not to be talked withal. Away with  
him to prison! Where is the provost? Away with him  
to prison! lay bolts enough upon him: let him  
speak no more. Away with those giglots too, and  
with the other confederate companion!

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

[To Provost] Stay, sir; stay awhile.

**ANGELO**

What, resists he? Help him, Lucio.

**LUCIO**

Come, sir; come, sir; come, sir; foh, sir! Why, you  
bald-pated, lying rascal, you must be hooded, must  
you? Show your knave's visage, with a pox to you!  
show your sheep-biting face, and be hanged an hour!  
Will't not off?

*Pulls off the friar's hood, and discovers DUKE VINCENTIO*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Thou art the first knave that e'er madest a duke.  
First, provost, let me bail these gentle three.

*To LUCIO*

Sneak not away, sir; for the friar and you

Must have a word anon. Lay hold on him.

**LUCIO**

This may prove worse than hanging.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

[To ESCALUS] What you have spoke I pardon: sit you down:  
We'll borrow place of him.

*To ANGELO*

Sir, by your leave.  
Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence,  
That yet can do thee office? If thou hast,  
Rely upon it till my tale be heard,  
And hold no longer out.

**ANGELO**

O my dread lord,  
I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,  
To think I can be undiscernible,  
When I perceive your grace, like power divine,  
Hath look'd upon my passes. Then, good prince,  
No longer session hold upon my shame,  
But let my trial be mine own confession:  
Immediate sentence then and sequent death  
Is all the grace I beg.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Come hither, Mariana.  
Say, wast thou e'er contracted to this woman?

**ANGELO**

I was, my lord.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Go take her hence, and marry her instantly.  
Do you the office, friar; which consummate,  
Return him here again. Go with him, provost.

*Exeunt ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR PETER and Provost*

## **ESCALUS**

My lord, I am more amazed at his dishonour  
Than at the strangeness of it.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Come hither, Isabel.  
Your friar is now your prince: as I was then  
Advertising and holy to your business,  
Not changing heart with habit, I am still  
Attorney'd at your service.

## **ISABELLA**

O, give me pardon,  
That I, your vassal, have employ'd and pain'd  
Your unknown sovereignty!

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

You are pardon'd, Isabel:  
And now, dear maid, be you as free to us.  
Your brother's death, I know, sits at your heart;  
And you may marvel why I obscured myself,  
Labouring to save his life, and would not rather  
Make rash remonstrance of my hidden power  
Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid,  
It was the swift celerity of his death,  
Which I did think with slower foot came on,  
That brain'd my purpose. But, peace be with him!  
That life is better life, past fearing death,  
Than that which lives to fear: make it your comfort,  
So happy is your brother.

## **ISABELLA**

I do, my lord.

*Re-enter ANGELO, MARIANA, FRIAR PETER, and Provost*

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

For this new-married man approaching here,  
Whose salt imagination yet hath wrong'd  
Your well defended honour, you must pardon  
For Mariana's sake: but as he adjudged your brother,--  
Being criminal, in double violation  
Of sacred chastity and of promise-breach  
Thereon dependent, for your brother's life,--  
The very mercy of the law cries out  
Most audible, even from his proper tongue,  
'An Angelo for Claudio, death for death!'  
Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;  
Like doth quit like, and MEASURE still FOR MEASURE.  
Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested;  
Which, though thou wouldst deny, denies thee vantage.  
We do condemn thee to the very block  
Where Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like haste.  
Away with him!

## **MARIANA**

O my most gracious lord,  
I hope you will not mock me with a husband.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

It is your husband mock'd you with a husband.  
Consenting to the safeguard of your honour,  
I thought your marriage fit; else imputation,  
For that he knew you, might reproach your life  
And choke your good to come; for his possessions,  
Although by confiscation they are ours,  
We do instate and widow you withal,  
To buy you a better husband.

**MARIANA**

O my dear lord,  
I crave no other, nor no better man.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Never crave him; we are definitive.

**MARIANA**

Gentle my liege,--

*Kneeling*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

You do but lose your labour.  
Away with him to death!

*To LUCIO*

Now, sir, to you.

**MARIANA**

O my good lord! Sweet Isabel, take my part;  
Lend me your knees, and all my life to come  
I'll lend you all my life to do you service.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Against all sense you do importune her:  
Should she kneel down in mercy of this fact,  
Her brother's ghost his paved bed would break,  
And take her hence in horror.

**MARIANA**

Isabel,  
Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me;

Hold up your hands, say nothing; I'll speak all.  
They say, best men are moulded out of faults;  
And, for the most, become much more the better  
For being a little bad: so may my husband.  
O Isabel, will you not lend a knee?

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

He dies for Claudio's death.

## **ISABELLA**

Most bounteous sir,

*Kneeling*

Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,  
As if my brother lived: I partly think  
A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,  
Till he did look on me: since it is so,  
Let him not die. My brother had but justice,  
In that he did the thing for which he died:  
For Angelo,  
His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,  
And must be buried but as an intent  
That perish'd by the way: thoughts are no subjects;  
Intents but merely thoughts.

## **MARIANA**

Merely, my lord.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Your suit's unprofitable; stand up, I say.  
I have bethought me of another fault.  
Provost, how came it Claudio was beheaded  
At an unusual hour?

## **Provost**

It was commanded so.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Had you a special warrant for the deed?

**Provost**

No, my good lord; it was by private message.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

For which I do discharge you of your office:  
Give up your keys.

**Provost**

Pardon me, noble lord:  
I thought it was a fault, but knew it not;  
Yet did repent me, after more advice;  
For testimony whereof, one in the prison,  
That should by private order else have died,  
I have reserved alive.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

What's he?

**Provost**

His name is Barnardine.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

I would thou hadst done so by Claudio.  
Go fetch him hither; let me look upon him.

*Exit Provost*

**ESCALUS**

I am sorry, one so learned and so wise



As you, Lord Angelo, have still appear'd,  
Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood.  
And lack of temper'd judgment afterward.

**ANGELO**

I am sorry that such sorrow I procure:  
And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart  
That I crave death more willingly than mercy;  
'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.

*Re-enter Provost, with BARNARDINE, CLAUDIO muffled, and JULIET*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Which is that Barnardine?

**Provost**

This, my lord.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

There was a friar told me of this man.  
Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul.  
That apprehends no further than this world,  
And squarest thy life according. Thou'rt condemn'd:  
But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all;  
And pray thee take this mercy to provide  
For better times to come. Friar, advise him;  
I leave him to your hand. What muffled fellow's that?

**Provost**

This is another prisoner that I saved.  
Who should have died when Claudio lost his head;  
As like almost to Claudio as himself.

*Unmuffles CLAUDIO*

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

[To ISABELLA] If he be like your brother, for his sake  
Is he pardon'd; and, for your lovely sake,  
Give me your hand and say you will be mine.  
He is my brother too: but fitter time for that.  
By this Lord Angelo perceives he's safe;  
Methinks I see a quickening in his eye.  
Well, Angelo, your evil quits you well:  
Look that you love your wife; her worth worth yours.  
I find an apt remission in myself;  
And yet here's one in place I cannot pardon.

*To LUCIO*

You, sirrah, that knew me for a fool, a coward,  
One all of luxury, an ass, a madman;  
Wherein have I so deserved of you,  
That you extol me thus?

**LUCIO**

'Faith, my lord. I spoke it but according to the  
trick. If you will hang me for it, you may; but I  
had rather it would please you I might be whipt.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Whipt first, sir, and hanged after.  
Proclaim it, provost, round about the city.  
Is any woman wrong'd by this lewd fellow,  
As I have heard him swear himself there's one  
Whom he begot with child, let her appear,  
And he shall marry her: the nuptial finish'd,  
Let him be whipt and hang'd.

**LUCIO**

I beseech your highness, do not marry me to a whore.  
Your highness said even now, I made you a duke:  
good my lord, do not recompense me in making me a cuckold.

**DUKE VINCENTIO**

Upon mine honour, thou shalt marry her.  
Thy slanders I forgive; and therewithal  
Remit thy other forfeits. Take him to prison;  
And see our pleasure herein executed.

## **LUCIO**

Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death,  
whipping, and hanging.

## **DUKE VINCENTIO**

Slandering a prince deserves it.

*Exit Officers with LUCIO*

She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore.  
Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo:  
I have confess'd her and I know her virtue.  
Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness:  
There's more behind that is more grate. . .  
Thanks, provost, for thy care and secrecy:  
We shall employ thee in a worthier place.  
Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home  
The head of Ragozine for Claudio's:  
The offence pardons itself. Dear Isabel,  
I have a motion much imports your good;  
Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,  
What's mine is yours and what is yours is mine.  
So, bring us to our palace; where we'll show  
What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know.

*Exeunt*

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Merry Wives of Windsor

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Windsor. Before PAGE's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The same.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [A room in the Garter Inn.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [A room in DOCTOR CAIUS' house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Before PAGE'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A room in the Garter Inn.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A field near Windsor.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A field near Frogmore.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [A room in FORD'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [A room in PAGE'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [A room in the Garter Inn.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [A street.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [A room in FORD'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [A room in the Garter Inn.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [A room in FORD'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [A room in the Garter Inn.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [Another room in the Garter Inn.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [A room in the Garter Inn.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Windsor Park.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [A street leading to the Park.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Windsor Park.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Another part of the Park.](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Windsor. Before PAGE's house.

*Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

### SHALLOW

Sir Hugh, persuade me not; I will make a Star-chamber matter of it: if he were twenty Sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

### SLENDER

In the county of Gloucester, justice of peace and 'Coram.'

### SHALLOW

Ay, cousin Slender, and 'Custalourum.

### SLENDER

Ay, and 'Rato-lorum' too; and a gentleman born, master parson; who writes himself 'Armigero,' in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, 'Armigero.'

### SHALLOW

Ay, that I do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

### SLENDER

All his successors gone before him hath done't; and all his ancestors that come after him may: they may give the dozen white luses in their coat.

**SHALLOW**

It is an old coat.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant; it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies love.

**SHALLOW**

The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat.

**SLENDER**

I may quarter, coz.

**SHALLOW**

You may, by marrying.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

**SHALLOW**

Not a whit.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Yes, py'r lady; if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures: but that is all one. If Sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence to make atonements and compromises between you.

**SHALLOW**

The council shall bear it; it is a riot.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is not meet the council hear a riot; there is no fear of Got in a riot: the council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments in that.

**SHALLOW**

Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it: and there is also another device in my prain, which peradventure prings goot discretions with it: there is Anne Page, which is daughter to Master Thomas Page, which is pretty virginity.

**SLENDER**

Mistress Anne Page? She has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is that fery person for all the orld, as just as you will desire; and seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold and silver, is her grandsire upon his death's-bed--Got deliver to a joyful resurrections! --give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old: it were a goot motion if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between Master Abraham and Mistress Anne Page.

**SLENDER**

Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.

**SLENDER**

I know the young gentlewoman; she has good gifts.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Seven hundred pounds and possibilities is goot gifts.

**SHALLOW**

Well, let us see honest Master Page. Is Falstaff there?

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar as I do despise one that is false, or as I despise one that is not true. The knight, Sir John, is there; and, I beseech you, be ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door for Master Page.

*Knocks*

What, hoa! Got pless your house here!

**PAGE**

[Within] Who's there?

*Enter PAGE*

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Here is Got's plessing, and your friend, and Justice Shallow; and here young Master Slender, that peradventures shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.



**PAGE**

I am glad to see your worships well.  
I thank you for my venison, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

Master Page, I am glad to see you: much good do it  
your good heart! I wished your venison better; it  
was ill killed. How doth good Mistress Page?--and I  
thank you always with my heart, la! with my heart.

**PAGE**

Sir, I thank you.

**SHALLOW**

Sir, I thank you; by yea and no, I do.

**PAGE**

I am glad to see you, good Master Slender.

**SLENDER**

How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he  
was outrun on Cotsall.

**PAGE**

It could not be judged, sir.

**SLENDER**

You'll not confess, you'll not confess.

**SHALLOW**

That he will not. 'Tis your fault, 'tis your fault;

'tis a good dog.

**PAGE**

A cur, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Sir, he's a good dog, and a fair dog: can there be more said? he is good and fair. Is Sir John Falstaff here?

**PAGE**

Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office between you.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is spoke as a Christians ought to speak.

**SHALLOW**

He hath wronged me, Master Page.

**PAGE**

Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

**SHALLOW**

If it be confessed, it is not redress'd: is not that so, Master Page? He hath wronged me; indeed he hath, at a word, he hath, believe me: Robert Shallow, esquire, saith, he is wronged.

**PAGE**

Here comes Sir John.

*Enter FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, NYM, and PISTOL*

**FALSTAFF**

Now, Master Shallow, you'll complain of me to the king?

**SHALLOW**

Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my lodge.

**FALSTAFF**

But not kissed your keeper's daughter?

**SHALLOW**

Tut, a pin! this shall be answered.

**FALSTAFF**

I will answer it straight; I have done all this.  
That is now answered.

**SHALLOW**

The council shall know this.

**FALSTAFF**

'Twere better for you if it were known in counsel:  
you'll be laughed at.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Pauca verba, Sir John; goot worts.

**FALSTAFF**

Good worts! good cabbage. Slender, I broke your head: what matter have you against me?

**SLENDER**

Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you;  
and against your cony-catching rascals, Bardolph,  
Nym, and Pistol.

**BARDOLPH**

You Banbury cheese!

**SLENDER**

Ay, it is no matter.

**PISTOL**

How now, Mephostophilus!

**SLENDER**

Ay, it is no matter.

**NYM**

Slice, I say! pauca, pauca: slice! that's my humour.

**SLENDER**

Where's Simple, my man? Can you tell, cousin?

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Peace, I pray you. Now let us understand. There is  
three umpires in this matter, as I understand; that  
is, Master Page, fidelicet Master Page; and there is  
myself, fidelicet myself; and the three party is,  
lastly and finally, mine host of the Garter.

**PAGE**

We three, to hear it and end it between them.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Fery goot: I will make a prief of it in my note-book; and we will afterwards ork upon the cause with as great discreetly as we can.

**FALSTAFF**

Pistol!

**PISTOL**

He hears with ears.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

The tevil and his tam! what phrase is this, 'He hears with ear'? why, it is affectations.

**FALSTAFF**

Pistol, did you pick Master Slender's purse?

**SLENDER**

Ay, by these gloves, did he, or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else, of seven groats in mill-sixpences, and two Edward shovel-boards, that cost me two shilling and two pence apiece of Yead Miller, by these gloves.

**FALSTAFF**

Is this true, Pistol?

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

No; it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

**PISTOL**

Ha, thou mountain-foreigner! Sir John and Master mine,  
I combat challenge of this latten bilbo.  
Word of denial in thy labras here!  
Word of denial: froth and scum, thou liest!

**SLENDER**

By these gloves, then, 'twas he.

**NYM**

Be avised, sir, and pass good humours: I will say  
'marry trap' with you, if you run the nuthook's  
humour on me; that is the very note of it.

**SLENDER**

By this hat, then, he in the red face had it; for  
though I cannot remember what I did when you made me  
drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

**FALSTAFF**

What say you, Scarlet and John?

**BARDOLPH**

Why, sir, for my part I say the gentleman had drunk  
himself out of his five sentences.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is his five senses: fie, what the ignorance is!

**BARDOLPH**

And being fap, sir, was, as they say, cashiered; and  
so conclusions passed the careires.

**SLENDER**

Ay, you spake in Latin then too; but 'tis no matter: I'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick: if I be drunk, I'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

So Got udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

**FALSTAFF**

You hear all these matters denied, gentlemen; you hear it.

*Enter ANNE PAGE, with wine; MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE, following*

**PAGE**

Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within.

*Exit ANNE PAGE*

**SLENDER**

O heaven! this is Mistress Anne Page.

**PAGE**

How now, Mistress Ford!

**FALSTAFF**

Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met: by your leave, good mistress.

*Kisses her*

**PAGE**

Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome. Come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner: come, gentlemen, I hope

we shall drink down all unkindness.

*Exeunt all except SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

**SLENDER**

I had rather than forty shillings I had my Book of Songs and Sonnets here.

*Enter SIMPLE*

How now, Simple! where have you been? I must wait on myself, must I? You have not the Book of Riddles about you, have you?

**SIMPLE**

Book of Riddles! why, did you not lend it to Alice Shortcake upon All-hallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?

**SHALLOW**

Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you. A word with you, coz; marry, this, coz: there is, as 'twere, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by Sir Hugh here. Do you understand me?

**SLENDER**

Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

**SHALLOW**

Nay, but understand me.

**SLENDER**

So I do, sir.



**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Give ear to his motions, Master Slender: I will  
description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

**SLENDER**

Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says: I pray  
you, pardon me; he's a justice of peace in his  
country, simple though I stand here.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

But that is not the question: the question is  
concerning your marriage.

**SHALLOW**

Ay, there's the point, sir.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Marry, is it; the very point of it; to Mistress Anne Page.

**SLENDER**

Why, if it be so, I will marry her upon any  
reasonable demands.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

But can you affection the 'oman? Let us command to  
know that of your mouth or of your lips; for divers  
philosophers hold that the lips is parcel of the  
mouth. Therefore, precisely, can you carry your  
good will to the maid?

**SHALLOW**

Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her?

**SLENDER**

I hope, sir, I will do as it shall become one that would do reason.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Nay, Got's lords and his ladies! you must speak possitable, if you can carry her your desires towards her.

**SHALLOW**

That you must. Will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

**SLENDER**

I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

**SHALLOW**

Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz: what I do is to pleasure you, coz. Can you love the maid?

**SLENDER**

I will marry her, sir, at your request: but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another; I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt: but if you say, 'Marry her,' I will marry her; that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is a fery discretion answer; save the fall is in the ort 'dissolutely:' the ort is, according to our meaning, 'resolutely:' his meaning is good.

**SHALLOW**

Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

**SLENDER**

Ay, or else I would I might be hanged, la!

**SHALLOW**

Here comes fair Mistress Anne.

*Re-enter ANNE PAGE*

Would I were young for your sake, Mistress Anne!

**ANNE PAGE**

The dinner is on the table; my father desires your worships' company.

**SHALLOW**

I will wait on him, fair Mistress Anne.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Od's plessed will! I will not be absence at the grace.

*Exeunt SHALLOW and SIR HUGH EVANS*

**ANNE PAGE**

Will't please your worship to come in, sir?

**SLENDER**

No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

**ANNE PAGE**

The dinner attends you, sir.

**SLENDER**

I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth. Go, sirrah, for all you are my man, go wait upon my cousin Shallow.

*Exit SIMPLE*

A justice of peace sometimes may be beholding to his friend for a man. I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead: but what though? Yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

**ANNE PAGE**

I may not go in without your worship: they will not sit till you come.

**SLENDER**

I' faith, I'll eat nothing; I thank you as much as though I did.

**ANNE PAGE**

I pray you, sir, walk in.

**SLENDER**

I had rather walk here, I thank you. I bruised my shin th' other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence; three veneyes for a dish of stewed prunes; and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so? be there bears i' the town?

**ANNE PAGE**

I think there are, sir; I heard them talked of.

**SLENDER**

I love the sport well but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in England. You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

**ANNE PAGE**

Ay, indeed, sir.

**SLENDER**

That's meat and drink to me, now. I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain; but, I warrant you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it, that it passed: but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favored rough things.

*Re-enter PAGE*

**PAGE**

Come, gentle Master Slender, come; we stay for you.

**SLENDER**

I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir.

**PAGE**

By cock and pie, you shall not choose, sir! come, come.

**SLENDER**

Nay, pray you, lead the way.

**PAGE**

Come on, sir.

**SLENDER**

Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

**ANNE PAGE**

Not I, sir; pray you, keep on.

**SLENDER**

I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome.  
You do yourself wrong, indeed, la!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE*

### SIR HUGH EVANS

Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house which is the way: and there dwells one Mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

### SIMPLE

Well, sir.

### SIR HUGH EVANS

Nay, it is petter yet. Give her this letter; for it is a 'oman that altogether's acquaintance with Mistress Anne Page: and the letter is, to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to Mistress Anne Page. I pray you, be gone: I will make an end of my dinner; there's pippins and cheese to come.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter FALSTAFF, Host, BARDOLPH, NYM, PISTOL, and ROBIN*

**FALSTAFF**

Mine host of the Garter!

**Host**

What says my bully-rook? speak scholarly and wisely.

**FALSTAFF**

Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

**Host**

Discard, bully Hercules; cashier: let them wag; trot, trot.

**FALSTAFF**

I sit at ten pounds a week.

**Host**

Thou'rt an emperor, Caesar, Keisar, and Pheezar. I will entertain Bardolph; he shall draw, he shall tap: said I well, bully Hector?

**FALSTAFF**

Do so, good mine host.



**Host**

I have spoke; let him follow.

*To BARDOLPH*

Let me see thee froth and lime: I am at a word; follow.

*Exit*

**FALSTAFF**

Bardolph, follow him. A tapster is a good trade: an old cloak makes a new jerkin; a withered serving-man a fresh tapster. Go; adieu.

**BARDOLPH**

It is a life that I have desired: I will thrive.

**PISTOL**

O base Hungarian wight! wilt thou the spigot wield?

*Exit BARDOLPH*

**NYM**

He was gotten in drink: is not the humour conceited?

**FALSTAFF**

I am glad I am so acquit of this tinderbox: his thefts were too open; his filching was like an unskilful singer; he kept not time.

**NYM**

The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest.

**PISTOL**

'Convey,' the wise it call. 'Steal!' foh! a fico  
for the phrase!

**FALSTAFF**

Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.

**PISTOL**

Why, then, let kibes ensue.

**FALSTAFF**

There is no remedy; I must cony-catch; I must shift.

**PISTOL**

Young ravens must have food.

**FALSTAFF**

Which of you know Ford of this town?

**PISTOL**

I ken the wight: he is of substance good.

**FALSTAFF**

My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

**PISTOL**

Two yards, and more.

**FALSTAFF**

No quips now, Pistol! Indeed, I am in the waist two  
yards about; but I am now about no waste; I am about  
thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's

wife: I spy entertainment in her; she discourses,  
she carves, she gives the leer of invitation: I  
can construe the action of her familiar style; and  
the hardest voice of her behavior, to be Englished  
rightly, is, 'I am Sir John Falstaff's.'

**PISTOL**

He hath studied her will, and translated her will,  
out of honesty into English.

**NYM**

The anchor is deep: will that humour pass?

**FALSTAFF**

Now, the report goes she has all the rule of her  
husband's purse: he hath a legion of angels.

**PISTOL**

As many devils entertain; and 'To her, boy,' say I.

**NYM**

The humour rises; it is good: humour me the angels.

**FALSTAFF**

I have writ me here a letter to her: and here  
another to Page's wife, who even now gave me good  
eyes too, examined my parts with most judicious  
oeillades; sometimes the beam of her view gilded my  
foot, sometimes my portly belly.

**PISTOL**

Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

**NYM**

I thank thee for that humour.

**FALSTAFF**

O, she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass! Here's another letter to her: she bears the purse too; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheater to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go bear thou this letter to Mistress Page; and thou this to Mistress Ford: we will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

**PISTOL**

Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,  
And by my side wear steel? then, Lucifer take all!

**NYM**

I will run no base humour: here, take the  
humour-letter: I will keep the havior of reputation.

**FALSTAFF**

[To ROBIN] Hold, sirrah, bear you these letters tightly;  
Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.  
Rogues, hence, avaunt! vanish like hailstones, go;  
Trudge, plod away o' the hoof; seek shelter, pack!  
Falstaff will learn the humour of the age,  
French thrift, you rogues; myself and skirted page.

*Exeunt FALSTAFF and ROBIN*

**PISTOL**

Let vultures gripe thy guts! for gourd and fullam holds,  
And high and low beguiles the rich and poor:  
Tester I'll have in pouch when thou shalt lack,

Base Phrygian Turk!

**NYM**

I have operations which be humours of revenge.

**PISTOL**

Wilt thou revenge?

**NYM**

By welkin and her star!

**PISTOL**

With wit or steel?

**NYM**

With both the humours, I:  
I will discuss the humour of this love to Page.

**PISTOL**

And I to Ford shall eke unfold  
How Falstaff, varlet vile,  
His dove will prove, his gold will hold,  
And his soft couch defile.

**NYM**

My humour shall not cool: I will incense Page to  
deal with poison; I will possess him with  
yellowness, for the revolt of mine is dangerous:  
that is my true humour.

**PISTOL**

Thou art the Mars of malecontents: I second thee; troop on.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A room in DOCTOR CAIUS' house.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY, SIMPLE, and RUGBY*

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

What, John Rugby! I pray thee, go to the casement, and see if you can see my master, Master Doctor Caius, coming. If he do, i' faith, and find any body in the house, here will be an old abusing of God's patience and the king's English.

### RUGBY

I'll go watch.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Go; and we'll have a posset for't soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal fire.

*Exit RUGBY*

An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal, and, I warrant you, no tell-tale nor no breed-bate: his worst fault is, that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way: but nobody but has his fault; but let that pass. Peter Simple, you say your name is?

### SIMPLE

Ay, for fault of a better.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

And Master Slender's your master?

**SIMPLE**

Ay, forsooth.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Does he not wear a great round beard, like a  
glover's paring-knife?

**SIMPLE**

No, forsooth: he hath but a little wee face, with a  
little yellow beard, a Cain-coloured beard.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

A softly-sprighted man, is he not?

**SIMPLE**

Ay, forsooth: but he is as tall a man of his hands  
as any is between this and his head; he hath fought  
with a warrener.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

How say you? O, I should remember him: does he not  
hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait?

**SIMPLE**

Yes, indeed, does he.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell  
Master Parson Evans I will do what I can for your  
master: Anne is a good girl, and I wish--



*Re-enter RUGBY*

**RUGBY**

Out, alas! here comes my master.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

We shall all be shent. Run in here, good young man; go into this closet: he will not stay long.

*Shuts SIMPLE in the closet*

What, John Rugby! John! what, John, I say!  
Go, John, go inquire for my master; I doubt  
he be not well, that he comes not home.

*Singing*

And down, down, adown-a, & c.

*Enter DOCTOR CAIUS*

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Vat is you sing? I do not like des toys. Pray you,  
go and vetch me in my closet un boitier vert, a box,  
a green-a box: do intend vat I speak? a green-a box.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Ay, forsooth; I'll fetch it you.

*Aside*

I am glad he went not in himself: if he had found  
the young man, he would have been horn-mad.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Fe, fe, fe, fe! ma foi, il fait fort chaud. Je

m'en vais a la cour--la grande affaire.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Is it this, sir?

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Oui; mette le au mon pocket: depeche, quickly. Vere is dat knave Rugby?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

What, John Rugby! John!

**RUGBY**

Here, sir!

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby. Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to the court.

**RUGBY**

'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By my trot, I tarry too long. Od's me!  
Qu'ai-j'oublie! dere is some simples in my closet,  
dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Ay me, he'll find the young man here, and be mad!

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

O diable, diable! vat is in my closet? Villain! larron!

*Pulling SIMPLE out*

Rugby, my rapier!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Good master, be content.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Wherefore shall I be content-a?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

The young man is an honest man.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

What shall de honest man do in my closet? dere is  
no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic. Hear the truth  
of it: he came of an errand to me from Parson Hugh.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Vell.

**SIMPLE**

Ay, forsooth; to desire her to--

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Peace, I pray you.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Peace-a your tongue. Speak-a your tale.

**SIMPLE**

To desire this honest gentlewoman, your maid, to speak a good word to Mistress Anne Page for my master in the way of marriage.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

This is all, indeed, la! but I'll ne'er put my finger in the fire, and need not.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Sir Hugh send-a you? Rugby, baille me some paper. Tarry you a little-a while.

*Writes*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

[Aside to SIMPLE] I am glad he is so quiet: if he had been thoroughly moved, you should have heard him so loud and so melancholy. But notwithstanding, man, I'll do you your master what good I can: and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master,--I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds and do all myself,--

**SIMPLE**

[Aside to MISTRESS QUICKLY] 'Tis a great charge to come under one body's hand.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

[Aside to SIMPLE] Are you avised o' that? you shall find it a great charge: and to be up early

and down late; but notwithstanding,--to tell you in your ear; I would have no words of it,--my master himself is in love with Mistress Anne Page: but notwithstanding that, I know Anne's mind,--that's neither here nor there.

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

You jack'nape, give-a this letter to Sir Hugh; by gar, it is a challenge: I will cut his troat in dee park; and I will teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make. You may be gone; it is not good you tarry here. By gar, I will cut all his two stones; by gar, he shall not have a stone to throw at his dog:

*Exit SIMPLE*

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

It is no matter-a ver dat: do not you tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself? By gar, I vill kill de Jack priest; and I have appointed mine host of de Jarteer to measure our weapon. By gar, I will myself have Anne Page.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well. We must give folks leave to prate: what, the good-jer!

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Rugby, come to the court with me. By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door. Follow my heels, Rugby.

*Exeunt DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

You shall have An fool's-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that: never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank heaven.

**FENTON**

[Within] Who's within there? ho!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Who's there, I trow! Come near the house, I pray you.

*Enter FENTON*

**FENTON**

How now, good woman? how dost thou?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

The better that it pleases your good worship to ask.

**FENTON**

What news? how does pretty Mistress Anne?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way; I praise heaven for it.

**FENTON**

Shall I do any good, thinkest thou? shall I not lose my suit?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Troth, sir, all is in his hands above: but notwithstanding, Master Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book, she loves you. Have not your worship a wart above your eye?

**FENTON**

Yes, marry, have I; what of that?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, thereby hangs a tale: good faith, it is such another Nan; but, I detest, an honest maid as ever broke bread: we had an hour's talk of that wart. I shall never laugh but in that maid's company! But indeed she is given too much to allicholy and musing: but for you--well, go to.

**FENTON**

Well, I shall see her to-day. Hold, there's money for thee; let me have thy voice in my behalf: if thou seest her before me, commend me.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Will I? i'faith, that we will; and I will tell your worship more of the wart the next time we have confidence; and of other wooers.

**FENTON**

Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Farewell to your worship.

*Exit FENTON*

Truly, an honest gentleman: but Anne loves him not;  
for I know Anne's mind as well as another does. Out  
upon't! what have I forgot?

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before PAGE'S house.

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE, with a letter*

### MISTRESS PAGE

What, have I scaped love-letters in the holiday-time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them? Let me see.

*Reads*

'Ask me no reason why I love you; for though Love use Reason for his physician, he admits him not for his counsellor. You are not young, no more am I; go to then, there's sympathy: you are merry, so am I; ha, ha! then there's more sympathy: you love sack, and so do I; would you desire better sympathy? Let it suffice thee, Mistress Page,--at the least, if the love of soldier can suffice,--that I love thee. I will not say, pity me; 'tis not a soldier-like phrase: but I say, love me. By me, Thine own true knight,  
By day or night,  
Or any kind of light,  
With all his might  
For thee to fight, JOHN FALSTAFF'  
What a Herod of Jewry is this! O wicked world! One that is well-nigh worn to pieces with age to show himself a young gallant! What an unweighed behavior hath this Flemish drunkard picked--with the devil's name!--out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company! What should I say to him? I was then frugal of my mirth: Heaven forgive me! Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of men. How

shall I be revenged on him? for revenged I will be,  
as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

*Enter MISTRESS FORD*

**MISTRESS FORD**

Mistress Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very  
ill.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Faith, but you do, in my mind.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Well, I do then; yet I say I could show you to the  
contrary. O Mistress Page, give me some counsel!

**MISTRESS PAGE**

What's the matter, woman?

**MISTRESS FORD**

O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect, I  
could come to such honour!

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Hang the trifle, woman! take the honour. What is  
it? dispense with trifles; what is it?

## **MISTRESS FORD**

If I would but go to hell for an eternal moment or so,  
I could be knighted.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

What? thou liest! Sir Alice Ford! These knights  
will hack; and so thou shouldst not alter the  
article of thy gentry.

## **MISTRESS FORD**

We burn daylight: here, read, read; perceive how I  
might be knighted. I shall think the worse of fat  
men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of  
men's liking: and yet he would not swear; praised  
women's modesty; and gave such orderly and  
well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness, that I  
would have sworn his disposition would have gone to  
the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere  
and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to  
the tune of 'Green Sleeves.' What tempest, I trow,  
threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his  
belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be revenged  
on him? I think the best way were to entertain him  
with hope, till the wicked fire of lust have melted  
him in his own grease. Did you ever hear the like?

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and  
Ford differs! To thy great comfort in this mystery  
of ill opinions, here's the twin-brother of thy  
letter: but let thine inherit first; for, I  
protest, mine never shall. I warrant he hath a  
thousand of these letters, writ with blank space for  
different names--sure, more,--and these are of the  
second edition: he will print them, out of doubt;  
for he cares not what he puts into the press, when  
he would put us two. I had rather be a giantess,  
and lie under Mount Pelion. Well, I will find you

twenty lascivious turtles ere one chaste man.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Why, this is the very same; the very hand, the very words. What doth he think of us?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Nay, I know not: it makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I'll entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted withal; for, sure, unless he know some strain in me, that I know not myself, he would never have boarded me in this fury.

**MISTRESS FORD**

'Boarding,' call you it? I'll be sure to keep him above deck.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

So will I if he come under my hatches, I'll never to sea again. Let's be revenged on him: let's appoint him a meeting; give him a show of comfort in his suit and lead him on with a fine-baited delay, till he hath pawned his horses to mine host of the Garter.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Nay, I will consent to act any villany against him, that may not sully the chariness of our honesty. O, that my husband saw this letter! it would give eternal food to his jealousy.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Why, look where he comes; and my good man too: he's as far from jealousy as I am from giving him cause; and that I hope is an unmeasurable distance.

**MISTRESS FORD**

You are the happier woman.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Let's consult together against this greasy knight.  
Come hither.

*They retire*

*Enter FORD with PISTOL, and PAGE with NYM*

**FORD**

Well, I hope it be not so.

**PISTOL**

Hope is a curtal dog in some affairs:  
Sir John affects thy wife.

**FORD**

Why, sir, my wife is not young.

**PISTOL**

He woos both high and low, both rich and poor,  
Both young and old, one with another, Ford;  
He loves the gallimaufry: Ford, perpend.

**FORD**

Love my wife!

**PISTOL**

With liver burning hot. Prevent, or go thou,  
Like Sir Actaeon he, with Ringwood at thy heels:  
O, odious is the name!

**FORD**

What name, sir?

**PISTOL**

The horn, I say. Farewell.

Take heed, have open eye, for thieves do foot by night:

Take heed, ere summer comes or cuckoo-birds do sing.

Away, Sir Corporal Nym!

Believe it, Page; he speaks sense.

*Exit*

**FORD**

[Aside] I will be patient; I will find out this.

**NYM**

[To PAGE] And this is true; I like not the humour of lying. He hath wronged me in some humours: I should have borne the humoured letter to her; but I have a sword and it shall bite upon my necessity.

He loves your wife; there's the short and the long.

My name is Corporal Nym; I speak and I avouch; 'tis true: my name is Nym and Falstaff loves your wife.

Adieu. I love not the humour of bread and cheese, and there's the humour of it. Adieu.

*Exit*

**PAGE**

'The humour of it,' quoth a! here's a fellow frights English out of his wits.

**FORD**

I will seek out Falstaff.

**PAGE**

I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

**FORD**

If I do find it: well.

**PAGE**

I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest  
o' the town commended him for a true man.

**FORD**

'Twas a good sensible fellow: well.

**PAGE**

How now, Meg!

*MISTRESS PAGE and MISTRESS FORD come forward*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Whither go you, George? Hark you.

**MISTRESS FORD**

How now, sweet Frank! why art thou melancholy?

**FORD**

I melancholy! I am not melancholy. Get you home, go.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Faith, thou hast some crotchets in thy head. Now,  
will you go, Mistress Page?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Have with you. You'll come to dinner, George.

*Aside to MISTRESS FORD*

Look who comes yonder: she shall be our messenger  
to this paltry knight.

**MISTRESS FORD**

[Aside to MISTRESS PAGE] Trust me, I thought on her:  
she'll fit it.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

You are come to see my daughter Anne?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Ay, forsooth; and, I pray, how does good Mistress Anne?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Go in with us and see: we have an hour's talk with  
you.

*Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and MISTRESS QUICKLY*

**PAGE**

How now, Master Ford!

**FORD**

You heard what this knave told me, did you not?

**PAGE**



Yes: and you heard what the other told me?

**FORD**

Do you think there is truth in them?

**PAGE**

Hang 'em, slaves! I do not think the knight would offer it: but these that accuse him in his intent towards our wives are a yoke of his discarded men; very rogues, now they be out of service.

**FORD**

Were they his men?

**PAGE**

Marry, were they.

**FORD**

I like it never the better for that. Does he lie at the Garter?

**PAGE**

Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend this voyage towards my wife, I would turn her loose to him; and what he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.

**FORD**

I do not misdoubt my wife; but I would be loath to turn them together. A man may be too confident: I would have nothing lie on my head: I cannot be thus satisfied.

**PAGE**

Look where my ranting host of the Garter comes:  
there is either liquor in his pate or money in his  
purse when he looks so merrily.

*Enter Host*

How now, mine host!

**Host**

How now, bully-rook! thou'rt a gentleman.  
Cavaleiro-justice, I say!

*Enter SHALLOW*

**SHALLOW**

I follow, mine host, I follow. Good even and  
twenty, good Master Page! Master Page, will you go  
with us? we have sport in hand.

**Host**

Tell him, cavaleiro-justice; tell him, bully-rook.

**SHALLOW**

Sir, there is a fray to be fought between Sir Hugh  
the Welsh priest and Caius the French doctor.

**FORD**

Good mine host o' the Garter, a word with you.

*Drawing him aside*

**Host**

What sayest thou, my bully-rook?

**SHALLOW**

[To PAGE] Will you go with us to behold it? My merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons; and, I think, hath appointed them contrary places; for, believe me, I hear the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be.

*They converse apart*

**Host**

Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest-cavaleire?

**FORD**

None, I protest: but I'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me recourse to him and tell him my name is Brook; only for a jest.

**Host**

My hand, bully; thou shalt have egress and regress; --said I well?--and thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry knight. Will you go, An-heires?

**SHALLOW**

Have with you, mine host.

**PAGE**

I have heard the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

**SHALLOW**

Tut, sir, I could have told you more. In these times you stand on distance, your passes, stoccadoes, and I know not what: 'tis the heart, Master Page; 'tis here, 'tis here. I have seen the time, with my long sword I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

**Host**

Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag?

**PAGE**

Have with you. I would rather hear them scold than fight.

*Exeunt Host, SHALLOW, and PAGE*

**FORD**

Though Page be a secure fool, an stands so firmly on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my opinion so easily: she was in his company at Page's house; and what they made there, I know not. Well, I will look further into't: and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff. If I find her honest, I lose not my labour; if she be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestowed.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter FALSTAFF and PISTOL*

**FALSTAFF**

I will not lend thee a penny.

**PISTOL**

Why, then the world's mine oyster.  
Which I with sword will open.

**FALSTAFF**

Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn; I have grated upon my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow Nym; or else you had looked through the grate, like a geminy of baboons. I am damned in hell for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good soldiers and tall fellows; and when Mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took't upon mine honour thou hadst it not.

**PISTOL**

Didst not thou share? hadst thou not fifteen pence?

**FALSTAFF**

Reason, you rogue, reason: thinkest thou I'll endanger my soul gratis? At a word, hang no more about me, I am no gibbet for you. Go. A short knife and a throng! To your manor of Pickt-hatch! Go. You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue! you

stand upon your honour! Why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do to keep the terms of my honour precise: I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of God on the left hand and hiding mine honour in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases, and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honour! You will not do it, you!

**PISTOL**

I do relent: what would thou more of man?

*Enter ROBIN*

**ROBIN**

Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

**FALSTAFF**

Let her approach.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Give your worship good morrow.

**FALSTAFF**

Good morrow, good wife.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Not so, an't please your worship.

**FALSTAFF**

Good maid, then.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I'll be sworn,  
As my mother was, the first hour I was born.

**FALSTAFF**

I do believe the swearer. What with me?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

**FALSTAFF**

Two thousand, fair woman: and I'll vouchsafe thee  
the hearing.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

There is one Mistress Ford, sir:--I pray, come a  
little nearer this ways:--I myself dwell with master  
Doctor Caius,--

**FALSTAFF**

Well, on: Mistress Ford, you say,--

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Your worship says very true: I pray your worship,  
come a little nearer this ways.

**FALSTAFF**

I warrant thee, nobody hears; mine own people, mine  
own people.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Are they so? God bless them and make them his servants!

**FALSTAFF**

Well, Mistress Ford; what of her?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord Lord! your worship's a wanton! Well, heaven forgive you and all of us, I pray!

**FALSTAFF**

Mistress Ford; come, Mistress Ford,--

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Marry, this is the short and the long of it; you have brought her into such a canaries as 'tis wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches, I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift; smelling so sweetly, all musk, and so rushing, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best and the fairest, that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her: I had myself twenty angels given me this morning; but I defy all angels, in any such sort, as they say, but in the way of honesty: and, I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all: and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners; but, I warrant you, all is one with her.

**FALSTAFF**

But what says she to me? be brief, my good



she-Mercury.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Marry, she hath received your letter, for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and she gives you to notify that her husband will be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

**FALSTAFF**

Ten and eleven?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Ay, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of: Master Ford, her husband, will be from home. Alas! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him: he's a very jealousy man: she leads a very frampold life with him, good heart.

**FALSTAFF**

Ten and eleven. Woman, commend me to her; I will not fail her.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Why, you say well. But I have another messenger to your worship. Mistress Page hath her hearty commendations to you too: and let me tell you in your ear, she's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor, whoe'er be the other: and she bade me tell your worship that her husband is seldom from home; but she hopes there will come a time. I never knew a woman so dote upon a man: surely I think you have charms, la; yes, in truth.

**FALSTAFF**

Not I, I assure thee: setting the attractions of my good parts aside I have no other charms.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Blessing on your heart for't!

**FALSTAFF**

But, I pray thee, tell me this: has Ford's wife and Page's wife acquainted each other how they love me?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

That were a jest indeed! they have not so little grace, I hope: that were a trick indeed! but Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves: her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page; and truly Master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does: do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will: and truly she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one. You must send her your page; no remedy.

**FALSTAFF**

Why, I will.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Nay, but do so, then: and, look you, he may come and go between you both; and in any case have a nay-word, that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand any thing; for 'tis not good that children should know any wickedness: old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

**FALSTAFF**

Fare thee well: commend me to them both: there's my purse; I am yet thy debtor. Boy, go along with this woman.

*Exeunt MISTRESS QUICKLY and ROBIN*

This news distracts me!

## **PISTOL**

This punk is one of Cupid's carriers:  
Clap on more sails; pursue; up with your fights:  
Give fire: she is my prize, or ocean overwhelm them all!

*Exit*

## **FALSTAFF**

Sayest thou so, old Jack? go thy ways; I'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee. Let them say 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

*Enter BARDOLPH*

## **BAROLPH**

Sir John, there's one Master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

## **FALSTAFF**

Brook is his name?

## **BAROLPH**

Ay, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Call him in.

*Exit BARDOLPH*

Such Brooks are welcome to me, that o'erflow such liquor. Ah, ha! Mistress Ford and Mistress Page have I encompassed you? go to; via!

*Re-enter BARDOLPH, with FORD disguised*

**FORD**

Bless you, sir!

**FALSTAFF**

And you, sir! Would you speak with me?

**FORD**

I make bold to press with so little preparation upon you.

**FALSTAFF**

You're welcome. What's your will? Give us leave, drawer.

*Exit BARDOLPH*

**FORD**

Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.

**FALSTAFF**

Good Master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.

**FORD**

Good Sir John, I sue for yours: not to charge you; for I must let you understand I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are: the which hath something embolden'd me to this unseasoned intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

**FALSTAFF**

Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on.

**FORD**

Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me: if you will help to bear it, Sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

**FALSTAFF**

Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

**FORD**

I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

**FALSTAFF**

Speak, good Master Brook: I shall be glad to be your servant.

**FORD**

Sir, I hear you are a scholar,--I will be brief with you,--and you have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means, as desire, to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection: but, good Sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the register of your own; that I may pass with a reproof the easier, sith you

yourself know how easy it is to be such an offender.

**FALSTAFF**

Very well, sir; proceed.

**FORD**

There is a gentlewoman in this town; her husband's name is Ford.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, sir.

**FORD**

I have long loved her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a doting observance; engrossed opportunities to meet her; fee'd every slight occasion that could but niggardly give me sight of her; not only bought many presents to give her, but have given largely to many to know what she would have given; briefly, I have pursued her as love hath pursued me; which hath been on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or, in my means, meed, I am sure, I have received none; unless experience be a jewel that I have purchased at an infinite rate, and that hath taught me to say this:  
'Love like a shadow flies when substance love pursues;  
Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.'

**FALSTAFF**

Have you received no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

**FORD**

Never.

**FALSTAFF**

Have you importuned her to such a purpose?

**FORD**

Never.

**FALSTAFF**

Of what quality was your love, then?

**FORD**

Like a fair house built on another man's ground; so that I have lost my edifice by mistaking the place where I erected it.

**FALSTAFF**

To what purpose have you unfolded this to me?

**FORD**

When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say, that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, Sir John, here is the heart of my purpose: you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authentic in your place and person, generally allowed for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

**FALSTAFF**

O, sir!

**FORD**

Believe it, for you know it. There is money; spend

it, spend it; spend more; spend all I have; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this Ford's wife: use your art of wooing; win her to consent to you: if any man may, you may as soon as any.

**FALSTAFF**

Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy? Methinks you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

**FORD**

O, understand my drift. She dwells so securely on the excellency of her honour, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself: she is too bright to be looked against. Now, could I could come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance and argument to commend themselves: I could drive her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too too strongly embattled against me. What say you to't, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

**FORD**

O good sir!

**FALSTAFF**

I say you shall.

**FORD**



Want no money, Sir John; you shall want none.

**FALSTAFF**

Want no Mistress Ford, Master Brook; you shall want none. I shall be with her, I may tell you, by her own appointment; even as you came in to me, her assistant or go-between parted from me: I say I shall be with her between ten and eleven; for at that time the jealous rascally knave her husband will be forth. Come you to me at night; you shall know how I speed.

**FORD**

I am blest in your acquaintance. Do you know Ford, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave! I know him not; yet I wrong him to call him poor; they say the jealous wittolly knave hath masses of money; for the which his wife seems to me well-favored. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldly rogue's coffer; and there's my harvest-home.

**FORD**

I would you knew Ford, sir, that you might avoid him if you saw him.

**FALSTAFF**

Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue! I will stare him out of his wits; I will awe him with my cudgel: it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns. Master Brook, thou shalt know I will predominate over the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife. Come to me soon at night. Ford's a knave, and I will aggravate his style; thou, Master Brook, shalt know him for knave and

cuckold. Come to me soon at night.

*Exit*

## **FORD**

What a damned Epicurean rascal is this! My heart is ready to crack with impatience. Who says this is improvident jealousy? my wife hath sent to him; the hour is fixed; the match is made. Would any man have thought this? See the hell of having a false woman! My bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at; and I shall not only receive this villanous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms! names! Amaimon sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends: but Cuckold! Wittol!--Cuckold! the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass: he will trust his wife; he will not be jealous. I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, Parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitae bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself; then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises; and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. God be praised for my jealousy! Eleven o'clock the hour. I will prevent this, detect my wife, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it; better three hours too soon than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold!

*Exit*

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A field near Windsor.

*Enter DOCTOR CAIUS and RUGBY*

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Jack Rugby!

**RUGBY**

Sir?

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Vat is de clock, Jack?

**RUGBY**

'Tis past the hour, sir, that Sir Hugh promised to meet.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come; he has pray his Pible well, dat he is no come: by gar, Jack Rugby, he is dead already, if he be come.

**RUGBY**

He is wise, sir; he knew your worship would kill him, if he came.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, de herring is no dead so as I vill kill him. Take your rapier, Jack; I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

## **RUGBY**

Alas, sir, I cannot fence.

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Villany, take your rapier.

## **RUGBY**

Forbear; here's company.

*Enter Host, SHALLOW, SLENDER, and PAGE*

## **Host**

Bless thee, bully doctor!

## **SHALLOW**

Save you, Master Doctor Caius!

## **PAGE**

Now, good master doctor!

## **SLENDER**

Give you good morrow, sir.

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for?

## **Host**

To see thee fight, to see thee foin, to see thee  
traverse; to see thee here, to see thee there; to  
see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy  
distance, thy montant. Is he dead, my Ethiopian? is

he dead, my Francisco? ha, bully! What says my  
AEsculapius? my Galen? my heart of elder? ha! is  
he dead, bully stale? is he dead?

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of de world; he  
is not show his face.

## **Host**

Thou art a Castalion-King-Urinal. Hector of Greece, my boy!

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

I pray you, bear vitness that me have stay six or  
seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

## **SHALLOW**

He is the wiser man, master doctor: he is a curer of  
souls, and you a curer of bodies; if you should  
fight, you go against the hair of your professions.  
Is it not true, Master Page?

## **PAGE**

Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great  
fighter, though now a man of peace.

## **SHALLOW**

Bodykins, Master Page, though I now be old and of  
the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to  
make one. Though we are justices and doctors and  
churchmen, Master Page, we have some salt of our  
youth in us; we are the sons of women, Master Page.

## **PAGE**

'Tis true, Master Shallow.

## **SHALLOW**

It will be found so, Master Page. Master Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace: you have showed yourself a wise physician, and Sir Hugh hath shown himself a wise and patient churchman. You must go with me, master doctor.

### **Host**

Pardon, guest-justice. A word, Mounseur Mockwater.

### **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Mock-vater! vat is dat?

### **Host**

Mock-water, in our English tongue, is valour, bully.

### **DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, den, I have as mush mock-vater as de Englishman. Scurvy jack-dog priest! by gar, me vill cut his ears.

### **Host**

He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

### **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Clapper-de-claw! vat is dat?

### **Host**

That is, he will make thee amends.

### **DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, me do look he shall clapper-de-claw me;  
for, by gar, me vill have it.

**Host**

And I will provoke him to't, or let him wag.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Me tank you for dat.

**Host**

And, moreover, bully,--but first, master guest, and  
Master Page, and eke Cavaleiro Slender, go you  
through the town to Frogmore.

*Aside to them*

**PAGE**

Sir Hugh is there, is he?

**Host**

He is there: see what humour he is in; and I will  
bring the doctor about by the fields. Will it do well?

**SHALLOW**

We will do it.

**PAGE SHALLOW SLENDER**

Adieu, good master doctor.

*Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER*

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak for a

jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

**Host**

Let him die: sheathe thy impatience, throw cold water on thy choler: go about the fields with me through Frogmore: I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a-feasting; and thou shalt woo her. Cried I aim? said I well?

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, me dank you for dat: by gar, I love you; and I shall procure-a you de good guest, de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

**Host**

For the which I will be thy adversary toward Anne Page. Said I well?

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

**Host**

Let us wag, then.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Come at my heels, Jack Rugby.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A field near Frogmore.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE*

### SIR HUGH EVANS

I pray you now, good master Slender's serving-man,  
and friend Simple by your name, which way have you  
looked for Master Caius, that calls himself doctor of physic?

### SIMPLE

Marry, sir, the pittie-ward, the park-ward, every  
way; old Windsor way, and every way but the town  
way.

### SIR HUGH EVANS

I most feheemently desire you you will also look that  
way.

### SIMPLE

I will, sir.

*Exit*

### SIR HUGH EVANS

'Pless my soul, how full of chollors I am, and  
trempling of mind! I shall be glad if he have  
deceived me. How melancholies I am! I will knog  
his urinals about his knave's costard when I have  
good opportunities for the ork. 'Pless my soul!

*Sings*

To shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals;  
There will we make our beds of roses,  
And a thousand fragrant posies.  
To shallow--  
Mercy on me! I have a great disposition to cry.

*Sings*

Melodious birds sing madrigals--  
When as I sat in Pabylon--  
And a thousand vagram posies.  
To shallow & c.

*Re-enter SIMPLE*

**SIMPLE**

Yonder he is coming, this way, Sir Hugh.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

He's welcome.

*Sings*

To shallow rivers, to whose falls-  
Heaven prosper the right! What weapons is he?

**SIMPLE**

No weapons, sir. There comes my master, Master  
Shallow, and another gentleman, from Frogmore, over  
the stile, this way.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Pray you, give me my gown; or else keep it in your arms.

*Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER*

## **SHALLOW**

How now, master Parson! Good morrow, good Sir Hugh.  
Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student  
from his book, and it is wonderful.

## **SLENDER**

[Aside] Ah, sweet Anne Page!

## **PAGE**

'Save you, good Sir Hugh!

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

'Pless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

## **SHALLOW**

What, the sword and the word! do you study them  
both, master parson?

## **PAGE**

And youthful still! in your doublet and hose this  
raw rheumatic day!

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

There is reasons and causes for it.

## **PAGE**

We are come to you to do a good office, master parson.

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

Fery well: what is it?

## **PAGE**

Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who, belike having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience that ever you saw.

**SHALLOW**

I have lived fourscore years and upward; I never heard a man of his place, gravity and learning, so wide of his own respect.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

What is he?

**PAGE**

I think you know him; Master Doctor Caius, the renowned French physician.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Got's will, and his passion of my heart! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge.

**PAGE**

Why?

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

He has no more knowledge in Hibocrates and Galen, --and he is a knave besides; a cowardly knave as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

**PAGE**

I warrant you, he's the man should fight with him.

**SHALLOW**

[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

**SHALLOW**

It appears so by his weapons. Keep them asunder:  
here comes Doctor Caius.

*Enter Host, DOCTOR CAIUS, and RUGBY*

**PAGE**

Nay, good master parson, keep in your weapon.

**SHALLOW**

So do you, good master doctor.

**Host**

Disarm them, and let them question: let them keep  
their limbs whole and hack our English.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

I pray you, let-a me speak a word with your ear.  
Wherefore vill you not meet-a me?

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

[Aside to DOCTOR CAIUS] Pray you, use your patience:  
in good time.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

[Aside to DOCTOR CAIUS] Pray you let us not be  
laughing-stocks to other men's humours; I desire you

in friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends.

*Aloud*

I will knog your urinals about your knave's cockscomb  
for missing your meetings and appointments.

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Diable! Jack Rugby,--mine host de Jarteer,--have I  
not stay for him to kill him? have I not, at de place  
I did appoint?

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

As I am a Christians soul now, look you, this is the  
place appointed: I'll be judgement by mine host of  
the Garter.

## **Host**

Peace, I say, Gallia and Gaul, French and Welsh,  
soul-curer and body-curer!

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Ay, dat is very good; excellent.

## **Host**

Peace, I say! hear mine host of the Garter. Am I  
politic? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I  
lose my doctor? no; he gives me the potions and the  
motions. Shall I lose my parson, my priest, my Sir  
Hugh? no; he gives me the proverbs and the  
no-verbs. Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so. Give me  
thy hand, celestial; so. Boys of art, I have  
deceived you both; I have directed you to wrong  
places: your hearts are mighty, your skins are  
whole, and let burnt sack be the issue. Come, lay  
their swords to pawn. Follow me, lads of peace;  
follow, follow, follow.

## **SHALLOW**

Trust me, a mad host. Follow, gentlemen, follow.

## **SLENDER**

[Aside] O sweet Anne Page!

*Exeunt SHALLOW, SLENDER, PAGE, and Host*

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Ha, do I perceive dat? have you make-a de sot of us, ha, ha?

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

This is well; he has made us his vlouting-stog. I desire you that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together to be revenge on this same scall, scurvy cogging companion, the host of the Garter.

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, with all my heart. He promise to bring me where is Anne Page; by gar, he deceive me too.

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

Well, I will smite his noddles. Pray you, follow.

*Exeunt*

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A street.

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN*

### MISTRESS PAGE

Nay, keep your way, little gallant; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

### ROBIN

I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man than follow him like a dwarf.

### MISTRESS PAGE

O, you are a flattering boy: now I see you'll be a courtier.

*Enter FORD*

### FORD

Well met, Mistress Page. Whither go you?

### MISTRESS PAGE

Truly, sir, to see your wife. Is she at home?

### FORD

Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company. I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.



**MISTRESS PAGE**

Be sure of that,--two other husbands.

**FORD**

Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my husband had him of. What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

**ROBIN**

Sir John Falstaff.

**FORD**

Sir John Falstaff!

**MISTRESS PAGE**

He, he; I can never hit on's name. There is such a league between my good man and he! Is your wife at home indeed?

**FORD**

Indeed she is.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

By your leave, sir: I am sick till I see her.

*Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN*

**FORD**

Has Page any brains? hath he any eyes? hath he any

thinking? Sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty mile, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score. He pieces out his wife's inclination; he gives her folly motion and advantage: and now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind. And Falstaff's boy with her! Good plots, they are laid; and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well; I will take him, then torture my wife, pluck the borrowed veil of modesty from the so seeming Mistress Page, divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actaeon; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbours shall cry aim.

*Clock heard*

The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search: there I shall find Falstaff: I shall be rather praised for this than mocked; for it is as positive as the earth is firm that Falstaff is there: I will go.

*Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, SLENDER, Host, SIR HUGH EVANS, DOCTOR CAIUS, and RUGBY*

**SHALLOW PAGE & C**

Well met, Master Ford.

**FORD**

Trust me, a good knot: I have good cheer at home; and I pray you all go with me.

**SHALLOW**

I must excuse myself, Master Ford.

**SLENDER**

And so must I, sir: we have appointed to dine with

Mistress Anne, and I would not break with her for more money than I'll speak of.

## **SHALLOW**

We have lingered about a match between Anne Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer.

## **SLENDER**

I hope I have your good will, father Page.

## **PAGE**

You have, Master Slender; I stand wholly for you: but my wife, master doctor, is for you altogether.

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Ay, be-gar; and de maid is love-a me: my nursh-a  
Quickly tell me so mush.

## **Host**

What say you to young Master Fenton? he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holiday, he smells April and May: he will carry't, he will carry't; 'tis in his buttons; he will carry't.

## **PAGE**

Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having: he kept company with the wild prince and Poins; he is of too high a region; he knows too much. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance: if he take her, let him take her simply; the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

## **FORD**

I beseech you heartily, some of you go home with me  
to dinner: besides your cheer, you shall have  
sport; I will show you a monster. Master doctor,  
you shall go; so shall you, Master Page; and you, Sir Hugh.

## **SHALLOW**

Well, fare you well: we shall have the freer wooing  
at Master Page's.

*Exeunt SHALLOW, and SLENDER*

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Go home, John Rugby; I come anon.

*Exit RUGBY*

## **Host**

Farewell, my hearts: I will to my honest knight  
Falstaff, and drink canary with him.

*Exit*

## **FORD**

[Aside] I think I shall drink in pipe wine first  
with him; I'll make him dance. Will you go, gentles?

## **All**

Have with you to see this monster.

*Exeunt*

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in FORD'S house.

*Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE*

**MISTRESS FORD**

What, John! What, Robert!

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Quickly, quickly! is the buck-basket--

**MISTRESS FORD**

I warrant. What, Robin, I say!

*Enter Servants with a basket*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Come, come, come.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Here, set it down.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Give your men the charge; we must be brief.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Marry, as I told you before, John and Robert, be ready here hard by in the brew-house: and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and without any pause

or staggering take this basket on your shoulders:  
that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry  
it among the whitsters in Datchet-mead, and there  
empty it in the muddy ditch close by the Thames side.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

You will do it?

**MISTRESS FORD**

I ha' told them over and over; they lack no  
direction. Be gone, and come when you are called.

*Exeunt Servants*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Here comes little Robin.

*Enter ROBIN*

**MISTRESS FORD**

How now, my eyas-musket! what news with you?

**ROBIN**

My master, Sir John, is come in at your back-door,  
Mistress Ford, and requests your company.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

You little Jack-a-Lent, have you been true to us?

**ROBIN**

Ay, I'll be sworn. My master knows not of your  
being here and hath threatened to put me into  
everlasting liberty if I tell you of it; for he  
swears he'll turn me away.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Thou'rt a good boy: this secrecy of thine shall be  
a tailor to thee and shall make thee a new doublet  
and hose. I'll go hide me.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Do so. Go tell thy master I am alone.

*Exit ROBIN*

Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

I warrant thee; if I do not act it, hiss me.

*Exit*

**MISTRESS FORD**

Go to, then: we'll use this unwholesome humidity,  
this gross watery pumpion; we'll teach him to know  
turtles from jays.

*Enter FALSTAFF*

**FALSTAFF**

Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? Why, now let  
me die, for I have lived long enough: this is the  
period of my ambition: O this blessed hour!

**MISTRESS FORD**

O sweet Sir John!

**FALSTAFF**

Mistress Ford, I cannot cog, I cannot prate,  
Mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish: I would  
thy husband were dead: I'll speak it before the  
best lord; I would make thee my lady.

### **MISTRESS FORD**

I your lady, Sir John! alas, I should be a pitiful lady!

### **FALSTAFF**

Let the court of France show me such another. I see  
how thine eye would emulate the diamond: thou hast  
the right arched beauty of the brow that becomes the  
ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of  
Venetian admittance.

### **MISTRESS FORD**

A plain kerchief, Sir John: my brows become nothing  
else; nor that well neither.

### **FALSTAFF**

By the Lord, thou art a traitor to say so: thou  
wouldst make an absolute courtier; and the firm  
fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion  
to thy gait in a semi-circled farthingale. I see  
what thou wert, if Fortune thy foe were not, Nature  
thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

### **MISTRESS FORD**

Believe me, there is no such thing in me.

### **FALSTAFF**

What made me love thee? let that persuade thee  
there's something extraordinary in thee. Come, I  
cannot cog and say thou art this and that, like a  
many of these lipping hawthorn-buds, that come like  
women in men's apparel, and smell like Bucklersbury



in simple time; I cannot: but I love thee; none  
but thee; and thou deservest it.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Do not betray me, sir. I fear you love Mistress Page.

**FALSTAFF**

Thou mightst as well say I love to walk by the  
Counter-gate, which is as hateful to me as the reek  
of a lime-kiln.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Well, heaven knows how I love you; and you shall one  
day find it.

**FALSTAFF**

Keep in that mind; I'll deserve it.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Nay, I must tell you, so you do; or else I could not  
be in that mind.

**ROBIN**

[Within] Mistress Ford, Mistress Ford! here's  
Mistress Page at the door, sweating and blowing and  
looking wildly, and would needs speak with you presently.

**FALSTAFF**

She shall not see me: I will ensconce me behind the arras.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Pray you, do so: she's a very tattling woman.

*FALSTAFF hides himself*

*Re-enter MISTRESS PAGE and ROBIN*

What's the matter? how now!

**MISTRESS PAGE**

O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You're shamed, you're overthrown, you're undone for ever!

**MISTRESS FORD**

What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

O well-a-day, Mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

**MISTRESS FORD**

What cause of suspicion?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

What cause of suspicion! Out pon you! how am I mistook in you!

**MISTRESS FORD**

Why, alas, what's the matter?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his assence: you are undone.

**MISTRESS FORD**

'Tis not so, I hope.

### **MISTRESS PAGE**

Pray heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here! but 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here convey, convey him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

### **MISTRESS FORD**

What shall I do? There is a gentleman my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

### **MISTRESS PAGE**

For shame! never stand 'you had rather' and 'you had rather:' your husband's here at hand, bethink you of some conveyance: in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me! Look, here is a basket: if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or--it is whiting-time --send him by your two men to Datchet-mead.

### **MISTRESS FORD**

He's too big to go in there. What shall I do?

### **FALSTAFF**

[Coming forward] Let me see't, let me see't, O, let me see't! I'll in, I'll in. Follow your friend's counsel. I'll in.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

What, Sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight?

## **FALSTAFF**

I love thee. Help me away. Let me creep in here.  
I'll never--

*Gets into the basket; they cover him with foul linen*

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

Help to cover your master, boy. Call your men,  
Mistress Ford. You dissembling knight!

## **MISTRESS FORD**

What, John! Robert! John!

*Exit ROBIN*

*Re-enter Servants*

Go take up these clothes here quickly. Where's the  
cowl-staff? look, how you drumble! Carry them to  
the laundress in Datchet-meat; quickly, come.

*Enter FORD, PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

## **FORD**

Pray you, come near: if I suspect without cause,  
why then make sport at me; then let me be your jest;  
I deserve it. How now! whither bear you this?

## **Servant**

To the laundress, forsooth.

## **MISTRESS FORD**

Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? You were best meddle with buck-washing.

**FORD**

Buck! I would I could wash myself of the buck!  
Buck, buck, buck! Ay, buck; I warrant you, buck;  
and of the season too, it shall appear.

*Exeunt Servants with the basket*

Gentlemen, I have dreamed to-night; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here be my keys: ascend my chambers; search, seek, find out: I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox. Let me stop this way first.

*Locking the door*

So, now uncape.

**PAGE**

Good Master Ford, be contented: you wrong yourself too much.

**FORD**

True, Master Page. Up, gentlemen: you shall see sport anon: follow me, gentlemen.

*Exit*

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

This is fery fantastical humours and jealousies.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, 'tis no the fashion of France; it is not jealous in France.

## **PAGE**

Nay, follow him, gentlemen; see the issue of his search.

*Exeunt PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

Is there not a double excellency in this?

## **MISTRESS FORD**

I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or Sir John.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

What a taking was he in when your husband asked who was in the basket!

## **MISTRESS FORD**

I am half afraid he will have need of washing; so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

Hang him, dishonest rascal! I would all of the same strain were in the same distress.

## **MISTRESS FORD**

I think my husband hath some special suspicion of Falstaff's being here; for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

I will lay a plot to try that; and we will yet have more tricks with Falstaff: his dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Shall we send that foolish carrion, Mistress  
Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the  
water; and give him another hope, to betray him to  
another punishment?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

We will do it: let him be sent for to-morrow,  
eight o'clock, to have amends.

*Re-enter FORD, PAGE, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

**FORD**

I cannot find him: may be the knave bragged of that  
he could not compass.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

[Aside to MISTRESS FORD] Heard you that?

**MISTRESS FORD**

You use me well, Master Ford, do you?

**FORD**

Ay, I do so.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

**FORD**

Amen!

**MISTRESS PAGE**

You do yourself mighty wrong, Master Ford.

**FORD**

Ay, ay; I must bear it.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, nor I too: there is no bodies.

**PAGE**

Fie, fie, Master Ford! are you not ashamed? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not ha' your distemper in this kind for the wealth of Windsor Castle.

**FORD**

'Tis my fault, Master Page: I suffer for it.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

You suffer for a pad conscience: your wife is as honest a 'omans as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

**FORD**

Well, I promised you a dinner. Come, come, walk in



the Park: I pray you, pardon me; I will hereafter make known to you why I have done this. Come, wife; come, Mistress Page. I pray you, pardon me; pray heartily, pardon me.

**PAGE**

Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll mock him. I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast: after, we'll a-birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush. Shall it be so?

**FORD**

Any thing.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

If there is one, I shall make two in the company.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

If dere be one or two, I shall make-a the turd.

**FORD**

Pray you, go, Master Page.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

I pray you now, remembrance tomorrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Dat is good; by gar, with all my heart!

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

A lousy knave, to have his gibes and his mockeries!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A room in PAGE'S house.

*Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE*

**FENTON**

I see I cannot get thy father's love;  
Therefore no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

**ANNE PAGE**

Alas, how then?

**FENTON**

Why, thou must be thyself.  
He doth object I am too great of birth--,  
And that, my state being gall'd with my expense,  
I seek to heal it only by his wealth:  
Besides these, other bars he lays before me,  
My riots past, my wild societies;  
And tells me 'tis a thing impossible  
I should love thee but as a property.

**ANNE PAGE**

May be he tells you true.

**FENTON**

No, heaven so speed me in my time to come!  
Albeit I will confess thy father's wealth  
Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne:  
Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value  
Than stamps in gold or sums in sealed bags;  
And 'tis the very riches of thyself

That now I aim at.

**ANNE PAGE**

Gentle Master Fenton,  
Yet seek my father's love; still seek it, sir:  
If opportunity and humblest suit  
Cannot attain it, why, then,--hark you hither!

*They converse apart*

*Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and MISTRESS QUICKLY*

**SHALLOW**

Break their talk, Mistress Quickly: my kinsman shall  
speak for himself.

**SLENDER**

I'll make a shaft or a bolt on't: 'slid, 'tis but  
venturing.

**SHALLOW**

Be not dismayed.

**SLENDER**

No, she shall not dismay me: I care not for that,  
but that I am afeard.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Hark ye; Master Slender would speak a word with you.

**ANNE PAGE**

I come to him.

*Aside*

This is my father's choice.  
O, what a world of vile ill-favor'd faults  
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a-year!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

And how does good Master Fenton? Pray you, a word with you.

**SHALLOW**

She's coming; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father!

**SLENDER**

I had a father, Mistress Anne; my uncle can tell you  
good jests of him. Pray you, uncle, tell Mistress  
Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out of  
a pen, good uncle.

**SHALLOW**

Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

**SLENDER**

Ay, that I do; as well as I love any woman in  
Gloucestershire.

**SHALLOW**

He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

**SLENDER**

Ay, that I will, come cut and long-tail, under the  
degree of a squire.

**SHALLOW**

He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

**ANNE PAGE**

Good Master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

**SHALLOW**

Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort. She calls you, coz: I'll leave you.

**ANNE PAGE**

Now, Master Slender,--

**SLENDER**

Now, good Mistress Anne,--

**ANNE PAGE**

What is your will?

**SLENDER**

My will! 'od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven; I am not such a sickly creature, I give heaven praise.

**ANNE PAGE**

I mean, Master Slender, what would you with me?

**SLENDER**

Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you. Your father and my uncle hath made motions: if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole! They can tell you how things go better than I can: you may ask your father; here he comes.

*Enter PAGE and MISTRESS PAGE*

**PAGE**

Now, Master Slender: love him, daughter Anne.  
Why, how now! what does Master Fenton here?  
You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house:  
I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of.

**FENTON**

Nay, Master Page, be not impatient.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Good Master Fenton, come not to my child.

**PAGE**

She is no match for you.

**FENTON**

Sir, will you hear me?

**PAGE**

No, good Master Fenton.  
Come, Master Shallow; come, son Slender, in.  
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, Master Fenton.

*Exeunt PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Speak to Mistress Page.

**FENTON**

Good Mistress Page, for that I love your daughter  
In such a righteous fashion as I do,  
Perforce, against all cheques, rebukes and manners,  
I must advance the colours of my love

And not retire: let me have your good will.

**ANNE PAGE**

Good mother, do not marry me to yond fool.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

I mean it not; I seek you a better husband.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

That's my master, master doctor.

**ANNE PAGE**

Alas, I had rather be set quick i' the earth  
And bowl'd to death with turnips!

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Come, trouble not yourself. Good Master Fenton,  
I will not be your friend nor enemy:  
My daughter will I question how she loves you,  
And as I find her, so am I affected.  
Till then farewell, sir: she must needs go in;  
Her father will be angry.

**FENTON**

Farewell, gentle mistress: farewell, Nan.

*Exeunt MISTRESS PAGE and ANNE PAGE*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

This is my doing, now: 'Nay,' said I, 'will you cast  
away your child on a fool, and a physician? Look on  
Master Fenton:' this is my doing.

**FENTON**



I thank thee; and I pray thee, once to-night  
Give my sweet Nan this ring: there's for thy pains.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Now heaven send thee good fortune!

*Exit FENTON*

A kind heart he hath: a woman would run through  
fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet I  
would my master had Mistress Anne; or I would  
Master Slender had her; or, in sooth, I would Master  
Fenton had her; I will do what I can for them all  
three; for so I have promised, and I'll be as good  
as my word; but speciously for Master Fenton. Well,  
I must of another errand to Sir John Falstaff from  
my two mistresses: what a beast am I to slack it!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH*

**FALSTAFF**

Bardolph, I say,--

**BARDOLPH**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Go fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in't.

*Exit BARDOLPH*

Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames? Well, if I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out and buttered, and give them to a dog for a new-year's gift. The rogues slighted me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a blind bitch's puppies, fifteen i' the litter: and you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drowned, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow,--a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

*Re-enter BARDOLPH with sack*

**BARDOLPH**

Here's Mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you.

**FALSTAFF**

Let me pour in some sack to the Thames water; for my belly's as cold as if I had swallowed snowballs for pills to cool the reins. Call her in.

**BARDOLPH**

Come in, woman!

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

By your leave; I cry you mercy: give your worship good morrow.

**FALSTAFF**

Take away these chalices. Go brew me a pottle of sack finely.

**BARDOLPH**

With eggs, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

Simple of itself; I'll no pullet-sperm in my brewage.

*Exit BARDOLPH*

How now!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Marry, sir, I come to your worship from Mistress Ford.

**FALSTAFF**

Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough; I was thrown into the ford; I have my belly full of ford.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: she does so take on with her men; they mistook their erection.

**FALSTAFF**

So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman's promise.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a-birding; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine: I must carry her word quickly: she'll make you amends, I warrant you.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, I will visit her: tell her so; and bid her think what a man is: let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I will tell her.

**FALSTAFF**

Do so. Between nine and ten, sayest thou?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Eight and nine, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, be gone: I will not miss her.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Peace be with you, sir.

*Exit*

**FALSTAFF**

I marvel I hear not of Master Brook; he sent me word to stay within: I like his money well. O, here he comes.

*Enter FORD*

**FORD**

Bless you, sir!

**FALSTAFF**

Now, master Brook, you come to know what hath passed between me and Ford's wife?

**FORD**

That, indeed, Sir John, is my business.

**FALSTAFF**

Master Brook, I will not lie to you: I was at her house the hour she appointed me.

**FORD**

And sped you, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

Very ill-favoredly, Master Brook.

**FORD**

How so, sir? Did she change her determination?

**FALSTAFF**

No, Master Brook; but the peaking Cornuto her husband, Master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter, after we had embraced, kissed, protested, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and instigated by his distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

**FORD**

What, while you were there?

**FALSTAFF**

While I was there.

**FORD**

And did he search for you, and could not find you?

**FALSTAFF**

You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one Mistress Page; gives intelligence of Ford's approach; and, in her invention and Ford's wife's distraction, they conveyed me into a buck-basket.

**FORD**

A buck-basket!

**FALSTAFF**

By the Lord, a buck-basket! rammed me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, greasy napkins; that, Master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villanous smell that ever offended nostril.

## **FORD**

And how long lay you there?

## **FALSTAFF**

Nay, you shall hear, Master Brook, what I have suffered to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were called forth by their mistress to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane: they took me on their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the door, who asked them once or twice what they had in their basket: I quaked for fear, lest the lunatic knave would have searched it; but fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well: on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, Master Brook: I suffered the pangs of three several deaths; first, an intolerable fright, to be detected with a jealous rotten bell-wether; next, to be compassed, like a good bilbo, in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head; and then, to be stopped in, like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease: think of that,--a man of my kidney,--think of that,--that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw: it was a miracle to scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse-shoe; think of that,--hissing hot,--think of that, Master Brook.

## **FORD**

In good sadness, I am sorry that for my sake you have sufferd all this. My suit then is desperate; you'll undertake her no more?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Brook, I will be thrown into Etna, as I have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a-birding: I have received from her another embassy of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, Master Brook.

**FORD**

'Tis past eight already, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Is it? I will then address me to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed; and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her. Adieu. You shall have her, Master Brook; Master Brook, you shall cuckold Ford.

*Exit*

**FORD**

Hum! ha! is this a vision? is this a dream? do I sleep? Master Ford awake! awake, Master Ford! there's a hole made in your best coat, Master Ford. This 'tis to be married! this 'tis to have linen and buck-baskets! Well, I will proclaim myself what I am: I will now take the lecher; he is at my house; he cannot 'scape me; 'tis impossible he should; he cannot creep into a halfpenny purse, nor into a pepper-box: but, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not shall not make me tame: if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go



with me: I'll be horn-mad.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 3, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A street.

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS QUICKLY, and WILLIAM PAGE*

### MISTRESS PAGE

Is he at Master Ford's already, think'st thou?

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Sure he is by this, or will be presently: but, truly, he is very courageous mad about his throwing into the water. Mistress Ford desires you to come suddenly.

### MISTRESS PAGE

I'll be with her by and by; I'll but bring my young man here to school. Look, where his master comes; 'tis a playing-day, I see.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS*

How now, Sir Hugh! no school to-day?

### SIR HUGH EVANS

No; Master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

Blessing of his heart!

### MISTRESS PAGE

Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in

the world at his book. I pray you, ask him some questions in his accidence.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Come hither, William; hold up your head; come.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Come on, sirrah; hold up your head; answer your master, be not afraid.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

William, how many numbers is in nouns?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Two.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Truly, I thought there had been one number more, because they say, 'Od's nouns.'

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Peace your tattlings! What is 'fair,' William?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Pulcher.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Polecats! there are fairer things than polecats, sure.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

You are a very simplicity 'oman: I pray you peace. What is 'lapis,' William?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

A stone.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

And what is 'a stone,' William?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

A pebble.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

No, it is 'lapis:' I pray you, remember in your prain.

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Lapis.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

That is a good William. What is he, William, that does lend articles?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined, Singulariter, nominativo, hic, haec, hoc.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Nominativo, hig, hag, hog; pray you, mark: genitivo, hujus. Well, what is your accusative case?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Accusativo, hinc.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

I pray you, have your remembrance, child,  
accusative, hung, hang, hog.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

'Hang-hog' is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Leave your prabbles, 'oman. What is the focative  
case, William?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

O,--vocativo, O.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Remember, William; focative is caret.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

And that's a good root.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

'Oman, forbear.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Peace!

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

What is your genitive case plural, William?

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Genitive case!

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Ay.

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Genitive,--horum, harum, horum.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Vengeance of Jenny's case! fie on her! never name  
her, child, if she be a whore.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

For shame, 'oman.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

You do ill to teach the child such words: he  
teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do  
fast enough of themselves, and to call 'horum:' fie upon you!

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

'Oman, art thou lunatics? hast thou no  
understandings for thy cases and the numbers of the  
genders? Thou art as foolish Christian creatures as  
I would desires.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Prithee, hold thy peace.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

**WILLIAM PAGE**

Forsooth, I have forgot.

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

It is qui, quae, quod: if you forget your 'quies,'  
your 'quaes,' and your 'quods,' you must be  
preeches. Go your ways, and play; go.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

He is a good sprag memory. Farewell, Mistress Page.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

Adieu, good Sir Hugh.

*Exit SIR HUGH EVANS*

Get you home, boy. Come, we stay too long.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in FORD'S house.

*Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS FORD*

### FALSTAFF

Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance. I see you are obsequious in your love, and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, Mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement, complement and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

### MISTRESS FORD

He's a-birding, sweet Sir John.

### MISTRESS PAGE

[Within] What, ho, gossip Ford! what, ho!

### MISTRESS FORD

Step into the chamber, Sir John.

*Exit FALSTAFF*

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE*

### MISTRESS PAGE

How now, sweetheart! who's at home besides yourself?

### MISTRESS FORD



Why, none but mine own people.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Indeed!

**MISTRESS FORD**

No, certainly.

*Aside to her*

Speak louder.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Why?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes again: he so takes on yonder with my husband; so rails against all married mankind; so curses all Eve's daughters, of what complexion soever; and so buffets himself on the forehead, crying, 'Peer out, peer out!' that any madness I ever yet beheld seemed but tameness, civility and patience, to this his distemper he is in now: I am glad the fat knight is not here.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Why, does he talk of him?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Of none but him; and swears he was carried out, the last time he searched for him, in a basket; protests

to my husband he is now here, and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion: but I am glad the knight is not here; now he shall see his own foolery.

**MISTRESS FORD**

How near is he, Mistress Page?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Hard by; at street end; he will be here anon.

**MISTRESS FORD**

I am undone! The knight is here.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Why then you are utterly shamed, and he's but a dead man. What a woman are you!--Away with him, away with him! better shame than murder.

**FORD**

Which way should he go? how should I bestow him?  
Shall I put him into the basket again?

*Re-enter FALSTAFF*

**FALSTAFF**

No, I'll come no more i' the basket. May I not go out ere he come?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Alas, three of Master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none shall issue out; otherwise you might slip away ere he came. But what make you here?

**FALSTAFF**

What shall I do? I'll creep up into the chimney.

**MISTRESS FORD**

There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces. Creep into the kiln-hole.

**FALSTAFF**

Where is it?

**MISTRESS FORD**

He will seek there, on my word. Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note: there is no hiding you in the house.

**FALSTAFF**

I'll go out then.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

If you go out in your own semblance, you die, Sir John. Unless you go out disguised--

**MISTRESS FORD**

How might we disguise him?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Alas the day, I know not! There is no woman's gown big enough for him otherwise he might put on a hat, a muffler and a kerchief, and so escape.

**FALSTAFF**

Good hearts, devise something: any extremity rather than a mischief.

**MISTRESS FORD**

My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a gown above.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

On my word, it will serve him; she's as big as he is: and there's her thrummed hat and her muffler too. Run up, Sir John.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Go, go, sweet Sir John: Mistress Page and I will look some linen for your head.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Quick, quick! we'll come dress you straight: put on the gown the while.

*Exit FALSTAFF*

**MISTRESS FORD**

I would my husband would meet him in this shape: he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford; he swears she's a witch; forbade her my house and hath threatened to beat her.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel, and the devil guide his cudgel afterwards!

**MISTRESS FORD**

But is my husband coming?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Ah, in good sadness, is he; and talks of the basket too, howsoever he hath had intelligence.

**MISTRESS FORD**

We'll try that; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Nay, but he'll be here presently: let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.

**MISTRESS FORD**

I'll first direct my men what they shall do with the basket. Go up; I'll bring linen for him straight.

*Exit*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough. We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do, Wives may be merry, and yet honest too: We do not act that often jest and laugh; 'Tis old, but true, Still swine eat all the draff.

*Exit*

*Re-enter MISTRESS FORD with two Servants*

**MISTRESS FORD**

Go, sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders: your master is hard at door; if he bid you set it down, obey him: quickly, dispatch.

*Exit*

**First Servant**

Come, come, take it up.

**Second Servant**

Pray heaven it be not full of knight again.

**First Servant**

I hope not; I had as lief bear so much lead.

*Enter FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

**FORD**

Ay, but if it prove true, Master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again? Set down the basket, villain! Somebody call my wife. Youth in a basket! O you panderly rascals! there's a knot, a ging, a pack, a conspiracy against me: now shall the devil be shamed. What, wife, I say! Come, come forth! Behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching!

**PAGE**

Why, this passes, Master Ford; you are not to go loose any longer; you must be pinioned.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Why, this is lunatics! this is mad as a mad dog!

**SHALLOW**

Indeed, Master Ford, this is not well, indeed.

**FORD**

So say I too, sir.

*Re-enter MISTRESS FORD*

Come hither, Mistress Ford; Mistress Ford the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband! I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

**MISTRESS FORD**

Heaven be my witness you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

**FORD**

Well said, brazen-face! hold it out. Come forth, sirrah!

*Pulling clothes out of the basket*

**PAGE**

This passes!

**MISTRESS FORD**

Are you not ashamed? let the clothes alone.

**FORD**

I shall find you anon.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

'Tis unreasonable! Will you take up your wife's clothes? Come away.

**FORD**

Empty the basket, I say!

**MISTRESS FORD**

Why, man, why?

**FORD**

Master Page, as I am a man, there was one conveyed out of my house yesterday in this basket: why may not he be there again? In my house I am sure he is: my intelligence is true; my jealousy is reasonable. Pluck me out all the linen.

**MISTRESS FORD**

If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

**PAGE**

Here's no man.

**SHALLOW**

By my fidelity, this is not well, Master Ford; this wrongs you.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Master Ford, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart: this is jealousies.

**FORD**

Well, he's not here I seek for.

**PAGE**

No, nor nowhere else but in your brain.

**FORD**

Help to search my house this one time. If I find



not what I seek, show no colour for my extremity; let me for ever be your table-sport; let them say of me, 'As jealous as Ford, Chat searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.' Satisfy me once more; once more search with me.

**MISTRESS FORD**

What, ho, Mistress Page! come you and the old woman down; my husband will come into the chamber.

**FORD**

Old woman! what old woman's that?

**MISTRESS FORD**

Nay, it is my maid's aunt of Brentford.

**FORD**

A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean! Have I not forbid her my house? She comes of errands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery as this is, beyond our element we know nothing. Come down, you witch, you hag, you; come down, I say!

**MISTRESS FORD**

Nay, good, sweet husband! Good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

*Re-enter FALSTAFF in woman's clothes, and MISTRESS PAGE*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Come, Mother Prat; come, give me your hand.

## **FORD**

I'll prat her.

*Beating him*

Out of my door, you witch, you hag, you baggage, you polecat, you runyon! out, out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you.

*Exit FALSTAFF*

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

Are you not ashamed? I think you have killed the poor woman.

## **MISTRESS FORD**

Nay, he will do it. 'Tis a goodly credit for you.

## **FORD**

Hang her, witch!

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

By the yea and no, I think the 'oman is a witch indeed: I like not when a 'oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under his muffler.

## **FORD**

Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you, follow; see but the issue of my jealousy: if I cry out thus upon no trail, never trust me when I open again.

## **PAGE**

Let's obey his humour a little further: come, gentlemen.

*Exeunt FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, DOCTOR CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Nay, by the mass, that he did not; he beat him most unpitifully, methought.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

I'll have the cudgel hallowed and hung o'er the altar; it hath done meritorious service.

**MISTRESS FORD**

What think you? may we, with the warrant of womanhood and the witness of a good conscience, pursue him with any further revenge?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

The spirit of wantonness is, sure, scared out of him: if the devil have him not in fee-simple, with fine and recovery, he will never, I think, in the way of waste, attempt us again.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Shall we tell our husbands how we have served him?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Yes, by all means; if it be but to scrape the figures out of your husband's brains. If they can find in their hearts the poor unvirtuous fat knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will still be the ministers.

## **MISTRESS FORD**

I'll warrant they'll have him publicly shamed: and  
methinks there would be no period to the jest,  
should he not be publicly shamed.

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

Come, to the forge with it then; shape it: I would  
not have things cool.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter Host and BARDOLPH*

### BARDOLPH

Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your horses: the duke himself will be to-morrow at court, and they are going to meet him.

### Host

What duke should that be comes so secretly? I hear not of him in the court. Let me speak with the gentlemen: they speak English?

### BARDOLPH

Ay, sir; I'll call them to you.

### Host

They shall have my horses; but I'll make them pay; I'll sauce them: they have had my house a week at command; I have turned away my other guests: they must come off; I'll sauce them. Come.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A room in FORD'S house.

*Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

### SIR HUGH EVANS

'Tis one of the best discretions of a 'oman as ever  
I did look upon.

### PAGE

And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

### MISTRESS PAGE

Within a quarter of an hour.

### FORD

Pardon me, wife. Henceforth do what thou wilt;  
I rather will suspect the sun with cold  
Than thee with wantonness: now doth thy honour stand  
In him that was of late an heretic,  
As firm as faith.

### PAGE

'Tis well, 'tis well; no more:  
Be not as extreme in submission  
As in offence.  
But let our plot go forward: let our wives  
Yet once again, to make us public sport,  
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,  
Where we may take him and disgrace him for it.

### FORD

There is no better way than that they spoke of.

**PAGE**

How? to send him word they'll meet him in the park  
at midnight? Fie, fie! he'll never come.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

You say he has been thrown in the rivers and has  
been grievously peaten as an old 'oman: methinks  
there should be terrors in him that he should not  
come; methinks his flesh is punished, he shall have  
no desires.

**PAGE**

So think I too.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Devise but how you'll use him when he comes,  
And let us two devise to bring him thither.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

There is an old tale goes that Herne the hunter,  
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,  
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,  
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;  
And there he blasts the tree and takes the cattle  
And makes milch-kine yield blood and shakes a chain  
In a most hideous and dreadful manner:  
You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know  
The superstitious idle-headed eld  
Received and did deliver to our age  
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

**PAGE**

Why, yet there want not many that do fear

In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak:  
But what of this?

**MISTRESS FORD**

Marry, this is our device;  
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us.

**PAGE**

Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come:  
And in this shape when you have brought him thither,  
What shall be done with him? what is your plot?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

That likewise have we thought upon, and thus:  
Nan Page my daughter and my little son  
And three or four more of their growth we'll dress  
Like urchins, ouphes and fairies, green and white,  
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,  
And rattles in their hands: upon a sudden,  
As Falstaff, she and I, are newly met,  
Let them from forth a sawpit rush at once  
With some diffused song: upon their sight,  
We two in great amazedness will fly:  
Then let them all encircle him about  
And, fairy-like, to-pinch the unclean knight,  
And ask him why, that hour of fairy revel,  
In their so sacred paths he dares to tread  
In shape profane.

**MISTRESS FORD**

And till he tell the truth,  
Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound  
And burn him with their tapers.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

The truth being known,  
We'll all present ourselves, dis-horn the spirit,



And mock him home to Windsor.

**FORD**

The children must  
Be practised well to this, or they'll ne'er do't.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

I will teach the children their behaviors; and I  
will be like a jack-an-apes also, to burn the  
knight with my taber.

**FORD**

That will be excellent. I'll go and buy them vizards.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

My Nan shall be the queen of all the fairies,  
Finely attired in a robe of white.

**PAGE**

That silk will I go buy.

*Aside*

And in that time  
Shall Master Slender steal my Nan away  
And marry her at Eton. Go send to Falstaff straight.

**FORD**

Nay I'll to him again in name of Brook  
He'll tell me all his purpose: sure, he'll come.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Fear not you that. Go get us properties  
And tricking for our fairies.

## SIR HUGH EVANS

Let us about it: it is admirable pleasures and fery  
honest knaveries.

*Exeunt PAGE, FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS*

## MISTRESS PAGE

Go, Mistress Ford,  
Send quickly to Sir John, to know his mind.

*Exit MISTRESS FORD*

I'll to the doctor: he hath my good will,  
And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.  
That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot;  
And he my husband best of all affects.  
The doctor is well money'd, and his friends  
Potent at court: he, none but he, shall have her,  
Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter Host and SIMPLE*

**Host**

What wouldst thou have, boor? what: thick-skin?  
speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

**SIMPLE**

Marry, sir, I come to speak with Sir John Falstaff  
from Master Slender.

**Host**

There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his  
standing-bed and truckle-bed; 'tis painted about  
with the story of the Prodigal, fresh and new. Go  
knock and call; hell speak like an Anthropophaginian  
unto thee: knock, I say.

**SIMPLE**

There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into his  
chamber: I'll be so bold as stay, sir, till she come  
down; I come to speak with her, indeed.

**Host**

Ha! a fat woman! the knight may be robbed: I'll  
call. Bully knight! bully Sir John! speak from  
thy lungs military: art thou there? it is thine  
host, thine Ephesian, calls.

**FALSTAFF**

[Above] How now, mine host!

**Host**

Here's a Bohemian-Tartar carries the coming down of thy fat woman. Let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honourable: fie! privacy? fie!

*Enter FALSTAFF*

**FALSTAFF**

There was, mine host, an old fat woman even now with me; but she's gone.

**SIMPLE**

Pray you, sir, was't not the wise woman of Brentford?

**FALSTAFF**

Ay, marry, was it, mussel-shell: what would you with her?

**SIMPLE**

My master, sir, Master Slender, sent to her, seeing her go through the streets, to know, sir, whether one Nym, sir, that beguiled him of a chain, had the chain or no.

**FALSTAFF**

I spake with the old woman about it.

**SIMPLE**

And what says she, I pray, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

Marry, she says that the very same man that  
beguiled Master Slender of his chain cozened him of  
it.

**SIMPLE**

I would I could have spoken with the woman herself;  
I had other things to have spoken with her too from  
him.

**FALSTAFF**

What are they? let us know.

**Host**

Ay, come; quick.

**SIMPLE**

I may not conceal them, sir.

**Host**

Conceal them, or thou diest.

**SIMPLE**

Why, sir, they were nothing but about Mistress Anne  
Page; to know if it were my master's fortune to  
have her or no.

**FALSTAFF**

'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

**SIMPLE**

What, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

To have her, or no. Go; say the woman told me so.

**SIMPLE**

May I be bold to say so, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

Ay, sir; like who more bold.

**SIMPLE**

I thank your worship: I shall make my master glad with these tidings.

*Exit*

**Host**

Thou art clerkly, thou art clerkly, Sir John. Was there a wise woman with thee?

**FALSTAFF**

Ay, that there was, mine host; one that hath taught me more wit than ever I learned before in my life; and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

*Enter BARDOLPH*

**BAROLPH**

Out, alas, sir! cozenage, mere cozenage!

**Host**

Where be my horses? speak well of them, varletto.

## **BARDOLPH**

Run away with the cozeners; for so soon as I came beyond Eton, they threw me off from behind one of them, in a slough of mire; and set spurs and away, like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses.

## **Host**

They are gone but to meet the duke, villain: do not say they be fled; Germans are honest men.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS*

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

Where is mine host?

## **Host**

What is the matter, sir?

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

Have a care of your entertainments: there is a friend of mine come to town tells me there is three cozen-germans that has cozened all the hosts of Readins, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you: you are wise and full of gibes and vlouting-stocks, and 'tis not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well.

*Exit*

*Enter DOCTOR CAIUS*

## **DOCTOR CAIUS**

Vere is mine host de Jarteer?

**Host**

Here, master doctor, in perplexity and doubtful dilemma.

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

I cannot tell vat is dat: but it is tell-a me dat  
you make grand preparation for a duke de Jamany: by  
my trot, dere is no duke dat the court is know to  
come. I tell you for good vill: adieu.

*Exit*

**Host**

Hue and cry, villain, go! Assist me, knight. I am  
undone! Fly, run, hue and cry, villain! I am undone!

*Exeunt Host and BARDOLPH*

**FALSTAFF**

I would all the world might be cozened; for I have  
been cozened and beaten too. If it should come to  
the ear of the court, how I have been transformed  
and how my transformation hath been washed and  
cudgelled, they would melt me out of my fat drop by  
drop and liquor fishermen's boots with me; I warrant  
they would whip me with their fine wits till I were  
as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I never prospered  
since I forswore myself at primero. Well, if my  
wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY*

Now, whence come you?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

From the two parties, forsooth.



## FALSTAFF

The devil take one party and his dam the other! and so they shall be both bestowed. I have suffered more for their sakes, more than the villanous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to bear.

## MISTRESS QUICKLY

And have not they suffered? Yes, I warrant; speciously one of them; Mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

## FALSTAFF

What tellest thou me of black and blue? I was beaten myself into all the colours of the rainbow; and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford: but that my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the action of an old woman, delivered me, the knave constable had set me i' the stocks, i' the common stocks, for a witch.

## MISTRESS QUICKLY

Sir, let me speak with you in your chamber: you shall hear how things go; and, I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat. Good hearts, what ado here is to bring you together! Sure, one of you does not serve heaven well, that you are so crossed.

## FALSTAFF

Come up into my chamber.

*Exeunt*

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Another room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter FENTON and Host*

**Host**

Master Fenton, talk not to me; my mind is heavy: I will give over all.

**FENTON**

Yet hear me speak. Assist me in my purpose,  
And, as I am a gentleman, I'll give thee  
A hundred pound in gold more than your loss.

**Host**

I will hear you, Master Fenton; and I will at the least keep your counsel.

**FENTON**

From time to time I have acquainted you  
With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page;  
Who mutually hath answer'd my affection,  
So far forth as herself might be her chooser,  
Even to my wish: I have a letter from her  
Of such contents as you will wonder at;  
The mirth whereof so larded with my matter,  
That neither singly can be manifested,  
Without the show of both; fat Falstaff  
Hath a great scene: the image of the jest  
I'll show you here at large. Hark, good mine host.  
To-night at Herne's oak, just 'twixt twelve and one,  
Must my sweet Nan present the Fairy Queen;  
The purpose why, is here: in which disguise,

While other jests are something rank on foot,  
Her father hath commanded her to slip  
Away with Slender and with him at Eton  
Immediately to marry: she hath consented: Now, sir,  
Her mother, ever strong against that match  
And firm for Doctor Caius, hath appointed  
That he shall likewise shuffle her away,  
While other sports are tasking of their minds,  
And at the deanery, where a priest attends,  
Straight marry her: to this her mother's plot  
She seemingly obedient likewise hath  
Made promise to the doctor. Now, thus it rests:  
Her father means she shall be all in white,  
And in that habit, when Slender sees his time  
To take her by the hand and bid her go,  
She shall go with him: her mother hath intended,  
The better to denote her to the doctor,  
For they must all be mask'd and vizarded,  
That quaint in green she shall be loose enrobed,  
With ribands pendent, flaring 'bout her head;  
And when the doctor spies his vantage ripe,  
To pinch her by the hand, and, on that token,  
The maid hath given consent to go with him.

**Host**

Which means she to deceive, father or mother?

**FENTON**

Both, my good host, to go along with me:  
And here it rests, that you'll procure the vicar  
To stay for me at church 'twixt twelve and one,  
And, in the lawful name of marrying,  
To give our hearts united ceremony.

**Host**

Well, husband your device; I'll to the vicar:  
Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

**FENTON**

So shall I evermore be bound to thee;  
Besides, I'll make a present recompense.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 4, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter FALSTAFF and MISTRESS QUICKLY*

**FALSTAFF**

Prithee, no more prattling; go. I'll hold. This is the third time; I hope good luck lies in odd numbers. Away I go. They say there is divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death. Away!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I'll provide you a chain; and I'll do what I can to get you a pair of horns.

**FALSTAFF**

Away, I say; time wears: hold up your head, and mince.

*Exit MISTRESS QUICKLY*

*Enter FORD*

How now, Master Brook! Master Brook, the matter will be known to-night, or never. Be you in the Park about midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see wonders.

**FORD**

Went you not to her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had appointed?

**FALSTAFF**

I went to her, Master Brook, as you see, like a poor old man: but I came from her, Master Brook, like a poor old woman. That same knave Ford, her husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, Master Brook, that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you: he beat me grievously, in the shape of a woman; for in the shape of man, Master Brook, I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam; because I know also life is a shuttle. I am in haste; go along with me: I'll tell you all, Master Brook. Since I plucked geese, played truant and whipped top, I knew not what 'twas to be beaten till lately. Follow me: I'll tell you strange things of this knave Ford, on whom to-night I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife into your hand. Follow. Strange things in hand, Master Brook! Follow.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Windsor Park.

*Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER*

### PAGE

Come, come; we'll couch i' the castle-ditch till we see the light of our fairies. Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

### SLENDER

Ay, forsooth; I have spoke with her and we have a nay-word how to know one another: I come to her in white, and cry 'mum;' she cries 'budget;' and by that we know one another.

### SHALLOW

That's good too: but what needs either your 'mum' or her 'budget?' the white will decipher her well enough. It hath struck ten o'clock.

### PAGE

The night is dark; light and spirits will become it well. Heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let's away; follow me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A street leading to the Park.

*Enter MISTRESS PAGE, MISTRESS FORD, and DOCTOR CAIUS*

### MISTRESS PAGE

Master doctor, my daughter is in green: when you see your time, take her by the band, away with her to the deanery, and dispatch it quickly. Go before into the Park: we two must go together.

### DOCTOR CAIUS

I know vat I have to do. Adieu.

### MISTRESS PAGE

Fare you well, sir.

*Exit DOCTOR CAIUS*

My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter: but 'tis no matter; better a little chiding than a great deal of heart-break.

### MISTRESS FORD

Where is Nan now and her troop of fairies, and the Welsh devil Hugh?

### MISTRESS PAGE

They are all couched in a pit hard by Herne's oak, with obscured lights; which, at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once



display to the night.

**MISTRESS FORD**

That cannot choose but amaze him.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

If he be not amazed, he will be mocked; if he be amazed, he will every way be mocked.

**MISTRESS FORD**

We'll betray him finely.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Against such lewdsters and their lechery  
Those that betray them do no treachery.

**MISTRESS FORD**

The hour draws on. To the oak, to the oak!

*Exeunt*

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Windsor Park.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised, with others as Fairies*

### SIR HUGH EVANS

Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts:  
be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and  
when I give the watch-'ords, do as I pid you:  
come, come; trib, trib.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merry Wives of Windsor

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merry Wives of Windsor](#) | Act 5, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the Park.

*Enter FALSTAFF disguised as Herne*

**FALSTAFF**

The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute draws on. Now, the hot-blooded gods assist me! Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love set on thy horns. O powerful love! that, in some respects, makes a beast a man, in some other, a man a beast. You were also, Jupiter, a swan for the love of Leda. O omnipotent Love! how near the god drew to the complexion of a goose! A fault done first in the form of a beast. O Jove, a beastly fault! And then another fault in the semblance of a fowl; think on 't, Jove; a fowl fault! When gods have hot backs, what shall poor men do? For me, I am here a Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me to piss my tallow? Who comes here? my doe?

*Enter MISTRESS FORD and MISTRESS PAGE*

**MISTRESS FORD**

Sir John! art thou there, my deer? my male deer?

**FALSTAFF**

My doe with the black scut! Let the sky rain potatoes; let it thunder to the tune of Green Sleeves, hail kissing-comfits and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here.

**MISTRESS FORD**

Mistress Page is come with me, sweetheart.

**FALSTAFF**

Divide me like a bribe buck, each a haunch: I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands. Am I a woodman, ha? Speak I like Herne the hunter? Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome!

*Noise within*

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Alas, what noise?

**MISTRESS FORD**

Heaven forgive our sins

**FALSTAFF**

What should this be?

**MISTRESS FORD MISTRESS PAGE**

Away, away!

*They run off*

**FALSTAFF**

I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that's in me should set hell on fire; he would never else cross me thus.

*Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, disguised as before; PISTOL, as Hobgoblin; MISTRESS QUICKLY, ANNE PAGE, and others, as Fairies, with tapers*

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,  
You moonshine revellers and shades of night,  
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,  
Attend your office and your quality.  
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

## **PISTOL**

Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys.  
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap:  
Where fires thou find'st unraked and hearths unswept,  
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:  
Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.

## **FALSTAFF**

They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:  
I'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye.

*Lies down upon his face*

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

Where's Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid  
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,  
Raise up the organs of her fantasy;  
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy:  
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,  
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides and shins.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

About, about;  
Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out:  
Strew good luck, ouphes, on every sacred room:  
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,  
In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,  
Worthy the owner, and the owner it.  
The several chairs of order look you scour

With juice of balm and every precious flower:  
Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,  
With loyal blazon, evermore be blest!  
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,  
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring:  
The expressure that it bears, green let it be,  
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;  
And 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' write  
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue and white;  
Let sapphire, pearl and rich embroidery,  
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee:  
Fairies use flowers for their charactery.  
Away; disperse: but till 'tis one o'clock,  
Our dance of custom round about the oak  
Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.

### **SIR HUGH EVANS**

Pray you, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set  
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,  
To guide our measure round about the tree.  
But, stay; I smell a man of middle-earth.

### **FALSTAFF**

Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest he  
transform me to a piece of cheese!

### **PISTOL**

Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy birth.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

With trial-fire touch me his finger-end:  
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend  
And turn him to no pain; but if he start,  
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

### **PISTOL**

A trial, come.

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**

Come, will this wood take fire?

*They burn him with their tapers*

## **FALSTAFF**

Oh, Oh, Oh!

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire!  
About him, fairies; sing a scornful rhyme;  
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

SONG.

Fie on sinful fantasy!  
Fie on lust and luxury!  
Lust is but a bloody fire,  
Kindled with unchaste desire,  
Fed in heart, whose flames aspire  
As thoughts do blow them, higher and higher.  
Pinch him, fairies, mutually;  
Pinch him for his villany;  
Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,  
Till candles and starlight and moonshine be out.

*During this song they pinch FALSTAFF. DOCTOR CAIUS comes one way, and steals away a boy in green; SLENDER another way, and takes off a boy in white; and FENTON comes and steals away ANN PAGE. A noise of hunting is heard within. All the Fairies run away. FALSTAFF pulls off his buck's head, and rises*

*Enter PAGE, FORD, MISTRESS PAGE, and MISTRESS FORD*

## **PAGE**

Nay, do not fly; I think we have watch'd you now  
Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn?

## **MISTRESS PAGE**

I pray you, come, hold up the jest no higher  
Now, good Sir John, how like you Windsor wives?  
See you these, husband? do not these fair yokes  
Become the forest better than the town?

## **FORD**

Now, sir, who's a cuckold now? Master Brook,  
Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave; here are his  
horns, Master Brook: and, Master Brook, he hath  
enjoyed nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his  
cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be  
paid to Master Brook; his horses are arrested for  
it, Master Brook.

## **MISTRESS FORD**

Sir John, we have had ill luck; we could never meet.  
I will never take you for my love again; but I will  
always count you my deer.

## **FALSTAFF**

I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

## **FORD**

Ay, and an ox too: both the proofs are extant.

## **FALSTAFF**

And these are not fairies? I was three or four  
times in the thought they were not fairies: and yet  
the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my  
powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a  
received belief, in despite of the teeth of all  
rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now  
how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon  
ill employment!

## **SIR HUGH EVANS**



Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

**FORD**

Well said, fairy Hugh.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

And leave your jealousies too, I pray you.

**FORD**

I will never mistrust my wife again till thou art able to woo her in good English.

**FALSTAFF**

Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'erreaching as this? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too? shall I have a coxcomb of frize? 'Tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

Seese is not good to give putter; your belly is all putter.

**FALSTAFF**

'Seese' and 'putter'! have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Why Sir John, do you think, though we would have the virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders and have given ourselves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

**FORD**

What, a hodge-pudding? a bag of flax?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

A puffed man?

**PAGE**

Old, cold, withered and of intolerable entrails?

**FORD**

And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

**PAGE**

And as poor as Job?

**FORD**

And as wicked as his wife?

**SIR HUGH EVANS**

And given to fornications, and to taverns and sack  
and wine and metheglins, and to drinkings and  
swearings and starings, pribbles and prabbles?

**FALSTAFF**

Well, I am your theme: you have the start of me; I  
am dejected; I am not able to answer the Welsh  
flannel; ignorance itself is a plummet o'er me: use  
me as you will.

**FORD**

Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one

Master Brook, that you have cozened of money, to whom you should have been a pander: over and above that you have suffered, I think to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

**PAGE**

Yet be cheerful, knight: thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house; where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee: tell her Master Slender hath married her daughter.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

[Aside] Doctors doubt that: if Anne Page be my daughter, she is, by this, Doctor Caius' wife.

*Enter SLENDER*

**SLENDER**

Whoa ho! ho, father Page!

**PAGE**

Son, how now! how now, son! have you dispatched?

**SLENDER**

Dispatched! I'll make the best in Gloucestershire know on't; would I were hanged, la, else.

**PAGE**

Of what, son?

**SLENDER**

I came yonder at Eton to marry Mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had not been i' the church, I would have swung him, or he

should have swung me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never stir!--and 'tis a postmaster's boy.

**PAGE**

Upon my life, then, you took the wrong.

**SLENDER**

What need you tell me that? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl. If I had been married to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

**PAGE**

Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you how you should know my daughter by her garments?

**SLENDER**

I went to her in white, and cried 'mum,' and she cried 'budget,' as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Good George, be not angry: I knew of your purpose; turned my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married.

*Enter DOCTOR CAIUS*

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Vere is Mistress Page? By gar, I am cozened: I ha' married un garcon, a boy; un paysan, by gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cozened.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Why, did you take her in green?

**DOCTOR CAIUS**

Ay, by gar, and 'tis a boy: by gar, I'll raise all Windsor.

*Exit*

**FORD**

This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

**PAGE**

My heart misgives me: here comes Master Fenton.

*Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE*

How now, Master Fenton!

**ANNE PAGE**

Pardon, good father! good my mother, pardon!

**PAGE**

Now, mistress, how chance you went not with Master Slender?

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Why went you not with master doctor, maid?

**FENTON**

You do amaze her: hear the truth of it.  
You would have married her most shamefully,  
Where there was no proportion held in love.  
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,  
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.  
The offence is holy that she hath committed;

And this deceit loses the name of craft,  
Of disobedience, or unduteous title,  
Since therein she doth evitate and shun  
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,  
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

**FORD**

Stand not amazed; here is no remedy:  
In love the heavens themselves do guide the state;  
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

**FALSTAFF**

I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to  
strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.

**PAGE**

Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!  
What cannot be eschew'd must be embraced.

**FALSTAFF**

When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chased.

**MISTRESS PAGE**

Well, I will muse no further. Master Fenton,  
Heaven give you many, many merry days!  
Good husband, let us every one go home,  
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;  
Sir John and all.

**FORD**

Let it be so. Sir John,  
To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word  
For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

*Exeunt*

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Merchant of Venice

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Venice. A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [Venice. A public place.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Venice. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [The same. A room in SHYLOCK'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [The same. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [The same. Before SHYLOCK'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 6: [The same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 7: [Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 8: [Venice. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 9: [Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Venice. A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Venice. A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [The same. A garden.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Venice. A court of justice.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [The same. A street.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house.](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Venice. A street.

*Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO*

### ANTONIO

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:  
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;  
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,  
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,  
I am to learn;  
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,  
That I have much ado to know myself.

### SALARINO

Your mind is tossing on the ocean;  
There, where your argosies with portly sail,  
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,  
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,  
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

### SALANIO

Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,  
The better part of my affections would  
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still  
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,  
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;  
And every object that might make me fear  
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt  
Would make me sad.

### SALARINO



My wind cooling my broth  
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought  
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.  
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,  
But I should think of shallows and of flats,  
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,  
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs  
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church  
And see the holy edifice of stone,  
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,  
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,  
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,  
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,  
And, in a word, but even now worth this,  
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought  
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought  
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?  
But tell not me; I know, Antonio  
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

## **ANTONIO**

Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,  
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,  
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate  
Upon the fortune of this present year:  
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

## **SALARINO**

Why, then you are in love.

## **ANTONIO**

Fie, fie!

## **SALARINO**

Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,  
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy  
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,  
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:  
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes  
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,  
And other of such vinegar aspect  
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,  
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

*Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO*

**SALANIO**

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,  
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:  
We leave you now with better company.

**SALARINO**

I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,  
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

**ANTONIO**

Your worth is very dear in my regard.  
I take it, your own business calls on you  
And you embrace the occasion to depart.

**SALARINO**

Good morrow, my good lords.

**BASSANIO**

Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?  
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

**SALARINO**

We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio*

## **LORENZO**

My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,  
We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,  
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

## **BASSANIO**

I will not fail you.

## **GRATIANO**

You look not well, Signior Antonio;  
You have too much respect upon the world:  
They lose it that do buy it with much care:  
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

## **ANTONIO**

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;  
A stage where every man must play a part,  
And mine a sad one.

## **GRATIANO**

Let me play the fool:  
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,  
And let my liver rather heat with wine  
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.  
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?  
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice  
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio--  
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks--  
There are a sort of men whose visages  
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,  
As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,  
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!'  
O my Antonio, I do know of these

That therefore only are reputed wise  
For saying nothing; when, I am very sure,  
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,  
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.  
I'll tell thee more of this another time:  
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,  
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.  
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:  
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

## **LORENZO**

Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:  
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,  
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

## **GRATIANO**

Well, keep me company but two years moe,  
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

## **ANTONIO**

Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.

## **GRATIANO**

Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable  
In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not vendible.

*Exeunt GRATIANO and LORENZO*

## **ANTONIO**

Is that any thing now?

## **BASSANIO**

Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more  
than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two  
grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you

shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

**ANTONIO**

Well, tell me now what lady is the same  
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,  
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

**BASSANIO**

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,  
How much I have disabled mine estate,  
By something showing a more swelling port  
Than my faint means would grant continuance:  
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged  
From such a noble rate; but my chief care  
Is to come fairly off from the great debts  
Wherein my time something too prodigal  
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,  
I owe the most, in money and in love,  
And from your love I have a warranty  
To unburden all my plots and purposes  
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

**ANTONIO**

I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;  
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,  
Within the eye of honour, be assured,  
My purse, my person, my extremest means,  
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

**BASSANIO**

In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,  
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight  
The self-same way with more advised watch,  
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both  
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,  
Because what follows is pure innocence.  
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,

That which I owe is lost; but if you please  
To shoot another arrow that self way  
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
As I will watch the aim, or to find both  
Or bring your latter hazard back again  
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

## **ANTONIO**

You know me well, and herein spend but time  
To wind about my love with circumstance;  
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong  
In making question of my uttermost  
Than if you had made waste of all I have:  
Then do but say to me what I should do  
That in your knowledge may by me be done,  
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

## **BASSANIO**

In Belmont is a lady richly left;  
And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,  
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes  
I did receive fair speechless messages:  
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued  
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:  
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,  
For the four winds blow in from every coast  
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks  
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;  
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,  
And many Jasons come in quest of her.  
O my Antonio, had I but the means  
To hold a rival place with one of them,  
I have a mind presages me such thrift,  
That I should questionless be fortunate!

## **ANTONIO**

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;  
Neither have I money nor commodity  
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;

Try what my credit can in Venice do:  
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,  
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.  
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,  
Where money is, and I no question make  
To have it of my trust or for my sake.

*Exeunt*

SCENE II: Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

**PORTIA**

By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of  
this great world.

**NERISSA**

You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in  
the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and  
yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit  
with too much as they that starve with nothing. It  
is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the  
mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but  
competency lives longer.

**PORTIA**

Good sentences and well pronounced.

**NERISSA**

They would be better, if well followed.

**PORTIA**

If to do were as easy as to know what were good to  
do, chapels had been churches and poor men's  
cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that

follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose!' I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

## **NERISSA**

Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

## **PORTIA**

I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

## **NERISSA**

First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

## **PORTIA**

Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith.



**NERISSA**

Then there is the County Palatine.

**PORTIA**

He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose:' he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

**NERISSA**

How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

**PORTIA**

God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

**NERISSA**

What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

**PORTIA**

You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and

swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English.  
He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can  
converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited!  
I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round  
hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his  
behavior every where.

**NERISSA**

What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

**PORTIA**

That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he  
borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and  
swore he would pay him again when he was able: I  
think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed  
under for another.

**NERISSA**

How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

**PORTIA**

Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and  
most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when  
he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and  
when he is worst, he is little better than a beast:  
and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall  
make shift to go without him.

**NERISSA**

If he should offer to choose, and choose the right  
casket, you should refuse to perform your father's  
will, if you should refuse to accept him.

**PORTIA**

Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a  
deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary casket,

for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

**NERISSA**

You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

**PORTIA**

If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

**NERISSA**

Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

**PORTIA**

Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called.

**NERISSA**

True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

**PORTIA**

I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

*Enter a Serving-man*

How now! what news?

**Servant**

The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

**PORTIA**

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me. Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.  
Whiles we shut the gates  
upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Venice. A public place.

*Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK*

**SHYLOCK**

Three thousand ducats; well.

**BASSANIO**

Ay, sir, for three months.

**SHYLOCK**

For three months; well.

**BASSANIO**

For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

**SHYLOCK**

Antonio shall become bound; well.

**BASSANIO**

May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I  
know your answer?

**SHYLOCK**

Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

**BASSANIO**

Your answer to that.

**SHYLOCK**

Antonio is a good man.

**BASSANIO**

Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

**SHYLOCK**

Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

**BASSANIO**

Be assured you may.

**SHYLOCK**

I will be assured I may; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

**BASSANIO**

If it please you to dine with us.

**SHYLOCK**

Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which  
your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I  
will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you,  
walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat  
with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What  
news on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

*Enter ANTONIO*

**BASSANIO**

This is Signior Antonio.

**SHYLOCK**

[Aside] How like a fawning publican he looks!  
I hate him for he is a Christian,  
But more for that in low simplicity  
He lends out money gratis and brings down  
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.  
If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.  
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,  
Even there where merchants most do congregate,  
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,  
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,  
If I forgive him!

**BASSANIO**

Shylock, do you hear?

**SHYLOCK**

I am debating of my present store,  
And, by the near guess of my memory,  
I cannot instantly raise up the gross  
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?  
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,  
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months  
Do you desire?

*To ANTONIO*

Rest you fair, good signior;  
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

**ANTONIO**

Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow  
By taking nor by giving of excess,  
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,  
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd  
How much ye would?

**SHYLOCK**

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

**ANTONIO**

And for three months.

**SHYLOCK**

I had forgot; three months; you told me so.  
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;  
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow  
Upon advantage.

**ANTONIO**

I do never use it.

**SHYLOCK**

When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep--  
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,  
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,  
The third possessor; ay, he was the third--

**ANTONIO**



And what of him? did he take interest?

**SHYLOCK**

No, not take interest, not, as you would say,  
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.  
When Laban and himself were compromised  
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied  
Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes, being rank,  
In the end of autumn turned to the rams,  
And, when the work of generation was  
Between these woolly breeders in the act,  
The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain wands,  
And, in the doing of the deed of kind,  
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,  
Who then conceiving did in eaning time  
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.  
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:  
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

**ANTONIO**

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;  
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,  
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.  
Was this inserted to make interest good?  
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

**SHYLOCK**

I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:  
But note me, signior.

**ANTONIO**

Mark you this, Bassanio,  
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.  
An evil soul producing holy witness  
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,  
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:  
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

## SHYLOCK

Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.  
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate--

## ANTONIO

Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

## SHYLOCK

Signior Antonio, many a time and oft  
In the Rialto you have rated me  
About my moneys and my usances:  
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,  
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.  
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,  
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
And all for use of that which is mine own.  
Well then, it now appears you need my help:  
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say  
'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you say so;  
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard  
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur  
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit  
What should I say to you? Should I not say  
'Hath a dog money? is it possible  
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or  
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,  
With bated breath and whispering humbleness, Say this;  
'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;  
You spurn'd me such a day; another time  
You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies  
I'll lend you thus much moneys'?

## ANTONIO

I am as like to call thee so again,  
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.  
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not  
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take  
A breed for barren metal of his friend?

But lend it rather to thine enemy,  
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face  
Exact the penalty.

**SHYLOCK**

Why, look you, how you storm!  
I would be friends with you and have your love,  
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,  
Supply your present wants and take no doit  
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:  
This is kind I offer.

**BASSANIO**

This were kindness.

**SHYLOCK**

This kindness will I show.  
Go with me to a notary, seal me there  
Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,  
If you repay me not on such a day,  
In such a place, such sum or sums as are  
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit  
Be nominated for an equal pound  
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken  
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

**ANTONIO**

Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond  
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

**BASSANIO**

You shall not seal to such a bond for me:  
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

**ANTONIO**

Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:

Within these two months, that's a month before  
This bond expires, I do expect return  
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

**SHYLOCK**

O father Abram, what these Christians are,  
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect  
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;  
If he should break his day, what should I gain  
By the exaction of the forfeiture?  
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man  
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,  
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,  
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:  
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;  
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

**ANTONIO**

Yes Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

**SHYLOCK**

Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;  
Give him direction for this merry bond,  
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,  
See to my house, left in the fearful guard  
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently  
I will be with you.

**ANTONIO**

Hie thee, gentle Jew.

*Exit Shylock*

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

**BASSANIO**

I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

**ANTONIO**

Come on: in this there can be no dismay;  
My ships come home a month before the day.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO and his train; PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending*

### MOROCCO

Mislike me not for my complexion,  
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,  
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.  
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,  
Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,  
And let us make incision for your love,  
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.  
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine  
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love I swear  
The best-regarded virgins of our clime  
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,  
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

### PORTIA

In terms of choice I am not solely led  
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;  
Besides, the lottery of my destiny  
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:  
But if my father had not scanted me  
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself  
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,  
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair  
As any comer I have look'd on yet  
For my affection.

### MOROCCO

Even for that I thank you:

Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets  
To try my fortune. By this scimitar  
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince  
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,  
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,  
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,  
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,  
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,  
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!  
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice  
Which is the better man, the greater throw  
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:  
So is Alcides beaten by his page;  
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,  
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,  
And die with grieving.

## **PORTIA**

You must take your chance,  
And either not attempt to choose at all  
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong  
Never to speak to lady afterward  
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

## **MOROCCO**

Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

## **PORTIA**

First, forward to the temple: after dinner  
Your hazard shall be made.

## **MOROCCO**

Good fortune then!  
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

*Cornets, and exeunt*





# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Venice. A street.

*Enter LAUNCELOT*

### LAUNCELOT

Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me saying to me 'Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,' or 'good Gobbo,' or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away. My conscience says 'No; take heed,' honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo, or, as aforesaid, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,' or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, my conscience says 'Launcelot, budge not.' 'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience. 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well;' 'Fiend,' say I, 'you counsel well:' to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

*Enter Old GOBBO, with a basket*

**GOBBO**

Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way  
to master Jew's?

**LAUNCELOT**

[Aside] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father!  
who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind,  
knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

**GOBBO**

Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way  
to master Jew's?

**LAUNCELOT**

Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but,  
at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at  
the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn  
down indirectly to the Jew's house.

**GOBBO**

By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can  
you tell me whether one Launcelot,  
that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

**LAUNCELOT**

Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

*Aside*

Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. Talk you  
of young Master Launcelot?

**GOBBO**

No master, sir, but a poor man's son: his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

**LAUNCELOT**

Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

**GOBBO**

Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

**LAUNCELOT**

But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

**GOBBO**

Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

**LAUNCELOT**

Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

**GOBBO**

Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

**LAUNCELOT**

Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or

a prop? Do you know me, father?

**GOBBO**

Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman:  
but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his  
soul, alive or dead?

**LAUNCELOT**

Do you not know me, father?

**GOBBO**

Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

**LAUNCELOT**

Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of  
the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his  
own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of  
your son: give me your blessing: truth will come  
to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son  
may, but at the length truth will out.

**GOBBO**

Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not  
Launcelot, my boy.

**LAUNCELOT**

Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but  
give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy  
that was, your son that is, your child that shall  
be.

**GOBBO**

I cannot think you are my son.

## LAUNCELOT

I know not what I shall think of that: but I am  
Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your  
wife is my mother.

## GOBBO

Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou  
be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood.  
Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou  
got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than  
Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

## LAUNCELOT

It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows  
backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail  
than I have of my face when I last saw him.

## GOBBO

Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy  
master agree? I have brought him a present. How  
'gree you now?

## LAUNCELOT

Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set  
up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I  
have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give  
him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in  
his service; you may tell every finger I have with  
my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me  
your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed,  
gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I  
will run as far as God has any ground. O rare  
fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I  
am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

*Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other followers*

**BASSANIO**

You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

*Exit a Servant*

**LAUNCELOT**

To him, father.

**GOBBO**

God bless your worship!

**BASSANIO**

Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

**GOBBO**

Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,--

**LAUNCELOT**

Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify--

**GOBBO**

He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve--

**LAUNCELOT**

Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify--

**GOBBO**

His master and he, saving your worship's reverence,  
are scarce cater-cousins--

**LAUNCELOT**

To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having  
done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I  
hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you--

**GOBBO**

I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon  
your worship, and my suit is--

**LAUNCELOT**

In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as  
your worship shall know by this honest old man; and,  
though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

**BASSANIO**

One speak for both. What would you?

**LAUNCELOT**

Serve you, sir.

**GOBBO**

That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

**BASSANIO**

I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:  
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,  
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment  
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become  
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

**LAUNCELOT**

The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

## **BASSANIO**

Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.  
Take leave of thy old master and inquire  
My lodging out. Give him a livery  
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.

## **LAUNCELOT**

Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo*

## **BASSANIO**

I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:  
These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,  
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night  
My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go.

## **LEONARDO**

My best endeavours shall be done herein.

*Enter GRATIANO*



**GRATIANO**

Where is your master?

**LEONARDO**

Yonder, sir, he walks.

*Exit*

**GRATIANO**

Signior Bassanio!

**BASSANIO**

Gratiano!

**GRATIANO**

I have a suit to you.

**BASSANIO**

You have obtain'd it.

**GRATIANO**

You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.

**BASSANIO**

Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;  
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;  
Parts that become thee happily enough  
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;  
But where thou art not known, why, there they show  
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain  
To allay with some cold drops of modesty  
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behavior  
I be misconstrued in the place I go to,

And lose my hopes.

**GRATIANO**

Signior Bassanio, hear me:  
If I do not put on a sober habit,  
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,  
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,  
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes  
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say 'amen,'  
Use all the observance of civility,  
Like one well studied in a sad ostent  
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

**BASSANIO**

Well, we shall see your bearing.

**GRATIANO**

Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me  
By what we do to-night.

**BASSANIO**

No, that were pity:  
I would entreat you rather to put on  
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends  
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:  
I have some business.

**GRATIANO**

And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:  
But we will visit you at supper-time.

*Exeunt*

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. A room in SHYLOCK'S house.

*Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT*

### JESSICA

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:  
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,  
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.  
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:  
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see  
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:  
Give him this letter; do it secretly;  
And so farewell: I would not have my father  
See me in talk with thee.

### LAUNCELOT

Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful  
pagan, most sweet Jew! if a Christian did not play  
the knave and get thee, I am much deceived. But,  
adieu: these foolish drops do something drown my  
manly spirit: adieu.

### JESSICA

Farewell, good Launcelot.

*Exit Launcelot*

Alack, what heinous sin is it in me  
To be ashamed to be my father's child!  
But though I am a daughter to his blood,  
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,  
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,  
Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. A street.

*Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO*

### LORENZO

Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,  
Disguise us at my lodging and return,  
All in an hour.

### GRATIANO

We have not made good preparation.

### SALARINO

We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.

### SALANIO

'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,  
And better in my mind not undertook.

### LORENZO

'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours  
To furnish us.

*Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

### LAUNCELOT

An it shall please you to break up

this, it shall seem to signify.

**LORENZO**

I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand;  
And whiter than the paper it writ on  
Is the fair hand that writ.

**GRATIANO**

Love-news, in faith.

**LAUNCELOT**

By your leave, sir.

**LORENZO**

Whither goest thou?

**LAUNCELOT**

Marry, sir, to bid my old master the  
Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

**LORENZO**

Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica  
I will not fail her; speak it privately.  
Go, gentlemen,

*Exit Launcelot*

Will you prepare you for this masque tonight?  
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

**SALANIO**

Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

**SALANIO**

And so will I.

**LORENZO**

Meet me and Gratiano  
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

**SALARINO**

'Tis good we do so.

*Exeunt SALARINO and SALANIO*

**GRATIANO**

Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

**LORENZO**

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed  
How I shall take her from her father's house,  
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,  
What page's suit she hath in readiness.  
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,  
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:  
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,  
Unless she do it under this excuse,  
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.  
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:  
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

*Exeunt*

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same. Before SHYLOCK'S house.

*Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT*

### SHYLOCK

Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,  
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:--  
What, Jessica!--thou shalt not gormandise,  
As thou hast done with me:--What, Jessica!--  
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;--  
Why, Jessica, I say!

### LAUNCELOT

Why, Jessica!

### SHYLOCK

Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

### LAUNCELOT

Your worship was wont to tell me that  
I could do nothing without bidding.

*Enter Jessica*

### JESSICA

Call you? what is your will?

### SHYLOCK

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:  
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?



I am not bid for love; they flatter me:  
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon  
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,  
Look to my house. I am right loath to go:  
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,  
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

**LAUNCELOT**

I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect  
your reproach.

**SHYLOCK**

So do I his.

**LAUNCELOT**

An they have conspired together, I will not say you  
shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not  
for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on  
Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning,  
falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four  
year, in the afternoon.

**SHYLOCK**

What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:  
Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum  
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,  
Clamber not you up to the casements then,  
Nor thrust your head into the public street  
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,  
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:  
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter  
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,  
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:  
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;  
Say I will come.

**LAUNCELOT**

I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this, There will come a Christian boy, will be worth a Jewess' eye.

*Exit*

**SHYLOCK**

What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

**JESSICA**

His words were 'Farewell mistress;' nothing else.

**SHYLOCK**

The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;  
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day  
More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me;  
Therefore I part with him, and part with him  
To one that would have him help to waste  
His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in;  
Perhaps I will return immediately:  
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:  
Fast bind, fast find;  
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

*Exit*

**JESSICA**

Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,  
I have a father, you a daughter, lost.

*Exit*

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The same.

*Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued*

### GRATIANO

This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo  
Desired us to make stand.

### SALARINO

His hour is almost past.

### GRATIANO

And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,  
For lovers ever run before the clock.

### SALARINO

O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly  
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont  
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

### GRATIANO

That ever holds: who riseth from a feast  
With that keen appetite that he sits down?  
Where is the horse that doth untread again  
His tedious measures with the unbated fire  
That he did pace them first? All things that are,  
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.  
How like a younker or a prodigal  
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,  
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!  
How like the prodigal doth she return,

With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,  
Lean, rent and beggar'd by the strumpet wind!

**SALARINO**

Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

*Enter LORENZO*

**LORENZO**

Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;  
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:  
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,  
I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;  
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

*Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes*

**JESSICA**

Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,  
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

**LORENZO**

Lorenzo, and thy love.

**JESSICA**

Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,  
For who love I so much? And now who knows  
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

**LORENZO**

Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

**JESSICA**

Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.

I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,  
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:  
But love is blind and lovers cannot see  
The pretty follies that themselves commit;  
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush  
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

**LORENZO**

Descend, for you must be my torchbearer.

**JESSICA**

What, must I hold a candle to my shames?  
They in themselves, good-sooth, are too too light.  
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;  
And I should be obscured.

**LORENZO**

So are you, sweet,  
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.  
But come at once;  
For the close night doth play the runaway,  
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

**JESSICA**

I will make fast the doors, and gild myself  
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

*Exit above*

**GRATIANO**

Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.

**LORENZO**

Beshrew me but I love her heartily;  
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,

And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,  
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,  
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,  
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

*Enter JESSICA, below*

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!  
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

*Exit with Jessica and Salarino*

*Enter ANTONIO*

**ANTONIO**

Who's there?

**GRATIANO**

Signior Antonio!

**ANTONIO**

Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?  
'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.  
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;  
Bassanio presently will go aboard:  
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

**GRATIANO**

I am glad on't: I desire no more delight  
Than to be under sail and gone to-night.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA, with the PRINCE OF MOROCCO, and their trains*

### PORTIA

Go draw aside the curtains and discover  
The several caskets to this noble prince.  
Now make your choice.

### MOROCCO

The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,  
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;'  
The second, silver, which this promise carries,  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;'  
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,  
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'  
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

### PORTIA

The one of them contains my picture, prince:  
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

### MOROCCO

Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;  
I will survey the inscriptions back again.  
What says this leaden casket?  
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'  
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?  
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all  
Do it in hope of fair advantages:  
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;  
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver with her virgin hue?  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'  
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,  
And weigh thy value with an even hand:  
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,  
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough  
May not extend so far as to the lady:  
And yet to be afeard of my deserving  
Were but a weak disabling of myself.  
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:  
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,  
In graces and in qualities of breeding;  
But more than these, in love I do deserve.  
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?  
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold  
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'  
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;  
From the four corners of the earth they come,  
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint:  
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds  
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now  
For princes to come view fair Portia:  
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head  
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar  
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,  
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.  
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.  
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation  
To think so base a thought: it were too gross  
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.  
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,  
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?  
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem  
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England  
A coin that bears the figure of an angel  
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;  
But here an angel in a golden bed  
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:  
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

## PORTIA

There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,



Then I am yours.

*He unlocks the golden casket*

## MOROCCO

O hell! what have we here?  
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye  
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

*Reads*

All that glitters is not gold;  
Often have you heard that told:  
Many a man his life hath sold  
But my outside to behold:  
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.  
Had you been as wise as bold,  
Young in limbs, in judgment old,  
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:  
Fare you well; your suit is cold.  
Cold, indeed; and labour lost:  
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!  
Portia, adieu. I have too griev'd a heart  
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

*Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets*

## PORTIA

A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.  
Let all of his complexion choose me so.

*Exeunt*

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. Venice. A street.

*Enter SALARINO and SALANIO*

### SALARINO

Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:  
With him is Gratiano gone along;  
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

### SALANIO

The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,  
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

### SALARINO

He came too late, the ship was under sail:  
But there the duke was given to understand  
That in a gondola were seen together  
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:  
Besides, Antonio certified the duke  
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

### SALANIO

I never heard a passion so confused,  
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,  
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:  
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!  
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!  
Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!  
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,  
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!  
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,  
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;

She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.'

**SALARINO**

Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,  
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

**SALANIO**

Let good Antonio look he keep his day,  
Or he shall pay for this.

**SALARINO**

Marry, well remember'd.  
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,  
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part  
The French and English, there miscarried  
A vessel of our country richly fraught:  
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;  
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

**SALANIO**

You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;  
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

**SALARINO**

A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.  
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:  
Bassanio told him he would make some speed  
Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so;  
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio  
But stay the very riping of the time;  
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,  
Let it not enter in your mind of love:  
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts  
To courtship and such fair ostents of love  
As shall conveniently become you there:'  
And even there, his eye being big with tears,  
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,

And with affection wondrous sensible  
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

**SALANIO**

I think he only loves the world for him.  
I pray thee, let us go and find him out  
And quicken his embraced heaviness  
With some delight or other.

**SALARINO**

Do we so.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 8  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IX. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Enter NERISSA with a Servitor*

**NERISSA**

Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain straight:  
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,  
And comes to his election presently.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, and their trains*

**PORTIA**

Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:  
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,  
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:  
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,  
You must be gone from hence immediately.

**ARRAGON**

I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:  
First, never to unfold to any one  
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail  
Of the right casket, never in my life  
To woo a maid in way of marriage: Lastly,  
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,  
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

**PORTIA**

To these injunctions every one doth swear  
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

**ARRAGON**

And so have I address'd me. Fortune now  
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.  
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'  
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.  
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:  
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'  
What many men desire! that 'many' may be meant  
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,  
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;  
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,  
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,  
Even in the force and road of casualty.  
I will not choose what many men desire,  
Because I will not jump with common spirits  
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.  
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;  
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'  
And well said too; for who shall go about  
To cozen fortune and be honourable  
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume  
To wear an undeserved dignity.  
O, that estates, degrees and offices  
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour  
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!  
How many then should cover that stand bare!  
How many be commanded that command!  
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd  
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour  
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times  
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:  
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'  
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,  
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

*He opens the silver casket*

**PORTIA**

Too long a pause for that which you find there.

**ARRAGON**

What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,  
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.  
How much unlike art thou to Portia!  
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!  
'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'  
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?  
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

## **PORTIA**

To offend, and judge, are distinct offices  
And of opposed natures.

## **ARRAGON**

What is here?

*Reads*

The fire seven times tried this:  
Seven times tried that judgment is,  
That did never choose amiss.  
Some there be that shadows kiss;  
Such have but a shadow's bliss:  
There be fools alive, I wis,  
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.  
Take what wife you will to bed,  
I will ever be your head:  
So be gone: you are sped.  
Still more fool I shall appear  
By the time I linger here  
With one fool's head I came to woo,  
But I go away with two.  
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,  
Patiently to bear my wrath.

*Exeunt Arragon and train*

## **PORTIA**

Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,  
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

**NERISSA**

The ancient saying is no heresy,  
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

**PORTIA**

Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

*Enter a Servant*

**Servant**

Where is my lady?

**PORTIA**

Here: what would my lord?

**Servant**

Madam, there is alighted at your gate  
A young Venetian, one that comes before  
To signify the approaching of his lord;  
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets,  
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,  
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen  
So likely an ambassador of love:  
A day in April never came so sweet,  
To show how costly summer was at hand,  
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

**PORTIA**

No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard  
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,  
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.  
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see



Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

**NERISSA**

Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 2, Scene 9  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Venice. A street.

*Enter SALANIO and SALARINO*

**SALANIO**

Now, what news on the Rialto?

**SALARINO**

Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd that Antonio hath  
a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas;  
the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very  
dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcasses of many  
a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip  
Report be an honest woman of her word.

**SALANIO**

I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever  
knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe she  
wept for the death of a third husband. But it is  
true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the  
plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the  
honest Antonio,--O that I had a title good enough  
to keep his name company!--

**SALARINO**

Come, the full stop.

**SALANIO**

Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath  
lost a ship.

**SALARINO**

I would it might prove the end of his losses.

**SALANIO**

Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

*Enter SHYLOCK*

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

**SHYLOCK**

You know, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

**SALARINO**

That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

**SALANIO**

And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

**SHYLOCK**

She is damned for it.

**SALANIO**

That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

**SHYLOCK**

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

## **SALANIO**

Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

## **SHYLOCK**

I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

## **SALARINO**

There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

## **SHYLOCK**

There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

## **SALARINO**

Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

## **SHYLOCK**

To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject

to the same diseases, healed by the same means,  
warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as  
a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?  
if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison  
us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not  
revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will  
resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian,  
what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian  
wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by  
Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you  
teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I  
will better the instruction.

*Enter a Servant*

### **Servant**

Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and  
desires to speak with you both.

### **SALARINO**

We have been up and down to seek him.

*Enter TUBAL*

### **SALANIO**

Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be  
matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

*Exeunt SALANIO, SALARINO, and Servant*

### **SHYLOCK**

How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou  
found my daughter?

### **TUBAL**

I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

**SHYLOCK**

Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone,  
cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse  
never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it  
till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other  
precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter  
were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear!  
would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in  
her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know  
not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon  
loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to  
find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge:  
nor no in luck stirring but what lights on my  
shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears  
but of my shedding.

**TUBAL**

Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I  
heard in Genoa,--

**SHYLOCK**

What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

**TUBAL**

Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

**SHYLOCK**

I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true?

**TUBAL**

I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

**SHYLOCK**

I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news!

ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

**TUBAL**

Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

**SHYLOCK**

Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

**TUBAL**

There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

**SHYLOCK**

I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

**TUBAL**

One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

**SHYLOCK**

Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

**TUBAL**

But Antonio is certainly undone.

**SHYLOCK**

Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee

me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and Attendants*

### PORTIA

I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two  
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,  
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.  
There's something tells me, but it is not love,  
I would not lose you; and you know yourself,  
Hate counsels not in such a quality.  
But lest you should not understand me well,--  
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,--  
I would detain you here some month or two  
Before you venture for me. I could teach you  
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;  
So will I never be: so may you miss me;  
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,  
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,  
They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;  
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,  
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,  
And so all yours. O, these naughty times  
Put bars between the owners and their rights!  
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,  
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.  
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,  
To eke it and to draw it out in length,  
To stay you from election.

### BASSANIO

Let me choose  
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

### PORTIA

Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess  
What treason there is mingled with your love.

**BASSANIO**

None but that ugly treason of mistrust,  
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:  
There may as well be amity and life  
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

**PORTIA**

Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,  
Where men enforced do speak anything.

**BASSANIO**

Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

**PORTIA**

Well then, confess and live.

**BASSANIO**

'Confess' and 'love'  
Had been the very sum of my confession:  
O happy torment, when my torturer  
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!  
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

**PORTIA**

Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:  
If you do love me, you will find me out.  
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.  
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;  
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,  
Fading in music: that the comparison  
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream

And watery death-bed for him. He may win;  
And what is music then? Then music is  
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow  
To a new-crowned monarch: such it is  
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day  
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,  
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,  
With no less presence, but with much more love,  
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy  
To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice  
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,  
With bleared visages, come forth to view  
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!  
Live thou, I live: with much, much more dismay  
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

*Music, whilst BASSANIO comments on the caskets to himself*

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,  
Or in the heart, or in the head?  
How begot, how nourished?  
Reply, reply.  
It is engender'd in the eyes,  
With gazing fed; and fancy dies  
In the cradle where it lies.  
Let us all ring fancy's knell  
I'll begin it,--Ding, dong, bell.

**ALL**

Ding, dong, bell.

**BASSANIO**

So may the outward shows be least themselves:  
The world is still deceived with ornament.  
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,  
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,  
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,  
What damned error, but some sober brow

Will bless it and approve it with a text,  
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?  
There is no vice so simple but assumes  
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:  
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false  
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins  
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;  
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;  
And these assume but valour's excrement  
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,  
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;  
Which therein works a miracle in nature,  
Making them lightest that wear most of it:  
So are those crisped snaky golden locks  
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,  
Upon supposed fairness, often known  
To be the dowry of a second head,  
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.  
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore  
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf  
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,  
The seeming truth which cunning times put on  
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,  
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;  
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge  
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,  
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,  
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;  
And here choose I; joy be the consequence!

## **PORTIA**

[Aside] How all the other passions fleet to air,  
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,  
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! O love,  
Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy,  
In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess.  
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,  
For fear I surfeit.

## **BASSANIO**

What find I here?

*Opening the leaden casket*

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god  
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?  
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,  
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,  
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar  
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs  
The painter plays the spider and hath woven  
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,  
Faster than gnats in cobwebs; but her eyes,--  
How could he see to do them? having made one,  
Methinks it should have power to steal both his  
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far  
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow  
In underprizing it, so far this shadow  
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,  
The continent and summary of my fortune.

*Reads*

You that choose not by the view,  
Chance as fair and choose as true!  
Since this fortune falls to you,  
Be content and seek no new,  
If you be well pleased with this  
And hold your fortune for your bliss,  
Turn you where your lady is  
And claim her with a loving kiss.  
A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;  
I come by note, to give and to receive.  
Like one of two contending in a prize,  
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,  
Hearing applause and universal shout,  
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt  
Whether these pearls of praise be his or no;  
So, thrice fair lady, stand I, even so;  
As doubtful whether what I see be true,  
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
Such as I am: though for myself alone  
I would not be ambitious in my wish,  
To wish myself much better; yet, for you  
I would be trebled twenty times myself;  
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;  
That only to stand high in your account,  
I might in virtue, beauties, livings, friends,  
Exceed account; but the full sum of me  
Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,  
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised;  
Happy in this, she is not yet so old  
But she may learn; happier than this,  
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;  
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit  
Commits itself to yours to be directed,  
As from her lord, her governor, her king.  
Myself and what is mine to you and yours  
Is now converted: but now I was the lord  
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,  
Queen o'er myself: and even now, but now,  
This house, these servants and this same myself  
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;  
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,  
Let it presage the ruin of your love  
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

## **BASSANIO**

Madam, you have bereft me of all words,  
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;  
And there is such confusion in my powers,  
As after some oration fairly spoke  
By a beloved prince, there doth appear  
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;  
Where every something, being blent together,  
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,  
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring  
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:  
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

## **NERISSA**

My lord and lady, it is now our time,  
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,  
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady!

## **GRATIANO**

My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,  
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;  
For I am sure you can wish none from me:  
And when your honours mean to solemnize  
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,  
Even at that time I may be married too.

## **BASSANIO**

With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

## **GRATIANO**

I thank your lordship, you have got me one.  
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:  
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;  
You loved, I loved for intermission.  
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.  
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,  
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;  
For wooing here until I sweat again,  
And sweating until my very roof was dry  
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,  
I got a promise of this fair one here  
To have her love, provided that your fortune  
Achieved her mistress.

## **PORTIA**

Is this true, Nerissa?

## **NERISSA**

Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

**BASSANIO**

And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

**GRATIANO**

Yes, faith, my lord.

**BASSANIO**

Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.

**GRATIANO**

We'll play with them the first boy for a thousand ducats.

**NERISSA**

What, and stake down?

**GRATIANO**

No; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake down.  
But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel? What,  
and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

*Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALERIO, a Messenger from Venice*

**BASSANIO**

Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;  
If that the youth of my new interest here  
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,  
I bid my very friends and countrymen,  
Sweet Portia, welcome.

**PORTIA**

So do I, my lord:  
They are entirely welcome.



## **LORENZO**

I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,  
My purpose was not to have seen you here;  
But meeting with Salerio by the way,  
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,  
To come with him along.

## **SALERIO**

I did, my lord;  
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio  
Commends him to you.

*Gives Bassanio a letter*

## **BASSANIO**

Ere I ope his letter,  
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

## **SALERIO**

Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;  
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there  
Will show you his estate.

## **GRATIANO**

Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.  
Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice?  
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?  
I know he will be glad of our success;  
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

## **SALERIO**

I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

## **PORTIA**

There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,  
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:  
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world  
Could turn so much the constitution  
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!  
With leave, Bassanio: I am half yourself,  
And I must freely have the half of anything  
That this same paper brings you.

## **BASSANIO**

O sweet Portia,  
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words  
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,  
When I did first impart my love to you,  
I freely told you, all the wealth I had  
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman;  
And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,  
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see  
How much I was a braggart. When I told you  
My state was nothing, I should then have told you  
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,  
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,  
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,  
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;  
The paper as the body of my friend,  
And every word in it a gaping wound,  
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?  
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?  
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,  
From Lisbon, Barbary and India?  
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch  
Of merchant-marring rocks?

## **SALERIO**

Not one, my lord.  
Besides, it should appear, that if he had  
The present money to discharge the Jew,  
He would not take it. Never did I know  
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,  
So keen and greedy to confound a man:  
He plies the duke at morning and at night,

And doth impeach the freedom of the state,  
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,  
The duke himself, and the magnificoes  
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;  
But none can drive him from the envious plea  
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

**JESSICA**

When I was with him I have heard him swear  
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,  
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh  
Than twenty times the value of the sum  
That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,  
If law, authority and power deny not,  
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

**PORTIA**

Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

**BASSANIO**

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,  
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit  
In doing courtesies, and one in whom  
The ancient Roman honour more appears  
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

**PORTIA**

What sum owes he the Jew?

**BASSANIO**

For me three thousand ducats.

**PORTIA**

What, no more?  
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;

Double six thousand, and then treble that,  
Before a friend of this description  
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.  
First go with me to church and call me wife,  
And then away to Venice to your friend;  
For never shall you lie by Portia's side  
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold  
To pay the petty debt twenty times over:  
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.  
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime  
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!  
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:  
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:  
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.  
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

## **BASSANIO**

[Reads] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all  
miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is  
very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since  
in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all  
debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but  
see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your  
pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come,  
let not my letter.

## **PORTIA**

O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

## **BASSANIO**

Since I have your good leave to go away,  
I will make haste: but, till I come again,  
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,  
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Venice. A street.

*Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, and Gaoler*

### SHYLOCK

Gaoler, look to him: tell not me of mercy;  
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:  
Gaoler, look to him.

### ANTONIO

Hear me yet, good Shylock.

### SHYLOCK

I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:  
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.  
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;  
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:  
The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,  
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond  
To come abroad with him at his request.

### ANTONIO

I pray thee, hear me speak.

### SHYLOCK

I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:  
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.  
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,  
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield  
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;  
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.

*Exit*

**SALARINO**

It is the most impenetrable cur  
That ever kept with men.

**ANTONIO**

Let him alone:  
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.  
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:  
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures  
Many that have at times made moan to me;  
Therefore he hates me.

**SALARINO**

I am sure the duke  
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

**ANTONIO**

The duke cannot deny the course of law:  
For the commodity that strangers have  
With us in Venice, if it be denied,  
Will much impeach the justice of his state;  
Since that the trade and profit of the city  
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:  
These griefs and losses have so bated me,  
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh  
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.  
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come  
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

*Exeunt*

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house.

*Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and BALTHASAR*

### LORENZO

Madam, although I speak it in your presence,  
You have a noble and a true conceit  
Of godlike amity; which appears most strongly  
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.  
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,  
How true a gentleman you send relief,  
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,  
I know you would be prouder of the work  
Than customary bounty can enforce you.

### PORTIA

I never did repent for doing good,  
Nor shall not now: for in companions  
That do converse and waste the time together,  
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke Of love,  
There must be needs a like proportion  
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;  
Which makes me think that this Antonio,  
Being the bosom lover of my lord,  
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,  
How little is the cost I have bestow'd  
In purchasing the semblance of my soul  
From out the state of hellish misery!  
This comes too near the praising of myself;  
Therefore no more of it: hear other things.  
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands  
The husbandry and manage of my house  
Until my lord's return: for mine own part,  
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow  
To live in prayer and contemplation,



Only attended by Nerissa here,  
Until her husband and my lord's return:  
There is a monastery two miles off;  
And there will we abide. I do desire you  
Not to deny this imposition;  
The which my love and some necessity  
Now lays upon you.

**LORENZO**

Madam, with all my heart;  
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

**PORTIA**

My people do already know my mind,  
And will acknowledge you and Jessica  
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.  
And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

**LORENZO**

Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

**JESSICA**

I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

**PORTIA**

I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased  
To wish it back on you: fare you well Jessica.

*Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO*

Now, Balthasar,  
As I have ever found thee honest-true,  
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,  
And use thou all the endeavour of a man  
In speed to Padua: see thou render this  
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;  
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,

Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed  
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry  
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,  
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

## **BALTHASAR**

Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

*Exit*

## **PORTIA**

Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand  
That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands  
Before they think of us.

## **NERISSA**

Shall they see us?

## **PORTIA**

They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,  
That they shall think we are accomplished  
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,  
When we are both accoutred like young men,  
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,  
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,  
And speak between the change of man and boy  
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps  
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays  
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,  
How honourable ladies sought my love,  
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;  
I could not do withal; then I'll repent,  
And wish for all that, that I had not killed them;  
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,  
That men shall swear I have discontinued school  
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind  
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,  
Which I will practise.

**NERISSA**

Why, shall we turn to men?

**PORTIA**

Fie, what a question's that,  
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter!  
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device  
When I am in my coach, which stays for us  
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,  
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same. A garden.

*Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA*

### LAUNCELOT

Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

### JESSICA

And what hope is that, I pray thee?

### LAUNCELOT

Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

### JESSICA

That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed: so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

### LAUNCELOT

Truly then I fear you are damned both by father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother: well, you are gone both ways.

**JESSICA**

I shall be saved by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

**LAUNCELOT**

Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

*Enter LORENZO*

**JESSICA**

I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say: here he comes.

**LORENZO**

I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

**JESSICA**

Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

**LORENZO**

I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the negro's belly: the Moor is with child by you, Launcelot.

**LAUNCELOT**

It is much that the Moor should be more than reason:  
but if she be less than an honest woman, she is  
indeed more than I took her for.

**LORENZO**

How every fool can play upon the word! I think the  
best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence,  
and discourse grow commendable in none only but  
parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

**LAUNCELOT**

That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

**LORENZO**

Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid  
them prepare dinner.

**LAUNCELOT**

That is done too, sir; only 'cover' is the word.

**LORENZO**

Will you cover then, sir?

**LAUNCELOT**

Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

**LORENZO**

Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show  
the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray  
thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning:  
go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve  
in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

**LAUNCELOT**

For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the  
meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in  
to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and  
conceits shall govern.

*Exit*

## **LORENZO**

O dear discretion, how his words are suited!  
The fool hath planted in his memory  
An army of good words; and I do know  
A many fools, that stand in better place,  
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word  
Defy the matter. How cheerest thou, Jessica?  
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,  
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

## **JESSICA**

Past all expressing. It is very meet  
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;  
For, having such a blessing in his lady,  
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;  
And if on earth he do not mean it, then  
In reason he should never come to heaven  
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match  
And on the wager lay two earthly women,  
And Portia one, there must be something else  
Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world  
Hath not her fellow.

## **LORENZO**

Even such a husband  
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

## **JESSICA**

Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

**LORENZO**

I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

**JESSICA**

Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

**LORENZO**

No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;  
' Then, howso'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things  
I shall digest it.

**JESSICA**

Well, I'll set you forth.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 3, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Venice. A court of justice.

*Enter the DUKE, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO, and others*

**DUKE**

What, is Antonio here?

**ANTONIO**

Ready, so please your grace.

**DUKE**

I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer  
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch  
uncapable of pity, void and empty  
From any dram of mercy.

**ANTONIO**

I have heard  
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify  
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate  
And that no lawful means can carry me  
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose  
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd  
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,  
The very tyranny and rage of his.

**DUKE**

Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

**SALERIO**

He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

*Enter SHYLOCK*

## **DUKE**

Make room, and let him stand before our face.  
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,  
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice  
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought  
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange  
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;  
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,  
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,  
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,  
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,  
Forgive a moiety of the principal;  
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,  
That have of late so huddled on his back,  
Enow to press a royal merchant down  
And pluck commiseration of his state  
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,  
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd  
To offices of tender courtesy.  
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

## **SHYLOCK**

I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose;  
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn  
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:  
If you deny it, let the danger light  
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.  
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have  
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive  
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:  
But, say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?  
What if my house be troubled with a rat  
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats  
To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?  
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;

Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;  
And others, when the bagpipe sings i' the nose,  
Cannot contain their urine: for affection,  
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood  
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:  
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,  
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;  
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;  
Why he, a woollen bagpipe; but of force  
Must yield to such inevitable shame  
As to offend, himself being offended;  
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,  
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing  
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus  
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

**BASSANIO**

This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,  
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

**SHYLOCK**

I am not bound to please thee with my answers.

**BASSANIO**

Do all men kill the things they do not love?

**SHYLOCK**

Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

**BASSANIO**

Every offence is not a hate at first.

**SHYLOCK**

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

## **ANTONIO**

I pray you, think you question with the Jew:  
You may as well go stand upon the beach  
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;  
You may as well use question with the wolf  
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;  
You may as well forbid the mountain pines  
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,  
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;  
You may as well do anything most hard,  
As seek to soften that--than which what's harder?--  
His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you,  
Make no more offers, use no farther means,  
But with all brief and plain conveniency  
Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

## **BASSANIO**

For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

## **SHYLOCK**

What judgment shall I dread, doing  
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,  
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

## **DUKE**

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

## **SHYLOCK**

What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?  
You have among you many a purchased slave,  
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,  
You use in abject and in slavish parts,  
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,  
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?  
Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds  
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates  
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer

'The slaves are ours:' so do I answer you:  
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,  
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.  
If you deny me, fie upon your law!  
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

**DUKE**

Upon my power I may dismiss this court,  
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,  
Whom I have sent for to determine this,  
Come here to-day.

**SALERIO**

My lord, here stays without  
A messenger with letters from the doctor,  
New come from Padua.

**DUKE**

Bring us the letter; call the messenger.

**BASSANIO**

Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!  
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,  
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

**ANTONIO**

I am a tainted wether of the flock,  
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit  
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me  
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,  
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

*Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk*

**DUKE**

Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

**NERISSA**

From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

*Presenting a letter*

**BASSANIO**

Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

**SHYLOCK**

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

**GRATIANO**

Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,  
Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,  
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness  
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

**SHYLOCK**

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

**GRATIANO**

O, be thou damn'd, execrable dog!  
And for thy life let justice be accused.  
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith  
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,  
That souls of animals infuse themselves  
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit  
Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,  
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,  
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,  
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires  
Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

## **SHYLOCK**

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,  
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:  
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall  
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

## **DUKE**

This letter from Bellario doth commend  
A young and learned doctor to our court.  
Where is he?

## **NERISSA**

He attendeth here hard by,  
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

## **DUKE**

With all my heart. Some three or four of you  
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.  
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

## **Clerk**

[Reads]  
Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of  
your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that  
your messenger came, in loving visitation was with  
me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I  
acquainted him with the cause in controversy between  
the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turned o'er  
many books together: he is furnished with my  
opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the  
greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes  
with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's  
request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of  
years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend  
estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so  
old a head. I leave him to your gracious  
acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his

commendation.

**DUKE**

You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:  
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

*Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of laws*

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

**PORTIA**

I did, my lord.

**DUKE**

You are welcome: take your place.  
Are you acquainted with the difference  
That holds this present question in the court?

**PORTIA**

I am informed thoroughly of the cause.  
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

**DUKE**

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

**PORTIA**

Is your name Shylock?

**SHYLOCK**

Shylock is my name.

**PORTIA**

Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;



Yet in such rule that the Venetian law  
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.  
You stand within his danger, do you not?

**ANTONIO**

Ay, so he says.

**PORTIA**

Do you confess the bond?

**ANTONIO**

I do.

**PORTIA**

Then must the Jew be merciful.

**SHYLOCK**

On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

**PORTIA**

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That, in the course of justice, none of us

Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;  
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

## **SHYLOCK**

My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

## **PORTIA**

Is he not able to discharge the money?

## **BASSANIO**

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;  
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,  
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,  
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:  
If this will not suffice, it must appear  
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,  
Wrest once the law to your authority:  
To do a great right, do a little wrong,  
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

## **PORTIA**

It must not be; there is no power in Venice  
Can alter a decree established:  
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,  
And many an error by the same example  
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

## **SHYLOCK**

A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!  
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

## **PORTIA**

I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

**SHYLOCK**

Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

**PORTIA**

Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

**SHYLOCK**

An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:  
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?  
No, not for Venice.

**PORTIA**

Why, this bond is forfeit;  
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim  
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off  
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:  
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

**SHYLOCK**

When it is paid according to the tenor.  
It doth appear you are a worthy judge;  
You know the law, your exposition  
Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,  
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,  
Proceed to judgment: by my soul I swear  
There is no power in the tongue of man  
To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

**ANTONIO**

Most heartily I do beseech the court  
To give the judgment.

**PORTIA**

Why then, thus it is:  
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

**SHYLOCK**

O noble judge! O excellent young man!

**PORTIA**

For the intent and purpose of the law  
Hath full relation to the penalty,  
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

**SHYLOCK**

'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!  
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

**PORTIA**

Therefore lay bare your bosom.

**SHYLOCK**

Ay, his breast:  
So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?  
'Nearest his heart:' those are the very words.

**PORTIA**

It is so. Are there balance here to weigh  
The flesh?

**SHYLOCK**

I have them ready.

**PORTIA**

Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,  
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

**SHYLOCK**

Is it so nominated in the bond?

**PORTIA**

It is not so express'd: but what of that?  
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

**SHYLOCK**

I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

**PORTIA**

You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

**ANTONIO**

But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.  
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!  
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;  
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom: it is still her use  
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,  
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow  
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance  
Of such misery doth she cut me off.  
Commend me to your honourable wife:  
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;  
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;  
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge  
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.  
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,  
And he repents not that he pays your debt;  
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,  
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

**BASSANIO**

Antonio, I am married to a wife  
Which is as dear to me as life itself;  
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,  
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:  
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all  
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

**PORTIA**

Your wife would give you little thanks for that,  
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

**GRATIANO**

I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:  
I would she were in heaven, so she could  
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

**NERISSA**

'Tis well you offer it behind her back;  
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

**SHYLOCK**

These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;  
Would any of the stock of Barrabas  
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!

*Aside*

We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

**PORTIA**

A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:  
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

**SHYLOCK**

Most rightful judge!

**PORTIA**

And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:  
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

**SHYLOCK**

Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

**PORTIA**

Tarry a little; there is something else.  
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;  
The words expressly are 'a pound of flesh:'  
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;  
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed  
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods  
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate  
Unto the state of Venice.

**GRATIANO**

O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

**SHYLOCK**

Is that the law?

**PORTIA**

Thyself shalt see the act:  
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured  
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

**GRATIANO**

O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

**SHYLOCK**

I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice  
And let the Christian go.

**BASSANIO**

Here is the money.

**PORTIA**

Soft!  
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:  
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

**GRATIANO**

O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

**PORTIA**

Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.  
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more  
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more  
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much  
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,  
Or the division of the twentieth part  
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn  
But in the estimation of a hair,  
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

**GRATIANO**

A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!  
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

**PORTIA**

Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

**SHYLOCK**

Give me my principal, and let me go.



## **BASSANIO**

I have it ready for thee; here it is.

## **PORTIA**

He hath refused it in the open court:  
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

## **GRATIANO**

A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!  
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

## **SHYLOCK**

Shall I not have barely my principal?

## **PORTIA**

Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,  
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

## **SHYLOCK**

Why, then the devil give him good of it!  
I'll stay no longer question.

## **PORTIA**

Tarry, Jew:  
The law hath yet another hold on you.  
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,  
If it be proved against an alien  
That by direct or indirect attempts  
He seek the life of any citizen,  
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive  
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half  
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;  
And the offender's life lies in the mercy

Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.  
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;  
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,  
That indirectly and directly too  
Thou hast contrived against the very life  
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd  
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.  
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

## **GRATIANO**

Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:  
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,  
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;  
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

## **DUKE**

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,  
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:  
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;  
The other half comes to the general state,  
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

## **PORTIA**

Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

## **SHYLOCK**

Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:  
You take my house when you do take the prop  
That doth sustain my house; you take my life  
When you do take the means whereby I live.

## **PORTIA**

What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

## **GRATIANO**

A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

**ANTONIO**

So please my lord the duke and all the court  
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,  
I am content; so he will let me have  
The other half in use, to render it,  
Upon his death, unto the gentleman  
That lately stole his daughter:  
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,  
He presently become a Christian;  
The other, that he do record a gift,  
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,  
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

**DUKE**

He shall do this, or else I do recant  
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

**PORTIA**

Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

**SHYLOCK**

I am content.

**PORTIA**

Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

**SHYLOCK**

I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;  
I am not well: send the deed after me,  
And I will sign it.

**DUKE**

Get thee gone, but do it.

**GRATIANO**

In christening shalt thou have two god-fathers:  
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,  
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

*Exit SHYLOCK*

**DUKE**

Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

**PORTIA**

I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:  
I must away this night toward Padua,  
And it is meet I presently set forth.

**DUKE**

I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.  
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,  
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

*Exeunt Duke and his train*

**BASSANIO**

Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend  
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted  
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,  
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,  
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

**ANTONIO**

And stand indebted, over and above,  
In love and service to you evermore.

**PORTIA**

He is well paid that is well satisfied;  
And I, delivering you, am satisfied  
And therein do account myself well paid:  
My mind was never yet more mercenary.  
I pray you, know me when we meet again:  
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

**BASSANIO**

Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:  
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,  
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,  
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

**PORTIA**

You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

*To ANTONIO*

Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;

*To BASSANIO*

And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you:  
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;  
And you in love shall not deny me this.

**BASSANIO**

This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!  
I will not shame myself to give you this.

**PORTIA**

I will have nothing else but only this;  
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

**BASSANIO**

There's more depends on this than on the value.

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,  
And find it out by proclamation:  
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

**PORTIA**

I see, sir, you are liberal in offers  
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks  
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

**BASSANIO**

Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;  
And when she put it on, she made me vow  
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

**PORTIA**

That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.  
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,  
And know how well I have deserved the ring,  
She would not hold out enemy for ever,  
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa*

**ANTONIO**

My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:  
Let his deservings and my love withal  
Be valued against your wife's commandment.

**BASSANIO**

Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;  
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,  
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.

*Exit Gratiano*

Come, you and I will thither presently;

And in the morning early will we both  
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. A street.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

### PORTIA

Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed  
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night  
And be a day before our husbands home:  
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

*Enter GRATIANO*

### GRATIANO

Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en  
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice  
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat  
Your company at dinner.

### PORTIA

That cannot be:  
His ring I do accept most thankfully:  
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,  
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

### GRATIANO

That will I do.

### NERISSA

Sir, I would speak with you.

*Aside to PORTIA*



I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,  
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

**PORTIA**

[Aside to NERISSA] Thou mayst, I warrant.  
We shall have old swearing  
That they did give the rings away to men;  
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.

*Aloud*

Away! make haste: thou knowist where I will tarry.

**NERISSA**

Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Merchant of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Merchant of Venice](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE I. Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S house.

*Enter LORENZO and JESSICA*

### LORENZO

The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees  
And they did make no noise, in such a night  
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls  
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night.

### JESSICA

In such a night  
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew  
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself  
And ran dismay'd away.

### LORENZO

In such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love  
To come again to Carthage.

### JESSICA

In such a night  
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs  
That did renew old AEson.

### LORENZO

In such a night

Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew  
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice  
As far as Belmont.

**JESSICA**

In such a night  
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,  
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith  
And ne'er a true one.

**LORENZO**

In such a night  
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,  
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

**JESSICA**

I would out-night you, did no body come;  
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

*Enter STEPHANO*

**LORENZO**

Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

**STEPHANO**

A friend.

**LORENZO**

A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

**STEPHANO**

Stephano is my name; and I bring word  
My mistress will before the break of day  
Be here at Belmont; she doth stray about

By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays  
For happy wedlock hours.

**LORENZO**

Who comes with her?

**STEPHANO**

None but a holy hermit and her maid.  
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

**LORENZO**

He is not, nor we have not heard from him.  
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,  
And ceremoniously let us prepare  
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

*Enter LAUNCELOT*

**LAUNCELOT**

Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

**LORENZO**

Who calls?

**LAUNCELOT**

Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?  
Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

**LORENZO**

Leave hollaing, man: here.

**LAUNCELOT**

Sola! where? where?

## **LORENZO**

Here.

## **LAUNCELOT**

Tell him there's a post come from my master, with  
his horn full of good news: my master will be here  
ere morning.

*Exit*

## **LORENZO**

Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.  
And yet no matter: why should we go in?  
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,  
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;  
And bring your music forth into the air.

*Exit Stephano*

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

*Enter Musicians*

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn!  
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,  
And draw her home with music.

*Music*

**JESSICA**

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

**LORENZO**

The reason is, your spirits are attentive:  
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,  
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,  
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,  
Which is the hot condition of their blood;  
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,  
Or any air of music touch their ears,  
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,  
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze  
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet  
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;  
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,  
But music for the time doth change his nature.  
The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night  
And his affections dark as Erebus:  
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

**PORTIA**

That light we see is burning in my hall.  
How far that little candle throws his beams!  
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

**NERISSA**

When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

**PORTIA**

So doth the greater glory dim the less:  
A substitute shines brightly as a king  
Unto the king be by, and then his state  
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook  
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

**NERISSA**

It is your music, madam, of the house.

**PORTIA**

Nothing is good, I see, without respect:  
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

**NERISSA**

Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

**PORTIA**

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,  
When neither is attended, and I think  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,  
When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.  
How many things by season season'd are  
To their right praise and true perfection!  
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion  
And would not be awaked.

*Music ceases*

**LORENZO**

That is the voice,  
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

**PORTIA**

He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,

By the bad voice.

**LORENZO**

Dear lady, welcome home.

**PORTIA**

We have been praying for our husbands' healths,  
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.  
Are they return'd?

**LORENZO**

Madam, they are not yet;  
But there is come a messenger before,  
To signify their coming.

**PORTIA**

Go in, Nerissa;  
Give order to my servants that they take  
No note at all of our being absent hence;  
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.

*A tucket sounds*

**LORENZO**

Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:  
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

**PORTIA**

This night methinks is but the daylight sick;  
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,  
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

*Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their followers*

**BASSANIO**



We should hold day with the Antipodes,  
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

**PORTIA**

Let me give light, but let me not be light;  
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,  
And never be Bassanio so for me:  
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

**BASSANIO**

I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.  
This is the man, this is Antonio,  
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

**PORTIA**

You should in all sense be much bound to him.  
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

**ANTONIO**

No more than I am well acquitted of.

**PORTIA**

Sir, you are very welcome to our house:  
It must appear in other ways than words,  
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

**GRATIANO**

[To NERISSA] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;  
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:  
Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,  
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

**PORTIA**

A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

## GRATIANO

About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring  
That she did give me, whose posy was  
For all the world like cutler's poetry  
Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.'

## NERISSA

What talk you of the posy or the value?  
You swore to me, when I did give it you,  
That you would wear it till your hour of death  
And that it should lie with you in your grave:  
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,  
You should have been respective and have kept it.  
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,  
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

## GRATIANO

He will, an if he live to be a man.

## NERISSA

Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

## GRATIANO

Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,  
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,  
No higher than thyself; the judge's clerk,  
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:  
I could not for my heart deny it him.

## PORTIA

You were to blame, I must be plain with you,  
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift:  
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger  
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.  
I gave my love a ring and made him swear

Never to part with it; and here he stands;  
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it  
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth  
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,  
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:  
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

## **BASSANIO**

[Aside] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off  
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

## **GRATIANO**

My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away  
Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed  
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,  
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;  
And neither man nor master would take aught  
But the two rings.

## **PORTIA**

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**

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 nought 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 honour 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 honour, madam, by my soul,  
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,  
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me  
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him  
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away;  
Even he that did uphold 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 honour 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 begg'd  
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 any thing 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 honour, 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 the 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 never more break faith advisedly.

**PORTIA**

Then you shall be his surety. Give him this  
And bid him keep it better than the other.

**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.

**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?

**PORTIA**

Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed:  
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;  
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 return'd; I have not yet  
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;  
And I have better news in store for you  
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;  
There you shall find three of your argosies  
Are richly come to harbour suddenly:  
You shall not know by what strange accident  
I chanced on this letter.

**ANTONIO**

I am dumb.

**BASSANIO**

Were you the doctor and I knew you not?

**GRATIANO**

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 bed-fellow:  
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.  
There do I give to you and Jessica,  
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,  
After his death, of all he dies possess'd 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,  
That 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*

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Midsummer Night's Dream

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Athens. The palace of THESEUS.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [Athens. QUINCE'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A wood near Athens.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Another part of the wood.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [The wood. TITANIA lying asleep.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Another part of the wood.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The same. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Athens. QUINCE'S house.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Athens. The palace of THESEUS.](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants*

### THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour  
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in  
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow  
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,  
Like to a step-dame or a dowager  
Long withering out a young man 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 woo'd 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 revelling.

*Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, 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 bewitch'd 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 stolen the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers  
Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:  
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,  
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,  
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,  
Be it so she; will not here before your grace  
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.

**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.  
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.

**HERMIA**

I would my father look'd 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  
For ever 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,  
You can endure the livery of a nun,  
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,

To live a barren sister all your life,  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.  
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;  
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,  
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn  
Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

## **HERMIA**

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,  
Ere I will 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 crazed 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 possess'd; my love is more than his;  
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,  
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 over-full 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.

## 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.

**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,--

**HERMIA**

O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

**LYSANDER**

Or else misgraffed in respect of years,--

**HERMIA**

O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

**LYSANDER**

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,--

**HERMIA**

O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.

**LYSANDER**

Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,  
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,  
Making it momentany as a sound,



Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;  
Brief as the lightning in the collid 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.

## **HERMIA**

If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,  
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.

## **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.  
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;  
And to that place the sharp Athenian law  
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,  
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;  
And in the wood, a league without the town,  
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,  
To do observance to a morn of May,  
There will I stay for thee.

## **HERMIA**

My good Lysander!  
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,  
By his best arrow with the golden head,  
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,  
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,  
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,  
When the false Trojan under sail was seen,  
By all the vows that ever men have broke,

In number more than ever women spoke,  
In that same place thou hast appointed me,  
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

**LYSANDER**

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

*Enter HELENA*

**HERMIA**

God speed fair Helena! whither away?

**HELENA**

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.  
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!  
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air  
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,  
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.  
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,  
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;  
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,  
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.  
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,  
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.  
O, teach me how you look, and with what art  
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

**HERMIA**

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

**HELENA**

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

**HERMIA**

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

**HELENA**

O that my prayers could such affection move!

**HERMIA**

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

**HELENA**

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

**HERMIA**

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

**HELENA**

None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

**HERMIA**

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;  
Lysander and myself will fly this place.  
Before the time I did Lysander see,  
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:  
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,  
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

**LYSANDER**

Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:  
To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold  
Her silver visage in the watery glass,  
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,  
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,  
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

**HERMIA**

And in the wood, where often you and I

Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,  
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,  
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;  
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,  
To seek new friends and stranger companies.  
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;  
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!  
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight  
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

## **LYSANDER**

I will, my Hermia.

*Exit HERMIA*

Helena, adieu:  
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

*Exit*

## **HELENA**

How happy some o'er other some can be!  
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.  
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;  
He will not know what all but he do know:  
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,  
So I, admiring of his qualities:  
Things base and vile, folding no quantity,  
Love can transpose to form and dignity:  
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;  
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:  
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;  
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:  
And therefore is Love said to be a child,  
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.  
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,  
So the boy Love is perjured every where:  
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,  
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;  
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,

So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.  
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:  
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night  
Pursue her; and for this intelligence  
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:  
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,  
To have his sight thither and back again.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house.

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

**QUINCE**

Is all our company here?

**BOTTOM**

You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

**QUINCE**

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

**BOTTOM**

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.

**QUINCE**

Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

**BOTTOM**

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

## QUINCE

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

## BOTTOM

Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

## QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

## BOTTOM

What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

## QUINCE

A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

## BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks  
And shivering shocks  
Shall break the locks  
Of prison gates;  
And Phibbus' car  
Shall shine from far  
And make and mar  
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.  
This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

## QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

**FLUTE**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

**FLUTE**

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

**QUINCE**

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

**FLUTE**

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

**QUINCE**

That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

**BOTTOM**

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

**QUINCE**

No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

**BOTTOM**

Well, proceed.



**QUINCE**

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

**STARVELING**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.  
Tom Snout, the tinker.

**SNOUT**

Here, Peter Quince.

**QUINCE**

You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father:  
Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I  
hope, here is a play fitted.

**SNUG**

Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it  
be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

**QUINCE**

You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

**BOTTOM**

Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will  
do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar,  
that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again,  
let him roar again.'

**QUINCE**

An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

**ALL**

That would hang us, every mother's son.

**BOTTOM**

I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

**QUINCE**

You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

**BOTTOM**

Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

**QUINCE**

Why, what you will.

**BOTTOM**

I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

## QUINCE

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

## BOTTOM

We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

## QUINCE

At the duke's oak we meet.

## BOTTOM

Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A wood near Athens.

*Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK*

**PUCK**

How now, spirit! whither wander you?

**Fairy**

Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,  
Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours,  
In those freckles live their savours:  
I must go seek some dewdrops here  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:  
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

**PUCK**

The king doth keep his revels here to-night:  
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;  
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,  
Because that she as her attendant hath  
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;  
She never had so sweet a changeling;  
And jealous Oberon would have the child

Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;  
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,  
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:  
And now they never meet in grove or green,  
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,  
But, they do square, that all their elves for fear  
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

## Fairy

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,  
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite  
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he  
That frights the maidens of the villagery;  
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern  
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;  
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;  
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?  
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,  
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:  
Are not you he?

## PUCK

Thou speak'st aright;  
I am that merry wanderer of the night.  
I jest to Oberon and make him smile  
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,  
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:  
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,  
In very likeness of a roasted crab,  
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob  
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.  
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,  
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;  
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,  
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;  
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,  
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear  
A merrier hour was never wasted there.  
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

## Fairy

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

*Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with hers*

## OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

## TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:  
I have forsworn his bed and company.

## OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

## TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady: but I know  
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,  
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,  
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love  
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,  
Come from the farthest Steppe of India?  
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,  
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,  
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come  
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

## OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,  
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?  
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night  
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?  
And make him with fair AEgle break his faith,  
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

## TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy:  
And never, since the middle summer's spring,  
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,  
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,  
Or in the beached margent of the sea,  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.  
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea  
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land  
Have every pelting river made so proud  
That they have overborne their continents:  
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,  
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn  
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;  
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;  
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,  
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green  
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:  
The human mortals want their winter here;  
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:  
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,  
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,  
That rheumatic diseases do abound:  
And thorough this distemperature we see  
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,  
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown  
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,  
The chiding autumn, angry winter, change  
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,  
By their increase, now knows not which is which:  
And this same progeny of evils comes  
From our debate, from our dissension;  
We are their parents and original.

## OBERON

Do you amend it then; it lies in you:  
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?  
I do but beg a little changeling boy,  
To be my henchman.

## **TITANIA**

Set your heart at rest:  
The fairy land buys not the child of me.  
His mother was a votaress of my order:  
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,  
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,  
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,  
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,  
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive  
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait  
Following,--her womb then rich with my young squire,--  
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,  
To fetch me trifles, and return again,  
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.  
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;  
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,  
And for her sake I will not part with him.

## **OBERON**

How long within this wood intend you stay?

## **TITANIA**

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.  
If you will patiently dance in our round  
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;  
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

## **OBERON**

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

## **TITANIA**



Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!  
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

*Exit TITANIA with her train*

## **OBERON**

Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove  
Till I torment thee for this injury.  
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest  
Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath  
That the rude sea grew civil at her song  
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,  
To hear the sea-maid's music.

## **PUCK**

I remember.

## **OBERON**

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,  
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took  
At a fair vestal throned by the west,  
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;  
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,  
And the imperial votaress passed on,  
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:  
It fell upon a little western flower,  
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,  
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.  
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:  
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid  
Will make or man or woman madly dote  
Upon the next live creature that it sees.  
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again

Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

## **PUCK**

I'll put a girdle round about the earth  
In forty minutes.

*Exit*

## **OBERON**

Having once this juice,  
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,  
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.  
The next thing then she waking looks upon,  
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,  
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,  
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:  
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,  
As I can take it with another herb,  
I'll make her render up her page to me.  
But who comes here? I am invisible;  
And I will overhear their conference.

*Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him*

## **DEMETRIUS**

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.  
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?  
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.  
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;  
And here am I, and wode within this wood,  
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.  
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

## **HELENA**

You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;  
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart  
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,  
And I shall have no power to follow you.

## DEMETRIUS

Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?  
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth  
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

## HELENA

And even for that do I love you the more.  
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,  
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:  
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,  
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,  
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.  
What worser place can I beg in your love,--  
And yet a place of high respect with me,--  
Than to be used as you use your dog?

## DEMETRIUS

Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;  
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

## HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

## DEMETRIUS

You do impeach your modesty too much,  
To leave the city and commit yourself  
Into the hands of one that loves you not;  
To trust the opportunity of night  
And the ill counsel of a desert place  
With the rich worth of your virginity.

## HELENA

Your virtue is my privilege: for that  
It is not night when I do see your face,  
Therefore I think I am not in the night;

Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,  
For you in my respect are all the world:  
Then how can it be said I am alone,  
When all the world is here to look on me?

**DEMETRIUS**

I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,  
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

**HELENA**

The wildest hath not such a heart as you.  
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:  
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;  
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind  
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,  
When cowardice pursues and valour flies.

**DEMETRIUS**

I will not stay thy questions; let me go:  
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe  
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

**HELENA**

Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,  
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!  
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:  
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;  
We should be wood and were not made to woo.

*Exit DEMETRIUS*

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,  
To die upon the hand I love so well.

*Exit*

**OBERON**

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,  
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

*Re-enter PUCK*

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

**PUCK**

Ay, there it is.

**OBERON**

I pray thee, give it me.  
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;  
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,  
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:  
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,  
And make her full of hateful fantasies.  
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:  
A sweet Athenian lady is in love  
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;  
But do it when the next thing he espies  
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man  
By the Athenian garments he hath on.  
Effect it with some care, that he may prove  
More fond on her than she upon her love:  
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

**PUCK**

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

*Enter TITANIA, with her train*

**TITANIA**

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;  
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;  
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,  
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,  
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back  
The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders  
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;  
Then to your offices and let me rest.

*The Fairies sing*

You spotted snakes with double tongue,  
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;  
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,  
Come not near our fairy queen.  
Philomel, with melody  
Sing in our sweet lullaby;  
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:  
Never harm,  
Nor spell nor charm,  
Come our lovely lady nigh;  
So, good night, with lullaby.  
Weaving spiders, come not here;  
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!  
Beetles black, approach not near;  
Worm nor snail, do no offence.  
Philomel, with melody, & c.

**Fairy**

Hence, away! now all is well:  
One aloof stand sentinel.

*Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps*

*Enter OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's eyelids*

## **OBERON**

What thou seest when thou dost wake,  
Do it for thy true-love take,  
Love and languish for his sake:  
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,  
Pard, or boar with bristled hair,  
In thy eye that shall appear  
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:  
Wake when some vile thing is near.

*Exit*

*Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA*

## **LYSANDER**

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;  
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:  
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,  
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

## **HERMIA**

Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;  
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

## **LYSANDER**

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;  
One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.

## **HERMIA**



Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,  
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

## **LYSANDER**

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!  
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.  
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit  
So that but one heart we can make of it;  
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;  
So then two bosoms and a single troth.  
Then by your side no bed-room me deny;  
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

## **HERMIA**

Lysander riddles very prettily:  
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,  
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.  
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy  
Lie further off; in human modesty,  
Such separation as may well be said  
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,  
So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:  
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

## **LYSANDER**

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;  
And then end life when I end loyalty!  
Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

## **HERMIA**

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

*They sleep*

*Enter PUCK*

## **PUCK**

Through the forest have I gone.  
But Athenian found I none,  
On whose eyes I might approve  
This flower's force in stirring love.  
Night and silence.--Who is here?  
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:  
This is he, my master said,  
Despised the Athenian maid;  
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,  
On the dank and dirty ground.  
Pretty soul! she durst not lie  
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.  
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw  
All the power this charm doth owe.  
When thou wakest, let love forbid  
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:  
So awake when I am gone;  
For I must now to Oberon.

*Exit*

*Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running*

**HELENA**

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

**DEMETRIUS**

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

**HELENA**

O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

**DEMETRIUS**

Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

*Exit*

## HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!  
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.  
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;  
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.  
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:  
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.  
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;  
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:  
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius  
Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.  
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine  
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?  
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!  
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.  
Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

## LYSANDER

[Awaking] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.  
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,  
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.  
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word  
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

## HELENA

Do not say so, Lysander; say not so  
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?  
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

## LYSANDER

Content with Hermia! No; I do repent  
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.  
Not Hermia but Helena I love:  
Who will not change a raven for a dove?  
The will of man is by his reason sway'd;  
And reason says you are the worthier maid.  
Things growing are not ripe until their season  
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;

And touching now the point of human skill,  
Reason becomes the marshal to my will  
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook  
Love's stories written in love's richest book.

## HELENA

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?  
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?  
Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,  
That I did never, no, nor never can,  
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,  
But you must flout my insufficiency?  
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,  
In such disdainful manner me to woo.  
But fare you well: perforce I must confess  
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.  
O, that a lady, of one man refused.  
Should of another therefore be abused!

*Exit*

## LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:  
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!  
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things  
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,  
Or as tie heresies that men do leave  
Are hated most of those they did deceive,  
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,  
Of all be hated, but the most of me!  
And, all my powers, address your love and might  
To honour Helen and to be her knight!

*Exit*

## HERMIA

[Awaking] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best  
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!  
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!

Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:  
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,  
And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.  
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!  
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?  
Alack, where are you speak, an if you hear;  
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.  
No? then I well perceive you all not nigh  
Either death or you I'll find immediately.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The wood. TITANIA lying asleep.

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

**BOTTOM**

Are we all met?

**QUINCE**

Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

**BOTTOM**

Peter Quince,--

**QUINCE**

What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

**BOTTOM**

There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

**SNOUT**

By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

**STARVELING**

I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

**BOTTOM**

Not a whit: I have a device to make all well.  
Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

**QUINCE**

Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

**BOTTOM**

No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

**SNOUT**

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

**STARVELING**

I fear it, I promise you.

**BOTTOM**

Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in--God shield us!--a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to 't.

**SNOUT**

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

## **BOTTOM**

Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,--'Ladies,'--or 'Fair-ladies--I would wish You,'--or 'I would request you,'--or 'I would entreat you,--not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are;' and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

## **QUINCE**

Well it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

## **SNOUT**

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

## **BOTTOM**

A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

## **QUINCE**

Yes, it doth shine that night.

## **BOTTOM**

Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

## **QUINCE**

Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns



and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

## **SNOUT**

You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

## **BOTTOM**

Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

## **QUINCE**

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

*Enter PUCK behind*

## **PUCK**

What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,  
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?  
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;  
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

## **QUINCE**

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

## **BOTTOM**

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,--

## QUINCE

Odours, odours.

## BOTTOM

--odours savours sweet:

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.  
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,  
And by and by I will to thee appear.

*Exit*

## PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

*Exit*

## FLUTE

Must I speak now?

## QUINCE

Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes  
but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

## FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,  
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,  
Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,  
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,  
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

## QUINCE

'Ninus' tomb,' man: why, you must not speak that

yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all Pyramus enter: your cue is past; it is, 'never tire.'

## **FLUTE**

O,--As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

*Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head*

## **BOTTOM**

If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

## **QUINCE**

O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

*Exeunt QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

## **PUCK**

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,  
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:  
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,  
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;  
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,  
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

*Exit*

## **BOTTOM**

Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

*Re-enter SNOUT*

## **SNOUT**

O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

**BOTTOM**

What do you see? you see an asshead of your own, do you?

*Exit SNOUT*

*Re-enter QUINCE*

**QUINCE**

Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.

*Exit*

**BOTTOM**

I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

*Sings*

The ousel cock so black of hue,  
With orange-tawny bill,  
The throstle with his note so true,  
The wren with little quill,--

**TITANIA**

[Awaking] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

**BOTTOM**

[Sings]

The finch, the sparrow and the lark,

The plain-song cuckoo gray,  
Whose note full many a man doth mark,  
And dares not answer nay;--  
for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish  
a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry  
'cuckoo' never so?

## **TITANIA**

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:  
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;  
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;  
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me  
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

## **BOTTOM**

Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason  
for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and  
love keep little company together now-a-days; the  
more the pity that some honest neighbours will not  
make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

## **TITANIA**

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

## **BOTTOM**

Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out  
of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

## **TITANIA**

Out of this wood do not desire to go:  
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.  
I am a spirit of no common rate;  
The summer still doth tend upon my state;  
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;  
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,  
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,  
And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;

And I will purge thy mortal grossness so  
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.  
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

*Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED*

**PEASEBLOSSOM**

Ready.

**COBWEB**

And I.

**MOTH**

And I.

**MUSTARDSEED**

And I.

**ALL**

Where shall we go?

**TITANIA**

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;  
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;  
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,  
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;  
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,  
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs  
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,  
To have my love to bed and to arise;  
And pluck the wings from Painted butterflies  
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:  
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

**PEASEBLOSSOM**

Hail, mortal!

**COBWEB**

Hail!

**MOTH**

Hail!

**MUSTARDSEED**

Hail!

**BOTTOM**

I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your  
worship's name.

**COBWEB**

Cobweb.

**BOTTOM**

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master  
Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with  
you. Your name, honest gentleman?

**PEASEBLOSSOM**

Peaseblossom.

**BOTTOM**

I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your  
mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good  
Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more  
acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

## MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

## BOTTOM

Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well:  
that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath  
devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise  
you your kindred had made my eyes water ere now. I  
desire your more acquaintance, good Master  
Mustardseed.

## TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.  
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;  
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,  
Lamenting some enforced chastity.  
Tie up my love's tongue bring him silently.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

*Enter OBERON*

**OBERON**

I wonder if Titania be awaked;  
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,  
Which she must dote on in extremity.

*Enter PUCK*

Here comes my messenger.  
How now, mad spirit!  
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

**PUCK**

My mistress with a monster is in love.  
Near to her close and consecrated bower,  
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,  
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,  
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,  
Were met together to rehearse a play  
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.  
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,  
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport  
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake  
When I did him at this advantage take,  
An ass's nolle I fixed on his head:  
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,  
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,  
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,  
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,  
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,  
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,

So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;  
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;  
He murder cries and help from Athens calls.  
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears  
thus strong,  
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;  
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;  
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all  
things catch.  
I led them on in this distracted fear,  
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:  
When in that moment, so it came to pass,  
Titania waked and straightway loved an ass.

## **OBERON**

This falls out better than I could devise.  
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes  
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

## **PUCK**

I took him sleeping,--that is finish'd too,--  
And the Athenian woman by his side:  
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

*Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS*

## **OBERON**

Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

## **PUCK**

This is the woman, but not this the man.

## **DEMETRIUS**

O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?  
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

## **HERMIA**

Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,  
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse,  
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,  
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,  
And kill me too.

The sun was not so true unto the day  
As he to me: would he have stolen away  
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon  
This whole earth may be bored and that the moon  
May through the centre creep and so displease  
Her brother's noontide with Antipodes.  
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;  
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

## **DEMETRIUS**

So should the murder'd look, and so should I,  
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:  
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,  
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

## **HERMIA**

What's this to my Lysander? where is he?  
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

## **DEMETRIUS**

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

## **HERMIA**

Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the bounds  
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?  
Henceforth be never number'd among men!  
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!  
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,  
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!  
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?  
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue  
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

## **DEMETRIUS**

You spend your passion on a misprised mood:  
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;  
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

## **HERMIA**

I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

## **DEMETRIUS**

An if I could, what should I get therefore?

## **HERMIA**

A privilege never to see me more.  
And from thy hated presence part I so:  
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

*Exit*

## **DEMETRIUS**

There is no following her in this fierce vein:  
Here therefore for a while I will remain.  
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow  
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe:  
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,  
If for his tender here I make some stay.

*Lies down and sleeps*

## **OBERON**

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite  
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:  
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue  
Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.

## **PUCK**

Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,  
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

## **OBERON**

About the wood go swifter than the wind,  
And Helena of Athens look thou find:  
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,  
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:  
By some illusion see thou bring her here:  
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

## **PUCK**

I go, I go; look how I go,  
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

*Exit*

## **OBERON**

Flower of this purple dye,  
Hit with Cupid's archery,  
Sink in apple of his eye.  
When his love he doth espy,  
Let her shine as gloriously  
As the Venus of the sky.  
When thou wakest, if she be by,  
Beg of her for remedy.

*Re-enter PUCK*

## **PUCK**

Captain of our fairy band,  
Helena is here at hand;  
And the youth, mistook by me,  
Pleading for a lover's fee.  
Shall we their fond pageant see?  
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

## **OBERON**

Stand aside: the noise they make  
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

## **PUCK**

Then will two at once woo one;  
That must needs be sport alone;  
And those things do best please me  
That befall preposterously.

*Enter LYSANDER and HELENA*

## **LYSANDER**

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?  
Scorn and derision never come in tears:  
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,  
In their nativity all truth appears.  
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,  
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

## **HELENA**

You do advance your cunning more and more.  
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!  
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?  
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:  
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,  
Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.

## **LYSANDER**

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

## **HELENA**

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

## LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

## DEMETRIUS

[Awaking] O Helena, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!  
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?  
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show  
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!  
That pure congealed white, high Taurus snow,  
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow  
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss  
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

## HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent  
To set against me for your merriment:  
If you were civil and knew courtesy,  
You would not do me thus much injury.  
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,  
But you must join in souls to mock me too?  
If you were men, as men you are in show,  
You would not use a gentle lady so;  
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,  
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.  
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;  
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:  
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,  
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes  
With your derision! none of noble sort  
Would so offend a virgin, and extort  
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

## LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;  
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:  
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,  
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;  
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,

Whom I do love and will do till my death.

**HELENA**

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

**DEMETRIUS**

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:  
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.  
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,  
And now to Helen is it home return'd,  
There to remain.

**LYSANDER**

Helen, it is not so.

**DEMETRIUS**

Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,  
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.  
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

*Re-enter HERMIA*

**HERMIA**

Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,  
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;  
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,  
It pays the hearing double recompense.  
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;  
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound  
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

**LYSANDER**

Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

**HERMIA**



What love could press Lysander from my side?

## **LYSANDER**

Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,  
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night  
Than all you fiery oes and eyes of light.  
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,  
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

## **HERMIA**

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

## **HELENA**

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!  
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three  
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.  
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!  
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived  
To bait me with this foul derision?  
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,  
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,  
When we have chid the hasty-footed time  
For parting us,--O, is it all forgot?  
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?  
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,  
Have with our needles created both one flower,  
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,  
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,  
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,  
Had been incorporate. So we grow together,  
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
But yet an union in partition;  
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;  
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;  
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,  
Due but to one and crowned with one crest.  
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,  
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?  
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:

Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,  
Though I alone do feel the injury.

## **HERMIA**

I am amazed at your passionate words.  
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

## **HELENA**

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,  
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?  
And made your other love, Demetrius,  
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,  
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,  
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this  
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander  
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,  
And tender me, forsooth, affection,  
But by your setting on, by your consent?  
What thought I be not so in grace as you,  
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,  
But miserable most, to love unloved?  
This you should pity rather than despise.

## **HERNIA**

I understand not what you mean by this.

## **HELENA**

Ay, do, persevere, counterfeit sad looks,  
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;  
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:  
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.  
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,  
You would not make me such an argument.  
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;  
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

## **LYSANDER**

Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:  
My love, my life my soul, fair Helena!

**HELENA**

O excellent!

**HERMIA**

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

**DEMETRIUS**

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

**LYSANDER**

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:  
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.  
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:  
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,  
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

**DEMETRIUS**

I say I love thee more than he can do.

**LYSANDER**

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

**DEMETRIUS**

Quick, come!

**HERMIA**

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

**LYSANDER**

Away, you Ethiope!

**DEMETRIUS**

No, no; he'll [ ]  
Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,  
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

**LYSANDER**

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,  
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

**HERMIA**

Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?  
Sweet love,--

**LYSANDER**

Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!  
Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!

**HERMIA**

Do you not jest?

**HELENA**

Yes, sooth; and so do you.

**LYSANDER**

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

**DEMETRIUS**

I would I had your bond, for I perceive  
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.

**LYSANDER**

What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?  
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

## HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?  
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!  
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?  
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.  
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left  
me:  
Why, then you left me--O, the gods forbid!--  
In earnest, shall I say?

## LYSANDER

Ay, by my life;  
And never did desire to see thee more.  
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;  
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest  
That I do hate thee and love Helena.

## HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!  
You thief of love! what, have you come by night  
And stolen my love's heart from him?

## HELENA

Fine, i'faith!  
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,  
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear  
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?  
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

## HERMIA

Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.  
Now I perceive that she hath made compare  
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;

And with her personage, her tall personage,  
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.  
And are you grown so high in his esteem;  
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?  
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;  
How low am I? I am not yet so low  
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

## HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,  
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;  
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;  
I am a right maid for my cowardice:  
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,  
Because she is something lower than myself,  
That I can match her.

## HERMIA

Lower! hark, again.

## HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.  
I evermore did love you, Hermia,  
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;  
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,  
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.  
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;  
But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd me  
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:  
And now, so you will let me quiet go,  
To Athens will I bear my folly back  
And follow you no further: let me go:  
You see how simple and how fond I am.

## HERMIA

Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

## HELENA

A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

**HERMIA**

What, with Lysander?

**HELENA**

With Demetrius.

**LYSANDER**

Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

**DEMETRIUS**

No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

**HELENA**

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!  
She was a vixen when she went to school;  
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

**HERMIA**

'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!  
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?  
Let me come to her.

**LYSANDER**

Get you gone, you dwarf;  
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;  
You bead, you acorn.

**DEMETRIUS**

You are too officious  
In her behalf that scorns your services.

Let her alone: speak not of Helena;  
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend  
Never so little show of love to her,  
Thou shalt aby it.

## **LYSANDER**

Now she holds me not;  
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,  
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

*Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS*

## **HERMIA**

You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:  
Nay, go not back.

## **HELENA**

I will not trust you, I,  
Nor longer stay in your curst company.  
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,  
My legs are longer though, to run away.

*Exit*

## **HERMIA**

I am amazed, and know not what to say.

*Exit*

## **OBERON**

This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,  
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.



## PUCK

Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.  
Did not you tell me I should know the man  
By the Athenian garment he had on?  
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,  
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;  
And so far am I glad it so did sort  
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

## OBERON

Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:  
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;  
The starry welkin cover thou anon  
With drooping fog as black as Acheron,  
And lead these testy rivals so astray  
As one come not within another's way.  
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,  
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;  
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;  
And from each other look thou lead them thus,  
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep  
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:  
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;  
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,  
To take from thence all error with his might,  
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.  
When they next wake, all this derision  
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,  
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,  
With league whose date till death shall never end.  
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,  
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;  
And then I will her charmed eye release  
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

## PUCK

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,  
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,  
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;

At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,  
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,  
That in crossways and floods have burial,  
Already to their wormy beds are gone;  
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,  
They willfully themselves exile from light  
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

## **OBERON**

But we are spirits of another sort:  
I with the morning's love have oft made sport,  
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,  
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,  
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,  
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.  
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:  
We may effect this business yet ere day.

*Exit*

## **PUCK**

Up and down, up and down,  
I will lead them up and down:  
I am fear'd in field and town:  
Goblin, lead them up and down.  
Here comes one.

*Re-enter LYSANDER*

## **LYSANDER**

Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

## **PUCK**

Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

## **LYSANDER**

I will be with thee straight.

**PUCK**

Follow me, then,  
To plainer ground.

*Exit LYSANDER, as following the voice*

*Re-enter DEMETRIUS*

**DEMETRIUS**

Lysander! speak again:  
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?  
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

**PUCK**

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,  
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,  
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;  
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled  
That draws a sword on thee.

**DEMETRIUS**

Yea, art thou there?

**PUCK**

Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter LYSANDER*

**LYSANDER**

He goes before me and still dares me on:  
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.  
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:

I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;  
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,  
And here will rest me.

*Lies down*

Come, thou gentle day!  
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,  
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite.

*Sleeps*

*Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS*

**PUCK**

Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

**DEMETRIUS**

Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot  
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,  
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.  
Where art thou now?

**PUCK**

Come hither: I am here.

**DEMETRIUS**

Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,  
If ever I thy face by daylight see:  
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me  
To measure out my length on this cold bed.  
By day's approach look to be visited.

*Lies down and sleeps*

*Re-enter HELENA*

## **HELENA**

O weary night, O long and tedious night,  
Abate thy hour! Shine comforts from the east,  
That I may back to Athens by daylight,  
From these that my poor company detest:  
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,  
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

*Lies down and sleeps*

## **PUCK**

Yet but three? Come one more;  
Two of both kinds make up four.  
Here she comes, curst and sad:  
Cupid is a knavish lad,  
Thus to make poor females mad.

*Re-enter HERMIA*

## **HERMIA**

Never so weary, never so in woe,  
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,  
I can no further crawl, no further go;  
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.  
Here will I rest me till the break of day.  
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

*Lies down and sleeps*

## **PUCK**

On the ground  
Sleep sound:  
I'll apply  
To your eye,  
Gentle lover, remedy.

*Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER's eyes*

When thou wakest,  
Thou takest  
True delight  
In the sight  
Of thy former lady's eye:  
And the country proverb known,  
That every man should take his own,  
In your waking shall be shown:  
Jack shall have Jill;  
Nought shall go ill;  
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The same. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA

lying asleep.

*Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, and other Fairies attending; OBERON behind unseen*

### TITANIA

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,  
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,  
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,  
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

### BOTTOM

Where's Peaseblossom?

### PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

### BOTTOM

Scratch my head Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

### COBWEB

Ready.

### BOTTOM

Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your  
weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped

humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good  
mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret  
yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and,  
good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not;  
I would be loath to have you overflown with a  
honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

**MUSTARDSEED**

Ready.

**BOTTOM**

Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you,  
leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

**MUSTARDSEED**

What's your Will?

**BOTTOM**

Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb  
to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for  
methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I  
am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me,  
I must scratch.

**TITANIA**

What, wilt thou hear some music,  
my sweet love?

**BOTTOM**

I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have  
the tongs and the bones.

**TITANIA**

Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.



## **BOTTOM**

Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good  
dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle  
of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

## **TITANIA**

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek  
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

## **BOTTOM**

I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas.  
But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I  
have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

## **TITANIA**

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.  
Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

*Exeunt fairies*

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle  
Gently entwist; the female ivy so  
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.  
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

*They sleep*

*Enter PUCK*

## **OBERON**

[Advancing] Welcome, good Robin.  
See'st thou this sweet sight?  
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:  
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,  
Seeking sweet favours from this hateful fool,  
I did upbraid her and fall out with her;

For she his hairy temples then had rounded  
With a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;  
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds  
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,  
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes  
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.  
When I had at my pleasure taunted her  
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,  
I then did ask of her her changeling child;  
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent  
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.  
And now I have the boy, I will undo  
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:  
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp  
From off the head of this Athenian swain;  
That, he awaking when the other do,  
May all to Athens back again repair  
And think no more of this night's accidents  
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.  
But first I will release the fairy queen.  
Be as thou wast wont to be;  
See as thou wast wont to see:  
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower  
Hath such force and blessed power.  
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

## **TITANIA**

My Oberon! what visions have I seen!  
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

## **OBERON**

There lies your love.

## **TITANIA**

How came these things to pass?  
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

## **OBERON**

Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.  
Titania, music call; and strike more dead  
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

**TITANIA**

Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!

*Music, still*

**PUCK**

Now, when thou wakest, with thine  
own fool's eyes peep.

**OBERON**

Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,  
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.  
Now thou and I are new in amity,  
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly  
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,  
And bless it to all fair prosperity:  
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be  
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

**PUCK**

Fairy king, attend, and mark:  
I do hear the morning lark.

**OBERON**

Then, my queen, in silence sad,  
Trip we after the night's shade:  
We the globe can compass soon,  
Swifter than the wandering moon.

**TITANIA**

Come, my lord, and in our flight

Tell me how it came this night  
That I sleeping here was found  
With these mortals on the ground.

*Exeunt*

*Horns winded within*

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train*

## **THESEUS**

Go, one of you, find out the forester;  
For now our observation is perform'd;  
And since we have the vaward of the day,  
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.  
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:  
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

*Exit an Attendant*

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,  
And mark the musical confusion  
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

## **HIPPOLYTA**

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,  
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear  
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear  
Such gallant chiding: for, besides the groves,  
The skies, the fountains, every region near  
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard  
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

## **THESEUS**

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,  
So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung  
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;  
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;  
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,

Each under each. A cry more tuneable  
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,  
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:  
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

**EGEUS**

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;  
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;  
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:  
I wonder of their being here together.

**THESEUS**

No doubt they rose up early to observe  
The rite of May, and hearing our intent,  
Came here in grace our solemnity.  
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day  
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

**EGEUS**

It is, my lord.

**THESEUS**

Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

*Horns and shout within. LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start up*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:  
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

**LYSANDER**

Pardon, my lord.

**THESEUS**

I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies:  
How comes this gentle concord in the world,  
That hatred is so far from jealousy,  
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

## **LYSANDER**

My lord, I shall reply amazedly,  
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,  
I cannot truly say how I came here;  
But, as I think,--for truly would I speak,  
And now do I bethink me, so it is,--  
I came with Hermia hither: our intent  
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,  
Without the peril of the Athenian law.

## **EGEUS**

Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:  
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.  
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,  
Thereby to have defeated you and me,  
You of your wife and me of my consent,  
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

## **DEMETRIUS**

My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,  
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;  
And I in fury hither follow'd them,  
Fair Helena in fancy following me.  
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,--  
But by some power it is,--my love to Hermia,  
Melted as the snow, seems to me now  
As the remembrance of an idle gaud  
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;  
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,  
The object and the pleasure of mine eye,  
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,  
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:  
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;  
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,

Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,  
And will for evermore be true to it.

## **THESEUS**

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:  
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.  
Egeus, I will overbear your will;  
For in the temple by and by with us  
These couples shall eternally be knit:  
And, for the morning now is something worn,  
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.  
Away with us to Athens; three and three,  
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.  
Come, Hippolyta.

*Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train*

## **DEMETRIUS**

These things seem small and undistinguishable,

## **HERMIA**

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,  
When every thing seems double.

## **HELENA**

So methinks:  
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,  
Mine own, and not mine own.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Are you sure  
That we are awake? It seems to me  
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think  
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

## **HERMIA**

Yea; and my father.

**HELENA**

And Hippolyta.

**LYSANDER**

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

**DEMETRIUS**

Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him  
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

*Exeunt*

**BOTTOM**

[Awaking] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was--there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,--and methought I had,--but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.

*Exit*



[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house.

*Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING*

**QUINCE**

Have you sent to Bottom's house ? is he come home yet?

**STARVELING**

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

**FLUTE**

If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

**QUINCE**

It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

**FLUTE**

No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

**QUINCE**

Yea and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

**FLUTE**

You must say 'paragon:' a paramour is, God bless us,  
a thing of naught.

*Enter SNUG*

**SNUG**

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and  
there is two or three lords and ladies more married:  
if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made  
men.

**FLUTE**

O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a  
day during his life; he could not have 'scaped  
sixpence a day: an the duke had not given him  
sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged;  
he would have deserved it: sixpence a day in  
Pyramus, or nothing.

*Enter BOTTOM*

**BOTTOM**

Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

**QUINCE**

Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

**BOTTOM**

Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not  
what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I  
will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

**QUINCE**

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

## BOTTOM

Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Midsummer Night's Dream](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

*Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords and Attendants*

### HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange my Theseus, that these  
lovers speak of.

### THESEUS

More strange than true: I never may believe  
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.  
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover and the poet  
Are of imagination all compact:  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,  
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:  
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.  
Such tricks hath strong imagination,  
That if it would but apprehend some joy,  
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;  
Or in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

### HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,

And all their minds transfigured so together,  
More witnesseth than fancy's images  
And grows to something of great constancy;  
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

## **THESEUS**

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

*Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA*

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love  
Accompany your hearts!

## **LYSANDER**

More than to us  
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

## **THESEUS**

Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,  
To wear away this long age of three hours  
Between our after-supper and bed-time?  
Where is our usual manager of mirth?  
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,  
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?  
Call Philostrate.

## **PHILOSTRATE**

Here, mighty Theseus.

## **THESEUS**

Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?  
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile  
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

## **PHILOSTRATE**

There is a brief how many sports are ripe:  
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

*Giving a paper*

## **THESEUS**

[Reads] 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung  
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'  
We'll none of that: that have I told my love,  
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

*Reads*

'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,  
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'  
That is an old device; and it was play'd  
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

*Reads*

'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death  
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.'  
That is some satire, keen and critical,  
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

*Reads*

'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'  
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!  
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.  
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

## **PHILOSTRATE**

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,  
Which is as brief as I have known a play;  
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,  
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play  
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:  
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;

For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.  
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,  
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears  
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

**THESEUS**

What are they that do play it?

**PHILOSTRATE**

Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,  
Which never labour'd in their minds till now,  
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories  
With this same play, against your nuptial.

**THESEUS**

And we will hear it.

**PHILOSTRATE**

No, my noble lord;  
It is not for you: I have heard it over,  
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;  
Unless you can find sport in their intents,  
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,  
To do you service.

**THESEUS**

I will hear that play;  
For never anything can be amiss,  
When simpleness and duty tender it.  
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

*Exit PHILOSTRATE*

**HIPPOLYTA**

I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged



And duty in his service perishing.

**THESEUS**

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

**HIPPOLYTA**

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

**THESEUS**

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.  
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:  
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect  
Takes it in might, not merit.  
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed  
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;  
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,  
Make periods in the midst of sentences,  
Throttle their practised accent in their fears  
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,  
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,  
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;  
And in the modesty of fearful duty  
I read as much as from the rattling tongue  
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.  
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity  
In least speak most, to my capacity.

*Re-enter PHILOSTRATE*

**PHILOSTRATE**

So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

**THESEUS**

Let him approach.

*Flourish of trumpets*

*Enter QUINCE for the Prologue*

## **Prologue**

If we offend, it is with our good will.  
That you should think, we come not to offend,  
But with good will. To show our simple skill,  
That is the true beginning of our end.  
Consider then we come but in despite.  
We do not come as minding to contest you,  
Our true intent is. All for your delight  
We are not here. That you should here repent you,  
The actors are at hand and by their show  
You shall know all that you are like to know.

## **THESEUS**

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

## **LYSANDER**

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows  
not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not  
enough to speak, but to speak true.

## **HIPPOLYTA**

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child  
on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

## **THESEUS**

His speech, was like a tangled chain; nothing  
impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

*Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion*

## **Prologue**

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;  
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;  
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.  
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present  
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;  
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content  
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.  
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,  
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,  
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn  
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.  
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,  
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,  
Did scare away, or rather did affright;  
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,  
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.  
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,  
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:  
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,  
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;  
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,  
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,  
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain  
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

*Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine*

## **THESEUS**

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

## **DEMETRIUS**

No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

## **Wall**

In this same interlude it doth befall  
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;  
And such a wall, as I would have you think,  
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,  
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,  
Did whisper often very secretly.

This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show  
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:  
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,  
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

## **THESEUS**

Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

## **DEMETRIUS**

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard  
discourse, my lord.

*Enter Pyramus*

## **THESEUS**

Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

## **Pyramus**

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!  
O night, which ever art when day is not!  
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,  
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!  
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,  
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!  
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,  
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

*Wall holds up his fingers*

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!  
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.  
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!  
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

## **THESEUS**

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

## **Pyramus**

No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me'  
is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to  
spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will  
fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

*Enter Thisbe*

## **Thisbe**

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,  
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!  
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,  
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

## **Pyramus**

I see a voice: now will I to the chink,  
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face. Thisby!

## **Thisbe**

My love thou art, my love I think.

## **Pyramus**

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;  
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

## **Thisbe**

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

## **Pyramus**

Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

## **Thisbe**

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

**Pyramus**

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

**Thisbe**

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

**Pyramus**

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

**Thisbe**

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe*

**Wall**

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;  
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

*Exit*

**THESEUS**

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

**DEMETRIUS**

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear  
without warning.

**HIPPOLYTA**

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

**THESEUS**

The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst  
are no worse, if imagination amend them.

**HIPPOLYTA**

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

**THESEUS**

If we imagine no worse of them than they of  
themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here  
come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

*Enter Lion and Moonshine*

**Lion**

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear  
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,  
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,  
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.  
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am  
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;  
For, if I should as lion come in strife  
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

**THESEUS**

A very gentle beast, of a good conscience.

**DEMETRIUS**

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

**LYSANDER**

This lion is a very fox for his valour.

**THESEUS**

True; and a goose for his discretion.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

## **THESEUS**

His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

## **Moonshine**

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;--

## **DEMETRIUS**

He should have worn the horns on his head.

## **THESEUS**

He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

## **Moonshine**

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;  
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

## **THESEUS**

This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon?

## **DEMETRIUS**

He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.



## **HIPPOLYTA**

I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

## **THESEUS**

It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

## **LYSANDER**

Proceed, Moon.

## **Moonshine**

All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Why, all these should be in the lantern; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

*Enter Thisbe*

## **Thisbe**

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

## **Lion**

[Roaring] Oh--

*Thisbe runs off*

## **DEMETRIUS**

Well roared, Lion.

## **THESEUS**

Well run, Thisbe.

## **HIPPOLYTA**

Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit*

## **THESEUS**

Well moused, Lion.

## **LYSANDER**

And so the lion vanished.

## **DEMETRIUS**

And then came Pyramus.

*Enter Pyramus*

## **Pyramus**

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;  
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;  
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,  
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.  
But stay, O spite!  
But mark, poor knight,  
What dreadful dole is here!  
Eyes, do you see?  
How can it be?  
O dainty duck! O dear!  
Thy mantle good,  
What, stain'd with blood!  
Approach, ye Furies fell!  
O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum;  
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

## **THESEUS**

This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would  
go near to make a man look sad.

## **HIPPOLYTA**

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

## **Pyramus**

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?  
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:  
Which is--no, no--which was the fairest dame  
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd  
with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;  
Out, sword, and wound  
The pap of Pyramus;  
Ay, that left pap,  
Where heart doth hop:

*Stabs himself*

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.  
Now am I dead,  
Now am I fled;  
My soul is in the sky:  
Tongue, lose thy light;  
Moon take thy flight:

*Exit Moonshine*

Now die, die, die, die, die.

*Dies*

## **DEMETRIUS**

No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

**LYSANDER**

Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

**THESEUS**

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

**HIPPOLYTA**

How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

**THESEUS**

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

*Re-enter Thisbe*

**HIPPOLYTA**

Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

**DEMETRIUS**

A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

**LYSANDER**

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

**DEMETRIUS**

And thus she means, videlicet:--

## **Thisbe**

Asleep, my love?  
What, dead, my dove?  
O Pyramus, arise!  
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?  
Dead, dead? A tomb  
Must cover thy sweet eyes.  
These My lips,  
This cherry nose,  
These yellow cowslip cheeks,  
Are gone, are gone:  
Lovers, make moan:  
His eyes were green as leeks.  
O Sisters Three,  
Come, come to me,  
With hands as pale as milk;  
Lay them in gore,  
Since you have shore  
With shears his thread of silk.  
Tongue, not a word:  
Come, trusty sword;  
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

*Stabs herself*

And, farewell, friends;  
Thus Thisby ends:  
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

*Dies*

## **THESEUS**

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Ay, and Wall too.

## **BOTTOM**

[Starting up] No assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

## **THESEUS**

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

*A dance*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:  
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.  
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn  
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.  
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled  
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.  
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,  
In nightly revels and new jollity.

*Exeunt*

*Enter PUCK*

## **PUCK**

Now the hungry lion roars,  
And the wolf behowls the moon;  
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,  
All with weary task fordone.  
Now the wasted brands do glow,  
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,  
Puts the wretch that lies in woe  
In remembrance of a shroud.

Now it is the time of night  
That the graves all gaping wide,  
Every one lets forth his sprite,  
In the church-way paths to glide:  
And we fairies, that do run  
By the triple Hecate's team,  
From the presence of the sun,  
Following darkness like a dream,  
Now are frolic: not a mouse  
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:  
I am sent with broom before,  
To sweep the dust behind the door.

*Enter OBERON and TITANIA with their train*

## **OBERON**

Through the house give gathering light,  
By the dead and drowsy fire:  
Every elf and fairy sprite  
Hop as light as bird from brier;  
And this ditty, after me,  
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

## **TITANIA**

First, rehearse your song by rote  
To each word a warbling note:  
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,  
Will we sing, and bless this place.

*Song and dance*

## **OBERON**

Now, until the break of day,  
Through this house each fairy stray.  
To the best bride-bed will we,  
Which by us shall blessed be;  
And the issue there create  
Ever shall be fortunate.  
So shall all the couples three

Ever true in loving be;  
And the blots of Nature's hand  
Shall not in their issue stand;  
Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,  
Nor mark prodigious, such as are  
Despised in nativity,  
Shall upon their children be.  
With this field-dew consecrate,  
Every fairy take his gait;  
And each several chamber bless,  
Through this palace, with sweet peace;  
And the owner of it blest  
Ever shall in safety rest.  
Trip away; make no stay;  
Meet me all by break of day.

*Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and train*

## **PUCK**

If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended,  
That you have but slumber'd here  
While these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme,  
No more yielding but a dream,  
Gentles, do not reprehend:  
if you pardon, we will mend:  
And, as I am an honest Puck,  
If we have unearned luck  
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,  
We will make amends ere long;  
Else the Puck a liar call;  
So, good night unto you all.  
Give me your hands, if we be friends,  
And Robin shall restore amends.



# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Much Ado About Nothing

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Before LEONATO'S house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [A room in LEONATO's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A hall in LEONATO'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [The same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [LEONATO'S orchard.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [LEONATO'S garden.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [A room in LEONATO'S house](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [HERO's apartment.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [Another room in LEONATO'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [A church.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [A prison.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Before LEONATO'S house.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [LEONATO'S garden.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [A church.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [A room in LEONATO'S house.](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before LEONATO'S house.

*Enter LEONATO, HERO, and BEATRICE, with a Messenger*

**LEONATO**

I learn in this letter that Don Peter of Arragon  
comes this night to Messina.

**Messenger**

He is very near by this: he was not three leagues off  
when I left him.

**LEONATO**

How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

**Messenger**

But few of any sort, and none of name.

**LEONATO**

A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings  
home full numbers. I find here that Don Peter hath  
bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

**Messenger**

Much deserved on his part and equally remembered by  
Don Pedro: he hath borne himself beyond the  
promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb,  
the feats of a lion: he hath indeed better  
bettered expectation than you must expect of me to  
tell you how.

**LEONATO**

He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

**Messenger**

I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

**LEONATO**

Did he break out into tears?

**Messenger**

In great measure.

**LEONATO**

A kind overflow of kindness: there are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

**BEATRICE**

I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no?

**Messenger**

I know none of that name, lady: there was none such in the army of any sort.

**LEONATO**

What is he that you ask for, niece?

**HERO**

My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

**Messenger**

O, he's returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

**BEATRICE**

He set up his bills here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the flight; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

**LEONATO**

Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

**Messenger**

He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

**BEATRICE**

You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

**Messenger**

And a good soldier too, lady.

**BEATRICE**

And a good soldier to a lady: but what is he to a lord?

**Messenger**

A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

**BEATRICE**

It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing,--well, we are all mortal.

**LEONATO**

You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

**BEATRICE**

Alas! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one: so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

**Messenger**

Is't possible?

**BEATRICE**

Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

**Messenger**

I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

**BEATRICE**

No; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray  
you, who is his companion? Is there no young  
squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?

**Messenger**

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

**BEATRICE**

O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: he  
is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker  
runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if  
he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a  
thousand pound ere a' be cured.

**Messenger**

I will hold friends with you, lady.

**BEATRICE**

Do, good friend.

**LEONATO**

You will never run mad, niece.

**BEATRICE**

No, not till a hot January.

**Messenger**

Don Pedro is approached.

*Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, and BALTHASAR*

**DON PEDRO**

Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your

trouble: the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

**LEONATO**

Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace: for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

**DON PEDRO**

You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter.

**LEONATO**

Her mother hath many times told me so.

**BENEDICK**

Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

**LEONATO**

Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

**DON PEDRO**

You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.

**BENEDICK**

If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

**BEATRICE**

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior  
Benedick: nobody marks you.

**BENEDICK**

What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

**BEATRICE**

Is it possible disdain should die while she hath  
such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick?  
Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come  
in her presence.

**BENEDICK**

Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I  
am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I  
would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard  
heart; for, truly, I love none.

**BEATRICE**

A dear happiness to women: they would else have  
been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God  
and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I  
had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man  
swear he loves me.

**BENEDICK**

God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some  
gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate  
scratched face.

**BEATRICE**

Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such  
a face as yours were.

**BENEDICK**



Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

**BEATRICE**

A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

**BENEDICK**

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, i' God's name; I have done.

**BEATRICE**

You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old.

**DON PEDRO**

That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month; and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer. I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

**LEONATO**

If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn.

*To DON JOHN*

Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

**DON JOHN**

I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

**LEONATO**

Please it your grace lead on?

**DON PEDRO**

Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

*Exeunt all except BENEDICK and CLAUDIO*

**CLAUDIO**

Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

**BENEDICK**

I noted her not; but I looked on her.

**CLAUDIO**

Is she not a modest young lady?

**BENEDICK**

Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

**CLAUDIO**

No; I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

**BENEDICK**

Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

**CLAUDIO**

Thou thinkest I am in sport: I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

**BENEDICK**

Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

**CLAUDIO**

Can the world buy such a jewel?

**BENEDICK**

Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder and Vulcan a rare carpenter? Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?

**CLAUDIO**

In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

**BENEDICK**

I can see yet without spectacles and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, and she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

**CLAUDIO**

I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

**BENEDICK**

Is't come to this? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion?

Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again?  
Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck  
into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away  
Sundays. Look Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

*Re-enter DON PEDRO*

**DON PEDRO**

What secret hath held you here, that you followed  
not to Leonato's?

**BENEDICK**

I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

**DON PEDRO**

I charge thee on thy allegiance.

**BENEDICK**

You hear, Count Claudio: I can be secret as a dumb  
man; I would have you think so; but, on my  
allegiance, mark you this, on my allegiance. He is  
in love. With who? now that is your grace's part.  
Mark how short his answer is;--With Hero, Leonato's  
short daughter.

**CLAUDIO**

If this were so, so were it uttered.

**BENEDICK**

Like the old tale, my lord: 'it is not so, nor  
'twas not so, but, indeed, God forbid it should be  
so.'

**CLAUDIO**

If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it  
should be otherwise.

**DON PEDRO**

Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

**CLAUDIO**

You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

By my troth, I speak my thought.

**CLAUDIO**

And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

**BENEDICK**

And, by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

**CLAUDIO**

That I love her, I feel.

**DON PEDRO**

That she is worthy, I know.

**BENEDICK**

That I neither feel how she should be loved nor  
know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that  
fire cannot melt out of me: I will die in it at the stake.

**DON PEDRO**

Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite  
of beauty.

**CLAUDIO**

And never could maintain his part but in the force  
of his will.

**BENEDICK**

That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she  
brought me up, I likewise give her most humble  
thanks: but that I will have a recheat winded in my  
forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick,  
all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do  
them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the  
right to trust none; and the fine is, for the which  
I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

**DON PEDRO**

I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

**BENEDICK**

With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord,  
not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood  
with love than I will get again with drinking, pick  
out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me  
up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of  
blind Cupid.

**DON PEDRO**

Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou  
wilt prove a notable argument.

**BENEDICK**

If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot  
at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapped on  
the shoulder, and called Adam.

**DON PEDRO**

Well, as time shall try: 'In time the savage bull  
doth bear the yoke.'

**BENEDICK**

The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible  
Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set  
them in my forehead: and let me be vilely painted,  
and in such great letters as they write 'Here is  
good horse to hire,' let them signify under my sign  
'Here you may see Benedick the married man.'

**CLAUDIO**

If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.

**DON PEDRO**

Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in  
Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

**BENEDICK**

I look for an earthquake too, then.

**DON PEDRO**

Well, you temporize with the hours. In the  
meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to  
Leonato's: commend me to him and tell him I will  
not fail him at supper; for indeed he hath made  
great preparation.

**BENEDICK**

I have almost matter enough in me for such an  
embassage; and so I commit you--

**CLAUDIO**

To the tuition of God: From my house, if I had it,--

**DON PEDRO**

The sixth of July: Your loving friend, Benedick.

**BENEDICK**

Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience: and so I leave you.

*Exit*

**CLAUDIO**

My liege, your highness now may do me good.

**DON PEDRO**

My love is thine to teach: teach it but how,  
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn  
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

**CLAUDIO**

Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

**DON PEDRO**

No child but Hero; she's his only heir.  
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

**CLAUDIO**

O, my lord,  
When you went onward on this ended action,  
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,  
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand



Than to drive liking to the name of love:  
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts  
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms  
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,  
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,  
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.

**DON PEDRO**

Thou wilt be like a lover presently  
And tire the hearer with a book of words.  
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,  
And I will break with her and with her father,  
And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end  
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

**CLAUDIO**

How sweetly you do minister to love,  
That know love's grief by his complexion!  
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,  
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

**DON PEDRO**

What need the bridge much broader than the flood?  
The fairest grant is the necessity.  
Look, what will serve is fit: 'tis once, thou lovest,  
And I will fit thee with the remedy.  
I know we shall have revelling to-night:  
I will assume thy part in some disguise  
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,  
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart  
And take her hearing prisoner with the force  
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:  
Then after to her father will I break;  
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.  
In practise let us put it presently.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in LEONATO's house.

*Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO, meeting*

**LEONATO**

How now, brother! Where is my cousin, your son?  
hath he provided this music?

**ANTONIO**

He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell  
you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

**LEONATO**

Are they good?

**ANTONIO**

As the event stamps them: but they have a good  
cover; they show well outward. The prince and Count  
Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in mine  
orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine:  
the prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my  
niece your daughter and meant to acknowledge it  
this night in a dance: and if he found her  
accordant, he meant to take the present time by the  
top and instantly break with you of it.

**LEONATO**

Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

**ANTONIO**

A good sharp fellow: I will send for him; and question him yourself.

## LEONATO

No, no; we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you and tell her of it.

*Enter Attendants*

Cousins, you know what you have to do. O, I cry you mercy, friend; go you with me, and I will use your skill. Good cousin, have a care this busy time.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same.

*Enter DON JOHN and CONRADE*

**CONRADE**

What the good-year, my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad?

**DON JOHN**

There is no measure in the occasion that breeds; therefore the sadness is without limit.

**CONRADE**

You should hear reason.

**DON JOHN**

And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

**CONRADE**

If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

**DON JOHN**

I wonder that thou, being, as thou sayest thou art, born under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach and wait for no man's leisure, sleep when I am drowsy and tend on no man's business, laugh when I am merry and

claw no man in his humour.

**CONRADE**

Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace; where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

**DON JOHN**

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

**CONRADE**

Can you make no use of your discontent?

**DON JOHN**

I make all use of it, for I use it only.  
Who comes here?

*Enter BORACHIO*

What news, Borachio?

**BORACHIO**

I came yonder from a great supper: the prince your

brother is royally entertained by Leonato: and I  
can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

**DON JOHN**

Will it serve for any model to build mischief on?  
What is he for a fool that betroths himself to  
unquietness?

**BORACHIO**

Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

**DON JOHN**

Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

**BORACHIO**

Even he.

**DON JOHN**

A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks  
he?

**BORACHIO**

Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

**DON JOHN**

A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

**BORACHIO**

Being entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a  
musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand  
in hand in sad conference: I whipt me behind the  
arras; and there heard it agreed upon that the  
prince should woo Hero for himself, and having

obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

**DON JOHN**

Come, come, let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

**CONRADE**

To the death, my lord.

**DON JOHN**

Let us to the great supper: their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were of my mind! Shall we go prove what's to be done?

**BORACHIO**

We'll wait upon your lordship.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A hall in LEONATO'S house.

*Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE, and others*

**LEONATO**

Was not Count John here at supper?

**ANTONIO**

I saw him not.

**BEATRICE**

How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after.

**HERO**

He is of a very melancholy disposition.

**BEATRICE**

He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

**LEONATO**

Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face,--

**BEATRICE**

With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world, if a' could get her good-will.

**LEONATO**

By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

**ANTONIO**

In faith, she's too curst.

**BEATRICE**

Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way; for it is said, 'God sends a curst cow short horns;' but to a cow too curst he sends none.

**LEONATO**

So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

**BEATRICE**

Just, if he send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face: I had rather lie in the woollen.

**LEONATO**

You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

**BEATRICE**

What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth is not for me, and he that is less than a

man, I am not for him: therefore, I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward, and lead his apes into hell.

**LEONATO**

Well, then, go you into hell?

**BEATRICE**

No, but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say 'Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven; here's no place for you maids:' so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

**ANTONIO**

[To HERO] Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

**BEATRICE**

Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy and say 'Father, as it please you.' But yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy and say 'Father, as it please me.'

**LEONATO**

Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

**BEATRICE**

Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a pierce of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren;

and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

**LEONATO**

Daughter, remember what I told you: if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

**BEATRICE**

The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in every thing and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque pace: the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

**LEONATO**

Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

**BEATRICE**

I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight.

**LEONATO**

The revellers are entering, brother: make good room.

*All put on their masks*

*Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHASAR, DON JOHN, BORACHIO, MARGARET, URSULA and others, masked*

**DON PEDRO**

Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

**HERO**

So you walk softly and look sweetly and say nothing,  
I am yours for the walk; and especially when I walk away.

**DON PEDRO**

With me in your company?

**HERO**

I may say so, when I please.

**DON PEDRO**

And when please you to say so?

**HERO**

When I like your favour; for God defend the lute  
should be like the case!

**DON PEDRO**

My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.

**HERO**

Why, then, your visor should be thatched.

**DON PEDRO**

Speak low, if you speak love.

*Drawing her aside*

**BALTHASAR**

Well, I would you did like me.

**MARGARET**

So would not I, for your own sake; for I have many  
ill-qualities.

**BALTHASAR**

Which is one?

**MARGARET**

I say my prayers aloud.

**BALTHASAR**

I love you the better: the hearers may cry, Amen.

**MARGARET**

God match me with a good dancer!

**BALTHASAR**

Amen.

**MARGARET**

And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is  
done! Answer, clerk.

**BALTHASAR**

No more words: the clerk is answered.

**URSULA**

I know you well enough; you are Signior Antonio.

**ANTONIO**

At a word, I am not.

**URSULA**

I know you by the waggling of your head.

**ANTONIO**

To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

**URSULA**

You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man. Here's his dry hand up and down: you are he, you are he.

**ANTONIO**

At a word, I am not.

**URSULA**

Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you are he: graces will appear, and there's an end.

**BEATRICE**

Will you not tell me who told you so?

**BENEDICK**

No, you shall pardon me.

**BEATRICE**

Nor will you not tell me who you are?

**BENEDICK**

Not now.

**BEATRICE**

That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales:'--well this was Signior Benedick that said so.

**BENEDICK**

What's he?

**BEATRICE**

I am sure you know him well enough.

**BENEDICK**

Not I, believe me.

**BEATRICE**

Did he never make you laugh?

**BENEDICK**

I pray you, what is he?

**BEATRICE**

Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet: I would he had boarded me.

**BENEDICK**

When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.



## **BEATRICE**

Do, do: he'll but break a comparison or two on me;  
which, peradventure not marked or not laughed at,  
strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a  
partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no  
supper that night.

*Music*

We must follow the leaders.

## **BENEDICK**

In every good thing.

## **BEATRICE**

Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at  
the next turning.

*Dance. Then exeunt all except DON JOHN, BORACHIO, and CLAUDIO*

## **DON JOHN**

Sure my brother is amorous on Hero and hath  
withdrawn her father to break with him about it.  
The ladies follow her and but one visor remains.

## **BORACHIO**

And that is Claudio: I know him by his bearing.

## **DON JOHN**

Are not you Signior Benedick?

## **CLAUDIO**

You know me well; I am he.

## **DON JOHN**

Signior, you are very near my brother in his love:  
he is enamoured on Hero; I pray you, dissuade him  
from her: she is no equal for his birth: you may  
do the part of an honest man in it.

## **CLAUDIO**

How know you he loves her?

## **DON JOHN**

I heard him swear his affection.

## **BORACHIO**

So did I too; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

## **DON JOHN**

Come, let us to the banquet.

*Exeunt DON JOHN and BORACHIO*

## **CLAUDIO**

Thus answer I in the name of Benedick,  
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.  
'Tis certain so; the prince wooes for himself.  
Friendship is constant in all other things  
Save in the office and affairs of love:  
Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues;  
Let every eye negotiate for itself  
And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch  
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.  
This is an accident of hourly proof,  
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, therefore, Hero!

*Re-enter BENEDICK*

**BENEDICK**

Count Claudio?

**CLAUDIO**

Yea, the same.

**BENEDICK**

Come, will you go with me?

**CLAUDIO**

Whither?

**BENEDICK**

Even to the next willow, about your own business, county. What fashion will you wear the garland of? about your neck, like an usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

**CLAUDIO**

I wish him joy of her.

**BENEDICK**

Why, that's spoken like an honest drovier: so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus?

**CLAUDIO**

I pray you, leave me.

**BENEDICK**

Ho! now you strike like the blind man: 'twas the

boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

**CLAUDIO**

If it will not be, I'll leave you.

*Exit*

**BENEDICK**

Alas, poor hurt fowl! now will he creep into sedges.  
But that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not  
know me! The prince's fool! Ha? It may be I go  
under that title because I am merry. Yea, but so I  
am apt to do myself wrong; I am not so reputed: it  
is the base, though bitter, disposition of Beatrice  
that puts the world into her person and so gives me  
out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

*Re-enter DON PEDRO*

**DON PEDRO**

Now, signior, where's the count? did you see him?

**BENEDICK**

Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame.  
I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a  
warren: I told him, and I think I told him true,  
that your grace had got the good will of this young  
lady; and I offered him my company to a willow-tree,  
either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or  
to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

**DON PEDRO**

To be whipped! What's his fault?

**BENEDICK**

The flat transgression of a schoolboy, who, being overjoyed with finding a birds' nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

**DON PEDRO**

Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

**BENEDICK**

Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stolen his birds' nest.

**DON PEDRO**

I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

**BENEDICK**

If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

**DON PEDRO**

The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you: the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

**BENEDICK**

O, she misused me past the endurance of a block! an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at

me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs:  
if her breath were as terrible as her terminations,  
there were no living near her; she would infect to  
the north star. I would not marry her, though she  
were endowed with all that Adam had left him before  
he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have  
turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make  
the fire too. Come, talk not of her: you shall find  
her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God  
some scholar would conjure her; for certainly, while  
she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a  
sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they  
would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror  
and perturbation follows her.

## **DON PEDRO**

Look, here she comes.

*Enter CLAUDIO, BEATRICE, HERO, and LEONATO*

## **BENEDICK**

Will your grace command me any service to the  
world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now  
to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on;  
I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the  
furthest inch of Asia, bring you the length of  
Prester John's foot, fetch you a hair off the great  
Cham's beard, do you any embassy to the Pigmies,  
rather than hold three words' conference with this  
harpy. You have no employment for me?

## **DON PEDRO**

None, but to desire your good company.

## **BENEDICK**

O God, sir, here's a dish I love not: I cannot  
endure my Lady Tongue.

*Exit*

**DON PEDRO**

Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

**BEATRICE**

Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile; and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one: marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I have lost it.

**DON PEDRO**

You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

**BEATRICE**

So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

**DON PEDRO**

Why, how now, count! wherefore are you sad?

**CLAUDIO**

Not sad, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

How then? sick?

**CLAUDIO**

Neither, my lord.

**BEATRICE**

The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

**DON PEDRO**

I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though, I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won: I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained: name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

**LEONATO**

Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and an grace say Amen to it.

**BEATRICE**

Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

**CLAUDIO**

Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you and dote upon the exchange.

**BEATRICE**

Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

**DON PEDRO**

In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

**BEATRICE**



Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

**CLAUDIO**

And so she doth, cousin.

**BEATRICE**

Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt; I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho for a husband!

**DON PEDRO**

Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

**BEATRICE**

I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

**DON PEDRO**

Will you have me, lady?

**BEATRICE**

No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days: your grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your grace, pardon me: I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

**DON PEDRO**

Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

**BEATRICE**

No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there  
was a star danced, and under that was I born.  
Cousins, God give you joy!

**LEONATO**

Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

**BEATRICE**

I cry you mercy, uncle. By your grace's pardon.

*Exit*

**DON PEDRO**

By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

**LEONATO**

There's little of the melancholy element in her, my  
lord: she is never sad but when she sleeps, and  
not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say,  
she hath often dreamed of unhappiness and waked  
herself with laughing.

**DON PEDRO**

She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

**LEONATO**

O, by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

**DON PEDRO**

She were an excellent wife for Benedict.

**LEONATO**

O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married,  
they would talk themselves mad.

**DON PEDRO**

County Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

**CLAUDIO**

To-morrow, my lord: time goes on crutches till love  
have all his rites.

**LEONATO**

Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just  
seven-night; and a time too brief, too, to have all  
things answer my mind.

**DON PEDRO**

Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing:  
but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go  
dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of  
Hercules' labours; which is, to bring Signior  
Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of  
affection the one with the other. I would fain have  
it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if  
you three will but minister such assistance as I  
shall give you direction.

**LEONATO**

My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten  
nights' watchings.

**CLAUDIO**

And I, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

And you too, gentle Hero?

## **HERO**

I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

## **DON PEDRO**

And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same.

*Enter DON JOHN and BORACHIO*

### DON JOHN

It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

### BORACHIO

Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

### DON JOHN

Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me: I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

### BORACHIO

Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

### DON JOHN

Show me briefly how.

### BORACHIO

I think I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

### DON JOHN

I remember.

**BORACHIO**

I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night,  
appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

**DON JOHN**

What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

**BORACHIO**

The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to  
the prince your brother; spare not to tell him that  
he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned  
Claudio--whose estimation do you mightily hold  
up--to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

**DON JOHN**

What proof shall I make of that?

**BORACHIO**

Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio,  
to undo Hero and kill Leonato. Look you for any  
other issue?

**DON JOHN**

Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

**BORACHIO**

Go, then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and  
the Count Claudio alone: tell them that you know  
that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the  
prince and Claudio, as,--in love of your brother's  
honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's

reputation, who is thus like to be cozened with the semblance of a maid,--that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding,--for in the meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent,--and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be called assurance and all the preparation overthrown.

## **DON JOHN**

Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practise. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

## **BORACHIO**

Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

## **DON JOHN**

I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. LEONATO'S orchard.

*Enter BENEDICK*

**BENEDICK**

Boy!

*Enter Boy*

**Boy**

Signior?

**BENEDICK**

In my chamber-window lies a book: bring it hither to me in the orchard.

**Boy**

I am here already, sir.

**BENEDICK**

I know that; but I would have thee hence, and here again.

*Exit Boy*

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviors to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by failing in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he



rather hear the tabour and the pipe: I have known  
when he would have walked ten mile a-foot to see a  
good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake,  
carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to  
speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man  
and a soldier; and now is he turned orthography; his  
words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many  
strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with  
these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not  
be sworn, but love may transform me to an oyster; but  
I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster  
of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman  
is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am  
well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all  
graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in  
my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise,  
or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her;  
fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not  
near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good  
discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall  
be of what colour it please God. Ha! the prince and  
Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

*Withdraws*

*Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and LEONATO*

**DON PEDRO**

Come, shall we hear this music?

**CLAUDIO**

Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is,  
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

**DON PEDRO**

See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

**CLAUDIO**

O, very well, my lord: the music ended,  
We'll fit the kid-fox with a pennyworth.

*Enter BALTHASAR with Music*

**DON PEDRO**

Come, Balthasar, we'll hear that song again.

**BALTHASAR**

O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice  
To slander music any more than once.

**DON PEDRO**

It is the witness still of excellency  
To put a strange face on his own perfection.  
I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more.

**BALTHASAR**

Because you talk of wooing, I will sing;  
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit  
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos,  
Yet will he swear he loves.

**DON PEDRO**

Now, pray thee, come;  
Or, if thou wilt hold longer argument,  
Do it in notes.

**BALTHASAR**

Note this before my notes;  
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

**DON PEDRO**

Why, these are very crotchets that he speaks;

Note, notes, forsooth, and nothing.

*Air*

**BENEDICK**

Now, divine air! now is his soul ravished! Is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies? Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

*The Song*

**BALTHASAR**

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever,  
One foot in sea and one on shore,  
To one thing constant never:  
Then sigh not so, but let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny,  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into Hey nonny, nonny.  
Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,  
Of dumps so dull and heavy;  
The fraud of men was ever so,  
Since summer first was leafy:  
Then sigh not so, & c.

**DON PEDRO**

By my troth, a good song.

**BALTHASAR**

And an ill singer, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

Ha, no, no, faith; thou singest well enough for a shift.

## **BENEDICK**

An he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him: and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief. I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

## **DON PEDRO**

Yea, marry, dost thou hear, Balthasar? I pray thee, get us some excellent music; for to-morrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

## **BALTHASAR**

The best I can, my lord.

## **DON PEDRO**

Do so: farewell.

*Exit BALTHASAR*

Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

## **CLAUDIO**

O, ay: stalk on. stalk on; the fowl sits. I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

## **LEONATO**

No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviors seemed ever to abhor.

## **BENEDICK**

Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

**LEONATO**

By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it but that she loves him with an enraged affection: it is past the infinite of thought.

**DON PEDRO**

May be she doth but counterfeit.

**CLAUDIO**

Faith, like enough.

**LEONATO**

O God, counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

**DON PEDRO**

Why, what effects of passion shows she?

**CLAUDIO**

Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.

**LEONATO**

What effects, my lord? She will sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

**CLAUDIO**

She did, indeed.

**DON PEDRO**

How, how, pray you? You amaze me: I would have I thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

**LEONATO**

I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.

**BENEDICK**

I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

**CLAUDIO**

He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up.

**DON PEDRO**

Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

**LEONATO**

No; and swears she never will: that's her torment.

**CLAUDIO**

'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says: 'Shall I,' says she, 'that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?'

**LEONATO**

This says she now when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper: my daughter tells us all.

**CLAUDIO**

Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

**LEONATO**

O, when she had writ it and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet?

**CLAUDIO**

That.

**LEONATO**

O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence; railed at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her; 'I measure him,' says she, 'by my own spirit; for I should flout him, if he writ to me; yea, though I love him, I should.'

**CLAUDIO**

Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses; 'O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!'

**LEONATO**

She doth indeed; my daughter says so: and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afeared she will do a desperate outrage to herself: it is very true.

**DON PEDRO**

It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

**CLAUDIO**

To what end? He would make but a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

**DON PEDRO**

An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

**CLAUDIO**

And she is exceeding wise.

**DON PEDRO**

In every thing but in loving Benedick.

**LEONATO**

O, my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

**DON PEDRO**

I would she had bestowed this dotage on me: I would have daffed all other respects and made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what a' will say.

**LEONATO**

Were it good, think you?

**CLAUDIO**

Hero thinks surely she will die; for she says she will die, if he love her not, and she will die, ere she make her love known, and she will die, if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her



accustomed crossness.

**DON PEDRO**

She doth well: if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

**CLAUDIO**

He is a very proper man.

**DON PEDRO**

He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

**CLAUDIO**

Before God! and, in my mind, very wise.

**DON PEDRO**

He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

**CLAUDIO**

And I take him to be valiant.

**DON PEDRO**

As Hector, I assure you: and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise; for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

**LEONATO**

If he do fear God, a' must necessarily keep peace: if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

**DON PEDRO**

And so will he do; for the man doth fear God,  
howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests  
he will make. Well I am sorry for your niece. Shall  
we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

**CLAUDIO**

Never tell him, my lord: let her wear it out with  
good counsel.

**LEONATO**

Nay, that's impossible: she may wear her heart out first.

**DON PEDRO**

Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter:  
let it cool the while. I love Benedick well; and I  
could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see  
how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

**LEONATO**

My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

**CLAUDIO**

If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never  
trust my expectation.

**DON PEDRO**

Let there be the same net spread for her; and that  
must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The  
sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of  
another's dotage, and no such matter: that's the  
scene that I would see, which will be merely a  
dumb-show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

**BENEDICK**

[Coming forward] This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

*Enter BEATRICE*

**BEATRICE**

Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

**BENEDICK**

Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

**BEATRICE**

I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would not have come.

**BENEDICK**

You take pleasure then in the message?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior: fare you well.

*Exit*

**BENEDICK**

Ha! 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner;' there's a double meaning in that 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me.' that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. LEONATO'S garden.

*Enter HERO, MARGARET, and URSULA*

### HERO

Good Margaret, run thee to the parlor;  
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice  
Proposing with the prince and Claudio:  
Whisper her ear and tell her, I and Ursula  
Walk in the orchard and our whole discourse  
Is all of her; say that thou overheard'st us;  
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,  
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,  
Forbid the sun to enter, like favourites,  
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride  
Against that power that bred it: there will she hide her,  
To listen our purpose. This is thy office;  
Bear thee well in it and leave us alone.

### MARGARET

I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently.

*Exit*

### HERO

Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,  
As we do trace this alley up and down,  
Our talk must only be of Benedick.  
When I do name him, let it be thy part  
To praise him more than ever man did merit:  
My talk to thee must be how Benedick  
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter  
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,

That only wounds by hearsay.

*Enter BEATRICE, behind*

Now begin;  
For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs  
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

**URSULA**

The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish  
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,  
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:  
So angle we for Beatrice; who even now  
Is couched in the woodbine coverture.  
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

**HERO**

Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing  
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.

*Approaching the bower*

No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful;  
I know her spirits are as coy and wild  
As haggerds of the rock.

**URSULA**

But are you sure  
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

**HERO**

So says the prince and my new-trothed lord.

**URSULA**

And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

## HERO

They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;  
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,  
To wish him wrestle with affection,  
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

## URSULA

Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman  
Deserve as full as fortunate a bed  
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?

## HERO

O god of love! I know he doth deserve  
As much as may be yielded to a man:  
But Nature never framed a woman's heart  
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice;  
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,  
Misprising what they look on, and her wit  
Values itself so highly that to her  
All matter else seems weak: she cannot love,  
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,  
She is so self-endear'd.

## URSULA

Sure, I think so;  
And therefore certainly it were not good  
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

## HERO

Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,  
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,  
But she would spell him backward: if fair-faced,  
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;  
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique,  
Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;  
If low, an agate very vilely cut;  
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;

If silent, why, a block moved with none.  
So turns she every man the wrong side out  
And never gives to truth and virtue that  
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.

## URSULA

Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

## HERO

No, not to be so odd and from all fashions  
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable:  
But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,  
She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me  
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.  
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,  
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:  
It were a better death than die with mocks,  
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

## URSULA

Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.

## HERO

No; rather I will go to Benedick  
And counsel him to fight against his passion.  
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders  
To stain my cousin with: one doth not know  
How much an ill word may empoison liking.

## URSULA

O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.  
She cannot be so much without true judgment--  
Having so swift and excellent a wit  
As she is prized to have--as to refuse  
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

## HERO



He is the only man of Italy.  
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

**URSULA**

I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,  
Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick,  
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,  
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

**HERO**

Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

**URSULA**

His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.  
When are you married, madam?

**HERO**

Why, every day, to-morrow. Come, go in:  
I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel  
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

**URSULA**

She's limed, I warrant you: we have caught her, madam.

**HERO**

If it proves so, then loving goes by haps:  
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

*Exeunt HERO and URSULA*

**BEATRICE**

[Coming forward]  
What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?  
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!  
No glory lives behind the back of such.  
And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,  
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:  
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee  
To bind our loves up in a holy band;  
For others say thou dost deserve, and I  
Believe it better than reportingly.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in LEONATO'S house

*Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, and LEONATO*

### DON PEDRO

I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

### CLAUDIO

I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

### DON PEDRO

Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth: he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string and the little hangman dare not shoot at him; he hath a heart as sound as a bell and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

### BENEDICK

Gallants, I am not as I have been.

### LEONATO

So say I methinks you are sadder.

### CLAUDIO

I hope he be in love.

**DON PEDRO**

Hang him, truant! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love: if he be sad, he wants money.

**BENEDICK**

I have the toothache.

**DON PEDRO**

Draw it.

**BENEDICK**

Hang it!

**CLAUDIO**

You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

**DON PEDRO**

What! sigh for the toothache?

**LEONATO**

Where is but a humour or a worm.

**BENEDICK**

Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

**CLAUDIO**

Yet say I, he is in love.

**DON PEDRO**

There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as, to be a Dutchman today, a Frenchman to-morrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as, a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

**CLAUDIO**

If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs: a' brushes his hat o' mornings; what should that bode?

**DON PEDRO**

Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

**CLAUDIO**

No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

**LEONATO**

Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

**DON PEDRO**

Nay, a' rubs himself with civet: can you smell him out by that?

**CLAUDIO**

That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

**DON PEDRO**

The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

**CLAUDIO**

And when was he wont to wash his face?

**DON PEDRO**

Yea, or to paint himself? for the which, I hear  
what they say of him.

**CLAUDIO**

Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into  
a lute-string and now governed by stops.

**DON PEDRO**

Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him: conclude,  
conclude he is in love.

**CLAUDIO**

Nay, but I know who loves him.

**DON PEDRO**

That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

**CLAUDIO**

Yes, and his ill conditions; and, in despite of  
all, dies for him.

**DON PEDRO**

She shall be buried with her face upwards.

**BENEDICK**

Yet is this no charm for the toothache. Old signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

*Exeunt BENEDICK and LEONATO*

**DON PEDRO**

For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

**CLAUDIO**

'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice; and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

*Enter DON JOHN*

**DON JOHN**

My lord and brother, God save you!

**DON PEDRO**

Good den, brother.

**DON JOHN**

If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

**DON PEDRO**

In private?

**DON JOHN**

If it please you: yet Count Claudio may hear; for what I would speak of concerns him.

**DON PEDRO**

What's the matter?

**DON JOHN**

[To CLAUDIO] Means your lordship to be married  
to-morrow?

**DON PEDRO**

You know he does.

**DON JOHN**

I know not that, when he knows what I know.

**CLAUDIO**

If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

**DON JOHN**

You may think I love you not: let that appear  
hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will  
manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you  
well, and in dearness of heart hath help to effect  
your ensuing marriage;--surely suit ill spent and  
labour ill bestowed.

**DON PEDRO**

Why, what's the matter?

**DON JOHN**

I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances  
shortened, for she has been too long a talking of,  
the lady is disloyal.

**CLAUDIO**



Who, Hero?

**DON PEDRO**

Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero:

**CLAUDIO**

Disloyal?

**DON JOHN**

The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say she were worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day: if you love her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

**CLAUDIO**

May this be so?

**DON PEDRO**

I will not think it.

**DON JOHN**

If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know: if you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed accordingly.

**CLAUDIO**

If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

**DON PEDRO**

And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join  
with thee to disgrace her.

**DON JOHN**

I will disparage her no farther till you are my  
witnesses: bear it coldly but till midnight, and  
let the issue show itself.

**DON PEDRO**

O day untowardly turned!

**CLAUDIO**

O mischief strangely thwarting!

**DON JOHN**

O plague right well prevented! so will you say when  
you have seen the sequel.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A street.

*Enter DOGBERRY and VERGES with the Watch*

### DOGBERRY

Are you good men and true?

### VERGES

Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

### DOGBERRY

Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

### VERGES

Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

### DOGBERRY

First, who think you the most desertless man to be constable?

### First Watchman

Hugh Otecake, sir, or George Seacole; for they can write and read.

### DOGBERRY

Come hither, neighbour Seacole. God hath blessed you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

## **Second Watchman**

Both which, master constable,--

## **DOGBERRY**

You have: I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.

## **Second Watchman**

How if a' will not stand?

## **DOGBERRY**

Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave.

## **VERGES**

If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

## **DOGBERRY**

True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

**Watchman**

We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.

**DOGBERRY**

Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

**Watchman**

How if they will not?

**DOGBERRY**

Why, then, let them alone till they are sober: if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

**Watchman**

Well, sir.

**DOGBERRY**

If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

**Watchman**

If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

**DOGBERRY**

Truly, by your office, you may; but I think they  
that touch pitch will be defiled: the most peaceable  
way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him  
show himself what he is and steal out of your company.

**VERGES**

You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

**DOGBERRY**

Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more  
a man who hath any honesty in him.

**VERGES**

If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call  
to the nurse and bid her still it.

**Watchman**

How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

**DOGBERRY**

Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake  
her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her  
lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats.

**VERGES**

'Tis very true.

**DOGBERRY**

This is the end of the charge:--you, constable, are  
to present the prince's own person: if you meet the  
prince in the night, you may stay him.

**VERGES**

Nay, by'r our lady, that I think a' cannot.

## **DOGBERRY**

Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him: marry, not without the prince be willing; for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

## **VERGES**

By'r lady, I think it be so.

## **DOGBERRY**

Ha, ha, ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own; and good night. Come, neighbour.

## **Watchman**

Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

## **DOGBERRY**

One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu: be vigilant, I beseech you.

*Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES*

*Enter BORACHIO and CONRADE*

## **BORACHIO**

What Conrade!

**Watchman**

[Aside] Peace! stir not.

**BORACHIO**

Conrade, I say!

**CONRADE**

Here, man; I am at thy elbow.

**BORACHIO**

Mass, and my elbow itched; I thought there would a scab follow.

**CONRADE**

I will owe thee an answer for that: and now forward with thy tale.

**BORACHIO**

Stand thee close, then, under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain; and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

**Watchman**

[Aside] Some treason, masters: yet stand close.

**BORACHIO**

Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

**CONRADE**

Is it possible that any villany should be so dear?

**BORACHIO**



Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villany should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

**CONRADE**

I wonder at it.

**BORACHIO**

That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

**CONRADE**

Yes, it is apparel.

**BORACHIO**

I mean, the fashion.

**CONRADE**

Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

**BORACHIO**

Tush! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

**Watchman**

[Aside] I know that Deformed; a' has been a vile thief this seven year; a' goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

**BORACHIO**

Didst thou not hear somebody?

**CONRADE**

No; 'twas the vane on the house.

**BORACHIO**

Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily a' turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reeky painting, sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club?

**CONRADE**

All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

**BORACHIO**

Not so, neither: but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,--I tell this tale vilely:--I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

**CONRADE**

And thought they Margaret was Hero?

**BORACHIO**

Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villany, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night and send her home again without a husband.

### **First Watchman**

We charge you, in the prince's name, stand!

### **Second Watchman**

Call up the right master constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

### **First Watchman**

And one Deformed is one of them: I know him; a' wears a lock.

### **CONRADE**

Masters, masters,--

### **Second Watchman**

You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

### **CONRADE**

Masters,--

### **First Watchman**

Never speak: we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

## **BORACHIO**

We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

## **CONRADE**

A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. HERO's apartment.

*Enter HERO, MARGARET, and URSULA*

**HERO**

Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

**URSULA**

I will, lady.

**HERO**

And bid her come hither.

**URSULA**

Well.

*Exit*

**MARGARET**

Troth, I think your other rabato were better.

**HERO**

No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

**MARGARET**

By my troth, 's not so good; and I warrant your cousin will say so.

**HERO**

My cousin's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this.

**MARGARET**

I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so.

**HERO**

O, that exceeds, they say.

**MARGARET**

By my troth, 's but a night-gown in respect of yours: cloth o' gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel: but for a fine, quaint, graceful and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on 't.

**HERO**

God give me joy to wear it! for my heart is exceeding heavy.

**MARGARET**

'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

**HERO**

Fie upon thee! art not ashamed?

**MARGARET**

Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Is not

marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say, 'saving your reverence, a husband:' and bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend nobody: is there any harm in 'the heavier for a husband'? None, I think, and it be the right husband and the right wife; otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy: ask my Lady Beatrice else; here she comes.

*Enter BEATRICE*

**HERO**

Good morrow, coz.

**BEATRICE**

Good morrow, sweet Hero.

**HERO**

Why how now? do you speak in the sick tune?

**BEATRICE**

I am out of all other tune, methinks.

**MARGARET**

Clap's into 'Light o' love;' that goes without a burden: do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

**BEATRICE**

Ye light o' love, with your heels! then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barns.

**MARGARET**

O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

**BEATRICE**

'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill: heigh-ho!

**MARGARET**

For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

**BEATRICE**

For the letter that begins them all, H.

**MARGARET**

Well, and you be not turned Turk, there's no more sailing by the star.

**BEATRICE**

What means the fool, trow?

**MARGARET**

Nothing I; but God send every one their heart's desire!

**HERO**

These gloves the count sent me; they are an excellent perfume.

**BEATRICE**

I am stuffed, cousin; I cannot smell.

**MARGARET**

A maid, and stuffed! there's goodly catching of cold.

**BEATRICE**



O, God help me! God help me! how long have you  
professed apprehension?

**MARGARET**

Even since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely?

**BEATRICE**

It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your  
cap. By my troth, I am sick.

**MARGARET**

Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus,  
and lay it to your heart: it is the only thing for a qualm.

**HERO**

There thou prickest her with a thistle.

**BEATRICE**

Benedictus! why Benedictus? you have some moral in  
this Benedictus.

**MARGARET**

Moral! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I  
meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think perchance  
that I think you are in love: nay, by'r lady, I am  
not such a fool to think what I list, nor I list  
not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think,  
if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you  
are in love or that you will be in love or that you  
can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and  
now is he become a man: he swore he would never  
marry, and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats  
his meat without grudging: and how you may be  
converted I know not, but methinks you look with  
your eyes as other women do.

## **BEATRICE**

What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

## **MARGARET**

Not a false gallop.

*Re-enter URSULA*

## **URSULA**

Madam, withdraw: the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

## **HERO**

Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another room in LEONATO'S house.

*Enter LEONATO, with DOGBERRY and VERGES*

**LEONATO**

What would you wish with me, honest neighbour?

**DOGBERRY**

Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that discerns you nearly.

**LEONATO**

Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

**DOGBERRY**

Marry, this it is, sir.

**VERGES**

Yes, in truth it is, sir.

**LEONATO**

What is it, my good friends?

**DOGBERRY**

Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

## **VERGES**

Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living  
that is an old man and no honester than I.

## **DOGBERRY**

Comparisons are odorous: palabras, neighbour Verges.

## **LEONATO**

Neighbours, you are tedious.

## **DOGBERRY**

It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the  
poor duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part,  
if I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in  
my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

## **LEONATO**

All thy tediousness on me, ah?

## **DOGBERRY**

Yea, an 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis; for  
I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any  
man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I  
am glad to hear it.

## **VERGES**

And so am I.

## **LEONATO**

I would fain know what you have to say.

## **VERGES**

Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

**DOGBERRY**

A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out: God help us! it is a world to see. Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges: well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, 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 neighbour!

**LEONATO**

Indeed, neighbour, 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 have them this morning examined before your worship.

**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.

## **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.

*Exeunt LEONATO and Messenger*

## **DOGBERRY**

Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacole; bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol: we are now to examination these men.

## **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 non-come: only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication and meet me at the gaol.

*Exeunt*

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A church.

*Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR FRANCIS, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, BEATRICE, and Attendants*

### LEONATO

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

### FRIAR FRANCIS

You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

### CLAUDIO

No.

### LEONATO

To be married to her: friar, you come to marry her.

### FRIAR FRANCIS

Lady, you come hither to be married to this count.

### HERO

I do.

### FRIAR FRANCIS

If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, charge you, on your souls,

to utter it.

**CLAUDIO**

Know you any, Hero?

**HERO**

None, my lord.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

Know you any, count?

**LEONATO**

I dare make his answer, none.

**CLAUDIO**

O, 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 of  
laughing, as, ah, ha, he!

**CLAUDIO**

Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave:  
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?

**DON PEDRO**

Nothing, unless you render her again.

**CLAUDIO**

Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.  
There, Leonato, take her back again:  
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;  
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.  
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!  
O, what authority and show of truth  
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!  
Comes not that blood as modest evidence  
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,  
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,  
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.

**LEONATO**

Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,  
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth,  
And made defeat of her virginity,--

**CLAUDIO**

I know what you would say: if I have known her,  
You will say she did embrace me as a husband,  
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin:

No, Leonato,  
I never tempted her with word too large;  
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd  
Bashful sincerity and comely love.

**HERO**

And seem'd 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 pamper'd 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 dishonour'd, 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! O 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**

I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

**HERO**

O, God defend me! how am I beset!  
What kind of catechising 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 talk'd with you yesternight  
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?  
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

## **HERO**

I talk'd 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 honour,  
Myself, my brother and this grieved 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,  
Confess'd 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 offence 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?

**DON JOHN**

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**

Dead, I think. Help, uncle!  
Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

**LEONATO**

O Fate! take not away thy heavy hand.  
Death is the fairest cover for her shame  
That may be wish'd for.

**BEATRICE**

How now, cousin Hero!

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

Have comfort, lady.

## **LEONATO**

Dost thou look up?

## **FRIAR FRANCIS**

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 ope thine eyes:  
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,  
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,  
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,  
Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?  
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?  
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?  
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?  
Why had I not with charitable hand  
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,  
Who smirch'd thus and mired with infamy,  
I might have said 'No part of it is mine;  
This shame derives itself from unknown loins'?  
But mine and mine I loved and mine I praised  
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much  
That I myself was to myself not mine,  
Valuing of her,--why, she, O, she is fallen  
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea  
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again  
And salt too little which may season give  
To her foul-tainted flesh!

## **BENEDICK**

Sir, sir, be patient.  
For my part, I am so attired in wonder,  
I know not what to say.

## **BEATRICE**

O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

**BENEDICK**

Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

**BEATRICE**

No, truly not; although, until last night,  
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

**LEONATO**

Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made  
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron!  
Would the two princes lie, and Claudio lie,  
Who loved her so, that, speaking of her foulness,  
Wash'd it with tears? Hence from her! let her die.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

Hear me a little;  
For I have only been silent so long  
And given way unto this course of fortune.

...

By noting of the lady I have mark'd  
A thousand blushing apparitions  
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames  
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;  
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,  
To burn the errors that these princes hold  
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;  
Trust not my reading nor my observations,  
Which with experimental seal doth warrant  
The tenor of my book; trust not my age,  
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,  
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here  
Under some biting error.

**LEONATO**

Friar, it cannot be.  
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left  
Is that she will not add to her damnation  
A sin of perjury; she not denies it:  
Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse  
That which appears in proper nakedness?

### **FRIAR FRANCIS**

Lady, what man is he you are accused of?

### **HERO**

They know that do accuse me; I know none:  
If I know more of any man alive  
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,  
Let all my sins lack mercy! O my father,  
Prove you that any man with me conversed  
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight  
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,  
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

### **FRIAR FRANCIS**

There is some strange misprision in the princes.

### **BENEDICK**

Two of them have the very bent of honour;  
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,  
The practise of it lives in John the bastard,  
Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.

### **LEONATO**

I know not. If they speak but truth of her,  
These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,  
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.  
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,  
Nor age so eat up my invention,  
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,  
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,



But they shall find, awaked in such a kind,  
Both strength of limb and policy of mind,  
Ability in means and choice of friends,  
To quit me of them throughly.

### **FRIAR FRANCIS**

Pause awhile,  
And let my counsel sway you in this case.  
Your daughter here the princes left for dead:  
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,  
And publish it that she is dead indeed;  
Maintain a mourning ostentation  
And on your family's old monument  
Hang mournful epitaphs and do all rites  
That appertain unto a burial.

### **LEONATO**

What shall become of this? what will this do?

### **FRIAR FRANCIS**

Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf  
Change slander to remorse; that is some good:  
But not for that dream I on this strange course,  
But on this travail look for greater birth.  
She dying, as it must so be maintain'd,  
Upon the instant that she was accused,  
Shall be lamented, pitied and excused  
Of every hearer: for it so falls out  
That what we have we prize not to the worth  
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,  
Why, then we rack the value, then we find  
The virtue that possession would not show us  
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio:  
When he shall hear she died upon his words,  
The idea of her life shall sweetly creep  
Into his study of imagination,  
And every lovely organ of her life  
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,  
More moving-delicate and full of life,

Into the eye and prospect of his soul,  
Than when she lived indeed; then shall he mourn,  
If ever love had interest in his liver,  
And wish he had not so accused her,  
No, though he thought his accusation true.  
Let this be so, and doubt not but success  
Will fashion the event in better shape  
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.  
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,  
The supposition of the lady's death  
Will quench the wonder of her infamy:  
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,  
As best befits her wounded reputation,  
In some reclusive and religious life,  
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds and injuries.

## **BENEDICK**

Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:  
And though you know my inwardness and love  
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,  
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this  
As secretly and justly as your soul  
Should with your body.

## **LEONATO**

Being that I flow in grief,  
The smallest twine may lead me.

## **FRIAR FRANCIS**

'Tis well consented: presently away;  
For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.  
Come, lady, die to live: this wedding-day  
Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience and endure.

*Exeunt all but BENEDICK and BEATRICE*

## **BENEDICK**

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

**BENEDICK**

I will not desire that.

**BEATRICE**

You have no reason; I do it freely.

**BENEDICK**

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

**BEATRICE**

Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

**BENEDICK**

Is there any way to show such friendship?

**BEATRICE**

A very even way, but no such friend.

**BENEDICK**

May a man do it?

**BEATRICE**

It is a man's office, but not yours.

**BENEDICK**

I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?

**BEATRICE**

As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.

**BENEDICK**

By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

**BEATRICE**

Do not swear, and eat it.

**BENEDICK**

I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

**BEATRICE**

Will you not eat your word?

**BENEDICK**

With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

**BEATRICE**

Why, then, God forgive me!

**BENEDICK**

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

**BEATRICE**

You have stayed me in a happy hour: I was about to

protest I loved you.

**BENEDICK**

And do it with all thy heart.

**BEATRICE**

I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.

**BENEDICK**

Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

**BEATRICE**

Kill Claudio.

**BENEDICK**

Ha! not for the wide world.

**BEATRICE**

You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

**BENEDICK**

Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

**BEATRICE**

I am gone, though I am here: there is no love in you: nay, I pray you, let me go.

**BENEDICK**

Beatrice,--

**BEATRICE**

In faith, I will go.

**BENEDICK**

We'll be friends first.

**BEATRICE**

You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

**BENEDICK**

Is Claudio thine enemy?

**BEATRICE**

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, --O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

**BENEDICK**

Hear me, Beatrice,--

**BEATRICE**

Talk with a man out at a window! A proper saying!

**BENEDICK**

Nay, but, Beatrice,--

**BEATRICE**

Sweet Hero! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

**BENEDICK**

Beat--

**BEATRICE**

Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect; a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

**BENEDICK**

Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

**BEATRICE**

Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

**BENEDICK**

Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

**BENEDICK**

Enough, I am engaged; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin: I must say she is dead: and so, farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A prison.

*Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and Sexton, in gowns; and the Watch, with CONRADE and BORACHIO*

### DOGBERRY

Is our whole dissembly appeared?

### VERGES

O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

### Sexton

Which be the malefactors?

### DOGBERRY

Marry, that am I and my partner.

### VERGES

Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.

### Sexton

But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

### DOGBERRY

Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend?

## **BORACHIO**

Borachio.

## **DOGBERRY**

Pray, write down, Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

## **CONRADE**

I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

## **DOGBERRY**

Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?

## **CONRADE BORACHIO**

Yea, sir, we hope.

## **DOGBERRY**

Write down, that they hope they serve God: and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

## **CONRADE**

Marry, sir, we say we are none.

## **DOGBERRY**

A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you: but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah; a word in your ear: sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

**BORACHIO**

Sir, I say to you we are none.

**DOGBERRY**

Well, stand aside. 'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they are none?

**Sexton**

Master constable, you go not the way to examine: you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

**DOGBERRY**

Yea, marry, that's the eftest way. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

**First Watchman**

This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

**DOGBERRY**

Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

**BORACHIO**

Master constable,--

**DOGBERRY**

Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

**Sexton**

What heard you him say else?

**Second Watchman**

Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of  
Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

**DOGBERRY**

Flat burglary as ever was committed.

**VERGES**

Yea, by mass, that it is.

**Sexton**

What else, fellow?

**First Watchman**

And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to  
disgrace Hero before the whole assembly. and not marry her.

**DOGBERRY**

O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting  
redemption for this.

**Sexton**

What else?

**Watchman**

This is all.

**Sexton**

And this is more, masters, than you can deny.  
Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away;

Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's: I will go before and show him their examination.

*Exit*

**DOGBERRY**

Come, let them be opinioned.

**VERGES**

Let them be in the hands--

**CONRADE**

Off, coxcomb!

**DOGBERRY**

God's my life, where's the sexton? let him write down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet!

**CONRADE**

Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

**DOGBERRY**

Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! But, masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in

Messina, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before LEONATO'S house.

*Enter LEONATO and ANTONIO*

### ANTONIO

If you go on thus, you will kill yourself:  
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief  
Against yourself.

### LEONATO

I pray thee, cease thy counsel,  
Which falls into mine ears as profitless  
As water in a sieve: give not me counsel;  
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear  
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.  
Bring me a father that so loved his child,  
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,  
And bid him speak of patience;  
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine  
And let it answer every strain for strain,  
As thus for thus and such a grief for such,  
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form:  
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,  
Bid sorrow wag, cry 'hem!' when he should groan,  
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk  
With candle-wasters; bring him yet to me,  
And I of him will gather patience.  
But there is no such man: for, brother, men  
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief  
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,  
Their counsel turns to passion, which before  
Would give preceptual medicine to rage,  
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,  
Charm ache with air and agony with words:  
No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience

To those that wring under the load of sorrow,  
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency  
To be so moral when he shall endure  
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel:  
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

**ANTONIO**

Therein do men from children nothing differ.

**LEONATO**

I pray thee, peace. I will be flesh and blood;  
For there was never yet philosopher  
That could endure the toothache patiently,  
However they have writ the style of gods  
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

**ANTONIO**

Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself;  
Make those that do offend you suffer too.

**LEONATO**

There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will do so.  
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;  
And that shall Claudio know; so shall the prince  
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

**ANTONIO**

Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.

*Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO*

**DON PEDRO**

Good den, good den.

**CLAUDIO**



Good day to both of you.

**LEONATO**

Hear you. my lords,--

**DON PEDRO**

We have some haste, Leonato.

**LEONATO**

Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord:  
Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.

**DON PEDRO**

Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

**ANTONIO**

If he could right himself with quarreling,  
Some of us would lie low.

**CLAUDIO**

Who wrongs him?

**LEONATO**

Marry, thou dost wrong me; thou dissembler, thou:--  
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword;  
I fear thee not.

**CLAUDIO**

Marry, beshrew my hand,  
If it should give your age such cause of fear:  
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

## **LEONATO**

Tush, tush, man; never fleer and jest at me:  
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,  
As under privilege of age to brag  
What I have done being young, or what would do  
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,  
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me  
That I am forced to lay my reverence by  
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,  
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.  
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child;  
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,  
And she lies buried with her ancestors;  
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,  
Save this of hers, framed by thy villany!

## **CLAUDIO**

My villany?

## **LEONATO**

Thine, Claudio; thine, I say.

## **DON PEDRO**

You say not right, old man.

## **LEONATO**

My lord, my lord,  
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,  
Despite his nice fence and his active practise,  
His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

## **CLAUDIO**

Away! I will not have to do with you.

## **LEONATO**

Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my child:  
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

**ANTONIO**

He shall kill two of us, and men indeed:  
But that's no matter; let him kill one first;  
Win me and wear me; let him answer me.  
Come, follow me, boy; come, sir boy, come, follow me:  
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence;  
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

**LEONATO**

Brother,--

**ANTONIO**

Content yourself. God knows I loved my niece;  
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,  
That dare as well answer a man indeed  
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue:  
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops!

**LEONATO**

Brother Antony,--

**ANTONIO**

Hold you content. What, man! I know them, yea,  
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,--  
Scrambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,  
That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander,  
Go anticly, show outward hideousness,  
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,  
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;  
And this is all.

**LEONATO**

But, brother Antony,--

**ANTONIO**

Come, 'tis no matter:  
Do not you meddle; let me deal in this.

**DON PEDRO**

Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.  
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death:  
But, on my honour, she was charged with nothing  
But what was true and very full of proof.

**LEONATO**

My lord, my lord,--

**DON PEDRO**

I will not hear you.

**LEONATO**

No? Come, brother; away! I will be heard.

**ANTONIO**

And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

*Exeunt LEONATO and ANTONIO*

**DON PEDRO**

See, see; here comes the man we went to seek.

*Enter BENEDICK*

**CLAUDIO**

Now, signior, what news?

**BENEDICK**

Good day, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

Welcome, signior: you are almost come to part  
almost a fray.

**CLAUDIO**

We had like to have had our two noses snapped off  
with two old men without teeth.

**DON PEDRO**

Leonato and his brother. What thinkest thou? Had  
we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

**BENEDICK**

In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came  
to seek you both.

**CLAUDIO**

We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are  
high-proof melancholy and would fain have it beaten  
away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

**BENEDICK**

It is in my scabbard: shall I draw it?

**DON PEDRO**

Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

**CLAUDIO**

Never any did so, though very many have been beside  
their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the  
minstrels; draw, to pleasure us.

**DON PEDRO**

As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou  
sick, or angry?

**CLAUDIO**

What, courage, man! What though care killed a cat,  
thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

**BENEDICK**

Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, and you  
charge it against me. I pray you choose another subject.

**CLAUDIO**

Nay, then, give him another staff: this last was  
broke cross.

**DON PEDRO**

By this light, he changes more and more: I think  
he be angry indeed.

**CLAUDIO**

If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

**BENEDICK**

Shall I speak a word in your ear?

**CLAUDIO**

God bless me from a challenge!

## **BENEDICK**

[Aside to CLAUDIO] You are a villain; I jest not: I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

## **CLAUDIO**

Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

## **DON PEDRO**

What, a feast, a feast?

## **CLAUDIO**

I' faith, I thank him; he hath bid me to a calf's head and a capon; the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too?

## **BENEDICK**

Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.

## **DON PEDRO**

I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day. I said, thou hadst a fine wit: 'True,' said she, 'a fine little one.' 'No,' said I, 'a great wit:' 'Right,' says she, 'a great gross one.' 'Nay,' said I, 'a good wit:' 'Just,' said she, 'it hurts nobody.' 'Nay,' said I, 'the gentleman is wise:' 'Certain,' said she, 'a wise gentleman.' 'Nay,' said I, 'he hath the tongues:' 'That I believe,' said she, 'for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning; there's a double tongue; there's two tongues.' Thus did she, an hour together, transshape thy particular

virtues: yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy.

**CLAUDIO**

For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.

**DON PEDRO**

Yea, that she did: but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly: the old man's daughter told us all.

**CLAUDIO**

All, all; and, moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

**DON PEDRO**

But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

**CLAUDIO**

Yea, and text underneath, 'Here dwells Benedick the married man'?

**BENEDICK**

Fare you well, boy: you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour: you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which God be thanked, hurt not. My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you: I must discontinue your company: your brother the bastard is fled from Messina: you have among you killed a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet: and, till then, peace be with him.



*Exit*

**DON PEDRO**

He is in earnest.

**CLAUDIO**

In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

**DON PEDRO**

And hath challenged thee.

**CLAUDIO**

Most sincerely.

**DON PEDRO**

What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit!

**CLAUDIO**

He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

**DON PEDRO**

But, soft you, let me be: pluck up, my heart, and be sad. Did he not say, my brother was fled?

*Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and the Watch, with CONRADE and BORACHIO*

**DOGBERRY**

Come you, sir: if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance: nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to.

**DON PEDRO**

How now? two of my brother's men bound! Borachio one!

**CLAUDIO**

Hearken after their offence, my lord.

**DON PEDRO**

Officers, what offence have these men done?

**DOGBERRY**

Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

**DON PEDRO**

First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

**CLAUDIO**

Rightly reasoned, and in his own division: and, by my troth, there's one meaning well suited.

**DON PEDRO**

Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood: what's your offence?

**BORACHIO**

Sweet prince, let me go no farther to mine answer:  
do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have  
deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms  
could not discover, these shallow fools have brought  
to light: who in the night overheard me confessing  
to this man how Don John your brother incensed me  
to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into  
the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's  
garments, how you disgraced her, when you should  
marry her: my villany they have upon record; which  
I had rather seal with my death than repeat over  
to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my  
master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire  
nothing but the reward of a villain.

**DON PEDRO**

Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

**CLAUDIO**

I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

**DON PEDRO**

But did my brother set thee on to this?

**BORACHIO**

Yea, and paid me richly for the practise of it.

**DON PEDRO**

He is composed and framed of treachery:  
And fled he is upon this villany.

**CLAUDIO**

Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear  
In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

## **DOGBERRY**

Come, bring away the plaintiffs: by this time our  
sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter:  
and, masters, do not forget to specify, when time  
and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

## **VERGES**

Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the  
Sexton too.

*Re-enter LEONATO and ANTONIO, with the Sexton*

## **LEONATO**

Which is the villain? let me see his eyes,  
That, when I note another man like him,  
I may avoid him: which of these is he?

## **BORACHIO**

If you would know your wronger, look on me.

## **LEONATO**

Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd  
Mine innocent child?

## **BORACHIO**

Yea, even I alone.

## **LEONATO**

No, not so, villain; thou beliest thyself:  
Here stand a pair of honourable men;  
A third is fled, that had a hand in it.  
I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death:  
Record it with your high and worthy deeds:  
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

## **CLAUDIO**

I know not how to pray your patience;  
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;  
Impose me to what penance your invention  
Can lay upon my sin: yet sinn'd I not  
But in mistaking.

## **DON PEDRO**

By my soul, nor I:  
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,  
I would bend under any heavy weight  
That he'll enjoin me to.

## **LEONATO**

I cannot bid you bid my daughter live;  
That were impossible: but, I pray you both,  
Possess the people in Messina here  
How innocent she died; and if your love  
Can labour ought in sad invention,  
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb  
And sing it to her bones, sing it to-night:  
To-morrow morning come you to my house,  
And since you could not be my son-in-law,  
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,  
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,  
And she alone is heir to both of us:  
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,  
And so dies my revenge.

## **CLAUDIO**

O noble sir,  
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!  
I do embrace your offer; and dispose  
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

## **LEONATO**

To-morrow then I will expect your coming;  
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man  
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,  
Who I believe was pack'd in all this wrong,  
Hired to it by your brother.

## **BORACHIO**

No, by my soul, she was not,  
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,  
But always hath been just and virtuous  
In any thing that I do know by her.

## **DOGBERRY**

Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and  
black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call  
me ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his  
punishment. And also, the watch heard them talk of  
one Deformed: they say he wears a key in his ear and  
a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's  
name, the which he hath used so long and never paid  
that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing  
for God's sake: pray you, examine him upon that point.

## **LEONATO**

I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

## **DOGBERRY**

Your worship speaks like a most thankful and  
reverend youth; and I praise God for you.

## **LEONATO**

There's for thy pains.

## **DOGBERRY**

God save the foundation!

**LEONATO**

Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

**DOGBERRY**

I leave an arrant knave with your worship; which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your worship! I wish your worship well; God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it! Come, neighbour.

*Exeunt DOGBERRY and VERGES*

**LEONATO**

Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

**ANTONIO**

Farewell, my lords: we look for you to-morrow.

**DON PEDRO**

We will not fail.

**CLAUDIO**

To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

**LEONATO**

[To the Watch] Bring you these fellows on. We'll talk with Margaret,  
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.

*Exeunt, severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. LEONATO'S garden.

*Enter BENEDICK and MARGARET, meeting*

**BENEDICK**

Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

**MARGARET**

Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

**BENEDICK**

In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

**MARGARET**

To have no man come over me! why, shall I always keep below stairs?

**BENEDICK**

Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth; it catches.

**MARGARET**

And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

**BENEDICK**

A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a woman: and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice: I give thee the bucklers.

**MARGARET**

Give us the swords; we have bucklers of our own.

**BENEDICK**

If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice; and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

**MARGARET**

Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs.

**BENEDICK**

And therefore will come.

*Exit MARGARET*

*Sings*

The god of love,  
That sits above,  
And knows me, and knows me,  
How pitiful I deserve,--  
I mean in singing; but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole bookful of these quondam carpet-mangers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried: I can find out no rhyme to 'lady' but 'baby,' an innocent rhyme; for 'scorn,' 'horn,' a hard rhyme; for, 'school,' 'fool,' a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings: no, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

*Enter BEATRICE*

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?

**BEATRICE**

Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

**BENEDICK**

O, stay but till then!

**BEATRICE**

'Then' is spoken; fare you well now: and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came; which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

**BENEDICK**

Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

**BEATRICE**

Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unknissed.

**BENEDICK**

Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

**BEATRICE**

For them all together; which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good

part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

**BENEDICK**

Suffer love! a good epithet! I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

**BEATRICE**

In spite of your heart, I think; alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

**BENEDICK**

Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

**BEATRICE**

It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

**BENEDICK**

An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the lime of good neighbours. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

**BEATRICE**

And how long is that, think you?

**BENEDICK**

Question: why, an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum: therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his

own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for  
praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is  
praiseworthy: and now tell me, how doth your cousin?

**BEATRICE**

Very ill.

**BENEDICK**

And how do you?

**BEATRICE**

Very ill too.

**BENEDICK**

Serve God, love me and mend. There will I leave  
you too, for here comes one in haste.

*Enter URSULA*

**URSULA**

Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old  
coil at home: it is proved my Lady Hero hath been  
falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily  
abused; and Don John is the author of all, who is  
fed and gone. Will you come presently?

**BEATRICE**

Will you go hear this news, signior?

**BENEDICK**

I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be  
buried in thy eyes; and moreover I will go with  
thee to thy uncle's.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A church.

*Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and three or four with tapers*

**CLAUDIO**

Is this the monument of Leonato?

**Lord**

It is, my lord.

**CLAUDIO**

[Reading out of a scroll]  
Done to death by slanderous tongues  
Was the Hero that here lies:  
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,  
Gives her fame which never dies.  
So the life that died with shame  
Lives in death with glorious fame.  
Hang thou there upon the tomb,  
Praising her when I am dumb.  
Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

SONG.

Pardon, goddess of the night,  
Those that slew thy virgin knight;  
For the which, with songs of woe,  
Round about her tomb they go.  
Midnight, assist our moan;  
Help us to sigh and groan,  
Heavily, heavily:  
Graves, yawn and yield your dead,  
Till death be uttered,  
Heavily, heavily.

**CLAUDIO**

Now, unto thy bones good night!  
Yearly will I do this rite.

**DON PEDRO**

Good morrow, masters; put your torches out:  
The wolves have prey'd; and look, the gentle day,  
Before the wheels of Phoebus, round about  
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.  
Thanks to you all, and leave us: fare you well.

**CLAUDIO**

Good morrow, masters: each his several way.

**DON PEDRO**

Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds;  
And then to Leonato's we will go.

**CLAUDIO**

And Hymen now with luckier issue speed's  
Than this for whom we render'd up this woe.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Much Ado About Nothing

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Much Ado About Nothing](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A room in LEONATO'S house.

*Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA, FRIAR FRANCIS, and HERO*

### FRIAR FRANCIS

Did I not tell you she was innocent?

### LEONATO

So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her  
Upon the error that you heard debated:  
But Margaret was in some fault for this,  
Although against her will, as it appears  
In the true course of all the question.

### ANTONIO

Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

### BENEDICK

And so am I, being else by faith enforced  
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

### LEONATO

Well, daughter, and you gentle-women all,  
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,  
And when I send for you, come hither mask'd.

*Exeunt Ladies*

The prince and Claudio promised by this hour  
To visit me. You know your office, brother:

You must be father to your brother's daughter  
And give her to young Claudio.

**ANTONIO**

Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

**BENEDICK**

Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

To do what, signior?

**BENEDICK**

To bind me, or undo me; one of them.  
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,  
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

**LEONATO**

That eye my daughter lent her: 'tis most true.

**BENEDICK**

And I do with an eye of love requite her.

**LEONATO**

The sight whereof I think you had from me,  
From Claudio and the prince: but what's your will?

**BENEDICK**

Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:  
But, for my will, my will is your good will  
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd  
In the state of honourable marriage:  
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

**LEONATO**

My heart is with your liking.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

And my help.  
Here comes the prince and Claudio.

*Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO, and two or three others*

**DON PEDRO**

Good morrow to this fair assembly.

**LEONATO**

Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio:  
We here attend you. Are you yet determined  
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

**CLAUDIO**

I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop.

**LEONATO**

Call her forth, brother; here's the friar ready.

*Exit ANTONIO*

**DON PEDRO**

Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter,  
That you have such a February face,  
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?

**CLAUDIO**

I think he thinks upon the savage bull.

Tush, fear not, man; we'll tip thy horns with gold  
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,  
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,  
When he would play the noble beast in love.

**BENEDICK**

Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low;  
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,  
And got a calf in that same noble feat  
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

**CLAUDIO**

For this I owe you: here comes other reckonings.

*Re-enter ANTONIO, with the Ladies masked*

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

**ANTONIO**

This same is she, and I do give you her.

**CLAUDIO**

Why, then she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

**LEONATO**

No, that you shall not, till you take her hand  
Before this friar and swear to marry her.

**CLAUDIO**

Give me your hand: before this holy friar,  
I am your husband, if you like of me.

**HERO**

And when I lived, I was your other wife:

*Unmasking*

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

**CLAUDIO**

Another Hero!

**HERO**

Nothing certainer:  
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,  
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

**DON PEDRO**

The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

**LEONATO**

She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

**FRIAR FRANCIS**

All this amazement can I qualify:  
When after that the holy rites are ended,  
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:  
Meantime let wonder seem familiar,  
And to the chapel let us presently.

**BENEDICK**

Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?

**BEATRICE**

[Unmasking] I answer to that name. What is your will?

**BENEDICK**

Do not you love me?

**BEATRICE**

Why, no; no more than reason.

**BENEDICK**

Why, then your uncle and the prince and Claudio  
Have been deceived; they swore you did.

**BEATRICE**

Do not you love me?

**BENEDICK**

Troth, no; no more than reason.

**BEATRICE**

Why, then my cousin Margaret and Ursula  
Are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

**BENEDICK**

They swore that you were almost sick for me.

**BEATRICE**

They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

**BENEDICK**

'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?

**BEATRICE**

No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

**LEONATO**

Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.

**CLAUDIO**

And I'll be sworn upon't that he loves her;  
For here's a paper written in his hand,  
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,  
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

**HERO**

And here's another  
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,  
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

**BENEDICK**

A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts.  
Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take  
thee for pity.

**BEATRICE**

I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield  
upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life,  
for I was told you were in a consumption.

**BENEDICK**

Peace! I will stop your mouth.

*Kissing her*

**DON PEDRO**

How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

**BENEDICK**

I'll tell thee what, prince; a college of

wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruised and love my cousin.

## **CLAUDIO**

I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer; which, out of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceedingly narrowly to thee.

## **BENEDICK**

Come, come, we are friends: let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

## **LEONATO**

We'll have dancing afterward.

## **BENEDICK**

First, of my word; therefore play, music. Prince, thou art sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife: there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,  
And brought with armed men back to Messina.



## **BENEDICK**

Think not on him till to-morrow:  
I'll devise thee brave punishments for him.  
Strike up, pipers.

*Dance*

*Exeunt*

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Pericles

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 1, Scene 1: [Antioch. A room in the palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [Tyre. A room in the palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [Tyre. An ante-chamber in the palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [Tarsus. A room in the Governor's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Pentapolis. An open place by the sea-side.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [The same. A public way or platform leading to the](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [The same. A hall of state: a banquet prepared.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Tyre. A room in the Governor's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [Pentapolis. A room in the palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Ephesus. A room in CERIMON's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Tarsus. A room in CLEON's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [Ephesus. A room in CERIMON's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Tarsus. An open place near the sea-shore.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Mytilene. A room in a brothel.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Tarsus. A room in CLEON's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Mytilene. A street before the brothel.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [The same. A room in the brothel.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [On board PERICLES' ship, off Mytilene. A close](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [The temple of Diana at Ephesus; THAISA standing](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Prologue  
[Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

*Enter GOWER*

*Before the palace of Antioch*

To sing a song that old was sung,  
From ashes ancient Gower is come;  
Assuming man's infirmities,  
To glad your ear, and please your eyes.  
It hath been sung at festivals,  
On ember-eves and holy-ales;  
And lords and ladies in their lives  
Have read it for restoratives:  
The purchase is to make men glorious;  
Et bonum quo antiquius, eo melius.  
If you, born in these latter times,  
When wit's more ripe, accept my rhymes.  
And that to hear an old man sing  
May to your wishes pleasure bring  
I life would wish, and that I might  
Waste it for you, like taper-light.  
This Antioch, then, Antiochus the Great  
Built up, this city, for his chiefest seat:  
The fairest in all Syria,  
I tell you what mine authors say:  
This king unto him took a fere,  
Who died and left a female heir,  
So buxom, blithe, and full of face,  
As heaven had lent her all his grace;  
With whom the father liking took,  
And her to incest did provoke:  
Bad child; worse father! to entice his own  
To evil should be done by none:  
But custom what they did begin  
Was with long use account no sin.  
The beauty of this sinful dame

Made many princes thither frame,  
To seek her as a bed-fellow,  
In marriage-pleasures play-fellow:  
Which to prevent he made a law,  
To keep her still, and men in awe,  
That whoso ask'd her for his wife,  
His riddle told not, lost his life:  
So for her many a wight did die,  
As yon grim looks do testify.  
What now ensues, to the judgment of your eye  
I give, my cause who best can justify.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Prologue  
[Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Antioch. A room in the palace.

*Enter ANTIOCHUS, Prince PERICLES, and followers*

### ANTIOCHUS

Young prince of Tyre, you have at large received  
The danger of the task you undertake.

### PERICLES

I have, Antiochus, and, with a soul  
Embolden'd with the glory of her praise,  
Think death no hazard in this enterprise.

### ANTIOCHUS

Bring in our daughter, clothed like a bride,  
For the embracements even of Jove himself;  
At whose conception, till Lucina reign'd,  
Nature this dowry gave, to glad her presence,  
The senate-house of planets all did sit,  
To knit in her their best perfections.

*Music. Enter the Daughter of ANTIOCHUS*

### PERICLES

See where she comes, apparell'd like the spring,  
Graces her subjects, and her thoughts the king  
Of every virtue gives renown to men!  
Her face the book of praises, where is read  
Nothing but curious pleasures, as from thence  
Sorrow were ever razed and testy wrath  
Could never be her mild companion.  
You gods that made me man, and sway in love,

That have inflamed desire in my breast  
To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree,  
Or die in the adventure, be my helps,  
As I am son and servant to your will,  
To compass such a boundless happiness!

## **ANTIOCHUS**

Prince Pericles,--

## **PERICLES**

That would be son to great Antiochus.

## **ANTIOCHUS**

Before thee stands this fair Hesperides,  
With golden fruit, but dangerous to be touch'd;  
For death-like dragons here affright thee hard:  
Her face, like heaven, enticeth thee to view  
Her countless glory, which desert must gain;  
And which, without desert, because thine eye  
Presumes to reach, all thy whole heap must die.  
Yon sometimes famous princes, like thyself,  
Drawn by report, adventurous by desire,  
Tell thee, with speechless tongues and semblance pale,  
That without covering, save yon field of stars,  
Here they stand martyrs, slain in Cupid's wars;  
And with dead cheeks advise thee to desist  
For going on death's net, whom none resist.

## **PERICLES**

Antiochus, I thank thee, who hath taught  
My frail mortality to know itself,  
And by those fearful objects to prepare  
This body, like to them, to what I must;  
For death remember'd should be like a mirror,  
Who tells us life's but breath, to trust it error.  
I'll make my will then, and, as sick men do  
Who know the world, see heaven, but, feeling woe,  
Gripe not at earthly joys as erst they did;

So I bequeath a happy peace to you  
And all good men, as every prince should do;  
My riches to the earth from whence they came;  
But my unspotted fire of love to you.

*To the Daughter of ANTIOCHUS*

Thus ready for the way of life or death,  
I wait the sharpest blow, Antiochus.

## **ANTIOCHUS**

Scorning advice, read the conclusion then:  
Which read and not expounded, 'tis decreed,  
As these before thee thou thyself shalt bleed.

## **Daughter**

Of all say'd yet, mayst thou prove prosperous!  
Of all say'd yet, I wish thee happiness!

## **PERICLES**

Like a bold champion, I assume the lists,  
Nor ask advice of any other thought  
But faithfulness and courage.

*He reads the riddle*

I am no viper, yet I feed  
On mother's flesh which did me breed.  
I sought a husband, in which labour  
I found that kindness in a father:  
He's father, son, and husband mild;  
I mother, wife, and yet his child.  
How they may be, and yet in two,  
As you will live, resolve it you.  
Sharp physic is the last: but, O you powers  
That give heaven countless eyes to view men's acts,  
Why cloud they not their sights perpetually,  
If this be true, which makes me pale to read it?  
Fair glass of light, I loved you, and could still,

*Takes hold of the hand of the Daughter of ANTIOCHUS*

Were not this glorious casket stored with ill:  
But I must tell you, now my thoughts revolt  
For he's no man on whom perfections wait  
That, knowing sin within, will touch the gate.  
You are a fair viol, and your sense the strings;  
Who, finger'd to make man his lawful music,  
Would draw heaven down, and all the gods, to hearken:  
But being play'd upon before your time,  
Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime.  
Good sooth, I care not for you.

**ANTIOCHUS**

Prince Pericles, touch not, upon thy life.  
For that's an article within our law,  
As dangerous as the rest. Your time's expired:  
Either expound now, or receive your sentence.

**PERICLES**

Great king,  
Few love to hear the sins they love to act;  
'Twould braid yourself too near for me to tell it.  
Who has a book of all that monarchs do,  
He's more secure to keep it shut than shown:  
For vice repeated is like the wandering wind.  
Blows dust in other's eyes, to spread itself;  
And yet the end of all is bought thus dear,  
The breath is gone, and the sore eyes see clear:  
To stop the air would hurt them. The blind mole casts  
Copp'd hills towards heaven, to tell the earth is throng'd  
By man's oppression; and the poor worm doth die for't.  
Kings are earth's gods; in vice their law's  
their will;  
And if Jove stray, who dares say Jove doth ill?  
It is enough you know; and it is fit,  
What being more known grows worse, to smother it.  
All love the womb that their first being bred,  
Then give my tongue like leave to love my head.



## ANTIOCHUS

[Aside] Heaven, that I had thy head! he has found  
the meaning:

But I will gloze with him.--Young prince of Tyre,  
Though by the tenor of our strict edict,  
Your exposition misinterpreting,  
We might proceed to cancel of your days;  
Yet hope, succeeding from so fair a tree  
As your fair self, doth tune us otherwise:  
Forty days longer we do respite you;  
If by which time our secret be undone,  
This mercy shows we'll joy in such a son:  
And until then your entertain shall be  
As doth befit our honour and your worth.

*Exeunt all but PERICLES*

## PERICLES

How courtesy would seem to cover sin,  
When what is done is like an hypocrite,  
The which is good in nothing but in sight!  
If it be true that I interpret false,  
Then were it certain you were not so bad  
As with foul incest to abuse your soul;  
Where now you're both a father and a son,  
By your untimely claspings with your child,  
Which pleasure fits an husband, not a father;  
And she an eater of her mother's flesh,  
By the defiling of her parent's bed;  
And both like serpents are, who though they feed  
On sweetest flowers, yet they poison breed.  
Antioch, farewell! for wisdom sees, those men  
Blush not in actions blacker than the night,  
Will shun no course to keep them from the light.  
One sin, I know, another doth provoke;  
Murder's as near to lust as flame to smoke:  
Poison and treason are the hands of sin,  
Ay, and the targets, to put off the shame:  
Then, lest my lie be cropp'd to keep you clear,  
By flight I'll shun the danger which I fear.

*Exit*

*Re-enter ANTIOCHUS*

**ANTIOCHUS**

He hath found the meaning, for which we mean  
To have his head.

He must not live to trumpet forth my infamy,  
Nor tell the world Antiochus doth sin  
In such a loathed manner;  
And therefore instantly this prince must die:  
For by his fall my honour must keep high.  
Who attends us there?

*Enter THALIARD*

**THALIARD**

Doth your highness call?

**ANTIOCHUS**

Thaliard,  
You are of our chamber, and our mind partakes  
Her private actions to your secrecy;  
And for your faithfulness we will advance you.  
Thaliard, behold, here's poison, and here's gold;  
We hate the prince of Tyre, and thou must kill him:  
It fits thee not to ask the reason why,  
Because we bid it. Say, is it done?

**THALIARD**

My lord,  
'Tis done.

**ANTIOCHUS**

Enough.

*Enter a Messenger*

Let your breath cool yourself, telling your haste.

**Messenger**

My lord, prince Pericles is fled.

*Exit*

**ANTIOCHUS**

As thou  
Wilt live, fly after: and like an arrow shot  
From a well-experienced archer hits the mark  
His eye doth level at, so thou ne'er return  
Unless thou say 'Prince Pericles is dead.'

**THALIARD**

My lord,  
If I can get him within my pistol's length,  
I'll make him sure enough: so, farewell to your highness.

**ANTIOCHUS**

Thaliard, adieu!

*Exit THALIARD*

Till Pericles be dead,  
My heart can lend no succor to my head.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Tyre. A room in the palace.

*Enter PERICLES*

### PERICLES

[To Lords without] Let none disturb us.--Why should this change of thoughts,  
The sad companion, dull-eyed melancholy,  
Be my so used a guest as not an hour,  
In the day's glorious walk, or peaceful night,  
The tomb where grief should sleep, can breed me quiet?  
Here pleasures court mine eyes, and mine eyes shun them,  
And danger, which I fear'd, is at Antioch,  
Whose aim seems far too short to hit me here:  
Yet neither pleasure's art can joy my spirits,  
Nor yet the other's distance comfort me.  
Then it is thus: the passions of the mind,  
That have their first conception by mis-dread,  
Have after-nourishment and life by care;  
And what was first but fear what might be done,  
Grows elder now and cares it be not done.  
And so with me: the great Antiochus,  
'Gainst whom I am too little to contend,  
Since he's so great can make his will his act,  
Will think me speaking, though I swear to silence;  
Nor boots it me to say I honour him.  
If he suspect I may dishonour him:  
And what may make him blush in being known,  
He'll stop the course by which it might be known;  
With hostile forces he'll o'erspread the land,  
And with the ostent of war will look so huge,  
Amazement shall drive courage from the state;  
Our men be vanquish'd ere they do resist,  
And subjects punish'd that ne'er thought offence:  
Which care of them, not pity of myself,  
Who am no more but as the tops of trees,

Which fence the roots they grow by and defend them,  
Makes both my body pine and soul to languish,  
And punish that before that he would punish.

*Enter HELICANUS, with other Lords*

### **First Lord**

Joy and all comfort in your sacred breast!

### **Second Lord**

And keep your mind, till you return to us,  
Peaceful and comfortable!

### **HELICANUS**

Peace, peace, and give experience tongue.  
They do abuse the king that flatter him:  
For flattery is the bellows blows up sin;  
The thing which is flatter'd, but a spark,  
To which that blast gives heat and stronger glowing;  
Whereas reproof, obedient and in order,  
Fits kings, as they are men, for they may err.  
When Signior Sooth here does proclaim a peace,  
He flatters you, makes war upon your life.  
Prince, pardon me, or strike me, if you please;  
I cannot be much lower than my knees.

### **PERICLES**

All leave us else; but let your cares o'erlook  
What shipping and what lading's in our haven,  
And then return to us.

*Exeunt Lords*

Helicanus, thou  
Hast moved us: what seest thou in our looks?

### **HELICANUS**

An angry brow, dread lord.

**PERICLES**

If there be such a dart in princes' frowns,  
How durst thy tongue move anger to our face?

**HELICANUS**

How dare the plants look up to heaven, from whence  
They have their nourishment?

**PERICLES**

Thou know'st I have power  
To take thy life from thee.

**HELICANUS**

[Kneeling]  
I have ground the axe myself;  
Do you but strike the blow.

**PERICLES**

Rise, prithee, rise.  
Sit down: thou art no flatterer:  
I thank thee for it; and heaven forbid  
That kings should let their ears hear their  
faults hid!  
Fit counsellor and servant for a prince,  
Who by thy wisdom makest a prince thy servant,  
What wouldst thou have me do?

**HELICANUS**

To bear with patience  
Such griefs as you yourself do lay upon yourself.

**PERICLES**

Thou speak'st like a physician, Helicanus,  
That minister'st a potion unto me  
That thou wouldst tremble to receive thyself.  
Attend me, then: I went to Antioch,  
Where as thou know'st, against the face of death,  
I sought the purchase of a glorious beauty.  
From whence an issue I might propagate,  
Are arms to princes, and bring joys to subjects.  
Her face was to mine eye beyond all wonder;  
The rest--hark in thine ear--as black as incest:  
Which by my knowledge found, the sinful father  
Seem'd not to strike, but smooth: but thou  
know'st this,  
'Tis time to fear when tyrants seem to kiss.  
Such fear so grew in me, I hither fled,  
Under the covering of a careful night,  
Who seem'd my good protector; and, being here,  
Bethought me what was past, what might succeed.  
I knew him tyrannous; and tyrants' fears  
Decrease not, but grow faster than the years:  
And should he doubt it, as no doubt he doth,  
That I should open to the listening air  
How many worthy princes' bloods were shed,  
To keep his bed of blackness unlaid ope,  
To lop that doubt, he'll fill this land with arms,  
And make pretence of wrong that I have done him:  
When all, for mine, if I may call offence,  
Must feel war's blow, who spares not innocence:  
Which love to all, of which thyself art one,  
Who now reprovest me for it,--

## **HELICANUS**

Alas, sir!

## **PERICLES**

Drew sleep out of mine eyes, blood from my cheeks,  
Musings into my mind, with thousand doubts  
How I might stop this tempest ere it came;  
And finding little comfort to relieve them,  
I thought it princely charity to grieve them.

## HELICANUS

Well, my lord, since you have given me leave to speak.  
Freely will I speak. Antiochus you fear,  
And justly too, I think, you fear the tyrant,  
Who either by public war or private treason  
Will take away your life.  
Therefore, my lord, go travel for a while,  
Till that his rage and anger be forgot,  
Or till the Destinies do cut his thread of life.  
Your rule direct to any; if to me.  
Day serves not light more faithful than I'll be.

## PERICLES

I do not doubt thy faith;  
But should he wrong my liberties in my absence?

## HELICANUS

We'll mingle our bloods together in the earth,  
From whence we had our being and our birth.

## PERICLES

Tyre, I now look from thee then, and to Tarsus  
Intend my travel, where I'll hear from thee;  
And by whose letters I'll dispose myself.  
The care I had and have of subjects' good  
On thee I lay whose wisdom's strength can bear it.  
I'll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath:  
Who shuns not to break one will sure crack both:  
But in our orbs we'll live so round and safe,  
That time of both this truth shall ne'er convince,  
Thou show'dst a subject's shine, I a true prince.

*Exeunt*



# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Tyre. An ante-chamber in the palace.

*Enter THALIARD*

### THALIARD

So, this is Tyre, and this the court. Here must I kill King Pericles; and if I do it not, I am sure to be hanged at home: 'tis dangerous. Well, I perceive he was a wise fellow, and had good discretion, that, being bid to ask what he would of the king, desired he might know none of his secrets: now do I see he had some reason for't; for if a king bid a man be a villain, he's bound by the indenture of his oath to be one! Hush! here come the lords of Tyre.

*Enter HELICANUS and ESCANES, with other Lords of Tyre*

### HELICANUS

You shall not need, my fellow peers of Tyre,  
Further to question me of your king's departure:  
His seal'd commission, left in trust with me,  
Doth speak sufficiently he's gone to travel.

### THALIARD

[Aside] How! the king gone!

### HELICANUS

If further yet you will be satisfied,  
Why, as it were unlicensed of your loves,  
He would depart, I'll give some light unto you.  
Being at Antioch--

## THALIARD

[Aside] What from Antioch?

## HELICANUS

Royal Antiochus--on what cause I know not--  
Took some displeasure at him; at least he judged so:  
And doubting lest that he had err'd or sinn'd,  
To show his sorrow, he'ld correct himself;  
So puts himself unto the shipman's toil,  
With whom each minute threatens life or death.

## THALIARD

[Aside] Well, I perceive  
I shall not be hang'd now, although I would;  
But since he's gone, the king's seas must please:  
He 'scaped the land, to perish at the sea.  
I'll present myself. Peace to the lords of Tyre!

## HELICANUS

Lord Thaliard from Antiochus is welcome.

## THALIARD

From him I come  
With message unto princely Pericles;  
But since my landing I have understood  
Your lord has betook himself to unknown travels,  
My message must return from whence it came.

## HELICANUS

We have no reason to desire it,  
Commended to our master, not to us:  
Yet, ere you shall depart, this we desire,  
As friends to Antioch, we may feast in Tyre.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Tarsus. A room in the Governor's house.

*Enter CLEON, the governor of Tarsus, with DIONYZA, and others*

**CLEON**

My Dionyza, shall we rest us here,  
And by relating tales of others' griefs,  
See if 'twill teach us to forget our own?

**DIONYZA**

That were to blow at fire in hope to quench it;  
For who digs hills because they do aspire  
Throws down one mountain to cast up a higher.  
O my distressed lord, even such our griefs are;  
Here they're but felt, and seen with mischief's eyes,  
But like to groves, being topp'd, they higher rise.

**CLEON**

O Dionyza,  
Who wanteth food, and will not say he wants it,  
Or can conceal his hunger till he famish?  
Our tongues and sorrows do sound deep  
Our woes into the air; our eyes do weep,  
Till tongues fetch breath that may proclaim them louder;  
That, if heaven slumber while their creatures want,  
They may awake their helps to comfort them.  
I'll then discourse our woes, felt several years,  
And wanting breath to speak help me with tears.

**DIONYZA**

I'll do my best, sir.

## CLEON

This Tarsus, o'er which I have the government,  
A city on whom plenty held full hand,  
For riches strew'd herself even in the streets;  
Whose towers bore heads so high they kiss'd the clouds,  
And strangers ne'er beheld but wondered at;  
Whose men and dames so jetted and adorn'd,  
Like one another's glass to trim them by:  
Their tables were stored full, to glad the sight,  
And not so much to feed on as delight;  
All poverty was scorn'd, and pride so great,  
The name of help grew odious to repeat.

## DIONYZA

O, 'tis too true.

## CLEON

But see what heaven can do! By this our change,  
These mouths, who but of late, earth, sea, and air,  
Were all too little to content and please,  
Although they gave their creatures in abundance,  
As houses are defiled for want of use,  
They are now starved for want of exercise:  
Those palates who, not yet two summers younger,  
Must have inventions to delight the taste,  
Would now be glad of bread, and beg for it:  
Those mothers who, to nouse up their babes,  
Thought nought too curious, are ready now  
To eat those little darlings whom they loved.  
So sharp are hunger's teeth, that man and wife  
Draw lots who first shall die to lengthen life:  
Here stands a lord, and there a lady weeping;  
Here many sink, yet those which see them fall  
Have scarce strength left to give them burial.  
Is not this true?

## DIONYZA

Our cheeks and hollow eyes do witness it.

**CLEON**

O, let those cities that of plenty's cup  
And her prosperities so largely taste,  
With their superfluous riots, hear these tears!  
The misery of Tarsus may be theirs.

*Enter a Lord*

**Lord**

Where's the lord governor?

**CLEON**

Here.  
Speak out thy sorrows which thou bring'st in haste,  
For comfort is too far for us to expect.

**Lord**

We have descried, upon our neighbouring shore,  
A portly sail of ships make hitherward.

**CLEON**

I thought as much.  
One sorrow never comes but brings an heir,  
That may succeed as his inheritor;  
And so in ours: some neighbouring nation,  
Taking advantage of our misery,  
Hath stuff'd these hollow vessels with their power,  
To beat us down, the which are down already;  
And make a conquest of unhappy me,  
Whereas no glory's got to overcome.

**Lord**

That's the least fear; for, by the semblance  
Of their white flags display'd, they bring us peace,  
And come to us as favourers, not as foes.

## CLEON

Thou speak'st like him's untutor'd to repeat:  
Who makes the fairest show means most deceit.  
But bring they what they will and what they can,  
What need we fear?  
The ground's the lowest, and we are half way there.  
Go tell their general we attend him here,  
To know for what he comes, and whence he comes,  
And what he craves.

## Lord

I go, my lord.

*Exit*

## CLEON

Welcome is peace, if he on peace consist;  
If wars, we are unable to resist.

*Enter PERICLES with Attendants*

## PERICLES

Lord governor, for so we hear you are,  
Let not our ships and number of our men  
Be like a beacon fired to amaze your eyes.  
We have heard your miseries as far as Tyre,  
And seen the desolation of your streets:  
Nor come we to add sorrow to your tears,  
But to relieve them of their heavy load;  
And these our ships, you happily may think  
Are like the Trojan horse was stuff'd within  
With bloody veins, expecting overthrow,  
Are stored with corn to make your needy bread,  
And give them life whom hunger starved half dead.

## All

The gods of Greece protect you!  
And we'll pray for you.

## **PERICLES**

Arise, I pray you, rise:  
We do not look for reverence, but to love,  
And harbourage for ourself, our ships, and men.

## **CLEON**

The which when any shall not gratify,  
Or pay you with unthankfulness in thought,  
Be it our wives, our children, or ourselves,  
The curse of heaven and men succeed their evils!  
Till when,--the which I hope shall ne'er be seen,--  
Your grace is welcome to our town and us.

## **PERICLES**

Which welcome we'll accept; feast here awhile,  
Until our stars that frown lend us a smile.

*Exeunt*

*Enter GOWER*

## **GOWER**

Here have you seen a mighty king  
His child, I wis, to incest bring;  
A better prince and benign lord,  
That will prove awful both in deed and word.  
Be quiet then as men should be,  
Till he hath pass'd necessity.  
I'll show you those in troubles reign,  
Losing a mite, a mountain gain.  
The good in conversation,  
To whom I give my benison,  
Is still at Tarsus, where each man  
Thinks all is writ he speken can;  
And, to remember what he does,



Build his statue to make him glorious:  
But tidings to the contrary  
Are brought your eyes; what need speak I?  
DUMB SHOW.

*Enter at one door PERICLES talking with CLEON; all the train with them.  
Enter at another door a Gentleman, with a letter to PERICLES; PERICLES  
shows the letter to CLEON; gives the Messenger a reward, and knights him.  
Exit PERICLES at one door, and CLEON at another*

Good Helicane, that stay'd at home,  
Not to eat honey like a drone  
From others' labours; for though he strive  
To killen bad, keep good alive;  
And to fulfil his prince' desire,  
Sends word of all that haps in Tyre:  
How Thaliard came full bent with sin  
And had intent to murder him;  
And that in Tarsus was not best  
Longer for him to make his rest.  
He, doing so, put forth to seas,  
Where when men been, there's seldom ease;  
For now the wind begins to blow;  
Thunder above and deeps below  
Make such unquiet, that the ship  
Should house him safe is wreck'd and split;  
And he, good prince, having all lost,  
By waves from coast to coast is tost:  
All perishen of man, of pelf,  
Ne aught escapen but himself;  
Till fortune, tired with doing bad,  
Threw him ashore, to give him glad:  
And here he comes. What shall be next,  
Pardon old Gower,--this longs the text.

*Exit*

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Pentapolis. An open place by the sea-side.

*Enter PERICLES, wet*

### PERICLES

Yet cease your ire, you angry stars of heaven!  
Wind, rain, and thunder, remember, earthly man  
Is but a substance that must yield to you;  
And I, as fits my nature, do obey you:  
Alas, the sea hath cast me on the rocks,  
Wash'd me from shore to shore, and left me breath  
Nothing to think on but ensuing death:  
Let it suffice the greatness of your powers  
To have bereft a prince of all his fortunes;  
And having thrown him from your watery grave,  
Here to have death in peace is all he'll crave.

*Enter three FISHERMEN*

### First Fisherman

What, ho, Pilch!

### Second Fisherman

Ha, come and bring away the nets!

### First Fisherman

What, Patch-breech, I say!

### Third Fisherman

What say you, master?

### **First Fisherman**

Look how thou stirrest now! come away, or I'll  
fetch thee with a wanion.

### **Third Fisherman**

Faith, master, I am thinking of the poor men that  
were cast away before us even now.

### **First Fisherman**

Alas, poor souls, it grieved my heart to hear what  
pitiful cries they made to us to help them, when,  
well-a-day, we could scarce help ourselves.

### **Third Fisherman**

Nay, master, said not I as much when I saw the  
porpus how he bounced and tumbled? they say  
they're half fish, half flesh: a plague on them,  
they ne'er come but I look to be washed. Master, I  
marvel how the fishes live in the sea.

### **First Fisherman**

Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the  
little ones: I can compare our rich misers to  
nothing so fitly as to a whale; a' plays and  
tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at  
last devours them all at a mouthful: such whales  
have I heard on o' the land, who never leave gaping  
till they've swallowed the whole parish, church,  
steeple, bells, and all.

### **PERICLES**

[Aside] A pretty moral.

### **Third Fisherman**

But, master, if I had been the sexton, I would have been that day in the belfry.

### **Second Fisherman**

Why, man?

### **Third Fisherman**

Because he should have swallowed me too: and when I had been in his belly, I would have kept such a jangling of the bells, that he should never have left, till he cast bells, steeple, church, and parish up again. But if the good King Simonides were of my mind,--

### **PERICLES**

[Aside] Simonides!

### **Third Fisherman**

We would purge the land of these drones, that rob the bee of her honey.

### **PERICLES**

[Aside] How from the finny subject of the sea  
These fishers tell the infirmities of men;  
And from their watery empire recollect  
All that may men approve or men detect!  
Peace be at your labour, honest fishermen.

### **Second Fisherman**

Honest! good fellow, what's that? If it be a day fits you, search out of the calendar, and nobody look after it.

### **PERICLES**

May see the sea hath cast upon your coast.

### **Second Fisherman**

What a drunken knave was the sea to cast thee in our way!

### **PERICLES**

A man whom both the waters and the wind,  
In that vast tennis-court, have made the ball  
For them to play upon, entreats you pity him:  
He asks of you, that never used to beg.

### **First Fisherman**

No, friend, cannot you beg? Here's them in our  
country Greece gets more with begging than we can do  
with working.

### **Second Fisherman**

Canst thou catch any fishes, then?

### **PERICLES**

I never practised it.

### **Second Fisherman**

Nay, then thou wilt starve, sure; for here's nothing  
to be got now-a-days, unless thou canst fish for't.

### **PERICLES**

What I have been I have forgot to know;  
But what I am, want teaches me to think on:  
A man throng'd up with cold: my veins are chill,  
And have no more of life than may suffice  
To give my tongue that heat to ask your help;  
Which if you shall refuse, when I am dead,

For that I am a man, pray see me buried.

### **First Fisherman**

Die quoth-a? Now gods forbid! I have a gown here;  
come, put it on; keep thee warm. Now, afore me, a  
handsome fellow! Come, thou shalt go home, and  
we'll have flesh for holidays, fish for  
fasting-days, and moreo'er puddings and flap-jacks,  
and thou shalt be welcome.

### **PERICLES**

I thank you, sir.

### **Second Fisherman**

Hark you, my friend; you said you could not beg.

### **PERICLES**

I did but crave.

### **Second Fisherman**

But crave! Then I'll turn craver too, and so I  
shall 'scape whipping.

### **PERICLES**

Why, are all your beggars whipped, then?

### **Second Fisherman**

O, not all, my friend, not all; for if all your  
beggars were whipped, I would wish no better office  
than to be beadle. But, master, I'll go draw up the  
net.

*Exit with Third Fisherman*

## **PERICLES**

[Aside] How well this honest mirth becomes their labour!

## **First Fisherman**

Hark you, sir, do you know where ye are?

## **PERICLES**

Not well.

## **First Fisherman**

Why, I'll tell you: this is called Pentapolis, and our king the good Simonides.

## **PERICLES**

The good King Simonides, do you call him.

## **First Fisherman**

Ay, sir; and he deserves so to be called for his peaceable reign and good government.

## **PERICLES**

He is a happy king, since he gains from his subjects the name of good by his government. How far is his court distant from this shore?

## **First Fisherman**

Marry, sir, half a day's journey: and I'll tell you, he hath a fair daughter, and to-morrow is her birth-day; and there are princes and knights come from all parts of the world to just and tourney for her love.

## **PERICLES**

Were my fortunes equal to my desires, I could wish  
to make one there.

### **First Fisherman**

O, sir, things must be as they may; and what a man  
cannot get, he may lawfully deal for--his wife's soul.

*Re-enter Second and Third Fishermen, drawing up a net*

### **Second Fisherman**

Help, master, help! here's a fish hangs in the net,  
like a poor man's right in the law; 'twill hardly  
come out. Ha! bots on't, 'tis come at last, and  
'tis turned to a rusty armour.

### **PERICLES**

An armour, friends! I pray you, let me see it.  
Thanks, fortune, yet, that, after all my crosses,  
Thou givest me somewhat to repair myself;  
And though it was mine own, part of my heritage,  
Which my dead father did bequeath to me.  
With this strict charge, even as he left his life,  
'Keep it, my Pericles; it hath been a shield  
Twixt me and death;'--and pointed to this brace;--  
'For that it saved me, keep it; in like necessity--  
The which the gods protect thee from!--may  
defend thee.'  
It kept where I kept, I so dearly loved it;  
Till the rough seas, that spare not any man,  
Took it in rage, though calm'd have given't again:  
I thank thee for't: my shipwreck now's no ill,  
Since I have here my father's gift in's will.

### **First Fisherman**

What mean you, sir?

### **PERICLES**



To beg of you, kind friends, this coat of worth,  
For it was sometime target to a king;  
I know it by this mark. He loved me dearly,  
And for his sake I wish the having of it;  
And that you'd guide me to your sovereign's court,  
Where with it I may appear a gentleman;  
And if that ever my low fortune's better,  
I'll pay your bounties; till then rest your debtor.

### **First Fisherman**

Why, wilt thou tourney for the lady?

### **PERICLES**

I'll show the virtue I have borne in arms.

### **First Fisherman**

Why, do 'e take it, and the gods give thee good on't!

### **Second Fisherman**

Ay, but hark you, my friend; 'twas we that made up  
this garment through the rough seams of the waters:  
there are certain condolences, certain vails. I  
hope, sir, if you thrive, you'll remember from  
whence you had it.

### **PERICLES**

Believe 't, I will.  
By your furtherance I am clothed in steel;  
And, spite of all the rapture of the sea,  
This jewel holds his building on my arm:  
Unto thy value I will mount myself  
Upon a courser, whose delightful steps  
Shall make the gazer joy to see him tread.  
Only, my friend, I yet am unprovided  
Of a pair of bases.

### **Second Fisherman**

We'll sure provide: thou shalt have my best gown to  
make thee a pair; and I'll bring thee to the court myself.

## **PERICLES**

Then honour be but a goal to my will,  
This day I'll rise, or else add ill to ill.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. A public way or platform leading to the

lists. A pavilion by the side of it for the reception of King, Princess, Lords, & c.

*Enter SIMONIDES, THAISA, Lords, and Attendants*

### SIMONIDES

Are the knights ready to begin the triumph?

### First Lord

They are, my liege;  
And stay your coming to present themselves.

### SIMONIDES

Return them, we are ready; and our daughter,  
In honour of whose birth these triumphs are,  
Sits here, like beauty's child, whom nature gat  
For men to see, and seeing wonder at.

*Exit a Lord*

### THAISA

It pleaseth you, my royal father, to express  
My commendations great, whose merit's less.

### SIMONIDES

It's fit it should be so; for princes are  
A model which heaven makes like to itself:  
As jewels lose their glory if neglected,  
So princes their renowns if not respected.

'Tis now your honour, daughter, to explain  
The labour of each knight in his device.

**THAISA**

Which, to preserve mine honour, I'll perform.

*Enter a Knight; he passes over, and his Squire presents his shield to the Princess*

**SIMONIDES**

Who is the first that doth prefer himself?

**THAISA**

A knight of Sparta, my renowned father;  
And the device he bears upon his shield  
Is a black Ethiopie reaching at the sun  
The word, 'Lux tua vita mihi.'

**SIMONIDES**

He loves you well that holds his life of you.

*The Second Knight passes over*

Who is the second that presents himself?

**THAISA**

A prince of Macedon, my royal father;  
And the device he bears upon his shield  
Is an arm'd knight that's conquer'd by a lady;  
The motto thus, in Spanish, 'Piu por dulzura que por fuerza.'

*The Third Knight passes over*

**SIMONIDES**

And what's the third?

## **THAISA**

The third of Antioch;  
And his device, a wreath of chivalry;  
The word, 'Me pompae provexit apex.'

*The Fourth Knight passes over*

## **SIMONIDES**

What is the fourth?

## **THAISA**

A burning torch that's turned upside down;  
The word, 'Quod me alit, me extinguit.'

## **SIMONIDES**

Which shows that beauty hath his power and will,  
Which can as well inflame as it can kill.

*The Fifth Knight passes over*

## **THAISA**

The fifth, an hand environed with clouds,  
Holding out gold that's by the touchstone tried;  
The motto thus, 'Sic spectanda fides.'

*The Sixth Knight, PERICLES, passes over*

## **SIMONIDES**

And what's  
The sixth and last, the which the knight himself  
With such a graceful courtesy deliver'd?

## **THAISA**

He seems to be a stranger; but his present is

A wither'd branch, that's only green at top;  
The motto, 'In hac spe vivo.'

## **SIMONIDES**

A pretty moral;  
From the dejected state wherein he is,  
He hopes by you his fortunes yet may flourish.

### **First Lord**

He had need mean better than his outward show  
Can any way speak in his just commend;  
For by his rusty outside he appears  
To have practised more the whipstock than the lance.

### **Second Lord**

He well may be a stranger, for he comes  
To an honour'd triumph strangely furnished.

### **Third Lord**

And on set purpose let his armour rust  
Until this day, to scour it in the dust.

## **SIMONIDES**

Opinion's but a fool, that makes us scan  
The outward habit by the inward man.  
But stay, the knights are coming: we will withdraw  
Into the gallery.

*Exeunt*

*Great shouts within and all cry 'The mean knight!'*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. A hall of state: a banquet prepared.

*Enter SIMONIDES, THAISA, Lords, Attendants, and Knights, from tilting*

### SIMONIDES

Knights,  
To say you're welcome were superfluous.  
To place upon the volume of your deeds,  
As in a title-page, your worth in arms,  
Were more than you expect, or more than's fit,  
Since every worth in show commends itself.  
Prepare for mirth, for mirth becomes a feast:  
You are princes and my guests.

### THAISA

But you, my knight and guest;  
To whom this wreath of victory I give,  
And crown you king of this day's happiness.

### PERICLES

'Tis more by fortune, lady, than by merit.

### SIMONIDES

Call it by what you will, the day is yours;  
And here, I hope, is none that envies it.  
In framing an artist, art hath thus decreed,  
To make some good, but others to exceed;  
And you are her labour'd scholar. Come, queen o'  
the feast,--  
For, daughter, so you are,--here take your place:  
Marshal the rest, as they deserve their grace.

## **KNIGHTS**

We are honour'd much by good Simonides.

## **SIMONIDES**

Your presence glads our days: honour we love;  
For who hates honour hates the gods above.

## **Marshal**

Sir, yonder is your place.

## **PERICLES**

Some other is more fit.

## **First Knight**

Contend not, sir; for we are gentlemen  
That neither in our hearts nor outward eyes  
Envy the great nor do the low despise.

## **PERICLES**

You are right courteous knights.

## **SIMONIDES**

Sit, sir, sit.

## **PERICLES**

By Jove, I wonder, that is king of thoughts,  
These cates resist me, she but thought upon.

## **THAISA**

By Juno, that is queen of marriage,  
All viands that I eat do seem unsavoury.  
Wishing him my meat. Sure, he's a gallant gentleman.



## **SIMONIDES**

He's but a country gentleman;  
Has done no more than other knights have done;  
Has broken a staff or so; so let it pass.

## **THAISA**

To me he seems like diamond to glass.

## **PERICLES**

Yon king's to me like to my father's picture,  
Which tells me in that glory once he was;  
Had princes sit, like stars, about his throne,  
And he the sun, for them to reverence;  
None that beheld him, but, like lesser lights,  
Did veil their crowns to his supremacy:  
Where now his son's like a glow-worm in the night,  
The which hath fire in darkness, none in light:  
Whereby I see that Time's the king of men,  
He's both their parent, and he is their grave,  
And gives them what he will, not what they crave.

## **SIMONIDES**

What, are you merry, knights?

## **Knights**

Who can be other in this royal presence?

## **SIMONIDES**

Here, with a cup that's stored unto the brim,--  
As you do love, fill to your mistress' lips,--  
We drink this health to you.

## **KNIGHTS**

We thank your grace.

## **SIMONIDES**

Yet pause awhile:  
Yon knight doth sit too melancholy,  
As if the entertainment in our court  
Had not a show might countervail his worth.  
Note it not you, Thaisa?

## **THAISA**

What is it  
To me, my father?

## **SIMONIDES**

O, attend, my daughter:  
Princes in this should live like gods above,  
Who freely give to every one that comes  
To honour them:  
And princes not doing so are like to gnats,  
Which make a sound, but kill'd are wonder'd at.  
Therefore to make his entrance more sweet,  
Here, say we drink this standing-bowl of wine to him.

## **THAISA**

Alas, my father, it befits not me  
Unto a stranger knight to be so bold:  
He may my proffer take for an offence,  
Since men take women's gifts for impudence.

## **SIMONIDES**

How!  
Do as I bid you, or you'll move me else.

## **THAISA**

[Aside] Now, by the gods, he could not please me better.

## **SIMONIDES**

And furthermore tell him, we desire to know of him,  
Of whence he is, his name and parentage.

## **THAISA**

The king my father, sir, has drunk to you.

## **PERICLES**

I thank him.

## **THAISA**

Wishing it so much blood unto your life.

## **PERICLES**

I thank both him and you, and pledge him freely.

## **THAISA**

And further he desires to know of you,  
Of whence you are, your name and parentage.

## **PERICLES**

A gentleman of Tyre; my name, Pericles;  
My education been in arts and arms;  
Who, looking for adventures in the world,  
Was by the rough seas reft of ships and men,  
And after shipwreck driven upon this shore.

## **THAISA**

He thanks your grace; names himself Pericles,  
A gentleman of Tyre,  
Who only by misfortune of the seas  
Bereft of ships and men, cast on this shore.

## **SIMONIDES**

Now, by the gods, I pity his misfortune,  
And will awake him from his melancholy.  
Come, gentlemen, we sit too long on trifles,  
And waste the time, which looks for other revels.  
Even in your armours, as you are address'd,  
Will very well become a soldier's dance.  
I will not have excuse, with saying this  
Loud music is too harsh for ladies' heads,  
Since they love men in arms as well as beds.

### *The Knights dance*

So, this was well ask'd, 'twas so well perform'd.  
Come, sir;  
Here is a lady that wants breathing too:  
And I have heard, you knights of Tyre  
Are excellent in making ladies trip;  
And that their measures are as excellent.

## **PERICLES**

In those that practise them they are, my lord.

## **SIMONIDES**

O, that's as much as you would be denied  
Of your fair courtesy.

### *The Knights and Ladies dance*

Unclasp, unclasp:  
Thanks, gentlemen, to all; all have done well.

### *To PERICLES*

But you the best. Pages and lights, to conduct  
These knights unto their several lodgings!

### *To PERICLES*

Yours, sir,  
We have given order to be next our own.

## **PERICLES**

I am at your grace's pleasure.

## **SIMONIDES**

Princes, it is too late to talk of love;  
And that's the mark I know you level at:  
Therefore each one betake him to his rest;  
To-morrow all for speeding do their best.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Tyre. A room in the Governor's house.

*Enter HELICANUS and ESCANES*

### HELICANUS

No, Escanes, know this of me,  
Antiochus from incest lived not free:  
For which, the most high gods not minding longer  
To withhold the vengeance that they had in store,  
Due to this heinous capital offence,  
Even in the height and pride of all his glory,  
When he was seated in a chariot  
Of an inestimable value, and his daughter with him,  
A fire from heaven came and shrivell'd up  
Their bodies, even to loathing; for they so stunk,  
That all those eyes adored them ere their fall  
Scorn now their hand should give them burial.

### ESCANES

'Twas very strange.

### HELICANUS

And yet but justice; for though  
This king were great, his greatness was no guard  
To bar heaven's shaft, but sin had his reward.

### ESCANES

'Tis very true.

*Enter two or three Lords*

### First Lord

See, not a man in private conference  
Or council has respect with him but he.

**Second Lord**

It shall no longer grieve without reproof.

**Third Lord**

And cursed be he that will not second it.

**First Lord**

Follow me, then. Lord Helicane, a word.

**HELICANUS**

With me? and welcome: happy day, my lords.

**First Lord**

Know that our griefs are risen to the top,  
And now at length they overflow their banks.

**HELICANUS**

Your griefs! for what? wrong not your prince you love.

**First Lord**

Wrong not yourself, then, noble Helicane;  
But if the prince do live, let us salute him,  
Or know what ground's made happy by his breath.  
If in the world he live, we'll seek him out;  
If in his grave he rest, we'll find him there;  
And be resolved he lives to govern us,  
Or dead, give's cause to mourn his funeral,  
And leave us to our free election.

**Second Lord**

Whose death indeed's the strongest in our censure:  
And knowing this kingdom is without a head,--  
Like goodly buildings left without a roof  
Soon fall to ruin,--your noble self,  
That best know how to rule and how to reign,  
We thus submit unto,--our sovereign.

**All**

Live, noble Helicane!

**HELICANUS**

For honour's cause, forbear your suffrages:  
If that you love Prince Pericles, forbear.  
Take I your wish, I leap into the seas,  
Where's hourly trouble for a minute's ease.  
A twelvemonth longer, let me entreat you to  
Forbear the absence of your king:  
If in which time expired, he not return,  
I shall with aged patience bear your yoke.  
But if I cannot win you to this love,  
Go search like nobles, like noble subjects,  
And in your search spend your adventurous worth;  
Whom if you find, and win unto return,  
You shall like diamonds sit about his crown.

**First Lord**

To wisdom he's a fool that will not yield;  
And since Lord Helicane enjoineth us,  
We with our travels will endeavour us.

**HELICANUS**

Then you love us, we you, and we'll clasp hands:  
When peers thus knit, a kingdom ever stands.

*Exeunt*





# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Pentapolis. A room in the palace.

*Enter SIMONIDES, reading a letter, at one door: the Knights meet him*

### First Knight

Good morrow to the good Simonides.

### SIMONIDES

Knights, from my daughter this I let you know,  
That for this twelvemonth she'll not undertake  
A married life.  
Her reason to herself is only known,  
Which yet from her by no means can I get.

### Second Knight

May we not get access to her, my lord?

### SIMONIDES

'Faith, by no means; she has so strictly tied  
Her to her chamber, that 'tis impossible.  
One twelve moons more she'll wear Diana's livery;  
This by the eye of Cynthia hath she vow'd  
And on her virgin honour will not break it.

### Third Knight

Loath to bid farewell, we take our leaves.

*Exeunt Knights*

### SIMONIDES

So,  
They are well dispatch'd; now to my daughter's letter:  
She tells me here, she'd wed the stranger knight,  
Or never more to view nor day nor light.  
'Tis well, mistress; your choice agrees with mine;  
I like that well: nay, how absolute she's in't,  
Not minding whether I dislike or no!  
Well, I do commend her choice;  
And will no longer have it be delay'd.  
Soft! here he comes: I must dissemble it.

*Enter PERICLES*

**PERICLES**

All fortune to the good Simonides!

**SIMONIDES**

To you as much, sir! I am beholding to you  
For your sweet music this last night: I do  
Protest my ears were never better fed  
With such delightful pleasing harmony.

**PERICLES**

It is your grace's pleasure to commend;  
Not my desert.

**SIMONIDES**

Sir, you are music's master.

**PERICLES**

The worst of all her scholars, my good lord.

**SIMONIDES**

Let me ask you one thing:  
What do you think of my daughter, sir?

**PERICLES**

A most virtuous princess.

**SIMONIDES**

And she is fair too, is she not?

**PERICLES**

As a fair day in summer, wondrous fair.

**SIMONIDES**

Sir, my daughter thinks very well of you;  
Ay, so well, that you must be her master,  
And she will be your scholar: therefore look to it.

**PERICLES**

I am unworthy for her schoolmaster.

**SIMONIDES**

She thinks not so; peruse this writing else.

**PERICLES**

[Aside] What's here?  
A letter, that she loves the knight of Tyre!  
'Tis the king's subtlety to have my life.  
O, seek not to entrap me, gracious lord,  
A stranger and distressed gentleman,  
That never aim'd so high to love your daughter,  
But bent all offices to honour her.

**SIMONIDES**

Thou hast bewitch'd my daughter, and thou art  
A villain.

## **PERICLES**

By the gods, I have not:  
Never did thought of mine levy offence;  
Nor never did my actions yet commence  
A deed might gain her love or your displeasure.

## **SIMONIDES**

Traitor, thou liest.

## **PERICLES**

Traitor!

## **SIMONIDES**

Ay, traitor.

## **PERICLES**

Even in his throat--unless it be the king--  
That calls me traitor, I return the lie.

## **SIMONIDES**

[Aside] Now, by the gods, I do applaud his courage.

## **PERICLES**

My actions are as noble as my thoughts,  
That never relish'd of a base descent.  
I came unto your court for honour's cause,  
And not to be a rebel to her state;  
And he that otherwise accounts of me,  
This sword shall prove he's honour's enemy.

## **SIMONIDES**

No?  
Here comes my daughter, she can witness it.

*Enter THAISA*

**PERICLES**

Then, as you are as virtuous as fair,  
Resolve your angry father, if my tongue  
Did ere solicit, or my hand subscribe  
To any syllable that made love to you.

**THAISA**

Why, sir, say if you had,  
Who takes offence at that would make me glad?

**SIMONIDES**

Yea, mistress, are you so peremptory?

*Aside*

I am glad on't with all my heart.--  
I'll tame you; I'll bring you in subjection.  
Will you, not having my consent,  
Bestow your love and your affections  
Upon a stranger?

*Aside*

who, for aught I know,  
May be, nor can I think the contrary,  
As great in blood as I myself.--  
Therefore hear you, mistress; either frame  
Your will to mine,--and you, sir, hear you,  
Either be ruled by me, or I will make you--  
Man and wife:  
Nay, come, your hands and lips must seal it too:  
And being join'd, I'll thus your hopes destroy;  
And for a further grief,--God give you joy!--  
What, are you both pleased?

**THAISA**

Yes, if you love me, sir.

**PERICLES**

Even as my life, or blood that fosters it.

**SIMONIDES**

What, are you both agreed?

**BOTH**

Yes, if it please your majesty.

**SIMONIDES**

It pleaseth me so well, that I will see you wed;  
And then with what haste you can get you to bed.

*Exeunt*

*Enter GOWER*

**GOWER**

Now sleep y-slaked hath the rout;  
No din but snores the house about,  
Made louder by the o'er-fed breast  
Of this most pompous marriage-feast.  
The cat, with eyne of burning coal,  
Now crouches fore the mouse's hole;  
And crickets sing at the oven's mouth,  
E'er the blither for their drouth.  
Hymen hath brought the bride to bed.  
Where, by the loss of maidenhead,  
A babe is moulded. Be attent,  
And time that is so briefly spent  
With your fine fancies quaintly eche:  
What's dumb in show I'll plain with speech.  
DUMB SHOW.

*Enter, PERICLES and SIMONIDES at one door, with Attendants; a Messenger meets them, kneels, and gives PERICLES a letter: PERICLES shows it SIMONIDES; the Lords kneel to him. Then enter THAISA with child, with LYCHORIDA a nurse. The KING shows her the letter; she rejoices: she and PERICLES takes leave of her father, and depart with LYCHORIDA and their Attendants. Then exeunt SIMONIDES and the rest*

By many a dorn and painful perch  
Of Pericles the careful search,  
By the four opposing coigns  
Which the world together joins,  
Is made with all due diligence  
That horse and sail and high expense  
Can stead the quest. At last from Tyre,  
Fame answering the most strange inquire,  
To the court of King Simonides  
Are letters brought, the tenor these:  
Antiochus and his daughter dead;  
The men of Tyrus on the head  
Of Helicanus would set on  
The crown of Tyre, but he will none:  
The mutiny he there hastes t' oppress;  
Says to 'em, if King Pericles  
Come not home in twice six moons,  
He, obedient to their dooms,  
Will take the crown. The sum of this,  
Brought hither to Pentapolis,  
Y-ravished the regions round,  
And every one with claps can sound,  
'Our heir-apparent is a king!  
Who dream'd, who thought of such a thing?'  
Brief, he must hence depart to Tyre:  
His queen with child makes her desire--  
Which who shall cross?--along to go:  
Omit we all their dole and woe:  
Lychorida, her nurse, she takes,  
And so to sea. Their vessel shakes  
On Neptune's billow; half the flood  
Hath their keel cut: but fortune's mood  
Varies again; the grisly north  
Disgorges such a tempest forth,  
That, as a duck for life that dives,  
So up and down the poor ship drives:



The lady shrieks, and well-a-neighbor  
Does fall in travail with her fear:  
And what ensues in this fell storm  
Shall for itself itself perform.  
I will relate, action may  
Conveniently the rest convey;  
Which might not what by me is told.  
In your imagination hold  
This stage the ship, upon whose deck  
The sea-tost Pericles appears to speak.

*Exit*

SCENE I:

*Enter PERICLES, on shipboard*

## **PERICLES**

Thou god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,  
Which wash both heaven and hell; and thou, that hast  
Upon the winds command, bind them in brass,  
Having call'd them from the deep! O, still  
Thy deafening, dreadful thunders; gently quench  
Thy nimble, sulphurous flashes! O, how, Lychorida,  
How does my queen? Thou stormest venomously;  
Wilt thou spit all thyself? The seaman's whistle  
Is as a whisper in the ears of death,  
Unheard. Lychorida!--Lucina, O  
Divinest patroness, and midwife gentle  
To those that cry by night, convey thy deity  
Aboard our dancing boat; make swift the pangs  
Of my queen's travails!

*Enter LYCHORIDA, with an Infant*

Now, Lychorida!

## **LYCHORIDA**

Here is a thing too young for such a place,  
Who, if it had conceit, would die, as I

Am like to do: take in your arms this piece  
Of your dead queen.

## **PERICLES**

How, how, Lychorida!

## **LYCHORIDA**

Patience, good sir; do not assist the storm.  
Here's all that is left living of your queen,  
A little daughter: for the sake of it,  
Be manly, and take comfort.

## **PERICLES**

O you gods!  
Why do you make us love your goodly gifts,  
And snatch them straight away? We here below  
Recall not what we give, and therein may  
Use honour with you.

## **LYCHORIDA**

Patience, good sir,  
Even for this charge.

## **PERICLES**

Now, mild may be thy life!  
For a more blustrous birth had never babe:  
Quiet and gentle thy conditions! for  
Thou art the rudeliest welcome to this world  
That ever was prince's child. Happy what follows!  
Thou hast as chiding a nativity  
As fire, air, water, earth, and heaven can make,  
To herald thee from the womb: even at the first  
Thy loss is more than can thy portage quit,  
With all thou canst find here. Now, the good gods  
Throw their best eyes upon't!

*Enter two Sailors*

**First Sailor**

What courage, sir? God save you!

**PERICLES**

Courage enough: I do not fear the flaw;  
It hath done to me the worst. Yet, for the love  
Of this poor infant, this fresh-new sea-farer,  
I would it would be quiet.

**First Sailor**

Slack the bolins there! Thou wilt not, wilt thou?  
Blow, and split thyself.

**Second Sailor**

But sea-room, an the brine and cloudy billow kiss  
the moon, I care not.

**First Sailor**

Sir, your queen must overboard: the sea works high,  
the wind is loud, and will not lie till the ship be  
cleared of the dead.

**PERICLES**

That's your superstition.

**First Sailor**

Pardon us, sir; with us at sea it hath been still  
observed: and we are strong in custom. Therefore  
briefly yield her; for she must overboard straight.

**PERICLES**

As you think meet. Most wretched queen!

## LYCHORIDA

Here she lies, sir.

## PERICLES

A terrible childbed hast thou had, my dear;  
No light, no fire: the unfriendly elements  
Forgot thee utterly: nor have I time  
To give thee hallow'd to thy grave, but straight  
Must cast thee, scarcely coffin'd, in the ooze;  
Where, for a monument upon thy bones,  
And e'er-remaining lamps, the belching whale  
And humming water must o'erwhelm thy corpse,  
Lying with simple shells. O Lychorida,  
Bid Nestor bring me spices, ink and paper,  
My casket and my jewels; and bid Nicander  
Bring me the satin coffer: lay the babe  
Upon the pillow: hie thee, whiles I say  
A priestly farewell to her: suddenly, woman.

*Exit LYCHORIDA*

## Second Sailor

Sir, we have a chest beneath the hatches, caulked  
and bitumed ready.

## PERICLES

I thank thee. Mariner, say what coast is this?

## Second Sailor

We are near Tarsus.

## PERICLES

Thither, gentle mariner.  
Alter thy course for Tyre. When canst thou reach it?

## Second Sailor

By break of day, if the wind cease.

## PERICLES

O, make for Tarsus!  
There will I visit Cleon, for the babe  
Cannot hold out to Tyrus: there I'll leave it  
At careful nursing. Go thy ways, good mariner:  
I'll bring the body presently.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 2, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Ephesus. A room in CERIMON's house.

*Enter CERIMON, with a Servant, and some Persons who have been shipwrecked*

**CERIMON**

Philemon, ho!

*Enter PHILEMON*

**PHILEMON**

Doth my lord call?

**CERIMON**

Get fire and meat for these poor men:  
'T has been a turbulent and stormy night.

**Servant**

I have been in many; but such a night as this,  
Till now, I ne'er endured.

**CERIMON**

Your master will be dead ere you return;  
There's nothing can be minister'd to nature  
That can recover him.

*To PHILEMON*

Give this to the 'pothecary,  
And tell me how it works.

*Exeunt all but CERIMON*

*Enter two Gentlemen*

**First Gentleman**

Good morrow.

**Second Gentleman**

Good morrow to your lordship.

**CERIMON**

Gentlemen,  
Why do you stir so early?

**First Gentleman**

Sir,  
Our lodgings, standing bleak upon the sea,  
Shook as the earth did quake;  
The very principals did seem to rend,  
And all-to topple: pure surprise and fear  
Made me to quit the house.

**Second Gentleman**

That is the cause we trouble you so early;  
'Tis not our husbandry.

**CERIMON**

O, you say well.

**First Gentleman**

But I much marvel that your lordship, having  
Rich tire about you, should at these early hours  
Shake off the golden slumber of repose.  
'Tis most strange,

Nature should be so conversant with pain,  
Being thereto not compell'd.

## **CERIMON**

I hold it ever,  
Virtue and cunning were endowments greater  
Than nobleness and riches: careless heirs  
May the two latter darken and expend;  
But immortality attends the former.  
Making a man a god. 'Tis known, I ever  
Have studied physic, through which secret art,  
By turning o'er authorities, I have,  
Together with my practise, made familiar  
To me and to my aid the blest infusions  
That dwell in vegetives, in metals, stones;  
And I can speak of the disturbances  
That nature works, and of her cures; which doth give me  
A more content in course of true delight  
Than to be thirsty after tottering honour,  
Or tie my treasure up in silken bags,  
To please the fool and death.

## **Second Gentleman**

Your honour has through Ephesus pour'd forth  
Your charity, and hundreds call themselves  
Your creatures, who by you have been restored:  
And not your knowledge, your personal pain, but even  
Your purse, still open, hath built Lord Cerimon  
Such strong renown as time shall ne'er decay.

*Enter two or three Servants with a chest*

## **First Servant**

So; lift there.

## **CERIMON**

What is that?



## **First Servant**

Sir, even now  
Did the sea toss upon our shore this chest:  
'Tis of some wreck.

## **CERIMON**

Set 't down, let's look upon't.

## **Second Gentleman**

'Tis like a coffin, sir.

## **CERIMON**

Whate'er it be,  
'Tis wondrous heavy. Wrench it open straight:  
If the sea's stomach be o'ercharged with gold,  
'Tis a good constraint of fortune it belches upon us.

## **Second Gentleman**

'Tis so, my lord.

## **CERIMON**

How close 'tis caulk'd and bitumed!  
Did the sea cast it up?

## **First Servant**

I never saw so huge a billow, sir,  
As toss'd it upon shore.

## **CERIMON**

Wrench it open;  
Soft! it smells most sweetly in my sense.

## **Second Gentleman**

A delicate odour.

**CERIMON**

As ever hit my nostril. So, up with it.  
O you most potent gods! what's here? a corse!

**First Gentleman**

Most strange!

**CERIMON**

Shrouded in cloth of state; balm'd and entreated  
With full bags of spices! A passport too!  
Apollo, perfect me in the characters!

*Reads from a scroll*

'Here I give to understand,  
If e'er this coffin drive a-land,  
I, King Pericles, have lost  
This queen, worth all our mundane cost.  
Who finds her, give her burying;  
She was the daughter of a king:  
Besides this treasure for a fee,  
The gods requite his charity!  
If thou livest, Pericles, thou hast a heart  
That even cracks for woe! This chanced tonight.

**Second Gentleman**

Most likely, sir.

**CERIMON**

Nay, certainly to-night;  
For look how fresh she looks! They were too rough  
That threw her in the sea. Make a fire within:  
Fetch hither all my boxes in my closet.

*Exit a Servant*

Death may usurp on nature many hours,  
And yet the fire of life kindle again  
The o'erpress'd spirits. I heard of an Egyptian  
That had nine hours lien dead,  
Who was by good appliance recovered.

*Re-enter a Servant, with boxes, napkins, and fire*

Well said, well said; the fire and cloths.  
The rough and woeful music that we have,  
Cause it to sound, beseech you.  
The viol once more: how thou stirr'st, thou block!  
The music there!--I pray you, give her air.  
Gentlemen.  
This queen will live: nature awakes; a warmth  
Breathes out of her: she hath not been entranced  
Above five hours: see how she gins to blow  
Into life's flower again!

### **First Gentleman**

The heavens,  
Through you, increase our wonder and set up  
Your fame forever.

### **CERIMON**

She is alive; behold,  
Her eyelids, cases to those heavenly jewels  
Which Pericles hath lost,  
Begin to part their fringes of bright gold;  
The diamonds of a most praised water  
Do appear, to make the world twice rich. Live,  
And make us weep to hear your fate, fair creature,  
Rare as you seem to be.

*She moves*

### **THAISA**

O dear Diana,  
Where am I? Where's my lord? What world is this?

**Second Gentleman**

Is not this strange?

**First Gentleman**

Most rare.

**CERIMON**

Hush, my gentle neighbours!  
Lend me your hands; to the next chamber bear her.  
Get linen: now this matter must be look'd to,  
For her relapse is mortal. Come, come;  
And AEsculapius guide us!

*Exeunt, carrying her away*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Tarsus. A room in CLEON's house.

*Enter PERICLES, CLEON, DIONYZA, and LYCHORIDA with MARINA in her arms*

### PERICLES

Most honour'd Cleon, I must needs be gone;  
My twelve months are expired, and Tyrus stands  
In a litigious peace. You, and your lady,  
Take from my heart all thankfulness! The gods  
Make up the rest upon you!

### CLEON

Your shafts of fortune, though they hurt you mortally,  
Yet glance full wanderingly on us.

### DIONYZA

O your sweet queen!  
That the strict fates had pleased you had brought her hither,  
To have bless'd mine eyes with her!

### PERICLES

We cannot but obey  
The powers above us. Could I rage and roar  
As doth the sea she lies in, yet the end  
Must be as 'tis. My gentle babe Marina, whom,  
For she was born at sea, I have named so, here  
I charge your charity withal, leaving her  
The infant of your care; beseeching you  
To give her princely training, that she may be  
Manner'd as she is born.

### CLEON

Fear not, my lord, but think  
Your grace, that fed my country with your corn,  
For which the people's prayers still fall upon you,  
Must in your child be thought on. If neglection  
Should therein make me vile, the common body,  
By you relieved, would force me to my duty:  
But if to that my nature need a spur,  
The gods revenge it upon me and mine,  
To the end of generation!

## **PERICLES**

I believe you;  
Your honour and your goodness teach me to't,  
Without your vows. Till she be married, madam,  
By bright Diana, whom we honour, all  
Unscissor'd shall this hair of mine remain,  
Though I show ill in't. So I take my leave.  
Good madam, make me blessed in your care  
In bringing up my child.

## **DIONYZA**

I have one myself,  
Who shall not be more dear to my respect  
Than yours, my lord.

## **PERICLES**

Madam, my thanks and prayers.

## **CLEON**

We'll bring your grace e'en to the edge o' the shore,  
Then give you up to the mask'd Neptune and  
The gentlest winds of heaven.

## **PERICLES**

I will embrace  
Your offer. Come, dearest madam. O, no tears,

Lychorida, no tears:  
Look to your little mistress, on whose grace  
You may depend hereafter. Come, my lord.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Ephesus. A room in CERIMON's house.

*Enter CERIMON and THAISA*

### CERIMON

Madam, this letter, and some certain jewels,  
Lay with you in your coffer: which are now  
At your command. Know you the character?

### THAISA

It is my lord's.  
That I was shipp'd at sea, I well remember,  
Even on my eaning time; but whether there  
Deliver'd, by the holy gods,  
I cannot rightly say. But since King Pericles,  
My wedded lord, I ne'er shall see again,  
A vestal livery will I take me to,  
And never more have joy.

### CERIMON

Madam, if this you purpose as ye speak,  
Diana's temple is not distant far,  
Where you may abide till your date expire.  
Moreover, if you please, a niece of mine  
Shall there attend you.

### THAISA

My recompense is thanks, that's all;  
Yet my good will is great, though the gift small.

*Exeunt*



*Enter GOWER*

**GOWER**

Imagine Pericles arrived at Tyre,  
Welcomed and settled to his own desire.  
His woeful queen we leave at Ephesus,  
Unto Diana there a votaress.  
Now to Marina bend your mind,  
Whom our fast-growing scene must find  
At Tarsus, and by Cleon train'd  
In music, letters; who hath gain'd  
Of education all the grace,  
Which makes her both the heart and place  
Of general wonder. But, alack,  
That monster envy, oft the wrack  
Of earned praise, Marina's life  
Seeks to take off by treason's knife.  
And in this kind hath our Cleon  
One daughter, and a wench full grown,  
Even ripe for marriage-rite; this maid  
Hight Philoten: and it is said  
For certain in our story, she  
Would ever with Marina be:  
Be't when she weaved the sleided silk  
With fingers long, small, white as milk;  
Or when she would with sharp needle wound  
The cambric, which she made more sound  
By hurting it; or when to the lute  
She sung, and made the night-bird mute,  
That still records with moan; or when  
She would with rich and constant pen  
Vail to her mistress Dian; still  
This Philoten contends in skill  
With absolute Marina: so  
With the dove of Paphos might the crow  
Vie feathers white. Marina gets  
All praises, which are paid as debts,  
And not as given. This so darks  
In Philoten all graceful marks,  
That Cleon's wife, with envy rare,  
A present murderer does prepare  
For good Marina, that her daughter

Might stand peerless by this slaughter.  
The sooner her vile thoughts to stead,  
Lychorida, our nurse, is dead:  
And cursed Dionyza hath  
The pregnant instrument of wrath  
Prest for this blow. The unborn event  
I do commend to your content:  
Only I carry winged time  
Post on the lame feet of my rhyme;  
Which never could I so convey,  
Unless your thoughts went on my way.  
Dionyza does appear,  
With Leonine, a murderer.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Tarsus. An open place near the sea-shore.

*Enter DIONYZA and LEONINE*

### DIONYZA

Thy oath remember; thou hast sworn to do't:  
'Tis but a blow, which never shall be known.  
Thou canst not do a thing in the world so soon,  
To yield thee so much profit. Let not conscience,  
Which is but cold, inflaming love i' thy bosom,  
Inflame too nicely; nor let pity, which  
Even women have cast off, melt thee, but be  
A soldier to thy purpose.

### LEONINE

I will do't; but yet she is a goodly creature.

### DIONYZA

The fitter, then, the gods should have her. Here  
she comes weeping for her only mistress' death.  
Thou art resolved?

### LEONINE

I am resolved.

*Enter MARINA, with a basket of flowers*

### MARINA

No, I will rob Tellus of her weed,  
To strew thy green with flowers: the yellows, blues,  
The purple violets, and marigolds,

Shall as a carpet hang upon thy grave,  
While summer-days do last. Ay me! poor maid,  
Born in a tempest, when my mother died,  
This world to me is like a lasting storm,  
Whirring me from my friends.

## **DIONYZA**

How now, Marina! why do you keep alone?  
How chance my daughter is not with you? Do not  
Consume your blood with sorrowing: you have  
A nurse of me. Lord, how your favour's changed  
With this unprofitable woe!  
Come, give me your flowers, ere the sea mar it.  
Walk with Leonine; the air is quick there,  
And it pierces and sharpens the stomach. Come,  
Leonine, take her by the arm, walk with her.

## **MARINA**

No, I pray you;  
I'll not bereave you of your servant.

## **DIONYZA**

Come, come;  
I love the king your father, and yourself,  
With more than foreign heart. We every day  
Expect him here: when he shall come and find  
Our paragon to all reports thus blasted,  
He will repent the breadth of his great voyage;  
Blame both my lord and me, that we have taken  
No care to your best courses. Go, I pray you,  
Walk, and be cheerful once again; reserve  
That excellent complexion, which did steal  
The eyes of young and old. Care not for me  
I can go home alone.

## **MARINA**

Well, I will go;  
But yet I have no desire to it.

**DIONYZA**

Come, come, I know 'tis good for you.  
Walk half an hour, Leonine, at the least:  
Remember what I have said.

**LEONINE**

I warrant you, madam.

**DIONYZA**

I'll leave you, my sweet lady, for a while:  
Pray, walk softly, do not heat your blood:  
What! I must have a care of you.

**MARINA**

My thanks, sweet madam.

*Exit DIONYZA*

Is this wind westerly that blows?

**LEONINE**

South-west.

**MARINA**

When I was born, the wind was north.

**LEONINE**

Was't so?

**MARINA**

My father, as nurse said, did never fear,  
But cried 'Good seaman!' to the sailors, galling

His kingly hands, haling ropes;  
And, clasping to the mast, endured a sea  
That almost burst the deck.

**LEONINE**

When was this?

**MARINA**

When I was born:  
Never was waves nor wind more violent;  
And from the ladder-tackle washes off  
A canvas-climber. 'Ha!' says one, 'wilt out?'  
And with a dropping industry they skip  
From stem to stern: the boatswain whistles, and  
The master calls, and trebles their confusion.

**LEONINE**

Come, say your prayers.

**MARINA**

What mean you?

**LEONINE**

If you require a little space for prayer,  
I grant it: pray; but be not tedious,  
For the gods are quick of ear, and I am sworn  
To do my work with haste.

**MARINA**

Why will you kill me?

**LEONINE**

To satisfy my lady.

## MARINA

Why would she have me kill'd?  
Now, as I can remember, by my troth,  
I never did her hurt in all my life:  
I never spake bad word, nor did ill turn  
To any living creature: believe me, la,  
I never kill'd a mouse, nor hurt a fly:  
I trod upon a worm against my will,  
But I wept for it. How have I offended,  
Wherein my death might yield her any profit,  
Or my life imply her any danger?

## LEONINE

My commission  
Is not to reason of the deed, but do it.

## MARINA

You will not do't for all the world, I hope.  
You are well favour'd, and your looks foreshow  
You have a gentle heart. I saw you lately,  
When you caught hurt in parting two that fought:  
Good sooth, it show'd well in you: do so now:  
Your lady seeks my life; come you between,  
And save poor me, the weaker.

## LEONINE

I am sworn,  
And will dispatch.

*He seizes her*

*Enter Pirates*

## First Pirate

Hold, villain!

*LEONINE runs away*

## **Second Pirate**

A prize! a prize!

## **Third Pirate**

Half-part, mates, half-part.  
Come, let's have her aboard suddenly.

*Exeunt Pirates with MARINA*

*Re-enter LEONINE*

## **LEONINE**

These roguing thieves serve the great pirate Valdes;  
And they have seized Marina. Let her go:  
There's no hope she will return. I'll swear  
she's dead,  
And thrown into the sea. But I'll see further:  
Perhaps they will but please themselves upon her,  
Not carry her aboard. If she remain,  
Whom they have ravish'd must by me be slain.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Mytilene. A room in a brothel.

*Enter Pandar, Bawd, and BOULT*

**Pandar**

Boult!

**BOULT**

Sir?

**Pandar**

Search the market narrowly; Mytilene is full of gallants. We lost too much money this mart by being too wenchless.

**Bawd**

We were never so much out of creatures. We have but poor three, and they can do no more than they can do; and they with continual action are even as good as rotten.

**Pandar**

Therefore let's have fresh ones, whate'er we pay for them. If there be not a conscience to be used in every trade, we shall never prosper.

**Bawd**

Thou sayest true: 'tis not our bringing up of poor bastards,--as, I think, I have brought up some eleven--

**BOULT**

Ay, to eleven; and brought them down again. But shall I search the market?

**Bawd**

What else, man? The stuff we have, a strong wind will blow it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden.

**Pandar**

Thou sayest true; they're too unwholesome, o' conscience. The poor Transylvanian is dead, that lay with the little baggage.

**BOULT**

Ay, she quickly pooped him; she made him roast-meat for worms. But I'll go search the market.

*Exit*

**Pandar**

Three or four thousand chequins were as pretty a proportion to live quietly, and so give over.

**Bawd**

Why to give over, I pray you? is it a shame to get when we are old?

**Pandar**

O, our credit comes not in like the commodity, nor the commodity wages not with the danger: therefore, if in our youths we could pick up some pretty estate, 'twere not amiss to keep our door hatched. Besides, the sore terms we stand upon with the gods will be strong with us for giving over.

**Bawd**

Come, other sorts offend as well as we.

**Pandar**

As well as we! ay, and better too; we offend worse.  
Neither is our profession any trade; it's no  
calling. But here comes Boulton.

*Re-enter BOULT, with the Pirates and MARINA*

**BOULT**

[To MARINA] Come your ways. My masters, you say  
she's a virgin?

**First Pirate**

O, sir, we doubt it not.

**BOULT**

Master, I have gone through for this piece, you see:  
if you like her, so; if not, I have lost my earnest.

**Bawd**

Boulton, has she any qualities?

**BOULT**

She has a good face, speaks well, and has excellent  
good clothes: there's no further necessity of  
qualities can make her be refused.

**Bawd**

What's her price, Boulton?

**BOULT**

I cannot be bated one doit of a thousand pieces.

**Pandar**

Well, follow me, my masters, you shall have your money presently. Wife, take her in; instruct her what she has to do, that she may not be raw in her entertainment.

*Exeunt Pandar and Pirates*

**Bawd**

Boult, take you the marks of her, the colour of her hair, complexion, height, age, with warrant of her virginity; and cry 'He that will give most shall have her first.' Such a maidenhead were no cheap thing, if men were as they have been. Get this done as I command you.

**BOULT**

Performance shall follow.

*Exit*

**MARINA**

Alack that Leonine was so slack, so slow!  
He should have struck, not spoke; or that these pirates,  
Not enough barbarous, had not o'erboard thrown me  
For to seek my mother!

**Bawd**

Why lament you, pretty one?

**MARINA**

That I am pretty.

**Bawd**

Come, the gods have done their part in you.

**MARINA**

I accuse them not.

**Bawd**

You are light into my hands, where you are like to live.

**MARINA**

The more my fault  
To scape his hands where I was like to die.

**Bawd**

Ay, and you shall live in pleasure.

**MARINA**

No.

**Bawd**

Yes, indeed shall you, and taste gentlemen of all  
fashions: you shall fare well; you shall have the  
difference of all complexions. What! do you stop your ears?

**MARINA**

Are you a woman?

**Bawd**

What would you have me be, an I be not a woman?

**MARINA**

An honest woman, or not a woman.

**Bawd**

Marry, whip thee, gosling: I think I shall have something to do with you. Come, you're a young foolish sapling, and must be bowed as I would have you.

**MARINA**

The gods defend me!

**Bawd**

If it please the gods to defend you by men, then men must comfort you, men must feed you, men must stir you up. Boult's returned.

*Re-enter BOULT*

Now, sir, hast thou cried her through the market?

**BOULT**

I have cried her almost to the number of her hairs;  
I have drawn her picture with my voice.

**Bawd**

And I prithee tell me, how dost thou find the inclination of the people, especially of the younger sort?

**BOULT**

'Faith, they listened to me as they would have hearkened to their father's testament. There was a Spaniard's mouth so watered, that he went to bed to her very description.

**Bawd**

We shall have him here to-morrow with his best ruff on.

**BOULT**

To-night, to-night. But, mistress, do you know the French knight that cowers i' the hams?

**Bawd**

Who, Monsieur Veroles?

**BOULT**

Ay, he: he offered to cut a caper at the proclamation; but he made a groan at it, and swore he would see her to-morrow.

**Bawd**

Well, well; as for him, he brought his disease hither: here he does but repair it. I know he will come in our shadow, to scatter his crowns in the sun.

**BOULT**

Well, if we had of every nation a traveller, we should lodge them with this sign.

**Bawd**

[To MARINA] Pray you, come hither awhile. You have fortunes coming upon you. Mark me: you must seem to do that fearfully which you commit willingly, despise profit where you have most gain. To weep that you live as ye do makes pity in your lovers: seldom but that pity begets you a good opinion, and that opinion a mere profit.

**MARINA**

I understand you not.

**BOULT**

O, take her home, mistress, take her home: these  
blushes of hers must be quenched with some present practise.

**Bawd**

Thou sayest true, i' faith, so they must; for your  
bride goes to that with shame which is her way to go  
with warrant.

**BOULT**

'Faith, some do, and some do not. But, mistress, if  
I have bargained for the joint,--

**Bawd**

Thou mayst cut a morsel off the spit.

**BOULT**

I may so.

**Bawd**

Who should deny it? Come, young one, I like the  
manner of your garments well.

**BOULT**

Ay, by my faith, they shall not be changed yet.

**Bawd**

Boult, spend thou that in the town: report what a  
sojourner we have; you'll lose nothing by custom.  
When nature flamed this piece, she meant thee a good  
turn; therefore say what a paragon she is, and thou



hast the harvest out of thine own report.

## **BOULT**

I warrant you, mistress, thunder shall not so awake  
the beds of eels as my giving out her beauty stir up  
the lewdly-inclined. I'll bring home some to-night.

## **Bawd**

Come your ways; follow me.

## **MARINA**

If fires be hot, knives sharp, or waters deep,  
Untied I still my virgin knot will keep.  
Diana, aid my purpose!

## **Bawd**

What have we to do with Diana? Pray you, will you go with us?

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Tarsus. A room in CLEON's house.

*Enter CLEON and DIONYZA*

**DIONYZA**

Why, are you foolish? Can it be undone?

**CLEON**

O Dionyza, such a piece of slaughter  
The sun and moon ne'er look'd upon!

**DIONYZA**

I think  
You'll turn a child again.

**CLEON**

Were I chief lord of all this spacious world,  
I'd give it to undo the deed. O lady,  
Much less in blood than virtue, yet a princess  
To equal any single crown o' the earth  
I' the justice of compare! O villain Leonine!  
Whom thou hast poison'd too:  
If thou hadst drunk to him, 't had been a kindness  
Becoming well thy fact: what canst thou say  
When noble Pericles shall demand his child?

**DIONYZA**

That she is dead. Nurses are not the fates,  
To foster it, nor ever to preserve.  
She died at night; I'll say so. Who can cross it?  
Unless you play the pious innocent,

And for an honest attribute cry out  
'She died by foul play.'

**CLEON**

O, go to. Well, well,  
Of all the faults beneath the heavens, the gods  
Do like this worst.

**DIONYZA**

Be one of those that think  
The petty wrens of Tarsus will fly hence,  
And open this to Pericles. I do shame  
To think of what a noble strain you are,  
And of how coward a spirit.

**CLEON**

To such proceeding  
Who ever but his approbation added,  
Though not his prime consent, he did not flow  
From honourable sources.

**DIONYZA**

Be it so, then:  
Yet none does know, but you, how she came dead,  
Nor none can know, Leonine being gone.  
She did disdain my child, and stood between  
Her and her fortunes: none would look on her,  
But cast their gazes on Marina's face;  
Whilst ours was blurted at and held a malkin  
Not worth the time of day. It pierced me through;  
And though you call my course unnatural,  
You not your child well loving, yet I find  
It greets me as an enterprise of kindness  
Perform'd to your sole daughter.

**CLEON**

Heavens forgive it!

## DIONYZA

And as for Pericles,  
What should he say? We wept after her hearse,  
And yet we mourn: her monument  
Is almost finish'd, and her epitaphs  
In glittering golden characters express  
A general praise to her, and care in us  
At whose expense 'tis done.

## CLEON

Thou art like the harpy,  
Which, to betray, dost, with thine angel's face,  
Seize with thine eagle's talons.

## DIONYZA

You are like one that superstitiously  
Doth swear to the gods that winter kills the flies:  
But yet I know you'll do as I advise.

*Exeunt*

SCENE IV:

*Enter GOWER, before the monument of MARINA at Tarsus*

## GOWER

Thus time we waste, and longest leagues make short;  
Sail seas in cockles, have an wish but for't;  
Making, to take your imagination,  
From bourn to bourn, region to region.  
By you being pardon'd, we commit no crime  
To use one language in each several clime  
Where our scenes seem to live. I do beseech you  
To learn of me, who stand i' the gaps to teach you,  
The stages of our story. Pericles  
Is now again thwarting the wayward seas,  
Attended on by many a lord and knight.

To see his daughter, all his life's delight.  
Old Escanes, whom Helicanus late  
Advanced in time to great and high estate,  
Is left to govern. Bear you it in mind,  
Old Helicanus goes along behind.  
Well-sailing ships and bounteous winds have brought  
This king to Tarsus,--think his pilot thought;  
So with his steerage shall your thoughts grow on,--  
To fetch his daughter home, who first is gone.  
Like motes and shadows see them move awhile;  
Your ears unto your eyes I'll reconcile.  
DUMB SHOW.

*Enter PERICLES, at one door, with all his train; CLEON and DIONYZA, at the other. CLEON shows PERICLES the tomb; whereat PERICLES makes lamentation, puts on sackcloth, and in a mighty passion departs. Then exeunt CLEON and DIONYZA*

See how belief may suffer by foul show!  
This borrow'd passion stands for true old woe;  
And Pericles, in sorrow all devour'd,  
With sighs shot through, and biggest tears  
o'erhower'd,  
Leaves Tarsus and again embarks. He swears  
Never to wash his face, nor cut his hairs:  
He puts on sackcloth, and to sea. He bears  
A tempest, which his mortal vessel tears,  
And yet he rides it out. Now please you wit.  
The epitaph is for Marina writ  
By wicked Dionyza.

*Reads the inscription on MARINA's monument*

'The fairest, sweet'st, and best lies here,  
Who wither'd in her spring of year.  
She was of Tyrus the king's daughter,  
On whom foul death hath made this slaughter;  
Marina was she call'd; and at her birth,  
Thetis, being proud, swallow'd some part o' the earth:  
Therefore the earth, fearing to be o'erflow'd,  
Hath Thetis' birth-child on the heavens bestow'd:  
Wherefore she does, and swears she'll never stint,  
Make raging battery upon shores of flint.'  
No visor does become black villany

So well as soft and tender flattery.  
Let Pericles believe his daughter's dead,  
And bear his courses to be ordered  
By Lady Fortune; while our scene must play  
His daughter's woe and heavy well-a-day  
In her unholy service. Patience, then,  
And think you now are all in Mytilene.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Mytilene. A street before the brothel.

*Enter, from the brothel, two Gentlemen*

### First Gentleman

Did you ever hear the like?

### Second Gentleman

No, nor never shall do in such a place as this, she being once gone.

### First Gentleman

But to have divinity preached there! did you ever dream of such a thing?

### Second Gentleman

No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy-houses: shall's go hear the vestals sing?

### First Gentleman

I'll do any thing now that is virtuous; but I am out of the road of rutting for ever.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The same. A room in the brothel.

*Enter Pandar, Bawd, and BOULT*

**Pandar**

Well, I had rather than twice the worth of her she had ne'er come here.

**Bawd**

Fie, fie upon her! she's able to freeze the god Priapus, and undo a whole generation. We must either get her ravished, or be rid of her. When she should do for clients her fitment, and do me the kindness of our profession, she has me her quirks, her reasons, her master reasons, her prayers, her knees; that she would make a puritan of the devil, if he should cheapen a kiss of her.

**BOULT**

'Faith, I must ravish her, or she'll disfurnish us of all our cavaliers, and make our swearers priests.

**Pandar**

Now, the pox upon her green-sickness for me!

**Bawd**

'Faith, there's no way to be rid on't but by the way to the pox. Here comes the Lord Lysimachus disguised.

**BOULT**



We should have both lord and lown, if the peevish  
baggage would but give way to customers.

*Enter LYSIMACHUS*

**LYSIMACHUS**

How now! How a dozen of virginities?

**Bawd**

Now, the gods to-bless your honour!

**BOULT**

I am glad to see your honour in good health.

**LYSIMACHUS**

You may so; 'tis the better for you that your  
resorters stand upon sound legs. How now!  
wholesome iniquity have you that a man may deal  
withal, and defy the surgeon?

**Bawd**

We have here one, sir, if she would--but there never  
came her like in Mytilene.

**LYSIMACHUS**

If she'ld do the deed of darkness, thou wouldst say.

**Bawd**

Your honour knows what 'tis to say well enough.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Well, call forth, call forth.

## **BOULT**

For flesh and blood, sir, white and red, you shall  
see a rose; and she were a rose indeed, if she had but--

## **LYSIMACHUS**

What, prithee?

## **BOULT**

O, sir, I can be modest.

## **LYSIMACHUS**

That dignifies the renown of a bawd, no less than it  
gives a good report to a number to be chaste.

*Exit BOULT*

## **Bawd**

Here comes that which grows to the stalk; never  
plucked yet, I can assure you.

*Re-enter BOULT with MARINA*

Is she not a fair creature?

## **LYSIMACHUS**

'Faith, she would serve after a long voyage at sea.  
Well, there's for you: leave us.

## **Bawd**

I beseech your honour, give me leave: a word, and  
I'll have done presently.

## **LYSIMACHUS**

I beseech you, do.

**Bawd**

[To MARINA] First, I would have you note, this is an honourable man.

**MARINA**

I desire to find him so, that I may worthily note him.

**Bawd**

Next, he's the governor of this country, and a man whom I am bound to.

**MARINA**

If he govern the country, you are bound to him indeed; but how honourable he is in that, I know not.

**Bawd**

Pray you, without any more virginal fencing, will you use him kindly? He will line your apron with gold.

**MARINA**

What he will do graciously, I will thankfully receive.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Ha' you done?

**Bawd**

My lord, she's not paced yet: you must take some pains to work her to your manage. Come, we will leave his honour and her together. Go thy ways.

*Exeunt Bawd, Pandar, and BOULT*

**LYSIMACHUS**

Now, pretty one, how long have you been at this trade?

**MARINA**

What trade, sir?

**LYSIMACHUS**

Why, I cannot name't but I shall offend.

**MARINA**

I cannot be offended with my trade. Please you to name it.

**LYSIMACHUS**

How long have you been of this profession?

**MARINA**

E'er since I can remember.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Did you go to 't so young? Were you a gamester at five or at seven?

**MARINA**

Earlier too, sir, if now I be one.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Why, the house you dwell in proclaims you to be a creature of sale.

**MARINA**

Do you know this house to be a place of such resort,  
and will come into 't? I hear say you are of  
honourable parts, and are the governor of this place.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Why, hath your principal made known unto you who I am?

**MARINA**

Who is my principal?

**LYSIMACHUS**

Why, your herb-woman; she that sets seeds and roots  
of shame and iniquity. O, you have heard something  
of my power, and so stand aloof for more serious  
wooing. But I protest to thee, pretty one, my  
authority shall not see thee, or else look friendly  
upon thee. Come, bring me to some private place:  
come, come.

**MARINA**

If you were born to honour, show it now;  
If put upon you, make the judgment good  
That thought you worthy of it.

**LYSIMACHUS**

How's this? how's this? Some more; be sage.

**MARINA**

For me,  
That am a maid, though most ungentle fortune  
Have placed me in this sty, where, since I came,  
Diseases have been sold dearer than physic,  
O, that the gods  
Would set me free from this unhallow'd place,  
Though they did change me to the meanest bird  
That flies i' the purer air!

## **LYSIMACHUS**

I did not think  
Thou couldst have spoke so well; ne'er dream'd thou couldst.  
Had I brought hither a corrupted mind,  
Thy speech had alter'd it. Hold, here's gold for thee:  
Persever in that clear way thou goest,  
And the gods strengthen thee!

## **MARINA**

The good gods preserve you!

## **LYSIMACHUS**

For me, be you thoughten  
That I came with no ill intent; for to me  
The very doors and windows savour vilely.  
Fare thee well. Thou art a piece of virtue, and  
I doubt not but thy training hath been noble.  
Hold, here's more gold for thee.  
A curse upon him, die he like a thief,  
That robs thee of thy goodness! If thou dost  
Hear from me, it shall be for thy good.

*Re-enter BOULT*

## **BOULT**

I beseech your honour, one piece for me.

## **LYSIMACHUS**

Avaunt, thou damned door-keeper!  
Your house, but for this virgin that doth prop it,  
Would sink and overwhelm you. Away!

*Exit*

## **BOULT**

How's this? We must take another course with you.  
If your peevish chastity, which is not worth a  
breakfast in the cheapest country under the cope,  
shall undo a whole household, let me be gelded like  
a spaniel. Come your ways.

**MARINA**

Whither would you have me?

**BOULT**

I must have your maidenhead taken off, or the common  
hangman shall execute it. Come your ways. We'll  
have no more gentlemen driven away. Come your ways, I say.

*Re-enter Bawd*

**Bawd**

How now! what's the matter?

**BOULT**

Worse and worse, mistress; she has here spoken holy  
words to the Lord Lysimachus.

**Bawd**

O abominable!

**BOULT**

She makes our profession as it were to stink afore  
the face of the gods.

**Bawd**

Marry, hang her up for ever!

**BOULT**

The nobleman would have dealt with her like a nobleman, and she sent him away as cold as a snowball; saying his prayers too.

**Bawd**

Boult, take her away; use her at thy pleasure:  
crack the glass of her virginity, and make the rest malleable.

**BOULT**

An if she were a thornier piece of ground than she is, she shall be ploughed.

**MARINA**

Hark, hark, you gods!

**Bawd**

She conjures: away with her! Would she had never come within my doors! Marry, hang you! She's born to undo us. Will you not go the way of women-kind? Marry, come up, my dish of chastity with rosemary and bays!

*Exit*

**BOULT**

Come, mistress; come your ways with me.

**MARINA**

Whither wilt thou have me?

**BOULT**

To take from you the jewel you hold so dear.

**MARINA**



Prithee, tell me one thing first.

**BOULT**

Come now, your one thing.

**MARINA**

What canst thou wish thine enemy to be?

**BOULT**

Why, I could wish him to be my master, or rather, my mistress.

**MARINA**

Neither of these are so bad as thou art,  
Since they do better thee in their command.  
Thou hold'st a place, for which the pained'st fiend  
Of hell would not in reputation change:  
Thou art the damned doorkeeper to every  
Coistrel that comes inquiring for his Tib;  
To the choleric fisting of every rogue  
Thy ear is liable; thy food is such  
As hath been belch'd on by infected lungs.

**BOULT**

What would you have me do? go to the wars, would  
you? where a man may serve seven years for the loss  
of a leg, and have not money enough in the end to  
buy him a wooden one?

**MARINA**

Do any thing but this thou doest. Empty  
OLD receptacles, or common shores, of filth;  
Serve by indenture to the common hangman:  
Any of these ways are yet better than this;  
For what thou professest, a baboon, could he speak,  
Would own a name too dear. O, that the gods

Would safely deliver me from this place!  
Here, here's gold for thee.  
If that thy master would gain by thee,  
Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance,  
With other virtues, which I'll keep from boast:  
And I will undertake all these to teach.  
I doubt not but this populous city will  
Yield many scholars.

**BOULT**

But can you teach all this you speak of?

**MARINA**

Prove that I cannot, take me home again,  
And prostitute me to the basest groom  
That doth frequent your house.

**BOULT**

Well, I will see what I can do for thee: if I can  
place thee, I will.

**MARINA**

But amongst honest women.

**BOULT**

'Faith, my acquaintance lies little amongst them.  
But since my master and mistress have bought you,  
there's no going but by their consent: therefore I  
will make them acquainted with your purpose, and I  
doubt not but I shall find them tractable enough.  
Come, I'll do for thee what I can; come your ways.

*Exeunt*

*Enter GOWER*

## GOWER

Marina thus the brothel 'scapes, and chances  
Into an honest house, our story says.  
She sings like one immortal, and she dances  
As goddess-like to her admired lays;  
Deep clerks she dumbs; and with her needle composes  
Nature's own shape, of bud, bird, branch, or berry,  
That even her art sisters the natural roses;  
Her inkle, silk, twin with the rubied cherry:  
That pupils lacks she none of noble race,  
Who pour their bounty on her; and her gain  
She gives the cursed bawd. Here we her place;  
And to her father turn our thoughts again,  
Where we left him, on the sea. We there him lost;  
Whence, driven before the winds, he is arrived  
Here where his daughter dwells; and on this coast  
Suppose him now at anchor. The city strived  
God Neptune's annual feast to keep: from whence  
Lysimachus our Tyrian ship espies,  
His banners sable, trimm'd with rich expense;  
And to him in his barge with fervor hies.  
In your supposing once more put your sight  
Of heavy Pericles; think this his bark:  
Where what is done in action, more, if might,  
Shall be discover'd; please you, sit and hark.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. On board PERICLES' ship, off Mytilene. A close

pavilion on deck, with a curtain before it; PERICLES within it, reclined on a couch. A barge lying beside the Tyrian vessel.

*Enter two Sailors, one belonging to the Tyrian vessel, the other to the barge; to them*  
*HELICANUS*

### Tyrian Sailor

[To the Sailor of Mytilene] Where is lord Helicanus?  
he can resolve you.

O, here he is.

Sir, there's a barge put off from Mytilene,

And in it is Lysimachus the governor,

Who craves to come aboard. What is your will?

### HELICANUS

That he have his. Call up some gentlemen.

### Tyrian Sailor

Ho, gentlemen! my lord calls.

*Enter two or three Gentlemen*

### First Gentleman

Doth your lordship call?

### HELICANUS

Gentlemen, there's some of worth would come aboard;  
I pray ye, greet them fairly.

*The Gentlemen and the two Sailors descend, and go on board the barge*

*Enter, from thence, LYSIMACHUS and Lords; with the Gentlemen and the two Sailors*

**Tyrian Sailor**

Sir,  
This is the man that can, in aught you would,  
Resolve you.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Hail, reverend sir! the gods preserve you!

**HELICANUS**

And you, sir, to outlive the age I am,  
And die as I would do.

**LYSIMACHUS**

You wish me well.  
Being on shore, honouring of Neptune's triumphs,  
Seeing this goodly vessel ride before us,  
I made to it, to know of whence you are.

**HELICANUS**

First, what is your place?

**LYSIMACHUS**

I am the governor of this place you lie before.

**HELICANUS**

Sir,  
Our vessel is of Tyre, in it the king;  
A man who for this three months hath not spoken  
To any one, nor taken sustenance  
But to prorogue his grief.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Upon what ground is his distemperature?

**HELICANUS**

'Twould be too tedious to repeat;  
But the main grief springs from the loss  
Of a beloved daughter and a wife.

**LYSIMACHUS**

May we not see him?

**HELICANUS**

You may;  
But bootless is your sight: he will not speak  
To any.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Yet let me obtain my wish.

**HELICANUS**

Behold him.

*PERICLES discovered*

This was a goodly person,  
Till the disaster that, one mortal night,  
Drove him to this.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Sir king, all hail! the gods preserve you!  
Hail, royal sir!

**HELICANUS**

It is in vain; he will not speak to you.

### **First Lord**

Sir,  
We have a maid in Mytilene, I durst wager,  
Would win some words of him.

### **LYSIMACHUS**

'Tis well bethought.  
She questionless with her sweet harmony  
And other chosen attractions, would allure,  
And make a battery through his deafen'd parts,  
Which now are midway stopp'd:  
She is all happy as the fairest of all,  
And, with her fellow maids is now upon  
The leafy shelter that abuts against  
The island's side.

*Whispers a Lord, who goes off in the barge of LYSIMACHUS*

### **HELICANUS**

Sure, all's effectless; yet nothing we'll omit  
That bears recovery's name. But, since your kindness  
We have stretch'd thus far, let us beseech you  
That for our gold we may provision have,  
Wherein we are not destitute for want,  
But weary for the staleness.

### **LYSIMACHUS**

O, sir, a courtesy  
Which if we should deny, the most just gods  
For every graff would send a caterpillar,  
And so afflict our province. Yet once more  
Let me entreat to know at large the cause  
Of your king's sorrow.

### **HELICANUS**

Sit, sir, I will recount it to you:  
But, see, I am prevented.

*Re-enter, from the barge, Lord, with MARINA, and a young Lady*

**LYSIMACHUS**

O, here is  
The lady that I sent for. Welcome, fair one!  
Is't not a goodly presence?

**HELICANUS**

She's a gallant lady.

**LYSIMACHUS**

She's such a one, that, were I well assured  
Came of a gentle kind and noble stock,  
I'd wish no better choice, and think me rarely wed.  
Fair one, all goodness that consists in bounty  
Expect even here, where is a kingly patient:  
If that thy prosperous and artificial feat  
Can draw him but to answer thee in aught,  
Thy sacred physic shall receive such pay  
As thy desires can wish.

**MARINA**

Sir, I will use  
My utmost skill in his recovery, Provided  
That none but I and my companion maid  
Be suffer'd to come near him.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Come, let us leave her;  
And the gods make her prosperous!

*MARINA sings*



## **LYSIMACHUS**

Mark'd he your music?

## **MARINA**

No, nor look'd on us.

## **LYSIMACHUS**

See, she will speak to him.

## **MARINA**

Hail, sir! my lord, lend ear.

## **PERICLES**

Hum, ha!

## **MARINA**

I am a maid,  
My lord, that ne'er before invited eyes,  
But have been gazed on like a comet: she speaks,  
My lord, that, may be, hath endured a grief  
Might equal yours, if both were justly weigh'd.  
Though wayward fortune did malign my state,  
My derivation was from ancestors  
Who stood equivalent with mighty kings:  
But time hath rooted out my parentage,  
And to the world and awkward casualties  
Bound me in servitude.

*Aside*

I will desist;  
But there is something glows upon my cheek,  
And whispers in mine ear, 'Go not till he speak.'

## **PERICLES**

My fortunes--parentage--good parentage--  
To equal mine!--was it not thus? what say you?

**MARINA**

I said, my lord, if you did know my parentage,  
You would not do me violence.

**PERICLES**

I do think so. Pray you, turn your eyes upon me.  
You are like something that--What country-woman?  
Here of these shores?

**MARINA**

No, nor of any shores:  
Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am  
No other than I appear.

**PERICLES**

I am great with woe, and shall deliver weeping.  
My dearest wife was like this maid, and such a one  
My daughter might have been: my queen's square brows;  
Her stature to an inch; as wand-like straight;  
As silver-voiced; her eyes as jewel-like  
And cased as richly; in pace another Juno;  
Who starves the ears she feeds, and makes them hungry,  
The more she gives them speech. Where do you live?

**MARINA**

Where I am but a stranger: from the deck  
You may discern the place.

**PERICLES**

Where were you bred?  
And how achieved you these endowments, which  
You make more rich to owe?

## MARINA

If I should tell my history, it would seem  
Like lies disdain'd in the reporting.

## PERICLES

Prithee, speak:  
Falseness cannot come from thee; for thou look'st  
Modest as Justice, and thou seem'st a palace  
For the crown'd Truth to dwell in: I will  
believe thee,  
And make my senses credit thy relation  
To points that seem impossible; for thou look'st  
Like one I loved indeed. What were thy friends?  
Didst thou not say, when I did push thee back--  
Which was when I perceived thee--that thou camest  
From good descending?

## MARINA

So indeed I did.

## PERICLES

Report thy parentage. I think thou said'st  
Thou hadst been toss'd from wrong to injury,  
And that thou thought'st thy griefs might equal mine,  
If both were open'd.

## MARINA

Some such thing  
I said, and said no more but what my thoughts  
Did warrant me was likely.

## PERICLES

Tell thy story;  
If thine consider'd prove the thousandth part  
Of my endurance, thou art a man, and I

Have suffer'd like a girl: yet thou dost look  
Like Patience gazing on kings' graves, and smiling  
Extremity out of act. What were thy friends?  
How lost thou them? Thy name, my most kind virgin?  
Recount, I do beseech thee: come, sit by me.

**MARINA**

My name is Marina.

**PERICLES**

O, I am mock'd,  
And thou by some incensed god sent hither  
To make the world to laugh at me.

**MARINA**

Patience, good sir,  
Or here I'll cease.

**PERICLES**

Nay, I'll be patient.  
Thou little know'st how thou dost startle me,  
To call thyself Marina.

**MARINA**

The name  
Was given me by one that had some power,  
My father, and a king.

**PERICLES**

How! a king's daughter?  
And call'd Marina?

**MARINA**

You said you would believe me;

But, not to be a troubler of your peace,  
I will end here.

**PERICLES**

But are you flesh and blood?  
Have you a working pulse? and are no fairy?  
Motion! Well; speak on. Where were you born?  
And wherefore call'd Marina?

**MARINA**

Call'd Marina  
For I was born at sea.

**PERICLES**

At sea! what mother?

**MARINA**

My mother was the daughter of a king;  
Who died the minute I was born,  
As my good nurse Lychorida hath oft  
Deliver'd weeping.

**PERICLES**

O, stop there a little!

*Aside*

This is the rarest dream that e'er dull sleep  
Did mock sad fools withal: this cannot be:  
My daughter's buried. Well: where were you bred?  
I'll hear you more, to the bottom of your story,  
And never interrupt you.

**MARINA**

You scorn: believe me, 'twere best I did give o'er.

## PERICLES

I will believe you by the syllable  
Of what you shall deliver. Yet, give me leave:  
How came you in these parts? where were you bred?

## MARINA

The king my father did in Tarsus leave me;  
Till cruel Cleon, with his wicked wife,  
Did seek to murder me: and having woo'd  
A villain to attempt it, who having drawn to do't,  
A crew of pirates came and rescued me;  
Brought me to Mytilene. But, good sir,  
Whither will you have me? Why do you weep?  
It may be,  
You think me an impostor: no, good faith;  
I am the daughter to King Pericles,  
If good King Pericles be.

## PERICLES

Ho, Helicanus!

## HELICANUS

Calls my lord?

## PERICLES

Thou art a grave and noble counsellor,  
Most wise in general: tell me, if thou canst,  
What this maid is, or what is like to be,  
That thus hath made me weep?

## HELICANUS

I know not; but  
Here is the regent, sir, of Mytilene  
Speaks nobly of her.

## **LYSIMACHUS**

She would never tell  
Her parentage; being demanded that,  
She would sit still and weep.

## **PERICLES**

O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir;  
Give me a gash, put me to present pain;  
Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me  
O'erbear the shores of my mortality,  
And drown me with their sweetness. O, come hither,  
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget;  
Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tarsus,  
And found at sea again! O Helicanus,  
Down on thy knees, thank the holy gods as loud  
As thunder threatens us: this is Marina.  
What was thy mother's name? tell me but that,  
For truth can never be confirm'd enough,  
Though doubts did ever sleep.

## **MARINA**

First, sir, I pray,  
What is your title?

## **PERICLES**

I am Pericles of Tyre: but tell me now  
My drown'd queen's name, as in the rest you said  
Thou hast been godlike perfect,  
The heir of kingdoms and another like  
To Pericles thy father.

## **MARINA**

Is it no more to be your daughter than  
To say my mother's name was Thaisa?  
Thaisa was my mother, who did end  
The minute I began.

## **PERICLES**

Now, blessing on thee! rise; thou art my child.  
Give me fresh garments. Mine own, Helicanus;  
She is not dead at Tarsus, as she should have been,  
By savage Cleon: she shall tell thee all;  
When thou shalt kneel, and justify in knowledge  
She is thy very princess. Who is this?

## **HELICANUS**

Sir, 'tis the governor of Mytilene,  
Who, hearing of your melancholy state,  
Did come to see you.

## **PERICLES**

I embrace you.  
Give me my robes. I am wild in my beholding.  
O heavens bless my girl! But, hark, what music?  
Tell Helicanus, my Marina, tell him  
O'er, point by point, for yet he seems to doubt,  
How sure you are my daughter. But, what music?

## **HELICANUS**

My lord, I hear none.

## **PERICLES**

None!  
The music of the spheres! List, my Marina.

## **LYSIMACHUS**

It is not good to cross him; give him way.

## **PERICLES**

Rarest sounds! Do ye not hear?



## LYSIMACHUS

My lord, I hear.

*Music*

## PERICLES

Most heavenly music!  
It nips me unto listening, and thick slumber  
Hangs upon mine eyes: let me rest.

*Sleeps*

## LYSIMACHUS

A pillow for his head:  
So, leave him all. Well, my companion friends,  
If this but answer to my just belief,  
I'll well remember you.

*Exeunt all but PERICLES*

*DIANA appears to PERICLES as in a vision*

## DIANA

My temple stands in Ephesus: hie thee thither,  
And do upon mine altar sacrifice.  
There, when my maiden priests are met together,  
Before the people all,  
Reveal how thou at sea didst lose thy wife:  
To mourn thy crosses, with thy daughter's, call  
And give them repetition to the life.  
Or perform my bidding, or thou livest in woe;  
Do it, and happy; by my silver bow!  
Awake, and tell thy dream.

*Disappears*

## PERICLES

Celestial Dian, goddess argentine,  
I will obey thee. Helicanus!

*Re-enter HELICANUS, LYSIMACHUS, and MARINA*

**HELICANUS**

Sir?

**PERICLES**

My purpose was for Tarsus, there to strike  
The inhospitable Cleon; but I am  
For other service first: toward Ephesus  
Turn our blown sails; eftsoons I'll tell thee why.

*To LYSIMACHUS*

Shall we refresh us, sir, upon your shore,  
And give you gold for such provision  
As our intents will need?

**LYSIMACHUS**

Sir,  
With all my heart; and, when you come ashore,  
I have another suit.

**PERICLES**

You shall prevail,  
Were it to woo my daughter; for it seems  
You have been noble towards her.

**LYSIMACHUS**

Sir, lend me your arm.

**PERICLES**

Come, my Marina.

*Exeunt*

SCENE II:

*Enter GOWER, before the temple of DIANA at Ephesus*

**GOWER**

Now our sands are almost run;  
More a little, and then dumb.  
This, my last boon, give me,  
For such kindness must relieve me,  
That you aptly will suppose  
What pageantry, what feats, what shows,  
What minstrelsy, and pretty din,  
The regent made in Mytilene  
To greet the king. So he thrived,  
That he is promised to be wived  
To fair Marina; but in no wise  
Till he had done his sacrifice,  
As Dian bade: whereto being bound,  
The interim, pray you, all confound.  
In feather'd briefness sails are fill'd,  
And wishes fall out as they're will'd.  
At Ephesus, the temple see,  
Our king and all his company.  
That he can hither come so soon,  
Is by your fancy's thankful doom.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Pericles, Prince of Tyre

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Pericles](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The temple of Diana at Ephesus; THAISA standing

near the altar, as high priestess; a number of Virgins on each side; CERIMON and other Inhabitants of Ephesus attending.

*Enter PERICLES, with his train; LYSIMACHUS, HELICANUS, MARINA, and a Lady*

### PERICLES

Hail, Dian! to perform thy just command,  
I here confess myself the king of Tyre;  
Who, frighted from my country, did wed  
At Pentapolis the fair Thaisa.  
At sea in childbed died she, but brought forth  
A maid-child call'd Marina; who, O goddess,  
Wears yet thy silver livery. She at Tarsus  
Was nursed with Cleon; who at fourteen years  
He sought to murder: but her better stars  
Brought her to Mytilene; 'gainst whose shore  
Riding, her fortunes brought the maid aboard us,  
Where, by her own most clear remembrance, she  
Made known herself my daughter.

### THAISA

Voice and favour!  
You are, you are--O royal Pericles!

*Faints*

### PERICLES

What means the nun? she dies! help, gentlemen!

### CERIMON

Noble sir,  
If you have told Diana's altar true,  
This is your wife.

**PERICLES**

Reverend appearer, no;  
I threw her overboard with these very arms.

**CERIMON**

Upon this coast, I warrant you.

**PERICLES**

'Tis most certain.

**CERIMON**

Look to the lady; O, she's but o'erjoy'd.  
Early in blustering morn this lady was  
Thrown upon this shore. I oped the coffin,  
Found there rich jewels; recover'd her, and placed her  
Here in Diana's temple.

**PERICLES**

May we see them?

**CERIMON**

Great sir, they shall be brought you to my house,  
Whither I invite you. Look, Thaisa is recovered.

**THAISA**

O, let me look!  
If he be none of mine, my sanctity  
Will to my sense bend no licentious ear,  
But curb it, spite of seeing. O, my lord,  
Are you not Pericles? Like him you spake,

Like him you are: did you not name a tempest,  
A birth, and death?

**PERICLES**

The voice of dead Thaisa!

**THAISA**

That Thaisa am I, supposed dead  
And drown'd.

**PERICLES**

Immortal Dian!

**THAISA**

Now I know you better.  
When we with tears parted Pentapolis,  
The king my father gave you such a ring.

*Shows a ring*

**PERICLES**

This, this: no more, you gods! your present kindness  
Makes my past miseries sports: you shall do well,  
That on the touching of her lips I may  
Melt and no more be seen. O, come, be buried  
A second time within these arms.

**MARINA**

My heart  
Leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom.

*Kneels to THAISA*

**PERICLES**

Look, who kneels here! Flesh of thy flesh, Thaisa;  
Thy burden at the sea, and call'd Marina  
For she was yielded there.

**THAISA**

Blest, and mine own!

**HELICANUS**

Hail, madam, and my queen!

**THAISA**

I know you not.

**PERICLES**

You have heard me say, when I did fly from Tyre,  
I left behind an ancient substitute:  
Can you remember what I call'd the man?  
I have named him oft.

**THAISA**

'Twas Helicanus then.

**PERICLES**

Still confirmation:  
Embrace him, dear Thaisa; this is he.  
Now do I long to hear how you were found;  
How possibly preserved; and who to thank,  
Besides the gods, for this great miracle.

**THAISA**

Lord Cerimon, my lord; this man,  
Through whom the gods have shown their power; that can  
From first to last resolve you.

## PERICLES

Reverend sir,  
The gods can have no mortal officer  
More like a god than you. Will you deliver  
How this dead queen re-lives?

## CERIMON

I will, my lord.  
Beseech you, first go with me to my house,  
Where shall be shown you all was found with her;  
How she came placed here in the temple;  
No needful thing omitted.

## PERICLES

Pure Dian, bless thee for thy vision! I  
Will offer night-oblations to thee. Thaisa,  
This prince, the fair-betrothed of your daughter,  
Shall marry her at Pentapolis. And now,  
This ornament  
Makes me look dismal will I clip to form;  
And what this fourteen years no razor touch'd,  
To grace thy marriage-day, I'll beautify.

## THAISA

Lord Cerimon hath letters of good credit, sir,  
My father's dead.

## PERICLES

Heavens make a star of him! Yet there, my queen,  
We'll celebrate their nuptials, and ourselves  
Will in that kingdom spend our following days:  
Our son and daughter shall in Tyrus reign.  
Lord Cerimon, we do our longing stay  
To hear the rest untold: sir, lead's the way.

*Exeunt*



*Enter GOWER*

**GOWER**

In Antiochus and his daughter you have heard  
Of monstrous lust the due and just reward:  
In Pericles, his queen and daughter, seen,  
Although assail'd with fortune fierce and keen,  
Virtue preserved from fell destruction's blast,  
Led on by heaven, and crown'd with joy at last:  
In Helicanus may you well descry  
A figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty:  
In reverend Cerimon there well appears  
The worth that learned charity aye wears:  
For wicked Cleon and his wife, when fame  
Had spread their cursed deed, and honour'd name  
Of Pericles, to rage the city turn,  
That him and his they in his palace burn;  
The gods for murder seemed so content  
To punish them; although not done, but meant.  
So, on your patience evermore attending,  
New joy wait on you! Here our play has ending.

*Exit*

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Taming of the Shrew

[Entire play](#) in one page

Induction, Scene 1: [Before an alehouse on a heath.](#)

Induction, Scene 2: [A bedchamber in the Lord's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 1: [Padua. A public place.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [Padua. Before HORTENSIO'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Padua. A room in BAPTISTA'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Padua. BAPTISTA'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [PETRUCHIO'S country house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [A room in PETRUCHIO'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [A public road.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Padua. Before LUCENTIO'S house.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Padua. LUCENTIO'S house.](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Induction, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before an alehouse on a heath.

*Enter Hostess and SLY*

**SLY**

I'll pheeze you, in faith.

**Hostess**

A pair of stocks, you rogue!

**SLY**

Ye are a baggage: the Slys are no rogues; look in  
the chronicles; we came in with Richard Conqueror.  
Therefore paucas pallabris; let the world slide: sessa!

**Hostess**

You will not pay for the glasses you have burst?

**SLY**

No, not a denier. Go by, Jeronimy: go to thy cold  
bed, and warm thee.

**Hostess**

I know my remedy; I must go fetch the  
third--borough.

*Exit*

**SLY**

Third, or fourth, or fifth borough, I'll answer him  
by law: I'll not budge an inch, boy: let him come,  
and kindly.

*Falls asleep*

*Horns winded. Enter a Lord from hunting, with his train*

**Lord**

Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds:  
Brach Merriman, the poor cur is emboss'd;  
And couple Clowder with the deep--mouth'd brach.  
Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good  
At the hedge-corner, in the coldest fault?  
I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.

**First Huntsman**

Why, Belman is as good as he, my lord;  
He cried upon it at the merest loss  
And twice to-day pick'd out the dullest scent:  
Trust me, I take him for the better dog.

**Lord**

Thou art a fool: if Echo were as fleet,  
I would esteem him worth a dozen such.  
But sup them well and look unto them all:  
To-morrow I intend to hunt again.

**First Huntsman**

I will, my lord.

**Lord**

What's here? one dead, or drunk? See, doth he breathe?

**Second Huntsman**

He breathes, my lord. Were he not warm'd with ale,  
This were a bed but cold to sleep so soundly.

## Lord

O monstrous beast! how like a swine he lies!  
Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image!  
Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man.  
What think you, if he were convey'd to bed,  
Wrapp'd in sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers,  
A most delicious banquet by his bed,  
And brave attendants near him when he wakes,  
Would not the beggar then forget himself?

## First Huntsman

Believe me, lord, I think he cannot choose.

## Second Huntsman

It would seem strange unto him when he waked.

## Lord

Even as a flattering dream or worthless fancy.  
Then take him up and manage well the jest:  
Carry him gently to my fairest chamber  
And hang it round with all my wanton pictures:  
Balm his foul head in warm distilled waters  
And burn sweet wood to make the lodging sweet:  
Procure me music ready when he wakes,  
To make a dulcet and a heavenly sound;  
And if he chance to speak, be ready straight  
And with a low submissive reverence  
Say 'What is it your honour will command?'  
Let one attend him with a silver basin  
Full of rose-water and bestrew'd with flowers,  
Another bear the ewer, the third a diaper,  
And say 'Will't please your lordship cool your hands?'  
Some one be ready with a costly suit  
And ask him what apparel he will wear;  
Another tell him of his hounds and horse,

And that his lady mourns at his disease:  
Persuade him that he hath been lunatic;  
And when he says he is, say that he dreams,  
For he is nothing but a mighty lord.  
This do and do it kindly, gentle sirs:  
It will be pastime passing excellent,  
If it be husbanded with modesty.

### **First Huntsman**

My lord, I warrant you we will play our part,  
As he shall think by our true diligence  
He is no less than what we say he is.

### **Lord**

Take him up gently and to bed with him;  
And each one to his office when he wakes.

*Some bear out SLY. A trumpet sounds*

Sirrah, go see what trumpet 'tis that sounds:

*Exit Servingman*

Belike, some noble gentleman that means,  
Travelling some journey, to repose him here.

*Re-enter Servingman*

How now! who is it?

### **Servant**

An't please your honour, players  
That offer service to your lordship.

### **Lord**

Bid them come near.

*Enter Players*

Now, fellows, you are welcome.

**Players**

We thank your honour.

**Lord**

Do you intend to stay with me tonight?

**A Player**

So please your lordship to accept our duty.

**Lord**

With all my heart. This fellow I remember,  
Since once he play'd a farmer's eldest son:  
'Twas where you woo'd the gentlewoman so well:  
I have forgot your name; but, sure, that part  
Was aptly fitted and naturally perform'd.

**A Player**

I think 'twas Soto that your honour means.

**Lord**

'Tis very true: thou didst it excellent.  
Well, you are come to me in a happy time;  
The rather for I have some sport in hand  
Wherein your cunning can assist me much.  
There is a lord will hear you play to-night:  
But I am doubtful of your modesties;  
Lest over-eyeing of his odd behavior,--  
For yet his honour never heard a play--  
You break into some merry passion  
And so offend him; for I tell you, sirs,  
If you should smile he grows impatient.

## A Player

Fear not, my lord: we can contain ourselves,  
Were he the veriest antic in the world.

## Lord

Go, sirrah, take them to the buttery,  
And give them friendly welcome every one:  
Let them want nothing that my house affords.

*Exit one with the Players*

Sirrah, go you to Barthol'mew my page,  
And see him dress'd in all suits like a lady:  
That done, conduct him to the drunkard's chamber;  
And call him 'madam,' do him obeisance.  
Tell him from me, as he will win my love,  
He bear himself with honourable action,  
Such as he hath observed in noble ladies  
Unto their lords, by them accomplished:  
Such duty to the drunkard let him do  
With soft low tongue and lowly courtesy,  
And say 'What is't your honour will command,  
Wherein your lady and your humble wife  
May show her duty and make known her love?'  
And then with kind embracements, tempting kisses,  
And with declining head into his bosom,  
Bid him shed tears, as being overjoy'd  
To see her noble lord restored to health,  
Who for this seven years hath esteem'd him  
No better than a poor and loathsome beggar:  
And if the boy have not a woman's gift  
To rain a shower of commanded tears,  
An onion will do well for such a shift,  
Which in a napkin being close convey'd  
Shall in despite enforce a watery eye.  
See this dispatch'd with all the haste thou canst:  
Anon I'll give thee more instructions.

*Exit a Servingman*



I know the boy will well usurp the grace,  
Voice, gait and action of a gentlewoman:  
I long to hear him call the drunkard husband,  
And how my men will stay themselves from laughter  
When they do homage to this simple peasant.  
I'll in to counsel them; haply my presence  
May well abate the over-merry spleen  
Which otherwise would grow into extremes.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Induction, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Induction, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A bedchamber in the Lord's house.

*Enter aloft SLY, with Attendants; some with apparel, others with basin and ewer and appurtenances; and Lord*

**SLY**

For God's sake, a pot of small ale.

**First Servant**

Will't please your lordship drink a cup of sack?

**Second Servant**

Will't please your honour taste of these conserves?

**Third Servant**

What raiment will your honour wear to-day?

**SLY**

I am Christophero Sly; call not me 'honour' nor 'lordship:' I ne'er drank sack in my life; and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef: ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear; for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet; nay, sometimes more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the over-leather.

**Lord**

Heaven cease this idle humour in your honour!  
O, that a mighty man of such descent,

Of such possessions and so high esteem,  
Should be infused with so foul a spirit!

## **SLY**

What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher  
Sly, old Sly's son of Burtonheath, by birth a  
pedlar, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a  
bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker?  
Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if  
she know me not: if she say I am not fourteen pence  
on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the  
lyingest knave in Christendom. What! I am not  
bestraught: here's--

## **Third Servant**

O, this it is that makes your lady mourn!

## **Second Servant**

O, this is it that makes your servants droop!

## **Lord**

Hence comes it that your kindred shuns your house,  
As beaten hence by your strange lunacy.  
O noble lord, bethink thee of thy birth,  
Call home thy ancient thoughts from banishment  
And banish hence these abject lowly dreams.  
Look how thy servants do attend on thee,  
Each in his office ready at thy beck.  
Wilt thou have music? hark! Apollo plays,

## *Music*

And twenty caged nightingales do sing:  
Or wilt thou sleep? we'll have thee to a couch  
Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed  
On purpose trimm'd up for Semiramis.  
Say thou wilt walk; we will bestrew the ground:  
Or wilt thou ride? thy horses shall be trapp'd,

Their harness studded all with gold and pearl.  
Dost thou love hawking? thou hast hawks will soar  
Above the morning lark or wilt thou hunt?  
Thy hounds shall make the welkin answer them  
And fetch shrill echoes from the hollow earth.

### **First Servant**

Say thou wilt course; thy greyhounds are as swift  
As breathed stags, ay, fleeter than the roe.

### **Second Servant**

Dost thou love pictures? we will fetch thee straight  
Adonis painted by a running brook,  
And Cytherea all in sedges hid,  
Which seem to move and wanton with her breath,  
Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

### **Lord**

We'll show thee Io as she was a maid,  
And how she was beguiled and surprised,  
As lively painted as the deed was done.

### **Third Servant**

Or Daphne roaming through a thorny wood,  
Scratching her legs that one shall swear she bleeds,  
And at that sight shall sad Apollo weep,  
So workmanly the blood and tears are drawn.

### **Lord**

Thou art a lord, and nothing but a lord:  
Thou hast a lady far more beautiful  
Than any woman in this waning age.

### **First Servant**

And till the tears that she hath shed for thee  
Like envious floods o'er-run her lovely face,

She was the fairest creature in the world;  
And yet she is inferior to none.

**SLY**

Am I a lord? and have I such a lady?  
Or do I dream? or have I dream'd till now?  
I do not sleep: I see, I hear, I speak;  
I smell sweet savours and I feel soft things:  
Upon my life, I am a lord indeed  
And not a tinker nor Christophero Sly.  
Well, bring our lady hither to our sight;  
And once again, a pot o' the smallest ale.

**Second Servant**

Will't please your mightiness to wash your hands?  
O, how we joy to see your wit restored!  
O, that once more you knew but what you are!  
These fifteen years you have been in a dream;  
Or when you waked, so waked as if you slept.

**SLY**

These fifteen years! by my fay, a goodly nap.  
But did I never speak of all that time?

**First Servant**

O, yes, my lord, but very idle words:  
For though you lay here in this goodly chamber,  
Yet would you say ye were beaten out of door;  
And rail upon the hostess of the house;  
And say you would present her at the leet,  
Because she brought stone jugs and no seal'd quarts:  
Sometimes you would call out for Cicely Hacket.

**SLY**

Ay, the woman's maid of the house.

**Third Servant**

Why, sir, you know no house nor no such maid,  
Nor no such men as you have reckon'd up,  
As Stephen Sly and did John Naps of Greece  
And Peter Turph and Henry Pimpernell  
And twenty more such names and men as these  
Which never were nor no man ever saw.

**SLY**

Now Lord be thanked for my good amends!

**ALL**

Amen.

**SLY**

I thank thee: thou shalt not lose by it.

*Enter the Page as a lady, with attendants*

**Page**

How fares my noble lord?

**SLY**

Marry, I fare well for here is cheer enough.  
Where is my wife?

**Page**

Here, noble lord: what is thy will with her?

**SLY**

Are you my wife and will not call me husband?  
My men should call me 'lord:' I am your goodman.

**Page**

My husband and my lord, my lord and husband;  
I am your wife in all obedience.

**SLY**

I know it well. What must I call her?

**Lord**

Madam.

**SLY**

Al'ce madam, or Joan madam?

**Lord**

'Madam,' and nothing else: so lords  
call ladies.

**SLY**

Madam wife, they say that I have dream'd  
And slept above some fifteen year or more.

**Page**

Ay, and the time seems thirty unto me,  
Being all this time abandon'd from your bed.

**SLY**

'Tis much. Servants, leave me and her alone.  
Madam, undress you and come now to bed.

**Page**

Thrice noble lord, let me entreat of you  
To pardon me yet for a night or two,  
Or, if not so, until the sun be set:

For your physicians have expressly charged,  
In peril to incur your former malady,  
That I should yet absent me from your bed:  
I hope this reason stands for my excuse.

**SLY**

Ay, it stands so that I may hardly  
tarry so long. But I would be loath to fall into  
my dreams again: I will therefore tarry in  
despite of the flesh and the blood.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Your honour's players, heating your amendment,  
Are come to play a pleasant comedy;  
For so your doctors hold it very meet,  
Seeing too much sadness hath congeal'd your blood,  
And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy:  
Therefore they thought it good you hear a play  
And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,  
Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

**SLY**

Marry, I will, let them play it. Is not a  
comondy a Christmas gambold or a tumbling-trick?

**Page**

No, my good lord; it is more pleasing stuff.

**SLY**

What, household stuff?

**Page**

It is a kind of history.



**SLY**

Well, well see't. Come, madam wife, sit by my side  
and let the world slip: we shall ne'er be younger.

*Flourish*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Induction, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Padua. A public place.

*Enter LUCENTIO and his man TRANIO*

### LUCENTIO

Tranio, since for the great desire I had  
To see fair Padua, nursery of arts,  
I am arrived for fruitful Lombardy,  
The pleasant garden of great Italy;  
And by my father's love and leave am arm'd  
With his good will and thy good company,  
My trusty servant, well approved in all,  
Here let us breathe and haply institute  
A course of learning and ingenious studies.  
Pisa renown'd for grave citizens  
Gave me my being and my father first,  
A merchant of great traffic through the world,  
Vincetino come of Bentivolii.  
Vincetino's son brought up in Florence  
It shall become to serve all hopes conceived,  
To deck his fortune with his virtuous deeds:  
And therefore, Tranio, for the time I study,  
Virtue and that part of philosophy  
Will I apply that treats of happiness  
By virtue specially to be achieved.  
Tell me thy mind; for I have Pisa left  
And am to Padua come, as he that leaves  
A shallow plash to plunge him in the deep  
And with satiety seeks to quench his thirst.

### TRANIO

Mi perdonato, gentle master mine,  
I am in all affected as yourself;  
Glad that you thus continue your resolve  
To suck the sweets of sweet philosophy.

Only, good master, while we do admire  
This virtue and this moral discipline,  
Let's be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray;  
Or so devote to Aristotle's cheques  
As Ovid be an outcast quite abjured:  
Balk logic with acquaintance that you have  
And practise rhetoric in your common talk;  
Music and poesy use to quicken you;  
The mathematics and the metaphysics,  
Fall to them as you find your stomach serves you;  
No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en:  
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

## **LUCENTIO**

Gramercies, Tranio, well dost thou advise.  
If, Biondello, thou wert come ashore,  
We could at once put us in readiness,  
And take a lodging fit to entertain  
Such friends as time in Padua shall beget.  
But stay a while: what company is this?

## **TRANIO**

Master, some show to welcome us to town.

*Enter BAPTISTA, KATHARINA, BIANCA, GREMIO, and HORTENSIO. LUCENTIO and  
TRANIO stand by*

## **BAPTISTA**

Gentlemen, importune me no farther,  
For how I firmly am resolved you know;  
That is, not bestow my youngest daughter  
Before I have a husband for the elder:  
If either of you both love Katharina,  
Because I know you well and love you well,  
Leave shall you have to court her at your pleasure.

## **GREMIO**

[Aside] To cart her rather: she's too rough for me.

There, There, Hortensio, will you any wife?

**KATHARINA**

I pray you, sir, is it your will  
To make a stale of me amongst these mates?

**HORTENSIO**

Mates, maid! how mean you that? no mates for you,  
Unless you were of gentler, milder mould.

**KATHARINA**

I'faith, sir, you shall never need to fear:  
I wis it is not half way to her heart;  
But if it were, doubt not her care should be  
To comb your noddle with a three-legg'd stool  
And paint your face and use you like a fool.

**HORTENSIA**

From all such devils, good Lord deliver us!

**GREMIO**

And me too, good Lord!

**TRANIO**

Hush, master! here's some good pastime toward:  
That wench is stark mad or wonderful froward.

**LUCENTIO**

But in the other's silence do I see  
Maid's mild behavior and sobriety.  
Peace, Tranio!

**TRANIO**

Well said, master; mum! and gaze your fill.

## **BAPTISTA**

Gentlemen, that I may soon make good  
What I have said, Bianca, get you in:  
And let it not displease thee, good Bianca,  
For I will love thee ne'er the less, my girl.

## **KATHARINA**

A pretty peat! it is best  
Put finger in the eye, an she knew why.

## **BIANCA**

Sister, content you in my discontent.  
Sir, to your pleasure humbly I subscribe:  
My books and instruments shall be my company,  
On them to took and practise by myself.

## **LUCENTIO**

Hark, Tranio! thou may'st hear Minerva speak.

## **HORTENSIO**

Signior Baptista, will you be so strange?  
Sorry am I that our good will effects  
Bianca's grief.

## **GREMIO**

Why will you mew her up,  
Signior Baptista, for this fiend of hell,  
And make her bear the penance of her tongue?

## **BAPTISTA**

Gentlemen, content ye; I am resolved:  
Go in, Bianca:

*Exit BIANCA*

And for I know she taketh most delight  
In music, instruments and poetry,  
Schoolmasters will I keep within my house,  
Fit to instruct her youth. If you, Hortensio,  
Or Signior Gremio, you, know any such,  
Prefer them hither; for to cunning men  
I will be very kind, and liberal  
To mine own children in good bringing up:  
And so farewell. Katharina, you may stay;  
For I have more to commune with Bianca.

*Exit*

## **KATHARINA**

Why, and I trust I may go too, may I not? What,  
shall I be appointed hours; as though, belike, I  
knew not what to take and what to leave, ha?

*Exit*

## **GREMIO**

You may go to the devil's dam: your gifts are so  
good, here's none will hold you. Their love is not  
so great, Hortensio, but we may blow our nails  
together, and fast it fairly out: our cakes dough on  
both sides. Farewell: yet for the love I bear my  
sweet Bianca, if I can by any means light on a fit  
man to teach her that wherein she delights, I will  
wish him to her father.

## **HORTENSIO**

So will I, Signior Gremio: but a word, I pray.  
Though the nature of our quarrel yet never brooked  
parle, know now, upon advice, it toucheth us both,  
that we may yet again have access to our fair  
mistress and be happy rivals in Bianco's love, to

labour and effect one thing specially.

**GREMIO**

What's that, I pray?

**HORTENSIO**

Marry, sir, to get a husband for her sister.

**GREMIO**

A husband! a devil.

**HORTENSIO**

I say, a husband.

**GREMIO**

I say, a devil. Thinkest thou, Hortensio, though  
her father be very rich, any man is so very a fool  
to be married to hell?

**HORTENSIO**

Tush, Gremio, though it pass your patience and mine  
to endure her loud alarums, why, man, there be good  
fellows in the world, an a man could light on them,  
would take her with all faults, and money enough.

**GREMIO**

I cannot tell; but I had as lief take her dowry with  
this condition, to be whipped at the high cross  
every morning.

**HORTENSIO**

Faith, as you say, there's small choice in rotten  
apples. But come; since this bar in law makes us

friends, it shall be so far forth friendly  
maintained all by helping Baptista's eldest daughter  
to a husband we set his youngest free for a husband,  
and then have to't a fresh. Sweet Bianca! Happy man  
be his dole! He that runs fastest gets the ring.  
How say you, Signior Gremio?

## **GREMIO**

I am agreed; and would I had given him the best  
horse in Padua to begin his wooing that would  
thoroughly woo her, wed her and bed her and rid the  
house of her! Come on.

*Exeunt GREMIO and HORTENSIO*

## **TRANIO**

I pray, sir, tell me, is it possible  
That love should of a sudden take such hold?

## **LUCENTIO**

O Tranio, till I found it to be true,  
I never thought it possible or likely;  
But see, while idly I stood looking on,  
I found the effect of love in idleness:  
And now in plainness do confess to thee,  
That art to me as secret and as dear  
As Anna to the queen of Carthage was,  
Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio,  
If I achieve not this young modest girl.  
Counsel me, Tranio, for I know thou canst;  
Assist me, Tranio, for I know thou wilt.

## **TRANIO**

Master, it is no time to chide you now;  
Affection is not rated from the heart:  
If love have touch'd you, nought remains but so,  
'Redime te captum quam queas minimo.'



## LUCENTIO

Gramercies, lad, go forward; this contents:  
The rest will comfort, for thy counsel's sound.

## TRANIO

Master, you look'd so longly on the maid,  
Perhaps you mark'd not what's the pith of all.

## LUCENTIO

O yes, I saw sweet beauty in her face,  
Such as the daughter of Agenor had,  
That made great Jove to humble him to her hand.  
When with his knees he kiss'd the Cretan strand.

## TRANIO

Saw you no more? mark'd you not how her sister  
Began to scold and raise up such a storm  
That mortal ears might hardly endure the din?

## LUCENTIO

Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move  
And with her breath she did perfume the air:  
Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.

## TRANIO

Nay, then, 'tis time to stir him from his trance.  
I pray, awake, sir: if you love the maid,  
Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her. Thus it stands:  
Her eldest sister is so curst and shrewd  
That till the father rid his hands of her,  
Master, your love must live a maid at home;  
And therefore has he closely mew'd her up,  
Because she will not be annoy'd with suitors.

## LUCENTIO

Ah, Tranio, what a cruel father's he!  
But art thou not advised, he took some care  
To get her cunning schoolmasters to instruct her?

**TRANIO**

Ay, marry, am I, sir; and now 'tis plotted.

**LUCENTIO**

I have it, Tranio.

**TRANIO**

Master, for my hand,  
Both our inventions meet and jump in one.

**LUCENTIO**

Tell me thine first.

**TRANIO**

You will be schoolmaster  
And undertake the teaching of the maid:  
That's your device.

**LUCENTIO**

It is: may it be done?

**TRANIO**

Not possible; for who shall bear your part,  
And be in Padua here Vincentio's son,  
Keep house and ply his book, welcome his friends,  
Visit his countrymen and banquet them?

**LUCENTIO**

Basta; content thee, for I have it full.

We have not yet been seen in any house,  
Nor can we lie distinguish'd by our faces  
For man or master; then it follows thus;  
Thou shalt be master, Tranio, in my stead,  
Keep house and port and servants as I should:  
I will some other be, some Florentine,  
Some Neapolitan, or meaner man of Pisa.  
'Tis hatch'd and shall be so: Tranio, at once  
Uncase thee; take my colour'd hat and cloak:  
When Biondello comes, he waits on thee;  
But I will charm him first to keep his tongue.

## **TRANIO**

So had you need.  
In brief, sir, sith it your pleasure is,  
And I am tied to be obedient;  
For so your father charged me at our parting,  
'Be serviceable to my son,' quoth he,  
Although I think 'twas in another sense;  
I am content to be Lucentio,  
Because so well I love Lucentio.

## **LUCENTIO**

Tranio, be so, because Lucentio loves:  
And let me be a slave, to achieve that maid  
Whose sudden sight hath thrall'd my wounded eye.  
Here comes the rogue.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

Sirrah, where have you been?

## **BIONDELLO**

Where have I been! Nay, how now! where are you?  
Master, has my fellow Tranio stolen your clothes? Or  
you stolen his? or both? pray, what's the news?

## **LUCENTIO**

Sirrah, come hither: 'tis no time to jest,  
And therefore frame your manners to the time.  
Your fellow Tranio here, to save my life,  
Puts my apparel and my countenance on,  
And I for my escape have put on his;  
For in a quarrel since I came ashore  
I kill'd a man and fear I was descried:  
Wait you on him, I charge you, as becomes,  
While I make way from hence to save my life:  
You understand me?

**BIONDELLO**

I, sir! ne'er a whit.

**LUCENTIO**

And not a jot of Tranio in your mouth:  
Tranio is changed into Lucentio.

**BIONDELLO**

The better for him: would I were so too!

**TRANIO**

So could I, faith, boy, to have the next wish after,  
That Lucentio indeed had Baptista's youngest daughter.  
But, sirrah, not for my sake, but your master's, I advise  
You use your manners discreetly in all kind of companies:  
When I am alone, why, then I am Tranio;  
But in all places else your master Lucentio.

**LUCENTIO**

Tranio, let's go: one thing more rests, that  
thysself execute, to make one among these wooers: if  
thou ask me why, sufficeth, my reasons are both good  
and weighty.

*Exeunt*

*The presenters above speak*

**First Servant**

My lord, you nod; you do not mind the play.

**SLY**

Yes, by Saint Anne, do I. A good matter, surely:  
comes there any more of it?

**Page**

My lord, 'tis but begun.

**SLY**

'Tis a very excellent piece of work, madam lady:  
would 'twere done!

*They sit and mark*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Padua. Before HORTENSIO'S house.

*Enter PETRUCHIO and his man GRUMIO*

### PETRUCHIO

Verona, for a while I take my leave,  
To see my friends in Padua, but of all  
My best beloved and approved friend,  
Hortensio; and I trow this is his house.  
Here, sirrah Grumio; knock, I say.

### GRUMIO

Knock, sir! whom should I knock? is there man has  
reused your worship?

### PETRUCHIO

Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.

### GRUMIO

Knock you here, sir! why, sir, what am I, sir, that  
I should knock you here, sir?

### PETRUCHIO

Villain, I say, knock me at this gate  
And rap me well, or I'll knock your knave's pate.

### GRUMIO

My master is grown quarrelsome. I should knock  
you first,  
And then I know after who comes by the worst.

**PETRUCHIO**

Will it not be?  
Faith, sirrah, an you'll not knock, I'll ring it;  
I'll try how you can sol, fa, and sing it.

*He wrings him by the ears*

**GRUMIO**

Help, masters, help! my master is mad.

**PETRUCHIO**

Now, knock when I bid you, sirrah villain!

*Enter HORTENSIO*

**HORTENSIO**

How now! what's the matter? My old friend Grumio!  
and my good friend Petruchio! How do you all at Verona?

**PETRUCHIO**

Signior Hortensio, come you to part the fray?  
'Con tutto il cuore, ben trovato,' may I say.

**HORTENSIO**

'Alla nostra casa ben venuto, molto honorato signor  
mio Petruchio.' Rise, Grumio, rise: we will compound  
this quarrel.

**GRUMIO**

Nay, 'tis no matter, sir, what he 'leges in Latin.  
if this be not a lawful case for me to leave his  
service, look you, sir, he bid me knock him and rap  
him soundly, sir: well, was it fit for a servant to  
use his master so, being perhaps, for aught I see,

two and thirty, a pip out? Whom would to God I had  
well knock'd at first, Then had not Grumio come by the worst.

## **PETRUCHIO**

A senseless villain! Good Hortensio,  
I bade the rascal knock upon your gate  
And could not get him for my heart to do it.

## **GRUMIO**

Knock at the gate! O heavens! Spake you not these  
words plain, 'Sirrah, knock me here, rap me here,  
knock me well, and knock me soundly'? And come you  
now with, 'knocking at the gate'?

## **PETRUCHIO**

Sirrah, be gone, or talk not, I advise you.

## **HORTENSIO**

Petruchio, patience; I am Grumio's pledge:  
Why, this's a heavy chance 'twixt him and you,  
Your ancient, trusty, pleasant servant Grumio.  
And tell me now, sweet friend, what happy gale  
Blows you to Padua here from old Verona?

## **PETRUCHIO**

Such wind as scatters young men through the world,  
To seek their fortunes farther than at home  
Where small experience grows. But in a few,  
Signior Hortensio, thus it stands with me:  
Antonio, my father, is deceased;  
And I have thrust myself into this maze,  
Haply to wive and thrive as best I may:  
Crowns in my purse I have and goods at home,  
And so am come abroad to see the world.

## **HORTENSIO**



Petruchio, shall I then come roundly to thee  
And wish thee to a shrewd ill-favour'd wife?  
Thou'ldst thank me but a little for my counsel:  
And yet I'll promise thee she shall be rich  
And very rich: but thou'rt too much my friend,  
And I'll not wish thee to her.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Signior Hortensio, 'twixt such friends as we  
Few words suffice; and therefore, if thou know  
One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife,  
As wealth is burden of my wooing dance,  
Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,  
As old as Sibyl and as curst and shrewd  
As Socrates' Xanthippe, or a worse,  
She moves me not, or not removes, at least,  
Affection's edge in me, were she as rough  
As are the swelling Adriatic seas:  
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;  
If wealthily, then happily in Padua.

## **GRUMIO**

Nay, look you, sir, he tells you flatly what his  
mind is: Why give him gold enough and marry him to  
a puppet or an aglet-baby; or an old trot with ne'er  
a tooth in her head, though she have as many diseases  
as two and fifty horses: why, nothing comes amiss,  
so money comes withal.

## **HORTENSIO**

Petruchio, since we are stepp'd thus far in,  
I will continue that I broach'd in jest.  
I can, Petruchio, help thee to a wife  
With wealth enough and young and beauteous,  
Brought up as best becomes a gentlewoman:  
Her only fault, and that is faults enough,  
Is that she is intolerable curst  
And shrewd and froward, so beyond all measure  
That, were my state far worsen than it is,

I would not wed her for a mine of gold.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Hortensio, peace! thou know'st not gold's effect:  
Tell me her father's name and 'tis enough;  
For I will board her, though she chide as loud  
As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack.

## **HORTENSIO**

Her father is Baptista Minola,  
An affable and courteous gentleman:  
Her name is Katharina Minola,  
Renown'd in Padua for her scolding tongue.

## **PETRUCHIO**

I know her father, though I know not her;  
And he knew my deceased father well.  
I will not sleep, Hortensio, till I see her;  
And therefore let me be thus bold with you  
To give you over at this first encounter,  
Unless you will accompany me thither.

## **GRUMIO**

I pray you, sir, let him go while the humour lasts.  
O' my word, an she knew him as well as I do, she  
would think scolding would do little good upon him:  
she may perhaps call him half a score knaves or so:  
why, that's nothing; an he begin once, he'll rail in  
his rope-tricks. I'll tell you what sir, an she  
stand him but a little, he will throw a figure in  
her face and so disfigure her with it that she  
shall have no more eyes to see withal than a cat.  
You know him not, sir.

## **HORTENSIO**

Tarry, Petruchio, I must go with thee,  
For in Baptista's keep my treasure is:

He hath the jewel of my life in hold,  
His youngest daughter, beautiful Binaca,  
And her withholds from me and other more,  
Suitors to her and rivals in my love,  
Supposing it a thing impossible,  
For those defects I have before rehearsed,  
That ever Katharina will be woo'd;  
Therefore this order hath Baptista ta'en,  
That none shall have access unto Bianca  
Till Katharina the curst have got a husband.

## **GRUMIO**

Katharina the curst!  
A title for a maid of all titles the worst.

## **HORTENSIO**

Now shall my friend Petruchio do me grace,  
And offer me disguised in sober robes  
To old Baptista as a schoolmaster  
Well seen in music, to instruct Bianca;  
That so I may, by this device, at least  
Have leave and leisure to make love to her  
And unsuspected court her by herself.

## **GRUMIO**

Here's no knavery! See, to beguile the old folks,  
how the young folks lay their heads together!

*Enter GREMIO, and LUCENTIO disguised*

Master, master, look about you: who goes there, ha?

## **HORTENSIO**

Peace, Grumio! it is the rival of my love.  
Petruchio, stand by a while.

## **GRUMIO**

A proper stripling and an amorous!

**GREMIO**

O, very well; I have perused the note.  
Hark you, sir: I'll have them very fairly bound:  
All books of love, see that at any hand;  
And see you read no other lectures to her:  
You understand me: over and beside  
Signior Baptista's liberality,  
I'll mend it with a largess. Take your paper too,  
And let me have them very well perfumed  
For she is sweeter than perfume itself  
To whom they go to. What will you read to her?

**LUCENTIO**

Whate'er I read to her, I'll plead for you  
As for my patron, stand you so assured,  
As firmly as yourself were still in place:  
Yea, and perhaps with more successful words  
Than you, unless you were a scholar, sir.

**GREMIO**

O this learning, what a thing it is!

**GRUMIO**

O this woodcock, what an ass it is!

**PETRUCHIO**

Peace, sirrah!

**HORTENSIO**

Grumio, mum! God save you, Signior Gremio.

**GREMIO**

And you are well met, Signior Hortensio.  
Trow you whither I am going? To Baptista Minola.  
I promised to inquire carefully  
About a schoolmaster for the fair Bianca:  
And by good fortune I have lighted well  
On this young man, for learning and behavior  
Fit for her turn, well read in poetry  
And other books, good ones, I warrant ye.

## **HORTENSIO**

'Tis well; and I have met a gentleman  
Hath promised me to help me to another,  
A fine musician to instruct our mistress;  
So shall I no whit be behind in duty  
To fair Bianca, so beloved of me.

## **GREMIO**

Beloved of me; and that my deeds shall prove.

## **GRUMIO**

And that his bags shall prove.

## **HORTENSIO**

Gremio, 'tis now no time to vent our love:  
Listen to me, and if you speak me fair,  
I'll tell you news indifferent good for either.  
Here is a gentleman whom by chance I met,  
Upon agreement from us to his liking,  
Will undertake to woo curst Katharina,  
Yea, and to marry her, if her dowry please.

## **GREMIO**

So said, so done, is well.  
Hortensio, have you told him all her faults?

## **PETRUCHIO**

I know she is an irksome brawling scold:  
If that be all, masters, I hear no harm.

**GREMIO**

No, say'st me so, friend? What countryman?

**PETRUCHIO**

Born in Verona, old Antonio's son:  
My father dead, my fortune lives for me;  
And I do hope good days and long to see.

**GREMIO**

O sir, such a life, with such a wife, were strange!  
But if you have a stomach, to't i' God's name:  
You shall have me assisting you in all.  
But will you woo this wild-cat?

**PETRUCHIO**

Will I live?

**GRUMIO**

Will he woo her? ay, or I'll hang her.

**PETRUCHIO**

Why came I hither but to that intent?  
Think you a little din can daunt mine ears?  
Have I not in my time heard lions roar?  
Have I not heard the sea puff'd up with winds  
Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?  
Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,  
And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?  
Have I not in a pitched battle heard  
Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang?  
And do you tell me of a woman's tongue,  
That gives not half so great a blow to hear

As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?  
Tush, tush! fear boys with bugs.

**GRUMIO**

For he fears none.

**GREMIO**

Hortensio, hark:  
This gentleman is happily arrived,  
My mind presumes, for his own good and ours.

**HORTENSIO**

I promised we would be contributors  
And bear his charging of wooing, whatsoe'er.

**GREMIO**

And so we will, provided that he win her.

**GRUMIO**

I would I were as sure of a good dinner.

*Enter TRANIO brave, and BIONDELLO*

**TRANIO**

Gentlemen, God save you. If I may be bold,  
Tell me, I beseech you, which is the readiest way  
To the house of Signior Baptista Minola?

**BIONDELLO**

He that has the two fair daughters: is't he you mean?

**TRANIO**

Even he, Biondello.

**GREMIO**

Hark you, sir; you mean not her to--

**TRANIO**

Perhaps, him and her, sir: what have you to do?

**PETRUCHIO**

Not her that chides, sir, at any hand, I pray.

**TRANIO**

I love no chiders, sir. Biondello, let's away.

**LUCENTIO**

Well begun, Tranio.

**HORTENSIO**

Sir, a word ere you go;  
Are you a suitor to the maid you talk of, yea or no?

**TRANIO**

And if I be, sir, is it any offence?

**GREMIO**

No; if without more words you will get you hence.

**TRANIO**

Why, sir, I pray, are not the streets as free  
For me as for you?

**GREMIO**



But so is not she.

**TRANIO**

For what reason, I beseech you?

**GREMIO**

For this reason, if you'll know,  
That she's the choice love of Signior Gremio.

**HORTENSIO**

That she's the chosen of Signior Hortensio.

**TRANIO**

Softly, my masters! if you be gentlemen,  
Do me this right; hear me with patience.  
Baptista is a noble gentleman,  
To whom my father is not all unknown;  
And were his daughter fairer than she is,  
She may more suitors have and me for one.  
Fair Leda's daughter had a thousand wooers;  
Then well one more may fair Bianca have:  
And so she shall; Lucentio shall make one,  
Though Paris came in hope to speed alone.

**GREMIO**

What! this gentleman will out-talk us all.

**LUCENTIO**

Sir, give him head: I know he'll prove a jade.

**PETRUCHIO**

Hortensio, to what end are all these words?

**HORTENSIO**

Sir, let me be so bold as ask you,  
Did you yet ever see Baptista's daughter?

**TRANIO**

No, sir; but hear I do that he hath two,  
The one as famous for a scolding tongue  
As is the other for beauteous modesty.

**PETRUCHIO**

Sir, sir, the first's for me; let her go by.

**GREMIO**

Yea, leave that labour to great Hercules;  
And let it be more than Alcides' twelve.

**PETRUCHIO**

Sir, understand you this of me in sooth:  
The younges t daughter whom you hearken for  
Her father keeps from all access of suitors,  
And will not promise her to any man  
Until the elder sister first be wed:  
The younger then is free and not before.

**TRANIO**

If it be so, sir, that you are the man  
Must stead us all and me amongst the rest,  
And if you break the ice and do this feat,  
Achieve the elder, set the younger free  
For our access, whose hap shall be to have her  
Will not so graceless be to be ingrate.

**HORTENSIO**

Sir, you say well and well you do conceive;  
And since you do profess to be a suitor,  
You must, as we do, gratify this gentleman,

To whom we all rest generally beholding.

**TRANIO**

Sir, I shall not be slack: in sign whereof,  
Please ye we may contrive this afternoon,  
And quaff carouses to our mistress' health,  
And do as adversaries do in law,  
Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.

**GRUMIO BIONDELLO**

O excellent motion! Fellows, let's be gone.

**HORTENSIO**

The motion's good indeed and be it so,  
Petruccio, I shall be your benvenuto.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Padua. A room in BAPTISTA'S house.

*Enter KATHARINA and BIANCA*

**BIANCA**

Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself,  
To make a bondmaid and a slave of me;  
That I disdain: but for these other gawds,  
Unbind my hands, I'll pull them off myself,  
Yea, all my raiment, to my petticoat;  
Or what you will command me will I do,  
So well I know my duty to my elders.

**KATHARINA**

Of all thy suitors, here I charge thee, tell  
Whom thou lovest best: see thou dissemble not.

**BIANCA**

Believe me, sister, of all the men alive  
I never yet beheld that special face  
Which I could fancy more than any other.

**KATHARINA**

Minion, thou liest. Is't not Hortensio?

**BIANCA**

If you affect him, sister, here I swear  
I'll plead for you myself, but you shall have  
him.

**KATHARINA**

O then, belike, you fancy riches more:  
You will have Gremio to keep you fair.

**BIANCA**

Is it for him you do envy me so?  
Nay then you jest, and now I well perceive  
You have but jested with me all this while:  
I prithee, sister Kate, untie my hands.

**KATHARINA**

If that be jest, then all the rest was so.

*Strikes her*

*Enter BAPTISTA*

**BAPTISTA**

Why, how now, dame! whence grows this insolence?  
Bianca, stand aside. Poor girl! she weeps.  
Go ply thy needle; meddle not with her.  
For shame, thou holding of a devilish spirit,  
Why dost thou wrong her that did ne'er wrong thee?  
When did she cross thee with a bitter word?

**KATHARINA**

Her silence flouts me, and I'll be revenged.

*Flies after BIANCA*

**BAPTISTA**

What, in my sight? Bianca, get thee in.

*Exit BIANCA*

**KATHARINA**

What, will you not suffer me? Nay, now I see  
She is your treasure, she must have a husband;  
I must dance bare-foot on her wedding day  
And for your love to her lead apes in hell.  
Talk not to me: I will go sit and weep  
Till I can find occasion of revenge.

*Exit*

**BAPTISTA**

Was ever gentleman thus grieved as I?  
But who comes here?

*Enter GREMIO, LUCENTIO in the habit of a mean man; PETRUCHIO, with  
HORTENSIO as a musician; and TRANIO, with BIONDELLO bearing a lute and books*

**GREMIO**

Good morrow, neighbour Baptista.

**BAPTISTA**

Good morrow, neighbour Gremio.  
God save you, gentlemen!

**PETRUCHIO**

And you, good sir! Pray, have you not a daughter  
Call'd Katharina, fair and virtuous?

**BAPTISTA**

I have a daughter, sir, called Katharina.

**GREMIO**

You are too blunt: go to it orderly.

**PETRUCHIO**

You wrong me, Signior Gremio: give me leave.  
I am a gentleman of Verona, sir,  
That, hearing of her beauty and her wit,  
Her affability and bashful modesty,  
Her wondrous qualities and mild behavior,  
Am bold to show myself a forward guest  
Within your house, to make mine eye the witness  
Of that report which I so oft have heard.  
And, for an entrance to my entertainment,  
I do present you with a man of mine,

*Presenting HORTENSIO*

Cunning in music and the mathematics,  
To instruct her fully in those sciences,  
Whereof I know she is not ignorant:  
Accept of him, or else you do me wrong:  
His name is Licio, born in Mantua.

**BAPTISTA**

You're welcome, sir; and he, for your good sake.  
But for my daughter Katharina, this I know,  
She is not for your turn, the more my grief.

**PETRUCHIO**

I see you do not mean to part with her,  
Or else you like not of my company.

**BAPTISTA**

Mistake me not; I speak but as I find.  
Whence are you, sir? what may I call your name?

**PETRUCHIO**

Petruchio is my name; Antonio's son,  
A man well known throughout all Italy.

**BAPTISTA**

I know him well: you are welcome for his sake.

**GREMIO**

Saving your tale, Petruchio, I pray,  
Let us, that are poor petitioners, speak too:  
Baccare! you are marvellous forward.

**PETRUCHIO**

O, pardon me, Signior Gremio; I would fain be doing.

**GREMIO**

I doubt it not, sir; but you will curse your  
wooing. Neighbour, this is a gift very grateful, I am  
sure of it. To express the like kindness, myself,  
that have been more kindly beholding to you than  
any, freely give unto you this young scholar,

*Presenting LUCENTIO*

that hath been long studying at Rheims; as cunning  
in Greek, Latin, and other languages, as the other  
in music and mathematics: his name is Cambio; pray,  
accept his service.

**BAPTISTA**

A thousand thanks, Signior Gremio.  
Welcome, good Cambio.

*To TRANIO*

But, gentle sir, methinks you walk like a stranger:  
may I be so bold to know the cause of your coming?

**TRANIO**

Pardon me, sir, the boldness is mine own,  
That, being a stranger in this city here,



Do make myself a suitor to your daughter,  
Unto Bianca, fair and virtuous.  
Nor is your firm resolve unknown to me,  
In the preferment of the eldest sister.  
This liberty is all that I request,  
That, upon knowledge of my parentage,  
I may have welcome 'mongst the rest that woo  
And free access and favour as the rest:  
And, toward the education of your daughters,  
I here bestow a simple instrument,  
And this small packet of Greek and Latin books:  
If you accept them, then their worth is great.

## **BAPTISTA**

Lucentio is your name; of whence, I pray?

## **TRANIO**

Of Pisa, sir; son to Vincentio.

## **BAPTISTA**

A mighty man of Pisa; by report  
I know him well: you are very welcome, sir,  
Take you the lute, and you the set of books;  
You shall go see your pupils presently.  
Holla, within!

*Enter a Servant*

Sirrah, lead these gentlemen  
To my daughters; and tell them both,  
These are their tutors: bid them use them well.

*Exit Servant, with LUCENTIO and HORTENSIO, BIONDELLO following*

We will go walk a little in the orchard,  
And then to dinner. You are passing welcome,  
And so I pray you all to think yourselves.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Signior Baptista, my business asketh haste,  
And every day I cannot come to woo.  
You knew my father well, and in him me,  
Left solely heir to all his lands and goods,  
Which I have better'd rather than decreased:  
Then tell me, if I get your daughter's love,  
What dowry shall I have with her to wife?

**BAPTISTA**

After my death the one half of my lands,  
And in possession twenty thousand crowns.

**PETRUCHIO**

And, for that dowry, I'll assure her of  
Her widowhood, be it that she survive me,  
In all my lands and leases whatsoever:  
Let specialties be therefore drawn between us,  
That covenants may be kept on either hand.

**BAPTISTA**

Ay, when the special thing is well obtain'd,  
That is, her love; for that is all in all.

**PETRUCHIO**

Why, that is nothing: for I tell you, father,  
I am as peremptory as she proud-minded;  
And where two raging fires meet together  
They do consume the thing that feeds their fury:  
Though little fire grows great with little wind,  
Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all:  
So I to her and so she yields to me;  
For I am rough and woo not like a babe.

**BAPTISTA**

Well mayst thou woo, and happy be thy speed!  
But be thou arm'd for some unhappy words.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Ay, to the proof; as mountains are for winds,  
That shake not, though they blow perpetually.

*Re-enter HORTENSIO, with his head broke*

## **BAPTISTA**

How now, my friend! why dost thou look so pale?

## **HORTENSIO**

For fear, I promise you, if I look pale.

## **BAPTISTA**

What, will my daughter prove a good musician?

## **HORTENSIO**

I think she'll sooner prove a soldier  
Iron may hold with her, but never lutes.

## **BAPTISTA**

Why, then thou canst not break her to the lute?

## **HORTENSIO**

Why, no; for she hath broke the lute to me.  
I did but tell her she mistook her frets,  
And bow'd her hand to teach her fingering;  
When, with a most impatient devilish spirit,  
'Frets, call you these?' quoth she; 'I'll fume  
with them.'  
And, with that word, she struck me on the head,  
And through the instrument my pate made way;  
And there I stood amazed for a while,  
As on a pillory, looking through the lute;

While she did call me rascal fiddler  
And twangling Jack; with twenty such vile terms,  
As had she studied to misuse me so.

**PETRUCHIO**

Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench;  
I love her ten times more than e'er I did:  
O, how I long to have some chat with her!

**BAPTISTA**

Well, go with me and be not so discomfited:  
Proceed in practise with my younger daughter;  
She's apt to learn and thankful for good turns.  
Signior Petruchio, will you go with us,  
Or shall I send my daughter Kate to you?

**PETRUCHIO**

I pray you do.

*Exeunt all but PETRUCHIO*

I will attend her here,  
And woo her with some spirit when she comes.  
Say that she rail; why then I'll tell her plain  
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale:  
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear  
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew:  
Say she be mute and will not speak a word;  
Then I'll commend her volubility,  
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence:  
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,  
As though she bid me stay by her a week:  
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day  
When I shall ask the banns and when be married.  
But here she comes; and now, Petruchio, speak.

*Enter KATHARINA*

Good morrow, Kate; for that's your name, I hear.

**KATHARINA**

Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:  
They call me Katharina that do talk of me.

**PETRUCHIO**

You lie, in faith; for you are call'd plain Kate,  
And bonny Kate and sometimes Kate the curst;  
But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom  
Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,  
For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,  
Take this of me, Kate of my consolation;  
Hearing thy mildness praised in every town,  
Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,  
Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,  
Myself am moved to woo thee for my wife.

**KATHARINA**

Moved! in good time: let him that moved you hither  
Remove you hence: I knew you at the first  
You were a moveable.

**PETRUCHIO**

Why, what's a moveable?

**KATHARINA**

A join'd-stool.

**PETRUCHIO**

Thou hast hit it: come, sit on me.

**KATHARINA**

Asses are made to bear, and so are you.

**PETRUCHIO**

Women are made to bear, and so are you.

**KATHARINA**

No such jade as you, if me you mean.

**PETRUCHIO**

Alas! good Kate, I will not burden thee;  
For, knowing thee to be but young and light--

**KATHARINA**

Too light for such a swain as you to catch;  
And yet as heavy as my weight should be.

**PETRUCHIO**

Should be! should--buzz!

**KATHARINA**

Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.

**PETRUCHIO**

O slow-wing'd turtle! shall a buzzard take thee?

**KATHARINA**

Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.

**PETRUCHIO**

Come, come, you wasp; i' faith, you are too angry.

**KATHARINA**

If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

**PETRUCHIO**

My remedy is then, to pluck it out.

**KATHARINA**

Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies,

**PETRUCHIO**

Who knows not where a wasp does  
wear his sting? In his tail.

**KATHARINA**

In his tongue.

**PETRUCHIO**

Whose tongue?

**KATHARINA**

Yours, if you talk of tails: and so farewell.

**PETRUCHIO**

What, with my tongue in your tail? nay, come again,  
Good Kate; I am a gentleman.

**KATHARINA**

That I'll try.

*She strikes him*

**PETRUCHIO**

I swear I'll cuff you, if you strike again.

**KATHARINA**

So may you lose your arms:  
If you strike me, you are no gentleman;  
And if no gentleman, why then no arms.

**PETRUCHIO**

A herald, Kate? O, put me in thy books!

**KATHARINA**

What is your crest? a coxcomb?

**PETRUCHIO**

A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen.

**KATHARINA**

No cock of mine; you crow too like a craven.

**PETRUCHIO**

Nay, come, Kate, come; you must not look so sour.

**KATHARINA**

It is my fashion, when I see a crab.

**PETRUCHIO**

Why, here's no crab; and therefore look not sour.

**KATHARINA**

There is, there is.

**PETRUCHIO**



Then show it me.

**KATHARINA**

Had I a glass, I would.

**PETRUCHIO**

What, you mean my face?

**KATHARINA**

Well aim'd of such a young one.

**PETRUCHIO**

Now, by Saint George, I am too young for you.

**KATHARINA**

Yet you are wither'd.

**PETRUCHIO**

'Tis with cares.

**KATHARINA**

I care not.

**PETRUCHIO**

Nay, hear you, Kate: in sooth you scape not so.

**KATHARINA**

I chafe you, if I tarry: let me go.

**PETRUCHIO**

No, not a whit: I find you passing gentle.

'Twas told me you were rough and coy and sullen,  
And now I find report a very liar;  
For thou are pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,  
But slow in speech, yet sweet as spring-time flowers:  
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,  
Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will,  
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk,  
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,  
With gentle conference, soft and affable.  
Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?  
O slanderous world! Kate like the hazel-twigg  
Is straight and slender and as brown in hue  
As hazel nuts and sweeter than the kernels.  
O, let me see thee walk: thou dost not halt.

**KATHARINA**

Go, fool, and whom thou keep'st command.

**PETRUCHIO**

Did ever Dian so become a grove  
As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?  
O, be thou Dian, and let her be Kate;  
And then let Kate be chaste and Dian sportful!

**KATHARINA**

Where did you study all this goodly speech?

**PETRUCHIO**

It is extempore, from my mother-wit.

**KATHARINA**

A witty mother! witless else her son.

**PETRUCHIO**

Am I not wise?

## **KATHARINA**

Yes; keep you warm.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Marry, so I mean, sweet Katharina, in thy bed:  
And therefore, setting all this chat aside,  
Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented  
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on;  
And, Will you, nill you, I will marry you.  
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn;  
For, by this light, whereby I see thy beauty,  
Thy beauty, that doth make me like thee well,  
Thou must be married to no man but me;  
For I am he am born to tame you Kate,  
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate  
Conformable as other household Kates.  
Here comes your father: never make denial;  
I must and will have Katharina to my wife.

*Re-enter BAPTISTA, GREMIO, and TRANIO*

## **BAPTISTA**

Now, Signior Petruccio, how speed you with my daughter?

## **PETRUCHIO**

How but well, sir? how but well?  
It were impossible I should speed amiss.

## **BAPTISTA**

Why, how now, daughter Katharina! in your dumps?

## **KATHARINA**

Call you me daughter? now, I promise you  
You have show'd a tender fatherly regard,  
To wish me wed to one half lunatic;

A mad-cup ruffian and a swearing Jack,  
That thinks with oaths to face the matter out.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Father, 'tis thus: yourself and all the world,  
That talk'd of her, have talk'd amiss of her:  
If she be curst, it is for policy,  
For she's not froward, but modest as the dove;  
She is not hot, but temperate as the morn;  
For patience she will prove a second Grissel,  
And Roman Lucrece for her chastity:  
And to conclude, we have 'greed so well together,  
That upon Sunday is the wedding-day.

## **KATHARINA**

I'll see thee hang'd on Sunday first.

## **GREMIO**

Hark, Petruchio; she says she'll see thee  
hang'd first.

## **TRANIO**

Is this your speeding? nay, then, good night our part!

## **PETRUCHIO**

Be patient, gentlemen; I choose her for myself:  
If she and I be pleased, what's that to you?  
'Tis bargain'd 'twixt us twain, being alone,  
That she shall still be curst in company.  
I tell you, 'tis incredible to believe  
How much she loves me: O, the kindest Kate!  
She hung about my neck; and kiss on kiss  
She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath,  
That in a twink she won me to her love.  
O, you are novices! 'tis a world to see,  
How tame, when men and women are alone,  
A meacock wretch can make the curstest shrew.

Give me thy hand, Kate: I will unto Venice,  
To buy apparel 'gainst the wedding-day.  
Provide the feast, father, and bid the guests;  
I will be sure my Katharina shall be fine.

**BAPTISTA**

I know not what to say: but give me your hands;  
God send you joy, Petruchio! 'tis a match.

**GREMIO TRANIO**

Amen, say we: we will be witnesses.

**PETRUCHIO**

Father, and wife, and gentlemen, adieu;  
I will to Venice; Sunday comes apace:  
We will have rings and things and fine array;  
And kiss me, Kate, we will be married o'Sunday.

*Exeunt PETRUCHIO and KATHARINA severally*

**GREMIO**

Was ever match clapp'd up so suddenly?

**BAPTISTA**

Faith, gentlemen, now I play a merchant's part,  
And venture madly on a desperate mart.

**TRANIO**

'Twas a commodity lay fretting by you:  
'Twill bring you gain, or perish on the seas.

**BAPTISTA**

The gain I seek is, quiet in the match.

**GREMIO**

No doubt but he hath got a quiet catch.  
But now, Baptists, to your younger daughter:  
Now is the day we long have looked for:  
I am your neighbour, and was suitor first.

**TRANIO**

And I am one that love Bianca more  
Than words can witness, or your thoughts can guess.

**GREMIO**

Youngling, thou canst not love so dear as I.

**TRANIO**

Graybeard, thy love doth freeze.

**GREMIO**

But thine doth fry.  
Skipper, stand back: 'tis age that nourisheth.

**TRANIO**

But youth in ladies' eyes that flourisheth.

**BAPTISTA**

Content you, gentlemen: I will compound this strife:  
'Tis deeds must win the prize; and he of both  
That can assure my daughter greatest dower  
Shall have my Bianca's love.  
Say, Signior Gremio, What can you assure her?

**GREMIO**

First, as you know, my house within the city  
Is richly furnished with plate and gold;

Basins and ewers to lave her dainty hands;  
My hangings all of Tyrian tapestry;  
In ivory coffers I have stuff'd my crowns;  
In cypress chests my arras counterpoints,  
Costly apparel, tents, and canopies,  
Fine linen, Turkey cushions boss'd with pearl,  
Valance of Venice gold in needlework,  
Pewter and brass and all things that belong  
To house or housekeeping: then, at my farm  
I have a hundred milch-kine to the pail,  
Sixscore fat oxen standing in my stalls,  
And all things answerable to this portion.  
Myself am struck in years, I must confess;  
And if I die to-morrow, this is hers,  
If whilst I live she will be only mine.

## **TRANIO**

That 'only' came well in. Sir, list to me:  
I am my father's heir and only son:  
If I may have your daughter to my wife,  
I'll leave her houses three or four as good,  
Within rich Pisa walls, as any one  
Old Signior Gremio has in Padua;  
Besides two thousand ducats by the year  
Of fruitful land, all which shall be her jointure.  
What, have I pinch'd you, Signior Gremio?

## **GREMIO**

Two thousand ducats by the year of land!  
My land amounts not to so much in all:  
That she shall have; besides an argosy  
That now is lying in Marseilles' road.  
What, have I choked you with an argosy?

## **TRANIO**

Gremio, 'tis known my father hath no less  
Than three great argosies; besides two galliases,  
And twelve tight galleys: these I will assure her,  
And twice as much, whate'er thou offer'st next.

**GREMIO**

Nay, I have offer'd all, I have no more;  
And she can have no more than all I have:  
If you like me, she shall have me and mine.

**TRANIO**

Why, then the maid is mine from all the world,  
By your firm promise: Gremio is out-vied.

**BAPTISTA**

I must confess your offer is the best;  
And, let your father make her the assurance,  
She is your own; else, you must pardon me,  
if you should die before him, where's her dower?

**TRANIO**

That's but a cavil: he is old, I young.

**GREMIO**

And may not young men die, as well as old?

**BAPTISTA**

Well, gentlemen,  
I am thus resolved: on Sunday next you know  
My daughter Katharina is to be married:  
Now, on the Sunday following, shall Bianca  
Be bride to you, if you this assurance;  
If not, Signior Gremio:  
And so, I take my leave, and thank you both.

**GREMIO**

Adieu, good neighbour.

*Exit BAPTISTA*



Now I fear thee not:  
Sirrah young gamester, your father were a fool  
To give thee all, and in his waning age  
Set foot under thy table: tut, a toy!  
An old Italian fox is not so kind, my boy.

*Exit*

## **TRANIO**

A vengeance on your crafty wither'd hide!  
Yet I have faced it with a card of ten.  
'Tis in my head to do my master good:  
I see no reason but supposed Lucentio  
Must get a father, call'd 'supposed Vincentio;'  
And that's a wonder: fathers commonly  
Do get their children; but in this case of wooing,  
A child shall get a sire, if I fail not of my cunning.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Padua. BAPTISTA'S house.

*Enter LUCENTIO, HORTENSIO, and BIANCA*

### LUCENTIO

Fiddler, forbear; you grow too forward, sir:  
Have you so soon forgot the entertainment  
Her sister Katharina welcomed you withal?

### HORTENSIO

But, wrangling pedant, this is  
The patroness of heavenly harmony:  
Then give me leave to have prerogative;  
And when in music we have spent an hour,  
Your lecture shall have leisure for as much.

### LUCENTIO

Preposterous ass, that never read so far  
To know the cause why music was ordain'd!  
Was it not to refresh the mind of man  
After his studies or his usual pain?  
Then give me leave to read philosophy,  
And while I pause, serve in your harmony.

### HORTENSIO

Sirrah, I will not bear these braves of thine.

### BIANCA

Why, gentlemen, you do me double wrong,  
To strive for that which resteth in my choice:  
I am no breeching scholar in the schools;

I'll not be tied to hours nor 'pointed times,  
But learn my lessons as I please myself.  
And, to cut off all strife, here sit we down:  
Take you your instrument, play you the whiles;  
His lecture will be done ere you have tuned.

**HORTENSIO**

You'll leave his lecture when I am in tune?

**LUCENTIO**

That will be never: tune your instrument.

**BIANCA**

Where left we last?

**LUCENTIO**

Here, madam:  
'Hic ibat Simois; hic est Sigeia tellus;  
Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.'

**BIANCA**

Construe them.

**LUCENTIO**

'Hic ibat,' as I told you before, 'Simois,' I am  
Lucentio, 'hic est,' son unto Vincentio of Pisa,  
'Sigeia tellus,' disguised thus to get your love;  
'Hic steterat,' and that Lucentio that comes  
a-wooing, 'Priami,' is my man Tranio, 'regia,'  
bearing my port, 'celsa senis,' that we might  
beguile the old pantaloon.

**HORTENSIO**

Madam, my instrument's in tune.

**BIANCA**

Let's hear. O fie! the treble jars.

**LUCENTIO**

Spit in the hole, man, and tune again.

**BIANCA**

Now let me see if I can construe it: 'Hic ibat  
Simois,' I know you not, 'hic est Sigeia tellus,' I  
trust you not; 'Hic steterat Priami,' take heed  
he hear us not, 'regia,' presume not, 'celsa senis,'  
despair not.

**HORTENSIO**

Madam, 'tis now in tune.

**LUCENTIO**

All but the base.

**HORTENSIO**

The base is right; 'tis the base knave that jars.

*Aside*

How fiery and forward our pedant is!  
Now, for my life, the knave doth court my love:  
Pedascule, I'll watch you better yet.

**BIANCA**

In time I may believe, yet I mistrust.

**LUCENTIO**

Mistrust it not: for, sure, AEacides  
Was Ajax, call'd so from his grandfather.

**BIANCA**

I must believe my master; else, I promise you,  
I should be arguing still upon that doubt:  
But let it rest. Now, Licio, to you:  
Good masters, take it not unkindly, pray,  
That I have been thus pleasant with you both.

**HORTENSIO**

You may go walk, and give me leave a while:  
My lessons make no music in three parts.

**LUCENTIO**

Are you so formal, sir? well, I must wait,

*Aside*

And watch withal; for, but I be deceived,  
Our fine musician groweth amorous.

**HORTENSIO**

Madam, before you touch the instrument,  
To learn the order of my fingering,  
I must begin with rudiments of art;  
To teach you gamut in a briefer sort,  
More pleasant, pithy and effectual,  
Than hath been taught by any of my trade:  
And there it is in writing, fairly drawn.

**BIANCA**

Why, I am past my gamut long ago.

**HORTENSIO**

Yet read the gamut of Hortensio.

## **BIANCA**

[Reads] "Gamut' I am, the ground of all accord,  
'A re,' to Plead Hortensio's passion;  
'B mi,' Bianca, take him for thy lord,  
'C fa ut,' that loves with all affection:  
'D sol re,' one clef, two notes have I:  
'E la mi,' show pity, or I die.'  
Call you this gamut? tut, I like it not:  
Old fashions please me best; I am not so nice,  
To change true rules for old inventions.

*Enter a Servant*

## **Servant**

Mistress, your father prays you leave your books  
And help to dress your sister's chamber up:  
You know to-morrow is the wedding-day.

## **BIANCA**

Farewell, sweet masters both; I must be gone.

*Exeunt BIANCA and Servant*

## **LUCENTIO**

Faith, mistress, then I have no cause to stay.

*Exit*

## **HORTENSIO**

But I have cause to pry into this pedant:  
Methinks he looks as though he were in love:  
Yet if thy thoughts, Bianca, be so humble  
To cast thy wandering eyes on every stale,  
Seize thee that list: if once I find thee ranging,

Hortensio will be quit with thee by changing.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house.

*Enter BAPTISTA, GREMIO, TRANIO, KATHARINA, BIANCA, LUCENTIO, and others, attendants*

### BAPTISTA

[To TRANIO] Signior Lucentio, this is the  
'pointed day.  
That Katharina and Petruchio should be married,  
And yet we hear not of our son-in-law.  
What will be said? what mockery will it be,  
To want the bridegroom when the priest attends  
To speak the ceremonial rites of marriage!  
What says Lucentio to this shame of ours?

### KATHARINA

No shame but mine: I must, forsooth, be forced  
To give my hand opposed against my heart  
Unto a mad-brain rudesby full of spleen;  
Who woo'd in haste and means to wed at leisure.  
I told you, I, he was a frantic fool,  
Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior:  
And, to be noted for a merry man,  
He'll woo a thousand, 'point the day of marriage,  
Make feasts, invite friends, and proclaim the banns;  
Yet never means to wed where he hath woo'd.  
Now must the world point at poor Katharina,  
And say, 'Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife,  
If it would please him come and marry her!'

### TRANIO

Patience, good Katharina, and Baptista too.  
Upon my life, Petruchio means but well,



Whatever fortune stays him from his word:  
Though he be blunt, I know him passing wise;  
Though he be merry, yet withal he's honest.

**KATHARINA**

Would Katharina had never seen him though!

*Exit weeping, followed by BIANCA and others*

**BAPTISTA**

Go, girl; I cannot blame thee now to weep;  
For such an injury would vex a very saint,  
Much more a shrew of thy impatient humour.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

**BIONDELLO**

Master, master! news, old news, and such news as  
you never heard of!

**BAPTISTA**

Is it new and old too? how may that be?

**BIONDELLO**

Why, is it not news, to hear of Petruchio's coming?

**BAPTISTA**

Is he come?

**BIONDELLO**

Why, no, sir.

**BAPTISTA**

What then?

**BIONDELLO**

He is coming.

**BAPTISTA**

When will he be here?

**BIONDELLO**

When he stands where I am and sees you there.

**TRANIO**

But say, what to thine old news?

**BIONDELLO**

Why, Petruccio is coming in a new hat and an old jerkin, a pair of old breeches thrice turned, a pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another laced, an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town-armory, with a broken hilt, and chapeless; with two broken points: his horse hipped with an old mothy saddle and stirrups of no kindred; besides, possessed with the glanders and like to mose in the chine; troubled with the lampass, infected with the fashions, full of wingdalls, sped with spavins, rayed with yellows, past cure of the fives, stark spoiled with the staggers, begnawn with the bots, swayed in the back and shoulder-shotten; near-legged before and with, a half-chequed bit and a head-stall of sheeps leather which, being restrained to keep him from stumbling, hath been often burst and now repaired with knots; one girth six time pieced and a woman's crupper of velure, which hath two letters for her name fairly set down in studs, and here and there pieced with packthread.

**BAPTISTA**

Who comes with him?

**BIONDELLO**

O, sir, his lackey, for all the world caparisoned like the horse; with a linen stock on one leg and a kersey boot-hose on the other, gartered with a red and blue list; an old hat and 'the humour of forty fancies' pricked in't for a feather: a monster, a very monster in apparel, and not like a Christian footboy or a gentleman's lackey.

**TRANIO**

'Tis some odd humour pricks him to this fashion; Yet oftentimes he goes but mean-apparell'd.

**BAPTISTA**

I am glad he's come, howsoe'er he comes.

**BIONDELLO**

Why, sir, he comes not.

**BAPTISTA**

Didst thou not say he comes?

**BIONDELLO**

Who? that Petruchio came?

**BAPTISTA**

Ay, that Petruchio came.

**BIONDELLO**

No, sir, I say his horse comes, with him on his back.

**BAPTISTA**

Why, that's all one.

**BIONDELLO**

Nay, by Saint Jamy,  
I hold you a penny,  
A horse and a man  
Is more than one,  
And yet not many.

*Enter PETRUCHIO and GRUMIO*

**PETRUCHIO**

Come, where be these gallants? who's at home?

**BAPTISTA**

You are welcome, sir.

**PETRUCHIO**

And yet I come not well.

**BAPTISTA**

And yet you halt not.

**TRANIO**

Not so well apparell'd  
As I wish you were.

**PETRUCHIO**

Were it better, I should rush in thus.  
But where is Kate? where is my lovely bride?  
How does my father? Gentles, methinks you frown:

And wherefore gaze this goodly company,  
As if they saw some wondrous monument,  
Some comet or unusual prodigy?

**BAPTISTA**

Why, sir, you know this is your wedding-day:  
First were we sad, fearing you would not come;  
Now sadder, that you come so unprovided.  
Fie, doff this habit, shame to your estate,  
An eye-sore to our solemn festival!

**TRANIO**

And tells us, what occasion of import  
Hath all so long detain'd you from your wife,  
And sent you hither so unlike yourself?

**PETRUCHIO**

Tedious it were to tell, and harsh to hear:  
Sufficeth I am come to keep my word,  
Though in some part enforced to digress;  
Which, at more leisure, I will so excuse  
As you shall well be satisfied withal.  
But where is Kate? I stay too long from her:  
The morning wears, 'tis time we were at church.

**TRANIO**

See not your bride in these unreverent robes:  
Go to my chamber; Put on clothes of mine.

**PETRUCHIO**

Not I, believe me: thus I'll visit her.

**BAPTISTA**

But thus, I trust, you will not marry her.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Good sooth, even thus; therefore ha' done with words:  
To me she's married, not unto my clothes:  
Could I repair what she will wear in me,  
As I can change these poor accoutrements,  
'Twere well for Kate and better for myself.  
But what a fool am I to chat with you,  
When I should bid good morrow to my bride,  
And seal the title with a lovely kiss!

*Exeunt PETRUCHIO and GRUMIO*

## **TRANIO**

He hath some meaning in his mad attire:  
We will persuade him, be it possible,  
To put on better ere he go to church.

## **BAPTISTA**

I'll after him, and see the event of this.

*Exeunt BAPTISTA, GREMIO, and attendants*

## **TRANIO**

But to her love concerneth us to add  
Her father's liking: which to bring to pass,  
As I before unparted to your worship,  
I am to get a man,--whate'er he be,  
It skills not much. we'll fit him to our turn,--  
And he shall be Vincentio of Pisa;  
And make assurance here in Padua  
Of greater sums than I have promised.  
So shall you quietly enjoy your hope,  
And marry sweet Bianca with consent.

## **LUCENTIO**

Were it not that my fellow-school-master  
Doth watch Bianca's steps so narrowly,

'Twere good, methinks, to steal our marriage;  
Which once perform'd, let all the world say no,  
I'll keep mine own, despite of all the world.

**TRANIO**

That by degrees we mean to look into,  
And watch our vantage in this business:  
We'll over-reach the greybeard, Gremio,  
The narrow-prying father, Minola,  
The quaint musician, amorous Licio;  
All for my master's sake, Lucentio.

*Re-enter GREMIO*

Signior Gremio, came you from the church?

**GREMIO**

As willingly as e'er I came from school.

**TRANIO**

And is the bride and bridegroom coming home?

**GREMIO**

A bridegroom say you? 'tis a groom indeed,  
A grumbling groom, and that the girl shall find.

**TRANIO**

Curster than she? why, 'tis impossible.

**GREMIO**

Why he's a devil, a devil, a very fiend.

**TRANIO**

Why, she's a devil, a devil, the devil's dam.

## GREMIO

Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him!  
I'll tell you, Sir Lucentio: when the priest  
Should ask, if Katharina should be his wife,  
'Ay, by gogs-wouns,' quoth he; and swore so loud,  
That, all-amazed, the priest let fall the book;  
And, as he stoop'd again to take it up,  
The mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff  
That down fell priest and book and book and priest:  
'Now take them up,' quoth he, 'if any list.'

## TRANIO

What said the wench when he rose again?

## GREMIO

Trembled and shook; for why, he stamp'd and swore,  
As if the vicar meant to cozen him.  
But after many ceremonies done,  
He calls for wine: 'A health!' quoth he, as if  
He had been aboard, carousing to his mates  
After a storm; quaff'd off the muscadel  
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face;  
Having no other reason  
But that his beard grew thin and hungerly  
And seem'd to ask him sops as he was drinking.  
This done, he took the bride about the neck  
And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack  
That at the parting all the church did echo:  
And I seeing this came thence for very shame;  
And after me, I know, the rout is coming.  
Such a mad marriage never was before:  
Hark, hark! I hear the minstrels play.

*Music*

*Re-enter PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, BIANCA, BAPTISTA, HORTENSIO, GRUMIO, and Train*



**PETRUCHIO**

Gentlemen and friends, I thank you for your pains:  
I know you think to dine with me to-day,  
And have prepared great store of wedding cheer;  
But so it is, my haste doth call me hence,  
And therefore here I mean to take my leave.

**BAPTISTA**

Is't possible you will away to-night?

**PETRUCHIO**

I must away to-day, before night come:  
Make it no wonder; if you knew my business,  
You would entreat me rather go than stay.  
And, honest company, I thank you all,  
That have beheld me give away myself  
To this most patient, sweet and virtuous wife:  
Dine with my father, drink a health to me;  
For I must hence; and farewell to you all.

**TRANIO**

Let us entreat you stay till after dinner.

**PETRUCHIO**

It may not be.

**GREMIO**

Let me entreat you.

**PETRUCHIO**

It cannot be.

**KATHARINA**

Let me entreat you.

**PETRUCHIO**

I am content.

**KATHARINA**

Are you content to stay?

**PETRUCHIO**

I am content you shall entreat me stay;  
But yet not stay, entreat me how you can.

**KATHARINA**

Now, if you love me, stay.

**PETRUCHIO**

Grumio, my horse.

**GRUMIO**

Ay, sir, they be ready: the oats have eaten the horses.

**KATHARINA**

Nay, then,  
Do what thou canst, I will not go to-day;  
No, nor to-morrow, not till I please myself.  
The door is open, sir; there lies your way;  
You may be jogging whiles your boots are green;  
For me, I'll not be gone till I please myself:  
'Tis like you'll prove a jolly surly groom,  
That take it on you at the first so roundly.

**PETRUCHIO**

O Kate, content thee; prithee, be not angry.

## **KATHARINA**

I will be angry: what hast thou to do?  
Father, be quiet; he shall stay my leisure.

## **GREMIO**

Ay, marry, sir, now it begins to work.

## **KATARINA**

Gentlemen, forward to the bridal dinner:  
I see a woman may be made a fool,  
If she had not a spirit to resist.

## **PETRUCHIO**

They shall go forward, Kate, at thy command.  
Obey the bride, you that attend on her;  
Go to the feast, revel and domineer,  
Carouse full measure to her maidenhead,  
Be mad and merry, or go hang yourselves:  
But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.  
Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;  
I will be master of what is mine own:  
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,  
My household stuff, my field, my barn,  
My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing;  
And here she stands, touch her whoever dare;  
I'll bring mine action on the proudest he  
That stops my way in Padua. Grumio,  
Draw forth thy weapon, we are beset with thieves;  
Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man.  
Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch  
thee, Kate:  
I'll buckler thee against a million.

*Exeunt PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, and GRUMIO*

## **BAPTISTA**

Nay, let them go, a couple of quiet ones.

**GREMIO**

Went they not quickly, I should die with laughing.

**TRANIO**

Of all mad matches never was the like.

**LUCENTIO**

Mistress, what's your opinion of your sister?

**BIANCA**

That, being mad herself, she's madly mated.

**GREMIO**

I warrant him, Petruchio is Kated.

**BAPTISTA**

Neighbours and friends, though bride and  
bridegroom wants  
For to supply the places at the table,  
You know there wants no junkets at the feast.  
Lucentio, you shall supply the bridegroom's place:  
And let Bianca take her sister's room.

**TRANIO**

Shall sweet Bianca practise how to bride it?

**BAPTISTA**

She shall, Lucentio. Come, gentlemen, let's go.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. PETRUCHIO'S country house.

*Enter GRUMIO*

**GRUMIO**

Fie, fie on all tired jades, on all mad masters, and all foul ways! Was ever man so beaten? was ever man so rayed? was ever man so weary? I am sent before to make a fire, and they are coming after to warm them. Now, were not I a little pot and soon hot, my very lips might freeze to my teeth, my tongue to the roof of my mouth, my heart in my belly, ere I should come by a fire to thaw me: but I, with blowing the fire, shall warm myself; for, considering the weather, a taller man than I will take cold. Holla, ho! Curtis.

*Enter CURTIS*

**CURTIS**

Who is that calls so coldly?

**GRUMIO**

A piece of ice: if thou doubt it, thou mayst slide from my shoulder to my heel with no greater a run but my head and my neck. A fire good Curtis.

**CURTIS**

Is my master and his wife coming, Grumio?

**GRUMIO**

O, ay, Curtis, ay: and therefore fire, fire; cast  
on no water.

**CURTIS**

Is she so hot a shrew as she's reported?

**GRUMIO**

She was, good Curtis, before this frost: but, thou  
knowest, winter tames man, woman and beast; for it  
hath tamed my old master and my new mistress and  
myself, fellow Curtis.

**CURTIS**

Away, you three-inch fool! I am no beast.

**GRUMIO**

Am I but three inches? why, thy horn is a foot; and  
so long am I at the least. But wilt thou make a  
fire, or shall I complain on thee to our mistress,  
whose hand, she being now at hand, thou shalt soon  
feel, to thy cold comfort, for being slow in thy hot office?

**CURTIS**

I prithee, good Grumio, tell me, how goes the world?

**GRUMIO**

A cold world, Curtis, in every office but thine; and  
therefore fire: do thy duty, and have thy duty; for  
my master and mistress are almost frozen to death.

**CURTIS**

There's fire ready; and therefore, good Grumio, the news.

**GRUMIO**

Why, 'Jack, boy! ho! boy!' and as much news as will thaw.

**CURTIS**

Come, you are so full of cony-catching!

**GRUMIO**

Why, therefore fire; for I have caught extreme cold.  
Where's the cook? is supper ready, the house trimmed, rushes strewed, cobwebs swept; the serving-men in their new fustian, their white stockings, and every officer his wedding-garment on? Be the jacks fair within, the jills fair without, the carpets laid, and every thing in order?

**CURTIS**

All ready; and therefore, I pray thee, news.

**GRUMIO**

First, know, my horse is tired; my master and mistress fallen out.

**CURTIS**

How?

**GRUMIO**

Out of their saddles into the dirt; and thereby hangs a tale.

**CURTIS**

Let's ha't, good Grumio.

**GRUMIO**



Lend thine ear.

**CURTIS**

Here.

**GRUMIO**

There.

*Strikes him*

**CURTIS**

This is to feel a tale, not to hear a tale.

**GRUMIO**

And therefore 'tis called a sensible tale: and this cuff was but to knock at your ear, and beseech listening. Now I begin: Imprimis, we came down a foul hill, my master riding behind my mistress,--

**CURTIS**

Both of one horse?

**GRUMIO**

What's that to thee?

**CURTIS**

Why, a horse.

**GRUMIO**

Tell thou the tale: but hadst thou not crossed me, thou shouldst have heard how her horse fell and she under her horse; thou shouldst have heard in how miry a place, how she was bemoiled, how he left her

with the horse upon her, how he beat me because her horse stumbled, how she waded through the dirt to pluck him off me, how he swore, how she prayed, that never prayed before, how I cried, how the horses ran away, how her bridle was burst, how I lost my crupper, with many things of worthy memory, which now shall die in oblivion and thou return unexperienced to thy grave.

**CURTIS**

By this reckoning he is more shrew than she.

**GRUMIO**

Ay; and that thou and the proudest of you all shall find when he comes home. But what talk I of this? Call forth Nathaniel, Joseph, Nicholas, Philip, Walter, Sugarsop and the rest: let their heads be sleekly combed their blue coats brushed and their garters of an indifferent knit: let them curtsy with their left legs and not presume to touch a hair of my master's horse-tail till they kiss their hands. Are they all ready?

**CURTIS**

They are.

**GRUMIO**

Call them forth.

**CURTIS**

Do you hear, ho? you must meet my master to countenance my mistress.

**GRUMIO**

Why, she hath a face of her own.

**CURTIS**

Who knows not that?

**GRUMIO**

Thou, it seems, that calls for company to countenance her.

**CURTIS**

I call them forth to credit her.

**GRUMIO**

Why, she comes to borrow nothing of them.

*Enter four or five Serving-men*

**NATHANIEL**

Welcome home, Grumio!

**PHILIP**

How now, Grumio!

**JOSEPH**

What, Grumio!

**NICHOLAS**

Fellow Grumio!

**NATHANIEL**

How now, old lad?

**GRUMIO**

Welcome, you;--how now, you;-- what, you;--fellow,  
you;--and thus much for greeting. Now, my spruce  
companions, is all ready, and all things neat?

**NATHANIEL**

All things is ready. How near is our master?

**GRUMIO**

E'en at hand, alighted by this; and therefore be  
not--Cock's passion, silence! I hear my master.

*Enter PETRUCHIO and KATHARINA*

**PETRUCHIO**

Where be these knaves? What, no man at door  
To hold my stirrup nor to take my horse!  
Where is Nathaniel, Gregory, Philip?  
ALL SERVING-MEN Here, here, sir; here, sir.

**PETRUCHIO**

Here, sir! here, sir! here, sir! here, sir!  
You logger-headed and unpolish'd grooms!  
What, no attendance? no regard? no duty?  
Where is the foolish knave I sent before?

**GRUMIO**

Here, sir; as foolish as I was before.

**PETRUCHIO**

You peasant swain! you whoreson malt-horse drudge!  
Did I not bid thee meet me in the park,  
And bring along these rascal knaves with thee?

**GRUMIO**

Nathaniel's coat, sir, was not fully made,  
And Gabriel's pumps were all unpink'd i' the heel;  
There was no link to colour Peter's hat,  
And Walter's dagger was not come from sheathing:  
There were none fine but Adam, Ralph, and Gregory;  
The rest were ragged, old, and beggarly;  
Yet, as they are, here are they come to meet you.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Go, rascals, go, and fetch my supper in.

*Exeunt Servants*

*Singing*

Where is the life that late I led--  
Where are those--Sit down, Kate, and welcome.--  
Sound, sound, sound, sound!

*Re-enter Servants with supper*

Why, when, I say? Nay, good sweet Kate, be merry.  
Off with my boots, you rogues! you villains, when?

*Sings*

It was the friar of orders grey,  
As he forth walked on his way:--  
Out, you rogue! you pluck my foot awry:  
Take that, and mend the plucking off the other.

*Strikes him*

Be merry, Kate. Some water, here; what, ho!  
Where's my spaniel Troilus? Sirrah, get you hence,  
And bid my cousin Ferdinand come hither:  
One, Kate, that you must kiss, and be acquainted with.  
Where are my slippers? Shall I have some water?

*Enter one with water*

Come, Kate, and wash, and welcome heartily.  
You whoreson villain! will you let it fall?

*Strikes him*

**KATHARINA**

Patience, I pray you; 'twas a fault unwilling.

**PETRUCHIO**

A whoreson beetle-headed, flap-ear'd knave!  
Come, Kate, sit down; I know you have a stomach.  
Will you give thanks, sweet Kate; or else shall I?  
What's this? mutton?

**First Servant**

Ay.

**PETRUCHIO**

Who brought it?

**PETER**

I.

**PETRUCHIO**

'Tis burnt; and so is all the meat.  
What dogs are these! Where is the rascal cook?  
How durst you, villains, bring it from the dresser,  
And serve it thus to me that love it not?  
Theretake it to you, trenchers, cups, and all;

*Throws the meat, & c. about the stage*

You heedless joltheads and unmanner'd slaves!  
What, do you grumble? I'll be with you straight.

## **KATHARINA**

I pray you, husband, be not so disquiet:  
The meat was well, if you were so contented.

## **PETRUCHIO**

I tell thee, Kate, 'twas burnt and dried away;  
And I expressly am forbid to touch it,  
For it engenders cholera, planteth anger;  
And better 'twere that both of us did fast,  
Since, of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,  
Than feed it with such over-roasted flesh.  
Be patient; to-morrow 't shall be mended,  
And, for this night, we'll fast for company:  
Come, I will bring thee to thy bridal chamber.

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter Servants severally*

## **NATHANIEL**

Peter, didst ever see the like?

## **PETER**

He kills her in her own humour.

*Re-enter CURTIS*

## **GRUMIO**

Where is he?

## **CURTIS**

In her chamber, making a sermon of continency to her;  
And rails, and swears, and rates, that she, poor soul,  
Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak,  
And sits as one new-risen from a dream.

Away, away! for he is coming hither.

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter PETRUCHIO*

## **PETRUCHIO**

Thus have I politicly begun my reign,  
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.  
My falcon now is sharp and passing empty;  
And till she stoop she must not be full-gorged,  
For then she never looks upon her lure.  
Another way I have to man my haggard,  
To make her come and know her keeper's call,  
That is, to watch her, as we watch these kites  
That bate and beat and will not be obedient.  
She eat no meat to-day, nor none shall eat;  
Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not;  
As with the meat, some undeserved fault  
I'll find about the making of the bed;  
And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,  
This way the coverlet, another way the sheets:  
Ay, and amid this hurly I intend  
That all is done in reverend care of her;  
And in conclusion she shall watch all night:  
And if she chance to nod I'll rail and brawl  
And with the clamour keep her still awake.  
This is a way to kill a wife with kindness;  
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour.  
He that knows better how to tame a shrew,  
Now let him speak: 'tis charity to show.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house.

*Enter TRANIO and HORTENSIO*

**TRANIO**

Is't possible, friend Licio, that Mistress Bianca  
Doth fancy any other but Lucentio?  
I tell you, sir, she bears me fair in hand.

**HORTENSIO**

Sir, to satisfy you in what I have said,  
Stand by and mark the manner of his teaching.

*Enter BIANCA and LUCENTIO*

**LUCENTIO**

Now, mistress, profit you in what you read?

**BIANCA**

What, master, read you? first resolve me that.

**LUCENTIO**

I read that I profess, the Art to Love.

**BIANCA**

And may you prove, sir, master of your art!

**LUCENTIO**

While you, sweet dear, prove mistress of my heart!

**HORTENSIO**

Quick proceeders, marry! Now, tell me, I pray,  
You that durst swear at your mistress Bianca  
Loved none in the world so well as Lucentio.

**TRANIO**

O despiteful love! unconstant womankind!  
I tell thee, Licio, this is wonderful.

**HORTENSIO**

Mistake no more: I am not Licio,  
Nor a musician, as I seem to be;  
But one that scorn to live in this disguise,  
For such a one as leaves a gentleman,  
And makes a god of such a cullion:  
Know, sir, that I am call'd Hortensio.

**TRANIO**

Signior Hortensio, I have often heard  
Of your entire affection to Bianca;  
And since mine eyes are witness of her lightness,  
I will with you, if you be so contented,  
Forswear Bianca and her love for ever.

**HORTENSIO**

See, how they kiss and court! Signior Lucentio,  
Here is my hand, and here I firmly vow  
Never to woo her no more, but do forswear her,  
As one unworthy all the former favours  
That I have fondly flatter'd her withal.

**TRANIO**

And here I take the unfeigned oath,  
Never to marry with her though she would entreat:

Fie on her! see, how beastly she doth court him!

**HORTENSIO**

Would all the world but he had quite forsworn!  
For me, that I may surely keep mine oath,  
I will be married to a wealthy widow,  
Ere three days pass, which hath as long loved me  
As I have loved this proud disdainful haggard.  
And so farewell, Signior Lucentio.  
Kindness in women, not their beauteous looks,  
Shall win my love: and so I take my leave,  
In resolution as I swore before.

*Exit*

**TRANIO**

Mistress Bianca, bless you with such grace  
As 'longeth to a lover's blessed case!  
Nay, I have ta'en you napping, gentle love,  
And have forsworn you with Hortensio.

**BIANCA**

Tranio, you jest: but have you both forsworn me?

**TRANIO**

Mistress, we have.

**LUCENTIO**

Then we are rid of Licio.

**TRANIO**

I' faith, he'll have a lusty widow now,  
That shall be wood and wedded in a day.

**BIANCA**

God give him joy!

**TRANIO**

Ay, and he'll tame her.

**BIANCA**

He says so, Tranio.

**TRANIO**

Faith, he is gone unto the taming-school.

**BIANCA**

The taming-school! what, is there such a place?

**TRANIO**

Ay, mistress, and Petruchio is the master;  
That teacheth tricks eleven and twenty long,  
To tame a shrew and charm her chattering tongue.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

**BIONDELLO**

O master, master, I have watch'd so long  
That I am dog-weary: but at last I spied  
An ancient angel coming down the hill,  
Will serve the turn.

**TRANIO**

What is he, Biondello?

**BIONDELLO**

Master, a mercatante, or a pedant,

I know not what; but format in apparel,  
In gait and countenance surely like a father.

**LUCENTIO**

And what of him, Tranio?

**TRANIO**

If he be credulous and trust my tale,  
I'll make him glad to seem Vincentio,  
And give assurance to Baptista Minola,  
As if he were the right Vincentio  
Take in your love, and then let me alone.

*Exeunt LUCENTIO and BIANCA*

*Enter a Pedant*

**Pedant**

God save you, sir!

**TRANIO**

And you, sir! you are welcome.  
Travel you far on, or are you at the farthest?

**Pedant**

Sir, at the farthest for a week or two:  
But then up farther, and as for as Rome;  
And so to Tripoli, if God lend me life.

**TRANIO**

What countryman, I pray?

**Pedant**

Of Mantua.

**TRANIO**

Of Mantua, sir? marry, God forbid!  
And come to Padua, careless of your life?

**Pedant**

My life, sir! how, I pray? for that goes hard.

**TRANIO**

'Tis death for any one in Mantua  
To come to Padua. Know you not the cause?  
Your ships are stay'd at Venice, and the duke,  
For private quarrel 'twixt your duke and him,  
Hath publish'd and proclaim'd it openly:  
'Tis, marvel, but that you are but newly come,  
You might have heard it else proclaim'd about.

**Pedant**

Alas! sir, it is worse for me than so;  
For I have bills for money by exchange  
From Florence and must here deliver them.

**TRANIO**

Well, sir, to do you courtesy,  
This will I do, and this I will advise you:  
First, tell me, have you ever been at Pisa?

**Pedant**

Ay, sir, in Pisa have I often been,  
Pisa renowned for grave citizens.

**TRANIO**

Among them know you one Vincentio?

**Pedant**

I know him not, but I have heard of him;  
A merchant of incomparable wealth.

**TRANIO**

He is my father, sir; and, sooth to say,  
In countenance somewhat doth resemble you.

**BIONDELLO**

[Aside] As much as an apple doth an oyster,  
and all one.

**TRANIO**

To save your life in this extremity,  
This favour will I do you for his sake;  
And think it not the worst of an your fortunes  
That you are like to Sir Vincentio.  
His name and credit shall you undertake,  
And in my house you shall be friendly lodged:  
Look that you take upon you as you should;  
You understand me, sir: so shall you stay  
Till you have done your business in the city:  
If this be courtesy, sir, accept of it.

**Pedant**

O sir, I do; and will repute you ever  
The patron of my life and liberty.

**TRANIO**

Then go with me to make the matter good.  
This, by the way, I let you understand;  
my father is here look'd for every day,  
To pass assurance of a dower in marriage  
'Twixt me and one Baptista's daughter here:  
In all these circumstances I'll instruct you:  
Go with me to clothe you as becomes you.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in PETRUCHIO'S house.

*Enter KATHARINA and GRUMIO*

**GRUMIO**

No, no, forsooth; I dare not for my life.

**KATHARINA**

The more my wrong, the more his spite appears:  
What, did he marry me to famish me?  
Beggars, that come unto my father's door,  
Upon entreaty have a present aims;  
If not, elsewhere they meet with charity:  
But I, who never knew how to entreat,  
Nor never needed that I should entreat,  
Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep,  
With oath kept waking and with brawling fed:  
And that which spites me more than all these wants,  
He does it under name of perfect love;  
As who should say, if I should sleep or eat,  
'Twere deadly sickness or else present death.  
I prithee go and get me some repast;  
I care not what, so it be wholesome food.

**GRUMIO**

What say you to a neat's foot?

**KATHARINA**

'Tis passing good: I prithee let me have it.

**GRUMIO**

I fear it is too choleric a meat.  
How say you to a fat tripe finely broil'd?

**KATHARINA**

I like it well: good Grumio, fetch it me.

**GRUMIO**

I cannot tell; I fear 'tis choleric.  
What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?

**KATHARINA**

A dish that I do love to feed upon.

**GRUMIO**

Ay, but the mustard is too hot a little.

**KATHARINA**

Why then, the beef, and let the mustard rest.

**GRUMIO**

Nay then, I will not: you shall have the mustard,  
Or else you get no beef of Grumio.

**KATHARINA**

Then both, or one, or any thing thou wilt.

**GRUMIO**

Why then, the mustard without the beef.

**KATHARINA**

Go, get thee gone, thou false deluding slave,

*Beats him*

That feed'st me with the very name of meat:  
Sorrow on thee and all the pack of you,  
That triumph thus upon my misery!  
Go, get thee gone, I say.

*Enter PETRUCHIO and HORTENSIO with meat*

**PETRUCHIO**

How fares my Kate? What, sweeting, all amort?

**HORTENSIO**

Mistress, what cheer?

**KATHARINA**

Faith, as cold as can be.

**PETRUCHIO**

Pluck up thy spirits; look cheerfully upon me.  
Here love; thou see'st how diligent I am  
To dress thy meat myself and bring it thee:  
I am sure, sweet Kate, this kindness merits thanks.  
What, not a word? Nay, then thou lovest it not;  
And all my pains is sorted to no proof.  
Here, take away this dish.

**KATHARINA**

I pray you, let it stand.

**PETRUCHIO**

The poorest service is repaid with thanks;  
And so shall mine, before you touch the meat.

**KATHARINA**

I thank you, sir.

**HORTENSIO**

Signior Petruchio, fie! you are to blame.  
Come, mistress Kate, I'll bear you company.

**PETRUCHIO**

[Aside] Eat it up all, Hortensio, if thou lovest me.  
Much good do it unto thy gentle heart!  
Kate, eat apace: and now, my honey love,  
Will we return unto thy father's house  
And revel it as bravely as the best,  
With silken coats and caps and golden rings,  
With ruffs and cuffs and fardingales and things;  
With scarfs and fans and double change of bravery,  
With amber bracelets, beads and all this knavery.  
What, hast thou dined? The tailor stays thy leisure,  
To deck thy body with his ruffling treasure.

*Enter Tailor*

Come, tailor, let us see these ornaments;  
Lay forth the gown.

*Enter Haberdasher*

What news with you, sir?

**Haberdasher**

Here is the cap your worship did bespeak.

**PETRUCHIO**

Why, this was moulded on a porringer;  
A velvet dish: fie, fie! 'tis lewd and filthy:  
Why, 'tis a cockle or a walnut-shell,  
A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap:  
Away with it! come, let me have a bigger.

**KATHARINA**

I'll have no bigger: this doth fit the time,  
And gentlewomen wear such caps as these

**PETRUCHIO**

When you are gentle, you shall have one too,  
And not till then.

**HORTENSIO**

[Aside] That will not be in haste.

**KATHARINA**

Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak;  
And speak I will; I am no child, no babe:  
Your betters have endured me say my mind,  
And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.  
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,  
Or else my heart concealing it will break,  
And rather than it shall, I will be free  
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.

**PETRUCHIO**

Why, thou say'st true; it is a paltry cap,  
A custard-coffin, a bauble, a silken pie:  
I love thee well, in that thou likest it not.

**KATHARINA**

Love me or love me not, I like the cap;  
And it I will have, or I will have none.

*Exit Haberdasher*

**PETRUCHIO**

Thy gown? why, ay: come, tailor, let us see't.  
O mercy, God! what masquing stuff is here?  
What's this? a sleeve? 'tis like a demi-cannon:  
What, up and down, carved like an apple-tart?  
Here's snip and nip and cut and slish and slash,  
Like to a censer in a barber's shop:  
Why, what, i' devil's name, tailor, call'st thou this?

## **HORTENSIO**

[Aside] I see she's like to have neither cap nor gown.

## **Tailor**

You bid me make it orderly and well,  
According to the fashion and the time.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Marry, and did; but if you be remember'd,  
I did not bid you mar it to the time.  
Go, hop me over every kennel home,  
For you shall hop without my custom, sir:  
I'll none of it: hence! make your best of it.

## **KATHARINA**

I never saw a better-fashion'd gown,  
More quaint, more pleasing, nor more commendable:  
Belike you mean to make a puppet of me.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Why, true; he means to make a puppet of thee.

## **Tailor**

She says your worship means to make  
a puppet of her.

## **PETRUCHIO**

O monstrous arrogance! Thou liest, thou thread,  
thou thimble,  
Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter, nail!  
Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket thou!  
Braved in mine own house with a skein of thread?  
Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant;  
Or I shall so be-mete thee with thy yard  
As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou livest!  
I tell thee, I, that thou hast marr'd her gown.

**Tailor**

Your worship is deceived; the gown is made  
Just as my master had direction:  
Grumio gave order how it should be done.

**GRUMIO**

I gave him no order; I gave him the stuff.

**Tailor**

But how did you desire it should be made?

**GRUMIO**

Marry, sir, with needle and thread.

**Tailor**

But did you not request to have it cut?

**GRUMIO**

Thou hast faced many things.

**Tailor**

I have.

**GRUMIO**

Face not me: thou hast braved many men; brave not me; I will neither be faced nor braved. I say unto thee, I bid thy master cut out the gown; but I did not bid him cut it to pieces: ergo, thou liest.

**Tailor**

Why, here is the note of the fashion to testify

**PETRUCHIO**

Read it.

**GRUMIO**

The note lies in's throat, if he say I said so.

**Tailor**

[Reads] 'Imprimis, a loose-bodied gown:'

**GRUMIO**

Master, if ever I said loose-bodied gown, sew me in the skirts of it, and beat me to death with a bottom of brown thread: I said a gown.

**PETRUCHIO**

Proceed.

**Tailor**

[Reads] 'With a small compassed cape:'

**GRUMIO**

I confess the cape.

**Tailor**



[Reads] 'With a trunk sleeve:'

**GRUMIO**

I confess two sleeves.

**Tailor**

[Reads] 'The sleeves curiously cut.'

**PETRUCHIO**

Ay, there's the villany.

**GRUMIO**

Error i' the bill, sir; error i' the bill.  
I commanded the sleeves should be cut out and  
sewed up again; and that I'll prove upon thee,  
though thy little finger be armed in a thimble.

**Tailor**

This is true that I say: an I had thee  
in place where, thou shouldst know it.

**GRUMIO**

I am for thee straight: take thou the  
bill, give me thy mete-yard, and spare not me.

**HORTENSIO**

God-a-mercy, Grumio! then he shall have no odds.

**PETRUCHIO**

Well, sir, in brief, the gown is not for me.

**GRUMIO**

You are i' the right, sir: 'tis for my mistress.

**PETRUCHIO**

Go, take it up unto thy master's use.

**GRUMIO**

Villain, not for thy life: take up my mistress'  
gown for thy master's use!

**PETRUCHIO**

Why, sir, what's your conceit in that?

**GRUMIO**

O, sir, the conceit is deeper than you think for:  
Take up my mistress' gown to his master's use!  
O, fie, fie, fie!

**PETRUCHIO**

[Aside] Hortensio, say thou wilt see the tailor paid.  
Go take it hence; be gone, and say no more.

**HORTENSIO**

Tailor, I'll pay thee for thy gown tomorrow:  
Take no unkindness of his hasty words:  
Away! I say; commend me to thy master.

*Exit Tailor*

**PETRUCHIO**

Well, come, my Kate; we will unto your father's  
Even in these honest mean habiliments:  
Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor;  
For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;

And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,  
So honour peereth in the meanest habit.  
What is the jay more precious than the lark,  
Because his fathers are more beautiful?  
Or is the adder better than the eel,  
Because his painted skin contents the eye?  
O, no, good Kate; neither art thou the worse  
For this poor furniture and mean array.  
if thou account'st it shame. lay it on me;  
And therefore frolic: we will hence forthwith,  
To feast and sport us at thy father's house.  
Go, call my men, and let us straight to him;  
And bring our horses unto Long-lane end;  
There will we mount, and thither walk on foot  
Let's see; I think 'tis now some seven o'clock,  
And well we may come there by dinner-time.

## **KATHARINA**

I dare assure you, sir, 'tis almost two;  
And 'twill be supper-time ere you come there.

## **PETRUCHIO**

It shall be seven ere I go to horse:  
Look, what I speak, or do, or think to do,  
You are still crossing it. Sirs, let't alone:  
I will not go to-day; and ere I do,  
It shall be what o'clock I say it is.

## **HORTENSIO**

[Aside] Why, so this gallant will command the sun.

*Exeunt*

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Padua. Before BAPTISTA'S house.

*Enter TRANIO, and the Pedant dressed like VINCENTIO*

**TRANIO**

Sir, this is the house: please it you that I call?

**Pedant**

Ay, what else? and but I be deceived  
Signior Baptista may remember me,  
Near twenty years ago, in Genoa,  
Where we were lodgers at the Pegasus.

**TRANIO**

'Tis well; and hold your own, in any case,  
With such austerity as 'longeth to a father.

**Pedant**

I warrant you.

*Enter BIONDELLO*

But, sir, here comes your boy;  
'Twere good he were school'd.

**TRANIO**

Fear you not him. Sirrah Biondello,  
Now do your duty throughly, I advise you:  
Imagine 'twere the right Vincentio.

**BIONDELLO**

Tut, fear not me.

**TRANIO**

But hast thou done thy errand to Baptista?

**BIONDELLO**

I told him that your father was at Venice,  
And that you look'd for him this day in Padua.

**TRANIO**

Thou'rt a tall fellow: hold thee that to drink.  
Here comes Baptista: set your countenance, sir.

*Enter BAPTISTA and LUCENTIO*

Signior Baptista, you are happily met.

*To the Pedant*

Sir, this is the gentleman I told you of:  
I pray you stand good father to me now,  
Give me Bianca for my patrimony.

**Pedant**

Soft son!  
Sir, by your leave: having come to Padua  
To gather in some debts, my son Lucentio  
Made me acquainted with a weighty cause  
Of love between your daughter and himself:  
And, for the good report I hear of you  
And for the love he beareth to your daughter  
And she to him, to stay him not too long,  
I am content, in a good father's care,  
To have him match'd; and if you please to like  
No worse than I, upon some agreement  
Me shall you find ready and willing

With one consent to have her so bestow'd;  
For curious I cannot be with you,  
Signior Baptista, of whom I hear so well.

## **BAPTISTA**

Sir, pardon me in what I have to say:  
Your plainness and your shortness please me well.  
Right true it is, your son Lucentio here  
Doth love my daughter and she loveth him,  
Or both dissemble deeply their affections:  
And therefore, if you say no more than this,  
That like a father you will deal with him  
And pass my daughter a sufficient dower,  
The match is made, and all is done:  
Your son shall have my daughter with consent.

## **TRANIO**

I thank you, sir. Where then do you know best  
We be affied and such assurance ta'en  
As shall with either part's agreement stand?

## **BAPTISTA**

Not in my house, Lucentio; for, you know,  
Pitchers have ears, and I have many servants:  
Besides, old Gremio is hearkening still;  
And happily we might be interrupted.

## **TRANIO**

Then at my lodging, an it like you:  
There doth my father lie; and there, this night,  
We'll pass the business privately and well.  
Send for your daughter by your servant here:  
My boy shall fetch the scrivener presently.  
The worst is this, that, at so slender warning,  
You are like to have a thin and slender pittance.

## **BAPTISTA**

It likes me well. Biondello, hie you home,  
And bid Bianca make her ready straight;  
And, if you will, tell what hath happened,  
Lucentio's father is arrived in Padua,  
And how she's like to be Lucentio's wife.

**BIONDELLO**

I pray the gods she may with all my heart!

**TRANIO**

Dally not with the gods, but get thee gone.

*Exit BIONDELLO*

Signior Baptista, shall I lead the way?  
Welcome! one mess is like to be your cheer:  
Come, sir; we will better it in Pisa.

**BAPTISTA**

I follow you.

*Exeunt TRANIO, Pedant, and BAPTISTA*

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

**BIONDELLO**

Cambio!

**LUCENTIO**

What sayest thou, Biondello?

**BIONDELLO**

You saw my master wink and laugh upon you?

**LUCENTIO**

Biondello, what of that?

**BIONDELLO**

Faith, nothing; but has left me here behind, to  
expound the meaning or moral of his signs and tokens.

**LUCENTIO**

I pray thee, moralize them.

**BIONDELLO**

Then thus. Baptista is safe, talking with the  
deceiving father of a deceitful son.

**LUCENTIO**

And what of him?

**BIONDELLO**

His daughter is to be brought by you to the supper.

**LUCENTIO**

And then?

**BIONDELLO**

The old priest of Saint Luke's church is at your  
command at all hours.

**LUCENTIO**

And what of all this?

**BIONDELLO**

I cannot tell; expect they are busied about a



counterfeit assurance: take you assurance of her,  
'cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum:' to the  
church; take the priest, clerk, and some sufficient  
honest witnesses: If this be not that you look for,  
I have no more to say, But bid Bianca farewell for  
ever and a day.

## **LUCENTIO**

Hearest thou, Biondello?

## **BIONDELLO**

I cannot tarry: I knew a wench married in an  
afternoon as she went to the garden for parsley to  
stuff a rabbit; and so may you, sir: and so, adieu,  
sir. My master hath appointed me to go to Saint  
Luke's, to bid the priest be ready to come against  
you come with your appendix.

*Exit*

## **LUCENTIO**

I may, and will, if she be so contented:  
She will be pleased; then wherefore should I doubt?  
Hap what hap may, I'll roundly go about her:  
It shall go hard if Cambio go without her.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. A public road.

*Enter PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, HORTENSIO, and Servants*

### PETRUCHIO

Come on, i' God's name; once more toward our father's.  
Good Lord, how bright and goodly shines the moon!

### KATHARINA

The moon! the sun: it is not moonlight now.

### PETRUCHIO

I say it is the moon that shines so bright.

### KATHARINA

I know it is the sun that shines so bright.

### PETRUCHIO

Now, by my mother's son, and that's myself,  
It shall be moon, or star, or what I list,  
Or ere I journey to your father's house.  
Go on, and fetch our horses back again.  
Evermore cross'd and cross'd; nothing but cross'd!

### HORTENSIO

Say as he says, or we shall never go.

### KATHARINA

Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,  
And be it moon, or sun, or what you please:  
An if you please to call it a rush-candle,  
Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.

**PETRUCHIO**

I say it is the moon.

**KATHARINA**

I know it is the moon.

**PETRUCHIO**

Nay, then you lie: it is the blessed sun.

**KATHARINA**

Then, God be bless'd, it is the blessed sun:  
But sun it is not, when you say it is not;  
And the moon changes even as your mind.  
What you will have it named, even that it is;  
And so it shall be so for Katharina.

**HORTENSIO**

Petruchio, go thy ways; the field is won.

**PETRUCHIO**

Well, forward, forward! thus the bowl should run,  
And not unluckily against the bias.  
But, soft! company is coming here.

*Enter VINCENTIO*

*To VINCENTIO*

Good morrow, gentle mistress: where away?  
Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,

Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman?  
Such war of white and red within her cheeks!  
What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty,  
As those two eyes become that heavenly face?  
Fair lovely maid, once more good day to thee.  
Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake.

## **HORTENSIO**

A' will make the man mad, to make a woman of him.

## **KATHARINA**

Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet,  
Whither away, or where is thy abode?  
Happy the parents of so fair a child;  
Happier the man, whom favourable stars  
Allot thee for his lovely bed-fellow!

## **PETRUCHIO**

Why, how now, Kate! I hope thou art not mad:  
This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, wither'd,  
And not a maiden, as thou say'st he is.

## **KATHARINA**

Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes,  
That have been so bedazzled with the sun  
That everything I look on seemeth green:  
Now I perceive thou art a reverend father;  
Pardon, I pray thee, for my mad mistaking.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Do, good old grandsire; and withal make known  
Which way thou travellest: if along with us,  
We shall be joyful of thy company.

## **VINCENTIO**

Fair sir, and you my merry mistress,

That with your strange encounter much amazed me,  
My name is call'd Vincentio; my dwelling Pisa;  
And bound I am to Padua; there to visit  
A son of mine, which long I have not seen.

**PETRUCHIO**

What is his name?

**VINCENTIO**

Lucentio, gentle sir.

**PETRUCHIO**

Happily we met; the happier for thy son.  
And now by law, as well as reverend age,  
I may entitle thee my loving father:  
The sister to my wife, this gentlewoman,  
Thy son by this hath married. Wonder not,  
Nor be grieved: she is of good esteem,  
Her dowery wealthy, and of worthy birth;  
Beside, so qualified as may beseem  
The spouse of any noble gentleman.  
Let me embrace with old Vincentio,  
And wander we to see thy honest son,  
Who will of thy arrival be full joyous.

**VINCENTIO**

But is it true? or else is it your pleasure,  
Like pleasant travellers, to break a jest  
Upon the company you overtake?

**HORTENSIO**

I do assure thee, father, so it is.

**PETRUCHIO**

Come, go along, and see the truth hereof;

For our first merriment hath made thee jealous.

*Exeunt all but HORTENSIO*

## **HORTENSIO**

Well, Petruchio, this has put me in heart.  
Have to my widow! and if she be froward,  
Then hast thou taught Hortensio to be untoward.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 4, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Padua. Before LUCENTIO'S house.

*GREMIO discovered. Enter behind BIONDELLO, LUCENTIO, and BIANCA*

### BIONDELLO

Softly and swiftly, sir; for the priest is ready.

### LUCENTIO

I fly, Biondello: but they may chance to need thee at home; therefore leave us.

### BIONDELLO

Nay, faith, I'll see the church o' your back; and then come back to my master's as soon as I can.

*Exeunt LUCENTIO, BIANCA, and BIONDELLO*

### GREMIO

I marvel Cambio comes not all this while.

*Enter PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, VINCENTIO, GRUMIO, with Attendants*

### PETRUCHIO

Sir, here's the door, this is Lucentio's house:  
My father's bears more toward the market-place;  
Thither must I, and here I leave you, sir.

### VINCENTIO

You shall not choose but drink before you go:

I think I shall command your welcome here,  
And, by all likelihood, some cheer is toward.

*Knocks*

**GREMIO**

They're busy within; you were best knock louder.

*Pedant looks out of the window*

**Pedant**

What's he that knocks as he would beat down the gate?

**VINCENTIO**

Is Signior Lucentio within, sir?

**Pedant**

He's within, sir, but not to be spoken withal.

**VINCENTIO**

What if a man bring him a hundred pound or two, to  
make merry withal?

**Pedant**

Keep your hundred pounds to yourself: he shall  
need none, so long as I live.

**PETRUCHIO**

Nay, I told you your son was well beloved in Padua.  
Do you hear, sir? To leave frivolous circumstances,  
I pray you, tell Signior Lucentio that his father is  
come from Pisa, and is here at the door to speak with him.

**Pedant**



Thou liest: his father is come from Padua and here looking out at the window.

**VINCENTIO**

Art thou his father?

**Pedant**

Ay, sir; so his mother says, if I may believe her.

**PETRUCHIO**

[To VINCENTIO] Why, how now, gentleman! why, this is flat knavery, to take upon you another man's name.

**Pedant**

Lay hands on the villain: I believe a' means to cozen somebody in this city under my countenance.

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

**BIONDELLO**

I have seen them in the church together: God send 'em good shipping! But who is here? mine old master Vincentio! now we are undone and brought to nothing.

**VINCENTIO**

[Seeing BIONDELLO]  
Come hither, crack-hemp.

**BIONDELLO**

Hope I may choose, sir.

**VINCENTIO**

Come hither, you rogue. What, have you forgot me?

**BIONDELLO**

Forgot you! no, sir: I could not forget you, for I never saw you before in all my life.

**VINCENTIO**

What, you notorious villain, didst thou never see thy master's father, Vincentio?

**BIONDELLO**

What, my old worshipful old master? yes, marry, sir: see where he looks out of the window.

**VINCENTIO**

Is't so, indeed.

*Beats BIONDELLO*

**BIONDELLO**

Help, help, help! here's a madman will murder me.

*Exit*

**Pedant**

Help, son! help, Signior Baptista!

*Exit from above*

**PETRUCHIO**

Prithee, Kate, let's stand aside and see the end of this controversy.

*They retire*

*Re-enter Pedant below; TRANIO, BAPTISTA, and Servants*

**TRANIO**

Sir, what are you that offer to beat my servant?

**VINCENTIO**

What am I, sir! nay, what are you, sir? O immortal gods! O fine villain! A silken doublet! a velvet hose! a scarlet cloak! and a copatain hat! O, I am undone! I am undone! while I play the good husband at home, my son and my servant spend all at the university.

**TRANIO**

How now! what's the matter?

**BAPTISTA**

What, is the man lunatic?

**TRANIO**

Sir, you seem a sober ancient gentleman by your habit, but your words show you a madman. Why, sir, what 'cerns it you if I wear pearl and gold? I thank my good father, I am able to maintain it.

**VINCENTIO**

Thy father! O villain! he is a sailmaker in Bergamo.

**BAPTISTA**

You mistake, sir, you mistake, sir. Pray, what do you think is his name?

**VINCENTIO**

His name! as if I knew not his name: I have brought him up ever since he was three years old, and his name is Tranio.

**Pedant**

Away, away, mad ass! his name is Lucentio and he is mine only son, and heir to the lands of me, Signior Vincentio.

**VINCENTIO**

Lucentio! O, he hath murdered his master! Lay hold on him, I charge you, in the duke's name. O, my son, my son! Tell me, thou villain, where is my son Lucentio?

**TRANIO**

Call forth an officer.

*Enter one with an Officer*

Carry this mad knave to the gaol. Father Baptista, I charge you see that he be forthcoming.

**VINCENTIO**

Carry me to the gaol!

**GREMIO**

Stay, officer: he shall not go to prison.

**BAPTISTA**

Talk not, Signior Gremio: I say he shall go to prison.

**GREMIO**

Take heed, Signior Baptista, lest you be cony-catched in this business: I dare swear this

is the right Vincentio.

**Pedant**

Swear, if thou darest.

**GREMIO**

Nay, I dare not swear it.

**TRANIO**

Then thou wert best say that I am not Lucentio.

**GREMIO**

Yes, I know thee to be Signior Lucentio.

**BAPTISTA**

Away with the dotard! to the gaol with him!

**VINCENTIO**

Thus strangers may be hailed and abused: O  
monstrous villain!

*Re-enter BIONDELLO, with LUCENTIO and BIANCA*

**BIONDELLO**

O! we are spoiled and--yonder he is: deny him,  
forswear him, or else we are all undone.

**LUCENTIO**

[Kneeling] Pardon, sweet father.

**VINCENTIO**

Lives my sweet son?

*Exeunt BIONDELLO, TRANIO, and Pedant, as fast as may be*

**BIANCA**

Pardon, dear father.

**BAPTISTA**

How hast thou offended?  
Where is Lucentio?

**LUCENTIO**

Here's Lucentio,  
Right son to the right Vincentio;  
That have by marriage made thy daughter mine,  
While counterfeit supposes bleared thine eyne.

**GREMIO**

Here's packing, with a witness to deceive us all!

**VINCENTIO**

Where is that damned villain Tranio,  
That faced and braved me in this matter so?

**BAPTISTA**

Why, tell me, is not this my Cambio?

**BIANCA**

Cambio is changed into Lucentio.

**LUCENTIO**

Love wrought these miracles. Bianca's love  
Made me exchange my state with Tranio,  
While he did bear my countenance in the town;

And happily I have arrived at the last  
Unto the wished haven of my bliss.  
What Tranio did, myself enforced him to;  
Then pardon him, sweet father, for my sake.

**VINCENTIO**

I'll slit the villain's nose, that would have sent  
me to the gaol.

**BAPTISTA**

But do you hear, sir? have you married my daughter  
without asking my good will?

**VINCENTIO**

Fear not, Baptista; we will content you, go to: but  
I will in, to be revenged for this villany.

*Exit*

**BAPTISTA**

And I, to sound the depth of this knavery.

*Exit*

**LUCENTIO**

Look not pale, Bianca; thy father will not frown.

*Exeunt LUCENTIO and BIANCA*

**GREMIO**

My cake is dough; but I'll in among the rest,  
Out of hope of all, but my share of the feast.

*Exit*

**KATHARINA**

Husband, let's follow, to see the end of this ado.

**PETRUCHIO**

First kiss me, Kate, and we will.

**KATHARINA**

What, in the midst of the street?

**PETRUCHIO**

What, art thou ashamed of me?

**KATHARINA**

No, sir, God forbid; but ashamed to kiss.

**PETRUCHIO**

Why, then let's home again. Come, sirrah, let's away.

**KATHARINA**

Nay, I will give thee a kiss: now pray thee, love, stay.

**PETRUCHIO**

Is not this well? Come, my sweet Kate:  
Better once than never, for never too late.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Taming of the Shrew

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Taming of the Shrew](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE II. Padua. LUCENTIO'S house.

*Enter BAPTISTA, VINCENTIO, GREMIO, the Pedant, LUCENTIO, BIANCA, PETRUCHIO, KATHARINA, HORTENSIO, and Widow, TRANIO, BIONDELLO, and GRUMIO the Serving-men with Tranio bringing in a banquet*

### LUCENTIO

At last, though long, our jarring notes agree:  
And time it is, when raging war is done,  
To smile at scapes and perils overblown.  
My fair Bianca, bid my father welcome,  
While I with self-same kindness welcome thine.  
Brother Petruchio, sister Katharina,  
And thou, Hortensio, with thy loving widow,  
Feast with the best, and welcome to my house:  
My banquet is to close our stomachs up,  
After our great good cheer. Pray you, sit down;  
For now we sit to chat as well as eat.

### PETRUCHIO

Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!

### BAPTISTA

Padua affords this kindness, son Petruchio.

### PETRUCHIO

Padua affords nothing but what is kind.

### HORTENSIO

For both our sakes, I would that word were true.

**PETRUCHIO**

Now, for my life, Hortensio fears his widow.

**Widow**

Then never trust me, if I be afeard.

**PETRUCHIO**

You are very sensible, and yet you miss my sense:  
I mean, Hortensio is afeard of you.

**Widow**

He that is giddy thinks the world turns round.

**PETRUCHIO**

Roundly replied.

**KATHARINA**

Mistress, how mean you that?

**Widow**

Thus I conceive by him.

**PETRUCHIO**

Conceives by me! How likes Hortensio that?

**HORTENSIO**

My widow says, thus she conceives her tale.

**PETRUCHIO**

Very well mended. Kiss him for that, good widow.

**KATHARINA**

'He that is giddy thinks the world turns round:'  
I pray you, tell me what you meant by that.

**Widow**

Your husband, being troubled with a shrew,  
Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe:  
And now you know my meaning,

**KATHARINA**

A very mean meaning.

**Widow**

Right, I mean you.

**KATHARINA**

And I am mean indeed, respecting you.

**PETRUCHIO**

To her, Kate!

**HORTENSIO**

To her, widow!

**PETRUCHIO**

A hundred marks, my Kate does put her down.

**HORTENSIO**

That's my office.

**PETRUCHIO**

Spoke like an officer; ha' to thee, lad!

*Drinks to HORTENSIO*

**BAPTISTA**

How likes Gremio these quick-witted folks?

**GREMIO**

Believe me, sir, they butt together well.

**BIANCA**

Head, and butt! an hasty-witted body  
Would say your head and butt were head and horn.

**VINCENTIO**

Ay, mistress bride, hath that awaken'd you?

**BIANCA**

Ay, but not frightened me; therefore I'll sleep again.

**PETRUCHIO**

Nay, that you shall not: since you have begun,  
Have at you for a bitter jest or two!

**BIANCA**

Am I your bird? I mean to shift my bush;  
And then pursue me as you draw your bow.  
You are welcome all.

*Exeunt BIANCA, KATHARINA, and Widow*

**PETRUCHIO**

She hath prevented me. Here, Signior Tranio.

This bird you aim'd at, though you hit her not;  
Therefore a health to all that shot and miss'd.

**TRANIO**

O, sir, Lucentio slipp'd me like his greyhound,  
Which runs himself and catches for his master.

**PETRUCHIO**

A good swift simile, but something currish.

**TRANIO**

'Tis well, sir, that you hunted for yourself:  
'Tis thought your deer does hold you at a bay.

**BAPTISTA**

O ho, Petruchio! Tranio hits you now.

**LUCENTIO**

I thank thee for that gird, good Tranio.

**HORTENSIO**

Confess, confess, hath he not hit you here?

**PETRUCHIO**

A' has a little gall'd me, I confess;  
And, as the jest did glance away from me,  
'Tis ten to one it maim'd you two outright.

**BAPTISTA**

Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio,  
I think thou hast the veriest shrew of all.

**PETRUCHIO**

Well, I say no: and therefore for assurance  
Let's each one send unto his wife;  
And he whose wife is most obedient  
To come at first when he doth send for her,  
Shall win the wager which we will propose.

**HORTENSIO**

Content. What is the wager?

**LUCENTIO**

Twenty crowns.

**PETRUCHIO**

Twenty crowns!  
I'll venture so much of my hawk or hound,  
But twenty times so much upon my wife.

**LUCENTIO**

A hundred then.

**HORTENSIO**

Content.

**PETRUCHIO**

A match! 'tis done.

**HORTENSIO**

Who shall begin?

**LUCENTIO**

That will I.  
Go, Biondello, bid your mistress come to me.

**BIONDELLO**

I go.

*Exit*

**BAPTISTA**

Son, I'll be your half, Bianca comes.

**LUCENTIO**

I'll have no halves; I'll bear it all myself.

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

How now! what news?

**BIONDELLO**

Sir, my mistress sends you word  
That she is busy and she cannot come.

**PETRUCHIO**

How! she is busy and she cannot come!  
Is that an answer?

**GREMIO**

Ay, and a kind one too:  
Pray God, sir, your wife send you not a worse.

**PETRUCHIO**

I hope better.

**HORTENSIO**

Sirrah Biondello, go and entreat my wife

To come to me forthwith.

*Exit BIONDELLO*

**PETRUCHIO**

O, ho! entreat her!  
Nay, then she must needs come.

**HORTENSIO**

I am afraid, sir,  
Do what you can, yours will not be entreated.

*Re-enter BIONDELLO*

Now, where's my wife?

**BIONDELLO**

She says you have some goodly jest in hand:  
She will not come: she bids you come to her.

**PETRUCHIO**

Worse and worse; she will not come! O vile,  
Intolerable, not to be endured!  
Sirrah Grumio, go to your mistress;  
Say, I command her to come to me.

*Exit GRUMIO*

**HORTENSIO**

I know her answer.

**PETRUCHIO**

What?

**HORTENSIO**



She will not.

**PETRUCHIO**

The fouler fortune mine, and there an end.

**BAPTISTA**

Now, by my holidame, here comes Katharina!

*Re-enter KATHARINA*

**KATHARINA**

What is your will, sir, that you send for me?

**PETRUCHIO**

Where is your sister, and Hortensio's wife?

**KATHARINA**

They sit conferring by the parlor fire.

**PETRUCHIO**

Go fetch them hither: if they deny to come.  
Swinge me them soundly forth unto their husbands:  
Away, I say, and bring them hither straight.

*Exit KATHARINA*

**LUCENTIO**

Here is a wonder, if you talk of a wonder.

**HORTENSIO**

And so it is: I wonder what it bodes.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Marry, peace it bodes, and love and quiet life,  
And awful rule and right supremacy;  
And, to be short, what not, that's sweet and happy?

## **BAPTISTA**

Now, fair befall thee, good Petruchio!  
The wager thou hast won; and I will add  
Unto their losses twenty thousand crowns;  
Another dowry to another daughter,  
For she is changed, as she had never been.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Nay, I will win my wager better yet  
And show more sign of her obedience,  
Her new-built virtue and obedience.  
See where she comes and brings your froward wives  
As prisoners to her womanly persuasion.

*Re-enter KATHARINA, with BIANCA and Widow*

Katharina, that cap of yours becomes you not:  
Off with that bauble, throw it under-foot.

## **Widow**

Lord, let me never have a cause to sigh,  
Till I be brought to such a silly pass!

## **BIANCA**

Fie! what a foolish duty call you this?

## **LUCENTIO**

I would your duty were as foolish too:  
The wisdom of your duty, fair Bianca,  
Hath cost me an hundred crowns since supper-time.

## **BIANCA**

The more fool you, for laying on my duty.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Katharina, I charge thee, tell these headstrong women  
What duty they do owe their lords and husbands.

## **Widow**

Come, come, you're mocking: we will have no telling.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Come on, I say; and first begin with her.

## **Widow**

She shall not.

## **PETRUCHIO**

I say she shall: and first begin with her.

## **KATHARINA**

Fie, fie! unknit that threatening unkind brow,  
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,  
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor:  
It blots thy beauty as frosts do bite the meads,  
Confounds thy fame as whirlwinds shake fair buds,  
And in no sense is meet or amiable.  
A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,  
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;  
And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty  
Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it.  
Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,  
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,  
And for thy maintenance commits his body  
To painful labour both by sea and land,

To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,  
Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;  
And craves no other tribute at thy hands  
But love, fair looks and true obedience;  
Too little payment for so great a debt.  
Such duty as the subject owes the prince  
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;  
And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,  
And not obedient to his honest will,  
What is she but a foul contending rebel  
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?  
I am ashamed that women are so simple  
To offer war where they should kneel for peace;  
Or seek for rule, supremacy and sway,  
When they are bound to serve, love and obey.  
Why are our bodies soft and weak and smooth,  
Unapt to toil and trouble in the world,  
But that our soft conditions and our hearts  
Should well agree with our external parts?  
Come, come, you froward and unable worms!  
My mind hath been as big as one of yours,  
My heart as great, my reason haply more,  
To bandy word for word and frown for frown;  
But now I see our lances are but straws,  
Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare,  
That seeming to be most which we indeed least are.  
Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,  
And place your hands below your husband's foot:  
In token of which duty, if he please,  
My hand is ready; may it do him ease.

## **PETRUCHIO**

Why, there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate.

## **LUCENTIO**

Well, go thy ways, old lad; for thou shalt ha't.

## **VINCENTIO**

'Tis a good hearing when children are toward.

**LUCENTIO**

But a harsh hearing when women are froward.

**PETRUCHIO**

Come, Kate, we'll to bed.  
We three are married, but you two are sped.

*To LUCENTIO*

'Twas I won the wager, though you hit the white;  
And, being a winner, God give you good night!

*Exeunt PETRUCHIO and KATHARINA*

**HORTENSIO**

Now, go thy ways; thou hast tamed a curst shrew.

**LUCENTIO**

'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so.

*Exeunt*

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | The Tempest

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [On a ship at sea: a tempestuous noise](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The island. Before PROSPERO'S cell.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Another part of the island.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Another part of the island.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Before PROSPERO'S Cell.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Another part of the island.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Another part of the island.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Before PROSPERO'S cell.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Before PROSPERO'S cell.](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. On a ship at sea: a tempestuous noise

of thunder and lightning heard.

*Enter a Master and a Boatswain*

**Master**

Boatswain!

**Boatswain**

Here, master: what cheer?

**Master**

Good, speak to the mariners: fall to't, yarely,  
or we run ourselves aground: bestir, bestir.

*Exit*

*Enter Mariners*

**Boatswain**

Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts!  
yare, yare! Take in the topsail. Tend to the  
master's whistle. Blow, till thou burst thy wind,  
if room enough!

*Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, FERDINAND, GONZALO, and others*

**ALONSO**

Good boatswain, have care. Where's the master?

Play the men.

**Boatswain**

I pray now, keep below.

**ANTONIO**

Where is the master, boatswain?

**Boatswain**

Do you not hear him? You mar our labour: keep your cabins: you do assist the storm.

**GONZALO**

Nay, good, be patient.

**Boatswain**

When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for the name of king? To cabin: silence! trouble us not.

**GONZALO**

Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

**Boatswain**

None that I more love than myself. You are a counsellor; if you can command these elements to silence, and work the peace of the present, we will not hand a rope more; use your authority: if you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour, if it so hap. Cheerly, good hearts! Out of our way, I say.

*Exit*



## **GONZALO**

I have great comfort from this fellow: methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good Fate, to his hanging: make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage. If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable.

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter Boatswain*

## **Boatswain**

Down with the topmast! yare! lower, lower! Bring her to try with main-course.

*A cry within*

A plague upon this howling! they are louder than the weather or our office.

*Re-enter SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, and GONZALO*

Yet again! what do you here? Shall we give o'er and drown? Have you a mind to sink?

## **SEBASTIAN**

A pox o' your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!

## **Boatswain**

Work you then.

## **ANTONIO**

Hang, cur! hang, you whoreson, insolent noisemaker! We are less afraid to be drowned than thou art.

## **GONZALO**

I'll warrant him for drowning; though the ship were  
no stronger than a nutshell and as leaky as an  
unstanched wench.

## **Boatswain**

Lay her a-hold, a-hold! set her two courses off to  
sea again; lay her off.

*Enter Mariners wet*

## **Mariners**

All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!

## **Boatswain**

What, must our mouths be cold?

## **GONZALO**

The king and prince at prayers! let's assist them,  
For our case is as theirs.

## **SEBASTIAN**

I'm out of patience.

## **ANTONIO**

We are merely cheated of our lives by drunkards:  
This wide-chapp'd rascal--would thou mightst lie drowning  
The washing of ten tides!

## **GONZALO**

He'll be hang'd yet,  
Though every drop of water swear against it

And gape at widest to glut him.

*A confused noise within: 'Mercy on us!'-- 'We split, we split!'-- 'Farewell, my wife and children!'-- 'Farewell, brother!'-- 'We split, we split, we split!'*

## **ANTONIO**

Let's all sink with the king.

## **SEBASTIAN**

Let's take leave of him.

*Exeunt ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN*

## **GONZALO**

Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground, long heath, brown furze, any thing. The wills above be done! but I would fain die a dry death.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The island. Before PROSPERO'S cell.

*Enter PROSPERO and MIRANDA*

### MIRANDA

If by your art, my dearest father, you have  
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.  
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,  
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,  
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered  
With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,  
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her,  
Dash'd all to pieces. O, the cry did knock  
Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd.  
Had I been any god of power, I would  
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere  
It should the good ship so have swallow'd and  
The fraughting souls within her.

### PROSPERO

Be collected:  
No more amazement: tell your piteous heart  
There's no harm done.

### MIRANDA

O, woe the day!

### PROSPERO

No harm.  
I have done nothing but in care of thee,  
Of thee, my dear one, thee, my daughter, who  
Art ignorant of what thou art, nought knowing

Of whence I am, nor that I am more better  
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,  
And thy no greater father.

## MIRANDA

More to know  
Did never meddle with my thoughts.

## PROSPERO

'Tis time  
I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand,  
And pluck my magic garment from me. So:

*Lays down his mantle*

Lie there, my art. Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.  
The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd  
The very virtue of compassion in thee,  
I have with such provision in mine art  
So safely ordered that there is no soul--  
No, not so much perdition as an hair  
Betid to any creature in the vessel  
Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. Sit down;  
For thou must now know farther.

## MIRANDA

You have often  
Begun to tell me what I am, but stopp'd  
And left me to a bootless inquisition,  
Concluding 'Stay: not yet.'

## PROSPERO

The hour's now come;  
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear;  
Obey and be attentive. Canst thou remember  
A time before we came unto this cell?  
I do not think thou canst, for then thou wast not  
Out three years old.

**MIRANDA**

Certainly, sir, I can.

**PROSPERO**

By what? by any other house or person?  
Of any thing the image tell me that  
Hath kept with thy remembrance.

**MIRANDA**

'Tis far off  
And rather like a dream than an assurance  
That my remembrance warrants. Had I not  
Four or five women once that tended me?

**PROSPERO**

Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it  
That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else  
In the dark backward and abysm of time?  
If thou remember'st aught ere thou camest here,  
How thou camest here thou mayst.

**MIRANDA**

But that I do not.

**PROSPERO**

Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,  
Thy father was the Duke of Milan and  
A prince of power.

**MIRANDA**

Sir, are not you my father?

**PROSPERO**

Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and  
She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father  
Was Duke of Milan; and thou his only heir  
And princess no worse issued.

**MIRANDA**

O the heavens!  
What foul play had we, that we came from thence?  
Or blessed was't we did?

**PROSPERO**

Both, both, my girl:  
By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence,  
But blessedly help hither.

**MIRANDA**

O, my heart bleeds  
To think o' the teen that I have turn'd you to,  
Which is from my remembrance! Please you, farther.

**PROSPERO**

My brother and thy uncle, call'd Antonio--  
I pray thee, mark me--that a brother should  
Be so perfidious!--he whom next thyself  
Of all the world I loved and to him put  
The manage of my state; as at that time  
Through all the signories it was the first  
And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed  
In dignity, and for the liberal arts  
Without a parallel; those being all my study,  
The government I cast upon my brother  
And to my state grew stranger, being transported  
And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle--  
Dost thou attend me?

**MIRANDA**

Sir, most heedfully.

## **PROSPERO**

Being once perfected how to grant suits,  
How to deny them, who to advance and who  
To trash for over-topping, new created  
The creatures that were mine, I say, or changed 'em,  
Or else new form'd 'em; having both the key  
Of officer and office, set all hearts i' the state  
To what tune pleased his ear; that now he was  
The ivy which had hid my princely trunk,  
And suck'd my verdure out on't. Thou attend'st not.

## **MIRANDA**

O, good sir, I do.

## **PROSPERO**

I pray thee, mark me.  
I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated  
To closeness and the bettering of my mind  
With that which, but by being so retired,  
O'er-prized all popular rate, in my false brother  
Awaked an evil nature; and my trust,  
Like a good parent, did beget of him  
A falsehood in its contrary as great  
As my trust was; which had indeed no limit,  
A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded,  
Not only with what my revenue yielded,  
But what my power might else exact, like one  
Who having into truth, by telling of it,  
Made such a sinner of his memory,  
To credit his own lie, he did believe  
He was indeed the duke; out o' the substitution  
And executing the outward face of royalty,  
With all prerogative: hence his ambition growing--  
Dost thou hear?

## **MIRANDA**



Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

## **PROSPERO**

To have no screen between this part he play'd  
And him he play'd it for, he needs will be  
Absolute Milan. Me, poor man, my library  
Was dukedom large enough: of temporal royalties  
He thinks me now incapable; confederates--  
So dry he was for sway--wi' the King of Naples  
To give him annual tribute, do him homage,  
Subject his coronet to his crown and bend  
The dukedom yet unbow'd--alas, poor Milan!--  
To most ignoble stooping.

## **MIRANDA**

O the heavens!

## **PROSPERO**

Mark his condition and the event; then tell me  
If this might be a brother.

## **MIRANDA**

I should sin  
To think but nobly of my grandmother:  
Good wombs have borne bad sons.

## **PROSPERO**

Now the condition.  
The King of Naples, being an enemy  
To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit;  
Which was, that he, in lieu o' the premises  
Of homage and I know not how much tribute,  
Should presently extirpate me and mine  
Out of the dukedom and confer fair Milan  
With all the honours on my brother: whereon,  
A treacherous army levied, one midnight  
Fated to the purpose did Antonio open

The gates of Milan, and, i' the dead of darkness,  
The ministers for the purpose hurried thence  
Me and thy crying self.

**MIRANDA**

Alack, for pity!  
I, not remembering how I cried out then,  
Will cry it o'er again: it is a hint  
That wrings mine eyes to't.

**PROSPERO**

Hear a little further  
And then I'll bring thee to the present business  
Which now's upon's; without the which this story  
Were most impertinent.

**MIRANDA**

Wherefore did they not  
That hour destroy us?

**PROSPERO**

Well demanded, wench:  
My tale provokes that question. Dear, they durst not,  
So dear the love my people bore me, nor set  
A mark so bloody on the business, but  
With colours fairer painted their foul ends.  
In few, they hurried us aboard a bark,  
Bore us some leagues to sea; where they prepared  
A rotten carcass of a boat, not rigg'd,  
Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats  
Instinctively had quit it: there they hoist us,  
To cry to the sea that roar'd to us, to sigh  
To the winds whose pity, sighing back again,  
Did us but loving wrong.

**MIRANDA**

Alack, what trouble

Was I then to you!

**PROSPERO**

O, a cherubim  
Thou wast that did preserve me. Thou didst smile.  
Infused with a fortitude from heaven,  
When I have deck'd the sea with drops full salt,  
Under my burthen groan'd; which raised in me  
An undergoing stomach, to bear up  
Against what should ensue.

**MIRANDA**

How came we ashore?

**PROSPERO**

By Providence divine.  
Some food we had and some fresh water that  
A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,  
Out of his charity, being then appointed  
Master of this design, did give us, with  
Rich garments, linens, stuffs and necessaries,  
Which since have steaded much; so, of his gentleness,  
Knowing I loved my books, he furnish'd me  
From mine own library with volumes that  
I prize above my dukedom.

**MIRANDA**

Would I might  
But ever see that man!

**PROSPERO**

Now I arise:

*Resumes his mantle*

Sit still, and hear the last of our sea-sorrow.  
Here in this island we arrived; and here

Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit  
Than other princesses can that have more time  
For vainer hours and tutors not so careful.

## **MIRANDA**

Heavens thank you for't! And now, I pray you, sir,  
For still 'tis beating in my mind, your reason  
For raising this sea-storm?

## **PROSPERO**

Know thus far forth.  
By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,  
Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies  
Brought to this shore; and by my prescience  
I find my zenith doth depend upon  
A most auspicious star, whose influence  
If now I court not but omit, my fortunes  
Will ever after droop. Here cease more questions:  
Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dulness,  
And give it way: I know thou canst not choose.

*MIRANDA sleeps*

Come away, servant, come. I am ready now.  
Approach, my Ariel, come.

*Enter ARIEL*

## **ARIEL**

All hail, great master! grave sir, hail! I come  
To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,  
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride  
On the curl'd clouds, to thy strong bidding task  
Ariel and all his quality.

## **PROSPERO**

Hast thou, spirit,  
Perform'd to point the tempest that I bade thee?

## **ARIEL**

To every article.  
I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,  
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,  
I flamed amazement: sometime I'd divide,  
And burn in many places; on the topmast,  
The yards and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,  
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors  
O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary  
And sight-outrunning were not; the fire and cracks  
Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune  
Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,  
Yea, his dread trident shake.

## **PROSPERO**

My brave spirit!  
Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil  
Would not infect his reason?

## **ARIEL**

Not a soul  
But felt a fever of the mad and play'd  
Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners  
Plunged in the foaming brine and quit the vessel,  
Then all afire with me: the king's son, Ferdinand,  
With hair up-staring,--then like reeds, not hair,--  
Was the first man that leap'd; cried, 'Hell is empty  
And all the devils are here.'

## **PROSPERO**

Why that's my spirit!  
But was not this nigh shore?

## **ARIEL**

Close by, my master.

## **PROSPERO**

But are they, Ariel, safe?

## **ARIEL**

Not a hair perish'd;  
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,  
But fresher than before: and, as thou badest me,  
In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle.  
The king's son have I landed by himself;  
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs  
In an odd angle of the isle and sitting,  
His arms in this sad knot.

## **PROSPERO**

Of the king's ship  
The mariners say how thou hast disposed  
And all the rest o' the fleet.

## **ARIEL**

Safely in harbour  
Is the king's ship; in the deep nook, where once  
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew  
From the still-vex'd Bermoothes, there she's hid:  
The mariners all under hatches stow'd;  
Who, with a charm join'd to their suffer'd labour,  
I have left asleep; and for the rest o' the fleet  
Which I dispersed, they all have met again  
And are upon the Mediterranean flote,  
Bound sadly home for Naples,  
Supposing that they saw the king's ship wreck'd  
And his great person perish.

## **PROSPERO**

Ariel, thy charge  
Exactly is perform'd: but there's more work.  
What is the time o' the day?

**ARIEL**

Past the mid season.

**PROSPERO**

At least two glasses. The time 'twixt six and now  
Must by us both be spent most preciously.

**ARIEL**

Is there more toil? Since thou dost give me pains,  
Let me remember thee what thou hast promised,  
Which is not yet perform'd me.

**PROSPERO**

How now? moody?  
What is't thou canst demand?

**ARIEL**

My liberty.

**PROSPERO**

Before the time be out? no more!

**ARIEL**

I prithee,  
Remember I have done thee worthy service;  
Told thee no lies, made thee no mistakings, served  
Without or grudge or grumblings: thou didst promise  
To bate me a full year.

**PROSPERO**

Dost thou forget  
From what a torment I did free thee?

**ARIEL**

No.

**PROSPERO**

Thou dost, and think'st it much to tread the ooze  
Of the salt deep,  
To run upon the sharp wind of the north,  
To do me business in the veins o' the earth  
When it is baked with frost.

**ARIEL**

I do not, sir.

**PROSPERO**

Thou liest, malignant thing! Hast thou forgot  
The foul witch Sycorax, who with age and envy  
Was grown into a hoop? hast thou forgot her?

**ARIEL**

No, sir.

**PROSPERO**

Thou hast. Where was she born? speak; tell me.

**ARIEL**

Sir, in Argier.

**PROSPERO**

O, was she so? I must  
Once in a month recount what thou hast been,  
Which thou forget'st. This damn'd witch Sycorax,  
For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible  
To enter human hearing, from Argier,



Thou know'st, was banish'd: for one thing she did  
They would not take her life. Is not this true?

**ARIEL**

Ay, sir.

**PROSPERO**

This blue-eyed hag was hither brought with child  
And here was left by the sailors. Thou, my slave,  
As thou report'st thyself, wast then her servant;  
And, for thou wast a spirit too delicate  
To act her earthy and abhorr'd commands,  
Refusing her grand hests, she did confine thee,  
By help of her more potent ministers  
And in her most unmitigable rage,  
Into a cloven pine; within which rift  
Imprison'd thou didst painfully remain  
A dozen years; within which space she died  
And left thee there; where thou didst vent thy groans  
As fast as mill-wheels strike. Then was this island--  
Save for the son that she did litter here,  
A freckled whelp hag-born--not honour'd with  
A human shape.

**ARIEL**

Yes, Caliban her son.

**PROSPERO**

Dull thing, I say so; he, that Caliban  
Whom now I keep in service. Thou best know'st  
What torment I did find thee in; thy groans  
Did make wolves howl and penetrate the breasts  
Of ever angry bears: it was a torment  
To lay upon the damn'd, which Sycorax  
Could not again undo: it was mine art,  
When I arrived and heard thee, that made gape  
The pine and let thee out.

**ARIEL**

I thank thee, master.

**PROSPERO**

If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak  
And peg thee in his knotty entrails till  
Thou hast howl'd away twelve winters.

**ARIEL**

Pardon, master;  
I will be correspondent to command  
And do my spiriting gently.

**PROSPERO**

Do so, and after two days  
I will discharge thee.

**ARIEL**

That's my noble master!  
What shall I do? say what; what shall I do?

**PROSPERO**

Go make thyself like a nymph o' the sea: be subject  
To no sight but thine and mine, invisible  
To every eyeball else. Go take this shape  
And hither come in't: go, hence with diligence!

*Exit ARIEL*

Awake, dear heart, awake! thou hast slept well; Awake!

**MIRANDA**

The strangeness of your story put  
Heaviness in me.

## **PROSPERO**

Shake it off. Come on;  
We'll visit Caliban my slave, who never  
Yields us kind answer.

## **MIRANDA**

'Tis a villain, sir,  
I do not love to look on.

## **PROSPERO**

But, as 'tis,  
We cannot miss him: he does make our fire,  
Fetch in our wood and serves in offices  
That profit us. What, ho! slave! Caliban!  
Thou earth, thou! speak.

## **CALIBAN**

[Within] There's wood enough within.

## **PROSPERO**

Come forth, I say! there's other business for thee:  
Come, thou tortoise! when?

*Re-enter ARIEL like a water-nymph*

Fine apparition! My quaint Ariel,  
Hark in thine ear.

## **ARIEL**

My lord it shall be done.

*Exit*

## **PROSPERO**

Thou poisonous slave, got by the devil himself  
Upon thy wicked dam, come forth!

*Enter CALIBAN*

## **CALIBAN**

As wicked dew as e'er my mother brush'd  
With raven's feather from unwholesome fen  
Drop on you both! a south-west blow on ye  
And blister you all o'er!

## **PROSPERO**

For this, be sure, to-night thou shalt have cramps,  
Side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up; urchins  
Shall, for that vast of night that they may work,  
All exercise on thee; thou shalt be pinch'd  
As thick as honeycomb, each pinch more stinging  
Than bees that made 'em.

## **CALIBAN**

I must eat my dinner.  
This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,  
Which thou takest from me. When thou camest first,  
Thou strokedst me and madest much of me, wouldst give me  
Water with berries in't, and teach me how  
To name the bigger light, and how the less,  
That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee  
And show'd thee all the qualities o' the isle,  
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile:  
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms  
Of Sycorax, toads, beetles, bats, light on you!  
For I am all the subjects that you have,  
Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me  
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me  
The rest o' the island.

## **PROSPERO**

Thou most lying slave,

Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee,  
Filth as thou art, with human care, and lodged thee  
In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate  
The honour of my child.

## **CALIBAN**

O ho, O ho! would't had been done!  
Thou didst prevent me; I had peopled else  
This isle with Calibans.

## **PROSPERO**

Abhorred slave,  
Which any print of goodness wilt not take,  
Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,  
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour  
One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,  
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like  
A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes  
With words that made them known. But thy vile race,  
Though thou didst learn, had that in't which  
good natures  
Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou  
Deservedly confined into this rock,  
Who hadst deserved more than a prison.

## **CALIBAN**

You taught me language; and my profit on't  
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you  
For learning me your language!

## **PROSPERO**

Hag-seed, hence!  
Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou'rt best,  
To answer other business. Shrug'st thou, malice?  
If thou neglect'st or dost unwillingly  
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,  
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar  
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

## **CALIBAN**

No, pray thee.

*Aside*

I must obey: his art is of such power,  
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,  
and make a vassal of him.

## **PROSPERO**

So, slave; hence!

*Exit CALIBAN*

*Re-enter ARIEL, invisible, playing and singing; FERDINAND following*

ARIEL'S song.

Come unto these yellow sands,  
And then take hands:  
Courtsied when you have and kiss'd  
The wild waves whist,  
Foot it featly here and there;  
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear.  
Hark, hark!

*Burthen [dispersedly, within*

The watch-dogs bark!

*Burthen Bow-wow*

Hark, hark! I hear  
The strain of strutting chanticleer  
Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow.

## **FERDINAND**

Where should this music be? i' the air or the earth?  
It sounds no more: and sure, it waits upon

Some god o' the island. Sitting on a bank,  
Weeping again the king my father's wreck,  
This music crept by me upon the waters,  
Allaying both their fury and my passion  
With its sweet air: thence I have follow'd it,  
Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.  
No, it begins again.

*ARIEL sings*

Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
Nothing of him that doth fade  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell

*Burthen Ding-dong*

Hark! now I hear them,--Ding-dong, bell.

## **FERDINAND**

The ditty does remember my drown'd father.  
This is no mortal business, nor no sound  
That the earth owes. I hear it now above me.

## **PROSPERO**

The fringed curtains of thine eye advance  
And say what thou seest yond.

## **MIRANDA**

What is't? a spirit?  
Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,  
It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.

## **PROSPERO**

No, wench; it eats and sleeps and hath such senses  
As we have, such. This gallant which thou seest  
Was in the wreck; and, but he's something stain'd  
With grief that's beauty's canker, thou mightst call him  
A goodly person: he hath lost his fellows  
And strays about to find 'em.

## **MIRANDA**

I might call him  
A thing divine, for nothing natural  
I ever saw so noble.

## **PROSPERO**

[Aside] It goes on, I see,  
As my soul prompts it. Spirit, fine spirit! I'll free thee  
Within two days for this.

## **FERDINAND**

Most sure, the goddess  
On whom these airs attend! Vouchsafe my prayer  
May know if you remain upon this island;  
And that you will some good instruction give  
How I may bear me here: my prime request,  
Which I do last pronounce, is, O you wonder!  
If you be maid or no?

## **MIRANDA**

No wonder, sir;  
But certainly a maid.

## **FERDINAND**

My language! heavens!  
I am the best of them that speak this speech,  
Were I but where 'tis spoken.

## **PROSPERO**



How? the best?  
What wert thou, if the King of Naples heard thee?

**FERDINAND**

A single thing, as I am now, that wonders  
To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me;  
And that he does I weep: myself am Naples,  
Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld  
The king my father wreck'd.

**MIRANDA**

Alack, for mercy!

**FERDINAND**

Yes, faith, and all his lords; the Duke of Milan  
And his brave son being twain.

**PROSPERO**

[Aside] The Duke of Milan  
And his more braver daughter could control thee,  
If now 'twere fit to do't. At the first sight  
They have changed eyes. Delicate Ariel,  
I'll set thee free for this.

*To FERDINAND*

A word, good sir;  
I fear you have done yourself some wrong: a word.

**MIRANDA**

Why speaks my father so ungently? This  
Is the third man that e'er I saw, the first  
That e'er I sigh'd for: pity move my father  
To be inclined my way!

**FERDINAND**

O, if a virgin,  
And your affection not gone forth, I'll make you  
The queen of Naples.

## **PROSPERO**

Soft, sir! one word more.

*Aside*

They are both in either's powers; but this swift business  
I must uneasy make, lest too light winning  
Make the prize light.

*To FERDINAND*

One word more; I charge thee  
That thou attend me: thou dost here usurp  
The name thou owest not; and hast put thyself  
Upon this island as a spy, to win it  
From me, the lord on't.

## **FERDINAND**

No, as I am a man.

## **MIRANDA**

There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:  
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,  
Good things will strive to dwell with't.

## **PROSPERO**

Follow me.  
Speak not you for him; he's a traitor. Come;  
I'll manacle thy neck and feet together:  
Sea-water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be  
The fresh-brook muscles, wither'd roots and husks  
Wherein the acorn cradled. Follow.

## **FERDINAND**

No;  
I will resist such entertainment till  
Mine enemy has more power.

*Draws, and is charmed from moving*

## **MIRANDA**

O dear father,  
Make not too rash a trial of him, for  
He's gentle and not fearful.

## **PROSPERO**

What? I say,  
My foot my tutor? Put thy sword up, traitor;  
Who makest a show but darest not strike, thy conscience  
Is so possess'd with guilt: come from thy ward,  
For I can here disarm thee with this stick  
And make thy weapon drop.

## **MIRANDA**

Beseech you, father.

## **PROSPERO**

Hence! hang not on my garments.

## **MIRANDA**

Sir, have pity;  
I'll be his surety.

## **PROSPERO**

Silence! one word more  
Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee. What!  
An advocate for an imposter! hush!

Thou think'st there is no more such shapes as he,  
Having seen but him and Caliban: foolish wench!  
To the most of men this is a Caliban  
And they to him are angels.

## **MIRANDA**

My affections  
Are then most humble; I have no ambition  
To see a goodlier man.

## **PROSPERO**

Come on; obey:  
Thy nerves are in their infancy again  
And have no vigour in them.

## **FERDINAND**

So they are;  
My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.  
My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,  
The wreck of all my friends, nor this man's threats,  
To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,  
Might I but through my prison once a day  
Behold this maid: all corners else o' the earth  
Let liberty make use of; space enough  
Have I in such a prison.

## **PROSPERO**

[Aside] It works.

*To FERDINAND*

Come on.  
Thou hast done well, fine Ariel!

*To FERDINAND*

Follow me.

*To ARIEL*

Hark what thou else shalt do me.

**MIRANDA**

Be of comfort;  
My father's of a better nature, sir,  
Than he appears by speech: this is unwonted  
Which now came from him.

**PROSPERO**

Thou shalt be free  
As mountain winds: but then exactly do  
All points of my command.

**ARIEL**

To the syllable.

**PROSPERO**

Come, follow. Speak not for him.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Another part of the island.

*Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and others*

### GONZALO

Beseech you, sir, be merry; you have cause,  
So have we all, of joy; for our escape  
Is much beyond our loss. Our hint of woe  
Is common; every day some sailor's wife,  
The masters of some merchant and the merchant  
Have just our theme of woe; but for the miracle,  
I mean our preservation, few in millions  
Can speak like us: then wisely, good sir, weigh  
Our sorrow with our comfort.

### ALONSO

Prithee, peace.

### SEBASTIAN

He receives comfort like cold porridge.

### ANTONIO

The visitor will not give him o'er so.

### SEBASTIAN

Look he's winding up the watch of his wit;  
by and by it will strike.

### GONZALO

Sir,--

**SEBASTIAN**

One: tell.

**GONZALO**

When every grief is entertain'd that's offer'd,  
Comes to the entertainer--

**SEBASTIAN**

A dollar.

**GONZALO**

Dolour comes to him, indeed: you  
have spoken truer than you purposed.

**SEBASTIAN**

You have taken it wiselier than I meant you should.

**GONZALO**

Therefore, my lord,--

**ANTONIO**

Fie, what a spendthrift is he of his tongue!

**ALONSO**

I prithee, spare.

**GONZALO**

Well, I have done: but yet,--

**SEBASTIAN**

He will be talking.

**ANTONIO**

Which, of he or Adrian, for a good  
wager, first begins to crow?

**SEBASTIAN**

The old cock.

**ANTONIO**

The cockerel.

**SEBASTIAN**

Done. The wager?

**ANTONIO**

A laughter.

**SEBASTIAN**

A match!

**ADRIAN**

Though this island seem to be desert,--

**SEBASTIAN**

Ha, ha, ha! So, you're paid.

**ADRIAN**

Uninhabitable and almost inaccessible,--

**SEBASTIAN**



Yet,--

**ADRIAN**

Yet,--

**ANTONIO**

He could not miss't.

**ADRIAN**

It must needs be of subtle, tender and delicate temperance.

**ANTONIO**

Temperance was a delicate wench.

**SEBASTIAN**

Ay, and a subtle; as he most learnedly delivered.

**ADRIAN**

The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.

**SEBASTIAN**

As if it had lungs and rotten ones.

**ANTONIO**

Or as 'twere perfumed by a fen.

**GONZALO**

Here is everything advantageous to life.

**ANTONIO**

True; save means to live.

**SEBASTIAN**

Of that there's none, or little.

**GONZALO**

How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!

**ANTONIO**

The ground indeed is tawny.

**SEBASTIAN**

With an eye of green in't.

**ANTONIO**

He misses not much.

**SEBASTIAN**

No; he doth but mistake the truth totally.

**GONZALO**

But the rarity of it is,--which is indeed almost  
beyond credit,--

**SEBASTIAN**

As many vouched rarities are.

**GONZALO**

That our garments, being, as they were, drenched in  
the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness and  
glosses, being rather new-dyed than stained with  
salt water.

**ANTONIO**

If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not  
say he lies?

**SEBASTIAN**

Ay, or very falsely pocket up his report

**GONZALO**

Methinks our garments are now as fresh as when we  
put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of  
the king's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis.

**SEBASTIAN**

'Twas a sweet marriage, and we prosper well in our return.

**ADRIAN**

Tunis was never graced before with such a paragon to  
their queen.

**GONZALO**

Not since widow Dido's time.

**ANTONIO**

Widow! a pox o' that! How came that widow in?  
widow Dido!

**SEBASTIAN**

What if he had said 'widower AEneas' too? Good Lord,  
how you take it!

**ADRIAN**

'Widow Dido' said you? you make me study of that:  
she was of Carthage, not of Tunis.

**GONZALO**

This Tunis, sir, was Carthage.

**ADRIAN**

Carthage?

**GONZALO**

I assure you, Carthage.

**SEBASTIAN**

His word is more than the miraculous harp; he hath  
raised the wall and houses too.

**ANTONIO**

What impossible matter will he make easy next?

**SEBASTIAN**

I think he will carry this island home in his pocket  
and give it his son for an apple.

**ANTONIO**

And, sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring  
forth more islands.

**GONZALO**

Ay.

**ANTONIO**

Why, in good time.

## **GONZALO**

Sir, we were talking that our garments seem now  
as fresh as when we were at Tunis at the marriage  
of your daughter, who is now queen.

## **ANTONIO**

And the rarest that e'er came there.

## **SEBASTIAN**

Bate, I beseech you, widow Dido.

## **ANTONIO**

O, widow Dido! ay, widow Dido.

## **GONZALO**

Is not, sir, my doublet as fresh as the first day I  
wore it? I mean, in a sort.

## **ANTONIO**

That sort was well fished for.

## **GONZALO**

When I wore it at your daughter's marriage?

## **ALONSO**

You cram these words into mine ears against  
The stomach of my sense. Would I had never  
Married my daughter there! for, coming thence,  
My son is lost and, in my rate, she too,  
Who is so far from Italy removed  
I ne'er again shall see her. O thou mine heir  
Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish

Hath made his meal on thee?

**FRANCISCO**

Sir, he may live:  
I saw him beat the surges under him,  
And ride upon their backs; he trod the water,  
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted  
The surge most swoln that met him; his bold head  
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd  
Himself with his good arms in lusty stroke  
To the shore, that o'er his wave-worn basis bow'd,  
As stooping to relieve him: I not doubt  
He came alive to land.

**ALONSO**

No, no, he's gone.

**SEBASTIAN**

Sir, you may thank yourself for this great loss,  
That would not bless our Europe with your daughter,  
But rather lose her to an African;  
Where she at least is banish'd from your eye,  
Who hath cause to wet the grief on't.

**ALONSO**

Prithee, peace.

**SEBASTIAN**

You were kneel'd to and importuned otherwise  
By all of us, and the fair soul herself  
Weigh'd between loathness and obedience, at  
Which end o' the beam should bow. We have lost your  
son,  
I fear, for ever: Milan and Naples have  
More widows in them of this business' making  
Than we bring men to comfort them:  
The fault's your own.

**ALONSO**

So is the dear'st o' the loss.

**GONZALO**

My lord Sebastian,  
The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness  
And time to speak it in: you rub the sore,  
When you should bring the plaster.

**SEBASTIAN**

Very well.

**ANTONIO**

And most chirurgemonly.

**GONZALO**

It is foul weather in us all, good sir,  
When you are cloudy.

**SEBASTIAN**

Foul weather?

**ANTONIO**

Very foul.

**GONZALO**

Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,--

**ANTONIO**

He'ld sow't with nettle-seed.

**SEBASTIAN**

Or docks, or mallows.

**GONZALO**

And were the king on't, what would I do?

**SEBASTIAN**

'Scape being drunk for want of wine.

**GONZALO**

I' the commonwealth I would by contraries  
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic  
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;  
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,  
And use of service, none; contract, succession,  
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;  
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;  
No occupation; all men idle, all;  
And women too, but innocent and pure;  
No sovereignty;--

**SEBASTIAN**

Yet he would be king on't.

**ANTONIO**

The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the  
beginning.

**GONZALO**

All things in common nature should produce  
Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony,  
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,  
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,  
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,



To feed my innocent people.

**SEBASTIAN**

No marrying 'mong his subjects?

**ANTONIO**

None, man; all idle: whores and knaves.

**GONZALO**

I would with such perfection govern, sir,  
To excel the golden age.

**SEBASTIAN**

God save his majesty!

**ANTONIO**

Long live Gonzalo!

**GONZALO**

And,--do you mark me, sir?

**ALONSO**

Prithee, no more: thou dost talk nothing to me.

**GONZALO**

I do well believe your highness; and  
did it to minister occasion to these gentlemen,  
who are of such sensible and nimble lungs that  
they always use to laugh at nothing.

**ANTONIO**

'Twas you we laughed at.

**GONZALO**

Who in this kind of merry fooling am nothing  
to you: so you may continue and laugh at  
nothing still.

**ANTONIO**

What a blow was there given!

**SEBASTIAN**

An it had not fallen flat-long.

**GONZALO**

You are gentlemen of brave metal; you would lift  
the moon out of her sphere, if she would continue  
in it five weeks without changing.

*Enter ARIEL, invisible, playing solemn music*

**SEBASTIAN**

We would so, and then go a bat-fowling.

**ANTONIO**

Nay, good my lord, be not angry.

**GONZALO**

No, I warrant you; I will not adventure  
my discretion so weakly. Will you laugh  
me asleep, for I am very heavy?

**ANTONIO**

Go sleep, and hear us.

*All sleep except ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, and ANTONIO*

**ALONSO**

What, all so soon asleep! I wish mine eyes  
Would, with themselves, shut up my thoughts: I find  
They are inclined to do so.

**SEBASTIAN**

Please you, sir,  
Do not omit the heavy offer of it:  
It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth,  
It is a comforter.

**ANTONIO**

We two, my lord,  
Will guard your person while you take your rest,  
And watch your safety.

**ALONSO**

Thank you. Wondrous heavy.

*ALONSO sleeps. Exit ARIEL*

**SEBASTIAN**

What a strange drowsiness possesses them!

**ANTONIO**

It is the quality o' the climate.

**SEBASTIAN**

Why  
Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find not  
Myself disposed to sleep.

**ANTONIO**

Nor I; my spirits are nimble.  
They fell together all, as by consent;  
They dropp'd, as by a thunder-stroke. What might,  
Worthy Sebastian? O, what might?--No more:--  
And yet me thinks I see it in thy face,  
What thou shouldst be: the occasion speaks thee, and  
My strong imagination sees a crown  
Dropping upon thy head.

**SEBASTIAN**

What, art thou waking?

**ANTONIO**

Do you not hear me speak?

**SEBASTIAN**

I do; and surely  
It is a sleepy language and thou speak'st  
Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say?  
This is a strange repose, to be asleep  
With eyes wide open; standing, speaking, moving,  
And yet so fast asleep.

**ANTONIO**

Noble Sebastian,  
Thou let'st thy fortune sleep--die, rather; wink'st  
Whiles thou art waking.

**SEBASTIAN**

Thou dost snore distinctly;  
There's meaning in thy snores.

**ANTONIO**

I am more serious than my custom: you  
Must be so too, if heed me; which to do  
Trebles thee o'er.

**SEBASTIAN**

Well, I am standing water.

**ANTONIO**

I'll teach you how to flow.

**SEBASTIAN**

Do so: to ebb  
Hereditary sloth instructs me.

**ANTONIO**

O,  
If you but knew how you the purpose cherish  
Whiles thus you mock it! how, in stripping it,  
You more invest it! Ebbing men, indeed,  
Most often do so near the bottom run  
By their own fear or sloth.

**SEBASTIAN**

Prithee, say on:  
The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim  
A matter from thee, and a birth indeed  
Which throes thee much to yield.

**ANTONIO**

Thus, sir:  
Although this lord of weak remembrance, this,  
Who shall be of as little memory  
When he is earth'd, hath here almost persuaded,--  
For he's a spirit of persuasion, only  
Professes to persuade,--the king his son's alive,  
'Tis as impossible that he's undrown'd

And he that sleeps here swims.

**SEBASTIAN**

I have no hope  
That he's undrown'd.

**ANTONIO**

O, out of that 'no hope'  
What great hope have you! no hope that way is  
Another way so high a hope that even  
Ambition cannot pierce a wink beyond,  
But doubt discovery there. Will you grant with me  
That Ferdinand is drown'd?

**SEBASTIAN**

He's gone.

**ANTONIO**

Then, tell me,  
Who's the next heir of Naples?

**SEBASTIAN**

Claribel.

**ANTONIO**

She that is queen of Tunis; she that dwells  
Ten leagues beyond man's life; she that from Naples  
Can have no note, unless the sun were post--  
The man i' the moon's too slow--till new-born chins  
Be rough and razorable; she that--from whom?  
We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,  
And by that destiny to perform an act  
Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come  
In yours and my discharge.

## **SEBASTIAN**

What stuff is this! how say you?  
'Tis true, my brother's daughter's queen of Tunis;  
So is she heir of Naples; 'twixt which regions  
There is some space.

## **ANTONIO**

A space whose every cubit  
Seems to cry out, 'How shall that Claribel  
Measure us back to Naples? Keep in Tunis,  
And let Sebastian wake.' Say, this were death  
That now hath seized them; why, they were no worse  
Than now they are. There be that can rule Naples  
As well as he that sleeps; lords that can prate  
As amply and unnecessarily  
As this Gonzalo; I myself could make  
A chough of as deep chat. O, that you bore  
The mind that I do! what a sleep were this  
For your advancement! Do you understand me?

## **SEBASTIAN**

Methinks I do.

## **ANTONIO**

And how does your content  
Tender your own good fortune?

## **SEBASTIAN**

I remember  
You did supplant your brother Prospero.

## **ANTONIO**

True:  
And look how well my garments sit upon me;  
Much feater than before: my brother's servants  
Were then my fellows; now they are my men.

## SEBASTIAN

But, for your conscience?

## ANTONIO

Ay, sir; where lies that? if 'twere a kibe,  
'Twould put me to my slipper: but I feel not  
This deity in my bosom: twenty consciences,  
That stand 'twixt me and Milan, candied be they  
And melt ere they molest! Here lies your brother,  
No better than the earth he lies upon,  
If he were that which now he's like, that's dead;  
Whom I, with this obedient steel, three inches of it,  
Can lay to bed for ever; whiles you, doing thus,  
To the perpetual wink for aye might put  
This ancient morsel, this Sir Prudence, who  
Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,  
They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk;  
They'll tell the clock to any business that  
We say befits the hour.

## SEBASTIAN

Thy case, dear friend,  
Shall be my precedent; as thou got'st Milan,  
I'll come by Naples. Draw thy sword: one stroke  
Shall free thee from the tribute which thou payest;  
And I the king shall love thee.

## ANTONIO

Draw together;  
And when I rear my hand, do you the like,  
To fall it on Gonzalo.

## SEBASTIAN

O, but one word.

*They talk apart*



*Re-enter ARIEL, invisible*

**ARIEL**

My master through his art foresees the danger  
That you, his friend, are in; and sends me forth--  
For else his project dies--to keep them living.

*Sings in GONZALO's ear*

While you here do snoring lie,  
Open-eyed conspiracy  
His time doth take.  
His time doth take.  
If of life you keep a care,  
Shake off slumber, and beware:  
Awake, awake!

**ANTONIO**

Then let us both be sudden.

**GONZALO**

Now, good angels  
Preserve the king.

*They wake*

**ALONSO**

Why, how now? ho, awake! Why are you drawn?  
Wherefore this ghastly looking?

**GONZALO**

What's the matter?

**SEBASTIAN**

Whiles we stood here securing your repose,

Even now, we heard a hollow burst of bellowing  
Like bulls, or rather lions: did't not wake you?  
It struck mine ear most terribly.

**ALONSO**

I heard nothing.

**ANTONIO**

O, 'twas a din to fright a monster's ear,  
To make an earthquake! sure, it was the roar  
Of a whole herd of lions.

**ALONSO**

Heard you this, Gonzalo?

**GONZALO**

Upon mine honour, sir, I heard a humming,  
And that a strange one too, which did awake me:  
I shaked you, sir, and cried: as mine eyes open'd,  
I saw their weapons drawn: there was a noise,  
That's verily. 'Tis best we stand upon our guard,  
Or that we quit this place; let's draw our weapons.

**ALONSO**

Lead off this ground; and let's make further search  
For my poor son.

**GONZALO**

Heavens keep him from these beasts!  
For he is, sure, i' the island.

**ALONSO**

Lead away.

## ARIEL

Prospero my lord shall know what I have done:  
So, king, go safely on to seek thy son.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another part of the island.

*Enter CALIBAN with a burden of wood. A noise of thunder heard*

### CALIBAN

All the infections that the sun sucks up  
From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall and make him  
By inch-meal a disease! His spirits hear me  
And yet I needs must curse. But they'll nor pinch,  
Fright me with urchin--shows, pitch me i' the mire,  
Nor lead me, like a firebrand, in the dark  
Out of my way, unless he bid 'em; but  
For every trifle are they set upon me;  
Sometime like apes that mow and chatter at me  
And after bite me, then like hedgehogs which  
Lie tumbling in my barefoot way and mount  
Their pricks at my footfall; sometime am I  
All wound with adders who with cloven tongues  
Do hiss me into madness.

*Enter TRINCULO*

Lo, now, lo!  
Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me  
For bringing wood in slowly. I'll fall flat;  
Perchance he will not mind me.

### TRINCULO

Here's neither bush nor shrub, to bear off  
any weather at all, and another storm brewing;  
I hear it sing i' the wind: yond same black  
cloud, yond huge one, looks like a foul  
bombard that would shed his liquor. If it  
should thunder as it did before, I know not

where to hide my head: yond same cloud cannot  
choose but fall by pailfuls. What have we  
here? a man or a fish? dead or alive? A fish:  
he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-  
like smell; a kind of not of the newest Poor-  
John. A strange fish! Were I in England now,  
as once I was, and had but this fish painted,  
not a holiday fool there but would give a piece  
of silver: there would this monster make a  
man; any strange beast there makes a man:  
when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame  
beggar, they will lazy out ten to see a dead  
Indian. Legged like a man and his fins like  
arms! Warm o' my troth! I do now let loose  
my opinion; hold it no longer: this is no fish,  
but an islander, that hath lately suffered by a  
thunderbolt.

*Thunder*

Alas, the storm is come again! my best way is to  
creep under his gaberdine; there is no other  
shelter hereabouts: misery acquaints a man with  
strange bed-fellows. I will here shroud till the  
dregs of the storm be past.

*Enter STEPHANO, singing: a bottle in his hand*

## **STEPHANO**

I shall no more to sea, to sea,  
Here shall I die ashore--  
This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a man's  
funeral: well, here's my comfort.

*Drinks*

*Sings*

The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I,  
The gunner and his mate  
Loved Mall, Meg and Marian and Margery,

But none of us cared for Kate;  
For she had a tongue with a tang,  
Would cry to a sailor, Go hang!  
She loved not the savour of tar nor of pitch,  
Yet a tailor might scratch her where'er she did itch:  
Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!  
This is a scurvy tune too: but here's my comfort.

*Drinks*

**CALIBAN**

Do not torment me: Oh!

**STEPHANO**

What's the matter? Have we devils here? Do you put  
tricks upon's with savages and men of Ind, ha? I  
have not scaped drowning to be afeard now of your  
four legs; for it hath been said, As proper a man as  
ever went on four legs cannot make him give ground;  
and it shall be said so again while Stephano  
breathes at's nostrils.

**CALIBAN**

The spirit torments me; Oh!

**STEPHANO**

This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who  
hath got, as I take it, an ague. Where the devil  
should he learn our language? I will give him some  
relief, if it be but for that. if I can recover him  
and keep him tame and get to Naples with him, he's a  
present for any emperor that ever trod on neat's leather.

**CALIBAN**

Do not torment me, prithee; I'll bring my wood home faster.

**STEPHANO**

He's in his fit now and does not talk after the wisest. He shall taste of my bottle: if he have never drunk wine afore will go near to remove his fit. If I can recover him and keep him tame, I will not take too much for him; he shall pay for him that hath him, and that soundly.

**CALIBAN**

Thou dost me yet but little hurt; thou wilt anon, I know it by thy trembling: now Prosper works upon thee.

**STEPHANO**

Come on your ways; open your mouth; here is that which will give language to you, cat: open your mouth; this will shake your shaking, I can tell you, and that soundly: you cannot tell who's your friend: open your chaps again.

**TRINCULO**

I should know that voice: it should be--but he is drowned; and these are devils: O defend me!

**STEPHANO**

Four legs and two voices: a most delicate monster! His forward voice now is to speak well of his friend; his backward voice is to utter foul speeches and to detract. If all the wine in my bottle will recover him, I will help his ague. Come. Amen! I will pour some in thy other mouth.

**TRINCULO**

Stephano!

**STEPHANO**

Doth thy other mouth call me? Mercy, mercy! This is a devil, and no monster: I will leave him; I have no long spoon.

## **TRINCULO**

Stephano! If thou beest Stephano, touch me and speak to me: for I am Trinculo--be not afeard--thy good friend Trinculo.

## **STEPHANO**

If thou beest Trinculo, come forth: I'll pull thee by the lesser legs: if any be Trinculo's legs, these are they. Thou art very Trinculo indeed! How camest thou to be the siege of this moon-calf? can he vent Trinculos?

## **TRINCULO**

I took him to be killed with a thunder-stroke. But art thou not drowned, Stephano? I hope now thou art not drowned. Is the storm overblown? I hid me under the dead moon-calf's gaberdine for fear of the storm. And art thou living, Stephano? O Stephano, two Neapolitans 'scaped!

## **STEPHANO**

Prithee, do not turn me about; my stomach is not constant.

## **CALIBAN**

[Aside] These be fine things, an if they be not sprites.  
That's a brave god and bears celestial liquor.  
I will kneel to him.

## **STEPHANO**

How didst thou 'scape? How camest thou hither? swear by this bottle how thou camest hither. I



escaped upon a butt of sack which the sailors  
heaved o'erboard, by this bottle; which I made of  
the bark of a tree with mine own hands since I was  
cast ashore.

**CALIBAN**

I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject;  
for the liquor is not earthly.

**STEPHANO**

Here; swear then how thou escapedst.

**TRINCULO**

Swum ashore. man, like a duck: I can swim like a  
duck, I'll be sworn.

**STEPHANO**

Here, kiss the book. Though thou canst swim like a  
duck, thou art made like a goose.

**TRINCULO**

O Stephano. hast any more of this?

**STEPHANO**

The whole butt, man: my cellar is in a rock by the  
sea-side where my wine is hid. How now, moon-calf!  
how does thine ague?

**CALIBAN**

Hast thou not dropp'd from heaven?

**STEPHANO**

Out o' the moon, I do assure thee: I was the man i'

the moon when time was.

**CALIBAN**

I have seen thee in her and I do adore thee:  
My mistress show'd me thee and thy dog and thy bush.

**STEPHANO**

Come, swear to that; kiss the book: I will furnish  
it anon with new contents swear.

**TRINCULO**

By this good light, this is a very shallow monster!  
I afeard of him! A very weak monster! The man i'  
the moon! A most poor credulous monster! Well  
drawn, monster, in good sooth!

**CALIBAN**

I'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island;  
And I will kiss thy foot: I prithee, be my god.

**TRINCULO**

By this light, a most perfidious and drunken  
monster! when 's god's asleep, he'll rob his bottle.

**CALIBAN**

I'll kiss thy foot; I'll swear myself thy subject.

**STEPHANO**

Come on then; down, and swear.

**TRINCULO**

I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed  
monster. A most scurvy monster! I could find in my

heart to beat him,--

**STEPHANO**

Come, kiss.

**TRINCULO**

But that the poor monster's in drink: an abominable monster!

**CALIBAN**

I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries;  
I'll fish for thee and get thee wood enough.  
A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!  
I'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,  
Thou wondrous man.

**TRINCULO**

A most ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of a  
Poor drunkard!

**CALIBAN**

I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;  
And I with my long nails will dig thee pignuts;  
Show thee a jay's nest and instruct thee how  
To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee  
To clustering filberts and sometimes I'll get thee  
Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?

**STEPHANO**

I prithee now, lead the way without any more  
talking. Trinculo, the king and all our company  
else being drowned, we will inherit here: here;  
bear my bottle: fellow Trinculo, we'll fill him by  
and by again.

**CALIBAN**

[Sings drunkenly]

Farewell master; farewell, farewell!

## **TRINCULO**

A howling monster: a drunken monster!

## **CALIBAN**

No more dams I'll make for fish

Nor fetch in firing

At requiring;

Nor scrape trencher, nor wash dish

'Ban, 'Ban, Cacaliban

Has a new master: get a new man.

Freedom, hey-day! hey-day, freedom! freedom,

hey-day, freedom!

## **STEPHANO**

O brave monster! Lead the way.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before PROSPERO'S Cell.

*Enter FERDINAND, bearing a log*

### FERDINAND

There be some sports are painful, and their labour  
Delight in them sets off: some kinds of baseness  
Are nobly undergone and most poor matters  
Point to rich ends. This my mean task  
Would be as heavy to me as odious, but  
The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead  
And makes my labours pleasures: O, she is  
Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed,  
And he's composed of harshness. I must remove  
Some thousands of these logs and pile them up,  
Upon a sore injunction: my sweet mistress  
Weeps when she sees me work, and says, such baseness  
Had never like executor. I forget:  
But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours,  
Most busy lest, when I do it.

*Enter MIRANDA; and PROSPERO at a distance, unseen*

### MIRANDA

Alas, now, pray you,  
Work not so hard: I would the lightning had  
Burnt up those logs that you are enjoin'd to pile!  
Pray, set it down and rest you: when this burns,  
'Twill weep for having wearied you. My father  
Is hard at study; pray now, rest yourself;  
He's safe for these three hours.

### FERDINAND

O most dear mistress,  
The sun will set before I shall discharge  
What I must strive to do.

**MIRANDA**

If you'll sit down,  
I'll bear your logs the while: pray, give me that;  
I'll carry it to the pile.

**FERDINAND**

No, precious creature;  
I had rather crack my sinews, break my back,  
Than you should such dishonour undergo,  
While I sit lazy by.

**MIRANDA**

It would become me  
As well as it does you: and I should do it  
With much more ease; for my good will is to it,  
And yours it is against.

**PROSPERO**

Poor worm, thou art infected!  
This visitation shows it.

**MIRANDA**

You look wearily.

**FERDINAND**

No, noble mistress;'tis fresh morning with me  
When you are by at night. I do beseech you--  
Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers--  
What is your name?

**MIRANDA**

Miranda.--O my father,  
I have broke your hest to say so!

## **FERDINAND**

Admired Miranda!  
Indeed the top of admiration! worth  
What's dearest to the world! Full many a lady  
I have eyed with best regard and many a time  
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage  
Brought my too diligent ear: for several virtues  
Have I liked several women; never any  
With so fun soul, but some defect in her  
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owed  
And put it to the foil: but you, O you,  
So perfect and so peerless, are created  
Of every creature's best!

## **MIRANDA**

I do not know  
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,  
Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen  
More that I may call men than you, good friend,  
And my dear father: how features are abroad,  
I am skillless of; but, by my modesty,  
The jewel in my dower, I would not wish  
Any companion in the world but you,  
Nor can imagination form a shape,  
Besides yourself, to like of. But I prattle  
Something too wildly and my father's precepts  
I therein do forget.

## **FERDINAND**

I am in my condition  
A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king;  
I would, not so!--and would no more endure  
This wooden slavery than to suffer  
The flesh-fly blow my mouth. Hear my soul speak:  
The very instant that I saw you, did  
My heart fly to your service; there resides,

To make me slave to it; and for your sake  
Am I this patient log--man.

**MIRANDA**

Do you love me?

**FERDINAND**

O heaven, O earth, bear witness to this sound  
And crown what I profess with kind event  
If I speak true! if hollowly, invert  
What best is boded me to mischief! I  
Beyond all limit of what else i' the world  
Do love, prize, honour you.

**MIRANDA**

I am a fool  
To weep at what I am glad of.

**PROSPERO**

Fair encounter  
Of two most rare affections! Heavens rain grace  
On that which breeds between 'em!

**FERDINAND**

Wherefore weep you?

**MIRANDA**

At mine unworthiness that dare not offer  
What I desire to give, and much less take  
What I shall die to want. But this is trifling;  
And all the more it seeks to hide itself,  
The bigger bulk it shows. Hence, bashful cunning!  
And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!  
I am your wife, if you will marry me;  
If not, I'll die your maid: to be your fellow  
You may deny me; but I'll be your servant,



Whether you will or no.

**FERDINAND**

My mistress, dearest;  
And I thus humble ever.

**MIRANDA**

My husband, then?

**FERDINAND**

Ay, with a heart as willing  
As bondage e'er of freedom: here's my hand.

**MIRANDA**

And mine, with my heart in't; and now farewell  
Till half an hour hence.

**FERDINAND**

A thousand thousand!

*Exeunt FERDINAND and MIRANDA severally*

**PROSPERO**

So glad of this as they I cannot be,  
Who are surprised withal; but my rejoicing  
At nothing can be more. I'll to my book,  
For yet ere supper-time must I perform  
Much business appertaining.

*Exit*

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another part of the island.

*Enter CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO*

### STEPHANO

Tell not me; when the butt is out, we will drink water; not a drop before: therefore bear up, and board 'em. Servant-monster, drink to me.

### TRINCULO

Servant-monster! the folly of this island! They say there's but five upon this isle: we are three of them; if th' other two be brained like us, the state totters.

### STEPHANO

Drink, servant-monster, when I bid thee: thy eyes are almost set in thy head.

### TRINCULO

Where should they be set else? he were a brave monster indeed, if they were set in his tail.

### STEPHANO

My man-monster hath drown'd his tongue in sack: for my part, the sea cannot drown me; I swam, ere I could recover the shore, five and thirty leagues off and on. By this light, thou shalt be my lieutenant, monster, or my standard.

### TRINCULO

Your lieutenant, if you list; he's no standard.

**STEPHANO**

We'll not run, Monsieur Monster.

**TRINCULO**

Nor go neither; but you'll lie like dogs and yet say nothing neither.

**STEPHANO**

Moon-calf, speak once in thy life, if thou beest a good moon-calf.

**CALIBAN**

How does thy honour? Let me lick thy shoe.  
I'll not serve him; he's not valiant.

**TRINCULO**

Thou liest, most ignorant monster: I am in case to justle a constable. Why, thou deboshed fish thou, was there ever man a coward that hath drunk so much sack as I to-day? Wilt thou tell a monstrous lie, being but half a fish and half a monster?

**CALIBAN**

Lo, how he mocks me! wilt thou let him, my lord?

**TRINCULO**

'Lord' quoth he! That a monster should be such a natural!

**CALIBAN**

Lo, lo, again! bite him to death, I prithee.

## **STEPHANO**

Trinculo, keep a good tongue in your head: if you prove a mutineer,--the next tree! The poor monster's my subject and he shall not suffer indignity.

## **CALIBAN**

I thank my noble lord. Wilt thou be pleased to hearken once again to the suit I made to thee?

## **STEPHANO**

Marry, will I kneel and repeat it; I will stand, and so shall Trinculo.

*Enter ARIEL, invisible*

## **CALIBAN**

As I told thee before, I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath cheated me of the island.

## **ARIEL**

Thou liest.

## **CALIBAN**

Thou liest, thou jesting monkey, thou: I would my valiant master would destroy thee! I do not lie.

## **STEPHANO**

Trinculo, if you trouble him any more in's tale, by this hand, I will supplant some of your teeth.

## **TRINCULO**

Why, I said nothing.

**STEPHANO**

Mum, then, and no more. Proceed.

**CALIBAN**

I say, by sorcery he got this isle;  
From me he got it. if thy greatness will  
Revenge it on him,--for I know thou darest,  
But this thing dare not,--

**STEPHANO**

That's most certain.

**CALIBAN**

Thou shalt be lord of it and I'll serve thee.

**STEPHANO**

How now shall this be compassed?  
Canst thou bring me to the party?

**CALIBAN**

Yea, yea, my lord: I'll yield him thee asleep,  
Where thou mayst knock a nail into his bead.

**ARIEL**

Thou liest; thou canst not.

**CALIBAN**

What a pied ninny's this! Thou scurvy patch!  
I do beseech thy greatness, give him blows  
And take his bottle from him: when that's gone  
He shall drink nought but brine; for I'll not show him  
Where the quick freshes are.

## STEPHANO

Trinculo, run into no further danger:  
interrupt the monster one word further, and,  
by this hand, I'll turn my mercy out o' doors  
and make a stock-fish of thee.

## TRINCULO

Why, what did I? I did nothing. I'll go farther  
off.

## STEPHANO

Didst thou not say he lied?

## ARIEL

Thou liest.

## STEPHANO

Do I so? take thou that.

*Beats TRINCULO*

As you like this, give me the lie another time.

## TRINCULO

I did not give the lie. Out o' your  
wits and bearing too? A pox o' your bottle!  
this can sack and drinking do. A murrain on  
your monster, and the devil take your fingers!

## CALIBAN

Ha, ha, ha!

## STEPHANO

Now, forward with your tale. Prithee, stand farther off.

**CALIBAN**

Beat him enough: after a little time  
I'll beat him too.

**STEPHANO**

Stand farther. Come, proceed.

**CALIBAN**

Why, as I told thee, 'tis a custom with him,  
I' th' afternoon to sleep: there thou mayst brain him,  
Having first seized his books, or with a log  
Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,  
Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember  
First to possess his books; for without them  
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not  
One spirit to command: they all do hate him  
As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.  
He has brave utensils,--for so he calls them--  
Which when he has a house, he'll deck withal  
And that most deeply to consider is  
The beauty of his daughter; he himself  
Calls her a nonpareil: I never saw a woman,  
But only Sycorax my dam and she;  
But she as far surpasseth Sycorax  
As great'st does least.

**STEPHANO**

Is it so brave a lass?

**CALIBAN**

Ay, lord; she will become thy bed, I warrant.  
And bring thee forth brave brood.

**STEPHANO**

Monster, I will kill this man: his daughter and I  
will be king and queen--save our graces!--and  
Trinculo and thyself shall be viceroys. Dost thou  
like the plot, Trinculo?

**TRINCULO**

Excellent.

**STEPHANO**

Give me thy hand: I am sorry I beat thee; but,  
while thou livest, keep a good tongue in thy head.

**CALIBAN**

Within this half hour will he be asleep:  
Wilt thou destroy him then?

**STEPHANO**

Ay, on mine honour.

**ARIEL**

This will I tell my master.

**CALIBAN**

Thou makest me merry; I am full of pleasure:  
Let us be jocund: will you troll the catch  
You taught me but while-ere?

**STEPHANO**

At thy request, monster, I will do reason, any  
reason. Come on, Trinculo, let us sing.

*Sings*



Flout 'em and scout 'em  
And scout 'em and flout 'em  
Thought is free.

**CALIBAN**

That's not the tune.

*Ariel plays the tune on a tabour and pipe*

**STEPHANO**

What is this same?

**TRINCULO**

This is the tune of our catch, played by the picture  
of Nobody.

**STEPHANO**

If thou beest a man, show thyself in thy likeness:  
if thou beest a devil, take't as thou list.

**TRINCULO**

O, forgive me my sins!

**STEPHANO**

He that dies pays all debts: I defy thee. Mercy upon us!

**CALIBAN**

Art thou afeard?

**STEPHANO**

No, monster, not I.

**CALIBAN**

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,  
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.  
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments  
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices  
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,  
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,  
The clouds methought would open and show riches  
Ready to drop upon me that, when I waked,  
I cried to dream again.

**STEPHANO**

This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall  
have my music for nothing.

**CALIBAN**

When Prospero is destroyed.

**STEPHANO**

That shall be by and by: I remember the story.

**TRINCULO**

The sound is going away; let's follow it, and  
after do our work.

**STEPHANO**

Lead, monster; we'll follow. I would I could see  
this tabourer; he lays it on.

**TRINCULO**

Wilt come? I'll follow, Stephano.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another part of the island.

*Enter ALONSO, SEBASTIAN, ANTONIO, GONZALO, ADRIAN, FRANCISCO, and others*

### GONZALO

By'r lakin, I can go no further, sir;  
My old bones ache: here's a maze trod indeed  
Through forth-rights and meanders! By your patience,  
I needs must rest me.

### ALONSO

Old lord, I cannot blame thee,  
Who am myself attach'd with weariness,  
To the dulling of my spirits: sit down, and rest.  
Even here I will put off my hope and keep it  
No longer for my flatterer: he is drown'd  
Whom thus we stray to find, and the sea mocks  
Our frustrate search on land. Well, let him go.

### ANTONIO

[Aside to SEBASTIAN] I am right glad that he's so  
out of hope.  
Do not, for one repulse, forego the purpose  
That you resolved to effect.

### SEBASTIAN

[Aside to ANTONIO] The next advantage  
Will we take throughly.

### ANTONIO

[Aside to SEBASTIAN] Let it be to-night;

For, now they are oppress'd with travel, they  
Will not, nor cannot, use such vigilance  
As when they are fresh.

**SEBASTIAN**

[Aside to ANTONIO] I say, to-night: no more.

*Solemn and strange music*

**ALONSO**

What harmony is this? My good friends, hark!

**GONZALO**

Marvellous sweet music!

*Enter PROSPERO above, invisible. Enter several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; they dance about it with gentle actions of salutation; and, inviting the King, & c. to eat, they depart*

**ALONSO**

Give us kind keepers, heavens! What were these?

**SEBASTIAN**

A living drollery. Now I will believe  
That there are unicorns, that in Arabia  
There is one tree, the phoenix' throne, one phoenix  
At this hour reigning there.

**ANTONIO**

I'll believe both;  
And what does else want credit, come to me,  
And I'll be sworn 'tis true: travellers ne'er did  
lie,  
Though fools at home condemn 'em.

## **GONZALO**

If in Naples  
I should report this now, would they believe me?  
If I should say, I saw such islanders--  
For, certes, these are people of the island--  
Who, though they are of monstrous shape, yet, note,  
Their manners are more gentle-kind than of  
Our human generation you shall find  
Many, nay, almost any.

## **PROSPERO**

[Aside] Honest lord,  
Thou hast said well; for some of you there present  
Are worse than devils.

## **ALONSO**

I cannot too much muse  
Such shapes, such gesture and such sound, expressing,  
Although they want the use of tongue, a kind  
Of excellent dumb discourse.

## **PROSPERO**

[Aside] Praise in departing.

## **FRANCISCO**

They vanish'd strangely.

## **SEBASTIAN**

No matter, since  
They have left their viands behind; for we have stomachs.  
Will't please you taste of what is here?

## **ALONSO**

Not I.

## GONZALO

Faith, sir, you need not fear. When we were boys,  
Who would believe that there were mountaineers  
Dew-lapp'd like bulls, whose throats had hanging at 'em  
Wallets of flesh? or that there were such men  
Whose heads stood in their breasts? which now we find  
Each putter-out of five for one will bring us  
Good warrant of.

## ALONSO

I will stand to and feed,  
Although my last: no matter, since I feel  
The best is past. Brother, my lord the duke,  
Stand to and do as we.

*Thunder and lightning. Enter ARIEL, like a harpy; claps his wings upon the table; and, with a quaint device, the banquet vanishes*

## ARIEL

You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,  
That hath to instrument this lower world  
And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea  
Hath caused to belch up you; and on this island  
Where man doth not inhabit; you 'mongst men  
Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;  
And even with such-like valour men hang and drown  
Their proper selves.

*ALONSO, SEBASTIAN & c. draw their swords*

You fools! I and my fellows  
Are ministers of Fate: the elements,  
Of whom your swords are temper'd, may as well  
Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at stabs  
Kill the still-closing waters, as diminish  
One dowle that's in my plume: my fellow-ministers  
Are like invulnerable. If you could hurt,  
Your swords are now too massy for your strengths  
And will not be uplifted. But remember--

For that's my business to you--that you three  
From Milan did supplant good Prospero;  
Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,  
Him and his innocent child: for which foul deed  
The powers, delaying, not forgetting, have  
Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,  
Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,  
They have bereft; and do pronounce by me:  
Lingering perdition, worse than any death  
Can be at once, shall step by step attend  
You and your ways; whose wraths to guard you from--  
Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls  
Upon your heads--is nothing but heart-sorrow  
And a clear life ensuing.

*He vanishes in thunder; then, to soft music enter the Shapes again, and dance, with mocks  
and mows, and carrying out the table*

## **PROSPERO**

Bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou  
Perform'd, my Ariel; a grace it had, devouring:  
Of my instruction hast thou nothing bated  
In what thou hadst to say: so, with good life  
And observation strange, my meaner ministers  
Their several kinds have done. My high charms work  
And these mine enemies are all knit up  
In their distractions; they now are in my power;  
And in these fits I leave them, while I visit  
Young Ferdinand, whom they suppose is drown'd,  
And his and mine loved darling.

*Exit above*

## **GONZALO**

I' the name of something holy, sir, why stand you  
In this strange stare?

## **ALONSO**

O, it is monstrous, monstrous:



Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;  
The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder,  
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced  
The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass.  
Therefore my son i' the ooze is bedded, and  
I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded  
And with him there lie mudded.

*Exit*

## **SEBASTIAN**

But one fiend at a time,  
I'll fight their legions o'er.

## **ANTONIO**

I'll be thy second.

*Exeunt SEBASTIAN, and ANTONIO*

## **GONZALO**

All three of them are desperate: their great guilt,  
Like poison given to work a great time after,  
Now 'gins to bite the spirits. I do beseech you  
That are of suppler joints, follow them swiftly  
And hinder them from what this ecstasy  
May now provoke them to.

## **ADRIAN**

Follow, I pray you.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before PROSPERO'S cell.

*Enter PROSPERO, FERDINAND, and MIRANDA*

### PROSPERO

If I have too austerely punish'd you,  
Your compensation makes amends, for I  
Have given you here a third of mine own life,  
Or that for which I live; who once again  
I tender to thy hand: all thy vexations  
Were but my trials of thy love and thou  
Hast strangely stood the test here, afore Heaven,  
I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand,  
Do not smile at me that I boast her off,  
For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise  
And make it halt behind her.

### FERDINAND

I do believe it  
Against an oracle.

### PROSPERO

Then, as my gift and thine own acquisition  
Worthily purchased take my daughter: but  
If thou dost break her virgin-knot before  
All sanctimonious ceremonies may  
With full and holy rite be minister'd,  
No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall  
To make this contract grow: but barren hate,  
Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew  
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly  
That you shall hate it both: therefore take heed,  
As Hymen's lamps shall light you.

## **FERDINAND**

As I hope  
For quiet days, fair issue and long life,  
With such love as 'tis now, the murkiest den,  
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion.  
Our worser genius can, shall never melt  
Mine honour into lust, to take away  
The edge of that day's celebration  
When I shall think: or Phoebus' steeds are founder'd,  
Or Night kept chain'd below.

## **PROSPERO**

Fairly spoke.  
Sit then and talk with her; she is thine own.  
What, Ariel! my industrious servant, Ariel!

*Enter ARIEL*

## **ARIEL**

What would my potent master? here I am.

## **PROSPERO**

Thou and thy meaner fellows your last service  
Did worthily perform; and I must use you  
In such another trick. Go bring the rabble,  
O'er whom I give thee power, here to this place:  
Incite them to quick motion; for I must  
Bestow upon the eyes of this young couple  
Some vanity of mine art: it is my promise,  
And they expect it from me.

## **ARIEL**

Presently?

## **PROSPERO**

Ay, with a twink.

**ARIEL**

Before you can say 'come' and 'go,'  
And breathe twice and cry 'so, so,'  
Each one, tripping on his toe,  
Will be here with mop and mow.  
Do you love me, master? no?

**PROSPERO**

Dearly my delicate Ariel. Do not approach  
Till thou dost hear me call.

**ARIEL**

Well, I conceive.

*Exit*

**PROSPERO**

Look thou be true; do not give dalliance  
Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw  
To the fire i' the blood: be more abstemious,  
Or else, good night your vow!

**FERDINAND**

I warrant you sir;  
The white cold virgin snow upon my heart  
Abates the ardour of my liver.

**PROSPERO**

Well.  
Now come, my Ariel! bring a corollary,  
Rather than want a spirit: appear and pertly!  
No tongue! all eyes! be silent.

*Soft music*

*Enter IRIS*

**IRIS**

Ceres, most bounteous lady, thy rich leas  
Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and pease;  
Thy turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,  
And flat meads thatch'd with stover, them to keep;  
Thy banks with pioned and twilled brims,  
Which spongy April at thy hest betrimms,  
To make cold nymphs chaste crowns; and thy broom -groves,  
Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,  
Being lass-lorn: thy pole-clipt vineyard;  
And thy sea-marge, sterile and rocky-hard,  
Where thou thyself dost air;--the queen o' the sky,  
Whose watery arch and messenger am I,  
Bids thee leave these, and with her sovereign grace,  
Here on this grass-plot, in this very place,  
To come and sport: her peacocks fly amain:  
Approach, rich Ceres, her to entertain.

*Enter CERES*

**CERES**

Hail, many-colour'd messenger, that ne'er  
Dost disobey the wife of Jupiter;  
Who with thy saffron wings upon my flowers  
Diffusest honey-drops, refreshing showers,  
And with each end of thy blue bow dost crown  
My bosky acres and my unshrub'd down,  
Rich scarf to my proud earth; why hath thy queen  
Summon'd me hither, to this short-grass'd green?

**IRIS**

A contract of true love to celebrate;  
And some donation freely to estate  
On the blest lovers.

## CERES

Tell me, heavenly bow,  
If Venus or her son, as thou dost know,  
Do now attend the queen? Since they did plot  
The means that dusky Dis my daughter got,  
Her and her blind boy's scandal'd company  
I have forsworn.

## IRIS

Of her society  
Be not afraid: I met her deity  
Cutting the clouds towards Paphos and her son  
Dove-drawn with her. Here thought they to have done  
Some wanton charm upon this man and maid,  
Whose vows are, that no bed-right shall be paid  
Till Hymen's torch be lighted: but vain;  
Mars's hot minion is returned again;  
Her waspish-headed son has broke his arrows,  
Swears he will shoot no more but play with sparrows  
And be a boy right out.

## CERES

High'st queen of state,  
Great Juno, comes; I know her by her gait.

*Enter JUNO*

## JUNO

How does my bounteous sister? Go with me  
To bless this twain, that they may prosperous be  
And honour'd in their issue.

*They sing:*

## JUNO

Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,  
Long continuance, and increasing,

Hourly joys be still upon you!  
Juno sings her blessings upon you.

## **CERES**

Earth's increase, foison plenty,  
Barns and garners never empty,  
Vines and clustering bunches growing,  
Plants with goodly burthen bowing;  
Spring come to you at the farthest  
In the very end of harvest!  
Scarcity and want shall shun you;  
Ceres' blessing so is on you.

## **FERDINAND**

This is a most majestic vision, and  
Harmoniously charmingly. May I be bold  
To think these spirits?

## **PROSPERO**

Spirits, which by mine art  
I have from their confines call'd to enact  
My present fancies.

## **FERDINAND**

Let me live here ever;  
So rare a wonder'd father and a wife  
Makes this place Paradise.

*Juno and Ceres whisper, and send Iris on employment*

## **PROSPERO**

Sweet, now, silence!  
Juno and Ceres whisper seriously;  
There's something else to do: hush, and be mute,  
Or else our spell is marr'd.

## **IRIS**

You nymphs, call'd Naiads, of the windring brooks,  
With your sedged crowns and ever-harmless looks,  
Leave your crisp channels and on this green land  
Answer your summons; Juno does command:  
Come, temperate nymphs, and help to celebrate  
A contract of true love; be not too late.

*Enter certain Nymphs*

You sunburnt sicklemen, of August weary,  
Come hither from the furrow and be merry:  
Make holiday; your rye-straw hats put on  
And these fresh nymphs encounter every one  
In country footing.

*Enter certain Reapers, properly habited: they join with the Nymphs in a graceful dance; towards the end whereof PROSPERO starts suddenly, and speaks; after which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish*

## **PROSPERO**

[Aside] I had forgot that foul conspiracy  
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates  
Against my life: the minute of their plot  
Is almost come.

*To the Spirits*

Well done! avoid; no more!

## **FERDINAND**

This is strange: your father's in some passion  
That works him strongly.

## **MIRANDA**

Never till this day  
Saw I him touch'd with anger so distemper'd.



## **PROSPERO**

You do look, my son, in a moved sort,  
As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir.  
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Ye all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex'd;  
Bear with my weakness; my brain is troubled:  
Be not disturb'd with my infirmity:  
If you be pleased, retire into my cell  
And there repose: a turn or two I'll walk,  
To still my beating mind.

## **FERDINAND MIRANDA**

We wish your peace.

*Exeunt*

## **PROSPERO**

Come with a thought I thank thee, Ariel: come.

*Enter ARIEL*

## **ARIEL**

Thy thoughts I cleave to. What's thy pleasure?

## **PROSPERO**

Spirit,  
We must prepare to meet with Caliban.

**ARIEL**

Ay, my commander: when I presented Ceres,  
I thought to have told thee of it, but I fear'd  
Lest I might anger thee.

**PROSPERO**

Say again, where didst thou leave these varlets?

**ARIEL**

I told you, sir, they were red-hot with drinking;  
So fun of valour that they smote the air  
For breathing in their faces; beat the ground  
For kissing of their feet; yet always bending  
Towards their project. Then I beat my tabour;  
At which, like unback'd colts, they prick'd  
their ears,  
Advanced their eyelids, lifted up their noses  
As they smelt music: so I charm'd their ears  
That calf-like they my lowing follow'd through  
Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss and thorns,  
Which entered their frail shins: at last I left them  
I' the filthy-mantled pool beyond your cell,  
There dancing up to the chins, that the foul lake  
O'erstunk their feet.

**PROSPERO**

This was well done, my bird.  
Thy shape invisible retain thou still:  
The trumpery in my house, go bring it hither,  
For stale to catch these thieves.

**ARIEL**

I go, I go.

*Exit*

**PROSPERO**

A devil, a born devil, on whose nature  
Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,  
Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;  
And as with age his body uglier grows,  
So his mind cankers. I will plague them all,  
Even to roaring.

*Re-enter ARIEL, loaden with glistering apparel, & c*

Come, hang them on this line.

*PROSPERO and ARIEL remain invisible. Enter CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO, all wet*

### **CALIBAN**

Pray you, tread softly, that the blind mole may not  
Hear a foot fall: we now are near his cell.

### **STEPHANO**

Monster, your fairy, which you say is  
a harmless fairy, has done little better than  
played the Jack with us.

### **TRINCULO**

Monster, I do smell all horse-piss; at  
which my nose is in great indignation.

### **STEPHANO**

So is mine. Do you hear, monster? If I should take  
a displeasure against you, look you,--

### **TRINCULO**

Thou wert but a lost monster.

### **CALIBAN**

Good my lord, give me thy favour still.  
Be patient, for the prize I'll bring thee to  
Shall hoodwink this mischance: therefore speak softly.  
All's hush'd as midnight yet.

**TRINCULO**

Ay, but to lose our bottles in the pool,--

**STEPHANO**

There is not only disgrace and dishonour in that,  
monster, but an infinite loss.

**TRINCULO**

That's more to me than my wetting: yet this is your  
harmless fairy, monster.

**STEPHANO**

I will fetch off my bottle, though I be o'er ears  
for my labour.

**CALIBAN**

Prithee, my king, be quiet. Seest thou here,  
This is the mouth o' the cell: no noise, and enter.  
Do that good mischief which may make this island  
Thine own for ever, and I, thy Caliban,  
For aye thy foot-licker.

**STEPHANO**

Give me thy hand. I do begin to have bloody thoughts.

**TRINCULO**

O king Stephano! O peer! O worthy Stephano! look  
what a wardrobe here is for thee!

**CALIBAN**

Let it alone, thou fool; it is but trash.

**TRINCULO**

O, ho, monster! we know what belongs to a frippery.  
O king Stephano!

**STEPHANO**

Put off that gown, Trinculo; by this hand, I'll have  
that gown.

**TRINCULO**

Thy grace shall have it.

**CALIBAN**

The dropsy drown this fool I what do you mean  
To dote thus on such luggage? Let's alone  
And do the murder first: if he awake,  
From toe to crown he'll fill our skins with pinches,  
Make us strange stuff.

**STEPHANO**

Be you quiet, monster. Mistress line,  
is not this my jerkin? Now is the jerkin under  
the line: now, jerkin, you are like to lose your  
hair and prove a bald jerkin.

**TRINCULO**

Do, do: we steal by line and level, an't like your grace.

**STEPHANO**

I thank thee for that jest; here's a garment for't:  
wit shall not go unrewarded while I am king of this

country. 'Steal by line and level' is an excellent  
pass of pate; there's another garment for't.

**TRINCULO**

Monster, come, put some lime upon your fingers, and  
away with the rest.

**CALIBAN**

I will have none on't: we shall lose our time,  
And all be turn'd to barnacles, or to apes  
With foreheads villanous low.

**STEPHANO**

Monster, lay-to your fingers: help to bear this  
away where my hogshead of wine is, or I'll turn you  
out of my kingdom: go to, carry this.

**TRINCULO**

And this.

**STEPHANO**

Ay, and this.

*A noise of hunters heard. Enter divers Spirits, in shape of dogs and hounds, and hunt them  
about, PROSPERO and ARIEL setting them on*

**PROSPERO**

Hey, Mountain, hey!

**ARIEL**

Silver I there it goes, Silver!

**PROSPERO**

Fury, Fury! there, Tyrant, there! hark! hark!

*CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO, are driven out*

Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints  
With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews  
With aged cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them  
Than pard or cat o' mountain.

## **ARIEL**

Hark, they roar!

## **PROSPERO**

Let them be hunted soundly. At this hour  
Lie at my mercy all mine enemies:  
Shortly shall all my labours end, and thou  
Shalt have the air at freedom: for a little  
Follow, and do me service.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tempest

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [The Tempest](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before PROSPERO'S cell.

*Enter PROSPERO in his magic robes, and ARIEL*

### PROSPERO

Now does my project gather to a head:  
My charms crack not; my spirits obey; and time  
Goes upright with his carriage. How's the day?

### ARIEL

On the sixth hour; at which time, my lord,  
You said our work should cease.

### PROSPERO

I did say so,  
When first I raised the tempest. Say, my spirit,  
How fares the king and's followers?

### ARIEL

Confined together  
In the same fashion as you gave in charge,  
Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir,  
In the line-grove which weather-fends your cell;  
They cannot budge till your release. The king,  
His brother and yours, abide all three distracted  
And the remainder mourning over them,  
Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly  
Him that you term'd, sir, 'The good old lord Gonzalo;'  
His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops  
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em  
That if you now beheld them, your affections  
Would become tender.



## **PROSPERO**

Dost thou think so, spirit?

## **ARIEL**

Mine would, sir, were I human.

## **PROSPERO**

And mine shall.

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling  
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,  
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,  
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than thou art?  
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,  
Yet with my nobler reason 'gaitist my fury  
Do I take part: the rarer action is  
In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,  
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend  
Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel:  
My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,  
And they shall be themselves.

## **ARIEL**

I'll fetch them, sir.

*Exit*

## **PROSPERO**

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,  
And ye that on the sands with printless foot  
Do chase the ebbing Neptune and do fly him  
When he comes back; you demi-puppets that  
By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,  
Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime  
Is to make midnight mushrooms, that rejoice  
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid,  
Weak masters though ye be, I have bedimm'd

The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,  
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault  
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder  
Have I given fire and rifted Jove's stout oak  
With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory  
Have I made shake and by the spurs pluck'd up  
The pine and cedar: graves at my command  
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth  
By my so potent art. But this rough magic  
I here abjure, and, when I have required  
Some heavenly music, which even now I do,  
To work mine end upon their senses that  
This airy charm is for, I'll break my staff,  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
I'll drown my book.

*Solemn music*

*Re-enter ARIEL before: then ALONSO, with a frantic gesture, attended by GONZALO; SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO in like manner, attended by ADRIAN and FRANCISCO they all enter the circle which PROSPERO had made, and there stand charmed; which PROSPERO observing, speaks:*

A solemn air and the best comforter  
To an unsettled fancy cure thy brains,  
Now useless, boil'd within thy skull! There stand,  
For you are spell-stopp'd.  
Holy Gonzalo, honourable man,  
Mine eyes, even sociable to the show of thine,  
Fall fellowly drops. The charm dissolves apace,  
And as the morning steals upon the night,  
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses  
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle  
Their clearer reason. O good Gonzalo,  
My true preserver, and a loyal sir  
To him you follow'st! I will pay thy graces  
Home both in word and deed. Most cruelly  
Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter:  
Thy brother was a furtherer in the act.  
Thou art pinch'd fort now, Sebastian. Flesh and blood,  
You, brother mine, that entertain'd ambition,  
Expell'd remorse and nature; who, with Sebastian,

Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong,  
Would here have kill'd your king; I do forgive thee,  
Unnatural though thou art. Their understanding  
Begins to swell, and the approaching tide  
Will shortly fill the reasonable shore  
That now lies foul and muddy. Not one of them  
That yet looks on me, or would know me Ariel,  
Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell:  
I will discase me, and myself present  
As I was sometime Milan: quickly, spirit;  
Thou shalt ere long be free.

*ARIEL sings and helps to attire him*

Where the bee sucks. there suck I:  
In a cowslip's bell I lie;  
There I couch when owls do cry.  
On the bat's back I do fly  
After summer merrily.  
Merrily, merrily shall I live now  
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

## **PROSPERO**

Why, that's my dainty Ariel! I shall miss thee:  
But yet thou shalt have freedom: so, so, so.  
To the king's ship, invisible as thou art:  
There shalt thou find the mariners asleep  
Under the hatches; the master and the boatswain  
Being awake, enforce them to this place,  
And presently, I prithee.

## **ARIEL**

I drink the air before me, and return  
Or ere your pulse twice beat.

*Exit*

## **GONZALO**

All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement

Inhabits here: some heavenly power guide us  
Out of this fearful country!

## **PROSPERO**

Behold, sir king,  
The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero:  
For more assurance that a living prince  
Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body;  
And to thee and thy company I bid  
A hearty welcome.

## **ALONSO**

Whether thou best he or no,  
Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,  
As late I have been, I not know: thy pulse  
Beats as of flesh and blood; and, since I saw thee,  
The affliction of my mind amends, with which,  
I fear, a madness held me: this must crave,  
An if this be at all, a most strange story.  
Thy dukedom I resign and do entreat  
Thou pardon me my wrongs. But how should Prospero  
Be living and be here?

## **PROSPERO**

First, noble friend,  
Let me embrace thine age, whose honour cannot  
Be measured or confined.

## **GONZALO**

Whether this be  
Or be not, I'll not swear.

## **PROSPERO**

You do yet taste  
Some subtilties o' the isle, that will not let you  
Believe things certain. Welcome, my friends all!

*Aside to SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO*

But you, my brace of lords, were I so minded,  
I here could pluck his highness' frown upon you  
And justify you traitors: at this time  
I will tell no tales.

**SEBASTIAN**

[Aside] The devil speaks in him.

**PROSPERO**

No.  
For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother  
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive  
Thy rankest fault; all of them; and require  
My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know,  
Thou must restore.

**ALONSO**

If thou be'st Prospero,  
Give us particulars of thy preservation;  
How thou hast met us here, who three hours since  
Were wreck'd upon this shore; where I have lost--  
How sharp the point of this remembrance is!--  
My dear son Ferdinand.

**PROSPERO**

I am woe for't, sir.

**ALONSO**

Irreparable is the loss, and patience  
Says it is past her cure.

**PROSPERO**

I rather think

You have not sought her help, of whose soft grace  
For the like loss I have her sovereign aid  
And rest myself content.

**ALONSO**

You the like loss!

**PROSPERO**

As great to me as late; and, supportable  
To make the dear loss, have I means much weaker  
Than you may call to comfort you, for I  
Have lost my daughter.

**ALONSO**

A daughter?  
O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,  
The king and queen there! that they were, I wish  
Myself were mudded in that oozy bed  
Where my son lies. When did you lose your daughter?

**PROSPERO**

In this last tempest. I perceive these lords  
At this encounter do so much admire  
That they devour their reason and scarce think  
Their eyes do offices of truth, their words  
Are natural breath: but, howsoe'er you have  
Been justled from your senses, know for certain  
That I am Prospero and that very duke  
Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely  
Upon this shore, where you were wreck'd, was landed,  
To be the lord on't. No more yet of this;  
For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,  
Not a relation for a breakfast nor  
Befitting this first meeting. Welcome, sir;  
This cell's my court: here have I few attendants  
And subjects none abroad: pray you, look in.  
My dukedom since you have given me again,  
I will requite you with as good a thing;

At least bring forth a wonder, to content ye  
As much as me my dukedom.

*Here PROSPERO discovers FERDINAND and MIRANDA playing at chess*

**MIRANDA**

Sweet lord, you play me false.

**FERDINAND**

No, my dear'st love,  
I would not for the world.

**MIRANDA**

Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,  
And I would call it, fair play.

**ALONSO**

If this prove  
A vision of the Island, one dear son  
Shall I twice lose.

**SEBASTIAN**

A most high miracle!

**FERDINAND**

Though the seas threaten, they are merciful;  
I have cursed them without cause.

*Kneels*

**ALONSO**

Now all the blessings  
Of a glad father compass thee about!  
Arise, and say how thou camest here.

## **MIRANDA**

O, wonder!  
How many goodly creatures are there here!  
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,  
That has such people in't!

## **PROSPERO**

'Tis new to thee.

## **ALONSO**

What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?  
Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours:  
Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,  
And brought us thus together?

## **FERDINAND**

Sir, she is mortal;  
But by immortal Providence she's mine:  
I chose her when I could not ask my father  
For his advice, nor thought I had one. She  
Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan,  
Of whom so often I have heard renown,  
But never saw before; of whom I have  
Received a second life; and second father  
This lady makes him to me.

## **ALONSO**

I am hers:  
But, O, how oddly will it sound that I  
Must ask my child forgiveness!

## **PROSPERO**

There, sir, stop:  
Let us not burthen our remembrance with  
A heaviness that's gone.



## GONZALO

I have inly wept,  
Or should have spoke ere this. Look down, you god,  
And on this couple drop a blessed crown!  
For it is you that have chalk'd forth the way  
Which brought us hither.

## ALONSO

I say, Amen, Gonzalo!

## GONZALO

Was Milan thrust from Milan, that his issue  
Should become kings of Naples? O, rejoice  
Beyond a common joy, and set it down  
With gold on lasting pillars: In one voyage  
Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,  
And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife  
Where he himself was lost, Prospero his dukedom  
In a poor isle and all of us ourselves  
When no man was his own.

## ALONSO

[To FERDINAND and MIRANDA] Give me your hands:  
Let grief and sorrow still embrace his heart  
That doth not wish you joy!

## GONZALO

Be it so! Amen!

*Re-enter ARIEL, with the Master and Boatswain amazedly following*

O, look, sir, look, sir! here is more of us:  
I prophesied, if a gallows were on land,  
This fellow could not drown. Now, blasphemy,  
That swear'st grace o'erboard, not an oath on shore?  
Hast thou no mouth by land? What is the news?

## **Boatswain**

The best news is, that we have safely found  
Our king and company; the next, our ship--  
Which, but three glasses since, we gave out split--  
Is tight and yare and bravely rigg'd as when  
We first put out to sea.

## **ARIEL**

[Aside to PROSPERO] Sir, all this service  
Have I done since I went.

## **PROSPERO**

[Aside to ARIEL] My tricky spirit!

## **ALONSO**

These are not natural events; they strengthen  
From strange to stranger. Say, how came you hither?

## **Boatswain**

If I did think, sir, I were well awake,  
I'd strive to tell you. We were dead of sleep,  
And--how we know not--all clapp'd under hatches;  
Where but even now with strange and several noises  
Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains,  
And more diversity of sounds, all horrible,  
We were awaked; straightway, at liberty;  
Where we, in all her trim, freshly beheld  
Our royal, good and gallant ship, our master  
Capering to eye her: on a trice, so please you,  
Even in a dream, were we divided from them  
And were brought moping hither.

## **ARIEL**

[Aside to PROSPERO] Was't well done?

## **PROSPERO**

[Aside to ARIEL] Bravely, my diligence. Thou shalt be free.

## **ALONSO**

This is as strange a maze as e'er men trod  
And there is in this business more than nature  
Was ever conduct of: some oracle  
Must rectify our knowledge.

## **PROSPERO**

Sir, my liege,  
Do not infest your mind with beating on  
The strangeness of this business; at pick'd leisure  
Which shall be shortly, single I'll resolve you,  
Which to you shall seem probable, of every  
These happen'd accidents; till when, be cheerful  
And think of each thing well.

*Aside to ARIEL*

Come hither, spirit:  
Set Caliban and his companions free;  
Untie the spell.

*Exit ARIEL*

How fares my gracious sir?  
There are yet missing of your company  
Some few odd lads that you remember not.

*Re-enter ARIEL, driving in CALIBAN, STEPHANO and TRINCULO, in their stolen apparel*

## **STEPHANO**

Every man shift for all the rest, and  
let no man take care for himself; for all is  
but fortune. Coragio, bully-monster, coragio!

## **TRINCULO**

If these be true spies which I wear in my head,  
here's a goodly sight.

## **CALIBAN**

O Setebos, these be brave spirits indeed!  
How fine my master is! I am afraid  
He will chastise me.

## **SEBASTIAN**

Ha, ha!  
What things are these, my lord Antonio?  
Will money buy 'em?

## **ANTONIO**

Very like; one of them  
Is a plain fish, and, no doubt, marketable.

## **PROSPERO**

Mark but the badges of these men, my lords,  
Then say if they be true. This mis-shapen knave,  
His mother was a witch, and one so strong  
That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs,  
And deal in her command without her power.  
These three have robb'd me; and this demi-devil--  
For he's a bastard one--had plotted with them  
To take my life. Two of these fellows you  
Must know and own; this thing of darkness!  
Acknowledge mine.

## **CALIBAN**

I shall be pinch'd to death.

## **ALONSO**

Is not this Stephano, my drunken butler?

**SEBASTIAN**

He is drunk now: where had he wine?

**ALONSO**

And Trinculo is reeling ripe: where should they  
Find this grand liquor that hath gilded 'em?  
How camest thou in this pickle?

**TRINCULO**

I have been in such a pickle since I  
saw you last that, I fear me, will never out of  
my bones: I shall not fear fly-blowing.

**SEBASTIAN**

Why, how now, Stephano!

**STEPHANO**

O, touch me not; I am not Stephano, but a cramp.

**PROSPERO**

You'ld be king o' the isle, sirrah?

**STEPHANO**

I should have been a sore one then.

**ALONSO**

This is a strange thing as e'er I look'd on.

*Pointing to Caliban*

**PROSPERO**

He is as disproportion'd in his manners  
As in his shape. Go, sirrah, to my cell;  
Take with you your companions; as you look  
To have my pardon, trim it handsomely.

## **CALIBAN**

Ay, that I will; and I'll be wise hereafter  
And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass  
Was I, to take this drunkard for a god  
And worship this dull fool!

## **PROSPERO**

Go to; away!

## **ALONSO**

Hence, and bestow your luggage where you found it.

## **SEBASTIAN**

Or stole it, rather.

*Exeunt CALIBAN, STEPHANO, and TRINCULO*

## **PROSPERO**

Sir, I invite your highness and your train  
To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest  
For this one night; which, part of it, I'll waste  
With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it  
Go quick away; the story of my life  
And the particular accidents gone by  
Since I came to this isle: and in the morn  
I'll bring you to your ship and so to Naples,  
Where I have hope to see the nuptial  
Of these our dear-beloved solemnized;  
And thence retire me to my Milan, where  
Every third thought shall be my grave.

## ALONSO

I long  
To hear the story of your life, which must  
Take the ear strangely.

## PROSPERO

I'll deliver all;  
And promise you calm seas, auspicious gales  
And sail so expeditious that shall catch  
Your royal fleet far off.

*Aside to ARIEL*

My Ariel, chick,  
That is thy charge: then to the elements  
Be free, and fare thou well! Please you, draw near.

*Exeunt*

## EPILOGUE

### SPOKEN BY PROSPERO

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,  
And what strength I have's mine own,  
Which is most faint: now, 'tis true,  
I must be here confined by you,  
Or sent to Naples. Let me not,  
Since I have my dukedom got  
And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell  
In this bare island by your spell;  
But release me from my bands  
With the help of your good hands:  
Gentle breath of yours my sails  
Must fill, or else my project fails,  
Which was to please. Now I want  
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,  
And my ending is despair,  
Unless I be relieved by prayer,  
Which pierces so that it assaults  
Mercy itself and frees all faults.  
As you from crimes would pardon'd be,

Let your indulgence set me free.



# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Troiles and Cressida

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Troy. Before Priam's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The Same. A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The Grecian camp. Before Agamemnon's tent.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A part of the Grecian camp.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Troy. A room in Priam's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [The Grecian camp. Before Achilles' tent.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Troy. Priam's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The same. Pandarus' orchard.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [The Grecian camp. Before Achilles' tent.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Troy. A street.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [The same. Court of Pandarus' house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The same. Street before Pandarus' house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [The same. Pandarus' house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [The Grecian camp. Lists set out.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [The Grecian camp. Before Achilles' tent.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The same. Before Calchas' tent.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Troy. Before Priam's palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Plains between Troy and the Grecian camp.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Another part of the plains.](#)

Act 5, Scene 6: [Another part of the plains.](#)

Act 5, Scene 7: [Another part of the plains.](#)

Act 5, Scene 8: [Another part of the plains.](#)

Act 5, Scene 9: [Another part of the plains.](#)

Act 5, Scene 10: [Another part of the plains.](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Troy. Before Priam's palace.

*Enter TROILUS armed, and PANDARUS*

### TROILUS

Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again:  
Why should I war without the walls of Troy,  
That find such cruel battle here within?  
Each Trojan that is master of his heart,  
Let him to field; Troilus, alas! hath none.

### PANDARUS

Will this gear ne'er be mended?

### TROILUS

The Greeks are strong and skilful to their strength,  
Fierce to their skill and to their fierceness valiant;  
But I am weaker than a woman's tear,  
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,  
Less valiant than the virgin in the night  
And skillless as unpractised infancy.

### PANDARUS

Well, I have told you enough of this: for my part,  
I'll not meddle nor make no further. He that will  
have a cake out of the wheat must needs tarry the grinding.

### TROILUS

Have I not tarried?

### PANDARUS

Ay, the grinding; but you must tarry  
the bolting.

**TROILUS**

Have I not tarried?

**PANDARUS**

Ay, the bolting, but you must tarry the leavening.

**TROILUS**

Still have I tarried.

**PANDARUS**

Ay, to the leavening; but here's yet in the word  
'hereafter' the kneading, the making of the cake, the  
heating of the oven and the baking; nay, you must  
stay the cooling too, or you may chance to burn your lips.

**TROILUS**

Patience herself, what goddess e'er she be,  
Doth lesser blench at sufferance than I do.  
At Priam's royal table do I sit;  
And when fair Cressid comes into my thoughts,--  
So, traitor! 'When she comes!' When is she thence?

**PANDARUS**

Well, she looked yesternight fairer than ever I saw  
her look, or any woman else.

**TROILUS**

I was about to tell thee:--when my heart,  
As wedged with a sigh, would rive in twain,  
Lest Hector or my father should perceive me,

I have, as when the sun doth light a storm,  
Buried this sigh in wrinkle of a smile:  
But sorrow, that is couch'd in seeming gladness,  
Is like that mirth fate turns to sudden sadness.

## **PANDARUS**

An her hair were not somewhat darker than Helen's--  
well, go to--there were no more comparison between  
the women: but, for my part, she is my kinswoman; I  
would not, as they term it, praise her: but I would  
somebody had heard her talk yesterday, as I did. I  
will not dispraise your sister Cassandra's wit, but--

## **TROILUS**

O Pandarus! I tell thee, Pandarus,--  
When I do tell thee, there my hopes lie drown'd,  
Reply not in how many fathoms deep  
They lie indrench'd. I tell thee I am mad  
In Cressid's love: thou answer'st 'she is fair;'  
Pour'st in the open ulcer of my heart  
Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice,  
Handlest in thy discourse, O, that her hand,  
In whose comparison all whites are ink,  
Writing their own reproach, to whose soft seizure  
The cygnet's down is harsh and spirit of sense  
Hard as the palm of ploughman: this thou tell'st me,  
As true thou tell'st me, when I say I love her;  
But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,  
Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me  
The knife that made it.

## **PANDARUS**

I speak no more than truth.

## **TROILUS**

Thou dost not speak so much.

## **PANDARUS**

Faith, I'll not meddle in't. Let her be as she is:  
if she be fair, 'tis the better for her; an she be  
not, she has the mends in her own hands.

**TROILUS**

Good Pandarus, how now, Pandarus!

**PANDARUS**

I have had my labour for my travail; ill-thought on of  
her and ill-thought on of you; gone between and  
between, but small thanks for my labour.

**TROILUS**

What, art thou angry, Pandarus? what, with me?

**PANDARUS**

Because she's kin to me, therefore she's not so fair  
as Helen: an she were not kin to me, she would be as  
fair on Friday as Helen is on Sunday. But what care  
I? I care not an she were a black-a-moor; 'tis all one to me.

**TROILUS**

Say I she is not fair?

**PANDARUS**

I do not care whether you do or no. She's a fool to  
stay behind her father; let her to the Greeks; and so  
I'll tell her the next time I see her: for my part,  
I'll meddle nor make no more i' the matter.

**TROILUS**

Pandarus,--

## PANDARUS

Not I.

## TROILUS

Sweet Pandarus,--

## PANDARUS

Pray you, speak no more to me: I will leave all as I  
found it, and there an end.

*Exit PANDARUS. An alarum*

## TROILUS

Peace, you ungracious clamours! peace, rude sounds!  
Fools on both sides! Helen must needs be fair,  
When with your blood you daily paint her thus.  
I cannot fight upon this argument;  
It is too starved a subject for my sword.  
But Pandarus,--O gods, how do you plague me!  
I cannot come to Cressid but by Pandar;  
And he's as tetchy to be woo'd to woo.  
As she is stubborn-chaste against all suit.  
Tell me, Apollo, for thy Daphne's love,  
What Cressid is, what Pandar, and what we?  
Her bed is India; there she lies, a pearl:  
Between our Ilium and where she resides,  
Let it be call'd the wild and wandering flood,  
Ourself the merchant, and this sailing Pandar  
Our doubtful hope, our convoy and our bark.

*Alarum. Enter AENEAS*

## AENEAS

How now, Prince Troilus! wherefore not afield?

## TROILUS

Because not there: this woman's answer sorts,  
For womanish it is to be from thence.  
What news, AEneas, from the field to-day?

**AENEAS**

That Paris is returned home and hurt.

**TROILUS**

By whom, AEneas?

**AENEAS**

Troilus, by Menelaus.

**TROILUS**

Let Paris bleed; 'tis but a scar to scorn;  
Paris is gored with Menelaus' horn.

*Alarum*

**AENEAS**

Hark, what good sport is out of town to-day!

**TROILUS**

Better at home, if 'would I might' were 'may.'  
But to the sport abroad: are you bound thither?

**AENEAS**

In all swift haste.

**TROILUS**

Come, go we then together.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The Same. A street.

*Enter CRESSIDA and ALEXANDER*

**CRESSIDA**

Who were those went by?

**ALEXANDER**

Queen Hecuba and Helen.

**CRESSIDA**

And whither go they?

**ALEXANDER**

Up to the eastern tower,  
Whose height commands as subject all the vale,  
To see the battle. Hector, whose patience  
Is, as a virtue, fix'd, to-day was moved:  
He chid Andromache and struck his armourer,  
And, like as there were husbandry in war,  
Before the sun rose he was harness'd light,  
And to the field goes he; where every flower  
Did, as a prophet, weep what it foresaw  
In Hector's wrath.

**CRESSIDA**

What was his cause of anger?

**ALEXANDER**

The noise goes, this: there is among the Greeks

A lord of Trojan blood, nephew to Hector;  
They call him Ajax.

**CRESSIDA**

Good; and what of him?

**ALEXANDER**

They say he is a very man per se,  
And stands alone.

**CRESSIDA**

So do all men, unless they are drunk, sick, or have no legs.

**ALEXANDER**

This man, lady, hath robbed many beasts of their particular additions; he is as valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant: a man into whom nature hath so crowded humours that his valour is crushed into folly, his folly sauced with discretion: there is no man hath a virtue that he hath not a glimpse of, nor any man an attainment but he carries some stain of it: he is melancholy without cause, and merry against the hair: he hath the joints of every thing, but everything so out of joint that he is a gouty Briareus, many hands and no use, or purblind Argus, all eyes and no sight.

**CRESSIDA**

But how should this man, that makes  
me smile, make Hector angry?

**ALEXANDER**

They say he yesterday coped Hector in the battle and struck him down, the disdain and shame whereof hath ever since kept Hector fasting and waking.

**CRESSIDA**

Who comes here?

**ALEXANDER**

Madam, your uncle Pandarus.

*Enter PANDARUS*

**CRESSIDA**

Hector's a gallant man.

**ALEXANDER**

As may be in the world, lady.

**PANDARUS**

What's that? what's that?

**CRESSIDA**

Good morrow, uncle Pandarus.

**PANDARUS**

Good morrow, cousin Cressid: what do you talk of?  
Good morrow, Alexander. How do you, cousin? When  
were you at Ilium?

**CRESSIDA**

This morning, uncle.

**PANDARUS**

What were you talking of when I came? Was Hector  
armed and gone ere ye came to Ilium? Helen was not  
up, was she?

**CRESSIDA**

Hector was gone, but Helen was not up.

**PANDARUS**

Even so: Hector was stirring early.

**CRESSIDA**

That were we talking of, and of his anger.

**PANDARUS**

Was he angry?

**CRESSIDA**

So he says here.

**PANDARUS**

True, he was so: I know the cause too: he'll lay  
about him to-day, I can tell them that: and there's  
Troilus will not come far behind him: let them take  
heed of Troilus, I can tell them that too.

**CRESSIDA**

What, is he angry too?

**PANDARUS**

Who, Troilus? Troilus is the better man of the two.

**CRESSIDA**

O Jupiter! there's no comparison.

**PANDARUS**

What, not between Troilus and Hector? Do you know a man if you see him?

**CRESSIDA**

Ay, if I ever saw him before and knew him.

**PANDARUS**

Well, I say Troilus is Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Then you say as I say; for, I am sure, he is not Hector.

**PANDARUS**

No, nor Hector is not Troilus in some degrees.

**CRESSIDA**

'Tis just to each of them; he is himself.

**PANDARUS**

Himself! Alas, poor Troilus! I would he were.

**CRESSIDA**

So he is.

**PANDARUS**

Condition, I had gone barefoot to India.

**CRESSIDA**

He is not Hector.

**PANDARUS**

Himself! no, he's not himself: would a' were  
himself! Well, the gods are above; time must friend  
or end: well, Troilus, well: I would my heart were  
in her body. No, Hector is not a better man than Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Excuse me.

**PANDARUS**

He is elder.

**CRESSIDA**

Pardon me, pardon me.

**PANDARUS**

Th' other's not come to't; you shall tell me another  
tale, when th' other's come to't. Hector shall not  
have his wit this year.

**CRESSIDA**

He shall not need it, if he have his own.

**PANDARUS**

Nor his qualities.

**CRESSIDA**

No matter.

**PANDARUS**

Nor his beauty.

**CRESSIDA**

'Twould not become him; his own's better.

**PANDARUS**

You have no judgment, niece: Helen  
herself swore th' other day, that Troilus, for  
a brown favour--for so 'tis, I must confess,--  
not brown neither,--

**CRESSIDA**

No, but brown.

**PANDARUS**

'Faith, to say truth, brown and not brown.

**CRESSIDA**

To say the truth, true and not true.

**PANDARUS**

She praised his complexion above Paris.

**CRESSIDA**

Why, Paris hath colour enough.

**PANDARUS**

So he has.

**CRESSIDA**

Then Troilus should have too much: if she praised  
him above, his complexion is higher than his; he  
having colour enough, and the other higher, is too  
flaming a praise for a good complexion. I had as

liefe Helen's golden tongue had commended Troilus for  
a copper nose.

**PANDARUS**

I swear to you. I think Helen loves him better than Paris.

**CRESSIDA**

Then she's a merry Greek indeed.

**PANDARUS**

Nay, I am sure she does. She came to him the other  
day into the compassed window,--and, you know, he  
has not past three or four hairs on his chin,--

**CRESSIDA**

Indeed, a tapster's arithmetic may soon bring his  
particulars therein to a total.

**PANDARUS**

Why, he is very young: and yet will he, within  
three pound, lift as much as his brother Hector.

**CRESSIDA**

Is he so young a man and so old a lifter?

**PANDARUS**

But to prove to you that Helen loves him: she came  
and puts me her white hand to his cloven chin--

**CRESSIDA**

Juno have mercy! how came it cloven?

**PANDARUS**



Why, you know 'tis dimpled: I think his smiling  
becomes him better than any man in all Phrygia.

**CRESSIDA**

O, he smiles valiantly.

**PANDARUS**

Does he not?

**CRESSIDA**

O yes, an 'twere a cloud in autumn.

**PANDARUS**

Why, go to, then: but to prove to you that Helen  
loves Troilus,--

**CRESSIDA**

Troilus will stand to the proof, if you'll  
prove it so.

**PANDARUS**

Troilus! why, he esteems her no more than I esteem  
an addle egg.

**CRESSIDA**

If you love an addle egg as well as you love an idle  
head, you would eat chickens i' the shell.

**PANDARUS**

I cannot choose but laugh, to think how she tickled  
his chin: indeed, she has a marvellous white hand, I  
must needs confess,--

**CRESSIDA**

Without the rack.

**PANDARUS**

And she takes upon her to spy a white hair on his chin.

**CRESSIDA**

Alas, poor chin! many a wart is richer.

**PANDARUS**

But there was such laughing! Queen Hecuba laughed  
that her eyes ran o'er.

**CRESSIDA**

With mill-stones.

**PANDARUS**

And Cassandra laughed.

**CRESSIDA**

But there was more temperate fire under the pot of  
her eyes: did her eyes run o'er too?

**PANDARUS**

And Hector laughed.

**CRESSIDA**

At what was all this laughing?

**PANDARUS**

Marry, at the white hair that Helen spied on Troilus' chin.

**CRESSIDA**

An't had been a green hair, I should have laughed too.

**PANDARUS**

They laughed not so much at the hair as at his pretty answer.

**CRESSIDA**

What was his answer?

**PANDARUS**

Quoth she, 'Here's but two and fifty hairs on your chin, and one of them is white.

**CRESSIDA**

This is her question.

**PANDARUS**

That's true; make no question of that. 'Two and fifty hairs' quoth he, 'and one white: that white hair is my father, and all the rest are his sons.' 'Jupiter!' quoth she, 'which of these hairs is Paris, my husband?' 'The forked one,' quoth he, 'pluck't out, and give it him.' But there was such laughing! and Helen so blushed, an Paris so chafed, and all the rest so laughed, that it passed.

**CRESSIDA**

So let it now; for it has been while going by.

**PANDARUS**

Well, cousin. I told you a thing yesterday; think on't.

**CRESSIDA**

So I do.

**PANDARUS**

I'll be sworn 'tis true; he will weep you, an 'twere  
a man born in April.

**CRESSIDA**

And I'll spring up in his tears, an 'twere a nettle  
against May.

*A retreat sounded*

**PANDARUS**

Hark! they are coming from the field: shall we  
stand up here, and see them as they pass toward  
Ilium? good niece, do, sweet niece Cressida.

**CRESSIDA**

At your pleasure.

**PANDARUS**

Here, here, here's an excellent place; here we may  
see most bravely: I'll tell you them all by their  
names as they pass by; but mark Troilus above the rest.

**CRESSIDA**

Speak not so loud.

*AENEAS passes*

**PANDARUS**

That's AEneas: is not that a brave man? he's one of  
the flowers of Troy, I can tell you: but mark  
Troilus; you shall see anon.

*ANTENOR passes*

**CRESSIDA**

Who's that?

**PANDARUS**

That's Antenor: he has a shrewd wit, I can tell you;  
and he's a man good enough, he's one o' the soundest  
judgments in whosoever, and a proper man of person.  
When comes Troilus? I'll show you Troilus anon: if  
he see me, you shall see him nod at me.

**CRESSIDA**

Will he give you the nod?

**PANDARUS**

You shall see.

**CRESSIDA**

If he do, the rich shall have more.

*HECTOR passes*

**PANDARUS**

That's Hector, that, that, look you, that; there's a  
fellow! Go thy way, Hector! There's a brave man,  
niece. O brave Hector! Look how he looks! there's  
a countenance! is't not a brave man?

**CRESSIDA**

O, a brave man!

**PANDARUS**

Is a' not? it does a man's heart good. Look you  
what hacks are on his helmet! look you yonder, do  
you see? look you there: there's no jesting;  
there's laying on, take't off who will, as they say:  
there be hacks!

**CRESSIDA**

Be those with swords?

**PANDARUS**

Swords! any thing, he cares not; an the devil come  
to him, it's all one: by God's lid, it does one's  
heart good. Yonder comes Paris, yonder comes Paris.

*PARIS passes*

Look ye yonder, niece; is't not a gallant man too,  
is't not? Why, this is brave now. Who said he came  
hurt home to-day? he's not hurt: why, this will do  
Helen's heart good now, ha! Would I could see  
Troilus now! You shall see Troilus anon.

*HELENUS passes*

**CRESSIDA**

Who's that?

**PANDARUS**

That's Helenus. I marvel where Troilus is. That's  
Helenus. I think he went not forth to-day. That's Helenus.

**CRESSIDA**

Can Helenus fight, uncle?

**PANDARUS**

Helenus? no. Yes, he'll fight indifferent well. I marvel where Troilus is. Hark! do you not hear the people cry 'Troilus'? Helenus is a priest.

**CRESSIDA**

What sneaking fellow comes yonder?

*TROILUS passes*

**PANDARUS**

Where? yonder? that's Deiphobus. 'Tis Troilus! there's a man, niece! Hem! Brave Troilus! the prince of chivalry!

**CRESSIDA**

Peace, for shame, peace!

**PANDARUS**

Mark him; note him. O brave Troilus! Look well upon him, niece: look you how his sword is bloodied, and his helm more hacked than Hector's, and how he looks, and how he goes! O admirable youth! he ne'er saw three and twenty. Go thy way, Troilus, go thy way! Had I a sister were a grace, or a daughter a goddess, he should take his choice. O admirable man! Paris? Paris is dirt to him; and, I warrant, Helen, to change, would give an eye to boot.

**CRESSIDA**

Here come more.

*Forces pass*

## **PANDARUS**

Asses, fools, dolts! chaff and bran, chaff and bran!  
porridge after meat! I could live and die i' the  
eyes of Troilus. Ne'er look, ne'er look: the eagles  
are gone: crows and daws, crows and daws! I had  
rather be such a man as Troilus than Agamemnon and  
all Greece.

## **CRESSIDA**

There is among the Greeks Achilles, a better man than Troilus.

## **PANDARUS**

Achilles! a drayman, a porter, a very camel.

## **CRESSIDA**

Well, well.

## **PANDARUS**

'Well, well!' why, have you any discretion? have  
you any eyes? Do you know what a man is? Is not  
birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood,  
learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality,  
and such like, the spice and salt that season a man?

## **CRESSIDA**

Ay, a minced man: and then to be baked with no date  
in the pie, for then the man's date's out.

## **PANDARUS**

You are such a woman! one knows not at what ward you  
lie.

## **CRESSIDA**



Upon my back, to defend my belly; upon my wit, to defend my wiles; upon my secrecy, to defend mine honesty; my mask, to defend my beauty; and you, to defend all these: and at all these wards I lie, at a thousand watches.

**PANDARUS**

Say one of your watches.

**CRESSIDA**

Nay, I'll watch you for that; and that's one of the chiefest of them too: if I cannot ward what I would not have hit, I can watch you for telling how I took the blow; unless it swell past hiding, and then it's past watching.

**PANDARUS**

You are such another!

*Enter Troilus's Boy*

**Boy**

Sir, my lord would instantly speak with you.

**PANDARUS**

Where?

**Boy**

At your own house; there he unarms him.

**PANDARUS**

Good boy, tell him I come.

*Exit boy*

I doubt he be hurt. Fare ye well, good niece.

**CRESSIDA**

Adieu, uncle.

**PANDARUS**

I'll be with you, niece, by and by.

**CRESSIDA**

To bring, uncle?

**PANDARUS**

Ay, a token from Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

By the same token, you are a bawd.

*Exit PANDARUS*

Words, vows, gifts, tears, and love's full sacrifice,  
He offers in another's enterprise;  
But more in Troilus thousand fold I see  
Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be;  
Yet hold I off. Women are angels, wooing:  
Things won are done; joy's soul lies in the doing.  
That she beloved knows nought that knows not this:  
Men prize the thing ungain'd more than it is:  
That she was never yet that ever knew  
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue.  
Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:  
Achievement is command; ungain'd, beseech:  
Then though my heart's content firm love doth bear,  
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The Grecian camp. Before Agamemnon's tent.

*Sennet. Enter AGAMEMNON, NESTOR, ULYSSES, MENELAUS, and others*

### AGAMEMNON

Princes,  
What grief hath set the jaundice on your cheeks?  
The ample proposition that hope makes  
In all designs begun on earth below  
Fails in the promised largeness: cheques and disasters  
Grow in the veins of actions highest rear'd,  
As knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,  
Infect the sound pine and divert his grain  
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.  
Nor, princes, is it matter new to us  
That we come short of our suppose so far  
That after seven years' siege yet Troy walls stand;  
Sith every action that hath gone before,  
Whereof we have record, trial did draw  
Bias and thwart, not answering the aim,  
And that unbodied figure of the thought  
That gave't surmised shape. Why then, you princes,  
Do you with cheeks abash'd behold our works,  
And call them shames? which are indeed nought else  
But the protractive trials of great Jove  
To find persistive constancy in men:  
The fineness of which metal is not found  
In fortune's love; for then the bold and coward,  
The wise and fool, the artist and unread,  
The hard and soft seem all affined and kin:  
But, in the wind and tempest of her frown,  
Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,  
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;  
And what hath mass or matter, by itself  
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.

## NESTOR

With due observance of thy godlike seat,  
Great Agamemnon, Nestor shall apply  
Thy latest words. In the reproof of chance  
Lies the true proof of men: the sea being smooth,  
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail  
Upon her patient breast, making their way  
With those of nobler bulk!  
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage  
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold  
The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,  
Bounding between the two moist elements,  
Like Perseus' horse: where's then the saucy boat  
Whose weak untimber'd sides but even now  
Co-rivall'd greatness? Either to harbour fled,  
Or made a toast for Neptune. Even so  
Doth valour's show and valour's worth divide  
In storms of fortune; for in her ray and brightness  
The herd hath more annoyance by the breeze  
Than by the tiger; but when the splitting wind  
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,  
And flies fled under shade, why, then the thing of courage  
As roused with rage with rage doth sympathize,  
And with an accent tuned in selfsame key  
Retorts to chiding fortune.

## ULYSSES

Agamemnon,  
Thou great commander, nerve and bone of Greece,  
Heart of our numbers, soul and only spirit.  
In whom the tempers and the minds of all  
Should be shut up, hear what Ulysses speaks.  
Besides the applause and approbation To which,

*To AGAMEMNON*

most mighty for thy place and sway,

*To NESTOR*

And thou most reverend for thy stretch'd-out life  
I give to both your speeches, which were such  
As Agamemnon and the hand of Greece  
Should hold up high in brass, and such again  
As venerable Nestor, hatch'd in silver,  
Should with a bond of air, strong as the axle-tree  
On which heaven rides, knit all the Greekish ears  
To his experienced tongue, yet let it please both,  
Thou great, and wise, to hear Ulysses speak.

## AGAMEMNON

Speak, prince of Ithaca; and be't of less expect  
That matter needless, of importless burden,  
Divide thy lips, than we are confident,  
When rank Thersites opes his mastic jaws,  
We shall hear music, wit and oracle.

## ULYSSES

Troy, yet upon his basis, had been down,  
And the great Hector's sword had lack'd a master,  
But for these instances.  
The specialty of rule hath been neglected:  
And, look, how many Grecian tents do stand  
Hollow upon this plain, so many hollow factions.  
When that the general is not like the hive  
To whom the foragers shall all repair,  
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded,  
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.  
The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre  
Observe degree, priority and place,  
Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,  
Office and custom, in all line of order;  
And therefore is the glorious planet Sol  
In noble eminence enthroned and sphered  
Amidst the other; whose medicinable eye  
Corrects the ill aspects of planets evil,  
And posts, like the commandment of a king,  
Sans cheque to good and bad: but when the planets  
In evil mixture to disorder wander,  
What plagues and what portents! what mutiny!  
What raging of the sea! shaking of earth!

Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors,  
Divert and crack, rend and deracinate  
The unity and married calm of states  
Quite from their fixure! O, when degree is shaken,  
Which is the ladder to all high designs,  
Then enterprise is sick! How could communities,  
Degrees in schools and brotherhoods in cities,  
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,  
The primogenitive and due of birth,  
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,  
But by degree, stand in authentic place?  
Take but degree away, untune that string,  
And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets  
In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters  
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores  
And make a sop of all this solid globe:  
Strength should be lord of imbecility,  
And the rude son should strike his father dead:  
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,  
Between whose endless jar justice resides,  
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.  
Then every thing includes itself in power,  
Power into will, will into appetite;  
And appetite, an universal wolf,  
So doubly seconded with will and power,  
Must make perforce an universal prey,  
And last eat up himself. Great Agamemnon,  
This chaos, when degree is suffocate,  
Follows the choking.  
And this neglect of degree it is  
That by a pace goes backward, with a purpose  
It hath to climb. The general's disdain'd  
By him one step below, he by the next,  
That next by him beneath; so every step,  
Exempl'd by the first pace that is sick  
Of his superior, grows to an envious fever  
Of pale and bloodless emulation:  
And 'tis this fever that keeps Troy on foot,  
Not her own sinews. To end a tale of length,  
Troy in our weakness stands, not in her strength.

**NESTOR**

Most wisely hath Ulysses here discover'd  
The fever whereof all our power is sick.

## AGAMEMNON

The nature of the sickness found, Ulysses,  
What is the remedy?

## ULYSSES

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns  
The sinew and the forehead of our host,  
Having his ear full of his airy fame,  
Grows dainty of his worth, and in his tent  
Lies mocking our designs: with him Patroclus  
Upon a lazy bed the livelong day  
Breaks scurril jests;  
And with ridiculous and awkward action,  
Which, slanderer, he imitation calls,  
He pageants us. Sometime, great Agamemnon,  
Thy topless deputation he puts on,  
And, like a strutting player, whose conceit  
Lies in his hamstring, and doth think it rich  
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound  
'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage,--  
Such to-be-pitied and o'er-wrested seeming  
He acts thy greatness in: and when he speaks,  
'Tis like a chime a-mending; with terms unsquared,  
Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd  
Would seem hyperboles. At this fusty stuff  
The large Achilles, on his press'd bed lolling,  
From his deep chest laughs out a loud applause;  
Cries 'Excellent! 'tis Agamemnon just.  
Now play me Nestor; hem, and stroke thy beard,  
As he being drest to some oration.'  
That's done, as near as the extremest ends  
Of parallels, as like as Vulcan and his wife:  
Yet god Achilles still cries 'Excellent!  
'Tis Nestor right. Now play him me, Patroclus,  
Arming to answer in a night alarm.'  
And then, forsooth, the faint defects of age  
Must be the scene of mirth; to cough and spit,  
And, with a palsy-fumbling on his gorget,



Shake in and out the rivet: and at this sport  
Sir Valour dies; cries 'O, enough, Patroclus;  
Or give me ribs of steel! I shall split all  
In pleasure of my spleen.' And in this fashion,  
All our abilities, gifts, natures, shapes,  
Severals and generals of grace exact,  
Achievements, plots, orders, preventions,  
Excitements to the field, or speech for truce,  
Success or loss, what is or is not, serves  
As stuff for these two to make paradoxes.

## NESTOR

And in the imitation of these twain--  
Who, as Ulysses says, opinion crowns  
With an imperial voice--many are infect.  
Ajax is grown self-will'd, and bears his head  
In such a rein, in full as proud a place  
As broad Achilles; keeps his tent like him;  
Makes factious feasts; rails on our state of war,  
Bold as an oracle, and sets Thersites,  
A slave whose gall coins slanders like a mint,  
To match us in comparisons with dirt,  
To weaken and discredit our exposure,  
How rank soever rounded in with danger.

## ULYSSES

They tax our policy, and call it cowardice,  
Count wisdom as no member of the war,  
Forestall prescience, and esteem no act  
But that of hand: the still and mental parts,  
That do contrive how many hands shall strike,  
When fitness calls them on, and know by measure  
Of their observant toil the enemies' weight,--  
Why, this hath not a finger's dignity:  
They call this bed-work, mappery, closet-war;  
So that the ram that batters down the wall,  
For the great swing and rudeness of his poise,  
They place before his hand that made the engine,  
Or those that with the fineness of their souls  
By reason guide his execution.

## **NESTOR**

Let this be granted, and Achilles' horse  
Makes many Thetis' sons.

*A tucket*

## **AGAMEMNON**

What trumpet? look, Menelaus.

## **MENELAUS**

From Troy.

*Enter AENEAS*

## **AGAMEMNON**

What would you 'fore our tent?

## **AENEAS**

Is this great Agamemnon's tent, I pray you?

## **AGAMEMNON**

Even this.

## **AENEAS**

May one, that is a herald and a prince,  
Do a fair message to his kingly ears?

## **AGAMEMNON**

With surety stronger than Achilles' arm  
'Fore all the Greekish heads, which with one voice  
Call Agamemnon head and general.

## **AENEAS**

Fair leave and large security. How may  
A stranger to those most imperial looks  
Know them from eyes of other mortals?

## **AGAMEMNON**

How!

## **AENEAS**

Ay;  
I ask, that I might waken reverence,  
And bid the cheek be ready with a blush  
Modest as morning when she coldly eyes  
The youthful Phoebus:  
Which is that god in office, guiding men?  
Which is the high and mighty Agamemnon?

## **AGAMEMNON**

This Trojan scorns us; or the men of Troy  
Are ceremonious courtiers.

## **AENEAS**

Courtiers as free, as debonair, unarm'd,  
As bending angels; that's their fame in peace:  
But when they would seem soldiers, they have galls,  
Good arms, strong joints, true swords; and,  
Jove's accord,  
Nothing so full of heart. But peace, AEneas,  
Peace, Trojan; lay thy finger on thy lips!  
The worthiness of praise distains his worth,  
If that the praised himself bring the praise forth:  
But what the repining enemy commends,  
That breath fame blows; that praise, sole sure,  
transcends.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Sir, you of Troy, call you yourself Aeneas?

**AENEAS**

Ay, Greek, that is my name.

**AGAMEMNON**

What's your affair I pray you?

**AENEAS**

Sir, pardon; 'tis for Agamemnon's ears.

**AGAMEMNON**

He hears naught privately that comes from Troy.

**AENEAS**

Nor I from Troy come not to whisper him:  
I bring a trumpet to awake his ear,  
To set his sense on the attentive bent,  
And then to speak.

**AGAMEMNON**

Speak frankly as the wind;  
It is not Agamemnon's sleeping hour:  
That thou shalt know. Trojan, he is awake,  
He tells thee so himself.

**AENEAS**

Trumpet, blow loud,  
Send thy brass voice through all these lazy tents;  
And every Greek of mettle, let him know,  
What Troy means fairly shall be spoke aloud.

*Trumpet sounds*

We have, great Agamemnon, here in Troy  
A prince call'd Hector,--Priam is his father,--  
Who in this dull and long-continued truce  
Is rusty grown: he bade me take a trumpet,  
And to this purpose speak. Kings, princes, lords!  
If there be one among the fair'st of Greece  
That holds his honour higher than his ease,  
That seeks his praise more than he fears his peril,  
That knows his valour, and knows not his fear,  
That loves his mistress more than in confession,  
With truant vows to her own lips he loves,  
And dare avow her beauty and her worth  
In other arms than hers,--to him this challenge.  
Hector, in view of Trojans and of Greeks,  
Shall make it good, or do his best to do it,  
He hath a lady, wiser, fairer, truer,  
Than ever Greek did compass in his arms,  
And will to-morrow with his trumpet call  
Midway between your tents and walls of Troy,  
To rouse a Grecian that is true in love:  
If any come, Hector shall honour him;  
If none, he'll say in Troy when he retires,  
The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth  
The splinter of a lance. Even so much.

## **AGAMEMNON**

This shall be told our lovers, Lord Aeneas;  
If none of them have soul in such a kind,  
We left them all at home: but we are soldiers;  
And may that soldier a mere recreant prove,  
That means not, hath not, or is not in love!  
If then one is, or hath, or means to be,  
That one meets Hector; if none else, I am he.

## **NESTOR**

Tell him of Nestor, one that was a man  
When Hector's grandsire suck'd: he is old now;  
But if there be not in our Grecian host  
One noble man that hath one spark of fire,  
To answer for his love, tell him from me  
I'll hide my silver beard in a gold beaver

And in my vantbrace put this wither'd brawn,  
And meeting him will tell him that my lady  
Was fairer than his grandam and as chaste  
As may be in the world: his youth in flood,  
I'll prove this truth with my three drops of blood.

## **AENEAS**

Now heavens forbid such scarcity of youth!

## **ULYSSES**

Amen.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Fair Lord AEneas, let me touch your hand;  
To our pavilion shall I lead you, sir.  
Achilles shall have word of this intent;  
So shall each lord of Greece, from tent to tent:  
Yourself shall feast with us before you go  
And find the welcome of a noble foe.

*Exeunt all but ULYSSES and NESTOR*

## **ULYSSES**

Nestor!

## **NESTOR**

What says Ulysses?

## **ULYSSES**

I have a young conception in my brain;  
Be you my time to bring it to some shape.

## **NESTOR**

What is't?

## ULYSSES

This 'tis:

Blunt wedges rive hard knots: the seeded pride  
That hath to this maturity blown up  
In rank Achilles must or now be cropp'd,  
Or, shedding, breed a nursery of like evil,  
To overbulk us all.

## NESTOR

Well, and how?

## ULYSSES

This challenge that the gallant Hector sends,  
However it is spread in general name,  
Relates in purpose only to Achilles.

## NESTOR

The purpose is perspicuous even as substance,  
Whose grossness little characters sum up:  
And, in the publication, make no strain,  
But that Achilles, were his brain as barren  
As banks of Libya,--though, Apollo knows,  
'Tis dry enough,--will, with great speed of judgment,  
Ay, with celerity, find Hector's purpose  
Pointing on him.

## ULYSSES

And wake him to the answer, think you?

## NESTOR

Yes, 'tis most meet: whom may you else oppose,  
That can from Hector bring his honour off,  
If not Achilles? Though't be a sportful combat,  
Yet in the trial much opinion dwells;  
For here the Trojans taste our dear'st repute

With their finest palate: and trust to me, Ulysses,  
Our imputation shall be oddly poised  
In this wild action; for the success,  
Although particular, shall give a scantling  
Of good or bad unto the general;  
And in such indexes, although small pricks  
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen  
The baby figure of the giant mass  
Of things to come at large. It is supposed  
He that meets Hector issues from our choice  
And choice, being mutual act of all our souls,  
Makes merit her election, and doth boil,  
As 'twere from us all, a man distill'd  
Out of our virtues; who miscarrying,  
What heart receives from hence the conquering part,  
To steel a strong opinion to themselves?  
Which entertain'd, limbs are his instruments,  
In no less working than are swords and bows  
Directive by the limbs.

## ULYSSES

Give pardon to my speech:  
Therefore 'tis meet Achilles meet not Hector.  
Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,  
And think, perchance, they'll sell; if not,  
The lustre of the better yet to show,  
Shall show the better. Do not consent  
That ever Hector and Achilles meet;  
For both our honour and our shame in this  
Are dogg'd with two strange followers.

## NESTOR

I see them not with my old eyes: what are they?

## ULYSSES

What glory our Achilles shares from Hector,  
Were he not proud, we all should share with him:  
But he already is too insolent;  
And we were better parch in Afric sun



Than in the pride and salt scorn of his eyes,  
Should he 'scape Hector fair: if he were foil'd,  
Why then, we did our main opinion crush  
In taint of our best man. No, make a lottery;  
And, by device, let blockish Ajax draw  
The sort to fight with Hector: among ourselves  
Give him allowance for the better man;  
For that will physic the great Myrmidon  
Who broils in loud applause, and make him fall  
His crest that prouder than blue Iris bends.  
If the dull brainless Ajax come safe off,  
We'll dress him up in voices: if he fail,  
Yet go we under our opinion still  
That we have better men. But, hit or miss,  
Our project's life this shape of sense assumes:  
Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes.

## NESTOR

Ulysses,  
Now I begin to relish thy advice;  
And I will give a taste of it forthwith  
To Agamemnon: go we to him straight.  
Two curs shall tame each other: pride alone  
Must tarre the mastiffs on, as 'twere their bone.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A part of the Grecian camp.

*Enter AJAX and THERSITES*

**AJAX**

Thersites!

**THERSITES**

Agamemnon, how if he had boils? full, all over,  
generally?

**AJAX**

Thersites!

**THERSITES**

And those boils did run? say so: did not the  
general run then? were not that a botchy core?

**AJAX**

Dog!

**THERSITES**

Then would come some matter from him; I see none now.

**AJAX**

Thou bitch-wolf's son, canst thou not hear?

*Beating him*

Feel, then.

**THERSITES**

The plague of Greece upon thee, thou mongrel  
beef-witted lord!

**AJAX**

Speak then, thou vinewedst leaven, speak: I will  
beat thee into handsomeness.

**THERSITES**

I shall sooner rail thee into wit and holiness: but,  
I think, thy horse will sooner con an oration than  
thou learn a prayer without book. Thou canst strike,  
canst thou? a red murrain o' thy jade's tricks!

**AJAX**

Toadstool, learn me the proclamation.

**THERSITES**

Dost thou think I have no sense, thou strikest me thus?

**AJAX**

The proclamation!

**THERSITES**

Thou art proclaimed a fool, I think.

**AJAX**

Do not, porpentine, do not: my fingers itch.

**THERSITES**

I would thou didst itch from head to foot and I had the scratching of thee; I would make thee the loathsomest scab in Greece. When thou art forth in the incursions, thou strikest as slow as another.

**AJAX**

I say, the proclamation!

**THERSITES**

Thou grumblest and railest every hour on Achilles, and thou art as full of envy at his greatness as Cerberus is at Proserpine's beauty, ay, that thou barkest at him.

**AJAX**

Mistress Thersites!

**THERSITES**

Thou shouldest strike him.

**AJAX**

Cobloaf!

**THERSITES**

He would pun thee into shivers with his fist, as a sailor breaks a biscuit.

**AJAX**

[Beating him] You whoreson cur!

**THERSITES**

Do, do.

**AJAX**

Thou stool for a witch!

**THERSITES**

Ay, do, do; thou sodden-witted lord! thou hast no more brain than I have in mine elbows; an assinego may tutor thee: thou scurvy-valiant ass! thou art here but to thrash Trojans; and thou art bought and sold among those of any wit, like a barbarian slave. If thou use to beat me, I will begin at thy heel, and tell what thou art by inches, thou thing of no bowels, thou!

**AJAX**

You dog!

**THERSITES**

You scurvy lord!

**AJAX**

[Beating him] You cur!

**THERSITES**

Mars his idiot! do, rudeness; do, camel; do, do.

*Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*

**ACHILLES**

Why, how now, Ajax! wherefore do you thus? How now, Thersites! what's the matter, man?

**THERSITES**

You see him there, do you?

**ACHILLES**

Ay; what's the matter?

**THERSITES**

Nay, look upon him.

**ACHILLES**

So I do: what's the matter?

**THERSITES**

Nay, but regard him well.

**ACHILLES**

'Well!' why, I do so.

**THERSITES**

But yet you look not well upon him; for whosoever you  
take him to be, he is Ajax.

**ACHILLES**

I know that, fool.

**THERSITES**

Ay, but that fool knows not himself.

**AJAX**

Therefore I beat thee.

**THERSITES**

Lo, lo, lo, lo, what modicums of wit he utters! his

evasions have ears thus long. I have bobbed his brain more than he has beat my bones: I will buy nine sparrows for a penny, and his pia mater is not worth the ninth part of a sparrow. This lord, Achilles, Ajax, who wears his wit in his belly and his guts in his head, I'll tell you what I say of him.

**ACHILLES**

What?

**THERSITES**

I say, this Ajax--

*Ajax offers to beat him*

**ACHILLES**

Nay, good Ajax.

**THERSITES**

Has not so much wit--

**ACHILLES**

Nay, I must hold you.

**THERSITES**

As will stop the eye of Helen's needle, for whom he comes to fight.

**ACHILLES**

Peace, fool!

**THERSITES**

I would have peace and quietness, but the fool will  
not: he there: that he: look you there.

**AJAX**

O thou damned cur! I shall--

**ACHILLES**

Will you set your wit to a fool's?

**THERSITES**

No, I warrant you; for a fools will shame it.

**PATROCLUS**

Good words, Thersites.

**ACHILLES**

What's the quarrel?

**AJAX**

I bade the vile owl go learn me the tenor of the  
proclamation, and he rails upon me.

**THERSITES**

I serve thee not.

**AJAX**

Well, go to, go to.

**THERSITES**

I serve here voluntarily.

**ACHILLES**



Your last service was sufferance, 'twas not  
voluntary: no man is beaten voluntary: Ajax was  
here the voluntary, and you as under an impress.

### **THERSITES**

E'en so; a great deal of your wit, too, lies in your  
sinews, or else there be liars. Hector have a great  
catch, if he knock out either of your brains: a'  
were as good crack a fusty nut with no kernel.

### **ACHILLES**

What, with me too, Thersites?

### **THERSITES**

There's Ulysses and old Nestor, whose wit was mouldy  
ere your grandsires had nails on their toes, yoke you  
like draught-oxen and make you plough up the wars.

### **ACHILLES**

What, what?

### **THERSITES**

Yes, good sooth: to, Achilles! to, Ajax! to!

### **AJAX**

I shall cut out your tongue.

### **THERSITES**

'Tis no matter! I shall speak as much as thou  
afterwards.

### **PATROCLUS**

No more words, Thersites; peace!

**THERSITES**

I will hold my peace when Achilles' brach bids me, shall I?

**ACHILLES**

There's for you, Patroclus.

**THERSITES**

I will see you hanged, like clotpoles, ere I come  
any more to your tents: I will keep where there is  
wit stirring and leave the faction of fools.

*Exit*

**PATROCLUS**

A good riddance.

**ACHILLES**

Marry, this, sir, is proclaim'd through all our host:  
That Hector, by the fifth hour of the sun,  
Will with a trumpet 'twixt our tents and Troy  
To-morrow morning call some knight to arms  
That hath a stomach; and such a one that dare  
Maintain--I know not what: 'tis trash. Farewell.

**AJAX**

Farewell. Who shall answer him?

**ACHILLES**

I know not: 'tis put to lottery; otherwise  
He knew his man.

**AJAX**

O, meaning you. I will go learn more of it.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Troy. A room in Priam's palace.

*Enter PRIAM, HECTOR, TROILUS, PARIS, and HELENUS*

### PRIAM

After so many hours, lives, speeches spent,  
Thus once again says Nestor from the Greeks:  
'Deliver Helen, and all damage else--  
As honour, loss of time, travail, expense,  
Wounds, friends, and what else dear that is consumed  
In hot digestion of this cormorant war--  
Shall be struck off.' Hector, what say you to't?

### HECTOR

Though no man lesser fears the Greeks than I  
As far as toucheth my particular,  
Yet, dread Priam,  
There is no lady of more softer bowels,  
More spongy to suck in the sense of fear,  
More ready to cry out 'Who knows what follows?'  
Than Hector is: the wound of peace is surety,  
Surety secure; but modest doubt is call'd  
The beacon of the wise, the tent that searches  
To the bottom of the worst. Let Helen go:  
Since the first sword was drawn about this question,  
Every tithed soul, 'mongst many thousand dismes,  
Hath been as dear as Helen; I mean, of ours:  
If we have lost so many tenths of ours,  
To guard a thing not ours nor worth to us,  
Had it our name, the value of one ten,  
What merit's in that reason which denies  
The yielding of her up?

### TROILUS

Fie, fie, my brother!  
Weigh you the worth and honour of a king  
So great as our dread father in a scale  
Of common ounces? will you with counters sum  
The past proportion of his infinite?  
And buckle in a waist most fathomless  
With spans and inches so diminutive  
As fears and reasons? fie, for godly shame!

## HELENUS

No marvel, though you bite so sharp at reasons,  
You are so empty of them. Should not our father  
Bear the great sway of his affairs with reasons,  
Because your speech hath none that tells him so?

## TROILUS

You are for dreams and slumbers, brother priest;  
You fur your gloves with reason. Here are  
your reasons:  
You know an enemy intends you harm;  
You know a sword employ'd is perilous,  
And reason flies the object of all harm:  
Who marvels then, when Helenus beholds  
A Grecian and his sword, if he do set  
The very wings of reason to his heels  
And fly like chidden Mercury from Jove,  
Or like a star disorb'd? Nay, if we talk of reason,  
Let's shut our gates and sleep: manhood and honour  
Should have hare-hearts, would they but fat  
their thoughts  
With this cramm'd reason: reason and respect  
Make livers pale and lustihood deject.

## HECTOR

Brother, she is not worth what she doth cost  
The holding.

## TROILUS

What is aught, but as 'tis valued?

## HECTOR

But value dwells not in particular will;  
It holds his estimate and dignity  
As well wherein 'tis precious of itself  
As in the prizer: 'tis mad idolatry  
To make the service greater than the god  
And the will dotes that is attributive  
To what infectiously itself affects,  
Without some image of the affected merit.

## TROILUS

I take to-day a wife, and my election  
Is led on in the conduct of my will;  
My will enkindled by mine eyes and ears,  
Two traded pilots 'twixt the dangerous shores  
Of will and judgment: how may I avoid,  
Although my will distaste what it elected,  
The wife I chose? there can be no evasion  
To blench from this and to stand firm by honour:  
We turn not back the silks upon the merchant,  
When we have soil'd them, nor the remainder viands  
We do not throw in unrespectful sieve,  
Because we now are full. It was thought meet  
Paris should do some vengeance on the Greeks:  
Your breath of full consent bellied his sails;  
The seas and winds, old wranglers, took a truce  
And did him service: he touch'd the ports desired,  
And for an old aunt whom the Greeks held captive,  
He brought a Grecian queen, whose youth and freshness  
Wrinkles Apollo's, and makes stale the morning.  
Why keep we her? the Grecians keep our aunt:  
Is she worth keeping? why, she is a pearl,  
Whose price hath launch'd above a thousand ships,  
And turn'd crown'd kings to merchants.  
If you'll avouch 'twas wisdom Paris went--  
As you must needs, for you all cried 'Go, go,'--  
If you'll confess he brought home noble prize--  
As you must needs, for you all clapp'd your hands  
And cried 'Inestimable!'--why do you now

The issue of your proper wisdoms rate,  
And do a deed that fortune never did,  
Beggar the estimation which you prized  
Richer than sea and land? O, theft most base,  
That we have stol'n what we do fear to keep!  
But, thieves, unworthy of a thing so stol'n,  
That in their country did them that disgrace,  
We fear to warrant in our native place!

**CASSANDRA**

[Within] Cry, Trojans, cry!

**PRIAM**

What noise? what shriek is this?

**TROILUS**

'Tis our mad sister, I do know her voice.

**CASSANDRA**

[Within] Cry, Trojans!

**HECTOR**

It is Cassandra.

*Enter CASSANDRA, raving*

**CASSANDRA**

Cry, Trojans, cry! lend me ten thousand eyes,  
And I will fill them with prophetic tears.

**HECTOR**

Peace, sister, peace!

**CASSANDRA**

Virgins and boys, mid-age and wrinkled eld,  
Soft infancy, that nothing canst but cry,  
Add to my clamours! let us pay betimes  
A moiety of that mass of moan to come.  
Cry, Trojans, cry! practise your eyes with tears!  
Troy must not be, nor goodly Ilion stand;  
Our firebrand brother, Paris, burns us all.  
Cry, Trojans, cry! a Helen and a woe:  
Cry, cry! Troy burns, or else let Helen go.

*Exit*

## **HECTOR**

Now, youthful Troilus, do not these high strains  
Of divination in our sister work  
Some touches of remorse? or is your blood  
So madly hot that no discourse of reason,  
Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause,  
Can qualify the same?

## **TROILUS**

Why, brother Hector,  
We may not think the justness of each act  
Such and no other than event doth form it,  
Nor once deject the courage of our minds,  
Because Cassandra's mad: her brain-sick raptures  
Cannot distaste the goodness of a quarrel  
Which hath our several honours all engaged  
To make it gracious. For my private part,  
I am no more touch'd than all Priam's sons:  
And Jove forbid there should be done amongst us  
Such things as might offend the weakest spleen  
To fight for and maintain!

## **PARIS**

Else might the world convince of levity  
As well my undertakings as your counsels:  
But I attest the gods, your full consent



Gave wings to my propension and cut off  
All fears attending on so dire a project.  
For what, alas, can these my single arms?  
What Propugnation is in one man's valour,  
To stand the push and enmity of those  
This quarrel would excite? Yet, I protest,  
Were I alone to pass the difficulties  
And had as ample power as I have will,  
Paris should ne'er retract what he hath done,  
Nor faint in the pursuit.

## **PRIAM**

Paris, you speak  
Like one besotted on your sweet delights:  
You have the honey still, but these the gall;  
So to be valiant is no praise at all.

## **PARIS**

Sir, I propose not merely to myself  
The pleasures such a beauty brings with it;  
But I would have the soil of her fair rape  
Wiped off, in honourable keeping her.  
What treason were it to the ransack'd queen,  
Disgrace to your great worths and shame to me,  
Now to deliver her possession up  
On terms of base compulsion! Can it be  
That so degenerate a strain as this  
Should once set footing in your generous bosoms?  
There's not the meanest spirit on our party  
Without a heart to dare or sword to draw  
When Helen is defended, nor none so noble  
Whose life were ill bestow'd or death unfamed  
Where Helen is the subject; then, I say,  
Well may we fight for her whom, we know well,  
The world's large spaces cannot parallel.

## **HECTOR**

Paris and Troilus, you have both said well,  
And on the cause and question now in hand

Have glozed, but superficially: not much  
Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought  
Unfit to hear moral philosophy:  
The reasons you allege do more conduce  
To the hot passion of distemper'd blood  
Than to make up a free determination  
'Twixt right and wrong, for pleasure and revenge  
Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice  
Of any true decision. Nature craves  
All dues be render'd to their owners: now,  
What nearer debt in all humanity  
Than wife is to the husband? If this law  
Of nature be corrupted through affection,  
And that great minds, of partial indulgence  
To their benumbed wills, resist the same,  
There is a law in each well-order'd nation  
To curb those raging appetites that are  
Most disobedient and refractory.  
If Helen then be wife to Sparta's king,  
As it is known she is, these moral laws  
Of nature and of nations speak aloud  
To have her back return'd: thus to persist  
In doing wrong extenuates not wrong,  
But makes it much more heavy. Hector's opinion  
Is this in way of truth; yet ne'ertheless,  
My spritely brethren, I propend to you  
In resolution to keep Helen still,  
For 'tis a cause that hath no mean dependance  
Upon our joint and several dignities.

## **TROILUS**

Why, there you touch'd the life of our design:  
Were it not glory that we more affected  
Than the performance of our heaving spleens,  
I would not wish a drop of Trojan blood  
Spent more in her defence. But, worthy Hector,  
She is a theme of honour and renown,  
A spur to valiant and magnanimous deeds,  
Whose present courage may beat down our foes,  
And fame in time to come canonize us;  
For, I presume, brave Hector would not lose  
So rich advantage of a promised glory

As smiles upon the forehead of this action  
For the wide world's revenue.

## HECTOR

I am yours,  
You valiant offspring of great Priamus.  
I have a roisting challenge sent amongst  
The dun and factious nobles of the Greeks  
Will strike amazement to their drowsy spirits:  
I was advertised their great general slept,  
Whilst emulation in the army crept:  
This, I presume, will wake him.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The Grecian camp. Before Achilles' tent.

*Enter THERSITES, solus*

### THERSITES

How now, Thersites! what lost in the labyrinth of thy fury! Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus? He beats me, and I rail at him: O, worthy satisfaction! would it were otherwise; that I could beat him, whilst he railed at me. 'Sfoot, I'll learn to conjure and raise devils, but I'll see some issue of my spiteful execrations. Then there's Achilles, a rare engineer! If Troy be not taken till these two undermine it, the walls will stand till they fall of themselves. O thou great thunder-darter of Olympus, forget that thou art Jove, the king of gods and, Mercury, lose all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that little, little less than little wit from them that they have! which short-armed ignorance itself knows is so abundant scarce, it will not in circumvention deliver a fly from a spider, without drawing their massy irons and cutting the web. After this, the vengeance on the whole camp! or rather, the bone-ache! for that, methinks, is the curse dependent on those that war for a placket. I have said my prayers and devil Envy say Amen. What ho! my Lord Achilles!

*Enter PATROCLUS*

### PATROCLUS

Who's there? Thersites! Good Thersites, come in and rail.

### THERSITES

If I could have remembered a gilt counterfeit, thou wouldst not have slipped out of my contemplation: but it is no matter; thyself upon thyself! The common curse of mankind, folly and ignorance, be thine in great revenue! heaven bless thee from a tutor, and discipline come not near thee! Let thy blood be thy direction till thy death! then if she that lays thee out says thou art a fair corpse, I'll be sworn and sworn upon't she never shrouded any but lazars. Amen. Where's Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

What, art thou devout? wast thou in prayer?

**THERSITES**

Ay: the heavens hear me!

*Enter ACHILLES*

**ACHILLES**

Who's there?

**PATROCLUS**

Thersites, my lord.

**ACHILLES**

Where, where? Art thou come? why, my cheese, my digestion, why hast thou not served thyself in to my table so many meals? Come, what's Agamemnon?

**THERSITES**

Thy commander, Achilles. Then tell me, Patroclus, what's Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

Thy lord, Thersites: then tell me, I pray thee,  
what's thyself?

**THERSITES**

Thy knower, Patroclus: then tell me, Patroclus,  
what art thou?

**PATROCLUS**

Thou mayst tell that knowest.

**ACHILLES**

O, tell, tell.

**THERSITES**

I'll decline the whole question. Agamemnon commands  
Achilles; Achilles is my lord; I am Patroclus'  
knower, and Patroclus is a fool.

**PATROCLUS**

You rascal!

**THERSITES**

Peace, fool! I have not done.

**ACHILLES**

He is a privileged man. Proceed, Thersites.

**THERSITES**

Agamemnon is a fool; Achilles is a fool; Thersites  
is a fool, and, as aforesaid, Patroclus is a fool.

**ACHILLES**

Derive this; come.

## **THERSITES**

Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles;  
Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon;  
Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool, and  
Patroclus is a fool positive.

## **PATROCLUS**

Why am I a fool?

## **THERSITES**

Make that demand of the prover. It suffices me thou  
art. Look you, who comes here?

## **ACHILLES**

Patroclus, I'll speak with nobody.  
Come in with me, Thersites.

*Exit*

## **THERSITES**

Here is such patchery, such juggling and such  
knavery! all the argument is a cuckold and a  
whore; a good quarrel to draw emulous factions  
and bleed to death upon. Now, the dry serpigo on  
the subject! and war and lechery confound all!

*Exit*

*Enter AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and AJAX*

## **AGAMEMNON**

Where is Achilles?

## **PATROCLUS**

Within his tent; but ill disposed, my lord.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Let it be known to him that we are here.  
He shent our messengers; and we lay by  
Our appertainments, visiting of him:  
Let him be told so; lest perchance he think  
We dare not move the question of our place,  
Or know not what we are.

## **PATROCLUS**

I shall say so to him.

*Exit*

## **ULYSSES**

We saw him at the opening of his tent:  
He is not sick.

## **AJAX**

Yes, lion-sick, sick of proud heart: you may call it  
melancholy, if you will favour the man; but, by my  
head, 'tis pride: but why, why? let him show us the  
cause. A word, my lord.

*Takes AGAMEMNON aside*

## **NESTOR**

What moves Ajax thus to bay at him?

## **ULYSSES**

Achilles hath inveigled his fool from him.



**NESTOR**

Who, Thersites?

**ULYSSES**

He.

**NESTOR**

Then will Ajax lack matter, if he have lost his argument.

**ULYSSES**

No, you see, he is his argument that has his argument, Achilles.

**NESTOR**

All the better; their faction is more our wish than their faction: but it was a strong composure a fool could disunite.

**ULYSSES**

The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily untie. Here comes Patroclus.

*Re-enter PATROCLUS*

**NESTOR**

No Achilles with him.

**ULYSSES**

The elephant hath joints, but none for courtesy: his legs are legs for necessity, not for flexure.

**PATROCLUS**

Achilles bids me say, he is much sorry,  
If any thing more than your sport and pleasure  
Did move your greatness and this noble state  
To call upon him; he hopes it is no other  
But for your health and your digestion sake,  
And after-dinner's breath.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Hear you, Patroclus:  
We are too well acquainted with these answers:  
But his evasion, wing'd thus swift with scorn,  
Cannot outfly our apprehensions.  
Much attribute he hath, and much the reason  
Why we ascribe it to him; yet all his virtues,  
Not virtuously on his own part beheld,  
Do in our eyes begin to lose their gloss,  
Yea, like fair fruit in an unwholesome dish,  
Are like to rot untasted. Go and tell him,  
We come to speak with him; and you shall not sin,  
If you do say we think him over-proud  
And under-honest, in self-assumption greater  
Than in the note of judgment; and worthier  
than himself  
Here tend the savage strangeness he puts on,  
Disguise the holy strength of their command,  
And underwrite in an observing kind  
His humorous predominance; yea, watch  
His pettish luns, his ebbs, his flows, as if  
The passage and whole carriage of this action  
Rode on his tide. Go tell him this, and add,  
That if he overhold his price so much,  
We'll none of him; but let him, like an engine  
Not portable, lie under this report:  
'Bring action hither, this cannot go to war:  
A stirring dwarf we do allowance give  
Before a sleeping giant.' Tell him so.

## **PATROCLUS**

I shall; and bring his answer presently.

*Exit*

**AGAMEMNON**

In second voice we'll not be satisfied;  
We come to speak with him. Ulysses, enter you.

*Exit ULYSSES*

**AJAX**

What is he more than another?

**AGAMEMNON**

No more than what he thinks he is.

**AJAX**

Is he so much? Do you not think he thinks himself a  
better man than I am?

**AGAMEMNON**

No question.

**AJAX**

Will you subscribe his thought, and say he is?

**AGAMEMNON**

No, noble Ajax; you are as strong, as valiant, as  
wise, no less noble, much more gentle, and altogether  
more tractable.

**AJAX**

Why should a man be proud? How doth pride grow? I  
know not what pride is.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Your mind is the clearer, Ajax, and your virtues the fairer. He that is proud eats up himself: pride is his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle; and whatever praises itself but in the deed, devours the deed in the praise.

## **AJAX**

I do hate a proud man, as I hate the engendering of toads.

## **NESTOR**

Yet he loves himself: is't not strange?

*Aside*

*Re-enter ULYSSES*

## **ULYSSES**

Achilles will not to the field to-morrow.

## **AGAMEMNON**

What's his excuse?

## **ULYSSES**

He doth rely on none,  
But carries on the stream of his dispose  
Without observance or respect of any,  
In will peculiar and in self-admission.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Why will he not upon our fair request  
Untent his person and share the air with us?

## **ULYSSES**

Things small as nothing, for request's sake only,  
He makes important: possess'd he is with greatness,  
And speaks not to himself but with a pride  
That quarrels at self-breath: imagined worth  
Holds in his blood such swoln and hot discourse  
That 'twixt his mental and his active parts  
Kingdom'd Achilles in commotion rages  
And batters down himself: what should I say?  
He is so plaguy proud that the death-tokens of it  
Cry 'No recovery.'

## **AGAMEMNON**

Let Ajax go to him.  
Dear lord, go you and greet him in his tent:  
'Tis said he holds you well, and will be led  
At your request a little from himself.

## **ULYSSES**

O Agamemnon, let it not be so!  
We'll consecrate the steps that Ajax makes  
When they go from Achilles: shall the proud lord  
That bastes his arrogance with his own seam  
And never suffers matter of the world  
Enter his thoughts, save such as do revolve  
And ruminates himself, shall he be worshipp'd  
Of that we hold an idol more than he?  
No, this thrice worthy and right valiant lord  
Must not so stale his palm, nobly acquired;  
Nor, by my will, assubjugate his merit,  
As amply titled as Achilles is,  
By going to Achilles:  
That were to enlard his fat already pride  
And add more coals to Cancer when he burns  
With entertaining great Hyperion.  
This lord go to him! Jupiter forbid,  
And say in thunder 'Achilles go to him.'

## **NESTOR**

[Aside to DIOMEDES] O, this is well; he rubs the

vein of him.

## **DIOMEDES**

[Aside to NESTOR] And how his silence drinks up  
this applause!

## **AJAX**

If I go to him, with my armed fist I'll pash him o'er the face.

## **AGAMEMNON**

O, no, you shall not go.

## **AJAX**

An a' be proud with me, I'll pheeze his pride:  
Let me go to him.

## **ULYSSES**

Not for the worth that hangs upon our quarrel.

## **AJAX**

A paltry, insolent fellow!

## **NESTOR**

How he describes himself!

## **AJAX**

Can he not be sociable?

## **ULYSSES**

The raven chides blackness.

## **AJAX**

I'll let his humours blood.

**AGAMEMNON**

He will be the physician that should be the patient.

**AJAX**

An all men were o' my mind,--

**ULYSSES**

Wit would be out of fashion.

**AJAX**

A' should not bear it so, a' should eat swords first:  
shall pride carry it?

**NESTOR**

An 'twould, you'd carry half.

**ULYSSES**

A' would have ten shares.

**AJAX**

I will knead him; I'll make him supple.

**NESTOR**

He's not yet through warm: force him with praises:  
pour in, pour in; his ambition is dry.

**ULYSSES**

[To AGAMEMNON] My lord, you feed too much on this dislike.

**NESTOR**

Our noble general, do not do so.

**DIOMEDES**

You must prepare to fight without Achilles.

**ULYSSES**

Why, 'tis this naming of him does him harm.  
Here is a man--but 'tis before his face;  
I will be silent.

**NESTOR**

Wherefore should you so?  
He is not emulous, as Achilles is.

**ULYSSES**

Know the whole world, he is as valiant.

**AJAX**

A whoreson dog, that shall pelter thus with us!  
Would he were a Trojan!

**NESTOR**

What a vice were it in Ajax now,--

**ULYSSES**

If he were proud,--

**DIOMEDES**

Or covetous of praise,--



## **ULYSSES**

Ay, or surly borne,--

## **DIOMEDES**

Or strange, or self-affected!

## **ULYSSES**

Thank the heavens, lord, thou art of sweet composure;  
Praise him that got thee, she that gave thee suck:  
Famed be thy tutor, and thy parts of nature  
Thrice famed, beyond all erudition:  
But he that disciplined thy arms to fight,  
Let Mars divide eternity in twain,  
And give him half: and, for thy vigour,  
Bull-bearing Milo his addition yield  
To sinewy Ajax. I will not praise thy wisdom,  
Which, like a bourn, a pale, a shore, confines  
Thy spacious and dilated parts: here's Nestor;  
Instructed by the antiquary times,  
He must, he is, he cannot but be wise:  
Put pardon, father Nestor, were your days  
As green as Ajax' and your brain so temper'd,  
You should not have the eminence of him,  
But be as Ajax.

## **AJAX**

Shall I call you father?

## **NESTOR**

Ay, my good son.

## **DIOMEDES**

Be ruled by him, Lord Ajax.

## **ULYSSES**

There is no tarrying here; the hart Achilles  
Keeps thicket. Please it our great general  
To call together all his state of war;  
Fresh kings are come to Troy: to-morrow  
We must with all our main of power stand fast:  
And here's a lord,--come knights from east to west,  
And cull their flower, Ajax shall cope the best.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Go we to council. Let Achilles sleep:  
Light boats sail swift, though greater hulks draw deep.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Troy. Priam's palace.

*Enter a Servant and PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

Friend, you! pray you, a word: do not you follow  
the young Lord Paris?

**Servant**

Ay, sir, when he goes before me.

**PANDARUS**

You depend upon him, I mean?

**Servant**

Sir, I do depend upon the lord.

**PANDARUS**

You depend upon a noble gentleman; I must needs  
praise him.

**Servant**

The lord be praised!

**PANDARUS**

You know me, do you not?

**Servant**

Faith, sir, superficially.

**PANDARUS**

Friend, know me better; I am the Lord Pandarus.

**Servant**

I hope I shall know your honour better.

**PANDARUS**

I do desire it.

**Servant**

You are in the state of grace.

**PANDARUS**

Grace! not so, friend: honour and lordship are my titles.

*Music within*

What music is this?

**Servant**

I do but partly know, sir: it is music in parts.

**PANDARUS**

Know you the musicians?

**Servant**

Wholly, sir.

**PANDARUS**

Who play they to?

**Servant**

To the hearers, sir.

**PANDARUS**

At whose pleasure, friend

**Servant**

At mine, sir, and theirs that love music.

**PANDARUS**

Command, I mean, friend.

**Servant**

Who shall I command, sir?

**PANDARUS**

Friend, we understand not one another: I am too courtly and thou art too cunning. At whose request do these men play?

**Servant**

That's to 't indeed, sir: marry, sir, at the request of Paris my lord, who's there in person; with him, the mortal Venus, the heart-blood of beauty, love's invisible soul,--

**PANDARUS**

Who, my cousin Cressida?

**Servant**

No, sir, Helen: could you not find out that by her attributes?

## **PANDARUS**

It should seem, fellow, that thou hast not seen the Lady Cressida. I come to speak with Paris from the Prince Troilus: I will make a complimentary assault upon him, for my business seethes.

## **Servant**

Sodden business! there's a stewed phrase indeed!

*Enter PARIS and HELEN, attended*

## **PANDARUS**

Fair be to you, my lord, and to all this fair company! fair desires, in all fair measure, fairly guide them! especially to you, fair queen! fair thoughts be your fair pillow!

## **HELEN**

Dear lord, you are full of fair words.

## **PANDARUS**

You speak your fair pleasure, sweet queen. Fair prince, here is good broken music.

## **PARIS**

You have broke it, cousin: and, by my life, you shall make it whole again; you shall piece it out with a piece of your performance. Nell, he is full of harmony.

## **PANDARUS**

Truly, lady, no.

**HELEN**

O, sir,--

**PANDARUS**

Rude, in sooth; in good sooth, very rude.

**PARIS**

Well said, my lord! well, you say so in fits.

**PANDARUS**

I have business to my lord, dear queen. My lord,  
will you vouchsafe me a word?

**HELEN**

Nay, this shall not hedge us out: we'll hear you  
sing, certainly.

**PANDARUS**

Well, sweet queen. you are pleasant with me. But,  
marry, thus, my lord: my dear lord and most esteemed  
friend, your brother Troilus,--

**HELEN**

My Lord Pandarus; honey-sweet lord,--

**PANDARUS**

Go to, sweet queen, to go:--commends himself most  
affectionately to you,--

**HELEN**

You shall not bob us out of our melody: if you do,  
our melancholy upon your head!

**PANDARUS**

Sweet queen, sweet queen! that's a sweet queen, i' faith.

**HELEN**

And to make a sweet lady sad is a sour offence.

**PANDARUS**

Nay, that shall not serve your turn; that shall not,  
in truth, la. Nay, I care not for such words; no,  
no. And, my lord, he desires you, that if the king  
call for him at supper, you will make his excuse.

**HELEN**

My Lord Pandarus,--

**PANDARUS**

What says my sweet queen, my very very sweet queen?

**PARIS**

What exploit's in hand? where sups he to-night?

**HELEN**

Nay, but, my lord,--

**PANDARUS**

What says my sweet queen? My cousin will fall out  
with you. You must not know where he sups.

**PARIS**



I'll lay my life, with my disposer Cressida.

**PANDARUS**

No, no, no such matter; you are wide: come, your disposer is sick.

**PARIS**

Well, I'll make excuse.

**PANDARUS**

Ay, good my lord. Why should you say Cressida? no, your poor disposer's sick.

**PARIS**

I spy.

**PANDARUS**

You spy! what do you spy? Come, give me an instrument. Now, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Why, this is kindly done.

**PANDARUS**

My niece is horribly in love with a thing you have, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

She shall have it, my lord, if it be not my lord Paris.

**PANDARUS**

He! no, she'll none of him; they two are twain.

**HELEN**

Falling in, after falling out, may make them three.

**PANDARUS**

Come, come, I'll hear no more of this; I'll sing  
you a song now.

**HELEN**

Ay, ay, prithee now. By my troth, sweet lord, thou  
hast a fine forehead.

**PANDARUS**

Ay, you may, you may.

**HELEN**

Let thy song be love: this love will undo us all.  
O Cupid, Cupid, Cupid!

**PANDARUS**

Love! ay, that it shall, i' faith.

**PARIS**

Ay, good now, love, love, nothing but love.

**PANDARUS**

In good troth, it begins so.

*Sings*

Love, love, nothing but love, still more!  
For, O, love's bow  
Shoots buck and doe:

The shaft confounds,  
Not that it wounds,  
But tickles still the sore.  
These lovers cry Oh! oh! they die!  
Yet that which seems the wound to kill,  
Doth turn oh! oh! to ha! ha! he!  
So dying love lives still:  
Oh! oh! a while, but ha! ha! ha!  
Oh! oh! groans out for ha! ha! ha!  
Heigh-ho!

## **HELEN**

In love, i' faith, to the very tip of the nose.

## **PARIS**

He eats nothing but doves, love, and that breeds hot  
blood, and hot blood begets hot thoughts, and hot  
thoughts beget hot deeds, and hot deeds is love.

## **PANDARUS**

Is this the generation of love? hot blood, hot  
thoughts, and hot deeds? Why, they are vipers:  
is love a generation of vipers? Sweet lord, who's  
a-field to-day?

## **PARIS**

Hector, Deiphobus, Helenus, Antenor, and all the  
gallantry of Troy: I would fain have armed to-day,  
but my Nell would not have it so. How chance my  
brother Troilus went not?

## **HELEN**

He hangs the lip at something: you know all, Lord Pandarus.

## **PANDARUS**

Not I, honey-sweet queen. I long to hear how they

sped to-day. You'll remember your brother's excuse?

**PARIS**

To a hair.

**PANDARUS**

Farewell, sweet queen.

**HELEN**

Commend me to your niece.

**PANDARUS**

I will, sweet queen.

*Exit*

*A retreat sounded*

**PARIS**

They're come from field: let us to Priam's hall,  
To greet the warriors. Sweet Helen, I must woo you  
To help unarm our Hector: his stubborn buckles,  
With these your white enchanting fingers touch'd,  
Shall more obey than to the edge of steel  
Or force of Greekish sinews; you shall do more  
Than all the island kings,--disarm great Hector.

**HELEN**

'Twill make us proud to be his servant, Paris;  
Yea, what he shall receive of us in duty  
Gives us more palm in beauty than we have,  
Yea, overshines ourself.

**PARIS**

Sweet, above thought I love thee.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. Pandarus' orchard.

*Enter PANDARUS and Troilus's Boy, meeting*

**PANDARUS**

How now! where's thy master? at my cousin  
Cressida's?

**Boy**

No, sir; he stays for you to conduct him thither.

**PANDARUS**

O, here he comes.

*Enter TROILUS*

How now, how now!

**TROILUS**

Sirrah, walk off.

*Exit Boy*

**PANDARUS**

Have you seen my cousin?

**TROILUS**

No, Pandarus: I stalk about her door,  
Like a strange soul upon the Stygian banks

Staying for waftage. O, be thou my Charon,  
And give me swift transportance to those fields  
Where I may wallow in the lily-beds  
Proposed for the deserver! O gentle Pandarus,  
From Cupid's shoulder pluck his painted wings  
And fly with me to Cressid!

## **PANDARUS**

Walk here i' the orchard, I'll bring her straight.

*Exit*

## **TROILUS**

I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.  
The imaginary relish is so sweet  
That it enchants my sense: what will it be,  
When that the watery palate tastes indeed  
Love's thrice repured nectar? death, I fear me,  
Swooning destruction, or some joy too fine,  
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness,  
For the capacity of my ruder powers:  
I fear it much; and I do fear besides,  
That I shall lose distinction in my joys;  
As doth a battle, when they charge on heaps  
The enemy flying.

*Re-enter PANDARUS*

## **PANDARUS**

She's making her ready, she'll come straight: you  
must be witty now. She does so blush, and fetches  
her wind so short, as if she were frayed with a  
sprite: I'll fetch her. It is the prettiest  
villain: she fetches her breath as short as a  
new-ta'en sparrow.

*Exit*

## **TROILUS**

Even such a passion doth embrace my bosom:  
My heart beats thicker than a feverous pulse;  
And all my powers do their bestowing lose,  
Like vassalage at unawares encountering  
The eye of majesty.

*Re-enter PANDARUS with CRESSIDA*

## **PANDARUS**

Come, come, what need you blush? shame's a baby.  
Here she is now: swear the oaths now to her that  
you have sworn to me. What, are you gone again?  
you must be watched ere you be made tame, must you?  
Come your ways, come your ways; an you draw backward,  
we'll put you i' the fills. Why do you not speak to  
her? Come, draw this curtain, and let's see your  
picture. Alas the day, how loath you are to offend  
daylight! an 'twere dark, you'd close sooner.  
So, so; rub on, and kiss the mistress. How now!  
a kiss in fee-farm! build there, carpenter; the air  
is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere  
I part you. The falcon as the tercel, for all the  
ducks i' the river: go to, go to.

## **TROILUS**

You have bereft me of all words, lady.

## **PANDARUS**

Words pay no debts, give her deeds: but she'll  
bereave you o' the deeds too, if she call your  
activity in question. What, billing again? Here's  
'In witness whereof the parties interchangeably'--  
Come in, come in: I'll go get a fire.

*Exit*

## **CRESSIDA**



Will you walk in, my lord?

**TROILUS**

O Cressida, how often have I wished me thus!

**CRESSIDA**

Wished, my lord! The gods grant,--O my lord!

**TROILUS**

What should they grant? what makes this pretty  
abruption? What too curious dreg espies my sweet  
lady in the fountain of our love?

**CRESSIDA**

More dregs than water, if my fears have eyes.

**TROILUS**

Fears make devils of cherubims; they never see truly.

**CRESSIDA**

Blind fear, that seeing reason leads, finds safer  
footing than blind reason stumbling without fear: to  
fear the worst oft cures the worse.

**TROILUS**

O, let my lady apprehend no fear: in all Cupid's  
pageant there is presented no monster.

**CRESSIDA**

Nor nothing monstrous neither?

**TROILUS**

Nothing, but our undertakings; when we vow to weep  
seas, live in fire, eat rocks, tame tigers; thinking  
it harder for our mistress to devise imposition  
enough than for us to undergo any difficulty imposed.  
This is the monstrosity in love, lady, that the will  
is infinite and the execution confined, that the  
desire is boundless and the act a slave to limit.

## **CRESSIDA**

They say all lovers swear more performance than they  
are able and yet reserve an ability that they never  
perform, vowing more than the perfection of ten and  
discharging less than the tenth part of one. They  
that have the voice of lions and the act of hares,  
are they not monsters?

## **TROILUS**

Are there such? such are not we: praise us as we  
are tasted, allow us as we prove; our head shall go  
bare till merit crown it: no perfection in reversion  
shall have a praise in present: we will not name  
desert before his birth, and, being born, his addition  
shall be humble. Few words to fair faith: Troilus  
shall be such to Cressid as what envy can say worst  
shall be a mock for his truth, and what truth can  
speak truest not truer than Troilus.

## **CRESSIDA**

Will you walk in, my lord?

*Re-enter PANDARUS*

## **PANDARUS**

What, blushing still? have you not done talking yet?

## **CRESSIDA**

Well, uncle, what folly I commit, I dedicate to you.

## **PANDARUS**

I thank you for that: if my lord get a boy of you,  
you'll give him me. Be true to my lord: if he  
flinch, chide me for it.

## **TROILUS**

You know now your hostages; your uncle's word and my  
firm faith.

## **PANDARUS**

Nay, I'll give my word for her too: our kindred,  
though they be long ere they are wooed, they are  
constant being won: they are burs, I can tell you;  
they'll stick where they are thrown.

## **CRESSIDA**

Boldness comes to me now, and brings me heart.  
Prince Troilus, I have loved you night and day  
For many weary months.

## **TROILUS**

Why was my Cressid then so hard to win?

## **CRESSIDA**

Hard to seem won: but I was won, my lord,  
With the first glance that ever--pardon me--  
If I confess much, you will play the tyrant.  
I love you now; but not, till now, so much  
But I might master it: in faith, I lie;  
My thoughts were like unbridled children, grown  
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!  
Why have I blabb'd? who shall be true to us,  
When we are so unsecret to ourselves?  
But, though I loved you well, I woo'd you not;  
And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,

Or that we women had men's privilege  
Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue,  
For in this rapture I shall surely speak  
The thing I shall repent. See, see, your silence,  
Cunning in dumbness, from my weakness draws  
My very soul of counsel! stop my mouth.

**TROILUS**

And shall, albeit sweet music issues thence.

**PANDARUS**

Pretty, i' faith.

**CRESSIDA**

My lord, I do beseech you, pardon me;  
'Twas not my purpose, thus to beg a kiss:  
I am ashamed. O heavens! what have I done?  
For this time will I take my leave, my lord.

**TROILUS**

Your leave, sweet Cressid!

**PANDARUS**

Leave! an you take leave till to-morrow morning,--

**CRESSIDA**

Pray you, content you.

**TROILUS**

What offends you, lady?

**CRESSIDA**

Sir, mine own company.

## **TROILUS**

You cannot shun Yourself.

## **CRESSIDA**

Let me go and try:  
I have a kind of self resides with you;  
But an unkind self, that itself will leave,  
To be another's fool. I would be gone:  
Where is my wit? I know not what I speak.

## **TROILUS**

Well know they what they speak that speak so wisely.

## **CRESSIDA**

Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love;  
And fell so roundly to a large confession,  
To angle for your thoughts: but you are wise,  
Or else you love not, for to be wise and love  
Exceeds man's might; that dwells with gods above.

## **TROILUS**

O that I thought it could be in a woman--  
As, if it can, I will presume in you--  
To feed for aye her ramp and flames of love;  
To keep her constancy in plight and youth,  
Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind  
That doth renew swifter than blood decays!  
Or that persuasion could but thus convince me,  
That my integrity and truth to you  
Might be affronted with the match and weight  
Of such a winnow'd purity in love;  
How were I then uplifted! but, alas!  
I am as true as truth's simplicity  
And simpler than the infancy of truth.

## **CRESSIDA**

In that I'll war with you.

## **TROILUS**

O virtuous fight,  
When right with right wars who shall be most right!  
True swains in love shall in the world to come  
Approve their truths by Troilus: when their rhymes,  
Full of protest, of oath and big compare,  
Want similes, truth tired with iteration,  
As true as steel, as plantage to the moon,  
As sun to day, as turtle to her mate,  
As iron to adamant, as earth to the centre,  
Yet, after all comparisons of truth,  
As truth's authentic author to be cited,  
'As true as Troilus' shall crown up the verse,  
And sanctify the numbers.

## **CRESSIDA**

Prophet may you be!  
If I be false, or swerve a hair from truth,  
When time is old and hath forgot itself,  
When waterdrops have worn the stones of Troy,  
And blind oblivion swallow'd cities up,  
And mighty states characterless are grated  
To dusty nothing, yet let memory,  
From false to false, among false maids in love,  
Upbraid my falsehood! when they've said 'as false  
As air, as water, wind, or sandy earth,  
As fox to lamb, as wolf to heifer's calf,  
Pard to the hind, or stepdame to her son,'  
'Yea,' let them say, to stick the heart of falsehood,  
'As false as Cressid.'

## **PANDARUS**

Go to, a bargain made: seal it, seal it; I'll be the  
witness. Here I hold your hand, here my cousin's.  
If ever you prove false one to another, since I have  
taken such pains to bring you together, let all

pitiful goers-between be called to the world's end  
after my name; call them all Pandars; let all  
constant men be Troiluses, all false women Cressids,  
and all brokers-between Pandars! say, amen.

## **TROILUS**

Amen.

## **CRESSIDA**

Amen.

## **PANDARUS**

Amen. Whereupon I will show you a chamber with a  
bed; which bed, because it shall not speak of your  
pretty encounters, press it to death: away!  
And Cupid grant all tongue-tied maidens here  
Bed, chamber, Pandar to provide this gear!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The Grecian camp. Before Achilles' tent.

*Enter AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, DIOMEDES, NESTOR, AJAX, MENELAUS, and CALCHAS*

### CALCHAS

Now, princes, for the service I have done you,  
The advantage of the time prompts me aloud  
To call for recompense. Appear it to your mind  
That, through the sight I bear in things to love,  
I have abandon'd Troy, left my possession,  
Incurr'd a traitor's name; exposed myself,  
From certain and possess'd conveniences,  
To doubtful fortunes; sequestering from me all  
That time, acquaintance, custom and condition  
Made tame and most familiar to my nature,  
And here, to do you service, am become  
As new into the world, strange, unacquainted:  
I do beseech you, as in way of taste,  
To give me now a little benefit,  
Out of those many register'd in promise,  
Which, you say, live to come in my behalf.

### AGAMEMNON

What wouldst thou of us, Trojan? make demand.

### CALCHAS

You have a Trojan prisoner, call'd Antenor,  
Yesterday took: Troy holds him very dear.  
Oft have you--often have you thanks therefore--  
Desired my Cressid in right great exchange,  
Whom Troy hath still denied: but this Antenor,  
I know, is such a wrest in their affairs



That their negotiations all must slack,  
Wanting his manage; and they will almost  
Give us a prince of blood, a son of Priam,  
In change of him: let him be sent, great princes,  
And he shall buy my daughter; and her presence  
Shall quite strike off all service I have done,  
In most accepted pain.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Let Diomedes bear him,  
And bring us Cressid hither: Calchas shall have  
What he requests of us. Good Diomed,  
Furnish you fairly for this interchange:  
Withal bring word if Hector will to-morrow  
Be answer'd in his challenge: Ajax is ready.

## **DIOMEDES**

This shall I undertake; and 'tis a burden  
Which I am proud to bear.

*Exeunt DIOMEDES and CALCHAS*

*Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS, before their tent*

## **ULYSSES**

Achilles stands i' the entrance of his tent:  
Please it our general to pass strangely by him,  
As if he were forgot; and, princes all,  
Lay negligent and loose regard upon him:  
I will come last. 'Tis like he'll question me  
Why such unplausive eyes are bent on him:  
If so, I have derision medicinal,  
To use between your strangeness and his pride,  
Which his own will shall have desire to drink:  
It may be good: pride hath no other glass  
To show itself but pride, for supple knees  
Feed arrogance and are the proud man's fees.

## **AGAMEMNON**

We'll execute your purpose, and put on  
A form of strangeness as we pass along:  
So do each lord, and either greet him not,  
Or else disdainfully, which shall shake him more  
Than if not look'd on. I will lead the way.

**ACHILLES**

What, comes the general to speak with me?  
You know my mind, I'll fight no more 'gainst Troy.

**AGAMEMNON**

What says Achilles? would he aught with us?

**NESTOR**

Would you, my lord, aught with the general?

**ACHILLES**

No.

**NESTOR**

Nothing, my lord.

**AGAMEMNON**

The better.

*Exeunt AGAMEMNON and NESTOR*

**ACHILLES**

Good day, good day.

**MENELAUS**

How do you? how do you?

*Exit*

**ACHILLES**

What, does the cuckold scorn me?

**AJAX**

How now, Patroclus!

**ACHILLES**

Good morrow, Ajax.

**AJAX**

Ha?

**ACHILLES**

Good morrow.

**AJAX**

Ay, and good next day too.

*Exit*

**ACHILLES**

What mean these fellows? Know they not Achilles?

**PATROCLUS**

They pass by strangely: they were used to bend  
To send their smiles before them to Achilles;  
To come as humbly as they used to creep  
To holy altars.

**ACHILLES**

What, am I poor of late?  
'Tis certain, greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,  
Must fall out with men too: what the declined is  
He shall as soon read in the eyes of others  
As feel in his own fall; for men, like butterflies,  
Show not their mealy wings but to the summer,  
And not a man, for being simply man,  
Hath any honour, but honour for those honours  
That are without him, as place, riches, favour,  
Prizes of accident as oft as merit:  
Which when they fall, as being slippery standers,  
The love that lean'd on them as slippery too,  
Do one pluck down another and together  
Die in the fall. But 'tis not so with me:  
Fortune and I are friends: I do enjoy  
At ample point all that I did possess,  
Save these men's looks; who do, methinks, find out  
Something not worth in me such rich beholding  
As they have often given. Here is Ulysses;  
I'll interrupt his reading.  
How now Ulysses!

## **ULYSSES**

Now, great Thetis' son!

## **ACHILLES**

What are you reading?

## **ULYSSES**

A strange fellow here  
Writes me: 'That man, how dearly ever parted,  
How much in having, or without or in,  
Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,  
Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection;  
As when his virtues shining upon others  
Heat them and they retort that heat again  
To the first giver.'

## ACHILLES

This is not strange, Ulysses.  
The beauty that is borne here in the face  
The bearer knows not, but commends itself  
To others' eyes; nor doth the eye itself,  
That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,  
Not going from itself; but eye to eye opposed  
Salutes each other with each other's form;  
For speculation turns not to itself,  
Till it hath travell'd and is mirror'd there  
Where it may see itself. This is not strange at all.

## ULYSSES

I do not strain at the position,--  
It is familiar,--but at the author's drift;  
Who, in his circumstance, expressly proves  
That no man is the lord of any thing,  
Though in and of him there be much consisting,  
Till he communicate his parts to others:  
Nor doth he of himself know them for aught  
Till he behold them form'd in the applause  
Where they're extended; who, like an arch,  
reverberates  
The voice again, or, like a gate of steel  
Fronting the sun, receives and renders back  
His figure and his heat. I was much wrapt in this;  
And apprehended here immediately  
The unknown Ajax.  
Heavens, what a man is there! a very horse,  
That has he knows not what. Nature, what things there are  
Most object in regard and dear in use!  
What things again most dear in the esteem  
And poor in worth! Now shall we see to-morrow--  
An act that very chance doth throw upon him--  
Ajax renown'd. O heavens, what some men do,  
While some men leave to do!  
How some men creep in skittish fortune's hall,  
Whiles others play the idiots in her eyes!  
How one man eats into another's pride,  
While pride is fasting in his wantonness!  
To see these Grecian lords!--why, even already

They clap the lubber Ajax on the shoulder,  
As if his foot were on brave Hector's breast  
And great Troy shrieking.

## ACHILLES

I do believe it; for they pass'd by me  
As misers do by beggars, neither gave to me  
Good word nor look: what, are my deeds forgot?

## ULYSSES

Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,  
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,  
A great-sized monster of ingratitude:  
Those scraps are good deeds past; which are devour'd  
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon  
As done: perseverance, dear my lord,  
Keeps honour bright: to have done is to hang  
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail  
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;  
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,  
Where one but goes abreast: keep then the path;  
For emulation hath a thousand sons  
That one by one pursue: if you give way,  
Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,  
Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by  
And leave you hindmost;  
Or like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,  
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,  
O'er-run and trampled on: then what they do in present,  
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;  
For time is like a fashionable host  
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,  
And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,  
Grasps in the comer: welcome ever smiles,  
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not  
virtue seek  
Remuneration for the thing it was;  
For beauty, wit,  
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,  
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all  
To envious and calumniating time.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,  
That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,  
Though they are made and moulded of things past,  
And give to dust that is a little gilt  
More laud than gilt o'er-dusted.  
The present eye praises the present object.  
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,  
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;  
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye  
Than what not stirs. The cry went once on thee,  
And still it might, and yet it may again,  
If thou wouldst not entomb thyself alive  
And case thy reputation in thy tent;  
Whose glorious deeds, but in these fields of late,  
Made emulous missions 'mongst the gods themselves  
And drave great Mars to faction.

## **ACHILLES**

Of this my privacy  
I have strong reasons.

## **ULYSSES**

But 'gainst your privacy  
The reasons are more potent and heroical:  
'Tis known, Achilles, that you are in love  
With one of Priam's daughters.

## **ACHILLES**

Ha! known!

## **ULYSSES**

Is that a wonder?  
The providence that's in a watchful state  
Knows almost every grain of Plutus' gold,  
Finds bottom in the uncomprehensive deeps,  
Keeps place with thought and almost, like the gods,  
Does thoughts unveil in their dumb cradles.  
There is a mystery--with whom relation

Durst never meddle--in the soul of state;  
Which hath an operation more divine  
Than breath or pen can give expresse to:  
All the commerce that you have had with Troy  
As perfectly is ours as yours, my lord;  
And better would it fit Achilles much  
To throw down Hector than Polyxena:  
But it must grieve young Pyrrhus now at home,  
When fame shall in our islands sound her trump,  
And all the Greekish girls shall tripping sing,  
'Great Hector's sister did Achilles win,  
But our great Ajax bravely beat down him.'  
Farewell, my lord: I as your lover speak;  
The fool slides o'er the ice that you should break.

*Exit*

## **PATROCLUS**

To this effect, Achilles, have I moved you:  
A woman impudent and mannish grown  
Is not more loathed than an effeminate man  
In time of action. I stand condemn'd for this;  
They think my little stomach to the war  
And your great love to me restrains you thus:  
Sweet, rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid  
Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,  
And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,  
Be shook to air.

## **ACHILLES**

Shall Ajax fight with Hector?

## **PATROCLUS**

Ay, and perhaps receive much honour by him.

## **ACHILLES**

I see my reputation is at stake  
My fame is shrewdly gored.



## **PATROCLUS**

O, then, beware;  
Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves:  
Omission to do what is necessary  
Seals a commission to a blank of danger;  
And danger, like an ague, subtly taints  
Even then when we sit idly in the sun.

## **ACHILLES**

Go call Thersites hither, sweet Patroclus:  
I'll send the fool to Ajax and desire him  
To invite the Trojan lords after the combat  
To see us here unarm'd: I have a woman's longing,  
An appetite that I am sick withal,  
To see great Hector in his weeds of peace,  
To talk with him and to behold his visage,  
Even to my full of view.

*Enter THERSITES*

A labour saved!

## **THERSITES**

A wonder!

## **ACHILLES**

What?

## **THERSITES**

Ajax goes up and down the field, asking for himself.

## **ACHILLES**

How so?

## **THERSITES**

He must fight singly to-morrow with Hector, and is so prophetically proud of an heroic cudgelling that he raves in saying nothing.

## **ACHILLES**

How can that be?

## **THERSITES**

Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock,--a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning: bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say 'There were wit in this head, an 'twould out;' and so there is, but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking. The man's undone forever; for if Hector break not his neck i' the combat, he'll break 't himself in vain-glory. He knows not me: I said 'Good morrow, Ajax;' and he replies 'Thanks, Agamemnon.' What think you of this man that takes me for the general? He's grown a very land-fish, language-less, a monster. A plague of opinion! a man may wear it on both sides, like a leather jerkin.

## **ACHILLES**

Thou must be my ambassador to him, Thersites.

## **THERSITES**

Who, I? why, he'll answer nobody; he professes not answering: speaking is for beggars; he wears his tongue in's arms. I will put on his presence: let Patroclus make demands to me, you shall see the pageant of Ajax.

## **ACHILLES**

To him, Patroclus; tell him I humbly desire the valiant Ajax to invite the most valorous Hector to come unarmed to my tent, and to procure safe-conduct for his person of the magnanimous and most illustrious six-or-seven-times-honoured captain-general of the Grecian army, Agamemnon, et cetera. Do this.

**PATROCLUS**

Jove bless great Ajax!

**THERSITES**

Hum!

**PATROCLUS**

I come from the worthy Achilles,--

**THERSITES**

Ha!

**PATROCLUS**

Who most humbly desires you to invite Hector to his tent,--

**THERSITES**

Hum!

**PATROCLUS**

And to procure safe-conduct from Agamemnon.

**THERSITES**

Agamemnon!

**PATROCLUS**

Ay, my lord.

**THERSITES**

Ha!

**PATROCLUS**

What say you to't?

**THERSITES**

God b' wi' you, with all my heart.

**PATROCLUS**

Your answer, sir.

**THERSITES**

If to-morrow be a fair day, by eleven o'clock it will go one way or other: howsoever, he shall pay for me ere he has me.

**PATROCLUS**

Your answer, sir.

**THERSITES**

Fare you well, with all my heart.

**ACHILLES**

Why, but he is not in this tune, is he?

**THERSITES**

No, but he's out o' tune thus. What music will be in him when Hector has knocked out his brains, I know

not; but, I am sure, none, unless the fiddler Apollo  
get his sinews to make catlings on.

## **ACHILLES**

Come, thou shalt bear a letter to him straight.

## **THERSITES**

Let me bear another to his horse; for that's the more  
capable creature.

## **ACHILLES**

My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirr'd;  
And I myself see not the bottom of it.

*Exeunt ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*

## **THERSITES**

Would the fountain of your mind were clear again,  
that I might water an ass at it! I had rather be a  
tick in a sheep than such a valiant ignorance.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Troy. A street.

*Enter, from one side, AENEAS, and Servant with a torch; from the other, PARIS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, DIOMEDES, and others, with torches*

### PARIS

See, ho! who is that there?

### DEIPHOBUS

It is the Lord Aeneas.

### AENEAS

Is the prince there in person?  
Had I so good occasion to lie long  
As you, prince Paris, nothing but heavenly business  
Should rob my bed-mate of my company.

### DIOMEDES

That's my mind too. Good morrow, Lord Aeneas.

### PARIS

A valiant Greek, Aeneas,--take his hand,--  
Witness the process of your speech, wherein  
You told how Diomed, a whole week by days,  
Did haunt you in the field.

### AENEAS

Health to you, valiant sir,  
During all question of the gentle truce;  
But when I meet you arm'd, as black defiance

As heart can think or courage execute.

## **DIOMEDES**

The one and other Diomed embraces.  
Our bloods are now in calm; and, so long, health!  
But when contention and occasion meet,  
By Jove, I'll play the hunter for thy life  
With all my force, pursuit and policy.

## **AENEAS**

And thou shalt hunt a lion, that will fly  
With his face backward. In humane gentleness,  
Welcome to Troy! now, by Anchises' life,  
Welcome, indeed! By Venus' hand I swear,  
No man alive can love in such a sort  
The thing he means to kill more excellently.

## **DIOMEDES**

We sympathize: Jove, let Aeneas live,  
If to my sword his fate be not the glory,  
A thousand complete courses of the sun!  
But, in mine emulous honour, let him die,  
With every joint a wound, and that to-morrow!

## **AENEAS**

We know each other well.

## **DIOMEDES**

We do; and long to know each other worse.

## **PARIS**

This is the most despiteful gentle greeting,  
The noblest hateful love, that e'er I heard of.  
What business, lord, so early?

## AENEAS

I was sent for to the king; but why, I know not.

## PARIS

His purpose meets you: 'twas to bring this Greek  
To Calchas' house, and there to render him,  
For the enfreed Antenor, the fair Cressid:  
Let's have your company, or, if you please,  
Haste there before us: I constantly do think--  
Or rather, call my thought a certain knowledge--  
My brother Troilus lodges there to-night:  
Rouse him and give him note of our approach.  
With the whole quality wherefore: I fear  
We shall be much unwelcome.

## AENEAS

That I assure you:  
Troilus had rather Troy were borne to Greece  
Than Cressid borne from Troy.

## PARIS

There is no help;  
The bitter disposition of the time  
Will have it so. On, lord; we'll follow you.

## AENEAS

Good morrow, all.

*Exit with Servant*

## PARIS

And tell me, noble Diomed, faith, tell me true,  
Even in the soul of sound good-fellowship,  
Who, in your thoughts, merits fair Helen best,  
Myself or Menelaus?



## DIOMEDES

Both alike:

He merits well to have her, that doth seek her,  
Not making any scruple of her soilure,  
With such a hell of pain and world of charge,  
And you as well to keep her, that defend her,  
Not palating the taste of her dishonour,  
With such a costly loss of wealth and friends:  
He, like a puling cuckold, would drink up  
The lees and dregs of a flat tamed piece;  
You, like a lecher, out of whorish loins  
Are pleased to breed out your inheritors:  
Both merits poised, each weighs nor less nor more;  
But he as he, the heavier for a whore.

## PARIS

You are too bitter to your countrywoman.

## DIOMEDES

She's bitter to her country: hear me, Paris:  
For every false drop in her bawdy veins  
A Grecian's life hath sunk; for every scruple  
Of her contaminated carrion weight,  
A Trojan hath been slain: since she could speak,  
She hath not given so many good words breath  
As for her Greeks and Trojans suffer'd death.

## PARIS

Fair Diomed, you do as chapmen do,  
Dispraise the thing that you desire to buy:  
But we in silence hold this virtue well,  
We'll but commend what we intend to sell.  
Here lies our way.

*Exeunt*



# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. Court of Pandarus' house.

*Enter TROILUS and CRESSIDA*

**TROILUS**

Dear, trouble not yourself: the morn is cold.

**CRESSIDA**

Then, sweet my lord, I'll call mine uncle down;  
He shall unbolt the gates.

**TROILUS**

Trouble him not;  
To bed, to bed: sleep kill those pretty eyes,  
And give as soft attachment to thy senses  
As infants' empty of all thought!

**CRESSIDA**

Good morrow, then.

**TROILUS**

I prithee now, to bed.

**CRESSIDA**

Are you a-weary of me?

**TROILUS**

O Cressida! but that the busy day,

Waked by the lark, hath roused the ribald crows,  
And dreaming night will hide our joys no longer,  
I would not from thee.

**CRESSIDA**

Night hath been too brief.

**TROILUS**

Beshrew the witch! with venomous wights she stays  
As tediously as hell, but flies the grasps of love  
With wings more momentary-swift than thought.  
You will catch cold, and curse me.

**CRESSIDA**

Prithee, tarry:  
You men will never tarry.  
O foolish Cressid! I might have still held off,  
And then you would have tarried. Hark!  
there's one up.

**PANDARUS**

[Within] What, 's all the doors open here?

**TROILUS**

It is your uncle.

**CRESSIDA**

A pestilence on him! now will he be mocking:  
I shall have such a life!

*Enter PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

How now, how now! how go maidenheads? Here, you

maid! where's my cousin Cressid?

**CRESSIDA**

Go hang yourself, you naughty mocking uncle!  
You bring me to do, and then you flout me too.

**PANDARUS**

To do what? to do what? let her say  
what: what have I brought you to do?

**CRESSIDA**

Come, come, beshrew your heart! you'll ne'er be good,  
Nor suffer others.

**PANDARUS**

Ha! ha! Alas, poor wretch! ah, poor capocchia!  
hast not slept to-night? would he not, a naughty  
man, let it sleep? a bugbear take him!

**CRESSIDA**

Did not I tell you? Would he were knock'd i' the head!

*Knocking within*

Who's that at door? good uncle, go and see.  
My lord, come you again into my chamber:  
You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily.

**TROILUS**

Ha, ha!

**CRESSIDA**

Come, you are deceived, I think of no such thing.

*Knocking within*

How earnestly they knock! Pray you, come in:  
I would not for half Troy have you seen here.

*Exeunt TROILUS and CRESSIDA*

**PANDARUS**

Who's there? what's the matter? will you beat  
down the door? How now! what's the matter?

*Enter AENEAS*

**AENEAS**

Good morrow, lord, good morrow.

**PANDARUS**

Who's there? my Lord AENEAS! By my troth,  
I knew you not: what news with you so early?

**AENEAS**

Is not Prince Troilus here?

**PANDARUS**

Here! what should he do here?

**AENEAS**

Come, he is here, my lord; do not deny him:  
It doth import him much to speak with me.

**PANDARUS**

Is he here, say you? 'tis more than I know, I'll  
be sworn: for my own part, I came in late. What  
should he do here?

## **AENEAS**

Who!--nay, then: come, come, you'll do him wrong  
ere you're ware: you'll be so true to him, to be  
false to him: do not you know of him, but yet go  
fetch him hither; go.

*Re-enter TROILUS*

## **TROILUS**

How now! what's the matter?

## **AENEAS**

My lord, I scarce have leisure to salute you,  
My matter is so rash: there is at hand  
Paris your brother, and Deiphobus,  
The Grecian Diomed, and our Antenor  
Deliver'd to us; and for him forthwith,  
Ere the first sacrifice, within this hour,  
We must give up to Diomedes' hand  
The Lady Cressida.

## **TROILUS**

Is it so concluded?

## **AENEAS**

By Priam and the general state of Troy:  
They are at hand and ready to effect it.

## **TROILUS**

How my achievements mock me!  
I will go meet them: and, my Lord AENEAS,  
We met by chance; you did not find me here.

## **AENEAS**

Good, good, my lord; the secrets of nature  
Have not more gift in taciturnity.

*Exeunt TROILUS and AENEAS*

**PANDARUS**

Is't possible? no sooner got but lost? The devil  
take Antenor! the young prince will go mad: a  
plague upon Antenor! I would they had broke 's neck!

*Re-enter CRESSIDA*

**CRESSIDA**

How now! what's the matter? who was here?

**PANDARUS**

Ah, ah!

**CRESSIDA**

Why sigh you so profoundly? where's my lord? gone!  
Tell me, sweet uncle, what's the matter?

**PANDARUS**

Would I were as deep under the earth as I am above!

**CRESSIDA**

O the gods! what's the matter?

**PANDARUS**

Prithee, get thee in: would thou hadst ne'er been  
born! I knew thou wouldst be his death. O, poor  
gentleman! A plague upon Antenor!

**CRESSIDA**



Good uncle, I beseech you, on my knees! beseech you,  
what's the matter?

**PANDARUS**

Thou must be gone, wench, thou must be gone; thou  
art changed for Antenor: thou must to thy father,  
and be gone from Troilus: 'twill be his death;  
'twill be his bane; he cannot bear it.

**CRESSIDA**

O you immortal gods! I will not go.

**PANDARUS**

Thou must.

**CRESSIDA**

I will not, uncle: I have forgot my father;  
I know no touch of consanguinity;  
No kin no love, no blood, no soul so near me  
As the sweet Troilus. O you gods divine!  
Make Cressid's name the very crown of falsehood,  
If ever she leave Troilus! Time, force, and death,  
Do to this body what extremes you can;  
But the strong base and building of my love  
Is as the very centre of the earth,  
Drawing all things to it. I'll go in and weep,--

**PANDARUS**

Do, do.

**CRESSIDA**

Tear my bright hair and scratch my praised cheeks,  
Crack my clear voice with sobs and break my heart  
With sounding Troilus. I will not go from Troy.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. Street before Pandarus' house.

*Enter PARIS, TROILUS, AENEAS, DEIPHOBUS, ANTENOR, and DIOMEDES*

### PARIS

It is great morning, and the hour prefix'd  
Of her delivery to this valiant Greek  
Comes fast upon. Good my brother Troilus,  
Tell you the lady what she is to do,  
And haste her to the purpose.

### TROILUS

Walk into her house;  
I'll bring her to the Grecian presently:  
And to his hand when I deliver her,  
Think it an altar, and thy brother Troilus  
A priest there offering to it his own heart.

*Exit*

### PARIS

I know what 'tis to love;  
And would, as I shall pity, I could help!  
Please you walk in, my lords.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. Pandarus' house.

*Enter PANDARUS and CRESSIDA*

**PANDARUS**

Be moderate, be moderate.

**CRESSIDA**

Why tell you me of moderation?  
The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,  
And violenteth in a sense as strong  
As that which causeth it: how can I moderate it?  
If I could temporize with my affection,  
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,  
The like allayment could I give my grief.  
My love admits no qualifying dross;  
No more my grief, in such a precious loss.

**PANDARUS**

Here, here, here he comes.

*Enter TROILUS*

Ah, sweet ducks!

**CRESSIDA**

O Troilus! Troilus!

*Embracing him*

**PANDARUS**

What a pair of spectacles is here!  
Let me embrace too. 'O heart,' as the goodly saying is,  
'--O heart, heavy heart,  
Why sigh'st thou without breaking?  
where he answers again,  
'Because thou canst not ease thy smart  
By friendship nor by speaking.'  
There was never a truer rhyme. Let us cast away  
nothing, for we may live to have need of such a  
verse: we see it, we see it. How now, lambs?

## **TROILUS**

Cressid, I love thee in so strain'd a purity,  
That the bless'd gods, as angry with my fancy,  
More bright in zeal than the devotion which  
Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me.

## **CRESSIDA**

Have the gods envy?

## **PANDARUS**

Ay, ay, ay, ay; 'tis too plain a case.

## **CRESSIDA**

And is it true that I must go from Troy?

## **TROILUS**

A hateful truth.

## **CRESSIDA**

What, and from Troilus too?

## **TROILUS**

From Troy and Troilus.

**CRESSIDA**

Is it possible?

**TROILUS**

And suddenly; where injury of chance  
Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by  
All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips  
Of all rejoindure, forcibly prevents  
Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows  
Even in the birth of our own labouring breath:  
We two, that with so many thousand sighs  
Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves  
With the rude brevity and discharge of one.  
Injurious time now with a robber's haste  
Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how:  
As many farewells as be stars in heaven,  
With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,  
He fumbles up into a lose adieu,  
And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,  
Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

**AENEAS**

[Within] My lord, is the lady ready?

**TROILUS**

Hark! you are call'd: some say the Genius so  
Cries 'come' to him that instantly must die.  
Bid them have patience; she shall come anon.

**PANDARUS**

Where are my tears? rain, to lay this wind, or  
my heart will be blown up by the root.

*Exit*

**CRESSIDA**

I must then to the Grecians?

**TROILUS**

No remedy.

**CRESSIDA**

A woful Cressid 'mongst the merry Greeks!  
When shall we see again?

**TROILUS**

Hear me, my love: be thou but true of heart,--

**CRESSIDA**

I true! how now! what wicked deem is this?

**TROILUS**

Nay, we must use expostulation kindly,  
For it is parting from us:  
I speak not 'be thou true,' as fearing thee,  
For I will throw my glove to Death himself,  
That there's no maculation in thy heart:  
But 'be thou true,' say I, to fashion in  
My sequent protestation; be thou true,  
And I will see thee.

**CRESSIDA**

O, you shall be exposed, my lord, to dangers  
As infinite as imminent! but I'll be true.

**TROILUS**

And I'll grow friend with danger. Wear this sleeve.

**CRESSIDA**

And you this glove. When shall I see you?

**TROILUS**

I will corrupt the Grecian sentinels,  
To give thee nightly visitation.  
But yet be true.

**CRESSIDA**

O heavens! 'be true' again!

**TROILUS**

Hear while I speak it, love:  
The Grecian youths are full of quality;  
They're loving, well composed with gifts of nature,  
Flowing and swelling o'er with arts and exercise:  
How novelty may move, and parts with person,  
Alas, a kind of godly jealousy--  
Which, I beseech you, call a virtuous sin--  
Makes me afeard.

**CRESSIDA**

O heavens! you love me not.

**TROILUS**

Die I a villain, then!  
In this I do not call your faith in question  
So mainly as my merit: I cannot sing,  
Nor heel the high lavolt, nor sweeten talk,  
Nor play at subtle games; fair virtues all,  
To which the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant:  
But I can tell that in each grace of these  
There lurks a still and dumb-discoursive devil  
That tempts most cunningly: but be not tempted.

**CRESSIDA**



Do you think I will?

**TROILUS**

No.  
But something may be done that we will not:  
And sometimes we are devils to ourselves,  
When we will tempt the frailty of our powers,  
Presuming on their changeful potency.

**AENEAS**

[Within] Nay, good my lord,--

**TROILUS**

Come, kiss; and let us part.

**PARIS**

[Within] Brother Troilus!

**TROILUS**

Good brother, come you hither;  
And bring AENEAS and the Grecian with you.

**CRESSIDA**

My lord, will you be true?

**TROILUS**

Who, I? alas, it is my vice, my fault:  
Whiles others fish with craft for great opinion,  
I with great truth catch mere simplicity;  
Whilst some with cunning gild their copper crowns,  
With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare.  
Fear not my truth: the moral of my wit  
Is 'plain and true;' there's all the reach of it.

*Enter AENEAS, PARIS, ANTENOR, DEIPHOBUS, and DIOMEDES*

Welcome, Sir Diomed! here is the lady  
Which for Antenor we deliver you:  
At the port, lord, I'll give her to thy hand,  
And by the way possess thee what she is.  
Entreat her fair; and, by my soul, fair Greek,  
If e'er thou stand at mercy of my sword,  
Name Cressida and thy life shall be as safe  
As Priam is in Ilion.

## **DIOMEDES**

Fair Lady Cressid,  
So please you, save the thanks this prince expects:  
The lustre in your eye, heaven in your cheek,  
Pleads your fair usage; and to Diomed  
You shall be mistress, and command him wholly.

## **TROILUS**

Grecian, thou dost not use me courteously,  
To shame the zeal of my petition to thee  
In praising her: I tell thee, lord of Greece,  
She is as far high-soaring o'er thy praises  
As thou unworthy to be call'd her servant.  
I charge thee use her well, even for my charge;  
For, by the dreadful Pluto, if thou dost not,  
Though the great bulk Achilles be thy guard,  
I'll cut thy throat.

## **DIOMEDES**

O, be not moved, Prince Troilus:  
Let me be privileged by my place and message,  
To be a speaker free; when I am hence  
I'll answer to my lust: and know you, lord,  
I'll nothing do on charge: to her own worth  
She shall be prized; but that you say 'be't so,'  
I'll speak it in my spirit and honour, 'no.'

## **TROILUS**

Come, to the port. I'll tell thee, Diomed,  
This brave shall oft make thee to hide thy head.  
Lady, give me your hand, and, as we walk,  
To our own selves bend we our needful talk.

*Exeunt TROILUS, CRESSIDA, and DIOMEDES*

*Trumpet within*

**PARIS**

Hark! Hector's trumpet.

**AENEAS**

How have we spent this morning!  
The prince must think me tardy and remiss,  
That sore to ride before him to the field.

**PARIS**

'Tis Troilus' fault: come, come, to field with him.

**DEIPHOBUS**

Let us make ready straight.

**AENEAS**

Yea, with a bridegroom's fresh alacrity,  
Let us address to tend on Hector's heels:  
The glory of our Troy doth this day lie  
On his fair worth and single chivalry.

*Exeunt*

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The Grecian camp. Lists set out.

*Enter AJAX, armed; AGAMEMNON, ACHILLES, PATROCLUS, MENELAUS, ULYSSES, NESTOR, and others*

### AGAMEMNON

Here art thou in appointment fresh and fair,  
Anticipating time with starting courage.  
Give with thy trumpet a loud note to Troy,  
Thou dreadful Ajax; that the appalled air  
May pierce the head of the great combatant  
And hale him hither.

### AJAX

Thou, trumpet, there's my purse.  
Now crack thy lungs, and split thy brazen pipe:  
Blow, villain, till thy sphered bias cheek  
Outswell the colic of puff'd Aquilon:  
Come, stretch thy chest and let thy eyes spout blood;  
Thou blow'st for Hector.

*Trumpet sounds*

### ULYSSES

No trumpet answers.

### ACHILLES

'Tis but early days.

### AGAMEMNON

Is not yond Diomed, with Calchas' daughter?

## **ULYSSES**

'Tis he, I ken the manner of his gait;  
He rises on the toe: that spirit of his  
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

*Enter DIOMEDES, with CRESSIDA*

## **AGAMEMNON**

Is this the Lady Cressid?

## **DIOMEDES**

Even she.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Most dearly welcome to the Greeks, sweet lady.

## **NESTOR**

Our general doth salute you with a kiss.

## **ULYSSES**

Yet is the kindness but particular;  
'Twere better she were kiss'd in general.

## **NESTOR**

And very courtly counsel: I'll begin.  
So much for Nestor.

## **ACHILLES**

I'll take what winter from your lips, fair lady:  
Achilles bids you welcome.

## **MENELAUS**

I had good argument for kissing once.

**PATROCLUS**

But that's no argument for kissing now;  
For this popp'd Paris in his hardiment,  
And parted thus you and your argument.

**ULYSSES**

O deadly gall, and theme of all our scorns!  
For which we lose our heads to gild his horns.

**PATROCLUS**

The first was Menelaus' kiss; this, mine:  
Patroclus kisses you.

**MENELAUS**

O, this is trim!

**PATROCLUS**

Paris and I kiss evermore for him.

**MENELAUS**

I'll have my kiss, sir. Lady, by your leave.

**CRESSIDA**

In kissing, do you render or receive?

**PATROCLUS**

Both take and give.

**CRESSIDA**

I'll make my match to live,  
The kiss you take is better than you give;  
Therefore no kiss.

**MENELAUS**

I'll give you boot, I'll give you three for one.

**CRESSIDA**

You're an odd man; give even or give none.

**MENELAUS**

An odd man, lady! every man is odd.

**CRESSIDA**

No, Paris is not; for you know 'tis true,  
That you are odd, and he is even with you.

**MENELAUS**

You fillip me o' the head.

**CRESSIDA**

No, I'll be sworn.

**ULYSSES**

It were no match, your nail against his horn.  
May I, sweet lady, beg a kiss of you?

**CRESSIDA**

You may.

**ULYSSES**

I do desire it.

**CRESSIDA**

Why, beg, then.

**ULYSSES**

Why then for Venus' sake, give me a kiss,  
When Helen is a maid again, and his.

**CRESSIDA**

I am your debtor, claim it when 'tis due.

**ULYSSES**

Never's my day, and then a kiss of you.

**DIOMEDES**

Lady, a word: I'll bring you to your father.

*Exit with CRESSIDA*

**NESTOR**

A woman of quick sense.

**ULYSSES**

Fie, fie upon her!  
There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motive of her body.  
O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,  
That give accosting welcome ere it comes,  
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts  
To every ticklish reader! set them down  
For sluttish spoils of opportunity  
And daughters of the game.



*Trumpet within*

**ALL**

The Trojans' trumpet.

**AGAMEMNON**

Yonder comes the troop.

*Enter HECTOR, armed; AENEAS, TROILUS, and other Trojans, with Attendants*

**AENEAS**

Hail, all you state of Greece! what shall be done  
To him that victory commands? or do you purpose  
A victor shall be known? will you the knights  
Shall to the edge of all extremity  
Pursue each other, or shall be divided  
By any voice or order of the field?  
Hector bade ask.

**AGAMEMNON**

Which way would Hector have it?

**AENEAS**

He cares not; he'll obey conditions.

**ACHILLES**

'Tis done like Hector; but securely done,  
A little proudly, and great deal misprizing  
The knight opposed.

**AENEAS**

If not Achilles, sir,  
What is your name?

## **ACHILLES**

If not Achilles, nothing.

## **AENEAS**

Therefore Achilles: but, whate'er, know this:  
In the extremity of great and little,  
Valour and pride excel themselves in Hector;  
The one almost as infinite as all,  
The other blank as nothing. Weigh him well,  
And that which looks like pride is courtesy.  
This Ajax is half made of Hector's blood:  
In love whereof, half Hector stays at home;  
Half heart, half hand, half Hector comes to seek  
This blended knight, half Trojan and half Greek.

## **ACHILLES**

A maiden battle, then? O, I perceive you.

*Re-enter DIOMEDES*

## **AGAMEMNON**

Here is Sir Diomed. Go, gentle knight,  
Stand by our Ajax: as you and Lord AEneas  
Consent upon the order of their fight,  
So be it; either to the uttermost,  
Or else a breath: the combatants being kin  
Half stints their strife before their strokes begin.

*AJAX and HECTOR enter the lists*

## **ULYSSES**

They are opposed already.

## **AGAMEMNON**

What Trojan is that same that looks so heavy?

## ULYSSES

The youngest son of Priam, a true knight,  
Not yet mature, yet matchless, firm of word,  
Speaking in deeds and deedless in his tongue;  
Not soon provoked nor being provoked soon calm'd:  
His heart and hand both open and both free;  
For what he has he gives, what thinks he shows;  
Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty,  
Nor dignifies an impure thought with breath;  
Manly as Hector, but more dangerous;  
For Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes  
To tender objects, but he in heat of action  
Is more vindicative than jealous love:  
They call him Troilus, and on him erect  
A second hope, as fairly built as Hector.  
Thus says Aeneas; one that knows the youth  
Even to his inches, and with private soul  
Did in great Ilion thus translate him to me.

*Alarum. Hector and Ajax fight*

## AGAMEMNON

They are in action.

## NESTOR

Now, Ajax, hold thine own!

## TROILUS

Hector, thou sleep'st;  
Awake thee!

## AGAMEMNON

His blows are well disposed: there, Ajax!

## DIOMEDES

You must no more.

*Trumpets cease*

## **AENEAS**

Princes, enough, so please you.

## **AJAX**

I am not warm yet; let us fight again.

## **DIOMEDES**

As Hector pleases.

## **HECTOR**

Why, then will I no more:  
Thou art, great lord, my father's sister's son,  
A cousin-german to great Priam's seed;  
The obligation of our blood forbids  
A gory emulation 'twixt us twain:  
Were thy commixtion Greek and Trojan so  
That thou couldst say 'This hand is Grecian all,  
And this is Trojan; the sinews of this leg  
All Greek, and this all Troy; my mother's blood  
Runs on the dexter cheek, and this sinister  
Bounds in my father's;' by Jove multipotent,  
Thou shouldst not bear from me a Greekish member  
Wherein my sword had not impressure made  
Of our rank feud: but the just gods gainsay  
That any drop thou borrow'dst from thy mother,  
My sacred aunt, should by my mortal sword  
Be drain'd! Let me embrace thee, Ajax:  
By him that thunders, thou hast lusty arms;  
Hector would have them fall upon him thus:  
Cousin, all honour to thee!

## **AJAX**

I thank thee, Hector

Thou art too gentle and too free a man:  
I came to kill thee, cousin, and bear hence  
A great addition earned in thy death.

## **HECTOR**

Not Neoptolemus so mirable,  
On whose bright crest Fame with her loud'st Oyes  
Cries 'This is he,' could promise to himself  
A thought of added honour torn from Hector.

## **AENEAS**

There is expectance here from both the sides,  
What further you will do.

## **HECTOR**

We'll answer it;  
The issue is embracement: Ajax, farewell.

## **AJAX**

If I might in entreaties find success--  
As seld I have the chance--I would desire  
My famous cousin to our Grecian tents.

## **DIOMEDES**

'Tis Agamemnon's wish, and great Achilles  
Doth long to see unarm'd the valiant Hector.

## **HECTOR**

Aeneas, call my brother Troilus to me,  
And signify this loving interview  
To the expecters of our Trojan part;  
Desire them home. Give me thy hand, my cousin;  
I will go eat with thee and see your knights.

## **AJAX**

Great Agamemnon comes to meet us here.

## **HECTOR**

The worthiest of them tell me name by name;  
But for Achilles, mine own searching eyes  
Shall find him by his large and portly size.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Worthy of arms! as welcome as to one  
That would be rid of such an enemy;  
But that's no welcome: understand more clear,  
What's past and what's to come is strew'd with husks  
And formless ruin of oblivion;  
But in this extant moment, faith and troth,  
Strain'd purely from all hollow bias-drawing,  
Bids thee, with most divine integrity,  
From heart of very heart, great Hector, welcome.

## **HECTOR**

I thank thee, most imperious Agamemnon.

## **AGAMEMNON**

[To TROILUS] My well-famed lord of Troy, no  
less to you.

## **MENELAUS**

Let me confirm my princely brother's greeting:  
You brace of warlike brothers, welcome hither.

## **HECTOR**

Who must we answer?

## **AENEAS**

The noble Menelaus.

## **HECTOR**

O, you, my lord? by Mars his gauntlet, thanks!  
Mock not, that I affect the untraded oath;  
Your quondam wife swears still by Venus' glove:  
She's well, but bade me not commend her to you.

## **MENELAUS**

Name her not now, sir; she's a deadly theme.

## **HECTOR**

O, pardon; I offend.

## **NESTOR**

I have, thou gallant Trojan, seen thee oft  
Labouring for destiny make cruel way  
Through ranks of Greekish youth, and I have seen thee,  
As hot as Perseus, spur thy Phrygian steed,  
Despising many forfeits and subduements,  
When thou hast hung thy advanced sword i' the air,  
Not letting it decline on the declined,  
That I have said to some my standers by  
'Lo, Jupiter is yonder, dealing life!  
And I have seen thee pause and take thy breath,  
When that a ring of Greeks have hemm'd thee in,  
Like an Olympian wrestling: this have I seen;  
But this thy countenance, still lock'd in steel,  
I never saw till now. I knew thy grandsire,  
And once fought with him: he was a soldier good;  
But, by great Mars, the captain of us all,  
Never saw like thee. Let an old man embrace thee;  
And, worthy warrior, welcome to our tents.

## **AENEAS**

'Tis the old Nestor.

## **HECTOR**

Let me embrace thee, good old chronicle,  
That hast so long walk'd hand in hand with time:  
Most reverend Nestor, I am glad to clasp thee.

**NESTOR**

I would my arms could match thee in contention,  
As they contend with thee in courtesy.

**HECTOR**

I would they could.

**NESTOR**

Ha!  
By this white beard, I'd fight with thee to-morrow.  
Well, welcome, welcome! I have seen the time.

**ULYSSES**

I wonder now how yonder city stands  
When we have here her base and pillar by us.

**HECTOR**

I know your favour, Lord Ulysses, well.  
Ah, sir, there's many a Greek and Trojan dead,  
Since first I saw yourself and Diomed  
In Ilion, on your Greekish embassy.

**ULYSSES**

Sir, I foretold you then what would ensue:  
My prophecy is but half his journey yet;  
For yonder walls, that pertly front your town,  
Yond towers, whose wanton tops do buss the clouds,  
Must kiss their own feet.

**HECTOR**



I must not believe you:  
There they stand yet, and modestly I think,  
The fall of every Phrygian stone will cost  
A drop of Grecian blood: the end crowns all,  
And that old common arbitrator, Time,  
Will one day end it.

## **ULYSSES**

So to him we leave it.  
Most gentle and most valiant Hector, welcome:  
After the general, I beseech you next  
To feast with me and see me at my tent.

## **ACHILLES**

I shall forestall thee, Lord Ulysses, thou!  
Now, Hector, I have fed mine eyes on thee;  
I have with exact view perused thee, Hector,  
And quoted joint by joint.

## **HECTOR**

Is this Achilles?

## **ACHILLES**

I am Achilles.

## **HECTOR**

Stand fair, I pray thee: let me look on thee.

## **ACHILLES**

Behold thy fill.

## **HECTOR**

Nay, I have done already.

## **ACHILLES**

Thou art too brief: I will the second time,  
As I would buy thee, view thee limb by limb.

## **HECTOR**

O, like a book of sport thou'lt read me o'er;  
But there's more in me than thou understand'st.  
Why dost thou so oppress me with thine eye?

## **ACHILLES**

Tell me, you heavens, in which part of his body  
Shall I destroy him? whether there, or there, or there?  
That I may give the local wound a name  
And make distinct the very breach whereout  
Hector's great spirit flew: answer me, heavens!

## **HECTOR**

It would discredit the blest gods, proud man,  
To answer such a question: stand again:  
Think'st thou to catch my life so pleasantly  
As to prenominate in nice conjecture  
Where thou wilt hit me dead?

## **ACHILLES**

I tell thee, yea.

## **HECTOR**

Wert thou an oracle to tell me so,  
I'd not believe thee. Henceforth guard thee well;  
For I'll not kill thee there, nor there, nor there;  
But, by the forge that stithied Mars his helm,  
I'll kill thee every where, yea, o'er and o'er.  
You wisest Grecians, pardon me this brag;  
His insolence draws folly from my lips;  
But I'll endeavour deeds to match these words,  
Or may I never--

## AJAX

Do not chafe thee, cousin:  
And you, Achilles, let these threats alone,  
Till accident or purpose bring you to't:  
You may have every day enough of Hector  
If you have stomach; the general state, I fear,  
Can scarce entreat you to be odd with him.

## HECTOR

I pray you, let us see you in the field:  
We have had pelting wars, since you refused  
The Grecians' cause.

## ACHILLES

Dost thou entreat me, Hector?  
To-morrow do I meet thee, fell as death;  
To-night all friends.

## HECTOR

Thy hand upon that match.

## AGAMEMNON

First, all you peers of Greece, go to my tent;  
There in the full convive we: afterwards,  
As Hector's leisure and your bounties shall  
Concur together, severally entreat him.  
Beat loud the tabourines, let the trumpets blow,  
That this great soldier may his welcome know.

*Exeunt all except TROILUS and ULYSSES*

## TROILUS

My Lord Ulysses, tell me, I beseech you,  
In what place of the field doth Calchas keep?

## ULYSSES

At Menelaus' tent, most princely Troilus:  
There Diomed doth feast with him to-night;  
Who neither looks upon the heaven nor earth,  
But gives all gaze and bent of amorous view  
On the fair Cressid.

## TROILUS

Shall sweet lord, be bound to you so much,  
After we part from Agamemnon's tent,  
To bring me thither?

## ULYSSES

You shall command me, sir.  
As gentle tell me, of what honour was  
This Cressida in Troy? Had she no lover there  
That wails her absence?

## TROILUS

O, sir, to such as boasting show their scars  
A mock is due. Will you walk on, my lord?  
She was beloved, she loved; she is, and doth:  
But still sweet love is food for fortune's tooth.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 4, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The Grecian camp. Before Achilles' tent.

*Enter ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*

**ACHILLES**

I'll heat his blood with Greekish wine to-night,  
Which with my scimitar I'll cool to-morrow.  
Patroclus, let us feast him to the height.

**PATROCLUS**

Here comes Thersites.

*Enter THERSITES*

**ACHILLES**

How now, thou core of envy!  
Thou crusty batch of nature, what's the news?

**THERSITES**

Why, thou picture of what thou seemest, and idol  
of idiot worshippers, here's a letter for thee.

**ACHILLES**

From whence, fragment?

**THERSITES**

Why, thou full dish of fool, from Troy.

**PATROCLUS**

Who keeps the tent now?

**THERSITES**

The surgeon's box, or the patient's wound.

**PATROCLUS**

Well said, adversity! and what need these tricks?

**THERSITES**

Prithee, be silent, boy; I profit not by thy talk:  
thou art thought to be Achilles' male varlet.

**PATROCLUS**

Male varlet, you rogue! what's that?

**THERSITES**

Why, his masculine whore. Now, the rotten diseases  
of the south, the guts-griping, ruptures, catarrhs,  
loads o' gravel i' the back, lethargies, cold  
palsies, raw eyes, dirt-rotten livers, wheezing  
lungs, bladders full of imposthume, sciaticas,  
limekilns i' the palm, incurable bone-ache, and the  
rivelled fee-simple of the tetter, take and take  
again such preposterous discoveries!

**PATROCLUS**

Why thou damnable box of envy, thou, what meanest  
thou to curse thus?

**THERSITES**

Do I curse thee?

**PATROCLUS**

Why no, you ruinous butt, you whoreson  
indistinguishable cur, no.

## **THERSITES**

No! why art thou then exasperate, thou idle  
immaterial skein of sleeve-silk, thou green sarcenet  
flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's  
purse, thou? Ah, how the poor world is pestered  
with such waterflies, diminutives of nature!

## **PATROCLUS**

Out, gall!

## **THERSITES**

Finch-egg!

## **ACHILLES**

My sweet Patroclus, I am thwarted quite  
From my great purpose in to-morrow's battle.  
Here is a letter from Queen Hecuba,  
A token from her daughter, my fair love,  
Both taxing me and gaging me to keep  
An oath that I have sworn. I will not break it:  
Fall Greeks; fail fame; honour or go or stay;  
My major vow lies here, this I'll obey.  
Come, come, Thersites, help to trim my tent:  
This night in banqueting must all be spent.  
Away, Patroclus!

*Exeunt ACHILLES and PATROCLUS*

## **THERSITES**

With too much blood and too little brain, these two  
may run mad; but, if with too much brain and too  
little blood they do, I'll be a curer of madmen.  
Here's Agamemnon, an honest fellow enough and one  
that loves quails; but he has not so much brain as

earwax: and the goodly transformation of Jupiter there, his brother, the bull,--the primitive statue, and oblique memorial of cuckolds; a thrifty shoeing-horn in a chain, hanging at his brother's leg,--to what form but that he is, should wit larded with malice and malice forced with wit turn him to? To an ass, were nothing; he is both ass and ox: to an ox, were nothing; he is both ox and ass. To be a dog, a mule, a cat, a fitchew, a toad, a lizard, an owl, a puttock, or a herring without a roe, I would not care; but to be Menelaus, I would conspire against destiny. Ask me not, what I would be, if I were not Thersites; for I care not to be the louse of a lazar, so I were not Menelaus! Hey-day! spirits and fires!

*Enter HECTOR, TROILUS, AJAX, AGAMEMNON, ULYSSES, NESTOR, MENELAUS, and DIOMEDES, with lights*

## **AGAMEMNON**

We go wrong, we go wrong.

## **AJAX**

No, yonder 'tis;  
There, where we see the lights.

## **HECTOR**

I trouble you.

## **AJAX**

No, not a whit.

## **ULYSSES**

Here comes himself to guide you.

*Re-enter ACHILLES*



## **ACHILLES**

Welcome, brave Hector; welcome, princes all.

## **AGAMEMNON**

So now, fair prince of Troy, I bid good night.  
Ajax commands the guard to tend on you.

## **HECTOR**

Thanks and good night to the Greeks' general.

## **MENELAUS**

Good night, my lord.

## **HECTOR**

Good night, sweet lord Menelaus.

## **THERSITES**

Sweet draught: 'sweet' quoth 'a! sweet sink,  
sweet sewer.

## **ACHILLES**

Good night and welcome, both at once, to those  
That go or tarry.

## **AGAMEMNON**

Good night.

*Exeunt AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS*

## **ACHILLES**

Old Nestor tarries; and you too, Diomed,

Keep Hector company an hour or two.

## **DIOMEDES**

I cannot, lord; I have important business,  
The tide whereof is now. Good night, great Hector.

## **HECTOR**

Give me your hand.

## **ULYSSES**

[Aside to TROILUS] Follow his torch; he goes to  
Calchas' tent:  
I'll keep you company.

## **TROILUS**

Sweet sir, you honour me.

## **HECTOR**

And so, good night.

*Exit DIOMEDES; ULYSSES and TROILUS following*

## **ACHILLES**

Come, come, enter my tent.

*Exeunt ACHILLES, HECTOR, AJAX, and NESTOR*

## **THERSITES**

That same Diomed's a false-hearted rogue, a most  
unjust knave; I will no more trust him when he leers  
than I will a serpent when he hisses: he will spend  
his mouth, and promise, like Brabblers the hound:  
but when he performs, astronomers foretell it; it  
is prodigious, there will come some change; the sun

borrows of the moon, when Diomed keeps his  
word. I will rather leave to see Hector, than  
not to dog him: they say he keeps a Trojan  
drab, and uses the traitor Calchas' tent: I'll  
after. Nothing but lechery! all incontinent varlets!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. Before Calchas' tent.

*Enter DIOMEDES*

**DIOMEDES**

What, are you up here, ho? speak.

**CALCHAS**

[Within] Who calls?

**DIOMEDES**

Calchas, I think. Where's your daughter?

**CALCHAS**

[Within] She comes to you.

*Enter TROILUS and ULYSSES, at a distance; after them, THERSITES*

**ULYSSES**

Stand where the torch may not discover us.

*Enter CRESSIDA*

**TROILUS**

Cressid comes forth to him.

**DIOMEDES**

How now, my charge!

**CRESSIDA**

Now, my sweet guardian! Hark, a word with you.

*Whispers*

**TROILUS**

Yea, so familiar!

**ULYSSES**

She will sing any man at first sight.

**THERSITES**

And any man may sing her, if he can take her cliff;  
she's noted.

**DIOMEDES**

Will you remember?

**CRESSIDA**

Remember! yes.

**DIOMEDES**

Nay, but do, then;  
And let your mind be coupled with your words.

**TROILUS**

What should she remember?

**ULYSSES**

List.

**CRESSIDA**

Sweet honey Greek, tempt me no more to folly.

**THERSITES**

Roguery!

**DIOMEDES**

Nay, then,--

**CRESSIDA**

I'll tell you what,--

**DIOMEDES**

Foh, foh! come, tell a pin: you are forsworn.

**CRESSIDA**

In faith, I cannot: what would you have me do?

**THERSITES**

A juggling trick,--to be secretly open.

**DIOMEDES**

What did you swear you would bestow on me?

**CRESSIDA**

I prithee, do not hold me to mine oath;  
Bid me do any thing but that, sweet Greek.

**DIOMEDES**

Good night.

**TROILUS**

Hold, patience!

**ULYSSES**

How now, Trojan!

**CRESSIDA**

Diomed,--

**DIOMEDES**

No, no, good night: I'll be your fool no more.

**TROILUS**

Thy better must.

**CRESSIDA**

Hark, one word in your ear.

**TROILUS**

O plague and madness!

**ULYSSES**

You are moved, prince; let us depart, I pray you,  
Lest your displeasure should enlarge itself  
To wrathful terms: this place is dangerous;  
The time right deadly; I beseech you, go.

**TROILUS**

Behold, I pray you!

**ULYSSES**

Nay, good my lord, go off:  
You flow to great distraction; come, my lord.

**TROILUS**

I pray thee, stay.

**ULYSSES**

You have not patience; come.

**TROILUS**

I pray you, stay; by hell and all hell's torments  
I will not speak a word!

**DIOMEDES**

And so, good night.

**CRESSIDA**

Nay, but you part in anger.

**TROILUS**

Doth that grieve thee?  
O wither'd truth!

**ULYSSES**

Why, how now, lord!

**TROILUS**

By Jove,  
I will be patient.

**CRESSIDA**

Guardian!--why, Greek!



**DIOMEDES**

Foh, foh! adieu; you palter.

**CRESSIDA**

In faith, I do not: come hither once again.

**ULYSSES**

You shake, my lord, at something: will you go?  
You will break out.

**TROILUS**

She strokes his cheek!

**ULYSSES**

Come, come.

**TROILUS**

Nay, stay; by Jove, I will not speak a word:  
There is between my will and all offences  
A guard of patience: stay a little while.

**THERSITES**

How the devil Luxury, with his fat rump and  
potato-finger, tickles these together! Fry, lechery, fry!

**DIOMEDES**

But will you, then?

**CRESSIDA**

In faith, I will, la; never trust me else.

**DIOMEDES**

Give me some token for the surety of it.

**CRESSIDA**

I'll fetch you one.

*Exit*

**ULYSSES**

You have sworn patience.

**TROILUS**

Fear me not, sweet lord;  
I will not be myself, nor have cognition  
Of what I feel: I am all patience.

*Re-enter CRESSIDA*

**THERSITES**

Now the pledge; now, now, now!

**CRESSIDA**

Here, Diomed, keep this sleeve.

**TROILUS**

O beauty! where is thy faith?

**ULYSSES**

My lord,--

**TROILUS**

I will be patient; outwardly I will.

**CRESSIDA**

You look upon that sleeve; behold it well.  
He loved me--O false wench!--Give't me again.

**DIOMEDES**

Whose was't?

**CRESSIDA**

It is no matter, now I have't again.  
I will not meet with you to-morrow night:  
I prithee, Diomed, visit me no more.

**THERSITES**

Now she sharpens: well said, whetstone!

**DIOMEDES**

I shall have it.

**CRESSIDA**

What, this?

**DIOMEDES**

Ay, that.

**CRESSIDA**

O, all you gods! O pretty, pretty pledge!  
Thy master now lies thinking in his bed  
Of thee and me, and sighs, and takes my glove,  
And gives memorial dainty kisses to it,  
As I kiss thee. Nay, do not snatch it from me;  
He that takes that doth take my heart withal.

**DIOMEDES**

I had your heart before, this follows it.

**TROILUS**

I did swear patience.

**CRESSIDA**

You shall not have it, Diomed; faith, you shall not;  
I'll give you something else.

**DIOMEDES**

I will have this: whose was it?

**CRESSIDA**

It is no matter.

**DIOMEDES**

Come, tell me whose it was.

**CRESSIDA**

'Twas one's that loved me better than you will.  
But, now you have it, take it.

**DIOMEDES**

Whose was it?

**CRESSIDA**

By all Diana's waiting-women yond,  
And by herself, I will not tell you whose.

**DIOMEDES**

To-morrow will I wear it on my helm,  
And grieve his spirit that dares not challenge it.

**TROILUS**

Wert thou the devil, and worest it on thy horn,  
It should be challenged.

**CRESSIDA**

Well, well, 'tis done, 'tis past: and yet it is not;  
I will not keep my word.

**DIOMEDES**

Why, then, farewell;  
Thou never shalt mock Diomed again.

**CRESSIDA**

You shall not go: one cannot speak a word,  
But it straight starts you.

**DIOMEDES**

I do not like this fooling.

**THERSITES**

Nor I, by Pluto: but that that likes not you pleases me best.

**DIOMEDES**

What, shall I come? the hour?

**CRESSIDA**

Ay, come:--O Jove!--do come:--I shall be plagued.

**DIOMEDES**

Farewell till then.

**CRESSIDA**

Good night: I prithee, come.

*Exit DIOMEDES*

Troilus, farewell! one eye yet looks on thee  
But with my heart the other eye doth see.  
Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,  
The error of our eye directs our mind:  
What error leads must err; O, then conclude  
Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude.

*Exit*

**THERSITES**

A proof of strength she could not publish more,  
Unless she said ' My mind is now turn'd whore.'

**ULYSSES**

All's done, my lord.

**TROILUS**

It is.

**ULYSSES**

Why stay we, then?

**TROILUS**

To make a recordation to my soul  
Of every syllable that here was spoke.  
But if I tell how these two did co-act,  
Shall I not lie in publishing a truth?

Sith yet there is a credence in my heart,  
An esperance so obstinately strong,  
That doth invert the attest of eyes and ears,  
As if those organs had deceptious functions,  
Created only to calumniate.  
Was Cressid here?

**ULYSSES**

I cannot conjure, Trojan.

**TROILUS**

She was not, sure.

**ULYSSES**

Most sure she was.

**TROILUS**

Why, my negation hath no taste of madness.

**ULYSSES**

Nor mine, my lord: Cressid was here but now.

**TROILUS**

Let it not be believed for womanhood!  
Think, we had mothers; do not give advantage  
To stubborn critics, apt, without a theme,  
For depravation, to square the general sex  
By Cressid's rule: rather think this not Cressid.

**ULYSSES**

What hath she done, prince, that can soil our mothers?

**TROILUS**

Nothing at all, unless that this were she.

## **THERSITES**

Will he swagger himself out on's own eyes?

## **TROILUS**

This she? no, this is Diomed's Cressida:  
If beauty have a soul, this is not she;  
If souls guide vows, if vows be sanctimonies,  
If sanctimony be the gods' delight,  
If there be rule in unity itself,  
This is not she. O madness of discourse,  
That cause sets up with and against itself!  
Bi-fold authority! where reason can revolt  
Without perdition, and loss assume all reason  
Without revolt: this is, and is not, Cressid.  
Within my soul there doth conduce a fight  
Of this strange nature that a thing inseparate  
Divides more wider than the sky and earth,  
And yet the spacious breadth of this division  
Admits no orifex for a point as subtle  
As Ariachne's broken woof to enter.  
Instance, O instance! strong as Pluto's gates;  
Cressid is mine, tied with the bonds of heaven:  
Instance, O instance! strong as heaven itself;  
The bonds of heaven are slipp'd, dissolved, and loosed;  
And with another knot, five-finger-tied,  
The fractions of her faith, orts of her love,  
The fragments, scraps, the bits and greasy relics  
Of her o'er-eaten faith, are bound to Diomed.

## **ULYSSES**

May worthy Troilus be half attach'd  
With that which here his passion doth express?

## **TROILUS**

Ay, Greek; and that shall be divulged well  
In characters as red as Mars his heart



Inflamed with Venus: never did young man fancy  
With so eternal and so fix'd a soul.  
Hark, Greek: as much as I do Cressid love,  
So much by weight hate I her Diomed:  
That sleeve is mine that he'll bear on his helm;  
Were it a casque composed by Vulcan's skill,  
My sword should bite it: not the dreadful spout  
Which shipmen do the hurricano call,  
Constringed in mass by the almighty sun,  
Shall dizzy with more clamour Neptune's ear  
In his descent than shall my prompted sword  
Falling on Diomed.

## **THERSITES**

He'll tickle it for his concupy.

## **TROILUS**

O Cressid! O false Cressid! false, false, false!  
Let all untruths stand by thy stained name,  
And they'll seem glorious.

## **ULYSSES**

O, contain yourself  
Your passion draws ears hither.

*Enter AENEAS*

## **AENEAS**

I have been seeking you this hour, my lord:  
Hector, by this, is arming him in Troy;  
Ajax, your guard, stays to conduct you home.

## **TROILUS**

Have with you, prince. My courteous lord, adieu.  
Farewell, revolted fair! and, Diomed,  
Stand fast, and wear a castle on thy head!

## ULYSSES

I'll bring you to the gates.

## TROILUS

Accept distracted thanks.

*Exeunt TROILUS, AENEAS, and ULYSSES*

## THERSITES

Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I would  
croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode.  
Patroclus will give me any thing for the  
intelligence of this whore: the parrot will not  
do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab.  
Lechery, lechery; still, wars and lechery; nothing  
else holds fashion: a burning devil take them!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Troy. Before Priam's palace.

*Enter HECTOR and ANDROMACHE*

### ANDROMACHE

When was my lord so much ungently temper'd,  
To stop his ears against admonishment?  
Unarm, unarm, and do not fight to-day.

### HECTOR

You train me to offend you; get you in:  
By all the everlasting gods, I'll go!

### ANDROMACHE

My dreams will, sure, prove ominous to the day.

### HECTOR

No more, I say.

*Enter CASSANDRA*

### CASSANDRA

Where is my brother Hector?

### ANDROMACHE

Here, sister; arm'd, and bloody in intent.  
Consort with me in loud and dear petition,  
Pursue we him on knees; for I have dream'd  
Of bloody turbulence, and this whole night  
Hath nothing been but shapes and forms of slaughter.

**CASSANDRA**

O, 'tis true.

**HECTOR**

Ho! bid my trumpet sound!

**CASSANDRA**

No notes of sally, for the heavens, sweet brother.

**HECTOR**

Be gone, I say: the gods have heard me swear.

**CASSANDRA**

The gods are deaf to hot and peevish vows:  
They are polluted offerings, more abhorr'd  
Than spotted livers in the sacrifice.

**ANDROMACHE**

O, be persuaded! do not count it holy  
To hurt by being just: it is as lawful,  
For we would give much, to use violent thefts,  
And rob in the behalf of charity.

**CASSANDRA**

It is the purpose that makes strong the vow;  
But vows to every purpose must not hold:  
Unarm, sweet Hector.

**HECTOR**

Hold you still, I say;  
Mine honour keeps the weather of my fate:  
Lie every man holds dear; but the brave man

Holds honour far more precious-dear than life.

*Enter TROILUS*

How now, young man! mean'st thou to fight to-day?

**ANDROMACHE**

Cassandra, call my father to persuade.

*Exit CASSANDRA*

**HECTOR**

No, faith, young Troilus; doff thy harness, youth;  
I am to-day i' the vein of chivalry:  
Let grow thy sinews till their knots be strong,  
And tempt not yet the brushes of the war.  
Unarm thee, go, and doubt thou not, brave boy,  
I'll stand to-day for thee and me and Troy.

**TROILUS**

Brother, you have a vice of mercy in you,  
Which better fits a lion than a man.

**HECTOR**

What vice is that, good Troilus? chide me for it.

**TROILUS**

When many times the captive Grecian falls,  
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,  
You bid them rise, and live.

**HECTOR**

O,'tis fair play.

**TROILUS**

Fool's play, by heaven, Hector.

**HECTOR**

How now! how now!

**TROILUS**

For the love of all the gods,  
Let's leave the hermit pity with our mothers,  
And when we have our armours buckled on,  
The venom'd vengeance ride upon our swords,  
Spur them to ruthless work, rein them from ruth.

**HECTOR**

Fie, savage, fie!

**TROILUS**

Hector, then 'tis wars.

**HECTOR**

Troilus, I would not have you fight to-day.

**TROILUS**

Who should withhold me?  
Not fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars  
Beckoning with fiery truncheon my retire;  
Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees,  
Their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears;  
Not you, my brother, with your true sword drawn,  
Opposed to hinder me, should stop my way,  
But by my ruin.

*Re-enter CASSANDRA, with PRIAM*

**CASSANDRA**

Lay hold upon him, Priam, hold him fast:  
He is thy crutch; now if thou lose thy stay,  
Thou on him leaning, and all Troy on thee,  
Fall all together.

## **PRIAM**

Come, Hector, come, go back:  
Thy wife hath dream'd; thy mother hath had visions;  
Cassandra doth foresee; and I myself  
Am like a prophet suddenly enrapt  
To tell thee that this day is ominous:  
Therefore, come back.

## **HECTOR**

Aeneas is a-field;  
And I do stand engaged to many Greeks,  
Even in the faith of valour, to appear  
This morning to them.

## **PRIAM**

Ay, but thou shalt not go.

## **HECTOR**

I must not break my faith.  
You know me dutiful; therefore, dear sir,  
Let me not shame respect; but give me leave  
To take that course by your consent and voice,  
Which you do here forbid me, royal Priam.

## **CASSANDRA**

O Priam, yield not to him!

## **ANDROMACHE**

Do not, dear father.

## **HECTOR**

Andromache, I am offended with you:  
Upon the love you bear me, get you in.

*Exit ANDROMACHE*

## **TROILUS**

This foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl  
Makes all these bodements.

## **CASSANDRA**

O, farewell, dear Hector!  
Look, how thou diest! look, how thy eye turns pale!  
Look, how thy wounds do bleed at many vents!  
Hark, how Troy roars! how Hecuba cries out!  
How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth!  
Behold, distraction, frenzy and amazement,  
Like witless antics, one another meet,  
And all cry, Hector! Hector's dead! O Hector!

## **TROILUS**

Away! away!

## **CASSANDRA**

Farewell: yet, soft! Hector! take my leave:  
Thou dost thyself and all our Troy deceive.

*Exit*

## **HECTOR**

You are amazed, my liege, at her exclaim:  
Go in and cheer the town: we'll forth and fight,  
Do deeds worth praise and tell you them at night.

## **PRIAM**



Farewell: the gods with safety stand about thee!

*Exeunt severally PRIAM and HECTOR. Alarums*

**TROILUS**

They are at it, hark! Proud Diomed, believe,  
I come to lose my arm, or win my sleeve.

*Enter PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

Do you hear, my lord? do you hear?

**TROILUS**

What now?

**PANDARUS**

Here's a letter come from yond poor girl.

**TROILUS**

Let me read.

**PANDARUS**

A whoreson tisick, a whoreson rascally tisick so  
troubles me, and the foolish fortune of this girl;  
and what one thing, what another, that I shall  
leave you one o' these days: and I have a rheum  
in mine eyes too, and such an ache in my bones  
that, unless a man were cursed, I cannot tell what  
to think on't. What says she there?

**TROILUS**

Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart:  
The effect doth operate another way.

*Tearing the letter*

Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change together.  
My love with words and errors still she feeds;  
But edifies another with her deeds.

*Exeunt severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Plains between Troy and the Grecian camp.

*Alarums: excursions. Enter THERSITES*

### THERSITES

Now they are clapper-clawing one another; I'll go look on. That dissembling abominable varlets Diomed, has got that same scurvy doting foolish young knave's sleeve of Troy there in his helm: I would fain see them meet; that that same young Trojan ass, that loves the whore there, might send that Greekish whore-masterly villain, with the sleeve, back to the dissembling luxurious drab, of a sleeveless errand. O' the t'other side, the policy of those crafty swearing rascals, that stale old mouse-eaten dry cheese, Nestor, and that same dog-fox, Ulysses, is not proved worthy a blackberry: they set me up, in policy, that mongrel cur, Ajax, against that dog of as bad a kind, Achilles: and now is the cur Ajax prouder than the cur Achilles, and will not arm to-day; whereupon the Grecians begin to proclaim barbarism, and policy grows into an ill opinion. Soft! here comes sleeve, and t'other.

*Enter DIOMEDES, TROILUS following*

### TROILUS

Fly not; for shouldst thou take the river Styx,  
I would swim after.

### DIOMEDES

Thou dost miscall retire:  
I do not fly, but advantageous care

Withdrew me from the odds of multitude:  
Have at thee!

## **THERSITES**

Hold thy whore, Grecian!--now for thy whore,  
Trojan!--now the sleeve, now the sleeve!

*Exeunt TROILUS and DIOMEDES, fighting*

*Enter HECTOR*

## **HECTOR**

What art thou, Greek? art thou for Hector's match?  
Art thou of blood and honour?

## **THERSITES**

No, no, I am a rascal; a scurvy railing knave:  
a very filthy rogue.

## **HECTOR**

I do believe thee: live.

*Exit*

## **THERSITES**

God-a-mercy, that thou wilt believe me; but a  
plague break thy neck for frightening me! What's  
become of the wenching rogues? I think they have  
swallowed one another: I would laugh at that  
miracle: yet, in a sort, lechery eats itself.  
I'll seek them.

*Exit*



# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the plains.

*Enter DIOMEDES and a Servant*

### DIOMEDES

Go, go, my servant, take thou Troilus' horse;  
Present the fair steed to my lady Cressid:  
Fellow, commend my service to her beauty;  
Tell her I have chastised the amorous Trojan,  
And am her knight by proof.

### Servant

I go, my lord.

*Exit*

*Enter AGAMEMNON*

### AGAMEMNON

Renew, renew! The fierce Polydamas  
Hath beat down Menon: bastard Margarelon  
Hath Doreus prisoner,  
And stands colossus-wise, waving his beam,  
Upon the pashed corpses of the kings  
Epistrophus and Cedius: Polyxenes is slain,  
Amphimachus and Thoas deadly hurt,  
Patroclus ta'en or slain, and Palamedes  
Sore hurt and bruised: the dreadful Sagittary  
Appals our numbers: haste we, Diomed,  
To reinforcement, or we perish all.

*Enter NESTOR*

## NESTOR

Go, bear Patroclus' body to Achilles;  
And bid the snail-paced Ajax arm for shame.  
There is a thousand Hectors in the field:  
Now here he fights on Galathe his horse,  
And there lacks work; anon he's there afoot,  
And there they fly or die, like scaled sculls  
Before the belching whale; then is he yonder,  
And there the strawy Greeks, ripe for his edge,  
Fall down before him, like the mower's swath:  
Here, there, and every where, he leaves and takes,  
Dexterity so obeying appetite  
That what he will he does, and does so much  
That proof is call'd impossibility.

*Enter ULYSSES*

## ULYSSES

O, courage, courage, princes! great Achilles  
Is arming, weeping, cursing, vowing vengeance:  
Patroclus' wounds have roused his drowsy blood,  
Together with his mangled Myrmidons,  
That noseless, handless, hack'd and chipp'd, come to him,  
Crying on Hector. Ajax hath lost a friend  
And foams at mouth, and he is arm'd and at it,  
Roaring for Troilus, who hath done to-day  
Mad and fantastic execution,  
Engaging and redeeming of himself  
With such a careless force and forceless care  
As if that luck, in very spite of cunning,  
Bade him win all.

*Enter AJAX*

## AJAX

Troilus! thou coward Troilus!

*Exit*

## DIOMEDES

Ay, there, there.

## NESTOR

So, so, we draw together.

*Enter ACHILLES*

## ACHILLES

Where is this Hector?

Come, come, thou boy-queller, show thy face;

Know what it is to meet Achilles angry:

Hector? where's Hector? I will none but Hector.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Another part of the plains.

*Enter AJAX*

**AJAX**

Troilus, thou coward Troilus, show thy head!

*Enter DIOMEDES*

**DIOMEDES**

Troilus, I say! where's Troilus?

**AJAX**

What wouldst thou?

**DIOMEDES**

I would correct him.

**AJAX**

Were I the general, thou shouldst have my office  
Ere that correction. Troilus, I say! what, Troilus!

*Enter TROILUS*

**TROILUS**

O traitor Diomed! turn thy false face, thou traitor,  
And pay thy life thou owest me for my horse!

**DIOMEDES**

Ha, art thou there?

**AJAX**

I'll fight with him alone: stand, Diomed.

**DIOMEDES**

He is my prize; I will not look upon.

**TROILUS**

Come, both you cogging Greeks; have at you both!

*Exeunt, fighting*

*Enter HECTOR*

**HECTOR**

Yea, Troilus? O, well fought, my youngest brother!

*Enter ACHILLES*

**ACHILLES**

Now do I see thee, ha! have at thee, Hector!

**HECTOR**

Pause, if thou wilt.

**ACHILLES**

I do disdain thy courtesy, proud Trojan:  
Be happy that my arms are out of use:  
My rest and negligence befriends thee now,  
But thou anon shalt hear of me again;  
Till when, go seek thy fortune.

*Exit*

**HECTOR**

Fare thee well:  
I would have been much more a fresher man,  
Had I expected thee. How now, my brother!

*Re-enter TROILUS*

**TROILUS**

Ajax hath ta'en AEneas: shall it be?  
No, by the flame of yonder glorious heaven,  
He shall not carry him: I'll be ta'en too,  
Or bring him off: fate, hear me what I say!  
I reckon not though I end my life to-day.

*Exit*

*Enter one in sumptuous armour*

**HECTOR**

Stand, stand, thou Greek; thou art a goodly mark:  
No? wilt thou not? I like thy armour well;  
I'll crush it and unlock the rivets all,  
But I'll be master of it: wilt thou not,  
beast, abide?  
Why, then fly on, I'll hunt thee for thy hide.

*Exeunt*

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Another part of the plains.

*Enter ACHILLES, with Myrmidons*

### ACHILLES

Come here about me, you my Myrmidons;  
Mark what I say. Attend me where I wheel:  
Strike not a stroke, but keep yourselves in breath:  
And when I have the bloody Hector found,  
Empale him with your weapons round about;  
In fellest manner execute your aims.  
Follow me, sirs, and my proceedings eye:  
It is decreed Hector the great must die.

*Exeunt*

*Enter MENELAUS and PARIS, fighting: then THERSITES*

### THERSITES

The cuckold and the cuckold-maker are at it. Now,  
bull! now, dog! 'Loo, Paris, 'loo! now my double-  
henned sparrow! 'loo, Paris, 'loo! The bull has the  
game: ware horns, ho!

*Exeunt PARIS and MENELAUS*

*Enter MARGARELON*

### MARGARELON

Turn, slave, and fight.

### THERSITES

What art thou?

**MARGARELON**

A bastard son of Priam's.

**THERSITES**

I am a bastard too; I love bastards: I am a bastard begot, bastard instructed, bastard in mind, bastard in valour, in every thing illegitimate. One bear will not bite another, and wherefore should one bastard? Take heed, the quarrel's most ominous to us: if the son of a whore fight for a whore, he tempts judgment: farewell, bastard.

*Exit*

**MARGARELON**

The devil take thee, coward!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. Another part of the plains.

*Enter HECTOR*

### HECTOR

Most putrefied core, so fair without,  
Thy goodly armour thus hath cost thy life.  
Now is my day's work done; I'll take good breath:  
Rest, sword; thou hast thy fill of blood and death.

*Puts off his helmet and hangs his shield behind him*

*Enter ACHILLES and Myrmidons*

### ACHILLES

Look, Hector, how the sun begins to set;  
How ugly night comes breathing at his heels:  
Even with the vail and darking of the sun,  
To close the day up, Hector's life is done.

### HECTOR

I am unarm'd; forego this vantage, Greek.

### ACHILLES

Strike, fellows, strike; this is the man I seek.

*HECTOR falls*

So, Ilium, fall thou next! now, Troy, sink down!  
Here lies thy heart, thy sinews, and thy bone.  
On, Myrmidons, and cry you all amain,  
'Achilles hath the mighty Hector slain.'

*A retreat sounded*

Hark! a retire upon our Grecian part.

## **MYRMIDONS**

The Trojan trumpets sound the like, my lord.

## **ACHILLES**

The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth,  
And, stickler-like, the armies separates.  
My half-supp'd sword, that frankly would have fed,  
Pleased with this dainty bait, thus goes to bed.

*Sheathes his sword*

Come, tie his body to my horse's tail;  
Along the field I will the Trojan trail.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troiles and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IX. Another part of the plains.

*Enter AGAMEMNON, AJAX, MENELAUS, NESTOR, DIOMEDES, and others, marching.  
Shouts within*

### AGAMEMNON

Hark! hark! what shout is that?

### NESTOR

Peace, drums!

*Within*

Achilles! Achilles! Hector's slain! Achilles.

### DIOMEDES

The bruit is, Hector's slain, and by Achilles.

### AJAX

If it be so, yet bragless let it be;  
Great Hector was a man as good as he.

### AGAMEMNON

March patiently along: let one be sent  
To pray Achilles see us at our tent.  
If in his death the gods have us befriended,  
Great Troy is ours, and our sharp wars are ended.

*Exeunt, marching*





# Troilus and Cressida

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Troilus and Cressida](#) | Act 5, Scene 10

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE X. Another part of the plains.

*Enter AENEAS and Trojans*

**AENEAS**

Stand, ho! yet are we masters of the field:  
Never go home; here starve we out the night.

*Enter TROILUS*

**TROILUS**

Hector is slain.

**ALL**

Hector! the gods forbid!

**TROILUS**

He's dead; and at the murderer's horse's tail,  
In beastly sort, dragg'd through the shameful field.  
Frown on, you heavens, effect your rage with speed!  
Sit, gods, upon your thrones, and smile at Troy!  
I say, at once let your brief plagues be mercy,  
And linger not our sure destructions on!

**AENEAS**

My lord, you do discomfort all the host!

**TROILUS**

You understand me not that tell me so:  
I do not speak of flight, of fear, of death,

But dare all imminence that gods and men  
Address their dangers in. Hector is gone:  
Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba?  
Let him that will a screech-owl aye be call'd,  
Go in to Troy, and say there, Hector's dead:  
There is a word will Priam turn to stone;  
Make wells and Niobes of the maids and wives,  
Cold statues of the youth, and, in a word,  
Scare Troy out of itself. But, march away:  
Hector is dead; there is no more to say.  
Stay yet. You vile abominable tents,  
Thus proudly pight upon our Phrygian plains,  
Let Titan rise as early as he dare,  
I'll through and through you! and, thou great-sized coward,  
No space of earth shall sunder our two hates:  
I'll haunt thee like a wicked conscience still,  
That mouldeth goblins swift as frenzy's thoughts.  
Strike a free march to Troy! with comfort go:  
Hope of revenge shall hide our inward woe.

*Exeunt AENEAS and Trojans*

*As TROILUS is going out, enter, from the other side, PANDARUS*

**PANDARUS**

But hear you, hear you!

**TROILUS**

Hence, broker-lackey! ignomy and shame  
Pursue thy life, and live aye with thy name!

*Exit*

**PANDARUS**

A goodly medicine for my aching bones! O world!  
world! world! thus is the poor agent despised!  
O traitors and bawds, how earnestly are you set  
a-work, and how ill requited! why should our  
endeavour be so loved and the performance so loathed?

what verse for it? what instance for it? Let me see:  
Full merrily the humble-bee doth sing,  
Till he hath lost his honey and his sting;  
And being once subdued in armed tail,  
Sweet honey and sweet notes together fail.  
Good traders in the flesh, set this in your  
painted cloths.  
As many as be here of pander's hall,  
Your eyes, half out, weep out at Pandar's fall;  
Or if you cannot weep, yet give some groans,  
Though not for me, yet for your aching bones.  
Brethren and sisters of the hold-door trade,  
Some two months hence my will shall here be made:  
It should be now, but that my fear is this,  
Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss:  
Till then I'll sweat and seek about for eases,  
And at that time bequeathe you my diseases.

*Exit*

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Twelfth Night

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [DUKE ORSINO's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The sea-coast.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [OLIVIA'S house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [DUKE ORSINO's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 5: [OLIVIA'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [The sea-coast.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [OLIVIA's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [DUKE ORSINO's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [OLIVIA's garden.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [OLIVIA's garden.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [OLIVIA's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [OLIVIA's garden.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Before OLIVIA's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [OLIVIA's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [OLIVIA's garden.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Before OLIVIA's house.](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. DUKE ORSINO's palace.

*Enter DUKE ORSINO, CURIO, and other Lords; Musicians attending*

### DUKE ORSINO

If music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,  
The appetite may sicken, and so die.  
That strain again! it had a dying fall:  
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:  
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.  
O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,  
That, notwithstanding thy capacity  
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,  
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,  
But falls into abatement and low price,  
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy  
That it alone is high fantastical.

### CURIO

Will you go hunt, my lord?

### DUKE ORSINO

What, Curio?

### CURIO

The hart.

### DUKE ORSINO

Why, so I do, the noblest that I have:  
O, when mine eyes did see Olivia first,  
Methought she purged the air of pestilence!  
That instant was I turn'd into a hart;  
And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,  
E'er since pursue me.

*Enter VALENTINE*

How now! what news from her?

## **VALENTINE**

So please my lord, I might not be admitted;  
But from her handmaid do return this answer:  
The element itself, till seven years' heat,  
Shall not behold her face at ample view;  
But, like a cloistress, she will veiled walk  
And water once a day her chamber round  
With eye-offending brine: all this to season  
A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh  
And lasting in her sad remembrance.

## **DUKE ORSINO**

O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame  
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,  
How will she love, when the rich golden shaft  
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else  
That live in her; when liver, brain and heart,  
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied, and fill'd  
Her sweet perfections with one self king!  
Away before me to sweet beds of flowers:  
Love-thoughts lie rich when canopied with bowers.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The sea-coast.

*Enter VIOLA, a Captain, and Sailors*

**VIOLA**

What country, friends, is this?

**Captain**

This is Illyria, lady.

**VIOLA**

And what should I do in Illyria?

My brother he is in Elysium.

Perchance he is not drown'd: what think you, sailors?

**Captain**

It is perchance that you yourself were saved.

**VIOLA**

O my poor brother! and so perchance may he be.

**Captain**

True, madam: and, to comfort you with chance,  
Assure yourself, after our ship did split,  
When you and those poor number saved with you  
Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,  
Most provident in peril, bind himself,  
Courage and hope both teaching him the practise,  
To a strong mast that lived upon the sea;  
Where, like Arion on the dolphin's back,



I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves  
So long as I could see.

**VIOLA**

For saying so, there's gold:  
Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,  
Whereto thy speech serves for authority,  
The like of him. Know'st thou this country?

**Captain**

Ay, madam, well; for I was bred and born  
Not three hours' travel from this very place.

**VIOLA**

Who governs here?

**Captain**

A noble duke, in nature as in name.

**VIOLA**

What is the name?

**Captain**

Orsino.

**VIOLA**

Orsino! I have heard my father name him:  
He was a bachelor then.

**Captain**

And so is now, or was so very late;  
For but a month ago I went from hence,  
And then 'twas fresh in murmur,--as, you know,

What great ones do the less will prattle of,--  
That he did seek the love of fair Olivia.

**VIOLA**

What's she?

**Captain**

A virtuous maid, the daughter of a count  
That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her  
In the protection of his son, her brother,  
Who shortly also died: for whose dear love,  
They say, she hath abjured the company  
And sight of men.

**VIOLA**

O that I served that lady  
And might not be delivered to the world,  
Till I had made mine own occasion mellow,  
What my estate is!

**Captain**

That were hard to compass;  
Because she will admit no kind of suit,  
No, not the duke's.

**VIOLA**

There is a fair behavior in thee, captain;  
And though that nature with a beauteous wall  
Doth oft close in pollution, yet of thee  
I will believe thou hast a mind that suits  
With this thy fair and outward character.  
I prithee, and I'll pay thee bounteously,  
Conceal me what I am, and be my aid  
For such disguise as haply shall become  
The form of my intent. I'll serve this duke:  
Thou shall present me as an eunuch to him:  
It may be worth thy pains; for I can sing

And speak to him in many sorts of music  
That will allow me very worth his service.  
What else may hap to time I will commit;  
Only shape thou thy silence to my wit.

**Captain**

Be you his eunuch, and your mute I'll be:  
When my tongue blabs, then let mine eyes not see.

**VIOLA**

I thank thee: lead me on.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. OLIVIA'S house.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and MARIA*

### SIR TOBY BELCH

What a plague means my niece, to take the death of her brother thus? I am sure care's an enemy to life.

### MARIA

By my troth, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o' nights: your cousin, my lady, takes great exceptions to your ill hours.

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Why, let her except, before excepted.

### MARIA

Ay, but you must confine yourself within the modest limits of order.

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Confine! I'll confine myself no finer than I am: these clothes are good enough to drink in; and so be these boots too: an they be not, let them hang themselves in their own straps.

### MARIA

That quaffing and drinking will undo you: I heard my lady talk of it yesterday; and of a foolish knight that you brought in one night here to be her wooer.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Who, Sir Andrew Aguecheek?

**MARIA**

Ay, he.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria.

**MARIA**

What's that to the purpose?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why, he has three thousand ducats a year.

**MARIA**

Ay, but he'll have but a year in all these ducats:  
he's a very fool and a prodigal.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Fie, that you'll say so! he plays o' the  
viol-de-gamboys, and speaks three or four languages  
word for word without book, and hath all the good  
gifts of nature.

**MARIA**

He hath indeed, almost natural: for besides that  
he's a fool, he's a great quarreller: and but that  
he hath the gift of a coward to allay the gust he  
hath in quarrelling, 'tis thought among the prudent  
he would quickly have the gift of a grave.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

By this hand, they are scoundrels and subtractors  
that say so of him. Who are they?

**MARIA**

They that add, moreover, he's drunk nightly in your company.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

With drinking healths to my niece: I'll drink to  
her as long as there is a passage in my throat and  
drink in Illyria: he's a coward and a coystrill  
that will not drink to my niece till his brains turn  
o' the toe like a parish-top. What, wench!  
Castiliano vulgo! for here comes Sir Andrew Agueface.

*Enter SIR ANDREW*

**SIR ANDREW**

Sir Toby Belch! how now, Sir Toby Belch!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Sweet Sir Andrew!

**SIR ANDREW**

Bless you, fair shrew.

**MARIA**

And you too, sir.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Accost, Sir Andrew, accost.

**SIR ANDREW**

What's that?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

My niece's chambermaid.

**SIR ANDREW**

Good Mistress Accost, I desire better acquaintance.

**MARIA**

My name is Mary, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

Good Mistress Mary Accost,--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You mistake, knight; 'accost' is front her, board her, woo her, assail her.

**SIR ANDREW**

By my troth, I would not undertake her in this company. Is that the meaning of 'accost'?

**MARIA**

Fare you well, gentlemen.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

An thou let part so, Sir Andrew, would thou mightst never draw sword again.

**SIR ANDREW**

An you part so, mistress, I would I might never draw sword again. Fair lady, do you think you have

fools in hand?

**MARIA**

Sir, I have not you by the hand.

**SIR ANDREW**

Marry, but you shall have; and here's my hand.

**MARIA**

Now, sir, 'thought is free:' I pray you, bring your hand to the buttery-bar and let it drink.

**SIR ANDREW**

Wherefore, sweet-heart? what's your metaphor?

**MARIA**

It's dry, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

Why, I think so: I am not such an ass but I can keep my hand dry. But what's your jest?

**MARIA**

A dry jest, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

Are you full of them?

**MARIA**

Ay, sir, I have them at my fingers' ends: marry, now I let go your hand, I am barren.



*Exit*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

O knight thou lackest a cup of canary: when did I see thee so put down?

**SIR ANDREW**

Never in your life, I think; unless you see canary put me down. Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has: but I am a great eater of beef and I believe that does harm to my wit.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

No question.

**SIR ANDREW**

An I thought that, I'd forswear it. I'll ride home to-morrow, Sir Toby.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Pourquoi, my dear knight?

**SIR ANDREW**

What is 'Pourquoi'? do or not do? I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing and bear-baiting: O, had I but followed the arts!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Then hadst thou had an excellent head of hair.

**SIR ANDREW**

Why, would that have mended my hair?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Past question; for thou seest it will not curl by nature.

**SIR ANDREW**

But it becomes me well enough, does't not?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Excellent; it hangs like flax on a distaff; and I hope to see a housewife take thee between her legs and spin it off.

**SIR ANDREW**

Faith, I'll home to-morrow, Sir Toby: your niece will not be seen; or if she be, it's four to one she'll none of me: the count himself here hard by woos her.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

She'll none o' the count: she'll not match above her degree, neither in estate, years, nor wit; I have heard her swear't. Tut, there's life in't, man.

**SIR ANDREW**

I'll stay a month longer. I am a fellow o' the strangest mind i' the world; I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Art thou good at these kickshawses, knight?

**SIR ANDREW**

As any man in Illyria, whatsoever he be, under the

degree of my betters; and yet I will not compare  
with an old man.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What is thy excellence in a galliard, knight?

**SIR ANDREW**

Faith, I can cut a caper.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And I can cut the mutton to't.

**SIR ANDREW**

And I think I have the back-trick simply as strong  
as any man in Illyria.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Wherefore are these things hid? wherefore have  
these gifts a curtain before 'em? are they like to  
take dust, like Mistress Mall's picture? why dost  
thou not go to church in a galliard and come home in  
a coranto? My very walk should be a jig; I would not  
so much as make water but in a sink-a-pace. What  
dost thou mean? Is it a world to hide virtues in?  
I did think, by the excellent constitution of thy  
leg, it was formed under the star of a galliard.

**SIR ANDREW**

Ay, 'tis strong, and it does indifferent well in a  
flame-coloured stock. Shall we set about some revels?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What shall we do else? were we not born under Taurus?

**SIR ANDREW**

Taurus! That's sides and heart.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

No, sir; it is legs and thighs. Let me see the  
caper; ha! higher: ha, ha! excellent!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. DUKE ORSINO's palace.

*Enter VALENTINE and VIOLA in man's attire*

**VALENTINE**

If the duke continue these favours towards you,  
Cesario, you are like to be much advanced: he hath  
known you but three days, and already you are no stranger.

**VIOLA**

You either fear his humour or my negligence, that  
you call in question the continuance of his love:  
is he inconstant, sir, in his favours?

**VALENTINE**

No, believe me.

**VIOLA**

I thank you. Here comes the count.

*Enter DUKE ORSINO, CURIO, and Attendants*

**DUKE ORSINO**

Who saw Cesario, ho?

**VIOLA**

On your attendance, my lord; here.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Stand you a while aloof, Cesario,  
Thou know'st no less but all; I have unclasp'd  
To thee the book even of my secret soul:  
Therefore, good youth, address thy gait unto her;  
Be not denied access, stand at her doors,  
And tell them, there thy fixed foot shall grow  
Till thou have audience.

**VIOLA**

Sure, my noble lord,  
If she be so abandon'd to her sorrow  
As it is spoke, she never will admit me.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Be clamorous and leap all civil bounds  
Rather than make unprofited return.

**VIOLA**

Say I do speak with her, my lord, what then?

**DUKE ORSINO**

O, then unfold the passion of my love,  
Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith:  
It shall become thee well to act my woes;  
She will attend it better in thy youth  
Than in a nuncio's of more grave aspect.

**VIOLA**

I think not so, my lord.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Dear lad, believe it;  
For they shall yet belie thy happy years,  
That say thou art a man: Diana's lip  
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe

Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,  
And all is semblative a woman's part.  
I know thy constellation is right apt  
For this affair. Some four or five attend him;  
All, if you will; for I myself am best  
When least in company. Prosper well in this,  
And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord,  
To call his fortunes thine.

## **VIOLA**

I'll do my best  
To woo your lady:

*Aside*

yet, a barful strife!  
Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. OLIVIA'S house.

*Enter MARIA and Clown*

**MARIA**

Nay, either tell me where thou hast been, or I will not open my lips so wide as a bristle may enter in way of thy excuse: my lady will hang thee for thy absence.

**Clown**

Let her hang me: he that is well hanged in this world needs to fear no colours.

**MARIA**

Make that good.

**Clown**

He shall see none to fear.

**MARIA**

A good lenten answer: I can tell thee where that saying was born, of 'I fear no colours.'

**Clown**

Where, good Mistress Mary?

**MARIA**

In the wars; and that may you be bold to say in your foolery.



**Clown**

Well, God give them wisdom that have it; and those that are fools, let them use their talents.

**MARIA**

Yet you will be hanged for being so long absent; or, to be turned away, is not that as good as a hanging to you?

**Clown**

Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage; and, for turning away, let summer bear it out.

**MARIA**

You are resolute, then?

**Clown**

Not so, neither; but I am resolved on two points.

**MARIA**

That if one break, the other will hold; or, if both break, your gaskins fall.

**Clown**

Apt, in good faith; very apt. Well, go thy way; if Sir Toby would leave drinking, thou wert as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria.

**MARIA**

Peace, you rogue, no more o' that. Here comes my lady: make your excuse wisely, you were best.

*Exit*

## Clown

Wit, an't be thy will, put me into good fooling!  
Those wits, that think they have thee, do very oft  
prove fools; and I, that am sure I lack thee, may  
pass for a wise man: for what says Quinapalus?  
'Better a witty fool, than a foolish wit.'

*Enter OLIVIA with MALVOLIO*

God bless thee, lady!

## OLIVIA

Take the fool away.

## Clown

Do you not hear, fellows? Take away the lady.

## OLIVIA

Go to, you're a dry fool; I'll no more of you:  
besides, you grow dishonest.

## Clown

Two faults, madonna, that drink and good counsel  
will amend: for give the dry fool drink, then is  
the fool not dry: bid the dishonest man mend  
himself; if he mend, he is no longer dishonest; if  
he cannot, let the botcher mend him. Any thing  
that's mended is but patched: virtue that  
transgresses is but patched with sin; and sin that  
amends is but patched with virtue. If that this  
simple syllogism will serve, so; if it will not,  
what remedy? As there is no true cuckold but  
calamity, so beauty's a flower. The lady bade take  
away the fool; therefore, I say again, take her away.

## OLIVIA

Sir, I bade them take away you.

**Clown**

Misprision in the highest degree! Lady, cucullus non facit monachum; that's as much to say as I wear not motley in my brain. Good madonna, give me leave to prove you a fool.

**OLIVIA**

Can you do it?

**Clown**

Dexterously, good madonna.

**OLIVIA**

Make your proof.

**Clown**

I must catechise you for it, madonna: good my mouse of virtue, answer me.

**OLIVIA**

Well, sir, for want of other idleness, I'll bide your proof.

**Clown**

Good madonna, why mournest thou?

**OLIVIA**

Good fool, for my brother's death.

**Clown**

I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

**OLIVIA**

I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

**Clown**

The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.

**OLIVIA**

What think you of this fool, Malvolio? doth he not mend?

**MALVOLIO**

Yes, and shall do till the pangs of death shake him: infirmity, that decays the wise, doth ever make the better fool.

**Clown**

God send you, sir, a speedy infirmity, for the better increasing your folly! Sir Toby will be sworn that I am no fox; but he will not pass his word for two pence that you are no fool.

**OLIVIA**

How say you to that, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal: I saw him put down the other day with an ordinary fool that has no more brain than a stone. Look you now, he's out of his guard already; unless you laugh and minister occasion to him, he is gagged. I protest, I take these wise men, that crow so at these set kind of fools, no better

than the fools' zanies.

**OLIVIA**

Oh, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless and of free disposition, is to take those things for bird-bolts that you deem cannon-bullets: there is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a known discreet man, though he do nothing but reprove.

**Clown**

Now Mercury endue thee with leasing, for thou speakest well of fools!

*Re-enter MARIA*

**MARIA**

Madam, there is at the gate a young gentleman much desires to speak with you.

**OLIVIA**

From the Count Orsino, is it?

**MARIA**

I know not, madam: 'tis a fair young man, and well attended.

**OLIVIA**

Who of my people hold him in delay?

**MARIA**

Sir Toby, madam, your kinsman.

**OLIVIA**

Fetch him off, I pray you; he speaks nothing but  
madman: fie on him!

*Exit MARIA*

Go you, Malvolio: if it be a suit from the count, I  
am sick, or not at home; what you will, to dismiss it.

*Exit MALVOLIO*

Now you see, sir, how your fooling grows old, and  
people dislike it.

**Clown**

Thou hast spoke for us, madonna, as if thy eldest  
son should be a fool; whose skull Jove cram with  
brains! for,--here he comes,--one of thy kin has a  
most weak pia mater.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH*

**OLIVIA**

By mine honour, half drunk. What is he at the gate, cousin?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

A gentleman.

**OLIVIA**

A gentleman! what gentleman?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

'Tis a gentle man here--a plague o' these  
pickle-herring! How now, sot!

**Clown**

Good Sir Toby!

**OLIVIA**

Cousin, cousin, how have you come so early by this lethargy?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Lechery! I defy lechery. There's one at the gate.

**OLIVIA**

Ay, marry, what is he?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Let him be the devil, an he will, I care not: give me faith, say I. Well, it's all one.

*Exit*

**OLIVIA**

What's a drunken man like, fool?

**Clown**

Like a drowned man, a fool and a mad man: one draught above heat makes him a fool; the second mads him; and a third drowns him.

**OLIVIA**

Go thou and seek the crowner, and let him sit o' my coz; for he's in the third degree of drink, he's drowned: go, look after him.

**Clown**

He is but mad yet, madonna; and the fool shall look

to the madman.

*Exit*

*Re-enter MALVOLIO*

**MALVOLIO**

Madam, yond young fellow swears he will speak with you. I told him you were sick; he takes on him to understand so much, and therefore comes to speak with you. I told him you were asleep; he seems to have a foreknowledge of that too, and therefore comes to speak with you. What is to be said to him, lady? he's fortified against any denial.

**OLIVIA**

Tell him he shall not speak with me.

**MALVOLIO**

Has been told so; and he says, he'll stand at your door like a sheriff's post, and be the supporter to a bench, but he'll speak with you.

**OLIVIA**

What kind o' man is he?

**MALVOLIO**

Why, of mankind.

**OLIVIA**

What manner of man?

**MALVOLIO**

Of very ill manner; he'll speak with you, will you or no.



**OLIVIA**

Of what personage and years is he?

**MALVOLIO**

Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod, or a cooling when 'tis almost an apple: 'tis with him in standing water, between boy and man. He is very well-favoured and he speaks very shrewishly; one would think his mother's milk were scarce out of him.

**OLIVIA**

Let him approach: call in my gentlewoman.

**MALVOLIO**

Gentlewoman, my lady calls.

*Exit*

*Re-enter MARIA*

**OLIVIA**

Give me my veil: come, throw it o'er my face.  
We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.

*Enter VIOLA, and Attendants*

**VIOLA**

The honourable lady of the house, which is she?

**OLIVIA**

Speak to me; I shall answer for her.  
Your will?

## **VIOLA**

Most radiant, exquisite and unmatchable beauty,--I pray you, tell me if this be the lady of the house, for I never saw her: I would be loath to cast away my speech, for besides that it is excellently well penned, I have taken great pains to con it. Good beauties, let me sustain no scorn; I am very comptible, even to the least sinister usage.

## **OLIVIA**

Whence came you, sir?

## **VIOLA**

I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part. Good gentle one, give me modest assurance if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

## **OLIVIA**

Are you a comedian?

## **VIOLA**

No, my profound heart: and yet, by the very fangs of malice I swear, I am not that I play. Are you the lady of the house?

## **OLIVIA**

If I do not usurp myself, I am.

## **VIOLA**

Most certain, if you are she, you do usurp yourself; for what is yours to bestow is not yours to reserve. But this is from my commission: I will on with my speech in your praise, and then show you

the heart of my message.

**OLIVIA**

Come to what is important in't: I forgive you the praise.

**VIOLA**

Alas, I took great pains to study it, and 'tis poetical.

**OLIVIA**

It is the more like to be feigned: I pray you,  
keep it in. I heard you were saucy at my gates,  
and allowed your approach rather to wonder at you  
than to hear you. If you be not mad, be gone; if  
you have reason, be brief: 'tis not that time of  
moon with me to make one in so skipping a dialogue.

**MARIA**

Will you hoist sail, sir? here lies your way.

**VIOLA**

No, good swabber; I am to hull here a little  
longer. Some mollification for your giant, sweet  
lady. Tell me your mind: I am a messenger.

**OLIVIA**

Sure, you have some hideous matter to deliver, when  
the courtesy of it is so fearful. Speak your office.

**VIOLA**

It alone concerns your ear. I bring no overture of  
war, no taxation of homage: I hold the olive in my  
hand; my words are as full of peace as matter.

**OLIVIA**

Yet you began rudely. What are you? what would you?

**VIOLA**

The rudeness that hath appeared in me have I  
learned from my entertainment. What I am, and what I  
would, are as secret as maidenhead; to your ears,  
divinity, to any other's, profanation.

**OLIVIA**

Give us the place alone: we will hear this divinity.

*Exeunt MARIA and Attendants*

Now, sir, what is your text?

**VIOLA**

Most sweet lady,--

**OLIVIA**

A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it.  
Where lies your text?

**VIOLA**

In Orsino's bosom.

**OLIVIA**

In his bosom! In what chapter of his bosom?

**VIOLA**

To answer by the method, in the first of his heart.

**OLIVIA**

O, I have read it: it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

**VIOLA**

Good madam, let me see your face.

**OLIVIA**

Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text: but we will draw the curtain and show you the picture. Look you, sir, such a one I was this present: is't not well done?

*Unveiling*

**VIOLA**

Excellently done, if God did all.

**OLIVIA**

'Tis in grain, sir; 'twill endure wind and weather.

**VIOLA**

'Tis beauty truly blent, whose red and white  
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on:  
Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive,  
If you will lead these graces to the grave  
And leave the world no copy.

**OLIVIA**

O, sir, I will not be so hard-hearted; I will give out divers schedules of my beauty: it shall be inventoried, and every particle and utensil labelled to my will: as, item, two lips, indifferent red; item, two grey eyes, with lids to them; item, one neck, one chin, and so forth. Were you sent hither to praise me?

**VIOLA**

I see you what you are, you are too proud;  
But, if you were the devil, you are fair.  
My lord and master loves you: O, such love  
Could be but recompensed, though you were crown'd  
The nonpareil of beauty!

**OLIVIA**

How does he love me?

**VIOLA**

With adorations, fertile tears,  
With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.

**OLIVIA**

Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him:  
Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,  
Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth;  
In voices well divulged, free, learn'd and valiant;  
And in dimension and the shape of nature  
A gracious person: but yet I cannot love him;  
He might have took his answer long ago.

**VIOLA**

If I did love you in my master's flame,  
With such a suffering, such a deadly life,  
In your denial I would find no sense;  
I would not understand it.

**OLIVIA**

Why, what would you?

**VIOLA**

Make me a willow cabin at your gate,

And call upon my soul within the house;  
Write loyal cantons of contemned love  
And sing them loud even in the dead of night;  
Halloo your name to the reverberate hills  
And make the babbling gossip of the air  
Cry out 'Olivia!' O, You should not rest  
Between the elements of air and earth,  
But you should pity me!

**OLIVIA**

You might do much.  
What is your parentage?

**VIOLA**

Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:  
I am a gentleman.

**OLIVIA**

Get you to your lord;  
I cannot love him: let him send no more;  
Unless, perchance, you come to me again,  
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well:  
I thank you for your pains: spend this for me.

**VIOLA**

I am no fee'd post, lady; keep your purse:  
My master, not myself, lacks recompense.  
Love make his heart of flint that you shall love;  
And let your fervor, like my master's, be  
Placed in contempt! Farewell, fair cruelty.

*Exit*

**OLIVIA**

'What is your parentage?'  
'Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:  
I am a gentleman.' I'll be sworn thou art;

Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions and spirit,  
Do give thee five-fold blazon: not too fast:  
soft, soft!  
Unless the master were the man. How now!  
Even so quickly may one catch the plague?  
Methinks I feel this youth's perfections  
With an invisible and subtle stealth  
To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be.  
What ho, Malvolio!

*Re-enter MALVOLIO*

## **MALVOLIO**

Here, madam, at your service.

## **OLIVIA**

Run after that same peevish messenger,  
The county's man: he left this ring behind him,  
Would I or not: tell him I'll none of it.  
Desire him not to flatter with his lord,  
Nor hold him up with hopes; I am not for him:  
If that the youth will come this way to-morrow,  
I'll give him reasons for't: hie thee, Malvolio.

## **MALVOLIO**

Madam, I will.

*Exit*

## **OLIVIA**

I do I know not what, and fear to find  
Mine eye too great a flatterer for my mind.  
Fate, show thy force: ourselves we do not owe;  
What is decreed must be, and be this so.

*Exit*



[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 1, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The sea-coast.

*Enter ANTONIO and SEBASTIAN*

**ANTONIO**

Will you stay no longer? nor will you not that I go with you?

**SEBASTIAN**

By your patience, no. My stars shine darkly over me: the malignancy of my fate might perhaps distemper yours; therefore I shall crave of you your leave that I may bear my evils alone: it were a bad recompense for your love, to lay any of them on you.  
ANTONIO: Let me yet know of you whither you are bound.

**SEBASTIAN**

No, sooth, sir: my determinate voyage is mere extravagancy. But I perceive in you so excellent a touch of modesty, that you will not extort from me what I am willing to keep in; therefore it charges me in manners the rather to express myself. You must know of me then, Antonio, my name is Sebastian, which I called Roderigo. My father was that Sebastian of Messaline, whom I know you have heard of. He left behind him myself and a sister, both born in an hour: if the heavens had been pleased, would we had so ended! but you, sir, altered that; for some hour before you took me from the breach of the sea was my sister drowned.

**ANTONIO**

Alas the day!

**SEBASTIAN**

A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me, was yet of many accounted beautiful: but, though I could not with such estimable wonder overfar believe that, yet thus far I will boldly publish her; she bore a mind that envy could not but call fair. She is drowned already, sir, with salt water, though I seem to drown her remembrance again with more.

**ANTONIO**

Pardon me, sir, your bad entertainment.

**SEBASTIAN**

O good Antonio, forgive me your trouble.

**ANTONIO**

If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant.

**SEBASTIAN**

If you will not undo what you have done, that is, kill him whom you have recovered, desire it not. Fare ye well at once: my bosom is full of kindness, and I am yet so near the manners of my mother, that upon the least occasion more mine eyes will tell tales of me. I am bound to the Count Orsino's court: farewell.

*Exit*

**ANTONIO**

The gentleness of all the gods go with thee!  
I have many enemies in Orsino's court,  
Else would I very shortly see thee there.  
But, come what may, I do adore thee so,  
That danger shall seem sport, and I will go.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A street.

*Enter VIOLA, MALVOLIO following*

**MALVOLIO**

Were not you even now with the Countess Olivia?

**VIOLA**

Even now, sir; on a moderate pace I have since arrived but hither.

**MALVOLIO**

She returns this ring to you, sir: you might have saved me my pains, to have taken it away yourself. She adds, moreover, that you should put your lord into a desperate assurance she will none of him: and one thing more, that you be never so hardy to come again in his affairs, unless it be to report your lord's taking of this. Receive it so.

**VIOLA**

She took the ring of me: I'll none of it.

**MALVOLIO**

Come, sir, you peevishly threw it to her; and her will is, it should be so returned: if it be worth stooping for, there it lies in your eye; if not, be it his that finds it.

*Exit*

## VIOLA

I left no ring with her: what means this lady?  
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm'd her!  
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,  
That sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue,  
For she did speak in starts distractedly.  
She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion  
Invites me in this churlish messenger.  
None of my lord's ring! why, he sent her none.  
I am the man: if it be so, as 'tis,  
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.  
Disguise, I see, thou art a wickedness,  
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.  
How easy is it for the proper-false  
In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!  
Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we!  
For such as we are made of, such we be.  
How will this fadge? my master loves her dearly;  
And I, poor monster, fond as much on him;  
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.  
What will become of this? As I am man,  
My state is desperate for my master's love;  
As I am woman,--now alas the day!--  
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!  
O time! thou must untangle this, not I;  
It is too hard a knot for me to untie!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. OLIVIA's house.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and SIR ANDREW*

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Approach, Sir Andrew: not to be abed after midnight is to be up betimes; and 'diluculo surgere,' thou know'st,--

### SIR ANDREW

Nay, my troth, I know not: but I know, to be up late is to be up late.

### SIR TOBY BELCH

A false conclusion: I hate it as an unfilled can. To be up after midnight and to go to bed then, is early: so that to go to bed after midnight is to go to bed betimes. Does not our life consist of the four elements?

### SIR ANDREW

Faith, so they say; but I think it rather consists of eating and drinking.

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Thou'rt a scholar; let us therefore eat and drink. Marian, I say! a stoup of wine!

*Enter Clown*

### SIR ANDREW

Here comes the fool, i' faith.

**Clown**

How now, my hearts! did you never see the picture  
of 'we three'?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Welcome, ass. Now let's have a catch.

**SIR ANDREW**

By my troth, the fool has an excellent breast. I  
had rather than forty shillings I had such a leg,  
and so sweet a breath to sing, as the fool has. In  
sooth, thou wast in very gracious fooling last  
night, when thou spokest of Pigrogromitus, of the  
Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus: 'twas  
very good, i' faith. I sent thee sixpence for thy  
leman: hadst it?

**Clown**

I did impetico thy gratillity; for Malvolio's nose  
is no whipstock: my lady has a white hand, and the  
Myrmidons are no bottle-ale houses.

**SIR ANDREW**

Excellent! why, this is the best fooling, when all  
is done. Now, a song.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come on; there is sixpence for you: let's have a song.

**SIR ANDREW**

There's a testril of me too: if one knight give a--



**Clown**

Would you have a love-song, or a song of good life?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

A love-song, a love-song.

**SIR ANDREW**

Ay, ay: I care not for good life.

**Clown**

[Sings]  
O mistress mine, where are you roaming?  
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,  
That can sing both high and low:  
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;  
Journeys end in lovers meeting,  
Every wise man's son doth know.

**SIR ANDREW**

Excellent good, i' faith.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Good, good.

**Clown**

[Sings]  
What is love? 'tis not hereafter;  
Present mirth hath present laughter;  
What's to come is still unsure:  
In delay there lies no plenty;  
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,  
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

**SIR ANDREW**

A mellifluous voice, as I am true knight.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

A contagious breath.

**SIR ANDREW**

Very sweet and contagious, i' faith.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

To hear by the nose, it is dulcet in contagion.  
But shall we make the welkin dance indeed? shall we  
rouse the night-owl in a catch that will draw three  
souls out of one weaver? shall we do that?

**SIR ANDREW**

An you love me, let's do't: I am dog at a catch.

**Clown**

By'r lady, sir, and some dogs will catch well.

**SIR ANDREW**

Most certain. Let our catch be, 'Thou knave.'

**Clown**

'Hold thy peace, thou knave,' knight? I shall be  
constrained in't to call thee knave, knight.

**SIR ANDREW**

'Tis not the first time I have constrained one to  
call me knave. Begin, fool: it begins 'Hold thy peace.'

**Clown**

I shall never begin if I hold my peace.

**SIR ANDREW**

Good, i' faith. Come, begin.

*Catch sung*

*Enter MARIA*

**MARIA**

What a caterwauling do you keep here! If my lady have not called up her steward Malvolio and bid him turn you out of doors, never trust me.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

My lady's a Cataian, we are politicians, Malvolio's a Peg-a-Ramsey, and 'Three merry men be we.' Am not I consanguineous? am I not of her blood? Tillyvally. Lady!

*Sings*

'There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady!'

**Clown**

Beshrew me, the knight's in admirable fooling.

**SIR ANDREW**

Ay, he does well enough if he be disposed, and so do I too: he does it with a better grace, but I do it more natural.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

[Sings] 'O, the twelfth day of December,'--

## **MARIA**

For the love o' God, peace!

*Enter MALVOLIO*

## **MALVOLIO**

My masters, are you mad? or what are you? Have ye no wit, manners, nor honesty, but to gabble like tinkers at this time of night? Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye squeak out your coziers' catches without any mitigation or remorse of voice? Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you?

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

We did keep time, sir, in our catches. Sneek up!

## **MALVOLIO**

Sir Toby, I must be round with you. My lady bade me tell you, that, though she harbours you as her kinsman, she's nothing allied to your disorders. If you can separate yourself and your misdemeanors, you are welcome to the house; if not, an it would please you to take leave of her, she is very willing to bid you farewell.

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

'Farewell, dear heart, since I must needs be gone.'

## **MARIA**

Nay, good Sir Toby.

## **Clown**

'His eyes do show his days are almost done.'

**MALVOLIO**

Is't even so?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

'But I will never die.'

**Clown**

Sir Toby, there you lie.

**MALVOLIO**

This is much credit to you.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

'Shall I bid him go?'

**Clown**

'What an if you do?'

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

'Shall I bid him go, and spare not?'

**Clown**

'O no, no, no, no, you dare not.'

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Out o' tune, sir: ye lie. Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?

**Clown**

Yes, by Saint Anne, and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Thou'rt i' the right. Go, sir, rub your chain with crumbs. A stoup of wine, Maria!

**MALVOLIO**

Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady's favour at any thing more than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil rule: she shall know of it, by this hand.

*Exit*

**MARIA**

Go shake your ears.

**SIR ANDREW**

'Twere as good a deed as to drink when a man's a-hungry, to challenge him the field, and then to break promise with him and make a fool of him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Do't, knight: I'll write thee a challenge: or I'll deliver thy indignation to him by word of mouth.

**MARIA**

Sweet Sir Toby, be patient for tonight: since the youth of the count's was today with thy lady, she is much out of quiet. For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him: if I do not gull him into a nayword, and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed: I know I can do it.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Possess us, possess us; tell us something of him.

**MARIA**

Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of puritan.

**SIR ANDREW**

O, if I thought that I'd beat him like a dog!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What, for being a puritan? thy exquisite reason,  
dear knight?

**SIR ANDREW**

I have no exquisite reason for't, but I have reason  
good enough.

**MARIA**

The devil a puritan that he is, or any thing  
constantly, but a time-pleaser; an affectioned ass,  
that cons state without book and utters it by great  
swarths: the best persuaded of himself, so  
crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is  
his grounds of faith that all that look on him love  
him; and on that vice in him will my revenge find  
notable cause to work.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What wilt thou do?

**MARIA**

I will drop in his way some obscure epistles of  
love; wherein, by the colour of his beard, the shape

of his leg, the manner of his gait, the expressure of his eye, forehead, and complexion, he shall find himself most feelingly personated. I can write very like my lady your niece: on a forgotten matter we can hardly make distinction of our hands.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Excellent! I smell a device.

**SIR ANDREW**

I have't in my nose too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He shall think, by the letters that thou wilt drop, that they come from my niece, and that she's in love with him.

**MARIA**

My purpose is, indeed, a horse of that colour.

**SIR ANDREW**

And your horse now would make him an ass.

**MARIA**

Ass, I doubt not.

**SIR ANDREW**

O, 'twill be admirable!

**MARIA**

Sport royal, I warrant you: I know my physic will work with him. I will plant you two, and let the fool make a third, where he shall find the letter:



observe his construction of it. For this night, to bed, and dream on the event. Farewell.

*Exit*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Good night, Penthesilea.

**SIR ANDREW**

Before me, she's a good wench.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

She's a beagle, true-bred, and one that adores me:  
what o' that?

**SIR ANDREW**

I was adored once too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Let's to bed, knight. Thou hadst need send for more money.

**SIR ANDREW**

If I cannot recover your niece, I am a foul way out.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Send for money, knight: if thou hast her not i'  
the end, call me cut.

**SIR ANDREW**

If I do not, never trust me, take it how you will.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come, come, I'll go burn some sack; 'tis too late  
to go to bed now: come, knight; come, knight.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. DUKE ORSINO's palace.

*Enter DUKE ORSINO, VIOLA, CURIO, and others*

### DUKE ORSINO

Give me some music. Now, good morrow, friends.  
Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,  
That old and antique song we heard last night:  
Methought it did relieve my passion much,  
More than light airs and recollected terms  
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times:  
Come, but one verse.

### CURIO

He is not here, so please your lordship that should sing it.

### DUKE ORSINO

Who was it?

### CURIO

Feste, the jester, my lord; a fool that the lady  
Olivia's father took much delight in. He is about the house.

### DUKE ORSINO

Seek him out, and play the tune the while.

*Exit CURIO. Music plays*

Come hither, boy: if ever thou shalt love,  
In the sweet pangs of it remember me;  
For such as I am all true lovers are,

Unstaid and skittish in all motions else,  
Save in the constant image of the creature  
That is beloved. How dost thou like this tune?

**VIOLA**

It gives a very echo to the seat  
Where Love is throned.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Thou dost speak masterly:  
My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye  
Hath stay'd upon some favour that it loves:  
Hath it not, boy?

**VIOLA**

A little, by your favour.

**DUKE ORSINO**

What kind of woman is't?

**VIOLA**

Of your complexion.

**DUKE ORSINO**

She is not worth thee, then. What years, i' faith?

**VIOLA**

About your years, my lord.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Too old by heaven: let still the woman take  
An elder than herself: so wears she to him,  
So sways she level in her husband's heart:

For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,  
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,  
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,  
Than women's are.

**VIOLA**

I think it well, my lord.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Then let thy love be younger than thyself,  
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;  
For women are as roses, whose fair flower  
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour.

**VIOLA**

And so they are: alas, that they are so;  
To die, even when they to perfection grow!

*Re-enter CURIO and Clown*

**DUKE ORSINO**

O, fellow, come, the song we had last night.  
Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain;  
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun  
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones  
Do use to chant it: it is silly sooth,  
And dallies with the innocence of love,  
Like the old age.

**Clown**

Are you ready, sir?

**DUKE ORSINO**

Ay; prithee, sing.

*Music*

SONG.

**Clown**

Come away, come away, death,  
And in sad cypress let me be laid;  
Fly away, fly away breath;  
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.  
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,  
O, prepare it!  
My part of death, no one so true  
Did share it.  
Not a flower, not a flower sweet  
On my black coffin let there be strown;  
Not a friend, not a friend greet  
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:  
A thousand thousand sighs to save,  
Lay me, O, where  
Sad true lover never find my grave,  
To weep there!

**DUKE ORSINO**

There's for thy pains.

**Clown**

No pains, sir: I take pleasure in singing, sir.

**DUKE ORSINO**

I'll pay thy pleasure then.

**Clown**

Truly, sir, and pleasure will be paid, one time or another.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Give me now leave to leave thee.

## **Clown**

Now, the melancholy god protect thee; and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal. I would have men of such constancy put to sea, that their business might be every thing and their intent every where; for that's it that always makes a good voyage of nothing. Farewell.

*Exit*

## **DUKE ORSINO**

Let all the rest give place.

*CURIO and Attendants retire*

Once more, Cesario,  
Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty:  
Tell her, my love, more noble than the world,  
Prizes not quantity of dirty lands;  
The parts that fortune hath bestow'd upon her,  
Tell her, I hold as giddily as fortune;  
But 'tis that miracle and queen of gems  
That nature pranks her in attracts my soul.

## **VIOLA**

But if she cannot love you, sir?

## **DUKE ORSINO**

I cannot be so answer'd.

## **VIOLA**

Sooth, but you must.  
Say that some lady, as perhaps there is,  
Hath for your love a great a pang of heart

As you have for Olivia: you cannot love her;  
You tell her so; must she not then be answer'd?

**DUKE ORSINO**

There is no woman's sides  
Can bide the beating of so strong a passion  
As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart  
So big, to hold so much; they lack retention  
Alas, their love may be call'd appetite,  
No motion of the liver, but the palate,  
That suffer surfeit, cloyment and revolt;  
But mine is all as hungry as the sea,  
And can digest as much: make no compare  
Between that love a woman can bear me  
And that I owe Olivia.

**VIOLA**

Ay, but I know--

**DUKE ORSINO**

What dost thou know?

**VIOLA**

Too well what love women to men may owe:  
In faith, they are as true of heart as we.  
My father had a daughter loved a man,  
As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,  
I should your lordship.

**DUKE ORSINO**

And what's her history?

**VIOLA**

A blank, my lord. She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought,



And with a green and yellow melancholy  
She sat like patience on a monument,  
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?  
We men may say more, swear more: but indeed  
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove  
Much in our vows, but little in our love.

## **DUKE ORSINO**

But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

## **VIOLA**

I am all the daughters of my father's house,  
And all the brothers too: and yet I know not.  
Sir, shall I to this lady?

## **DUKE ORSINO**

Ay, that's the theme.  
To her in haste; give her this jewel; say,  
My love can give no place, bide no deny.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. OLIVIA's garden.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN*

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Come thy ways, Signior Fabian.

### FABIAN

Nay, I'll come: if I lose a scruple of this sport,  
let me be boiled to death with melancholy.

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Wouldst thou not be glad to have the niggardly  
rascally sheep-biter come by some notable shame?

### FABIAN

I would exult, man: you know, he brought me out o'  
favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here.

### SIR TOBY BELCH

To anger him we'll have the bear again; and we will  
fool him black and blue: shall we not, Sir Andrew?

### SIR ANDREW

An we do not, it is pity of our lives.

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Here comes the little villain.

*Enter MARIA*

How now, my metal of India!

**MARIA**

Get ye all three into the box-tree: Malvolio's coming down this walk: he has been yonder i' the sun practising behavior to his own shadow this half hour: observe him, for the love of mockery; for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him. Close, in the name of jesting! Lie thou there,

*Throws down a letter*

for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling.

*Exit*

*Enter MALVOLIO*

**MALVOLIO**

'Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me: and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on't?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Here's an overweening rogue!

**FABIAN**

O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him: how he jets under his advanced plumes!

**SIR ANDREW**

'Slight, I could so beat the rogue!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Peace, I say.

**MALVOLIO**

To be Count Malvolio!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Ah, rogue!

**SIR ANDREW**

Pistol him, pistol him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Peace, peace!

**MALVOLIO**

There is example for't; the lady of the Strachy  
married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

**SIR ANDREW**

Fie on him, Jezebel!

**FABIAN**

O, peace! now he's deeply in: look how  
imagination blows him.

**MALVOLIO**

Having been three months married to her, sitting in  
my state,--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

O, for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye!

**MALVOLIO**

Calling my officers about me, in my branched velvet gown; having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping,--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Fire and brimstone!

**FABIAN**

O, peace, peace!

**MALVOLIO**

And then to have the humour of state; and after a demure travel of regard, telling them I know my place as I would they should do theirs, to for my kinsman Toby,--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Bolts and shackles!

**FABIAN**

O peace, peace, peace! now, now.

**MALVOLIO**

Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for him: I frown the while; and perchance wind up watch, or play with my--some rich jewel. Toby approaches; courtesies there to me,--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Shall this fellow live?

**FABIAN**

Though our silence be drawn from us with cars, yet peace.

**MALVOLIO**

I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar smile with an austere regard of control,--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And does not Toby take you a blow o' the lips then?

**MALVOLIO**

Saying, 'Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on your niece give me this prerogative of speech,'--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What, what?

**MALVOLIO**

'You must amend your drunkenness.'

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Out, scab!

**FABIAN**

Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot.

**MALVOLIO**

'Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with a foolish knight,'--

**SIR ANDREW**

That's me, I warrant you.

**MALVOLIO**

'One Sir Andrew,'--

**SIR ANDREW**

I knew 'twas I; for many do call me fool.

**MALVOLIO**

What employment have we here?

*Taking up the letter*

**FABIAN**

Now is the woodcock near the gin.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

O, peace! and the spirit of humour intimate reading  
aloud to him!

**MALVOLIO**

By my life, this is my lady's hand these be her  
very C's, her U's and her T's and thus makes she her  
great P's. It is, in contempt of question, her hand.

**SIR ANDREW**

Her C's, her U's and her T's: why that?

**MALVOLIO**

[Reads] 'To the unknown beloved, this, and my good

wishes: '--her very phrases! By your leave, wax.  
Soft! and the impresse her Lucrece, with which she  
uses to seal: 'tis my lady. To whom should this be?

**FABIAN**

This wins him, liver and all.

**MALVOLIO**

[Reads]  
Jove knows I love: But who?  
Lips, do not move;  
No man must know.  
'No man must know.' What follows? the numbers  
altered! 'No man must know:' if this should be  
thee, Malvolio?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Marry, hang thee, brock!

**MALVOLIO**

[Reads]  
I may command where I adore;  
But silence, like a Lucrece knife,  
With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore:  
M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.

**FABIAN**

A fustian riddle!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Excellent wench, say I.

**MALVOLIO**

'M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.' Nay, but first, let



me see, let me see, let me see.

**FABIAN**

What dish o' poison has she dressed him!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And with what wing the staniel cheques at it!

**MALVOLIO**

'I may command where I adore.' Why, she may command me: I serve her; she is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal capacity; there is no obstruction in this: and the end,--what should that alphabetical position portend? If I could make that resemble something in me,--Softly! M, O, A, I,--

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

O, ay, make up that: he is now at a cold scent.

**FABIAN**

Sowter will cry upon't for all this, though it be as rank as a fox.

**MALVOLIO**

M,--Malvolio; M,--why, that begins my name.

**FABIAN**

Did not I say he would work it out? the cur is excellent at faults.

**MALVOLIO**

M,--but then there is no consonancy in the sequel;

that suffers under probation A should follow but O does.

**FABIAN**

And O shall end, I hope.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Ay, or I'll cudgel him, and make him cry O!

**MALVOLIO**

And then I comes behind.

**FABIAN**

Ay, an you had any eye behind you, you might see more detraction at your heels than fortunes before you.

**MALVOLIO**

M, O, A, I; this simulation is not as the former: and yet, to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in my name. Soft! here follows prose.

*Reads*

'If this fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars I am above thee; but be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em. Thy Fates open their hands; let thy blood and spirit embrace them; and, to inure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy humble slough and appear fresh. Be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity: she thus advises thee that sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered: I say, remember. Go to, thou art

made, if thou desirest to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers. Farewell. She that would alter services with thee,  
**THE FORTUNATE-UNHAPPY.'**

Daylight and champaign discovers not more: this is open. I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintance, I will be point-devise the very man. I do not now fool myself, to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-gartered; and in this she manifests herself to my love, and with a kind of injunction drives me to these habits of her liking. I thank my stars I am happy. I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings, and cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. Jove and my stars be praised! Here is yet a postscript.

*Reads*

'Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou entertainest my love, let it appear in thy smiling; thy smiles become thee well; therefore in my presence still smile, dear my sweet, I prithee.'  
Jove, I thank thee: I will smile; I will do everything that thou wilt have me.

*Exit*

**FABIAN**

I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the Sophy.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I could marry this wench for this device.

**SIR ANDREW**

So could I too.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest.

**SIR ANDREW**

Nor I neither.

**FABIAN**

Here comes my noble gull-catcher.

*Re-enter MARIA*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck?

**SIR ANDREW**

Or o' mine either?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Shall I play my freedom at traytrip, and become thy  
bond-slave?

**SIR ANDREW**

I' faith, or I either?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why, thou hast put him in such a dream, that when  
the image of it leaves him he must run mad.

**MARIA**

Nay, but say true; does it work upon him?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Like aqua-vitae with a midwife.

**MARIA**

If you will then see the fruits of the sport, mark his first approach before my lady: he will come to her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a colour she abhors, and cross-gartered, a fashion she detests; and he will smile upon her, which will now be so unsuitable to her disposition, being addicted to a melancholy as she is, that it cannot but turn him into a notable contempt. If you will see it, follow me.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

To the gates of Tartar, thou most excellent devil of wit!

**SIR ANDREW**

I'll make one too.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. OLIVIA's garden.

*Enter VIOLA, and Clown with a tabour*

**VIOLA**

Save thee, friend, and thy music: dost thou live by thy tabour?

**Clown**

No, sir, I live by the church.

**VIOLA**

Art thou a churchman?

**Clown**

No such matter, sir: I do live by the church; for I do live at my house, and my house doth stand by the church.

**VIOLA**

So thou mayst say, the king lies by a beggar, if a beggar dwell near him; or, the church stands by thy tabour, if thy tabour stand by the church.

**Clown**

You have said, sir. To see this age! A sentence is but a cheveril glove to a good wit: how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward!

**VIOLA**

Nay, that's certain; they that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.

**Clown**

I would, therefore, my sister had had no name, sir.

**VIOLA**

Why, man?

**Clown**

Why, sir, her name's a word; and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them.

**VIOLA**

Thy reason, man?

**Clown**

Troth, sir, I can yield you none without words; and words are grown so false, I am loath to prove reason with them.

**VIOLA**

I warrant thou art a merry fellow and carest for nothing.

**Clown**

Not so, sir, I do care for something; but in my conscience, sir, I do not care for you: if that be to care for nothing, sir, I would it would make you invisible.

**VIOLA**

Art not thou the Lady Olivia's fool?

## Clown

No, indeed, sir; the Lady Olivia has no folly: she will keep no fool, sir, till she be married; and fools are as like husbands as pilchards are to herrings; the husband's the bigger: I am indeed not her fool, but her corrupter of words.

## VIOLA

I saw thee late at the Count Orsino's.

## Clown

Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines every where. I would be sorry, sir, but the fool should be as oft with your master as with my mistress: I think I saw your wisdom there.

## VIOLA

Nay, an thou pass upon me, I'll no more with thee. Hold, there's expenses for thee.

## Clown

Now Jove, in his next commodity of hair, send thee a beard!

## VIOLA

By my troth, I'll tell thee, I am almost sick for one;

*Aside*

though I would not have it grow on my chin. Is thy lady within?

## Clown



Would not a pair of these have bred, sir?

**VIOLA**

Yes, being kept together and put to use.

**Clown**

I would play Lord Pandarus of Phrygia, sir, to bring a Cressida to this Troilus.

**VIOLA**

I understand you, sir; 'tis well begged.

**Clown**

The matter, I hope, is not great, sir, begging but a beggar: Cressida was a beggar. My lady is within, sir. I will construe to them whence you come; who you are and what you would are out of my welkin, I might say 'element,' but the word is over-worn.

*Exit*

**VIOLA**

This fellow is wise enough to play the fool;  
And to do that well craves a kind of wit:  
He must observe their mood on whom he jests,  
The quality of persons, and the time,  
And, like the haggard, cheque at every feather  
That comes before his eye. This is a practise  
As full of labour as a wise man's art  
For folly that he wisely shows is fit;  
But wise men, folly-fall'n, quite taint their wit.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH, and SIR ANDREW*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Save you, gentleman.

**VIOLA**

And you, sir.

**SIR ANDREW**

Dieu vous garde, monsieur.

**VIOLA**

Et vous aussi; votre serviteur.

**SIR ANDREW**

I hope, sir, you are; and I am yours.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Will you encounter the house? my niece is desirous  
you should enter, if your trade be to her.

**VIOLA**

I am bound to your niece, sir; I mean, she is the  
list of my voyage.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Taste your legs, sir; put them to motion.

**VIOLA**

My legs do better understand me, sir, than I  
understand what you mean by bidding me taste my legs.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I mean, to go, sir, to enter.

**VIOLA**

I will answer you with gait and entrance. But we  
are prevented.

*Enter OLIVIA and MARIA*

Most excellent accomplished lady, the heavens rain  
odours on you!

**SIR ANDREW**

That youth's a rare courtier: 'Rain odours;' well.

**VIOLA**

My matter hath no voice, to your own most pregnant  
and vouchsafed ear.

**SIR ANDREW**

'Odours,' 'pregnant' and 'vouchsafed:' I'll get 'em  
all three all ready.

**OLIVIA**

Let the garden door be shut, and leave me to my hearing.

*Exeunt SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and MARIA*

Give me your hand, sir.

**VIOLA**

My duty, madam, and most humble service.

**OLIVIA**

What is your name?

**VIOLA**

Cesario is your servant's name, fair princess.

**OLIVIA**

My servant, sir! 'Twas never merry world  
Since lowly feigning was call'd compliment:  
You're servant to the Count Orsino, youth.

**VIOLA**

And he is yours, and his must needs be yours:  
Your servant's servant is your servant, madam.

**OLIVIA**

For him, I think not on him: for his thoughts,  
Would they were blanks, rather than fill'd with me!

**VIOLA**

Madam, I come to whet your gentle thoughts  
On his behalf.

**OLIVIA**

O, by your leave, I pray you,  
I bade you never speak again of him:  
But, would you undertake another suit,  
I had rather hear you to solicit that  
Than music from the spheres.

**VIOLA**

Dear lady,--

**OLIVIA**

Give me leave, beseech you. I did send,  
After the last enchantment you did here,  
A ring in chase of you: so did I abuse

Myself, my servant and, I fear me, you:  
Under your hard construction must I sit,  
To force that on you, in a shameful cunning,  
Which you knew none of yours: what might you think?  
Have you not set mine honour at the stake  
And baited it with all the unmuzzled thoughts  
That tyrannous heart can think? To one of your receiving  
Enough is shown: a cypress, not a bosom,  
Hideth my heart. So, let me hear you speak.

**VIOLA**

I pity you.

**OLIVIA**

That's a degree to love.

**VIOLA**

No, not a grize; for 'tis a vulgar proof,  
That very oft we pity enemies.

**OLIVIA**

Why, then, methinks 'tis time to smile again.  
O, world, how apt the poor are to be proud!  
If one should be a prey, how much the better  
To fall before the lion than the wolf!

*Clock strikes*

The clock upbraids me with the waste of time.  
Be not afraid, good youth, I will not have you:  
And yet, when wit and youth is come to harvest,  
Your were is alike to reap a proper man:  
There lies your way, due west.

**VIOLA**

Then westward-ho! Grace and good disposition  
Attend your ladyship!

You'll nothing, madam, to my lord by me?

**OLIVIA**

Stay:

I prithee, tell me what thou thinkest of me.

**VIOLA**

That you do think you are not what you are.

**OLIVIA**

If I think so, I think the same of you.

**VIOLA**

Then think you right: I am not what I am.

**OLIVIA**

I would you were as I would have you be!

**VIOLA**

Would it be better, madam, than I am?  
I wish it might, for now I am your fool.

**OLIVIA**

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful  
In the contempt and anger of his lip!  
A murderous guilt shows not itself more soon  
Than love that would seem hid: love's night is noon.  
Cesario, by the roses of the spring,  
By maidhood, honour, truth and every thing,  
I love thee so, that, maugre all thy pride,  
Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide.  
Do not extort thy reasons from this clause,  
For that I woo, thou therefore hast no cause,  
But rather reason thus with reason fetter,

Love sought is good, but given unsought better.

**VIOLA**

By innocence I swear, and by my youth  
I have one heart, one bosom and one truth,  
And that no woman has; nor never none  
Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.  
And so adieu, good madam: never more  
Will I my master's tears to you deplore.

**OLIVIA**

Yet come again; for thou perhaps mayst move  
That heart, which now abhors, to like his love.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. OLIVIA's house.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN*

**SIR ANDREW**

No, faith, I'll not stay a jot longer.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason.

**FABIAN**

You must needs yield your reason, Sir Andrew.

**SIR ANDREW**

Marry, I saw your niece do more favours to the count's serving-man than ever she bestowed upon me; I saw't i' the orchard.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Did she see thee the while, old boy? tell me that.

**SIR ANDREW**

As plain as I see you now.

**FABIAN**

This was a great argument of love in her toward you.

**SIR ANDREW**



'Slight, will you make an ass o' me?

**FABIAN**

I will prove it legitimate, sir, upon the oaths of judgment and reason.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And they have been grand-jury-men since before Noah was a sailor.

**FABIAN**

She did show favour to the youth in your sight only to exasperate you, to awake your dormouse valour, to put fire in your heart and brimstone in your liver. You should then have accosted her; and with some excellent jests, fire-new from the mint, you should have banged the youth into dumbness. This was looked for at your hand, and this was balked: the double gilt of this opportunity you let time wash off, and you are now sailed into the north of my lady's opinion; where you will hang like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard, unless you do redeem it by some laudable attempt either of valour or policy.

**SIR ANDREW**

An't be any way, it must be with valour; for policy I hate: I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why, then, build me thy fortunes upon the basis of valour. Challenge me the count's youth to fight with him; hurt him in eleven places: my niece shall take note of it; and assure thyself, there is no love-broker in the world can more prevail in man's commendation with woman than report of valour.

**FABIAN**

There is no way but this, Sir Andrew.

**SIR ANDREW**

Will either of you bear me a challenge to him?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Go, write it in a martial hand; be curst and brief;  
it is no matter how witty, so it be eloquent and fun  
of invention: taunt him with the licence of ink:  
if thou thou'st him some thrice, it shall not be  
amiss; and as many lies as will lie in thy sheet of  
paper, although the sheet were big enough for the  
bed of Ware in England, set 'em down: go, about it.  
Let there be gall enough in thy ink, though thou  
write with a goose-pen, no matter: about it.

**SIR ANDREW**

Where shall I find you?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

We'll call thee at the cubiculo: go.

*Exit SIR ANDREW*

**FABIAN**

This is a dear manikin to you, Sir Toby.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I have been dear to him, lad, some two thousand  
strong, or so.

**FABIAN**

We shall have a rare letter from him: but you'll not deliver't?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Never trust me, then; and by all means stir on the youth to an answer. I think oxen and wainropes cannot hale them together. For Andrew, if he were opened, and you find so much blood in his liver as will clog the foot of a flea, I'll eat the rest of the anatomy.

**FABIAN**

And his opposite, the youth, bears in his visage no great presage of cruelty.

*Enter MARIA*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Look, where the youngest wren of nine comes.

**MARIA**

If you desire the spleen, and will laugh yourself into stitches, follow me. Yond gull Malvolio is turned heathen, a very renegado; for there is no Christian, that means to be saved by believing rightly, can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness. He's in yellow stockings.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

And cross-gartered?

**MARIA**

Most villanously; like a pedant that keeps a school i' the church. I have dogged him, like his murderer. He does obey every point of the letter

that I dropped to betray him: he does smile his  
face into more lines than is in the new map with the  
augmentation of the Indies: you have not seen such  
a thing as 'tis. I can hardly forbear hurling things  
at him. I know my lady will strike him: if she do,  
he'll smile and take't for a great favour.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come, bring us, bring us where he is.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A street.

*Enter SEBASTIAN and ANTONIO*

### SEBASTIAN

I would not by my will have troubled you;  
But, since you make your pleasure of your pains,  
I will no further chide you.

### ANTONIO

I could not stay behind you: my desire,  
More sharp than filed steel, did spur me forth;  
And not all love to see you, though so much  
As might have drawn one to a longer voyage,  
But jealousy what might befall your travel,  
Being skillless in these parts; which to a stranger,  
Unguided and unfriended, often prove  
Rough and unhospitable: my willing love,  
The rather by these arguments of fear,  
Set forth in your pursuit.

### SEBASTIAN

My kind Antonio,  
I can no other answer make but thanks,  
And thanks; and ever [ ] oft good turns  
Are shuffled off with such uncurrent pay:  
But, were my worth as is my conscience firm,  
You should find better dealing. What's to do?  
Shall we go see the reliques of this town?

### ANTONIO

To-morrow, sir: best first go see your lodging.

**SEBASTIAN**

I am not weary, and 'tis long to night:  
I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes  
With the memorials and the things of fame  
That do renown this city.

**ANTONIO**

Would you'ld pardon me;  
I do not without danger walk these streets:  
Once, in a sea-fight, 'gainst the count his galleys  
I did some service; of such note indeed,  
That were I ta'en here it would scarce be answer'd.

**SEBASTIAN**

Belike you slew great number of his people.

**ANTONIO**

The offence is not of such a bloody nature;  
Albeit the quality of the time and quarrel  
Might well have given us bloody argument.  
It might have since been answer'd in repaying  
What we took from them; which, for traffic's sake,  
Most of our city did: only myself stood out;  
For which, if I be lapsed in this place,  
I shall pay dear.

**SEBASTIAN**

Do not then walk too open.

**ANTONIO**

It doth not fit me. Hold, sir, here's my purse.  
In the south suburbs, at the Elephant,  
Is best to lodge: I will bespeak our diet,  
Whiles you beguile the time and feed your knowledge  
With viewing of the town: there shall you have me.

**SEBASTIAN**

Why I your purse?

**ANTONIO**

Haply your eye shall light upon some toy  
You have desire to purchase; and your store,  
I think, is not for idle markets, sir.

**SEBASTIAN**

I'll be your purse-bearer and leave you  
For an hour.

**ANTONIO**

To the Elephant.

**SEBASTIAN**

I do remember.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. OLIVIA's garden.

*Enter OLIVIA and MARIA*

**OLIVIA**

I have sent after him: he says he'll come;  
How shall I feast him? what bestow of him?  
For youth is bought more oft than begg'd or borrow'd.  
I speak too loud.  
Where is Malvolio? he is sad and civil,  
And suits well for a servant with my fortunes:  
Where is Malvolio?

**MARIA**

He's coming, madam; but in very strange manner. He  
is, sure, possessed, madam.

**OLIVIA**

Why, what's the matter? does he rave?

**MARIA**

No, madam, he does nothing but smile: your  
ladyship were best to have some guard about you, if  
he come; for, sure, the man is tainted in's wits.

**OLIVIA**

Go call him hither.

*Exit MARIA*

I am as mad as he,



If sad and merry madness equal be.

*Re-enter MARIA, with MALVOLIO*

How now, Malvolio!

**MALVOLIO**

Sweet lady, ho, ho.

**OLIVIA**

Smilest thou?  
I sent for thee upon a sad occasion.

**MALVOLIO**

Sad, lady! I could be sad: this does make some obstruction in the blood, this cross-gartering; but what of that? if it please the eye of one, it is with me as the very true sonnet is, 'Please one, and please all.'

**OLIVIA**

Why, how dost thou, man? what is the matter with thee?

**MALVOLIO**

Not black in my mind, though yellow in my legs. It did come to his hands, and commands shall be executed: I think we do know the sweet Roman hand.

**OLIVIA**

Wilt thou go to bed, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

To bed! ay, sweet-heart, and I'll come to thee.

**OLIVIA**

God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so and kiss  
thy hand so oft?

**MARIA**

How do you, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

At your request! yes; nightingales answer daws.

**MARIA**

Why appear you with this ridiculous boldness before my lady?

**MALVOLIO**

'Be not afraid of greatness:' 'twas well writ.

**OLIVIA**

What meanest thou by that, Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

'Some are born great,'--

**OLIVIA**

Ha!

**MALVOLIO**

'Some achieve greatness,'--

**OLIVIA**

What sayest thou?

**MALVOLIO**

'And some have greatness thrust upon them.'

**OLIVIA**

Heaven restore thee!

**MALVOLIO**

'Remember who commended thy yellow stockings,'--

**OLIVIA**

Thy yellow stockings!

**MALVOLIO**

'And wished to see thee cross-gartered.'

**OLIVIA**

Cross-gartered!

**MALVOLIO**

'Go to thou art made, if thou desirest to be so;'--

**OLIVIA**

Am I made?

**MALVOLIO**

'If not, let me see thee a servant still.'

**OLIVIA**

Why, this is very midsummer madness.

*Enter Servant*

**Servant**

Madam, the young gentleman of the Count Orsino's is returned: I could hardly entreat him back: he attends your ladyship's pleasure.

**OLIVIA**

I'll come to him.

*Exit Servant*

Good Maria, let this fellow be looked to. Where's my cousin Toby? Let some of my people have a special care of him: I would not have him miscarry for the half of my dowry.

*Exeunt OLIVIA and MARIA*

**MALVOLIO**

O, ho! do you come near me now? no worse man than Sir Toby to look to me! This concurs directly with the letter: she sends him on purpose, that I may appear stubborn to him; for she incites me to that in the letter. 'Cast thy humble slough,' says she; 'be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants; let thy tongue tang with arguments of state; put thyself into the trick of singularity;' and consequently sets down the manner how; as, a sad face, a reverend carriage, a slow tongue, in the habit of some sir of note, and so forth. I have limed her; but it is Jove's doing, and Jove make me thankful! And when she went away now, 'Let this fellow be looked to:' fellow! not Malvolio, nor after my degree, but fellow. Why, every thing adheres together, that no dram of a scruple, no scruple of a scruple, no obstacle, no incredulous or unsafe circumstance--What can be said? Nothing that can be can come between me and the full

prospect of my hopes. Well, Jove, not I, is the doer of this, and he is to be thanked.

*Re-enter MARIA, with SIR TOBY BELCH and FABIAN*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Which way is he, in the name of sanctity? If all the devils of hell be drawn in little, and Legion himself possessed him, yet I'll speak to him.

**FABIAN**

Here he is, here he is. How is't with you, sir?  
how is't with you, man?

**MALVOLIO**

Go off; I discard you: let me enjoy my private: go off.

**MARIA**

Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him! did not I tell you? Sir Toby, my lady prays you to have a care of him.

**MALVOLIO**

Ah, ha! does she so?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Go to, go to; peace, peace; we must deal gently with him: let me alone. How do you, Malvolio? how is't with you? What, man! defy the devil: consider, he's an enemy to mankind.

**MALVOLIO**

Do you know what you say?

**MARIA**

La you, an you speak ill of the devil, how he takes  
it at heart! Pray God, he be not bewitched!

**FABIAN**

Carry his water to the wise woman.

**MARIA**

Marry, and it shall be done to-morrow morning, if I  
live. My lady would not lose him for more than I'll say.

**MALVOLIO**

How now, mistress!

**MARIA**

O Lord!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Prithee, hold thy peace; this is not the way: do  
you not see you move him? let me alone with him.

**FABIAN**

No way but gentleness; gently, gently: the fiend is  
rough, and will not be roughly used.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why, how now, my bawcock! how dost thou, chuck?

**MALVOLIO**

Sir!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Ay, Biddy, come with me. What, man! 'tis not for gravity to play at cherry-pit with Satan: hang him, foul collier!

**MARIA**

Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby, get him to pray.

**MALVOLIO**

My prayers, minx!

**MARIA**

No, I warrant you, he will not hear of godliness.

**MALVOLIO**

Go, hang yourselves all! you are idle shallow things: I am not of your element: you shall know more hereafter.

*Exit*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Is't possible?

**FABIAN**

If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

His very genius hath taken the infection of the device, man.

**MARIA**

Nay, pursue him now, lest the device take air and taint.

**FABIAN**

Why, we shall make him mad indeed.

**MARIA**

The house will be the quieter.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound. My niece is already in the belief that he's mad: we may carry it thus, for our pleasure and his penance, till our very pastime, tired out of breath, prompt us to have mercy on him: at which time we will bring the device to the bar and crown thee for a finder of madmen. But see, but see.

*Enter SIR ANDREW*

**FABIAN**

More matter for a May morning.

**SIR ANDREW**

Here's the challenge, read it: warrant there's vinegar and pepper in't.

**FABIAN**

Is't so saucy?

**SIR ANDREW**

Ay, is't, I warrant him: do but read.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**



Give me.

*Reads*

'Youth, whatsoever thou art, thou art but a scurvy fellow.'

**FABIAN**

Good, and valiant.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

[Reads] 'Wonder not, nor admire not in thy mind, why I do call thee so, for I will show thee no reason for't.'

**FABIAN**

A good note; that keeps you from the blow of the law.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

[Reads] 'Thou comest to the lady Olivia, and in my sight she uses thee kindly: but thou liest in thy throat; that is not the matter I challenge thee for.'

**FABIAN**

Very brief, and to exceeding good sense--less.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

[Reads] 'I will waylay thee going home; where if it be thy chance to kill me,'--

**FABIAN**

Good.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

[Reads] 'Thou killest me like a rogue and a villain.'

## **FABIAN**

Still you keep o' the windy side of the law: good.

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

[Reads] 'Fare thee well; and God have mercy upon one of our souls! He may have mercy upon mine; but my hope is better, and so look to thyself. Thy friend, as thou usest him, and thy sworn enemy, ANDREW AGUECHEEK.

If this letter move him not, his legs cannot:  
I'll give't him.

## **MARIA**

You may have very fit occasion for't: he is now in some commerce with my lady, and will by and by depart.

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

Go, Sir Andrew: scout me for him at the corner the orchard like a bum-baily: so soon as ever thou seest him, draw; and, as thou drawest swear horrible; for it comes to pass oft that a terrible oath, with a swaggering accent sharply twanged off, gives manhood more approbation than ever proof itself would have earned him. Away!

## **SIR ANDREW**

Nay, let me alone for swearing.

*Exit*

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

Now will not I deliver his letter: for the behavior of the young gentleman gives him out to be of good capacity and breeding; his employment between his lord and my niece confirms no less: therefore this

letter, being so excellently ignorant, will breed no terror in the youth: he will find it comes from a clodpole. But, sir, I will deliver his challenge by word of mouth; set upon Aguecheek a notable report of valour; and drive the gentleman, as I know his youth will aptly receive it, into a most hideous opinion of his rage, skill, fury and impetuosity. This will so fright them both that they will kill one another by the look, like cockatrices.

*Re-enter OLIVIA, with VIOLA*

## **FABIAN**

Here he comes with your niece: give them way till he take leave, and presently after him.

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

I will meditate the while upon some horrid message for a challenge.

*Exeunt SIR TOBY BELCH, FABIAN, and MARIA*

## **OLIVIA**

I have said too much unto a heart of stone  
And laid mine honour too unchary out:  
There's something in me that reproves my fault;  
But such a headstrong potent fault it is,  
That it but mocks reproof.

## **VIOLA**

With the same 'havior that your passion bears  
Goes on my master's grief.

## **OLIVIA**

Here, wear this jewel for me, 'tis my picture;  
Refuse it not; it hath no tongue to vex you;

And I beseech you come again to-morrow.  
What shall you ask of me that I'll deny,  
That honour saved may upon asking give?

**VIOLA**

Nothing but this; your true love for my master.

**OLIVIA**

How with mine honour may I give him that  
Which I have given to you?

**VIOLA**

I will acquit you.

**OLIVIA**

Well, come again to-morrow: fare thee well:  
A fiend like thee might bear my soul to hell.

*Exit*

*Re-enter SIR TOBY BELCH and FABIAN*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Gentleman, God save thee.

**VIOLA**

And you, sir.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

That defence thou hast, betake thee to't: of what  
nature the wrongs are thou hast done him, I know  
not; but thy interceptor, full of despite, bloody as  
the hunter, attends thee at the orchard-end:  
dismount thy tuck, be yare in thy preparation, for

thy assailant is quick, skilful and deadly.

**VIOLA**

You mistake, sir; I am sure no man hath any quarrel to me: my remembrance is very free and clear from any image of offence done to any man.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You'll find it otherwise, I assure you: therefore, if you hold your life at any price, betake you to your guard; for your opposite hath in him what youth, strength, skill and wrath can furnish man withal.

**VIOLA**

I pray you, sir, what is he?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

He is knight, dubbed with unhatched rapier and on carpet consideration; but he is a devil in private brawl: souls and bodies hath he divorced three; and his incensement at this moment is so implacable, that satisfaction can be none but by pangs of death and sepulchre. Hob, nob, is his word; give't or take't.

**VIOLA**

I will return again into the house and desire some conduct of the lady. I am no fighter. I have heard of some kind of men that put quarrels purposely on others, to taste their valour: belike this is a man of that quirk.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Sir, no; his indignation derives itself out of a very competent injury: therefore, get you on and give him his desire. Back you shall not to the house, unless you undertake that with me which with

as much safety you might answer him: therefore, on,  
or strip your sword stark naked; for meddle you  
must, that's certain, or forswear to wear iron about you.

**VIOLA**

This is as uncivil as strange. I beseech you, do me  
this courteous office, as to know of the knight what  
my offence to him is: it is something of my  
negligence, nothing of my purpose.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I will do so. Signior Fabian, stay you by this  
gentleman till my return.

*Exit*

**VIOLA**

Pray you, sir, do you know of this matter?

**FABIAN**

I know the knight is incensed against you, even to a  
mortal arbitrement; but nothing of the circumstance more.

**VIOLA**

I beseech you, what manner of man is he?

**FABIAN**

Nothing of that wonderful promise, to read him by  
his form, as you are like to find him in the proof  
of his valour. He is, indeed, sir, the most skilful,  
bloody and fatal opposite that you could possibly  
have found in any part of Illyria. Will you walk  
towards him? I will make your peace with him if I  
can.

## **VIOLA**

I shall be much bound to you for't: I am one that  
had rather go with sir priest than sir knight: I  
care not who knows so much of my mettle.

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter SIR TOBY BELCH, with SIR ANDREW*

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

Why, man, he's a very devil; I have not seen such a  
firago. I had a pass with him, rapier, scabbard and  
all, and he gives me the stuck in with such a mortal  
motion, that it is inevitable; and on the answer, he  
pays you as surely as your feet hit the ground they  
step on. They say he has been fencer to the Sophy.

## **SIR ANDREW**

Pox on't, I'll not meddle with him.

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

Ay, but he will not now be pacified: Fabian can  
scarce hold him yonder.

## **SIR ANDREW**

Plague on't, an I thought he had been valiant and so  
cunning in fence, I'd have seen him damned ere I'd  
have challenged him. Let him let the matter slip,  
and I'll give him my horse, grey Capilet.

## **SIR TOBY BELCH**

I'll make the motion: stand here, make a good show  
on't: this shall end without the perdition of souls.

*Aside*

Marry, I'll ride your horse as well as I ride you.

*Re-enter FABIAN and VIOLA*

*To FABIAN*

I have his horse to take up the quarrel:  
I have persuaded him the youth's a devil.

**FABIAN**

He is as horribly conceited of him; and pants and looks pale, as if a bear were at his heels.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

[To VIOLA] There's no remedy, sir; he will fight with you for's oath sake: marry, he hath better bethought him of his quarrel, and he finds that now scarce to be worth talking of: therefore draw, for the supportance of his vow; he protests he will not hurt you.

**VIOLA**

[Aside] Pray God defend me! A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man.

**FABIAN**

Give ground, if you see him furious.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come, Sir Andrew, there's no remedy; the gentleman will, for his honour's sake, have one bout with you; he cannot by the duello avoid it: but he has promised me, as he is a gentleman and a soldier, he will not hurt you. Come on; to't.

**SIR ANDREW**



Pray God, he keep his oath!

**VIOLA**

I do assure you, 'tis against my will.

*They draw*

*Enter ANTONIO*

**ANTONIO**

Put up your sword. If this young gentleman  
Have done offence, I take the fault on me:  
If you offend him, I for him defy you.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

You, sir! why, what are you?

**ANTONIO**

One, sir, that for his love dares yet do more  
Than you have heard him brag to you he will.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Nay, if you be an undertaker, I am for you.

*They draw*

*Enter Officers*

**FABIAN**

O good Sir Toby, hold! here come the officers.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I'll be with you anon.

**VIOLA**

Pray, sir, put your sword up, if you please.

**SIR ANDREW**

Marry, will I, sir; and, for that I promised you,  
I'll be as good as my word: he will bear you easily  
and reins well.

**First Officer**

This is the man; do thy office.

**Second Officer**

Antonio, I arrest thee at the suit of Count Orsino.

**ANTONIO**

You do mistake me, sir.

**First Officer**

No, sir, no jot; I know your favour well,  
Though now you have no sea-cap on your head.  
Take him away: he knows I know him well.

**ANTONIO**

I must obey.

*To VIOLA*

This comes with seeking you:  
But there's no remedy; I shall answer it.  
What will you do, now my necessity  
Makes me to ask you for my purse? It grieves me  
Much more for what I cannot do for you  
Than what befalls myself. You stand amazed;  
But be of comfort.

**Second Officer**

Come, sir, away.

**ANTONIO**

I must entreat of you some of that money.

**VIOLA**

What money, sir?  
For the fair kindness you have show'd me here,  
And, part, being prompted by your present trouble,  
Out of my lean and low ability  
I'll lend you something: my having is not much;  
I'll make division of my present with you:  
Hold, there's half my coffer.

**ANTONIO**

Will you deny me now?  
Is't possible that my deserts to you  
Can lack persuasion? Do not tempt my misery,  
Lest that it make me so unsound a man  
As to upbraid you with those kindnesses  
That I have done for you.

**VIOLA**

I know of none;  
Nor know I you by voice or any feature:  
I hate ingratitude more in a man  
Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness,  
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption  
Inhabits our frail blood.

**ANTONIO**

O heavens themselves!

**Second Officer**

Come, sir, I pray you, go.

**ANTONIO**

Let me speak a little. This youth that you see here  
I snatch'd one half out of the jaws of death,  
Relieved him with such sanctity of love,  
And to his image, which methought did promise  
Most venerable worth, did I devotion.

**First Officer**

What's that to us? The time goes by: away!

**ANTONIO**

But O how vile an idol proves this god  
Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame.  
In nature there's no blemish but the mind;  
None can be call'd deform'd but the unkind:  
Virtue is beauty, but the beauteous evil  
Are empty trunks o'erflourish'd by the devil.

**First Officer**

The man grows mad: away with him! Come, come, sir.

**ANTONIO**

Lead me on.

*Exit with Officers*

**VIOLA**

Methinks his words do from such passion fly,  
That he believes himself: so do not I.  
Prove true, imagination, O, prove true,  
That I, dear brother, be now ta'en for you!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come hither, knight; come hither, Fabian: we'll  
whisper o'er a couplet or two of most sage saws.

**VIOLA**

He named Sebastian: I my brother know  
Yet living in my glass; even such and so  
In favour was my brother, and he went  
Still in this fashion, colour, ornament,  
For him I imitate: O, if it prove,  
Tempests are kind and salt waves fresh in love.

*Exit*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

A very dishonest paltry boy, and more a coward than  
a hare: his dishonesty appears in leaving his  
friend here in necessity and denying him; and for  
his cowardship, ask Fabian.

**FABIAN**

A coward, a most devout coward, religious in it.

**SIR ANDREW**

'Slid, I'll after him again and beat him.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Do; cuff him soundly, but never draw thy sword.

**SIR ANDREW**

An I do not,--

**FABIAN**

Come, let's see the event.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

I dare lay any money 'twill be nothing yet.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before OLIVIA's house.

*Enter SEBASTIAN and Clown*

**Clown**

Will you make me believe that I am not sent for you?

**SEBASTIAN**

Go to, go to, thou art a foolish fellow:  
Let me be clear of thee.

**Clown**

Well held out, i' faith! No, I do not know you; nor  
I am not sent to you by my lady, to bid you come  
speak with her; nor your name is not Master Cesario;  
nor this is not my nose neither. Nothing that is so is so.

**SEBASTIAN**

I prithee, vent thy folly somewhere else: Thou  
know'st not me.

**Clown**

Vent my folly! he has heard that word of some  
great man and now applies it to a fool. Vent my  
folly! I am afraid this great lubber, the world,  
will prove a cockney. I prithee now, ungird thy  
strangeness and tell me what I shall vent to my  
lady: shall I vent to her that thou art coming?

**SEBASTIAN**

I prithee, foolish Greek, depart from me: There's money for thee: if you tarry longer, I shall give worse payment.

**Clown**

By my troth, thou hast an open hand. These wise men that give fools money get themselves a good report--after fourteen years' purchase.

*Enter SIR ANDREW, SIR TOBY BELCH, and FABIAN*

**SIR ANDREW**

Now, sir, have I met you again? there's for you.

**SEBASTIAN**

Why, there's for thee, and there, and there. Are all the people mad?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Hold, sir, or I'll throw your dagger o'er the house.

**Clown**

This will I tell my lady straight: I would not be in some of your coats for two pence.

*Exit*

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come on, sir; hold.

**SIR ANDREW**

Nay, let him alone: I'll go another way to work with him; I'll have an action of battery against him, if there be any law in Illyria: though I



struck him first, yet it's no matter for that.

**SEBASTIAN**

Let go thy hand.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Come, sir, I will not let you go. Come, my young soldier, put up your iron: you are well fleshed; come on.

**SEBASTIAN**

I will be free from thee. What wouldst thou now? If thou darest tempt me further, draw thy sword.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

What, what? Nay, then I must have an ounce or two of this malapert blood from you.

*Enter OLIVIA*

**OLIVIA**

Hold, Toby; on thy life I charge thee, hold!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Madam!

**OLIVIA**

Will it be ever thus? Ungracious wretch,  
Fit for the mountains and the barbarous caves,  
Where manners ne'er were preach'd! out of my sight!  
Be not offended, dear Cesario.  
Rudesby, be gone!

*Exeunt SIR TOBY BELCH, SIR ANDREW, and FABIAN*

I prithee, gentle friend,  
Let thy fair wisdom, not thy passion, sway  
In this uncivil and thou unjust extent  
Against thy peace. Go with me to my house,  
And hear thou there how many fruitless pranks  
This ruffian hath botch'd up, that thou thereby  
Mayst smile at this: thou shalt not choose but go:  
Do not deny. Beshrew his soul for me,  
He started one poor heart of mine in thee.

**SEBASTIAN**

What relish is in this? how runs the stream?  
Or I am mad, or else this is a dream:  
Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep;  
If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!

**OLIVIA**

Nay, come, I prithee; would thou'ldst be ruled by me!

**SEBASTIAN**

Madam, I will.

**OLIVIA**

O, say so, and so be!

*Exeunt*

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. OLIVIA's house.

*Enter MARIA and Clown*

### MARIA

Nay, I prithee, put on this gown and this beard;  
make him believe thou art Sir Topas the curate: do  
it quickly; I'll call Sir Toby the whilst.

*Exit*

### Clown

Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble myself  
in't; and I would I were the first that ever  
dissembled in such a gown. I am not tall enough to  
become the function well, nor lean enough to be  
thought a good student; but to be said an honest man  
and a good housekeeper goes as fairly as to say a  
careful man and a great scholar. The competitors enter.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and MARIA*

### SIR TOBY BELCH

Jove bless thee, master Parson.

### Clown

Bonos dies, Sir Toby: for, as the old hermit of  
Prague, that never saw pen and ink, very wittily  
said to a niece of King Gorboduc, 'That that is is;'  
so I, being Master Parson, am Master Parson; for,  
what is 'that' but 'that,' and 'is' but 'is'?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

To him, Sir Topas.

**Clown**

What, ho, I say! peace in this prison!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

The knave counterfeits well; a good knave.

**MALVOLIO**

[Within] Who calls there?

**Clown**

Sir Topas the curate, who comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, go to my lady.

**Clown**

Out, hyperbolic fiend! how vexest thou this man! talkest thou nothing but of ladies?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Well said, Master Parson.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas, never was man thus wronged: good Sir Topas, do not think I am mad: they have laid me here in hideous darkness.

**Clown**

Fie, thou dishonest Satan! I call thee by the most modest terms; for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the devil himself with courtesy: sayest thou that house is dark?

**MALVOLIO**

As hell, Sir Topas.

**Clown**

Why it hath bay windows transparent as barricadoes, and the clearstores toward the south north are as lustrous as ebony; and yet complainest thou of obstruction?

**MALVOLIO**

I am not mad, Sir Topas: I say to you, this house is dark.

**Clown**

Madman, thou errest: I say, there is no darkness but ignorance; in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog.

**MALVOLIO**

I say, this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell; and I say, there was never man thus abused. I am no more mad than you are: make the trial of it in any constant question.

**Clown**

What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?

**MALVOLIO**

That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

**Clown**

What thinkest thou of his opinion?

**MALVOLIO**

I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion.

**Clown**

Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness:  
thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will  
allow of thy wits, and fear to kill a woodcock, lest  
thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam. Fare thee well.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas, Sir Topas!

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

My most exquisite Sir Topas!

**Clown**

Nay, I am for all waters.

**MARIA**

Thou mightst have done this without thy beard and  
gown: he sees thee not.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

To him in thine own voice, and bring me word how  
thou findest him: I would we were well rid of this  
knavery. If he may be conveniently delivered, I  
would he were, for I am now so far in offence with  
my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this  
sport to the upshot. Come by and by to my chamber.

*Exeunt SIR TOBY BELCH and MARIA*

**Clown**

[Singing]

'Hey, Robin, jolly Robin,  
Tell me how thy lady does.'

**MALVOLIO**

Fool!

**Clown**

'My lady is unkind, perdy.'

**MALVOLIO**

Fool!

**Clown**

'Alas, why is she so?'

**MALVOLIO**

Fool, I say!

**Clown**

'She loves another'--Who calls, ha?

**MALVOLIO**

Good fool, as ever thou wilt deserve well at my  
hand, help me to a candle, and pen, ink and paper:  
as I am a gentleman, I will live to be thankful to  
thee for't.

**Clown**

Master Malvolio?

**MALVOLIO**

Ay, good fool.

**Clown**

Alas, sir, how fell you besides your five wits?

**MALVOLIO**

Fool, there was never a man so notoriously abused: I am as well in my wits, fool, as thou art.

**Clown**

But as well? then you are mad indeed, if you be no better in your wits than a fool.

**MALVOLIO**

They have here propertied me; keep me in darkness, send ministers to me, asses, and do all they can to face me out of my wits.

**Clown**

Advise you what you say; the minister is here. Malvolio, Malvolio, thy wits the heavens restore! endeavour thyself to sleep, and leave thy vain bibble babble.

**MALVOLIO**

Sir Topas!

**Clown**

Maintain no words with him, good fellow. Who, I, sir? not I, sir. God be wi' you, good Sir Topas.



Merry, amen. I will, sir, I will.

**MALVOLIO**

Fool, fool, fool, I say!

**Clown**

Alas, sir, be patient. What say you sir? I am shent for speaking to you.

**MALVOLIO**

Good fool, help me to some light and some paper: I tell thee, I am as well in my wits as any man in Illyria.

**Clown**

Well-a-day that you were, sir

**MALVOLIO**

By this hand, I am. Good fool, some ink, paper and light; and convey what I will set down to my lady: it shall advantage thee more than ever the bearing of letter did.

**Clown**

I will help you to't. But tell me true, are you not mad indeed? or do you but counterfeit?

**MALVOLIO**

Believe me, I am not; I tell thee true.

**Clown**

Nay, I'll ne'er believe a madman till I see his brains. I will fetch you light and paper and ink.

## MALVOLIO

Fool, I'll requite it in the highest degree: I  
prithee, be gone.

## Clown

[Singing]

I am gone, sir,  
And anon, sir,  
I'll be with you again,  
In a trice,  
Like to the old Vice,  
Your need to sustain;  
Who, with dagger of lath,  
In his rage and his wrath,  
Cries, ah, ha! to the devil:  
Like a mad lad,  
Pare thy nails, dad;  
Adieu, good man devil.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. OLIVIA's garden.

*Enter SEBASTIAN*

### SEBASTIAN

This is the air; that is the glorious sun;  
This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't;  
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,  
Yet 'tis not madness. Where's Antonio, then?  
I could not find him at the Elephant:  
Yet there he was; and there I found this credit,  
That he did range the town to seek me out.  
His counsel now might do me golden service;  
For though my soul disputes well with my sense,  
That this may be some error, but no madness,  
Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune  
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,  
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes  
And wrangle with my reason that persuades me  
To any other trust but that I am mad  
Or else the lady's mad; yet, if 'twere so,  
She could not sway her house, command her followers,  
Take and give back affairs and their dispatch  
With such a smooth, discreet and stable bearing  
As I perceive she does: there's something in't  
That is deceiveable. But here the lady comes.

*Enter OLIVIA and Priest*

### OLIVIA

Blame not this haste of mine. If you mean well,  
Now go with me and with this holy man  
Into the chantry by: there, before him,  
And underneath that consecrated roof,  
Plight me the full assurance of your faith;

That my most jealous and too doubtful soul  
May live at peace. He shall conceal it  
Whiles you are willing it shall come to note,  
What time we will our celebration keep  
According to my birth. What do you say?

**SEBASTIAN**

I'll follow this good man, and go with you;  
And, having sworn truth, ever will be true.

**OLIVIA**

Then lead the way, good father; and heavens so shine,  
That they may fairly note this act of mine!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Twelfth Night

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Twelfth Night](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before OLIVIA's house.

*Enter Clown and FABIAN*

**FABIAN**

Now, as thou lovest me, let me see his letter.

**Clown**

Good Master Fabian, grant me another request.

**FABIAN**

Any thing.

**Clown**

Do not desire to see this letter.

**FABIAN**

This is, to give a dog, and in recompense desire my dog again.

*Enter DUKE ORSINO, VIOLA, CURIO, and Lords*

**DUKE ORSINO**

Belong you to the Lady Olivia, friends?

**Clown**

Ay, sir; we are some of her trappings.

**DUKE ORSINO**

I know thee well; how dost thou, my good fellow?

**Clown**

Truly, sir, the better for my foes and the worse for my friends.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Just the contrary; the better for thy friends.

**Clown**

No, sir, the worse.

**DUKE ORSINO**

How can that be?

**Clown**

Marry, sir, they praise me and make an ass of me; now my foes tell me plainly I am an ass: so that by my foes, sir I profit in the knowledge of myself, and by my friends, I am abused: so that, conclusions to be as kisses, if your four negatives make your two affirmatives why then, the worse for my friends and the better for my foes.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Why, this is excellent.

**Clown**

By my troth, sir, no; though it please you to be one of my friends.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Thou shalt not be the worse for me: there's gold.

**Clown**

But that it would be double-dealing, sir, I would you could make it another.

**DUKE ORSINO**

O, you give me ill counsel.

**Clown**

Put your grace in your pocket, sir, for this once, and let your flesh and blood obey it.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Well, I will be so much a sinner, to be a double-dealer: there's another.

**Clown**

Primo, secundo, tertio, is a good play; and the old saying is, the third pays for all: the triplex, sir, is a good tripping measure; or the bells of Saint Bennet, sir, may put you in mind; one, two, three.

**DUKE ORSINO**

You can fool no more money out of me at this throw: if you will let your lady know I am here to speak with her, and bring her along with you, it may awake my bounty further.

**Clown**

Marry, sir, lullaby to your bounty till I come again. I go, sir; but I would not have you to think that my desire of having is the sin of covetousness: but, as you say, sir, let your bounty take a nap, I

will awake it anon.

*Exit*

**VIOLA**

Here comes the man, sir, that did rescue me.

*Enter ANTONIO and Officers*

**DUKE ORSINO**

That face of his I do remember well;  
Yet, when I saw it last, it was besmear'd  
As black as Vulcan in the smoke of war:  
A bawbling vessel was he captain of,  
For shallow draught and bulk unprizable;  
With which such scathful grapple did he make  
With the most noble bottom of our fleet,  
That very envy and the tongue of loss  
Cried fame and honour on him. What's the matter?

**First Officer**

Orsino, this is that Antonio  
That took the Phoenix and her fraught from Candy;  
And this is he that did the Tiger board,  
When your young nephew Titus lost his leg:  
Here in the streets, desperate of shame and state,  
In private brabble did we apprehend him.

**VIOLA**

He did me kindness, sir, drew on my side;  
But in conclusion put strange speech upon me:  
I know not what 'twas but distraction.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Notable pirate! thou salt-water thief!  
What foolish boldness brought thee to their mercies,



Whom thou, in terms so bloody and so dear,  
Hast made thine enemies?

**ANTONIO**

Orsino, noble sir,  
Be pleased that I shake off these names you give me:  
Antonio never yet was thief or pirate,  
Though I confess, on base and ground enough,  
Orsino's enemy. A witchcraft drew me hither:  
That most ingrateful boy there by your side,  
From the rude sea's enraged and foamy mouth  
Did I redeem; a wreck past hope he was:  
His life I gave him and did thereto add  
My love, without retention or restraint,  
All his in dedication; for his sake  
Did I expose myself, pure for his love,  
Into the danger of this adverse town;  
Drew to defend him when he was beset:  
Where being apprehended, his false cunning,  
Not meaning to partake with me in danger,  
Taught him to face me out of his acquaintance,  
And grew a twenty years removed thing  
While one would wink; denied me mine own purse,  
Which I had recommended to his use  
Not half an hour before.

**VIOLA**

How can this be?

**DUKE ORSINO**

When came he to this town?

**ANTONIO**

To-day, my lord; and for three months before,  
No interim, not a minute's vacancy,  
Both day and night did we keep company.

*Enter OLIVIA and Attendants*

**DUKE ORSINO**

Here comes the countess: now heaven walks on earth.  
But for thee, fellow; fellow, thy words are madness:  
Three months this youth hath tended upon me;  
But more of that anon. Take him aside.

**OLIVIA**

What would my lord, but that he may not have,  
Wherein Olivia may seem serviceable?  
Cesario, you do not keep promise with me.

**VIOLA**

Madam!

**DUKE ORSINO**

Gracious Olivia,--

**OLIVIA**

What do you say, Cesario? Good my lord,--

**VIOLA**

My lord would speak; my duty hushes me.

**OLIVIA**

If it be aught to the old tune, my lord,  
It is as fat and fulsome to mine ear  
As howling after music.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Still so cruel?

**OLIVIA**

Still so constant, lord.

**DUKE ORSINO**

What, to perverseness? you uncivil lady,  
To whose ingrate and unauspicious altars  
My soul the faithfull'st offerings hath breathed out  
That e'er devotion tender'd! What shall I do?

**OLIVIA**

Even what it please my lord, that shall become him.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,  
Like to the Egyptian thief at point of death,  
Kill what I love?--a savage jealousy  
That sometimes savours nobly. But hear me this:  
Since you to non-regardance cast my faith,  
And that I partly know the instrument  
That screws me from my true place in your favour,  
Live you the marble-breasted tyrant still;  
But this your minion, whom I know you love,  
And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,  
Him will I tear out of that cruel eye,  
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite.  
Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in mischief:  
I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,  
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.

**VIOLA**

And I, most jocund, apt and willingly,  
To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die.

**OLIVIA**

Where goes Cesario?

**VIOLA**

After him I love  
More than I love these eyes, more than my life,  
More, by all mores, than e'er I shall love wife.  
If I do feign, you witnesses above  
Punish my life for tainting of my love!

**OLIVIA**

Ay me, detested! how am I beguiled!

**VIOLA**

Who does beguile you? who does do you wrong?

**OLIVIA**

Hast thou forgot thyself? is it so long?  
Call forth the holy father.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Come, away!

**OLIVIA**

Whither, my lord? Cesario, husband, stay.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Husband!

**OLIVIA**

Ay, husband: can he that deny?

**DUKE ORSINO**

Her husband, sirrah!

**VIOLA**

No, my lord, not I.

## **OLIVIA**

Alas, it is the baseness of thy fear  
That makes thee strangle thy propriety:  
Fear not, Cesario; take thy fortunes up;  
Be that thou know'st thou art, and then thou art  
As great as that thou fear'st.

*Enter Priest*

O, welcome, father!  
Father, I charge thee, by thy reverence,  
Here to unfold, though lately we intended  
To keep in darkness what occasion now  
Reveals before 'tis ripe, what thou dost know  
Hath newly pass'd between this youth and me.

## **Priest**

A contract of eternal bond of love,  
Confirm'd by mutual joinder of your hands,  
Attested by the holy close of lips,  
Strengthen'd by interchangement of your rings;  
And all the ceremony of this compact  
Seal'd in my function, by my testimony:  
Since when, my watch hath told me, toward my grave  
I have travell'd but two hours.

## **DUKE ORSINO**

O thou dissembling cub! what wilt thou be  
When time hath sow'd a grizzle on thy case?  
Or will not else thy craft so quickly grow,  
That thine own trip shall be thine overthrow?  
Farewell, and take her; but direct thy feet  
Where thou and I henceforth may never meet.

## **VIOLA**

My lord, I do protest--

**OLIVIA**

O, do not swear!  
Hold little faith, though thou hast too much fear.

*Enter SIR ANDREW*

**SIR ANDREW**

For the love of God, a surgeon! Send one presently  
to Sir Toby.

**OLIVIA**

What's the matter?

**SIR ANDREW**

He has broke my head across and has given Sir Toby  
a bloody coxcomb too: for the love of God, your  
help! I had rather than forty pound I were at home.

**OLIVIA**

Who has done this, Sir Andrew?

**SIR ANDREW**

The count's gentleman, one Cesario: we took him for  
a coward, but he's the very devil incardinate.

**DUKE ORSINO**

My gentleman, Cesario?

**SIR ANDREW**

'Od's lifelings, here he is! You broke my head for  
nothing; and that that I did, I was set on to do't

by Sir Toby.

**VIOLA**

Why do you speak to me? I never hurt you:  
You drew your sword upon me without cause;  
But I bespoke you fair, and hurt you not.

**SIR ANDREW**

If a bloody coxcomb be a hurt, you have hurt me: I  
think you set nothing by a bloody coxcomb.

*Enter SIR TOBY BELCH and Clown*

Here comes Sir Toby halting; you shall hear more:  
but if he had not been in drink, he would have  
tickled you othergates than he did.

**DUKE ORSINO**

How now, gentleman! how is't with you?

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

That's all one: has hurt me, and there's the end  
on't. Sot, didst see Dick surgeon, sot?

**Clown**

O, he's drunk, Sir Toby, an hour ago; his eyes  
were set at eight i' the morning.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Then he's a rogue, and a passy measures panyn: I  
hate a drunken rogue.

**OLIVIA**

Away with him! Who hath made this havoc with them?

**SIR ANDREW**

I'll help you, Sir Toby, because well be dressed together.

**SIR TOBY BELCH**

Will you help? an ass-head and a coxcomb and a knave, a thin-faced knave, a gull!

**OLIVIA**

Get him to bed, and let his hurt be look'd to.

*Exeunt Clown, FABIAN, SIR TOBY BELCH, and SIR ANDREW*

*Enter SEBASTIAN*

**SEBASTIAN**

I am sorry, madam, I have hurt your kinsman:  
But, had it been the brother of my blood,  
I must have done no less with wit and safety.  
You throw a strange regard upon me, and by that  
I do perceive it hath offended you:  
Pardon me, sweet one, even for the vows  
We made each other but so late ago.

**DUKE ORSINO**

One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons,  
A natural perspective, that is and is not!

**SEBASTIAN**

Antonio, O my dear Antonio!  
How have the hours rack'd and tortured me,  
Since I have lost thee!

**ANTONIO**



Sebastian are you?

**SEBASTIAN**

Fear'st thou that, Antonio?

**ANTONIO**

How have you made division of yourself?  
An apple, cleft in two, is not more twin  
Than these two creatures. Which is Sebastian?

**OLIVIA**

Most wonderful!

**SEBASTIAN**

Do I stand there? I never had a brother;  
Nor can there be that deity in my nature,  
Of here and every where. I had a sister,  
Whom the blind waves and surges have devour'd.  
Of charity, what kin are you to me?  
What countryman? what name? what parentage?

**VIOLA**

Of Messaline: Sebastian was my father;  
Such a Sebastian was my brother too,  
So went he suited to his watery tomb:  
If spirits can assume both form and suit  
You come to fright us.

**SEBASTIAN**

A spirit I am indeed;  
But am in that dimension grossly clad  
Which from the womb I did participate.  
Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,  
I should my tears let fall upon your cheek,  
And say 'Thrice-welcome, drowned Viola!'

**VIOLA**

My father had a mole upon his brow.

**SEBASTIAN**

And so had mine.

**VIOLA**

And died that day when Viola from her birth  
Had number'd thirteen years.

**SEBASTIAN**

O, that record is lively in my soul!  
He finished indeed his mortal act  
That day that made my sister thirteen years.

**VIOLA**

If nothing lets to make us happy both  
But this my masculine usurp'd attire,  
Do not embrace me till each circumstance  
Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump  
That I am Viola: which to confirm,  
I'll bring you to a captain in this town,  
Where lie my maiden weeds; by whose gentle help  
I was preserved to serve this noble count.  
All the occurrence of my fortune since  
Hath been between this lady and this lord.

**SEBASTIAN**

[To OLIVIA] So comes it, lady, you have been mistook:  
But nature to her bias drew in that.  
You would have been contracted to a maid;  
Nor are you therein, by my life, deceived,  
You are betroth'd both to a maid and man.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Be not amazed; right noble is his blood.  
If this be so, as yet the glass seems true,  
I shall have share in this most happy wreck.

*To VIOLA*

Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times  
Thou never shouldst love woman like to me.

**VIOLA**

And all those sayings will I overswear;  
And those swearings keep as true in soul  
As doth that orb'd continent the fire  
That severs day from night.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Give me thy hand;  
And let me see thee in thy woman's weeds.

**VIOLA**

The captain that did bring me first on shore  
Hath my maid's garments: he upon some action  
Is now in durance, at Malvolio's suit,  
A gentleman, and follower of my lady's.

**OLIVIA**

He shall enlarge him: fetch Malvolio hither:  
And yet, alas, now I remember me,  
They say, poor gentleman, he's much distract.

*Re-enter Clown with a letter, and FABIAN*

A most extracting frenzy of mine own  
From my remembrance clearly banish'd his.  
How does he, sirrah?

**Clown**

Truly, madam, he holds Belzebub at the staves's end as well as a man in his case may do: has here writ a letter to you; I should have given't you to-day morning, but as a madman's epistles are no gospels, so it skills not much when they are delivered.

**OLIVIA**

Open't, and read it.

**Clown**

Look then to be well edified when the fool delivers the madman.

*Reads*

'By the Lord, madam,'--

**OLIVIA**

How now! art thou mad?

**Clown**

No, madam, I do but read madness: an your ladyship will have it as it ought to be, you must allow Vox.

**OLIVIA**

Prithee, read i' thy right wits.

**Clown**

So I do, madonna; but to read his right wits is to read thus: therefore perpend, my princess, and give ear.

**OLIVIA**

Read it you, sirrah.

*To FABIAN*

**FABIAN**

[Reads] 'By the Lord, madam, you wrong me, and the world shall know it: though you have put me into darkness and given your drunken cousin rule over me, yet have I the benefit of my senses as well as your ladyship. I have your own letter that induced me to the semblance I put on; with the which I doubt not but to do myself much right, or you much shame. Think of me as you please. I leave my duty a little unthought of and speak out of my injury.  
THE MADLY-USED MALVOLIO.'

**OLIVIA**

Did he write this?

**Clown**

Ay, madam.

**DUKE ORSINO**

This savours not much of distraction.

**OLIVIA**

See him deliver'd, Fabian; bring him hither.

*Exit FABIAN*

My lord so please you, these things further  
thought on,  
To think me as well a sister as a wife,  
One day shall crown the alliance on't, so please you,  
Here at my house and at my proper cost.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Madam, I am most apt to embrace your offer.

*To VIOLA*

Your master quits you; and for your service done him,  
So much against the mettle of your sex,  
So far beneath your soft and tender breeding,  
And since you call'd me master for so long,  
Here is my hand: you shall from this time be  
Your master's mistress.

**OLIVIA**

A sister! you are she.

*Re-enter FABIAN, with MALVOLIO*

**DUKE ORSINO**

Is this the madman?

**OLIVIA**

Ay, my lord, this same.  
How now, Malvolio!

**MALVOLIO**

Madam, you have done me wrong,  
Notorious wrong.

**OLIVIA**

Have I, Malvolio? no.

**MALVOLIO**

Lady, you have. Pray you, peruse that letter.  
You must not now deny it is your hand:  
Write from it, if you can, in hand or phrase;  
Or say 'tis not your seal, nor your invention:

You can say none of this: well, grant it then  
And tell me, in the modesty of honour,  
Why you have given me such clear lights of favour,  
Bade me come smiling and cross-garter'd to you,  
To put on yellow stockings and to frown  
Upon Sir Toby and the lighter people;  
And, acting this in an obedient hope,  
Why have you suffer'd me to be imprison'd,  
Kept in a dark house, visited by the priest,  
And made the most notorious geck and gull  
That e'er invention play'd on? tell me why.

## **OLIVIA**

Alas, Malvolio, this is not my writing,  
Though, I confess, much like the character  
But out of question 'tis Maria's hand.  
And now I do bethink me, it was she  
First told me thou wast mad; then camest in smiling,  
And in such forms which here were presupposed  
Upon thee in the letter. Prithee, be content:  
This practise hath most shrewdly pass'd upon thee;  
But when we know the grounds and authors of it,  
Thou shalt be both the plaintiff and the judge  
Of thine own cause.

## **FABIAN**

Good madam, hear me speak,  
And let no quarrel nor no brawl to come  
Taint the condition of this present hour,  
Which I have wonder'd at. In hope it shall not,  
Most freely I confess, myself and Toby  
Set this device against Malvolio here,  
Upon some stubborn and uncourteous parts  
We had conceived against him: Maria writ  
The letter at Sir Toby's great importance;  
In recompense whereof he hath married her.  
How with a sportful malice it was follow'd,  
May rather pluck on laughter than revenge;  
If that the injuries be justly weigh'd  
That have on both sides pass'd.

## **OLIVIA**

Alas, poor fool, how have they baffled thee!

## **Clown**

Why, 'some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrown upon them.' I was one, sir, in this interlude; one Sir Topas, sir; but that's all one. 'By the Lord, fool, I am not mad.' But do you remember? 'Madam, why laugh you at such a barren rascal? an you smile not, he's gagged:' and thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.

## **MALVOLIO**

I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you.

*Exit*

## **OLIVIA**

He hath been most notoriously abused.

## **DUKE ORSINO**

Pursue him and entreat him to a peace:  
He hath not told us of the captain yet:  
When that is known and golden time conveys,  
A solemn combination shall be made  
Of our dear souls. Meantime, sweet sister,  
We will not part from hence. Cesario, come;  
For so you shall be, while you are a man;  
But when in other habits you are seen,  
Orsino's mistress and his fancy's queen.

*Exeunt all, except Clown*

## **Clown**

[Sings]



When that I was and a little tiny boy,  
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,  
A foolish thing was but a toy,  
For the rain it raineth every day.  
But when I came to man's estate,  
With hey, ho, & c.  
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,  
For the rain, & c.  
But when I came, alas! to wive,  
With hey, ho, & c.  
By swaggering could I never thrive,  
For the rain, & c.  
But when I came unto my beds,  
With hey, ho, & c.  
With toss-pots still had drunken heads,  
For the rain, & c.  
A great while ago the world begun,  
With hey, ho, & c.  
But that's all one, our play is done,  
And we'll strive to please you every day.

*Exit*

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Verona. An open place.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The same. Garden of JULIA's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The same. ANTONIO's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Milan. The DUKE's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Verona. JULIA'S house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [The same. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Milan. The DUKE's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [The same. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 6: [The same. The DUKE'S palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 7: [Verona. JULIA'S house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Milan. The DUKE's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The same. The DUKE's palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The frontiers of Mantua. A forest.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Milan. Outside the DUKE's palace, under SILVIA's chamber.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [The same.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Milan. An abbey.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The same. The DUKE's palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [The frontiers of Mantua. The forest.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Another part of the forest.](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Verona. An open place.

*Enter VALENTINE and PROTEUS*

### VALENTINE

Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus:  
Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.  
Were't not affection chains thy tender days  
To the sweet glances of thy honour'd love,  
I rather would entreat thy company  
To see the wonders of the world abroad,  
Than, living dully sluggardized at home,  
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.  
But since thou lovest, love still and thrive therein,  
Even as I would when I to love begin.

### PROTEUS

Wilt thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu!  
Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest  
Some rare note-worthy object in thy travel:  
Wish me partaker in thy happiness  
When thou dost meet good hap; and in thy danger,  
If ever danger do environ thee,  
Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers,  
For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine.

### VALENTINE

And on a love-book pray for my success?

### PROTEUS

Upon some book I love I'll pray for thee.

**VALENTINE**

That's on some shallow story of deep love:  
How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont.

**PROTEUS**

That's a deep story of a deeper love:  
For he was more than over shoes in love.

**VALENTINE**

'Tis true; for you are over boots in love,  
And yet you never swum the Hellespont.

**PROTEUS**

Over the boots? nay, give me not the boots.

**VALENTINE**

No, I will not, for it boots thee not.

**PROTEUS**

What?

**VALENTINE**

To be in love, where scorn is bought with groans;  
Coy looks with heart-sore sighs; one fading moment's mirth  
With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights:  
If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain;  
If lost, why then a grievous labour won;  
However, but a folly bought with wit,  
Or else a wit by folly vanquished.

**PROTEUS**

So, by your circumstance, you call me fool.

**VALENTINE**

So, by your circumstance, I fear you'll prove.

**PROTEUS**

'Tis love you cavil at: I am not Love.

**VALENTINE**

Love is your master, for he masters you:  
And he that is so yoked by a fool,  
Methinks, should not be chronicled for wise.

**PROTEUS**

Yet writers say, as in the sweetest bud  
The eating canker dwells, so eating love  
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

**VALENTINE**

And writers say, as the most forward bud  
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,  
Even so by love the young and tender wit  
Is turn'd to folly, blasting in the bud,  
Losing his verdure even in the prime  
And all the fair effects of future hopes.  
But wherefore waste I time to counsel thee,  
That art a votary to fond desire?  
Once more adieu! my father at the road  
Expects my coming, there to see me shipp'd.

**PROTEUS**

And thither will I bring thee, Valentine.

**VALENTINE**

Sweet Proteus, no; now let us take our leave.  
To Milan let me hear from thee by letters

Of thy success in love, and what news else  
Betideth here in absence of thy friend;  
And likewise will visit thee with mine.

**PROTEUS**

All happiness bechance to thee in Milan!

**VALENTINE**

As much to you at home! and so, farewell.

*Exit*

**PROTEUS**

He after honour hunts, I after love:  
He leaves his friends to dignify them more,  
I leave myself, my friends and all, for love.  
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me,  
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,  
War with good counsel, set the world at nought;  
Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought.

*Enter SPEED*

**SPEED**

Sir Proteus, save you! Saw you my master?

**PROTEUS**

But now he parted hence, to embark for Milan.

**SPEED**

Twenty to one then he is shipp'd already,  
And I have play'd the sheep in losing him.

**PROTEUS**

Indeed, a sheep doth very often stray,  
An if the shepherd be a while away.

**SPEED**

You conclude that my master is a shepherd, then,  
and I a sheep?

**PROTEUS**

I do.

**SPEED**

Why then, my horns are his horns, whether I wake or sleep.

**PROTEUS**

A silly answer and fitting well a sheep.

**SPEED**

This proves me still a sheep.

**PROTEUS**

True; and thy master a shepherd.

**SPEED**

Nay, that I can deny by a circumstance.

**PROTEUS**

It shall go hard but I'll prove it by another.

**SPEED**

The shepherd seeks the sheep, and not the sheep the  
shepherd; but I seek my master, and my master seeks  
not me: therefore I am no sheep.

## **PROTEUS**

The sheep for fodder follow the shepherd; the shepherd for food follows not the sheep: thou for wages followest thy master; thy master for wages follows not thee: therefore thou art a sheep.

## **SPEED**

Such another proof will make me cry 'baa.'

## **PROTEUS**

But, dost thou hear? gavest thou my letter to Julia?

## **SPEED**

Ay sir: I, a lost mutton, gave your letter to her, a laced mutton, and she, a laced mutton, gave me, a lost mutton, nothing for my labour.

## **PROTEUS**

Here's too small a pasture for such store of muttons.

## **SPEED**

If the ground be overcharged, you were best stick her.

## **PROTEUS**

Nay: in that you are astray, 'twere best pound you.

## **SPEED**

Nay, sir, less than a pound shall serve me for carrying your letter.

## **PROTEUS**



You mistake; I mean the pound,--a pifold.

**SPEED**

From a pound to a pin? fold it over and over,  
'Tis threefold too little for carrying a letter to  
your lover.

**PROTEUS**

But what said she?

**SPEED**

[First nodding] Ay.

**PROTEUS**

Nod--Ay--why, that's noddy.

**SPEED**

You mistook, sir; I say, she did nod: and you ask  
me if she did nod; and I say, 'Ay.'

**PROTEUS**

And that set together is noddy.

**SPEED**

Now you have taken the pains to set it together,  
take it for your pains.

**PROTEUS**

No, no; you shall have it for bearing the letter.

**SPEED**

Well, I perceive I must be fain to bear with you.

**PROTEUS**

Why sir, how do you bear with me?

**SPEED**

Marry, sir, the letter, very orderly; having nothing but the word 'noddy' for my pains.

**PROTEUS**

Beshrew me, but you have a quick wit.

**SPEED**

And yet it cannot overtake your slow purse.

**PROTEUS**

Come come, open the matter in brief: what said she?

**SPEED**

Open your purse, that the money and the matter may be both at once delivered.

**PROTEUS**

Well, sir, here is for your pains. What said she?

**SPEED**

Truly, sir, I think you'll hardly win her.

**PROTEUS**

Why, couldst thou perceive so much from her?

**SPEED**

Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her; no, not so much as a ducat for delivering your letter: and being so hard to me that brought your mind, I fear she'll prove as hard to you in telling your mind. Give her no token but stones; for she's as hard as steel.

## **PROTEUS**

What said she? nothing?

## **SPEED**

No, not so much as 'Take this for thy pains.' To testify your bounty, I thank you, you have testerned me; in requital whereof, henceforth carry your letters yourself: and so, sir, I'll commend you to my master.

## **PROTEUS**

Go, go, be gone, to save your ship from wreck,  
Which cannot perish having thee aboard,  
Being destined to a drier death on shore.

*Exit SPEED*

I must go send some better messenger:  
I fear my Julia would not deign my lines,  
Receiving them from such a worthless post.

*Exit*

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. Garden of JULIA's house.

*Enter JULIA and LUCETTA*

**JULIA**

But say, Lucetta, now we are alone,  
Wouldst thou then counsel me to fall in love?

**LUCETTA**

Ay, madam, so you stumble not unheedfully.

**JULIA**

Of all the fair resort of gentlemen  
That every day with parle encounter me,  
In thy opinion which is worthiest love?

**LUCETTA**

Please you repeat their names, I'll show my mind  
According to my shallow simple skill.

**JULIA**

What think'st thou of the fair Sir Eglamour?

**LUCETTA**

As of a knight well-spoken, neat and fine;  
But, were I you, he never should be mine.

**JULIA**

What think'st thou of the rich Mercatio?

**LUCETTA**

Well of his wealth; but of himself, so so.

**JULIA**

What think'st thou of the gentle Proteus?

**LUCETTA**

Lord, Lord! to see what folly reigns in us!

**JULIA**

How now! what means this passion at his name?

**LUCETTA**

Pardon, dear madam: 'tis a passing shame  
That I, unworthy body as I am,  
Should censure thus on lovely gentlemen.

**JULIA**

Why not on Proteus, as of all the rest?

**LUCETTA**

Then thus: of many good I think him best.

**JULIA**

Your reason?

**LUCETTA**

I have no other, but a woman's reason;  
I think him so because I think him so.

**JULIA**

And wouldst thou have me cast my love on him?

**LUCETTA**

Ay, if you thought your love not cast away.

**JULIA**

Why he, of all the rest, hath never moved me.

**LUCETTA**

Yet he, of all the rest, I think, best loves ye.

**JULIA**

His little speaking shows his love but small.

**LUCETTA**

Fire that's closest kept burns most of all.

**JULIA**

They do not love that do not show their love.

**LUCETTA**

O, they love least that let men know their love.

**JULIA**

I would I knew his mind.

**LUCETTA**

Peruse this paper, madam.

**JULIA**

'To Julia.' Say, from whom?

**LUCETTA**

That the contents will show.

**JULIA**

Say, say, who gave it thee?

**LUCETTA**

Valentine's page; and sent, I think, from Proteus.  
He would have given it you; but I, being in the way,  
Did in your name receive it: pardon the  
fault I pray.

**JULIA**

Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker!  
Dare you presume to harbour wanton lines?  
To whisper and conspire against my youth?  
Now, trust me, 'tis an office of great worth  
And you an officer fit for the place.  
Or else return no more into my sight.

**LUCETTA**

To plead for love deserves more fee than hate.

**JULIA**

Will ye be gone?

**LUCETTA**

That you may ruminate.

*Exit*

## **JULIA**

And yet I would I had o'erlooked the letter:  
It were a shame to call her back again  
And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.  
What a fool is she, that knows I am a maid,  
And would not force the letter to my view!  
Since maids, in modesty, say 'no' to that  
Which they would have the profferer construe 'ay.'  
Fie, fie, how wayward is this foolish love  
That, like a testy babe, will scratch the nurse  
And presently all humbled kiss the rod!  
How churlishly I chid Lucetta hence,  
When willingly I would have had her here!  
How angerly I taught my brow to frown,  
When inward joy enforced my heart to smile!  
My penance is to call Lucetta back  
And ask remission for my folly past.  
What ho! Lucetta!

*Re-enter LUCETTA*

## **LUCETTA**

What would your ladyship?

## **JULIA**

Is't near dinner-time?

## **LUCETTA**

I would it were,  
That you might kill your stomach on your meat  
And not upon your maid.

## **JULIA**

What is't that you took up so gingerly?

## **LUCETTA**



Nothing.

**JULIA**

Why didst thou stoop, then?

**LUCETTA**

To take a paper up that I let fall.

**JULIA**

And is that paper nothing?

**LUCETTA**

Nothing concerning me.

**JULIA**

Then let it lie for those that it concerns.

**LUCETTA**

Madam, it will not lie where it concerns  
Unless it have a false interpreter.

**JULIA**

Some love of yours hath writ to you in rhyme.

**LUCETTA**

That I might sing it, madam, to a tune.  
Give me a note: your ladyship can set.

**JULIA**

As little by such toys as may be possible.  
Best sing it to the tune of 'Light o' love.'

**LUCETTA**

It is too heavy for so light a tune.

**JULIA**

Heavy! belike it hath some burden then?

**LUCETTA**

Ay, and melodious were it, would you sing it.

**JULIA**

And why not you?

**LUCETTA**

I cannot reach so high.

**JULIA**

Let's see your song. How now, minion!

**LUCETTA**

Keep tune there still, so you will sing it out:  
And yet methinks I do not like this tune.

**JULIA**

You do not?

**LUCETTA**

No, madam; it is too sharp.

**JULIA**

You, minion, are too saucy.

**LUCETTA**

Nay, now you are too flat  
And mar the concord with too harsh a descant:  
There wanteth but a mean to fill your song.

**JULIA**

The mean is drown'd with your unruly bass.

**LUCETTA**

Indeed, I bid the base for Proteus.

**JULIA**

This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.  
Here is a coil with protestation!

*Tears the letter*

Go get you gone, and let the papers lie:  
You would be fingering them, to anger me.

**LUCETTA**

She makes it strange; but she would be best pleased  
To be so anger'd with another letter.

*Exit*

**JULIA**

Nay, would I were so anger'd with the same!  
O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!  
Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey  
And kill the bees that yield it with your stings!  
I'll kiss each several paper for amends.  
Look, here is writ 'kind Julia.' Unkind Julia!  
As in revenge of thy ingratitude,

I throw thy name against the bruising stones,  
Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain.  
And here is writ 'love-wounded Proteus.'  
Poor wounded name! my bosom as a bed  
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly heal'd;  
And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.  
But twice or thrice was 'Proteus' written down.  
Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away  
Till I have found each letter in the letter,  
Except mine own name: that some whirlwind bear  
Unto a ragged fearful-hanging rock  
And throw it thence into the raging sea!  
Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ,  
'Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus,  
To the sweet Julia:' that I'll tear away.  
And yet I will not, sith so prettily  
He couples it to his complaining names.  
Thus will I fold them one on another:  
Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

*Re-enter LUCETTA*

**LUCETTA**

Madam,  
Dinner is ready, and your father stays.

**JULIA**

Well, let us go.

**LUCETTA**

What, shall these papers lie like tell-tales here?

**JULIA**

If you respect them, best to take them up.

**LUCETTA**

Nay, I was taken up for laying them down:

Yet here they shall not lie, for catching cold.

**JULIA**

I see you have a month's mind to them.

**LUCETTA**

Ay, madam, you may say what sights you see;  
I see things too, although you judge I wink.

**JULIA**

Come, come; will't please you go?

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. ANTONIO's house.

*Enter ANTONIO and PANTHINO*

**ANTONIO**

Tell me, Panthino, what sad talk was that  
Wherewith my brother held you in the cloister?

**PANTHINO**

'Twas of his nephew Proteus, your son.

**ANTONIO**

Why, what of him?

**PANTHINO**

He wonder'd that your lordship  
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,  
While other men, of slender reputation,  
Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:  
Some to the wars, to try their fortune there;  
Some to discover islands far away;  
Some to the studious universities.  
For any or for all these exercises,  
He said that Proteus your son was meet,  
And did request me to importune you  
To let him spend his time no more at home,  
Which would be great impeachment to his age,  
In having known no travel in his youth.

**ANTONIO**

Nor need'st thou much importune me to that

Whereon this month I have been hammering.  
I have consider'd well his loss of time  
And how he cannot be a perfect man,  
Not being tried and tutor'd in the world:  
Experience is by industry achieved  
And perfected by the swift course of time.  
Then tell me, whither were I best to send him?

**PANTHINO**

I think your lordship is not ignorant  
How his companion, youthful Valentine,  
Attends the emperor in his royal court.

**ANTONIO**

I know it well.

**PANTHINO**

'Twere good, I think, your lordship sent him thither:  
There shall he practise tilts and tournaments,  
Hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen.  
And be in eye of every exercise  
Worthy his youth and nobleness of birth.

**ANTONIO**

I like thy counsel; well hast thou advised:  
And that thou mayst perceive how well I like it,  
The execution of it shall make known.  
Even with the speediest expedition  
I will dispatch him to the emperor's court.

**PANTHINO**

To-morrow, may it please you, Don Alphonso,  
With other gentlemen of good esteem,  
Are journeying to salute the emperor  
And to commend their service to his will.

**ANTONIO**

Good company; with them shall Proteus go:  
And, in good time! now will we break with him.

*Enter PROTEUS*

**PROTEUS**

Sweet love! sweet lines! sweet life!  
Here is her hand, the agent of her heart;  
Here is her oath for love, her honour's pawn.  
O, that our fathers would applaud our loves,  
To seal our happiness with their consents!  
O heavenly Julia!

**ANTONIO**

How now! what letter are you reading there?

**PROTEUS**

May't please your lordship, 'tis a word or two  
Of commendations sent from Valentine,  
Deliver'd by a friend that came from him.

**ANTONIO**

Lend me the letter; let me see what news.

**PROTEUS**

There is no news, my lord, but that he writes  
How happily he lives, how well beloved  
And daily graced by the emperor;  
Wishing me with him, partner of his fortune.

**ANTONIO**

And how stand you affected to his wish?

**PROTEUS**



As one relying on your lordship's will  
And not depending on his friendly wish.

**ANTONIO**

My will is something sorted with his wish.  
Muse not that I thus suddenly proceed;  
For what I will, I will, and there an end.  
I am resolved that thou shalt spend some time  
With Valentinus in the emperor's court:  
What maintenance he from his friends receives,  
Like exhibition thou shalt have from me.  
To-morrow be in readiness to go:  
Excuse it not, for I am peremptory.

**PROTEUS**

My lord, I cannot be so soon provided:  
Please you, deliberate a day or two.

**ANTONIO**

Look, what thou want'st shall be sent after thee:  
No more of stay! to-morrow thou must go.  
Come on, Panthino: you shall be employ'd  
To hasten on his expedition.

*Exeunt ANTONIO and PANTHINO*

**PROTEUS**

Thus have I shunn'd the fire for fear of burning,  
And drench'd me in the sea, where I am drown'd.  
I fear'd to show my father Julia's letter,  
Lest he should take exceptions to my love;  
And with the vantage of mine own excuse  
Hath he excepted most against my love.  
O, how this spring of love resembleth  
The uncertain glory of an April day,  
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,  
And by and by a cloud takes all away!

*Re-enter PANTHINO*

**PANTHINO**

Sir Proteus, your father calls for you:  
He is in haste; therefore, I pray you to go.

**PROTEUS**

Why, this it is: my heart accords thereto,  
And yet a thousand times it answers 'no.'

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Milan. The DUKE's palace.

*Enter VALENTINE and SPEED*

**SPEED**

Sir, your glove.

**VALENTINE**

Not mine; my gloves are on.

**SPEED**

Why, then, this may be yours, for this is but one.

**VALENTINE**

Ha! let me see: ay, give it me, it's mine:  
Sweet ornament that decks a thing divine!  
Ah, Silvia, Silvia!

**SPEED**

Madam Silvia! Madam Silvia!

**VALENTINE**

How now, sirrah?

**SPEED**

She is not within hearing, sir.

**VALENTINE**

Why, sir, who bade you call her?

**SPEED**

Your worship, sir; or else I mistook.

**VALENTINE**

Well, you'll still be too forward.

**SPEED**

And yet I was last chidden for being too slow.

**VALENTINE**

Go to, sir: tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?

**SPEED**

She that your worship loves?

**VALENTINE**

Why, how know you that I am in love?

**SPEED**

Marry, by these special marks: first, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms, like a malecontent; to relish a love-song, like a robin-redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; to sigh, like a school-boy that had lost his A B C; to weep, like a young wench that had buried her grandam; to fast, like one that takes diet; to watch like one that fears robbing; to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money: and now you

are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.

**VALENTINE**

Are all these things perceived in me?

**SPEED**

They are all perceived without ye.

**VALENTINE**

Without me? they cannot.

**SPEED**

Without you? nay, that's certain, for, without you were so simple, none else would: but you are so without these follies, that these follies are within you and shine through you like the water in an urinal, that not an eye that sees you but is a physician to comment on your malady.

**VALENTINE**

But tell me, dost thou know my lady Silvia?

**SPEED**

She that you gaze on so as she sits at supper?

**VALENTINE**

Hast thou observed that? even she, I mean.

**SPEED**

Why, sir, I know her not.

**VALENTINE**

Dost thou know her by my gazing on her, and yet knowest her not?

**SPEED**

Is she not hard-favoured, sir?

**VALENTINE**

Not so fair, boy, as well-favoured.

**SPEED**

Sir, I know that well enough.

**VALENTINE**

What dost thou know?

**SPEED**

That she is not so fair as, of you, well-favoured.

**VALENTINE**

I mean that her beauty is exquisite, but her favour infinite.

**SPEED**

That's because the one is painted and the other out of all count.

**VALENTINE**

How painted? and how out of count?

**SPEED**

Marry, sir, so painted, to make her fair, that no man counts of her beauty.

**VALENTINE**

How esteemest thou me? I account of her beauty.

**SPEED**

You never saw her since she was deformed.

**VALENTINE**

How long hath she been deformed?

**SPEED**

Ever since you loved her.

**VALENTINE**

I have loved her ever since I saw her; and still I  
see her beautiful.

**SPEED**

If you love her, you cannot see her.

**VALENTINE**

Why?

**SPEED**

Because Love is blind. O, that you had mine eyes;  
or your own eyes had the lights they were wont to  
have when you chid at Sir Proteus for going  
ungartered!

**VALENTINE**

What should I see then?

## **SPEED**

Your own present folly and her passing deformity:  
for he, being in love, could not see to garter his  
hose, and you, being in love, cannot see to put on your hose.

## **VALENTINE**

Belike, boy, then, you are in love; for last  
morning you could not see to wipe my shoes.

## **SPEED**

True, sir; I was in love with my bed: I thank you,  
you swung me for my love, which makes me the  
bolder to chide you for yours.

## **VALENTINE**

In conclusion, I stand affected to her.

## **SPEED**

I would you were set, so your affection would cease.

## **VALENTINE**

Last night she enjoined me to write some lines to  
one she loves.

## **SPEED**

And have you?

## **VALENTINE**

I have.

## **SPEED**

Are they not lamely writ?



**VALENTINE**

No, boy, but as well as I can do them. Peace!  
here she comes.

**SPEED**

[Aside] O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet!  
Now will he interpret to her.

*Enter SILVIA*

**VALENTINE**

Madam and mistress, a thousand good-morrows.

**SPEED**

[Aside] O, give ye good even! here's a million of manners.

**SILVIA**

Sir Valentine and servant, to you two thousand.

**SPEED**

[Aside] He should give her interest and she gives it him.

**VALENTINE**

As you enjoin'd me, I have writ your letter  
Unto the secret nameless friend of yours;  
Which I was much unwilling to proceed in  
But for my duty to your ladyship.

**SILVIA**

I thank you gentle servant: 'tis very clerkly done.

**VALENTINE**

Now trust me, madam, it came hardly off;  
For being ignorant to whom it goes  
I writ at random, very doubtfully.

**SILVIA**

Perchance you think too much of so much pains?

**VALENTINE**

No, madam; so it stead you, I will write  
Please you command, a thousand times as much; And yet--

**SILVIA**

A pretty period! Well, I guess the sequel;  
And yet I will not name it; and yet I care not;  
And yet take this again; and yet I thank you,  
Meaning henceforth to trouble you no more.

**SPEED**

[Aside] And yet you will; and yet another 'yet.'

**VALENTINE**

What means your ladyship? do you not like it?

**SILVIA**

Yes, yes; the lines are very quaintly writ;  
But since unwillingly, take them again.  
Nay, take them.

**VALENTINE**

Madam, they are for you.

**SILVIA**

Ay, ay: you writ them, sir, at my request;  
But I will none of them; they are for you;  
I would have had them writ more movingly.

**VALENTINE**

Please you, I'll write your ladyship another.

**SILVIA**

And when it's writ, for my sake read it over,  
And if it please you, so; if not, why, so.

**VALENTINE**

If it please me, madam, what then?

**SILVIA**

Why, if it please you, take it for your labour:  
And so, good morrow, servant.

*Exit*

**SPEED**

O jest unseen, inscrutable, invisible,  
As a nose on a man's face, or a weathercock on a steeple!  
My master sues to her, and she hath  
taught her suitor,  
He being her pupil, to become her tutor.  
O excellent device! was there ever heard a better,  
That my master, being scribe, to himself should write  
the letter?

**VALENTINE**

How now, sir? what are you reasoning with yourself?

**SPEED**

Nay, I was rhyming: 'tis you that have the reason.

**VALENTINE**

To do what?

**SPEED**

To be a spokesman for Madam Silvia.

**VALENTINE**

To whom?

**SPEED**

To yourself: why, she wooes you by a figure.

**VALENTINE**

What figure?

**SPEED**

By a letter, I should say.

**VALENTINE**

Why, she hath not writ to me?

**SPEED**

What need she, when she hath made you write to yourself? Why, do you not perceive the jest?

**VALENTINE**

No, believe me.

**SPEED**

No believing you, indeed, sir. But did you perceive  
her earnest?

**VALENTINE**

She gave me none, except an angry word.

**SPEED**

Why, she hath given you a letter.

**VALENTINE**

That's the letter I writ to her friend.

**SPEED**

And that letter hath she delivered, and there an end.

**VALENTINE**

I would it were no worse.

**SPEED**

I'll warrant you, 'tis as well:  
For often have you writ to her, and she, in modesty,  
Or else for want of idle time, could not again reply;  
Or fearing else some messenger that might her mind discover,  
Herself hath taught her love himself to write unto her lover.  
All this I speak in print, for in print I found it.  
Why muse you, sir? 'tis dinner-time.

**VALENTINE**

I have dined.

**SPEED**

Ay, but hearken, sir; though the chameleon Love can  
feed on the air, I am one that am nourished by my

victuals, and would fain have meat. O, be not like  
your mistress; be moved, be moved.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Verona. JULIA'S house.

*Enter PROTEUS and JULIA*

**PROTEUS**

Have patience, gentle Julia.

**JULIA**

I must, where is no remedy.

**PROTEUS**

When possibly I can, I will return.

**JULIA**

If you turn not, you will return the sooner.  
Keep this remembrance for thy Julia's sake.

*Giving a ring*

**PROTEUS**

Why then, we'll make exchange; here, take you this.

**JULIA**

And seal the bargain with a holy kiss.

**PROTEUS**

Here is my hand for my true constancy;  
And when that hour o'erslips me in the day

Wherein I sigh not, Julia, for thy sake,  
The next ensuing hour some foul mischance  
Torment me for my love's forgetfulness!  
My father stays my coming; answer not;  
The tide is now: nay, not thy tide of tears;  
That tide will stay me longer than I should.  
Julia, farewell!

*Exit JULIA*

What, gone without a word?  
Ay, so true love should do: it cannot speak;  
For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.

*Enter PANTHINO*

**PANTHINO**

Sir Proteus, you are stay'd for.

**PROTEUS**

Go; I come, I come.  
Alas! this parting strikes poor lovers dumb.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. A street.

*Enter LAUNCE, leading a dog*

**LAUNCE**

Nay, 'twill be this hour ere I have done weeping; all the kind of the Launces have this very fault. I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial's court. I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured dog that lives: my mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear: he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog: a Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father: no, this left shoe is my father: no, no, this left shoe is my mother: nay, that cannot be so neither: yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worsor sole. This shoe, with the hole in it, is my mother, and this my father; a vengeance on't! there 'tis: now, sit, this staff is my sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand: this hat is Nan, our maid: I am the dog: no, the dog is himself, and I am the dog--Oh! the dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so, so. Now come I to my father; Father, your blessing: now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping: now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now come I to my mother: O, that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her; why, there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes. Now

the dog all this while sheds not a tear nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

*Enter PANTHINO*

**PANTHINO**

Launce, away, away, aboard! thy master is shipped and thou art to post after with oars. What's the matter? why weepest thou, man? Away, ass! You'll lose the tide, if you tarry any longer.

**LAUNCE**

It is no matter if the tied were lost; for it is the unkindest tied that ever any man tied.

**PANTHINO**

What's the unkindest tide?

**LAUNCE**

Why, he that's tied here, Crab, my dog.

**PANTHINO**

Tut, man, I mean thou'lt lose the flood, and, in losing the flood, lose thy voyage, and, in losing thy voyage, lose thy master, and, in losing thy master, lose thy service, and, in losing thy service,--Why dost thou stop my mouth?

**LAUNCE**

For fear thou shouldst lose thy tongue.

**PANTHINO**

Where should I lose my tongue?

**LAUNCE**

In thy tale.

**PANTHINO**

In thy tail!

**LAUNCE**

Lose the tide, and the voyage, and the master, and the service, and the tied! Why, man, if the river were dry, I am able to fill it with my tears; if the wind were down, I could drive the boat with my sighs.

**PANTHINO**

Come, come away, man; I was sent to call thee.

**LAUNCE**

Sir, call me what thou darest.

**PANTHINO**

Wilt thou go?

**LAUNCE**

Well, I will go.

*Exeunt*

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Milan. The DUKE's palace.

*Enter SILVIA, VALENTINE, THURIO, and SPEED*

**SILVIA**

Servant!

**VALENTINE**

Mistress?

**SPEED**

Master, Sir Thurio frowns on you.

**VALENTINE**

Ay, boy, it's for love.

**SPEED**

Not of you.

**VALENTINE**

Of my mistress, then.

**SPEED**

'Twere good you knocked him.

*Exit*

**SILVIA**

Servant, you are sad.

**VALENTINE**

Indeed, madam, I seem so.

**THURIO**

Seem you that you are not?

**VALENTINE**

Haply I do.

**THURIO**

So do counterfeits.

**VALENTINE**

So do you.

**THURIO**

What seem I that I am not?

**VALENTINE**

Wise.

**THURIO**

What instance of the contrary?

**VALENTINE**

Your folly.

**THURIO**

And how quote you my folly?

**VALENTINE**

I quote it in your jerkin.

**THURIO**

My jerkin is a doublet.

**VALENTINE**

Well, then, I'll double your folly.

**THURIO**

How?

**SILVIA**

What, angry, Sir Thurio! do you change colour?

**VALENTINE**

Give him leave, madam; he is a kind of chameleon.

**THURIO**

That hath more mind to feed on your blood than live  
in your air.

**VALENTINE**

You have said, sir.

**THURIO**

Ay, sir, and done too, for this time.

**VALENTINE**

I know it well, sir; you always end ere you begin.

**SILVIA**

A fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off.

**VALENTINE**

'Tis indeed, madam; we thank the giver.

**SILVIA**

Who is that, servant?

**VALENTINE**

Yourself, sweet lady; for you gave the fire. Sir  
Thurio borrows his wit from your ladyship's looks,  
and spends what he borrows kindly in your company.

**THURIO**

Sir, if you spend word for word with me, I shall  
make your wit bankrupt.

**VALENTINE**

I know it well, sir; you have an exchequer of words,  
and, I think, no other treasure to give your  
followers, for it appears by their bare liveries,  
that they live by your bare words.

**SILVIA**

No more, gentlemen, no more:--here comes my father.

*Enter DUKE*

**DUKE**

Now, daughter Silvia, you are hard beset.

Sir Valentine, your father's in good health:  
What say you to a letter from your friends  
Of much good news?

**VALENTINE**

My lord, I will be thankful.  
To any happy messenger from thence.

**DUKE**

Know ye Don Antonio, your countryman?

**VALENTINE**

Ay, my good lord, I know the gentleman  
To be of worth and worthy estimation  
And not without desert so well reputed.

**DUKE**

Hath he not a son?

**VALENTINE**

Ay, my good lord; a son that well deserves  
The honour and regard of such a father.

**DUKE**

You know him well?

**VALENTINE**

I know him as myself; for from our infancy  
We have conversed and spent our hours together:  
And though myself have been an idle truant,  
Omitting the sweet benefit of time  
To clothe mine age with angel-like perfection,  
Yet hath Sir Proteus, for that's his name,  
Made use and fair advantage of his days;



His years but young, but his experience old;  
His head unmellow'd, but his judgment ripe;  
And, in a word, for far behind his worth  
Comes all the praises that I now bestow,  
He is complete in feature and in mind  
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

**DUKE**

Beshrew me, sir, but if he make this good,  
He is as worthy for an empress' love  
As meet to be an emperor's counsellor.  
Well, sir, this gentleman is come to me,  
With commendation from great potentates;  
And here he means to spend his time awhile:  
I think 'tis no unwelcome news to you.

**VALENTINE**

Should I have wish'd a thing, it had been he.

**DUKE**

Welcome him then according to his worth.  
Silvia, I speak to you, and you, Sir Thurio;  
For Valentine, I need not cite him to it:  
I will send him hither to you presently.

*Exit*

**VALENTINE**

This is the gentleman I told your ladyship  
Had come along with me, but that his mistress  
Did hold his eyes lock'd in her crystal looks.

**SILVIA**

Belike that now she hath enfranchised them  
Upon some other pawn for fealty.

**VALENTINE**

Nay, sure, I think she holds them prisoners still.

**SILVIA**

Nay, then he should be blind; and, being blind  
How could he see his way to seek out you?

**VALENTINE**

Why, lady, Love hath twenty pair of eyes.

**THURIO**

They say that Love hath not an eye at all.

**VALENTINE**

To see such lovers, Thurio, as yourself:  
Upon a homely object Love can wink.

**SILVIA**

Have done, have done; here comes the gentleman.

*Exit THURIO*

*Enter PROTEUS*

**VALENTINE**

Welcome, dear Proteus! Mistress, I beseech you,  
Confirm his welcome with some special favour.

**SILVIA**

His worth is warrant for his welcome hither,  
If this be he you oft have wish'd to hear from.

**VALENTINE**

Mistress, it is: sweet lady, entertain him  
To be my fellow-servant to your ladyship.

**SILVIA**

Too low a mistress for so high a servant.

**PROTEUS**

Not so, sweet lady: but too mean a servant  
To have a look of such a worthy mistress.

**VALENTINE**

Leave off discourse of disability:  
Sweet lady, entertain him for your servant.

**PROTEUS**

My duty will I boast of; nothing else.

**SILVIA**

And duty never yet did want his need:  
Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.

**PROTEUS**

I'll die on him that says so but yourself.

**SILVIA**

That you are welcome?

**PROTEUS**

That you are worthless.

*Re-enter THURIO*

**THURIO**

Madam, my lord your father would speak with you.

**SILVIA**

I wait upon his pleasure. Come, Sir Thurio,  
Go with me. Once more, new servant, welcome:  
I'll leave you to confer of home affairs;  
When you have done, we look to hear from you.

**PROTEUS**

We'll both attend upon your ladyship.

*Exeunt SILVIA and THURIO*

**VALENTINE**

Now, tell me, how do all from whence you came?

**PROTEUS**

Your friends are well and have them much commended.

**VALENTINE**

And how do yours?

**PROTEUS**

I left them all in health.

**VALENTINE**

How does your lady? and how thrives your love?

**PROTEUS**

My tales of love were wont to weary you;  
I know you joy not in a love discourse.

## **VALENTINE**

Ay, Proteus, but that life is alter'd now:  
I have done penance for contemning Love,  
Whose high imperious thoughts have punish'd me  
With bitter fasts, with penitential groans,  
With nightly tears and daily heart-sore sighs;  
For in revenge of my contempt of love,  
Love hath chased sleep from my enthralled eyes  
And made them watchers of mine own heart's sorrow.  
O gentle Proteus, Love's a mighty lord,  
And hath so humbled me, as, I confess,  
There is no woe to his correction,  
Nor to his service no such joy on earth.  
Now no discourse, except it be of love;  
Now can I break my fast, dine, sup and sleep,  
Upon the very naked name of love.

## **PROTEUS**

Enough; I read your fortune in your eye.  
Was this the idol that you worship so?

## **VALENTINE**

Even she; and is she not a heavenly saint?

## **PROTEUS**

No; but she is an earthly paragon.

## **VALENTINE**

Call her divine.

## **PROTEUS**

I will not flatter her.

## **VALENTINE**

O, flatter me; for love delights in praises.

**PROTEUS**

When I was sick, you gave me bitter pills,  
And I must minister the like to you.

**VALENTINE**

Then speak the truth by her; if not divine,  
Yet let her be a principality,  
Sovereign to all the creatures on the earth.

**PROTEUS**

Except my mistress.

**VALENTINE**

Sweet, except not any;  
Except thou wilt except against my love.

**PROTEUS**

Have I not reason to prefer mine own?

**VALENTINE**

And I will help thee to prefer her too:  
She shall be dignified with this high honour--  
To bear my lady's train, lest the base earth  
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss  
And, of so great a favour growing proud,  
Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower  
And make rough winter everlastingly.

**PROTEUS**

Why, Valentine, what braggardism is this?

**VALENTINE**

Pardon me, Proteus: all I can is nothing  
To her whose worth makes other worthies nothing;  
She is alone.

**PROTEUS**

Then let her alone.

**VALENTINE**

Not for the world: why, man, she is mine own,  
And I as rich in having such a jewel  
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,  
The water nectar and the rocks pure gold.  
Forgive me that I do not dream on thee,  
Because thou see'st me dote upon my love.  
My foolish rival, that her father likes  
Only for his possessions are so huge,  
Is gone with her along, and I must after,  
For love, thou know'st, is full of jealousy.

**PROTEUS**

But she loves you?

**VALENTINE**

Ay, and we are betroth'd: nay, more, our,  
marriage-hour,  
With all the cunning manner of our flight,  
Determined of; how I must climb her window,  
The ladder made of cords, and all the means  
Plotted and 'greed on for my happiness.  
Good Proteus, go with me to my chamber,  
In these affairs to aid me with thy counsel.

**PROTEUS**

Go on before; I shall inquire you forth:  
I must unto the road, to disembark  
Some necessaries that I needs must use,

And then I'll presently attend you.

**VALENTINE**

Will you make haste?

**PROTEUS**

I will.

*Exit VALENTINE*

Even as one heat another heat expels,  
Or as one nail by strength drives out another,  
So the remembrance of my former love  
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.  
Is it mine, or Valentine's praise,  
Her true perfection, or my false transgression,  
That makes me reasonless to reason thus?  
She is fair; and so is Julia that I love--  
That I did love, for now my love is thaw'd;  
Which, like a waxen image, 'gainst a fire,  
Bears no impression of the thing it was.  
Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold,  
And that I love him not as I was wont.  
O, but I love his lady too too much,  
And that's the reason I love him so little.  
How shall I dote on her with more advice,  
That thus without advice begin to love her!  
'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,  
And that hath dazzled my reason's light;  
But when I look on her perfections,  
There is no reason but I shall be blind.  
If I can cheque my erring love, I will;  
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill.

*Exit*



# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same. A street.

*Enter SPEED and LAUNCE severally*

### SPEED

Launce! by mine honesty, welcome to Milan!

### LAUNCE

Forswear not thyself, sweet youth, for I am not welcome. I reckon this always, that a man is never undone till he be hanged, nor never welcome to a place till some certain shot be paid and the hostess say 'Welcome!'

### SPEED

Come on, you madcap, I'll to the alehouse with you presently; where, for one shot of five pence, thou shalt have five thousand welcomes. But, sirrah, how did thy master part with Madam Julia?

### LAUNCE

Marry, after they closed in earnest, they parted very fairly in jest.

### SPEED

But shall she marry him?

### LAUNCE

No.

**SPEED**

How then? shall he marry her?

**LAUNCE**

No, neither.

**SPEED**

What, are they broken?

**LAUNCE**

No, they are both as whole as a fish.

**SPEED**

Why, then, how stands the matter with them?

**LAUNCE**

Marry, thus: when it stands well with him, it stands well with her.

**SPEED**

What an ass art thou! I understand thee not.

**LAUNCE**

What a block art thou, that thou canst not! My staff understands me.

**SPEED**

What thou sayest?

**LAUNCE**

Ay, and what I do too: look thee, I'll but lean,

and my staff understands me.

**SPEED**

It stands under thee, indeed.

**LAUNCE**

Why, stand-under and under-stand is all one.

**SPEED**

But tell me true, will't be a match?

**LAUNCE**

Ask my dog: if he say ay, it will! if he say no,  
it will; if he shake his tail and say nothing, it will.

**SPEED**

The conclusion is then that it will.

**LAUNCE**

Thou shalt never get such a secret from me but by a parable.

**SPEED**

'Tis well that I get it so. But, Launce, how sayest  
thou, that my master is become a notable lover?

**LAUNCE**

I never knew him otherwise.

**SPEED**

Than how?

**LAUNCE**

A notable lubber, as thou reportest him to be.

**SPEED**

Why, thou whoreson ass, thou mistakest me.

**LAUNCE**

Why, fool, I meant not thee; I meant thy master.

**SPEED**

I tell thee, my master is become a hot lover.

**LAUNCE**

Why, I tell thee, I care not though he burn himself  
in love. If thou wilt, go with me to the alehouse;  
if not, thou art an Hebrew, a Jew, and not worth the  
name of a Christian.

**SPEED**

Why?

**LAUNCE**

Because thou hast not so much charity in thee as to  
go to the ale with a Christian. Wilt thou go?

**SPEED**

At thy service.

*Exeunt*

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The same. The DUKE'S palace.

*Enter PROTEUS*

### PROTEUS

To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn;  
To love fair Silvia, shall I be forsworn;  
To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn;  
And even that power which gave me first my oath  
Provokes me to this threefold perjury;  
Love bade me swear and Love bids me forswear.  
O sweet-suggesting Love, if thou hast sinned,  
Teach me, thy tempted subject, to excuse it!  
At first I did adore a twinkling star,  
But now I worship a celestial sun.  
Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken,  
And he wants wit that wants resolved will  
To learn his wit to exchange the bad for better.  
Fie, fie, unreverend tongue! to call her bad,  
Whose sovereignty so oft thou hast preferr'd  
With twenty thousand soul-confirming oaths.  
I cannot leave to love, and yet I do;  
But there I leave to love where I should love.  
Julia I lose and Valentine I lose:  
If I keep them, I needs must lose myself;  
If I lose them, thus find I by their loss  
For Valentine myself, for Julia Silvia.  
I to myself am dearer than a friend,  
For love is still most precious in itself;  
And Silvia--witness Heaven, that made her fair!--  
Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiopie.  
I will forget that Julia is alive,  
Remembering that my love to her is dead;  
And Valentine I'll hold an enemy,  
Aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend.  
I cannot now prove constant to myself,

Without some treachery used to Valentine.  
This night he meaneth with a corded ladder  
To climb celestial Silvia's chamber-window,  
Myself in counsel, his competitor.  
Now presently I'll give her father notice  
Of their disguising and pretended flight;  
Who, all enraged, will banish Valentine;  
For Thurio, he intends, shall wed his daughter;  
But, Valentine being gone, I'll quickly cross  
By some sly trick blunt Thurio's dull proceeding.  
Love, lend me wings to make my purpose swift,  
As thou hast lent me wit to plot this drift!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Verona. JULIA'S house.

*Enter JULIA and LUCETTA*

**JULIA**

Counsel, Lucetta; gentle girl, assist me;  
And even in kind love I do conjure thee,  
Who art the table wherein all my thoughts  
Are visibly character'd and engraved,  
To lesson me and tell me some good mean  
How, with my honour, I may undertake  
A journey to my loving Proteus.

**LUCETTA**

Alas, the way is wearisome and long!

**JULIA**

A true-devoted pilgrim is not weary  
To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps;  
Much less shall she that hath Love's wings to fly,  
And when the flight is made to one so dear,  
Of such divine perfection, as Sir Proteus.

**LUCETTA**

Better forbear till Proteus make return.

**JULIA**

O, know'st thou not his looks are my soul's food?  
Pity the dearth that I have pined in,  
By longing for that food so long a time.  
Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,

Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow  
As seek to quench the fire of love with words.

**LUCETTA**

I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,  
But qualify the fire's extreme rage,  
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

**JULIA**

The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns.  
The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;  
But when his fair course is not hindered,  
He makes sweet music with the enamell'ed stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage,  
And so by many winding nooks he strays  
With willing sport to the wild ocean.  
Then let me go and hinder not my course  
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream  
And make a pastime of each weary step,  
Till the last step have brought me to my love;  
And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil  
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

**LUCETTA**

But in what habit will you go along?

**JULIA**

Not like a woman; for I would prevent  
The loose encounters of lascivious men:  
Gentle Lucetta, fit me with such weeds  
As may beseem some well-reputed page.

**LUCETTA**

Why, then, your ladyship must cut your hair.



**JULIA**

No, girl, I'll knit it up in silken strings  
With twenty odd-conceited true-love knots.  
To be fantastic may become a youth  
Of greater time than I shall show to be.

**LUCETTA**

What fashion, madam shall I make your breeches?

**JULIA**

That fits as well as 'Tell me, good my lord,  
What compass will you wear your farthingale?'  
Why even what fashion thou best likest, Lucetta.

**LUCETTA**

You must needs have them with a codpiece, madam.

**JULIA**

Out, out, Lucetta! that would be ill-favour'd.

**LUCETTA**

A round hose, madam, now's not worth a pin,  
Unless you have a codpiece to stick pins on.

**JULIA**

Lucetta, as thou lovest me, let me have  
What thou thinkest meet and is most mannerly.  
But tell me, wench, how will the world repute me  
For undertaking so unsta'd a journey?  
I fear me, it will make me scandalized.

**LUCETTA**

If you think so, then stay at home and go not.

**JULIA**

Nay, that I will not.

**LUCETTA**

Then never dream on infamy, but go.  
If Proteus like your journey when you come,  
No matter who's displeas'd when you are gone:  
I fear me, he will scarce be pleas'd withal.

**JULIA**

That is the least, Lucetta, of my fear:  
A thousand oaths, an ocean of his tears  
And instances of infinite of love  
Warrant me welcome to my Proteus.

**LUCETTA**

All these are servants to deceitful men.

**JULIA**

Base men, that use them to so base effect!  
But truer stars did govern Proteus' birth  
His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles,  
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate,  
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart,  
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.

**LUCETTA**

Pray heaven he prove so, when you come to him!

**JULIA**

Now, as thou lovest me, do him not that wrong  
To bear a hard opinion of his truth:  
Only deserve my love by loving him;  
And presently go with me to my chamber,

To take a note of what I stand in need of,  
To furnish me upon my longing journey.  
All that is mine I leave at thy dispose,  
My goods, my lands, my reputation;  
Only, in lieu thereof, dispatch me hence.  
Come, answer not, but to it presently!  
I am impatient of my tarriance.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 2, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Milan. The DUKE's palace.

*Enter DUKE, THURIO, and PROTEUS*

**DUKE**

Sir Thurio, give us leave, I pray, awhile;  
We have some secrets to confer about.

*Exit THURIO*

Now, tell me, Proteus, what's your will with me?

**PROTEUS**

My gracious lord, that which I would discover  
The law of friendship bids me to conceal;  
But when I call to mind your gracious favours  
Done to me, undeserving as I am,  
My duty pricks me on to utter that  
Which else no worldly good should draw from me.  
Know, worthy prince, Sir Valentine, my friend,  
This night intends to steal away your daughter:  
Myself am one made privy to the plot.  
I know you have determined to bestow her  
On Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates;  
And should she thus be stol'n away from you,  
It would be much vexation to your age.  
Thus, for my duty's sake, I rather chose  
To cross my friend in his intended drift  
Than, by concealing it, heap on your head  
A pack of sorrows which would press you down,  
Being unprevented, to your timeless grave.

**DUKE**

Proteus, I thank thee for thine honest care;  
Which to requite, command me while I live.  
This love of theirs myself have often seen,  
Haply when they have judged me fast asleep,  
And oftentimes have purposed to forbid  
Sir Valentine her company and my court:  
But fearing lest my jealous aim might err  
And so unworthily disgrace the man,  
A rashness that I ever yet have shunn'd,  
I gave him gentle looks, thereby to find  
That which thyself hast now disclosed to me.  
And, that thou mayst perceive my fear of this,  
Knowing that tender youth is soon suggested,  
I nightly lodge her in an upper tower,  
The key whereof myself have ever kept;  
And thence she cannot be convey'd away.

## **PROTEUS**

Know, noble lord, they have devised a mean  
How he her chamber-window will ascend  
And with a corded ladder fetch her down;  
For which the youthful lover now is gone  
And this way comes he with it presently;  
Where, if it please you, you may intercept him.  
But, good my Lord, do it so cunningly  
That my discovery be not aimed at;  
For love of you, not hate unto my friend,  
Hath made me publisher of this pretence.

## **DUKE**

Upon mine honour, he shall never know  
That I had any light from thee of this.

## **PROTEUS**

Adieu, my Lord; Sir Valentine is coming.

*Exit*

*Enter VALENTINE*

**DUKE**

Sir Valentine, whither away so fast?

**VALENTINE**

Please it your grace, there is a messenger  
That stays to bear my letters to my friends,  
And I am going to deliver them.

**DUKE**

Be they of much import?

**VALENTINE**

The tenor of them doth but signify  
My health and happy being at your court.

**DUKE**

Nay then, no matter; stay with me awhile;  
I am to break with thee of some affairs  
That touch me near, wherein thou must be secret.  
'Tis not unknown to thee that I have sought  
To match my friend Sir Thurio to my daughter.

**VALENTINE**

I know it well, my Lord; and, sure, the match  
Were rich and honourable; besides, the gentleman  
Is full of virtue, bounty, worth and qualities  
Beseeming such a wife as your fair daughter:  
Cannot your Grace win her to fancy him?

**DUKE**

No, trust me; she is peevish, sullen, froward,  
Proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty,  
Neither regarding that she is my child  
Nor fearing me as if I were her father;

And, may I say to thee, this pride of hers,  
Upon advice, hath drawn my love from her;  
And, where I thought the remnant of mine age  
Should have been cherish'd by her child-like duty,  
I now am full resolved to take a wife  
And turn her out to who will take her in:  
Then let her beauty be her wedding-dower;  
For me and my possessions she esteems not.

**VALENTINE**

What would your Grace have me to do in this?

**DUKE**

There is a lady in Verona here  
Whom I affect; but she is nice and coy  
And nought esteems my aged eloquence:  
Now therefore would I have thee to my tutor--  
For long ago I have forgot to court;  
Besides, the fashion of the time is changed--  
How and which way I may bestow myself  
To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.

**VALENTINE**

Win her with gifts, if she respect not words:  
Dumb jewels often in their silent kind  
More than quick words do move a woman's mind.

**DUKE**

But she did scorn a present that I sent her.

**VALENTINE**

A woman sometimes scorns what best contents her.  
Send her another; never give her o'er;  
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.  
If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,  
But rather to beget more love in you:  
If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone;

For why, the fools are mad, if left alone.  
Take no repulse, whatever she doth say;  
For 'get you gone,' she doth not mean 'away!'  
Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces;  
Though ne'er so black, say they have angels' faces.  
That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,  
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.

**DUKE**

But she I mean is promised by her friends  
Unto a youthful gentleman of worth,  
And kept severely from resort of men,  
That no man hath access by day to her.

**VALENTINE**

Why, then, I would resort to her by night.

**DUKE**

Ay, but the doors be lock'd and keys kept safe,  
That no man hath recourse to her by night.

**VALENTINE**

What lets but one may enter at her window?

**DUKE**

Her chamber is aloft, far from the ground,  
And built so shelving that one cannot climb it  
Without apparent hazard of his life.

**VALENTINE**

Why then, a ladder quaintly made of cords,  
To cast up, with a pair of anchoring hooks,  
Would serve to scale another Hero's tower,  
So bold Leander would adventure it.



**DUKE**

Now, as thou art a gentleman of blood,  
Advise me where I may have such a ladder.

**VALENTINE**

When would you use it? pray, sir, tell me that.

**DUKE**

This very night; for Love is like a child,  
That longs for every thing that he can come by.

**VALENTINE**

By seven o'clock I'll get you such a ladder.

**DUKE**

But, hark thee; I will go to her alone:  
How shall I best convey the ladder thither?

**VALENTINE**

It will be light, my lord, that you may bear it  
Under a cloak that is of any length.

**DUKE**

A cloak as long as thine will serve the turn?

**VALENTINE**

Ay, my good lord.

**DUKE**

Then let me see thy cloak:  
I'll get me one of such another length.

## VALENTINE

Why, any cloak will serve the turn, my lord.

## DUKE

How shall I fashion me to wear a cloak?  
I pray thee, let me feel thy cloak upon me.  
What letter is this same? What's here? 'To Silvia'!  
And here an engine fit for my proceeding.  
I'll be so bold to break the seal for once.

### *Reads*

'My thoughts do harbour with my Silvia nightly,  
And slaves they are to me that send them flying:  
O, could their master come and go as lightly,  
Himself would lodge where senseless they are lying!  
My herald thoughts in thy pure bosom rest them:  
While I, their king, that hither them importune,  
Do curse the grace that with such grace hath bless'd them,  
Because myself do want my servants' fortune:  
I curse myself, for they are sent by me,  
That they should harbour where their lord would be.'  
What's here?  
'Silvia, this night I will enfranchise thee.'  
'Tis so; and here's the ladder for the purpose.  
Why, Phaeton,--for thou art Merops' son,--  
Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car  
And with thy daring folly burn the world?  
Wilt thou reach stars, because they shine on thee?  
Go, base intruder! overweening slave!  
Bestow thy fawning smiles on equal mates,  
And think my patience, more than thy desert,  
Is privilege for thy departure hence:  
Thank me for this more than for all the favours  
Which all too much I have bestow'd on thee.  
But if thou linger in my territories  
Longer than swiftest expedition  
Will give thee time to leave our royal court,  
By heaven! my wrath shall far exceed the love  
I ever bore my daughter or thyself.

Be gone! I will not hear thy vain excuse;  
But, as thou lovest thy life, make speed from hence.

*Exit*

## **VALENTINE**

And why not death rather than living torment?  
To die is to be banish'd from myself;  
And Silvia is myself: banish'd from her  
Is self from self: a deadly banishment!  
What light is light, if Silvia be not seen?  
What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by?  
Unless it be to think that she is by  
And feed upon the shadow of perfection  
Except I be by Silvia in the night,  
There is no music in the nightingale;  
Unless I look on Silvia in the day,  
There is no day for me to look upon;  
She is my essence, and I leave to be,  
If I be not by her fair influence  
Foster'd, illumined, cherish'd, kept alive.  
I fly not death, to fly his deadly doom:  
Tarry I here, I but attend on death:  
But, fly I hence, I fly away from life.

*Enter PROTEUS and LAUNCE*

## **PROTEUS**

Run, boy, run, run, and seek him out.

## **LAUNCE**

Soho, soho!

## **PROTEUS**

What seest thou?

## **LAUNCE**

Him we go to find: there's not a hair on's head  
but 'tis a Valentine.

**PROTEUS**

Valentine?

**VALENTINE**

No.

**PROTEUS**

Who then? his spirit?

**VALENTINE**

Neither.

**PROTEUS**

What then?

**VALENTINE**

Nothing.

**LAUNCE**

Can nothing speak? Master, shall I strike?

**PROTEUS**

Who wouldst thou strike?

**LAUNCE**

Nothing.

**PROTEUS**

Villain, forbear.

**LAUNCE**

Why, sir, I'll strike nothing: I pray you,--

**PROTEUS**

Sirrah, I say, forbear. Friend Valentine, a word.

**VALENTINE**

My ears are stopt and cannot hear good news,  
So much of bad already hath possess'd them.

**PROTEUS**

Then in dumb silence will I bury mine,  
For they are harsh, untuneable and bad.

**VALENTINE**

Is Silvia dead?

**PROTEUS**

No, Valentine.

**VALENTINE**

No Valentine, indeed, for sacred Silvia.  
Hath she forsworn me?

**PROTEUS**

No, Valentine.

**VALENTINE**

No Valentine, if Silvia have forsworn me.

What is your news?

**LAUNCE**

Sir, there is a proclamation that you are vanished.

**PROTEUS**

That thou art banished--O, that's the news!--  
From hence, from Silvia and from me thy friend.

**VALENTINE**

O, I have fed upon this woe already,  
And now excess of it will make me surfeit.  
Doth Silvia know that I am banished?

**PROTEUS**

Ay, ay; and she hath offer'd to the doom--  
Which, unreversed, stands in effectual force--  
A sea of melting pearl, which some call tears:  
Those at her father's churlish feet she tender'd;  
With them, upon her knees, her humble self;  
Wringing her hands, whose whiteness so became them  
As if but now they waxed pale for woe:  
But neither bended knees, pure hands held up,  
Sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver-shedding tears,  
Could penetrate her uncompassionate sire;  
But Valentine, if he be ta'en, must die.  
Besides, her intercession chafed him so,  
When she for thy repeal was suppliant,  
That to close prison he commanded her,  
With many bitter threats of bidding there.

**VALENTINE**

No more; unless the next word that thou speak'st  
Have some malignant power upon my life:  
If so, I pray thee, breathe it in mine ear,  
As ending anthem of my endless dolour.

## **PROTEUS**

Cease to lament for that thou canst not help,  
And study help for that which thou lament'st.  
Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.  
Here if thou stay, thou canst not see thy love;  
Besides, thy staying will abridge thy life.  
Hope is a lover's staff; walk hence with that  
And manage it against despairing thoughts.  
Thy letters may be here, though thou art hence;  
Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd  
Even in the milk-white bosom of thy love.  
The time now serves not to expostulate:  
Come, I'll convey thee through the city-gate;  
And, ere I part with thee, confer at large  
Of all that may concern thy love-affairs.  
As thou lovest Silvia, though not for thyself,  
Regard thy danger, and along with me!

## **VALENTINE**

I pray thee, Launce, an if thou seest my boy,  
Bid him make haste and meet me at the North-gate.

## **PROTEUS**

Go, sirrah, find him out. Come, Valentine.

## **VALENTINE**

O my dear Silvia! Hapless Valentine!

*Exeunt VALENTINE and PROTEUS*

## **LAUNCE**

I am but a fool, look you; and yet I have the wit to  
think my master is a kind of a knave: but that's  
all one, if he be but one knave. He lives not now  
that knows me to be in love; yet I am in love; but a  
team of horse shall not pluck that from me; nor who  
'tis I love; and yet 'tis a woman; but what woman, I

will not tell myself; and yet 'tis a milkmaid; yet 'tis not a maid, for she hath had gossips; yet 'tis a maid, for she is her master's maid, and serves for wages. She hath more qualities than a water-spaniel; which is much in a bare Christian.

*Pulling out a paper*

Here is the cate-log of her condition.  
'Imprimis: She can fetch and carry.' Why, a horse can do no more: nay, a horse cannot fetch, but only carry; therefore is she better than a jade. 'Item: She can milk;' look you, a sweet virtue in a maid with clean hands.

*Enter SPEED*

**SPEED**

How now, Signior Launce! what news with your mastership?

**LAUNCE**

With my master's ship? why, it is at sea.

**SPEED**

Well, your old vice still; mistake the word. What news, then, in your paper?

**LAUNCE**

The blackest news that ever thou heardest.

**SPEED**

Why, man, how black?

**LAUNCE**



Why, as black as ink.

**SPEED**

Let me read them.

**LAUNCE**

Fie on thee, jolt-head! thou canst not read.

**SPEED**

Thou liest; I can.

**LAUNCE**

I will try thee. Tell me this: who begot thee?

**SPEED**

Marry, the son of my grandfather.

**LAUNCE**

O illiterate loiterer! it was the son of thy  
grandmother: this proves that thou canst not read.

**SPEED**

Come, fool, come; try me in thy paper.

**LAUNCE**

There; and St. Nicholas be thy speed!

**SPEED**

[Reads] 'Imprimis: She can milk.'

**LAUNCE**

Ay, that she can.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She brews good ale.'

## **LAUNCE**

And thereof comes the proverb: 'Blessing of your heart, you brew good ale.'

## **SPEED**

'Item: She can sew.'

## **LAUNCE**

That's as much as to say, Can she so?

## **SPEED**

'Item: She can knit.'

## **LAUNCE**

What need a man care for a stock with a wench, when she can knit him a stock?

## **SPEED**

'Item: She can wash and scour.'

## **LAUNCE**

A special virtue: for then she need not be washed and scoured.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She can spin.'

**LAUNCE**

Then may I set the world on wheels, when she can  
spin for her living.

**SPEED**

'Item: She hath many nameless virtues.'

**LAUNCE**

That's as much as to say, bastard virtues; that,  
indeed, know not their fathers and therefore have no names.

**SPEED**

'Here follow her vices.'

**LAUNCE**

Close at the heels of her virtues.

**SPEED**

'Item: She is not to be kissed fasting in respect  
of her breath.'

**LAUNCE**

Well, that fault may be mended with a breakfast. Read on.

**SPEED**

'Item: She hath a sweet mouth.'

**LAUNCE**

That makes amends for her sour breath.

**SPEED**

'Item: She doth talk in her sleep.'

## **LAUNCE**

It's no matter for that, so she sleep not in her talk.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She is slow in words.'

## **LAUNCE**

O villain, that set this down among her vices! To be slow in words is a woman's only virtue: I pray thee, out with't, and place it for her chief virtue.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She is proud.'

## **LAUNCE**

Out with that too; it was Eve's legacy, and cannot be ta'en from her.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She hath no teeth.'

## **LAUNCE**

I care not for that neither, because I love crusts.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She is curst.'

## **LAUNCE**

Well, the best is, she hath no teeth to bite.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She will often praise her liquor.'

## **LAUNCE**

If her liquor be good, she shall: if she will not, I will; for good things should be praised.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She is too liberal.'

## **LAUNCE**

Of her tongue she cannot, for that's writ down she is slow of; of her purse she shall not, for that I'll keep shut: now, of another thing she may, and that cannot I help. Well, proceed.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She hath more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults.'

## **LAUNCE**

Stop there; I'll have her: she was mine, and not mine, twice or thrice in that last article. Rehearse that once more.

## **SPEED**

'Item: She hath more hair than wit,'--

## **LAUNCE**

More hair than wit? It may be; I'll prove it. The cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt; the hair that covers the wit is more than the wit, for the greater hides the

less. What's next?

**SPEED**

'And more faults than hairs,'--

**LAUNCE**

That's monstrous: O, that that were out!

**SPEED**

'And more wealth than faults.'

**LAUNCE**

Why, that word makes the faults gracious. Well,  
I'll have her; and if it be a match, as nothing is  
impossible,--

**SPEED**

What then?

**LAUNCE**

Why, then will I tell thee--that thy master stays  
for thee at the North-gate.

**SPEED**

For me?

**LAUNCE**

For thee! ay, who art thou? he hath stayed for a  
better man than thee.

**SPEED**

And must I go to him?

**LAUNCE**

Thou must run to him, for thou hast stayed so long  
that going will scarce serve the turn.

**SPEED**

Why didst not tell me sooner? pox of your love letters!

*Exit*

**LAUNCE**

Now will he be swinged for reading my letter; an  
unmannerly slave, that will thrust himself into  
secrets! I'll after, to rejoice in the boy's correction.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. The DUKE's palace.

*Enter DUKE and THURIO*

**DUKE**

Sir Thurio, fear not but that she will love you,  
Now Valentine is banish'd from her sight.

**THURIO**

Since his exile she hath despised me most,  
Forsworn my company and rail'd at me,  
That I am desperate of obtaining her.

**DUKE**

This weak impress of love is as a figure  
Trenched in ice, which with an hour's heat  
Dissolves to water and doth lose his form.  
A little time will melt her frozen thoughts  
And worthless Valentine shall be forgot.

*Enter PROTEUS*

How now, Sir Proteus! Is your countryman  
According to our proclamation gone?

**PROTEUS**

Gone, my good lord.

**DUKE**

My daughter takes his going grievously.



**PROTEUS**

A little time, my lord, will kill that grief.

**DUKE**

So I believe; but Thurio thinks not so.  
Proteus, the good conceit I hold of thee--  
For thou hast shown some sign of good desert--  
Makes me the better to confer with thee.

**PROTEUS**

Longer than I prove loyal to your grace  
Let me not live to look upon your grace.

**DUKE**

Thou know'st how willingly I would effect  
The match between Sir Thurio and my daughter.

**PROTEUS**

I do, my lord.

**DUKE**

And also, I think, thou art not ignorant  
How she opposes her against my will

**PROTEUS**

She did, my lord, when Valentine was here.

**DUKE**

Ay, and perversely she perseveres so.  
What might we do to make the girl forget  
The love of Valentine and love Sir Thurio?

**PROTEUS**

The best way is to slander Valentine  
With falsehood, cowardice and poor descent,  
Three things that women highly hold in hate.

**DUKE**

Ay, but she'll think that it is spoke in hate.

**PROTEUS**

Ay, if his enemy deliver it:  
Therefore it must with circumstance be spoken  
By one whom she esteemeth as his friend.

**DUKE**

Then you must undertake to slander him.

**PROTEUS**

And that, my lord, I shall be loath to do:  
'Tis an ill office for a gentleman,  
Especially against his very friend.

**DUKE**

Where your good word cannot advantage him,  
Your slander never can endamage him;  
Therefore the office is indifferent,  
Being entreated to it by your friend.

**PROTEUS**

You have prevail'd, my lord; if I can do it  
By ought that I can speak in his dispraise,  
She shall not long continue love to him.  
But say this weed her love from Valentine,  
It follows not that she will love Sir Thurio.

**THURIO**

Therefore, as you unwind her love from him,  
Lest it should ravel and be good to none,  
You must provide to bottom it on me;  
Which must be done by praising me as much  
As you in worth dispraise Sir Valentine.

## **DUKE**

And, Proteus, we dare trust you in this kind,  
Because we know, on Valentine's report,  
You are already Love's firm votary  
And cannot soon revolt and change your mind.  
Upon this warrant shall you have access  
Where you with Silvia may confer at large;  
For she is lumpish, heavy, melancholy,  
And, for your friend's sake, will be glad of you;  
Where you may temper her by your persuasion  
To hate young Valentine and love my friend.

## **PROTEUS**

As much as I can do, I will effect:  
But you, Sir Thurio, are not sharp enough;  
You must lay lime to tangle her desires  
By wailful sonnets, whose composed rhymes  
Should be full-fraught with serviceable vows.

## **DUKE**

Ay,  
Much is the force of heaven-bred poesy.

## **PROTEUS**

Say that upon the altar of her beauty  
You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart:  
Write till your ink be dry, and with your tears  
Moist it again, and frame some feeling line  
That may discover such integrity:  
For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews,  
Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,  
Make tigers tame and huge leviathans

Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.  
After your dire-lamenting elegies,  
Visit by night your lady's chamber-window  
With some sweet concert; to their instruments  
Tune a deploring dump: the night's dead silence  
Will well become such sweet-complaining grievance.  
This, or else nothing, will inherit her.

## **DUKE**

This discipline shows thou hast been in love.

## **THURIO**

And thy advice this night I'll put in practise.  
Therefore, sweet Proteus, my direction-giver,  
Let us into the city presently  
To sort some gentlemen well skill'd in music.  
I have a sonnet that will serve the turn  
To give the onset to thy good advice.

## **DUKE**

About it, gentlemen!

## **PROTEUS**

We'll wait upon your grace till after supper,  
And afterward determine our proceedings.

## **DUKE**

Even now about it! I will pardon you.

*Exeunt*

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The frontiers of Mantua. A forest.

*Enter certain Outlaws*

### First Outlaw

Fellows, stand fast; I see a passenger.

### Second Outlaw

If there be ten, shrink not, but down with 'em.

*Enter VALENTINE and SPEED*

### Third Outlaw

Stand, sir, and throw us that you have about ye:  
If not: we'll make you sit and rifle you.

### SPEED

Sir, we are undone; these are the villains  
That all the travellers do fear so much.

### VALENTINE

My friends,--

### First Outlaw

That's not so, sir: we are your enemies.

### Second Outlaw

Peace! we'll hear him.

### **Third Outlaw**

Ay, by my beard, will we, for he's a proper man.

### **VALENTINE**

Then know that I have little wealth to lose:  
A man I am cross'd with adversity;  
My riches are these poor habiliments,  
Of which if you should here disfurnish me,  
You take the sum and substance that I have.

### **Second Outlaw**

Whither travel you?

### **VALENTINE**

To Verona.

### **First Outlaw**

Whence came you?

### **VALENTINE**

From Milan.

### **Third Outlaw**

Have you long sojourned there?

### **VALENTINE**

Some sixteen months, and longer might have stay'd,  
If crooked fortune had not thwarted me.

### **First Outlaw**

What, were you banish'd thence?

## **VALENTINE**

I was.

### **Second Outlaw**

For what offence?

## **VALENTINE**

For that which now torments me to rehearse:  
I kill'd a man, whose death I much repent;  
But yet I slew him manfully in fight,  
Without false vantage or base treachery.

### **First Outlaw**

Why, ne'er repent it, if it were done so.  
But were you banish'd for so small a fault?

## **VALENTINE**

I was, and held me glad of such a doom.

### **Second Outlaw**

Have you the tongues?

## **VALENTINE**

My youthful travel therein made me happy,  
Or else I often had been miserable.

### **Third Outlaw**

By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar,  
This fellow were a king for our wild faction!

### **First Outlaw**

We'll have him. Sirs, a word.

## **SPEED**

Master, be one of them; it's an honourable kind of thievery.

## **VALENTINE**

Peace, villain!

## **Second Outlaw**

Tell us this: have you any thing to take to?

## **VALENTINE**

Nothing but my fortune.

## **Third Outlaw**

Know, then, that some of us are gentlemen,  
Such as the fury of ungovern'd youth  
Thrust from the company of awful men:  
Myself was from Verona banished  
For practising to steal away a lady,  
An heir, and near allied unto the duke.

## **Second Outlaw**

And I from Mantua, for a gentleman,  
Who, in my mood, I stabb'd unto the heart.

## **First Outlaw**

And I for such like petty crimes as these,  
But to the purpose--for we cite our faults,  
That they may hold excus'd our lawless lives;  
And partly, seeing you are beautified  
With goodly shape and by your own report  
A linguist and a man of such perfection  
As we do in our quality much want--



## Second Outlaw

Indeed, because you are a banish'd man,  
Therefore, above the rest, we parley to you:  
Are you content to be our general?  
To make a virtue of necessity  
And live, as we do, in this wilderness?

## Third Outlaw

What say'st thou? wilt thou be of our consort?  
Say ay, and be the captain of us all:  
We'll do thee homage and be ruled by thee,  
Love thee as our commander and our king.

## First Outlaw

But if thou scorn our courtesy, thou diest.

## Second Outlaw

Thou shalt not live to brag what we have offer'd.

## VALENTINE

I take your offer and will live with you,  
Provided that you do no outrages  
On silly women or poor passengers.

## Third Outlaw

No, we detest such vile base practises.  
Come, go with us, we'll bring thee to our crews,  
And show thee all the treasure we have got,  
Which, with ourselves, all rest at thy dispose.

*Exeunt*

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Milan. Outside the DUKE's palace, under SILVIA's chamber.

*Enter PROTEUS*

### PROTEUS

Already have I been false to Valentine  
And now I must be as unjust to Thurio.  
Under the colour of commending him,  
I have access my own love to prefer:  
But Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy,  
To be corrupted with my worthless gifts.  
When I protest true loyalty to her,  
She twits me with my falsehood to my friend;  
When to her beauty I commend my vows,  
She bids me think how I have been forsworn  
In breaking faith with Julia whom I loved:  
And notwithstanding all her sudden quips,  
The least whereof would quell a lover's hope,  
Yet, spaniel-like, the more she spurns my love,  
The more it grows and fawneth on her still.  
But here comes Thurio: now must we to her window,  
And give some evening music to her ear.

*Enter THURIO and Musicians*

### THURIO

How now, Sir Proteus, are you crept before us?

### PROTEUS

Ay, gentle Thurio: for you know that love  
Will creep in service where it cannot go.

**THURIO**

Ay, but I hope, sir, that you love not here.

**PROTEUS**

Sir, but I do; or else I would be hence.

**THURIO**

Who? Silvia?

**PROTEUS**

Ay, Silvia; for your sake.

**THURIO**

I thank you for your own. Now, gentlemen,  
Let's tune, and to it lustily awhile.

*Enter, at a distance, Host, and JULIA in boy's clothes*

**Host**

Now, my young guest, methinks you're allycholly: I  
pray you, why is it?

**JULIA**

Marry, mine host, because I cannot be merry.

**Host**

Come, we'll have you merry: I'll bring you where  
you shall hear music and see the gentleman that you asked for.

**JULIA**

But shall I hear him speak?

**Host**

Ay, that you shall.

**JULIA**

That will be music.

*Music plays*

**Host**

Hark, hark!

**JULIA**

Is he among these?

**Host**

Ay: but, peace! let's hear 'em.

SONG.

Who is Silvia? what is she,  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair and wise is she;  
The heaven such grace did lend her,  
That she might admired be.  
Is she kind as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness.  
Love doth to her eyes repair,  
To help him of his blindness,  
And, being help'd, inhabits there.  
Then to Silvia let us sing,  
That Silvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling:  
To her let us garlands bring.

**Host**

How now! are you sadder than you were before? How  
do you, man? the music likes you not.

**JULIA**

You mistake; the musician likes me not.

**Host**

Why, my pretty youth?

**JULIA**

He plays false, father.

**Host**

How? out of tune on the strings?

**JULIA**

Not so; but yet so false that he grieves my very  
heart-strings.

**Host**

You have a quick ear.

**JULIA**

Ay, I would I were deaf; it makes me have a slow heart.

**Host**

I perceive you delight not in music.

**JULIA**

Not a whit, when it jars so.

**Host**

Hark, what fine change is in the music!

**JULIA**

Ay, that change is the spite.

**Host**

You would have them always play but one thing?

**JULIA**

I would always have one play but one thing.  
But, host, doth this Sir Proteus that we talk on  
Often resort unto this gentlewoman?

**Host**

I tell you what Launce, his man, told me: he loved  
her out of all nick.

**JULIA**

Where is Launce?

**Host**

Gone to seek his dog; which tomorrow, by his  
master's command, he must carry for a present to his lady.

**JULIA**

Peace! stand aside: the company parts.

**PROTEUS**

Sir Thurio, fear not you: I will so plead  
That you shall say my cunning drift excels.

**THURIO**

Where meet we?

**PROTEUS**

At Saint Gregory's well.

**THURIO**

Farewell.

*Exeunt THURIO and Musicians*

*Enter SILVIA above*

**PROTEUS**

Madam, good even to your ladyship.

**SILVIA**

I thank you for your music, gentlemen.  
Who is that that spake?

**PROTEUS**

One, lady, if you knew his pure heart's truth,  
You would quickly learn to know him by his voice.

**SILVIA**

Sir Proteus, as I take it.

**PROTEUS**

Sir Proteus, gentle lady, and your servant.

**SILVIA**

What's your will?

**PROTEUS**

That I may compass yours.

**SILVIA**

You have your wish; my will is even this:  
That presently you hie you home to bed.  
Thou subtle, perjured, false, disloyal man!  
Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,  
To be seduced by thy flattery,  
That hast deceived so many with thy vows?  
Return, return, and make thy love amends.  
For me, by this pale queen of night I swear,  
I am so far from granting thy request  
That I despise thee for thy wrongful suit,  
And by and by intend to chide myself  
Even for this time I spend in talking to thee.

**PROTEUS**

I grant, sweet love, that I did love a lady;  
But she is dead.

**JULIA**

[Aside] 'Twere false, if I should speak it;  
For I am sure she is not buried.

**SILVIA**

Say that she be; yet Valentine thy friend  
Survives; to whom, thyself art witness,  
I am betroth'd: and art thou not ashamed  
To wrong him with thy importunacy?

**PROTEUS**

I likewise hear that Valentine is dead.

**SILVIA**



And so suppose am I; for in his grave  
Assure thyself my love is buried.

**PROTEUS**

Sweet lady, let me rake it from the earth.

**SILVIA**

Go to thy lady's grave and call hers thence,  
Or, at the least, in hers sepulchre thine.

**JULIA**

[Aside] He heard not that.

**PROTEUS**

Madam, if your heart be so obdurate,  
Vouchsafe me yet your picture for my love,  
The picture that is hanging in your chamber;  
To that I'll speak, to that I'll sigh and weep:  
For since the substance of your perfect self  
Is else devoted, I am but a shadow;  
And to your shadow will I make true love.

**JULIA**

[Aside] If 'twere a substance, you would, sure,  
deceive it,  
And make it but a shadow, as I am.

**SILVIA**

I am very loath to be your idol, sir;  
But since your falsehood shall become you well  
To worship shadows and adore false shapes,  
Send to me in the morning and I'll send it:  
And so, good rest.

**PROTEUS**

As wretches have o'ernight  
That wait for execution in the morn.

*Exeunt PROTEUS and SILVIA severally*

**JULIA**

Host, will you go?

**Host**

By my halidom, I was fast asleep.

**JULIA**

Pray you, where lies Sir Proteus?

**Host**

Marry, at my house. Trust me, I think 'tis almost  
day.

**JULIA**

Not so; but it hath been the longest night  
That e'er I watch'd and the most heaviest.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same.

*Enter EGLAMOUR*

### EGLAMOUR

This is the hour that Madam Silvia  
Entreated me to call and know her mind:  
There's some great matter she'ld employ me in.  
Madam, madam!

*Enter SILVIA above*

### SILVIA

Who calls?

### EGLAMOUR

Your servant and your friend;  
One that attends your ladyship's command.

### SILVIA

Sir Eglamour, a thousand times good morrow.

### EGLAMOUR

As many, worthy lady, to yourself:  
According to your ladyship's impose,  
I am thus early come to know what service  
It is your pleasure to command me in.

### SILVIA

O Eglamour, thou art a gentleman--

Think not I flatter, for I swear I do not--  
Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplish'd:  
Thou art not ignorant what dear good will  
I bear unto the banish'd Valentine,  
Nor how my father would enforce me marry  
Vain Thurio, whom my very soul abhors.  
Thyself hast loved; and I have heard thee say  
No grief did ever come so near thy heart  
As when thy lady and thy true love died,  
Upon whose grave thou vow'dst pure chastity.  
Sir Eglamour, I would to Valentine,  
To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode;  
And, for the ways are dangerous to pass,  
I do desire thy worthy company,  
Upon whose faith and honour I repose.  
Urge not my father's anger, Eglamour,  
But think upon my grief, a lady's grief,  
And on the justice of my flying hence,  
To keep me from a most unholy match,  
Which heaven and fortune still rewards with plagues.  
I do desire thee, even from a heart  
As full of sorrows as the sea of sands,  
To bear me company and go with me:  
If not, to hide what I have said to thee,  
That I may venture to depart alone.

## EGLAMOUR

Madam, I pity much your grievances;  
Which since I know they virtuously are placed,  
I give consent to go along with you,  
Recking as little what betideth me  
As much I wish all good befortune you.  
When will you go?

## SILVIA

This evening coming.

## EGLAMOUR

Where shall I meet you?

**SILVIA**

At Friar Patrick's cell,  
Where I intend holy confession.

**EGLAMOUR**

I will not fail your ladyship. Good morrow, gentle lady.

**SILVIA**

Good morrow, kind Sir Eglamour.

*Exeunt severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same.

*Enter LAUNCE, with his his Dog*

**LAUNCE**

When a man's servant shall play the cur with him,  
look you, it goes hard: one that I brought up of a  
puppy; one that I saved from drowning, when three or  
four of his blind brothers and sisters went to it.  
I have taught him, even as one would say precisely,  
'thus I would teach a dog.' I was sent to deliver  
him as a present to Mistress Silvia from my master;  
and I came no sooner into the dining-chamber but he  
steps me to her trencher and steals her capon's leg:  
O, 'tis a foul thing when a cur cannot keep himself  
in all companies! I would have, as one should say,  
one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed, to be,  
as it were, a dog at all things. If I had not had  
more wit than he, to take a fault upon me that he did,  
I think verily he had been hanged for't; sure as I  
live, he had suffered for't; you shall judge. He  
thrusts me himself into the company of three or four  
gentlemanlike dogs under the duke's table: he had  
not been there--bless the mark!--a pissing while, but  
all the chamber smelt him. 'Out with the dog!' says  
one: 'What cur is that?' says another: 'Whip him  
out' says the third: 'Hang him up' says the duke.  
I, having been acquainted with the smell before,  
knew it was Crab, and goes me to the fellow that  
whips the dogs: 'Friend,' quoth I, 'you mean to whip  
the dog?' 'Ay, marry, do I,' quoth he. 'You do him  
the more wrong,' quoth I; 'twas I did the thing you  
wot of.' He makes me no more ado, but whips me out  
of the chamber. How many masters would do this for  
his servant? Nay, I'll be sworn, I have sat in the  
stocks for puddings he hath stolen, otherwise he had

been executed; I have stood on the pillory for geese  
he hath killed, otherwise he had suffered for't.  
Thou thinkest not of this now. Nay, I remember the  
trick you served me when I took my leave of Madam  
Silvia: did not I bid thee still mark me and do as I  
do? when didst thou see me heave up my leg and make  
water against a gentlewoman's farthingale? didst  
thou ever see me do such a trick?

*Enter PROTEUS and JULIA*

**PROTEUS**

Sebastian is thy name? I like thee well  
And will employ thee in some service presently.

**JULIA**

In what you please: I'll do what I can.

**PROTEUS**

I hope thou wilt.

*To LAUNCE*

How now, you whoreson peasant!  
Where have you been these two days loitering?

**LAUNCE**

Marry, sir, I carried Mistress Silvia the dog you bade me.

**PROTEUS**

And what says she to my little jewel?

**LAUNCE**

Marry, she says your dog was a cur, and tells you  
currish thanks is good enough for such a present.

## **PROTEUS**

But she received my dog?

## **LAUNCE**

No, indeed, did she not: here have I brought him back again.

## **PROTEUS**

What, didst thou offer her this from me?

## **LAUNCE**

Ay, sir: the other squirrel was stolen from me by the hangman boys in the market-place: and then I offered her mine own, who is a dog as big as ten of yours, and therefore the gift the greater.

## **PROTEUS**

Go get thee hence, and find my dog again,  
Or ne'er return again into my sight.  
Away, I say! stay'st thou to vex me here?

*Exit LAUNCE*

A slave, that still an end turns me to shame!  
Sebastian, I have entertained thee,  
Partly that I have need of such a youth  
That can with some discretion do my business,  
For 'tis no trusting to yond foolish lout,  
But chiefly for thy face and thy behavior,  
Which, if my augury deceive me not,  
Witness good bringing up, fortune and truth:  
Therefore know thou, for this I entertain thee.  
Go presently and take this ring with thee,  
Deliver it to Madam Silvia:  
She loved me well deliver'd it to me.



**JULIA**

It seems you loved not her, to leave her token.  
She is dead, belike?

**PROTEUS**

Not so; I think she lives.

**JULIA**

Alas!

**PROTEUS**

Why dost thou cry 'alas'?

**JULIA**

I cannot choose  
But pity her.

**PROTEUS**

Wherefore shouldst thou pity her?

**JULIA**

Because methinks that she loved you as well  
As you do love your lady Silvia:  
She dreams of him that has forgot her love;  
You dote on her that cares not for your love.  
'Tis pity love should be so contrary;  
And thinking of it makes me cry 'alas!'

**PROTEUS**

Well, give her that ring and therewithal  
This letter. That's her chamber. Tell my lady  
I claim the promise for her heavenly picture.  
Your message done, hie home unto my chamber,

Where thou shalt find me, sad and solitary.

*Exit*

**JULIA**

How many women would do such a message?  
Alas, poor Proteus! thou hast entertain'd  
A fox to be the shepherd of thy lambs.  
Alas, poor fool! why do I pity him  
That with his very heart despiseth me?  
Because he loves her, he despiseth me;  
Because I love him I must pity him.  
This ring I gave him when he parted from me,  
To bind him to remember my good will;  
And now am I, unhappy messenger,  
To plead for that which I would not obtain,  
To carry that which I would have refused,  
To praise his faith which I would have dispraised.  
I am my master's true-confirmed love;  
But cannot be true servant to my master,  
Unless I prove false traitor to myself.  
Yet will I woo for him, but yet so coldly  
As, heaven it knows, I would not have him speed.

*Enter SILVIA, attended*

Gentlewoman, good day! I pray you, be my mean  
To bring me where to speak with Madam Silvia.

**SILVIA**

What would you wish with her, if that I be she?

**JULIA**

If you be she, I do entreat your patience  
To hear me speak the message I am sent on.

**SILVIA**

From whom?

**JULIA**

From my master, Sir Proteus, madam.

**SILVIA**

O, he sends you for a picture.

**JULIA**

Ay, madam.

**SILVIA**

Ursula, bring my picture here.  
Go give your master this: tell him from me,  
One Julia, that his changing thoughts forget,  
Would better fit his chamber than this shadow.

**JULIA**

Madam, please you peruse this letter.--  
Pardon me, madam; I have unadvised  
Deliver'd you a paper that I should not:  
This is the letter to your ladyship.

**SILVIA**

I pray thee, let me look on that again.

**JULIA**

It may not be; good madam, pardon me.

**SILVIA**

There, hold!  
I will not look upon your master's lines:  
I know they are stuff'd with protestations  
And full of new-found oaths; which he will break

As easily as I do tear his paper.

**JULIA**

Madam, he sends your ladyship this ring.

**SILVIA**

The more shame for him that he sends it me;  
For I have heard him say a thousand times  
His Julia gave it him at his departure.  
Though his false finger have profaned the ring,  
Mine shall not do his Julia so much wrong.

**JULIA**

She thanks you.

**SILVIA**

What say'st thou?

**JULIA**

I thank you, madam, that you tender her.  
Poor gentlewoman! my master wrongs her much.

**SILVIA**

Dost thou know her?

**JULIA**

Almost as well as I do know myself:  
To think upon her woes I do protest  
That I have wept a hundred several times.

**SILVIA**

Belike she thinks that Proteus hath forsook her.

**JULIA**

I think she doth; and that's her cause of sorrow.

**SILVIA**

Is she not passing fair?

**JULIA**

She hath been fairer, madam, than she is:  
When she did think my master loved her well,  
She, in my judgment, was as fair as you:  
But since she did neglect her looking-glass  
And threw her sun-expelling mask away,  
The air hath starved the roses in her cheeks  
And pinch'd the lily-tincture of her face,  
That now she is become as black as I.

**SILVIA**

How tall was she?

**JULIA**

About my stature; for at Pentecost,  
When all our pageants of delight were play'd,  
Our youth got me to play the woman's part,  
And I was trimm'd in Madam Julia's gown,  
Which served me as fit, by all men's judgments,  
As if the garment had been made for me:  
Therefore I know she is about my height.  
And at that time I made her weep agood,  
For I did play a lamentable part:  
Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning  
For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight;  
Which I so lively acted with my tears  
That my poor mistress, moved therewithal,  
Wept bitterly; and would I might be dead  
If I in thought felt not her very sorrow!

**SILVIA**

She is beholding to thee, gentle youth.  
Alas, poor lady, desolate and left!  
I weep myself to think upon thy words.  
Here, youth, there is my purse; I give thee this  
For thy sweet mistress' sake, because thou lovest her.  
Farewell.

*Exit SILVIA, with attendants*

## **JULIA**

And she shall thank you for't, if e'er you know her.  
A virtuous gentlewoman, mild and beautiful  
I hope my master's suit will be but cold,  
Since she respects my mistress' love so much.  
Alas, how love can trifle with itself!  
Here is her picture: let me see; I think,  
If I had such a tire, this face of mine  
Were full as lovely as is this of hers:  
And yet the painter flatter'd her a little,  
Unless I flatter with myself too much.  
Her hair is auburn, mine is perfect yellow:  
If that be all the difference in his love,  
I'll get me such a colour'd periwig.  
Her eyes are grey as glass, and so are mine:  
Ay, but her forehead's low, and mine's as high.  
What should it be that he respects in her  
But I can make respective in myself,  
If this fond Love were not a blinded god?  
Come, shadow, come and take this shadow up,  
For 'tis thy rival. O thou senseless form,  
Thou shalt be worshipp'd, kiss'd, loved and adored!  
And, were there sense in his idolatry,  
My substance should be statue in thy stead.  
I'll use thee kindly for thy mistress' sake,  
That used me so; or else, by Jove I vow,  
I should have scratch'd out your unseeing eyes  
To make my master out of love with thee!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Milan. An abbey.

*Enter EGLAMOUR*

### EGLAMOUR

The sun begins to gild the western sky;  
And now it is about the very hour  
That Silvia, at Friar Patrick's cell, should meet me.  
She will not fail, for lovers break not hours,  
Unless it be to come before their time;  
So much they spur their expedition.  
See where she comes.

*Enter SILVIA*

Lady, a happy evening!

### SILVIA

Amen, amen! Go on, good Eglamour,  
Out at the postern by the abbey-wall:  
I fear I am attended by some spies.

### EGLAMOUR

Fear not: the forest is not three leagues off;  
If we recover that, we are sure enough.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. The DUKE's palace.

*Enter THURIO, PROTEUS, and JULIA*

**THURIO**

Sir Proteus, what says Silvia to my suit?

**PROTEUS**

O, sir, I find her milder than she was;  
And yet she takes exceptions at your person.

**THURIO**

What, that my leg is too long?

**PROTEUS**

No; that it is too little.

**THURIO**

I'll wear a boot, to make it somewhat rounder.

**JULIA**

[Aside] But love will not be spurr'd to what  
it loathes.

**THURIO**

What says she to my face?

**PROTEUS**

She says it is a fair one.

**THURIO**

Nay then, the wanton lies; my face is black.

**PROTEUS**

But pearls are fair; and the old saying is,  
Black men are pearls in beauteous ladies' eyes.

**JULIA**

[Aside] 'Tis true; such pearls as put out  
ladies' eyes;  
For I had rather wink than look on them.

**THURIO**

How likes she my discourse?

**PROTEUS**

Ill, when you talk of war.

**THURIO**

But well, when I discourse of love and peace?

**JULIA**

[Aside] But better, indeed, when you hold your peace.

**THURIO**

What says she to my valour?

**PROTEUS**

O, sir, she makes no doubt of that.

**JULIA**

[Aside] She needs not, when she knows it cowardice.

**THURIO**

What says she to my birth?

**PROTEUS**

That you are well derived.

**JULIA**

[Aside] True; from a gentleman to a fool.

**THURIO**

Considers she my possessions?

**PROTEUS**

O, ay; and pities them.

**THURIO**

Wherefore?

**JULIA**

[Aside] That such an ass should owe them.

**PROTEUS**

That they are out by lease.

**JULIA**

Here comes the duke.

*Enter DUKE*

**DUKE**

How now, Sir Proteus! how now, Thurio!  
Which of you saw Sir Eglamour of late?

**THURIO**

Not I.

**PROTEUS**

Nor I.

**DUKE**

Saw you my daughter?

**PROTEUS**

Neither.

**DUKE**

Why then,  
She's fled unto that peasant Valentine;  
And Eglamour is in her company.  
'Tis true; for Friar Laurence met them both,  
As he in penance wander'd through the forest;  
Him he knew well, and guess'd that it was she,  
But, being mask'd, he was not sure of it;  
Besides, she did intend confession  
At Patrick's cell this even; and there she was not;  
These likelihoods confirm her flight from hence.  
Therefore, I pray you, stand not to discourse,  
But mount you presently and meet with me  
Upon the rising of the mountain-foot  
That leads towards Mantua, whither they are fled:  
Dispatch, sweet gentlemen, and follow me.

*Exit*

**THURIO**

Why, this it is to be a peevish girl,  
That flies her fortune when it follows her.  
I'll after, more to be revenged on Eglamour  
Than for the love of reckless Silvia.

*Exit*

**PROTEUS**

And I will follow, more for Silvia's love  
Than hate of Eglamour that goes with her.

*Exit*

**JULIA**

And I will follow, more to cross that love  
Than hate for Silvia that is gone for love.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The frontiers of Mantua. The forest.

*Enter Outlaws with SILVIA*

### First Outlaw

Come, come,  
Be patient; we must bring you to our captain.

### SILVIA

A thousand more mischances than this one  
Have learn'd me how to brook this patiently.

### Second Outlaw

Come, bring her away.

### First Outlaw

Where is the gentleman that was with her?

### Third Outlaw

Being nimble-footed, he hath outrun us,  
But Moyses and Valerius follow him.  
Go thou with her to the west end of the wood;  
There is our captain: we'll follow him that's fled;  
The thicket is beset; he cannot 'scape.

### First Outlaw

Come, I must bring you to our captain's cave:  
Fear not; he bears an honourable mind,  
And will not use a woman lawlessly.

**SILVIA**

O Valentine, this I endure for thee!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Two Gentlemen of Verona

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Two Gentlemen of Verona](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the forest.

*Enter VALENTINE*

**VALENTINE**

How use doth breed a habit in a man!  
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,  
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns:  
Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,  
And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
Tune my distresses and record my woes.  
O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,  
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,  
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall  
And leave no memory of what it was!  
Repair me with thy presence, Silvia;  
Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain!  
What halloing and what stir is this to-day?  
These are my mates, that make their wills their law,  
Have some unhappy passenger in chase.  
They love me well; yet I have much to do  
To keep them from uncivil outrages.  
Withdraw thee, Valentine: who's this comes here?

*Enter PROTEUS, SILVIA, and JULIA*

**PROTEUS**

Madam, this service I have done for you,  
Though you respect not aught your servant doth,  
To hazard life and rescue you from him  
That would have forced your honour and your love;  
Vouchsafe me, for my meed, but one fair look;  
A smaller boon than this I cannot beg  
And less than this, I am sure, you cannot give.



## **VALENTINE**

[Aside] How like a dream is this I see and hear!  
Love, lend me patience to forbear awhile.

## **SILVIA**

O miserable, unhappy that I am!

## **PROTEUS**

Unhappy were you, madam, ere I came;  
But by my coming I have made you happy.

## **SILVIA**

By thy approach thou makest me most unhappy.

## **JULIA**

[Aside] And me, when he approacheth to your presence.

## **SILVIA**

Had I been seized by a hungry lion,  
I would have been a breakfast to the beast,  
Rather than have false Proteus rescue me.  
O, Heaven be judge how I love Valentine,  
Whose life's as tender to me as my soul!  
And full as much, for more there cannot be,  
I do detest false perjured Proteus.  
Therefore be gone; solicit me no more.

## **PROTEUS**

What dangerous action, stood it next to death,  
Would I not undergo for one calm look!  
O, 'tis the curse in love, and still approved,  
When women cannot love where they're beloved!

## **SILVIA**

When Proteus cannot love where he's beloved.  
Read over Julia's heart, thy first best love,  
For whose dear sake thou didst then rend thy faith  
Into a thousand oaths; and all those oaths  
Descended into perjury, to love me.  
Thou hast no faith left now, unless thou'dst two;  
And that's far worse than none; better have none  
Than plural faith which is too much by one:  
Thou counterfeit to thy true friend!

## **PROTEUS**

In love  
Who respects friend?

## **SILVIA**

All men but Proteus.

## **PROTEUS**

Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words  
Can no way change you to a milder form,  
I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end,  
And love you 'gainst the nature of love,--force ye.

## **SILVIA**

O heaven!

## **PROTEUS**

I'll force thee yield to my desire.

## **VALENTINE**

Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch,  
Thou friend of an ill fashion!

## **PROTEUS**

Valentine!

## **VALENTINE**

Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,  
For such is a friend now; treacherous man!  
Thou hast beguiled my hopes; nought but mine eye  
Could have persuaded me: now I dare not say  
I have one friend alive; thou wouldst disprove me.  
Who should be trusted, when one's own right hand  
Is perjured to the bosom? Proteus,  
I am sorry I must never trust thee more,  
But count the world a stranger for thy sake.  
The private wound is deepest: O time most accurst,  
'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst!

## **PROTEUS**

My shame and guilt confounds me.  
Forgive me, Valentine: if hearty sorrow  
Be a sufficient ransom for offence,  
I tender 't here; I do as truly suffer  
As e'er I did commit.

## **VALENTINE**

Then I am paid;  
And once again I do receive thee honest.  
Who by repentance is not satisfied  
Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased.  
By penitence the Eternal's wrath's appeased:  
And, that my love may appear plain and free,  
All that was mine in Silvia I give thee.

## **JULIA**

O me unhappy!

*Swoons*

## **PROTEUS**

Look to the boy.

**VALENTINE**

Why, boy! why, wag! how now! what's the matter?  
Look up; speak.

**JULIA**

O good sir, my master charged me to deliver a ring  
to Madam Silvia, which, out of my neglect, was never done.

**PROTEUS**

Where is that ring, boy?

**JULIA**

Here 'tis; this is it.

**PROTEUS**

How! let me see:  
Why, this is the ring I gave to Julia.

**JULIA**

O, cry you mercy, sir, I have mistook:  
This is the ring you sent to Silvia.

**PROTEUS**

But how camest thou by this ring? At my depart  
I gave this unto Julia.

**JULIA**

And Julia herself did give it me;  
And Julia herself hath brought it hither.

**PROTEUS**

How! Julia!

## **JULIA**

Behold her that gave aim to all thy oaths,  
And entertain'd 'em deeply in her heart.  
How oft hast thou with perjury cleft the root!  
O Proteus, let this habit make thee blush!  
Be thou ashamed that I have took upon me  
Such an immodest raiment, if shame live  
In a disguise of love:  
It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,  
Women to change their shapes than men their minds.

## **PROTEUS**

Than men their minds! 'tis true.  
O heaven! were man  
But constant, he were perfect. That one error  
Fills him with faults; makes him run through all the sins:  
Inconstancy falls off ere it begins.  
What is in Silvia's face, but I may spy  
More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye?

## **VALENTINE**

Come, come, a hand from either:  
Let me be blest to make this happy close;  
'Twere pity two such friends should be long foes.

## **PROTEUS**

Bear witness, Heaven, I have my wish for ever.

## **JULIA**

And I mine.

*Enter Outlaws, with DUKE and THURIO*

## **Outlaws**

A prize, a prize, a prize!

**VALENTINE**

Forbear, forbear, I say! it is my lord the duke.  
Your grace is welcome to a man disgraced,  
Banished Valentine.

**DUKE**

Sir Valentine!

**THURIO**

Yonder is Silvia; and Silvia's mine.

**VALENTINE**

Thurio, give back, or else embrace thy death;  
Come not within the measure of my wrath;  
Do not name Silvia thine; if once again,  
Verona shall not hold thee. Here she stands;  
Take but possession of her with a touch:  
I dare thee but to breathe upon my love.

**THURIO**

Sir Valentine, I care not for her, I;  
I hold him but a fool that will endanger  
His body for a girl that loves him not:  
I claim her not, and therefore she is thine.

**DUKE**

The more degenerate and base art thou,  
To make such means for her as thou hast done  
And leave her on such slight conditions.  
Now, by the honour of my ancestry,  
I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine,  
And think thee worthy of an empress' love:

Know then, I here forget all former griefs,  
Cancel all grudge, repeal thee home again,  
Plead a new state in thy unrivall'd merit,  
To which I thus subscribe: Sir Valentine,  
Thou art a gentleman and well derived;  
Take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserved her.

**VALENTINE**

I thank your grace; the gift hath made me happy.  
I now beseech you, for your daughter's sake,  
To grant one boon that I shall ask of you.

**DUKE**

I grant it, for thine own, whate'er it be.

**VALENTINE**

These banish'd men that I have kept withal  
Are men endued with worthy qualities:  
Forgive them what they have committed here  
And let them be recall'd from their exile:  
They are reformed, civil, full of good  
And fit for great employment, worthy lord.

**DUKE**

Thou hast prevail'd; I pardon them and thee:  
Dispose of them as thou know'st their deserts.  
Come, let us go: we will include all jars  
With triumphs, mirth and rare solemnity.

**VALENTINE**

And, as we walk along, I dare be bold  
With our discourse to make your grace to smile.  
What think you of this page, my lord?

**DUKE**

I think the boy hath grace in him; he blushes.

**VALENTINE**

I warrant you, my lord, more grace than boy.

**DUKE**

What mean you by that saying?

**VALENTINE**

Please you, I'll tell you as we pass along,  
That you will wonder what hath fortun'd.  
Come, Proteus; 'tis your penance but to hear  
The story of your loves discovered:  
That done, our day of marriage shall be yours;  
One feast, one house, one mutual happiness.

*Exeunt*



# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Winter's Tale

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Antechamber in LEONTES' palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [A room of state in the same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A room in LEONTES' palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A prison.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A room in LEONTES' palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A sea-port in Sicilia.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [A court of Justice.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Bohemia. A desert country near the sea.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Bohemia. The palace of POLIXENES.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [A road near the Shepherd's cottage.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [The Shepherd's cottage.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [A room in LEONTES' palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Before LEONTES' palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [A chapel in PAULINA'S house.](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Antechamber in LEONTES' palace.

*Enter CAMILLO and ARCHIDAMUS*

### ARCHIDAMUS

If you shall chance, Camillo, to visit Bohemia, on the like occasion whereon my services are now on foot, you shall see, as I have said, great difference betwixt our Bohemia and your Sicilia.

### CAMILLO

I think, this coming summer, the King of Sicilia means to pay Bohemia the visitation which he justly owes him.

### ARCHIDAMUS

Wherein our entertainment shall shame us we will be justified in our loves; for indeed--

### CAMILLO

Beseech you,--

### ARCHIDAMUS

Verily, I speak it in the freedom of my knowledge: we cannot with such magnificence--in so rare--I know not what to say. We will give you sleepy drinks, that your senses, unintelligent of our insufficiency, may, though they cannot praise us, as little accuse us.

### CAMILLO

You pay a great deal too dear for what's given freely.

## **ARCHIDAMUS**

Believe me, I speak as my understanding instructs me  
and as mine honesty puts it to utterance.

## **CAMILLO**

Sicilia cannot show himself over-kind to Bohemia.  
They were trained together in their childhoods; and  
there rooted betwixt them then such an affection,  
which cannot choose but branch now. Since their  
more mature dignities and royal necessities made  
separation of their society, their encounters,  
though not personal, have been royally attorneyed  
with interchange of gifts, letters, loving  
embassies; that they have seemed to be together,  
though absent, shook hands, as over a vast, and  
embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed  
winds. The heavens continue their loves!

## **ARCHIDAMUS**

I think there is not in the world either malice or  
matter to alter it. You have an unspeakable  
comfort of your young prince Mamillius: it is a  
gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came  
into my note.

## **CAMILLO**

I very well agree with you in the hopes of him: it  
is a gallant child; one that indeed physics the  
subject, makes old hearts fresh: they that went on  
crutches ere he was born desire yet their life to  
see him a man.

## **ARCHIDAMUS**

Would they else be content to die?

## CAMILLO

Yes; if there were no other excuse why they should desire to live.

## ARCHIDAMUS

If the king had no son, they would desire to live on crutches till he had one.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room of state in the same.

*Enter LEONTES, HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, POLIXENES, CAMILLO, and Attendants*

### POLIXENES

Nine changes of the watery star hath been  
The shepherd's note since we have left our throne  
Without a burthen: time as long again  
Would be find up, my brother, with our thanks;  
And yet we should, for perpetuity,  
Go hence in debt: and therefore, like a cipher,  
Yet standing in rich place, I multiply  
With one 'We thank you' many thousands moe  
That go before it.

### LEONTES

Stay your thanks a while;  
And pay them when you part.

### POLIXENES

Sir, that's to-morrow.  
I am question'd by my fears, of what may chance  
Or breed upon our absence; that may blow  
No sneaping winds at home, to make us say  
'This is put forth too truly:' besides, I have stay'd  
To tire your royalty.

### LEONTES

We are tougher, brother,  
Than you can put us to't.

### POLIXENES

No longer stay.

**LEONTES**

One seven-night longer.

**POLIXENES**

Very sooth, to-morrow.

**LEONTES**

We'll part the time between's then; and in that  
I'll no gainsaying.

**POLIXENES**

Press me not, beseech you, so.  
There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' the world,  
So soon as yours could win me: so it should now,  
Were there necessity in your request, although  
'Twere needful I denied it. My affairs  
Do even drag me homeward: which to hinder  
Were in your love a whip to me; my stay  
To you a charge and trouble: to save both,  
Farewell, our brother.

**LEONTES**

Tongue-tied, our queen?  
speak you.

**HERMIONE**

I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until  
You have drawn oaths from him not to stay. You, sir,  
Charge him too coldly. Tell him, you are sure  
All in Bohemia's well; this satisfaction  
The by-gone day proclaim'd: say this to him,  
He's beat from his best ward.

## LEONTES

Well said, Hermione.

## HERMIONE

To tell, he longs to see his son, were strong:  
But let him say so then, and let him go;  
But let him swear so, and he shall not stay,  
We'll thwack him hence with distaffs.  
Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure  
The borrow of a week. When at Bohemia  
You take my lord, I'll give him my commission  
To let him there a month behind the gest  
Prefix'd for's parting: yet, good deed, Leontes,  
I love thee not a jar o' the clock behind  
What lady-she her lord. You'll stay?

## POLIXENES

No, madam.

## HERMIONE

Nay, but you will?

## POLIXENES

I may not, verily.

## HERMIONE

Verily!  
You put me off with limber vows; but I,  
Though you would seek to unsphere the  
stars with oaths,  
Should yet say 'Sir, no going.' Verily,  
You shall not go: a lady's 'Verily' 's  
As potent as a lord's. Will you go yet?  
Force me to keep you as a prisoner,  
Not like a guest; so you shall pay your fees  
When you depart, and save your thanks. How say you?

My prisoner? or my guest? by your dread 'Verily,'  
One of them you shall be.

## **POLIXENES**

Your guest, then, madam:  
To be your prisoner should import offending;  
Which is for me less easy to commit  
Than you to punish.

## **HERMIONE**

Not your gaoler, then,  
But your kind hostess. Come, I'll question you  
Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were boys:  
You were pretty lordings then?

## **POLIXENES**

We were, fair queen,  
Two lads that thought there was no more behind  
But such a day to-morrow as to-day,  
And to be boy eternal.

## **HERMIONE**

Was not my lord  
The verier wag o' the two?

## **POLIXENES**

We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' the sun,  
And bleat the one at the other: what we changed  
Was innocence for innocence; we knew not  
The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd  
That any did. Had we pursued that life,  
And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd  
With stronger blood, we should have answer'd heaven  
Boldly 'not guilty;' the imposition clear'd  
Hereditary ours.

## **HERMIONE**



By this we gather  
You have tripp'd since.

**POLIXENES**

O my most sacred lady!  
Temptations have since then been born to's; for  
In those unfledged days was my wife a girl;  
Your precious self had then not cross'd the eyes  
Of my young play-fellow.

**HERMIONE**

Grace to boot!  
Of this make no conclusion, lest you say  
Your queen and I are devils: yet go on;  
The offences we have made you do we'll answer,  
If you first sinn'd with us and that with us  
You did continue fault and that you slipp'd not  
With any but with us.

**LEONTES**

Is he won yet?

**HERMIONE**

He'll stay my lord.

**LEONTES**

At my request he would not.  
Hermione, my dearest, thou never spokest  
To better purpose.

**HERMIONE**

Never?

**LEONTES**

Never, but once.

## HERMIONE

What! have I twice said well? when was't before?  
I prithee tell me; cram's with praise, and make's  
As fat as tame things: one good deed dying tongueless  
Slaughters a thousand waiting upon that.  
Our praises are our wages: you may ride's  
With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere  
With spur we beat an acre. But to the goal:  
My last good deed was to entreat his stay:  
What was my first? it has an elder sister,  
Or I mistake you: O, would her name were Grace!  
But once before I spoke to the purpose: when?  
Nay, let me have't; I long.

## LEONTES

Why, that was when  
Three crabbed months had sour'd themselves to death,  
Ere I could make thee open thy white hand  
And clap thyself my love: then didst thou utter  
'I am yours for ever.'

## HERMIONE

'Tis grace indeed.  
Why, lo you now, I have spoke to the purpose twice:  
The one for ever earn'd a royal husband;  
The other for some while a friend.

## LEONTES

[Aside] Too hot, too hot!  
To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.  
I have tremor cordis on me: my heart dances;  
But not for joy; not joy. This entertainment  
May a free face put on, derive a liberty  
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,  
And well become the agent; 't may, I grant;  
But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,

As now they are, and making practised smiles,  
As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere  
The mort o' the deer; O, that is entertainment  
My bosom likes not, nor my brows! Mamillius,  
Art thou my boy?

## **MAMILLIUS**

Ay, my good lord.

## **LEONTES**

I' fecks!  
Why, that's my bawcock. What, hast  
smutch'd thy nose?  
They say it is a copy out of mine. Come, captain,  
We must be neat; not neat, but cleanly, captain:  
And yet the steer, the heifer and the calf  
Are all call'd neat.--Still virginalling  
Upon his palm!--How now, you wanton calf!  
Art thou my calf?

## **MAMILLIUS**

Yes, if you will, my lord.

## **LEONTES**

Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have,  
To be full like me: yet they say we are  
Almost as like as eggs; women say so,  
That will say anything but were they false  
As o'er-dyed blacks, as wind, as waters, false  
As dice are to be wish'd by one that fixes  
No bourn 'twixt his and mine, yet were it true  
To say this boy were like me. Come, sir page,  
Look on me with your welkin eye: sweet villain!  
Most dear'st! my collop! Can thy dam?--may't be?--  
Affection! thy intention stabs the centre:  
Thou dost make possible things not so held,  
Communicatest with dreams;--how can this be?--  
With what's unreal thou coactive art,

And fellow'st nothing: then 'tis very credent  
Thou mayst co-join with something; and thou dost,  
And that beyond commission, and I find it,  
And that to the infection of my brains  
And hardening of my brows.

## **POLIXENES**

What means Sicilia?

## **HERMIONE**

He something seems unsettled.

## **POLIXENES**

How, my lord!  
What cheer? how is't with you, best brother?

## **HERMIONE**

You look as if you held a brow of much distraction  
Are you moved, my lord?

## **LEONTES**

No, in good earnest.  
How sometimes nature will betray its folly,  
Its tenderness, and make itself a pastime  
To harder bosoms! Looking on the lines  
Of my boy's face, methoughts I did recoil  
Twenty-three years, and saw myself unbreech'd,  
In my green velvet coat, my dagger muzzled,  
Lest it should bite its master, and so prove,  
As ornaments oft do, too dangerous:  
How like, methought, I then was to this kernel,  
This squash, this gentleman. Mine honest friend,  
Will you take eggs for money?

## **MAMILLIUS**

No, my lord, I'll fight.

## LEONTES

You will! why, happy man be's dole! My brother,  
Are you so fond of your young prince as we  
Do seem to be of ours?

## POLIXENES

If at home, sir,  
He's all my exercise, my mirth, my matter,  
Now my sworn friend and then mine enemy,  
My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all:  
He makes a July's day short as December,  
And with his varying childness cures in me  
Thoughts that would thicken my blood.

## LEONTES

So stands this squire  
Officed with me: we two will walk, my lord,  
And leave you to your graver steps. Hermione,  
How thou lovest us, show in our brother's welcome;  
Let what is dear in Sicily be cheap:  
Next to thyself and my young rover, he's  
Apparent to my heart.

## HERMIONE

If you would seek us,  
We are yours i' the garden: shall's attend you there?

## LEONTES

To your own bents dispose you: you'll be found,  
Be you beneath the sky.

*Aside*

I am angling now,  
Though you perceive me not how I give line.

Go to, go to!  
How she holds up the neb, the bill to him!  
And arms her with the boldness of a wife  
To her allowing husband!

*Exeunt POLIXENES, HERMIONE, and Attendants*

Gone already!  
Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er head and  
ears a fork'd one!  
Go, play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I  
Play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue  
Will hiss me to my grave: contempt and clamour  
Will be my knell. Go, play, boy, play.  
There have been,  
Or I am much deceived, cuckolds ere now;  
And many a man there is, even at this present,  
Now while I speak this, holds his wife by the arm,  
That little thinks she has been sluiced in's absence  
And his pond fish'd by his next neighbour, by  
Sir Smile, his neighbour: nay, there's comfort in't  
Whiles other men have gates and those gates open'd,  
As mine, against their will. Should all despair  
That have revolted wives, the tenth of mankind  
Would hang themselves. Physic for't there is none;  
It is a bawdy planet, that will strike  
Where 'tis predominant; and 'tis powerful, think it,  
From east, west, north and south: be it concluded,  
No barricado for a belly; know't;  
It will let in and out the enemy  
With bag and baggage: many thousand on's  
Have the disease, and feel't not. How now, boy!

**MAMILLIUS**

I am like you, they say.

**LEONTES**

Why that's some comfort. What, Camillo there?

**CAMILLO**

Ay, my good lord.

**LEONTES**

Go play, Mamillius; thou'rt an honest man.

*Exit MAMILLIUS*

Camillo, this great sir will yet stay longer.

**CAMILLO**

You had much ado to make his anchor hold:  
When you cast out, it still came home.

**LEONTES**

Didst note it?

**CAMILLO**

He would not stay at your petitions: made  
His business more material.

**LEONTES**

Didst perceive it?

*Aside*

They're here with me already, whispering, rounding  
'Sicilia is a so-forth:' 'tis far gone,  
When I shall gust it last. How came't, Camillo,  
That he did stay?

**CAMILLO**

At the good queen's entreaty.

**LEONTES**

At the queen's be't: 'good' should be pertinent  
But, so it is, it is not. Was this taken  
By any understanding pate but thine?  
For thy conceit is soaking, will draw in  
More than the common blocks: not noted, is't,  
But of the finer natures? by some severals  
Of head-piece extraordinary? lower messes  
Perchance are to this business purblind? say.

**CAMILLO**

Business, my lord! I think most understand  
Bohemia stays here longer.

**LEONTES**

Ha!

**CAMILLO**

Stays here longer.

**LEONTES**

Ay, but why?

**CAMILLO**

To satisfy your highness and the entreaties  
Of our most gracious mistress.

**LEONTES**

Satisfy!  
The entreaties of your mistress! satisfy!  
Let that suffice. I have trusted thee, Camillo,  
With all the nearest things to my heart, as well  
My chamber-councils, wherein, priest-like, thou  
Hast cleansed my bosom, I from thee departed  
Thy penitent reform'd: but we have been  
Deceived in thy integrity, deceived



In that which seems so.

**CAMILLO**

Be it forbid, my lord!

**LEONTES**

To bide upon't, thou art not honest, or,  
If thou inclinest that way, thou art a coward,  
Which hoxes honesty behind, restraining  
From course required; or else thou must be counted  
A servant grafted in my serious trust  
And therein negligent; or else a fool  
That seest a game play'd home, the rich stake drawn,  
And takest it all for jest.

**CAMILLO**

My gracious lord,  
I may be negligent, foolish and fearful;  
In every one of these no man is free,  
But that his negligence, his folly, fear,  
Among the infinite doings of the world,  
Sometime puts forth. In your affairs, my lord,  
If ever I were wilful-negligent,  
It was my folly; if industriously  
I play'd the fool, it was my negligence,  
Not weighing well the end; if ever fearful  
To do a thing, where I the issue doubted,  
Where of the execution did cry out  
Against the non-performance, 'twas a fear  
Which oft infects the wisest: these, my lord,  
Are such allow'd infirmities that honesty  
Is never free of. But, beseech your grace,  
Be plainer with me; let me know my trespass  
By its own visage: if I then deny it,  
'Tis none of mine.

**LEONTES**

Ha' not you seen, Camillo,--

But that's past doubt, you have, or your eye-glass  
Is thicker than a cuckold's horn,--or heard,--  
For to a vision so apparent rumour  
Cannot be mute,--or thought,--for cogitation  
Resides not in that man that does not think,--  
My wife is slippery? If thou wilt confess,  
Or else be impudently negative,  
To have nor eyes nor ears nor thought, then say  
My wife's a hobby-horse, deserves a name  
As rank as any flax-wench that puts to  
Before her troth-plight: say't and justify't.

## **CAMILLO**

I would not be a stander-by to hear  
My sovereign mistress clouded so, without  
My present vengeance taken: 'shrew my heart,  
You never spoke what did become you less  
Than this; which to reiterate were sin  
As deep as that, though true.

## **LEONTES**

Is whispering nothing?  
Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?  
Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career  
Of laughing with a sigh?--a note infallible  
Of breaking honesty--horsing foot on foot?  
Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?  
Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes  
Blind with the pin and web but theirs, theirs only,  
That would unseen be wicked? is this nothing?  
Why, then the world and all that's in't is nothing;  
The covering sky is nothing; Bohemia nothing;  
My wife is nothing; nor nothing have these nothings,  
If this be nothing.

## **CAMILLO**

Good my lord, be cured  
Of this diseased opinion, and betimes;  
For 'tis most dangerous.

**LEONTES**

Say it be, 'tis true.

**CAMILLO**

No, no, my lord.

**LEONTES**

It is; you lie, you lie:  
I say thou liest, Camillo, and I hate thee,  
Pronounce thee a gross lout, a mindless slave,  
Or else a hovering temporizer, that  
Canst with thine eyes at once see good and evil,  
Inclining to them both: were my wife's liver  
Infected as her life, she would not live  
The running of one glass.

**CAMILLO**

Who does infect her?

**LEONTES**

Why, he that wears her like a medal, hanging  
About his neck, Bohemia: who, if I  
Had servants true about me, that bare eyes  
To see alike mine honour as their profits,  
Their own particular thrifts, they would do that  
Which should undo more doing: ay, and thou,  
His cupbearer,--whom I from meaner form  
Have benched and reared to worship, who mayst see  
Plainly as heaven sees earth and earth sees heaven,  
How I am galled,--mightst bespice a cup,  
To give mine enemy a lasting wink;  
Which draught to me were cordial.

**CAMILLO**

Sir, my lord,

I could do this, and that with no rash potion,  
But with a lingering dram that should not work  
Maliciously like poison: but I cannot  
Believe this crack to be in my dread mistress,  
So sovereignly being honourable.  
I have loved thee,--

## LEONTES

Make that thy question, and go rot!  
Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled,  
To appoint myself in this vexation, sully  
The purity and whiteness of my sheets,  
Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted  
Is goads, thorns, nettles, tails of wasps,  
Give scandal to the blood o' the prince my son,  
Who I do think is mine and love as mine,  
Without ripe moving to't? Would I do this?  
Could man so blench?

## CAMILLO

I must believe you, sir:  
I do; and will fetch off Bohemia for't;  
Provided that, when he's removed, your highness  
Will take again your queen as yours at first,  
Even for your son's sake; and thereby for sealing  
The injury of tongues in courts and kingdoms  
Known and allied to yours.

## LEONTES

Thou dost advise me  
Even so as I mine own course have set down:  
I'll give no blemish to her honour, none.

## CAMILLO

My lord,  
Go then; and with a countenance as clear  
As friendship wears at feasts, keep with Bohemia  
And with your queen. I am his cupbearer:

If from me he have wholesome beverage,  
Account me not your servant.

**LEONTES**

This is all:  
Do't and thou hast the one half of my heart;  
Do't not, thou split'st thine own.

**CAMILLO**

I'll do't, my lord.

**LEONTES**

I will seem friendly, as thou hast advised me.

*Exit*

**CAMILLO**

O miserable lady! But, for me,  
What case stand I in? I must be the poisoner  
Of good Polixenes; and my ground to do't  
Is the obedience to a master, one  
Who in rebellion with himself will have  
All that are his so too. To do this deed,  
Promotion follows. If I could find example  
Of thousands that had struck anointed kings  
And flourish'd after, I'd not do't; but since  
Nor brass nor stone nor parchment bears not one,  
Let villany itself forswear't. I must  
Forsake the court: to do't, or no, is certain  
To me a break-neck. Happy star, reign now!  
Here comes Bohemia.

*Re-enter POLIXENES*

**POLIXENES**

This is strange: methinks  
My favour here begins to warp. Not speak?

Good day, Camillo.

**CAMILLO**

Hail, most royal sir!

**POLIXENES**

What is the news i' the court?

**CAMILLO**

None rare, my lord.

**POLIXENES**

The king hath on him such a countenance  
As he had lost some province and a region  
Loved as he loves himself: even now I met him  
With customary compliment; when he,  
Wafting his eyes to the contrary and falling  
A lip of much contempt, speeds from me and  
So leaves me to consider what is breeding  
That changeth thus his manners.

**CAMILLO**

I dare not know, my lord.

**POLIXENES**

How! dare not! do not. Do you know, and dare not?  
Be intelligent to me: 'tis thereabouts;  
For, to yourself, what you do know, you must.  
And cannot say, you dare not. Good Camillo,  
Your changed complexions are to me a mirror  
Which shows me mine changed too; for I must be  
A party in this alteration, finding  
Myself thus alter'd with 't.

**CAMILLO**

There is a sickness  
Which puts some of us in distemper, but  
I cannot name the disease; and it is caught  
Of you that yet are well.

## **POLIXENES**

How! caught of me!  
Make me not sighted like the basilisk:  
I have look'd on thousands, who have sped the better  
By my regard, but kill'd none so. Camillo,--  
As you are certainly a gentleman, thereto  
Clerk-like experienced, which no less adorns  
Our gentry than our parents' noble names,  
In whose success we are gentle,--I beseech you,  
If you know aught which does behove my knowledge  
Thereof to be inform'd, imprison't not  
In ignorant concealment.

## **CAMILLO**

I may not answer.

## **POLIXENES**

A sickness caught of me, and yet I well!  
I must be answer'd. Dost thou hear, Camillo,  
I conjure thee, by all the parts of man  
Which honour does acknowledge, whereof the least  
Is not this suit of mine, that thou declare  
What incidency thou dost guess of harm  
Is creeping toward me; how far off, how near;  
Which way to be prevented, if to be;  
If not, how best to bear it.

## **CAMILLO**

Sir, I will tell you;  
Since I am charged in honour and by him  
That I think honourable: therefore mark my counsel,  
Which must be even as swiftly follow'd as  
I mean to utter it, or both yourself and me

Cry lost, and so good night!

**POLIXENES**

On, good Camillo.

**CAMILLO**

I am appointed him to murder you.

**POLIXENES**

By whom, Camillo?

**CAMILLO**

By the king.

**POLIXENES**

For what?

**CAMILLO**

He thinks, nay, with all confidence he swears,  
As he had seen't or been an instrument  
To vice you to't, that you have touch'd his queen  
Forbiddenly.

**POLIXENES**

O, then my best blood turn  
To an infected jelly and my name  
Be yoked with his that did betray the Best!  
Turn then my freshest reputation to  
A savour that may strike the dullest nostril  
Where I arrive, and my approach be shunn'd,  
Nay, hated too, worse than the great'st infection  
That e'er was heard or read!

**CAMILLO**



Swear his thought over  
By each particular star in heaven and  
By all their influences, you may as well  
Forbid the sea for to obey the moon  
As or by oath remove or counsel shake  
The fabric of his folly, whose foundation  
Is piled upon his faith and will continue  
The standing of his body.

## **POLIXENES**

How should this grow?

## **CAMILLO**

I know not: but I am sure 'tis safer to  
Avoid what's grown than question how 'tis born.  
If therefore you dare trust my honesty,  
That lies enclosed in this trunk which you  
Shall bear along impawn'd, away to-night!  
Your followers I will whisper to the business,  
And will by twos and threes at several posterns  
Clear them o' the city. For myself, I'll put  
My fortunes to your service, which are here  
By this discovery lost. Be not uncertain;  
For, by the honour of my parents, I  
Have utter'd truth: which if you seek to prove,  
I dare not stand by; nor shall you be safer  
Than one condemn'd by the king's own mouth, thereon  
His execution sworn.

## **POLIXENES**

I do believe thee:  
I saw his heart in 's face. Give me thy hand:  
Be pilot to me and thy places shall  
Still neighbour mine. My ships are ready and  
My people did expect my hence departure  
Two days ago. This jealousy  
Is for a precious creature: as she's rare,  
Must it be great, and as his person's mighty,  
Must it be violent, and as he does conceive

He is dishonour'd by a man which ever  
Profess'd to him, why, his revenges must  
In that be made more bitter. Fear o'ershades me:  
Good expedition be my friend, and comfort  
The gracious queen, part of his theme, but nothing  
Of his ill-ta'en suspicion! Come, Camillo;  
I will respect thee as a father if  
Thou bear'st my life off hence: let us avoid.

## **CAMILLO**

It is in mine authority to command  
The keys of all the posterns: please your highness  
To take the urgent hour. Come, sir, away.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in LEONTES' palace.

*Enter HERMIONE, MAMILLIUS, and Ladies*

**HERMIONE**

Take the boy to you: he so troubles me,  
'Tis past enduring.

**First Lady**

Come, my gracious lord,  
Shall I be your playfellow?

**MAMILLIUS**

No, I'll none of you.

**First Lady**

Why, my sweet lord?

**MAMILLIUS**

You'll kiss me hard and speak to me as if  
I were a baby still. I love you better.

**Second Lady**

And why so, my lord?

**MAMILLIUS**

Not for because  
Your brows are blacker; yet black brows, they say,

Become some women best, so that there be not  
Too much hair there, but in a semicircle  
Or a half-moon made with a pen.

**Second Lady**

Who taught you this?

**MAMILLIUS**

I learnt it out of women's faces. Pray now  
What colour are your eyebrows?

**First Lady**

Blue, my lord.

**MAMILLIUS**

Nay, that's a mock: I have seen a lady's nose  
That has been blue, but not her eyebrows.

**First Lady**

Hark ye;  
The queen your mother rounds apace: we shall  
Present our services to a fine new prince  
One of these days; and then you'd wanton with us,  
If we would have you.

**Second Lady**

She is spread of late  
Into a goodly bulk: good time encounter her!

**HERMIONE**

What wisdom stirs amongst you? Come, sir, now  
I am for you again: pray you, sit by us,  
And tell 's a tale.

**MAMILLIUS**

Merry or sad shall't be?

**HERMIONE**

As merry as you will.

**MAMILLIUS**

A sad tale's best for winter: I have one  
Of sprites and goblins.

**HERMIONE**

Let's have that, good sir.  
Come on, sit down: come on, and do your best  
To fright me with your sprites; you're powerful at it.

**MAMILLIUS**

There was a man--

**HERMIONE**

Nay, come, sit down; then on.

**MAMILLIUS**

Dwelt by a churchyard: I will tell it softly;  
Yond crickets shall not hear it.

**HERMIONE**

Come on, then,  
And give't me in mine ear.

*Enter LEONTES, with ANTIGONUS, Lords and others*

**LEONTES**

Was he met there? his train? Camillo with him?

**First Lord**

Behind the tuft of pines I met them; never  
Saw I men scour so on their way: I eyed them  
Even to their ships.

**LEONTES**

How blest am I  
In my just censure, in my true opinion!  
Alack, for lesser knowledge! how accursed  
In being so blest! There may be in the cup  
A spider steep'd, and one may drink, depart,  
And yet partake no venom, for his knowledge  
Is not infected: but if one present  
The abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known  
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,  
With violent hefts. I have drunk,  
and seen the spider.  
Camillo was his help in this, his pander:  
There is a plot against my life, my crown;  
All's true that is mistrusted: that false villain  
Whom I employ'd was pre-employ'd by him:  
He has discover'd my design, and I  
Remain a pinch'd thing; yea, a very trick  
For them to play at will. How came the posterns  
So easily open?

**First Lord**

By his great authority;  
Which often hath no less prevail'd than so  
On your command.

**LEONTES**

I know't too well.  
Give me the boy: I am glad you did not nurse him:  
Though he does bear some signs of me, yet you  
Have too much blood in him.

## HERMIONE

What is this? sport?

## LEONTES

Bear the boy hence; he shall not come about her;  
Away with him! and let her sport herself  
With that she's big with; for 'tis Polixenes  
Has made thee swell thus.

## HERMIONE

But I'd say he had not,  
And I'll be sworn you would believe my saying,  
Howe'er you lean to the nayward.

## LEONTES

You, my lords,  
Look on her, mark her well; be but about  
To say 'she is a goodly lady,' and  
The justice of your bearts will thereto add  
'Tis pity she's not honest, honourable.'  
Praise her but for this her without-door form,  
Which on my faith deserves high speech, and straight  
The shrug, the hum or ha, these petty brands  
That calumny doth use--O, I am out--  
That mercy does, for calumny will sear  
Virtue itself: these shrugs, these hums and ha's,  
When you have said 'she's goodly,' come between  
Ere you can say 'she's honest:' but be 't known,  
From him that has most cause to grieve it should be,  
She's an adulteress.

## HERMIONE

Should a villain say so,  
The most replenish'd villain in the world,  
He were as much more villain: you, my lord,  
Do but mistake.

## LEONTES

You have mistook, my lady,  
Polixenes for Leontes: O thou thing!  
Which I'll not call a creature of thy place,  
Lest barbarism, making me the precedent,  
Should a like language use to all degrees  
And mannerly distinguishment leave out  
Betwixt the prince and beggar: I have said  
She's an adulteress; I have said with whom:  
More, she's a traitor and Camillo is  
A federary with her, and one that knows  
What she should shame to know herself  
But with her most vile principal, that she's  
A bed-swerger, even as bad as those  
That vulgars give bold'st titles, ay, and privy  
To this their late escape.

## HERMIONE

No, by my life.  
Privy to none of this. How will this grieve you,  
When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that  
You thus have publish'd me! Gentle my lord,  
You scarce can right me throughly then to say  
You did mistake.

## LEONTES

No; if I mistake  
In those foundations which I build upon,  
The centre is not big enough to bear  
A school-boy's top. Away with her! to prison!  
He who shall speak for her is afar off guilty  
But that he speaks.

## HERMIONE

There's some ill planet reigns:  
I must be patient till the heavens look  
With an aspect more favourable. Good my lords,  
I am not prone to weeping, as our sex



Commonly are; the want of which vain dew  
Perchance shall dry your pities: but I have  
That honourable grief lodged here which burns  
Worse than tears drown: beseech you all, my lords,  
With thoughts so qualified as your charities  
Shall best instruct you, measure me; and so  
The king's will be perform'd!

## **LEONTES**

Shall I be heard?

## **HERMIONE**

Who is't that goes with me? Beseech your highness,  
My women may be with me; for you see  
My plight requires it. Do not weep, good fools;  
There is no cause: when you shall know your mistress  
Has deserved prison, then abound in tears  
As I come out: this action I now go on  
Is for my better grace. Adieu, my lord:  
I never wish'd to see you sorry; now  
I trust I shall. My women, come; you have leave.

## **LEONTES**

Go, do our bidding; hence!

*Exit HERMIONE, guarded; with Ladies*

## **First Lord**

Beseech your highness, call the queen again.

## **ANTIGONUS**

Be certain what you do, sir, lest your justice  
Prove violence; in the which three great ones suffer,  
Yourself, your queen, your son.

## **First Lord**

For her, my lord,  
I dare my life lay down and will do't, sir,  
Please you to accept it, that the queen is spotless  
I' the eyes of heaven and to you; I mean,  
In this which you accuse her.

## **ANTIGONUS**

If it prove  
She's otherwise, I'll keep my stables where  
I lodge my wife; I'll go in couples with her;  
Than when I feel and see her no farther trust her;  
For every inch of woman in the world,  
Ay, every dram of woman's flesh is false, If she be.

## **LEONTES**

Hold your peaces.

## **First Lord**

Good my lord,--

## **ANTIGONUS**

It is for you we speak, not for ourselves:  
You are abused and by some putter-on  
That will be damn'd for't; would I knew the villain,  
I would land-damn him. Be she honour-flaw'd,  
I have three daughters; the eldest is eleven  
The second and the third, nine, and some five;  
If this prove true, they'll pay for't:  
by mine honour,  
I'll geld 'em all; fourteen they shall not see,  
To bring false generations: they are co-heirs;  
And I had rather glib myself than they  
Should not produce fair issue.

## **LEONTES**

Cease; no more.  
You smell this business with a sense as cold

As is a dead man's nose: but I do see't and feel't  
As you feel doing thus; and see withal  
The instruments that feel.

## **ANTIGONUS**

If it be so,  
We need no grave to bury honesty:  
There's not a grain of it the face to sweeten  
Of the whole dungy earth.

## **LEONTES**

What! lack I credit?

## **First Lord**

I had rather you did lack than I, my lord,  
Upon this ground; and more it would content me  
To have her honour true than your suspicion,  
Be blamed for't how you might.

## **LEONTES**

Why, what need we  
Commune with you of this, but rather follow  
Our forceful instigation? Our prerogative  
Calls not your counsels, but our natural goodness  
Imparts this; which if you, or stupefied  
Or seeming so in skill, cannot or will not  
Relish a truth like us, inform yourselves  
We need no more of your advice: the matter,  
The loss, the gain, the ordering on't, is all  
Properly ours.

## **ANTIGONUS**

And I wish, my liege,  
You had only in your silent judgment tried it,  
Without more overture.

## **LEONTES**

How could that be?  
Either thou art most ignorant by age,  
Or thou wert born a fool. Camillo's flight,  
Added to their familiarity,  
Which was as gross as ever touch'd conjecture,  
That lack'd sight only, nought for approbation  
But only seeing, all other circumstances  
Made up to the deed, doth push on this proceeding:  
Yet, for a greater confirmation,  
For in an act of this importance 'twere  
Most piteous to be wild, I have dispatch'd in post  
To sacred Delphos, to Apollo's temple,  
Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know  
Of stuff'd sufficiency: now from the oracle  
They will bring all; whose spiritual counsel had,  
Shall stop or spur me. Have I done well?

### **First Lord**

Well done, my lord.

### **LEONTES**

Though I am satisfied and need no more  
Than what I know, yet shall the oracle  
Give rest to the minds of others, such as he  
Whose ignorant credulity will not  
Come up to the truth. So have we thought it good  
From our free person she should be confined,  
Lest that the treachery of the two fled hence  
Be left her to perform. Come, follow us;  
We are to speak in public; for this business  
Will raise us all.

### **ANTIGONUS**

[Aside]  
To laughter, as I take it,  
If the good truth were known.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A prison.

*Enter PAULINA, a Gentleman, and Attendants*

**PAULINA**

The keeper of the prison, call to him;  
let him have knowledge who I am.

*Exit Gentleman*

Good lady,  
No court in Europe is too good for thee;  
What dost thou then in prison?

*Re-enter Gentleman, with the Gaoler*

Now, good sir,  
You know me, do you not?

**Gaoler**

For a worthy lady  
And one whom much I honour.

**PAULINA**

Pray you then,  
Conduct me to the queen.

**Gaoler**

I may not, madam:  
To the contrary I have express commandment.

**PAULINA**

Here's ado,  
To lock up honesty and honour from  
The access of gentle visitors!  
Is't lawful, pray you,  
To see her women? any of them? Emilia?

**Gaoler**

So please you, madam,  
To put apart these your attendants, I  
Shall bring Emilia forth.

**PAULINA**

I pray now, call her.  
Withdraw yourselves.

*Exeunt Gentleman and Attendants*

**Gaoler**

And, madam,  
I must be present at your conference.

**PAULINA**

Well, be't so, prithee.

*Exit Gaoler*

Here's such ado to make no stain a stain  
As passes colouring.

*Re-enter Gaoler, with EMILIA*

Dear gentlewoman,  
How fares our gracious lady?

**EMILIA**

As well as one so great and so forlorn  
May hold together: on her frights and griefs,  
Which never tender lady hath born greater,  
She is something before her time deliver'd.

**PAULINA**

A boy?

**EMILIA**

A daughter, and a goodly babe,  
Lusty and like to live: the queen receives  
Much comfort in't; says 'My poor prisoner,  
I am innocent as you.'

**PAULINA**

I dare be sworn  
These dangerous unsafe luns i' the king,  
beshrew them!  
He must be told on't, and he shall: the office  
Becomes a woman best; I'll take't upon me:  
If I prove honey-mouth'd let my tongue blister  
And never to my red-look'd anger be  
The trumpet any more. Pray you, Emilia,  
Commend my best obedience to the queen:  
If she dares trust me with her little babe,  
I'll show't the king and undertake to be  
Her advocate to the loud'st. We do not know  
How he may soften at the sight o' the child:  
The silence often of pure innocence  
Persuades when speaking fails.

**EMILIA**

Most worthy madam,  
Your honour and your goodness is so evident  
That your free undertaking cannot miss  
A thriving issue: there is no lady living  
So meet for this great errand. Please your ladyship  
To visit the next room, I'll presently



Acquaint the queen of your most noble offer;  
Who but to-day hammer'd of this design,  
But durst not tempt a minister of honour,  
Lest she should be denied.

**PAULINA**

Tell her, Emilia.  
I'll use that tongue I have: if wit flow from't  
As boldness from my bosom, let 't not be doubted  
I shall do good.

**EMILIA**

Now be you blest for it!  
I'll to the queen: please you,  
come something nearer.

**Gaoler**

Madam, if't please the queen to send the babe,  
I know not what I shall incur to pass it,  
Having no warrant.

**PAULINA**

You need not fear it, sir:  
This child was prisoner to the womb and is  
By law and process of great nature thence  
Freed and enfranchised, not a party to  
The anger of the king nor guilty of,  
If any be, the trespass of the queen.

**Gaoler**

I do believe it.

**PAULINA**

Do not you fear: upon mine honour,  
I will stand betwixt you and danger.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in LEONTES' palace.

*Enter LEONTES, ANTIGONUS, Lords, and Servants*

### LEONTES

Nor night nor day no rest: it is but weakness  
To bear the matter thus; mere weakness. If  
The cause were not in being,--part o' the cause,  
She the adulteress; for the harlot king  
Is quite beyond mine arm, out of the blank  
And level of my brain, plot-proof; but she  
I can hook to me: say that she were gone,  
Given to the fire, a moiety of my rest  
Might come to me again. Who's there?

### First Servant

My lord?

### LEONTES

How does the boy?

### First Servant

He took good rest to-night;  
'Tis hoped his sickness is discharged.

### LEONTES

To see his nobleness!  
Conceiving the dishonour of his mother,  
He straight declined, droop'd, took it deeply,  
Fasten'd and fix'd the shame on't in himself,  
Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,

And downright languish'd. Leave me solely: go,  
See how he fares.

*Exit Servant*

Fie, fie! no thought of him:  
The thought of my revenges that way  
Recoil upon me: in himself too mighty,  
And in his parties, his alliance; let him be  
Until a time may serve: for present vengeance,  
Take it on her. Camillo and Polixenes  
Laugh at me, make their pastime at my sorrow:  
They should not laugh if I could reach them, nor  
Shall she within my power.

*Enter PAULINA, with a child*

**First Lord**

You must not enter.

**PAULINA**

Nay, rather, good my lords, be second to me:  
Fear you his tyrannous passion more, alas,  
Than the queen's life? a gracious innocent soul,  
More free than he is jealous.

**ANTIGONUS**

That's enough.

**Second Servant**

Madam, he hath not slept tonight; commanded  
None should come at him.

**PAULINA**

Not so hot, good sir:  
I come to bring him sleep. 'Tis such as you,

That creep like shadows by him and do sigh  
At each his needless heavings, such as you  
Nourish the cause of his awaking: I  
Do come with words as medicinal as true,  
Honest as either, to purge him of that humour  
That presses him from sleep.

**LEONTES**

What noise there, ho?

**PAULINA**

No noise, my lord; but needful conference  
About some gossips for your highness.

**LEONTES**

How!  
Away with that audacious lady! Antigonus,  
I charged thee that she should not come about me:  
I knew she would.

**ANTIGONUS**

I told her so, my lord,  
On your displeasure's peril and on mine,  
She should not visit you.

**LEONTES**

What, canst not rule her?

**PAULINA**

From all dishonesty he can: in this,  
Unless he take the course that you have done,  
Commit me for committing honour, trust it,  
He shall not rule me.

**ANTIGONUS**

La you now, you hear:  
When she will take the rein I let her run;  
But she'll not stumble.

**PAULINA**

Good my liege, I come;  
And, I beseech you, hear me, who profess  
Myself your loyal servant, your physician,  
Your most obedient counsellor, yet that dare  
Less appear so in comforting your evils,  
Than such as most seem yours: I say, I come  
From your good queen.

**LEONTES**

Good queen!

**PAULINA**

Good queen, my lord,  
Good queen; I say good queen;  
And would by combat make her good, so were I  
A man, the worst about you.

**LEONTES**

Force her hence.

**PAULINA**

Let him that makes but trifles of his eyes  
First hand me: on mine own accord I'll off;  
But first I'll do my errand. The good queen,  
For she is good, hath brought you forth a daughter;  
Here 'tis; commends it to your blessing.

*Laying down the child*

**LEONTES**

Out!

A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o' door:  
A most intelligencing bawd!

**PAULINA**

Not so:

I am as ignorant in that as you  
In so entitling me, and no less honest  
Than you are mad; which is enough, I'll warrant,  
As this world goes, to pass for honest.

**LEONTES**

Traitors!  
Will you not push her out? Give her the bastard.  
Thou dotard! thou art woman-tired, unroosted  
By thy dame Partlet here. Take up the bastard;  
Take't up, I say; give't to thy crone.

**PAULINA**

For ever  
Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou  
Takest up the princess by that forced baseness  
Which he has put upon't!

**LEONTES**

He dreads his wife.

**PAULINA**

So I would you did; then 'twere past all doubt  
You'd call your children yours.

**LEONTES**

A nest of traitors!

**ANTIGONUS**

I am none, by this good light.

**PAULINA**

Nor I, nor any  
But one that's here, and that's himself, for he  
The sacred honour of himself, his queen's,  
His hopeful son's, his babe's, betrays to slander,  
Whose sting is sharper than the sword's;  
and will not--  
For, as the case now stands, it is a curse  
He cannot be compell'd to't--once remove  
The root of his opinion, which is rotten  
As ever oak or stone was sound.

**LEONTES**

A callat  
Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband  
And now baits me! This brat is none of mine;  
It is the issue of Polixenes:  
Hence with it, and together with the dam  
Commit them to the fire!

**PAULINA**

It is yours;  
And, might we lay the old proverb to your charge,  
So like you, 'tis the worse. Behold, my lords,  
Although the print be little, the whole matter  
And copy of the father, eye, nose, lip,  
The trick of's frown, his forehead, nay, the valley,  
The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek,  
His smiles,  
The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger:  
And thou, good goddess Nature, which hast made it  
So like to him that got it, if thou hast  
The ordering of the mind too, 'mongst all colours  
No yellow in't, lest she suspect, as he does,  
Her children not her husband's!

**LEONTES**



A gross hag  
And, lozel, thou art worthy to be hang'd,  
That wilt not stay her tongue.

## **ANTIGONUS**

Hang all the husbands  
That cannot do that feat, you'll leave yourself  
Hardly one subject.

## **LEONTES**

Once more, take her hence.

## **PAULINA**

A most unworthy and unnatural lord  
Can do no more.

## **LEONTES**

I'll ha' thee burnt.

## **PAULINA**

I care not:  
It is an heretic that makes the fire,  
Not she which burns in't. I'll not call you tyrant;  
But this most cruel usage of your queen,  
Not able to produce more accusation  
Than your own weak-hinged fancy, something savours  
Of tyranny and will ignoble make you,  
Yea, scandalous to the world.

## **LEONTES**

On your allegiance,  
Out of the chamber with her! Were I a tyrant,  
Where were her life? she durst not call me so,  
If she did know me one. Away with her!

## **PAULINA**

I pray you, do not push me; I'll be gone.  
Look to your babe, my lord; 'tis yours:  
Jove send her  
A better guiding spirit! What needs these hands?  
You, that are thus so tender o'er his follies,  
Will never do him good, not one of you.  
So, so: farewell; we are gone.

*Exit*

## **LEONTES**

Thou, traitor, hast set on thy wife to this.  
My child? away with't! Even thou, that hast  
A heart so tender o'er it, take it hence  
And see it instantly consumed with fire;  
Even thou and none but thou. Take it up straight:  
Within this hour bring me word 'tis done,  
And by good testimony, or I'll seize thy life,  
With what thou else call'st thine. If thou refuse  
And wilt encounter with my wrath, say so;  
The bastard brains with these my proper hands  
Shall I dash out. Go, take it to the fire;  
For thou set'st on thy wife.

## **ANTIGONUS**

I did not, sir:  
These lords, my noble fellows, if they please,  
Can clear me in't.

## **Lords**

We can: my royal liege,  
He is not guilty of her coming hither.

## **LEONTES**

You're liars all.

## **First Lord**

Beseech your highness, give us better credit:  
We have always truly served you, and beseech you  
So to esteem of us, and on our knees we beg,  
As recompense of our dear services  
Past and to come, that you do change this purpose,  
Which being so horrible, so bloody, must  
Lead on to some foul issue: we all kneel.

## **LEONTES**

I am a feather for each wind that blows:  
Shall I live on to see this bastard kneel  
And call me father? better burn it now  
Than curse it then. But be it; let it live.  
It shall not neither. You, sir, come you hither;  
You that have been so tenderly officious  
With Lady Margery, your midwife there,  
To save this bastard's life,--for 'tis a bastard,  
So sure as this beard's grey,  
--what will you adventure  
To save this brat's life?

## **ANTIGONUS**

Any thing, my lord,  
That my ability may undergo  
And nobleness impose: at least thus much:  
I'll pawn the little blood which I have left  
To save the innocent: any thing possible.

## **LEONTES**

It shall be possible. Swear by this sword  
Thou wilt perform my bidding.

## **ANTIGONUS**

I will, my lord.

## **LEONTES**

Mark and perform it, see'st thou! for the fail  
Of any point in't shall not only be  
Death to thyself but to thy lewd-tongued wife,  
Whom for this time we pardon. We enjoin thee,  
As thou art liege-man to us, that thou carry  
This female bastard hence and that thou bear it  
To some remote and desert place quite out  
Of our dominions, and that there thou leave it,  
Without more mercy, to its own protection  
And favour of the climate. As by strange fortune  
It came to us, I do in justice charge thee,  
On thy soul's peril and thy body's torture,  
That thou commend it strangely to some place  
Where chance may nurse or end it. Take it up.

## **ANTIGONUS**

I swear to do this, though a present death  
Had been more merciful. Come on, poor babe:  
Some powerful spirit instruct the kites and ravens  
To be thy nurses! Wolves and bears, they say  
Casting their savageness aside have done  
Like offices of pity. Sir, be prosperous  
In more than this deed does require! And blessing  
Against this cruelty fight on thy side,  
Poor thing, condemn'd to loss!

*Exit with the child*

## **LEONTES**

No, I'll not rear  
Another's issue.

*Enter a Servant*

## **Servant**

Please your highness, posts  
From those you sent to the oracle are come  
An hour since: Cleomenes and Dion,

Being well arrived from Delphos, are both landed,  
Hasting to the court.

**First Lord**

So please you, sir, their speed  
Hath been beyond account.

**LEONTES**

Twenty-three days  
They have been absent: 'tis good speed; foretells  
The great Apollo suddenly will have  
The truth of this appear. Prepare you, lords;  
Summon a session, that we may arraign  
Our most disloyal lady, for, as she hath  
Been publicly accused, so shall she have  
A just and open trial. While she lives  
My heart will be a burthen to me. Leave me,  
And think upon my bidding.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A sea-port in Sicilia.

*Enter CLEOMENES and DION*

### CLEOMENES

The climate's delicate, the air most sweet,  
Fertile the isle, the temple much surpassing  
The common praise it bears.

### DION

I shall report,  
For most it caught me, the celestial habits,  
Methinks I so should term them, and the reverence  
Of the grave wearers. O, the sacrifice!  
How ceremonious, solemn and unearthly  
It was i' the offering!

### CLEOMENES

But of all, the burst  
And the ear-deafening voice o' the oracle,  
Kin to Jove's thunder, so surprised my sense.  
That I was nothing.

### DION

If the event o' the journey  
Prove as successful to the queen,--O be't so!--  
As it hath been to us rare, pleasant, speedy,  
The time is worth the use on't.

### CLEOMENES

Great Apollo

Turn all to the best! These proclamations,  
So forcing faults upon Hermione,  
I little like.

## **DION**

The violent carriage of it  
Will clear or end the business: when the oracle,  
Thus by Apollo's great divine seal'd up,  
Shall the contents discover, something rare  
Even then will rush to knowledge. Go: fresh horses!  
And gracious be the issue!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A court of Justice.

*Enter LEONTES, Lords, and Officers*

**LEONTES**

This sessions, to our great grief we pronounce,  
Even pushes 'gainst our heart: the party tried  
The daughter of a king, our wife, and one  
Of us too much beloved. Let us be clear'd  
Of being tyrannous, since we so openly  
Proceed in justice, which shall have due course,  
Even to the guilt or the purgation.  
Produce the prisoner.

**Officer**

It is his highness' pleasure that the queen  
Appear in person here in court. Silence!

*Enter HERMIONE guarded; PAULINA and Ladies attending*

**LEONTES**

Read the indictment.

**Officer**

[Reads] Hermione, queen to the worthy  
Leontes, king of Sicilia, thou art here accused and  
arraigned of high treason, in committing adultery  
with Polixenes, king of Bohemia, and conspiring  
with Camillo to take away the life of our sovereign  
lord the king, thy royal husband: the pretence  
whereof being by circumstances partly laid open,  
thou, Hermione, contrary to the faith and allegiance



of a true subject, didst counsel and aid them, for  
their better safety, to fly away by night.

## HERMIONE

Since what I am to say must be but that  
Which contradicts my accusation and  
The testimony on my part no other  
But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me  
To say 'not guilty:' mine integrity  
Being counted falsehood, shall, as I express it,  
Be so received. But thus: if powers divine  
Behold our human actions, as they do,  
I doubt not then but innocence shall make  
False accusation blush and tyranny  
Tremble at patience. You, my lord, best know,  
Who least will seem to do so, my past life  
Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,  
As I am now unhappy; which is more  
Than history can pattern, though devised  
And play'd to take spectators. For behold me  
A fellow of the royal bed, which owe  
A moiety of the throne a great king's daughter,  
The mother to a hopeful prince, here standing  
To prate and talk for life and honour 'fore  
Who please to come and hear. For life, I prize it  
As I weigh grief, which I would spare: for honour,  
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,  
And only that I stand for. I appeal  
To your own conscience, sir, before Polixenes  
Came to your court, how I was in your grace,  
How merited to be so; since he came,  
With what encounter so uncurrent I  
Have strain'd to appear thus: if one jot beyond  
The bound of honour, or in act or will  
That way inclining, harden'd be the hearts  
Of all that hear me, and my near'st of kin  
Cry fie upon my grave!

## LEONTES

I ne'er heard yet  
That any of these bolder vices wanted

Less impudence to gainsay what they did  
Than to perform it first.

**HERMIONE**

That's true enough;  
Through 'tis a saying, sir, not due to me.

**LEONTES**

You will not own it.

**HERMIONE**

More than mistress of  
Which comes to me in name of fault, I must not  
At all acknowledge. For Polixenes,  
With whom I am accused, I do confess  
I loved him as in honour he required,  
With such a kind of love as might become  
A lady like me, with a love even such,  
So and no other, as yourself commanded:  
Which not to have done I think had been in me  
Both disobedience and ingratitude  
To you and toward your friend, whose love had spoke,  
Even since it could speak, from an infant, freely  
That it was yours. Now, for conspiracy,  
I know not how it tastes; though it be dish'd  
For me to try how: all I know of it  
Is that Camillo was an honest man;  
And why he left your court, the gods themselves,  
Wotting no more than I, are ignorant.

**LEONTES**

You knew of his departure, as you know  
What you have underta'en to do in's absence.

**HERMIONE**

Sir,  
You speak a language that I understand not:

My life stands in the level of your dreams,  
Which I'll lay down.

## LEONTES

Your actions are my dreams;  
You had a bastard by Polixenes,  
And I but dream'd it. As you were past all shame,--  
Those of your fact are so--so past all truth:  
Which to deny concerns more than avails; for as  
Thy brat hath been cast out, like to itself,  
No father owning it,--which is, indeed,  
More criminal in thee than it,--so thou  
Shalt feel our justice, in whose easiest passage  
Look for no less than death.

## HERMIONE

Sir, spare your threats:  
The bug which you would fright me with I seek.  
To me can life be no commodity:  
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,  
I do give lost; for I do feel it gone,  
But know not how it went. My second joy  
And first-fruits of my body, from his presence  
I am barr'd, like one infectious. My third comfort  
Starr'd most unluckily, is from my breast,  
The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,  
Haled out to murder: myself on every post  
Proclaimed a strumpet: with immodest hatred  
The child-bed privilege denied, which 'longs  
To women of all fashion; lastly, hurried  
Here to this place, i' the open air, before  
I have got strength of limit. Now, my liege,  
Tell me what blessings I have here alive,  
That I should fear to die? Therefore proceed.  
But yet hear this: mistake me not; no life,  
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour,  
Which I would free, if I shall be condemn'd  
Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else  
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you  
'Tis rigor and not law. Your honours all,  
I do refer me to the oracle:

Apollo be my judge!

**First Lord**

This your request  
Is altogether just: therefore bring forth,  
And in Apollos name, his oracle.

*Exeunt certain Officers*

**HERMIONE**

The Emperor of Russia was my father:  
O that he were alive, and here beholding  
His daughter's trial! that he did but see  
The flatness of my misery, yet with eyes  
Of pity, not revenge!

*Re-enter Officers, with CLEOMENES and DION*

**Officer**

You here shall swear upon this sword of justice,  
That you, Cleomenes and Dion, have  
Been both at Delphos, and from thence have brought  
The seal'd-up oracle, by the hand deliver'd  
Of great Apollo's priest; and that, since then,  
You have not dared to break the holy seal  
Nor read the secrets in't.

**CLEOMENES DION**

All this we swear.

**LEONTES**

Break up the seals and read.

**Officer**

[Reads] Hermione is chaste;

Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject; Leontes  
a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten;  
and the king shall live without an heir, if that  
which is lost be not found.

**Lords**

Now blessed be the great Apollo!

**HERMIONE**

Praised!

**LEONTES**

Hast thou read truth?

**Officer**

Ay, my lord; even so  
As it is here set down.

**LEONTES**

There is no truth at all i' the oracle:  
The sessions shall proceed: this is mere falsehood.

*Enter Servant*

**Servant**

My lord the king, the king!

**LEONTES**

What is the business?

**Servant**

O sir, I shall be hated to report it!  
The prince your son, with mere conceit and fear

Of the queen's speed, is gone.

**LEONTES**

How! gone!

**Servant**

Is dead.

**LEONTES**

Apollo's angry; and the heavens themselves  
Do strike at my injustice.

*HERMIONE swoons*

How now there!

**PAULINA**

This news is mortal to the queen: look down  
And see what death is doing.

**LEONTES**

Take her hence:  
Her heart is but o'ercharged; she will recover:  
I have too much believed mine own suspicion:  
Beseech you, tenderly apply to her  
Some remedies for life.

*Exeunt PAULINA and Ladies, with HERMIONE*

Apollo, pardon  
My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle!  
I'll reconcile me to Polixenes,  
New woo my queen, recall the good Camillo,  
Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy;  
For, being transported by my jealousies  
To bloody thoughts and to revenge, I chose

Camillo for the minister to poison  
My friend Polixenes: which had been done,  
But that the good mind of Camillo tardied  
My swift command, though I with death and with  
Reward did threaten and encourage him,  
Not doing 't and being done: he, most humane  
And fill'd with honour, to my kingly guest  
Unclasp'd my practise, quit his fortunes here,  
Which you knew great, and to the hazard  
Of all encertainties himself commended,  
No richer than his honour: how he glisters  
Thorough my rust! and how his pity  
Does my deeds make the blacker!

*Re-enter PAULINA*

**PAULINA**

Woe the while!  
O, cut my lace, lest my heart, cracking it,  
Break too.

**First Lord**

What fit is this, good lady?

**PAULINA**

What studied torments, tyrant, hast for me?  
What wheels? racks? fires? what flaying? boiling?  
In leads or oils? what old or newer torture  
Must I receive, whose every word deserves  
To taste of thy most worst? Thy tyranny  
Together working with thy jealousies,  
Fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle  
For girls of nine, O, think what they have done  
And then run mad indeed, stark mad! for all  
Thy by-gone fooleries were but spices of it.  
That thou betray'dst Polixenes, 'twas nothing;  
That did but show thee, of a fool, inconstant  
And damnable ingrateful: nor was't much,  
Thou wouldst have poison'd good Camillo's honour,

To have him kill a king: poor trespasses,  
More monstrous standing by: whereof I reckon  
The casting forth to crows thy baby-daughter  
To be or none or little; though a devil  
Would have shed water out of fire ere done't:  
Nor is't directly laid to thee, the death  
Of the young prince, whose honourable thoughts,  
Thoughts high for one so tender, cleft the heart  
That could conceive a gross and foolish sire  
Blemish'd his gracious dam: this is not, no,  
Laid to thy answer: but the last,--O lords,  
When I have said, cry 'woe!' the queen, the queen,  
The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead,  
and vengeance for't  
Not dropp'd down yet.

### **First Lord**

The higher powers forbid!

### **PAULINA**

I say she's dead; I'll swear't. If word nor oath  
Prevail not, go and see: if you can bring  
Tincture or lustre in her lip, her eye,  
Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you  
As I would do the gods. But, O thou tyrant!  
Do not repent these things, for they are heavier  
Than all thy woes can stir; therefore betake thee  
To nothing but despair. A thousand knees  
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,  
Upon a barren mountain and still winter  
In storm perpetual, could not move the gods  
To look that way thou wert.

### **LEONTES**

Go on, go on  
Thou canst not speak too much; I have deserved  
All tongues to talk their bitterest.

### **First Lord**



Say no more:  
Howe'er the business goes, you have made fault  
I' the boldness of your speech.

## PAULINA

I am sorry for't:  
All faults I make, when I shall come to know them,  
I do repent. Alas! I have show'd too much  
The rashness of a woman: he is touch'd  
To the noble heart. What's gone and what's past help  
Should be past grief: do not receive affliction  
At my petition; I beseech you, rather  
Let me be punish'd, that have minded you  
Of what you should forget. Now, good my liege  
Sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman:  
The love I bore your queen--lo, fool again!--  
I'll speak of her no more, nor of your children;  
I'll not remember you of my own lord,  
Who is lost too: take your patience to you,  
And I'll say nothing.

## LEONTES

Thou didst speak but well  
When most the truth; which I receive much better  
Than to be pitied of thee. Prithee, bring me  
To the dead bodies of my queen and son:  
One grave shall be for both: upon them shall  
The causes of their death appear, unto  
Our shame perpetual. Once a day I'll visit  
The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there  
Shall be my recreation: so long as nature  
Will bear up with this exercise, so long  
I daily vow to use it. Come and lead me  
Unto these sorrows.

*Exeunt*

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Bohemia. A desert country near the sea.

*Enter ANTIGONUS with a Child, and a Mariner*

**ANTIGONUS**

Thou art perfect then, our ship hath touch'd upon  
The deserts of Bohemia?

**Mariner**

Ay, my lord: and fear  
We have landed in ill time: the skies look grimly  
And threaten present blusters. In my conscience,  
The heavens with that we have in hand are angry  
And frown upon 's.

**ANTIGONUS**

Their sacred wills be done! Go, get aboard;  
Look to thy bark: I'll not be long before  
I call upon thee.

**Mariner**

Make your best haste, and go not  
Too far i' the land: 'tis like to be loud weather;  
Besides, this place is famous for the creatures  
Of prey that keep upon't.

**ANTIGONUS**

Go thou away:  
I'll follow instantly.

**Mariner**

I am glad at heart  
To be so rid o' the business.

*Exit*

## ANTIGONUS

Come, poor babe:  
I have heard, but not believed,  
the spirits o' the dead  
May walk again: if such thing be, thy mother  
Appear'd to me last night, for ne'er was dream  
So like a waking. To me comes a creature,  
Sometimes her head on one side, some another;  
I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,  
So fill'd and so becoming: in pure white robes,  
Like very sanctity, she did approach  
My cabin where I lay; thrice bow'd before me,  
And gasping to begin some speech, her eyes  
Became two spouts: the fury spent, anon  
Did this break-from her: 'Good Antigonus,  
Since fate, against thy better disposition,  
Hath made thy person for the thrower-out  
Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,  
Places remote enough are in Bohemia,  
There weep and leave it crying; and, for the babe  
Is counted lost for ever, Perdita,  
I prithee, call't. For this ungentle business  
Put on thee by my lord, thou ne'er shalt see  
Thy wife Paulina more.' And so, with shrieks  
She melted into air. Affrighted much,  
I did in time collect myself and thought  
This was so and no slumber. Dreams are toys:  
Yet for this once, yea, superstitiously,  
I will be squared by this. I do believe  
Hermione hath suffer'd death, and that  
Apollo would, this being indeed the issue  
Of King Polixenes, it should here be laid,  
Either for life or death, upon the earth  
Of its right father. Blossom, speed thee well!  
There lie, and there thy character: there these;  
Which may, if fortune please, both breed thee, pretty,

And still rest thine. The storm begins; poor wretch,  
That for thy mother's fault art thus exposed  
To loss and what may follow! Weep I cannot,  
But my heart bleeds; and most accursed am I  
To be by oath enjoin'd to this. Farewell!  
The day frowns more and more: thou'rt like to have  
A lullaby too rough: I never saw  
The heavens so dim by day. A savage clamour!  
Well may I get aboard! This is the chase:  
I am gone for ever.

*Exit, pursued by a bear*

*Enter a Shepherd*

## **Shepherd**

I would there were no age between sixteen and  
three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the  
rest; for there is nothing in the between but  
getting wenches with child, wronging the ancients,  
stealing, fighting--Hark you now! Would any but  
these boiled brains of nineteen and two-and-twenty  
hunt this weather? They have scared away two of my  
best sheep, which I fear the wolf will sooner find  
than the master: if any where I have them, 'tis by  
the seaside, browsing of ivy. Good luck, an't be thy  
will what have we here! Mercy on 's, a barne a very  
pretty barne! A boy or a child, I wonder? A  
pretty one; a very pretty one: sure, some 'scape:  
though I am not bookish, yet I can read  
waiting-gentlewoman in the 'scape. This has been  
some stair-work, some trunk-work, some  
behind-door-work: they were warmer that got this  
than the poor thing is here. I'll take it up for  
pity: yet I'll tarry till my son come; he hallooed  
but even now. Whoa, ho, hoa!

*Enter Clown*

## **Clown**

Hilloa, loa!

**Shepherd**

What, art so near? If thou'lt see a thing to talk  
on when thou art dead and rotten, come hither. What  
ailest thou, man?

**Clown**

I have seen two such sights, by sea and by land!  
but I am not to say it is a sea, for it is now the  
sky: betwixt the firmament and it you cannot thrust  
a bodkin's point.

**Shepherd**

Why, boy, how is it?

**Clown**

I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages,  
how it takes up the shore! but that's not the  
point. O, the most piteous cry of the poor souls!  
sometimes to see 'em, and not to see 'em; now the  
ship boring the moon with her main-mast, and anon  
swallowed with yest and froth, as you'ld thrust a  
cork into a hogshead. And then for the  
land-service, to see how the bear tore out his  
shoulder-bone; how he cried to me for help and said  
his name was Antigonus, a nobleman. But to make an  
end of the ship, to see how the sea flap-dragoned  
it: but, first, how the poor souls roared, and the  
sea mocked them; and how the poor gentleman roared  
and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than  
the sea or weather.

**Shepherd**

Name of mercy, when was this, boy?

**Clown**

Now, now: I have not winked since I saw these sights: the men are not yet cold under water, nor the bear half dined on the gentleman: he's at it now.

**Shepherd**

Would I had been by, to have helped the old man!

**Clown**

I would you had been by the ship side, to have helped her: there your charity would have lacked footing.

**Shepherd**

Heavy matters! heavy matters! but look thee here, boy. Now bless thyself: thou mettest with things dying, I with things newborn. Here's a sight for thee; look thee, a bearing-cloth for a squire's child! look thee here; take up, take up, boy; open't. So, let's see: it was told me I should be rich by the fairies. This is some changeling: open't. What's within, boy?

**Clown**

You're a made old man: if the sins of your youth are forgiven you, you're well to live. Gold! all gold!

**Shepherd**

This is fairy gold, boy, and 'twill prove so: up with't, keep it close: home, home, the next way. We are lucky, boy; and to be so still requires nothing but secrecy. Let my sheep go: come, good boy, the next way home.

**Clown**

Go you the next way with your findings. I'll go see  
if the bear be gone from the gentleman and how much  
he hath eaten: they are never curst but when they  
are hungry: if there be any of him left, I'll bury  
it.

### **Shepherd**

That's a good deed. If thou mayest discern by that  
which is left of him what he is, fetch me to the  
sight of him.

### **Clown**

Marry, will I; and you shall help to put him i' the ground.

### **Shepherd**

'Tis a lucky day, boy, and we'll do good deeds on't.

*Exeunt*

SCENE I:

*Enter Time, the Chorus*

### **Time**

I, that please some, try all, both joy and terror  
Of good and bad, that makes and unfolds error,  
Now take upon me, in the name of Time,  
To use my wings. Impute it not a crime  
To me or my swift passage, that I slide  
O'er sixteen years and leave the growth untried  
Of that wide gap, since it is in my power  
To o'erthrow law and in one self-born hour  
To plant and o'erwhelm custom. Let me pass  
The same I am, ere ancient'st order was  
Or what is now received: I witness to  
The times that brought them in; so shall I do  
To the freshest things now reigning and make stale  
The glistening of this present, as my tale

Now seems to it. Your patience this allowing,  
I turn my glass and give my scene such growing  
As you had slept between: Leontes leaving,  
The effects of his fond jealousies so grieving  
That he shuts up himself, imagine me,  
Gentle spectators, that I now may be  
In fair Bohemia, and remember well,  
I mentioned a son o' the king's, which Florizel  
I now name to you; and with speed so pace  
To speak of Perdita, now grown in grace  
Equal with wondering: what of her ensues  
I list not prophecy; but let Time's news  
Be known when 'tis brought forth.  
A shepherd's daughter,  
And what to her adheres, which follows after,  
Is the argument of Time. Of this allow,  
If ever you have spent time worse ere now;  
If never, yet that Time himself doth say  
He wishes earnestly you never may.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Bohemia. The palace of POLIXENES.

*Enter POLIXENES and CAMILLO*

### POLIXENES

I pray thee, good Camillo, be no more importunate:  
'tis a sickness denying thee any thing; a death to  
grant this.

### CAMILLO

It is fifteen years since I saw my country: though  
I have for the most part been aired abroad, I  
desire to lay my bones there. Besides, the penitent  
king, my master, hath sent for me; to whose feeling  
sorrows I might be some allay, or I o'erween to  
think so, which is another spur to my departure.

### POLIXENES

As thou lovest me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of  
thy services by leaving me now: the need I have of  
thee thine own goodness hath made; better not to  
have had thee than thus to want thee: thou, having  
made me businesses which none without thee can  
sufficiently manage, must either stay to execute  
them thyself or take away with thee the very  
services thou hast done; which if I have not enough  
considered, as too much I cannot, to be more  
thankful to thee shall be my study, and my profit  
therein the heaping friendships. Of that fatal  
country, Sicilia, prithee speak no more; whose very  
naming punishes me with the remembrance of that  
penitent, as thou callest him, and reconciled king,  
my brother; whose loss of his most precious queen

and children are even now to be afresh lamented.  
Say to me, when sawest thou the Prince Florizel, my  
son? Kings are no less unhappy, their issue not  
being gracious, than they are in losing them when  
they have approved their virtues.

## **CAMILLO**

Sir, it is three days since I saw the prince. What  
his happier affairs may be, are to me unknown: but I  
have missingly noted, he is of late much retired  
from court and is less frequent to his princely  
exercises than formerly he hath appeared.

## **POLIXENES**

I have considered so much, Camillo, and with some  
care; so far that I have eyes under my service which  
look upon his removedness; from whom I have this  
intelligence, that he is seldom from the house of a  
most homely shepherd; a man, they say, that from  
very nothing, and beyond the imagination of his  
neighbours, is grown into an unspeakable estate.

## **CAMILLO**

I have heard, sir, of such a man, who hath a  
daughter of most rare note: the report of her is  
extended more than can be thought to begin from such a cottage.

## **POLIXENES**

That's likewise part of my intelligence; but, I  
fear, the angle that plucks our son thither. Thou  
shalt accompany us to the place; where we will, not  
appearing what we are, have some question with the  
shepherd; from whose simplicity I think it not  
uneasy to get the cause of my son's resort thither.  
Prithee, be my present partner in this business, and  
lay aside the thoughts of Sicilia.

## **CAMILLO**

I willingly obey your command.

**POLIXENES**

My best Camillo! We must disguise ourselves.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A road near the Shepherd's cottage.

*Enter AUTOLYCUS, singing*

### AUTOLYCUS

When daffodils begin to peer,  
With heigh! the doxy over the dale,  
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;  
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.  
The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,  
With heigh! the sweet birds, O, how they sing!  
Doth set my pugging tooth on edge;  
For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.  
The lark, that tirra-lyra chants,  
With heigh! with heigh! the thrush and the jay,  
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,  
While we lie tumbling in the hay.  
I have served Prince Florizel and in my time  
wore three-pile; but now I am out of service:  
But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?  
The pale moon shines by night:  
And when I wander here and there,  
I then do most go right.  
If tinkers may have leave to live,  
And bear the sow-skin budget,  
Then my account I well may, give,  
And in the stocks avouch it.  
My traffic is sheets; when the kite builds, look to  
lesser linen. My father named me Autolycus; who  
being, as I am, littered under Mercury, was likewise  
a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. With die and  
drab I purchased this caparison, and my revenue is  
the silly cheat. Gallows and knock are too powerful  
on the highway: beating and hanging are terrors to  
me: for the life to come, I sleep out the thought  
of it. A prize! a prize!

*Enter Clown*

**Clown**

Let me see: every 'leven wether tod; every tod yields pound and odd shilling; fifteen hundred shorn. what comes the wool to?

**AUTOLYCUS**

[Aside]  
If the springe hold, the cock's mine.

**Clown**

I cannot do't without counters. Let me see; what am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? Three pound of sugar, five pound of currants, rice,--what will this sister of mine do with rice? But my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and she lays it on. She hath made me four and twenty nose-gays for the shearers, three-man-song-men all, and very good ones; but they are most of them means and bases; but one puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to horn-pipes. I must have saffron to colour the warden pies; mace; dates?--none, that's out of my note; nutmegs, seven; a race or two of ginger, but that I may beg; four pound of prunes, and as many of raisins o' the sun.

**AUTOLYCUS**

O that ever I was born!

*Grovelling on the ground*

**Clown**

I' the name of me--

**AUTOLYCUS**

O, help me, help me! pluck but off these rags; and then, death, death!

**Clown**

Alack, poor soul! thou hast need of more rags to lay on thee, rather than have these off.

**AUTOLYCUS**

O sir, the loathsomeness of them offends me more than the stripes I have received, which are mighty ones and millions.

**Clown**

Alas, poor man! a million of beating may come to a great matter.

**AUTOLYCUS**

I am robbed, sir, and beaten; my money and apparel ta'en from me, and these detestable things put upon me.

**Clown**

What, by a horseman, or a footman?

**AUTOLYCUS**

A footman, sweet sir, a footman.

**Clown**

Indeed, he should be a footman by the garments he has left with thee: if this be a horseman's coat, it hath seen very hot service. Lend me thy hand, I'll help thee: come, lend me thy hand.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

O, good sir, tenderly, O!

## **Clown**

Alas, poor soul!

## **AUTOLYCUS**

O, good sir, softly, good sir! I fear, sir, my  
shoulder-blade is out.

## **Clown**

How now! canst stand?

## **AUTOLYCUS**

[Picking his pocket]

Softly, dear sir; good sir, softly. You ha' done me  
a charitable office.

## **Clown**

Dost lack any money? I have a little money for thee.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

No, good sweet sir; no, I beseech you, sir: I have  
a kinsman not past three quarters of a mile hence,  
unto whom I was going; I shall there have money, or  
any thing I want: offer me no money, I pray you;  
that kills my heart.

## **Clown**

What manner of fellow was he that robbed you?

## **AUTOLYCUS**

A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about with troll-my-dames; I knew him once a servant of the prince: I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipped out of the court.

### **Clown**

His vices, you would say; there's no virtue whipped out of the court: they cherish it to make it stay there; and yet it will no more but abide.

### **AUTOLYCUS**

Vices, I would say, sir. I know this man well: he hath been since an ape-bearer; then a process-server, a bailiff; then he compassed a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife within a mile where my land and living lies; and, having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue: some call him Autolycus.

### **Clown**

Out upon him! prig, for my life, prig: he haunts wakes, fairs and bear-baitings.

### **AUTOLYCUS**

Very true, sir; he, sir, he; that's the rogue that put me into this apparel.

### **Clown**

Not a more cowardly rogue in all Bohemia: if you had but looked big and spit at him, he'ld have run.

### **AUTOLYCUS**

I must confess to you, sir, I am no fighter: I am false of heart that way; and that he knew, I warrant him.



## Clown

How do you now?

## AUTOLYCUS

Sweet sir, much better than I was; I can stand and walk: I will even take my leave of you, and pace softly towards my kinsman's.

## Clown

Shall I bring thee on the way?

## AUTOLYCUS

No, good-faced sir; no, sweet sir.

## Clown

Then fare thee well: I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing.

## AUTOLYCUS

Prosper you, sweet sir!

*Exit Clown*

Your purse is not hot enough to purchase your spice.  
I'll be with you at your sheep-shearing too: if I make not this cheat bring out another and the shearers prove sheep, let me be unrolled and my name put in the book of virtue!

*Sings*

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,  
And merrily hent the stile-a:  
A merry heart goes all the day,  
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The Shepherd's cottage.

*Enter FLORIZEL and PERDITA*

### FLORIZEL

These your unusual weeds to each part of you  
Do give a life: no shepherdess, but Flora  
Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing  
Is as a meeting of the petty gods,  
And you the queen on't.

### PERDITA

Sir, my gracious lord,  
To chide at your extremes it not becomes me:  
O, pardon, that I name them! Your high self,  
The gracious mark o' the land, you have obscured  
With a swain's wearing, and me, poor lowly maid,  
Most goddess-like prank'd up: but that our feasts  
In every mess have folly and the feeders  
Digest it with a custom, I should blush  
To see you so attired, sworn, I think,  
To show myself a glass.

### FLORIZEL

I bless the time  
When my good falcon made her flight across  
Thy father's ground.

### PERDITA

Now Jove afford you cause!  
To me the difference forges dread; your greatness  
Hath not been used to fear. Even now I tremble

To think your father, by some accident,  
Should pass this way as you did: O, the Fates!  
How would he look, to see his work so noble  
Vilely bound up? What would he say? Or how  
Should I, in these my borrow'd flaunts, behold  
The sternness of his presence?

## **FLORIZEL**

Apprehend  
Nothing but jollity. The gods themselves,  
Humbling their deities to love, have taken  
The shapes of beasts upon them: Jupiter  
Became a bull, and bellow'd; the green Neptune  
A ram, and bleated; and the fire-robed god,  
Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,  
As I seem now. Their transformations  
Were never for a piece of beauty rarer,  
Nor in a way so chaste, since my desires  
Run not before mine honour, nor my lusts  
Burn hotter than my faith.

## **PERDITA**

O, but, sir,  
Your resolution cannot hold, when 'tis  
Opposed, as it must be, by the power of the king:  
One of these two must be necessities,  
Which then will speak, that you must  
change this purpose,  
Or I my life.

## **FLORIZEL**

Thou dearest Perdita,  
With these forced thoughts, I prithee, darken not  
The mirth o' the feast. Or I'll be thine, my fair,  
Or not my father's. For I cannot be  
Mine own, nor any thing to any, if  
I be not thine. To this I am most constant,  
Though destiny say no. Be merry, gentle;  
Strangle such thoughts as these with any thing

That you behold the while. Your guests are coming:  
Lift up your countenance, as it were the day  
Of celebration of that nuptial which  
We two have sworn shall come.

## **PERDITA**

O lady Fortune,  
Stand you auspicious!

## **FLORIZEL**

See, your guests approach:  
Address yourself to entertain them sprightly,  
And let's be red with mirth.

*Enter Shepherd, Clown, MOPSA, DORCAS, and others, with POLIXENES and CAMILLO disguised*

## **Shepherd**

Fie, daughter! when my old wife lived, upon  
This day she was both pantler, butler, cook,  
Both dame and servant; welcomed all, served all;  
Would sing her song and dance her turn; now here,  
At upper end o' the table, now i' the middle;  
On his shoulder, and his; her face o' fire  
With labour and the thing she took to quench it,  
She would to each one sip. You are retired,  
As if you were a feasted one and not  
The hostess of the meeting: pray you, bid  
These unknown friends to's welcome; for it is  
A way to make us better friends, more known.  
Come, quench your blushes and present yourself  
That which you are, mistress o' the feast: come on,  
And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,  
As your good flock shall prosper.

## **PERDITA**

[To POLIXENES] Sir, welcome:  
It is my father's will I should take on me

The hostess-ship o' the day.

*To CAMILLO*

You're welcome, sir.  
Give me those flowers there, Dorcas. Reverend sirs,  
For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep  
Seeming and savour all the winter long:  
Grace and remembrance be to you both,  
And welcome to our shearing!

**POLIXENES**

Shepherdess,  
A fair one are you--well you fit our ages  
With flowers of winter.

**PERDITA**

Sir, the year growing ancient,  
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth  
Of trembling winter, the fairest  
flowers o' the season  
Are our carnations and streak'd gillyvors,  
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind  
Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not  
To get slips of them.

**POLIXENES**

Wherefore, gentle maiden,  
Do you neglect them?

**PERDITA**

For I have heard it said  
There is an art which in their piedness shares  
With great creating nature.

**POLIXENES**

Say there be;

Yet nature is made better by no mean  
But nature makes that mean: so, over that art  
Which you say adds to nature, is an art  
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry  
A gentler scion to the wildest stock,  
And make conceive a bark of baser kind  
By bud of nobler race: this is an art  
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but  
The art itself is nature.

## **PERDITA**

So it is.

## **POLIXENES**

Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,  
And do not call them bastards.

## **PERDITA**

I'll not put  
The dibble in earth to set one slip of them;  
No more than were I painted I would wish  
This youth should say 'twere well and only therefore  
Desire to breed by me. Here's flowers for you;  
Hot lavender, mints, savoury, marjoram;  
The marigold, that goes to bed wi' the sun  
And with him rises weeping: these are flowers  
Of middle summer, and I think they are given  
To men of middle age. You're very welcome.

## **CAMILLO**

I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,  
And only live by gazing.

## **PERDITA**

Out, alas!  
You'd be so lean, that blasts of January  
Would blow you through and through.

Now, my fair'st friend,  
I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might  
Become your time of day; and yours, and yours,  
That wear upon your virgin branches yet  
Your maidenheads growing: O Proserpina,  
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall  
From Dis's waggon! daffodils,  
That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses  
That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
Bright Phoebus in his strength--a malady  
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and  
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,  
The flower-de-luce being one! O, these I lack,  
To make you garlands of, and my sweet friend,  
To strew him o'er and o'er!

## **FLORIZEL**

What, like a corse?

## **PERDITA**

No, like a bank for love to lie and play on;  
Not like a corse; or if, not to be buried,  
But quick and in mine arms. Come, take your flowers:  
Methinks I play as I have seen them do  
In Whitsun pastorals: sure this robe of mine  
Does change my disposition.

## **FLORIZEL**

What you do  
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet.  
I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,  
I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,  
Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs,  
To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you  
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do  
Nothing but that; move still, still so,



And own no other function: each your doing,  
So singular in each particular,  
Crowns what you are doing in the present deed,  
That all your acts are queens.

## **PERDITA**

O Doricles,  
Your praises are too large: but that your youth,  
And the true blood which peepeth fairly through't,  
Do plainly give you out an unstain'd shepherd,  
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,  
You woo'd me the false way.

## **FLORIZEL**

I think you have  
As little skill to fear as I have purpose  
To put you to't. But come; our dance, I pray:  
Your hand, my Perdita: so turtles pair,  
That never mean to part.

## **PERDITA**

I'll swear for 'em.

## **POLIXENES**

This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever  
Ran on the green-sward: nothing she does or seems  
But smacks of something greater than herself,  
Too noble for this place.

## **CAMILLO**

He tells her something  
That makes her blood look out: good sooth, she is  
The queen of curds and cream.

## **Clown**

Come on, strike up!

## **DORCAS**

Mopsa must be your mistress: marry, garlic,  
To mend her kissing with!

## **MOPSA**

Now, in good time!

## **Clown**

Not a word, a word; we stand upon our manners.  
Come, strike up!

*Music. Here a dance of Shepherds and Shepherdesses*

## **POLIXENES**

Pray, good shepherd, what fair swain is this  
Which dances with your daughter?

## **Shepherd**

They call him Doricles; and boasts himself  
To have a worthy feeding: but I have it  
Upon his own report and I believe it;  
He looks like sooth. He says he loves my daughter:  
I think so too; for never gazed the moon  
Upon the water as he'll stand and read  
As 'twere my daughter's eyes: and, to be plain.  
I think there is not half a kiss to choose  
Who loves another best.

## **POLIXENES**

She dances featly.

## **Shepherd**

So she does any thing; though I report it,

That should be silent: if young Doricles  
Do light upon her, she shall bring him that  
Which he not dreams of.

*Enter Servant*

## **Servant**

O master, if you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabour and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you: he sings several tunes faster than you'll tell money; he utters them as he had eaten ballads and all men's ears grew to his tunes.

## **Clown**

He could never come better; he shall come in. I love a ballad but even too well, if it be doleful matter merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing indeed and sung lamentably.

## **Servant**

He hath songs for man or woman, of all sizes; no milliner can so fit his customers with gloves: he has the prettiest love-songs for maids; so without bawdry, which is strange; with such delicate burthens of dildos and fadings, 'jump her and thump her;' and where some stretch-mouthed rascal would, as it were, mean mischief and break a foul gap into the matter, he makes the maid to answer 'Whoop, do me no harm, good man;' puts him off, slights him, with 'Whoop, do me no harm, good man.'

## **POLIXENES**

This is a brave fellow.

## **Clown**

Believe me, thou talkest of an admirable conceited

fellow. Has he any unbraided wares?

**Servant**

He hath ribbons of an the colours i' the rainbow;  
points more than all the lawyers in Bohemia can  
learnedly handle, though they come to him by the  
gross: inkles, caddisses, cambrics, lawns: why, he  
sings 'em over as they were gods or goddesses; you  
would think a smock were a she-angel, he so chants  
to the sleeve-hand and the work about the square on't.

**Clown**

Prithee bring him in; and let him approach singing.

**PERDITA**

Forewarn him that he use no scurrilous words in 's tunes.

*Exit Servant*

**Clown**

You have of these pedlars, that have more in them  
than you'd think, sister.

**PERDITA**

Ay, good brother, or go about to think.

*Enter AUTOLYCUS, singing*

**AUTOLYCUS**

Lawn as white as driven snow;  
Cyprus black as e'er was crow;  
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;  
Masks for faces and for noses;  
Bugle bracelet, necklace amber,  
Perfume for a lady's chamber;

Golden quoifs and stomachers,  
For my lads to give their dears:  
Pins and poking-sticks of steel,  
What maids lack from head to heel:  
Come buy of me, come; come buy, come buy;  
Buy lads, or else your lasses cry: Come buy.

### **Clown**

If I were not in love with Mopsa, thou shouldst take  
no money of me; but being enthralled as I am, it  
will also be the bondage of certain ribbons and gloves.

### **MOPSA**

I was promised them against the feast; but they come  
not too late now.

### **DORCAS**

He hath promised you more than that, or there be liars.

### **MOPSA**

He hath paid you all he promised you; may be, he has  
paid you more, which will shame you to give him again.

### **Clown**

Is there no manners left among maids? will they  
wear their plackets where they should bear their  
faces? Is there not milking-time, when you are  
going to bed, or kiln-hole, to whistle off these  
secrets, but you must be tittle-tattling before all  
our guests? 'tis well they are whispering: clamour  
your tongues, and not a word more.

### **MOPSA**

I have done. Come, you promised me a tawdry-lace  
and a pair of sweet gloves.

**Clown**

Have I not told thee how I was cozened by the way  
and lost all my money?

**AUTOLYCUS**

And indeed, sir, there are cozeners abroad;  
therefore it behoves men to be wary.

**Clown**

Fear not thou, man, thou shalt lose nothing here.

**AUTOLYCUS**

I hope so, sir; for I have about me many parcels of charge.

**Clown**

What hast here? ballads?

**MOPSA**

Pray now, buy some: I love a ballad in print o'  
life, for then we are sure they are true.

**AUTOLYCUS**

Here's one to a very doleful tune, how a usurer's  
wife was brought to bed of twenty money-bags at a  
burthen and how she longed to eat adders' heads and  
toads carbonadoed.

**MOPSA**

Is it true, think you?

**AUTOLYCUS**

Very true, and but a month old.

## **DORCAS**

Bless me from marrying a usurer!

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Here's the midwife's name to't, one Mistress  
Tale-porter, and five or six honest wives that were  
present. Why should I carry lies abroad?

## **MOPSA**

Pray you now, buy it.

## **Clown**

Come on, lay it by: and let's first see moe  
ballads; we'll buy the other things anon.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Here's another ballad of a fish, that appeared upon  
the coast on Wednesday the four-score of April,  
forty thousand fathom above water, and sung this  
ballad against the hard hearts of maids: it was  
thought she was a woman and was turned into a cold  
fish for she would not exchange flesh with one that  
loved her: the ballad is very pitiful and as true.

## **DORCAS**

Is it true too, think you?

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Five justices' hands at it, and witnesses more than  
my pack will hold.

## **Clown**

Lay it by too: another.

**AUTOLYCUS**

This is a merry ballad, but a very pretty one.

**MOPSA**

Let's have some merry ones.

**AUTOLYCUS**

Why, this is a passing merry one and goes to the tune of 'Two maids wooing a man:' there's scarce a maid westward but she sings it; 'tis in request, I can tell you.

**MOPSA**

We can both sing it: if thou'lt bear a part, thou shalt hear; 'tis in three parts.

**DORCAS**

We had the tune on't a month ago.

**AUTOLYCUS**

I can bear my part; you must know 'tis my occupation; have at it with you.

*SONG*

**AUTOLYCUS**

Get you hence, for I must go  
Where it fits not you to know.

**DORCAS**

Whither?



**MOPSA**

O, whither?

**DORCAS**

Whither?

**MOPSA**

It becomes thy oath full well,  
Thou to me thy secrets tell.

**DORCAS**

Me too, let me go thither.

**MOPSA**

Or thou goest to the orange or mill.

**DORCAS**

If to either, thou dost ill.

**AUTOLYCUS**

Neither.

**DORCAS**

What, neither?

**AUTOLYCUS**

Neither.

**DORCAS**

Thou hast sworn my love to be.

## **MOPSA**

Thou hast sworn it more to me:  
Then whither goest? say, whither?

## **Clown**

We'll have this song out anon by ourselves: my  
father and the gentlemen are in sad talk, and we'll  
not trouble them. Come, bring away thy pack after  
me. Wenches, I'll buy for you both. Pedlar, let's  
have the first choice. Follow me, girls.

*Exit with DORCAS and MOPSA*

## **AUTOLYCUS**

And you shall pay well for 'em.

*Follows singing*

Will you buy any tape,  
Or lace for your cape,  
My dainty duck, my dear-a?  
Any silk, any thread,  
Any toys for your head,  
Of the new'st and finest, finest wear-a?  
Come to the pedlar;  
Money's a medler.  
That doth utter all men's ware-a.

*Exit*

*Re-enter Servant*

## **Servant**

Master, there is three carters, three shepherds,  
three neat-herds, three swine-herds, that have made  
themselves all men of hair, they call themselves

Saltiers, and they have a dance which the wenches say is a gallimaufry of gambols, because they are not in't; but they themselves are o' the mind, if it be not too rough for some that know little but bowling, it will please plentifully.

### **Shepherd**

Away! we'll none on 't: here has been too much homely foolery already. I know, sir, we weary you.

### **POLIXENES**

You weary those that refresh us: pray, let's see these four threes of herdsmen.

### **Servant**

One three of them, by their own report, sir, hath danced before the king; and not the worst of the three but jumps twelve foot and a half by the squier.

### **Shepherd**

Leave your prating: since these good men are pleased, let them come in; but quickly now.

### **Servant**

Why, they stay at door, sir.

*Exit*

*Here a dance of twelve Satyrs*

### **POLIXENES**

O, father, you'll know more of that hereafter.

*To CAMILLO*

Is it not too far gone? 'Tis time to part them.  
He's simple and tells much.

*To FLORIZEL*

How now, fair shepherd!  
Your heart is full of something that does take  
Your mind from feasting. Sooth, when I was young  
And handed love as you do, I was wont  
To load my she with knacks: I would have ransack'd  
The pedlar's silken treasury and have pour'd it  
To her acceptance; you have let him go  
And nothing mated with him. If your lass  
Interpretation should abuse and call this  
Your lack of love or bounty, you were straited  
For a reply, at least if you make a care  
Of happy holding her.

**FLORIZEL**

Old sir, I know  
She prizes not such trifles as these are:  
The gifts she looks from me are pack'd and lock'd  
Up in my heart; which I have given already,  
But not deliver'd. O, hear me breathe my life  
Before this ancient sir, who, it should seem,  
Hath sometime loved! I take thy hand, this hand,  
As soft as dove's down and as white as it,  
Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd  
snow that's bolted  
By the northern blasts twice o'er.

**POLIXENES**

What follows this?  
How prettily the young swain seems to wash  
The hand was fair before! I have put you out:  
But to your protestation; let me hear  
What you profess.

**FLORIZEL**

Do, and be witness to 't.

**POLIXENES**

And this my neighbour too?

**FLORIZEL**

And he, and more  
Than he, and men, the earth, the heavens, and all:  
That, were I crown'd the most imperial monarch,  
Thereof most worthy, were I the fairest youth  
That ever made eye swerve, had force and knowledge  
More than was ever man's, I would not prize them  
Without her love; for her employ them all;  
Commend them and condemn them to her service  
Or to their own perdition.

**POLIXENES**

Fairly offer'd.

**CAMILLO**

This shows a sound affection.

**Shepherd**

But, my daughter,  
Say you the like to him?

**PERDITA**

I cannot speak  
So well, nothing so well; no, nor mean better:  
By the pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out  
The purity of his.

**Shepherd**

Take hands, a bargain!

And, friends unknown, you shall bear witness to 't:  
I give my daughter to him, and will make  
Her portion equal his.

**FLORIZEL**

O, that must be  
I' the virtue of your daughter: one being dead,  
I shall have more than you can dream of yet;  
Enough then for your wonder. But, come on,  
Contract us 'fore these witnesses.

**Shepherd**

Come, your hand;  
And, daughter, yours.

**POLIXENES**

Soft, swain, awhile, beseech you;  
Have you a father?

**FLORIZEL**

I have: but what of him?

**POLIXENES**

Knows he of this?

**FLORIZEL**

He neither does nor shall.

**POLIXENES**

Methinks a father  
Is at the nuptial of his son a guest  
That best becomes the table. Pray you once more,  
Is not your father grown incapable  
Of reasonable affairs? is he not stupid

With age and altering rheums? can he speak? hear?  
Know man from man? dispute his own estate?  
Lies he not bed-rid? and again does nothing  
But what he did being childish?

**FLORIZEL**

No, good sir;  
He has his health and ampler strength indeed  
Than most have of his age.

**POLIXENES**

By my white beard,  
You offer him, if this be so, a wrong  
Something unfilial: reason my son  
Should choose himself a wife, but as good reason  
The father, all whose joy is nothing else  
But fair posterity, should hold some counsel  
In such a business.

**FLORIZEL**

I yield all this;  
But for some other reasons, my grave sir,  
Which 'tis not fit you know, I not acquaint  
My father of this business.

**POLIXENES**

Let him know't.

**FLORIZEL**

He shall not.

**POLIXENES**

Prithee, let him.

**FLORIZEL**

No, he must not.

**Shepherd**

Let him, my son: he shall not need to grieve  
At knowing of thy choice.

**FLORIZEL**

Come, come, he must not.  
Mark our contract.

**POLIXENES**

Mark your divorce, young sir,

*Discovering himself*

Whom son I dare not call; thou art too base  
To be acknowledged: thou a sceptre's heir,  
That thus affect'st a sheep-hook! Thou old traitor,  
I am sorry that by hanging thee I can  
But shorten thy life one week. And thou, fresh piece  
Of excellent witchcraft, who of force must know  
The royal fool thou copest with,--

**Shepherd**

O, my heart!

**POLIXENES**

I'll have thy beauty scratch'd with briars, and made  
More homely than thy state. For thee, fond boy,  
If I may ever know thou dost but sigh  
That thou no more shalt see this knack, as never  
I mean thou shalt, we'll bar thee from succession;  
Not hold thee of our blood, no, not our kin,  
Far than Deucalion off: mark thou my words:  
Follow us to the court. Thou churl, for this time,  
Though full of our displeasure, yet we free thee



From the dead blow of it. And you, enchantment.--  
Worthy enough a herdsman: yea, him too,  
That makes himself, but for our honour therein,  
Unworthy thee,--if ever henceforth thou  
These rural latches to his entrance open,  
Or hoop his body more with thy embraces,  
I will devise a death as cruel for thee  
As thou art tender to't.

*Exit*

## **PERDITA**

Even here undone!  
I was not much afeard; for once or twice  
I was about to speak and tell him plainly,  
The selfsame sun that shines upon his court  
Hides not his visage from our cottage but  
Looks on alike. Will't please you, sir, be gone?  
I told you what would come of this: beseech you,  
Of your own state take care: this dream of mine,--  
Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch farther,  
But milk my ewes and weep.

## **CAMILLO**

Why, how now, father!  
Speak ere thou diest.

## **Shepherd**

I cannot speak, nor think  
Nor dare to know that which I know. O sir!  
You have undone a man of fourscore three,  
That thought to fill his grave in quiet, yea,  
To die upon the bed my father died,  
To lie close by his honest bones: but now  
Some hangman must put on my shroud and lay me  
Where no priest shovels in dust. O cursed wretch,  
That knew'st this was the prince,  
and wouldst adventure  
To mingle faith with him! Undone! undone!

If I might die within this hour, I have lived  
To die when I desire.

*Exit*

**FLORIZEL**

Why look you so upon me?  
I am but sorry, not afeard; delay'd,  
But nothing alter'd: what I was, I am;  
More straining on for plucking back, not following  
My leash unwillingly.

**CAMILLO**

Gracious my lord,  
You know your father's temper: at this time  
He will allow no speech, which I do guess  
You do not purpose to him; and as hardly  
Will he endure your sight as yet, I fear:  
Then, till the fury of his highness settle,  
Come not before him.

**FLORIZEL**

I not purpose it.  
I think, Camillo?

**CAMILLO**

Even he, my lord.

**PERDITA**

How often have I told you 'twould be thus!  
How often said, my dignity would last  
But till 'twere known!

**FLORIZEL**

It cannot fail but by

The violation of my faith; and then  
Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together  
And mar the seeds within! Lift up thy looks:  
From my succession wipe me, father; I  
Am heir to my affection.

**CAMILLO**

Be advised.

**FLORIZEL**

I am, and by my fancy: if my reason  
Will thereto be obedient, I have reason;  
If not, my senses, better pleased with madness,  
Do bid it welcome.

**CAMILLO**

This is desperate, sir.

**FLORIZEL**

So call it: but it does fulfil my vow;  
I needs must think it honesty. Camillo,  
Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that may  
Be thereat glean'd, for all the sun sees or  
The close earth wombs or the profound sea hides  
In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath  
To this my fair beloved: therefore, I pray you,  
As you have ever been my father's honour'd friend,  
When he shall miss me,--as, in faith, I mean not  
To see him any more,--cast your good counsels  
Upon his passion; let myself and fortune  
Tug for the time to come. This you may know  
And so deliver, I am put to sea  
With her whom here I cannot hold on shore;  
And most opportune to our need I have  
A vessel rides fast by, but not prepared  
For this design. What course I mean to hold  
Shall nothing benefit your knowledge, nor  
Concern me the reporting.

**CAMILLO**

O my lord!  
I would your spirit were easier for advice,  
Or stronger for your need.

**FLORIZEL**

Hark, Perdita

*Drawing her aside*

I'll hear you by and by.

**CAMILLO**

He's irremovable,  
Resolved for flight. Now were I happy, if  
His going I could frame to serve my turn,  
Save him from danger, do him love and honour,  
Purchase the sight again of dear Sicilia  
And that unhappy king, my master, whom  
I so much thirst to see.

**FLORIZEL**

Now, good Camillo;  
I am so fraught with curious business that  
I leave out ceremony.

**CAMILLO**

Sir, I think  
You have heard of my poor services, i' the love  
That I have borne your father?

**FLORIZEL**

Very nobly  
Have you deserved: it is my father's music  
To speak your deeds, not little of his care

To have them recompensed as thought on.

**CAMILLO**

Well, my lord,  
If you may please to think I love the king  
And through him what is nearest to him, which is  
Your gracious self, embrace but my direction:  
If your more ponderous and settled project  
May suffer alteration, on mine honour,  
I'll point you where you shall have such receiving  
As shall become your highness; where you may  
Enjoy your mistress, from the whom, I see,  
There's no disjunction to be made, but by--  
As heavens forefend!--your ruin; marry her,  
And, with my best endeavours in your absence,  
Your discontenting father strive to qualify  
And bring him up to liking.

**FLORIZEL**

How, Camillo,  
May this, almost a miracle, be done?  
That I may call thee something more than man  
And after that trust to thee.

**CAMILLO**

Have you thought on  
A place whereto you'll go?

**FLORIZEL**

Not any yet:  
But as the unthought-on accident is guilty  
To what we wildly do, so we profess  
Ourselves to be the slaves of chance and flies  
Of every wind that blows.

**CAMILLO**

Then list to me:

This follows, if you will not change your purpose  
But undergo this flight, make for Sicilia,  
And there present yourself and your fair princess,  
For so I see she must be, 'fore Leontes:  
She shall be habited as it becomes  
The partner of your bed. Methinks I see  
Leontes opening his free arms and weeping  
His welcomes forth; asks thee the son forgiveness,  
As 'twere i' the father's person; kisses the hands  
Of your fresh princess; o'er and o'er divides him  
'Twixt his unkindness and his kindness; the one  
He chides to hell and bids the other grow  
Faster than thought or time.

## **FLORIZEL**

Worthy Camillo,  
What colour for my visitation shall I  
Hold up before him?

## **CAMILLO**

Sent by the king your father  
To greet him and to give him comforts. Sir,  
The manner of your bearing towards him, with  
What you as from your father shall deliver,  
Things known betwixt us three, I'll write you down:  
The which shall point you forth at every sitting  
What you must say; that he shall not perceive  
But that you have your father's bosom there  
And speak his very heart.

## **FLORIZEL**

I am bound to you:  
There is some sap in this.

## **CAMILLO**

A cause more promising  
Than a wild dedication of yourselves  
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores, most certain

To miseries enough; no hope to help you,  
But as you shake off one to take another;  
Nothing so certain as your anchors, who  
Do their best office, if they can but stay you  
Where you'll be loath to be: besides you know  
Prosperity's the very bond of love,  
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together  
Affliction alters.

**PERDITA**

One of these is true:  
I think affliction may subdue the cheek,  
But not take in the mind.

**CAMILLO**

Yea, say you so?  
There shall not at your father's house these  
seven years  
Be born another such.

**FLORIZEL**

My good Camillo,  
She is as forward of her breeding as  
She is i' the rear our birth.

**CAMILLO**

I cannot say 'tis pity  
She lacks instructions, for she seems a mistress  
To most that teach.

**PERDITA**

Your pardon, sir; for this  
I'll blush you thanks.

**FLORIZEL**

My prettiest Perdita!

But O, the thorns we stand upon! Camillo,  
Preserver of my father, now of me,  
The medicine of our house, how shall we do?  
We are not furnish'd like Bohemia's son,  
Nor shall appear in Sicilia.

## **CAMILLO**

My lord,  
Fear none of this: I think you know my fortunes  
Do all lie there: it shall be so my care  
To have you royally appointed as if  
The scene you play were mine. For instance, sir,  
That you may know you shall not want, one word.

*They talk aside*

*Re-enter AUTOLYCUS*

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Ha, ha! what a fool Honesty is! and Trust, his  
sworn brother, a very simple gentleman! I have sold  
all my trumpery; not a counterfeit stone, not a  
ribbon, glass, pomander, brooch, table-book, ballad,  
knife, tape, glove, shoe-tie, bracelet, horn-ring,  
to keep my pack from fasting: they throng who  
should buy first, as if my trinkets had been  
hallowed and brought a benediction to the buyer:  
by which means I saw whose purse was best in  
picture; and what I saw, to my good use I  
remembered. My clown, who wants but something to  
be a reasonable man, grew so in love with the  
wenches' song, that he would not stir his pettitoes  
till he had both tune and words; which so drew the  
rest of the herd to me that all their other senses  
stuck in ears: you might have pinched a placket, it  
was senseless; 'twas nothing to geld a codpiece of a  
purse; I could have filed keys off that hung in  
chains: no hearing, no feeling, but my sir's song,  
and admiring the nothing of it. So that in this  
time of lethargy I picked and cut most of their



festival purses; and had not the old man come in with a whoo-bub against his daughter and the king's son and scared my choughs from the chaff, I had not left a purse alive in the whole army.

*CAMILLO, FLORIZEL, and PERDITA come forward*

**CAMILLO**

Nay, but my letters, by this means being there  
So soon as you arrive, shall clear that doubt.

**FLORIZEL**

And those that you'll procure from King Leontes--

**CAMILLO**

Shall satisfy your father.

**PERDITA**

Happy be you!  
All that you speak shows fair.

**CAMILLO**

Who have we here?

*Seeing AUTOLYCUS*

We'll make an instrument of this, omit  
Nothing may give us aid.

**AUTOLYCUS**

If they have overheard me now, why, hanging.

**CAMILLO**

How now, good fellow! why shakest thou so? Fear

not, man; here's no harm intended to thee.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

I am a poor fellow, sir.

## **CAMILLO**

Why, be so still; here's nobody will steal that from thee: yet for the outside of thy poverty we must make an exchange; therefore discase thee instantly, --thou must think there's a necessity in't,--and change garments with this gentleman: though the pennyworth on his side be the worst, yet hold thee, there's some boot.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

I am a poor fellow, sir.

*Aside*

I know ye well enough.

## **CAMILLO**

Nay, prithee, dispatch: the gentleman is half flayed already.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Are you in earnest, sir?

*Aside*

I smell the trick on't.

## **FLORIZEL**

Dispatch, I prithee.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Indeed, I have had earnest: but I cannot with  
conscience take it.

## **CAMILLO**

Unbuckle, unbuckle.

*FLORIZEL and AUTOLYCUS exchange garments*

Fortunate mistress,--let my prophecy  
Come home to ye!--you must retire yourself  
Into some covert: take your sweetheart's hat  
And pluck it o'er your brows, muffle your face,  
Dismantle you, and, as you can, disliken  
The truth of your own seeming; that you may--  
For I do fear eyes over--to shipboard  
Get undescried.

## **PERDITA**

I see the play so lies  
That I must bear a part.

## **CAMILLO**

No remedy.  
Have you done there?

## **FLORIZEL**

Should I now meet my father,  
He would not call me son.

## **CAMILLO**

Nay, you shall have no hat.

*Giving it to PERDITA*

Come, lady, come. Farewell, my friend.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Adieu, sir.

## **FLORIZEL**

O Perdita, what have we twain forgot!  
Pray you, a word.

## **CAMILLO**

[Aside] What I do next, shall be to tell the king  
Of this escape and whither they are bound;  
Wherein my hope is I shall so prevail  
To force him after: in whose company  
I shall review Sicilia, for whose sight  
I have a woman's longing.

## **FLORIZEL**

Fortune speed us!  
Thus we set on, Camillo, to the sea-side.

## **CAMILLO**

The swifter speed the better.

*Exeunt FLORIZEL, PERDITA, and CAMILLO*

## **AUTOLYCUS**

I understand the business, I hear it: to have an  
open ear, a quick eye, and a nimble hand, is  
necessary for a cut-purse; a good nose is requisite  
also, to smell out work for the other senses. I see  
this is the time that the unjust man doth thrive.  
What an exchange had this been without boot! What  
a boot is here with this exchange! Sure the gods do  
this year connive at us, and we may do any thing

extempore. The prince himself is about a piece of iniquity, stealing away from his father with his clog at his heels: if I thought it were a piece of honesty to acquaint the king withal, I would not do't: I hold it the more knavery to conceal it; and therein am I constant to my profession.

*Re-enter Clown and Shepherd*

Aside, aside; here is more matter for a hot brain: every lane's end, every shop, church, session, hanging, yields a careful man work.

**Clown**

See, see; what a man you are now!  
There is no other way but to tell the king  
she's a changeling and none of your flesh and blood.

**Shepherd**

Nay, but hear me.

**Clown**

Nay, but hear me.

**Shepherd**

Go to, then.

**Clown**

She being none of your flesh and blood, your flesh and blood has not offended the king; and so your flesh and blood is not to be punished by him. Show those things you found about her, those secret things, all but what she has with her: this being done, let the law go whistle: I warrant you.

**Shepherd**

I will tell the king all, every word, yea, and his son's pranks too; who, I may say, is no honest man, neither to his father nor to me, to go about to make me the king's brother-in-law.

**Clown**

Indeed, brother-in-law was the farthest off you could have been to him and then your blood had been the dearer by I know how much an ounce.

**AUTOLYCUS**

[Aside] Very wisely, puppies!

**Shepherd**

Well, let us to the king: there is that in this fardel will make him scratch his beard.

**AUTOLYCUS**

[Aside] I know not what impediment this complaint may be to the flight of my master.

**Clown**

Pray heartily he be at palace.

**AUTOLYCUS**

[Aside] Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance: let me pocket up my pedlar's excrement.

*Takes off his false beard*

How now, rustics! whither are you bound?

**Shepherd**

To the palace, an it like your worship.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Your affairs there, what, with whom, the condition of that fardel, the place of your dwelling, your names, your ages, of what having, breeding, and any thing that is fitting to be known, discover.

## **Clown**

We are but plain fellows, sir.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

A lie; you are rough and hairy. Let me have no lying: it becomes none but tradesmen, and they often give us soldiers the lie: but we pay them for it with stamped coin, not stabbing steel; therefore they do not give us the lie.

## **Clown**

Your worship had like to have given us one, if you had not taken yourself with the manner.

## **Shepherd**

Are you a courtier, an't like you, sir?

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Whether it like me or no, I am a courtier. Seest thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? hath not my gait in it the measure of the court? receives not thy nose court-odor from me? reflect I not on thy baseness court-contempt? Thinkest thou, for that I insinuate, or toaze from thee thy business, I am therefore no courtier? I am courtier cap-a-pe; and one that will either push on or pluck back thy business there: whereupon I command thee to open thy affair.

**Shepherd**

My business, sir, is to the king.

**AUTOLYCUS**

What advocate hast thou to him?

**Shepherd**

I know not, an't like you.

**Clown**

Advocate's the court-word for a pheasant: say you have none.

**Shepherd**

None, sir; I have no pheasant, cock nor hen.

**AUTOLYCUS**

How blessed are we that are not simple men!  
Yet nature might have made me as these are,  
Therefore I will not disdain.

**Clown**

This cannot be but a great courtier.

**Shepherd**

His garments are rich, but he wears  
them not handsomely.

**Clown**

He seems to be the more noble in being fantastical:  
a great man, I'll warrant; I know by the picking  
on's teeth.



## **AUTOLYCUS**

The fardel there? what's i' the fardel?  
Wherefore that box?

## **Shepherd**

Sir, there lies such secrets in this fardel and box,  
which none must know but the king; and which he  
shall know within this hour, if I may come to the  
speech of him.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Age, thou hast lost thy labour.

## **Shepherd**

Why, sir?

## **AUTOLYCUS**

The king is not at the palace; he is gone aboard a  
new ship to purge melancholy and air himself: for,  
if thou beest capable of things serious, thou must  
know the king is full of grief.

## **Shepard**

So 'tis said, sir; about his son, that should have  
married a shepherd's daughter.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

If that shepherd be not in hand-fast, let him fly:  
the curses he shall have, the tortures he shall  
feel, will break the back of man, the heart of monster.

## **Clown**

Think you so, sir?

## **AUTOLYCUS**

Not he alone shall suffer what wit can make heavy and vengeance bitter; but those that are germane to him, though removed fifty times, shall all come under the hangman: which though it be great pity, yet it is necessary. An old sheep-whistling rogue a ram-tender, to offer to have his daughter come into grace! Some say he shall be stoned; but that death is too soft for him, say I draw our throne into a sheep-cote! all deaths are too few, the sharpest too easy.

## **Clown**

Has the old man e'er a son, sir, do you hear. an't like you, sir?

## **AUTOLYCUS**

He has a son, who shall be flayed alive; then 'nointed over with honey, set on the head of a wasp's nest; then stand till he be three quarters and a dram dead; then recovered again with aqua-vitae or some other hot infusion; then, raw as he is, and in the hottest day prognostication proclaims, shall be set against a brick-wall, the sun looking with a southward eye upon him, where he is to behold him with flies blown to death. But what talk we of these traitorly rascals, whose miseries are to be smiled at, their offences being so capital? Tell me, for you seem to be honest plain men, what you have to the king: being something gently considered, I'll bring you where he is aboard, tender your persons to his presence, whisper him in your behalfs; and if it be in man besides the king to effect your suits, here is man shall do it.

## **Clown**

He seems to be of great authority: close with him,  
give him gold; and though authority be a stubborn  
bear, yet he is oft led by the nose with gold: show  
the inside of your purse to the outside of his hand,  
and no more ado. Remember 'stoned,' and 'flayed alive.'

**Shepherd**

An't please you, sir, to undertake the business for  
us, here is that gold I have: I'll make it as much  
more and leave this young man in pawn till I bring it you.

**AUTOLYCUS**

After I have done what I promised?

**Shepherd**

Ay, sir.

**AUTOLYCUS**

Well, give me the moiety. Are you a party in this business?

**Clown**

In some sort, sir: but though my case be a pitiful  
one, I hope I shall not be flayed out of it.

**AUTOLYCUS**

O, that's the case of the shepherd's son: hang him,  
he'll be made an example.

**Clown**

Comfort, good comfort! We must to the king and show  
our strange sights: he must know 'tis none of your  
daughter nor my sister; we are gone else. Sir, I  
will give you as much as this old man does when the  
business is performed, and remain, as he says, your

pawn till it be brought you.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

I will trust you. Walk before toward the sea-side;  
go on the right hand: I will but look upon the  
hedge and follow you.

## **Clown**

We are blest in this man, as I may say, even blest.

## **Shepherd**

Let's before as he bids us: he was provided to do us good.

*Exeunt Shepherd and Clown*

## **AUTOLYCUS**

If I had a mind to be honest, I see Fortune would  
not suffer me: she drops booties in my mouth. I am  
courted now with a double occasion, gold and a means  
to do the prince my master good; which who knows how  
that may turn back to my advancement? I will bring  
these two moles, these blind ones, aboard him: if he  
think it fit to shore them again and that the  
complaint they have to the king concerns him  
nothing, let him call me rogue for being so far  
officious; for I am proof against that title and  
what shame else belongs to't. To him will I present  
them: there may be matter in it.

*Exit*

# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in LEONTES' palace.

*Enter LEONTES, CLEOMENES, DION, PAULINA, and Servants*

### CLEOMENES

Sir, you have done enough, and have perform'd  
A saint-like sorrow: no fault could you make,  
Which you have not redeem'd; indeed, paid down  
More penitence than done trespass: at the last,  
Do as the heavens have done, forget your evil;  
With them forgive yourself.

### LEONTES

Whilst I remember  
Her and her virtues, I cannot forget  
My blemishes in them, and so still think of  
The wrong I did myself; which was so much,  
That heirless it hath made my kingdom and  
Destroy'd the sweet'st companion that e'er man  
Bred his hopes out of.

### PAULINA

True, too true, my lord:  
If, one by one, you wedded all the world,  
Or from the all that are took something good,  
To make a perfect woman, she you kill'd  
Would be unparallel'd.

### LEONTES

I think so. Kill'd!  
She I kill'd! I did so: but thou strikest me  
Sorely, to say I did; it is as bitter

Upon thy tongue as in my thought: now, good now,  
Say so but seldom.

## CLEOMENES

Not at all, good lady:  
You might have spoken a thousand things that would  
Have done the time more benefit and graced  
Your kindness better.

## PAULINA

You are one of those  
Would have him wed again.

## DION

If you would not so,  
You pity not the state, nor the remembrance  
Of his most sovereign name; consider little  
What dangers, by his highness' fail of issue,  
May drop upon his kingdom and devour  
Uncertain lookers on. What were more holy  
Than to rejoice the former queen is well?  
What holier than, for royalty's repair,  
For present comfort and for future good,  
To bless the bed of majesty again  
With a sweet fellow to't?

## PAULINA

There is none worthy,  
Respecting her that's gone. Besides, the gods  
Will have fulfill'd their secret purposes;  
For has not the divine Apollo said,  
Is't not the tenor of his oracle,  
That King Leontes shall not have an heir  
Till his lost child be found? which that it shall,  
Is all as monstrous to our human reason  
As my Antigonus to break his grave  
And come again to me; who, on my life,  
Did perish with the infant. 'Tis your counsel

My lord should to the heavens be contrary,  
Oppose against their wills.

*To LEONTES*

Care not for issue;  
The crown will find an heir: great Alexander  
Left his to the worthiest; so his successor  
Was like to be the best.

**LEONTES**

Good Paulina,  
Who hast the memory of Hermione,  
I know, in honour, O, that ever I  
Had squared me to thy counsel! then, even now,  
I might have look'd upon my queen's full eyes,  
Have taken treasure from her lips--

**PAULINA**

And left them  
More rich for what they yielded.

**LEONTES**

Thou speak'st truth.  
No more such wives; therefore, no wife: one worse,  
And better used, would make her sainted spirit  
Again possess her corpse, and on this stage,  
Where we're offenders now, appear soul-vex'd,  
And begin, 'Why to me?'

**PAULINA**

Had she such power,  
She had just cause.

**LEONTES**

She had; and would incense me  
To murder her I married.

**PAULINA**

I should so.  
Were I the ghost that walk'd, I'd bid you mark  
Her eye, and tell me for what dull part in't  
You chose her; then I'd shriek, that even your ears  
Should rift to hear me; and the words that follow'd  
Should be 'Remember mine.'

**LEONTES**

Stars, stars,  
And all eyes else dead coals! Fear thou no wife;  
I'll have no wife, Paulina.

**PAULINA**

Will you swear  
Never to marry but by my free leave?

**LEONTES**

Never, Paulina; so be blest my spirit!

**PAULINA**

Then, good my lords, bear witness to his oath.

**CLEOMENES**

You tempt him over-much.

**PAULINA**

Unless another,  
As like Hermione as is her picture,  
Affront his eye.

**CLEOMENES**



Good madam,--

**PAULINA**

I have done.  
Yet, if my lord will marry,--if you will, sir,  
No remedy, but you will,--give me the office  
To choose you a queen: she shall not be so young  
As was your former; but she shall be such  
As, walk'd your first queen's ghost,  
it should take joy  
To see her in your arms.

**LEONTES**

My true Paulina,  
We shall not marry till thou bid'st us.

**PAULINA**

That  
Shall be when your first queen's again in breath;  
Never till then.

*Enter a Gentleman*

**Gentleman**

One that gives out himself Prince Florizel,  
Son of Polixenes, with his princess, she  
The fairest I have yet beheld, desires access  
To your high presence.

**LEONTES**

What with him? he comes not  
Like to his father's greatness: his approach,  
So out of circumstance and sudden, tells us  
'Tis not a visitation framed, but forced  
By need and accident. What train?

**Gentleman**

But few,  
And those but mean.

**LEONTES**

His princess, say you, with him?

**Gentleman**

Ay, the most peerless piece of earth, I think,  
That e'er the sun shone bright on.

**PAULINA**

O Hermione,  
As every present time doth boast itself  
Above a better gone, so must thy grave  
Give way to what's seen now! Sir, you yourself  
Have said and writ so, but your writing now  
Is colder than that theme, 'She had not been,  
Nor was not to be equall'd;'--thus your verse  
Flow'd with her beauty once: 'tis shrewdly ebb'd,  
To say you have seen a better.

**Gentleman**

Pardon, madam:  
The one I have almost forgot,--your pardon,--  
The other, when she has obtain'd your eye,  
Will have your tongue too. This is a creature,  
Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal  
Of all professors else, make proselytes  
Of who she but bid follow.

**PAULINA**

How! not women?

**Gentleman**

Women will love her, that she is a woman  
More worth than any man; men, that she is  
The rarest of all women.

## LEONTES

Go, Cleomenes;  
Yourself, assisted with your honour'd friends,  
Bring them to our embracement. Still, 'tis strange

*Exeunt CLEOMENES and others*

He thus should steal upon us.

## PAULINA

Had our prince,  
Jewel of children, seen this hour, he had pair'd  
Well with this lord: there was not full a month  
Between their births.

## LEONTES

Prithee, no more; cease; thou know'st  
He dies to me again when talk'd of: sure,  
When I shall see this gentleman, thy speeches  
Will bring me to consider that which may  
Unfurnish me of reason. They are come.

*Re-enter CLEOMENES and others, with FLORIZEL and PERDITA*

Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince;  
For she did print your royal father off,  
Conceiving you: were I but twenty-one,  
Your father's image is so hit in you,  
His very air, that I should call you brother,  
As I did him, and speak of something wildly  
By us perform'd before. Most dearly welcome!  
And your fair princess,--goddess!--O, alas!  
I lost a couple, that 'twixt heaven and earth  
Might thus have stood begetting wonder as  
You, gracious couple, do: and then I lost--

All mine own folly--the society,  
Amity too, of your brave father, whom,  
Though bearing misery, I desire my life  
Once more to look on him.

**FLORIZEL**

By his command  
Have I here touch'd Sicilia and from him  
Give you all greetings that a king, at friend,  
Can send his brother: and, but infirmity  
Which waits upon worn times hath something seized  
His wish'd ability, he had himself  
The lands and waters 'twixt your throne and his  
Measured to look upon you; whom he loves--  
He bade me say so--more than all the sceptres  
And those that bear them living.

**LEONTES**

O my brother,  
Good gentleman! the wrongs I have done thee stir  
Afresh within me, and these thy offices,  
So rarely kind, are as interpreters  
Of my behind-hand slackness. Welcome hither,  
As is the spring to the earth. And hath he too  
Exposed this paragon to the fearful usage,  
At least ungentle, of the dreadful Neptune,  
To greet a man not worth her pains, much less  
The adventure of her person?

**FLORIZEL**

Good my lord,  
She came from Libya.

**LEONTES**

Where the warlike Smalus,  
That noble honour'd lord, is fear'd and loved?

**FLORIZEL**

Most royal sir, from thence; from him, whose daughter  
His tears proclaim'd his, parting with her: thence,  
A prosperous south-wind friendly, we have cross'd,  
To execute the charge my father gave me  
For visiting your highness: my best train  
I have from your Sicilian shores dismiss'd;  
Who for Bohemia bend, to signify  
Not only my success in Libya, sir,  
But my arrival and my wife's in safety  
Here where we are.

## LEONTES

The blessed gods  
Purge all infection from our air whilst you  
Do climate here! You have a holy father,  
A graceful gentleman; against whose person,  
So sacred as it is, I have done sin:  
For which the heavens, taking angry note,  
Have left me issueless; and your father's blest,  
As he from heaven merits it, with you  
Worthy his goodness. What might I have been,  
Might I a son and daughter now have look'd on,  
Such goodly things as you!

*Enter a Lord*

## Lord

Most noble sir,  
That which I shall report will bear no credit,  
Were not the proof so nigh. Please you, great sir,  
Bohemia greets you from himself by me;  
Desires you to attach his son, who has--  
His dignity and duty both cast off--  
Fled from his father, from his hopes, and with  
A shepherd's daughter.

## LEONTES

Where's Bohemia? speak.

**Lord**

Here in your city; I now came from him:  
I speak amazedly; and it becomes  
My marvel and my message. To your court  
Whiles he was hastening, in the chase, it seems,  
Of this fair couple, meets he on the way  
The father of this seeming lady and  
Her brother, having both their country quitted  
With this young prince.

**FLORIZEL**

Camillo has betray'd me;  
Whose honour and whose honesty till now  
Endured all weathers.

**Lord**

Lay't so to his charge:  
He's with the king your father.

**LEONTES**

Who? Camillo?

**Lord**

Camillo, sir; I spake with him; who now  
Has these poor men in question. Never saw I  
Wretches so quake: they kneel, they kiss the earth;  
Forswear themselves as often as they speak:  
Bohemia stops his ears, and threatens them  
With divers deaths in death.

**PERDITA**

O my poor father!  
The heaven sets spies upon us, will not have  
Our contract celebrated.

## LEONTES

You are married?

## FLORIZEL

We are not, sir, nor are we like to be;  
The stars, I see, will kiss the valleys first:  
The odds for high and low's alike.

## LEONTES

My lord,  
Is this the daughter of a king?

## FLORIZEL

She is,  
When once she is my wife.

## LEONTES

That 'once' I see by your good father's speed  
Will come on very slowly. I am sorry,  
Most sorry, you have broken from his liking  
Where you were tied in duty, and as sorry  
Your choice is not so rich in worth as beauty,  
That you might well enjoy her.

## FLORIZEL

Dear, look up:  
Though Fortune, visible an enemy,  
Should chase us with my father, power no jot  
Hath she to change our loves. Beseech you, sir,  
Remember since you owed no more to time  
Than I do now: with thought of such affections,  
Step forth mine advocate; at your request  
My father will grant precious things as trifles.

## LEONTES

Would he do so, I'd beg your precious mistress,  
Which he counts but a trifle.

**PAULINA**

Sir, my liege,  
Your eye hath too much youth in't: not a month  
'Fore your queen died, she was more worth such gazes  
Than what you look on now.

**LEONTES**

I thought of her,  
Even in these looks I made.

*To FLORIZEL*

But your petition  
Is yet unanswer'd. I will to your father:  
Your honour not o'erthrown by your desires,  
I am friend to them and you: upon which errand  
I now go toward him; therefore follow me  
And mark what way I make: come, good my lord.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before LEONTES' palace.

*Enter AUTOLYCUS and a Gentleman*

**AUTOLYCUS**

Beseech you, sir, were you present at this relation?

**First Gentleman**

I was by at the opening of the fardel, heard the old shepherd deliver the manner how he found it: whereupon, after a little amazedness, we were all commanded out of the chamber; only this methought I heard the shepherd say, he found the child.

**AUTOLYCUS**

I would most gladly know the issue of it.

**First Gentleman**

I make a broken delivery of the business; but the changes I perceived in the king and Camillo were very notes of admiration: they seemed almost, with staring on one another, to tear the cases of their eyes; there was speech in their dumbness, language in their very gesture; they looked as they had heard of a world ransomed, or one destroyed: a notable passion of wonder appeared in them; but the wisest beholder, that knew no more but seeing, could not say if the importance were joy or sorrow; but in the extremity of the one, it must needs be.

*Enter another Gentleman*

Here comes a gentleman that haply knows more.  
The news, Rogero?

## **Second Gentleman**

Nothing but bonfires: the oracle is fulfilled; the king's daughter is found: such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it.

*Enter a third Gentleman*

Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward: he can deliver you more. How goes it now, sir? this news which is called true is so like an old tale, that the verity of it is in strong suspicion: has the king found his heir?

## **Third Gentleman**

Most true, if ever truth were pregnant by circumstance: that which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of Queen Hermione's, her jewel about the neck of it, the letters of Antigonus found with it which they know to be his character, the majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother, the affection of nobleness which nature shows above her breeding, and many other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the king's daughter. Did you see the meeting of the two kings?

## **Second Gentleman**

No.

## **Third Gentleman**

Then have you lost a sight, which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their

joy waded in tears. There was casting up of eyes, holding up of hands, with countenances of such distraction that they were to be known by garment, not by favour. Our king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss, cries 'O, thy mother, thy mother!' then asks Bohemia forgiveness; then embraces his son-in-law; then again worries he his daughter with clipping her; now he thanks the old shepherd, which stands by like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such another encounter, which lames report to follow it and undoes description to do it.

### **Second Gentleman**

What, pray you, became of Antigonus, that carried hence the child?

### **Third Gentleman**

Like an old tale still, which will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep and not an ear open. He was torn to pieces with a bear: this avouches the shepherd's son; who has not only his innocence, which seems much, to justify him, but a handkerchief and rings of his that Paulina knows.

### **First Gentleman**

What became of his bark and his followers?

### **Third Gentleman**

Wrecked the same instant of their master's death and in the view of the shepherd: so that all the instruments which aided to expose the child were even then lost when it was found. But O, the noble combat that 'twixt joy and sorrow was fought in Paulina! She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled: she lifted the princess from the earth,

and so locks her in embracing, as if she would pin her to her heart that she might no more be in danger of losing.

### **First Gentleman**

The dignity of this act was worth the audience of kings and princes; for by such was it acted.

### **Third Gentleman**

One of the prettiest touches of all and that which angled for mine eyes, caught the water though not the fish, was when, at the relation of the queen's death, with the manner how she came to't bravely confessed and lamented by the king, how attentiveness wounded his daughter; till, from one sign of dolour to another, she did, with an 'Alas,' I would fain say, bleed tears, for I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble there changed colour; some swooned, all sorrowed: if all the world could have seen 't, the woe had been universal.

### **First Gentleman**

Are they returned to the court?

### **Third Gentleman**

No: the princess hearing of her mother's statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina,--a piece many years in doing and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape: he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer: thither with all greediness of affection are they gone, and there they intend to sup.

### **Second Gentleman**

I thought she had some great matter there in hand;  
for she hath privately twice or thrice a day, ever  
since the death of Hermione, visited that removed  
house. Shall we thither and with our company piece  
the rejoicing?

### **First Gentleman**

Who would be thence that has the benefit of access?  
every wink of an eye some new grace will be born:  
our absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge.  
Let's along.

*Exeunt Gentlemen*

### **AUTOLYCUS**

Now, had I not the dash of my former life in me,  
would preferment drop on my head. I brought the old  
man and his son aboard the prince: told him I heard  
them talk of a fardel and I know not what: but he  
at that time, overfond of the shepherd's daughter,  
so he then took her to be, who began to be much  
sea-sick, and himself little better, extremity of  
weather continuing, this mystery remained  
undiscovered. But 'tis all one to me; for had I  
been the finder out of this secret, it would not  
have relished among my other discredits.

*Enter Shepherd and Clown*

Here come those I have done good to against my will,  
and already appearing in the blossoms of their fortune.

### **Shepherd**

Come, boy; I am past moe children, but thy sons and  
daughters will be all gentlemen born.

### **Clown**

You are well met, sir. You denied to fight with me

this other day, because I was no gentleman born.  
See you these clothes? say you see them not and  
think me still no gentleman born: you were best say  
these robes are not gentlemen born: give me the  
lie, do, and try whether I am not now a gentleman born.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born.

## **Clown**

Ay, and have been so any time these four hours.

## **Shepherd**

And so have I, boy.

## **Clown**

So you have: but I was a gentleman born before my  
father; for the king's son took me by the hand, and  
called me brother; and then the two kings called my  
father brother; and then the prince my brother and  
the princess my sister called my father father; and  
so we wept, and there was the first gentleman-like  
tears that ever we shed.

## **Shepherd**

We may live, son, to shed many more.

## **Clown**

Ay; or else 'twere hard luck, being in so  
preposterous estate as we are.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

I humbly beseech you, sir, to pardon me all the  
faults I have committed to your worship and to give

me your good report to the prince my master.

**Shepherd**

Prithee, son, do; for we must be gentle, now we are gentlemen.

**Clown**

Thou wilt amend thy life?

**AUTOLYCUS**

Ay, an it like your good worship.

**Clown**

Give me thy hand: I will swear to the prince thou art as honest a true fellow as any is in Bohemia.

**Shepherd**

You may say it, but not swear it.

**Clown**

Not swear it, now I am a gentleman? Let boors and franklins say it, I'll swear it.

**Shepherd**

How if it be false, son?

**Clown**

If it be ne'er so false, a true gentleman may swear it in the behalf of his friend: and I'll swear to the prince thou art a tall fellow of thy hands and that thou wilt not be drunk; but I know thou art no tall fellow of thy hands and that thou wilt be drunk: but I'll swear it, and I would thou wouldst

be a tall fellow of thy hands.

## **AUTOLYCUS**

I will prove so, sir, to my power.

## **Clown**

Ay, by any means prove a tall fellow: if I do not wonder how thou darest venture to be drunk, not being a tall fellow, trust me not. Hark! the kings and the princes, our kindred, are going to see the queen's picture. Come, follow us: we'll be thy good masters.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Winter's Tale

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Winter's Tale](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE III. A chapel in PAULINA'S house.

*Enter LEONTES, POLIXENES, FLORIZEL, PERDITA, CAMILLO, PAULINA, Lords, and Attendants*

### LEONTES

O grave and good Paulina, the great comfort  
That I have had of thee!

### PAULINA

What, sovereign sir,  
I did not well I meant well. All my services  
You have paid home: but that you have vouchsafed,  
With your crown'd brother and these your contracted  
Heirs of your kingdoms, my poor house to visit,  
It is a surplus of your grace, which never  
My life may last to answer.

### LEONTES

O Paulina,  
We honour you with trouble: but we came  
To see the statue of our queen: your gallery  
Have we pass'd through, not without much content  
In many singularities; but we saw not  
That which my daughter came to look upon,  
The statue of her mother.

### PAULINA

As she lived peerless,  
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,  
Excels whatever yet you look'd upon  
Or hand of man hath done; therefore I keep it

Lonely, apart. But here it is: prepare  
To see the life as lively mock'd as ever  
Still sleep mock'd death: behold, and say 'tis well.

*PAULINA draws a curtain, and discovers HERMIONE standing like a statue*

I like your silence, it the more shows off  
Your wonder: but yet speak; first, you, my liege,  
Comes it not something near?

## **LEONTES**

Her natural posture!  
Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed  
Thou art Hermione; or rather, thou art she  
In thy not chiding, for she was as tender  
As infancy and grace. But yet, Paulina,  
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing  
So aged as this seems.

## **POLIXENES**

O, not by much.

## **PAULINA**

So much the more our carver's excellence;  
Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her  
As she lived now.

## **LEONTES**

As now she might have done,  
So much to my good comfort, as it is  
Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood,  
Even with such life of majesty, warm life,  
As now it coldly stands, when first I woo'd her!  
I am ashamed: does not the stone rebuke me  
For being more stone than it? O royal piece,  
There's magic in thy majesty, which has  
My evils conjured to remembrance and  
From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,

Standing like stone with thee.

**PERDITA**

And give me leave,  
And do not say 'tis superstition, that  
I kneel and then implore her blessing. Lady,  
Dear queen, that ended when I but began,  
Give me that hand of yours to kiss.

**PAULINA**

O, patience!  
The statue is but newly fix'd, the colour's Not dry.

**CAMILLO**

My lord, your sorrow was too sore laid on,  
Which sixteen winters cannot blow away,  
So many summers dry; scarce any joy  
Did ever so long live; no sorrow  
But kill'd itself much sooner.

**POLIXENES**

Dear my brother,  
Let him that was the cause of this have power  
To take off so much grief from you as he  
Will piece up in himself.

**PAULINA**

Indeed, my lord,  
If I had thought the sight of my poor image  
Would thus have wrought you,--for the stone is mine--  
I'd not have show'd it.

**LEONTES**

Do not draw the curtain.

**PAULINA**

No longer shall you gaze on't, lest your fancy  
May think anon it moves.

**LEONTES**

Let be, let be.  
Would I were dead, but that, methinks, already--  
What was he that did make it? See, my lord,  
Would you not deem it breathed? and that those veins  
Did verily bear blood?

**POLIXENES**

Masterly done:  
The very life seems warm upon her lip.

**LEONTES**

The fixture of her eye has motion in't,  
As we are mock'd with art.

**PAULINA**

I'll draw the curtain:  
My lord's almost so far transported that  
He'll think anon it lives.

**LEONTES**

O sweet Paulina,  
Make me to think so twenty years together!  
No settled senses of the world can match  
The pleasure of that madness. Let 't alone.

**PAULINA**

I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirr'd you: but  
I could afflict you farther.

## LEONTES

Do, Paulina;  
For this affliction has a taste as sweet  
As any cordial comfort. Still, methinks,  
There is an air comes from her: what fine chisel  
Could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me,  
For I will kiss her.

## PAULINA

Good my lord, forbear:  
The ruddiness upon her lip is wet;  
You'll mar it if you kiss it, stain your own  
With oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain?

## LEONTES

No, not these twenty years.

## PERDITA

So long could I  
Stand by, a looker on.

## PAULINA

Either forbear,  
Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you  
For more amazement. If you can behold it,  
I'll make the statue move indeed, descend  
And take you by the hand; but then you'll think--  
Which I protest against--I am assisted  
By wicked powers.

## LEONTES

What you can make her do,  
I am content to look on: what to speak,  
I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy  
To make her speak as move.

## PAULINA

It is required  
You do awake your faith. Then all stand still;  
On: those that think it is unlawful business  
I am about, let them depart.

## LEONTES

Proceed:  
No foot shall stir.

## PAULINA

Music, awake her; strike!

*Music*

'Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;  
Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come,  
I'll fill your grave up: stir, nay, come away,  
Bequeath to death your numbness, for from him  
Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs:

*HERMIONE comes down*

Start not; her actions shall be holy as  
You hear my spell is lawful: do not shun her  
Until you see her die again; for then  
You kill her double. Nay, present your hand:  
When she was young you woo'd her; now in age  
Is she become the suitor?

## LEONTES

O, she's warm!  
If this be magic, let it be an art  
Lawful as eating.

## POLIXENES

She embraces him.

## **CAMILLO**

She hangs about his neck:  
If she pertain to life let her speak too.

## **POLIXENES**

Ay, and make't manifest where she has lived,  
Or how stolen from the dead.

## **PAULINA**

That she is living,  
Were it but told you, should be hooted at  
Like an old tale: but it appears she lives,  
Though yet she speak not. Mark a little while.  
Please you to interpose, fair madam: kneel  
And pray your mother's blessing. Turn, good lady;  
Our Perdita is found.

## **HERMIONE**

You gods, look down  
And from your sacred vials pour your graces  
Upon my daughter's head! Tell me, mine own.  
Where hast thou been preserved? where lived? how found  
Thy father's court? for thou shalt hear that I,  
Knowing by Paulina that the oracle  
Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved  
Myself to see the issue.

## **PAULINA**

There's time enough for that;  
Lest they desire upon this push to trouble  
Your joys with like relation. Go together,  
You precious winners all; your exultation  
Partake to every one. I, an old turtle,  
Will wing me to some wither'd bough and there  
My mate, that's never to be found again,

Lament till I am lost.

## LEONTES

O, peace, Paulina!  
Thou shouldst a husband take by my consent,  
As I by thine a wife: this is a match,  
And made between's by vows. Thou hast found mine;  
But how, is to be question'd; for I saw her,  
As I thought, dead, and have in vain said many  
A prayer upon her grave. I'll not seek far--  
For him, I partly know his mind--to find thee  
An honourable husband. Come, Camillo,  
And take her by the hand, whose worth and honesty  
Is richly noted and here justified  
By us, a pair of kings. Let's from this place.  
What! look upon my brother: both your pardons,  
That e'er I put between your holy looks  
My ill suspicion. This is your son-in-law,  
And son unto the king, who, heavens directing,  
Is troth-plight to your daughter. Good Paulina,  
Lead us from hence, where we may leisurely  
Each one demand an answer to his part  
Perform'd in this wide gap of time since first  
We were dissever'd: hastily lead away.

*Exeunt*



# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Henry IV, part 1

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [London. An apartment of the Prince's.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Rochester. An inn yard.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [The highway, near Gadshill.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [Warkworth castle](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [The Boar's-Head Tavern, Eastcheap.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Bangor. The Archdeacon's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [A public road near Coventry.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [York. The ARCHBISHOP'S palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [KING HENRY IV's camp near Shrewsbury.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The rebel camp.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Plain between the camps.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Another part of the field.](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. The palace.

*Enter KING HENRY, LORD JOHN OF LANCASTER, the EARL of WESTMORELAND, SIR WALTER BLUNT, and others*

### KING HENRY IV

So shaken as we are, so wan with care,  
Find we a time for frightened peace to pant,  
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils  
To be commenced in strands afar remote.  
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil  
Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood;  
Nor more shall trenching war channel her fields,  
Nor bruise her flowerets with the armed hoofs  
Of hostile paces: those opposed eyes,  
Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,  
All of one nature, of one substance bred,  
Did lately meet in the intestine shock  
And furious close of civil butchery  
Shall now, in mutual well-beseeming ranks,  
March all one way and be no more opposed  
Against acquaintance, kindred and allies:  
The edge of war, like an ill-sheathed knife,  
No more shall cut his master. Therefore, friends,  
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ,  
Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross  
We are impressed and engaged to fight,  
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy;  
Whose arms were moulded in their mothers' womb  
To chase these pagans in those holy fields  
Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet  
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd  
For our advantage on the bitter cross.  
But this our purpose now is twelve month old,  
And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go:  
Therefore we meet not now. Then let me hear

Of you, my gentle cousin Westmoreland,  
What yesternight our council did decree  
In forwarding this dear expedience.

## **WESTMORELAND**

My liege, this haste was hot in question,  
And many limits of the charge set down  
But yesternight: when all athwart there came  
A post from Wales loaden with heavy news;  
Whose worst was, that the noble Mortimer,  
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight  
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,  
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman taken,  
A thousand of his people butchered;  
Upon whose dead corpse there was such misuse,  
Such beastly shameless transformation,  
By those Welshwomen done as may not be  
Without much shame retold or spoken of.

## **KING HENRY IV**

It seems then that the tidings of this broil  
Brake off our business for the Holy Land.

## **WESTMORELAND**

This match'd with other did, my gracious lord;  
For more uneven and unwelcome news  
Came from the north and thus it did import:  
On Holy-rood day, the gallant Hotspur there,  
Young Harry Percy and brave Archibald,  
That ever-valiant and approved Scot,  
At Holmedon met,  
Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour,  
As by discharge of their artillery,  
And shape of likelihood, the news was told;  
For he that brought them, in the very heat  
And pride of their contention did take horse,  
Uncertain of the issue any way.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Here is a dear, a true industrious friend,  
Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse.  
Stain'd with the variation of each soil  
Betwixt that Holmedon and this seat of ours;  
And he hath brought us smooth and welcome news.  
The Earl of Douglas is discomfited:  
Ten thousand bold Scots, two and twenty knights,  
Balk'd in their own blood did Sir Walter see  
On Holmedon's plains. Of prisoners, Hotspur took  
Mordake the Earl of Fife, and eldest son  
To beaten Douglas; and the Earl of Athol,  
Of Murray, Angus, and Menteith:  
And is not this an honourable spoil?  
A gallant prize? ha, cousin, is it not?

## **WESTMORELAND**

In faith,  
It is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Yea, there thou makest me sad and makest me sin  
In envy that my Lord Northumberland  
Should be the father to so blest a son,  
A son who is the theme of honour's tongue;  
Amongst a grove, the very straightest plant;  
Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride:  
Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,  
See riot and dishonour stain the brow  
Of my young Harry. O that it could be proved  
That some night-tripping fairy had exchanged  
In cradle-clothes our children where they lay,  
And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!  
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.  
But let him from my thoughts. What think you, coz,  
Of this young Percy's pride? the prisoners,  
Which he in this adventure hath surprised,  
To his own use he keeps; and sends me word,  
I shall have none but Mordake Earl of Fife.

## **WESTMORELAND**

This is his uncle's teaching; this is Worcester,  
Malevolent to you in all aspects;  
Which makes him prune himself, and bristle up  
The crest of youth against your dignity.

## **KING HENRY IV**

But I have sent for him to answer this;  
And for this cause awhile we must neglect  
Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.  
Cousin, on Wednesday next our council we  
Will hold at Windsor; so inform the lords:  
But come yourself with speed to us again;  
For more is to be said and to be done  
Than out of anger can be uttered.

## **WESTMORELAND**

I will, my liege.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. London. An apartment of the Prince's.

*Enter the PRINCE OF WALES and FALSTAFF*

**FALSTAFF**

Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thou art so fat-witted, with drinking of old sack and unbuttoning thee after supper and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldst truly know. What a devil hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack and minutes capons and clocks the tongues of bawds and dials the signs of leaping-houses and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day.

**FALSTAFF**

Indeed, you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars, and not by Phoebus, he, 'that wandering knight so fair.' And, I prithee, sweet wag, when thou art king, as, God save thy grace,--majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none,--

**PRINCE HENRY**

What, none?

**FALSTAFF**

No, by my troth, not so much as will serve to  
prologue to an egg and butter.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, how then? come, roundly, roundly.

**FALSTAFF**

Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art king, let not  
us that are squires of the night's body be called  
thieves of the day's beauty: let us be Diana's  
foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the  
moon; and let men say we be men of good government,  
being governed, as the sea is, by our noble and  
chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thou sayest well, and it holds well too; for the  
fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and  
flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is,  
by the moon. As, for proof, now: a purse of gold  
most resolutely snatched on Monday night and most  
dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with  
swearing 'Lay by' and spent with crying 'Bring in;'  
now in as low an ebb as the foot of the ladder  
and by and by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows.

**FALSTAFF**

By the Lord, thou sayest true, lad. And is not my  
hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?

**PRINCE HENRY**

As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle. And  
is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of durance?

**FALSTAFF**

How now, how now, mad wag! what, in thy quips and thy quiddities? what a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?

**FALSTAFF**

Well, thou hast called her to a reckoning many a time and oft.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

**FALSTAFF**

No; I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch; and where it would not, I have used my credit.

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, and so used it that were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent--But, I prithee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? and resolution thus fobbed as it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

**PRINCE HENRY**

No; thou shalt.

**FALSTAFF**



Shall I? O rare! By the Lord, I'll be a brave judge.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thou judgest false already: I mean, thou shalt have the hanging of the thieves and so become a rare hangman.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, Hal, well; and in some sort it jumps with my humour as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you.

**PRINCE HENRY**

For obtaining of suits?

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, for obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no lean wardrobe. 'Sblood, I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugged bear.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moor-ditch?

**FALSTAFF**

Thou hast the most unsavoury similes and art indeed the most comparative, rascalliest, sweet young prince. But, Hal, I prithee, trouble me no more

with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought. An old lord of the council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I marked him not; and yet he talked very wisely, but I regarded him not; and yet he talked wisely, and in the street too.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thou didst well; for wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it.

**FALSTAFF**

O, thou hast damnable iteration and art indeed able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm upon me, Hal; God forgive thee for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing; and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over: by the Lord, and I do not, I am a villain: I'll be damned for never a king's son in Christendom.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Where shall we take a purse tomorrow, Jack?

**FALSTAFF**

'Zounds, where thou wilt, lad; I'll make one; an I do not, call me villain and baffle me.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I see a good amendment of life in thee; from praying to purse-taking.

**FALSTAFF**

Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal; 'tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.

*Enter POINS*

Poins! Now shall we know if Gadshill have set a match. O, if men were to be saved by merit, what hole in hell were hot enough for him? This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried 'Stand' to a true man.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Good morrow, Ned.

**POINS**

Good morrow, sweet Hal. What says Monsieur Remorse? what says Sir John Sack and Sugar? Jack! how agrees the devil and thee about thy soul, that thou soldest him on Good-Friday last for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sir John stands to his word, the devil shall have his bargain; for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs: he will give the devil his due.

**POINS**

Then art thou damned for keeping thy word with the devil.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Else he had been damned for cozening the devil.

**POINS**

But, my lads, my lads, to-morrow morning, by four o'clock, early at Gadshill! there are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses: I have vizards

for you all; you have horses for yourselves:  
Gadshill lies to-night in Rochester: I have bespoke  
supper to-morrow night in Eastcheap: we may do it  
as secure as sleep. If you will go, I will stuff  
your purses full of crowns; if you will not, tarry  
at home and be hanged.

**FALSTAFF**

Hear ye, Yedward; if I tarry at home and go not,  
I'll hang you for going.

**POINS**

You will, chops?

**FALSTAFF**

Hal, wilt thou make one?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Who, I rob? I a thief? not I, by my faith.

**FALSTAFF**

There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good  
fellowship in thee, nor thou camest not of the blood  
royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well then, once in my days I'll be a madcap.

**FALSTAFF**

Why, that's well said.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, come what will, I'll tarry at home.

**FALSTAFF**

By the Lord, I'll be a traitor then, when thou art king.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I care not.

**POINS**

Sir John, I prithee, leave the prince and me alone:  
I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure  
that he shall go.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion and him  
the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may  
move and what he hears may be believed, that the  
true prince may, for recreation sake, prove a false  
thief; for the poor abuses of the time want  
countenance. Farewell: you shall find me in Eastcheap.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Farewell, thou latter spring! farewell, All-hallown summer!

*Exit Falstaff*

**POINS**

Now, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us  
to-morrow: I have a jest to execute that I cannot  
manage alone. Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto and Gadshill  
shall rob those men that we have already waylaid:  
yourself and I will not be there; and when they  
have the booty, if you and I do not rob them, cut  
this head off from my shoulders.

**PRINCE HENRY**

How shall we part with them in setting forth?

**POINS**

Why, we will set forth before or after them, and appoint them a place of meeting, wherein it is at our pleasure to fail, and then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves; which they shall have no sooner achieved, but we'll set upon them.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Yea, but 'tis like that they will know us by our horses, by our habits and by every other appointment, to be ourselves.

**POINS**

Tut! our horses they shall not see: I'll tie them in the wood; our vizards we will change after we leave them: and, sirrah, I have cases of buckram for the nonce, to immask our noted outward garments.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Yea, but I doubt they will be too hard for us.

**POINS**

Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turned back; and for the third, if he fight longer than he sees reason, I'll forswear arms. The virtue of this jest will be, the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper: how thirty, at least, he fought with; what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lies the jest.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, I'll go with thee: provide us all things  
necessary and meet me to-morrow night in Eastcheap;  
there I'll sup. Farewell.

## **POINS**

Farewell, my lord.

*Exit Poins*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I know you all, and will awhile uphold  
The unyoked humour of your idleness:  
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
To smother up his beauty from the world,  
That, when he please again to be himself,  
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,  
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists  
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.  
If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work;  
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,  
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.  
So, when this loose behavior I throw off  
And pay the debt I never promised,  
By how much better than my word I am,  
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;  
And like bright metal on a sullen ground,  
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,  
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes  
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.  
I'll so offend, to make offence a skill;  
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. London. The palace.

*Enter the KING, NORTHUMBERLAND, WORCESTER, HOTSPUR, SIR WALTER BLUNT, with others*

### KING HENRY IV

My blood hath been too cold and temperate,  
Unapt to stir at these indignities,  
And you have found me; for accordingly  
You tread upon my patience: but be sure  
I will from henceforth rather be myself,  
Mighty and to be fear'd, than my condition;  
Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young down,  
And therefore lost that title of respect  
Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the proud.

### EARL OF WORCESTER

Our house, my sovereign liege, little deserves  
The scourge of greatness to be used on it;  
And that same greatness too which our own hands  
Have help to make so portly.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord.--

### KING HENRY IV

Worcester, get thee gone; for I do see  
Danger and disobedience in thine eye:  
O, sir, your presence is too bold and peremptory,  
And majesty might never yet endure  
The moody frontier of a servant brow.  
You have good leave to leave us: when we need



Your use and counsel, we shall send for you.

*Exit Worcester*

You were about to speak.

*To North*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Yea, my good lord.  
Those prisoners in your highness' name demanded,  
Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,  
Were, as he says, not with such strength denied  
As is deliver'd to your majesty:  
Either envy, therefore, or misprison  
Is guilty of this fault and not my son.

## **HOTSPUR**

My liege, I did deny no prisoners.  
But I remember, when the fight was done,  
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,  
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,  
Came there a certain lord, neat, and trimly dress'd,  
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd  
Show'd like a stubble-land at harvest-home;  
He was perfum'd like a milliner;  
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held  
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon  
He gave his nose and took't away again;  
Who therewith angry, when it next came there,  
Took it in snuff; and still he smiled and talk'd,  
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,  
He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,  
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse  
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.  
With many holiday and lady terms  
He question'd me; amongst the rest, demanded  
My prisoners in your majesty's behalf.  
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,  
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,

Out of my grief and my impatience,  
Answer'd neglectingly I know not what,  
He should or he should not; for he made me mad  
To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet  
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman  
Of guns and drums and wounds,--God save the mark!--  
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth  
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise;  
And that it was great pity, so it was,  
This villanous salt-petre should be digg'd  
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,  
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd  
So cowardly; and but for these vile guns,  
He would himself have been a soldier.  
This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,  
I answer'd indirectly, as I said;  
And I beseech you, let not his report  
Come current for an accusation  
Betwixt my love and your high majesty.

#### **SIR WALTER BLUNT**

The circumstance consider'd, good my lord,  
Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said  
To such a person and in such a place,  
At such a time, with all the rest retold,  
May reasonably die and never rise  
To do him wrong or any way impeach  
What then he said, so he unsay it now.

#### **KING HENRY IV**

Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,  
But with proviso and exception,  
That we at our own charge shall ransom straight  
His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer;  
Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betray'd  
The lives of those that he did lead to fight  
Against that great magician, damn'd Glendower,  
Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of March  
Hath lately married. Shall our coffers, then,  
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?  
Shall we but treason? and indent with fears,

When they have lost and forfeited themselves?  
No, on the barren mountains let him starve;  
For I shall never hold that man my friend  
Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost  
To ransom home revolted Mortimer.

## **HOTSPUR**

Revolted Mortimer!  
He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,  
But by the chance of war; to prove that true  
Needs no more but one tongue for all those wounds,  
Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he took  
When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,  
In single opposition, hand to hand,  
He did confound the best part of an hour  
In changing hardiment with great Glendower:  
Three times they breathed and three times did  
they drink,  
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;  
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,  
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,  
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,  
Bloodstained with these valiant combatants.  
Never did base and rotten policy  
Colour her working with such deadly wounds;  
Nor could the noble Mortimer  
Receive so many, and all willingly:  
Then let not him be slander'd with revolt.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Thou dost belie him, Percy, thou dost belie him;  
He never did encounter with Glendower:  
I tell thee,  
He durst as well have met the devil alone  
As Owen Glendower for an enemy.  
Art thou not ashamed? But, sirrah, henceforth  
Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer:  
Send me your prisoners with the speediest means,  
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me  
As will displease you. My Lord Northumberland,  
We licence your departure with your son.

Send us your prisoners, or you will hear of it.

*Exeunt King Henry, Blunt, and train*

## **HOTSPUR**

An if the devil come and roar for them,  
I will not send them: I will after straight  
And tell him so; for I will ease my heart,  
Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

What, drunk with choler? stay and pause awhile:  
Here comes your uncle.

*Re-enter WORCESTER*

## **HOTSPUR**

Speak of Mortimer!  
'Zounds, I will speak of him; and let my soul  
Want mercy, if I do not join with him:  
Yea, on his part I'll empty all these veins,  
And shed my dear blood drop by drop in the dust,  
But I will lift the down-trod Mortimer  
As high in the air as this unthankful king,  
As this ingrate and canker'd Bolingbroke.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Brother, the king hath made your nephew mad.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Who struck this heat up after I was gone?

## **HOTSPUR**

He will, forsooth, have all my prisoners;  
And when I urged the ransom once again

Of my wife's brother, then his cheek look'd pale,  
And on my face he turn'd an eye of death,  
Trembling even at the name of Mortimer.

### **EARL OF WORCESTER**

I cannot blame him: was not he proclaim'd  
By Richard that dead is the next of blood?

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

He was; I heard the proclamation:  
And then it was when the unhappy king,  
--Whose wrongs in us God pardon!--did set forth  
Upon his Irish expedition;  
From whence he intercepted did return  
To be deposed and shortly murdered.

### **EARL OF WORCESTER**

And for whose death we in the world's wide mouth  
Live scandalized and foully spoken of.

### **HOTSPUR**

But soft, I pray you; did King Richard then  
Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer  
Heir to the crown?

### **NORTHUMBERLAND**

He did; myself did hear it.

### **HOTSPUR**

Nay, then I cannot blame his cousin king,  
That wish'd him on the barren mountains starve.  
But shall it be that you, that set the crown  
Upon the head of this forgetful man  
And for his sake wear the detested blot  
Of murderous subornation, shall it be,  
That you a world of curses undergo,

Being the agents, or base second means,  
The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?  
O, pardon me that I descend so low,  
To show the line and the predicament  
Wherein you range under this subtle king;  
Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,  
Or fill up chronicles in time to come,  
That men of your nobility and power  
Did gage them both in an unjust behalf,  
As both of you--God pardon it!--have done,  
To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,  
An plant this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke?  
And shall it in more shame be further spoken,  
That you are fool'd, discarded and shook off  
By him for whom these shames ye underwent?  
No; yet time serves wherein you may redeem  
Your banish'd honours and restore yourselves  
Into the good thoughts of the world again,  
Revenge the jeering and disdain'd contempt  
Of this proud king, who studies day and night  
To answer all the debt he owes to you  
Even with the bloody payment of your deaths:  
Therefore, I say--

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Peace, cousin, say no more:  
And now I will unclasp a secret book,  
And to your quick-conceiving discontents  
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,  
As full of peril and adventurous spirit  
As to o'er-walk a current roaring loud  
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

## **HOTSPUR**

If he fall in, good night! or sink or swim:  
Send danger from the east unto the west,  
So honour cross it from the north to south,  
And let them grapple: O, the blood more stirs  
To rouse a lion than to start a hare!

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Imagination of some great exploit  
Drives him beyond the bounds of patience.

## **HOTSPUR**

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,  
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,  
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,  
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,  
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks;  
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear  
Without corrival, all her dignities:  
But out upon this half-faced fellowship!

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

He apprehends a world of figures here,  
But not the form of what he should attend.  
Good cousin, give me audience for a while.

## **HOTSPUR**

I cry you mercy.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Those same noble Scots  
That are your prisoners,--

## **HOTSPUR**

I'll keep them all;  
By God, he shall not have a Scot of them;  
No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not:  
I'll keep them, by this hand.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

You start away

And lend no ear unto my purposes.  
Those prisoners you shall keep.

## **HOTSPUR**

Nay, I will; that's flat:  
He said he would not ransom Mortimer;  
Forbad my tongue to speak of Mortimer;  
But I will find him when he lies asleep,  
And in his ear I'll holla 'Mortimer!'  
Nay,  
I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak  
Nothing but 'Mortimer,' and give it him  
To keep his anger still in motion.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Hear you, cousin; a word.

## **HOTSPUR**

All studies here I solemnly defy,  
Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke:  
And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of Wales,  
But that I think his father loves him not  
And would be glad he met with some mischance,  
I would have him poison'd with a pot of ale.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Farewell, kinsman: I'll talk to you  
When you are better temper'd to attend.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Why, what a wasp-stung and impatient fool  
Art thou to break into this woman's mood,  
Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!

## **HOTSPUR**

Why, look you, I am whipp'd and scourged with rods,



Nettled and stung with pismires, when I hear  
Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke.  
In Richard's time,--what do you call the place?--  
A plague upon it, it is in Gloucestershire;  
'Twas where the madcap duke his uncle kept,  
His uncle York; where I first bow'd my knee  
Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke,--  
'Sblood!--  
When you and he came back from Ravenspurgh.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

At Berkley castle.

## **HOTSPUR**

You say true:  
Why, what a candy deal of courtesy  
This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!  
Look, 'when his infant fortune came to age,'  
And 'gentle Harry Percy,' and 'kind cousin;'  
O, the devil take such cozeners! God forgive me!  
Good uncle, tell your tale; I have done.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Nay, if you have not, to it again;  
We will stay your leisure.

## **HOTSPUR**

I have done, i' faith.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Then once more to your Scottish prisoners.  
Deliver them up without their ransom straight,  
And make the Douglas' son your only mean  
For powers in Scotland; which, for divers reasons  
Which I shall send you written, be assured,  
Will easily be granted. You, my lord,

*To Northumberland*

Your son in Scotland being thus employ'd,  
Shall secretly into the bosom creep  
Of that same noble prelate, well beloved,  
The archbishop.

**HOTSPUR**

Of York, is it not?

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

True; who bears hard  
His brother's death at Bristol, the Lord Scroop.  
I speak not this in estimation,  
As what I think might be, but what I know  
Is ruminated, plotted and set down,  
And only stays but to behold the face  
Of that occasion that shall bring it on.

**HOTSPUR**

I smell it: upon my life, it will do well.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Before the game is afoot, thou still let'st slip.

**HOTSPUR**

Why, it cannot choose but be a noble plot;  
And then the power of Scotland and of York,  
To join with Mortimer, ha?

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

And so they shall.

**HOTSPUR**

In faith, it is exceedingly well aim'd.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

And 'tis no little reason bids us speed,  
To save our heads by raising of a head;  
For, bear ourselves as even as we can,  
The king will always think him in our debt,  
And think we think ourselves unsatisfied,  
Till he hath found a time to pay us home:  
And see already how he doth begin  
To make us strangers to his looks of love.

## **HOTSPUR**

He does, he does: we'll be revenged on him.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Cousin, farewell: no further go in this  
Than I by letters shall direct your course.  
When time is ripe, which will be suddenly,  
I'll steal to Glendower and Lord Mortimer;  
Where you and Douglas and our powers at once,  
As I will fashion it, shall happily meet,  
To bear our fortunes in our own strong arms,  
Which now we hold at much uncertainty.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Farewell, good brother: we shall thrive, I trust.

## **HOTSPUR**

Uncle, Adieu: O, let the hours be short  
Till fields and blows and groans applaud our sport!

*Exeunt*

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rochester. An inn yard.

*Enter a Carrier with a lantern in his hand*

### First Carrier

Heigh-ho! an it be not four by the day, I'll be hanged: Charles' wain is over the new chimney, and yet our horse not packed. What, ostler!

### Ostler

[Within] Anon, anon.

### First Carrier

I prithee, Tom, beat Cut's saddle, put a few flocks in the point; poor jade, is wrung in the withers out of all cress.

*Enter another Carrier*

### Second Carrier

Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is the next way to give poor jades the bots: this house is turned upside down since Robin Ostler died.

### First Carrier

Poor fellow, never joyed since the price of oats rose; it was the death of him.

### Second Carrier

I think this be the most villanous house in all

London road for fleas: I am stung like a tench.

**First Carrier**

Like a tench! by the mass, there is ne'er a king  
christen could be better bit than I have been since  
the first cock.

**Second Carrier**

Why, they will allow us ne'er a jordan, and then we  
leak in your chimney; and your chamber-lie breeds  
fleas like a loach.

**First Carrier**

What, ostler! come away and be hanged!

**Second Carrier**

I have a gammon of bacon and two razors of ginger,  
to be delivered as far as Charing-cross.

**First Carrier**

God's body! the turkeys in my pannier are quite  
starved. What, ostler! A plague on thee! hast thou  
never an eye in thy head? canst not hear? An  
'twere not as good deed as drink, to break the pate  
on thee, I am a very villain. Come, and be hanged!  
hast thou no faith in thee?

*Enter GADSHILL*

**GADSHILL**

Good morrow, carriers. What's o'clock?

**First Carrier**

I think it be two o'clock.

**GADSHILL**

I pray thee lend me thy lantern, to see my gelding  
in the stable.

**First Carrier**

Nay, by God, soft; I know a trick worth two of that, i' faith.

**GADSHILL**

I pray thee, lend me thine.

**Second Carrier**

Ay, when? can'st tell? Lend me thy lantern, quoth  
he? marry, I'll see thee hanged first.

**GADSHILL**

Sirrah carrier, what time do you mean to come to London?

**Second Carrier**

Time enough to go to bed with a candle, I warrant  
thee. Come, neighbour Mugs, we'll call up the  
gentleman: they will along with company, for they  
have great charge.

*Exeunt carriers*

**GADSHILL**

What, ho! chamberlain!

**Chamberlain**

[Within] At hand, quoth pick-purse.

**GADSHILL**

That's even as fair as--at hand, quoth the chamberlain; for thou variest no more from picking of purses than giving direction doth from labouring; thou layest the plot how.

*Enter Chamberlain*

### **Chamberlain**

Good morrow, Master Gadshill. It holds current that I told you yesternight: there's a franklin in the wild of Kent hath brought three hundred marks with him in gold: I heard him tell it to one of his company last night at supper; a kind of auditor; one that hath abundance of charge too, God knows what. They are up already, and call for eggs and butter; they will away presently.

### **GADSHILL**

Sirrah, if they meet not with Saint Nicholas' clerks, I'll give thee this neck.

### **Chamberlain**

No, I'll none of it: I pray thee keep that for the hangman; for I know thou worshippest St. Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.

### **GADSHILL**

What talkest thou to me of the hangman? if I hang, I'll make a fat pair of gallows; for if I hang, old Sir John hangs with me, and thou knowest he is no starveling. Tut! there are other Trojans that thou dreamest not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace; that would, if matters should be looked into, for their own credit sake, make all whole. I am joined with no foot-land rakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers, none of these mad mustachio purple-hued malt-worms;

but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters and great oneyers, such as can hold in, such as will strike sooner than speak, and speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray: and yet, zounds, I lie; for they pray continually to their saint, the commonwealth; or rather, not pray to her, but prey on her, for they ride up and down on her and make her their boots.

**Chamberlain**

What, the commonwealth their boots? will she hold out water in foul way?

**GADSHILL**

She will, she will; justice hath liquored her. We steal as in a castle, cocksure; we have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible.

**Chamberlain**

Nay, by my faith, I think you are more beholding to the night than to fern-seed for your walking invisible.

**GADSHILL**

Give me thy hand: thou shalt have a share in our purchase, as I am a true man.

**Chamberlain**

Nay, rather let me have it, as you are a false thief.

**GADSHILL**

Go to; 'homo' is a common name to all men. Bid the ostler bring my gelding out of the stable. Farewell, you muddy knave.

*Exeunt*





# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The highway, near Gadshill.

*Enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS*

**POINS**

Come, shelter, shelter: I have removed Falstaff's horse, and he frets like a gummed velvet.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Stand close.

*Enter FALSTAFF*

**FALSTAFF**

Poins! Poins, and be hanged! Poins!

**PRINCE HENRY**

Peace, ye fat-kidneyed rascal! what a brawling dost thou keep!

**FALSTAFF**

Where's Poins, Hal?

**PRINCE HENRY**

He is walked up to the top of the hill: I'll go seek him.

**FALSTAFF**

I am accursed to rob in that thief's company: the

rascal hath removed my horse, and tied him I know not where. If I travel but four foot by the squier further afoot, I shall break my wind. Well, I doubt not but to die a fair death for all this, if I 'scape hanging for killing that rogue. I have forsworn his company hourly any time this two and twenty years, and yet I am bewitched with the rogue's company. If the rascal hath not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged; it could not be else: I have drunk medicines. Poin! Hal! a plague upon you both! Bardolph! Peto! I'll starve ere I'll rob a foot further. An 'twere not as good a deed as drink, to turn true man and to leave these rogues, I am the veriest varlet that ever chewed with a tooth. Eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me; and the stony-hearted villains know it well enough: a plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another!

*They whistle*

Whew! A plague upon you all! Give me my horse, you rogues; give me my horse, and be hanged!

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Peace, ye fat-guts! lie down; lay thine ear close to the ground and list if thou canst hear the tread of travellers.

## **FALSTAFF**

Have you any levers to lift me up again, being down? 'Sblood, I'll not bear mine own flesh so far afoot again for all the coin in thy father's exchequer. What a plague mean ye to colt me thus?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Thou liest; thou art not colted, thou art uncolted.

## **FALSTAFF**

I prithee, good Prince Hal, help me to my horse,  
good king's son.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Out, ye rogue! shall I be your ostler?

**FALSTAFF**

Go, hang thyself in thine own heir-apparent  
garters! If I be ta'en, I'll peach for this. An I  
have not ballads made on you all and sung to filthy  
tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison: when a jest  
is so forward, and afoot too! I hate it.

*Enter GADSHILL, BARDOLPH and PETO*

**GADSHILL**

Stand.

**FALSTAFF**

So I do, against my will.

**POINS**

O, 'tis our setter: I know his voice. Bardolph,  
what news?

**BARDOLPH**

Case ye, case ye; on with your vizards: there 's  
money of the king's coming down the hill; 'tis going  
to the king's exchequer.

**FALSTAFF**

You lie, ye rogue; 'tis going to the king's tavern.

**GADSHILL**

There's enough to make us all.

**FALSTAFF**

To be hanged.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sirs, you four shall front them in the narrow lane;  
Ned Poins and I will walk lower: if they 'scape  
from your encounter, then they light on us.

**PETO**

How many be there of them?

**GADSHILL**

Some eight or ten.

**FALSTAFF**

'Zounds, will they not rob us?

**PRINCE HENRY**

What, a coward, Sir John Paunch?

**FALSTAFF**

Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather;  
but yet no coward, Hal.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, we leave that to the proof.

**POINS**

Sirrah Jack, thy horse stands behind the hedge:  
when thou needest him, there thou shalt find him.  
Farewell, and stand fast.

**FALSTAFF**

Now cannot I strike him, if I should be hanged.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Ned, where are our disguises?

**POINS**

Here, hard by: stand close.

*Exeunt PRINCE HENRY and POINS*

**FALSTAFF**

Now, my masters, happy man be his dole, say I:  
every man to his business.

*Enter the Travellers*

**First Traveller**

Come, neighbour: the boy shall lead our horses down  
the hill; we'll walk afoot awhile, and ease our legs.

**Thieves**

Stand!

**Travellers**

Jesus bless us!

**FALSTAFF**

Strike; down with them; cut the villains' throats:

ah! whoreson caterpillars! bacon-fed knaves! they  
hate us youth: down with them: fleece them.

## **Travellers**

O, we are undone, both we and ours for ever!

## **FALSTAFF**

Hang ye, gorbellied knaves, are ye undone? No, ye  
fat chuffs: I would your store were here! On,  
bacons, on! What, ye knaves! young men must live.  
You are Grand-jurors, are ye? we'll jure ye, 'faith.

*Here they rob them and bind them. Exeunt*

*Re-enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

The thieves have bound the true men. Now could thou  
and I rob the thieves and go merrily to London, it  
would be argument for a week, laughter for a month  
and a good jest for ever.

## **POINS**

Stand close; I hear them coming.

*Enter the Thieves again*

## **FALSTAFF**

Come, my masters, let us share, and then to horse  
before day. An the Prince and Poins be not two  
arrant cowards, there's no equity stirring: there's  
no more valour in that Poins than in a wild-duck.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Your money!

## POINS

Villains!

*As they are sharing, the Prince and Poins set upon them; they all run away; and Falstaff, after a blow or two, runs away too, leaving the booty behind them*

## PRINCE HENRY

Got with much ease. Now merrily to horse:  
The thieves are all scatter'd and possess'd with fear  
So strongly that they dare not meet each other;  
Each takes his fellow for an officer.  
Away, good Ned. Falstaff sweats to death,  
And lards the lean earth as he walks along:  
Were 't not for laughing, I should pity him.

## POINS

How the rogue roar'd!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Warkworth castle

*Enter HOTSPUR, solus, reading a letter*

### HOTSPUR

'But for mine own part, my lord, I could be well contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear your house.' He could be contented: why is he not, then? In respect of the love he bears our house: he shows in this, he loves his own barn better than he loves our house. Let me see some more. 'The purpose you undertake is dangerous;'--why, that's certain: 'tis dangerous to take a cold, to sleep, to drink; but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety. 'The purpose you undertake is dangerous; the friends you have named uncertain; the time itself unsorted; and your whole plot too light for the counterpoise of so great an opposition.' Say you so, say you so? I say unto you again, you are a shallow cowardly hind, and you lie. What a lack-brain is this! By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant: a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation; an excellent plot, very good friends. What a frosty-spirited rogue is this! Why, my lord of York commends the plot and the general course of action. 'Zounds, an I were now by this rascal, I could brain him with his lady's fan. Is there not my father, my uncle and myself? lord Edmund Mortimer, My lord of York and Owen Glendower? is there not besides the Douglas? have I not all their letters to meet me in arms by the ninth of the next month? and are they not some of them set forward already? What a pagan rascal is this! an infidel! Ha! you shall see now in very sincerity of fear and cold heart, will he to the king and lay

open all our proceedings. O, I could divide myself  
and go to buffets, for moving such a dish of  
skim milk with so honourable an action! Hang him!  
let him tell the king: we are prepared. I will set  
forward to-night.

*Enter LADY PERCY*

How now, Kate! I must leave you within these two hours.

## **LADY PERCY**

O, my good lord, why are you thus alone?  
For what offence have I this fortnight been  
A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?  
Tell me, sweet lord, what is't that takes from thee  
Thy stomach, pleasure and thy golden sleep?  
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,  
And start so often when thou sit'st alone?  
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks;  
And given my treasures and my rights of thee  
To thick-eyed musing and cursed melancholy?  
In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch'd,  
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars;  
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed;  
Cry 'Courage! to the field!' And thou hast talk'd  
Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,  
Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,  
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,  
Of prisoners' ransom and of soldiers slain,  
And all the currents of a heady fight.  
Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war  
And thus hath so bestirr'd thee in thy sleep,  
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow  
Like bubbles in a late-disturbed stream;  
And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,  
Such as we see when men restrain their breath  
On some great sudden hest. O, what portents are these?  
Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,  
And I must know it, else he loves me not.

## **HOTSPUR**

What, ho!

*Enter Servant*

Is Gilliams with the packet gone?

**Servant**

He is, my lord, an hour ago.

**HOTSPUR**

Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?

**Servant**

One horse, my lord, he brought even now.

**HOTSPUR**

What horse? a roan, a crop-ear, is it not?

**Servant**

It is, my lord.

**HOTSPUR**

That roan shall by my throne.  
Well, I will back him straight: O esperance!  
Bid Butler lead him forth into the park.

*Exit Servant*

**LADY PERCY**

But hear you, my lord.

**HOTSPUR**

What say'st thou, my lady?

**LADY PERCY**

What is it carries you away?

**HOTSPUR**

Why, my horse, my love, my horse.

**LADY PERCY**

Out, you mad-headed ape!  
A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen  
As you are toss'd with. In faith,  
I'll know your business, Harry, that I will.  
I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir  
About his title, and hath sent for you  
To line his enterprise: but if you go,--

**HOTSPUR**

So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.

**LADY PERCY**

Come, come, you paraquito, answer me  
Directly unto this question that I ask:  
In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,  
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

**HOTSPUR**

Away,  
Away, you trifler! Love! I love thee not,  
I care not for thee, Kate: this is no world  
To play with mammets and to tilt with lips:  
We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns,  
And pass them current too. God's me, my horse!  
What say'st thou, Kate? what would'st thou  
have with me?

## **LADY PERCY**

Do you not love me? do you not, indeed?  
Well, do not then; for since you love me not,  
I will not love myself. Do you not love me?  
Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.

## **HOTSPUR**

Come, wilt thou see me ride?  
And when I am on horseback, I will swear  
I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate;  
I must not have you henceforth question me  
Whither I go, nor reason whereabout:  
Whither I must, I must; and, to conclude,  
This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.  
I know you wise, but yet no farther wise  
Than Harry Percy's wife: constant you are,  
But yet a woman: and for secrecy,  
No lady closer; for I well believe  
Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know;  
And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.

## **LADY PERCY**

How! so far?

## **HOTSPUR**

Not an inch further. But hark you, Kate:  
Whither I go, thither shall you go too;  
To-day will I set forth, to-morrow you.  
Will this content you, Kate?

## **LADY PERCY**

It must of force.

*Exeunt*



# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The Boar's-Head Tavern, Eastcheap.

*Enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS*

### PRINCE HENRY

Ned, prithee, come out of that fat room, and lend me thy hand to laugh a little.

### POINS

Where hast been, Hal?

### PRINCE HENRY

With three or four loggerheads amongst three or four score hogsheads. I have sounded the very base-string of humility. Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers; and can call them all by their christen names, as Tom, Dick, and Francis. They take it already upon their salvation, that though I be but the prince of Wales, yet I am king of courtesy; and tell me flatly I am no proud Jack, like Falstaff, but a Corinthian, a lad of mettle, a good boy, by the Lord, so they call me, and when I am king of England, I shall command all the good lads in Eastcheap. They call drinking deep, dyeing scarlet; and when you breathe in your watering, they cry 'hem!' and bid you play it off. To conclude, I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour, that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life. I tell thee, Ned, thou hast lost much honour, that thou wert not with me in this sweet action. But, sweet Ned,--to sweeten which name of Ned, I give thee this pennyworth of sugar, clapped even now into my hand by an under-skinker, one that

never spake other English in his life than 'Eight shillings and sixpence' and 'You are welcome,' with this shrill addition, 'Anon, anon, sir! Score a pint of bastard in the Half-Moon,' or so. But, Ned, to drive away the time till Falstaff come, I prithee, do thou stand in some by-room, while I question my puny drawer to what end he gave me the sugar; and do thou never leave calling 'Francis,' that his tale to me may be nothing but 'Anon.' Step aside, and I'll show thee a precedent.

**POINS**

Francis!

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thou art perfect.

**POINS**

Francis!

*Exit POINS*

*Enter FRANCIS*

**FRANCIS**

Anon, anon, sir. Look down into the Pomgarnet, Ralph.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Come hither, Francis.

**FRANCIS**

My lord?

**PRINCE HENRY**



How long hast thou to serve, Francis?

**FRANCIS**

Forsooth, five years, and as much as to--

**POINS**

[Within] Francis!

**FRANCIS**

Anon, anon, sir.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Five year! by'r lady, a long lease for the clinking of pewter. But, Francis, darest thou be so valiant as to play the coward with thy indenture and show it a fair pair of heels and run from it?

**FRANCIS**

O Lord, sir, I'll be sworn upon all the books in England, I could find in my heart.

**POINS**

[Within] Francis!

**FRANCIS**

Anon, sir.

**PRINCE HENRY**

How old art thou, Francis?

**FRANCIS**

Let me see--about Michaelmas next I shall be--

**POINS**

[Within] Francis!

**FRANCIS**

Anon, sir. Pray stay a little, my lord.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Nay, but hark you, Francis: for the sugar thou gavest me, 'twas a pennyworth, wast't not?

**FRANCIS**

O Lord, I would it had been two!

**PRINCE HENRY**

I will give thee for it a thousand pound: ask me when thou wilt, and thou shalt have it.

**POINS**

[Within] Francis!

**FRANCIS**

Anon, anon.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Anon, Francis? No, Francis; but to-morrow, Francis; or, Francis, o' Thursday; or indeed, Francis, when thou wilt. But, Francis!

**FRANCIS**

My lord?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Wilt thou rob this leathern jerkin, crystal-button,  
not-pated, agate-ring, puke-stocking, caddis-garter,  
smooth-tongue, Spanish-pouch,--

## **FRANCIS**

O Lord, sir, who do you mean?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Why, then, your brown bastard is your only drink;  
for look you, Francis, your white canvas doublet  
will sully: in Barbary, sir, it cannot come to so much.

## **FRANCIS**

What, sir?

## **POINS**

[Within] Francis!

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Away, you rogue! dost thou not hear them call?

*Here they both call him; the drawer stands amazed, not knowing which way to go*

*Enter Vintner*

## **Vintner**

What, standest thou still, and hearest such a  
calling? Look to the guests within.

*Exit Francis*

My lord, old Sir John, with half-a-dozen more, are  
at the door: shall I let them in?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Let them alone awhile, and then open the door.

*Exit Vintner*

Poins!

*Re-enter POINS*

**POINS**

Anon, anon, sir.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sirrah, Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are at the door: shall we be merry?

**POINS**

As merry as crickets, my lad. But hark ye; what cunning match have you made with this jest of the drawer? come, what's the issue?

**PRINCE HENRY**

I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight.

*Re-enter FRANCIS*

What's o'clock, Francis?

**FRANCIS**

Anon, anon, sir.

*Exit*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

That ever this fellow should have fewer words than a parrot, and yet the son of a woman! His industry is upstairs and downstairs; his eloquence the parcel of a reckoning. I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the north; he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work.' 'O my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou killed to-day?' 'Give my roan horse a drench,' says he; and answers 'Some fourteen,' an hour after; 'a trifle, a trifle.' I prithee, call in Falstaff: I'll play Percy, and that damned brawn shall play Dame Mortimer his wife. 'Rivo!' says the drunkard. Call in ribs, call in tallow.

*Enter FALSTAFF, GADSHILL, BARDOLPH, and PETO; FRANCIS following with wine*

## **POINS**

Welcome, Jack: where hast thou been?

## **FALSTAFF**

A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! marry, and amen! Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether stocks and mend them and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant?

*He drinks*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Didst thou never see Titan kiss a dish of butter? pitiful-hearted Titan, that melted at the sweet tale of the sun's! if thou didst, then behold that compound.

## **FALSTAFF**

You rogue, here's lime in this sack too: there is nothing but roguery to be found in villanous man: yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it. A villanous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack; die when thou wilt, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring. There live not three good men unhang'd in England; and one of them is fat and grows old: God help the while! a bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver; I could sing psalms or any thing. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

How now, wool-sack! what mutter you?

### **FALSTAFF**

A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild-geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales!

### **PRINCE HENRY**

Why, you whoreson round man, what's the matter?

### **FALSTAFF**

Are not you a coward? answer me to that: and Poins there?

### **POINS**

'Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me coward, by the Lord, I'll stab thee.

### **FALSTAFF**

I call thee coward! I'll see thee damned ere I call thee coward: but I would give a thousand pound I could run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders, you care not who sees your

back: call you that backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing! give me them that will face me. Give me a cup of sack: I am a rogue, if I drunk to-day.

**PRINCE HENRY**

O villain! thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunkenest last.

**FALSTAFF**

All's one for that.

*He drinks*

A plague of all cowards, still say I.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What's the matter?

**FALSTAFF**

What's the matter! there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Where is it, Jack? where is it?

**FALSTAFF**

Where is it! taken from us it is: a hundred upon poor four of us.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What, a hundred, man?

**FALSTAFF**

I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scaped by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through; my sword hacked like a hand-saw--ecce signum! I never dealt better since I was a man: all would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak: if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Speak, sirs; how was it?

**GADSHILL**

We four set upon some dozen--

**FALSTAFF**

Sixteen at least, my lord.

**GADSHILL**

And bound them.

**PETO**

No, no, they were not bound.

**FALSTAFF**

You rogue, they were bound, every man of them; or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

**GADSHILL**

As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us--

**FALSTAFF**



And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What, fought you with them all?

**FALSTAFF**

All! I know not what you call all; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish: if there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Pray God you have not murdered some of them.

**FALSTAFF**

Nay, that's past praying for: I have peppered two of them; two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward; here I lay and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me--

**PRINCE HENRY**

What, four? thou saidst but two even now.

**FALSTAFF**

Four, Hal; I told thee four.

**POINS**

Ay, ay, he said four.

**FALSTAFF**

These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Seven? why, there were but four even now.

**FALSTAFF**

In buckram?

**POINS**

Ay, four, in buckram suits.

**FALSTAFF**

Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Prithee, let him alone; we shall have more anon.

**FALSTAFF**

Dost thou hear me, Hal?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

**FALSTAFF**

Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of--

**PRINCE HENRY**

So, two more already.

**FALSTAFF**

Their points being broken,--

**POINS**

Down fell their hose.

**FALSTAFF**

Began to give me ground: but I followed me close,  
came in foot and hand; and with a thought seven of  
the eleven I paid.

**PRINCE HENRY**

O monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two!

**FALSTAFF**

But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten  
knaves in Kendal green came at my back and let drive  
at me; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst  
not see thy hand.

**PRINCE HENRY**

These lies are like their father that begets them;  
gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou  
clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou  
whoreson, obscene, grease tallow-catch,--

**FALSTAFF**

What, art thou mad? art thou mad? is not the truth  
the truth?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal  
green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy

hand? come, tell us your reason: what sayest thou to this?

**POINS**

Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

**FALSTAFF**

What, upon compulsion? 'Zounds, an I were at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion! If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I'll be no longer guilty of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horseback-breaker, this huge hill of flesh,--

**FALSTAFF**

'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stock-fish! O for breath to utter what is like thee! you tailor's-yard, you sheath, you bowcase; you vile standing-tuck,--

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, breathe awhile, and then to it again: and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

**POINS**

Mark, Jack.

**PRINCE HENRY**

We two saw you four set on four and bound them, and were masters of their wealth. Mark now, how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four; and, with a word, out-faced you from your prize, and have it; yea, and can show it you here in the house: and, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy and still run and roared, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

## **POINS**

Come, let's hear, Jack; what trick hast thou now?

## **FALSTAFF**

By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters: was it for me to kill the heir-apparent? should I turn upon the true prince? why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules: but beware instinct; the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter; I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee during my life; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors: watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? shall we have a play extempore?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Content; and the argument shall be thy running away.

## **FALSTAFF**

Ah, no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me!

*Enter Hostess*

**Hostess**

O Jesu, my lord the prince!

**PRINCE HENRY**

How now, my lady the hostess! what sayest thou to me?

**Hostess**

Marry, my lord, there is a nobleman of the court at door would speak with you: he says he comes from your father.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Give him as much as will make him a royal man, and send him back again to my mother.

**FALSTAFF**

What manner of man is he?

**Hostess**

An old man.

**FALSTAFF**

What doth gravity out of his bed at midnight? Shall I give him his answer?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Prithee, do, Jack.

**FALSTAFF**

'Faith, and I'll send him packing.

*Exit FALSTAFF*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Now, sirs: by'r lady, you fought fair; so did you, Peto; so did you, Bardolph: you are lions too, you ran away upon instinct, you will not touch the true prince; no, fie!

## **BARBOLPH**

'Faith, I ran when I saw others run.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

'Faith, tell me now in earnest, how came Falstaff's sword so hacked?

## **PETO**

Why, he hacked it with his dagger, and said he would swear truth out of England but he would make you believe it was done in fight, and persuaded us to do the like.

## **BARBOLPH**

Yea, and to tickle our noses with spear-grass to make them bleed, and then to beslobber our garments with it and swear it was the blood of true men. I did that I did not this seven year before, I blushed to hear his monstrous devices.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

O villain, thou stolest a cup of sack eighteen years ago, and wert taken with the manner, and ever since thou hast blushed extempore. Thou hadst fire and sword on thy side, and yet thou rannest away: what instinct hadst thou for it?

**ARDOLPH**

My lord, do you see these meteors? do you behold these exhalations?

**PRINCE HENRY**

I do.

**ARDOLPH**

What think you they portend?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Hot livers and cold purses.

**ARDOLPH**

Choler, my lord, if rightly taken.

**PRINCE HENRY**

No, if rightly taken, halter.

*Re-enter FALSTAFF*

Here comes lean Jack, here comes bare-bone.  
How now, my sweet creature of bombast!  
How long is't ago, Jack, since thou sawest thine own knee?

**FALSTAFF**

My own knee! when I was about thy years, Hal, I was not an eagle's talon in the waist; I could have crept into any alderman's thumb-ring: a plague of sighing and grief! it blows a man up like a bladder. There's villanous news abroad: here was Sir John Bracy from your father; you must to the court in the morning. That same mad fellow of the



north, Percy, and he of Wales, that gave Amamon the bastinado and made Lucifer cuckold and swore the devil his true liegeman upon the cross of a Welsh hook--what a plague call you him?

**POINS**

O, Glendower.

**FALSTAFF**

Owen, Owen, the same; and his son-in-law Mortimer, and old Northumberland, and that sprightly Scot of Scots, Douglas, that runs o' horseback up a hill perpendicular,--

**PRINCE HENRY**

He that rides at high speed and with his pistol kills a sparrow flying.

**FALSTAFF**

You have hit it.

**PRINCE HENRY**

So did he never the sparrow.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, that rascal hath good mettle in him; he will not run.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Why, what a rascal art thou then, to praise him so for running!

**FALSTAFF**

O' horseback, ye cuckoo; but afoot he will not budge a foot.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Yes, Jack, upon instinct.

**FALSTAFF**

I grant ye, upon instinct. Well, he is there too, and one Mordake, and a thousand blue-caps more: Worcester is stolen away to-night; thy father's beard is turned white with the news: you may buy land now as cheap as stinking mackerel.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Why, then, it is like, if there come a hot June and this civil buffeting hold, we shall buy maidenheads as they buy hob-nails, by the hundreds.

**FALSTAFF**

By the mass, lad, thou sayest true; it is like we shall have good trading that way. But tell me, Hal, art not thou horrible afeard? thou being heir-apparent, could the world pick thee out three such enemies again as that fiend Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that devil Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? doth not thy blood thrill at it?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Not a whit, i' faith; I lack some of thy instinct.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, thou wert be horribly chid tomorrow when thou comest to thy father: if thou love me, practise an answer.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Do thou stand for my father, and examine me upon the

particulars of my life.

**FALSTAFF**

Shall I? content: this chair shall be my state,  
this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thy state is taken for a joined-stool, thy golden  
sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich  
crown for a pitiful bald crown!

**FALSTAFF**

Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee,  
now shalt thou be moved. Give me a cup of sack to  
make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have  
wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it  
in King Cambyses' vein.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, here is my leg.

**FALSTAFF**

And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility.

**Hostess**

O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!

**FALSTAFF**

Weep not, sweet queen; for trickling tears are vain.

**Hostess**

O, the father, how he holds his countenance!

## **FALSTAFF**

For God's sake, lords, convey my tristful queen;  
For tears do stop the flood-gates of her eyes.

## **Hostess**

O Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry  
players as ever I see!

## **FALSTAFF**

Peace, good pint-pot; peace, good tickle-brain.  
Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy  
time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though  
the camomile, the more it is trodden on the faster  
it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted the  
sooner it wears. That thou art my son, I have  
partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion,  
but chiefly a villanous trick of thine eye and a  
foolish-hanging of thy nether lip, that doth warrant  
me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point;  
why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall  
the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher and eat  
blackberries? a question not to be asked. Shall  
the sun of England prove a thief and take purses? a  
question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry,  
which thou hast often heard of and it is known to  
many in our land by the name of pitch: this pitch,  
as ancient writers do report, doth defile; so doth  
the company thou keepest: for, Harry, now I do not  
speak to thee in drink but in tears, not in  
pleasure but in passion, not in words only, but in  
woes also: and yet there is a virtuous man whom I  
have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

What manner of man, an it like your majesty?

## **FALSTAFF**

A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r lady, inclining to three score; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff: if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff: him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

**FALSTAFF**

Depose me? if thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poulter's hare.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Well, here I am set.

**FALSTAFF**

And here I stand: judge, my masters.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Now, Harry, whence come you?

**FALSTAFF**

My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

**PRINCE HENRY**

The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

**FALSTAFF**

'Sblood, my lord, they are false: nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Swearest thou, ungracious boy? henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villany? wherein villanous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?

**FALSTAFF**

I would your grace would take me with you: whom means your grace?

**PRINCE HENRY**

That villanous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord, the man I know.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I know thou dost.

## **FALSTAFF**

But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old, the more the pity, his white hairs do witness it; but that he is, saving your reverence, a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! if to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company: banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I do, I will.

*A knocking heard*

*Exeunt Hostess, FRANCIS, and BARDOLPH*

*Re-enter BARDOLPH, running*

## **BARDOLPH**

O, my lord, my lord! the sheriff with a most monstrous watch is at the door.

## **FALSTAFF**

Out, ye rogue! Play out the play: I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.

*Re-enter the Hostess*

**Hostess**

O Jesu, my lord, my lord!

**PRINCE HENRY**

Heigh, heigh! the devil rides upon a fiddlestick:  
what's the matter?

**Hostess**

The sheriff and all the watch are at the door: they  
are come to search the house. Shall I let them in?

**FALSTAFF**

Dost thou hear, Hal? never call a true piece of  
gold a counterfeit: thou art essentially mad,  
without seeming so.

**PRINCE HENRY**

And thou a natural coward, without instinct.

**FALSTAFF**

I deny your major: if you will deny the sheriff,  
so; if not, let him enter: if I become not a cart  
as well as another man, a plague on my bringing up!  
I hope I shall as soon be strangled with a halter as another.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Go, hide thee behind the arras: the rest walk up  
above. Now, my masters, for a true face and good  
conscience.

**FALSTAFF**

Both which I have had: but their date is out, and  
therefore I'll hide me.



## **PRINCE HENRY**

Call in the sheriff.

*Exeunt all except PRINCE HENRY and PETO*

*Enter Sheriff and the Carrier*

Now, master sheriff, what is your will with me?

## **Sheriff**

First, pardon me, my lord. A hue and cry  
Hath follow'd certain men unto this house.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

What men?

## **Sheriff**

One of them is well known, my gracious lord,  
A gross fat man.

## **Carrier**

As fat as butter.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

The man, I do assure you, is not here;  
For I myself at this time have employ'd him.  
And, sheriff, I will engage my word to thee  
That I will, by to-morrow dinner-time,  
Send him to answer thee, or any man,  
For any thing he shall be charged withal:  
And so let me entreat you leave the house.

## **Sheriff**

I will, my lord. There are two gentlemen  
Have in this robbery lost three hundred marks.

**PRINCE HENRY**

It may be so: if he have robb'd these men,  
He shall be answerable; and so farewell.

**Sheriff**

Good night, my noble lord.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I think it is good morrow, is it not?

**Sheriff**

Indeed, my lord, I think it be two o'clock.

*Exeunt Sheriff and Carrier*

**PRINCE HENRY**

This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's. Go,  
call him forth.

**PETO**

Falstaff!--Fast asleep behind the arras, and  
snorting like a horse.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Hark, how hard he fetches breath. Search his pockets.

*He searcheth his pockets, and findeth certain papers*

What hast thou found?

**PETO**

Nothing but papers, my lord.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Let's see what they be: read them.

**PETO**

[Reads] Item, A capon,. . . 2s. 2d.

Item, Sauce,. . . 4d.

Item, Sack, two gallons, 5s. 8d.

Item, Anchovies and sack after supper, 2s. 6d.

Item, Bread, ob.

**PRINCE HENRY**

O monstrous! but one half-penny-worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! What there is else, keep close; we'll read it at more advantage: there let him sleep till day. I'll to the court in the morning. We must all to the wars, and thy place shall be honourable. I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot; and I know his death will be a march of twelve-score. The money shall be paid back again with advantage. Be with me betimes in the morning; and so, good morrow, Peto.

*Exeunt*

**PETO**

Good morrow, good my lord.

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Bangor. The Archdeacon's house.

*Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, MORTIMER, and GLENDOWER*

### MORTIMER

These promises are fair, the parties sure,  
And our induction full of prosperous hope.

### HOTSPUR

Lord Mortimer, and cousin Glendower,  
Will you sit down?  
And uncle Worcester: a plague upon it!  
I have forgot the map.

### GLENDOWER

No, here it is.  
Sit, cousin Percy; sit, good cousin Hotspur,  
For by that name as oft as Lancaster  
Doth speak of you, his cheek looks pale and with  
A rising sigh he wisheth you in heaven.

### HOTSPUR

And you in hell, as oft as he hears Owen Glendower spoke of.

### GLENDOWER

I cannot blame him: at my nativity  
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,  
Of burning cressets; and at my birth  
The frame and huge foundation of the earth  
Shaked like a coward.

## **HOTSPUR**

Why, so it would have done at the same season, if  
your mother's cat had but kittened, though yourself  
had never been born.

## **GLENDOWER**

I say the earth did shake when I was born.

## **HOTSPUR**

And I say the earth was not of my mind,  
If you suppose as fearing you it shook.

## **GLENDOWER**

The heavens were all on fire, the earth did tremble.

## **HOTSPUR**

O, then the earth shook to see the heavens on fire,  
And not in fear of your nativity.  
Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth  
In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth  
Is with a kind of colic pinch'd and vex'd  
By the imprisoning of unruly wind  
Within her womb; which, for enlargement striving,  
Shakes the old beldam earth and topples down  
Steeple and moss-grown towers. At your birth  
Our grandam earth, having this distemperature,  
In passion shook.

## **GLENDOWER**

Cousin, of many men  
I do not bear these crossings. Give me leave  
To tell you once again that at my birth  
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,  
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds  
Were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields.  
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary;

And all the courses of my life do show  
I am not in the roll of common men.  
Where is he living, clipp'd in with the sea  
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,  
Which calls me pupil, or hath read to me?  
And bring him out that is but woman's son  
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art  
And hold me pace in deep experiments.

### **HOTSPUR**

I think there's no man speaks better Welsh.  
I'll to dinner.

### **MORTIMER**

Peace, cousin Percy; you will make him mad.

### **GLENDOWER**

I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

### **HOTSPUR**

Why, so can I, or so can any man;  
But will they come when you do call for them?

### **GLENDOWER**

Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command  
The devil.

### **HOTSPUR**

And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the devil  
By telling truth: tell truth and shame the devil.  
If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,  
And I'll be sworn I have power to shame him hence.  
O, while you live, tell truth and shame the devil!

### **MORTIMER**

Come, come, no more of this unprofitable chat.

## **GLENDOWER**

Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head  
Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye  
And sandy-bottom'd Severn have I sent him  
Bootless home and weather-beaten back.

## **HOTSPUR**

Home without boots, and in foul weather too!  
How 'scapes he agues, in the devil's name?

## **GLENDOWER**

Come, here's the map: shall we divide our right  
According to our threefold order ta'en?

## **MORTIMER**

The archdeacon hath divided it  
Into three limits very equally:  
England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,  
By south and east is to my part assign'd:  
All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,  
And all the fertile land within that bound,  
To Owen Glendower: and, dear coz, to you  
The remnant northward, lying off from Trent.  
And our indentures tripartite are drawn;  
Which being sealed interchangeably,  
A business that this night may execute,  
To-morrow, cousin Percy, you and I  
And my good Lord of Worcester will set forth  
To meet your father and the Scottish power,  
As is appointed us, at Shrewsbury.  
My father Glendower is not ready yet,  
Not shall we need his help these fourteen days.  
Within that space you may have drawn together  
Your tenants, friends and neighbouring gentlemen.

## **GLENDOWER**

A shorter time shall send me to you, lords:  
And in my conduct shall your ladies come;  
From whom you now must steal and take no leave,  
For there will be a world of water shed  
Upon the parting of your wives and you.

## **HOTSPUR**

Methinks my moiety, north from Burton here,  
In quantity equals not one of yours:  
See how this river comes me cranking in,  
And cuts me from the best of all my land  
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle out.  
I'll have the current in this place damm'd up;  
And here the smug and silver Trent shall run  
In a new channel, fair and evenly;  
It shall not wind with such a deep indent,  
To rob me of so rich a bottom here.

## **GLENDOWER**

Not wind? it shall, it must; you see it doth.

## **MORTIMER**

Yea, but  
Mark how he bears his course, and runs me up  
With like advantage on the other side;  
Gelding the opposed continent as much  
As on the other side it takes from you.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Yea, but a little charge will trench him here  
And on this north side win this cape of land;  
And then he runs straight and even.

## **HOTSPUR**

I'll have it so: a little charge will do it.



**GLENDOWER**

I'll not have it alter'd.

**HOTSPUR**

Will not you?

**GLENDOWER**

No, nor you shall not.

**HOTSPUR**

Who shall say me nay?

**GLENDOWER**

Why, that will I.

**HOTSPUR**

Let me not understand you, then; speak it in Welsh.

**GLENDOWER**

I can speak English, lord, as well as you;  
For I was train'd up in the English court;  
Where, being but young, I framed to the harp  
Many an English ditty lovely well  
And gave the tongue a helpful ornament,  
A virtue that was never seen in you.

**HOTSPUR**

Marry,  
And I am glad of it with all my heart:  
I had rather be a kitten and cry mew  
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers;  
I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd,  
Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree;

And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,  
Nothing so much as mincing poetry:  
'Tis like the forced gait of a shuffling nag.

## **GLENDOWER**

Come, you shall have Trent turn'd.

## **HOTSPUR**

I do not care: I'll give thrice so much land  
To any well-deserving friend;  
But in the way of bargain, mark ye me,  
I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair.  
Are the indentures drawn? shall we be gone?

## **GLENDOWER**

The moon shines fair; you may away by night:  
I'll haste the writer and withal  
Break with your wives of your departure hence:  
I am afraid my daughter will run mad,  
So much she doteth on her Mortimer.

*Exit GLENDOWER*

## **MORTIMER**

Fie, cousin Percy! how you cross my father!

## **HOTSPUR**

I cannot choose: sometime he angers me  
With telling me of the mouldwarp and the ant,  
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,  
And of a dragon and a finless fish,  
A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulted raven,  
A couching lion and a ramping cat,  
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff  
As puts me from my faith. I tell you what;  
He held me last night at least nine hours  
In reckoning up the several devils' names

That were his lackeys: I cried 'hum,' and 'well, go to,'  
But mark'd him not a word. O, he is as tedious  
As a tired horse, a railing wife;  
Worse than a smoky house: I had rather live  
With cheese and garlic in a windmill, far,  
Than feed on cates and have him talk to me  
In any summer-house in Christendom.

## **MORTIMER**

In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,  
Exceedingly well read, and profited  
In strange concealments, valiant as a lion  
And as wondrous affable and as bountiful  
As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin?  
He holds your temper in a high respect  
And curbs himself even of his natural scope  
When you come 'cross his humour; faith, he does:  
I warrant you, that man is not alive  
Might so have tempted him as you have done,  
Without the taste of danger and reproof:  
But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

In faith, my lord, you are too wilful-blame;  
And since your coming hither have done enough  
To put him quite beside his patience.  
You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault:  
Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood,--  
And that's the dearest grace it renders you,--  
Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,  
Defect of manners, want of government,  
Pride, haughtiness, opinion and disdain:  
The least of which haunting a nobleman  
Loseth men's hearts and leaves behind a stain  
Upon the beauty of all parts besides,  
Beguiling them of commendation.

## **HOTSPUR**

Well, I am school'd: good manners be your speed!

Here come our wives, and let us take our leave.

*Re-enter GLENDOWER with the ladies*

**MORTIMER**

This is the deadly spite that angers me;  
My wife can speak no English, I no Welsh.

**GLENDOWER**

My daughter weeps: she will not part with you;  
She'll be a soldier too, she'll to the wars.

**MORTIMER**

Good father, tell her that she and my aunt Percy  
Shall follow in your conduct speedily.

*Glendower speaks to her in Welsh, and she answers him in the same*

**GLENDOWER**

She is desperate here; a peevish self-wind harlotry,  
one that no persuasion can do good upon.

*The lady speaks in Welsh*

**MORTIMER**

I understand thy looks: that pretty Welsh  
Which thou pour'st down from these swelling heavens  
I am too perfect in; and, but for shame,  
In such a parley should I answer thee.

*The lady speaks again in Welsh*

I understand thy kisses and thou mine,  
And that's a feeling disputation:  
But I will never be a truant, love,  
Till I have learned thy language; for thy tongue

Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd,  
Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,  
With ravishing division, to her lute.

**GLENDOWER**

Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad.

*The lady speaks again in Welsh*

**MORTIMER**

O, I am ignorance itself in this!

**GLENDOWER**

She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down  
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,  
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you  
And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep.  
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness,  
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep  
As is the difference betwixt day and night  
The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team  
Begins his golden progress in the east.

**MORTIMER**

With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing:  
By that time will our book, I think, be drawn

**GLENDOWER**

Do so;  
And those musicians that shall play to you  
Hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence,  
And straight they shall be here: sit, and attend.

**HOTSPUR**

Come, Kate, thou art perfect in lying down: come,

quick, quick, that I may lay my head in thy lap.

**LADY PERCY**

Go, ye giddy goose.

*The music plays*

**HOTSPUR**

Now I perceive the devil understands Welsh;  
And 'tis no marvel he is so humorous.  
By'r lady, he is a good musician.

**LADY PERCY**

Then should you be nothing but musical for you are  
altogether governed by humours. Lie still, ye thief,  
and hear the lady sing in Welsh.

**HOTSPUR**

I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl in Irish.

**LADY PERCY**

Wouldst thou have thy head broken?

**HOTSPUR**

No.

**LADY PERCY**

Then be still.

**HOTSPUR**

Neither; 'tis a woman's fault.

**LADY PERCY**

Now God help thee!

**HOTSPUR**

To the Welsh lady's bed.

**LADY PERCY**

What's that?

**HOTSPUR**

Peace! she sings.

*Here the lady sings a Welsh song*

**HOTSPUR**

Come, Kate, I'll have your song too.

**LADY PERCY**

Not mine, in good sooth.

**HOTSPUR**

Not yours, in good sooth! Heart! you swear like a  
comfit-maker's wife. 'Not you, in good sooth,' and  
'as true as I live,' and 'as God shall mend me,' and  
'as sure as day,'

And givest such sarcenet surety for thy oaths,  
As if thou never walk'st further than Finsbury.  
Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,  
A good mouth-filling oath, and leave 'in sooth,'  
And such protest of pepper-gingerbread,  
To velvet-guards and Sunday-citizens.  
Come, sing.

**LADY PERCY**

I will not sing.

## **HOTSPUR**

'Tis the next way to turn tailor, or be red-breast  
teacher. An the indentures be drawn, I'll away  
within these two hours; and so, come in when ye will.

*Exit*

## **GLENDOWER**

Come, come, Lord Mortimer; you are as slow  
As hot Lord Percy is on fire to go.  
By this our book is drawn; we'll but seal,  
And then to horse immediately.

## **MORTIMER**

With all my heart.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. London. The palace.

*Enter KING HENRY IV, PRINCE HENRY, and others*

### KING HENRY IV

Lords, give us leave; the Prince of Wales and I  
Must have some private conference; but be near at hand,  
For we shall presently have need of you.

*Exeunt Lords*

I know not whether God will have it so,  
For some displeasing service I have done,  
That, in his secret doom, out of my blood  
He'll breed revengement and a scourge for me;  
But thou dost in thy passages of life  
Make me believe that thou art only mark'd  
For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven  
To punish my mistreadings. Tell me else,  
Could such inordinate and low desires,  
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,  
Such barren pleasures, rude society,  
As thou art match'd withal and grafted to,  
Accompany the greatness of thy blood  
And hold their level with thy princely heart?

### PRINCE HENRY

So please your majesty, I would I could  
Quit all offences with as clear excuse  
As well as I am doubtless I can purge  
Myself of many I am charged withal:  
Yet such extenuation let me beg,  
As, in reproof of many tales devised,  
which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear,

By smiling pick-thanks and base news-mongers,  
I may, for some things true, wherein my youth  
Hath faulty wander'd and irregular,  
Find pardon on my true submission.

## **KING HENRY IV**

God pardon thee! yet let me wonder, Harry,  
At thy affections, which do hold a wing  
Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.  
Thy place in council thou hast rudely lost,  
Which by thy younger brother is supplied,  
And art almost an alien to the hearts  
Of all the court and princes of my blood:  
The hope and expectation of thy time  
Is ruin'd, and the soul of every man  
Prophetically doth forethink thy fall.  
Had I so lavish of my presence been,  
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,  
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,  
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,  
Had still kept loyal to possession  
And left me in reputeless banishment,  
A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.  
By being seldom seen, I could not stir  
But like a comet I was wonder'd at;  
That men would tell their children 'This is he;'  
Others would say 'Where, which is Bolingbroke?'  
And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,  
And dress'd myself in such humility  
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,  
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths,  
Even in the presence of the crowned king.  
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new;  
My presence, like a robe pontifical,  
Ne'er seen but wonder'd at: and so my state,  
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a feast  
And won by rareness such solemnity.  
The skipping king, he ambled up and down  
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,  
Soon kindled and soon burnt; carded his state,  
Mingled his royalty with capering fools,  
Had his great name profaned with their scorns

And gave his countenance, against his name,  
To laugh at gibing boys and stand the push  
Of every beardless vain comparative,  
Grew a companion to the common streets,  
Enfeoff'd himself to popularity;  
That, being daily swallow'd by men's eyes,  
They surfeited with honey and began  
To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little  
More than a little is by much too much.  
So when he had occasion to be seen,  
He was but as the cuckoo is in June,  
Heard, not regarded; seen, but with such eyes  
As, sick and blunted with community,  
Afford no extraordinary gaze,  
Such as is bent on sun-like majesty  
When it shines seldom in admiring eyes;  
But rather drowzed and hung their eyelids down,  
Slept in his face and render'd such aspect  
As cloudy men use to their adversaries,  
Being with his presence glutted, gorged and full.  
And in that very line, Harry, standest thou;  
For thou has lost thy princely privilege  
With vile participation: not an eye  
But is a-weary of thy common sight,  
Save mine, which hath desired to see thee more;  
Which now doth that I would not have it do,  
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I shall hereafter, my thrice gracious lord,  
Be more myself.

## **KING HENRY IV**

For all the world  
As thou art to this hour was Richard then  
When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh,  
And even as I was then is Percy now.  
Now, by my sceptre and my soul to boot,  
He hath more worthy interest to the state  
Than thou the shadow of succession;  
For of no right, nor colour like to right,

He doth fill fields with harness in the realm,  
Turns head against the lion's armed jaws,  
And, being no more in debt to years than thou,  
Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on  
To bloody battles and to bruising arms.  
What never-dying honour hath he got  
Against renowned Douglas! whose high deeds,  
Whose hot incursions and great name in arms  
Holds from all soldiers chief majority  
And military title capital  
Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge Christ:  
Thrice hath this Hotspur, Mars in swathing clothes,  
This infant warrior, in his enterprises  
Discomfited great Douglas, ta'en him once,  
Enlarged him and made a friend of him,  
To fill the mouth of deep defiance up  
And shake the peace and safety of our throne.  
And what say you to this? Percy, Northumberland,  
The Archbishop's grace of York, Douglas, Mortimer,  
Capitulate against us and are up.  
But wherefore do I tell these news to thee?  
Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,  
Which art my near'st and dearest enemy?  
Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,  
Base inclination and the start of spleen  
To fight against me under Percy's pay,  
To dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns,  
To show how much thou art degenerate.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Do not think so; you shall not find it so:  
And God forgive them that so much have sway'd  
Your majesty's good thoughts away from me!  
I will redeem all this on Percy's head  
And in the closing of some glorious day  
Be bold to tell you that I am your son;  
When I will wear a garment all of blood  
And stain my favours in a bloody mask,  
Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame with it:  
And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights,  
That this same child of honour and renown,  
This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,

And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.  
For every honour sitting on his helm,  
Would they were multitudes, and on my head  
My shames redoubled! for the time will come,  
That I shall make this northern youth exchange  
His glorious deeds for my indignities.  
Percy is but my factor, good my lord,  
To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf;  
And I will call him to so strict account,  
That he shall render every glory up,  
Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,  
Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.  
This, in the name of God, I promise here:  
The which if He be pleased I shall perform,  
I do beseech your majesty may salve  
The long-grown wounds of my intemperance:  
If not, the end of life cancels all bands;  
And I will die a hundred thousand deaths  
Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.

#### **KING HENRY IV**

A hundred thousand rebels die in this:  
Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust herein.

*Enter BLUNT*

How now, good Blunt? thy looks are full of speed.

#### **SIR WALTER BLUNT**

So hath the business that I come to speak of.  
Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word  
That Douglas and the English rebels met  
The eleventh of this month at Shrewsbury  
A mighty and a fearful head they are,  
If promises be kept on every hand,  
As ever offer'd foul play in the state.

#### **KING HENRY IV**

The Earl of Westmoreland set forth to-day;

With him my son, Lord John of Lancaster;  
For this advertisement is five days old:  
On Wednesday next, Harry, you shall set forward;  
On Thursday we ourselves will march: our meeting  
Is Bridgenorth: and, Harry, you shall march  
Through Gloucestershire; by which account,  
Our business valued, some twelve days hence  
Our general forces at Bridgenorth shall meet.  
Our hands are full of business: let's away;  
Advantage feeds him fat, while men delay.

*Exeunt*

### **Scene III**

Eastcheap. The Boar's-Head Tavern.

*Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH*

#### **FALSTAFF**

Bardolph, am I not fallen away vilely since this last action? do I not bate? do I not dwindle? Why my skin hangs about me like an like an old lady's loose gown; I am withered like an old apple-john. Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking; I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse: the inside of a church! Company, villanous company, hath been the spoil of me.

#### **BARDOLPH**

Sir John, you are so fretful, you cannot live long.

#### **FALSTAFF**

Why, there is it: come sing me a bawdy song; make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be; virtuous enough; swore little; diced not

above seven times a week; went to a bawdy-house once in a quarter--of an hour; paid money that I borrowed, three of four times; lived well and in good compass: and now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

## **ARDOLPH**

Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass, out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

## **FALSTAFF**

Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life: thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop, but 'tis in the nose of thee; thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp.

## **ARDOLPH**

Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

## **FALSTAFF**

No, I'll be sworn; I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a Death's-head or a memento mori: I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning. If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be 'By this fire, that's God's angel:' but thou art altogether given over; and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou rannest up Gadshill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an ignis fatuus or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern: but the sack that thou hast

drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap  
at the dearest chandler's in Europe. I have  
maintained that salamander of yours with fire any  
time this two and thirty years; God reward me for  
it!

**BARDOLPH**

'Sblood, I would my face were in your belly!

**FALSTAFF**

God-a-mercy! so should I be sure to be heart-burned.

*Enter Hostess*

How now, Dame Partlet the hen! have you inquired  
yet who picked my pocket?

**Hostess**

Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? do you  
think I keep thieves in my house? I have searched,  
I have inquired, so has my husband, man by man, boy  
by boy, servant by servant: the tithe of a hair  
was never lost in my house before.

**FALSTAFF**

Ye lie, hostess: Bardolph was shaved and lost many  
a hair; and I'll be sworn my pocket was picked. Go  
to, you are a woman, go.

**Hostess**

Who, I? no; I defy thee: God's light, I was never  
called so in mine own house before.

**FALSTAFF**

Go to, I know you well enough.



**Hostess**

No, Sir John; You do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John: you owe me money, Sir John; and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it: I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back.

**FALSTAFF**

Dowlas, filthy dowlas: I have given them away to bakers' wives, and they have made bolters of them.

**Hostess**

Now, as I am a true woman, holland of eight shillings an ell. You owe money here besides, Sir John, for your diet and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four and twenty pound.

**FALSTAFF**

He had his part of it; let him pay.

**Hostess**

He? alas, he is poor; he hath nothing.

**FALSTAFF**

How! poor? look upon his face; what call you rich? let them coin his nose, let them coin his cheeks: Ill not pay a denier. What, will you make a younker of me? shall I not take mine case in mine inn but I shall have my pocket picked? I have lost a seal-ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

**Hostess**

O Jesu, I have heard the prince tell him, I know not how oft, that ring was copper!

## **FALSTAFF**

How! the prince is a Jack, a sneak-cup: 'sblood, an he were here, I would cudgel him like a dog, if he would say so.

*Enter PRINCE HENRY and PETO, marching, and FALSTAFF meets them playing on his truncheon like a life*

How now, lad! is the wind in that door, i' faith? must we all march?

## **BARDOLPH**

Yea, two and two, Newgate fashion.

## **Hostess**

My lord, I pray you, hear me.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

What sayest thou, Mistress Quickly? How doth thy husband? I love him well; he is an honest man.

## **Hostess**

Good my lord, hear me.

## **FALSTAFF**

Prithee, let her alone, and list to me.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

What sayest thou, Jack?

## **FALSTAFF**

The other night I fell asleep here behind the arras and had my pocket picked: this house is turned

bawdy-house; they pick pockets.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What didst thou lose, Jack?

**FALSTAFF**

Wilt thou believe me, Hal? three or four bonds of forty pound apiece, and a seal-ring of my grandfather's.

**PRINCE HENRY**

A trifle, some eight-penny matter.

**Hostess**

So I told him, my lord; and I said I heard your grace say so: and, my lord, he speaks most vilely of you, like a foul-mouthed man as he is; and said he would cudgel you.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What! he did not?

**Hostess**

There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.

**FALSTAFF**

There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune; nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox; and for womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go

**Hostess**

Say, what thing? what thing?

**FALSTAFF**

What thing! why, a thing to thank God on.

**Hostess**

I am no thing to thank God on, I would thou shouldst know it; I am an honest man's wife: and, setting thy knighthood aside, thou art a knave to call me so.

**FALSTAFF**

Setting thy womanhood aside, thou art a beast to say otherwise.

**Hostess**

Say, what beast, thou knave, thou?

**FALSTAFF**

What beast! why, an otter.

**PRINCE HENRY**

An otter, Sir John! Why an otter?

**FALSTAFF**

Why, she's neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have her.

**Hostess**

Thou art an unjust man in saying so: thou or any man knows where to have me, thou knave, thou!

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thou sayest true, hostess; and he slanders thee most grossly.

**Hostess**

So he doth you, my lord; and said this other day you ought him a thousand pound.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

**FALSTAFF**

A thousand pound, Ha! a million: thy love is worth a million: thou owest me thy love.

**Hostess**

Nay, my lord, he called you Jack, and said he would cudgel you.

**FALSTAFF**

Did I, Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, if he said my ring was copper.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I say 'tis copper: darest thou be as good as thy word now?

**FALSTAFF**

Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare:

but as thou art prince, I fear thee as I fear the roaring of a lion's whelp.

**PRINCE HENRY**

And why not as the lion?

**FALSTAFF**

The king is to be feared as the lion: dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? nay, an I do, I pray God my girdle break.

**PRINCE HENRY**

O, if it should, how would thy guts fall about thy knees! But, sirrah, there's no room for faith, truth, nor honesty in this bosom of thine; it is all filled up with guts and midriff. Charge an honest woman with picking thy pocket! why, thou whoreson, impudent, embossed rascal, if there were anything in thy pocket but tavern-reckonings, memorandums of bawdy-houses, and one poor penny-worth of sugar-candy to make thee long-winded, if thy pocket were enriched with any other injuries but these, I am a villain: and yet you will stand to it; you will not pocket up wrong: art thou not ashamed?

**FALSTAFF**

Dost thou hear, Hal? thou knowest in the state of innocency Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villany? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty. You confess then, you picked my pocket?

**PRINCE HENRY**

It appears so by the story.

**FALSTAFF**

Hostess, I forgive thee: go, make ready breakfast;  
love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy  
guests: thou shalt find me tractable to any honest  
reason: thou seest I am pacified still. Nay,  
prithee, be gone.

*Exit Hostess*

Now Hal, to the news at court: for the robbery,  
lad, how is that answered?

**PRINCE HENRY**

O, my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to  
thee: the money is paid back again.

**FALSTAFF**

O, I do not like that paying back; 'tis a double labour.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I am good friends with my father and may do any thing.

**FALSTAFF**

Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou doest, and  
do it with unwashed hands too.

**BARDOLPH**

Do, my lord.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

**FALSTAFF**

I would it had been of horse. Where shall I find  
one that can steal well? O for a fine thief, of the

age of two and twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided. Well, God be thanked for these rebels, they offend none but the virtuous: I laud them, I praise them.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Bardolph!

**BARDOLPH**

My lord?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Go bear this letter to Lord John of Lancaster, to my brother John; this to my Lord of Westmoreland.

*Exit Bardolph*

Go, Peto, to horse, to horse; for thou and I have thirty miles to ride yet ere dinner time.

*Exit Peto*

Jack, meet me to-morrow in the temple hall at two o'clock in the afternoon.

There shalt thou know thy charge; and there receive Money and order for their furniture.

The land is burning; Percy stands on high;  
And either we or they must lower lie.

*Exit PRINCE HENRY*

**FALSTAFF**

Rare words! brave world! Hostess, my breakfast, come!  
O, I could wish this tavern were my drum!

*Exit*



[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.

*Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, and DOUGLAS*

### HOTSPUR

Well said, my noble Scot: if speaking truth  
In this fine age were not thought flattery,  
Such attribution should the Douglas have,  
As not a soldier of this season's stamp  
Should go so general current through the world.  
By God, I cannot flatter; I do defy  
The tongues of soothers; but a braver place  
In my heart's love hath no man than yourself:  
Nay, task me to my word; approve me, lord.

### EARL OF DOUGLAS

Thou art the king of honour:  
No man so potent breathes upon the ground  
But I will beard him.

### HOTSPUR

Do so, and 'tis well.

*Enter a Messenger with letters*

What letters hast thou there?--I can but thank you.

### Messenger

These letters come from your father.

### HOTSPUR

Letters from him! why comes he not himself?

**Messenger**

He cannot come, my lord; he is grievous sick.

**HOTSPUR**

'Zounds! how has he the leisure to be sick  
In such a rustling time? Who leads his power?  
Under whose government come they along?

**Messenger**

His letters bear his mind, not I, my lord.

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

I prithee, tell me, doth he keep his bed?

**Messenger**

He did, my lord, four days ere I set forth;  
And at the time of my departure thence  
He was much fear'd by his physicians.

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

I would the state of time had first been whole  
Ere he by sickness had been visited:  
His health was never better worth than now.

**HOTSPUR**

Sick now! droop now! this sickness doth infect  
The very life-blood of our enterprise;  
'Tis catching hither, even to our camp.  
He writes me here, that inward sickness--  
And that his friends by deputation could not  
So soon be drawn, nor did he think it meet  
To lay so dangerous and dear a trust

On any soul removed but on his own.  
Yet doth he give us bold advertisement,  
That with our small conjunction we should on,  
To see how fortune is disposed to us;  
For, as he writes, there is no quailing now.  
Because the king is certainly possess'd  
Of all our purposes. What say you to it?

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Your father's sickness is a main to us.

## **HOTSPUR**

A perilous gash, a very limb lopp'd off:  
And yet, in faith, it is not; his present want  
Seems more than we shall find it: were it good  
To set the exact wealth of all our states  
All at one cast? to set so rich a main  
On the nice hazard of one doubtful hour?  
It were not good; for therein should we read  
The very bottom and the soul of hope,  
The very list, the very utmost bound  
Of all our fortunes.

## **EARL OF DOUGLAS**

'Faith, and so we should;  
Where now remains a sweet reversion:  
We may boldly spend upon the hope of what  
Is to come in:  
A comfort of retirement lives in this.

## **HOTSPUR**

A rendezvous, a home to fly unto.  
If that the devil and mischance look big  
Upon the maidenhead of our affairs.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

But yet I would your father had been here.

The quality and hair of our attempt  
Brooks no division: it will be thought  
By some, that know not why he is away,  
That wisdom, loyalty and mere dislike  
Of our proceedings kept the earl from hence:  
And think how such an apprehension  
May turn the tide of fearful faction  
And breed a kind of question in our cause;  
For well you know we of the offering side  
Must keep aloof from strict arbitrement,  
And stop all sight-holes, every loop from whence  
The eye of reason may pry in upon us:  
This absence of your father's draws a curtain,  
That shows the ignorant a kind of fear  
Before not dreamt of.

## **HOTSPUR**

You strain too far.  
I rather of his absence make this use:  
It lends a lustre and more great opinion,  
A larger dare to our great enterprise,  
Than if the earl were here; for men must think,  
If we without his help can make a head  
To push against a kingdom, with his help  
We shall o'erturn it topsy-turvy down.  
Yet all goes well, yet all our joints are whole.

## **EARL OF DOUGLAS**

As heart can think: there is not such a word  
Spoke of in Scotland as this term of fear.

*Enter SIR RICHARD VERNON*

## **HOTSPUR**

My cousin Vernon, welcome, by my soul.

## **VERNON**

Pray God my news be worth a welcome, lord.

The Earl of Westmoreland, seven thousand strong,  
Is marching hitherwards; with him Prince John.

## **HOTSPUR**

No harm: what more?

## **VERNON**

And further, I have learn'd,  
The king himself in person is set forth,  
Or hitherwards intended speedily,  
With strong and mighty preparation.

## **HOTSPUR**

He shall be welcome too. Where is his son,  
The nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales,  
And his comrades, that daff'd the world aside,  
And bid it pass?

## **VERNON**

All furnish'd, all in arms;  
All plumed like estridges that with the wind  
Baited like eagles having lately bathed;  
Glittering in golden coats, like images;  
As full of spirit as the month of May,  
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer;  
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.  
I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,  
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd  
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,  
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,  
As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds,  
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus  
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

## **HOTSPUR**

No more, no more: worse than the sun in March,  
This praise doth nourish agues. Let them come:

They come like sacrifices in their trim,  
And to the fire-eyed maid of smoky war  
All hot and bleeding will we offer them:  
The mailed Mars shall on his altar sit  
Up to the ears in blood. I am on fire  
To hear this rich reprisal is so nigh  
And yet not ours. Come, let me taste my horse,  
Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt  
Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales:  
Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,  
Meet and ne'er part till one drop down a corse.  
O that Glendower were come!

## **VERNON**

There is more news:  
I learn'd in Worcester, as I rode along,  
He cannot draw his power this fourteen days.

## **EARL OF DOUGLAS**

That's the worst tidings that I hear of yet.

## **WORCESTER**

Ay, by my faith, that bears a frosty sound.

## **HOTSPUR**

What may the king's whole battle reach unto?

## **VERNON**

To thirty thousand.

## **HOTSPUR**

Forty let it be:  
My father and Glendower being both away,  
The powers of us may serve so great a day  
Come, let us take a muster speedily:  
Doomsday is near; die all, die merrily.

## EARL OF DOUGLAS

Talk not of dying: I am out of fear  
Of death or death's hand for this one-half year.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A public road near Coventry.

*Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH*

**FALSTAFF**

Bardolph, get thee before to Coventry; fill me a bottle of sack: our soldiers shall march through; we'll to Sutton Co'fil' tonight.

**BARDOLPH**

Will you give me money, captain?

**FALSTAFF**

Lay out, lay out.

**BARDOLPH**

This bottle makes an angel.

**FALSTAFF**

An if it do, take it for thy labour; and if it make twenty, take them all; I'll answer the coinage. Bid my lieutenant Peto meet me at town's end.

**BARDOLPH**

I will, captain: farewell.

*Exit*

**FALSTAFF**

If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I am a soused gurnet. I have misused the king's press damnably. I have got, in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers, three hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but good house-holders, yeoman's sons; inquire me out contracted bachelors, such as had been asked twice on the banns; such a commodity of warm slaves, as had as lieve hear the devil as a drum; such as fear the report of a caliver worse than a struck fowl or a hurt wild-duck. I pressed me none but such toasts-and-butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins' heads, and they have bought out their services; and now my whole charge consists of ancients, corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen of companies, slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked his sores; and such as indeed were never soldiers, but discarded unjust serving-men, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters and ostlers trade-fallen, the cankers of a calm world and a long peace, ten times more dishonourable ragged than an old faced ancient: and such have I, to fill up the rooms of them that have bought out their services, that you would think that I had a hundred and fifty tattered prodigals lately come from swine-keeping, from eating draff and husks. A mad fellow met me on the way and told me I had unloaded all the gibbets and pressed the dead bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat: nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they had gyves on; for indeed I had the most of them out of prison. There's but a shirt and a half in all my company; and the half shirt is two napkins tacked together and thrown over the shoulders like an herald's coat without sleeves; and the shirt, to say the truth, stolen from my host at Saint Alban's, or the red-nose innkeeper of Daventry. But that's all one; they'll find linen enough on every hedge.

*Enter the PRINCE and WESTMORELAND*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

How now, blown Jack! how now, quilt!

## **FALSTAFF**

What, Hal! how now, mad wag! what a devil dost thou in Warwickshire? My good Lord of Westmoreland, I cry you mercy: I thought your honour had already been at Shrewsbury.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Faith, Sir John, 'tis more than time that I were there, and you too; but my powers are there already. The king, I can tell you, looks for us all: we must away all night.

## **FALSTAFF**

Tut, never fear me: I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I think, to steal cream indeed, for thy theft hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose fellows are these that come after?

## **FALSTAFF**

Mine, Hal, mine.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I did never see such pitiful rascals.

## **FALSTAFF**

Tut, tut; good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better:

tush, man, mortal men, mortal men.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare, too beggarly.

## **FALSTAFF**

'Faith, for their poverty, I know not where they had that; and for their bareness, I am sure they never learned that of me.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

No I'll be sworn; unless you call three fingers on the ribs bare. But, sirrah, make haste: Percy is already in the field.

## **FALSTAFF**

What, is the king encamped?

## **WESTMORELAND**

He is, Sir John: I fear we shall stay too long.

## **FALSTAFF**

Well,  
To the latter end of a fray and the beginning of a feast  
Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The rebel camp near Shrewsbury.

*Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, DOUGLAS, and VERNON*

**HOTSPUR**

We'll fight with him to-night.

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

It may not be.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

You give him then the advantage.

**VERNON**

Not a whit.

**HOTSPUR**

Why say you so? looks he not for supply?

**VERNON**

So do we.

**HOTSPUR**

His is certain, ours is doubtful.

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

Good cousin, be advised; stir not tonight.

**VERNON**

Do not, my lord.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

You do not counsel well:  
You speak it out of fear and cold heart.

**VERNON**

Do me no slander, Douglas: by my life,  
And I dare well maintain it with my life,  
If well-respected honour bid me on,  
I hold as little counsel with weak fear  
As you, my lord, or any Scot that this day lives:  
Let it be seen to-morrow in the battle  
Which of us fears.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

Yea, or to-night.

**VERNON**

Content.

**HOTSPUR**

To-night, say I.

**VERNON**

Come, come it nay not be. I wonder much,  
Being men of such great leading as you are,  
That you foresee not what impediments  
Drag back our expedition: certain horse  
Of my cousin Vernon's are not yet come up:  
Your uncle Worcester's horse came but today;  
And now their pride and mettle is asleep,  
Their courage with hard labour tame and dull,

That not a horse is half the half of himself.

## **HOTSPUR**

So are the horses of the enemy  
In general, journey-bated and brought low:  
The better part of ours are full of rest.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

The number of the king exceedeth ours:  
For God's sake, cousin, stay till all come in.

*The trumpet sounds a parley*

*Enter SIR WALTER BLUNT*

## **SIR WALTER BLUNT**

I come with gracious offers from the king,  
if you vouchsafe me hearing and respect.

## **HOTSPUR**

Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt; and would to God  
You were of our determination!  
Some of us love you well; and even those some  
Envy your great deservings and good name,  
Because you are not of our quality,  
But stand against us like an enemy.

## **SIR WALTER BLUNT**

And God defend but still I should stand so,  
So long as out of limit and true rule  
You stand against anointed majesty.  
But to my charge. The king hath sent to know  
The nature of your griefs, and whereupon  
You conjure from the breast of civil peace  
Such bold hostility, teaching his duteous land  
Audacious cruelty. If that the king  
Have any way your good deserts forgot,

Which he confesseth to be manifold,  
He bids you name your griefs; and with all speed  
You shall have your desires with interest  
And pardon absolute for yourself and these  
Herein misled by your suggestion.

## **HOTSPUR**

The king is kind; and well we know the king  
Knows at what time to promise, when to pay.  
My father and my uncle and myself  
Did give him that same royalty he wears;  
And when he was not six and twenty strong,  
Sick in the world's regard, wretched and low,  
A poor unminded outlaw sneaking home,  
My father gave him welcome to the shore;  
And when he heard him swear and vow to God  
He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,  
To sue his livery and beg his peace,  
With tears of innocency and terms of zeal,  
My father, in kind heart and pity moved,  
Swore him assistance and perform'd it too.  
Now when the lords and barons of the realm  
Perceived Northumberland did lean to him,  
The more and less came in with cap and knee;  
Met him in boroughs, cities, villages,  
Attended him on bridges, stood in lanes,  
Laid gifts before him, proffer'd him their oaths,  
Gave him their heirs, as pages follow'd him  
Even at the heels in golden multitudes.  
He presently, as greatness knows itself,  
Steps me a little higher than his vow  
Made to my father, while his blood was poor,  
Upon the naked shore at Ravenspurgh;  
And now, forsooth, takes on him to reform  
Some certain edicts and some strait decrees  
That lie too heavy on the commonwealth,  
Cries out upon abuses, seems to weep  
Over his country's wrongs; and by this face,  
This seeming brow of justice, did he win  
The hearts of all that he did angle for;  
Proceeded further; cut me off the heads  
Of all the favourites that the absent king



In deputation left behind him here,  
When he was personal in the Irish war.

**SIR WALTER BLUNT**

Tut, I came not to hear this.

**HOTSPUR**

Then to the point.  
In short time after, he deposed the king;  
Soon after that, deprived him of his life;  
And in the neck of that, task'd the whole state:  
To make that worse, suffer'd his kinsman March,  
Who is, if every owner were well placed,  
Indeed his king, to be engaged in Wales,  
There without ransom to lie forfeited;  
Disgraced me in my happy victories,  
Sought to entrap me by intelligence;  
Rated mine uncle from the council-board;  
In rage dismiss'd my father from the court;  
Broke oath on oath, committed wrong on wrong,  
And in conclusion drove us to seek out  
This head of safety; and withal to pry  
Into his title, the which we find  
Too indirect for long continuance.

**SIR WALTER BLUNT**

Shall I return this answer to the king?

**HOTSPUR**

Not so, Sir Walter: we'll withdraw awhile.  
Go to the king; and let there be impawn'd  
Some surety for a safe return again,  
And in the morning early shall my uncle  
Bring him our purposes: and so farewell.

**SIR WALTER BLUNT**

I would you would accept of grace and love.

## **HOTSPUR**

And may be so we shall.

## **SIR WALTER BLUNT**

Pray God you do.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. York. The ARCHBISHOP'S palace.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK and SIR MICHAEL*

### ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Hie, good Sir Michael; bear this sealed brief  
With winged haste to the lord marshal;  
This to my cousin Scroop, and all the rest  
To whom they are directed. If you knew  
How much they do to import, you would make haste.

### SIR MICHAEL

My good lord,  
I guess their tenor.

### ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Like enough you do.  
To-morrow, good Sir Michael, is a day  
Wherein the fortune of ten thousand men  
Must bide the touch; for, sir, at Shrewsbury,  
As I am truly given to understand,  
The king with mighty and quick-raised power  
Meets with Lord Harry: and, I fear, Sir Michael,  
What with the sickness of Northumberland,  
Whose power was in the first proportion,  
And what with Owen Glendower's absence thence,  
Who with them was a rated sinew too  
And comes not in, o'er-ruled by prophecies,  
I fear the power of Percy is too weak  
To wage an instant trial with the king.

### SIR MICHAEL

Why, my good lord, you need not fear;  
There is Douglas and Lord Mortimer.

**ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

No, Mortimer is not there.

**SIR MICHAEL**

But there is Mordake, Vernon, Lord Harry Percy,  
And there is my Lord of Worcester and a head  
Of gallant warriors, noble gentlemen.

**ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

And so there is: but yet the king hath drawn  
The special head of all the land together:  
The Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster,  
The noble Westmoreland and warlike Blunt;  
And moe corrivals and dear men  
Of estimation and command in arms.

**SIR MICHAEL**

Doubt not, my lord, they shall be well opposed.

**ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

I hope no less, yet needful 'tis to fear;  
And, to prevent the worst, Sir Michael, speed:  
For if Lord Percy thrive not, ere the king  
Dismiss his power, he means to visit us,  
For he hath heard of our confederacy,  
And 'tis but wisdom to make strong against him:  
Therefore make haste. I must go write again  
To other friends; and so farewell, Sir Michael.

*Exeunt*

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. KING HENRY IV's camp near Shrewsbury.

*Enter KING HENRY, PRINCE HENRY, Lord John of LANCASTER, EARL OF WESTMORELAND, SIR WALTER BLUNT, and FALSTAFF*

### KING HENRY IV

How bloodily the sun begins to peer  
Above yon busky hill! the day looks pale  
At his distemperature.

### PRINCE HENRY

The southern wind  
Doth play the trumpet to his purposes,  
And by his hollow whistling in the leaves  
Foretells a tempest and a blustering day.

### KING HENRY IV

Then with the losers let it sympathize,  
For nothing can seem foul to those that win.

*The trumpet sounds*

*Enter WORCESTER and VERNON*

How now, my Lord of Worcester! 'tis not well  
That you and I should meet upon such terms  
As now we meet. You have deceived our trust,  
And made us doff our easy robes of peace,  
To crush our old limbs in ungentle steel:  
This is not well, my lord, this is not well.  
What say you to it? will you again unknit  
This curlish knot of all-abhorred war?  
And move in that obedient orb again

Where you did give a fair and natural light,  
And be no more an exhaled meteor,  
A prodigy of fear and a portent  
Of broached mischief to the unborn times?

### **EARL OF WORCESTER**

Hear me, my liege:  
For mine own part, I could be well content  
To entertain the lag-end of my life  
With quiet hours; for I do protest,  
I have not sought the day of this dislike.

### **KING HENRY IV**

You have not sought it! how comes it, then?

### **FALSTAFF**

Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.

### **PRINCE HENRY**

Peace, chewet, peace!

### **EARL OF WORCESTER**

It pleased your majesty to turn your looks  
Of favour from myself and all our house;  
And yet I must remember you, my lord,  
We were the first and dearest of your friends.  
For you my staff of office did I break  
In Richard's time; and posted day and night  
to meet you on the way, and kiss your hand,  
When yet you were in place and in account  
Nothing so strong and fortunate as I.  
It was myself, my brother and his son,  
That brought you home and boldly did outdare  
The dangers of the time. You swore to us,  
And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,  
That you did nothing purpose 'gainst the state;  
Nor claim no further than your new-fall'n right,

The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster:  
To this we swore our aid. But in short space  
It rain'd down fortune showering on your head;  
And such a flood of greatness fell on you,  
What with our help, what with the absent king,  
What with the injuries of a wanton time,  
The seeming sufferances that you had borne,  
And the contrarious winds that held the king  
So long in his unlucky Irish wars  
That all in England did repute him dead:  
And from this swarm of fair advantages  
You took occasion to be quickly woo'd  
To gripe the general sway into your hand;  
Forget your oath to us at Doncaster;  
And being fed by us you used us so  
As that ungentle hull, the cuckoo's bird,  
Useth the sparrow; did oppress our nest;  
Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk  
That even our love durst not come near your sight  
For fear of swallowing; but with nimble wing  
We were enforced, for safety sake, to fly  
Out of sight and raise this present head;  
Whereby we stand opposed by such means  
As you yourself have forged against yourself  
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,  
And violation of all faith and troth  
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.

## **KING HENRY IV**

These things indeed you have articulate,  
Proclaim'd at market-crosses, read in churches,  
To face the garment of rebellion  
With some fine colour that may please the eye  
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,  
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news  
Of hurlyburly innovation:  
And never yet did insurrection want  
Such water-colours to impaint his cause;  
Nor moody beggars, starving for a time  
Of pellmell havoc and confusion.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

In both your armies there is many a soul  
Shall pay full dearly for this encounter,  
If once they join in trial. Tell your nephew,  
The Prince of Wales doth join with all the world  
In praise of Henry Percy: by my hopes,  
This present enterprise set off his head,  
I do not think a braver gentleman,  
More active-valiant or more valiant-young,  
More daring or more bold, is now alive  
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.  
For my part, I may speak it to my shame,  
I have a truant been to chivalry;  
And so I hear he doth account me too;  
Yet this before my father's majesty--  
I am content that he shall take the odds  
Of his great name and estimation,  
And will, to save the blood on either side,  
Try fortune with him in a single fight.

#### **KING HENRY IV**

And, Prince of Wales, so dare we venture thee,  
Albeit considerations infinite  
Do make against it. No, good Worcester, no,  
We love our people well; even those we love  
That are misled upon your cousin's part;  
And, will they take the offer of our grace,  
Both he and they and you, every man  
Shall be my friend again and I'll be his:  
So tell your cousin, and bring me word  
What he will do: but if he will not yield,  
Rebuke and dread correction wait on us  
And they shall do their office. So, be gone;  
We will not now be troubled with reply:  
We offer fair; take it advisedly.

*Exeunt WORCESTER and VERNON*

#### **PRINCE HENRY**

It will not be accepted, on my life:



The Douglas and the Hotspur both together  
Are confident against the world in arms.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Hence, therefore, every leader to his charge;  
For, on their answer, will we set on them:  
And God befriend us, as our cause is just!

*Exeunt all but PRINCE HENRY and FALSTAFF*

## **FALSTAFF**

Hal, if thou see me down in the battle and bestride  
me, so; 'tis a point of friendship.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friendship.  
Say thy prayers, and farewell.

## **FALSTAFF**

I would 'twere bed-time, Hal, and all well.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Why, thou owest God a death.

*Exit PRINCE HENRY*

## **FALSTAFF**

'Tis not due yet; I would be loath to pay him before  
his day. What need I be so forward with him that  
calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks  
me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I  
come on? how then? Can honour set to a leg? no: or  
an arm? no: or take away the grief of a wound? no.  
Honour hath no skill in surgery, then? no. What is  
honour? a word. What is in that word honour? what

is that honour? air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it?  
he that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? no.  
Doth he hear it? no. 'Tis insensible, then. Yea,  
to the dead. But will it not live with the living?  
no. Why? detraction will not suffer it. Therefore  
I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon: and so  
ends my catechism.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The rebel camp.

*Enter WORCESTER and VERNON*

### EARL OF WORCESTER

O, no, my nephew must not know, Sir Richard,  
The liberal and kind offer of the king.

### VERNON

'Twere best he did.

### EARL OF WORCESTER

Then are we all undone.  
It is not possible, it cannot be,  
The king should keep his word in loving us;  
He will suspect us still and find a time  
To punish this offence in other faults:  
Suspicion all our lives shall be stuck full of eyes;  
For treason is but trusted like the fox,  
Who, ne'er so tame, so cherish'd and lock'd up,  
Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.  
Look how we can, or sad or merrily,  
Interpretation will misquote our looks,  
And we shall feed like oxen at a stall,  
The better cherish'd, still the nearer death.  
My nephew's trespass may be well forgot;  
It hath the excuse of youth and heat of blood,  
And an adopted name of privilege,  
A hair-brain'd Hotspur, govern'd by a spleen:  
All his offences live upon my head  
And on his father's; we did train him on,  
And, his corruption being ta'en from us,  
We, as the spring of all, shall pay for all.

Therefore, good cousin, let not Harry know,  
In any case, the offer of the king.

**VERNON**

Deliver what you will; I'll say 'tis so.  
Here comes your cousin.

*Enter HOTSPUR and DOUGLAS*

**HOTSPUR**

My uncle is return'd:  
Deliver up my Lord of Westmoreland.  
Uncle, what news?

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

The king will bid you battle presently.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

Defy him by the Lord of Westmoreland.

**HOTSPUR**

Lord Douglas, go you and tell him so.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

Marry, and shall, and very willingly.

*Exit*

**EARL OF WORCESTER**

There is no seeming mercy in the king.

**HOTSPUR**

Did you beg any? God forbid!

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

I told him gently of our grievances,  
Of his oath-breaking; which he mended thus,  
By now forswearing that he is forsworn:  
He calls us rebels, traitors; and will scourge  
With haughty arms this hateful name in us.

*Re-enter the EARL OF DOUGLAS*

## **EARL OF DOUGLAS**

Arm, gentlemen; to arms! for I have thrown  
A brave defiance in King Henry's teeth,  
And Westmoreland, that was engaged, did bear it;  
Which cannot choose but bring him quickly on.

## **EARL OF WORCESTER**

The Prince of Wales stepp'd forth before the king,  
And, nephew, challenged you to single fight.

## **HOTSPUR**

O, would the quarrel lay upon our heads,  
And that no man might draw short breath today  
But I and Harry Monmouth! Tell me, tell me,  
How show'd his tasking? seem'd it in contempt?

## **VERNON**

No, by my soul; I never in my life  
Did hear a challenge urged more modestly,  
Unless a brother should a brother dare  
To gentle exercise and proof of arms.  
He gave you all the duties of a man;  
Trimm'd up your praises with a princely tongue,  
Spoke to your deservings like a chronicle,  
Making you ever better than his praise  
By still dispraising praise valued in you;  
And, which became him like a prince indeed,

He made a blushing cital of himself;  
And chid his truant youth with such a grace  
As if he master'd there a double spirit.  
Of teaching and of learning instantly.  
There did he pause: but let me tell the world,  
If he outlive the envy of this day,  
England did never owe so sweet a hope,  
So much misconstrued in his wantonness.

## **HOTSPUR**

Cousin, I think thou art enamoured  
On his follies: never did I hear  
Of any prince so wild a libertine.  
But be he as he will, yet once ere night  
I will embrace him with a soldier's arm,  
That he shall shrink under my courtesy.  
Arm, arm with speed: and, fellows, soldiers, friends,  
Better consider what you have to do  
Than I, that have not well the gift of tongue,  
Can lift your blood up with persuasion.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

My lord, here are letters for you.

## **HOTSPUR**

I cannot read them now.  
O gentlemen, the time of life is short!  
To spend that shortness basely were too long,  
If life did ride upon a dial's point,  
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.  
An if we live, we live to tread on kings;  
If die, brave death, when princes die with us!  
Now, for our consciences, the arms are fair,  
When the intent of bearing them is just.

*Enter another Messenger*

## Messenger

My lord, prepare; the king comes on apace.

## HOTSPUR

I thank him, that he cuts me from my tale,  
For I profess not talking; only this--  
Let each man do his best: and here draw I  
A sword, whose temper I intend to stain  
With the best blood that I can meet withal  
In the adventure of this perilous day.  
Now, Esperance! Percy! and set on.  
Sound all the lofty instruments of war,  
And by that music let us all embrace;  
For, heaven to earth, some of us never shall  
A second time do such a courtesy.

*The trumpets sound. They embrace, and exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Plain between the camps.

*KING HENRY enters with his power. Alarum to the battle. Then enter DOUGLAS and SIR WALTER BLUNT*

### SIR WALTER BLUNT

What is thy name, that in the battle thus  
Thou crossest me? what honour dost thou seek  
Upon my head?

### EARL OF DOUGLAS

Know then, my name is Douglas;  
And I do haunt thee in the battle thus  
Because some tell me that thou art a king.

### SIR WALTER BLUNT

They tell thee true.

### EARL OF DOUGLAS

The Lord of Stafford dear to-day hath bought  
Thy likeness, for instead of thee, King Harry,  
This sword hath ended him: so shall it thee,  
Unless thou yield thee as my prisoner.

### SIR WALTER BLUNT

I was not born a yielder, thou proud Scot;  
And thou shalt find a king that will revenge  
Lord Stafford's death.

*They fight. DOUGLAS kills SIR WALTER BLUNT. Enter HOTSPUR*



**HOTSPUR**

O Douglas, hadst thou fought at Holmedon thus,  
never had triumph'd upon a Scot.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

All's done, all's won; here breathless lies the king.

**HOTSPUR**

Where?

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

Here.

**HOTSPUR**

This, Douglas? no: I know this face full well:  
A gallant knight he was, his name was Blunt;  
Semblably furnish'd like the king himself.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

A fool go with thy soul, whither it goes!  
A borrow'd title hast thou bought too dear:  
Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a king?

**HOTSPUR**

The king hath many marching in his coats.

**EARL OF DOUGLAS**

Now, by my sword, I will kill all his coats;  
I'll murder all his wardrobe, piece by piece,  
Until I meet the king.

**HOTSPUR**

Up, and away!  
Our soldiers stand full fairly for the day.

*Exeunt*

*Alarum. Enter FALSTAFF, solus*

**FALSTAFF**

Though I could 'scape shot-free at London, I fear  
the shot here; here's no scoring but upon the pate.  
Soft! who are you? Sir Walter Blunt: there's honour  
for you! here's no vanity! I am as hot as moulten  
lead, and as heavy too: God keep lead out of me! I  
need no more weight than mine own bowels. I have  
led my ragamuffins where they are peppered: there's  
not three of my hundred and fifty left alive; and  
they are for the town's end, to beg during life.  
But who comes here?

*Enter PRINCE HENRY*

**PRINCE HENRY**

What, stand'st thou idle here? lend me thy sword:  
Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff  
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,  
Whose deaths are yet unrevenged: I prithee,  
lend me thy sword.

**FALSTAFF**

O Hal, I prithee, give me leave to breathe awhile.  
Turk Gregory never did such deeds in arms as I have  
done this day. I have paid Percy, I have made him sure.

**PRINCE HENRY**

He is, indeed; and living to kill thee. I prithee,  
lend me thy sword.

**FALSTAFF**

Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou get'st not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Give it to me: what, is it in the case?

**FALSTAFF**

Ay, Hal; 'tis hot, 'tis hot; there's that will sack a city.

*PRINCE HENRY draws it out, and finds it to be a bottle of sack*

**PRINCE HENRY**

What, is it a time to jest and dally now?

*He throws the bottle at him. Exit*

**FALSTAFF**

Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. If he do come in my way, so: if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath: give me life: which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlooked for, and there's an end.

*Exit FALSTAFF*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

*Alarum. Excursions. Enter PRINCE HENRY, LORD JOHN OF LANCASTER, and EARL OF WESTMORELAND*

### KING HENRY IV

I prithee,  
Harry, withdraw thyself; thou bleed'st too much.  
Lord John of Lancaster, go you with him.

### LANCASTER

Not I, my lord, unless I did bleed too.

### PRINCE HENRY

I beseech your majesty, make up,  
Lest your retirement do amaze your friends.

### KING HENRY IV

I will do so.  
My Lord of Westmoreland, lead him to his tent.

### WESTMORELAND

Come, my lord, I'll lead you to your tent.

### PRINCE HENRY

Lead me, my lord? I do not need your help:  
And God forbid a shallow scratch should drive  
The Prince of Wales from such a field as this,  
Where stain'd nobility lies trodden on,  
and rebels' arms triumph in massacres!

## **LANCASTER**

We breathe too long: come, cousin Westmoreland,  
Our duty this way lies; for God's sake come.

*Exeunt LANCASTER and WESTMORELAND*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

By God, thou hast deceived me, Lancaster;  
I did not think thee lord of such a spirit:  
Before, I loved thee as a brother, John;  
But now, I do respect thee as my soul.

## **KING HENRY IV**

I saw him hold Lord Percy at the point  
With lustier maintenance than I did look for  
Of such an ungrown warrior.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

O, this boy  
Lends mettle to us all!

*Exit*

*Enter DOUGLAS*

## **EARL OF DOUGLAS**

Another king! they grow like Hydra's heads:  
I am the Douglas, fatal to all those  
That wear those colours on them: what art thou,  
That counterfeit'st the person of a king?

## **KING HENRY IV**

The king himself; who, Douglas, grieves at heart  
So many of his shadows thou hast met  
And not the very king. I have two boys

Seek Percy and thyself about the field:  
But, seeing thou fall'st on me so luckily,  
I will assay thee: so, defend thyself.

## **EARL OF DOUGLAS**

I fear thou art another counterfeit;  
And yet, in faith, thou bear'st thee like a king:  
But mine I am sure thou art, whoe'er thou be,  
And thus I win thee.

*They fight. KING HENRY being in danger, PRINCE HENRY enters*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou art like  
Never to hold it up again! the spirits  
Of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blunt, are in my arms:  
It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee;  
Who never promiseth but he means to pay.

*They fight: DOUGLAS flies*

Cheerly, my lord how fares your grace?  
Sir Nicholas Gawsey hath for succor sent,  
And so hath Clifton: I'll to Clifton straight.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Stay, and breathe awhile:  
Thou hast redeem'd thy lost opinion,  
And show'd thou makest some tender of my life,  
In this fair rescue thou hast brought to me.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

O God! they did me too much injury  
That ever said I hearken'd for your death.  
If it were so, I might have let alone  
The insulting hand of Douglas over you,  
Which would have been as speedy in your end  
As all the poisonous potions in the world

And saved the treacherous labour of your son.

**KING HENRY IV**

Make up to Clifton: I'll to Sir Nicholas Gawsey.

*Exit*

*Enter HOTSPUR*

**HOTSPUR**

If I mistake not, thou art Harry Monmouth.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Thou speak'st as if I would deny my name.

**HOTSPUR**

My name is Harry Percy.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Why, then I see  
A very valiant rebel of the name.  
I am the Prince of Wales; and think not, Percy,  
To share with me in glory any more:  
Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere;  
Nor can one England brook a double reign,  
Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales.

**HOTSPUR**

Nor shall it, Harry; for the hour is come  
To end the one of us; and would to God  
Thy name in arms were now as great as mine!

**PRINCE HENRY**

I'll make it greater ere I part from thee;

And all the budding honours on thy crest  
I'll crop, to make a garland for my head.

## **HOTSPUR**

I can no longer brook thy vanities.

*They fight*

*Enter FALSTAFF*

## **FALSTAFF**

Well said, Hal! to it Hal! Nay, you shall find no  
boy's play here, I can tell you.

*Re-enter DOUGLAS; he fights with FALSTAFF, who falls down as if he were dead, and  
exit DOUGLAS. HOTSPUR is wounded, and falls*

## **HOTSPUR**

O, Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my youth!  
I better brook the loss of brittle life  
Than those proud titles thou hast won of me;  
They wound my thoughts worse than sword my flesh:  
But thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool;  
And time, that takes survey of all the world,  
Must have a stop. O, I could prophesy,  
But that the earthy and cold hand of death  
Lies on my tongue: no, Percy, thou art dust  
And food for--

*Dies*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

For worms, brave Percy: fare thee well, great heart!  
Ill-weaved ambition, how much art thou shrunk!  
When that this body did contain a spirit,  
A kingdom for it was too small a bound;  
But now two paces of the vilest earth  
Is room enough: this earth that bears thee dead



Bears not alive so stout a gentleman.  
If thou wert sensible of courtesy,  
I should not make so dear a show of zeal:  
But let my favours hide thy mangled face;  
And, even in thy behalf, I'll thank myself  
For doing these fair rites of tenderness.  
Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to heaven!  
Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,  
But not remember'd in thy epitaph!

*He spieth FALSTAFF on the ground*

What, old acquaintance! could not all this flesh  
Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!  
I could have better spared a better man:  
O, I should have a heavy miss of thee,  
If I were much in love with vanity!  
Death hath not struck so fat a deer to-day,  
Though many dearer, in this bloody fray.  
Embowell'd will I see thee by and by:  
Till then in blood by noble Percy lie.

*Exit PRINCE HENRY*

## **FALSTAFF**

[Rising up] Embowelled! if thou embowel me to-day,  
I'll give you leave to powder me and eat me too  
to-morrow. 'Sblood,'twas time to counterfeit, or  
that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too.  
Counterfeit? I lie, I am no counterfeit: to die,  
is to be a counterfeit; for he is but the  
counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man:  
but to counterfeit dying, when a man thereby  
liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and  
perfect image of life indeed. The better part of  
valour is discretion; in the which better part I  
have saved my life.'Zounds, I am afraid of this  
gunpowder Percy, though he be dead: how, if he  
should counterfeit too and rise? by my faith, I am  
afraid he would prove the better counterfeit.  
Therefore I'll make him sure; yea, and I'll swear I

killed him. Why may not he rise as well as I?  
Nothing confutes me but eyes, and nobody sees me.  
Therefore, sirrah,

*Stabbing him*

with a new wound in your thigh, come you along with me.

*Takes up HOTSPUR on his back*

*Re-enter PRINCE HENRY and LORD JOHN OF LANCASTER*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Come, brother John; full bravely hast thou flesh'd  
Thy maiden sword.

## **LANCASTER**

But, soft! whom have we here?  
Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I did; I saw him dead,  
Breathless and bleeding on the ground. Art  
thou alive?  
Or is it fantasy that plays upon our eyesight?  
I prithee, speak; we will not trust our eyes  
Without our ears: thou art not what thou seem'st.

## **FALSTAFF**

No, that's certain; I am not a double man: but if I  
be not Jack Falstaff, then am I a Jack. There is Percy:

*Throwing the body down*

if your father will do me any honour, so; if not, let  
him kill the next Percy himself. I look to be either  
earl or duke, I can assure you.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Why, Percy I killed myself and saw thee dead.

## **FALSTAFF**

Didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying! I grant you I was down and out of breath; and so was he: but we rose both at an instant and fought a long hour by Shrewsbury clock. If I may be believed, so; if not, let them that should reward valour bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh: if the man were alive and would deny it, 'zounds, I would make him eat a piece of my sword.

## **LANCASTER**

This is the strangest tale that ever I heard.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

This is the strangest fellow, brother John.  
Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back:  
For my part, if a lie may do thee grace,  
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.

*A retreat is sounded*

The trumpet sounds retreat; the day is ours.  
Come, brother, let us to the highest of the field,  
To see what friends are living, who are dead.

*Exeunt PRINCE HENRY and LANCASTER*

## **FALSTAFF**

I'll follow, as they say, for reward. He that rewards me, God reward him! If I do grow great, I'll grow less; for I'll purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly as a nobleman should do.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the field.

*The trumpets sound. Enter KING HENRY IV, PRINCE HENRY, LORD JOHN LANCASTER, EARL OF WESTMORELAND, with WORCESTER and VERNON prisoners*

### KING HENRY IV

Thus ever did rebellion find rebuke.  
Ill-spirited Worcester! did not we send grace,  
Pardon and terms of love to all of you?  
And wouldst thou turn our offers contrary?  
Misuse the tenor of thy kinsman's trust?  
Three knights upon our party slain to-day,  
A noble earl and many a creature else  
Had been alive this hour,  
If like a Christian thou hadst truly borne  
Betwixt our armies true intelligence.

### EARL OF WORCESTER

What I have done my safety urged me to;  
And I embrace this fortune patiently,  
Since not to be avoided it falls on me.

### KING HENRY IV

Bear Worcester to the death and Vernon too:  
Other offenders we will pause upon.

*Exeunt WORCESTER and VERNON, guarded*

How goes the field?

### PRINCE HENRY

The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when he saw

The fortune of the day quite turn'd from him,  
The noble Percy slain, and all his men  
Upon the foot of fear, fled with the rest;  
And falling from a hill, he was so bruised  
That the pursuers took him. At my tent  
The Douglas is; and I beseech your grace  
I may dispose of him.

#### **KING HENRY IV**

With all my heart.

#### **PRINCE HENRY**

Then, brother John of Lancaster, to you  
This honourable bounty shall belong:  
Go to the Douglas, and deliver him  
Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free:  
His valour shown upon our crests to-day  
Hath taught us how to cherish such high deeds  
Even in the bosom of our adversaries.

#### **LANCASTER**

I thank your grace for this high courtesy,  
Which I shall give away immediately.

#### **KING HENRY IV**

Then this remains, that we divide our power.  
You, son John, and my cousin Westmoreland  
Towards York shall bend you with your dearest speed,  
To meet Northumberland and the prelate Scroop,  
Who, as we hear, are busily in arms:  
Myself and you, son Harry, will towards Wales,  
To fight with Glendower and the Earl of March.  
Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway,  
Meeting the cheque of such another day:  
And since this business so fair is done,  
Let us not leave till all our own be won.

*Exeunt*

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Henry IV, part 2

[Entire play](#) in one page

Induction: [Induction](#)

Act 1, Scene 1: [The same.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [London. A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [York. The Archbishop's palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [London. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [London. Another street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [Warkworth. Before the castle.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [London. The Boar's-head Tavern in Eastcheap.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Westminster. The palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Gloucestershire. Before SHALLOW'S house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Yorkshire. Gaultree Forest.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Another part of the forest.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Another part of the forest.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [Westminster. The Jerusalem Chamber.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Another chamber.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S house.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Westminster. The palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S orchard.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [London. A street.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [A public place near Westminster Abbey.](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Induction

[Next scene](#)

## Induction

*Warkworth. Before the castle*

*Enter RUMOUR, painted full of tongues*

## RUMOUR

Open your ears; for which of you will stop  
The vent of hearing when loud Rumour speaks?  
I, from the orient to the drooping west,  
Making the wind my post-horse, still unfold  
The acts commenced on this ball of earth:  
Upon my tongues continual slanders ride,  
The which in every language I pronounce,  
Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.  
I speak of peace, while covert enmity  
Under the smile of safety wounds the world:  
And who but Rumour, who but only I,  
Make fearful musters and prepared defence,  
Whiles the big year, swoln with some other grief,  
Is thought with child by the stern tyrant war,  
And no such matter? Rumour is a pipe  
Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures  
And of so easy and so plain a stop  
That the blunt monster with uncounted heads,  
The still-discordant wavering multitude,  
Can play upon it. But what need I thus  
My well-known body to anatomize  
Among my household? Why is Rumour here?  
I run before King Harry's victory;  
Who in a bloody field by Shrewsbury  
Hath beaten down young Hotspur and his troops,  
Quenching the flame of bold rebellion  
Even with the rebel's blood. But what mean I  
To speak so true at first? my office is  
To noise abroad that Harry Monmouth fell



Under the wrath of noble Hotspur's sword,  
And that the king before the Douglas' rage  
Stoop'd his anointed head as low as death.  
This have I rumour'd through the peasant towns  
Between that royal field of Shrewsbury  
And this worm-eaten hold of ragged stone,  
Where Hotspur's father, old Northumberland,  
Lies crafty-sick: the posts come tiring on,  
And not a man of them brings other news  
Than they have learn'd of me: from Rumour's tongues  
They bring smooth comforts false, worse than  
true wrongs.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Induction

[Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The same.

*Enter LORD BARDOLPH*

### LORD BARDOLPH

Who keeps the gate here, ho?

*The Porter opens the gate*

Where is the earl?

### Porter

What shall I say you are?

### LORD BARDOLPH

Tell thou the earl  
That the Lord Bardolph doth attend him here.

### Porter

His lordship is walk'd forth into the orchard;  
Please it your honour, knock but at the gate,  
And he himself wilt answer.

*Enter NORTHUMBERLAND*

### LORD BARDOLPH

Here comes the earl.

*Exit Porter*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

What news, Lord Bardolph? every minute now  
Should be the father of some stratagem:  
The times are wild: contention, like a horse  
Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose  
And bears down all before him.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

Noble earl,  
I bring you certain news from Shrewsbury.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Good, an God will!

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

As good as heart can wish:  
The king is almost wounded to the death;  
And, in the fortune of my lord your son,  
Prince Harry slain outright; and both the Blunts  
Kill'd by the hand of Douglas; young Prince John  
And Westmoreland and Stafford fled the field;  
And Harry Monmouth's brawn, the hulk Sir John,  
Is prisoner to your son: O, such a day,  
So fought, so follow'd and so fairly won,  
Came not till now to dignify the times,  
Since Caesar's fortunes!

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

How is this derived?  
Saw you the field? came you from Shrewsbury?

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

I spake with one, my lord, that came from thence,  
A gentleman well bred and of good name,  
That freely render'd me these news for true.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Here comes my servant Travers, whom I sent  
On Tuesday last to listen after news.

*Enter TRAVERS*

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

My lord, I over-rode him on the way;  
And he is furnish'd with no certainties  
More than he haply may retail from me.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Now, Travers, what good tidings comes with you?

## **TRAVERS**

My lord, Sir John Umfrevile turn'd me back  
With joyful tidings; and, being better horsed,  
Out-rode me. After him came spurring hard  
A gentleman, almost forspent with speed,  
That stopp'd by me to breathe his bloodied horse.  
He ask'd the way to Chester; and of him  
I did demand what news from Shrewsbury:  
He told me that rebellion had bad luck  
And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold.  
With that, he gave his able horse the head,  
And bending forward struck his armed heels  
Against the panting sides of his poor jade  
Up to the rowel-head, and starting so  
He seem'd in running to devour the way,  
Staying no longer question.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Ha! Again:  
Said he young Harry Percy's spur was cold?  
Of Hotspur Coldspur? that rebellion  
Had met ill luck?

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

My lord, I'll tell you what;  
If my young lord your son have not the day,  
Upon mine honour, for a silken point  
I'll give my barony: never talk of it.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Why should that gentleman that rode by Travers  
Give then such instances of loss?

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

Who, he?  
He was some hilding fellow that had stolen  
The horse he rode on, and, upon my life,  
Spoke at a venture. Look, here comes more news.

*Enter MORTON*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Yea, this man's brow, like to a title-leaf,  
Foretells the nature of a tragic volume:  
So looks the strand whereon the imperious flood  
Hath left a witness'd usurpation.  
Say, Morton, didst thou come from Shrewsbury?

## **MORTON**

I ran from Shrewsbury, my noble lord;  
Where hateful death put on his ugliest mask  
To fright our party.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

How doth my son and brother?  
Thou tremblest; and the whiteness in thy cheek  
Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.  
Even such a man, so faint, so spiritless,

So dull, so dead in look, so woe-begone,  
Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night,  
And would have told him half his Troy was burnt;  
But Priam found the fire ere he his tongue,  
And I my Percy's death ere thou report'st it.  
This thou wouldst say, 'Your son did thus and thus;  
Your brother thus: so fought the noble Douglas:'  
Stopping my greedy ear with their bold deeds:  
But in the end, to stop my ear indeed,  
Thou hast a sigh to blow away this praise,  
Ending with 'Brother, son, and all are dead.'

## **MORTON**

Douglas is living, and your brother, yet;  
But, for my lord your son--

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Why, he is dead.  
See what a ready tongue suspicion hath!  
He that but fears the thing he would not know  
Hath by instinct knowledge from others' eyes  
That what he fear'd is chanced. Yet speak, Morton;  
Tell thou an earl his divination lies,  
And I will take it as a sweet disgrace  
And make thee rich for doing me such wrong.

## **MORTON**

You are too great to be by me gainsaid:  
Your spirit is too true, your fears too certain.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Yet, for all this, say not that Percy's dead.  
I see a strange confession in thine eye:  
Thou shakest thy head and hold'st it fear or sin  
To speak a truth. If he be slain, say so;  
The tongue offends not that reports his death:  
And he doth sin that doth belie the dead,  
Not he which says the dead is not alive.

Yet the first bringer of unwelcome news  
Hath but a losing office, and his tongue  
Sounds ever after as a sullen bell,  
Remember'd tolling a departing friend.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

I cannot think, my lord, your son is dead.

## **MORTON**

I am sorry I should force you to believe  
That which I would to God I had not seen;  
But these mine eyes saw him in bloody state,  
Rendering faint quittance, wearied and out-breathed,  
To Harry Monmouth; whose swift wrath beat down  
The never-daunted Percy to the earth,  
From whence with life he never more sprung up.  
In few, his death, whose spirit lent a fire  
Even to the dullest peasant in his camp,  
Being bruited once, took fire and heat away  
From the best temper'd courage in his troops;  
For from his metal was his party steel'd;  
Which once in him abated, all the rest  
Turn'd on themselves, like dull and heavy lead:  
And as the thing that's heavy in itself,  
Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed,  
So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss,  
Lend to this weight such lightness with their fear  
That arrows fled not swifter toward their aim  
Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,  
Fly from the field. Then was the noble Worcester  
Too soon ta'en prisoner; and that furious Scot,  
The bloody Douglas, whose well-labouring sword  
Had three times slain the appearance of the king,  
'Gan vail his stomach and did grace the shame  
Of those that turn'd their backs, and in his flight,  
Stumbling in fear, was took. The sum of all  
Is that the king hath won, and hath sent out  
A speedy power to encounter you, my lord,  
Under the conduct of young Lancaster  
And Westmoreland. This is the news at full.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

For this I shall have time enough to mourn.  
In poison there is physic; and these news,  
Having been well, that would have made me sick,  
Being sick, have in some measure made me well:  
And as the wretch, whose fever-weaken'd joints,  
Like strengthless hinges, buckle under life,  
Impatient of his fit, breaks like a fire  
Out of his keeper's arms, even so my limbs,  
Weaken'd with grief, being now enraged with grief,  
Are thrice themselves. Hence, therefore, thou nice crutch!  
A scaly gauntlet now with joints of steel  
Must glove this hand: and hence, thou sickly quoil!  
Thou art a guard too wanton for the head  
Which princes, flesh'd with conquest, aim to hit.  
Now bind my brows with iron; and approach  
The ragged'st hour that time and spite dare bring  
To frown upon the enraged Northumberland!  
Let heaven kiss earth! now let not Nature's hand  
Keep the wild flood confined! let order die!  
And let this world no longer be a stage  
To feed contention in a lingering act;  
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain  
Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set  
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,  
And darkness be the burier of the dead!

## **TRAVERS**

This strained passion doth you wrong, my lord.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

Sweet earl, divorce not wisdom from your honour.

## **MORTON**

The lives of all your loving complices  
Lean on your health; the which, if you give o'er  
To stormy passion, must perforce decay.  
You cast the event of war, my noble lord,



And summ'd the account of chance, before you said  
'Let us make head.' It was your presurmise,  
That, in the dole of blows, your son might drop:  
You knew he walk'd o'er perils, on an edge,  
More likely to fall in than to get o'er;  
You were advised his flesh was capable  
Of wounds and scars and that his forward spirit  
Would lift him where most trade of danger ranged:  
Yet did you say 'Go forth;' and none of this,  
Though strongly apprehended, could restrain  
The stiff-borne action: what hath then befallen,  
Or what hath this bold enterprise brought forth,  
More than that being which was like to be?

### **LORD BARDOLPH**

We all that are engaged to this loss  
Knew that we ventured on such dangerous seas  
That if we wrought our life 'twas ten to one;  
And yet we ventured, for the gain proposed  
Choked the respect of likely peril fear'd;  
And since we are o'erset, venture again.  
Come, we will all put forth, body and goods.

### **MORTON**

'Tis more than time: and, my most noble lord,  
I hear for certain, and do speak the truth,  
The gentle Archbishop of York is up  
With well-appointed powers: he is a man  
Who with a double surety binds his followers.  
My lord your son had only but the corpse,  
But shadows and the shows of men, to fight;  
For that same word, rebellion, did divide  
The action of their bodies from their souls;  
And they did fight with queasiness, constrain'd,  
As men drink potions, that their weapons only  
Seem'd on our side; but, for their spirits and souls,  
This word, rebellion, it had froze them up,  
As fish are in a pond. But now the bishop  
Turns insurrection to religion:  
Supposed sincere and holy in his thoughts,  
He's followed both with body and with mind;

And doth enlarge his rising with the blood  
Of fair King Richard, scraped from Pomfret stones;  
Derives from heaven his quarrel and his cause;  
Tells them he doth bestride a bleeding land,  
Gasping for life under great Bolingbroke;  
And more and less do flock to follow him.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

I knew of this before; but, to speak truth,  
This present grief had wiped it from my mind.  
Go in with me; and counsel every man  
The aptest way for safety and revenge:  
Get posts and letters, and make friends with speed:  
Never so few, and never yet more need.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. London. A street.

*Enter FALSTAFF, with his Page bearing his sword and buckler*

**FALSTAFF**

Sirrah, you giant, what says the doctor to my water?

**Page**

He said, sir, the water itself was a good healthy water; but, for the party that owed it, he might have more diseases than he knew for.

**FALSTAFF**

Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me: the brain of this foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent or is invented on me: I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men. I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one. If the prince put thee into my service for any other reason than to set me off, why then I have no judgment. Thou whoreson mandrake, thou art fitter to be worn in my cap than to wait at my heels. I was never manned with an agate till now: but I will inset you neither in gold nor silver, but in vile apparel, and send you back again to your master, for a jewel,-- the juvenal, the prince your master, whose chin is not yet fledged. I will sooner have a beard grow in the palm of my hand than he shall get one on his cheek; and yet he will not stick to say his face is a face-royal: God may finish it when he will, 'tis not a hair amiss yet: he may keep it still at a

face-royal, for a barber shall never earn sixpence out of it; and yet he'll be crowing as if he had writ man ever since his father was a bachelor. He may keep his own grace, but he's almost out of mine, I can assure him. What said Master Dombledon about the satin for my short cloak and my slops?

## Page

He said, sir, you should procure him better assurance than Bardolph: he would not take his band and yours; he liked not the security.

## FALSTAFF

Let him be damned, like the glutton! pray God his tongue be hotter! A whoreson Achitophel! a rascally yea-forsooth knave! to bear a gentleman in hand, and then stand upon security! The whoreson smooth-pates do now wear nothing but high shoes, and bunches of keys at their girdles; and if a man is through with them in honest taking up, then they must stand upon security. I had as lief they would put ratsbane in my mouth as offer to stop it with security. I looked a' should have sent me two and twenty yards of satin, as I am a true knight, and he sends me security. Well, he may sleep in security; for he hath the horn of abundance, and the lightness of his wife shines through it: and yet cannot he see, though he have his own lanthorn to light him. Where's Bardolph?

## Page

He's gone into Smithfield to buy your worship a horse.

## FALSTAFF

I bought him in Paul's, and he'll buy me a horse in Smithfield: an I could get me but a wife in the stews, I were manned, horsed, and wived.

*Enter the Lord Chief-Justice and Servant*

**Page**

Sir, here comes the nobleman that committed the Prince for striking him about Bardolph.

**FALSTAFF**

Wait, close; I will not see him.  
Lord Chief-Justice What's he that goes there?

**Servant**

Falstaff, an't please your lordship.  
Lord Chief-Justice He that was in question for the robbery?

**Servant**

He, my lord: but he hath since done good service at Shrewsbury; and, as I hear, is now going with some charge to the Lord John of Lancaster.  
Lord Chief-Justice What, to York? Call him back again.

**Servant**

Sir John Falstaff!

**FALSTAFF**

Boy, tell him I am deaf.

**Page**

You must speak louder; my master is deaf.  
Lord Chief-Justice I am sure he is, to the hearing of any thing good.  
Go, pluck him by the elbow; I must speak with him.

**Servant**

Sir John!

## **FALSTAFF**

What! a young knave, and begging! Is there not wars? is there not employment? doth not the king lack subjects? do not the rebels need soldiers? Though it be a shame to be on any side but one, it is worse shame to beg than to be on the worst side, were it worse than the name of rebellion can tell how to make it.

## **Servant**

You mistake me, sir.

## **FALSTAFF**

Why, sir, did I say you were an honest man? setting my knighthood and my soldiership aside, I had lied in my throat, if I had said so.

## **Servant**

I pray you, sir, then set your knighthood and our soldiership aside; and give me leave to tell you, you lie in your throat, if you say I am any other than an honest man.

## **FALSTAFF**

I give thee leave to tell me so! I lay aside that which grows to me! if thou gettest any leave of me, hang me; if thou takest leave, thou wert better be hanged. You hunt counter: hence! avaunt!

## **Servant**

Sir, my lord would speak with you.  
Lord Chief-Justice Sir John Falstaff, a word with you.

## **FALSTAFF**

My good lord! God give your lordship good time of day. I am glad to see your lordship abroad: I heard say your lordship was sick: I hope your lordship goes abroad by advice. Your lordship, though not clean past your youth, hath yet some smack of age in you, some relish of the saltness of time; and I must humbly beseech your lordship to have a reverent care of your health.

Lord Chief-Justice Sir John, I sent for you before your expedition to Shrewsbury.

**FALSTAFF**

An't please your lordship, I hear his majesty is returned with some discomfort from Wales.

Lord Chief-Justice I talk not of his majesty: you would not come when I sent for you.

**FALSTAFF**

And I hear, moreover, his highness is fallen into this same whoreson apoplexy.

Lord Chief-Justice Well, God mend him! I pray you, let me speak with you.

**FALSTAFF**

This apoplexy is, as I take it, a kind of lethargy, an't please your lordship; a kind of sleeping in the blood, a whoreson tingling.

Lord Chief-Justice What tell you me of it? be it as it is.

**FALSTAFF**

It hath its original from much grief, from study and perturbation of the brain: I have read the cause of his effects in Galen: it is a kind of deafness.

Lord Chief-Justice I think you are fallen into the disease; for you hear not what I say to you.

**FALSTAFF**

Very well, my lord, very well: rather, an't please you, it is the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that I am troubled withal.

Lord Chief-Justice To punish you by the heels would amend the attention of your ears; and I care not if I do become your physician.

## **FALSTAFF**

I am as poor as Job, my lord, but not so patient: your lordship may minister the potion of imprisonment to me in respect of poverty; but how should I be your patient to follow your prescriptions, the wise may make some dram of a scruple, or indeed a scruple itself.

Lord Chief-Justice I sent for you, when there were matters against you for your life, to come speak with me.

## **FALSTAFF**

As I was then advised by my learned counsel in the laws of this land-service, I did not come.

Lord Chief-Justice Well, the truth is, Sir John, you live in great infamy.

## **FALSTAFF**

He that buckles him in my belt cannot live in less.

Lord Chief-Justice Your means are very slender, and your waste is great.

## **FALSTAFF**

I would it were otherwise; I would my means were greater, and my waist slenderer.

Lord Chief-Justice You have misled the youthful prince.

## **FALSTAFF**

The young prince hath misled me: I am the fellow with the great belly, and he my dog.

Lord Chief-Justice Well, I am loath to gall a new-healed wound: your day's service at Shrewsbury hath a little gilded over your night's exploit on Gad's-hill: you may



thank the unquiet time for your quiet o'er-posting  
that action.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord?

Lord Chief-Justice But since all is well, keep it so: wake not a  
sleeping wolf.

**FALSTAFF**

To wake a wolf is as bad as to smell a fox.

Lord Chief-Justice What! you are as a candle, the better part burnt  
out.

**FALSTAFF**

A wassail candle, my lord, all tallow: if I did say  
of wax, my growth would approve the truth.

Lord Chief-Justice There is not a white hair on your face but should  
have his effect of gravity.

**FALSTAFF**

His effect of gravy, gravy, gravy.

Lord Chief-Justice You follow the young prince up and down, like his  
ill angel.

**FALSTAFF**

Not so, my lord; your ill angel is light; but I hope  
he that looks upon me will take me without weighing:  
and yet, in some respects, I grant, I cannot go: I  
cannot tell. Virtue is of so little regard in these  
costermonger times that true valour is turned  
bear-herd: pregnancy is made a tapster, and hath  
his quick wit wasted in giving reckonings: all the  
other gifts appertinent to man, as the malice of  
this age shapes them, are not worth a gooseberry.  
You that are old consider not the capacities of us  
that are young; you do measure the heat of our  
livers with the bitterness of your galls: and we

that are in the vaward of our youth, I must confess,  
are wags too.

Lord Chief-Justice Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth,  
that are written down old with all the characters of  
age? Have you not a moist eye? a dry hand? a  
yellow cheek? a white beard? a decreasing leg? an  
increasing belly? is not your voice broken? your  
wind short? your chin double? your wit single? and  
every part about you blasted with antiquity? and  
will you yet call yourself young? Fie, fie, fie, Sir John!

## **FALSTAFF**

My lord, I was born about three of the clock in the  
afternoon, with a white head and something a round  
belly. For my voice, I have lost it with halloing  
and singing of anthems. To approve my youth  
further, I will not: the truth is, I am only old in  
judgment and understanding; and he that will caper  
with me for a thousand marks, let him lend me the  
money, and have at him! For the box of the ear that  
the prince gave you, he gave it like a rude prince,  
and you took it like a sensible lord. I have  
chequed him for it, and the young lion repents;  
marry, not in ashes and sackcloth, but in new silk  
and old sack.

Lord Chief-Justice Well, God send the prince a better companion!

## **FALSTAFF**

God send the companion a better prince! I cannot  
rid my hands of him.

Lord Chief-Justice Well, the king hath severed you and Prince Harry: I  
hear you are going with Lord John of Lancaster  
against the Archbishop and the Earl of  
Northumberland.

## **FALSTAFF**

Yea; I thank your pretty sweet wit for it. But look  
you pray, all you that kiss my lady Peace at home,  
that our armies join not in a hot day; for, by the

Lord, I take but two shirts out with me, and I mean not to sweat extraordinarily: if it be a hot day, and I brandish any thing but a bottle, I would I might never spit white again. There is not a dangerous action can peep out his head but I am thrust upon it: well, I cannot last ever: but it was alway yet the trick of our English nation, if they have a good thing, to make it too common. If ye will needs say I am an old man, you should give me rest. I would to God my name were not so terrible to the enemy as it is: I were better to be eaten to death with a rust than to be scoured to nothing with perpetual motion.  
Lord Chief-Justice Well, be honest, be honest; and God bless your expedition!

**FALSTAFF**

Will your lordship lend me a thousand pound to furnish me forth?  
Lord Chief-Justice Not a penny, not a penny; you are too impatient to bear crosses. Fare you well: commend me to my cousin Westmoreland.

*Exeunt Chief-Justice and Servant*

**FALSTAFF**

If I do, fillip me with a three-man beetle. A man can no more separate age and covetousness than a' can part young limbs and lechery: but the gout galls the one, and the pox pinches the other; and so both the degrees prevent my curses. Boy!

**Page**

Sir?

**FALSTAFF**

What money is in my purse?

Seven groats and two pence.

**FALSTAFF**

I can get no remedy against this consumption of the purse: borrowing only lingers and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable. Go bear this letter to my Lord of Lancaster; this to the prince; this to the Earl of Westmoreland; and this to old Mistress Ursula, whom I have weekly sworn to marry since I perceived the first white hair on my chin. About it: you know where to find me.

*Exit Page*

A pox of this gout! or, a gout of this pox! for the one or the other plays the rogue with my great toe. 'Tis no matter if I do halt; I have the wars for my colour, and my pension shall seem the more reasonable. A good wit will make use of any thing: I will turn diseases to commodity.

*Exit*

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. York. The Archbishop's palace.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, the Lords HASTINGS, MOWBRAY, and BARDOLPH*

### ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Thus have you heard our cause and known our means;  
And, my most noble friends, I pray you all,  
Speak plainly your opinions of our hopes:  
And first, lord marshal, what say you to it?

### MOWBRAY

I well allow the occasion of our arms;  
But gladly would be better satisfied  
How in our means we should advance ourselves  
To look with forehead bold and big enough  
Upon the power and puissance of the king.

### HASTINGS

Our present musters grow upon the file  
To five and twenty thousand men of choice;  
And our supplies live largely in the hope  
Of great Northumberland, whose bosom burns  
With an incensed fire of injuries.

### LORD BARDOLPH

The question then, Lord Hastings, standeth thus;  
Whether our present five and twenty thousand  
May hold up head without Northumberland?

### HASTINGS

With him, we may.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

Yea, marry, there's the point:  
But if without him we be thought too feeble,  
My judgment is, we should not step too far  
Till we had his assistance by the hand;  
For in a theme so bloody-faced as this  
Conjecture, expectation, and surmise  
Of aids incertain should not be admitted.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

'Tis very true, Lord Bardolph; for indeed  
It was young Hotspur's case at Shrewsbury.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

It was, my lord; who lined himself with hope,  
Eating the air on promise of supply,  
Flattering himself in project of a power  
Much smaller than the smallest of his thoughts:  
And so, with great imagination  
Proper to madmen, led his powers to death  
And winking leap'd into destruction.

## **HASTINGS**

But, by your leave, it never yet did hurt  
To lay down likelihoods and forms of hope.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

Yes, if this present quality of war,  
Indeed the instant action: a cause on foot  
Lives so in hope as in an early spring  
We see the appearing buds; which to prove fruit,  
Hope gives not so much warrant as despair  
That frosts will bite them. When we mean to build,  
We first survey the plot, then draw the model;  
And when we see the figure of the house,  
Then must we rate the cost of the erection;

Which if we find outweighs ability,  
What do we then but draw anew the model  
In fewer offices, or at last desist  
To build at all? Much more, in this great work,  
Which is almost to pluck a kingdom down  
And set another up, should we survey  
The plot of situation and the model,  
Consent upon a sure foundation,  
Question surveyors, know our own estate,  
How able such a work to undergo,  
To weigh against his opposite; or else  
We fortify in paper and in figures,  
Using the names of men instead of men:  
Like one that draws the model of a house  
Beyond his power to build it; who, half through,  
Gives o'er and leaves his part-created cost  
A naked subject to the weeping clouds  
And waste for churlish winter's tyranny.

## **HASTINGS**

Grant that our hopes, yet likely of fair birth,  
Should be still-born, and that we now possess'd  
The utmost man of expectation,  
I think we are a body strong enough,  
Even as we are, to equal with the king.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

What, is the king but five and twenty thousand?

## **HASTINGS**

To us no more; nay, not so much, Lord Bardolph.  
For his divisions, as the times do brawl,  
Are in three heads: one power against the French,  
And one against Glendower; perforce a third  
Must take up us: so is the unfirm king  
In three divided; and his coffers sound  
With hollow poverty and emptiness.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

That he should draw his several strengths together  
And come against us in full puissance,  
Need not be dreaded.

## **HASTINGS**

If he should do so,  
He leaves his back unarm'd, the French and Welsh  
Baying him at the heels: never fear that.

## **LORD BARDOLPH**

Who is it like should lead his forces hither?

## **HASTINGS**

The Duke of Lancaster and Westmoreland;  
Against the Welsh, himself and Harry Monmouth:  
But who is substituted 'gainst the French,  
I have no certain notice.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Let us on,  
And publish the occasion of our arms.  
The commonwealth is sick of their own choice;  
Their over-greedy love hath surfeited:  
An habitation giddy and unsure  
Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart.  
O thou fond many, with what loud applause  
Didst thou beat heaven with blessing Bolingbroke,  
Before he was what thou wouldst have him be!  
And being now trimm'd in thine own desires,  
Thou, beastly feeder, art so full of him,  
That thou provokest thyself to cast him up.  
So, so, thou common dog, didst thou disgorge  
Thy glutton bosom of the royal Richard;  
And now thou wouldst eat thy dead vomit up,  
And howl'st to find it. What trust is in  
these times?  
They that, when Richard lived, would have him die,



Are now become enamour'd on his grave:  
Thou, that threw'st dust upon his goodly head  
When through proud London he came sighing on  
After the admired heels of Bolingbroke,  
Criest now 'O earth, yield us that king again,  
And take thou this!' O thoughts of men accursed!  
Past and to come seems best; things present worst.

## **MOWBRAY**

Shall we go draw our numbers and set on?

## **HASTINGS**

We are time's subjects, and time bids be gone.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. A street.

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY, FANG and his Boy with her, and SNARE following.*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Master Fang, have you entered the action?

**FANG**

It is entered.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Where's your yeoman? Is't a lusty yeoman? will a' stand to 't?

**FANG**

Sirrah, where's Snare?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O Lord, ay! good Master Snare.

**SNARE**

Here, here.

**FANG**

Snare, we must arrest Sir John Falstaff.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Yea, good Master Snare; I have entered him and all.

**SNARE**

It may chance cost some of us our lives, for he will stab.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Alas the day! take heed of him; he stabbed me in mine own house, and that most beastly: in good faith, he cares not what mischief he does. If his weapon be out: he will foin like any devil; he will spare neither man, woman, nor child.

**FANG**

If I can close with him, I care not for his thrust.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, nor I neither: I'll be at your elbow.

**FANG**

An I but fist him once; an a' come but within my vice,--

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I am undone by his going; I warrant you, he's an infinitive thing upon my score. Good Master Fang, hold him sure: good Master Snare, let him not 'scape. A' comes continuantly to Pie-corner--saving your manhoods--to buy a saddle; and he is indited to dinner to the Lubber's-head in Lumbert street, to Master Smooth's the silkman: I pray ye, since my exion is entered and my case so openly known to the world, let him be brought in to his answer. A hundred mark is a long one for a poor lone woman to bear: and I have borne, and borne, and borne, and have been fubbed off, and fubbed off, and fubbed off, from this day to that day, that it is a shame to be thought on. There is no honesty in such

dealing; unless a woman should be made an ass and a beast, to bear every knave's wrong. Yonder he comes; and that errant malmsey-nose knave, Bardolph, with him. Do your offices, do your offices: Master Fang and Master Snare, do me, do me, do me your offices.

*Enter FALSTAFF, Page, and BARDOLPH*

**FALSTAFF**

How now! whose mare's dead? what's the matter?

**FANG**

Sir John, I arrest you at the suit of Mistress Quickly.

**FALSTAFF**

Away, varlets! Draw, Bardolph: cut me off the villain's head: throw the quean in the channel.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Throw me in the channel! I'll throw thee in the channel. Wilt thou? wilt thou? thou bastardy rogue! Murder, murder! Ah, thou honeysuckle villain! wilt thou kill God's officers and the king's? Ah, thou honey-seed rogue! thou art a honey-seed, a man-queller, and a woman-queller.

**FALSTAFF**

Keep them off, Bardolph.

**FANG**

A rescue! a rescue!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Good people, bring a rescue or two. Thou wo't, wo't

thou? Thou wo't, wo't ta? do, do, thou rogue! do,  
thou hemp-seed!

## **FALSTAFF**

Away, you scullion! you rampallion! You  
fustilarian! I'll tickle your catastrophe.

*Enter the Lord Chief-Justice, and his men*

Lord Chief-Justice What is the matter? keep the peace here, ho!

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Good my lord, be good to me. I beseech you, stand to me.  
Lord Chief-Justice How now, Sir John! what are you brawling here?  
Doth this become your place, your time and business?  
You should have been well on your way to York.  
Stand from him, fellow: wherefore hang'st upon him?

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O most worshipful lord, an't please your grace, I am  
a poor widow of Eastcheap, and he is arrested at my suit.  
Lord Chief-Justice For what sum?

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

It is more than for some, my lord; it is for all,  
all I have. He hath eaten me out of house and home;  
he hath put all my substance into that fat belly of  
his: but I will have some of it out again, or I  
will ride thee o' nights like the mare.

## **FALSTAFF**

I think I am as like to ride the mare, if I have  
any vantage of ground to get up.  
Lord Chief-Justice How comes this, Sir John? Fie! what man of good  
temper would endure this tempest of exclamation?  
Are you not ashamed to enforce a poor widow to so  
rough a course to come by her own?

## **FALSTAFF**

What is the gross sum that I owe thee?

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and the money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Wheeson week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath: deny it, if thou canst.

## **FALSTAFF**

My lord, this is a poor mad soul; and she says up and down the town that the eldest son is like you: she hath been in good case, and the truth is, poverty hath distracted her. But for these foolish officers, I beseech you I may have redress against them. Lord Chief-Justice Sir John, Sir John, I am well acquainted with your manner of wrenching the true cause the false way. It is not a confident brow, nor the throng of words that come with such more than impudent sauciness from you, can thrust me from a level consideration: you have, as it appears to me, practised upon the easy-yielding spirit of this woman, and made her

serve your uses both in purse and in person.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Yea, in truth, my lord.

Lord Chief-Justice Pray thee, peace. Pay her the debt you owe her, and unpay the villany you have done her: the one you may do with sterling money, and the other with current repentance.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord, I will not undergo this sneap without reply. You call honourable boldness impudent sauciness: if a man will make courtesy and say nothing, he is virtuous: no, my lord, my humble duty remembered, I will not be your suitor. I say to you, I do desire deliverance from these officers, being upon hasty employment in the king's affairs.

Lord Chief-Justice You speak as having power to do wrong: but answer in the effect of your reputation, and satisfy this poor woman.

**FALSTAFF**

Come hither, hostess.

*Enter GOWER*

Lord Chief-Justice Now, Master Gower, what news?

**GOWER**

The king, my lord, and Harry Prince of Wales  
Are near at hand: the rest the paper tells.

**FALSTAFF**

As I am a gentleman.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Faith, you said so before.

**FALSTAFF**

As I am a gentleman. Come, no more words of it.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

By this heavenly ground I tread on, I must be fain  
to pawn both my plate and the tapestry of my  
dining-chambers.

**FALSTAFF**

Glasses, glasses is the only drinking: and for thy  
walls, a pretty slight drollery, or the story of  
the Prodigal, or the German hunting in water-work,  
is worth a thousand of these bed-hangings and these  
fly-bitten tapestries. Let it be ten pound, if thou  
canst. Come, an 'twere not for thy humours, there's  
not a better wench in England. Go, wash thy face,  
and draw the action. Come, thou must not be in  
this humour with me; dost not know me? come, come, I  
know thou wast set on to this.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Pray thee, Sir John, let it be but twenty nobles: i'  
faith, I am loath to pawn my plate, so God save me,  
la!

**FALSTAFF**

Let it alone; I'll make other shift: you'll be a  
fool still.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, you shall have it, though I pawn my gown. I  
hope you'll come to supper. You'll pay me all together?



**FALSTAFF**

Will I live?

*To BARDOLPH*

Go, with her, with her; hook on, hook on.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Will you have Doll Tearsheet meet you at supper?

**FALSTAFF**

No more words; let's have her.

*Exeunt MISTRESS QUICKLY, BARDOLPH, Officers and Boy*

Lord Chief-Justice I have heard better news.

**FALSTAFF**

What's the news, my lord?

Lord Chief-Justice Where lay the king last night?

**GOWER**

At Basingstoke, my lord.

**FALSTAFF**

I hope, my lord, all's well: what is the news, my lord?

Lord Chief-Justice Come all his forces back?

**GOWER**

No; fifteen hundred foot, five hundred horse,  
Are marched up to my lord of Lancaster,  
Against Northumberland and the Archbishop.

**FALSTAFF**

Comes the king back from Wales, my noble lord?  
Lord Chief-Justice You shall have letters of me presently:  
Come, go along with me, good Master Gower.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord!  
Lord Chief-Justice What's the matter?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Gower, shall I entreat you with me to dinner?

**GOWER**

I must wait upon my good lord here; I thank you,  
good Sir John.  
Lord Chief-Justice Sir John, you loiter here too long, being you are to  
take soldiers up in counties as you go.

**FALSTAFF**

Will you sup with me, Master Gower?  
Lord Chief-Justice What foolish master taught you these manners, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

Master Gower, if they become me not, he was a fool  
that taught them me. This is the right fencing  
grace, my lord; tap for tap, and so part fair.  
Lord Chief-Justice Now the Lord lighten thee! thou art a great fool.

*Exeunt*

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. London. Another street.

*Enter PRINCE HENRY and POINS*

### PRINCE HENRY

Before God, I am exceeding weary.

### POINS

Is't come to that? I had thought weariness durst not have attached one of so high blood.

### PRINCE HENRY

Faith, it does me; though it discolours the complexion of my greatness to acknowledge it. Doth it not show vilely in me to desire small beer?

### POINS

Why, a prince should not be so loosely studied as to remember so weak a composition.

### PRINCE HENRY

Belike then my appetite was not princely got; for, by my troth, I do now remember the poor creature, small beer. But, indeed, these humble considerations make me out of love with my greatness. What a disgrace is it to me to remember thy name! or to know thy face to-morrow! or to take note how many pair of silk stockings thou hast, viz. these, and those that were thy peach-coloured ones! or to bear the inventory of thy shirts, as, one for superfluity, and another for

use! But that the tennis-court-keeper knows better than I; for it is a low ebb of linen with thee when thou keepest not racket there; as thou hast not done a great while, because the rest of thy low countries have made a shift to eat up thy holland: and God knows, whether those that bawl out the ruins of thy linen shall inherit his kingdom: but the midwives say the children are not in the fault; whereupon the world increases, and kindreds are mightily strengthened.

## **POINS**

How ill it follows, after you have laboured so hard, you should talk so idly! Tell me, how many good young princes would do so, their fathers being so sick as yours at this time is?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Shall I tell thee one thing, Poins?

## **POINS**

Yes, faith; and let it be an excellent good thing.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

It shall serve among wits of no higher breeding than thine.

## **POINS**

Go to; I stand the push of your one thing that you will tell.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Marry, I tell thee, it is not meet that I should be sad, now my father is sick: albeit I could tell thee, as to one it pleases me, for fault of a better, to call my friend, I could be sad, and sad indeed too.

**POINS**

Very hardly upon such a subject.

**PRINCE HENRY**

By this hand thou thinkest me as far in the devil's book as thou and Falstaff for obduracy and persistency: let the end try the man. But I tell thee, my heart bleeds inwardly that my father is so sick: and keeping such vile company as thou art hath in reason taken from me all ostentation of sorrow.

**POINS**

The reason?

**PRINCE HENRY**

What wouldst thou think of me, if I should weep?

**POINS**

I would think thee a most princely hypocrite.

**PRINCE HENRY**

It would be every man's thought; and thou art a blessed fellow to think as every man thinks: never a man's thought in the world keeps the road-way better than thine: every man would think me an hypocrite indeed. And what accites your most worshipful thought to think so?

**POINS**

Why, because you have been so lewd and so much engrafted to Falstaff.

**PRINCE HENRY**

And to thee.

## **POINS**

By this light, I am well spoke on; I can hear it with my own ears: the worst that they can say of me is that I am a second brother and that I am a proper fellow of my hands; and those two things, I confess, I cannot help. By the mass, here comes Bardolph.

*Enter BARDOLPH and Page*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

And the boy that I gave Falstaff: a' had him from me Christian; and look, if the fat villain have not transformed him ape.

## **BARDOLPH**

God save your grace!

## **PRINCE HENRY**

And yours, most noble Bardolph!

## **BARDOLPH**

Come, you virtuous ass, you bashful fool, must you be blushing? wherefore blush you now? What a maidenly man-at-arms are you become! Is't such a matter to get a pottle-pot's maidenhead?

## **Page**

A' calls me e'en now, my lord, through a red lattice, and I could discern no part of his face from the window: at last I spied his eyes, and methought he had made two holes in the ale-wife's new petticoat and so peeped through.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Has not the boy profited?

**BARDOLPH**

Away, you whoreson upright rabbit, away!

**Page**

Away, you rascally Althaea's dream, away!

**PRINCE HENRY**

Instruct us, boy; what dream, boy?

**Page**

Marry, my lord, Althaea dreamed she was delivered of a fire-brand; and therefore I call him her dream.

**PRINCE HENRY**

A crown's worth of good interpretation: there 'tis, boy.

**POINS**

O, that this good blossom could be kept from cankers! Well, there is sixpence to preserve thee.

**BARDOLPH**

An you do not make him hanged among you, the gallows shall have wrong.

**PRINCE HENRY**

And how doth thy master, Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

Well, my lord. He heard of your grace's coming to town: there's a letter for you.

**POINS**

Delivered with good respect. And how doth the martlemas, your master?

**BARDOLPH**

In bodily health, sir.

**POINS**

Marry, the immortal part needs a physician; but that moves not him: though that be sick, it dies not.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I do allow this wen to be as familiar with me as my dog; and he holds his place; for look you how he writes.

**POINS**

[Reads] 'John Falstaff, knight,'--every man must know that, as oft as he has occasion to name himself: even like those that are kin to the king; for they never prick their finger but they say, 'There's some of the king's blood spilt.' 'How comes that?' says he, that takes upon him not to conceive. The answer is as ready as a borrower's cap, 'I am the king's poor cousin, sir.'

**PRINCE HENRY**

Nay, they will be kin to us, or they will fetch it from Japhet. But to the letter.

**POINS**



[Reads] 'Sir John Falstaff, knight, to the son of the king, nearest his father, Harry Prince of Wales, greeting.' Why, this is a certificate.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Peace!

## **POINS**

[Reads] 'I will imitate the honourable Romans in brevity:' he sure means brevity in breath, short-winded. 'I commend me to thee, I commend thee, and I leave thee. Be not too familiar with Poins; for he misuses thy favours so much, that he swears thou art to marry his sister Nell. Repent at idle times as thou mayest; and so, farewell. Thine, by yea and no, which is as much as to say, as thou usest him, JACK FALSTAFF with my familiars, JOHN with my brothers and sisters, and SIR JOHN with all Europe.'  
My lord, I'll steep this letter in sack and make him eat it.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

That's to make him eat twenty of his words. But do you use me thus, Ned? must I marry your sister?

## **POINS**

God send the wench no worse fortune! But I never said so.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Well, thus we play the fools with the time, and the spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us. Is your master here in London?

## **BARDOLPH**

Yea, my lord.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Where sups he? doth the old boar feed in the old frank?

**BARDOLPH**

At the old place, my lord, in Eastcheap.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What company?

**Page**

Ephesians, my lord, of the old church.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sup any women with him?

**Page**

None, my lord, but old Mistress Quickly and  
Mistress Doll Tearsheet.

**PRINCE HENRY**

What pagan may that be?

**Page**

A proper gentlewoman, sir, and a kinswoman of my master's.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Even such kin as the parish heifers are to the town  
bull. Shall we steal upon them, Ned, at supper?

**POINS**

I am your shadow, my lord; I'll follow you.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Sirrah, you boy, and Bardolph, no word to your master that I am yet come to town: there's for your silence.

**BARDOLPH**

I have no tongue, sir.

**Page**

And for mine, sir, I will govern it.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Fare you well; go.

*Exeunt BARDOLPH and Page*

This Doll Tearsheet should be some road.

**POINS**

I warrant you, as common as the way between Saint Alban's and London.

**PRINCE HENRY**

How might we see Falstaff bestow himself to-night in his true colours, and not ourselves be seen?

**POINS**

Put on two leathern jerkins and aprons, and wait upon him at his table as drawers.

**PRINCE HENRY**

From a God to a bull? a heavy decension! it was  
Jove's case. From a prince to a prentice? a low  
transformation! that shall be mine; for in every  
thing the purpose must weigh with the folly.  
Follow me, Ned.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Warkworth. Before the castle.

*Enter NORTHUMBERLAND, LADY NORTHUMBERLAND, and LADY PERCY*

### NORTHUMBERLAND

I pray thee, loving wife, and gentle daughter,  
Give even way unto my rough affairs:  
Put not you on the visage of the times  
And be like them to Percy troublesome.  
LADY

### NORTHUMBERLAND

I have given over, I will speak no more:  
Do what you will; your wisdom be your guide.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Alas, sweet wife, my honour is at pawn;  
And, but my going, nothing can redeem it.

### LADY PERCY

O yet, for God's sake, go not to these wars!  
The time was, father, that you broke your word,  
When you were more endeared to it than now;  
When your own Percy, when my heart's dear Harry,  
Threw many a northward look to see his father  
Bring up his powers; but he did long in vain.  
Who then persuaded you to stay at home?  
There were two honours lost, yours and your son's.  
For yours, the God of heaven brighten it!  
For his, it stuck upon him as the sun  
In the grey vault of heaven, and by his light  
Did all the chivalry of England move

To do brave acts: he was indeed the glass  
Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves:  
He had no legs that practised not his gait;  
And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,  
Became the accents of the valiant;  
For those that could speak low and tardily  
Would turn their own perfection to abuse,  
To seem like him: so that in speech, in gait,  
In diet, in affections of delight,  
In military rules, humours of blood,  
He was the mark and glass, copy and book,  
That fashion'd others. And him, O wondrous him!  
O miracle of men! him did you leave,  
Second to none, unseconded by you,  
To look upon the hideous god of war  
In disadvantage; to abide a field  
Where nothing but the sound of Hotspur's name  
Did seem defensible: so you left him.  
Never, O never, do his ghost the wrong  
To hold your honour more precise and nice  
With others than with him! let them alone:  
The marshal and the archbishop are strong:  
Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers,  
To-day might I, hanging on Hotspur's neck,  
Have talk'd of Monmouth's grave.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Beshrew your heart,  
Fair daughter, you do draw my spirits from me  
With new lamenting ancient oversights.  
But I must go and meet with danger there,  
Or it will seek me in another place  
And find me worse provided.  
LADY

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

O, fly to Scotland,  
Till that the nobles and the armed commons  
Have of their puissance made a little taste.

## LADY PERCY

If they get ground and vantage of the king,  
Then join you with them, like a rib of steel,  
To make strength stronger; but, for all our loves,  
First let them try themselves. So did your son;  
He was so suffer'd: so came I a widow;  
And never shall have length of life enough  
To rain upon remembrance with mine eyes,  
That it may grow and sprout as high as heaven,  
For recordation to my noble husband.

## NORTHUMBERLAND

Come, come, go in with me. 'Tis with my mind  
As with the tide swell'd up unto his height,  
That makes a still-stand, running neither way:  
Fain would I go to meet the archbishop,  
But many thousand reasons hold me back.  
I will resolve for Scotland: there am I,  
Till time and vantage crave my company.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. London. The Boar's-head Tavern in Eastcheap.

*Enter two Drawers*

### First Drawer

What the devil hast thou brought there? apple-johns?  
thou knowest Sir John cannot endure an apple-john.

### Second Drawer

Mass, thou sayest true. The prince once set a dish  
of apple-johns before him, and told him there were  
five more Sir Johns, and, putting off his hat, said  
'I will now take my leave of these six dry, round,  
old, withered knights.' It angered him to the  
heart: but he hath forgot that.

### First Drawer

Why, then, cover, and set them down: and see if  
thou canst find out Sneak's noise; Mistress  
Tearsheet would fain hear some music. Dispatch: the  
room where they supped is too hot; they'll come in straight.

### Second Drawer

Sirrah, here will be the prince and Master Poins  
anon; and they will put on two of our jerkins and  
aprons; and Sir John must not know of it: Bardolph  
hath brought word.

### First Drawer

By the mass, here will be old Utis: it will be an  
excellent stratagem.



## **Second Drawer**

I'll see if I can find out Sneak.

*Exit*

*Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY and DOLL TEARSHEET*

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

I' faith, sweetheart, methinks now you are in an excellent good temperality: your pulsidge beats as extraordinarily as heart would desire; and your colour, I warrant you, is as red as any rose, in good truth, la! But, i' faith, you have drunk too much canaries; and that's a marvellous searching wine, and it perfumes the blood ere one can say 'What's this?' How do you now?

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Better than I was: hem!

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Why, that's well said; a good heart's worth gold.  
Lo, here comes Sir John.

*Enter FALSTAFF*

### **FALSTAFF**

[Singing] 'When Arthur first in court,'  
--Empty the jordan.

*Exit First Drawer*

*Singing*

--'And was a worthy king.' How now, Mistress Doll!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Sick of a calm; yea, good faith.

**FALSTAFF**

So is all her sect; an they be once in a calm, they are sick.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

You muddy rascal, is that all the comfort you give me?

**FALSTAFF**

You make fat rascals, Mistress Doll.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I make them! gluttony and diseases make them; I make them not.

**FALSTAFF**

If the cook help to make the gluttony, you help to make the diseases, Doll: we catch of you, Doll, we catch of you; grant that, my poor virtue grant that.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Yea, joy, our chains and our jewels.

**FALSTAFF**

'Your broaches, pearls, and ouches:' for to serve bravely is to come halting off, you know: to come off the breach with his pike bent bravely, and to surgery bravely; to venture upon the charged chambers bravely,--

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Hang yourself, you muddy conger, hang yourself!

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

By my troth, this is the old fashion; you two never meet but you fall to some discord: you are both, i' good truth, as rheumatic as two dry toasts; you cannot one bear with another's confirmities. What the good-year! one must bear, and that must be you: you are the weaker vessel, as they say, the emptier vessel.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Can a weak empty vessel bear such a huge full hogshead? there's a whole merchant's venture of Bourdeaux stuff in him; you have not seen a hulk better stuffed in the hold. Come, I'll be friends with thee, Jack: thou art going to the wars; and whether I shall ever see thee again or no, there is nobody cares.

*Re-enter First Drawer*

### **First Drawer**

Sir, Ancient Pistol's below, and would speak with you.

### **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Hang him, swaggering rascal! let him not come hither: it is the foul-mouthed'st rogue in England.

### **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

If he swagger, let him not come here: no, by my faith; I must live among my neighbours: I'll no swaggerers: I am in good name and fame with the very best: shut the door; there comes no swaggerers here: I have not lived all this while, to have

swaggering now: shut the door, I pray you.

**FALSTAFF**

Dost thou hear, hostess?

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Pray ye, pacify yourself, Sir John: there comes no swaggerers here.

**FALSTAFF**

Dost thou hear? it is mine ancient.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Tilly-fally, Sir John, ne'er tell me: your ancient swaggerer comes not in my doors. I was before Master Tisick, the deputy, t'other day; and, as he said to me, 'twas no longer ago than Wednesday last, 'T' good faith, neighbour Quickly,' says he; Master Dumbe, our minister, was by then; 'neighbour Quickly,' says he, 'receive those that are civil; for,' said he, 'you are in an ill name:' now a' said so, I can tell whereupon; 'for,' says he, 'you are an honest woman, and well thought on; therefore take heed what guests you receive: receive,' says he, 'no swaggering companions.' There comes none here: you would bless you to hear what he said: no, I'll no swaggerers.

**FALSTAFF**

He's no swaggerer, hostess; a tame cheater, i' faith; you may stroke him as gently as a puppy greyhound: he'll not swagger with a Barbary hen, if her feathers turn back in any show of resistance. Call him up, drawer.

*Exit First Drawer*

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Cheater, call you him? I will bar no honest man my house, nor no cheater: but I do not love swaggering, by my troth; I am the worse, when one says swagger: feel, masters, how I shake; look you, I warrant you.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

So you do, hostess.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Do I? yea, in very truth, do I, an 'twere an aspen leaf: I cannot abide swaggerers.

*Enter PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and Page*

## **PISTOL**

God save you, Sir John!

## **FALSTAFF**

Welcome, Ancient Pistol. Here, Pistol, I charge you with a cup of sack: do you discharge upon mine hostess.

## **PISTOL**

I will discharge upon her, Sir John, with two bullets.

## **FALSTAFF**

She is Pistol-proof, sir; you shall hardly offend her.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Come, I'll drink no proofs nor no bullets: I'll drink no more than will do me good, for no man's

pleasure, I.

**PISTOL**

Then to you, Mistress Dorothy; I will charge you.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Charge me! I scorn you, scurvy companion. What!  
you poor, base, rascally, cheating, lack-linen  
mate! Away, you mouldy rogue, away! I am meat for  
your master.

**PISTOL**

I know you, Mistress Dorothy.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Away, you cut-purse rascal! you filthy bung, away!  
by this wine, I'll thrust my knife in your mouldy  
chaps, an you play the saucy cuttle with me. Away,  
you bottle-ale rascal! you basket-hilt stale  
juggler, you! Since when, I pray you, sir? God's  
light, with two points on your shoulder? much!

**PISTOL**

God let me not live, but I will murder your ruff for this.

**FALSTAFF**

No more, Pistol; I would not have you go off here:  
discharge yourself of our company, Pistol.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, Good Captain Pistol; not here, sweet captain.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Captain! thou abominable damned cheater, art thou not ashamed to be called captain? An captains were of my mind, they would truncheon you out, for taking their names upon you before you have earned them. You a captain! you slave, for what? for tearing a poor whore's ruff in a bawdy-house? He a captain! hang him, rogue! he lives upon mouldy stewed prunes and dried cakes. A captain! God's light, these villains will make the word as odious as the word 'occupy;' which was an excellent good word before it was ill sorted: therefore captains had need look to 't.

## **BARBOLPH**

Pray thee, go down, good ancient.

## **FALSTAFF**

Hark thee hither, Mistress Doll.

## **PISTOL**

Not I I tell thee what, Corporal Bardolph, I could tear her: I'll be revenged of her.

## **Page**

Pray thee, go down.

## **PISTOL**

I'll see her damned first; to Pluto's damned lake, by this hand, to the infernal deep, with Erebus and tortures vile also. Hold hook and line, say I. Down, down, dogs! down, faitors! Have we not Hiren here?

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Good Captain Peesel, be quiet; 'tis very late, i' faith: I beseek you now, aggravate your choler.

## **PISTOL**

These be good humours, indeed! Shall pack-horses  
And hollow pamper'd jades of Asia,  
Which cannot go but thirty mile a-day,  
Compare with Caesars, and with Cannibals,  
And Trojan Greeks? nay, rather damn them with  
King Cerberus; and let the welkin roar.  
Shall we fall foul for toys?

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

By my troth, captain, these are very bitter words.

## **BARDOLPH**

Be gone, good ancient: this will grow to abrawl anon.

## **PISTOL**

Die men like dogs! give crowns like pins! Have we  
not Heren here?

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O' my word, captain, there's none such here. What  
the good-year! do you think I would deny her? For  
God's sake, be quiet.

## **PISTOL**

Then feed, and be fat, my fair Calipolis.  
Come, give's some sack.  
'Si fortune me tormente, sperato me contento.'  
Fear we broadsides? no, let the fiend give fire:  
Give me some sack: and, sweetheart, lie thou there.

*Laying down his sword*

Come we to full points here; and are etceteras nothing?



**FALSTAFF**

Pistol, I would be quiet.

**PISTOL**

Sweet knight, I kiss thy neaf: what! we have seen  
the seven stars.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

For God's sake, thrust him down stairs: I cannot  
endure such a fustian rascal.

**PISTOL**

Thrust him down stairs! know we not Galloway nags?

**FALSTAFF**

Quoit him down, Bardolph, like a shove-groat  
shilling: nay, an a' do nothing but speak nothing,  
a' shall be nothing here.

**BARDOLPH**

Come, get you down stairs.

**PISTOL**

What! shall we have incision? shall we imbrue?

*Snatching up his sword*

Then death rock me asleep, abridge my doleful days!  
Why, then, let grievous, ghastly, gaping wounds  
Untwine the Sisters Three! Come, Atropos, I say!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Here's goodly stuff toward!

**FALSTAFF**

Give me my rapier, boy.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I pray thee, Jack, I pray thee, do not draw.

**FALSTAFF**

Get you down stairs.

*Drawing, and driving PISTOL out*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Here's a goodly tumult! I'll forswear keeping house, afore I'll be in these tiritts and frights. So; murder, I warrant now. Alas, alas! put up your naked weapons, put up your naked weapons.

*Exeunt PISTOL and BARDOLPH*

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I pray thee, Jack, be quiet; the rascal's gone. Ah, you whoreson little valiant villain, you!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

He you not hurt i' the groin? methought a' made a shrewd thrust at your belly.

*Re-enter BARDOLPH*

**FALSTAFF**

Have you turned him out o' doors?

## **BARDOLPH**

Yea, sir. The rascal's drunk: you have hurt him,  
sir, i' the shoulder.

## **FALSTAFF**

A rascal! to brave me!

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Ah, you sweet little rogue, you! alas, poor ape,  
how thou sweatest! come, let me wipe thy face;  
come on, you whoreson chops: ah, rogue! i'faith, I  
love thee: thou art as valorous as Hector of Troy,  
worth five of Agamemnon, and ten times better than  
the Nine Worthies: ah, villain!

## **FALSTAFF**

A rascally slave! I will toss the rogue in a blanket.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Do, an thou darest for thy heart: an thou dost,  
I'll canvass thee between a pair of sheets.

*Enter Music*

## **Page**

The music is come, sir.

## **FALSTAFF**

Let them play. Play, sirs. Sit on my knee, Doll.  
A rascal bragging slave! the rogue fled from me  
like quicksilver.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

I' faith, and thou followedst him like a church.  
Thou whoreson little tidy Bartholomew boar-pig,  
when wilt thou leave fighting o' days and foining  
o' nights, and begin to patch up thine old body for heaven?

*Enter, behind, PRINCE HENRY and POINS, disguised*

**FALSTAFF**

Peace, good Doll! do not speak like a death's-head;  
do not bid me remember mine end.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Sirrah, what humour's the prince of?

**FALSTAFF**

A good shallow young fellow: a' would have made a  
good pantler, a' would ha' chipp'd bread well.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

They say Poins has a good wit.

**FALSTAFF**

He a good wit? hang him, baboon! his wit's as thick  
as Tewksbury mustard; there's no more conceit in him  
than is in a mallet.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

Why does the prince love him so, then?

**FALSTAFF**

Because their legs are both of a bigness, and a'  
plays at quoits well, and eats conger and fennel,  
and drinks off candles' ends for flap-dragons, and  
rides the wild-mare with the boys, and jumps upon

joined-stools, and swears with a good grace, and wears his boots very smooth, like unto the sign of the leg, and breeds no bate with telling of discreet stories; and such other gambol faculties a' has, that show a weak mind and an able body, for the which the prince admits him: for the prince himself is such another; the weight of a hair will turn the scales between their avoirdupois.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Would not this nave of a wheel have his ears cut off?

**POINS**

Let's beat him before his whore.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Look, whether the withered elder hath not his poll clawed like a parrot.

**POINS**

Is it not strange that desire should so many years outlive performance?

**FALSTAFF**

Kiss me, Doll.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Saturn and Venus this year in conjunction! what says the almanac to that?

**POINS**

And look, whether the fiery Trigon, his man, be not lipping to his master's old tables, his note-book, his counsel-keeper.

**FALSTAFF**

Thou dost give me flattering busses.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

By my troth, I kiss thee with a most constant heart.

**FALSTAFF**

I am old, I am old.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

I love thee better than I love e'er a scurvy young  
boy of them all.

**FALSTAFF**

What stuff wilt have a kirtle of? I shall receive  
money o' Thursday: shalt have a cap to-morrow. A  
merry song, come: it grows late; we'll to bed.  
Thou'lt forget me when I am gone.

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

By my troth, thou'lt set me a-weeping, an thou  
sayest so: prove that ever I dress myself handsome  
till thy return: well, harken at the end.

**FALSTAFF**

Some sack, Francis.

**PRINCE HENRY POINS**

Anon, anon, sir.

*Coming forward*

## **FALSTAFF**

Ha! a bastard son of the king's? And art not thou  
Poins his brother?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Why, thou globe of sinful continents! what a life  
dost thou lead!

## **FALSTAFF**

A better than thou: I am a gentleman; thou art a drawer.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

Very true, sir; and I come to draw you out by the ears.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O, the Lord preserve thy good grace! by my troth,  
welcome to London. Now, the Lord bless that sweet  
face of thine! O, Jesu, are you come from Wales?

## **FALSTAFF**

Thou whoreson mad compound of majesty, by this light  
flesh and corrupt blood, thou art welcome.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

How, you fat fool! I scorn you.

## **POINS**

My lord, he will drive you out of your revenge and  
turn all to a merriment, if you take not the heat.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

You whoreson candle-mine, you, how vilely did you

Speak of me even now before this honest, virtuous,  
civil gentlewoman!

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

God's blessing of your good heart! and so she is,  
by my troth.

**FALSTAFF**

Didst thou hear me?

**PRINCE HENRY**

Yea, and you knew me, as you did when you ran away  
by Gad's-hill: you knew I was at your back, and  
spoke it on purpose to try my patience.

**FALSTAFF**

No, no, no; not so; I did not think thou wast within hearing.

**PRINCE HENRY**

I shall drive you then to confess the wilful abuse;  
and then I know how to handle you.

**FALSTAFF**

No abuse, Hal, o' mine honour, no abuse.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Not to dispraise me, and call me pantier and  
bread-chipper and I know not what?

**FALSTAFF**

No abuse, Hal.

**POINS**



No abuse?

**FALSTAFF**

No abuse, Ned, i' the world; honest Ned, none. I dispraised him before the wicked, that the wicked might not fall in love with him; in which doing, I have done the part of a careful friend and a true subject, and thy father is to give me thanks for it. No abuse, Hal: none, Ned, none: no, faith, boys, none.

**PRINCE HENRY**

See now, whether pure fear and entire cowardice doth not make thee wrong this virtuous gentlewoman to close with us? is she of the wicked? is thine hostess here of the wicked? or is thy boy of the wicked? or honest Bardolph, whose zeal burns in his nose, of the wicked?

**POINS**

Answer, thou dead elm, answer.

**FALSTAFF**

The fiend hath pricked down Bardolph irrecoverable; and his face is Lucifer's privy-kitchen, where he doth nothing but roast malt-worms. For the boy, there is a good angel about him; but the devil outbids him too.

**PRINCE HENRY**

For the women?

**FALSTAFF**

For one of them, she is in hell already, and burns poor souls. For the other, I owe her money, and whether she be damned for that, I know not.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

No, I warrant you.

**FALSTAFF**

No, I think thou art not; I think thou art quit for that. Marry, there is another indictment upon thee, for suffering flesh to be eaten in thy house, contrary to the law; for the which I think thou wilt howl.

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

All victuallers do so; what's a joint of mutton or two in a whole Lent?

**PRINCE HENRY**

You, gentlewoman,-

**DOLL TEARSHEET**

What says your grace?

**FALSTAFF**

His grace says that which his flesh rebels against.

*Knocking within*

**MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Who knocks so loud at door? Look to the door there, Francis.

*Enter PETO*

**PRINCE HENRY**

Peto, how now! what news?

## **PETO**

The king your father is at Westminster:  
And there are twenty weak and wearied posts  
Come from the north: and, as I came along,  
I met and overtook a dozen captains,  
Bare-headed, sweating, knocking at the taverns,  
And asking every one for Sir John Falstaff.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

By heaven, Poins, I feel me much to blame,  
So idly to profane the precious time,  
When tempest of commotion, like the south  
Borne with black vapour, doth begin to melt  
And drop upon our bare unarmed heads.  
Give me my sword and cloak. Falstaff, good night.

*Exeunt PRINCE HENRY, POINS, PETO and BARDOLPH*

## **FALSTAFF**

Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night, and  
we must hence and leave it unpicked.

*Knocking within*

More knocking at the door!

*Re-enter BARDOLPH*

How now! what's the matter?

## **BARDOLPH**

You must away to court, sir, presently;  
A dozen captains stay at door for you.

## **FALSTAFF**

[To the Page] Pay the musicians, sirrah. Farewell,

hostess; farewell, Doll. You see, my good wenches,  
how men of merit are sought after: the undeserver  
may sleep, when the man of action is called on.  
Farewell good wenches: if I be not sent away post,  
I will see you again ere I go.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

I cannot speak; if my heart be not read to burst,--  
well, sweet Jack, have a care of thyself.

## **FALSTAFF**

Farewell, farewell.

*Exeunt FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH*

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Well, fare thee well: I have known thee these  
twenty-nine years, come peascod-time; but an  
honester and truer-hearted man,--well, fare thee well.

## **BARDOLPH**

[Within] Mistress Tearsheet!

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

What's the matter?

## **BARDOLPH**

[Within] Good Mistress Tearsheet, come to my master.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O, run, Doll, run; run, good Doll: come.

*She comes blubbered*

Yea, will you come, Doll?

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Westminster. The palace.

*Enter KING HENRY IV in his nightgown, with a Page*

### KING HENRY IV

Go call the Earls of Surrey and of Warwick;  
But, ere they come, bid them o'er-read these letters,  
And well consider of them; make good speed.

*Exit Page*

How many thousand of my poorest subjects  
Are at this hour asleep! O sleep, O gentle sleep,  
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?  
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,  
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee  
And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,  
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,  
Under the canopies of costly state,  
And lull'd with sound of sweetest melody?  
O thou dull god, why liest thou with the vile  
In loathsome beds, and leavest the kingly couch  
A watch-case or a common 'larum-bell?  
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude imperious surge  
And in the visitation of the winds,  
Who take the ruffian billows by the top,  
Curling their monstrous heads and hanging them  
With deafening clamour in the slippery clouds,  
That, with the hurly, death itself awakes?  
Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude,  
And in the calmest and most stillest night,

With all appliances and means to boot,  
Deny it to a king? Then happy low, lie down!  
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

*Enter WARWICK and SURREY*

**WARWICK**

Many good morrows to your majesty!

**KING HENRY IV**

Is it good morrow, lords?

**WARWICK**

'Tis one o'clock, and past.

**KING HENRY IV**

Why, then, good morrow to you all, my lords.  
Have you read o'er the letters that I sent you?

**WARWICK**

We have, my liege.

**KING HENRY IV**

Then you perceive the body of our kingdom  
How foul it is; what rank diseases grow  
And with what danger, near the heart of it.

**WARWICK**

It is but as a body yet distemper'd;  
Which to his former strength may be restored  
With good advice and little medicine:  
My Lord Northumberland will soon be cool'd.

**KING HENRY IV**

O God! that one might read the book of fate,  
And see the revolution of the times  
Make mountains level, and the continent,  
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself  
Into the sea! and, other times, to see  
The beachy girdle of the ocean  
Too wide for Neptune's hips; how chances mock,  
And changes fill the cup of alteration  
With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,  
The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,  
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,  
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.  
'Tis not 'ten years gone  
Since Richard and Northumberland, great friends,  
Did feast together, and in two years after  
Were they at wars: it is but eight years since  
This Percy was the man nearest my soul,  
Who like a brother toil'd in my affairs  
And laid his love and life under my foot,  
Yea, for my sake, even to the eyes of Richard  
Gave him defiance. But which of you was by--  
You, cousin Nevil, as I may remember--

*To WARWICK*

When Richard, with his eye brimful of tears,  
Then cheque'd and rated by Northumberland,  
Did speak these words, now proved a prophecy?  
'Northumberland, thou ladder by the which  
My cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne;  
Though then, God knows, I had no such intent,  
But that necessity so bow'd the state  
That I and greatness were compell'd to kiss:  
'The time shall come,' thus did he follow it,  
'The time will come, that foul sin, gathering head,  
Shall break into corruption:' so went on,  
Foretelling this same time's condition  
And the division of our amity.

**WARWICK**

There is a history in all men's lives,



Figuring the nature of the times deceased;  
The which observed, a man may prophesy,  
With a near aim, of the main chance of things  
As yet not come to life, which in their seeds  
And weak beginnings lie intreasured.  
Such things become the hatch and brood of time;  
And by the necessary form of this  
King Richard might create a perfect guess  
That great Northumberland, then false to him,  
Would of that seed grow to a greater falseness;  
Which should not find a ground to root upon,  
Unless on you.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Are these things then necessities?  
Then let us meet them like necessities:  
And that same word even now cries out on us:  
They say the bishop and Northumberland  
Are fifty thousand strong.

## **WARWICK**

It cannot be, my lord;  
Rumour doth double, like the voice and echo,  
The numbers of the fear'd. Please it your grace  
To go to bed. Upon my soul, my lord,  
The powers that you already have sent forth  
Shall bring this prize in very easily.  
To comfort you the more, I have received  
A certain instance that Glendower is dead.  
Your majesty hath been this fortnight ill,  
And these unseason'd hours perforce must add  
Unto your sickness.

## **KING HENRY IV**

I will take your counsel:  
And were these inward wars once out of hand,  
We would, dear lords, unto the Holy Land.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Gloucestershire. Before SHALLOW'S house.

*Enter SHALLOW and SILENCE, meeting; MOULDY, SHADOW, WART, FEEBLE, BULLCALF, a Servant or two with them*

### SHALLOW

Come on, come on, come on, sir; give me your hand, sir, give me your hand, sir: an early stirrer, by the rood! And how doth my good cousin Silence?

### SILENCE

Good morrow, good cousin Shallow.

### SHALLOW

And how doth my cousin, your bedfellow? and your fairest daughter and mine, my god-daughter Ellen?

### SILENCE

Alas, a black ousel, cousin Shallow!

### SHALLOW

By yea and nay, sir, I dare say my cousin William is become a good scholar: he is at Oxford still, is he not?

### SILENCE

Indeed, sir, to my cost.

### SHALLOW

A' must, then, to the inns o' court shortly. I was once of Clement's Inn, where I think they will talk of mad Shallow yet.

## **SILENCE**

You were called 'lusty Shallow' then, cousin.

## **SHALLOW**

By the mass, I was called any thing; and I would have done any thing indeed too, and roundly too. There was I, and little John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Cotswold man; you had not four such swinge-bucklers in all the inns o' court again: and I may say to you, we knew where the bona-robas were and had the best of them all at commandment. Then was Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

## **SILENCE**

This Sir John, cousin, that comes hither anon about soldiers?

## **SHALLOW**

The same Sir John, the very same. I see him break Skogan's head at the court-gate, when a' was a crack not thus high: and the very same day did I fight with one Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent! and to see how many of my old acquaintance are dead!

## **SILENCE**

We shall all follow, cousin.

## **SHADOW**

Certain, 'tis certain; very sure, very sure: death,

as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all; all shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?

**SILENCE**

By my troth, I was not there.

**SHALLOW**

Death is certain. Is old Double of your town living yet?

**SILENCE**

Dead, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Jesu, Jesu, dead! a' drew a good bow; and dead! a' shot a fine shoot: John a Gaunt loved him well, and betted much money on his head. Dead! a' would have clapped i' the clout at twelve score; and carried you a forehand shaft a fourteen and fourteen and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see. How a score of ewes now?

**SILENCE**

Thereafter as they be: a score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.

**SHALLOW**

And is old Double dead?

**SILENCE**

Here come two of Sir John Falstaff's men, as I think.

*Enter BARDOLPH and one with him*

## **BARBOLPH**

Good morrow, honest gentlemen: I beseech you, which is Justice Shallow?

## **SHALLOW**

I am Robert Shallow, sir; a poor esquire of this county, and one of the king's justices of the peace: What is your good pleasure with me?

## **BARBOLPH**

My captain, sir, commends him to you; my captain, Sir John Falstaff, a tall gentleman, by heaven, and a most gallant leader.

## **SHALLOW**

He greets me well, sir. I knew him a good backword man. How doth the good knight? may I ask how my lady his wife doth?

## **BARBOLPH**

Sir, pardon; a soldier is better accommodated than with a wife.

## **SHALLOW**

It is well said, in faith, sir; and it is well said indeed too. Better accommodated! it is good; yea, indeed, is it: good phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable. Accommodated! it comes of 'accommodo' very good; a good phrase.

## **BARBOLPH**

Pardon me, sir; I have heard the word. Phrase call you it? by this good day, I know not the phrase; but I will maintain the word with my sword to be a

soldier-like word, and a word of exceeding good command, by heaven. Accommodated; that is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated; or when a man is, being, whereby a' may be thought to be accommodated; which is an excellent thing.

## **SHALLOW**

It is very just.

*Enter FALSTAFF*

Look, here comes good Sir John. Give me your good hand, give me your worship's good hand: by my troth, you like well and bear your years very well: welcome, good Sir John.

## **FALSTAFF**

I am glad to see you well, good Master Robert Shallow: Master Surecard, as I think?

## **SHALLOW**

No, Sir John; it is my cousin Silence, in commission with me.

## **FALSTAFF**

Good Master Silence, it well befits you should be of the peace.

## **SILENCE**

Your good-worship is welcome.

## **FALSTAFF**

Fie! this is hot weather, gentlemen. Have you provided me here half a dozen sufficient men?

## **SHALLOW**

Marry, have we, sir. Will you sit?

**FALSTAFF**

Let me see them, I beseech you.

**SHALLOW**

Where's the roll? where's the roll? where's the roll? Let me see, let me see, let me see. So, so: yea, marry, sir: Ralph Mouldy! Let them appear as I call; let them do so, let them do so. Let me see; where is Mouldy?

**MOULDY**

Here, an't please you.

**SHALLOW**

What think you, Sir John? a good-limbed fellow; young, strong, and of good friends.

**FALSTAFF**

Is thy name Mouldy?

**MOULDY**

Yea, an't please you.

**FALSTAFF**

'Tis the more time thou wert used.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, ha, ha! most excellent, i' faith! Things that are mouldy lack use: very singular good! in faith, well said, Sir John, very well said.



**FALSTAFF**

Prick him.

**MOULDY**

I was pricked well enough before, an you could have let me alone: my old dame will be undone now for one to do her husbandry and her drudgery: you need not to have pricked me; there are other men fitter to go out than I.

**FALSTAFF**

Go to: peace, Mouldy; you shall go. Mouldy, it is time you were spent.

**MOULDY**

Spent!

**SHALLOW**

Peace, fellow, peace; stand aside: know you where you are? For the other, Sir John: let me see:  
Simon Shadow!

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, marry, let me have him to sit under: he's like to be a cold soldier.

**SHALLOW**

Where's Shadow?

**SHADOW**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Shadow, whose son art thou?

**SHADOW**

My mother's son, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Thy mother's son! like enough, and thy father's shadow: so the son of the female is the shadow of the male: it is often so, indeed; but much of the father's substance!

**SHALLOW**

Do you like him, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

Shadow will serve for summer; prick him, for we have a number of shadows to fill up the muster-book.

**SHALLOW**

Thomas Wart!

**FALSTAFF**

Where's he?

**WART**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Is thy name Wart?

**WART**

Yea, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Thou art a very ragged wart.

**SHALLOW**

Shall I prick him down, Sir John?

**FALSTAFF**

It were superfluous; for his apparel is built upon his back and the whole frame stands upon pins: prick him no more.

**SHALLOW**

Ha, ha, ha! you can do it, sir; you can do it: I commend you well. Francis Feeble!

**FEEBLE**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

What trade art thou, Feeble?

**FEEBLE**

A woman's tailor, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Shall I prick him, sir?

**FALSTAFF**

You may: but if he had been a man's tailor, he'd ha' pricked you. Wilt thou make as many holes in

an enemy's battle as thou hast done in a woman's petticoat?

**FEEBLE**

I will do my good will, sir; you can have no more.

**FALSTAFF**

Well said, good woman's tailor! well said,  
courageous Feeble! thou wilt be as valiant as the  
wrathful dove or most magnanimous mouse. Prick the  
woman's tailor: well, Master Shallow; deep, Master Shallow.

**FEEBLE**

I would Wart might have gone, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

I would thou wert a man's tailor, that thou mightst  
mend him and make him fit to go. I cannot put him  
to a private soldier that is the leader of so many  
thousands: let that suffice, most forcible Feeble.

**FEEBLE**

It shall suffice, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

I am bound to thee, reverend Feeble. Who is next?

**SHALLOW**

Peter Bullcalf o' the green!

**FALSTAFF**

Yea, marry, let's see Bullcalf.

**BULLCALF**

Here, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

'Fore God, a likely fellow! Come, prick me Bullcalf till he roar again.

**BULLCALF**

O Lord! good my lord captain,--

**FALSTAFF**

What, dost thou roar before thou art pricked?

**BULLCALF**

O Lord, sir! I am a diseased man.

**FALSTAFF**

What disease hast thou?

**BULLCALF**

A whoreson cold, sir, a cough, sir, which I caught with ringing in the king's affairs upon his coronation-day, sir.

**FALSTAFF**

Come, thou shalt go to the wars in a gown; we wilt have away thy cold; and I will take such order that my friends shall ring for thee. Is here all?

**SHALLOW**

Here is two more called than your number, you must have but four here, sir: and so, I pray you, go in with me to dinner.

**FALSTAFF**

Come, I will go drink with you, but I cannot tarry dinner. I am glad to see you, by my troth, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

O, Sir John, do you remember since we lay all night in the windmill in Saint George's field?

**FALSTAFF**

No more of that, good Master Shallow, no more of that.

**SHALLOW**

Ha! 'twas a merry night. And is Jane Nightwork alive?

**FALSTAFF**

She lives, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

She never could away with me.

**FALSTAFF**

Never, never; she would always say she could not abide Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

By the mass, I could anger her to the heart. She was then a bona-roba. Doth she hold her own well?

**FALSTAFF**

Old, old, Master Shallow.

## **SHALLOW**

Nay, she must be old; she cannot choose but be old; certain she's old; and had Robin Nightwork by old Nightwork before I came to Clement's Inn.

## **SILENCE**

That's fifty-five year ago.

## **SHALLOW**

Ha, cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen that that this knight and I have seen! Ha, Sir John, said I well?

## **FALSTAFF**

We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow.

## **SHALLOW**

That we have, that we have, that we have; in faith, Sir John, we have: our watch-word was 'Hem boys!' Come, let's to dinner; come, let's to dinner: Jesus, the days that we have seen! Come, come.

*Exeunt FALSTAFF and Justices*

## **BULLCALF**

Good Master Corporate Bardolph, stand my friend; and here's four Harry ten shillings in French crowns for you. In very truth, sir, I had as lief be hanged, sir, as go: and yet, for mine own part, sir, I do not care; but rather, because I am unwilling, and, for mine own part, have a desire to stay with my friends; else, sir, I did not care, for mine own part, so much.

## **BARBOLPH**

Go to; stand aside.

## **MOULDY**

And, good master corporal captain, for my old  
dame's sake, stand my friend: she has nobody to do  
any thing about her when I am gone; and she is old,  
and cannot help herself: You shall have forty, sir.

## **BARDOLPH**

Go to; stand aside.

## **FEEBLE**

By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once: we  
owe God a death: I'll ne'er bear a base mind:  
an't be my destiny, so; an't be not, so: no man is  
too good to serve's prince; and let it go which way  
it will, he that dies this year is quit for the next.

## **BARDOLPH**

Well said; thou'rt a good fellow.

## **FEEBLE**

Faith, I'll bear no base mind.

*Re-enter FALSTAFF and the Justices*

## **FALSTAFF**

Come, sir, which men shall I have?

## **SHALLOW**

Four of which you please.

## **BARDOLPH**



Sir, a word with you: I have three pound to free  
Mouldy and Bullcalf.

**FALSTAFF**

Go to; well.

**SHALLOW**

Come, Sir John, which four will you have?

**FALSTAFF**

Do you choose for me.

**SHALLOW**

Marry, then, Mouldy, Bullcalf, Feeble and Shadow.

**FALSTAFF**

Mouldy and Bullcalf: for you, Mouldy, stay at home  
till you are past service: and for your part,  
Bullcalf, grow till you come unto it: I will none of you.

**SHALLOW**

Sir John, Sir John, do not yourself wrong: they are  
your likeliest men, and I would have you served with the best.

**FALSTAFF**

Will you tell me, Master Shallow, how to choose a  
man? Care I for the limb, the thewes, the stature,  
bulk, and big assemblance of a man! Give me the  
spirit, Master Shallow. Here's Wart; you see what a  
ragged appearance it is; a' shall charge you and  
discharge you with the motion of a pewterer's  
hammer, come off and on swifter than he that gibbets  
on the brewer's bucket. And this same half-faced  
fellow, Shadow; give me this man: he presents no

mark to the enemy; the foeman may with as great aim level at the edge of a penknife. And for a retreat; how swiftly will this Feeble the woman's tailor run off! O, give me the spare men, and spare me the great ones. Put me a caliver into Wart's hand, Bardolph.

## **BARBOLPH**

Hold, Wart, traverse; thus, thus, thus.

## **FALSTAFF**

Come, manage me your caliver. So: very well: go to: very good, exceeding good. O, give me always a little, lean, old, chapt, bald shot. Well said, i' faith, Wart; thou'rt a good scab: hold, there's a tester for thee.

## **SHALLOW**

He is not his craft's master; he doth not do it right. I remember at Mile-end Green, when I lay at Clement's Inn--I was then Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show,--there was a little quiver fellow, and a' would manage you his piece thus; and a' would about and about, and come you in and come you in: 'rah, tah, tah,' would a' say; 'bounce' would a' say; and away again would a' go, and again would a' come: I shall ne'er see such a fellow.

## **FALSTAFF**

These fellows will do well, Master Shallow. God keep you, Master Silence: I will not use many words with you. Fare you well, gentlemen both: I thank you: I must a dozen mile to-night. Bardolph, give the soldiers coats.

## **SHALLOW**

Sir John, the Lord bless you! God prosper your affairs! God send us peace! At your return visit

our house; let our old acquaintance be renewed;  
peradventure I will with ye to the court.

**FALSTAFF**

'Fore God, I would you would, Master Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

Go to; I have spoke at a word. God keep you.

**FALSTAFF**

Fare you well, gentle gentlemen.

*Exeunt Justices*

On, Bardolph; lead the men away.

*Exeunt BARDOLPH, Recruits, & c*

As I return, I will fetch off these justices: I do see the bottom of Justice Shallow. Lord, Lord, how subject we old men are to this vice of lying! This same starved justice hath done nothing but prate to me of the wildness of his youth, and the feats he hath done about Turnbull Street: and every third word a lie, duer paid to the hearer than the Turk's tribute. I do remember him at Clement's Inn like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring: when a' was naked, he was, for all the world, like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife: a' was so forlorn, that his dimensions to any thick sight were invincible: a' was the very genius of famine; yet lecherous as a monkey, and the whores called him mandrake: a' came ever in the rearward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the overscutched huswives that he heard the carmen whistle, and swear they were his fancies or his good-nights. And now is this Vice's dagger become a squire, and talks as familiarly of John a Gaunt as if he had been sworn brother to him; and

I'll be sworn a' ne'er saw him but once in the  
Tilt-yard; and then he burst his head for crowding  
among the marshal's men. I saw it, and told John a  
Gaunt he beat his own name; for you might have  
thrust him and all his apparel into an eel-skin; the  
case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him, a  
court: and now has he land and beefs. Well, I'll  
be acquainted with him, if I return; and it shall  
go hard but I will make him a philosopher's two  
stones to me: if the young dace be a bait for the  
old pike, I see no reason in the law of nature but I  
may snap at him. Let time shape, and there an end.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Yorkshire. Gaultree Forest.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, MOWBRAY, LORD HASTINGS, and others*

### ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

What is this forest call'd?

### HASTINGS

'Tis Gaultree Forest, an't shall please your grace.

### ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Here stand, my lords; and send discoverers forth  
To know the numbers of our enemies.

### HASTINGS

We have sent forth already.

### ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

'Tis well done.  
My friends and brethren in these great affairs,  
I must acquaint you that I have received  
New-dated letters from Northumberland;  
Their cold intent, tenor and substance, thus:  
Here doth he wish his person, with such powers  
As might hold sortance with his quality,  
The which he could not levy; whereupon  
He is retired, to ripe his growing fortunes,  
To Scotland: and concludes in hearty prayers  
That your attempts may overlive the hazard  
And fearful melting of their opposite.

## **MOWBRAY**

Thus do the hopes we have in him touch ground  
And dash themselves to pieces.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **HASTINGS**

Now, what news?

## **Messenger**

West of this forest, scarcely off a mile,  
In goodly form comes on the enemy;  
And, by the ground they hide, I judge their number  
Upon or near the rate of thirty thousand.

## **MOWBRAY**

The just proportion that we gave them out  
Let us sway on and face them in the field.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

What well-appointed leader fronts us here?

*Enter WESTMORELAND*

## **MOWBRAY**

I think it is my Lord of Westmoreland.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Health and fair greeting from our general,  
The prince, Lord John and Duke of Lancaster.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Say on, my Lord of Westmoreland, in peace:

What doth concern your coming?

## **WESTMORELAND**

Then, my lord,  
Unto your grace do I in chief address  
The substance of my speech. If that rebellion  
Came like itself, in base and abject routs,  
Led on by bloody youth, guarded with rags,  
And countenanced by boys and beggary,  
I say, if damn'd commotion so appear'd,  
In his true, native and most proper shape,  
You, reverend father, and these noble lords  
Had not been here, to dress the ugly form  
Of base and bloody insurrection  
With your fair honours. You, lord archbishop,  
Whose see is by a civil peace maintained,  
Whose beard the silver hand of peace hath touch'd,  
Whose learning and good letters peace hath tutor'd,  
Whose white investments figure innocence,  
The dove and very blessed spirit of peace,  
Wherefore do you so ill translate ourself  
Out of the speech of peace that bears such grace,  
Into the harsh and boisterous tongue of war;  
Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,  
Your pens to lances and your tongue divine  
To a trumpet and a point of war?

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Wherefore do I this? so the question stands.  
Briefly to this end: we are all diseased,  
And with our surfeiting and wanton hours  
Have brought ourselves into a burning fever,  
And we must bleed for it; of which disease  
Our late king, Richard, being infected, died.  
But, my most noble Lord of Westmoreland,  
I take not on me here as a physician,  
Nor do I as an enemy to peace  
Troop in the throngs of military men;  
But rather show awhile like fearful war,  
To diet rank minds sick of happiness  
And purge the obstructions which begin to stop

Our very veins of life. Hear me more plainly.  
I have in equal balance justly weigh'd  
What wrongs our arms may do, what wrongs we suffer,  
And find our griefs heavier than our offences.  
We see which way the stream of time doth run,  
And are enforced from our most quiet there  
By the rough torrent of occasion;  
And have the summary of all our griefs,  
When time shall serve, to show in articles;  
Which long ere this we offer'd to the king,  
And might by no suit gain our audience:  
When we are wrong'd and would unfold our griefs,  
We are denied access unto his person  
Even by those men that most have done us wrong.  
The dangers of the days but newly gone,  
Whose memory is written on the earth  
With yet appearing blood, and the examples  
Of every minute's instance, present now,  
Hath put us in these ill-beseeming arms,  
Not to break peace or any branch of it,  
But to establish here a peace indeed,  
Concurring both in name and quality.

## **WESTMORELAND**

When ever yet was your appeal denied?  
Wherein have you been galled by the king?  
What peer hath been suborn'd to grate on you,  
That you should seal this lawless bloody book  
Of forged rebellion with a seal divine  
And consecrate commotion's bitter edge?

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

My brother general, the commonwealth,  
To brother born an household cruelty,  
I make my quarrel in particular.

## **WESTMORELAND**

There is no need of any such redress;  
Or if there were, it not belongs to you.



## **MOWBRAY**

Why not to him in part, and to us all  
That feel the bruises of the days before,  
And suffer the condition of these times  
To lay a heavy and unequal hand  
Upon our honours?

## **WESTMORELAND**

O, my good Lord Mowbray,  
Construe the times to their necessities,  
And you shall say indeed, it is the time,  
And not the king, that doth you injuries.  
Yet for your part, it not appears to me  
Either from the king or in the present time  
That you should have an inch of any ground  
To build a grief on: were you not restored  
To all the Duke of Norfolk's signories,  
Your noble and right well remember'd father's?

## **MOWBRAY**

What thing, in honour, had my father lost,  
That need to be revived and breathed in me?  
The king that loved him, as the state stood then,  
Was force perforce compell'd to banish him:  
And then that Harry Bolingbroke and he,  
Being mounted and both roused in their seats,  
Their neighing coursers daring of the spur,  
Their armed staves in charge, their beavers down,  
Their eyes of fire sparking through sights of steel  
And the loud trumpet blowing them together,  
Then, then, when there was nothing could have stay'd  
My father from the breast of Bolingbroke,  
O when the king did throw his warder down,  
His own life hung upon the staff he threw;  
Then threw he down himself and all their lives  
That by indictment and by dint of sword  
Have since miscarried under Bolingbroke.

## **WESTMORELAND**

You speak, Lord Mowbray, now you know not what.  
The Earl of Hereford was reputed then  
In England the most valiant gentlemen:  
Who knows on whom fortune would then have smiled?  
But if your father had been victor there,  
He ne'er had borne it out of Coventry:  
For all the country in a general voice  
Cried hate upon him; and all their prayers and love  
Were set on Hereford, whom they doted on  
And bless'd and graced indeed, more than the king.  
But this is mere digression from my purpose.  
Here come I from our princely general  
To know your griefs; to tell you from his grace  
That he will give you audience; and wherein  
It shall appear that your demands are just,  
You shall enjoy them, every thing set off  
That might so much as think you enemies.

## **MOWBRAY**

But he hath forced us to compel this offer;  
And it proceeds from policy, not love.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Mowbray, you overween to take it so;  
This offer comes from mercy, not from fear:  
For, lo! within a ken our army lies,  
Upon mine honour, all too confident  
To give admittance to a thought of fear.  
Our battle is more full of names than yours,  
Our men more perfect in the use of arms,  
Our armour all as strong, our cause the best;  
Then reason will our heart should be as good  
Say you not then our offer is compell'd.

## **MOWBRAY**

Well, by my will we shall admit no parley.

## **WESTMORELAND**

That argues but the shame of your offence:  
A rotten case abides no handling.

## **HASTINGS**

Hath the Prince John a full commission,  
In very ample virtue of his father,  
To hear and absolutely to determine  
Of what conditions we shall stand upon?

## **WESTMORELAND**

That is intended in the general's name:  
I muse you make so slight a question.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Then take, my Lord of Westmoreland, this schedule,  
For this contains our general grievances:  
Each several article herein redress'd,  
All members of our cause, both here and hence,  
That are insinew'd to this action,  
Acquitted by a true substantial form  
And present execution of our wills  
To us and to our purposes confined,  
We come within our awful banks again  
And knit our powers to the arm of peace.

## **WESTMORELAND**

This will I show the general. Please you, lords,  
In sight of both our battles we may meet;  
And either end in peace, which God so frame!  
Or to the place of difference call the swords  
Which must decide it.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

My lord, we will do so.

*Exit WESTMORELAND*

## **MOWBRAY**

There is a thing within my bosom tells me  
That no conditions of our peace can stand.

## **HASTINGS**

Fear you not that: if we can make our peace  
Upon such large terms and so absolute  
As our conditions shall consist upon,  
Our peace shall stand as firm as rocky mountains.

## **MOWBRAY**

Yea, but our valuation shall be such  
That every slight and false-derived cause,  
Yea, every idle, nice and wanton reason  
Shall to the king taste of this action;  
That, were our royal faiths martyrs in love,  
We shall be winnow'd with so rough a wind  
That even our corn shall seem as light as chaff  
And good from bad find no partition.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

No, no, my lord. Note this; the king is weary  
Of dainty and such picking grievances:  
For he hath found to end one doubt by death  
Revives two greater in the heirs of life,  
And therefore will he wipe his tables clean  
And keep no tell-tale to his memory  
That may repeat and history his loss  
To new remembrance; for full well he knows  
He cannot so precisely weed this land  
As his misdoubts present occasion:  
His foes are so enrooted with his friends  
That, plucking to unfix an enemy,  
He doth unfasten so and shake a friend:  
So that this land, like an offensive wife  
That hath enraged him on to offer strokes,  
As he is striking, holds his infant up

And hangs resolved correction in the arm  
That was uprear'd to execution.

## **HASTINGS**

Besides, the king hath wasted all his rods  
On late offenders, that he now doth lack  
The very instruments of chastisement:  
So that his power, like to a fangless lion,  
May offer, but not hold.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

'Tis very true:  
And therefore be assured, my good lord marshal,  
If we do now make our atonement well,  
Our peace will, like a broken limb united,  
Grow stronger for the breaking.

## **MOWBRAY**

Be it so.  
Here is return'd my Lord of Westmoreland.

*Re-enter WESTMORELAND*

## **WESTMORELAND**

The prince is here at hand: pleaseth your lordship  
To meet his grace just distance 'tween our armies.

## **MOWBRAY**

Your grace of York, in God's name then, set forward.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Before, and greet his grace: my lord, we come.

*Exeunt*



# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another part of the forest.

*Enter, from one side, MOWBRAY, attended; afterwards the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, HASTINGS, and others: from the other side, Prince John of LANCASTER, and WESTMORELAND; Officers, and others with them*

### LANCASTER

You are well encounter'd here, my cousin Mowbray:  
Good day to you, gentle lord archbishop;  
And so to you, Lord Hastings, and to all.  
My Lord of York, it better show'd with you  
When that your flock, assembled by the bell,  
Encircled you to hear with reverence  
Your exposition on the holy text  
Than now to see you here an iron man,  
Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,  
Turning the word to sword and life to death.  
That man that sits within a monarch's heart,  
And ripens in the sunshine of his favour,  
Would he abuse the countenance of the king,  
Alack, what mischiefs might he set abrooch  
In shadow of such greatness! With you, lord bishop,  
It is even so. Who hath not heard it spoken  
How deep you were within the books of God?  
To us the speaker in his parliament;  
To us the imagined voice of God himself;  
The very opener and intelligencer  
Between the grace, the sanctities of heaven  
And our dull workings. O, who shall believe  
But you misuse the reverence of your place,  
Employ the countenance and grace of heaven,  
As a false favourite doth his prince's name,  
In deeds dishonourable? You have ta'en up,  
Under the counterfeited zeal of God,  
The subjects of his substitute, my father,  
And both against the peace of heaven and him

Have here up-swarm'd them.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Good my Lord of Lancaster,  
I am not here against your father's peace;  
But, as I told my lord of Westmoreland,  
The time disorder'd doth, in common sense,  
Crowd us and crush us to this monstrous form,  
To hold our safety up. I sent your grace  
The parcels and particulars of our grief,  
The which hath been with scorn shoved from the court,  
Whereon this Hydra son of war is born;  
Whose dangerous eyes may well be charm'd asleep  
With grant of our most just and right desires,  
And true obedience, of this madness cured,  
Stoop tamely to the foot of majesty.

## **MOWBRAY**

If not, we ready are to try our fortunes  
To the last man.

## **HASTINGS**

And though we here fall down,  
We have supplies to second our attempt:  
If they miscarry, theirs shall second them;  
And so success of mischief shall be born  
And heir from heir shall hold this quarrel up  
Whiles England shall have generation.

## **LANCASTER**

You are too shallow, Hastings, much too shallow,  
To sound the bottom of the after-times.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Pleaseth your grace to answer them directly  
How far forth you do like their articles.



## **LANCASTER**

I like them all, and do allow them well,  
And swear here, by the honour of my blood,  
My father's purposes have been mistook,  
And some about him have too lavishly  
Wrested his meaning and authority.  
My lord, these griefs shall be with speed redress'd;  
Upon my soul, they shall. If this may please you,  
Discharge your powers unto their several counties,  
As we will ours: and here between the armies  
Let's drink together friendly and embrace,  
That all their eyes may bear those tokens home  
Of our restored love and amity.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

I take your princely word for these redresses.

## **LANCASTER**

I give it you, and will maintain my word:  
And thereupon I drink unto your grace.

## **HASTINGS**

Go, captain, and deliver to the army  
This news of peace: let them have pay, and part:  
I know it will well please them. Hie thee, captain.

*Exit Officer*

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

To you, my noble Lord of Westmoreland.

## **WESTMORELAND**

I pledge your grace; and, if you knew what pains  
I have bestow'd to breed this present peace,  
You would drink freely: but my love to ye  
Shall show itself more openly hereafter.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

I do not doubt you.

## **WESTMORELAND**

I am glad of it.  
Health to my lord and gentle cousin, Mowbray.

## **MOWBRAY**

You wish me health in very happy season;  
For I am, on the sudden, something ill.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Against ill chances men are ever merry;  
But heaviness foreruns the good event.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Therefore be merry, coz; since sudden sorrow  
Serves to say thus, 'some good thing comes  
to-morrow.'

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Believe me, I am passing light in spirit.

## **MOWBRAY**

So much the worse, if your own rule be true.

*Shouts within*

## **LANCASTER**

The word of peace is render'd: hark, how they shout!

## **MOWBRAY**

This had been cheerful after victory.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

A peace is of the nature of a conquest;  
For then both parties nobly are subdued,  
And neither party loser.

## **LANCASTER**

Go, my lord,  
And let our army be discharged too.

*Exit WESTMORELAND*

And, good my lord, so please you, let our trains  
March, by us, that we may peruse the men  
We should have coped withal.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Go, good Lord Hastings,  
And, ere they be dismissed, let them march by.

*Exit HASTINGS*

## **LANCASTER**

I trust, lords, we shall lie to-night together.

*Re-enter WESTMORELAND*

Now, cousin, wherefore stands our army still?

## **WESTMORELAND**

The leaders, having charge from you to stand,  
Will not go off until they hear you speak.

## **LANCASTER**

They know their duties.

*Re-enter HASTINGS*

## **HASTINGS**

My lord, our army is dispersed already;  
Like youthful steers unyoked, they take their courses  
East, west, north, south; or, like a school broke up,  
Each hurries toward his home and sporting-place.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Good tidings, my Lord Hastings; for the which  
I do arrest thee, traitor, of high treason:  
And you, lord archbishop, and you, Lord Mowbray,  
Of capitol treason I attach you both.

## **MOWBRAY**

Is this proceeding just and honourable?

## **WESTMORELAND**

Is your assembly so?

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Will you thus break your faith?

## **LANCASTER**

I pawn'd thee none:  
I promised you redress of these same grievances  
Whereof you did complain; which, by mine honour,  
I will perform with a most Christian care.  
But for you, rebels, look to taste the due  
Meet for rebellion and such acts as yours.  
Most shallowly did you these arms commence,  
Fondly brought here and foolishly sent hence.

Strike up our drums, pursue the scatter'd stray:  
God, and not we, hath safely fought to-day.  
Some guard these traitors to the block of death,  
Treason's true bed and yielder up of breath.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another part of the forest.

*Alarum. Excursions. Enter FALSTAFF and COLEVILE, meeting*

**FALSTAFF**

What's your name, sir? of what condition are you,  
and of what place, I pray?

**COLEVILE**

I am a knight, sir, and my name is Colevile of the dale.

**FALSTAFF**

Well, then, Colevile is your name, a knight is your  
degree, and your place the dale: Colevile shall be  
still your name, a traitor your degree, and the  
dungeon your place, a place deep enough; so shall  
you be still Colevile of the dale.

**COLEVILE**

Are not you Sir John Falstaff?

**FALSTAFF**

As good a man as he, sir, whoe'er I am. Do ye  
yield, sir? or shall I sweat for you? if I do  
sweat, they are the drops of thy lovers, and they  
weep for thy death: therefore rouse up fear and  
trembling, and do observance to my mercy.

**COLEVILE**

I think you are Sir John Falstaff, and in that

thought yield me.

## **FALSTAFF**

I have a whole school of tongues in this belly of mine, and not a tongue of them all speaks any other word but my name. An I had but a belly of any indifference, I were simply the most active fellow in Europe: my womb, my womb, my womb, undoes me. Here comes our general.

*Enter PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER, WESTMORELAND, BLUNT, and others*

## **LANCASTER**

The heat is past; follow no further now:  
Call in the powers, good cousin Westmoreland.

*Exit WESTMORELAND*

Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?  
When every thing is ended, then you come:  
These tardy tricks of yours will, on my life,  
One time or other break some gallows' back.

## **FALSTAFF**

I would be sorry, my lord, but it should be thus: I never knew yet but rebuke and cheque was the reward of valour. Do you think me a swallow, an arrow, or a bullet? have I, in my poor and old motion, the expedition of thought? I have speeded hither with the very extremest inch of possibility; I have foundered nine score and odd posts: and here, travel-tainted as I am, have in my pure and immaculate valour, taken Sir John Colevile of the dale, a most furious knight and valorous enemy. But what of that? he saw me, and yielded; that I may justly say, with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome, 'I came, saw, and overcame.'

## **LANCASTER**

It was more of his courtesy than your deserving.

**FALSTAFF**

I know not: here he is, and here I yield him: and I beseech your grace, let it be booked with the rest of this day's deeds; or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular ballad else, with mine own picture on the top on't, Colevile kissing my foot: to the which course if I be enforced, if you do not all show like gilt twopences to me, and I in the clear sky of fame o'ershine you as much as the full moon doth the cinders of the element, which show like pins' heads to her, believe not the word of the noble: therefore let me have right, and let desert mount.

**LANCASTER**

Thine's too heavy to mount.

**FALSTAFF**

Let it shine, then.

**LANCASTER**

Thine's too thick to shine.

**FALSTAFF**

Let it do something, my good lord, that may do me good, and call it what you will.

**LANCASTER**

Is thy name Colevile?

**COLEVILE**



It is, my lord.

**LANCASTER**

A famous rebel art thou, Colevile.

**FALSTAFF**

And a famous true subject took him.

**COLEVILE**

I am, my lord, but as my betters are  
That led me hither: had they been ruled by me,  
You should have won them dearer than you have.

**FALSTAFF**

I know not how they sold themselves: but thou, like  
a kind fellow, gavest thyself away gratis; and I  
thank thee for thee.

*Re-enter WESTMORELAND*

**LANCASTER**

Now, have you left pursuit?

**WESTMORELAND**

Retreat is made and execution stay'd.

**LANCASTER**

Send Colevile with his confederates  
To York, to present execution:  
Blunt, lead him hence; and see you guard him sure.

*Exeunt BLUNT and others with COLEVILE*

And now dispatch we toward the court, my lords:

I hear the king my father is sore sick:  
Our news shall go before us to his majesty,  
Which, cousin, you shall bear to comfort him,  
And we with sober speed will follow you.

## **FALSTAFF**

My lord, I beseech you, give me leave to go  
Through Gloucestershire: and, when you come to court,  
Stand my good lord, pray, in your good report.

## **LANCASTER**

Fare you well, Falstaff: I, in my condition,  
Shall better speak of you than you deserve.

*Exeunt all but Falstaff*

## **FALSTAFF**

I would you had but the wit: 'twere better than  
your dukedom. Good faith, this same young sober-  
blooded boy doth not love me; nor a man cannot make  
him laugh; but that's no marvel, he drinks no wine.  
There's never none of these demure boys come to any  
proof; for thin drink doth so over-cool their blood,  
and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a  
kind of male green-sickness; and then when they  
marry, they get wenches: they are generally fools  
and cowards; which some of us should be too, but for  
inflammation. A good sherris sack hath a two-fold  
operation in it. It ascends me into the brain;  
dries me there all the foolish and dull and curdy  
vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive,  
quick, forgetive, full of nimble fiery and  
delectable shapes, which, delivered o'er to the  
voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes  
excellent wit. The second property of your  
excellent sherris is, the warming of the blood;  
which, before cold and settled, left the liver  
white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity  
and cowardice; but the sherris warms it and makes

it course from the inwards to the parts extreme:  
it illumineth the face, which as a beacon gives  
warning to all the rest of this little kingdom,  
man, to arm; and then the vital commoners and  
inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain,  
the heart, who, great and puffed up with this  
retinue, doth any deed of courage; and this valour  
comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is  
nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work; and  
learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till  
sack commences it and sets it in act and use.  
Hereof comes it that Prince Harry is valiant; for  
the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his  
father, he hath, like lean, sterile and bare land,  
manured, husbanded and tilled with excellent  
endeavour of drinking good and good store of fertile  
sherris, that he is become very hot and valiant. If  
I had a thousand sons, the first humane principle I  
would teach them should be, to forswear thin  
potations and to addict themselves to sack.

*Enter BARDOLPH*

How now Bardolph?

**BAROLPH**

The army is discharged all and gone.

**FALSTAFF**

Let them go. I'll through Gloucestershire; and  
there will I visit Master Robert Shallow, esquire:  
I have him already tempering between my finger and  
my thumb, and shortly will I seal with him. Come away.

*Exeunt*

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Westminster. The Jerusalem Chamber.

*Enter KING HENRY IV, the Princes Thomas of CLARENCE and Humphrey of GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, and others*

### KING HENRY IV

Now, lords, if God doth give successful end  
To this debate that bleedeth at our doors,  
We will our youth lead on to higher fields  
And draw no swords but what are sanctified.  
Our navy is address'd, our power collected,  
Our substitutes in absence well invested,  
And every thing lies level to our wish:  
Only, we want a little personal strength;  
And pause us, till these rebels, now afoot,  
Come underneath the yoke of government.

### WARWICK

Both which we doubt not but your majesty  
Shall soon enjoy.

### KING HENRY IV

Humphrey, my son of Gloucester,  
Where is the prince your brother?

### GLOUCESTER

I think he's gone to hunt, my lord, at Windsor.

### KING HENRY IV

And how accompanied?

## **GLOUCESTER**

I do not know, my lord.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Is not his brother, Thomas of Clarence, with him?

## **GLOUCESTER**

No, my good lord; he is in presence here.

## **CLARENCE**

What would my lord and father?

## **KING HENRY IV**

Nothing but well to thee, Thomas of Clarence.  
How chance thou art not with the prince thy brother?  
He loves thee, and thou dost neglect him, Thomas;  
Thou hast a better place in his affection  
Than all thy brothers: cherish it, my boy,  
And noble offices thou mayst effect  
Of mediation, after I am dead,  
Between his greatness and thy other brethren:  
Therefore omit him not; blunt not his love,  
Nor lose the good advantage of his grace  
By seeming cold or careless of his will;  
For he is gracious, if he be observed:  
He hath a tear for pity and a hand  
Open as day for melting charity:  
Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, he's flint,  
As humorous as winter and as sudden  
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.  
His temper, therefore, must be well observed:  
Chide him for faults, and do it reverently,  
When thou perceive his blood inclined to mirth;  
But, being moody, give him line and scope,  
Till that his passions, like a whale on ground,  
Confound themselves with working. Learn this, Thomas,  
And thou shalt prove a shelter to thy friends,

A hoop of gold to bind thy brothers in,  
That the united vessel of their blood,  
Mingled with venom of suggestion--  
As, force perforce, the age will pour it in--  
Shall never leak, though it do work as strong  
As aconitum or rash gunpowder.

**CLARENCE**

I shall observe him with all care and love.

**KING HENRY IV**

Why art thou not at Windsor with him, Thomas?

**CLARENCE**

He is not there to-day; he dines in London.

**KING HENRY IV**

And how accompanied? canst thou tell that?

**CLARENCE**

With Poins, and other his continual followers.

**KING HENRY IV**

Most subject is the fattest soil to weeds;  
And he, the noble image of my youth,  
Is overspread with them: therefore my grief  
Stretches itself beyond the hour of death:  
The blood weeps from my heart when I do shape  
In forms imaginary the unguided days  
And rotten times that you shall look upon  
When I am sleeping with my ancestors.  
For when his headstrong riot hath no curb,  
When rage and hot blood are his counsellors,  
When means and lavish manners meet together,  
O, with what wings shall his affections fly  
Towards fronting peril and opposed decay!

## **WARWICK**

My gracious lord, you look beyond him quite:  
The prince but studies his companions  
Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,  
'Tis needful that the most immodest word  
Be look'd upon and learn'd; which once attain'd,  
Your highness knows, comes to no further use  
But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,  
The prince will in the perfectness of time  
Cast off his followers; and their memory  
Shall as a pattern or a measure live,  
By which his grace must mete the lives of others,  
Turning past evils to advantages.

## **KING HENRY IV**

'Tis seldom when the bee doth leave her comb  
In the dead carrion.

*Enter WESTMORELAND*

Who's here? Westmoreland?

## **WESTMORELAND**

Health to my sovereign, and new happiness  
Added to that that I am to deliver!  
Prince John your son doth kiss your grace's hand:  
Mowbray, the Bishop Scroop, Hastings and all  
Are brought to the correction of your law;  
There is not now a rebel's sword unsheath'd  
But peace puts forth her olive every where.  
The manner how this action hath been borne  
Here at more leisure may your highness read,  
With every course in his particular.

## **KING HENRY IV**

O Westmoreland, thou art a summer bird,  
Which ever in the haunch of winter sings

The lifting up of day.

*Enter HARCOURT*

Look, here's more news.

## **HARCOURT**

From enemies heaven keep your majesty;  
And, when they stand against you, may they fall  
As those that I am come to tell you of!  
The Earl Northumberland and the Lord Bardolph,  
With a great power of English and of Scots  
Are by the sheriff of Yorkshire overthrown:  
The manner and true order of the fight  
This packet, please it you, contains at large.

## **KING HENRY IV**

And wherefore should these good news make me sick?  
Will fortune never come with both hands full,  
But write her fair words still in foulest letters?  
She either gives a stomach and no food;  
Such are the poor, in health; or else a feast  
And takes away the stomach; such are the rich,  
That have abundance and enjoy it not.  
I should rejoice now at this happy news;  
And now my sight fails, and my brain is giddy:  
O me! come near me; now I am much ill.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Comfort, your majesty!

## **CLARENCE**

O my royal father!

## **WESTMORELAND**

My sovereign lord, cheer up yourself, look up.



## **WARWICK**

Be patient, princes; you do know, these fits  
Are with his highness very ordinary.  
Stand from him. Give him air; he'll straight be well.

## **CLARENCE**

No, no, he cannot long hold out these pangs:  
The incessant care and labour of his mind  
Hath wrought the mure that should confine it in  
So thin that life looks through and will break out.

## **GLOUCESTER**

The people fear me; for they do observe  
Unfather'd heirs and loathly births of nature:  
The seasons change their manners, as the year  
Had found some months asleep and leap'd them over.

## **CLARENCE**

The river hath thrice flow'd, no ebb between;  
And the old folk, time's doting chronicles,  
Say it did so a little time before  
That our great-grandsire, Edward, sick'd and died.

## **WARWICK**

Speak lower, princes, for the king recovers.

## **GLOUCESTER**

This apoplexy will certain be his end.

## **KING HENRY IV**

I pray you, take me up, and bear me hence  
Into some other chamber: softly, pray.



# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another chamber.

*KING HENRY IV lying on a bed: CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, and others in attendance*

### KING HENRY IV

Let there be no noise made, my gentle friends;  
Unless some dull and favourable hand  
Will whisper music to my weary spirit.

### WARWICK

Call for the music in the other room.

### KING HENRY IV

Set me the crown upon my pillow here.

### CLARENCE

His eye is hollow, and he changes much.

### WARWICK

Less noise, less noise!

*Enter PRINCE HENRY*

### PRINCE HENRY

Who saw the Duke of Clarence?

### CLARENCE

I am here, brother, full of heaviness.

**PRINCE HENRY**

How now! rain within doors, and none abroad!  
How doth the king?

**GLOUCESTER**

Exceeding ill.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Heard he the good news yet?  
Tell it him.

**GLOUCESTER**

He alter'd much upon the hearing it.

**PRINCE HENRY**

If he be sick with joy, he'll recover without physic.

**WARWICK**

Not so much noise, my lords: sweet prince,  
speak low;  
The king your father is disposed to sleep.

**CLARENCE**

Let us withdraw into the other room.

**WARWICK**

Will't please your grace to go along with us?

**PRINCE HENRY**

No; I will sit and watch here by the king.

*Exeunt all but PRINCE HENRY*

Why doth the crown lie there upon his pillow,  
Being so troublesome a bedfellow?  
O polish'd perturbation! golden care!  
That keep'st the ports of slumber open wide  
To many a watchful night! sleep with it now!  
Yet not so sound and half so deeply sweet  
As he whose brow with homely biggen bound  
Snores out the watch of night. O majesty!  
When thou dost pinch thy bearer, thou dost sit  
Like a rich armour worn in heat of day,  
That scalds with safety. By his gates of breath  
There lies a downy feather which stirs not:  
Did he suspire, that light and weightless down  
Perforce must move. My gracious lord! my father!  
This sleep is sound indeed, this is a sleep  
That from this golden rigol hath divorced  
So many English kings. Thy due from me  
Is tears and heavy sorrows of the blood,  
Which nature, love, and filial tenderness,  
Shall, O dear father, pay thee plenteously:  
My due from thee is this imperial crown,  
Which, as immediate as thy place and blood,  
Derives itself to me. Lo, here it sits,  
Which God shall guard: and put the world's whole strength  
Into one giant arm, it shall not force  
This lineal honour from me: this from thee  
Will I to mine leave, as 'tis left to me.

*Exit*

**KING HENRY IV**

Warwick! Gloucester! Clarence!

*Re-enter WARWICK, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and the rest*

**CLARENCE**

Doth the king call?

**WARWICK**

What would your majesty? How fares your grace?

**KING HENRY IV**

Why did you leave me here alone, my lords?

**CLARENCE**

We left the prince my brother here, my liege,  
Who undertook to sit and watch by you.

**KING HENRY IV**

The Prince of Wales! Where is he? let me see him:  
He is not here.

**WARWICK**

This door is open; he is gone this way.

**GLOUCESTER**

He came not through the chamber where we stay'd.

**KING HENRY IV**

Where is the crown? who took it from my pillow?

**WARWICK**

When we withdrew, my liege, we left it here.

**KING HENRY IV**

The prince hath ta'en it hence: go, seek him out.  
Is he so hasty that he doth suppose  
My sleep my death?  
Find him, my Lord of Warwick; chide him hither.

*Exit WARWICK*

This part of his conjoins with my disease,  
And helps to end me. See, sons, what things you are!  
How quickly nature falls into revolt  
When gold becomes her object!  
For this the foolish over-careful fathers  
Have broke their sleep with thoughts, their brains with care,  
Their bones with industry;  
For this they have engrossed and piled up  
The canker'd heaps of strange-achieved gold;  
For this they have been thoughtful to invest  
Their sons with arts and martial exercises:  
When, like the bee, culling from every flower  
The virtuous sweets,  
Our thighs pack'd with wax, our mouths with honey,  
We bring it to the hive, and, like the bees,  
Are murdered for our pains. This bitter taste  
Yield his engrossments to the ending father.

*Re-enter WARWICK*

Now, where is he that will not stay so long  
Till his friend sickness hath determined me?

**WARWICK**

My lord, I found the prince in the next room,  
Washing with kindly tears his gentle cheeks,  
With such a deep demeanor in great sorrow  
That tyranny, which never quaff'd but blood,  
Would, by beholding him, have wash'd his knife  
With gentle eye-drops. He is coming hither.

**KING HENRY IV**

But wherefore did he take away the crown?

*Re-enter PRINCE HENRY*

Lo, where he comes. Come hither to me, Harry.

Depart the chamber, leave us here alone.

*Exeunt WARWICK and the rest*

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I never thought to hear you speak again.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought:  
I stay too long by thee, I weary thee.  
Dost thou so hunger for mine empty chair  
That thou wilt needs invest thee with my honours  
Before thy hour be ripe? O foolish youth!  
Thou seek'st the greatness that will o'erwhelm thee.  
Stay but a little; for my cloud of dignity  
Is held from falling with so weak a wind  
That it will quickly drop: my day is dim.  
Thou hast stolen that which after some few hours  
Were thine without offence; and at my death  
Thou hast seal'd up my expectation:  
Thy life did manifest thou lovedst me not,  
And thou wilt have me die assured of it.  
Thou hidest a thousand daggers in thy thoughts,  
Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart,  
To stab at half an hour of my life.  
What! canst thou not forbear me half an hour?  
Then get thee gone and dig my grave thyself,  
And bid the merry bells ring to thine ear  
That thou art crowned, not that I am dead.  
Let all the tears that should bedew my hearse  
Be drops of balm to sanctify thy head:  
Only compound me with forgotten dust  
Give that which gave thee life unto the worms.  
Pluck down my officers, break my decrees;  
For now a time is come to mock at form:  
Harry the Fifth is crown'd: up, vanity!  
Down, royal state! all you sage counsellors, hence!  
And to the English court assemble now,  
From every region, apes of idleness!  
Now, neighbour confines, purge you of your scum:



Have you a ruffian that will swear, drink, dance,  
Revel the night, rob, murder, and commit  
The oldest sins the newest kind of ways?  
Be happy, he will trouble you no more;  
England shall double gild his treble guilt,  
England shall give him office, honour, might;  
For the fifth Harry from curb'd licence plucks  
The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog  
Shall flesh his tooth on every innocent.  
O my poor kingdom, sick with civil blows!  
When that my care could not withhold thy riots,  
What wilt thou do when riot is thy care?  
O, thou wilt be a wilderness again,  
Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants!

## **PRINCE HENRY**

O, pardon me, my liege! but for my tears,  
The moist impediments unto my speech,  
I had forestall'd this dear and deep rebuke  
Ere you with grief had spoke and I had heard  
The course of it so far. There is your crown;  
And He that wears the crown immortally  
Long guard it yours! If I affect it more  
Than as your honour and as your renown,  
Let me no more from this obedience rise,  
Which my most inward true and duteous spirit  
Teacheth, this prostrate and exterior bending.  
God witness with me, when I here came in,  
And found no course of breath within your majesty,  
How cold it struck my heart! If I do feign,  
O, let me in my present wildness die  
And never live to show the incredulous world  
The noble change that I have purposed!  
Coming to look on you, thinking you dead,  
And dead almost, my liege, to think you were,  
I spake unto this crown as having sense,  
And thus upbraided it: 'The care on thee depending  
Hath fed upon the body of my father;  
Therefore, thou best of gold art worst of gold:  
Other, less fine in carat, is more precious,  
Preserving life in medicine potable;  
But thou, most fine, most honour'd: most renown'd,

Hast eat thy bearer up.' Thus, my most royal liege,  
Accusing it, I put it on my head,  
To try with it, as with an enemy  
That had before my face murder'd my father,  
The quarrel of a true inheritor.  
But if it did infect my blood with joy,  
Or swell my thoughts to any strain of pride;  
If any rebel or vain spirit of mine  
Did with the least affection of a welcome  
Give entertainment to the might of it,  
Let God for ever keep it from my head  
And make me as the poorest vassal is  
That doth with awe and terror kneel to it!

## **KING HENRY IV**

O my son,  
God put it in thy mind to take it hence,  
That thou mightst win the more thy father's love,  
Pleading so wisely in excuse of it!  
Come hither, Harry, sit thou by my bed;  
And hear, I think, the very latest counsel  
That ever I shall breathe. God knows, my son,  
By what by-paths and indirect crook'd ways  
I met this crown; and I myself know well  
How troublesome it sat upon my head.  
To thee it shall descend with bitter quiet,  
Better opinion, better confirmation;  
For all the soil of the achievement goes  
With me into the earth. It seem'd in me  
But as an honour snatch'd with boisterous hand,  
And I had many living to upbraid  
My gain of it by their assistances;  
Which daily grew to quarrel and to bloodshed,  
Wounding supposed peace: all these bold fears  
Thou see'st with peril I have answered;  
For all my reign hath been but as a scene  
Acting that argument: and now my death  
Changes the mode; for what in me was purchased,  
Falls upon thee in a more fairer sort;  
So thou the garland wear'st successively.  
Yet, though thou stand'st more sure than I could do,  
Thou art not firm enough, since griefs are green;

And all my friends, which thou must make thy friends,  
Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out;  
By whose fell working I was first advanced  
And by whose power I well might lodge a fear  
To be again displaced: which to avoid,  
I cut them off; and had a purpose now  
To lead out many to the Holy Land,  
Lest rest and lying still might make them look  
Too near unto my state. Therefore, my Harry,  
Be it thy course to busy giddy minds  
With foreign quarrels; that action, hence borne out,  
May waste the memory of the former days.  
More would I, but my lungs are wasted so  
That strength of speech is utterly denied me.  
How I came by the crown, O God forgive;  
And grant it may with thee in true peace live!

## **PRINCE HENRY**

My gracious liege,  
You won it, wore it, kept it, gave it me;  
Then plain and right must my possession be:  
Which I with more than with a common pain  
'Gainst all the world will rightfully maintain.

*Enter Lord John of LANCASTER*

## **KING HENRY IV**

Look, look, here comes my John of Lancaster.

## **LANCASTER**

Health, peace, and happiness to my royal father!

## **KING HENRY IV**

Thou bring'st me happiness and peace, son John;  
But health, alack, with youthful wings is flown  
From this bare wither'd trunk: upon thy sight  
My worldly business makes a period.  
Where is my Lord of Warwick?

## **PRINCE HENRY**

My Lord of Warwick!

*Enter WARWICK, and others*

## **KING HENRY IV**

Doth any name particular belong  
Unto the lodging where I first did swoon?

## **WARWICK**

'Tis call'd Jerusalem, my noble lord.

## **KING HENRY IV**

Laud be to God! even there my life must end.  
It hath been prophesied to me many years,  
I should not die but in Jerusalem;  
Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land:  
But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie;  
In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S house.

*Enter SHALLOW, FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, and Page*

**SHALLOW**

By cock and pie, sir, you shall not away to-night.  
What, Davy, I say!

**FALSTAFF**

You must excuse me, Master Robert Shallow.

**SHALLOW**

I will not excuse you; you shall not be excused;  
excuses shall not be admitted; there is no excuse  
shall serve; you shall not be excused. Why, Davy!

*Enter DAVY*

**DAVY**

Here, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Davy, Davy, Davy, Davy, let me see, Davy; let me  
see, Davy; let me see: yea, marry, William cook,  
bid him come hither. Sir John, you shall not be excused.

**DAVY**

Marry, sir, thus; those precepts cannot be served:  
and, again, sir, shall we sow the headland with wheat?

**SHALLOW**

With red wheat, Davy. But for William cook: are there no young pigeons?

**DAVY**

Yes, sir. Here is now the smith's note for shoeing and plough-irons.

**SHALLOW**

Let it be cast and paid. Sir John, you shall not be excused.

**DAVY**

Now, sir, a new link to the bucket must need be had: and, sir, do you mean to stop any of William's wages, about the sack he lost the other day at Hinckley fair?

**SHALLOW**

A' shall answer it. Some pigeons, Davy, a couple of short-legged hens, a joint of mutton, and any pretty little tiny kickshaws, tell William cook.

**DAVY**

Doth the man of war stay all night, sir?

**SHALLOW**

Yea, Davy. I will use him well: a friend i' the court is better than a penny in purse. Use his men well, Davy; for they are arrant knaves, and will backbite.

**DAVY**

No worse than they are backbitten, sir; for they have marvellous foul linen.

## SHALLOW

Well conceited, Davy: about thy business, Davy.

## DAVY

I beseech you, sir, to countenance William Visor of Woncot against Clement Perkes of the hill.

## SHALLOW

There is many complaints, Davy, against that Visor: that Visor is an arrant knave, on my knowledge.

## DAVY

I grant your worship that he is a knave, sir; but yet, God forbid, sir, but a knave should have some countenance at his friend's request. An honest man, sir, is able to speak for himself, when a knave is not. I have served your worship truly, sir, this eight years; and if I cannot once or twice in a quarter bear out a knave against an honest man, I have but a very little credit with your worship. The knave is mine honest friend, sir; therefore, I beseech your worship, let him be countenanced.

## SHALLOW

Go to; I say he shall have no wrong. Look about, Davy.

*Exit DAVY*

Where are you, Sir John? Come, come, come, off with your boots. Give me your hand, Master Bardolph.

## BARBOLPH

I am glad to see your worship.

## SHALLOW

I thank thee with all my heart, kind  
Master Bardolph: and welcome, my tall fellow.

*To the Page*

Come, Sir John.

## FALSTAFF

I'll follow you, good Master Robert Shallow.

*Exit SHALLOW*

Bardolph, look to our horses.

*Exeunt BARDOLPH and Page*

If I were sawed into quantities, I should make four dozen of such bearded hermits' staves as Master Shallow. It is a wonderful thing to see the semblable coherence of his men's spirits and his: they, by observing of him, do bear themselves like foolish justices; he, by conversing with them, is turned into a justice-like serving-man: their spirits are so married in conjunction with the participation of society that they flock together in consent, like so many wild-geese. If I had a suit to Master Shallow, I would humour his men with the imputation of being near their master: if to his men, I would curry with Master Shallow that no man could better command his servants. It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught, as men take diseases, one of another: therefore let men take heed of their company. I will devise matter enough out of this Shallow to keep Prince Harry in continual laughter the wearing out of six fashions, which is four terms, or two actions, and a' shall laugh without intervallums. O, it is much that a lie with a slight oath and a jest with a sad brow will do with a fellow that never



had the ache in his shoulders! O, you shall see him  
laugh till his face be like a wet cloak ill laid up!

**SHALLOW**

[Within] Sir John!

**FALSTAFF**

I come, Master Shallow; I come, Master Shallow.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Westminster. The palace.

*Enter WARWICK and the Lord Chief-Justice, meeting*

**WARWICK**

How now, my lord chief-justice! whither away?  
Lord Chief-Justice How doth the king?

**WARWICK**

Exceeding well; his cares are now all ended.  
Lord Chief-Justice I hope, not dead.

**WARWICK**

He's walk'd the way of nature;  
And to our purposes he lives no more.  
Lord Chief-Justice I would his majesty had call'd me with him:  
The service that I truly did his life  
Hath left me open to all injuries.

**WARWICK**

Indeed I think the young king loves you not.  
Lord Chief-Justice I know he doth not, and do arm myself  
To welcome the condition of the time,  
Which cannot look more hideously upon me  
Than I have drawn it in my fantasy.

*Enter LANCASTER, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, WESTMORELAND, and others*

**WARWICK**

Here come the heavy issue of dead Harry:  
O that the living Harry had the temper

Of him, the worst of these three gentlemen!  
How many nobles then should hold their places  
That must strike sail to spirits of vile sort!  
Lord Chief-Justice O God, I fear all will be overturn'd!

**LANCASTER**

Good morrow, cousin Warwick, good morrow.

**GLOUCESTER CLARENCE**

Good morrow, cousin.

**LANCASTER**

We meet like men that had forgot to speak.

**WARWICK**

We do remember; but our argument  
Is all too heavy to admit much talk.

**LANCASTER**

Well, peace be with him that hath made us heavy.  
Lord Chief-Justice Peace be with us, lest we be heavier!

**GLOUCESTER**

O, good my lord, you have lost a friend indeed;  
And I dare swear you borrow not that face  
Of seeming sorrow, it is sure your own.

**LANCASTER**

Though no man be assured what grace to find,  
You stand in coldest expectation:  
I am the sorrier; would 'twere otherwise.

**CLARENCE**

Well, you must now speak Sir John Falstaff fair;  
Which swims against your stream of quality.  
Lord Chief-Justice Sweet princes, what I did, I did in honour,  
Led by the impartial conduct of my soul:  
And never shall you see that I will beg  
A ragged and forestall'd remission.  
If truth and upright innocency fail me,  
I'll to the king my master that is dead,  
And tell him who hath sent me after him.

## **WARWICK**

Here comes the prince.

*Enter KING HENRY V, attended*

Lord Chief-Justice Good morrow; and God save your majesty!

## **KING HENRY V**

This new and gorgeous garment, majesty,  
Sits not so easy on me as you think.  
Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear:  
This is the English, not the Turkish court;  
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,  
But Harry Harry. Yet be sad, good brothers,  
For, by my faith, it very well becomes you:  
Sorrow so royally in you appears  
That I will deeply put the fashion on  
And wear it in my heart: why then, be sad;  
But entertain no more of it, good brothers,  
Than a joint burden laid upon us all.  
For me, by heaven, I bid you be assured,  
I'll be your father and your brother too;  
Let me but bear your love, I'll bear your cares:  
Yet weep that Harry's dead; and so will I;  
But Harry lives, that shall convert those tears  
By number into hours of happiness.

## **Princes**

We hope no other from your majesty.

## **KING HENRY V**

You all look strangely on me: and you most;  
You are, I think, assured I love you not.  
Lord Chief-Justice I am assured, if I be measured rightly,  
Your majesty hath no just cause to hate me.

## **KING HENRY V**

No!  
How might a prince of my great hopes forget  
So great indignities you laid upon me?  
What! rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison  
The immediate heir of England! Was this easy?  
May this be wash'd in Lethe, and forgotten?  
Lord Chief-Justice I then did use the person of your father;  
The image of his power lay then in me:  
And, in the administration of his law,  
Whiles I was busy for the commonwealth,  
Your highness pleased to forget my place,  
The majesty and power of law and justice,  
The image of the king whom I presented,  
And struck me in my very seat of judgment;  
Whereon, as an offender to your father,  
I gave bold way to my authority  
And did commit you. If the deed were ill,  
Be you contented, wearing now the garland,  
To have a son set your decrees at nought,  
To pluck down justice from your awful bench,  
To trip the course of law and blunt the sword  
That guards the peace and safety of your person;  
Nay, more, to spurn at your most royal image  
And mock your workings in a second body.  
Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours;  
Be now the father and propose a son,  
Hear your own dignity so much profaned,  
See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,  
Behold yourself so by a son disdain'd;  
And then imagine me taking your part  
And in your power soft silencing your son:  
After this cold considerance, sentence me;  
And, as you are a king, speak in your state

What I have done that misbecame my place,  
My person, or my liege's sovereignty.

## **KING HENRY V**

You are right, justice, and you weigh this well;  
Therefore still bear the balance and the sword:  
And I do wish your honours may increase,  
Till you do live to see a son of mine  
Offend you and obey you, as I did.  
So shall I live to speak my father's words:  
'Happy am I, that have a man so bold,  
That dares do justice on my proper son;  
And not less happy, having such a son,  
That would deliver up his greatness so  
Into the hands of justice.' You did commit me:  
For which, I do commit into your hand  
The unstained sword that you have used to bear;  
With this remembrance, that you use the same  
With the like bold, just and impartial spirit  
As you have done 'gainst me. There is my hand.  
You shall be as a father to my youth:  
My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear,  
And I will stoop and humble my intents  
To your well-practised wise directions.  
And, princes all, believe me, I beseech you;  
My father is gone wild into his grave,  
For in his tomb lie my affections;  
And with his spirit sadly I survive,  
To mock the expectation of the world,  
To frustrate prophecies and to raze out  
Rotten opinion, who hath writ me down  
After my seeming. The tide of blood in me  
Hath proudly flow'd in vanity till now:  
Now doth it turn and ebb back to the sea,  
Where it shall mingle with the state of floods  
And flow henceforth in formal majesty.  
Now call we our high court of parliament:  
And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel,  
That the great body of our state may go  
In equal rank with the best govern'd nation;  
That war, or peace, or both at once, may be  
As things acquainted and familiar to us;

In which you, father, shall have foremost hand.  
Our coronation done, we will accite,  
As I before remember'd, all our state:  
And, God consigning to my good intents,  
No prince nor peer shall have just cause to say,  
God shorten Harry's happy life one day!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Gloucestershire. SHALLOW'S orchard.

*Enter FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, SILENCE, DAVY, BARDOLPH, and the Page*

### SHALLOW

Nay, you shall see my orchard, where, in an arbour,  
we will eat a last year's pippin of my own graffing,  
with a dish of caraways, and so forth: come,  
cousin Silence: and then to bed.

### FALSTAFF

'Fore God, you have here a goodly dwelling and a rich.

### SHALLOW

Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all,  
Sir John: marry, good air. Spread, Davy; spread,  
Davy; well said, Davy.

### FALSTAFF

This Davy serves you for good uses; he is your  
serving-man and your husband.

### SHALLOW

A good varlet, a good varlet, a very good varlet,  
Sir John: by the mass, I have drunk too much sack  
at supper: a good varlet. Now sit down, now sit  
down: come, cousin.

### SILENCE

Ah, sirrah! quoth-a, we shall



Do nothing but eat, and make good cheer,

*Singing*

And praise God for the merry year;  
When flesh is cheap and females dear,  
And lusty lads roam here and there  
So merrily,  
And ever among so merrily.

**FALSTAFF**

There's a merry heart! Good Master Silence, I'll  
give you a health for that anon.

**SHALLOW**

Give Master Bardolph some wine, Davy.

**DAVY**

Sweet sir, sit; I'll be with you anon. most sweet  
sir, sit. Master page, good master page, sit.  
Proface! What you want in meat, we'll have in drink:  
but you must bear; the heart's all.

*Exit*

**SHALLOW**

Be merry, Master Bardolph; and, my little soldier  
there, be merry.

**SILENCE**

Be merry, be merry, my wife has all;

*Singing*

For women are shrews, both short and tall:  
'Tis merry in hall when beards wag all,

And welcome merry Shrove-tide.  
Be merry, be merry.

**FALSTAFF**

I did not think Master Silence had been a man of  
this mettle.

**SILENCE**

Who, I? I have been merry twice and once ere now.

*Re-enter DAVY*

**DAVY**

There's a dish of leather-coats for you.

*To BARDOLPH*

**SHALLOW**

Davy!

**DAVY**

Your worship! I'll be with you straight.

*To BARDOLPH*

A cup of wine, sir?

**SILENCE**

A cup of wine that's brisk and fine,

*Singing*

And drink unto the leman mine;  
And a merry heart lives long-a.

**FALSTAFF**

Well said, Master Silence.

**SILENCE**

An we shall be merry, now comes in the sweet o' the night.

**FALSTAFF**

Health and long life to you, Master Silence.

**SILENCE**

Fill the cup, and let it come;

*Singing*

I'll pledge you a mile to the bottom.

**SHALLOW**

Honest Bardolph, welcome: if thou wantest any thing, and wilt not call, beshrew thy heart. Welcome, my little tiny thief.

*To the Page*

And welcome indeed too. I'll drink to Master Bardolph, and to all the cavaleros about London.

**DAVY**

I hove to see London once ere I die.

**BARDOLPH**

An I might see you there, Davy,--

**SHALLOW**

By the mass, you'll crack a quart together, ha!  
Will you not, Master Bardolph?

**BARDOLPH**

Yea, sir, in a pottle-pot.

**SHALLOW**

By God's liggens, I thank thee: the knave will  
stick by thee, I can assure thee that. A' will not  
out; he is true bred.

**BARDOLPH**

And I'll stick by him, sir.

**SHALLOW**

Why, there spoke a king. Lack nothing: be merry.

*Knocking within*

Look who's at door there, ho! who knocks?

*Exit DAVY*

**FALSTAFF**

Why, now you have done me right.

*To SILENCE, seeing him take off a bumper*

**SILENCE**

[Singing]  
Do me right,  
And dub me knight: Samingo.  
Is't not so?

**FALSTAFF**

'Tis so.

**SILENCE**

Is't so? Why then, say an old man can do somewhat.

*Re-enter DAVY*

**DAVY**

An't please your worship, there's one Pistol come from the court with news.

**FALSTAFF**

From the court! let him come in.

*Enter PISTOL*

How now, Pistol!

**PISTOL**

Sir John, God save you!

**FALSTAFF**

What wind blew you hither, Pistol?

**PISTOL**

Not the ill wind which blows no man to good. Sweet knight, thou art now one of the greatest men in this realm.

**SILENCE**

By'r lady, I think a' be, but goodman Puff of Barson.

**PISTOL**

Puff!  
Puff in thy teeth, most recreant coward base!  
Sir John, I am thy Pistol and thy friend,  
And helter-skelter have I rode to thee,  
And tidings do I bring and lucky joys  
And golden times and happy news of price.

**FALSTAFF**

I pray thee now, deliver them like a man of this world.

**PISTOL**

A foutre for the world and worldlings base!  
I speak of Africa and golden joys.

**FALSTAFF**

O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news?  
Let King Cophetua know the truth thereof.

**SILENCE**

And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John.

*Singing*

**PISTOL**

Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons?  
And shall good news be baffled?  
Then, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies' lap.

**SILENCE**

Honest gentleman, I know not your breeding.

**PISTOL**

Why then, lament therefore.

**SHALLOW**

Give me pardon, sir: if, sir, you come with news  
from the court, I take it there's but two ways,  
either to utter them, or to conceal them. I am,  
sir, under the king, in some authority.

**PISTOL**

Under which king, Besonian? speak, or die.

**SHALLOW**

Under King Harry.

**PISTOL**

Harry the Fourth? or Fifth?

**SHALLOW**

Harry the Fourth.

**PISTOL**

A foutre for thine office!  
Sir John, thy tender lambkin now is king;  
Harry the Fifth's the man. I speak the truth:  
When Pistol lies, do this; and fig me, like  
The bragging Spaniard.

**FALSTAFF**

What, is the old king dead?

**PISTOL**

As nail in door: the things I speak are just.

**FALSTAFF**

Away, Bardolph! saddle my horse. Master Robert Shallow, choose what office thou wilt in the land, 'tis thine. Pistol, I will double-charge thee with dignities.

## **BARDOLPH**

O joyful day!  
I would not take a knighthood for my fortune.

## **PISTOL**

What! I do bring good news.

## **FALSTAFF**

Carry Master Silence to bed. Master Shallow, my Lord Shallow,--be what thou wilt; I am fortune's steward--get on thy boots: we'll ride all night.  
O sweet Pistol! Away, Bardolph!

*Exit BARDOLPH*

Come, Pistol, utter more to me; and withal devise something to do thyself good. Boot, boot, Master Shallow: I know the young king is sick for me. Let us take any man's horses; the laws of England are at my commandment. Blessed are they that have been my friends; and woe to my lord chief-justice!

## **PISTOL**

Let vultures vile seize on his lungs also!  
'Where is the life that late I led?' say they:  
Why, here it is; welcome these pleasant days!

*Exeunt*



# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. London. A street.

*Enter Beadles, dragging in HOSTESS QUICKLY and DOLL TEARSHEET*

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

No, thou arrant knave; I would to God that I might die, that I might have thee hanged: thou hast drawn my shoulder out of joint.

### First Beadle

The constables have delivered her over to me; and she shall have whipping-cheer enough, I warrant her: there hath been a man or two lately killed about her.

### DOLL TEARSHEET

Nut-hook, nut-hook, you lie. Come on; I'll tell thee what, thou damned tripe-visaged rascal, an the child I now go with do miscarry, thou wert better thou hadst struck thy mother, thou paper-faced villain.

### MISTRESS QUICKLY

O the Lord, that Sir John were come! he would make this a bloody day to somebody. But I pray God the fruit of her womb miscarry!

### First Beadle

If it do, you shall have a dozen of cushions again; you have but eleven now. Come, I charge you both go with me; for the man is dead that you and Pistol beat amongst you.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

I'll tell you what, you thin man in a censer, I  
will have you as soundly swung for this,--you  
blue-bottle rogue, you filthy famished correctioner,  
if you be not swung, I'll forswear half-kirtles.

### **First Beadle**

Come, come, you she knight-errant, come.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

O God, that right should thus overcome might!  
Well, of sufferance comes ease.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Come, you rogue, come; bring me to a justice.

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Ay, come, you starved blood-hound.

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Goodman death, goodman bones!

## **MISTRESS QUICKLY**

Thou atomy, thou!

## **DOLL TEARSHEET**

Come, you thin thing; come you rascal.

### **First Beadle**

Very well.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Fourth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry IV, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. A public place near Westminster Abbey.

*Enter two Grooms, strewing rushes*

### First Groom

More rushes, more rushes.

### Second Groom

The trumpets have sounded twice.

### First Groom

'Twill be two o'clock ere they come from the coronation: dispatch, dispatch.

*Exeunt*

*Enter FALSTAFF, SHALLOW, PISTOL, BARDOLPH, and Page*

### FALSTAFF

Stand here by me, Master Robert Shallow; I will make the king do you grace: I will leer upon him as a' comes by; and do but mark the countenance that he will give me.

### PISTOL

God bless thy lungs, good knight.

### FALSTAFF

Come here, Pistol; stand behind me. O, if I had had

time to have made new liveries, I would have bestowed the thousand pound I borrowed of you. But 'tis no matter; this poor show doth better: this doth infer the zeal I had to see him.

**SHALLOW**

It doth so.

**FALSTAFF**

It shows my earnestness of affection,--

**SHALLOW**

It doth so.

**FALSTAFF**

My devotion,--

**SHALLOW**

It doth, it doth, it doth.

**FALSTAFF**

As it were, to ride day and night; and not to deliberate, not to remember, not to have patience to shift me,--

**SHALLOW**

It is best, certain.

**FALSTAFF**

But to stand stained with travel, and sweating with desire to see him; thinking of nothing else, putting all affairs else in oblivion, as if there were nothing else to be done but to see him.

## **PISTOL**

'Tis 'semper idem,' for 'obsque hoc nihil est:'  
'tis all in every part.

## **SHALLOW**

'Tis so, indeed.

## **PISTOL**

My knight, I will inflame thy noble liver,  
And make thee rage.  
Thy Doll, and Helen of thy noble thoughts,  
Is in base durance and contagious prison;  
Haled thither  
By most mechanical and dirty hand:  
Rouse up revenge from ebon den with fell  
Alecto's snake,  
For Doll is in. Pistol speaks nought but truth.

## **FALSTAFF**

I will deliver her.

*Shouts within, and the trumpets sound*

## **PISTOL**

There roar'd the sea, and trumpet-clangor sounds.

*Enter KING HENRY V and his train, the Lord Chief- Justice among them*

## **FALSTAFF**

God save thy grace, King Hal! my royal Hal!

## **PISTOL**

The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame!

## **FALSTAFF**

God save thee, my sweet boy!

## **KING HENRY IV**

My lord chief-justice, speak to that vain man.

Lord Chief-Justice Have you your wits? know you what 'tis to speak?

## **FALSTAFF**

My king! my Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!

## **KING HENRY IV**

I know thee not, old man: fall to thy prayers;  
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!  
I have long dream'd of such a kind of man,  
So surfeit-swell'd, so old and so profane;  
But, being awaked, I do despise my dream.  
Make less thy body hence, and more thy grace;  
Leave gormandizing; know the grave doth gape  
For thee thrice wider than for other men.  
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest:  
Presume not that I am the thing I was;  
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,  
That I have turn'd away my former self;  
So will I those that kept me company.  
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,  
Approach me, and thou shalt be as thou wast,  
The tutor and the feeder of my riots:  
Till then, I banish thee, on pain of death,  
As I have done the rest of my misleaders,  
Not to come near our person by ten mile.  
For competence of life I will allow you,  
That lack of means enforce you not to evil:  
And, as we hear you do reform yourselves,  
We will, according to your strengths and qualities,  
Give you advancement. Be it your charge, my lord,  
To see perform'd the tenor of our word. Set on.

*Exeunt KING HENRY V, & c*

**FALSTAFF**

Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound.

**SHALLOW**

Yea, marry, Sir John; which I beseech you to let me have home with me.

**FALSTAFF**

That can hardly be, Master Shallow. Do not you grieve at this; I shall be sent for in private to him: look you, he must seem thus to the world: fear not your advancements; I will be the man yet that shall make you great.

**SHALLOW**

I cannot well perceive how, unless you should give me your doublet and stuff me out with straw. I beseech you, good Sir John, let me have five hundred of my thousand.

**FALSTAFF**

Sir, I will be as good as my word: this that you heard was but a colour.

**SHALLOW**

A colour that I fear you will die in, Sir John.

**FALSTAFF**

Fear no colours: go with me to dinner: come, Lieutenant Pistol; come, Bardolph: I shall be sent for soon at night.

*Re-enter Prince John of LANCASTER, the Lord Chief-Justice; Officers with them*



Lord Chief-Justice Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet:  
Take all his company along with him.

**FALSTAFF**

My lord, my lord,--  
Lord Chief-Justice I cannot now speak: I will hear you soon.  
Take them away.

**PISTOL**

Si fortune me tormenta, spero contenta.

*Exeunt all but PRINCE JOHN and the Lord Chief-Justice*

**LANCASTER**

I like this fair proceeding of the king's:  
He hath intent his wonted followers  
Shall all be very well provided for;  
But all are banish'd till their conversations  
Appear more wise and modest to the world.  
Lord Chief-Justice And so they are.

**LANCASTER**

The king hath call'd his parliament, my lord.  
Lord Chief-Justice He hath.

**LANCASTER**

I will lay odds that, ere this year expire,  
We bear our civil swords and native fire  
As far as France: I heard a bird so sing,  
Whose music, to my thinking, pleased the king.  
Come, will you hence?

*Exeunt*

**EPILOGUE**

*Spoken by a Dancer*

First my fear; then my courtesy; last my speech.  
My fear is, your displeasure; my courtesy, my duty;  
and my speech, to beg your pardons. If you look  
for a good speech now, you undo me: for what I have  
to say is of mine own making; and what indeed I  
should say will, I doubt, prove mine own marring.  
But to the purpose, and so to the venture. Be it  
known to you, as it is very well, I was lately here  
in the end of a displeasing play, to pray your  
patience for it and to promise you a better. I  
meant indeed to pay you with this; which, if like an  
ill venture it come unluckily home, I break, and  
you, my gentle creditors, lose. Here I promised you  
I would be and here I commit my body to your  
mercies: bate me some and I will pay you some and,  
as most debtors do, promise you infinitely.  
If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will  
you command me to use my legs? and yet that were but  
light payment, to dance out of your debt. But a  
good conscience will make any possible satisfaction,  
and so would I. All the gentlewomen here have  
forgiven me: if the gentlemen will not, then the  
gentlemen do not agree with the gentlewomen, which  
was never seen before in such an assembly.  
One word more, I beseech you. If you be not too  
much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will  
continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make  
you merry with fair Katharine of France: where, for  
any thing I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat,  
unless already a' be killed with your hard  
opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is  
not the man. My tongue is weary; when my legs are  
too, I will bid you good night: and so kneel down  
before you; but, indeed, to pray for the queen.

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Henry V

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 1, Scene 1: [London. An ante-chamber in the KING'S palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The same. The Presence chamber.](#)

Act 2, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [London. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Southampton. A council-chamber.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [London. Before a tavern.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [France. The KING'S palace.](#)

Act 3, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [France. Before Harfleur.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The same.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [The same. Before the gates.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [The FRENCH KING's palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [The same.](#)

Act 3, Scene 6: [The English camp in Picardy.](#)

Act 3, Scene 7: [The French camp, near Agincourt:](#)

Act 4, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The English camp at Agincourt.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [The French camp.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The English camp.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [The field of battle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 4, Scene 7: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 4, Scene 8: [Before KING HENRY'S pavilion.](#)

Act 5, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [France. The English camp.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [France. A royal palace.](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 1, Prologue

[Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

*Enter Chorus*

### Chorus

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention,  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!  
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,  
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,  
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire  
Crouch for employment. But pardon, and gentles all,  
The flat unraised spirits that have dared  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
So great an object: can this cockpit hold  
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?  
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may  
Attest in little place a million;  
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,  
On your imaginary forces work.  
Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,  
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts  
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:  
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;  
Into a thousand parts divide on man,  
And make imaginary puissance;  
Think when we talk of horses, that you see them  
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;  
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,  
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times,  
Turning the accomplishment of many years  
Into an hour-glass: for the which supply,

Admit me Chorus to this history;  
Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,  
Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 1, Prologue  
[Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. An ante-chamber in the KING'S palace.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, and the BISHOP OF ELY*

### CANTERBURY

My lord, I'll tell you; that self bill is urged,  
Which in the eleventh year of the last king's reign  
Was like, and had indeed against us pass'd,  
But that the scrambling and unquiet time  
Did push it out of farther question.

### ELY

But how, my lord, shall we resist it now?

### CANTERBURY

It must be thought on. If it pass against us,  
We lose the better half of our possession:  
For all the temporal lands which men devout  
By testament have given to the church  
Would they strip from us; being valued thus:  
As much as would maintain, to the king's honour,  
Full fifteen earls and fifteen hundred knights,  
Six thousand and two hundred good esquires;  
And, to relief of lazars and weak age,  
Of indigent faint souls past corporal toil.  
A hundred almshouses right well supplied;  
And to the coffers of the king beside,  
A thousand pounds by the year: thus runs the bill.

### ELY

This would drink deep.

## **CANTERBURY**

'Twould drink the cup and all.

## **ELY**

But what prevention?

## **CANTERBURY**

The king is full of grace and fair regard.

## **ELY**

And a true lover of the holy church.

## **CANTERBURY**

The courses of his youth promised it not.  
The breath no sooner left his father's body,  
But that his wildness, mortified in him,  
Seem'd to die too; yea, at that very moment  
Consideration, like an angel, came  
And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him,  
Leaving his body as a paradise,  
To envelop and contain celestial spirits.  
Never was such a sudden scholar made;  
Never came reformation in a flood,  
With such a heady currance, scouring faults  
Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness  
So soon did lose his seat and all at once  
As in this king.

## **ELY**

We are blessed in the change.

## **CANTERBURY**

Hear him but reason in divinity,  
And all-admiring with an inward wish

You would desire the king were made a prelate:  
Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,  
You would say it hath been all in all his study:  
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear  
A fearful battle render'd you in music:  
Turn him to any cause of policy,  
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,  
Familiar as his garter: that, when he speaks,  
The air, a charter'd libertine, is still,  
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,  
To steal his sweet and honey'd sentences;  
So that the art and practis'd part of life  
Must be the mistress to this theoric:  
Which is a wonder how his grace should glean it,  
Since his addiction was to courses vain,  
His companies unletter'd, rude and shallow,  
His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports,  
And never noted in him any study,  
Any retirement, any sequestration  
From open haunts and popularity.

## **ELY**

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle  
And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best  
Neighbour'd by fruit of baser quality:  
And so the prince obscured his contemplation  
Under the veil of wildness; which, no doubt,  
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,  
Unseen, yet crevice in his faculty.

## **CANTERBURY**

It must be so; for miracles are ceased;  
And therefore we must needs admit the means  
How things are perfected.

## **ELY**

But, my good lord,  
How now for mitigation of this bill  
Urged by the commons? Doth his majesty



Incline to it, or no?

**CANTERBURY**

He seems indifferent,  
Or rather swaying more upon our part  
Than cherishing the exhibitors against us;  
For I have made an offer to his majesty,  
Upon our spiritual convocation  
And in regard of causes now in hand,  
Which I have open'd to his grace at large,  
As touching France, to give a greater sum  
Than ever at one time the clergy yet  
Did to his predecessors part withal.

**ELY**

How did this offer seem received, my lord?

**CANTERBURY**

With good acceptance of his majesty;  
Save that there was not time enough to hear,  
As I perceived his grace would fain have done,  
The severals and unhidden passages  
Of his true titles to some certain dukedoms  
And generally to the crown and seat of France  
Derived from Edward, his great-grandfather.

**ELY**

What was the impediment that broke this off?

**CANTERBURY**

The French ambassador upon that instant  
Craved audience; and the hour, I think, is come  
To give him hearing: is it four o'clock?

**ELY**

It is.

## CANTERBURY

Then go we in, to know his embassy;  
Which I could with a ready guess declare,  
Before the Frenchman speak a word of it.

## ELY

I'll wait upon you, and I long to hear it.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. The Presence chamber.

*Enter KING HENRY V, GLOUCESTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, WARWICK, WESTMORELAND, and Attendants*

**KING HENRY V**

Where is my gracious Lord of Canterbury?

**EXETER**

Not here in presence.

**KING HENRY V**

Send for him, good uncle.

**WESTMORELAND**

Shall we call in the ambassador, my liege?

**KING HENRY V**

Not yet, my cousin: we would be resolved,  
Before we hear him, of some things of weight  
That task our thoughts, concerning us and France.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, and the BISHOP of ELY*

**CANTERBURY**

God and his angels guard your sacred throne  
And make you long become it!

**KING HENRY V**

Sure, we thank you.  
My learned lord, we pray you to proceed  
And justly and religiously unfold  
Why the law Salique that they have in France  
Or should, or should not, bar us in our claim:  
And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,  
That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,  
Or nicely charge your understanding soul  
With opening titles miscreate, whose right  
Suits not in native colours with the truth;  
For God doth know how many now in health  
Shall drop their blood in approbation  
Of what your reverence shall incite us to.  
Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,  
How you awake our sleeping sword of war:  
We charge you, in the name of God, take heed;  
For never two such kingdoms did contend  
Without much fall of blood; whose guiltless drops  
Are every one a woe, a sore complaint  
'Gainst him whose wrong gives edge unto the swords  
That make such waste in brief mortality.  
Under this conjuration, speak, my lord;  
For we will hear, note and believe in heart  
That what you speak is in your conscience wash'd  
As pure as sin with baptism.

## CANTERBURY

Then hear me, gracious sovereign, and you peers,  
That owe yourselves, your lives and services  
To this imperial throne. There is no bar  
To make against your highness' claim to France  
But this, which they produce from Pharamond,  
'In terram Salicam mulieres ne succedant:'  
'No woman shall succeed in Salique land:'  
Which Salique land the French unjustly gloze  
To be the realm of France, and Pharamond  
The founder of this law and female bar.  
Yet their own authors faithfully affirm  
That the land Salique is in Germany,  
Between the floods of Sala and of Elbe;  
Where Charles the Great, having subdued the Saxons,

There left behind and settled certain French;  
Who, holding in disdain the German women  
For some dishonest manners of their life,  
Establish'd then this law; to wit, no female  
Should be inheritrix in Salique land:  
Which Salique, as I said, 'twixt Elbe and Sala,  
Is at this day in Germany call'd Meisen.  
Then doth it well appear that Salique law  
Was not devised for the realm of France:  
Nor did the French possess the Salique land  
Until four hundred one and twenty years  
After defunction of King Pharamond,  
Idly supposed the founder of this law;  
Who died within the year of our redemption  
Four hundred twenty-six; and Charles the Great  
Subdued the Saxons, and did seat the French  
Beyond the river Sala, in the year  
Eight hundred five. Besides, their writers say,  
King Pepin, which deposed Childeric,  
Did, as heir general, being descended  
Of Blithild, which was daughter to King Clothair,  
Make claim and title to the crown of France.  
Hugh Capet also, who usurped the crown  
Of Charles the duke of Lorraine, sole heir male  
Of the true line and stock of Charles the Great,  
To find his title with some shows of truth,  
'Through, in pure truth, it was corrupt and naught,  
Convey'd himself as heir to the Lady Lingare,  
Daughter to Charlemain, who was the son  
To Lewis the emperor, and Lewis the son  
Of Charles the Great. Also King Lewis the Tenth,  
Who was sole heir to the usurper Capet,  
Could not keep quiet in his conscience,  
Wearing the crown of France, till satisfied  
That fair Queen Isabel, his grandmother,  
Was lineal of the Lady Ermengare,  
Daughter to Charles the foresaid duke of Lorraine:  
By the which marriage the line of Charles the Great  
Was re-united to the crown of France.  
So that, as clear as is the summer's sun.  
King Pepin's title and Hugh Capet's claim,  
King Lewis his satisfaction, all appear  
To hold in right and title of the female:

So do the kings of France unto this day;  
Howbeit they would hold up this Salique law  
To bar your highness claiming from the female,  
And rather choose to hide them in a net  
Than amply to imbar their crooked titles  
Usurp'd from you and your progenitors.

## **KING HENRY V**

May I with right and conscience make this claim?

## **CANTERBURY**

The sin upon my head, dread sovereign!  
For in the book of Numbers is it writ,  
When the man dies, let the inheritance  
Descend unto the daughter. Gracious lord,  
Stand for your own; unwind your bloody flag;  
Look back into your mighty ancestors:  
Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsire's tomb,  
From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,  
And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,  
Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,  
Making defeat on the full power of France,  
Whiles his most mighty father on a hill  
Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp  
Forge in blood of French nobility.  
O noble English. that could entertain  
With half their forces the full Pride of France  
And let another half stand laughing by,  
All out of work and cold for action!

## **ELY**

Awake remembrance of these valiant dead  
And with your puissant arm renew their feats:  
You are their heir; you sit upon their throne;  
The blood and courage that renowned them  
Runs in your veins; and my thrice-puissant liege  
Is in the very May-morn of his youth,  
Ripe for exploits and mighty enterprises.

## **EXETER**

Your brother kings and monarchs of the earth  
Do all expect that you should rouse yourself,  
As did the former lions of your blood.

## **WESTMORELAND**

They know your grace hath cause and means and might;  
So hath your highness; never king of England  
Had nobles richer and more loyal subjects,  
Whose hearts have left their bodies here in England  
And lie pavilion'd in the fields of France.

## **CANTERBURY**

O, let their bodies follow, my dear liege,  
With blood and sword and fire to win your right;  
In aid whereof we of the spirituality  
Will raise your highness such a mighty sum  
As never did the clergy at one time  
Bring in to any of your ancestors.

## **KING HENRY V**

We must not only arm to invade the French,  
But lay down our proportions to defend  
Against the Scot, who will make road upon us  
With all advantages.

## **CANTERBURY**

They of those marches, gracious sovereign,  
Shall be a wall sufficient to defend  
Our inland from the pilfering borderers.

## **KING HENRY V**

We do not mean the coursing snatchers only,  
But fear the main intendment of the Scot,  
Who hath been still a giddy neighbour to us;  
For you shall read that my great-grandfather

Never went with his forces into France  
But that the Scot on his unfurnish'd kingdom  
Came pouring, like the tide into a breach,  
With ample and brim fulness of his force,  
Galling the gleaned land with hot assays,  
Girding with grievous siege castles and towns;  
That England, being empty of defence,  
Hath shook and trembled at the ill neighbourhood.

## **CANTERBURY**

She hath been then more fear'd than harm'd, my liege;  
For hear her but exempl'd by herself:  
When all her chivalry hath been in France  
And she a mourning widow of her nobles,  
She hath herself not only well defended  
But taken and impounded as a stray  
The King of Scots; whom she did send to France,  
To fill King Edward's fame with prisoner kings  
And make her chronicle as rich with praise  
As is the ooze and bottom of the sea  
With sunken wreck and sunless treasuries.

## **WESTMORELAND**

But there's a saying very old and true,  
'If that you will France win,  
Then with Scotland first begin:'  
For once the eagle England being in prey,  
To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot  
Comes sneaking and so sucks her princely eggs,  
Playing the mouse in absence of the cat,  
To tear and havoc more than she can eat.

## **EXETER**

It follows then the cat must stay at home:  
Yet that is but a crush'd necessity,  
Since we have locks to safeguard necessities,  
And pretty traps to catch the petty thieves.  
While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,  
The advised head defends itself at home;



For government, though high and low and lower,  
Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,  
Congreeing in a full and natural close,  
Like music.

## CANTERBURY

Therefore doth heaven divide  
The state of man in divers functions,  
Setting endeavour in continual motion;  
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,  
Obedience: for so work the honey-bees,  
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach  
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.  
They have a king and officers of sorts;  
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home,  
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad,  
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,  
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,  
Which pillage they with merry march bring home  
To the tent-royal of their emperor;  
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys  
The singing masons building roofs of gold,  
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,  
The poor mechanic porters crowding in  
Their heavy burdens at his narrow gate,  
The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,  
Delivering o'er to executors pale  
The lazy yawning drone. I this infer,  
That many things, having full reference  
To one consent, may work contrariously:  
As many arrows, loosed several ways,  
Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town;  
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;  
As many lines close in the dial's centre;  
So may a thousand actions, once afoot.  
End in one purpose, and be all well borne  
Without defeat. Therefore to France, my liege.  
Divide your happy England into four;  
Whereof take you one quarter into France,  
And you withal shall make all Gallia shake.  
If we, with thrice such powers left at home,  
Cannot defend our own doors from the dog,

Let us be worried and our nation lose  
The name of hardiness and policy.

## **KING HENRY V**

Call in the messengers sent from the Dauphin.

*Exeunt some Attendants*

Now are we well resolved; and, by God's help,  
And yours, the noble sinews of our power,  
France being ours, we'll bend it to our awe,  
Or break it all to pieces: or there we'll sit,  
Ruling in large and ample empery  
O'er France and all her almost kingly dukedoms,  
Or lay these bones in an unworthy urn,  
Tombless, with no remembrance over them:  
Either our history shall with full mouth  
Speak freely of our acts, or else our grave,  
Like Turkish mute, shall have a tongueless mouth,  
Not worshipp'd with a waxen epitaph.

*Enter Ambassadors of France*

Now are we well prepared to know the pleasure  
Of our fair cousin Dauphin; for we hear  
Your greeting is from him, not from the king.

## **First Ambassador**

May't please your majesty to give us leave  
Freely to render what we have in charge;  
Or shall we sparingly show you far off  
The Dauphin's meaning and our embassy?

## **KING HENRY V**

We are no tyrant, but a Christian king;  
Unto whose grace our passion is as subject  
As are our wretches fetter'd in our prisons:  
Therefore with frank and with uncurbed plainness  
Tell us the Dauphin's mind.

## **First Ambassador**

Thus, then, in few.  
Your highness, lately sending into France,  
Did claim some certain dukedoms, in the right  
Of your great predecessor, King Edward the Third.  
In answer of which claim, the prince our master  
Says that you savour too much of your youth,  
And bids you be advised there's nought in France  
That can be with a nimble galliard won;  
You cannot revel into dukedoms there.  
He therefore sends you, meeter for your spirit,  
This tun of treasure; and, in lieu of this,  
Desires you let the dukedoms that you claim  
Hear no more of you. This the Dauphin speaks.

## **KING HENRY V**

What treasure, uncle?

## **EXETER**

Tennis-balls, my liege.

## **KING HENRY V**

We are glad the Dauphin is so pleasant with us;  
His present and your pains we thank you for:  
When we have march'd our rackets to these balls,  
We will, in France, by God's grace, play a set  
Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.  
Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler  
That all the courts of France will be disturb'd  
With chaces. And we understand him well,  
How he comes o'er us with our wilder days,  
Not measuring what use we made of them.  
We never valued this poor seat of England;  
And therefore, living hence, did give ourself  
To barbarous licence; as 'tis ever common  
That men are merriest when they are from home.  
But tell the Dauphin I will keep my state,

Be like a king and show my sail of greatness  
When I do rouse me in my throne of France:  
For that I have laid by my majesty  
And plodded like a man for working-days,  
But I will rise there with so full a glory  
That I will dazzle all the eyes of France,  
Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.  
And tell the pleasant prince this mock of his  
Hath turn'd his balls to gun-stones; and his soul  
Shall stand sore charged for the wasteful vengeance  
That shall fly with them: for many a thousand widows  
Shall this his mock mock out of their dear husbands;  
Mock mothers from their sons, mock castles down;  
And some are yet ungotten and unborn  
That shall have cause to curse the Dauphin's scorn.  
But this lies all within the will of God,  
To whom I do appeal; and in whose name  
Tell you the Dauphin I am coming on,  
To venge me as I may and to put forth  
My rightful hand in a well-hallow'd cause.  
So get you hence in peace; and tell the Dauphin  
His jest will savour but of shallow wit,  
When thousands weep more than did laugh at it.  
Convey them with safe conduct. Fare you well.

*Exeunt Ambassadors*

## **EXETER**

This was a merry message.

## **KING HENRY V**

We hope to make the sender blush at it.  
Therefore, my lords, omit no happy hour  
That may give furtherance to our expedition;  
For we have now no thought in us but France,  
Save those to God, that run before our business.  
Therefore let our proportions for these wars  
Be soon collected and all things thought upon  
That may with reasonable swiftness add  
More feathers to our wings; for, God before,

We'll chide this Dauphin at his father's door.  
Therefore let every man now task his thought,  
That this fair action may on foot be brought.

*Exeunt. Flourish*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Prologue

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

*Enter Chorus*

### Chorus

Now all the youth of England are on fire,  
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies:  
Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought  
Reigns solely in the breast of every man:  
They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,  
Following the mirror of all Christian kings,  
With winged heels, as English Mercuries.  
For now sits Expectation in the air,  
And hides a sword from hilts unto the point  
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets,  
Promised to Harry and his followers.  
The French, advised by good intelligence  
Of this most dreadful preparation,  
Shake in their fear and with pale policy  
Seek to divert the English purposes.  
O England! model to thy inward greatness,  
Like little body with a mighty heart,  
What mightst thou do, that honour would thee do,  
Were all thy children kind and natural!  
But see thy fault! France hath in thee found out  
A nest of hollow bosoms, which he fills  
With treacherous crowns; and three corrupted men,  
One, Richard Earl of Cambridge, and the second,  
Henry Lord Scroop of Masham, and the third,  
Sir Thomas Grey, knight, of Northumberland,  
Have, for the gilt of France,--O guilt indeed!  
Confirm'd conspiracy with fearful France;  
And by their hands this grace of kings must die,  
If hell and treason hold their promises,  
Ere he take ship for France, and in Southampton.  
Linger your patience on; and we'll digest

The abuse of distance; force a play:  
The sum is paid; the traitors are agreed;  
The king is set from London; and the scene  
Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton;  
There is the playhouse now, there must you sit:  
And thence to France shall we convey you safe,  
And bring you back, charming the narrow seas  
To give you gentle pass; for, if we may,  
We'll not offend one stomach with our play.  
But, till the king come forth, and not till then,  
Unto Southampton do we shift our scene.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Prologue  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. A street.

*Enter Corporal NYM and Lieutenant BARDOLPH*

**BARDOLPH**

Well met, Corporal Nym.

**NYM**

Good morrow, Lieutenant Bardolph.

**BARDOLPH**

What, are Ancient Pistol and you friends yet?

**NYM**

For my part, I care not: I say little; but when time shall serve, there shall be smiles; but that shall be as it may. I dare not fight; but I will wink and hold out mine iron: it is a simple one; but what though? it will toast cheese, and it will endure cold as another man's sword will: and there's an end.

**BARDOLPH**

I will bestow a breakfast to make you friends; and we'll be all three sworn brothers to France: let it be so, good Corporal Nym.

**NYM**

Faith, I will live so long as I may, that's the certain of it; and when I cannot live any longer, I



will do as I may: that is my rest, that is the rendezvous of it.

## **BARDOLPH**

It is certain, corporal, that he is married to Nell Quickly: and certainly she did you wrong; for you were troth-plight to her.

## **NYM**

I cannot tell: things must be as they may: men may sleep, and they may have their throats about them at that time; and some say knives have edges. It must be as it may: though patience be a tired mare, yet she will plod. There must be conclusions. Well, I cannot tell.

*Enter PISTOL and Hostess*

## **BARDOLPH**

Here comes Ancient Pistol and his wife: good corporal, be patient here. How now, mine host Pistol!

## **PISTOL**

Base tike, call'st thou me host? Now, by this hand, I swear, I scorn the term; Nor shall my Nell keep lodgers.

## **Hostess**

No, by my troth, not long; for we cannot lodge and board a dozen or fourteen gentlewomen that live honestly by the prick of their needles, but it will be thought we keep a bawdy house straight.

*NYM and PISTOL draw*

O well a day, Lady, if he be not drawn now! we shall see wilful adultery and murder committed.

## **BARDOLPH**

Good lieutenant! good corporal! offer nothing here.

## **NYM**

Pish!

## **PISTOL**

Pish for thee, Iceland dog! thou prick-ear'd cur of Iceland!

## **Hostess**

Good Corporal Nym, show thy valour, and put up your sword.

## **NYM**

Will you shog off? I would have you solus.

## **PISTOL**

'Solus,' egregious dog? O viper vile!  
The 'solus' in thy most mervailous face;  
The 'solus' in thy teeth, and in thy throat,  
And in thy hateful lungs, yea, in thy maw, perdy,  
And, which is worse, within thy nasty mouth!  
I do retort the 'solus' in thy bowels;  
For I can take, and Pistol's cock is up,  
And flashing fire will follow.

## **NYM**

I am not Barbason; you cannot conjure me. I have an humour to knock you indifferently well. If you grow foul with me, Pistol, I will scour you with my rapier, as I may, in fair terms: if you would walk off, I would prick your guts a little, in good terms, as I may: and that's the humour of it.

## **PISTOL**

O braggart vile and damned furious wight!  
The grave doth gape, and doting death is near;  
Therefore exhale.

## **BARDOLPH**

Hear me, hear me what I say: he that strikes the  
first stroke, I'll run him up to the hilts, as I am a soldier.

*Draws*

## **PISTOL**

An oath of mickle might; and fury shall abate.  
Give me thy fist, thy fore-foot to me give:  
Thy spirits are most tall.

## **NYM**

I will cut thy throat, one time or other, in fair  
terms: that is the humour of it.

## **PISTOL**

'Couple a gorge!  
That is the word. I thee defy again.  
O hound of Crete, think'st thou my spouse to get?  
No; to the spital go,  
And from the powdering tub of infamy  
Fetch forth the lazar kite of Cressid's kind,  
Doll Tearsheet she by name, and her espouse:  
I have, and I will hold, the quondam Quickly  
For the only she; and--pauca, there's enough. Go to.

*Enter the Boy*

## **Boy**

Mine host Pistol, you must come to my master, and  
you, hostess: he is very sick, and would to bed.  
Good Bardolph, put thy face between his sheets, and

do the office of a warming-pan. Faith, he's very ill.

**BARDOLPH**

Away, you rogue!

**Hostess**

By my troth, he'll yield the crow a pudding one of these days. The king has killed his heart. Good husband, come home presently.

*Exeunt Hostess and Boy*

**BARDOLPH**

Come, shall I make you two friends? We must to France together: why the devil should we keep knives to cut one another's throats?

**PISTOL**

Let floods o'erswell, and fiends for food howl on!

**NYM**

You'll pay me the eight shillings I won of you at betting?

**PISTOL**

Base is the slave that pays.

**NYM**

That now I will have: that's the humour of it.

**PISTOL**

As manhood shall compound: push home.

*They draw*

**BARBOLPH**

By this sword, he that makes the first thrust, I'll  
kill him; by this sword, I will.

**PISTOL**

Sword is an oath, and oaths must have their course.

**BARBOLPH**

Corporal Nym, an thou wilt be friends, be friends:  
an thou wilt not, why, then, be enemies with me too.  
Prithee, put up.

**NYM**

I shall have my eight shillings I won of you at betting?

**PISTOL**

A noble shalt thou have, and present pay;  
And liquor likewise will I give to thee,  
And friendship shall combine, and brotherhood:  
I'll live by Nym, and Nym shall live by me;  
Is not this just? for I shall sutler be  
Unto the camp, and profits will accrue.  
Give me thy hand.

**NYM**

I shall have my noble?

**PISTOL**

In cash most justly paid.

**NYM**

Well, then, that's the humour of't.

*Re-enter Hostess*

**Hostess**

As ever you came of women, come in quickly to Sir John. Ah, poor heart! he is so shaken of a burning quotidian tertian, that it is most lamentable to behold. Sweet men, come to him.

**NYM**

The king hath run bad humours on the knight; that's the even of it.

**PISTOL**

Nym, thou hast spoke the right;  
His heart is fractured and corroborate.

**NYM**

The king is a good king: but it must be as it may;  
he passes some humours and careers.

**PISTOL**

Let us condole the knight; for, lambkins we will live.

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Southampton. A council-chamber.

*Enter EXETER, BEDFORD, and WESTMORELAND*

### BEDFORD

'Fore God, his grace is bold, to trust these traitors.

### EXETER

They shall be apprehended by and by.

### WESTMORELAND

How smooth and even they do bear themselves!  
As if allegiance in their bosoms sat,  
Crowned with faith and constant loyalty.

### BEDFORD

The king hath note of all that they intend,  
By interception which they dream not of.

### EXETER

Nay, but the man that was his bedfellow,  
Whom he hath dull'd and cloy'd with gracious favours,  
That he should, for a foreign purse, so sell  
His sovereign's life to death and treachery.

*Trumpets sound. Enter KING HENRY V, SCROOP, CAMBRIDGE, GREY, and Attendants*

### KING HENRY V

Now sits the wind fair, and we will aboard.  
My Lord of Cambridge, and my kind Lord of Masham,

And you, my gentle knight, give me your thoughts:  
Think you not that the powers we bear with us  
Will cut their passage through the force of France,  
Doing the execution and the act  
For which we have in head assembled them?

## **SCROOP**

No doubt, my liege, if each man do his best.

## **KING HENRY V**

I doubt not that; since we are well persuaded  
We carry not a heart with us from hence  
That grows not in a fair consent with ours,  
Nor leave not one behind that doth not wish  
Success and conquest to attend on us.

## **CAMBRIDGE**

Never was monarch better fear'd and loved  
Than is your majesty: there's not, I think, a subject  
That sits in heart-grief and uneasiness  
Under the sweet shade of your government.

## **GREY**

True: those that were your father's enemies  
Have steep'd their galls in honey and do serve you  
With hearts create of duty and of zeal.

## **KING HENRY V**

We therefore have great cause of thankfulness;  
And shall forget the office of our hand,  
Sooner than quittance of desert and merit  
According to the weight and worthiness.

## **SCROOP**

So service shall with steeled sinews toil,



And labour shall refresh itself with hope,  
To do your grace incessant services.

## **KING HENRY V**

We judge no less. Uncle of Exeter,  
Enlarge the man committed yesterday,  
That rail'd against our person: we consider  
it was excess of wine that set him on;  
And on his more advice we pardon him.

## **SCROOP**

That's mercy, but too much security:  
Let him be punish'd, sovereign, lest example  
Breed, by his sufferance, more of such a kind.

## **KING HENRY V**

O, let us yet be merciful.

## **CAMBRIDGE**

So may your highness, and yet punish too.

## **GREY**

Sir,  
You show great mercy, if you give him life,  
After the taste of much correction.

## **KING HENRY V**

Alas, your too much love and care of me  
Are heavy orisons 'gainst this poor wretch!  
If little faults, proceeding on distemper,  
Shall not be wink'd at, how shall we stretch our eye  
When capital crimes, chew'd, swallow'd and digested,  
Appear before us? We'll yet enlarge that man,  
Though Cambridge, Scroop and Grey, in their dear care  
And tender preservation of our person,  
Would have him punished. And now to our French causes:

Who are the late commissioners?

**CAMBRIDGE**

I one, my lord:  
Your highness bade me ask for it to-day.

**SCROOP**

So did you me, my liege.

**GREY**

And I, my royal sovereign.

**KING HENRY V**

Then, Richard Earl of Cambridge, there is yours;  
There yours, Lord Scroop of Masham; and, sir knight,  
Grey of Northumberland, this same is yours:  
Read them; and know, I know your worthiness.  
My Lord of Westmoreland, and uncle Exeter,  
We will aboard to night. Why, how now, gentlemen!  
What see you in those papers that you lose  
So much complexion? Look ye, how they change!  
Their cheeks are paper. Why, what read you there  
That hath so cowarded and chased your blood  
Out of appearance?

**CAMBRIDGE**

I do confess my fault;  
And do submit me to your highness' mercy.

**GREY SCROOP**

To which we all appeal.

**KING HENRY V**

The mercy that was quick in us but late,

By your own counsel is suppress'd and kill'd:  
You must not dare, for shame, to talk of mercy;  
For your own reasons turn into your bosoms,  
As dogs upon their masters, worrying you.  
See you, my princes, and my noble peers,  
These English monsters! My Lord of Cambridge here,  
You know how apt our love was to accord  
To furnish him with all appertinents  
Belonging to his honour; and this man  
Hath, for a few light crowns, lightly conspired,  
And sworn unto the practises of France,  
To kill us here in Hampton: to the which  
This knight, no less for bounty bound to us  
Than Cambridge is, hath likewise sworn. But, O,  
What shall I say to thee, Lord Scroop? thou cruel,  
Ingrateful, savage and inhuman creature!  
Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,  
That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,  
That almost mightst have coin'd me into gold,  
Wouldst thou have practised on me for thy use,  
May it be possible, that foreign hire  
Could out of thee extract one spark of evil  
That might annoy my finger? 'tis so strange,  
That, though the truth of it stands off as gross  
As black and white, my eye will scarcely see it.  
Treason and murder ever kept together,  
As two yoke-devils sworn to either's purpose,  
Working so grossly in a natural cause,  
That admiration did not whoop at them:  
But thou, 'gainst all proportion, didst bring in  
Wonder to wait on treason and on murder:  
And whatsoever cunning fiend it was  
That wrought upon thee so preposterously  
Hath got the voice in hell for excellence:  
All other devils that suggest by treasons  
Do botch and bungle up damnation  
With patches, colours, and with forms being fetch'd  
From glistening semblances of piety;  
But he that temper'd thee bade thee stand up,  
Gave thee no instance why thou shouldst do treason,  
Unless to dub thee with the name of traitor.  
If that same demon that hath gull'd thee thus  
Should with his lion gait walk the whole world,

He might return to vasty Tartar back,  
And tell the legions 'I can never win  
A soul so easy as that Englishman's.'  
O, how hast thou with 'jealousy infected  
The sweetness of affianced! Show men dutiful?  
Why, so didst thou: seem they grave and learned?  
Why, so didst thou: come they of noble family?  
Why, so didst thou: seem they religious?  
Why, so didst thou: or are they spare in diet,  
Free from gross passion or of mirth or anger,  
Constant in spirit, not swerving with the blood,  
Garnish'd and deck'd in modest complement,  
Not working with the eye without the ear,  
And but in purged judgment trusting neither?  
Such and so finely bolted didst thou seem:  
And thus thy fall hath left a kind of blot,  
To mark the full-fraught man and best indued  
With some suspicion. I will weep for thee;  
For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like  
Another fall of man. Their faults are open:  
Arrest them to the answer of the law;  
And God acquit them of their practises!

## **EXETER**

I arrest thee of high treason, by the name of  
Richard Earl of Cambridge.  
I arrest thee of high treason, by the name of  
Henry Lord Scroop of Masham.  
I arrest thee of high treason, by the name of  
Thomas Grey, knight, of Northumberland.

## **SCROOP**

Our purposes God justly hath discover'd;  
And I repent my fault more than my death;  
Which I beseech your highness to forgive,  
Although my body pay the price of it.

## **CAMBRIDGE**

For me, the gold of France did not seduce;

Although I did admit it as a motive  
The sooner to effect what I intended:  
But God be thanked for prevention;  
Which I in sufferance heartily will rejoice,  
Beseeching God and you to pardon me.

## **GREY**

Never did faithful subject more rejoice  
At the discovery of most dangerous treason  
Than I do at this hour joy o'er myself.  
Prevented from a damned enterprise:  
My fault, but not my body, pardon, sovereign.

## **KING HENRY V**

God quit you in his mercy! Hear your sentence.  
You have conspired against our royal person,  
Join'd with an enemy proclaim'd and from his coffers  
Received the golden earnest of our death;  
Wherein you would have sold your king to slaughter,  
His princes and his peers to servitude,  
His subjects to oppression and contempt  
And his whole kingdom into desolation.  
Touching our person seek we no revenge;  
But we our kingdom's safety must so tender,  
Whose ruin you have sought, that to her laws  
We do deliver you. Get you therefore hence,  
Poor miserable wretches, to your death:  
The taste whereof, God of his mercy give  
You patience to endure, and true repentance  
Of all your dear offences! Bear them hence.

*Exeunt CAMBRIDGE, SCROOP and GREY, guarded*

Now, lords, for France; the enterprise whereof  
Shall be to you, as us, like glorious.  
We doubt not of a fair and lucky war,  
Since God so graciously hath brought to light  
This dangerous treason lurking in our way  
To hinder our beginnings. We doubt not now  
But every rub is smoothed on our way.

Then forth, dear countrymen: let us deliver  
Our puissance into the hand of God,  
Putting it straight in expedition.  
Cheerly to sea; the signs of war advance:  
No king of England, if not king of France.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. London. Before a tavern.

*Enter PISTOL, Hostess, NYM, BARDOLPH, and Boy*

**Hostess**

Prithee, honey-sweet husband, let me bring thee to Staines.

**PISTOL**

No; for my manly heart doth yearn.  
Bardolph, be blithe: Nym, rouse thy vaunting veins:  
Boy, bristle thy courage up; for Falstaff he is dead,  
And we must yearn therefore.

**BARDOLPH**

Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, either in  
heaven or in hell!

**Hostess**

Nay, sure, he's not in hell: he's in Arthur's  
bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom. A' made  
a finer end and went away an it had been any  
christom child; a' parted even just between twelve  
and one, even at the turning o' the tide: for after  
I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with  
flowers and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew  
there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as  
a pen, and a' babbled of green fields. 'How now,  
sir John!' quoth I 'what, man! be o' good  
cheer.' So a' cried out 'God, God, God!' three or  
four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him a'  
should not think of God; I hoped there was no need  
to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet. So

a' bade me lay more clothes on his feet: I put my hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as cold as any stone; then I felt to his knees, and they were as cold as any stone, and so upward and upward, and all was as cold as any stone.

**NYM**

They say he cried out of sack.

**Hostess**

Ay, that a' did.

**BARDOLPH**

And of women.

**Hostess**

Nay, that a' did not.

**Boy**

Yes, that a' did; and said they were devils incarnate.

**Hostess**

A' could never abide carnation; 'twas a colour he never liked.

**Boy**

A' said once, the devil would have him about women.

**Hostess**

A' did in some sort, indeed, handle women; but then he was rheumatic, and talked of the whore of Babylon.



**Boy**

Do you not remember, a' saw a flea stick upon  
Bardolph's nose, and a' said it was a black soul  
burning in hell-fire?

**BARDOLPH**

Well, the fuel is gone that maintained that fire:  
that's all the riches I got in his service.

**NYM**

Shall we shog? the king will be gone from  
Southampton.

**PISTOL**

Come, let's away. My love, give me thy lips.  
Look to my chattels and my movables:  
Let senses rule; the word is 'Pitch and Pay:'  
Trust none;  
For oaths are straws, men's faiths are wafer-cakes,  
And hold-fast is the only dog, my duck:  
Therefore, Caveto be thy counsellor.  
Go, clear thy c rystals. Yoke-fellows in arms,  
Let us to France; like horse-leeches, my boys,  
To suck, to suck, the very blood to suck!

**Boy**

And that's but unwholesome food they say.

**PISTOL**

Touch her soft mouth, and march.

**BARDOLPH**

Farewell, hostess.

*Kissing her*

**NYM**

I cannot kiss, that is the humour of it; but, adieu.

**PISTOL**

Let housewifery appear: keep close, I thee command.

**Hostess**

Farewell; adieu.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. France. The KING'S palace.

*Flourish. Enter the FRENCH KING, the DAUPHIN, the DUKES of BERRI and BRETAGNE, the Constable, and others*

### KING OF FRANCE

Thus comes the English with full power upon us;  
And more than carefully it us concerns  
To answer royally in our defences.  
Therefore the Dukes of Berri and of Bretagne,  
Of Brabant and of Orleans, shall make forth,  
And you, Prince Dauphin, with all swift dispatch,  
To line and new repair our towns of war  
With men of courage and with means defendant;  
For England his approaches makes as fierce  
As waters to the sucking of a gulf.  
It fits us then to be as provident  
As fear may teach us out of late examples  
Left by the fatal and neglected English  
Upon our fields.

### DAUPHIN

My most redoubted father,  
It is most meet we arm us 'gainst the foe;  
For peace itself should not so dull a kingdom,  
Though war nor no known quarrel were in question,  
But that defences, musters, preparations,  
Should be maintain'd, assembled and collected,  
As were a war in expectation.  
Therefore, I say 'tis meet we all go forth  
To view the sick and feeble parts of France:  
And let us do it with no show of fear;  
No, with no more than if we heard that England  
Were busied with a Whitsun morris-dance:  
For, my good liege, she is so idly king'd,

Her sceptre so fantastically borne  
By a vain, giddy, shallow, humorous youth,  
That fear attends her not.

## **Constable**

O peace, Prince Dauphin!  
You are too much mistaken in this king:  
Question your grace the late ambassadors,  
With what great state he heard their embassy,  
How well supplied with noble counsellors,  
How modest in exception, and withal  
How terrible in constant resolution,  
And you shall find his vanities forespent  
Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus,  
Covering discretion with a coat of folly;  
As gardeners do with ordure hide those roots  
That shall first spring and be most delicate.

## **DAUPHIN**

Well, 'tis not so, my lord high constable;  
But though we think it so, it is no matter:  
In cases of defence 'tis best to weigh  
The enemy more mighty than he seems:  
So the proportions of defence are fill'd;  
Which of a weak or niggardly projection  
Doth, like a miser, spoil his coat with scanting  
A little cloth.

## **KING OF FRANCE**

Think we King Harry strong;  
And, princes, look you strongly arm to meet him.  
The kindred of him hath been flesh'd upon us;  
And he is bred out of that bloody strain  
That haunted us in our familiar paths:  
Witness our too much memorable shame  
When Cressy battle fatally was struck,  
And all our princes captiv'd by the hand  
Of that black name, Edward, Black Prince of Wales;  
Whiles that his mountain sire, on mountain standing,

Up in the air, crown'd with the golden sun,  
Saw his heroical seed, and smiled to see him,  
Mangle the work of nature and deface  
The patterns that by God and by French fathers  
Had twenty years been made. This is a stem  
Of that victorious stock; and let us fear  
The native mightiness and fate of him.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Ambassadors from Harry King of England  
Do crave admittance to your majesty.

**KING OF FRANCE**

We'll give them present audience. Go, and bring them.

*Exeunt Messenger and certain Lords*

You see this chase is hotly follow'd, friends.

**DAUPHIN**

Turn head, and stop pursuit; for coward dogs  
Most spend their mouths when what they seem to threaten  
Runs far before them. Good my sovereign,  
Take up the English short, and let them know  
Of what a monarchy you are the head:  
Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin  
As self-neglecting.

*Re-enter Lords, with EXETER and train*

**KING OF FRANCE**

From our brother England?

**EXETER**

From him; and thus he greets your majesty.  
He wills you, in the name of God Almighty,  
That you divest yourself, and lay apart  
The borrow'd glories that by gift of heaven,  
By law of nature and of nations, 'long  
To him and to his heirs; namely, the crown  
And all wide-stretched honours that pertain  
By custom and the ordinance of times  
Unto the crown of France. That you may know  
'Tis no sinister nor no awkward claim,  
Pick'd from the worm-holes of long-vanish'd days,  
Nor from the dust of old oblivion raked,  
He sends you this most memorable line,  
In every branch truly demonstrative;  
Willing to overlook this pedigree:  
And when you find him evenly derived  
From his most famed of famous ancestors,  
Edward the Third, he bids you then resign  
Your crown and kingdom, indirectly held  
From him the native and true challenger.

## **KING OF FRANCE**

Or else what follows?

## **EXETER**

Bloody constraint; for if you hide the crown  
Even in your hearts, there will he rake for it:  
Therefore in fierce tempest is he coming,  
In thunder and in earthquake, like a Jove,  
That, if requiring fail, he will compel;  
And bids you, in the bowels of the Lord,  
Deliver up the crown, and to take mercy  
On the poor souls for whom this hungry war  
Opens his vasty jaws; and on your head  
Turning the widows' tears, the orphans' cries  
The dead men's blood, the pining maidens groans,  
For husbands, fathers and betrothed lovers,  
That shall be swallow'd in this controversy.  
This is his claim, his threatening and my message;  
Unless the Dauphin be in presence here,  
To whom expressly I bring greeting too.

## **KING OF FRANCE**

For us, we will consider of this further:  
To-morrow shall you bear our full intent  
Back to our brother England.

## **DAUPHIN**

For the Dauphin,  
I stand here for him: what to him from England?

## **EXETER**

Scorn and defiance; slight regard, contempt,  
And any thing that may not misbecome  
The mighty sender, doth he prize you at.  
Thus says my king; an' if your father's highness  
Do not, in grant of all demands at large,  
Sweeten the bitter mock you sent his majesty,  
He'll call you to so hot an answer of it,  
That caves and womby vaultages of France  
Shall chide your trespass and return your mock  
In second accent of his ordnance.

## **DAUPHIN**

Say, if my father render fair return,  
It is against my will; for I desire  
Nothing but odds with England: to that end,  
As matching to his youth and vanity,  
I did present him with the Paris balls.

## **EXETER**

He'll make your Paris Louvre shake for it,  
Were it the mistress-court of mighty Europe:  
And, be assured, you'll find a difference,  
As we his subjects have in wonder found,  
Between the promise of his greener days  
And these he masters now: now he weighs time  
Even to the utmost grain: that you shall read

In your own losses, if he stay in France.

**KING OF FRANCE**

To-morrow shall you know our mind at full.

**EXETER**

Dispatch us with all speed, lest that our king  
Come here himself to question our delay;  
For he is footed in this land already.

**KING OF FRANCE**

You shall be soon dispatch's with fair conditions:  
A night is but small breath and little pause  
To answer matters of this consequence.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Prologue

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

*Enter Chorus*

### Chorus

Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies  
In motion of no less celerity  
Than that of thought. Suppose that you have seen  
The well-appointed king at Hampton pier  
Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet  
With silken streamers the young Phoebus fanning:  
Play with your fancies, and in them behold  
Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;  
Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give  
To sounds confused; behold the threaden sails,  
Borne with the invisible and creeping wind,  
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea,  
Breasting the lofty surge: O, do but think  
You stand upon the ravage and behold  
A city on the inconstant billows dancing;  
For so appears this fleet majestical,  
Holding due course to Harfleur. Follow, follow:  
Grapple your minds to sternage of this navy,  
And leave your England, as dead midnight still,  
Guarded with grandsires, babies and old women,  
Either past or not arrived to pith and puissance;  
For who is he, whose chin is but enrich'd  
With one appearing hair, that will not follow  
These cull'd and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?  
Work, work your thoughts, and therein see a siege;  
Behold the ordnance on their carriages,  
With fatal mouths gaping on girded Harfleur.  
Suppose the ambassador from the French comes back;  
Tells Harry that the king doth offer him  
Katharine his daughter, and with her, to dowry,  
Some petty and unprofitable dukedoms.

The offer likes not: and the nimble gunner  
With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,

*Alarum, and chambers go off*

And down goes all before them. Still be kind,  
And eke out our performance with your mind.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Prologue  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. France. Before Harfleur.

*Alarum. Enter KING HENRY, EXETER, BEDFORD, GLOUCESTER, and Soldiers, with scaling-ladders*

### KING HENRY V

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;  
Or close the wall up with our English dead.  
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man  
As modest stillness and humility:  
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,  
Then imitate the action of the tiger;  
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,  
Disguise fair nature with hard-favour'd rage;  
Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;  
Let pry through the portage of the head  
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it  
As fearfully as doth a galled rock  
O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,  
Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.  
Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,  
Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit  
To his full height. On, on, you noblest English.  
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof!  
Fathers that, like so many Alexanders,  
Have in these parts from morn till even fought  
And sheathed their swords for lack of argument:  
Dishonour not your mothers; now attest  
That those whom you call'd fathers did beget you.  
Be copy now to men of grosser blood,  
And teach them how to war. And you, good yeoman,  
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here  
The mettle of your pasture; let us swear  
That you are worth your breeding; which I doubt not;  
For there is none of you so mean and base,  
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.

I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,  
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot:  
Follow your spirit, and upon this charge  
Cry 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'

*Exeunt. Alarum, and chambers go off*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same.

*Enter NYM, BARDOLPH, PISTOL, and Boy*

### BARDOLPH

On, on, on, on, on! to the breach, to the breach!

### NYM

Pray thee, corporal, stay: the knocks are too hot;  
and, for mine own part, I have not a case of lives:  
the humour of it is too hot, that is the very  
plain-song of it.

### PISTOL

The plain-song is most just: for humours do abound:  
Knocks go and come; God's vassals drop and die;  
And sword and shield,  
In bloody field,  
Doth win immortal fame.

### Boy

Would I were in an alehouse in London! I would give  
all my fame for a pot of ale and safety.

### PISTOL

And I:  
If wishes would prevail with me,  
My purpose should not fail with me,  
But thither would I hie.

### Boy

As duly, but not as truly,  
As bird doth sing on bough.

*Enter FLUELLEN*

**FLUELLEN**

Up to the breach, you dogs! avaunt, you cullions!

*Driving them forward*

**PISTOL**

Be merciful, great duke, to men of mould.  
Abate thy rage, abate thy manly rage,  
Abate thy rage, great duke!  
Good bawcock, bate thy rage; use lenity, sweet chuck!

**NYM**

These be good humours! your honour wins bad humours.

*Exeunt all but Boy*

**Boy**

As young as I am, I have observed these three swashers. I am boy to them all three: but all they three, though they would serve me, could not be man to me; for indeed three such antics do not amount to a man. For Bardolph, he is white-livered and red-faced; by the means whereof a' faces it out, but fights not. For Pistol, he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword; by the means whereof a' breaks words, and keeps whole weapons. For Nym, he hath heard that men of few words are the best men; and therefore he scorns to say his prayers, lest a' should be thought a coward: but his few bad words are matched with as few good deeds; for a' never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk. They will steal

any thing, and call it purchase. Bardolph stole a lute-case, bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three half pence. Nym and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching, and in Calais they stole a fire-shovel: I knew by that piece of service the men would carry coals. They would have me as familiar with men's pockets as their gloves or their handkerchers: which makes much against my manhood, if I should take from another's pocket to put into mine; for it is plain pocketing up of wrongs. I must leave them, and seek some better service: their villany goes against my weak stomach, and therefore I must cast it up.

*Exit*

*Re-enter FLUELLEN, GOWER following*

**GOWER**

Captain Fluellen, you must come presently to the mines; the Duke of Gloucester would speak with you.

**FLUELLEN**

To the mines! tell you the duke, it is not so good to come to the mines; for, look you, the mines is not according to the disciplines of the war: the concavities of it is not sufficient; for, look you, the athversary, you may discuss unto the duke, look you, is digt himself four yard under the countermines: by Cheshu, I think a' will plough up all, if there is not better directions.

**GOWER**

The Duke of Gloucester, to whom the order of the siege is given, is altogether directed by an Irishman, a very valiant gentleman, i' faith.

**FLUELLEN**

It is Captain Macmorris, is it not?

**GOWER**

I think it be.

**FLUELLEN**

By Cheshu, he is an ass, as in the world: I will verify as much in his beard: he has no more directions in the true disciplines of the wars, look you, of the Roman disciplines, than is a puppy-dog.

*Enter MACMORRIS and Captain JAMY*

**GOWER**

Here a' comes; and the Scots captain, Captain Jamy, with him.

**FLUELLEN**

Captain Jamy is a marvellous falourous gentleman, that is certain; and of great expedition and knowledge in th' aunchient wars, upon my particular knowledge of his directions: by Cheshu, he will maintain his argument as well as any military man in the world, in the disciplines of the pristine wars of the Romans.

**JAMY**

I say gud-day, Captain Fluellen.

**FLUELLEN**

God-den to your worship, good Captain James.

**GOWER**

How now, Captain Macmorris! have you quit the mines? have the pioneers given o'er?



## MACMORRIS

By Chrish, la! tish ill done: the work ish give over, the trompet sound the retreat. By my hand, I swear, and my father's soul, the work ish ill done; it ish give over: I would have blowed up the town, so Chrish save me, la! in an hour: O, tish ill done, tish ill done; by my hand, tish ill done!

## FLUELLEN

Captain Macmorris, I beseech you now, will you voutsafe me, look you, a few disputations with you, as partly touching or concerning the disciplines of the war, the Roman wars, in the way of argument, look you, and friendly communication; partly to satisfy my opinion, and partly for the satisfaction, look you, of my mind, as touching the direction of the military discipline; that is the point.

## JAMY

It sall be vary gud, gud feith, gud captains bath: and I sall quit you with gud leve, as I may pick occasion; that sall I, marry.

## MACMORRIS

It is no time to discourse, so Chrish save me: the day is hot, and the weather, and the wars, and the king, and the dukes: it is no time to discourse. The town is beseeched, and the trumpet call us to the breach; and we talk, and, be Chrish, do nothing: 'tis shame for us all: so God sa' me, 'tis shame to stand still; it is shame, by my hand: and there is throats to be cut, and works to be done; and there ish nothing done, so Chrish sa' me, la!

## JAMY

By the mess, ere these eyes of mine take themselves

to slomber, ay'll de gud service, or ay'll lig i'  
the grund for it; ay, or go to death; and ay'll pay  
't as valourously as I may, that sall I suerly do,  
that is the breff and the long. Marry, I wad full  
fain hear some question 'tween you tway.

## **FLUELLEN**

Captain Macmorris, I think, look you, under your  
correction, there is not many of your nation--

## **MACMORRIS**

Of my nation! What ish my nation? Ish a villain,  
and a bastard, and a knave, and a rascal. What ish  
my nation? Who talks of my nation?

## **FLUELLEN**

Look you, if you take the matter otherwise than is  
meant, Captain Macmorris, peradventure I shall think  
you do not use me with that affability as in  
discretion you ought to use me, look you: being as  
good a man as yourself, both in the disciplines of  
war, and in the derivation of my birth, and in  
other particularities.

## **MACMORRIS**

I do not know you so good a man as myself: so  
Chrish save me, I will cut off your head.

## **GOWER**

Gentlemen both, you will mistake each other.

## **JAMY**

A! that's a foul fault.

*A parley sounded*

## **GOWER**

The town sounds a parley.

## **FLUELLEN**

Captain Macmorris, when there is more better opportunity to be required, look you, I will be so bold as to tell you I know the disciplines of war; and there is an end.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. Before the gates.

*The Governor and some Citizens on the walls; the English forces below. Enter KING HENRY and his train*

### KING HENRY V

How yet resolves the governor of the town?  
This is the latest parle we will admit;  
Therefore to our best mercy give yourselves;  
Or like to men proud of destruction  
Defy us to our worst: for, as I am a soldier,  
A name that in my thoughts becomes me best,  
If I begin the battery once again,  
I will not leave the half-achieved Harfleur  
Till in her ashes she lie buried.  
The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,  
And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,  
In liberty of bloody hand shall range  
With conscience wide as hell, mowing like grass  
Your fresh-fair virgins and your flowering infants.  
What is it then to me, if impious war,  
Array'd in flames like to the prince of fiends,  
Do, with his smirch'd complexion, all fell feats  
Enlink'd to waste and desolation?  
What is't to me, when you yourselves are cause,  
If your pure maidens fall into the hand  
Of hot and forcing violation?  
What rein can hold licentious wickedness  
When down the hill he holds his fierce career?  
We may as bootless spend our vain command  
Upon the enraged soldiers in their spoil  
As send precepts to the leviathan  
To come ashore. Therefore, you men of Harfleur,  
Take pity of your town and of your people,  
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command;  
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace

O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds  
Of heady murder, spoil and villany.  
If not, why, in a moment look to see  
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand  
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;  
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,  
And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls,  
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,  
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused  
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry  
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.  
What say you? will you yield, and this avoid,  
Or, guilty in defence, be thus destroy'd?

## **GOVERNOR**

Our expectation hath this day an end:  
The Dauphin, whom of succors we entreated,  
Returns us that his powers are yet not ready  
To raise so great a siege. Therefore, great king,  
We yield our town and lives to thy soft mercy.  
Enter our gates; dispose of us and ours;  
For we no longer are defensible.

## **KING HENRY V**

Open your gates. Come, uncle Exeter,  
Go you and enter Harfleur; there remain,  
And fortify it strongly 'gainst the French:  
Use mercy to them all. For us, dear uncle,  
The winter coming on and sickness growing  
Upon our soldiers, we will retire to Calais.  
To-night in Harfleur we will be your guest;  
To-morrow for the march are we address.

*Flourish. The King and his train enter the town*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The FRENCH KING's palace.

*Enter KATHARINE and ALICE*

**KATHARINE**

Alice, tu as ete en Angleterre, et tu parles bien le langage.

**ALICE**

Un peu, madame.

**KATHARINE**

Je te prie, m'enseignez: il faut que j'apprenne a parler. Comment appelez-vous la main en Anglois?

**ALICE**

La main? elle est appelee de hand.

**KATHARINE**

De hand. Et les doigts?

**ALICE**

Les doigts? ma foi, j'oublie les doigts; mais je me souviendrai. Les doigts? je pense qu'ils sont appeles de fingres; oui, de fingres.

**KATHARINE**

La main, de hand; les doigts, de fingres. Je pense que je suis le bon ecolier; j'ai gagne deux mots

d'Anglois vitement. Comment appelez-vous les ongles?

**ALICE**

Les ongles? nous les appelons de nails.

**KATHARINE**

De nails. Ecoutez; dites-moi, si je parle bien: de hand, de fingres, et de nails.

**ALICE**

C'est bien dit, madame; il est fort bon Anglois.

**KATHARINE**

Dites-moi l'Anglois pour le bras.

**ALICE**

De arm, madame.

**KATHARINE**

Et le coude?

**ALICE**

De elbow.

**KATHARINE**

De elbow. Je m'en fais la repetition de tous les mots que vous m'avez appris des a present.

**ALICE**

Il est trop difficile, madame, comme je pense.

**KATHARINE**

Excusez-moi, Alice; écoutez: de hand, de fingres,  
de nails, de arma, de bilbow.

**ALICE**

De elbow, madame.

**KATHARINE**

O Seigneur Dieu, je m'en oublie! de elbow. Comment  
appelez-vous le col?

**ALICE**

De neck, madame.

**KATHARINE**

De nick. Et le menton?

**ALICE**

De chin.

**KATHARINE**

De sin. Le col, de nick; de menton, de sin.

**ALICE**

Oui. Sauf votre honneur, en verite, vous prononcez  
les mots aussi droit que les natifs d'Angleterre.

**KATHARINE**

Je ne doute point d'apprendre, par la grace de Dieu,  
et en peu de temps.

**ALICE**



N'avez vous pas deja oublie ce que je vous ai enseigne?

**KATHARINE**

Non, je reciterai a vous promptement: de hand, de fingres, de mails--

**ALICE**

De nails, madame.

**KATHARINE**

De nails, de arm, de ilbow.

**ALICE**

Sauf votre honneur, de elbow.

**KATHARINE**

Ainsi dis-je; de elbow, de nick, et de sin. Comment appelez-vous le pied et la robe?

**ALICE**

De foot, madame; et de coun.

**KATHARINE**

De foot et de coun! O Seigneur Dieu! ce sont mots de son mauvais, corruptible, gros, et impudique, et non pour les dames d'honneur d'user: je ne voudrais prononcer ces mots devant les seigneurs de France pour tout le monde. Foh! le foot et le coun! Neanmoins, je reciterai une autre fois ma lecon ensemble: de hand, de fingres, de nails, de arm, de elbow, de nick, de sin, de foot, de coun.

**ALICE**

Excellent, madame!

**KATHARINE**

C'est assez pour une fois: allons-nous a diner.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same.

*Enter the KING OF FRANCE, the DAUPHIN, the DUKE OF BOURBON, the Constable Of France, and others*

### KING OF FRANCE

'Tis certain he hath pass'd the river Somme.

### Constable

And if he be not fought withal, my lord,  
Let us not live in France; let us quit all  
And give our vineyards to a barbarous people.

### DAUPHIN

O Dieu vivant! shall a few sprays of us,  
The emptying of our fathers' luxury,  
Our scions, put in wild and savage stock,  
Spirt up so suddenly into the clouds,  
And overlook their grafters?

### BOURBON

Normans, but bastard Normans, Norman bastards!  
Mort de ma vie! if they march along  
Unfought withal, but I will sell my dukedom,  
To buy a slobbery and a dirty farm  
In that nook-shotten isle of Albion.

### Constable

Dieu de batailles! where have they this mettle?  
Is not their climate foggy, raw and dull,  
On whom, as in despite, the sun looks pale,

Killing their fruit with frowns? Can sodden water,  
A drench for sur-rein'd jades, their barley-broth,  
Decoct their cold blood to such valiant heat?  
And shall our quick blood, spirited with wine,  
Seem frosty? O, for honour of our land,  
Let us not hang like roping icicles  
Upon our houses' thatch, whiles a more frosty people  
Sweat drops of gallant youth in our rich fields!  
Poor we may call them in their native lords.

## **DAUPHIN**

By faith and honour,  
Our madams mock at us, and plainly say  
Our mettle is bred out and they will give  
Their bodies to the lust of English youth  
To new-store France with bastard warriors.

## **BOURBON**

They bid us to the English dancing-schools,  
And teach lavoltas high and swift corantos;  
Saying our grace is only in our heels,  
And that we are most lofty runaways.

## **KING OF FRANCE**

Where is Montjoy the herald? speed him hence:  
Let him greet England with our sharp defiance.  
Up, princes! and, with spirit of honour edged  
More sharper than your swords, hie to the field:  
Charles Delabreth, high constable of France;  
You Dukes of Orleans, Bourbon, and of Berri,  
Alencon, Brabant, Bar, and Burgundy;  
Jaques Chatillon, Rambures, Vaudemont,  
Beaumont, Grandpre, Roussi, and Fauconberg,  
Foix, Lestrade, Bouciqualt, and Charolois;  
High dukes, great princes, barons, lords and knights,  
For your great seats now quit you of great shames.  
Bar Harry England, that sweeps through our land  
With pennons painted in the blood of Harfleur:  
Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow

Upon the valleys, whose low vassal seat  
The Alps doth spit and void his rheum upon:  
Go down upon him, you have power enough,  
And in a captive chariot into Rouen  
Bring him our prisoner.

### **Constable**

This becomes the great.  
Sorry am I his numbers are so few,  
His soldiers sick and famish'd in their march,  
For I am sure, when he shall see our army,  
He'll drop his heart into the sink of fear  
And for achievement offer us his ransom.

### **KING OF FRANCE**

Therefore, lord constable, haste on Montjoy.  
And let him say to England that we send  
To know what willing ransom he will give.  
Prince Dauphin, you shall stay with us in Rouen.

### **DAUPHIN**

Not so, I do beseech your majesty.

### **KING OF FRANCE**

Be patient, for you shall remain with us.  
Now forth, lord constable and princes all,  
And quickly bring us word of England's fall.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The English camp in Picardy.

*Enter GOWER and FLUELLEN, meeting*

**GOWER**

How now, Captain Fluellen! come you from the bridge?

**FLUELLEN**

I assure you, there is very excellent services committed at the bridge.

**GOWER**

Is the Duke of Exeter safe?

**FLUELLEN**

The Duke of Exeter is as magnanimous as Agamemnon; and a man that I love and honour with my soul, and my heart, and my duty, and my life, and my living, and my uttermost power: he is not-God be praised and blessed!--any hurt in the world; but keeps the bridge most valiantly, with excellent discipline. There is an aunchient lieutenant there at the pridge, I think in my very conscience he is as valiant a man as Mark Antony; and he is a man of no estimation in the world; but did see him do as gallant service.

**GOWER**

What do you call him?

**FLUELLEN**

He is called Aunchient Pistol.

**GOWER**

I know him not.

*Enter PISTOL*

**FLUELLEN**

Here is the man.

**PISTOL**

Captain, I thee beseech to do me favours:  
The Duke of Exeter doth love thee well.

**FLUELLEN**

Ay, I praise God; and I have merited some love at  
his hands.

**PISTOL**

Bardolph, a soldier, firm and sound of heart,  
And of buxom valour, hath, by cruel fate,  
And giddy Fortune's furious fickle wheel,  
That goddess blind,  
That stands upon the rolling restless stone--

**FLUELLEN**

By your patience, Aunchient Pistol. Fortune is  
painted blind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to  
signify to you that Fortune is blind; and she is  
painted also with a wheel, to signify to you, which  
is the moral of it, that she is turning, and  
inconstant, and mutability, and variation: and her  
foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone,  
which rolls, and rolls, and rolls: in good truth,

the poet makes a most excellent description of it:  
Fortune is an excellent moral.

## **PISTOL**

Fortune is Bardolph's foe, and frowns on him;  
For he hath stolen a pax, and hanged must a' be:  
A damned death!  
Let gallows gape for dog; let man go free  
And let not hemp his wind-pipe suffocate:  
But Exeter hath given the doom of death  
For pax of little price.  
Therefore, go speak: the duke will hear thy voice:  
And let not Bardolph's vital thread be cut  
With edge of penny cord and vile reproach:  
Speak, captain, for his life, and I will thee requite.

## **FLUELLEN**

Aunchient Pistol, I do partly understand your meaning.

## **PISTOL**

Why then, rejoice therefore.

## **FLUELLEN**

Certainly, aunchient, it is not a thing to rejoice  
at: for if, look you, he were my brother, I would  
desire the duke to use his good pleasure, and put  
him to execution; for discipline ought to be used.

## **PISTOL**

Die and be damn'd! and figo for thy friendship!

## **FLUELLEN**

It is well.

## **PISTOL**



The fig of Spain!

*Exit*

**FLUELLEN**

Very good.

**GOWER**

Why, this is an arrant counterfeit rascal; I remember him now; a bawd, a cutpurse.

**FLUELLEN**

I'll assure you, a' uttered as brave words at the bridge as you shall see in a summer's day. But it is very well; what he has spoke to me, that is well, I warrant you, when time is serve.

**GOWER**

Why, 'tis a gull, a fool, a rogue, that now and then goes to the wars, to grace himself at his return into London under the form of a soldier. And such fellows are perfect in the great commanders' names: and they will learn you by rote where services were done; at such and such a sconce, at such a breach, at such a convoy; who came off bravely, who was shot, who disgraced, what terms the enemy stood on; and this they con perfectly in the phrase of war, which they trick up with new-tuned oaths: and what a beard of the general's cut and a horrid suit of the camp will do among foaming bottles and ale-washed wits, is wonderful to be thought on. But you must learn to know such slanders of the age, or else you may be marvellously mistook.

**FLUELLEN**

I tell you what, Captain Gower; I do perceive he is

not the man that he would gladly make show to the world he is: if I find a hole in his coat, I will tell him my mind.

*Drum heard*

Hark you, the king is coming, and I must speak with him from the pridge.

*Drum and colours. Enter KING HENRY, GLOUCESTER, and Soldiers*

God pless your majesty!

**KING HENRY V**

How now, Fluellen! camest thou from the bridge?

**FLUELLEN**

Ay, so please your majesty. The Duke of Exeter has very gallantly maintained the pridge: the French is gone off, look you; and there is gallant and most prave passages; marry, th' athversary was have possession of the pridge; but he is enforced to retire, and the Duke of Exeter is master of the pridge: I can tell your majesty, the duke is a prave man.

**KING HENRY V**

What men have you lost, Fluellen?

**FLUELLEN**

The perdition of th' athversary hath been very great, reasonable great: marry, for my part, I think the duke hath lost never a man, but one that is like to be executed for robbing a church, one Bardolph, if your majesty know the man: his face is all bubukles, and whelks, and knobs, and flames o' fire: and his lips blows at his nose, and it is like a coal of fire, sometimes plue and sometimes red;

but his nose is executed and his fire's out.

**KING HENRY V**

We would have all such offenders so cut off: and we give express charge, that in our marches through the country, there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the French upbraided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner.

*Tucket. Enter MONTJOY*

**MONTJOY**

You know me by my habit.

**KING HENRY V**

Well then I know thee: what shall I know of thee?

**MONTJOY**

My master's mind.

**KING HENRY V**

Unfold it.

**MONTJOY**

Thus says my king: Say thou to Harry of England: Though we seemed dead, we did but sleep: advantage is a better soldier than rashness. Tell him we could have rebuked him at Harfleur, but that we thought not good to bruise an injury till it were full ripe: now we speak upon our cue, and our voice is imperial: England shall repent his folly, see his weakness, and admire our sufferance. Bid him therefore consider of his ransom; which must

proportion the losses we have borne, the subjects we have lost, the disgrace we have digested; which in weight to re-answer, his pettiness would bow under. For our losses, his exchequer is too poor; for the effusion of our blood, the muster of his kingdom too faint a number; and for our disgrace, his own person, kneeling at our feet, but a weak and worthless satisfaction. To this add defiance: and tell him, for conclusion, he hath betrayed his followers, whose condemnation is pronounced. So far my king and master; so much my office.

## **KING HENRY V**

What is thy name? I know thy quality.

## **MONTJOY**

Montjoy.

## **KING HENRY V**

Thou dost thy office fairly. Turn thee back.  
And tell thy king I do not seek him now;  
But could be willing to march on to Calais  
Without impeachment: for, to say the sooth,  
Though 'tis no wisdom to confess so much  
Unto an enemy of craft and vantage,  
My people are with sickness much enfeebled,  
My numbers lessened, and those few I have  
Almost no better than so many French;  
Who when they were in health, I tell thee, herald,  
I thought upon one pair of English legs  
Did march three Frenchmen. Yet, forgive me, God,  
That I do brag thus! This your air of France  
Hath blown that vice in me: I must repent.  
Go therefore, tell thy master here I am;  
My ransom is this frail and worthless trunk,  
My army but a weak and sickly guard;  
Yet, God before, tell him we will come on,  
Though France himself and such another neighbour  
Stand in our way. There's for thy labour, Montjoy.

Go bid thy master well advise himself:  
If we may pass, we will; if we be hinder'd,  
We shall your tawny ground with your red blood  
Discolour: and so Montjoy, fare you well.  
The sum of all our answer is but this:  
We would not seek a battle, as we are;  
Nor, as we are, we say we will not shun it:  
So tell your master.

## **MONTJOY**

I shall deliver so. Thanks to your highness.

*Exit*

## **GLOUCESTER**

I hope they will not come upon us now.

## **KING HENRY V**

We are in God's hand, brother, not in theirs.  
March to the bridge; it now draws toward night:  
Beyond the river we'll encamp ourselves,  
And on to-morrow, bid them march away.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. The French camp, near Agincourt:

*Enter the Constable of France, the LORD RAMBURES, ORLEANS, DAUPHIN, with others*

**Constable**

Tut! I have the best armour of the world. Would it were day!

**ORLEANS**

You have an excellent armour; but let my horse have his due.

**Constable**

It is the best horse of Europe.

**ORLEANS**

Will it never be morning?

**DAUPHIN**

My lord of Orleans, and my lord high constable, you talk of horse and armour?

**ORLEANS**

You are as well provided of both as any prince in the world.

**DAUPHIN**

What a long night is this! I will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns. Ca, ha! he bounds from the earth, as if his

entrails were hairs; le cheval volant, the Pegasus,  
chez les narines de feu! When I bestride him, I  
soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air; the earth  
sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his  
hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.

## **ORLEANS**

He's of the colour of the nutmeg.

## **DAUPHIN**

And of the heat of the ginger. It is a beast for  
Perseus: he is pure air and fire; and the dull  
elements of earth and water never appear in him, but  
only in Patient stillness while his rider mounts  
him: he is indeed a horse; and all other jades you  
may call beasts.

## **Constable**

Indeed, my lord, it is a most absolute and excellent horse.

## **DAUPHIN**

It is the prince of palfreys; his neigh is like the  
bidding of a monarch and his countenance enforces homage.

## **ORLEANS**

No more, cousin.

## **DAUPHIN**

Nay, the man hath no wit that cannot, from the  
rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb, vary  
deserved praise on my palfrey: it is a theme as  
fluent as the sea: turn the sands into eloquent  
tongues, and my horse is argument for them all:  
'tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for  
a sovereign's sovereign to ride on; and for the  
world, familiar to us and unknown to lay apart

their particular functions and wonder at him. I  
once writ a sonnet in his praise and began thus:  
'Wonder of nature,'--

## **ORLEANS**

I have heard a sonnet begin so to one's mistress.

## **DAUPHIN**

Then did they imitate that which I composed to my  
courser, for my horse is my mistress.

## **ORLEANS**

Your mistress bears well.

## **DAUPHIN**

Me well; which is the prescript praise and  
perfection of a good and particular mistress.

## **Constable**

Nay, for methought yesterday your mistress shrewdly  
shook your back.

## **DAUPHIN**

So perhaps did yours.

## **Constable**

Mine was not bridled.

## **DAUPHIN**

O then belike she was old and gentle; and you rode,  
like a kern of Ireland, your French hose off, and in  
your straight strossers.



**Constable**

You have good judgment in horsemanship.

**DAUPHIN**

Be warned by me, then: they that ride so and ride not warily, fall into foul bogs. I had rather have my horse to my mistress.

**Constable**

I had as lief have my mistress a jade.

**DAUPHIN**

I tell thee, constable, my mistress wears his own hair.

**Constable**

I could make as true a boast as that, if I had a sow to my mistress.

**DAUPHIN**

'Le chien est retourne a son propre vomissement, et la truie lavee au borbier;' thou makest use of any thing.

**Constable**

Yet do I not use my horse for my mistress, or any such proverb so little kin to the purpose.

**RAMBURES**

My lord constable, the armour that I saw in your tent to-night, are those stars or suns upon it?

**Constable**

Stars, my lord.

**DAUPHIN**

Some of them will fall to-morrow, I hope.

**Constable**

And yet my sky shall not want.

**DAUPHIN**

That may be, for you bear a many superfluously, and 'twere more honour some were away.

**Constable**

Even as your horse bears your praises; who would trot as well, were some of your brags dismounted.

**DAUPHIN**

Would I were able to load him with his desert! Will it never be day? I will trot to-morrow a mile, and my way shall be paved with English faces.

**Constable**

I will not say so, for fear I should be faced out of my way: but I would it were morning; for I would fain be about the ears of the English.

**RAMBURES**

Who will go to hazard with me for twenty prisoners?

**Constable**

You must first go yourself to hazard, ere you have them.

**DAUPHIN**

'Tis midnight; I'll go arm myself.

*Exit*

**ORLEANS**

The Dauphin longs for morning.

**RAMBURES**

He longs to eat the English.

**Constable**

I think he will eat all he kills.

**ORLEANS**

By the white hand of my lady, he's a gallant prince.

**Constable**

Swear by her foot, that she may tread out the oath.

**ORLEANS**

He is simply the most active gentleman of France.

**Constable**

Doing is activity; and he will still be doing.

**ORLEANS**

He never did harm, that I heard of.

**Constable**

Nor will do none to-morrow: he will keep that good name still.

**ORLEANS**

I know him to be valiant.

**Constable**

I was told that by one that knows him better than you.

**ORLEANS**

What's he?

**Constable**

Marry, he told me so himself; and he said he cared not who knew it

**ORLEANS**

He needs not; it is no hidden virtue in him.

**Constable**

By my faith, sir, but it is; never any body saw it but his lackey: 'tis a hooded valour; and when it appears, it will bate.

**ORLEANS**

Ill will never said well.

**Constable**

I will cap that proverb with 'There is flattery in friendship.'

**ORLEANS**

And I will take up that with 'Give the devil his due.'

**Constable**

Well placed: there stands your friend for the devil: have at the very eye of that proverb with 'A pox of the devil.'

## **ORLEANS**

You are the better at proverbs, by how much 'A fool's bolt is soon shot.'

## **Constable**

You have shot over.

## **ORLEANS**

'Tis not the first time you were overshot.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

My lord high constable, the English lie within fifteen hundred paces of your tents.

## **Constable**

Who hath measured the ground?

## **Messenger**

The Lord Grandpre.

## **Constable**

A valiant and most expert gentleman. Would it were day! Alas, poor Harry of England! he longs not for the dawning as we do.

## **ORLEANS**

What a wretched and peevish fellow is this king of

England, to mope with his fat-brained followers so far out of his knowledge!

**Constable**

If the English had any apprehension, they would run away.

**ORLEANS**

That they lack; for if their heads had any intellectual armour, they could never wear such heavy head-pieces.

**RAMBURES**

That island of England breeds very valiant creatures; their mastiffs are of unmatchable courage.

**ORLEANS**

Foolish curs, that run winking into the mouth of a Russian bear and have their heads crushed like rotten apples! You may as well say, that's a valiant flea that dare eat his breakfast on the lip of a lion.

**Constable**

Just, just; and the men do sympathize with the mastiffs in robustious and rough coming on, leaving their wits with their wives: and then give them great meals of beef and iron and steel, they will eat like wolves and fight like devils.

**ORLEANS**

Ay, but these English are shrewdly out of beef.

**Constable**

Then shall we find to-morrow they have only stomachs to eat and none to fight. Now is it time to arm:

come, shall we about it?

## ORLEANS

It is now two o'clock: but, let me see, by ten  
We shall have each a hundred Englishmen.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 3, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Prologue

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

*Enter Chorus*

### Chorus

Now entertain conjecture of a time  
When creeping murmur and the poring dark  
Fills the wide vessel of the universe.  
From camp to camp through the foul womb of night  
The hum of either army stilly sounds,  
That the fixed sentinels almost receive  
The secret whispers of each other's watch:  
Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames  
Each battle sees the other's umber'd face;  
Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs  
Piercing the night's dull ear, and from the tents  
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,  
With busy hammers closing rivets up,  
Give dreadful note of preparation:  
The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,  
And the third hour of drowsy morning name.  
Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,  
The confident and over-lusty French  
Do the low-rated English play at dice;  
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night  
Who, like a foul and ugly witch, doth limp  
So tediously away. The poor condemned English,  
Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires  
Sit patiently and inly ruminate  
The morning's danger, and their gesture sad  
Investing lank-lean; cheeks and war-worn coats  
Presenteth them unto the gazing moon  
So many horrid ghosts. O now, who will behold  
The royal captain of this ruin'd band  
Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,  
Let him cry 'Praise and glory on his head!'



For forth he goes and visits all his host.  
Bids them good morrow with a modest smile  
And calls them brothers, friends and countrymen.  
Upon his royal face there is no note  
How dread an army hath enrouned him;  
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour  
Unto the weary and all-watched night,  
But freshly looks and over-bears attaint  
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty;  
That every wretch, pining and pale before,  
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks:  
A largess universal like the sun  
His liberal eye doth give to every one,  
Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all,  
Behold, as may unworthiness define,  
A little touch of Harry in the night.  
And so our scene must to the battle fly;  
Where--O for pity!--we shall much disgrace  
With four or five most vile and ragged foils,  
Right ill-disposed in brawl ridiculous,  
The name of Agincourt. Yet sit and see,  
Minding true things by what their mockeries be.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Prologue  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The English camp at Agincourt.

*Enter KING HENRY, BEDFORD, and GLOUCESTER*

### KING HENRY V

Gloucester, 'tis true that we are in great danger;  
The greater therefore should our courage be.  
Good morrow, brother Bedford. God Almighty!  
There is some soul of goodness in things evil,  
Would men observingly distil it out.  
For our bad neighbour makes us early stirrers,  
Which is both healthful and good husbandry:  
Besides, they are our outward consciences,  
And preachers to us all, admonishing  
That we should dress us fairly for our end.  
Thus may we gather honey from the weed,  
And make a moral of the devil himself.

*Enter ERPINGHAM*

Good morrow, old Sir Thomas Erpingham:  
A good soft pillow for that good white head  
Were better than a churlish turf of France.

### ERPINGHAM

Not so, my liege: this lodging likes me better,  
Since I may say 'Now lie I like a king.'

### KING HENRY V

'Tis good for men to love their present pains  
Upon example; so the spirit is eased:  
And when the mind is quicken'd, out of doubt,  
The organs, though defunct and dead before,

Break up their drowsy grave and newly move,  
With casted slough and fresh legerity.  
Lend me thy cloak, Sir Thomas. Brothers both,  
Commend me to the princes in our camp;  
Do my good morrow to them, and anon  
Desire them an to my pavilion.

## **GLOUCESTER**

We shall, my liege.

## **ERPINGHAM**

Shall I attend your grace?

## **KING HENRY V**

No, my good knight;  
Go with my brothers to my lords of England:  
I and my bosom must debate awhile,  
And then I would no other company.

## **ERPINGHAM**

The Lord in heaven bless thee, noble Harry!

*Exeunt all but KING HENRY*

## **KING HENRY V**

God-a-mercy, old heart! thou speak'st cheerfully.

*Enter PISTOL*

## **PISTOL**

Qui va la?

## **KING HENRY V**

A friend.

**PISTOL**

Discuss unto me; art thou officer?  
Or art thou base, common and popular?

**KING HENRY V**

I am a gentleman of a company.

**PISTOL**

Trail'st thou the puissant pike?

**KING HENRY V**

Even so. What are you?

**PISTOL**

As good a gentleman as the emperor.

**KING HENRY V**

Then you are a better than the king.

**PISTOL**

The king's a bawcock, and a heart of gold,  
A lad of life, an imp of fame;  
Of parents good, of fist most valiant.  
I kiss his dirty shoe, and from heart-string  
I love the lovely bully. What is thy name?

**KING HENRY V**

Harry le Roy.

**PISTOL**

Le Roy! a Cornish name: art thou of Cornish crew?

**KING HENRY V**

No, I am a Welshman.

**PISTOL**

Know'st thou Fluellen?

**KING HENRY V**

Yes.

**PISTOL**

Tell him, I'll knock his leek about his pate  
Upon Saint Davy's day.

**KING HENRY V**

Do not you wear your dagger in your cap that day,  
lest he knock that about yours.

**PISTOL**

Art thou his friend?

**KING HENRY V**

And his kinsman too.

**PISTOL**

The figo for thee, then!

**KING HENRY V**

I thank you: God be with you!

**PISTOL**

My name is Pistol call'd.

*Exit*

**KING HENRY V**

It sorts well with your fierceness.

*Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER*

**GOWER**

Captain Fluellen!

**FLUELLEN**

So! in the name of Jesu Christ, speak lower. It is the greatest admiration of the universal world, when the true and aunchient prerogatifes and laws of the wars is not kept: if you would take the pains but to examine the wars of Pompey the Great, you shall find, I warrant you, that there is no tiddle toddle nor pibble pabble in Pompey's camp; I warrant you, you shall find the ceremonies of the wars, and the cares of it, and the forms of it, and the sobriety of it, and the modesty of it, to be otherwise.

**GOWER**

Why, the enemy is loud; you hear him all night.

**FLUELLEN**

If the enemy is an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb, is it meet, think you, that we should also, look you, be an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb? in your own conscience, now?

**GOWER**

I will speak lower.

## **FLUELLEN**

I pray you and beseech you that you will.

*Exeunt GOWER and FLUELLEN*

## **KING HENRY V**

Though it appear a little out of fashion,  
There is much care and valour in this Welshman.

*Enter three soldiers, JOHN BATES, ALEXANDER COURT, and MICHAEL WILLIAMS*

## **COURT**

Brother John Bates, is not that the morning which  
breaks yonder?

## **BATES**

I think it be: but we have no great cause to desire  
the approach of day.

## **WILLIAMS**

We see yonder the beginning of the day, but I think  
we shall never see the end of it. Who goes there?

## **KING HENRY V**

A friend.

## **WILLIAMS**

Under what captain serve you?

## **KING HENRY V**

Under Sir Thomas Erpingham.

## **WILLIAMS**

A good old commander and a most kind gentleman: I pray you, what thinks he of our estate?

## **KING HENRY V**

Even as men wrecked upon a sand, that look to be washed off the next tide.

## **BATES**

He hath not told his thought to the king?

## **KING HENRY V**

No; nor it is not meet he should. For, though I speak it to you, I think the king is but a man, as I am: the violet smells to him as it doth to me: the element shows to him as it doth to me; all his senses have but human conditions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness he appears but a man; and though his affections are higher mounted than ours, yet, when they stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as ours are: yet, in reason, no man should possess him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army.

## **BATES**

He may show what outward courage he will; but I believe, as cold a night as 'tis, he could wish himself in Thames up to the neck; and so I would he were, and I by him, at all adventures, so we were quit here.

## **KING HENRY V**

By my troth, I will speak my conscience of the king: I think he would not wish himself any where but where he is.



## **BATES**

Then I would he were here alone; so should he be sure to be ransomed, and a many poor men's lives saved.

## **KING HENRY V**

I dare say you love him not so ill, to wish him here alone, howsoever you speak this to feel other men's minds: methinks I could not die any where so contented as in the king's company; his cause being just and his quarrel honourable.

## **WILLIAMS**

That's more than we know.

## **BATES**

Ay, or more than we should seek after; for we know enough, if we know we are the king's subjects: if his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us.

## **WILLIAMS**

But if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in battle, shall join together at the latter day and cry all 'We died at such a place;' some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afeard there are few die well that die in a battle; for how can they charitably dispose of any thing, when blood is their argument? Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black matter for the king that led them to it; whom to disobey were against all proportion of subjection.

## KING HENRY V

So, if a son that is by his father sent about merchandise do sinfully miscarry upon the sea, the imputation of his wickedness by your rule, should be imposed upon his father that sent him: or if a servant, under his master's command transporting a sum of money, be assailed by robbers and die in many irreconciled iniquities, you may call the business of the master the author of the servant's damnation: but this is not so: the king is not bound to answer the particular endings of his soldiers, the father of his son, nor the master of his servant; for they purpose not their death, when they purpose their services. Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the arbitrement of swords, can try it out with all unspotted soldiers: some peradventure have on them the guilt of premeditated and contrived murder; some, of beguiling virgins with the broken seals of perjury; some, making the wars their bulwark, that have before gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery. Now, if these men have defeated the law and outrun native punishment, though they can outstrip men, they have no wings to fly from God: war is his beadle, war is vengeance; so that here men are punished for before-breach of the king's laws in now the king's quarrel: where they feared the death, they have borne life away; and where they would be safe, they perish: then if they die unprovided, no more is the king guilty of their damnation than he was before guilty of those impieties for the which they are now visited. Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience: and dying so, death is to him advantage; or not dying, the time was blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gained: and in him that escapes, it were not sin to think that, making God so free an offer, He let him outlive that day to see His greatness and to teach others how they should prepare.

## **WILLIAMS**

'Tis certain, every man that dies ill, the ill upon his own head, the king is not to answer it.

## **BATES**

But I do not desire he should answer for me; and yet I determine to fight lustily for him.

## **KING HENRY V**

I myself heard the king say he would not be ransomed.

## **WILLIAMS**

Ay, he said so, to make us fight cheerfully: but when our throats are cut, he may be ransomed, and we ne'er the wiser.

## **KING HENRY V**

If I live to see it, I will never trust his word after.

## **WILLIAMS**

You pay him then. That's a perilous shot out of an elder-gun, that a poor and private displeasure can do against a monarch! you may as well go about to turn the sun to ice with fanning in his face with a peacock's feather. You'll never trust his word after! come, 'tis a foolish saying.

## **KING HENRY V**

Your reproof is something too round: I should be angry with you, if the time were convenient.

## **WILLIAMS**

Let it be a quarrel between us, if you live.

**KING HENRY V**

I embrace it.

**WILLIAMS**

How shall I know thee again?

**KING HENRY V**

Give me any gage of thine, and I will wear it in my bonnet: then, if ever thou darest acknowledge it, I will make it my quarrel.

**WILLIAMS**

Here's my glove: give me another of thine.

**KING HENRY V**

There.

**WILLIAMS**

This will I also wear in my cap: if ever thou come to me and say, after to-morrow, 'This is my glove,' by this hand, I will take thee a box on the ear.

**KING HENRY V**

If ever I live to see it, I will challenge it.

**WILLIAMS**

Thou darest as well be hanged.

**KING HENRY V**

Well. I will do it, though I take thee in the

king's company.

## **WILLIAMS**

Keep thy word: fare thee well.

## **BATES**

Be friends, you English fools, be friends: we have  
French quarrels enow, if you could tell how to reckon.

## **KING HENRY V**

Indeed, the French may lay twenty French crowns to  
one, they will beat us; for they bear them on their  
shoulders: but it is no English treason to cut  
French crowns, and to-morrow the king himself will  
be a clipper.

*Exeunt soldiers*

Upon the king! let us our lives, our souls,  
Our debts, our careful wives,  
Our children and our sins lay on the king!  
We must bear all. O hard condition,  
Twin-born with greatness, subject to the breath  
Of every fool, whose sense no more can feel  
But his own wringing! What infinite heart's-ease  
Must kings neglect, that private men enjoy!  
And what have kings, that privates have not too,  
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?  
And what art thou, thou idle ceremony?  
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more  
Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?  
What are thy rents? what are thy comings in?  
O ceremony, show me but thy worth!  
What is thy soul of adoration?  
Art thou aught else but place, degree and form,  
Creating awe and fear in other men?  
Wherein thou art less happy being fear'd  
Than they in fearing.  
What drink'st thou oft, instead of homage sweet,

But poison'd flattery? O, be sick, great greatness,  
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!  
Think'st thou the fiery fever will go out  
With titles blown from adulation?  
Will it give place to flexure and low bending?  
Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,  
Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,  
That play'st so subtly with a king's repose;  
I am a king that find thee, and I know  
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre and the ball,  
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,  
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,  
The farced title running 'fore the king,  
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp  
That beats upon the high shore of this world,  
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,  
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,  
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,  
Who with a body fill'd and vacant mind  
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread;  
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell,  
But, like a lackey, from the rise to set  
Sweats in the eye of Phoebus and all night  
Sleeps in Elysium; next day after dawn,  
Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse,  
And follows so the ever-running year,  
With profitable labour, to his grave:  
And, but for ceremony, such a wretch,  
Winding up days with toil and nights with sleep,  
Had the fore-hand and vantage of a king.  
The slave, a member of the country's peace,  
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots  
What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace,  
Whose hours the peasant best advantages.

*Enter ERPINGHAM*

## **ERPINGHAM**

My lord, your nobles, jealous of your absence,  
Seek through your camp to find you.

## **KING HENRY V**

Good old knight,  
Collect them all together at my tent:  
I'll be before thee.

## **ERPINGHAM**

I shall do't, my lord.

*Exit*

## **KING HENRY V**

O God of battles! steel my soldiers' hearts;  
Possess them not with fear; take from them now  
The sense of reckoning, if the opposed numbers  
Pluck their hearts from them. Not to-day, O Lord,  
O, not to-day, think not upon the fault  
My father made in compassing the crown!  
I Richard's body have interred anew;  
And on it have bestow'd more contrite tears  
Than from it issued forced drops of blood:  
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,  
Who twice a-day their wither'd hands hold up  
Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built  
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests  
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do;  
Though all that I can do is nothing worth,  
Since that my penitence comes after all,  
Imploring pardon.

*Enter GLOUCESTER*

## **GLOUCESTER**

My liege!

## **KING HENRY V**

My brother Gloucester's voice? Ay;  
I know thy errand, I will go with thee:  
The day, my friends and all things stay for me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The French camp.

*Enter the DAUPHIN, ORLEANS, RAMBURES, and others*

**ORLEANS**

The sun doth gild our armour; up, my lords!

**DAUPHIN**

Montez A cheval! My horse! varlet! laquais! ha!

**ORLEANS**

O brave spirit!

**DAUPHIN**

Via! les eaux et la terre.

**ORLEANS**

Rien puis? L'air et la feu.

**DAUPHIN**

Ciel, cousin Orleans.

*Enter Constable*

Now, my lord constable!

**Constable**

Hark, how our steeds for present service neigh!

## **DAUPHIN**

Mount them, and make incision in their hides,  
That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,  
And dout them with superfluous courage, ha!

## **RAMBURES**

What, will you have them weep our horses' blood?  
How shall we, then, behold their natural tears?

*Enter Messenger*

## **Messenger**

The English are embattled, you French peers.

## **Constable**

To horse, you gallant princes! straight to horse!  
Do but behold yon poor and starved band,  
And your fair show shall suck away their souls,  
Leaving them but the shales and husks of men.  
There is not work enough for all our hands;  
Scarce blood enough in all their sickly veins  
To give each naked curtle-axe a stain,  
That our French gallants shall to-day draw out,  
And sheathe for lack of sport: let us but blow on them,  
The vapour of our valour will o'erturn them.  
'Tis positive 'gainst all exceptions, lords,  
That our superfluous lackeys and our peasants,  
Who in unnecessary action swarm  
About our squares of battle, were enow  
To purge this field of such a hilding foe,  
Though we upon this mountain's basis by  
Took stand for idle speculation:  
But that our honours must not. What's to say?  
A very little little let us do.  
And all is done. Then let the trumpets sound  
The tucket sonance and the note to mount;  
For our approach shall so much dare the field

That England shall couch down in fear and yield.

*Enter GRANDPRE*

## **GRANDPRE**

Why do you stay so long, my lords of France?  
Yon island carrions, desperate of their bones,  
Ill-favouredly become the morning field:  
Their ragged curtains poorly are let loose,  
And our air shakes them passing scornfully:  
Big Mars seems bankrupt in their beggar'd host  
And faintly through a rusty beaver peeps:  
The horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,  
With torch-staves in their hand; and their poor jades  
Lob down their heads, dropping the hides and hips,  
The gum down-roping from their pale-dead eyes  
And in their pale dull mouths the gimmel bit  
Lies foul with chew'd grass, still and motionless;  
And their executors, the knavish crows,  
Fly o'er them, all impatient for their hour.  
Description cannot suit itself in words  
To demonstrate the life of such a battle  
In life so lifeless as it shows itself.

## **Constable**

They have said their prayers, and they stay for death.

## **DAUPHIN**

Shall we go send them dinners and fresh suits  
And give their fasting horses provender,  
And after fight with them?

## **Constable**

I stay but for my guidon: to the field!  
I will the banner from a trumpet take,  
And use it for my haste. Come, come, away!  
The sun is high, and we outwear the day.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The English camp.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, ERPINGHAM, with all his host:  
SALISBURY and WESTMORELAND*

### GLOUCESTER

Where is the king?

### BEDFORD

The king himself is rode to view their battle.

### WESTMORELAND

Of fighting men they have full three score thousand.

### EXETER

There's five to one; besides, they all are fresh.

### SALISBURY

God's arm strike with us! 'tis a fearful odds.  
God be wi' you, princes all; I'll to my charge:  
If we no more meet till we meet in heaven,  
Then, joyfully, my noble Lord of Bedford,  
My dear Lord Gloucester, and my good Lord Exeter,  
And my kind kinsman, warriors all, adieu!

### BEDFORD

Farewell, good Salisbury; and good luck go with thee!

### EXETER

Farewell, kind lord; fight valiantly to-day:  
And yet I do thee wrong to mind thee of it,  
For thou art framed of the firm truth of valour.

*Exit SALISBURY*

## **BEDFORD**

He is full of valour as of kindness;  
Princely in both.

*Enter the KING*

## **WESTMORELAND**

O that we now had here  
But one ten thousand of those men in England  
That do no work to-day!

## **KING HENRY V**

What's he that wishes so?  
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:  
If we are mark'd to die, we are enow  
To do our country loss; and if to live,  
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.  
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.  
By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,  
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;  
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;  
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:  
But if it be a sin to covet honour,  
I am the most offending soul alive.  
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:  
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honour  
As one man more, methinks, would share from me  
For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!  
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,  
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,  
Let him depart; his passport shall be made  
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:  
We would not die in that man's company

That fears his fellowship to die with us.  
This day is called the feast of Crispian:  
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,  
Will stand a tip-toe when the day is named,  
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.  
He that shall live this day, and see old age,  
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,  
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'  
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars.  
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'  
Old men forget: yet all shall be forgot,  
But he'll remember with advantages  
What feats he did that day: then shall our names  
Familiar in his mouth as household words  
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,  
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,  
Be in their flowing cups freshly remember'd.  
This story shall the good man teach his son;  
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,  
From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remember'd;  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition:  
And gentlemen in England now a-bed  
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,  
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

*Re-enter SALISBURY*

## **SALISBURY**

My sovereign lord, bestow yourself with speed:  
The French are bravely in their battles set,  
And will with all expedience charge on us.

## **KING HENRY V**

All things are ready, if our minds be so.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Perish the man whose mind is backward now!

## **KING HENRY V**

Thou dost not wish more help from England, coz?

## **WESTMORELAND**

God's will! my liege, would you and I alone,  
Without more help, could fight this royal battle!

## **KING HENRY V**

Why, now thou hast unwish'd five thousand men;  
Which likes me better than to wish us one.  
You know your places: God be with you all!

*Tucket. Enter MONTJOY*

## **MONTJOY**

Once more I come to know of thee, King Harry,  
If for thy ransom thou wilt now compound,  
Before thy most assured overthrow:  
For certainly thou art so near the gulf,  
Thou needs must be englutted. Besides, in mercy,  
The constable desires thee thou wilt mind  
Thy followers of repentance; that their souls  
May make a peaceful and a sweet retire  
From off these fields, where, wretches, their poor bodies  
Must lie and fester.

## **KING HENRY V**

Who hath sent thee now?

## **MONTJOY**

The Constable of France.



## **KING HENRY V**

I pray thee, bear my former answer back:  
Bid them achieve me and then sell my bones.  
Good God! why should they mock poor fellows thus?  
The man that once did sell the lion's skin  
While the beast lived, was killed with hunting him.  
A many of our bodies shall no doubt  
Find native graves; upon the which, I trust,  
Shall witness live in brass of this day's work:  
And those that leave their valiant bones in France,  
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,  
They shall be famed; for there the sun shall greet them,  
And draw their honours reeking up to heaven;  
Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,  
The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.  
Mark then abounding valour in our English,  
That being dead, like to the bullet's grazing,  
Break out into a second course of mischief,  
Killing in relapse of mortality.  
Let me speak proudly: tell the constable  
We are but warriors for the working-day;  
Our gayness and our gilt are all besmirch'd  
With rainy marching in the painful field;  
There's not a piece of feather in our host--  
Good argument, I hope, we will not fly--  
And time hath worn us into slovenry:  
But, by the mass, our hearts are in the trim;  
And my poor soldiers tell me, yet ere night  
They'll be in fresher robes, or they will pluck  
The gay new coats o'er the French soldiers' heads  
And turn them out of service. If they do this,--  
As, if God please, they shall,--my ransom then  
Will soon be levied. Herald, save thou thy labour;  
Come thou no more for ransom, gentle herald:  
They shall have none, I swear, but these my joints;  
Which if they have as I will leave 'em them,  
Shall yield them little, tell the constable.

## **MONTJOY**

I shall, King Harry. And so fare thee well:

Thou never shalt hear herald any more.

*Exit*

**KING HENRY V**

I fear thou'lt once more come again for ransom.

*Enter YORK*

**YORK**

My lord, most humbly on my knee I beg  
The leading of the vaward.

**KING HENRY V**

Take it, brave York. Now, soldiers, march away:  
And how thou pleasest, God, dispose the day!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The field of battle.

*Alarum. Excursions. Enter PISTOL, French Soldier, and Boy*

**PISTOL**

Yield, cur!

**French Soldier**

Je pense que vous etes gentilhomme de bonne qualite.

**PISTOL**

Qualitie calmie custure me! Art thou a gentleman?  
what is thy name? discuss.

**French Soldier**

O Seigneur Dieu!

**PISTOL**

O, Signieur Dew should be a gentleman:  
Perpend my words, O Signieur Dew, and mark;  
O Signieur Dew, thou diest on point of fox,  
Except, O signieur, thou do give to me  
Egregious ransom.

**French Soldier**

O, prenez misericorde! ayez pitie de moi!

**PISTOL**

Moy shall not serve; I will have forty moys;  
Or I will fetch thy rim out at thy throat  
In drops of crimson blood.

**French Soldier**

Est-il impossible d'echapper la force de ton bras?

**PISTOL**

Brass, cur!  
Thou damned and luxurious mountain goat,  
Offer'st me brass?

**French Soldier**

O pardonnez moi!

**PISTOL**

Say'st thou me so? is that a ton of moys?  
Come hither, boy: ask me this slave in French  
What is his name.

**Boy**

Ecoutez: comment etes-vous appele?

**French Soldier**

Monsieur le Fer.

**Boy**

He says his name is Master Fer.

**PISTOL**

Master Fer! I'll fer him, and firk him, and ferret  
him: discuss the same in French unto him.

**Boy**

I do not know the French for fer, and ferret, and firk.

**PISTOL**

Bid him prepare; for I will cut his throat.

**French Soldier**

Que dit-il, monsieur?

**Boy**

Il me commande de vous dire que vous faites vous  
pret; car ce soldat ici est dispose tout a cette  
heure de couper votre gorge.

**PISTOL**

Owy, cuppele gorge, permafoy,  
Peasant, unless thou give me crowns, brave crowns;  
Or mangled shalt thou be by this my sword.

**French Soldier**

O, je vous supplie, pour l'amour de Dieu, me  
pardonner! Je suis gentilhomme de bonne maison:  
gardez ma vie, et je vous donnerai deux cents ecus.

**PISTOL**

What are his words?

**Boy**

He prays you to save his life: he is a gentleman of  
a good house; and for his ransom he will give you  
two hundred crowns.

**PISTOL**

Tell him my fury shall abate, and I the crowns will take.

**French Soldier**

Petit monsieur, que dit-il?

**Boy**

Encore qu'il est contre son jurement de pardonner  
aucun prisonnier, néanmoins, pour les ecus que vous  
l'avez promis, il est content de vous donner la  
liberte, le franchisement.

**French Soldier**

Sur mes genoux je vous donne mille remercimens; et  
je m'estime heureux que je suis tombe entre les  
mains d'un chevalier, je pense, le plus brave,  
vaillant, et tres distingue seigneur d'Angleterre.

**PISTOL**

Expound unto me, boy.

**Boy**

He gives you, upon his knees, a thousand thanks; and  
he esteems himself happy that he hath fallen into  
the hands of one, as he thinks, the most brave,  
valorous, and thrice-worthy signieur of England.

**PISTOL**

As I suck blood, I will some mercy show.  
Follow me!

**Boy**

Suivez-vous le grand capitaine.

*Exeunt PISTOL, and French Soldier*

I did never know so full a voice issue from so empty a heart: but the saying is true 'The empty vessel makes the greatest sound.' Bardolph and Nym had ten times more valour than this roaring devil i' the old play, that every one may pare his nails with a wooden dagger; and they are both hanged; and so would this be, if he durst steal any thing adventurously. I must stay with the lackeys, with the luggage of our camp: the French might have a good prey of us, if he knew of it; for there is none to guard it but boys.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the field.

*Enter Constable, ORLEANS, BOURBON, DAUPHIN, and RAMBURES*

**Constable**

O diable!

**ORLEANS**

O seigneur! le jour est perdu, tout est perdu!

**DAUPHIN**

Mort de ma vie! all is confounded, all!  
Reproach and everlasting shame  
Sits mocking in our plumes. O merchant fortune!  
Do not run away.

*A short alarum*

**Constable**

Why, all our ranks are broke.

**DAUPHIN**

O perdurable shame! let's stab ourselves.  
Be these the wretches that we play'd at dice for?

**ORLEANS**

Is this the king we sent to for his ransom?

**BOURBON**



Shame and eternal shame, nothing but shame!  
Let us die in honour: once more back again;  
And he that will not follow Bourbon now,  
Let him go hence, and with his cap in hand,  
Like a base pander, hold the chamber-door  
Whilst by a slave, no gentler than my dog,  
His fairest daughter is contaminated.

### **Constable**

Disorder, that hath spoil'd us, friend us now!  
Let us on heaps go offer up our lives.

### **ORLEANS**

We are enow yet living in the field  
To smother up the English in our throngs,  
If any order might be thought upon.

### **BOURBON**

The devil take order now! I'll to the throng:  
Let life be short; else shame will be too long.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Another part of the field.

*Alarums. Enter KING HENRY and forces, EXETER, and others*

### KING HENRY V

Well have we done, thrice valiant countrymen:  
But all's not done; yet keep the French the field.

### EXETER

The Duke of York commends him to your majesty.

### KING HENRY V

Lives he, good uncle? thrice within this hour  
I saw him down; thrice up again and fighting;  
From helmet to the spur all blood he was.

### EXETER

In which array, brave soldier, doth he lie,  
Larding the plain; and by his bloody side,  
Yoke-fellow to his honour-owing wounds,  
The noble Earl of Suffolk also lies.  
Suffolk first died: and York, all haggled over,  
Comes to him, where in gore he lay insteep'd,  
And takes him by the beard; kisses the gashes  
That bloodily did spawn upon his face;  
And cries aloud 'Tarry, dear cousin Suffolk!  
My soul shall thine keep company to heaven;  
Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly abreast,  
As in this glorious and well-foughten field  
We kept together in our chivalry!  
Upon these words I came and cheer'd him up:  
He smiled me in the face, raught me his hand,

And, with a feeble gripe, says 'Dear my lord,  
Commend my service to me sovereign.'  
So did he turn and over Suffolk's neck  
He threw his wounded arm and kiss'd his lips;  
And so espoused to death, with blood he seal'd  
A testament of noble-ending love.  
The pretty and sweet manner of it forced  
Those waters from me which I would have stopp'd;  
But I had not so much of man in me,  
And all my mother came into mine eyes  
And gave me up to tears.

## **KING HENRY V**

I blame you not;  
For, hearing this, I must perforce compound  
With mistful eyes, or they will issue too.

*Alarum*

But, hark! what new alarum is this same?  
The French have reinforced their scatter'd men:  
Then every soldier kill his prisoners:  
Give the word through.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Another part of the field.

*Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER*

**FLUELLEN**

Kill the poys and the luggage! 'tis expressly against the law of arms: 'tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offer't; in your conscience, now, is it not?

**GOWER**

'Tis certain there's not a boy left alive; and the cowardly rascals that ran from the battle ha' done this slaughter: besides, they have burned and carried away all that was in the king's tent; wherefore the king, most worthily, hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat. O, 'tis a gallant king!

**FLUELLEN**

Ay, he was porn at Monmouth, Captain Gower. What call you the town's name where Alexander the Pig was born!

**GOWER**

Alexander the Great.

**FLUELLEN**

Why, I pray you, is not pig great? the pig, or the great, or the mighty, or the huge, or the magnanimous, are all one reckonings, save the phrase is a little variations.

## **GOWER**

I think Alexander the Great was born in Macedon; his father was called Philip of Macedon, as I take it.

## **FLUELLEN**

I think it is in Macedon where Alexander is born. I tell you, captain, if you look in the maps of the world, I warrant you shall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth: it is called Wye at Monmouth; but it is out of my prains what is the name of the other river; but 'tis all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both. If you mark Alexander's life well, Harry of Monmouth's life is come after it indifferent well; for there is figures in all things. Alexander, God knows, and you know, in his rages, and his furies, and his wraths, and his cholers, and his moods, and his displeasures, and his indignations, and also being a little intoxicates in his prains, did, in his ales and his angers, look you, kill his best friend, Cleitus.

## **GOWER**

Our king is not like him in that: he never killed any of his friends.

## **FLUELLEN**

It is not well done, mark you now take the tales out of my mouth, ere it is made and finished. I speak but in the figures and comparisons of it: as Alexander killed his friend Cleitus, being in his ales and his cups; so also Harry Monmouth, being in his right wits and his good judgments, turned away the fat knight with the great belly-doublet: he was full of jests, and gipes, and knaveries, and

mocks; I have forgot his name.

**GOWER**

Sir John Falstaff.

**FLUELLEN**

That is he: I'll tell you there is good men porn at Monmouth.

**GOWER**

Here comes his majesty.

*Alarum. Enter KING HENRY, and forces; WARWICK, GLOUCESTER, EXETER, and others*

**KING HENRY V**

I was not angry since I came to France  
Until this instant. Take a trumpet, herald;  
Ride thou unto the horsemen on yon hill:  
If they will fight with us, bid them come down,  
Or void the field; they do offend our sight:  
If they'll do neither, we will come to them,  
And make them skirr away, as swift as stones  
Enforced from the old Assyrian slings:  
Besides, we'll cut the throats of those we have,  
And not a man of them that we shall take  
Shall taste our mercy. Go and tell them so.

*Enter MONTJOY*

**EXETER**

Here comes the herald of the French, my liege.

**GLOUCESTER**

His eyes are humbler than they used to be.

## **KING HENRY V**

How now! what means this, herald? know'st thou not  
That I have fined these bones of mine for ransom?  
Comest thou again for ransom?

## **MONTJOY**

No, great king:  
I come to thee for charitable licence,  
That we may wander o'er this bloody field  
To look our dead, and then to bury them;  
To sort our nobles from our common men.  
For many of our princes--woe the while!--  
Lie drown'd and soak'd in mercenary blood;  
So do our vulgar drench their peasant limbs  
In blood of princes; and their wounded steeds  
Fret fetlock deep in gore and with wild rage  
Yerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,  
Killing them twice. O, give us leave, great king,  
To view the field in safety and dispose  
Of their dead bodies!

## **KING HENRY V**

I tell thee truly, herald,  
I know not if the day be ours or no;  
For yet a many of your horsemen peer  
And gallop o'er the field.

## **MONTJOY**

The day is yours.

## **KING HENRY V**

Praised be God, and not our strength, for it!  
What is this castle call'd that stands hard by?

## **MONTJOY**

They call it Agincourt.

**KING HENRY V**

Then call we this the field of Agincourt,  
Fought on the day of Crispin Crispianus.

**FLUELLEN**

Your grandfather of famous memory, an't please your  
majesty, and your great-uncle Edward the Plack  
Prince of Wales, as I have read in the chronicles,  
fought a most prave pattle here in France.

**KING HENRY V**

They did, Fluellen.

**FLUELLEN**

Your majesty says very true: if your majesties is  
remembered of it, the Welshmen did good service in a  
garden where leeks did grow, wearing leeks in their  
Monmouth caps; which, your majesty know, to this  
hour is an honourable badge of the service; and I do  
believe your majesty takes no scorn to wear the leek  
upon Saint Tavy's day.

**KING HENRY V**

I wear it for a memorable honour;  
For I am Welsh, you know, good countryman.

**FLUELLEN**

All the water in Wye cannot wash your majesty's  
Welsh plood out of your pody, I can tell you that:  
God pless it and preserve it, as long as it pleases  
his grace, and his majesty too!

**KING HENRY V**



Thanks, good my countryman.

## **FLUELLEN**

By Jeshu, I am your majesty's countryman, I care not  
who know it; I will confess it to all the 'orld: I  
need not to be ashamed of your majesty, praised be  
God, so long as your majesty is an honest man.

## **KING HENRY V**

God keep me so! Our heralds go with him:  
Bring me just notice of the numbers dead  
On both our parts. Call yonder fellow hither.

*Points to WILLIAMS. Exeunt Heralds with Montjoy*

## **EXETER**

Soldier, you must come to the king.

## **KING HENRY V**

Soldier, why wearest thou that glove in thy cap?

## **WILLIAMS**

An't please your majesty, 'tis the gage of one that  
I should fight withal, if he be alive.

## **KING HENRY V**

An Englishman?

## **WILLIAMS**

An't please your majesty, a rascal that swaggered  
with me last night; who, if alive and ever dare to  
challenge this glove, I have sworn to take him a box  
o' th' ear: or if I can see my glove in his cap,  
which he swore, as he was a soldier, he would wear

if alive, I will strike it out soundly.

**KING HENRY V**

What think you, Captain Fluellen? is it fit this soldier keep his oath?

**FLUELLEN**

He is a craven and a villain else, an't please your majesty, in my conscience.

**KING HENRY V**

It may be his enemy is a gentleman of great sort, quite from the answer of his degree.

**FLUELLEN**

Though he be as good a gentleman as the devil is, as Lucifer and Belzebub himself, it is necessary, look your grace, that he keep his vow and his oath: if he be perjured, see you now, his reputation is as arrant a villain and a Jacksauce, as ever his black shoe trod upon God's ground and his earth, in my conscience, la!

**KING HENRY V**

Then keep thy vow, sirrah, when thou meetest the fellow.

**WILLIAMS**

So I will, my liege, as I live.

**KING HENRY V**

Who servest thou under?

**WILLIAMS**

Under Captain Gower, my liege.

**FLUELLEN**

Gower is a good captain, and is good knowledge and literated in the wars.

**KING HENRY V**

Call him hither to me, soldier.

**WILLIAMS**

I will, my liege.

*Exit*

**KING HENRY V**

Here, Fluellen; wear thou this favour for me and stick it in thy cap: when Alencon and myself were down together, I plucked this glove from his helm: if any man challenge this, he is a friend to Alencon, and an enemy to our person; if thou encounter any such, apprehend him, an thou dost me love.

**FLUELLEN**

Your grace doo's me as great honours as can be desired in the hearts of his subjects: I would fain see the man, that has but two legs, that shall find himself aggrieved at this glove; that is all; but I would fain see it once, an please God of his grace that I might see.

**KING HENRY V**

Knowest thou Gower?

**FLUELLEN**

He is my dear friend, an please you.

**KING HENRY V**

Pray thee, go seek him, and bring him to my tent.

**FLUELLEN**

I will fetch him.

*Exit*

**KING HENRY V**

My Lord of Warwick, and my brother Gloucester,  
Follow Fluellen closely at the heels:  
The glove which I have given him for a favour  
May haply purchase him a box o' th' ear;  
It is the soldier's; I by bargain should  
Wear it myself. Follow, good cousin Warwick:  
If that the soldier strike him, as I judge  
By his blunt bearing he will keep his word,  
Some sudden mischief may arise of it;  
For I do know Fluellen valiant  
And, touched with choler, hot as gunpowder,  
And quickly will return an injury:  
Follow and see there be no harm between them.  
Go you with me, uncle of Exeter.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. Before KING HENRY'S pavilion.

*Enter GOWER and WILLIAMS*

**WILLIAMS**

I warrant it is to knight you, captain.

*Enter FLUELLEN*

**FLUELLEN**

God's will and his pleasure, captain, I beseech you now, come apace to the king: there is more good toward you peradventure than is in your knowledge to dream of.

**WILLIAMS**

Sir, know you this glove?

**FLUELLEN**

Know the glove! I know the glove is glove.

**WILLIAMS**

I know this; and thus I challenge it.

*Strikes him*

**FLUELLEN**

'Sblood! an arrant traitor as any is in the universal world, or in France, or in England!

**GOWER**

How now, sir! you villain!

**WILLIAMS**

Do you think I'll be forsworn?

**FLUELLEN**

Stand away, Captain Gower; I will give treason his payment into ploughs, I warrant you.

**WILLIAMS**

I am no traitor.

**FLUELLEN**

That's a lie in thy throat. I charge you in his majesty's name, apprehend him: he's a friend of the Duke Alencon's.

*Enter WARWICK and GLOUCESTER*

**WARWICK**

How now, how now! what's the matter?

**FLUELLEN**

My Lord of Warwick, here is--praised be God for it! --a most contagious treason come to light, look you, as you shall desire in a summer's day. Here is his majesty.

*Enter KING HENRY and EXETER*

**KING HENRY V**

How now! what's the matter?

## **FLUELLEN**

My liege, here is a villain and a traitor, that,  
look your grace, has struck the glove which your  
majesty is take out of the helmet of Alencon.

## **WILLIAMS**

My liege, this was my glove; here is the fellow of  
it; and he that I gave it to in change promised to  
wear it in his cap: I promised to strike him, if he  
did: I met this man with my glove in his cap, and I  
have been as good as my word.

## **FLUELLEN**

Your majesty hear now, saving your majesty's  
manhood, what an arrant, rascally, beggarly, lousy  
knave it is: I hope your majesty is pear me  
testimony and witness, and will avouchment, that  
this is the glove of Alencon, that your majesty is  
give me; in your conscience, now?

## **KING HENRY V**

Give me thy glove, soldier: look, here is the  
fellow of it.  
'Twas I, indeed, thou promised'st to strike;  
And thou hast given me most bitter terms.

## **FLUELLEN**

An please your majesty, let his neck answer for it,  
if there is any martial law in the world.

## **KING HENRY V**

How canst thou make me satisfaction?

## **WILLIAMS**

All offences, my lord, come from the heart: never  
came any from mine that might offend your majesty.

**KING HENRY V**

It was ourself thou didst abuse.

**WILLIAMS**

Your majesty came not like yourself: you appeared to  
me but as a common man; witness the night, your  
garments, your lowliness; and what your highness  
suffered under that shape, I beseech you take it for  
your own fault and not mine: for had you been as I  
took you for, I made no offence; therefore, I  
beseech your highness, pardon me.

**KING HENRY V**

Here, uncle Exeter, fill this glove with crowns,  
And give it to this fellow. Keep it, fellow;  
And wear it for an honour in thy cap  
Till I do challenge it. Give him the crowns:  
And, captain, you must needs be friends with him.

**FLUELLEN**

By this day and this light, the fellow has mettle  
enough in his belly. Hold, there is twelve pence  
for you; and I pray you to serve Got, and keep you  
out of prawls, and prabbles' and quarrels, and  
dissensions, and, I warrant you, it is the better for you.

**WILLIAMS**

I will none of your money.

**FLUELLEN**

It is with a good will; I can tell you, it will  
serve you to mend your shoes: come, wherefore should



you be so pashful? your shoes is not so good: 'tis  
a good silling, I warrant you, or I will change it.

*Enter an English Herald*

**KING HENRY V**

Now, herald, are the dead number'd?

**Herald**

Here is the number of the slaughter'd French.

**KING HENRY V**

What prisoners of good sort are taken, uncle?

**EXETER**

Charles Duke of Orleans, nephew to the king;  
John Duke of Bourbon, and Lord Bouciqualt:  
Of other lords and barons, knights and squires,  
Full fifteen hundred, besides common men.

**KING HENRY V**

This note doth tell me of ten thousand French  
That in the field lie slain: of princes, in this number,  
And nobles bearing banners, there lie dead  
One hundred twenty six: added to these,  
Of knights, esquires, and gallant gentlemen,  
Eight thousand and four hundred; of the which,  
Five hundred were but yesterday dubb'd knights:  
So that, in these ten thousand they have lost,  
There are but sixteen hundred mercenaries;  
The rest are princes, barons, lords, knights, squires,  
And gentlemen of blood and quality.  
The names of those their nobles that lie dead:  
Charles Delabreth, high constable of France;  
Jaques of Chatillon, admiral of France;  
The master of the cross-bows, Lord Rambures;  
Great Master of France, the brave Sir Guichard Dolphin,

John Duke of Alencon, Anthony Duke of Brabant,  
The brother of the Duke of Burgundy,  
And Edward Duke of Bar: of lusty earls,  
Grandpre and Roussi, Fauconberg and Foix,  
Beaumont and Marle, Vaudemont and Lestrals.  
Here was a royal fellowship of death!  
Where is the number of our English dead?

*Herald shews him another paper*

Edward the Duke of York, the Earl of Suffolk,  
Sir Richard Ketly, Davy Gam, esquire:  
None else of name; and of all other men  
But five and twenty. O God, thy arm was here;  
And not to us, but to thy arm alone,  
Ascribe we all! When, without stratagem,  
But in plain shock and even play of battle,  
Was ever known so great and little loss  
On one part and on the other? Take it, God,  
For it is none but thine!

## **EXETER**

'Tis wonderful!

## **KING HENRY V**

Come, go we in procession to the village.  
And be it death proclaimed through our host  
To boast of this or take the praise from God  
Which is his only.

## **FLUELLEN**

Is it not lawful, an please your majesty, to tell  
how many is killed?

## **KING HENRY V**

Yes, captain; but with this acknowledgement,  
That God fought for us.

## FLUELLEN

Yes, my conscience, he did us great good.

## KING HENRY V

Do we all holy rites;  
Let there be sung 'Non nobis' and 'Te Deum';  
The dead with charity enclosed in clay:  
And then to Calais; and to England then:  
Where ne'er from France arrived more happy men.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 4, Scene 8  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 5, Prologue

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

*Enter Chorus*

### Chorus

Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story,  
That I may prompt them: and of such as have,  
I humbly pray them to admit the excuse  
Of time, of numbers and due course of things,  
Which cannot in their huge and proper life  
Be here presented. Now we bear the king  
Toward Calais: grant him there; there seen,  
Heave him away upon your winged thoughts  
Athwart the sea. Behold, the English beach  
Pales in the flood with men, with wives and boys,  
Whose shouts and claps out-voice the deep mouth'd sea,  
Which like a mighty whiffler 'fore the king  
Seems to prepare his way: so let him land,  
And solemnly see him set on to London.  
So swift a pace hath thought that even now  
You may imagine him upon Blackheath;  
Where that his lords desire him to have borne  
His bruised helmet and his bended sword  
Before him through the city: he forbids it,  
Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;  
Giving full trophy, signal and ostent  
Quite from himself to God. But now behold,  
In the quick forge and working-house of thought,  
How London doth pour out her citizens!  
The mayor and all his brethren in best sort,  
Like to the senators of the antique Rome,  
With the plebeians swarming at their heels,  
Go forth and fetch their conquering Caesar in:  
As, by a lower but loving likelihood,  
Were now the general of our gracious empress,  
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,

Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,  
How many would the peaceful city quit,  
To welcome him! much more, and much more cause,  
Did they this Harry. Now in London place him;  
As yet the lamentation of the French  
Invites the King of England's stay at home;  
The emperor's coming in behalf of France,  
To order peace between them; and omit  
All the occurrences, whatever chanced,  
Till Harry's back-return again to France:  
There must we bring him; and myself have play'd  
The interim, by remembering you 'tis past.  
Then brook abridgment, and your eyes advance,  
After your thoughts, straight back again to France.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 5, Prologue  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. France. The English camp.

*Enter FLUELLEN and GOWER*

### GOWER

Nay, that's right; but why wear you your leek today?  
Saint Davy's day is past.

### FLUELLEN

There is occasions and causes why and wherefore in  
all things: I will tell you, asse my friend,  
Captain Gower: the rascally, scald, beggarly,  
lousy, praggling knave, Pistol, which you and  
yourself and all the world know to be no petter  
than a fellow, look you now, of no merits, he is  
come to me and prings me pread and salt yesterday,  
look you, and bid me eat my leek: it was in place  
where I could not breed no contention with him; but  
I will be so bold as to wear it in my cap till I see  
him once again, and then I will tell him a little  
piece of my desires.

*Enter PISTOL*

### GOWER

Why, here he comes, swelling like a turkey-cock.

### FLUELLEN

'Tis no matter for his swellings nor his  
turkey-cocks. God pless you, Aunchient Pistol! you  
scurvy, lousy knave, God pless you!

## **PISTOL**

Ha! art thou bedlam? dost thou thirst, base Trojan,  
To have me fold up Parca's fatal web?  
Hence! I am qualmish at the smell of leek.

## **FLUELLEN**

I peseech you heartily, scurvy, lousy knave, at my  
desires, and my requests, and my petitions, to eat,  
look you, this leek: because, look you, you do not  
love it, nor your affections and your appetites and  
your digestions doo's not agree with it, I would  
desire you to eat it.

## **PISTOL**

Not for Cadwallader and all his goats.

## **FLUELLEN**

There is one goat for you.

*Strikes him*

Will you be so good, scauld knave, as eat it?

## **PISTOL**

Base Trojan, thou shalt die.

## **FLUELLEN**

You say very true, scauld knave, when God's will is:  
I will desire you to live in the mean time, and eat  
your victuals: come, there is sauce for it.

*Strikes him*

You called me yesterday mountain-squire; but I will  
make you to-day a squire of low degree. I pray you,

fall to: if you can mock a leek, you can eat a leek.

**GOWER**

Enough, captain: you have astonished him.

**FLUELLEN**

I say, I will make him eat some part of my leek, or  
I will peat his pate four days. Bite, I pray you; it  
is good for your green wound and your ploody coxcomb.

**PISTOL**

Must I bite?

**FLUELLEN**

Yes, certainly, and out of doubt and out of question  
too, and ambiguities.

**PISTOL**

By this leek, I will most horribly revenge: I eat  
and eat, I swear--

**FLUELLEN**

Eat, I pray you: will you have some more sauce to  
your leek? there is not enough leek to swear by.

**PISTOL**

Quiet thy cudgel; thou dost see I eat.

**FLUELLEN**

Much good do you, scauld knave, heartily. Nay, pray  
you, throw none away; the skin is good for your  
broken coxcomb. When you take occasions to see leeks  
hereafter, I pray you, mock at 'em; that is all.



**PISTOL**

Good.

**FLUELLEN**

Ay, leeks is good: hold you, there is a groat to heal your pate.

**PISTOL**

Me a groat!

**FLUELLEN**

Yes, verily and in truth, you shall take it; or I have another leek in my pocket, which you shall eat.

**PISTOL**

I take thy groat in earnest of revenge.

**FLUELLEN**

If I owe you any thing, I will pay you in cudgels: you shall be a woodmonger, and buy nothing of me but cudgels. God b' wi' you, and keep you, and heal your pate.

*Exit*

**PISTOL**

All hell shall stir for this.

**GOWER**

Go, go; you are a counterfeit cowardly knave. Will you mock at an ancient tradition, begun upon an honourable respect, and worn as a memorable trophy of predeceased valour and dare not avouch in your deeds

any of your words? I have seen you gleeking and galling at this gentleman twice or thrice. You thought, because he could not speak English in the native garb, he could not therefore handle an English cudgel: you find it otherwise; and henceforth let a Welsh correction teach you a good English condition. Fare ye well.

*Exit*

## **PISTOL**

Doth Fortune play the huswife with me now?  
News have I, that my Nell is dead i' the spital  
Of malady of France;  
And there my rendezvous is quite cut off.  
Old I do wax; and from my weary limbs  
Honour is cudgelled. Well, bawd I'll turn,  
And something lean to cutpurse of quick hand.  
To England will I steal, and there I'll steal:  
And patches will I get unto these cudgell'd scars,  
And swear I got them in the Gallia wars.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Fifth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry V](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE II. France. A royal palace.

*Enter, at one door KING HENRY, EXETER, BEDFORD, GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, WESTMORELAND, and other Lords; at another, the FRENCH KING, QUEEN ISABEL, the PRINCESS KATHARINE, ALICE and other Ladies; the DUKE of BURGUNDY, and his train*

### KING HENRY V

Peace to this meeting, wherefore we are met!  
Unto our brother France, and to our sister,  
Health and fair time of day; joy and good wishes  
To our most fair and princely cousin Katharine;  
And, as a branch and member of this royalty,  
By whom this great assembly is contrived,  
We do salute you, Duke of Burgundy;  
And, princes French, and peers, health to you all!

### KING OF FRANCE

Right joyous are we to behold your face,  
Most worthy brother England; fairly met:  
So are you, princes English, every one.

### QUEEN ISABEL

So happy be the issue, brother England,  
Of this good day and of this gracious meeting,  
As we are now glad to behold your eyes;  
Your eyes, which hitherto have borne in them  
Against the French, that met them in their bent,  
The fatal balls of murdering basilisks:  
The venom of such looks, we fairly hope,  
Have lost their quality, and that this day  
Shall change all griefs and quarrels into love.

## **KING HENRY V**

To cry amen to that, thus we appear.

## **QUEEN ISABEL**

You English princes all, I do salute you.

## **BURGUNDY**

My duty to you both, on equal love,  
Great Kings of France and England! That I have labour'd,  
With all my wits, my pains and strong endeavours,  
To bring your most imperial majesties  
Unto this bar and royal interview,  
Your mightiness on both parts best can witness.  
Since then my office hath so far prevail'd  
That, face to face and royal eye to eye,  
You have congreeted, let it not disgrace me,  
If I demand, before this royal view,  
What rub or what impediment there is,  
Why that the naked, poor and mangled Peace,  
Dear nurse of arts and joyful births,  
Should not in this best garden of the world  
Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?  
Alas, she hath from France too long been chased,  
And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps,  
Corrupting in its own fertility.  
Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,  
Unpruned dies; her hedges even-pleach'd,  
Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair,  
Put forth disorder'd twigs; her fallow leas  
The darnel, hemlock and rank fumitory  
Doth root upon, while that the coulter rusts  
That should deracinate such savagery;  
The even mead, that erst brought sweetly forth  
The freckled cowslip, burnet and green clover,  
Wanting the scythe, all uncorrected, rank,  
Conceives by idleness and nothing teems  
But hateful docks, rough thistles, kecksies, burs,  
Losing both beauty and utility.  
And as our vineyards, fallows, meads and hedges,

Defective in their natures, grow to wildness,  
Even so our houses and ourselves and children  
Have lost, or do not learn for want of time,  
The sciences that should become our country;  
But grow like savages,--as soldiers will  
That nothing do but meditate on blood,--  
To swearing and stern looks, diffused attire  
And every thing that seems unnatural.  
Which to reduce into our former favour  
You are assembled: and my speech entreats  
That I may know the let, why gentle Peace  
Should not expel these inconveniences  
And bless us with her former qualities.

### **KING HENRY V**

If, Duke of Burgundy, you would the peace,  
Whose want gives growth to the imperfections  
Which you have cited, you must buy that peace  
With full accord to all our just demands;  
Whose tenors and particular effects  
You have enscheduled briefly in your hands.

### **BURGUNDY**

The king hath heard them; to the which as yet  
There is no answer made.

### **KING HENRY V**

Well then the peace,  
Which you before so urged, lies in his answer.

### **KING OF FRANCE**

I have but with a cursory eye  
O'erglanced the articles: pleaseth your grace  
To appoint some of your council presently  
To sit with us once more, with better heed  
To re-survey them, we will suddenly  
Pass our accept and peremptory answer.

## **KING HENRY V**

Brother, we shall. Go, uncle Exeter,  
And brother Clarence, and you, brother Gloucester,  
Warwick and Huntingdon, go with the king;  
And take with you free power to ratify,  
Augment, or alter, as your wisdoms best  
Shall see advantageable for our dignity,  
Any thing in or out of our demands,  
And we'll consign thereto. Will you, fair sister,  
Go with the princes, or stay here with us?

## **QUEEN ISABEL**

Our gracious brother, I will go with them:  
Haply a woman's voice may do some good,  
When articles too nicely urged be stood on.

## **KING HENRY V**

Yet leave our cousin Katharine here with us:  
She is our capital demand, comprised  
Within the fore-rank of our articles.

## **QUEEN ISABEL**

She hath good leave.

*Exeunt all except HENRY, KATHARINE, and ALICE*

## **KING HENRY V**

Fair Katharine, and most fair,  
Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms  
Such as will enter at a lady's ear  
And plead his love-suit to her gentle heart?

## **KATHARINE**

Your majesty shall mock at me; I cannot speak your England.

## **KING HENRY V**

O fair Katharine, if you will love me soundly with your French heart, I will be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your English tongue. Do you like me, Kate?

## **KATHARINE**

Pardonnez-moi, I cannot tell vat is 'like me.'

## **KING HENRY V**

An angel is like you, Kate, and you are like an angel.

## **KATHARINE**

Que dit-il? que je suis semblable a les anges?

## **ALICE**

Oui, vraiment, sauf votre grace, ainsi dit-il.

## **KING HENRY V**

I said so, dear Katharine; and I must not blush to affirm it.

## **KATHARINE**

O bon Dieu! les langues des hommes sont pleines de tromperies.

## **KING HENRY V**

What says she, fair one? that the tongues of men are full of deceits?

## **ALICE**

Oui, dat de tongues of de mans is be full of

deceits: dat is de princess.

## **KING HENRY V**

The princess is the better Englishwoman. I' faith, Kate, my wooing is fit for thy understanding: I am glad thou canst speak no better English; for, if thou couldst, thou wouldst find me such a plain king that thou wouldst think I had sold my farm to buy my crown. I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say 'I love you:' then if you urge me farther than to say 'do you in faith?' I wear out my suit. Give me your answer; i' faith, do: and so clap hands and a bargain: how say you, lady?

## **KATHARINE**

Sauf votre honneur, me understand vell.

## **KING HENRY V**

Marry, if you would put me to verses or to dance for your sake, Kate, why you undid me: for the one, I have neither words nor measure, and for the other, I have no strength in measure, yet a reasonable measure in strength. If I could win a lady at leap-frog, or by vaulting into my saddle with my armour on my back, under the correction of bragging be it spoken. I should quickly leap into a wife. Or if I might buffet for my love, or bound my horse for her favours, I could lay on like a butcher and sit like a jack-an-apes, never off. But, before God, Kate, I cannot look greenly nor gasp out my eloquence, nor I have no cunning in protestation; only downright oaths, which I never use till urged, nor never break for urging. If thou canst love a fellow of this temper, Kate, whose face is not worth sun-burning, that never looks in his glass for love of any thing he sees there, let thine eye be thy cook. I speak to thee plain soldier: If thou canst love me for this, take me: if not, to say to thee that I shall die, is true; but for thy love, by the



Lord, no; yet I love thee too. And while thou livest, dear Kate, take a fellow of plain and uncoined constancy; for he perforce must do thee right, because he hath not the gift to woo in other places: for these fellows of infinite tongue, that can rhyme themselves into ladies' favours, they do always reason themselves out again. What! a speaker is but a prater; a rhyme is but a ballad. A good leg will fall; a straight back will stoop; a black beard will turn white; a curled pate will grow bald; a fair face will wither; a full eye will wax hollow: but a good heart, Kate, is the sun and the moon; or, rather, the sun, and not the moon; for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps his course truly. If thou would have such a one, take me; and take me, take a soldier; take a soldier, take a king. And what sayest thou then to my love? speak, my fair, and fairly, I pray thee.

#### **KATHARINE**

Is it possible dat I sould love de enemy of France?

#### **KING HENRY V**

No; it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate: but, in loving me, you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine: and, Kate, when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine.

#### **KATHARINE**

I cannot tell vat is dat.

#### **KING HENRY V**

No, Kate? I will tell thee in French; which I am sure will hang upon my tongue like a new-married wife about her husband's neck, hardly to be shook off. Je quand sur le possession de France, et quand

vous avez le possession de moi,--let me see, what then? Saint Denis be my speed!--donc votre est France et vous etes mienne. It is as easy for me, Kate, to conquer the kingdom as to speak so much more French: I shall never move thee in French, unless it be to laugh at me.

**KATHARINE**

Sauf votre honneur, le Francois que vous parlez, il est meilleur que l'Anglois lequel je parle.

**KING HENRY V**

No, faith, is't not, Kate: but thy speaking of my tongue, and I thine, most truly-falsely, must needs be granted to be much at one. But, Kate, dost thou understand thus much English, canst thou love me?

**KATHARINE**

I cannot tell.

**KING HENRY V**

Can any of your neighbours tell, Kate? I'll ask them. Come, I know thou lovest me: and at night, when you come into your closet, you'll question this gentlewoman about me; and I know, Kate, you will to her dispraise those parts in me that you love with your heart: but, good Kate, mock me mercifully; the rather, gentle princess, because I love thee cruelly. If ever thou beest mine, Kate, as I have a saving faith within me tells me thou shalt, I get thee with scrambling, and thou must therefore needs prove a good soldier-breeder: shall not thou and I, between Saint Denis and Saint George, compound a boy, half French, half English, that shall go to Constantinople and take the Turk by the beard? shall we not? what sayest thou, my fair flower-de-luce?

## **KATHARINE**

I do not know dat

## **KING HENRY V**

No; 'tis hereafter to know, but now to promise: do but now promise, Kate, you will endeavour for your French part of such a boy; and for my English moiety take the word of a king and a bachelor. How answer you, la plus belle Katharine du monde, mon tres cher et devin deesse?

## **KATHARINE**

Your majestee ave fausse French enough to deceive de most sage demoiselle dat is en France.

## **KING HENRY V**

Now, fie upon my false French! By mine honour, in true English, I love thee, Kate: by which honour I dare not swear thou lovest me; yet my blood begins to flatter me that thou dost, notwithstanding the poor and untempering effect of my visage. Now, beshrew my father's ambition! he was thinking of civil wars when he got me: therefore was I created with a stubborn outside, with an aspect of iron, that, when I come to woo ladies, I fright them. But, in faith, Kate, the elder I wax, the better I shall appear: my comfort is, that old age, that ill layer up of beauty, can do no more, spoil upon my face: thou hast me, if thou hast me, at the worst; and thou shalt wear me, if thou wear me, better and better: and therefore tell me, most fair Katharine, will you have me? Put off your maiden blushes; avouch the thoughts of your heart with the looks of an empress; take me by the hand, and say 'Harry of England I am thine:' which word thou shalt no sooner bless mine ear withal, but I will tell thee aloud 'England is thine, Ireland is thine, France is thine, and Harry Plantagenet is thine;' who though I speak it before

his face, if he be not fellow with the best king,  
thou shalt find the best king of good fellows.  
Come, your answer in broken music; for thy voice is  
music and thy English broken; therefore, queen of  
all, Katharine, break thy mind to me in broken  
English; wilt thou have me?

**KATHARINE**

Dat is as it sall please de roi mon pere.

**KING HENRY V**

Nay, it will please him well, Kate it shall please  
him, Kate.

**KATHARINE**

Den it sall also content me.

**KING HENRY V**

Upon that I kiss your hand, and I call you my queen.

**KATHARINE**

Laissez, mon seigneur, laissez, laissez: ma foi, je  
ne veux point que vous abaissiez votre grandeur en  
baisant la main d'une de votre seigneurie indigne  
serviteur; excusez-moi, je vous supplie, mon  
tres-puissant seigneur.

**KING HENRY V**

Then I will kiss your lips, Kate.

**KATHARINE**

Les dames et demoiselles pour etre baisees devant  
leur noces, il n'est pas la coutume de France.

**KING HENRY V**

Madam my interpreter, what says she?

**ALICE**

Dat it is not be de fashion pour les ladies of  
France,--I cannot tell vat is baiser en English.

**KING HENRY V**

To kiss.

**ALICE**

Your majesty entendre bettere que moi.

**KING HENRY V**

It is not a fashion for the maids in France to kiss  
before they are married, would she say?

**ALICE**

Oui, vraiment.

**KING HENRY V**

O Kate, nice customs curtsy to great kings. Dear  
Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak  
list of a country's fashion: we are the makers of  
manners, Kate; and the liberty that follows our  
places stops the mouth of all find-faults; as I will  
do yours, for upholding the nice fashion of your  
country in denying me a kiss: therefore, patiently  
and yielding.

*Kissing her*

You have witchcraft in your lips, Kate: there is  
more eloquence in a sugar touch of them than in the

tongues of the French council; and they should sooner persuade Harry of England than a general petition of monarchs. Here comes your father.

*Re-enter the FRENCH KING and his QUEEN, BURGUNDY, and other Lords*

**BURGUNDY**

God save your majesty! my royal cousin, teach you our princess English?

**KING HENRY V**

I would have her learn, my fair cousin, how perfectly I love her; and that is good English.

**BURGUNDY**

Is she not apt?

**KING HENRY V**

Our tongue is rough, coz, and my condition is not smooth; so that, having neither the voice nor the heart of flattery about me, I cannot so conjure up the spirit of love in her, that he will appear in his true likeness.

**BURGUNDY**

Pardon the frankness of my mirth, if I answer you for that. If you would conjure in her, you must make a circle; if conjure up love in her in his true likeness, he must appear naked and blind. Can you blame her then, being a maid yet rosed over with the virgin crimson of modesty, if she deny the appearance of a naked blind boy in her naked seeing self? It were, my lord, a hard condition for a maid to consign to.

**KING HENRY V**

Yet they do wink and yield, as love is blind and enforces.

**BURGUNDY**

They are then excused, my lord, when they see not what they do.

**KING HENRY V**

Then, good my lord, teach your cousin to consent winking.

**BURGUNDY**

I will wink on her to consent, my lord, if you will teach her to know my meaning: for maids, well summered and warm kept, are like flies at Bartholomew-tide, blind, though they have their eyes; and then they will endure handling, which before would not abide looking on.

**KING HENRY V**

This moral ties me over to time and a hot summer; and so I shall catch the fly, your cousin, in the latter end and she must be blind too.

**BURGUNDY**

As love is, my lord, before it loves.

**KING HENRY V**

It is so: and you may, some of you, thank love for my blindness, who cannot see many a fair French city for one fair French maid that stands in my way.

**FRENCH KING**

Yes, my lord, you see them perspective, the cities turned into a maid; for they are all girdled with maiden walls that war hath never entered.

**KING HENRY V**

Shall Kate be my wife?

**FRENCH KING**

So please you.

**KING HENRY V**

I am content; so the maiden cities you talk of may wait on her: so the maid that stood in the way for my wish shall show me the way to my will.

**FRENCH KING**

We have consented to all terms of reason.

**KING HENRY V**

Is't so, my lords of England?

**WESTMORELAND**

The king hath granted every article:  
His daughter first, and then in sequel all,  
According to their firm proposed natures.

**EXETER**

Only he hath not yet subscribed this:  
Where your majesty demands, that the King of France,  
having any occasion to write for matter of grant,  
shall name your highness in this form and with this  
addition in French, Notre trescher fils Henri, Roi  
d'Angleterre, Heritier de France; and thus in  
Latin, Praeclarissimus filius noster Henricus, Rex  
Angliae, et Haeres Franciae.

**FRENCH KING**



Nor this I have not, brother, so denied,  
But your request shall make me let it pass.

## **KING HENRY V**

I pray you then, in love and dear alliance,  
Let that one article rank with the rest;  
And thereupon give me your daughter.

## **FRENCH KING**

Take her, fair son, and from her blood raise up  
Issue to me; that the contending kingdoms  
Of France and England, whose very shores look pale  
With envy of each other's happiness,  
May cease their hatred, and this dear conjunction  
Plant neighbourhood and Christian-like accord  
In their sweet bosoms, that never war advance  
His bleeding sword 'twixt England and fair France.

## **ALL**

Amen!

## **KING HENRY V**

Now, welcome, Kate: and bear me witness all,  
That here I kiss her as my sovereign queen.

*Flourish*

## **QUEEN ISABEL**

God, the best maker of all marriages,  
Combine your hearts in one, your realms in one!  
As man and wife, being two, are one in love,  
So be there 'twixt your kingdoms such a spousal,  
That never may ill office, or fell jealousy,  
Which troubles oft the bed of blessed marriage,  
Thrust in between the paction of these kingdoms,  
To make divorce of their incorporate league;

That English may as French, French Englishmen,  
Receive each other. God speak this Amen!

**ALL**

Amen!

**KING HENRY V**

Prepare we for our marriage--on which day,  
My Lord of Burgundy, we'll take your oath,  
And all the peers', for surety of our leagues.  
Then shall I swear to Kate, and you to me;  
And may our oaths well kept and prosperous be!

*Sennet. Exeunt*

**EPILOGUE**

*Enter Chorus*

**Chorus**

Thus far, with rough and all-unable pen,  
Our bending author hath pursued the story,  
In little room confining mighty men,  
Mangling by starts the full course of their glory.  
Small time, but in that small most greatly lived  
This star of England: Fortune made his sword;  
By which the world's best garden be achieved,  
And of it left his son imperial lord.  
Henry the Sixth, in infant bands crown'd King  
Of France and England, did this king succeed;  
Whose state so many had the managing,  
That they lost France and made his England bleed:  
Which oft our stage hath shown; and, for their sake,  
In your fair minds let this acceptance take.

*Exit*

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Henry VI, part 1

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Westminster Abbey.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [France. Before Orleans.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [London. Before the Tower.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [Orleans.](#)

Act 1, Scene 5: [The same.](#)

Act 1, Scene 6: [The same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Before Orleans.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Orleans. Within the town.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [Auvergne. The COUNTESS's castle.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [London. The Temple-garden.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [The Tower of London.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [London. The Parliament-house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [France. Before Rouen.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [The plains near Rouen.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [Paris. The palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Paris. A hall of state.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Before Bourdeaux.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Plains in Gascony.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [Other plains in Gascony.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [The English camp near Bourdeaux.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [A field of battle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 7: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [France. Plains in Anjou.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Before Angiers.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Camp of the YORK in Anjou.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [London. The palace.](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Westminster Abbey.

*Dead March. Enter the Funeral of KING HENRY the Fifth, attended on by Dukes of BEDFORD, Regent of France; GLOUCESTER, Protector; and EXETER, Earl of WARWICK, the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, Herald, & c*

### BEDFORD

Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!  
Comets, importing change of times and states,  
Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,  
And with them scourge the bad revolting stars  
That have consented unto Henry's death!  
King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!  
England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

### GLOUCESTER

England ne'er had a king until his time.  
Virtue he had, deserving to command:  
His brandish'd sword did blind men with his beams:  
His arms spread wider than a dragon's wings;  
His sparking eyes, replete with wrathful fire,  
More dazzled and drove back his enemies  
Than mid-day sun fierce bent against their faces.  
What should I say? his deeds exceed all speech:  
He ne'er lift up his hand but conquered.

### EXETER

We mourn in black: why mourn we not in blood?  
Henry is dead and never shall revive:  
Upon a wooden coffin we attend,  
And death's dishonourable victory  
We with our stately presence glorify,  
Like captives bound to a triumphant car.

What! shall we curse the planets of mishap  
That plotted thus our glory's overthrow?  
Or shall we think the subtle-witted French  
Conjurers and sorcerers, that afraid of him  
By magic verses have contrived his end?  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

He was a king bless'd of the King of kings.  
Unto the French the dreadful judgement-day  
So dreadful will not be as was his sight.  
The battles of the Lord of hosts he fought:  
The church's prayers made him so prosperous.

## **GLOUCESTER**

The church! where is it? Had not churchmen pray'd,  
His thread of life had not so soon decay'd:  
None do you like but an effeminate prince,  
Whom, like a school-boy, you may over-awe.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Gloucester, whate'er we like, thou art protector  
And lookest to command the prince and realm.  
Thy wife is proud; she holdeth thee in awe,  
More than God or religious churchmen may.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Name not religion, for thou lovest the flesh,  
And ne'er throughout the year to church thou go'st  
Except it be to pray against thy foes.

## **BEDFORD**

Cease, cease these jars and rest your minds in peace:  
Let's to the altar: heralds, wait on us:  
Instead of gold, we'll offer up our arms:  
Since arms avail not now that Henry's dead.

Posterity, await for wretched years,  
When at their mothers' moist eyes babes shall suck,  
Our isle be made a nourish of salt tears,  
And none but women left to wail the dead.  
Henry the Fifth, thy ghost I invoke:  
Prosper this realm, keep it from civil broils,  
Combat with adverse planets in the heavens!  
A far more glorious star thy soul will make  
Than Julius Caesar or bright--

*Enter a Messenger*

### **Messenger**

My honourable lords, health to you all!  
Sad tidings bring I to you out of France,  
Of loss, of slaughter and discomfiture:  
Guienne, Champagne, Rheims, Orleans,  
Paris, Guysors, Poitiers, are all quite lost.

### **BEDFORD**

What say'st thou, man, before dead Henry's corse?  
Speak softly, or the loss of those great towns  
Will make him burst his lead and rise from death.

### **GLOUCESTER**

Is Paris lost? is Rouen yielded up?  
If Henry were recall'd to life again,  
These news would cause him once more yield the ghost.

### **EXETER**

How were they lost? what treachery was used?

### **Messenger**

No treachery; but want of men and money.  
Amongst the soldiers this is muttered,  
That here you maintain several factions,  
And whilst a field should be dispatch'd and fought,

You are disputing of your generals:  
One would have lingering wars with little cost;  
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings;  
A third thinks, without expense at all,  
By guileful fair words peace may be obtain'd.  
Awake, awake, English nobility!  
Let not sloth dim your horrors new-begot:  
Cropp'd are the flower-de-luces in your arms;  
Of England's coat one half is cut away.

## **EXETER**

Were our tears wanting to this funeral,  
These tidings would call forth their flowing tides.

## **BEDFORD**

Me they concern; Regent I am of France.  
Give me my steeled coat. I'll fight for France.  
Away with these disgraceful wailing robes!  
Wounds will I lend the French instead of eyes,  
To weep their intermissive miseries.

*Enter to them another Messenger*

## **Messenger**

Lords, view these letters full of bad mischance.  
France is revolted from the English quite,  
Except some petty towns of no import:  
The Dauphin Charles is crowned king of Rheims;  
The Bastard of Orleans with him is join'd;  
Reignier, Duke of Anjou, doth take his part;  
The Duke of Alencon flieth to his side.

## **EXETER**

The Dauphin crowned king! all fly to him!  
O, whither shall we fly from this reproach?

## **GLOUCESTER**

We will not fly, but to our enemies' throats.  
Bedford, if thou be slack, I'll fight it out.

## **BEDFORD**

Gloucester, why doubt'st thou of my forwardness?  
An army have I muster'd in my thoughts,  
Wherewith already France is overrun.

*Enter another Messenger*

## **Messenger**

My gracious lords, to add to your laments,  
Wherewith you now bedew King Henry's hearse,  
I must inform you of a dismal fight  
Betwixt the stout Lord Talbot and the French.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

What! wherein Talbot overcame? is't so?

## **Messenger**

O, no; wherein Lord Talbot was o'erthrown:  
The circumstance I'll tell you more at large.  
The tenth of August last this dreadful lord,  
Retiring from the siege of Orleans,  
Having full scarce six thousand in his troop.  
By three and twenty thousand of the French  
Was round encompassed and set upon.  
No leisure had he to enrank his men;  
He wanted pikes to set before his archers;  
Instead whereof sharp stakes pluck'd out of hedges  
They pitched in the ground confusedly,  
To keep the horsemen off from breaking in.  
More than three hours the fight continued;  
Where valiant Talbot above human thought  
Enacted wonders with his sword and lance:  
Hundreds he sent to hell, and none durst stand him;  
Here, there, and every where, enraged he flew:



The French exclaim'd, the devil was in arms;  
All the whole army stood agazed on him:  
His soldiers spying his undaunted spirit  
A Talbot! a Talbot! cried out amain  
And rush'd into the bowels of the battle.  
Here had the conquest fully been seal'd up,  
If Sir John Fastolfe had not play'd the coward:  
He, being in the vaward, placed behind  
With purpose to relieve and follow them,  
Cowardly fled, not having struck one stroke.  
Hence grew the general wreck and massacre;  
Enclosed were they with their enemies:  
A base Walloon, to win the Dauphin's grace,  
Thrust Talbot with a spear into the back,  
Whom all France with their chief assembled strength  
Durst not presume to look once in the face.

## **BEDFORD**

Is Talbot slain? then I will slay myself,  
For living idly here in pomp and ease,  
Whilst such a worthy leader, wanting aid,  
Unto his dastard foemen is betray'd.

## **Messenger**

O no, he lives; but is took prisoner,  
And Lord Scales with him and Lord Hungerford:  
Most of the rest slaughter'd or took likewise.

## **BEDFORD**

His ransom there is none but I shall pay:  
I'll hale the Dauphin headlong from his throne:  
His crown shall be the ransom of my friend;  
Four of their lords I'll change for one of ours.  
Farewell, my masters; to my task will I;  
Bonfires in France forthwith I am to make,  
To keep our great Saint George's feast withal:  
Ten thousand soldiers with me I will take,  
Whose bloody deeds shall make all Europe quake.

## **Messenger**

So you had need; for Orleans is besieged;  
The English army is grown weak and faint:  
The Earl of Salisbury craveth supply,  
And hardly keeps his men from mutiny,  
Since they, so few, watch such a multitude.

## **EXETER**

Remember, lords, your oaths to Henry sworn,  
Either to quell the Dauphin utterly,  
Or bring him in obedience to your yoke.

## **BEDFORD**

I do remember it; and here take my leave,  
To go about my preparation.

*Exit*

## **GLOUCESTER**

I'll to the Tower with all the haste I can,  
To view the artillery and munition;  
And then I will proclaim young Henry king.

*Exit*

## **EXETER**

To Eltham will I, where the young king is,  
Being ordain'd his special governor,  
And for his safety there I'll best devise.

*Exit*

**BISHOP**

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Each hath his place and function to attend:  
I am left out; for me nothing remains.  
But long I will not be Jack out of office:  
The king from Eltham I intend to steal  
And sit at chiefest stern of public weal.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. France. Before Orleans.

*Sound a flourish. Enter CHARLES, ALENCON, and REIGNIER, marching with drum and Soldiers*

### CHARLES

Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens  
So in the earth, to this day is not known:  
Late did he shine upon the English side;  
Now we are victors; upon us he smiles.  
What towns of any moment but we have?  
At pleasure here we lie near Orleans;  
Otherwhiles the famish'd English, like pale ghosts,  
Faintly besiege us one hour in a month.

### ALENCON

They want their porridge and their fat bull-beeves:  
Either they must be dieted like mules  
And have their provender tied to their mouths  
Or piteous they will look, like drowned mice.

### REIGNIER

Let's raise the siege: why live we idly here?  
Talbot is taken, whom we wont to fear:  
Remaineth none but mad-brain'd Salisbury;  
And he may well in fretting spend his gall,  
Nor men nor money hath he to make war.

### CHARLES

Sound, sound alarum! we will rush on them.  
Now for the honour of the forlorn French!  
Him I forgive my death that killeth me

When he sees me go back one foot or fly.

*Exeunt*

*Here alarum; they are beaten back by the English with great loss. Re-enter CHARLES, ALENCON, and REIGNIER*

## **CHARLES**

Who ever saw the like? what men have I!  
Dogs! cowards! dastards! I would ne'er have fled,  
But that they left me 'midst my enemies.

## **REIGNIER**

Salisbury is a desperate homicide;  
He fighteth as one weary of his life.  
The other lords, like lions wanting food,  
Do rush upon us as their hungry prey.

## **ALENCON**

Froissart, a countryman of ours, records,  
England all Olivers and Rowlands bred,  
During the time Edward the Third did reign.  
More truly now may this be verified;  
For none but Samsons and Goliases  
It sendeth forth to skirmish. One to ten!  
Lean, raw-boned rascals! who would e'er suppose  
They had such courage and audacity?

## **CHARLES**

Let's leave this town; for they are hare-brain'd slaves,  
And hunger will enforce them to be more eager:  
Of old I know them; rather with their teeth  
The walls they'll tear down than forsake the siege.

## **REIGNIER**

I think, by some odd gimmors or device  
Their arms are set like clocks, stiff to strike on;

Else ne'er could they hold out so as they do.  
By my consent, we'll even let them alone.

## **ALENCON**

Be it so.

*Enter the BASTARD OF ORLEANS*

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

Where's the Prince Dauphin? I have news for him.

## **CHARLES**

Bastard of Orleans, thrice welcome to us.

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

Methinks your looks are sad, your cheer appall'd:  
Hath the late overthrow wrought this offence?  
Be not dismay'd, for succor is at hand:  
A holy maid hither with me I bring,  
Which by a vision sent to her from heaven  
Ordained is to raise this tedious siege  
And drive the English forth the bounds of France.  
The spirit of deep prophecy she hath,  
Exceeding the nine sibyls of old Rome:  
What's past and what's to come she can descry.  
Speak, shall I call her in? Believe my words,  
For they are certain and unfallible.

## **CHARLES**

Go, call her in.

*Exit BASTARD OF ORLEANS*

But first, to try her skill,  
Reignier, stand thou as Dauphin in my place:  
Question her proudly; let thy looks be stern:

By this means shall we sound what skill she hath.

*Re-enter the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, with JOAN LA PUCELLE*

**REIGNIER**

Fair maid, is't thou wilt do these wondrous feats?

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Reignier, is't thou that thinkest to beguile me?  
Where is the Dauphin? Come, come from behind;  
I know thee well, though never seen before.  
Be not amazed, there's nothing hid from me:  
In private will I talk with thee apart.  
Stand back, you lords, and give us leave awhile.

**REIGNIER**

She takes upon her bravely at first dash.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,  
My wit untrain'd in any kind of art.  
Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased  
To shine on my contemptible estate:  
Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs,  
And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,  
God's mother deigned to appear to me  
And in a vision full of majesty  
Will'd me to leave my base vocation  
And free my country from calamity:  
Her aid she promised and assured success:  
In complete glory she reveal'd herself;  
And, whereas I was black and swart before,  
With those clear rays which she infused on me  
That beauty am I bless'd with which you see.  
Ask me what question thou canst possible,  
And I will answer unpremeditated:  
My courage try by combat, if thou darest,  
And thou shalt find that I exceed my sex.

Resolve on this, thou shalt be fortunate,  
If thou receive me for thy warlike mate.

**CHARLES**

Thou hast astonish'd me with thy high terms:  
Only this proof I'll of thy valour make,  
In single combat thou shalt buckle with me,  
And if thou vanquishest, thy words are true;  
Otherwise I renounce all confidence.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

I am prepared: here is my keen-edged sword,  
Deck'd with five flower-de-luces on each side;  
The which at Touraine, in Saint Katharine's  
churchyard,  
Out of a great deal of old iron I chose forth.

**CHARLES**

Then come, o' God's name; I fear no woman.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

And while I live, I'll ne'er fly from a man.

*Here they fight, and JOAN LA PUCELLE overcomes*

**CHARLES**

Stay, stay thy hands! thou art an Amazon  
And fightest with the sword of Deborah.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Christ's mother helps me, else I were too weak.

**CHARLES**

Whoe'er helps thee, 'tis thou that must help me:



Impatiently I burn with thy desire;  
My heart and hands thou hast at once subdued.  
Excellent Pucelle, if thy name be so,  
Let me thy servant and not sovereign be:  
'Tis the French Dauphin sueth to thee thus.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

I must not yield to any rites of love,  
For my profession's sacred from above:  
When I have chased all thy foes from hence,  
Then will I think upon a recompense.

## **CHARLES**

Meantime look gracious on thy prostrate thrall.

## **REIGNIER**

My lord, methinks, is very long in talk.

## **ALENCON**

Doubtless he shrives this woman to her smock;  
Else ne'er could he so long protract his speech.

## **REIGNIER**

Shall we disturb him, since he keeps no mean?

## **ALENCON**

He may mean more than we poor men do know:  
These women are shrewd tempters with their tongues.

## **REIGNIER**

My lord, where are you? what devise you on?  
Shall we give over Orleans, or no?

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Why, no, I say, distrustful recreants!  
Fight till the last gasp; I will be your guard.

**CHARLES**

What she says I'll confirm: we'll fight it out.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Assign'd am I to be the English scourge.  
This night the siege assuredly I'll raise:  
Expect Saint Martin's summer, halcyon days,  
Since I have entered into these wars.  
Glory is like a circle in the water,  
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself  
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.  
With Henry's death the English circle ends;  
Dispersed are the glories it included.  
Now am I like that proud insulting ship  
Which Caesar and his fortune bare at once.

**CHARLES**

Was Mahomet inspired with a dove?  
Thou with an eagle art inspired then.  
Helen, the mother of great Constantine,  
Nor yet Saint Philip's daughters, were like thee.  
Bright star of Venus, fall'n down on the earth,  
How may I reverently worship thee enough?

**ALENCON**

Leave off delays, and let us raise the siege.

**REIGNIER**

Woman, do what thou canst to save our honours;  
Drive them from Orleans and be immortalized.

**CHARLES**

Presently we'll try: come, let's away about it:  
No prophet will I trust, if she prove false.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. London. Before the Tower.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, with his Serving-men in blue coats*

### GLOUCESTER

I am come to survey the Tower this day:  
Since Henry's death, I fear, there is conveyance.  
Where be these warders, that they wait not here?  
Open the gates; 'tis Gloucester that calls.

### First Warder

[Within] Who's there that knocks so imperiously?  
First Serving-Man It is the noble Duke of Gloucester.

### Second Warder

[Within] Whoe'er he be, you may not be let in.  
First Serving-Man Villains, answer you so the lord protector?

### First Warder

[Within] The Lord protect him! so we answer him:  
We do no otherwise than we are will'd.

### GLOUCESTER

Who willed you? or whose will stands but mine?  
There's none protector of the realm but I.  
Break up the gates, I'll be your warrantize.  
Shall I be flouted thus by dunghill grooms?

*Gloucester's men rush at the Tower Gates, and WOODVILE the Lieutenant speaks within*

### WOODVILE

What noise is this? what traitors have we here?

**GLOUCESTER**

Lieutenant, is it you whose voice I hear?  
Open the gates; here's Gloucester that would enter.

**WOODVILE**

Have patience, noble duke; I may not open;  
The Cardinal of Winchester forbids:  
From him I have express commandment  
That thou nor none of thine shall be let in.

**GLOUCESTER**

Faint-hearted Woodvile, prizest him 'fore me?  
Arrogant Winchester, that haughty prelate,  
Whom Henry, our late sovereign, ne'er could brook?  
Thou art no friend to God or to the king:  
Open the gates, or I'll shut thee out shortly.  
Serving-Men Open the gates unto the lord protector,  
Or we'll burst them open, if that you come not quickly.

*Enter to the Protector at the Tower Gates BISHOP OF WINCHESTER and his men in tawny coats*

BISHOP

**OF WINCHESTER**

How now, ambitious Humphry! what means this?

**GLOUCESTER**

Peel'd priest, dost thou command me to be shut out?  
BISHOP

**OF WINCHESTER**

I do, thou most usurping proditor,

And not protector, of the king or realm.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Stand back, thou manifest conspirator,  
Thou that contrivedst to murder our dead lord;  
Thou that givest whores indulgences to sin:  
I'll canvass thee in thy broad cardinal's hat,  
If thou proceed in this thy insolence.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Nay, stand thou back, I will not budge a foot:  
This be Damascus, be thou cursed Cain,  
To slay thy brother Abel, if thou wilt.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I will not slay thee, but I'll drive thee back:  
Thy scarlet robes as a child's bearing-cloth  
I'll use to carry thee out of this place.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Do what thou darest; I beard thee to thy face.

## **GLOUCESTER**

What! am I dared and bearded to my face?  
Draw, men, for all this privileged place;  
Blue coats to tawny coats. Priest, beware your beard,  
I mean to tug it and to cuff you soundly:  
Under my feet I stamp thy cardinal's hat:  
In spite of pope or dignities of church,  
Here by the cheeks I'll drag thee up and down.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Gloucester, thou wilt answer this before the pope.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Winchester goose, I cry, a rope! a rope!  
Now beat them hence; why do you let them stay?  
Thee I'll chase hence, thou wolf in sheep's array.  
Out, tawny coats! out, scarlet hypocrite!

*Here GLOUCESTER's men beat out BISHOP OF WINCHESTER's men, and enter in the hurly-burly the Mayor of London and his Officers*

## **Mayor**

Fie, lords! that you, being supreme magistrates,  
Thus contumeliously should break the peace!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Peace, mayor! thou know'st little of my wrongs:  
Here's Beaufort, that regards nor God nor king,  
Hath here distrain'd the Tower to his use.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Here's Gloucester, a foe to citizens,  
One that still motions war and never peace,  
O'ercharging your free purses with large fines,  
That seeks to overthrow religion,  
Because he is protector of the realm,  
And would have armour here out of the Tower,  
To crown himself king and suppress the prince.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I will not answer thee with words, but blows.

*Here they skirmish again*

## **Mayor**

Naught rests for me in this tumultuous strife  
But to make open proclamation:  
Come, officer; as loud as e'er thou canst,  
Cry.

**Officer**

All manner of men assembled here in arms this day  
against God's peace and the king's, we charge and  
command you, in his highness' name, to repair to  
your several dwelling-places; and not to wear,  
handle, or use any sword, weapon, or dagger,  
henceforward, upon pain of death.

**GLOUCESTER**

Cardinal, I'll be no breaker of the law:  
But we shall meet, and break our minds at large.  
BISHOP

**OF WINCHESTER**

Gloucester, we will meet; to thy cost, be sure:  
Thy heart-blood I will have for this day's work.

**Mayor**

I'll call for clubs, if you will not away.  
This cardinal's more haughty than the devil.

**GLOUCESTER**

Mayor, farewell: thou dost but what thou mayst.  
BISHOP

**OF WINCHESTER**

Abominable Gloucester, guard thy head;  
For I intend to have it ere long.

*Exeunt, severally, GLOUCESTER and BISHOP OF WINCHESTER with their Serving-men*



## Mayor

See the coast clear'd, and then we will depart.  
Good God, these nobles should such stomachs bear!  
I myself fight not once in forty year.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Orleans.

*Enter, on the walls, a Master Gunner and his Boy*

Master-Gunner Sirrah, thou know'st how Orleans is besieged,  
And how the English have the suburbs won.

**Boy**

Father, I know; and oft have shot at them,  
Howe'er unfortunate I miss'd my aim.  
Master-Gunner But now thou shalt not. Be thou ruled by me:  
Chief master-gunner am I of this town;  
Something I must do to procure me grace.  
The prince's espials have informed me  
How the English, in the suburbs close intrench'd,  
Wont, through a secret grate of iron bars  
In yonder tower, to overpeer the city,  
And thence discover how with most advantage  
They may vex us with shot, or with assault.  
To intercept this inconvenience,  
A piece of ordnance 'gainst it I have placed;  
And even these three days have I watch'd,  
If I could see them.  
Now do thou watch, for I can stay no longer.  
If thou spy'st any, run and bring me word;  
And thou shalt find me at the governor's.

*Exit*

**Boy**

Father, I warrant you; take you no care;  
I'll never trouble you, if I may spy them.

*Exit*

*Enter, on the turrets, SALISBURY and TALBOT, GLANSDALE, GARGRAVE, and others*

**SALISBURY**

Talbot, my life, my joy, again return'd!  
How wert thou handled being prisoner?  
Or by what means got'st thou to be released?  
Discourse, I prithee, on this turret's top.

**TALBOT**

The Duke of Bedford had a prisoner  
Call'd the brave Lord Ponton de Santrailles;  
For him was I exchanged and ransomed.  
But with a baser man of arms by far  
Once in contempt they would have barter'd me:  
Which I, disdainingly, scorn'd; and craved death,  
Rather than I would be so vile esteem'd.  
In fine, redeem'd I was as I desired.  
But, O! the treacherous Fastolfe wounds my heart,  
Whom with my bare fists I would execute,  
If I now had him brought into my power.

**SALISBURY**

Yet tell'st thou not how thou wert entertain'd.

**TALBOT**

With scoffs and scorns and contumelious taunts.  
In open market-place produced they me,  
To be a public spectacle to all:  
Here, said they, is the terror of the French,  
The scarecrow that affrights our children so.  
Then broke I from the officers that led me,  
And with my nails digg'd stones out of the ground,  
To hurl at the beholders of my shame:  
My grisly countenance made others fly;  
None durst come near for fear of sudden death.  
In iron walls they deem'd me not secure;  
So great fear of my name 'mongst them was spread,  
That they supposed I could rend bars of steel,

And spurn in pieces posts of adamant:  
Wherefore a guard of chosen shot I had,  
That walked about me every minute-while;  
And if I did but stir out of my bed,  
Ready they were to shoot me to the heart.

*Enter the Boy with a linstock*

## **SALISBURY**

I grieve to hear what torments you endured,  
But we will be revenged sufficiently  
Now it is supper-time in Orleans:  
Here, through this grate, I count each one  
and view the Frenchmen how they fortify:  
Let us look in; the sight will much delight thee.  
Sir Thomas Gargrave, and Sir William Glansdale,  
Let me have your express opinions  
Where is best place to make our battery next.

## **GARGRAVE**

I think, at the north gate; for there stand lords.

## **GLANSDALE**

And I, here, at the bulwark of the bridge.

## **TALBOT**

For aught I see, this city must be famish'd,  
Or with light skirmishes enfeebled.

*Here they shoot. SALISBURY and GARGRAVE fall*

## **SALISBURY**

O Lord, have mercy on us, wretched sinners!

## **GARGRAVE**

O Lord, have mercy on me, woful man!

## TALBOT

What chance is this that suddenly hath cross'd us?  
Speak, Salisbury; at least, if thou canst speak:  
How farest thou, mirror of all martial men?  
One of thy eyes and thy cheek's side struck off!  
Accursed tower! accursed fatal hand  
That hath contrived this woful tragedy!  
In thirteen battles Salisbury o'ercame;  
Henry the Fifth he first train'd to the wars;  
Whilst any trump did sound, or drum struck up,  
His sword did ne'er leave striking in the field.  
Yet livest thou, Salisbury? though thy speech doth fail,  
One eye thou hast, to look to heaven for grace:  
The sun with one eye vieweth all the world.  
Heaven, be thou gracious to none alive,  
If Salisbury wants mercy at thy hands!  
Bear hence his body; I will help to bury it.  
Sir Thomas Gargrave, hast thou any life?  
Speak unto Talbot; nay, look up to him.  
Salisbury, cheer thy spirit with this comfort;  
Thou shalt not die whiles--  
He beckons with his hand and smiles on me.  
As who should say 'When I am dead and gone,  
Remember to avenge me on the French.'  
Plantagenet, I will; and like thee, Nero,  
Play on the lute, beholding the towns burn:  
Wretched shall France be only in my name.

*Here an alarum, and it thunders and lightens*

What stir is this? what tumult's in the heavens?  
Whence cometh this alarum and the noise?

*Enter a Messenger*

## Messenger

My lord, my lord, the French have gathered head:  
The Dauphin, with one Joan la Pucelle join'd,

A holy prophetess new risen up,  
Is come with a great power to raise the siege.

*Here SALISBURY lifteth himself up and groans*

## TALBOT

Hear, hear how dying Salisbury doth groan!  
It irks his heart he cannot be revenged.  
Frenchmen, I'll be a Salisbury to you:  
Pucelle or puzzel, dolphin or dogfish,  
Your hearts I'll stamp out with my horse's heels,  
And make a quagmire of your mingled brains.  
Convey me Salisbury into his tent,  
And then we'll try what these dastard Frenchmen dare.

*Alarum. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same.

*Here an alarum again: and TALBOT pursueth the DAUPHIN, and driveth him: then enter JOAN LA PUCELLE, driving Englishmen before her, and exit after them then re-enter TALBOT*

### TALBOT

Where is my strength, my valour, and my force?  
Our English troops retire, I cannot stay them:  
A woman clad in armour chaseth them.

*Re-enter JOAN LA PUCELLE*

Here, here she comes. I'll have a bout with thee;  
Devil or devil's dam, I'll conjure thee:  
Blood will I draw on thee, thou art a witch,  
And straightway give thy soul to him thou servest.

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

Come, come, 'tis only I that must disgrace thee.

*Here they fight*

### TALBOT

Heavens, can you suffer hell so to prevail?  
My breast I'll burst with straining of my courage  
And from my shoulders crack my arms asunder.  
But I will chastise this high-minded strumpet.

*They fight again*

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

Talbot, farewell; thy hour is not yet come:  
I must go victual Orleans forthwith.

*A short alarum; then enter the town with soldiers*

O'ertake me, if thou canst; I scorn thy strength.  
Go, go, cheer up thy hungry-starved men;  
Help Salisbury to make his testament:  
This day is ours, as many more shall be.

*Exit*

## **TALBOT**

My thoughts are whirled like a potter's wheel;  
I know not where I am, nor what I do;  
A witch, by fear, not force, like Hannibal,  
Drives back our troops and conquers as she lists:  
So bees with smoke and doves with noisome stench  
Are from their hives and houses driven away.  
They call'd us for our fierceness English dogs;  
Now, like to whelps, we crying run away.

*A short alarum*

Hark, countrymen! either renew the fight,  
Or tear the lions out of England's coat;  
Renounce your soil, give sheep in lions' stead:  
Sheep run not half so treacherous from the wolf,  
Or horse or oxen from the leopard,  
As you fly from your oft-subdued slaves.

*Alarum. Here another skirmish*

It will not be: retire into your trenches:  
You all consented unto Salisbury's death,  
For none would strike a stroke in his revenge.  
Pucelle is enter'd into Orleans,  
In spite of us or aught that we could do.  
O, would I were to die with Salisbury!  
The shame hereof will make me hide my head.



*Exit TALBOT. Alarum; retreat; flourish*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The same.

*Enter, on the walls, JOAN LA PUCELLE, CHARLES, REIGNIER, ALENCON, and Soldiers*

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

Advance our waving colours on the walls;  
Rescued is Orleans from the English  
Thus Joan la Pucelle hath perform'd her word.

### CHARLES

Divinest creature, Astraea's daughter,  
How shall I honour thee for this success?  
Thy promises are like Adonis' gardens  
That one day bloom'd and fruitful were the next.  
France, triumph in thy glorious prophetess!  
Recover'd is the town of Orleans:  
More blessed hap did ne'er befall our state.

### REIGNIER

Why ring not out the bells aloud throughout the town?  
Dauphin, command the citizens make bonfires  
And feast and banquet in the open streets,  
To celebrate the joy that God hath given us.

### ALENCON

All France will be replete with mirth and joy,  
When they shall hear how we have play'd the men.

### CHARLES

'Tis Joan, not we, by whom the day is won;

For which I will divide my crown with her,  
And all the priests and friars in my realm  
Shall in procession sing her endless praise.  
A statelier pyramis to her I'll rear  
Than Rhodope's or Memphis' ever was:  
In memory of her when she is dead,  
Her ashes, in an urn more precious  
Than the rich-jewel'd of Darius,  
Transported shall be at high festivals  
Before the kings and queens of France.  
No longer on Saint Denis will we cry,  
But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.  
Come in, and let us banquet royally,  
After this golden day of victory.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 1, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before Orleans.

*Enter a Sergeant of a band with two Sentinels*

### Sergeant

Sirs, take your places and be vigilant:  
If any noise or soldier you perceive  
Near to the walls, by some apparent sign  
Let us have knowledge at the court of guard.

### First Sentinel

Sergeant, you shall.

*Exit Sergeant*

Thus are poor servitors,  
When others sleep upon their quiet beds,  
Constrain'd to watch in darkness, rain and cold.

*Enter TALBOT, BEDFORD, BURGUNDY, and Forces, with scaling-ladders, their drums beating a dead march*

### TALBOT

Lord Regent, and redoubted Burgundy,  
By whose approach the regions of Artois,  
Wallon and Picardy are friends to us,  
This happy night the Frenchmen are secure,  
Having all day caroused and banqueted:  
Embrace we then this opportunity  
As fitting best to quittance their deceit  
Contrived by art and baleful sorcery.

### BEDFORD

Coward of France! how much he wrongs his fame,  
Despairing of his own arm's fortitude,  
To join with witches and the help of hell!

**BURGUNDY**

Traitors have never other company.  
But what's that Pucelle whom they term so pure?

**TALBOT**

A maid, they say.

**BEDFORD**

A maid! and be so martial!

**BURGUNDY**

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long,  
If underneath the standard of the French  
She carry armour as she hath begun.

**TALBOT**

Well, let them practise and converse with spirits:  
God is our fortress, in whose conquering name  
Let us resolve to scale their flinty bulwarks.

**BEDFORD**

Ascend, brave Talbot; we will follow thee.

**TALBOT**

Not all together: better far, I guess,  
That we do make our entrance several ways;  
That, if it chance the one of us do fail,  
The other yet may rise against their force.

## **BEDFORD**

Agreed: I'll to yond corner.

## **BURGUNDY**

And I to this.

## **TALBOT**

And here will Talbot mount, or make his grave.  
Now, Salisbury, for thee, and for the right  
Of English Henry, shall this night appear  
How much in duty I am bound to both.

## **Sentinels**

Arm! arm! the enemy doth make assault!

*Cry: 'St. George,' 'A Talbot.'*

*The French leap over the walls in their shirts. Enter, several ways, the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, and REIGNIER, half ready, and half unready*

## **ALENCON**

How now, my lords! what, all unready so?

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

Unready! ay, and glad we 'scaped so well.

## **REIGNIER**

'Twas time, I trow, to wake and leave our beds,  
Hearing alarums at our chamber-doors.

## **ALENCON**

Of all exploits since first I follow'd arms,  
Ne'er heard I of a warlike enterprise

More venturous or desperate than this.

**BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

I think this Talbot be a fiend of hell.

**REIGNIER**

If not of hell, the heavens, sure, favour him.

**ALENCON**

Here cometh Charles: I marvel how he sped.

**BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

Tut, holy Joan was his defensive guard.

*Enter CHARLES and JOAN LA PUCELLE*

**CHARLES**

Is this thy cunning, thou deceitful dame?  
Didst thou at first, to flatter us withal,  
Make us partakers of a little gain,  
That now our loss might be ten times so much?

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Wherefore is Charles impatient with his friend!  
At all times will you have my power alike?  
Sleeping or waking must I still prevail,  
Or will you blame and lay the fault on me?  
Improvident soldiers! had your watch been good,  
This sudden mischief never could have fall'n.

**CHARLES**

Duke of Alencon, this was your default,  
That, being captain of the watch to-night,  
Did look no better to that weighty charge.

## **ALENCON**

Had all your quarters been as safely kept  
As that whereof I had the government,  
We had not been thus shamefully surprised.

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

Mine was secure.

## **REIGNIER**

And so was mine, my lord.

## **CHARLES**

And, for myself, most part of all this night,  
Within her quarter and mine own precinct  
I was employ'd in passing to and fro,  
About relieving of the sentinels:  
Then how or which way should they first break in?

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Question, my lords, no further of the case,  
How or which way: 'tis sure they found some place  
But weakly guarded, where the breach was made.  
And now there rests no other shift but this;  
To gather our soldiers, scatter'd and dispersed,  
And lay new platforms to endamage them.

*Alarum. Enter an English Soldier, crying 'A Talbot! a Talbot!' They fly, leaving their clothes behind*

## **Soldier**

I'll be so bold to take what they have left.  
The cry of Talbot serves me for a sword;  
For I have loaden me with many spoils,  
Using no other weapon but his name.



*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Orleans. Within the town.

*Enter TALBOT, BEDFORD, BURGUNDY, a Captain, and others*

### BEDFORD

The day begins to break, and night is fled,  
Whose pitchy mantle over-veil'd the earth.  
Here sound retreat, and cease our hot pursuit.

*Retreat sounded*

### TALBOT

Bring forth the body of old Salisbury,  
And here advance it in the market-place,  
The middle centre of this cursed town.  
Now have I paid my vow unto his soul;  
For every drop of blood was drawn from him,  
There hath at least five Frenchmen died tonight.  
And that hereafter ages may behold  
What ruin happen'd in revenge of him,  
Within their chiefest temple I'll erect  
A tomb, wherein his corpse shall be interr'd:  
Upon the which, that every one may read,  
Shall be engraved the sack of Orleans,  
The treacherous manner of his mournful death  
And what a terror he had been to France.  
But, lords, in all our bloody massacre,  
I muse we met not with the Dauphin's grace,  
His new-come champion, virtuous Joan of Arc,  
Nor any of his false confederates.

### BEDFORD

'Tis thought, Lord Talbot, when the fight began,

Roused on the sudden from their drowsy beds,  
They did amongst the troops of armed men  
Leap o'er the walls for refuge in the field.

## **BURGUNDY**

Myself, as far as I could well discern  
For smoke and dusky vapours of the night,  
Am sure I scared the Dauphin and his trull,  
When arm in arm they both came swiftly running,  
Like to a pair of loving turtle-doves  
That could not live asunder day or night.  
After that things are set in order here,  
We'll follow them with all the power we have.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

All hail, my lords! which of this princely train  
Call ye the warlike Talbot, for his acts  
So much applauded through the realm of France?

## **TALBOT**

Here is the Talbot: who would speak with him?

## **Messenger**

The virtuous lady, Countess of Auvergne,  
With modesty admiring thy renown,  
By me entreats, great lord, thou wouldst vouchsafe  
To visit her poor castle where she lies,  
That she may boast she hath beheld the man  
Whose glory fills the world with loud report.

## **BURGUNDY**

Is it even so? Nay, then, I see our wars  
Will turn unto a peaceful comic sport,  
When ladies crave to be encounter'd with.  
You may not, my lord, despise her gentle suit.

## TALBOT

Ne'er trust me then; for when a world of men  
Could not prevail with all their oratory,  
Yet hath a woman's kindness over-ruled:  
And therefore tell her I return great thanks,  
And in submission will attend on her.  
Will not your honours bear me company?

## BEDFORD

No, truly; it is more than manners will:  
And I have heard it said, unbidden guests  
Are often welcomest when they are gone.

## TALBOT

Well then, alone, since there's no remedy,  
I mean to prove this lady's courtesy.  
Come hither, captain.

*Whispers*

You perceive my mind?

## Captain

I do, my lord, and mean accordingly.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Auvergne. The COUNTESS's castle.

*Enter the COUNTESS and her Porter*

COUNTESS

### OF AUVERGNE

Porter, remember what I gave in charge;  
And when you have done so, bring the keys to me.

**Porter**

Madam, I will.

*Exit*

COUNTESS

### OF AUVERGNE

The plot is laid: if all things fall out right,  
I shall as famous be by this exploit  
As Scythian Tomyris by Cyrus' death.  
Great is the rumor of this dreadful knight,  
And his achievements of no less account:  
Fain would mine eyes be witness with mine ears,  
To give their censure of these rare reports.

*Enter Messenger and TALBOT*

**Messenger**

Madam,  
According as your ladyship desired,  
By message craved, so is Lord Talbot come.

COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

And he is welcome. What! is this the man?

**Messenger**

Madam, it is.  
COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

Is this the scourge of France?  
Is this the Talbot, so much fear'd abroad  
That with his name the mothers still their babes?  
I see report is fabulous and false:  
I thought I should have seen some Hercules,  
A second Hector, for his grim aspect,  
And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs.  
Alas, this is a child, a silly dwarf!  
It cannot be this weak and writhled shrimp  
Should strike such terror to his enemies.

**TALBOT**

Madam, I have been bold to trouble you;  
But since your ladyship is not at leisure,  
I'll sort some other time to visit you.  
COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

What means he now? Go ask him whither he goes.

**Messenger**

Stay, my Lord Talbot; for my lady craves  
To know the cause of your abrupt departure.

**TALBOT**

Marry, for that she's in a wrong belief,  
I go to certify her Talbot's here.

*Re-enter Porter with keys*

COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

If thou be he, then art thou prisoner.

**TALBOT**

Prisoner! to whom?

COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

To me, blood-thirsty lord;  
And for that cause I trained thee to my house.  
Long time thy shadow hath been thrall to me,  
For in my gallery thy picture hangs:  
But now the substance shall endure the like,  
And I will chain these legs and arms of thine,  
That hast by tyranny these many years  
Wasted our country, slain our citizens  
And sent our sons and husbands captivate.

**TALBOT**

Ha, ha, ha!

COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

Laughst thou, wretch? thy mirth shall turn to moan.

**TALBOT**

I laugh to see your ladyship so fond  
To think that you have aught but Talbot's shadow

Whereon to practise your severity.  
COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

Why, art not thou the man?

**TALBOT**

I am indeed.  
COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

Then have I substance too.

**TALBOT**

No, no, I am but shadow of myself:  
You are deceived, my substance is not here;  
For what you see is but the smallest part  
And least proportion of humanity:  
I tell you, madam, were the whole frame here,  
It is of such a spacious lofty pitch,  
Your roof were not sufficient to contain't.  
COUNTESS

**OF AUVERGNE**

This is a riddling merchant for the nonce;  
He will be here, and yet he is not here:  
How can these contrarities agree?

**TALBOT**

That will I show you presently.

*Winds his horn. Drums strike up: a peal of ordnance. Enter soldiers*

How say you, madam? are you now persuaded  
That Talbot is but shadow of himself?



These are his substance, sinews, arms and strength,  
With which he yoketh your rebellious necks,  
Razeth your cities and subverts your towns  
And in a moment makes them desolate.  
COUNTESS

## OF AUVERGNE

Victorious Talbot! pardon my abuse:  
I find thou art no less than fame hath bruited  
And more than may be gather'd by thy shape.  
Let my presumption not provoke thy wrath;  
For I am sorry that with reverence  
I did not entertain thee as thou art.

## TALBOT

Be not dismay'd, fair lady; nor misconstrue  
The mind of Talbot, as you did mistake  
The outward composition of his body.  
What you have done hath not offended me;  
Nor other satisfaction do I crave,  
But only, with your patience, that we may  
Taste of your wine and see what cates you have;  
For soldiers' stomachs always serve them well.  
COUNTESS

## OF AUVERGNE

With all my heart, and think me honoured  
To feast so great a warrior in my house.

*Exeunt*

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. London. The Temple-garden.

*Enter the Earls of SOMERSET, SUFFOLK, and WARWICK; RICHARD PLANTAGENET, VERNON, and another Lawyer*

RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Great lords and gentlemen, what means this silence?  
Dare no man answer in a case of truth?

SUFFOLK

Within the Temple-hall we were too loud;  
The garden here is more convenient.  
RICHARD

PLANTAGENET

Then say at once if I maintain'd the truth;  
Or else was wrangling Somerset in the error?

SUFFOLK

Faith, I have been a truant in the law,  
And never yet could frame my will to it;  
And therefore frame the law unto my will.

SOMERSET

Judge you, my Lord of Warwick, then, between us.

WARWICK

Between two hawks, which flies the higher pitch;

Between two dogs, which hath the deeper mouth;  
Between two blades, which bears the better temper:  
Between two horses, which doth bear him best;  
Between two girls, which hath the merriest eye;  
I have perhaps some shallow spirit of judgement;  
But in these nice sharp quilllets of the law,  
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw.

RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Tut, tut, here is a mannerly forbearance:  
The truth appears so naked on my side  
That any purblind eye may find it out.

## **SOMERSET**

And on my side it is so well apparell'd,  
So clear, so shining and so evident  
That it will glimmer through a blind man's eye.

RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Since you are tongue-tied and so loath to speak,  
In dumb significants proclaim your thoughts:  
Let him that is a true-born gentleman  
And stands upon the honour of his birth,  
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,  
From off this brier pluck a white rose with me.

## **SOMERSET**

Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer,  
But dare maintain the party of the truth,  
Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.

## **WARWICK**

I love no colours, and without all colour  
Of base insinuating flattery  
I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet.

## **SUFFOLK**

I pluck this red rose with young Somerset  
And say withal I think he held the right.

## **VERNON**

Stay, lords and gentlemen, and pluck no more,  
Till you conclude that he upon whose side  
The fewest roses are cropp'd from the tree  
Shall yield the other in the right opinion.

## **SOMERSET**

Good Master Vernon, it is well objected:  
If I have fewest, I subscribe in silence.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

And I.

## **VERNON**

Then for the truth and plainness of the case.  
I pluck this pale and maiden blossom here,  
Giving my verdict on the white rose side.

## **SOMERSET**

Prick not your finger as you pluck it off,  
Lest bleeding you do paint the white rose red  
And fall on my side so, against your will.

## **VERNON**

If I my lord, for my opinion bleed,  
Opinion shall be surgeon to my hurt  
And keep me on the side where still I am.

## **SOMERSET**

Well, well, come on: who else?

## **Lawyer**

Unless my study and my books be false,  
The argument you held was wrong in you:

*To SOMERSET*

In sign whereof I pluck a white rose too.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Now, Somerset, where is your argument?

## **SOMERSET**

Here in my scabbard, meditating that  
Shall dye your white rose in a bloody red.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Meantime your cheeks do counterfeit our roses;  
For pale they look with fear, as witnessing  
The truth on our side.

## **SOMERSET**

No, Plantagenet,  
'Tis not for fear but anger that thy cheeks  
Blush for pure shame to counterfeit our roses,  
And yet thy tongue will not confess thy error.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Hath not thy rose a canker, Somerset?

## **SOMERSET**

Hath not thy rose a thorn, Plantagenet?

RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Ay, sharp and piercing, to maintain his truth;  
Whiles thy consuming canker eats his falsehood.

## **SOMERSET**

Well, I'll find friends to wear my bleeding roses,  
That shall maintain what I have said is true,  
Where false Plantagenet dare not be seen.

RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Now, by this maiden blossom in my hand,  
I scorn thee and thy fashion, peevish boy.

## **SUFFOLK**

Turn not thy scorns this way, Plantagenet.

RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Proud Pole, I will, and scorn both him and thee.

## **SUFFOLK**

I'll turn my part thereof into thy throat.

## **SOMERSET**

Away, away, good William de la Pole!  
We grace the yeoman by conversing with him.

## **WARWICK**

Now, by God's will, thou wrong'st him, Somerset;  
His grandfather was Lionel Duke of Clarence,  
Third son to the third Edward King of England:  
Spring crestless yeomen from so deep a root?  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

He bears him on the place's privilege,  
Or durst not, for his craven heart, say thus.

## **SOMERSET**

By him that made me, I'll maintain my words  
On any plot of ground in Christendom.  
Was not thy father, Richard Earl of Cambridge,  
For treason executed in our late king's days?  
And, by his treason, stand'st not thou attainted,  
Corrupted, and exempt from ancient gentry?  
His trespass yet lives guilty in thy blood;  
And, till thou be restored, thou art a yeoman.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

My father was attached, not attainted,  
Condemn'd to die for treason, but no traitor;  
And that I'll prove on better men than Somerset,  
Were growing time once ripen'd to my will.  
For your partaker Pole and you yourself,  
I'll note you in my book of memory,  
To scourge you for this apprehension:  
Look to it well and say you are well warn'd.

## **SOMERSET**

Ah, thou shalt find us ready for thee still;  
And know us by these colours for thy foes,  
For these my friends in spite of thee shall wear.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

And, by my soul, this pale and angry rose,  
As cognizance of my blood-drinking hate,  
Will I for ever and my faction wear,  
Until it wither with me to my grave  
Or flourish to the height of my degree.

## **SUFFOLK**

Go forward and be choked with thy ambition!  
And so farewell until I meet thee next.

*Exit*

## **SOMERSET**

Have with thee, Pole. Farewell, ambitious Richard.

*Exit*

RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

How I am braved and must perforce endure it!

## **WARWICK**

This blot that they object against your house  
Shall be wiped out in the next parliament  
Call'd for the truce of Winchester and Gloucester;  
And if thou be not then created York,  
I will not live to be accounted Warwick.  
Meantime, in signal of my love to thee,  
Against proud Somerset and William Pole,  
Will I upon thy party wear this rose:  
And here I prophesy: this brawl to-day,  
Grown to this faction in the Temple-garden,  
Shall send between the red rose and the white  
A thousand souls to death and deadly night.



RICHARD

**PLANTAGENET**

Good Master Vernon, I am bound to you,  
That you on my behalf would pluck a flower.

**VERNON**

In your behalf still will I wear the same.

**Lawyer**

And so will I.  
RICHARD

**PLANTAGENET**

Thanks, gentle sir.  
Come, let us four to dinner: I dare say  
This quarrel will drink blood another day.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The Tower of London.

*Enter MORTIMER, brought in a chair, and Gaolers*

### MORTIMER

Kind keepers of my weak decaying age,  
Let dying Mortimer here rest himself.  
Even like a man new haled from the rack,  
So fare my limbs with long imprisonment.  
And these grey locks, the pursuivants of death,  
Nestor-like aged in an age of care,  
Argue the end of Edmund Mortimer.  
These eyes, like lamps whose wasting oil is spent,  
Wax dim, as drawing to their exigent;  
Weak shoulders, overborne with burthening grief,  
And pithless arms, like to a wither'd vine  
That droops his sapless branches to the ground;  
Yet are these feet, whose strengthless stay is numb,  
Unable to support this lump of clay,  
Swift-winged with desire to get a grave,  
As witting I no other comfort have.  
But tell me, keeper, will my nephew come?

### First Gaoler

Richard Plantagenet, my lord, will come:  
We sent unto the Temple, unto his chamber;  
And answer was return'd that he will come.

### MORTIMER

Enough: my soul shall then be satisfied.  
Poor gentleman! his wrong doth equal mine.  
Since Henry Monmouth first began to reign,  
Before whose glory I was great in arms,

This loathsome sequestration have I had:  
And even since then hath Richard been obscured,  
Deprived of honour and inheritance.  
But now the arbitrator of despairs,  
Just death, kind umpire of men's miseries,  
With sweet enlargement doth dismiss me hence:  
I would his troubles likewise were expired,  
That so he might recover what was lost.

*Enter RICHARD PLANTAGENET*

**First Gaoler**

My lord, your loving nephew now is come.

**MORTIMER**

Richard Plantagenet, my friend, is he come?  
RICHARD

**PLANTAGENET**

Ay, noble uncle, thus ignobly used,  
Your nephew, late despised Richard, comes.

**MORTIMER**

Direct mine arms I may embrace his neck,  
And in his bosom spend my latter gasp:  
O, tell me when my lips do touch his cheeks,  
That I may kindly give one fainting kiss.  
And now declare, sweet stem from York's great stock,  
Why didst thou say, of late thou wert despised?  
RICHARD

**PLANTAGENET**

First, lean thine aged back against mine arm;  
And, in that ease, I'll tell thee my disease.  
This day, in argument upon a case,  
Some words there grew 'twixt Somerset and me;  
Among which terms he used his lavish tongue

And did upbraid me with my father's death:  
Which obloquy set bars before my tongue,  
Else with the like I had requited him.  
Therefore, good uncle, for my father's sake,  
In honour of a true Plantagenet  
And for alliance sake, declare the cause  
My father, Earl of Cambridge, lost his head.

## **MORTIMER**

That cause, fair nephew, that imprison'd me  
And hath detain'd me all my flowering youth  
Within a loathsome dungeon, there to pine,  
Was cursed instrument of his decease.

RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Discover more at large what cause that was,  
For I am ignorant and cannot guess.

## **MORTIMER**

I will, if that my fading breath permit  
And death approach not ere my tale be done.  
Henry the Fourth, grandfather to this king,  
Deposed his nephew Richard, Edward's son,  
The first-begotten and the lawful heir,  
Of Edward king, the third of that descent:  
During whose reign the Percies of the north,  
Finding his usurpation most unjust,  
Endeavor'd my advancement to the throne:  
The reason moved these warlike lords to this  
Was, for that--young King Richard thus removed,  
Leaving no heir begotten of his body--  
I was the next by birth and parentage;  
For by my mother I derived am  
From Lionel Duke of Clarence, the third son  
To King Edward the Third; whereas he  
From John of Gaunt doth bring his pedigree,  
Being but fourth of that heroic line.  
But mark: as in this haughty attempt

They laboured to plant the rightful heir,  
I lost my liberty and they their lives.  
Long after this, when Henry the Fifth,  
Succeeding his father Bolingbroke, did reign,  
Thy father, Earl of Cambridge, then derived  
From famous Edmund Langley, Duke of York,  
Marrying my sister that thy mother was,  
Again in pity of my hard distress  
Levied an army, weening to redeem  
And have install'd me in the diadem:  
But, as the rest, so fell that noble earl  
And was beheaded. Thus the Mortimers,  
In whom the tide rested, were suppress'd.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Of which, my lord, your honour is the last.

## **MORTIMER**

True; and thou seest that I no issue have  
And that my fainting words do warrant death;  
Thou art my heir; the rest I wish thee gather:  
But yet be wary in thy studious care.  
RICHARD

## **PLANTAGENET**

Thy grave admonishments prevail with me:  
But yet, methinks, my father's execution  
Was nothing less than bloody tyranny.

## **MORTIMER**

With silence, nephew, be thou politic:  
Strong-fixed is the house of Lancaster,  
And like a mountain, not to be removed.  
But now thy uncle is removing hence:  
As princes do their courts, when they are cloy'd  
With long continuance in a settled place.  
RICHARD

## PLANTAGENET

O, uncle, would some part of my young years  
Might but redeem the passage of your age!

## MORTIMER

Thou dost then wrong me, as that slaughterer doth  
Which giveth many wounds when one will kill.  
Mourn not, except thou sorrow for my good;  
Only give order for my funeral:  
And so farewell, and fair be all thy hopes  
And prosperous be thy life in peace and war!

*Dies*

RICHARD

## PLANTAGENET

And peace, no war, befall thy parting soul!  
In prison hast thou spent a pilgrimage  
And like a hermit overpass'd thy days.  
Well, I will lock his counsel in my breast;  
And what I do imagine let that rest.  
Keepers, convey him hence, and I myself  
Will see his burial better than his life.

*Exeunt Gaolers, bearing out the body of MORTIMER*

Here dies the dusky torch of Mortimer,  
Choked with ambition of the meaner sort:  
And for those wrongs, those bitter injuries,  
Which Somerset hath offer'd to my house:  
I doubt not but with honour to redress;  
And therefore haste I to the parliament,  
Either to be restored to my blood,  
Or make my ill the advantage of my good.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 2, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. The Parliament-house.

*Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, EXETER, GLOUCESTER, WARWICK, SOMERSET, and SUFFOLK; the BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, RICHARD PLANTAGENET, and others. GLOUCESTER offers to put up a bill; BISHOP OF WINCHESTER snatches it, and tears it*

BISHOP

### OF WINCHESTER

Comest thou with deep premeditated lines,  
With written pamphlets studiously devised,  
Humphrey of Gloucester? If thou canst accuse,  
Or aught intend'st to lay unto my charge,  
Do it without invention, suddenly;  
As I with sudden and extemporal speech  
Purpose to answer what thou canst object.

### GLOUCESTER

Presumptuous priest! this place commands my patience,  
Or thou shouldst find thou hast dishonour'd me.  
Think not, although in writing I preferr'd  
The manner of thy vile outrageous crimes,  
That therefore I have forged, or am not able  
Verbatim to rehearse the method of my pen:  
No, prelate; such is thy audacious wickedness,  
Thy lewd, pestiferous and dissentious pranks,  
As very infants prattle of thy pride.  
Thou art a most pernicious usurer,  
Forward by nature, enemy to peace;  
Lascivious, wanton, more than well beseems  
A man of thy profession and degree;  
And for thy treachery, what's more manifest?  
In that thou laid'st a trap to take my life,  
As well at London bridge as at the Tower.  
Beside, I fear me, if thy thoughts were sifted,



The king, thy sovereign, is not quite exempt  
From envious malice of thy swelling heart.  
BISHOP

**OF WINCHESTER**

Gloucester, I do defy thee. Lords, vouchsafe  
To give me hearing what I shall reply.  
If I were covetous, ambitious or perverse,  
As he will have me, how am I so poor?  
Or how haps it I seek not to advance  
Or raise myself, but keep my wonted calling?  
And for dissension, who preferreth peace  
More than I do?--except I be provoked.  
No, my good lords, it is not that offends;  
It is not that that hath incensed the duke:  
It is, because no one should sway but he;  
No one but he should be about the king;  
And that engenders thunder in his breast  
And makes him roar these accusations forth.  
But he shall know I am as good--

**GLOUCESTER**

As good!  
Thou bastard of my grandfather!  
BISHOP

**OF WINCHESTER**

Ay, lordly sir; for what are you, I pray,  
But one imperious in another's throne?

**GLOUCESTER**

Am I not protector, saucy priest?  
BISHOP

**OF WINCHESTER**

And am not I a prelate of the church?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Yes, as an outlaw in a castle keeps  
And useth it to patronage his theft.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Unreverent Gloster!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Thou art reverent  
Touching thy spiritual function, not thy life.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Rome shall remedy this.

## **WARWICK**

Roam thither, then.

## **SOMERSET**

My lord, it were your duty to forbear.

## **WARWICK**

Ay, see the bishop be not overborne.

## **SOMERSET**

Methinks my lord should be religious  
And know the office that belongs to such.

## **WARWICK**

Methinks his lordship should be humbler;  
it fitteth not a prelate so to plead.

## SOMERSET

Yes, when his holy state is touch'd so near.

## WARWICK

State holy or unhallow'd, what of that?

Is not his grace protector to the king?

RICHARD

## PLANTAGENET

[Aside] Plantagenet, I see, must hold his tongue,

Lest it be said 'Speak, sirrah, when you should;

Must your bold verdict enter talk with lords?'

Else would I have a fling at Winchester.

## KING HENRY VI

Uncles of Gloucester and of Winchester,

The special watchmen of our English weal,

I would prevail, if prayers might prevail,

To join your hearts in love and amity.

O, what a scandal is it to our crown,

That two such noble peers as ye should jar!

Believe me, lords, my tender years can tell

Civil dissension is a viperous worm

That gnaws the bowels of the commonwealth.

*A noise within, 'Down with the tawny-coats!'*

What tumult's this?

## WARWICK

An uproar, I dare warrant,

Begun through malice of the bishop's men.

*A noise again, 'Stones! stones!' Enter Mayor*

## Mayor

O, my good lords, and virtuous Henry,  
Pity the city of London, pity us!  
The bishop and the Duke of Gloucester's men,  
Forbidden late to carry any weapon,  
Have fill'd their pockets full of pebble stones  
And banding themselves in contrary parts  
Do pelt so fast at one another's pate  
That many have their giddy brains knock'd out:  
Our windows are broke down in every street  
And we for fear compell'd to shut our shops.

*Enter Serving-men, in skirmish, with bloody pates*

## KING HENRY VI

We charge you, on allegiance to ourself,  
To hold your slaughtering hands and keep the peace.  
Pray, uncle Gloucester, mitigate this strife.  
First Serving-man Nay, if we be forbidden stones,  
We'll fall to it with our teeth.  
Second Serving-man Do what ye dare, we are as resolute.

*Skirmish again*

## GLOUCESTER

You of my household, leave this peevish broil  
And set this unaccustom'd fight aside.  
Third Serving-man My lord, we know your grace to be a man  
Just and upright; and, for your royal birth,  
Inferior to none but to his majesty:  
And ere that we will suffer such a prince,  
So kind a father of the commonweal,  
To be disgraced by an inkhorn mate,  
We and our wives and children all will fight  
And have our bodies slaughtered by thy foes.  
First Serving-man Ay, and the very parings of our nails  
Shall pitch a field when we are dead.

*Begin again*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Stay, stay, I say!  
And if you love me, as you say you do,  
Let me persuade you to forbear awhile.

## **KING HENRY VI**

O, how this discord doth afflict my soul!  
Can you, my Lord of Winchester, behold  
My sighs and tears and will not once relent?  
Who should be pitiful, if you be not?  
Or who should study to prefer a peace.  
If holy churchmen take delight in broils?

## **WARWICK**

Yield, my lord protector; yield, Winchester;  
Except you mean with obstinate repulse  
To slay your sovereign and destroy the realm.  
You see what mischief and what murder too  
Hath been enacted through your enmity;  
Then be at peace except ye thirst for blood.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

He shall submit, or I will never yield.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Compassion on the king commands me stoop;  
Or I would see his heart out, ere the priest  
Should ever get that privilege of me.

## **WARWICK**

Behold, my Lord of Winchester, the duke  
Hath banish'd moody discontented fury,  
As by his smoothed brows it doth appear:  
Why look you still so stern and tragical?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Here, Winchester, I offer thee my hand.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Fie, uncle Beaufort! I have heard you preach  
That malice was a great and grievous sin;  
And will not you maintain the thing you teach,  
But prove a chief offender in the same?

## **WARWICK**

Sweet king! the bishop hath a kindly gird.  
For shame, my lord of Winchester, relent!  
What, shall a child instruct you what to do?  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Well, Duke of Gloucester, I will yield to thee;  
Love for thy love and hand for hand I give.

## **GLOUCESTER**

[Aside] Ay, but, I fear me, with a hollow heart.--  
See here, my friends and loving countrymen,  
This token serveth for a flag of truce  
Betwixt ourselves and all our followers:  
So help me God, as I dissemble not!  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

[Aside] So help me God, as I intend it not!

## **KING HENRY VI**

O, loving uncle, kind Duke of Gloucester,  
How joyful am I made by this contract!  
Away, my masters! trouble us no more;

But join in friendship, as your lords have done.  
First Serving-man Content: I'll to the surgeon's.  
Second Serving-man And so will I.  
Third Serving-man And I will see what physic the tavern affords.

*Exeunt Serving-men, Mayor, & c*

## **WARWICK**

Accept this scroll, most gracious sovereign,  
Which in the right of Richard Plantagenet  
We do exhibit to your majesty.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Well urged, my Lord of Warwick: or sweet prince,  
And if your grace mark every circumstance,  
You have great reason to do Richard right;  
Especially for those occasions  
At Eltham Place I told your majesty.

## **KING HENRY VI**

And those occasions, uncle, were of force:  
Therefore, my loving lords, our pleasure is  
That Richard be restored to his blood.

## **WARWICK**

Let Richard be restored to his blood;  
So shall his father's wrongs be recompensed.  
BISHOP

## **OF WINCHESTER**

As will the rest, so willeth Winchester.

## **KING HENRY VI**

If Richard will be true, not that alone  
But all the whole inheritance I give

That doth belong unto the house of York,  
From whence you spring by lineal descent.  
RICHARD

**PLANTAGENET**

Thy humble servant vows obedience  
And humble service till the point of death.

**KING HENRY VI**

Stoop then and set your knee against my foot;  
And, in requerdon of that duty done,  
I gird thee with the valiant sword of York:  
Rise Richard, like a true Plantagenet,  
And rise created princely Duke of York.  
RICHARD

**PLANTAGENET**

And so thrive Richard as thy foes may fall!  
And as my duty springs, so perish they  
That grudge one thought against your majesty!

**ALL**

Welcome, high prince, the mighty Duke of York!

**SOMERSET**

[Aside] Perish, base prince, ignoble Duke of York!

**GLOUCESTER**

Now will it best avail your majesty  
To cross the seas and to be crown'd in France:  
The presence of a king engenders love  
Amongst his subjects and his loyal friends,  
As it disanimates his enemies.

**KING HENRY VI**



When Gloucester says the word, King Henry goes;  
For friendly counsel cuts off many foes.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Your ships already are in readiness.

*Sennet. Flourish. Exeunt all but EXETER*

## **EXETER**

Ay, we may march in England or in France,  
Not seeing what is likely to ensue.  
This late dissension grown betwixt the peers  
Burns under feigned ashes of forged love  
And will at last break out into a flame:  
As fester'd members rot but by degree,  
Till bones and flesh and sinews fall away,  
So will this base and envious discord breed.  
And now I fear that fatal prophecy  
Which in the time of Henry named the Fifth  
Was in the mouth of every sucking babe;  
That Henry born at Monmouth should win all  
And Henry born at Windsor lose all:  
Which is so plain that Exeter doth wish  
His days may finish ere that hapless time.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. France. Before Rouen.

*Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE disguised, with four Soldiers with sacks upon their backs*

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

These are the city gates, the gates of Rouen,  
Through which our policy must make a breach:  
Take heed, be wary how you place your words;  
Talk like the vulgar sort of market men  
That come to gather money for their corn.  
If we have entrance, as I hope we shall,  
And that we find the slothful watch but weak,  
I'll by a sign give notice to our friends,  
That Charles the Dauphin may encounter them.

### First Soldier

Our sacks shall be a mean to sack the city,  
And we be lords and rulers over Rouen;  
Therefore we'll knock.

*Knocks*

### Watch

[Within] Qui est la?

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

Paysans, pauvres gens de France;  
Poor market folks that come to sell their corn.

### Watch

Enter, go in; the market bell is rung.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Now, Rouen, I'll shake thy bulwarks to the ground.

*Exeunt*

*Enter CHARLES, the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, REIGNIER, and forces*

## **CHARLES**

Saint Denis bless this happy stratagem!  
And once again we'll sleep secure in Rouen.

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

Here enter'd Pucelle and her practisants;  
Now she is there, how will she specify  
Where is the best and safest passage in?

## **REIGNIER**

By thrusting out a torch from yonder tower;  
Which, once discern'd, shows that her meaning is,  
No way to that, for weakness, which she enter'd.

*Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE on the top, thrusting out a torch burning*

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Behold, this is the happy wedding torch  
That joineth Rouen unto her countrymen,  
But burning fatal to the Talbotites!

*Exit*

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

See, noble Charles, the beacon of our friend;  
The burning torch in yonder turret stands.

## **CHARLES**

Now shine it like a comet of revenge,  
A prophet to the fall of all our foes!

## **REIGNIER**

Defer no time, delays have dangerous ends;  
Enter, and cry 'The Dauphin!' presently,  
And then do execution on the watch.

*Alarum. Exeunt*

*An alarum. Enter TALBOT in an excursion*

## **TALBOT**

France, thou shalt rue this treason with thy tears,  
If Talbot but survive thy treachery.  
Pucelle, that witch, that damned sorceress,  
Hath wrought this hellish mischief unawares,  
That hardly we escaped the pride of France.

*Exit*

*An alarum: excursions. BEDFORD, brought in sick in a chair. Enter TALBOT and BURGUNDY without: within JOAN LA PUCELLE, CHARLES, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, and REIGNIER, on the walls*

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Good morrow, gallants! want ye corn for bread?  
I think the Duke of Burgundy will fast  
Before he'll buy again at such a rate:  
'Twas full of darnel; do you like the taste?

## **BURGUNDY**

Scoff on, vile fiend and shameless courtezan!  
I trust ere long to choke thee with thine own  
And make thee curse the harvest of that corn.

**CHARLES**

Your grace may starve perhaps before that time.

**BEDFORD**

O, let no words, but deeds, revenge this treason!

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

What will you do, good grey-beard? break a lance,  
And run a tilt at death within a chair?

**TALBOT**

Foul fiend of France, and hag of all despite,  
Encompass'd with thy lustful paramours!  
Becomes it thee to taunt his valiant age  
And twit with cowardice a man half dead?  
Damsel, I'll have a bout with you again,  
Or else let Talbot perish with this shame.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Are ye so hot, sir? yet, Pucelle, hold thy peace;  
If Talbot do but thunder, rain will follow.

*The English whisper together in council*

God speed the parliament! who shall be the speaker?

**TALBOT**

Dare ye come forth and meet us in the field?

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Belike your lordship takes us then for fools,  
To try if that our own be ours or no.

**TALBOT**

I speak not to that railing Hecate,  
But unto thee, Alencon, and the rest;  
Will ye, like soldiers, come and fight it out?

**ALENCON**

Signior, no.

**TALBOT**

Signior, hang! base muleters of France!  
Like peasant foot-boys do they keep the walls  
And dare not take up arms like gentlemen.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Away, captains! let's get us from the walls;  
For Talbot means no goodness by his looks.  
God be wi' you, my lord! we came but to tell you  
That we are here.

*Exeunt from the walls*

**TALBOT**

And there will we be too, ere it be long,  
Or else reproach be Talbot's greatest fame!  
Vow, Burgundy, by honour of thy house,  
Prick'd on by public wrongs sustain'd in France,  
Either to get the town again or die:  
And I, as sure as English Henry lives  
And as his father here was conqueror,  
As sure as in this late-betrayed town  
Great Coeur-de-lion's heart was buried,  
So sure I swear to get the town or die.

**BURGUNDY**

My vows are equal partners with thy vows.

## **TALBOT**

But, ere we go, regard this dying prince,  
The valiant Duke of Bedford. Come, my lord,  
We will bestow you in some better place,  
Fitter for sickness and for crazy age.

## **BEDFORD**

Lord Talbot, do not so dishonour me:  
Here will I sit before the walls of Rouen  
And will be partner of your weal or woe.

## **BURGUNDY**

Courageous Bedford, let us now persuade you.

## **BEDFORD**

Not to be gone from hence; for once I read  
That stout Pendragon in his litter sick  
Came to the field and vanquished his foes:  
Methinks I should revive the soldiers' hearts,  
Because I ever found them as myself.

## **TALBOT**

Undaunted spirit in a dying breast!  
Then be it so: heavens keep old Bedford safe!  
And now no more ado, brave Burgundy,  
But gather we our forces out of hand  
And set upon our boasting enemy.

*Exeunt all but BEDFORD and Attendants*

*An alarum: excursions. Enter FASTOLFE and a Captain*

## **Captain**

Whither away, Sir John Fastolfe, in such haste?

## **FASTOLFE**

Whither away! to save myself by flight:  
We are like to have the overthrow again.

## **Captain**

What! will you fly, and leave Lord Talbot?

## **FASTOLFE**

Ay,  
All the Talbots in the world, to save my life!

*Exit*

## **Captain**

Cowardly knight! ill fortune follow thee!

*Exit*

*Retreat: excursions. JOAN LA PUCELLE, ALENCON, and CHARLES fly*

## **BEDFORD**

Now, quiet soul, depart when heaven please,  
For I have seen our enemies' overthrow.  
What is the trust or strength of foolish man?  
They that of late were daring with their scoffs  
Are glad and fain by flight to save themselves.

*BEDFORD dies, and is carried in by two in his chair*

*An alarum. Re-enter TALBOT, BURGUNDY, and the rest*

## **TALBOT**

Lost, and recover'd in a day again!  
This is a double honour, Burgundy:  
Yet heavens have glory for this victory!



## BURGUNDY

Warlike and martial Talbot, Burgundy  
Enshrines thee in his heart and there erects  
Thy noble deeds as valour's monuments.

## TALBOT

Thanks, gentle duke. But where is Pucelle now?  
I think her old familiar is asleep:  
Now where's the Bastard's braves, and Charles his gleeks?  
What, all amort? Rouen hangs her head for grief  
That such a valiant company are fled.  
Now will we take some order in the town,  
Placing therein some expert officers,  
And then depart to Paris to the king,  
For there young Henry with his nobles lie.

## BURGUNDY

What wills Lord Talbot pleaseth Burgundy.

## TALBOT

But yet, before we go, let's not forget  
The noble Duke of Bedford late deceased,  
But see his exequies fulfill'd in Rouen:  
A braver soldier never couched lance,  
A gentler heart did never sway in court;  
But kings and mightiest potentates must die,  
For that's the end of human misery.

*Exeunt*

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The plains near Rouen.

*Enter CHARLES, the BASTARD OF ORLEANS, ALENCON, JOAN LA PUCELLE, and forces*

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

Dismay not, princes, at this accident,  
Nor grieve that Rouen is so recovered:  
Care is no cure, but rather corrosive,  
For things that are not to be remedied.  
Let frantic Talbot triumph for a while  
And like a peacock sweep along his tail;  
We'll pull his plumes and take away his train,  
If Dauphin and the rest will be but ruled.

### CHARLES

We have been guided by thee hitherto,  
And of thy cunning had no diffidence:  
One sudden foil shall never breed distrust.

### BASTARD OF ORLEANS

Search out thy wit for secret policies,  
And we will make thee famous through the world.

### ALENCON

We'll set thy statue in some holy place,  
And have thee revered like a blessed saint:  
Employ thee then, sweet virgin, for our good.

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

Then thus it must be; this doth Joan devise:

By fair persuasions mix'd with sugar'd words  
We will entice the Duke of Burgundy  
To leave the Talbot and to follow us.

## **CHARLES**

Ay, marry, sweeting, if we could do that,  
France were no place for Henry's warriors;  
Nor should that nation boast it so with us,  
But be extirped from our provinces.

## **ALENCON**

For ever should they be expelled from France  
And not have title of an earldom here.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Your honours shall perceive how I will work  
To bring this matter to the wished end.

*Drum sounds afar off*

Hark! by the sound of drum you may perceive  
Their powers are marching unto Paris-ward.

*Here sound an English march. Enter, and pass over at a distance, TALBOT and his forces*

There goes the Talbot, with his colours spread,  
And all the troops of English after him.

*French march. Enter BURGUNDY and forces*

Now in the rearward comes the duke and his:  
Fortune in favour makes him lag behind.  
Summon a parley; we will talk with him.

*Trumpets sound a parley*

## **CHARLES**

A parley with the Duke of Burgundy!

**BURGUNDY**

Who craves a parley with the Burgundy?

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

The princely Charles of France, thy countryman.

**BURGUNDY**

What say'st thou, Charles? for I am marching hence.

**CHARLES**

Speak, Pucelle, and enchant him with thy words.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Brave Burgundy, undoubted hope of France!  
Stay, let thy humble handmaid speak to thee.

**BURGUNDY**

Speak on; but be not over-tedious.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Look on thy country, look on fertile France,  
And see the cities and the towns defaced  
By wasting ruin of the cruel foe.  
As looks the mother on her lowly babe  
When death doth close his tender dying eyes,  
See, see the pining malady of France;  
Behold the wounds, the most unnatural wounds,  
Which thou thyself hast given her woful breast.  
O, turn thy edged sword another way;  
Strike those that hurt, and hurt not those that help.  
One drop of blood drawn from thy country's bosom  
Should grieve thee more than streams of foreign gore:

Return thee therefore with a flood of tears,  
And wash away thy country's stained spots.

## **BURGUNDY**

Either she hath bewitch'd me with her words,  
Or nature makes me suddenly relent.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Besides, all French and France exclaims on thee,  
Doubting thy birth and lawful progeny.  
Who joint'st thou with but with a lordly nation  
That will not trust thee but for profit's sake?  
When Talbot hath set footing once in France  
And fashion'd thee that instrument of ill,  
Who then but English Henry will be lord  
And thou be thrust out like a fugitive?  
Call we to mind, and mark but this for proof,  
Was not the Duke of Orleans thy foe?  
And was he not in England prisoner?  
But when they heard he was thine enemy,  
They set him free without his ransom paid,  
In spite of Burgundy and all his friends.  
See, then, thou fight'st against thy countrymen  
And joint'st with them will be thy slaughtermen.  
Come, come, return; return, thou wandering lord:  
Charles and the rest will take thee in their arms.

## **BURGUNDY**

I am vanquished; these haughty words of hers  
Have batter'd me like roaring cannon-shot,  
And made me almost yield upon my knees.  
Forgive me, country, and sweet countrymen,  
And, lords, accept this hearty kind embrace:  
My forces and my power of men are yours:  
So farewell, Talbot; I'll no longer trust thee.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

[Aside] Done like a Frenchman: turn, and turn again!

## **CHARLES**

Welcome, brave duke! thy friendship makes us fresh.

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

And doth beget new courage in our breasts.

## **ALENCON**

Pucelle hath bravely play'd her part in this,  
And doth deserve a coronet of gold.

## **CHARLES**

Now let us on, my lords, and join our powers,  
And seek how we may prejudice the foe.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Paris. The palace.

*Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, YORK, SUFFOLK, SOMERSET, WARWICK, EXETER, VERNON BASSET, and others. To them with his Soldiers, TALBOT*

### TALBOT

My gracious prince, and honourable peers,  
Hearing of your arrival in this realm,  
I have awhile given truce unto my wars,  
To do my duty to my sovereign:  
In sign, whereof, this arm, that hath reclaim'd  
To your obedience fifty fortresses,  
Twelve cities and seven walled towns of strength,  
Beside five hundred prisoners of esteem,  
Lest fall his sword before your highness' feet,  
And with submissive loyalty of heart  
Ascribes the glory of his conquest got  
First to my God and next unto your grace.

*Kneels*

### KING HENRY VI

Is this the Lord Talbot, uncle Gloucester,  
That hath so long been resident in France?

### GLOUCESTER

Yes, if it please your majesty, my liege.

### KING HENRY VI

Welcome, brave captain and victorious lord!  
When I was young, as yet I am not old,

I do remember how my father said  
A stouter champion never handled sword.  
Long since we were resolved of your truth,  
Your faithful service and your toil in war;  
Yet never have you tasted our reward,  
Or been reguerdon'd with so much as thanks,  
Because till now we never saw your face:  
Therefore, stand up; and, for these good deserts,  
We here create you Earl of Shrewsbury;  
And in our coronation take your place.

*Sennet. Flourish. Exeunt all but VERNON and BASSET*

**VERNON**

Now, sir, to you, that were so hot at sea,  
Disgracing of these colours that I wear  
In honour of my noble Lord of York:  
Darest thou maintain the former words thou spakest?

**BASSET**

Yes, sir; as well as you dare patronage  
The envious barking of your saucy tongue  
Against my lord the Duke of Somerset.

**VERNON**

Sirrah, thy lord I honour as he is.

**BASSET**

Why, what is he? as good a man as York.

**VERNON**

Hark ye; not so: in witness, take ye that.

*Strikes him*

**BASSET**



Villain, thou know'st the law of arms is such  
That whoso draws a sword, 'tis present death,  
Or else this blow should broach thy dearest blood.  
But I'll unto his majesty, and crave  
I may have liberty to venge this wrong;  
When thou shalt see I'll meet thee to thy cost.

## **VERNON**

Well, miscreant, I'll be there as soon as you;  
And, after, meet you sooner than you would.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Paris. A hall of state.

*Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, YORK, SUFFOLK, SOMERSET, WARWICK, TALBOT, EXETER, the Governor, of Paris, and others*

### GLOUCESTER

Lord bishop, set the crown upon his head.

BISHOP

### OF WINCHESTER

God save King Henry, of that name the sixth!

### GLOUCESTER

Now, governor of Paris, take your oath,  
That you elect no other king but him;  
Esteem none friends but such as are his friends,  
And none your foes but such as shall pretend  
Malicious practises against his state:  
This shall ye do, so help you righteous God!

*Enter FASTOLFE*

### FASTOLFE

My gracious sovereign, as I rode from Calais,  
To haste unto your coronation,  
A letter was deliver'd to my hands,  
Writ to your grace from the Duke of Burgundy.

### TALBOT

Shame to the Duke of Burgundy and thee!  
I vow'd, base knight, when I did meet thee next,

To tear the garter from thy craven's leg,

*Plucking it off*

Which I have done, because unworthily  
Thou wast installed in that high degree.  
Pardon me, princely Henry, and the rest  
This dastard, at the battle of Patay,  
When but in all I was six thousand strong  
And that the French were almost ten to one,  
Before we met or that a stroke was given,  
Like to a trusty squire did run away:  
In which assault we lost twelve hundred men;  
Myself and divers gentlemen beside  
Were there surprised and taken prisoners.  
Then judge, great lords, if I have done amiss;  
Or whether that such cowards ought to wear  
This ornament of knighthood, yea or no.

## **GLOUCESTER**

To say the truth, this fact was infamous  
And ill beseeming any common man,  
Much more a knight, a captain and a leader.

## **TALBOT**

When first this order was ordain'd, my lords,  
Knights of the garter were of noble birth,  
Valiant and virtuous, full of haughty courage,  
Such as were grown to credit by the wars;  
Not fearing death, nor shrinking for distress,  
But always resolute in most extremes.  
He then that is not furnish'd in this sort  
Doth but usurp the sacred name of knight,  
Profaning this most honourable order,  
And should, if I were worthy to be judge,  
Be quite degraded, like a hedge-born swain  
That doth presume to boast of gentle blood.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Stain to thy countrymen, thou hear'st thy doom!  
Be packing, therefore, thou that wast a knight:  
Henceforth we banish thee, on pain of death.

*Exit FASTOLFE*

And now, my lord protector, view the letter  
Sent from our uncle Duke of Burgundy.

## **GLOUCESTER**

What means his grace, that he hath changed his style?  
No more but, plain and bluntly, 'To the king!'  
Hath he forgot he is his sovereign?  
Or doth this churlish superscription  
Pretend some alteration in good will?  
What's here?

*Reads*

'I have, upon especial cause,  
Moved with compassion of my country's wreck,  
Together with the pitiful complaints  
Of such as your oppression feeds upon,  
Forsaken your pernicious faction  
And join'd with Charles, the rightful King of France.'  
O monstrous treachery! can this be so,  
That in alliance, amity and oaths,  
There should be found such false dissembling guile?

## **KING HENRY VI**

What! doth my uncle Burgundy revolt?

## **GLOUCESTER**

He doth, my lord, and is become your foe.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Is that the worst this letter doth contain?

## **GLOUCESTER**

It is the worst, and all, my lord, he writes.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Why, then, Lord Talbot there shall talk with him  
And give him chastisement for this abuse.  
How say you, my lord? are you not content?

## **TALBOT**

Content, my liege! yes, but that I am prevented,  
I should have begg'd I might have been employ'd.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Then gather strength and march unto him straight:  
Let him perceive how ill we brook his treason  
And what offence it is to flout his friends.

## **TALBOT**

I go, my lord, in heart desiring still  
You may behold confusion of your foes.

*Exit*

*Enter VERNON and BASSET*

## **VERNON**

Grant me the combat, gracious sovereign.

## **BASSET**

And me, my lord, grant me the combat too.

## **YORK**

This is my servant: hear him, noble prince.

## **SOMERSET**

And this is mine: sweet Henry, favour him.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Be patient, lords; and give them leave to speak.  
Say, gentlemen, what makes you thus exclaim?  
And wherefore crave you combat? or with whom?

## **VERNON**

With him, my lord; for he hath done me wrong.

## **BASSET**

And I with him; for he hath done me wrong.

## **KING HENRY VI**

What is that wrong whereof you both complain?  
First let me know, and then I'll answer you.

## **BASSET**

Crossing the sea from England into France,  
This fellow here, with envious carping tongue,  
Upbraided me about the rose I wear;  
Saying, the sanguine colour of the leaves  
Did represent my master's blushing cheeks,  
When stubbornly he did repugn the truth  
About a certain question in the law  
Argued betwixt the Duke of York and him;  
With other vile and ignominious terms:  
In confutation of which rude reproach  
And in defence of my lord's worthiness,  
I crave the benefit of law of arms.

## **VERNON**

And that is my petition, noble lord:  
For though he seem with forged quaint conceit  
To set a gloss upon his bold intent,  
Yet know, my lord, I was provoked by him;  
And he first took exceptions at this badge,  
Pronouncing that the paleness of this flower  
Bewray'd the faintness of my master's heart.

**YORK**

Will not this malice, Somerset, be left?

**SOMERSET**

Your private grudge, my Lord of York, will out,  
Though ne'er so cunningly you smother it.

**KING HENRY VI**

Good Lord, what madness rules in brainsick men,  
When for so slight and frivolous a cause  
Such factious emulations shall arise!  
Good cousins both, of York and Somerset,  
Quiet yourselves, I pray, and be at peace.

**YORK**

Let this dissension first be tried by fight,  
And then your highness shall command a peace.

**SOMERSET**

The quarrel toucheth none but us alone;  
Betwixt ourselves let us decide it then.

**YORK**

There is my pledge; accept it, Somerset.

**VERNON**

Nay, let it rest where it began at first.

## **BASSET**

Confirm it so, mine honourable lord.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Confirm it so! Confounded be your strife!  
And perish ye, with your audacious prate!  
Presumptuous vassals, are you not ashamed  
With this immodest clamorous outrage  
To trouble and disturb the king and us?  
And you, my lords, methinks you do not well  
To bear with their perverse objections;  
Much less to take occasion from their mouths  
To raise a mutiny betwixt yourselves:  
Let me persuade you take a better course.

## **EXETER**

It grieves his highness: good my lords, be friends.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Come hither, you that would be combatants:  
Henceforth I charge you, as you love our favour,  
Quite to forget this quarrel and the cause.  
And you, my lords, remember where we are,  
In France, amongst a fickle wavering nation:  
If they perceive dissension in our looks  
And that within ourselves we disagree,  
How will their grudging stomachs be provoked  
To wilful disobedience, and rebel!  
Beside, what infamy will there arise,  
When foreign princes shall be certified  
That for a toy, a thing of no regard,  
King Henry's peers and chief nobility  
Destroy'd themselves, and lost the realm of France!  
O, think upon the conquest of my father,  
My tender years, and let us not forego  
That for a trifle that was bought with blood



Let me be umpire in this doubtful strife.  
I see no reason, if I wear this rose,

*Putting on a red rose*

That any one should therefore be suspicious  
I more incline to Somerset than York:  
Both are my kinsmen, and I love them both:  
As well they may upbraid me with my crown,  
Because, forsooth, the king of Scots is crown'd.  
But your discretions better can persuade  
Than I am able to instruct or teach:  
And therefore, as we hither came in peace,  
So let us still continue peace and love.  
Cousin of York, we institute your grace  
To be our regent in these parts of France:  
And, good my Lord of Somerset, unite  
Your troops of horsemen with his bands of foot;  
And, like true subjects, sons of your progenitors,  
Go cheerfully together and digest  
Your angry choler on your enemies.  
Ourself, my lord protector and the rest  
After some respite will return to Calais;  
From thence to England; where I hope ere long  
To be presented, by your victories,  
With Charles, Alencon and that traitorous rout.

*Flourish. Exeunt all but YORK, WARWICK, EXETER and VERNON*

**WARWICK**

My Lord of York, I promise you, the king  
Prettily, methought, did play the orator.

**YORK**

And so he did; but yet I like it not,  
In that he wears the badge of Somerset.

**WARWICK**

Tush, that was but his fancy, blame him not;

I dare presume, sweet prince, he thought no harm.

## **YORK**

An if I wist he did,--but let it rest;  
Other affairs must now be managed.

*Exeunt all but EXETER*

## **EXETER**

Well didst thou, Richard, to suppress thy voice;  
For, had the passions of thy heart burst out,  
I fear we should have seen decipher'd there  
More rancorous spite, more furious raging broils,  
Than yet can be imagined or supposed.  
But howso'er, no simple man that sees  
This jarring discord of nobility,  
This shouldering of each other in the court,  
This factious bandying of their favourites,  
But that it doth presage some ill event.  
'Tis much when sceptres are in children's hands;  
But more when envy breeds unkind division;  
There comes the rain, there begins confusion.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before Bourdeaux.

*Enter TALBOT, with trump and drum*

**TALBOT**

Go to the gates of Bourdeaux, trumpeter:  
Summon their general unto the wall.

*Trumpet sounds. Enter General and others, aloft*

English John Talbot, captains, calls you forth,  
Servant in arms to Harry King of England;  
And thus he would: Open your city gates;  
Be humble to us; call my sovereign yours,  
And do him homage as obedient subjects;  
And I'll withdraw me and my bloody power:  
But, if you frown upon this proffer'd peace,  
You tempt the fury of my three attendants,  
Lean famine, quartering steel, and climbing fire;  
Who in a moment even with the earth  
Shall lay your stately and air-braving towers,  
If you forsake the offer of their love.

**General**

Thou ominous and fearful owl of death,  
Our nation's terror and their bloody scourge!  
The period of thy tyranny approacheth.  
On us thou canst not enter but by death;  
For, I protest, we are well fortified  
And strong enough to issue out and fight:  
If thou retire, the Dauphin, well appointed,  
Stands with the snares of war to tangle thee:  
On either hand thee there are squadrons pitch'd,  
To wall thee from the liberty of flight;

And no way canst thou turn thee for redress,  
But death doth front thee with apparent spoil  
And pale destruction meets thee in the face.  
Ten thousand French have ta'en the sacrament  
To rive their dangerous artillery  
Upon no Christian soul but English Talbot.  
Lo, there thou stand'st, a breathing valiant man,  
Of an invincible unconquer'd spirit!  
This is the latest glory of thy praise  
That I, thy enemy, due thee withal;  
For ere the glass, that now begins to run,  
Finish the process of his sandy hour,  
These eyes, that see thee now well coloured,  
Shall see thee wither'd, bloody, pale and dead.

*Drum afar off*

Hark! hark! the Dauphin's drum, a warning bell,  
Sings heavy music to thy timorous soul;  
And mine shall ring thy dire departure out.

*Exeunt General, & c*

## **TALBOT**

He fables not; I hear the enemy:  
Out, some light horsemen, and peruse their wings.  
O, negligent and heedless discipline!  
How are we park'd and bounded in a pale,  
A little herd of England's timorous deer,  
Mazed with a yelping kennel of French curs!  
If we be English deer, be then in blood;  
Not rascal-like, to fall down with a pinch,  
But rather, moody-mad and desperate stags,  
Turn on the bloody hounds with heads of steel  
And make the cowards stand aloof at bay:  
Sell every man his life as dear as mine,  
And they shall find dear deer of us, my friends.  
God and Saint George, Talbot and England's right,  
Prosper our colours in this dangerous fight!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Plains in Gascony.

*Enter a Messenger that meets YORK. Enter YORK with trumpet and many Soldiers*

**YORK**

Are not the speedy scouts return'd again,  
That dogg'd the mighty army of the Dauphin?

**Messenger**

They are return'd, my lord, and give it out  
That he is march'd to Bourdeaux with his power,  
To fight with Talbot: as he march'd along,  
By your espials were discovered  
Two mightier troops than that the Dauphin led,  
Which join'd with him and made their march for Bourdeaux.

**YORK**

A plague upon that villain Somerset,  
That thus delays my promised supply  
Of horsemen, that were levied for this siege!  
Renowned Talbot doth expect my aid,  
And I am lowted by a traitor villain  
And cannot help the noble chevalier:  
God comfort him in this necessity!  
If he miscarry, farewell wars in France.

*Enter Sir William LUCY*

**LUCY**

Thou princely leader of our English strength,  
Never so needful on the earth of France,  
Spur to the rescue of the noble Talbot,

Who now is girdled with a waist of iron  
And hemm'd about with grim destruction:  
To Bourdeaux, warlike duke! to Bourdeaux, York!  
Else, farewell Talbot, France, and England's honour.

## **YORK**

O God, that Somerset, who in proud heart  
Doth stop my cornets, were in Talbot's place!  
So should we save a valiant gentleman  
By forfeiting a traitor and a coward.  
Mad ire and wrathful fury makes me weep,  
That thus we die, while remiss traitors sleep.

## **LUCY**

O, send some succor to the distress'd lord!

## **YORK**

He dies, we lose; I break my warlike word;  
We mourn, France smiles; we lose, they daily get;  
All 'long of this vile traitor Somerset.

## **LUCY**

Then God take mercy on brave Talbot's soul;  
And on his son young John, who two hours since  
I met in travel toward his warlike father!  
This seven years did not Talbot see his son;  
And now they meet where both their lives are done.

## **YORK**

Alas, what joy shall noble Talbot have  
To bid his young son welcome to his grave?  
Away! vexation almost stops my breath,  
That sunder'd friends greet in the hour of death.  
Lucy, farewell; no more my fortune can,  
But curse the cause I cannot aid the man.  
Maine, Blois, Poitiers, and Tours, are won away,  
'Long all of Somerset and his delay.

*Exit, with his soldiers*

## LUCY

Thus, while the vulture of sedition  
Feeds in the bosom of such great commanders,  
Sleeping neglect doth betray to loss  
The conquest of our scarce cold conqueror,  
That ever living man of memory,  
Henry the Fifth: whiles they each other cross,  
Lives, honours, lands and all hurry to loss.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Other plains in Gascony.

*Enter SOMERSET, with his army; a Captain of TALBOT's with him*

### SOMERSET

It is too late; I cannot send them now:  
This expedition was by York and Talbot  
Too rashly plotted: all our general force  
Might with a sally of the very town  
Be buckled with: the over-daring Talbot  
Hath sullied all his gloss of former honour  
By this unheedful, desperate, wild adventure:  
York set him on to fight and die in shame,  
That, Talbot dead, great York might bear the name.

### Captain

Here is Sir William Lucy, who with me  
Set from our o'ermatch'd forces forth for aid.

*Enter Sir William LUCY*

### SOMERSET

How now, Sir William! whither were you sent?

### LUCY

Whither, my lord? from bought and sold Lord Talbot;  
Who, ring'd about with bold adversity,  
Cries out for noble York and Somerset,  
To beat assailing death from his weak legions:  
And whiles the honourable captain there  
Drops bloody sweat from his war-wearied limbs,  
And, in advantage lingering, looks for rescue,

You, his false hopes, the trust of England's honour,  
Keep off aloof with worthless emulation.  
Let not your private discord keep away  
The levied succors that should lend him aid,  
While he, renowned noble gentleman,  
Yields up his life unto a world of odds:  
Orleans the Bastard, Charles, Burgundy,  
Alencon, Reignier, compass him about,  
And Talbot perisheth by your default.

## **SOMERSET**

York set him on; York should have sent him aid.

## **LUCY**

And York as fast upon your grace exclaims;  
Swearing that you withhold his levied host,  
Collected for this expedition.

## **SOMERSET**

York lies; he might have sent and had the horse;  
I owe him little duty, and less love;  
And take foul scorn to fawn on him by sending.

## **LUCY**

The fraud of England, not the force of France,  
Hath now entrapp'd the noble-minded Talbot:  
Never to England shall he bear his life;  
But dies, betray'd to fortune by your strife.

## **SOMERSET**

Come, go; I will dispatch the horsemen straight:  
Within six hours they will be at his aid.

## **LUCY**

Too late comes rescue: he is ta'en or slain;  
For fly he could not, if he would have fled;

And fly would Talbot never, though he might.

**SOMERSET**

If he be dead, brave Talbot, then adieu!

**LUCY**

His fame lives in the world, his shame in you.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The English camp near Bourdeaux.

*Enter TALBOT and JOHN his son*

**TALBOT**

O young John Talbot! I did send for thee  
To tutor thee in stratagems of war,  
That Talbot's name might be in thee revived  
When sapless age and weak unable limbs  
Should bring thy father to his drooping chair.  
But, O malignant and ill-boding stars!  
Now thou art come unto a feast of death,  
A terrible and unavoided danger:  
Therefore, dear boy, mount on my swiftest horse;  
And I'll direct thee how thou shalt escape  
By sudden flight: come, dally not, be gone.

**JOHN TALBOT**

Is my name Talbot? and am I your son?  
And shall I fly? O if you love my mother,  
Dishonour not her honourable name,  
To make a bastard and a slave of me!  
The world will say, he is not Talbot's blood,  
That basely fled when noble Talbot stood.

**TALBOT**

Fly, to revenge my death, if I be slain.

**JOHN TALBOT**

He that flies so will ne'er return again.

**TALBOT**

If we both stay, we both are sure to die.

**JOHN TALBOT**

Then let me stay; and, father, do you fly:  
Your loss is great, so your regard should be;  
My worth unknown, no loss is known in me.  
Upon my death the French can little boast;  
In yours they will, in you all hopes are lost.  
Flight cannot stain the honour you have won;  
But mine it will, that no exploit have done:  
You fled for vantage, everyone will swear;  
But, if I bow, they'll say it was for fear.  
There is no hope that ever I will stay,  
If the first hour I shrink and run away.  
Here on my knee I beg mortality,  
Rather than life preserved with infamy.

**TALBOT**

Shall all thy mother's hopes lie in one tomb?

**JOHN TALBOT**

Ay, rather than I'll shame my mother's womb.

**TALBOT**

Upon my blessing, I command thee go.

**JOHN TALBOT**

To fight I will, but not to fly the foe.

**TALBOT**

Part of thy father may be saved in thee.

**JOHN TALBOT**

No part of him but will be shame in me.

**TALBOT**

Thou never hadst renown, nor canst not lose it.

**JOHN TALBOT**

Yes, your renowned name: shall flight abuse it?

**TALBOT**

Thy father's charge shall clear thee from that stain.

**JOHN TALBOT**

You cannot witness for me, being slain.  
If death be so apparent, then both fly.

**TALBOT**

And leave my followers here to fight and die?  
My age was never tainted with such shame.

**JOHN TALBOT**

And shall my youth be guilty of such blame?  
No more can I be sever'd from your side,  
Than can yourself yourself in twain divide:  
Stay, go, do what you will, the like do I;  
For live I will not, if my father die.

**TALBOT**

Then here I take my leave of thee, fair son,  
Born to eclipse thy life this afternoon.  
Come, side by side together live and die.  
And soul with soul from France to heaven fly.

*Exeunt*



# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. A field of battle.

*Alarum: excursions, wherein JOHN TALBOT is hemmed about, and TALBOT rescues him*

### TALBOT

Saint George and victory! fight, soldiers, fight.  
The regent hath with Talbot broke his word  
And left us to the rage of France his sword.  
Where is John Talbot? Pause, and take thy breath;  
I gave thee life and rescued thee from death.

### JOHN TALBOT

O, twice my father, twice am I thy son!  
The life thou gavest me first was lost and done,  
Till with thy warlike sword, despite of late,  
To my determined time thou gavest new date.

### TALBOT

When from the Dauphin's crest thy sword struck fire,  
It warm'd thy father's heart with proud desire  
Of bold-faced victory. Then leaden age,  
Quicken'd with youthful spleen and warlike rage,  
Beat down Alencon, Orleans, Burgundy,  
And from the pride of Gallia rescued thee.  
The ireful bastard Orleans, that drew blood  
From thee, my boy, and had the maidenhood  
Of thy first fight, I soon encountered,  
And interchanging blows I quickly shed  
Some of his bastard blood; and in disgrace  
Bespoke him thus; 'Contaminated, base  
And misbegotten blood I spill of thine,  
Mean and right poor, for that pure blood of mine  
Which thou didst force from Talbot, my brave boy!'



Here, purposing the Bastard to destroy,  
Came in strong rescue. Speak, thy father's care,  
Art thou not weary, John? how dost thou fare?  
Wilt thou yet leave the battle, boy, and fly,  
Now thou art seal'd the son of chivalry?  
Fly, to revenge my death when I am dead:  
The help of one stands me in little stead.  
O, too much folly is it, well I wot,  
To hazard all our lives in one small boat!  
If I to-day die not with Frenchmen's rage,  
To-morrow I shall die with mickle age:  
By me they nothing gain an if I stay;  
'Tis but the shortening of my life one day:  
In thee thy mother dies, our household's name,  
My death's revenge, thy youth, and England's fame:  
All these and more we hazard by thy stay;  
All these are saved if thou wilt fly away.

## **JOHN TALBOT**

The sword of Orleans hath not made me smart;  
These words of yours draw life-blood from my heart:  
On that advantage, bought with such a shame,  
To save a paltry life and slay bright fame,  
Before young Talbot from old Talbot fly,  
The coward horse that bears me fail and die!  
And like me to the peasant boys of France,  
To be shame's scorn and subject of mischance!  
Surely, by all the glory you have won,  
An if I fly, I am not Talbot's son:  
Then talk no more of flight, it is no boot;  
If son to Talbot, die at Talbot's foot.

## **TALBOT**

Then follow thou thy desperate sire of Crete,  
Thou Icarus; thy life to me is sweet:  
If thou wilt fight, fight by thy father's side;  
And, commendable proved, let's die in pride.

*Exeunt*



# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Another part of the field.

*Alarum: excursions. Enter TALBOT led by a Servant*

**TALBOT**

Where is my other life? mine own is gone;  
O, where's young Talbot? where is valiant John?  
Triumphant death, smear'd with captivity,  
Young Talbot's valour makes me smile at thee:  
When he perceived me shrink and on my knee,  
His bloody sword he brandish'd over me,  
And, like a hungry lion, did commence  
Rough deeds of rage and stern impatience;  
But when my angry guardant stood alone,  
Tendering my ruin and assail'd of none,  
Dizzy-eyed fury and great rage of heart  
Suddenly made him from my side to start  
Into the clustering battle of the French;  
And in that sea of blood my boy did drench  
His over-mounting spirit, and there died,  
My Icarus, my blossom, in his pride.

**Servant**

O, my dear lord, lo, where your son is borne!

*Enter Soldiers, with the body of JOHN TALBOT*

**TALBOT**

Thou antic death, which laugh'st us here to scorn,  
Anon, from thy insulting tyranny,  
Coupled in bonds of perpetuity,  
Two Talbots, winged through the lither sky,  
In thy despite shall 'scape mortality.

O, thou, whose wounds become hard-favour'd death,  
Speak to thy father ere thou yield thy breath!  
Brave death by speaking, whether he will or no;  
Imagine him a Frenchman and thy foe.  
Poor boy! he smiles, methinks, as who should say,  
Had death been French, then death had died to-day.  
Come, come and lay him in his father's arms:  
My spirit can no longer bear these harms.  
Soldiers, adieu! I have what I would have,  
Now my old arms are young John Talbot's grave.

*Dies*

*Enter CHARLES, ALENCON, BURGUNDY, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, JOAN LA  
PUCELLE, and forces*

## **CHARLES**

Had York and Somerset brought rescue in,  
We should have found a bloody day of this.

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

How the young whelp of Talbot's, raging-wood,  
Did flesh his puny sword in Frenchmen's blood!

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Once I encounter'd him, and thus I said:  
'Thou maiden youth, be vanquish'd by a maid:'  
But, with a proud majestic high scorn,  
He answer'd thus: 'Young Talbot was not born  
To be the pillage of a giglot wench:'  
So, rushing in the bowels of the French,  
He left me proudly, as unworthy fight.

## **BURGUNDY**

Doubtless he would have made a noble knight;  
See, where he lies inhearsed in the arms  
Of the most bloody nurser of his harms!

## **BASTARD OF ORLEANS**

Hew them to pieces, hack their bones asunder  
Whose life was England's glory, Gallia's wonder.

## **CHARLES**

O, no, forbear! for that which we have fled  
During the life, let us not wrong it dead.

*Enter Sir William LUCY, attended; Herald of the French preceding*

## **LUCY**

Herald, conduct me to the Dauphin's tent,  
To know who hath obtained the glory of the day.

## **CHARLES**

On what submissive message art thou sent?

## **LUCY**

Submission, Dauphin! 'tis a mere French word;  
We English warriors wot not what it means.  
I come to know what prisoners thou hast ta'en  
And to survey the bodies of the dead.

## **CHARLES**

For prisoners ask'st thou? hell our prison is.  
But tell me whom thou seek'st.

## **LUCY**

But where's the great Alcides of the field,  
Valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury,  
Created, for his rare success in arms,  
Great Earl of Washford, Waterford and Valence;  
Lord Talbot of Goodrig and Urchinfield,  
Lord Strange of Blackmere, Lord Verdun of Alton,

Lord Cromwell of Wingfield, Lord Furnival of Sheffield,  
The thrice-victorious Lord of Falconbridge;  
Knight of the noble order of Saint George,  
Worthy Saint Michael and the Golden Fleece;  
Great marshal to Henry the Sixth  
Of all his wars within the realm of France?

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Here is a silly stately style indeed!  
The Turk, that two and fifty kingdoms hath,  
Writes not so tedious a style as this.  
Him that thou magnifiest with all these titles  
Stinking and fly-blown lies here at our feet.

## **LUCY**

Is Talbot slain, the Frenchmen's only scourge,  
Your kingdom's terror and black Nemesis?  
O, were mine eyeballs into bullets turn'd,  
That I in rage might shoot them at your faces!  
O, that I could but call these dead to life!  
It were enough to fright the realm of France:  
Were but his picture left amongst you here,  
It would amaze the proudest of you all.  
Give me their bodies, that I may bear them hence  
And give them burial as beseems their worth.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

I think this upstart is old Talbot's ghost,  
He speaks with such a proud commanding spirit.  
For God's sake let him have 'em; to keep them here,  
They would but stink, and putrefy the air.

## **CHARLES**

Go, take their bodies hence.

## **LUCY**

I'll bear them hence; but from their ashes shall be rear'd

A phoenix that shall make all France afeard.

**CHARLES**

So we be rid of them, do with 'em what thou wilt.  
And now to Paris, in this conquering vein:  
All will be ours, now bloody Talbot's slain.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 4, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. The palace.

*Sennet. Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, and EXETER*

### KING HENRY VI

Have you perused the letters from the pope,  
The emperor and the Earl of Armagnac?

### GLOUCESTER

I have, my lord: and their intent is this:  
They humbly sue unto your excellence  
To have a godly peace concluded of  
Between the realms of England and of France.

### KING HENRY VI

How doth your grace affect their motion?

### GLOUCESTER

Well, my good lord; and as the only means  
To stop effusion of our Christian blood  
And 'stablish quietness on every side.

### KING HENRY VI

Ay, marry, uncle; for I always thought  
It was both impious and unnatural  
That such immanity and bloody strife  
Should reign among professors of one faith.

### GLOUCESTER

Beside, my lord, the sooner to effect



And surer bind this knot of amity,  
The Earl of Armagnac, near knit to Charles,  
A man of great authority in France,  
Proffers his only daughter to your grace  
In marriage, with a large and sumptuous dowry.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Marriage, uncle! alas, my years are young!  
And fitter is my study and my books  
Than wanton dalliance with a paramour.  
Yet call the ambassador; and, as you please,  
So let them have their answers every one:  
I shall be well content with any choice  
Tends to God's glory and my country's weal.

*Enter CARDINAL OF WINCHESTER in Cardinal's habit, a Legate and two Ambassadors*

## **EXETER**

What! is my Lord of Winchester install'd,  
And call'd unto a cardinal's degree?  
Then I perceive that will be verified  
Henry the Fifth did sometime prophesy,  
'If once he come to be a cardinal,  
He'll make his cap co-equal with the crown.'

## **KING HENRY VI**

My lords ambassadors, your several suits  
Have been consider'd and debated on.  
And therefore are we certainly resolved  
To draw conditions of a friendly peace;  
Which by my Lord of Winchester we mean  
Shall be transported presently to France.

## **GLOUCESTER**

And for the proffer of my lord your master,  
I have inform'd his highness so at large  
As liking of the lady's virtuous gifts,  
Her beauty and the value of her dower,

He doth intend she shall be England's queen.

## **KING HENRY VI**

In argument and proof of which contract,  
Bear her this jewel, pledge of my affection.  
And so, my lord protector, see them guarded  
And safely brought to Dover; where inshipp'd  
Commit them to the fortune of the sea.

*Exeunt all but CARDINAL OF WINCHESTER and Legate*

CARDINAL

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Stay, my lord legate: you shall first receive  
The sum of money which I promised  
Should be deliver'd to his holiness  
For clothing me in these grave ornaments.

## **Legate**

I will attend upon your lordship's leisure.  
CARDINAL

## **OF WINCHESTER**

[Aside] Now Winchester will not submit, I trow,  
Or be inferior to the proudest peer.  
Humphrey of Gloucester, thou shalt well perceive  
That, neither in birth or for authority,  
The bishop will be overborne by thee:  
I'll either make thee stoop and bend thy knee,  
Or sack this country with a mutiny.

*Exeunt*

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. France. Plains in Anjou.

*Enter CHARLES, BURGUNDY, ALENCON, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, REIGNIER, JOAN LA PUCELLE, and forces*

### CHARLES

These news, my lord, may cheer our drooping spirits:  
'Tis said the stout Parisians do revolt  
And turn again unto the warlike French.

### ALENCON

Then march to Paris, royal Charles of France,  
And keep not back your powers in dalliance.

### JOAN LA PUCELLE

Peace be amongst them, if they turn to us;  
Else, ruin combat with their palaces!

*Enter Scout*

### Scout

Success unto our valiant general,  
And happiness to his accomplices!

### CHARLES

What tidings send our scouts? I prithee, speak.

### Scout

The English army, that divided was  
Into two parties, is now conjoined in one,

And means to give you battle presently.

## **CHARLES**

Somewhat too sudden, sirs, the warning is;  
But we will presently provide for them.

## **BURGUNDY**

I trust the ghost of Talbot is not there:  
Now he is gone, my lord, you need not fear.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Of all base passions, fear is most accursed.  
Command the conquest, Charles, it shall be thine,  
Let Henry fret and all the world repine.

## **CHARLES**

Then on, my lords; and France be fortunate!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Before Angiers.

*Alarum. Excursions. Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE*

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

The regent conquers, and the Frenchmen fly.  
Now help, ye charming spells and periapts;  
And ye choice spirits that admonish me  
And give me signs of future accidents.

*Thunder*

You speedy helpers, that are substitutes  
Under the lordly monarch of the north,  
Appear and aid me in this enterprise.

*Enter Fiends*

This speedy and quick appearance argues proof  
Of your accustom'd diligence to me.  
Now, ye familiar spirits, that are cull'd  
Out of the powerful regions under earth,  
Help me this once, that France may get the field.

*They walk, and speak not*

O, hold me not with silence over-long!  
Where I was wont to feed you with my blood,  
I'll lop a member off and give it you  
In earnest of further benefit,  
So you do condescend to help me now.

*They hang their heads*

No hope to have redress? My body shall

Pay recompense, if you will grant my suit.

*They shake their heads*

Cannot my body nor blood-sacrifice  
Entreat you to your wonted furtherance?  
Then take my soul, my body, soul and all,  
Before that England give the French the foil.

*They depart*

See, they forsake me! Now the time is come  
That France must vail her lofty-plumed crest  
And let her head fall into England's lap.  
My ancient incantations are too weak,  
And hell too strong for me to buckle with:  
Now, France, thy glory droopeth to the dust.

*Exit*

*Excursions. Re-enter JOAN LA PUCELLE fighting hand to hand with YORK. JOAN LA PUCELLE is taken. The French fly.*

**YORK**

Damsel of France, I think I have you fast:  
Unchain your spirits now with spelling charms  
And try if they can gain your liberty.  
A goodly prize, fit for the devil's grace!  
See, how the ugly wench doth bend her brows,  
As if with Circe she would change my shape!

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Changed to a worsen shape thou canst not be.

**YORK**

O, Charles the Dauphin is a proper man;  
No shape but his can please your dainty eye.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

A plaguing mischief light on Charles and thee!  
And may ye both be suddenly surprised  
By bloody hands, in sleeping on your beds!

## **YORK**

Fell banning hag, enchantress, hold thy tongue!

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

I prithee, give me leave to curse awhile.

## **YORK**

Curse, miscreant, when thou comest to the stake.

*Exeunt*

*Alarum. Enter SUFFOLK with MARGARET in his hand*

## **SUFFOLK**

Be what thou wilt, thou art my prisoner.

*Gazes on her*

O fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly!  
For I will touch thee but with reverent hands;  
I kiss these fingers for eternal peace,  
And lay them gently on thy tender side.  
Who art thou? say, that I may honour thee.

## **MARGARET**

Margaret my name, and daughter to a king,  
The King of Naples, whosoe'er thou art.

## **SUFFOLK**

An earl I am, and Suffolk am I call'd.  
Be not offended, nature's miracle,  
Thou art allotted to be ta'en by me:  
So doth the swan her downy cygnets save,  
Keeping them prisoner underneath her wings.  
Yet, if this servile usage once offend.  
Go, and be free again, as Suffolk's friend.

*She is going*

O, stay! I have no power to let her pass;  
My hand would free her, but my heart says no  
As plays the sun upon the glassy streams,  
Twinkling another counterfeited beam,  
So seems this gorgeous beauty to mine eyes.  
Fain would I woo her, yet I dare not speak:  
I'll call for pen and ink, and write my mind.  
Fie, de la Pole! disable not thyself;  
Hast not a tongue? is she not here?  
Wilt thou be daunted at a woman's sight?  
Ay, beauty's princely majesty is such,  
Confounds the tongue and makes the senses rough.

**MARGARET**

Say, Earl of Suffolk--if thy name be so--  
What ransom must I pay before I pass?  
For I perceive I am thy prisoner.

**SUFFOLK**

How canst thou tell she will deny thy suit,  
Before thou make a trial of her love?

**MARGARET**

Why speak'st thou not? what ransom must I pay?

**SUFFOLK**

She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd;  
She is a woman, therefore to be won.



**MARGARET**

Wilt thou accept of ransom? yea, or no.

**SUFFOLK**

Fond man, remember that thou hast a wife;  
Then how can Margaret be thy paramour?

**MARGARET**

I were best to leave him, for he will not hear.

**SUFFOLK**

There all is marr'd; there lies a cooling card.

**MARGARET**

He talks at random; sure, the man is mad.

**SUFFOLK**

And yet a dispensation may be had.

**MARGARET**

And yet I would that you would answer me.

**SUFFOLK**

I'll win this Lady Margaret. For whom?  
Why, for my king: tush, that's a wooden thing!

**MARGARET**

He talks of wood: it is some carpenter.

**SUFFOLK**

Yet so my fancy may be satisfied,  
And peace established between these realms  
But there remains a scruple in that too;  
For though her father be the King of Naples,  
Duke of Anjou and Maine, yet is he poor,  
And our nobility will scorn the match.

**MARGARET**

Hear ye, captain, are you not at leisure?

**SUFFOLK**

It shall be so, disdain they ne'er so much.  
Henry is youthful and will quickly yield.  
Madam, I have a secret to reveal.

**MARGARET**

What though I be enthralld? he seems a knight,  
And will not any way dishonour me.

**SUFFOLK**

Lady, vouchsafe to listen what I say.

**MARGARET**

Perhaps I shall be rescued by the French;  
And then I need not crave his courtesy.

**SUFFOLK**

Sweet madam, give me a hearing in a cause--

**MARGARET**

Tush, women have been captivate ere now.

**SUFFOLK**

Lady, wherefore talk you so?

**MARGARET**

I cry you mercy, 'tis but Quid for Quo.

**SUFFOLK**

Say, gentle princess, would you not suppose  
Your bondage happy, to be made a queen?

**MARGARET**

To be a queen in bondage is more vile  
Than is a slave in base servility;  
For princes should be free.

**SUFFOLK**

And so shall you,  
If happy England's royal king be free.

**MARGARET**

Why, what concerns his freedom unto me?

**SUFFOLK**

I'll undertake to make thee Henry's queen,  
To put a golden sceptre in thy hand  
And set a precious crown upon thy head,  
If thou wilt condescend to be my--

**MARGARET**

What?

**SUFFOLK**

His love.

**MARGARET**

I am unworthy to be Henry's wife.

**SUFFOLK**

No, gentle madam; I unworthy am  
To woo so fair a dame to be his wife,  
And have no portion in the choice myself.  
How say you, madam, are ye so content?

**MARGARET**

An if my father please, I am content.

**SUFFOLK**

Then call our captains and our colours forth.  
And, madam, at your father's castle walls  
We'll crave a parley, to confer with him.

*A parley sounded. Enter REIGNIER on the walls*

See, Reignier, see, thy daughter prisoner!

**REIGNIER**

To whom?

**SUFFOLK**

To me.

**REIGNIER**

Suffolk, what remedy?  
I am a soldier, and unapt to weep,  
Or to exclaim on fortune's fickleness.

**SUFFOLK**

Yes, there is remedy enough, my lord:  
Consent, and for thy honour give consent,  
Thy daughter shall be wedded to my king;  
Whom I with pain have woo'd and won thereto;  
And this her easy-held imprisonment  
Hath gained thy daughter princely liberty.

**REIGNIER**

Speaks Suffolk as he thinks?

**SUFFOLK**

Fair Margaret knows  
That Suffolk doth not flatter, face, or feign.

**REIGNIER**

Upon thy princely warrant, I descend  
To give thee answer of thy just demand.

*Exit from the walls*

**SUFFOLK**

And here I will expect thy coming.

*Trumpets sound. Enter REIGNIER, below*

**REIGNIER**

Welcome, brave earl, into our territories:  
Command in Anjou what your honour pleases.

**SUFFOLK**

Thanks, Reignier, happy for so sweet a child,  
Fit to be made companion with a king:  
What answer makes your grace unto my suit?

**REIGNIER**

Since thou dost deign to woo her little worth  
To be the princely bride of such a lord;  
Upon condition I may quietly  
Enjoy mine own, the country Maine and Anjou,  
Free from oppression or the stroke of war,  
My daughter shall be Henry's, if he please.

## **SUFFOLK**

That is her ransom; I deliver her;  
And those two counties I will undertake  
Your grace shall well and quietly enjoy.

## **REIGNIER**

And I again, in Henry's royal name,  
As deputy unto that gracious king,  
Give thee her hand, for sign of plighted faith.

## **SUFFOLK**

Reignier of France, I give thee kingly thanks,  
Because this is in traffic of a king.

*Aside*

And yet, methinks, I could be well content  
To be mine own attorney in this case.  
I'll over then to England with this news,  
And make this marriage to be solemnized.  
So farewell, Reignier: set this diamond safe  
In golden palaces, as it becomes.

## **REIGNIER**

I do embrace thee, as I would embrace  
The Christian prince, King Henry, were he here.

## **MARGARET**

Farewell, my lord: good wishes, praise and prayers

Shall Suffolk ever have of Margaret.

*Going*

**SUFFOLK**

Farewell, sweet madam: but hark you, Margaret;  
No princely commendations to my king?

**MARGARET**

Such commendations as becomes a maid,  
A virgin and his servant, say to him.

**SUFFOLK**

Words sweetly placed and modestly directed.  
But madam, I must trouble you again;  
No loving token to his majesty?

**MARGARET**

Yes, my good lord, a pure unspotted heart,  
Never yet taint with love, I send the king.

**SUFFOLK**

And this withal.

*Kisses her*

**MARGARET**

That for thyself: I will not so presume  
To send such peevish tokens to a king.

*Exeunt REIGNIER and MARGARET*

**SUFFOLK**

O, wert thou for myself! But, Suffolk, stay;

Thou mayst not wander in that labyrinth;  
There Minotaurs and ugly treasons lurk.  
Solicit Henry with her wondrous praise:  
Bethink thee on her virtues that surmount,  
And natural graces that extinguish art;  
Repeat their semblance often on the seas,  
That, when thou comest to kneel at Henry's feet,  
Thou mayst bereave him of his wits with wonder.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Camp of the YORK in Anjou.

*Enter YORK, WARWICK, and others*

**YORK**

Bring forth that sorceress condemn'd to burn.

*Enter JOAN LA PUCELLE, guarded, and a Shepherd*

**Shepherd**

Ah, Joan, this kills thy father's heart outright!  
Have I sought every country far and near,  
And, now it is my chance to find thee out,  
Must I behold thy timeless cruel death?  
Ah, Joan, sweet daughter Joan, I'll die with thee!

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Decrepit miser! base ignoble wretch!  
I am descended of a gentler blood:  
Thou art no father nor no friend of mine.

**Shepherd**

Out, out! My lords, an please you, 'tis not so;  
I did beget her, all the parish knows:  
Her mother liveth yet, can testify  
She was the first fruit of my bachelorship.

**WARWICK**

Graceless! wilt thou deny thy parentage?

**YORK**

This argues what her kind of life hath been,  
Wicked and vile; and so her death concludes.

### **Shepherd**

Fie, Joan, that thou wilt be so obstacle!  
God knows thou art a collop of my flesh;  
And for thy sake have I shed many a tear:  
Deny me not, I prithee, gentle Joan.

### **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Peasant, avaunt! You have suborn'd this man,  
Of purpose to obscure my noble birth.

### **Shepherd**

'Tis true, I gave a noble to the priest  
The morn that I was wedded to her mother.  
Kneel down and take my blessing, good my girl.  
Wilt thou not stoop? Now cursed be the time  
Of thy nativity! I would the milk  
Thy mother gave thee when thou suck'dst her breast,  
Had been a little ratsbane for thy sake!  
Or else, when thou didst keep my lambs a-field,  
I wish some ravenous wolf had eaten thee!  
Dost thou deny thy father, cursed drab?  
O, burn her, burn her! hanging is too good.

*Exit*

### **YORK**

Take her away; for she hath lived too long,  
To fill the world with vicious qualities.

### **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

First, let me tell you whom you have condemn'd:  
Not me begotten of a shepherd swain,  
But issued from the progeny of kings;  
Virtuous and holy; chosen from above,

By inspiration of celestial grace,  
To work exceeding miracles on earth.  
I never had to do with wicked spirits:  
But you, that are polluted with your lusts,  
Stain'd with the guiltless blood of innocents,  
Corrupt and tainted with a thousand vices,  
Because you want the grace that others have,  
You judge it straight a thing impossible  
To compass wonders but by help of devils.  
No, misconceived! Joan of Arc hath been  
A virgin from her tender infancy,  
Chaste and immaculate in very thought;  
Whose maiden blood, thus rigorously effused,  
Will cry for vengeance at the gates of heaven.

## **YORK**

Ay, ay: away with her to execution!

## **WARWICK**

And hark ye, sirs; because she is a maid,  
Spare for no faggots, let there be enow:  
Place barrels of pitch upon the fatal stake,  
That so her torture may be shortened.

## **JOAN LA PUCELLE**

Will nothing turn your unrelenting hearts?  
Then, Joan, discover thine infirmity,  
That warranteth by law to be thy privilege.  
I am with child, ye bloody homicides:  
Murder not then the fruit within my womb,  
Although ye hale me to a violent death.

## **YORK**

Now heaven forbend! the holy maid with child!

## **WARWICK**

The greatest miracle that e'er ye wrought:

Is all your strict preciseness come to this?

**YORK**

She and the Dauphin have been juggling:  
I did imagine what would be her refuge.

**WARWICK**

Well, go to; we'll have no bastards live;  
Especially since Charles must father it.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

You are deceived; my child is none of his:  
It was Alencon that enjoy'd my love.

**YORK**

Alencon! that notorious Machiavel!  
It dies, an if it had a thousand lives.

**JOAN LA PUCELLE**

O, give me leave, I have deluded you:  
'Twas neither Charles nor yet the duke I named,  
But Reignier, king of Naples, that prevail'd.

**WARWICK**

A married man! that's most intolerable.

**YORK**

Why, here's a girl! I think she knows not well,  
There were so many, whom she may accuse.

**WARWICK**

It's sign she hath been liberal and free.

## YORK

And yet, forsooth, she is a virgin pure.  
Strumpet, thy words condemn thy brat and thee:  
Use no entreaty, for it is in vain.

## JOAN LA PUCELLE

Then lead me hence; with whom I leave my curse:  
May never glorious sun reflex his beams  
Upon the country where you make abode;  
But darkness and the gloomy shade of death  
Environ you, till mischief and despair  
Drive you to break your necks or hang yourselves!

*Exit, guarded*

## YORK

Break thou in pieces and consume to ashes,  
Thou foul accursed minister of hell!

*Enter CARDINAL OF WINCHESTER, attended*

CARDINAL

## OF WINCHESTER

Lord regent, I do greet your excellence  
With letters of commission from the king.  
For know, my lords, the states of Christendom,  
Moved with remorse of these outrageous broils,  
Have earnestly implored a general peace  
Betwixt our nation and the aspiring French;  
And here at hand the Dauphin and his train  
Approacheth, to confer about some matter.

## YORK

Is all our travail turn'd to this effect?  
After the slaughter of so many peers,  
So many captains, gentlemen and soldiers,

That in this quarrel have been overthrown  
And sold their bodies for their country's benefit,  
Shall we at last conclude effeminate peace?  
Have we not lost most part of all the towns,  
By treason, falsehood and by treachery,  
Our great progenitors had conquered?  
O Warwick, Warwick! I foresee with grief  
The utter loss of all the realm of France.

## **WARWICK**

Be patient, York: if we conclude a peace,  
It shall be with such strict and severe covenants  
As little shall the Frenchmen gain thereby.

*Enter CHARLES, ALENCON, BASTARD OF ORLEANS, REIGNIER, and others*

## **CHARLES**

Since, lords of England, it is thus agreed  
That peaceful truce shall be proclaim'd in France,  
We come to be informed by yourselves  
What the conditions of that league must be.

## **YORK**

Speak, Winchester; for boiling choler chokes  
The hollow passage of my poison'd voice,  
By sight of these our baleful enemies.  
CARDINAL

## **OF WINCHESTER**

Charles, and the rest, it is enacted thus:  
That, in regard King Henry gives consent,  
Of mere compassion and of lenity,  
To ease your country of distressful war,  
And suffer you to breathe in fruitful peace,  
You shall become true liegemen to his crown:  
And Charles, upon condition thou wilt swear  
To pay him tribute, submit thyself,  
Thou shalt be placed as viceroy under him,

And still enjoy thy regal dignity.

## **ALENCON**

Must he be then as shadow of himself?  
Adorn his temples with a coronet,  
And yet, in substance and authority,  
Retain but privilege of a private man?  
This proffer is absurd and reasonless.

## **CHARLES**

'Tis known already that I am possess'd  
With more than half the Gallian territories,  
And therein revered for their lawful king:  
Shall I, for lucre of the rest unvanquish'd,  
Detract so much from that prerogative,  
As to be call'd but viceroy of the whole?  
No, lord ambassador, I'll rather keep  
That which I have than, coveting for more,  
Be cast from possibility of all.

## **YORK**

Insulting Charles! hast thou by secret means  
Used intercession to obtain a league,  
And, now the matter grows to compromise,  
Stand'st thou aloof upon comparison?  
Either accept the title thou usurp'st,  
Of benefit proceeding from our king  
And not of any challenge of desert,  
Or we will plague thee with incessant wars.

## **REIGNIER**

My lord, you do not well in obstinacy  
To cavil in the course of this contract:  
If once it be neglected, ten to one  
We shall not find like opportunity.

## **ALENCON**

To say the truth, it is your policy  
To save your subjects from such massacre  
And ruthless slaughters as are daily seen  
By our proceeding in hostility;  
And therefore take this compact of a truce,  
Although you break it when your pleasure serves.

## **WARWICK**

How say'st thou, Charles? shall our condition stand?

## **CHARLES**

It shall;  
Only reserved, you claim no interest  
In any of our towns of garrison.

## **YORK**

Then swear allegiance to his majesty,  
As thou art knight, never to disobey  
Nor be rebellious to the crown of England,  
Thou, nor thy nobles, to the crown of England.  
So, now dismiss your army when ye please:  
Hang up your ensign, let your drums be still,  
For here we entertain a solemn peace.

*Exeunt*



# The First part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 1](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. London. The palace.

*Enter SUFFOLK in conference with KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER and EXETER*

### KING HENRY VI

Your wondrous rare description, noble earl,  
Of beauteous Margaret hath astonish'd me:  
Her virtues graced with external gifts  
Do breed love's settled passions in my heart:  
And like as rigor of tempestuous gusts  
Provokes the mightiest hulk against the tide,  
So am I driven by breath of her renown  
Either to suffer shipwreck or arrive  
Where I may have fruition of her love.

### SUFFOLK

Tush, my good lord, this superficial tale  
Is but a preface of her worthy praise;  
The chief perfections of that lovely dame  
Had I sufficient skill to utter them,  
Would make a volume of enticing lines,  
Able to ravish any dull conceit:  
And, which is more, she is not so divine,  
So full-replete with choice of all delights,  
But with as humble lowliness of mind  
She is content to be at your command;  
Command, I mean, of virtuous chaste intents,  
To love and honour Henry as her lord.

### KING HENRY VI

And otherwise will Henry ne'er presume.  
Therefore, my lord protector, give consent  
That Margaret may be England's royal queen.

## **GLOUCESTER**

So should I give consent to flatter sin.  
You know, my lord, your highness is betroth'd  
Unto another lady of esteem:  
How shall we then dispense with that contract,  
And not deface your honour with reproach?

## **SUFFOLK**

As doth a ruler with unlawful oaths;  
Or one that, at a triumph having vow'd  
To try his strength, forsaketh yet the lists  
By reason of his adversary's odds:  
A poor earl's daughter is unequal odds,  
And therefore may be broke without offence.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Why, what, I pray, is Margaret more than that?  
Her father is no better than an earl,  
Although in glorious titles he excel.

## **SUFFOLK**

Yes, lord, her father is a king,  
The King of Naples and Jerusalem;  
And of such great authority in France  
As his alliance will confirm our peace  
And keep the Frenchmen in allegiance.

## **GLOUCESTER**

And so the Earl of Armagnac may do,  
Because he is near kinsman unto Charles.

## **EXETER**

Beside, his wealth doth warrant a liberal dower,  
Where Reignier sooner will receive than give.

## SUFFOLK

A dower, my lords! disgrace not so your king,  
That he should be so abject, base and poor,  
To choose for wealth and not for perfect love.  
Henry is able to enrich his queen  
And not seek a queen to make him rich:  
So worthless peasants bargain for their wives,  
As market-men for oxen, sheep, or horse.  
Marriage is a matter of more worth  
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship;  
Not whom we will, but whom his grace affects,  
Must be companion of his nuptial bed:  
And therefore, lords, since he affects her most,  
It most of all these reasons bindeth us,  
In our opinions she should be preferr'd.  
For what is wedlock forced but a hell,  
An age of discord and continual strife?  
Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss,  
And is a pattern of celestial peace.  
Whom should we match with Henry, being a king,  
But Margaret, that is daughter to a king?  
Her peerless feature, joined with her birth,  
Approves her fit for none but for a king:  
Her valiant courage and undaunted spirit,  
More than in women commonly is seen,  
Will answer our hope in issue of a king;  
For Henry, son unto a conqueror,  
Is likely to beget more conquerors,  
If with a lady of so high resolve  
As is fair Margaret he be link'd in love.  
Then yield, my lords; and here conclude with me  
That Margaret shall be queen, and none but she.

## KING HENRY VI

Whether it be through force of your report,  
My noble Lord of Suffolk, or for that  
My tender youth was never yet attain'd  
With any passion of inflaming love,  
I cannot tell; but this I am assured,  
I feel such sharp dissension in my breast,  
Such fierce alarms both of hope and fear,

As I am sick with working of my thoughts.  
Take, therefore, shipping; post, my lord, to France;  
Agree to any covenants, and procure  
That Lady Margaret do vouchsafe to come  
To cross the seas to England and be crown'd  
King Henry's faithful and anointed queen:  
For your expenses and sufficient charge,  
Among the people gather up a tenth.  
Be gone, I say; for, till you do return,  
I rest perplexed with a thousand cares.  
And you, good uncle, banish all offence:  
If you do censure me by what you were,  
Not what you are, I know it will excuse  
This sudden execution of my will.  
And so, conduct me where, from company,  
I may revolve and ruminare my grief.

*Exit*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ay, grief, I fear me, both at first and last.

*Exeunt GLOUCESTER and EXETER*

## **SUFFOLK**

Thus Suffolk hath prevail'd; and thus he goes,  
As did the youthful Paris once to Greece,  
With hope to find the like event in love,  
But prosper better than the Trojan did.  
Margaret shall now be queen, and rule the king;  
But I will rule both her, the king and realm.

*Exit*

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Henry VI, part 2

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [GLOUCESTER'S house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [GLOUCESTER's garden.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Saint Alban's.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [London. YORK'S garden.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A hall of justice.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [The Abbey at Bury St. Edmund's.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Bury St. Edmund's. A room of state.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [A bedchamber.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The coast of Kent.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Blackheath.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Another part of Blackheath.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [London. The Tower.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [London. Cannon Street.](#)

Act 4, Scene 7: [London. Smithfield.](#)

Act 4, Scene 8: [Southwark.](#)

Act 4, Scene 9: [Kenilworth Castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 10: [Kent. IDEN's garden.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Fields between Dartford and Blackheath.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Saint Alban's.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Fields near St. Alban's.](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. The palace.

*Flourish of trumpets: then hautboys. Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, SALISBURY, WARWICK, and CARDINAL, on the one side; QUEEN MARGARET, SUFFOLK, YORK, SOMERSET, and BUCKINGHAM, on the other*

### SUFFOLK

As by your high imperial majesty  
I had in charge at my depart for France,  
As procurator to your excellence,  
To marry Princess Margaret for your grace,  
So, in the famous ancient city, Tours,  
In presence of the Kings of France and Sicil,  
The Dukes of Orleans, Calaber, Bretagne and Alencon,  
Seven earls, twelve barons and twenty reverend bishops,  
I have perform'd my task and was espoused:  
And humbly now upon my bended knee,  
In sight of England and her lordly peers,  
Deliver up my title in the queen  
To your most gracious hands, that are the substance  
Of that great shadow I did represent;  
The happiest gift that ever marquess gave,  
The fairest queen that ever king received.

### KING HENRY VI

Suffolk, arise. Welcome, Queen Margaret:  
I can express no kinder sign of love  
Than this kind kiss. O Lord, that lends me life,  
Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness!  
For thou hast given me in this beauteous face  
A world of earthly blessings to my soul,  
If sympathy of love unite our thoughts.

### QUEEN MARGARET

Great King of England and my gracious lord,  
The mutual conference that my mind hath had,  
By day, by night, waking and in my dreams,  
In courtly company or at my beads,  
With you, mine alder-liefest sovereign,  
Makes me the bolder to salute my king  
With ruder terms, such as my wit affords  
And over-joy of heart doth minister.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Her sight did ravish; but her grace in speech,  
Her words y-clad with wisdom's majesty,  
Makes me from wondering fall to weeping joys;  
Such is the fulness of my heart's content.  
Lords, with one cheerful voice welcome my love.

## **ALL**

[Kneeling] Long live Queen Margaret, England's  
happiness!

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

We thank you all.

*Flourish*

## **SUFFOLK**

My lord protector, so it please your grace,  
Here are the articles of contracted peace  
Between our sovereign and the French king Charles,  
For eighteen months concluded by consent.

## **GLOUCESTER**

[Reads] 'Imprimis, it is agreed between the French  
king Charles, and William de la Pole, Marquess of  
Suffolk, ambassador for Henry King of England, that  
the said Henry shall espouse the Lady Margaret,

daughter unto Reignier King of Naples, Sicilia and Jerusalem, and crown her Queen of England ere the thirtieth of May next ensuing. Item, that the duchy of Anjou and the county of Maine shall be released and delivered to the king her father'--

*Lets the paper fall*

**KING HENRY VI**

Uncle, how now!

**GLOUCESTER**

Pardon me, gracious lord;  
Some sudden qualm hath struck me at the heart  
And dimm'd mine eyes, that I can read no further.

**KING HENRY VI**

Uncle of Winchester, I pray, read on.

**CARDINAL**

[Reads] 'Item, It is further agreed between them, that the duchies of Anjou and Maine shall be released and delivered over to the king her father, and she sent over of the King of England's own proper cost and charges, without having any dowry.'

**KING HENRY VI**

They please us well. Lord marquess, kneel down:  
We here create thee the first duke of Suffolk,  
And gird thee with the sword. Cousin of York,  
We here discharge your grace from being regent  
I' the parts of France, till term of eighteen months  
Be full expired. Thanks, uncle Winchester,  
Gloucester, York, Buckingham, Somerset,  
Salisbury, and Warwick;  
We thank you all for the great favour done,  
In entertainment to my princely queen.



Come, let us in, and with all speed provide  
To see her coronation be perform'd.

*Exeunt KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, and SUFFOLK*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Brave peers of England, pillars of the state,  
To you Duke Humphrey must unload his grief,  
Your grief, the common grief of all the land.  
What! did my brother Henry spend his youth,  
His valour, coin and people, in the wars?  
Did he so often lodge in open field,  
In winter's cold and summer's parching heat,  
To conquer France, his true inheritance?  
And did my brother Bedford toil his wits,  
To keep by policy what Henry got?  
Have you yourselves, Somerset, Buckingham,  
Brave York, Salisbury, and victorious Warwick,  
Received deep scars in France and Normandy?  
Or hath mine uncle Beaufort and myself,  
With all the learned council of the realm,  
Studied so long, sat in the council-house  
Early and late, debating to and fro  
How France and Frenchmen might be kept in awe,  
And had his highness in his infancy  
Crowned in Paris in despite of foes?  
And shall these labours and these honours die?  
Shall Henry's conquest, Bedford's vigilance,  
Your deeds of war and all our counsel die?  
O peers of England, shameful is this league!  
Fatal this marriage, cancelling your fame,  
Blotting your names from books of memory,  
Razing the characters of your renown,  
Defacing monuments of conquer'd France,  
Undoing all, as all had never been!

## **CARDINAL**

Nephew, what means this passionate discourse,  
This peroration with such circumstance?  
For France, 'tis ours; and we will keep it still.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ay, uncle, we will keep it, if we can;  
But now it is impossible we should:  
Suffolk, the new-made duke that rules the roast,  
Hath given the duchy of Anjou and Maine  
Unto the poor King Reignier, whose large style  
Agrees not with the leanness of his purse.

## **SALISBURY**

Now, by the death of Him that died for all,  
These counties were the keys of Normandy.  
But wherefore weeps Warwick, my valiant son?

## **WARWICK**

For grief that they are past recovery:  
For, were there hope to conquer them again,  
My sword should shed hot blood, mine eyes no tears.  
Anjou and Maine! myself did win them both;  
Those provinces these arms of mine did conquer:  
And are the cities, that I got with wounds,  
Delivered up again with peaceful words?  
Mort Dieu!

## **YORK**

For Suffolk's duke, may he be suffocate,  
That dims the honour of this warlike isle!  
France should have torn and rent my very heart,  
Before I would have yielded to this league.  
I never read but England's kings have had  
Large sums of gold and dowries with their wives:  
And our King Henry gives away his own,  
To match with her that brings no vantages.

## **GLOUCESTER**

A proper jest, and never heard before,  
That Suffolk should demand a whole fifteenth  
For costs and charges in transporting her!

She should have stayed in France and starved  
in France, Before--

## **CARDINAL**

My Lord of Gloucester, now ye grow too hot:  
It was the pleasure of my lord the King.

## **GLOUCESTER**

My Lord of Winchester, I know your mind;  
'Tis not my speeches that you do mislike,  
But 'tis my presence that doth trouble ye.  
Rancour will out: proud prelate, in thy face  
I see thy fury: if I longer stay,  
We shall begin our ancient bickerings.  
Lordings, farewell; and say, when I am gone,  
I prophesied France will be lost ere long.

*Exit*

## **CARDINAL**

So, there goes our protector in a rage.  
'Tis known to you he is mine enemy,  
Nay, more, an enemy unto you all,  
And no great friend, I fear me, to the king.  
Consider, lords, he is the next of blood,  
And heir apparent to the English crown:  
Had Henry got an empire by his marriage,  
And all the wealthy kingdoms of the west,  
There's reason he should be displeas'd at it.  
Look to it, lords! let not his smoothing words  
Bewitch your hearts; be wise and circumspect.  
What though the common people favour him,  
Calling him 'Humphrey, the good Duke of  
Gloucester,'  
Clapping their hands, and crying with loud voice,  
'Jesu maintain your royal excellence!'  
With 'God preserve the good Duke Humphrey!'  
I fear me, lords, for all this flattering gloss,  
He will be found a dangerous protector.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Why should he, then, protect our sovereign,  
He being of age to govern of himself?  
Cousin of Somerset, join you with me,  
And all together, with the Duke of Suffolk,  
We'll quickly hoise Duke Humphrey from his seat.

## **CARDINAL**

This weighty business will not brook delay:  
I'll to the Duke of Suffolk presently.

*Exit*

## **SOMERSET**

Cousin of Buckingham, though Humphrey's pride  
And greatness of his place be grief to us,  
Yet let us watch the haughty cardinal:  
His insolence is more intolerable  
Than all the princes in the land beside:  
If Gloucester be displaced, he'll be protector.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Or thou or I, Somerset, will be protector,  
Despite Duke Humphrey or the cardinal.

*Exeunt BUCKINGHAM and SOMERSET*

## **SALISBURY**

Pride went before, ambition follows him.  
While these do labour for their own preferment,  
Behoves it us to labour for the realm.  
I never saw but Humphrey Duke of Gloucester  
Did bear him like a noble gentleman.  
Oft have I seen the haughty cardinal,  
More like a soldier than a man o' the church,  
As stout and proud as he were lord of all,

Swear like a ruffian and demean himself  
Unlike the ruler of a commonweal.  
Warwick, my son, the comfort of my age,  
Thy deeds, thy plainness and thy housekeeping,  
Hath won the greatest favour of the commons,  
Excepting none but good Duke Humphrey:  
And, brother York, thy acts in Ireland,  
In bringing them to civil discipline,  
Thy late exploits done in the heart of France,  
When thou wert regent for our sovereign,  
Have made thee fear'd and honour'd of the people:  
Join we together, for the public good,  
In what we can, to bridle and suppress  
The pride of Suffolk and the cardinal,  
With Somerset's and Buckingham's ambition;  
And, as we may, cherish Duke Humphrey's deeds,  
While they do tend the profit of the land.

## **WARWICK**

So God help Warwick, as he loves the land,  
And common profit of his country!

## **YORK**

[Aside] And so says York, for he hath greatest cause.

## **SALISBURY**

Then let's make haste away, and look unto the main.

## **WARWICK**

Unto the main! O father, Maine is lost;  
That Maine which by main force Warwick did win,  
And would have kept so long as breath did last!  
Main chance, father, you meant; but I meant Maine,  
Which I will win from France, or else be slain,

*Exeunt WARWICK and SALISBURY*

## **YORK**

Anjou and Maine are given to the French;  
Paris is lost; the state of Normandy  
Stands on a tickle point, now they are gone:  
Suffolk concluded on the articles,  
The peers agreed, and Henry was well pleased  
To change two dukedoms for a duke's fair daughter.  
I cannot blame them all: what is't to them?  
'Tis thine they give away, and not their own.  
Pirates may make cheap pennyworths of their pillage  
And purchase friends and give to courtezans,  
Still revelling like lords till all be gone;  
While as the silly owner of the goods  
Weeps over them and wrings his hapless hands  
And shakes his head and trembling stands aloof,  
While all is shared and all is borne away,  
Ready to starve and dare not touch his own:  
So York must sit and fret and bite his tongue,  
While his own lands are bargain'd for and sold.  
Methinks the realms of England, France and Ireland  
Bear that proportion to my flesh and blood  
As did the fatal brand Althaea burn'd  
Unto the prince's heart of Calydon.  
Anjou and Maine both given unto the French!  
Cold news for me, for I had hope of France,  
Even as I have of fertile England's soil.  
A day will come when York shall claim his own;  
And therefore I will take the Nevils' parts  
And make a show of love to proud Duke Humphrey,  
And, when I spy advantage, claim the crown,  
For that's the golden mark I seek to hit:  
Nor shall proud Lancaster usurp my right,  
Nor hold the sceptre in his childish fist,  
Nor wear the diadem upon his head,  
Whose church-like humours fits not for a crown.  
Then, York, be still awhile, till time do serve:  
Watch thou and wake when others be asleep,  
To pry into the secrets of the state;  
Till Henry, surfeiting in joys of love,  
With his new bride and England's dear-bought queen,  
And Humphrey with the peers be fall'n at jars:  
Then will I raise aloft the milk-white rose,  
With whose sweet smell the air shall be perfumed;

And in my standard bear the arms of York  
To grapple with the house of Lancaster;  
And, force perforce, I'll make him yield the crown,  
Whose bookish rule hath pull'd fair England down.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. GLOUCESTER'S house.

*Enter GLOUCESTER and his DUCHESS*

### DUCHESS

Why droops my lord, like over-ripen'd corn,  
Hanging the head at Ceres' plenteous load?  
Why doth the great Duke Humphrey knit his brows,  
As frowning at the favours of the world?  
Why are thine eyes fixed to the sullen earth,  
Gazing on that which seems to dim thy sight?  
What seest thou there? King Henry's diadem,  
Enchased with all the honours of the world?  
If so, gaze on, and grovel on thy face,  
Until thy head be circled with the same.  
Put forth thy hand, reach at the glorious gold.  
What, is't too short? I'll lengthen it with mine:  
And, having both together heaved it up,  
We'll both together lift our heads to heaven,  
And never more abase our sight so low  
As to vouchsafe one glance unto the ground.

### GLOUCESTER

O Nell, sweet Nell, if thou dost love thy lord,  
Banish the canker of ambitious thoughts.  
And may that thought, when I imagine ill  
Against my king and nephew, virtuous Henry,  
Be my last breathing in this mortal world!  
My troublous dream this night doth make me sad.

### DUCHESS

What dream'd my lord? tell me, and I'll requite it  
With sweet rehearsal of my morning's dream.



## **GLOUCESTER**

Methought this staff, mine office-badge in court,  
Was broke in twain; by whom I have forgot,  
But, as I think, it was by the cardinal;  
And on the pieces of the broken wand  
Were placed the heads of Edmund Duke of Somerset,  
And William de la Pole, first duke of Suffolk.  
This was my dream: what it doth bode, God knows.

## **DUCHESS**

Tut, this was nothing but an argument  
That he that breaks a stick of Gloucester's grove  
Shall lose his head for his presumption.  
But list to me, my Humphrey, my sweet duke:  
Methought I sat in seat of majesty  
In the cathedral church of Westminster,  
And in that chair where kings and queens are crown'd;  
Where Henry and dame Margaret kneel'd to me  
And on my head did set the diadem.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Nay, Eleanor, then must I chide outright:  
Presumptuous dame, ill-nurtured Eleanor,  
Art thou not second woman in the realm,  
And the protector's wife, beloved of him?  
Hast thou not worldly pleasure at command,  
Above the reach or compass of thy thought?  
And wilt thou still be hammering treachery,  
To tumble down thy husband and thyself  
From top of honour to disgrace's feet?  
Away from me, and let me hear no more!

## **DUCHESS**

What, what, my lord! are you so choleric  
With Eleanor, for telling but her dream?  
Next time I'll keep my dreams unto myself,  
And not be cheque'd.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Nay, be not angry; I am pleased again.

*Enter Messenger*

## **Messenger**

My lord protector, 'tis his highness' pleasure  
You do prepare to ride unto Saint Alban's,  
Where as the king and queen do mean to hawk.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I go. Come, Nell, thou wilt ride with us?

## **DUCHESS**

Yes, my good lord, I'll follow presently.

*Exeunt GLOUCESTER and Messenger*

Follow I must; I cannot go before,  
While Gloucester bears this base and humble mind.  
Were I a man, a duke, and next of blood,  
I would remove these tedious stumbling-blocks  
And smooth my way upon their headless necks;  
And, being a woman, I will not be slack  
To play my part in Fortune's pageant.  
Where are you there? Sir John! nay, fear not, man,  
We are alone; here's none but thee and I.

*Enter HUME*

## **HUME**

Jesus preserve your royal majesty!

## **DUCHESS**

What say'st thou? majesty! I am but grace.

## HUME

But, by the grace of God, and Hume's advice,  
Your grace's title shall be multiplied.

## DUCHESS

What say'st thou, man? hast thou as yet conferr'd  
With Margery Jourdain, the cunning witch,  
With Roger Bolingbroke, the conjurer?  
And will they undertake to do me good?

## HUME

This they have promised, to show your highness  
A spirit raised from depth of under-ground,  
That shall make answer to such questions  
As by your grace shall be propounded him.

## DUCHESS

It is enough; I'll think upon the questions:  
When from St. Alban's we do make return,  
We'll see these things effected to the full.  
Here, Hume, take this reward; make merry, man,  
With thy confederates in this weighty cause.

*Exit*

## HUME

Hume must make merry with the duchess' gold;  
Marry, and shall. But how now, Sir John Hume!  
Seal up your lips, and give no words but mum:  
The business asketh silent secrecy.  
Dame Eleanor gives gold to bring the witch:  
Gold cannot come amiss, were she a devil.  
Yet have I gold flies from another coast;  
I dare not say, from the rich cardinal  
And from the great and new-made Duke of Suffolk,  
Yet I do find it so; for to be plain,

They, knowing Dame Eleanor's aspiring humour,  
Have hired me to undermine the duchess  
And buz these conjurations in her brain.  
They say 'A crafty knave does need no broker;  
Yet am I Suffolk and the cardinal's broker.  
Hume, if you take not heed, you shall go near  
To call them both a pair of crafty knaves.  
Well, so it stands; and thus, I fear, at last  
Hume's knavery will be the duchess' wreck,  
And her attainture will be Humphrey's fall:  
Sort how it will, I shall have gold for all.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The palace.

*Enter three or four Petitioners, PETER, the Armourer's man, being one*

### First Petitioner

My masters, let's stand close: my lord protector  
will come this way by and by, and then we may deliver  
our supplications in the quill.

### Second Petitioner

Marry, the Lord protect him, for he's a good man!  
Jesu bless him!

*Enter SUFFOLK and QUEEN MARGARET*

### PETER

Here a' comes, methinks, and the queen with him.  
I'll be the first, sure.

### Second Petitioner

Come back, fool; this is the Duke of Suffolk, and  
not my lord protector.

### SUFFOLK

How now, fellow! would'st anything with me?

### First Petitioner

I pray, my lord, pardon me; I took ye for my lord  
protector.

## QUEEN MARGARET

[Reading] 'To my Lord Protector!' Are your supplications to his lordship? Let me see them: what is thine?

### First Petitioner

Mine is, an't please your grace, against John Goodman, my lord cardinal's man, for keeping my house, and lands, and wife and all, from me.

## SUFFOLK

Thy wife, too! that's some wrong, indeed. What's yours? What's here!

*Reads*

'Against the Duke of Suffolk, for enclosing the commons of Melford.' How now, sir knave!

### Second Petitioner

Alas, sir, I am but a poor petitioner of our whole township.

## PETER

[Giving his petition] Against my master, Thomas Horner, for saying that the Duke of York was rightful heir to the crown.

## QUEEN MARGARET

What sayst thou? did the Duke of York say he was rightful heir to the crown?

## PETER

That my master was? no, forsooth: my master said that he was, and that the king was an usurper.

## SUFFOLK

Who is there?

*Enter Servant*

Take this fellow in, and send for  
his master with a pursuivant presently: we'll hear  
more of your matter before the King.

*Exit Servant with PETER*

## QUEEN MARGARET

And as for you, that love to be protected  
Under the wings of our protector's grace,  
Begin your suits anew, and sue to him.

*Tears the supplication*

Away, base cullions! Suffolk, let them go.

## ALL

Come, let's be gone.

*Exeunt*

## QUEEN MARGARET

My Lord of Suffolk, say, is this the guise,  
Is this the fashion in the court of England?  
Is this the government of Britain's isle,  
And this the royalty of Albion's king?  
What shall King Henry be a pupil still  
Under the surly Gloucester's governance?  
Am I a queen in title and in style,  
And must be made a subject to a duke?  
I tell thee, Pole, when in the city Tours  
Thou ran'st a tilt in honour of my love  
And stolest away the ladies' hearts of France,

I thought King Henry had resembled thee  
In courage, courtship and proportion:  
But all his mind is bent to holiness,  
To number Ave-Maries on his beads;  
His champions are the prophets and apostles,  
His weapons holy saws of sacred writ,  
His study is his tilt-yard, and his loves  
Are brazen images of canonized saints.  
I would the college of the cardinals  
Would choose him pope, and carry him to Rome,  
And set the triple crown upon his head:  
That were a state fit for his holiness.

## **SUFFOLK**

Madam, be patient: as I was cause  
Your highness came to England, so will I  
In England work your grace's full content.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Beside the haughty protector, have we Beaufort,  
The imperious churchman, Somerset, Buckingham,  
And grumbling York: and not the least of these  
But can do more in England than the king.

## **SUFFOLK**

And he of these that can do most of all  
Cannot do more in England than the Nevils:  
Salisbury and Warwick are no simple peers.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Not all these lords do vex me half so much  
As that proud dame, the lord protector's wife.  
She sweeps it through the court with troops of ladies,  
More like an empress than Duke Humphrey's wife:  
Strangers in court do take her for the queen:  
She bears a duke's revenues on her back,  
And in her heart she scorns our poverty:  
Shall I not live to be avenged on her?



Contemptuous base-born callet as she is,  
She vaunted 'mongst her minions t'other day,  
The very train of her worst wearing gown  
Was better worth than all my father's lands,  
Till Suffolk gave two dukedoms for his daughter.

## **SUFFOLK**

Madam, myself have limed a bush for her,  
And placed a quire of such enticing birds,  
That she will light to listen to the lays,  
And never mount to trouble you again.  
So, let her rest: and, madam, list to me;  
For I am bold to counsel you in this.  
Although we fancy not the cardinal,  
Yet must we join with him and with the lords,  
Till we have brought Duke Humphrey in disgrace.  
As for the Duke of York, this late complaint  
Will make but little for his benefit.  
So, one by one, we'll weed them all at last,  
And you yourself shall steer the happy helm.

*Sound a sennet. Enter KING HENRY VI, GLOUCESTER, CARDINAL, BUCKINGHAM, YORK, SOMERSET, SALISBURY, WARWICK, and the DUCHESS*

## **KING HENRY VI**

For my part, noble lords, I care not which;  
Or Somerset or York, all's one to me.

## **YORK**

If York have ill demean'd himself in France,  
Then let him be denay'd the regentship.

## **SOMERSET**

If Somerset be unworthy of the place,  
Let York be regent; I will yield to him.

## **WARWICK**

Whether your grace be worthy, yea or no,  
Dispute not that: York is the worthier.

**CARDINAL**

Ambitious Warwick, let thy betters speak.

**WARWICK**

The cardinal's not my better in the field.

**BUCKINGHAM**

All in this presence are thy betters, Warwick.

**WARWICK**

Warwick may live to be the best of all.

**SALISBURY**

Peace, son! and show some reason, Buckingham,  
Why Somerset should be preferred in this.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Because the king, forsooth, will have it so.

**GLOUCESTER**

Madam, the king is old enough himself  
To give his censure: these are no women's matters.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

If he be old enough, what needs your grace  
To be protector of his excellence?

**GLOUCESTER**

Madam, I am protector of the realm;

And, at his pleasure, will resign my place.

## **SUFFOLK**

Resign it then and leave thine insolence.  
Since thou wert king--as who is king but thou?--  
The commonwealth hath daily run to wreck;  
The Dauphin hath prevail'd beyond the seas;  
And all the peers and nobles of the realm  
Have been as bondmen to thy sovereignty.

## **CARDINAL**

The commons hast thou rack'd; the clergy's bags  
Are lank and lean with thy extortions.

## **SOMERSET**

Thy sumptuous buildings and thy wife's attire  
Have cost a mass of public treasury.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Thy cruelty in execution  
Upon offenders, hath exceeded law,  
And left thee to the mercy of the law.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

They sale of offices and towns in France,  
If they were known, as the suspect is great,  
Would make thee quickly hop without thy head.

*Exit GLOUCESTER. QUEEN MARGARET drops her fan*

Give me my fan: what, minion! can ye not?

*She gives the DUCHESS a box on the ear*

I cry you mercy, madam; was it you?

## **DUCHESS**

Was't I! yea, I it was, proud Frenchwoman:  
Could I come near your beauty with my nails,  
I'd set my ten commandments in your face.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Sweet aunt, be quiet; 'twas against her will.

## **DUCHESS**

Against her will! good king, look to't in time;  
She'll hamper thee, and dandle thee like a baby:  
Though in this place most master wear no breeches,  
She shall not strike Dame Eleanor unrevenged.

*Exit*

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Lord cardinal, I will follow Eleanor,  
And listen after Humphrey, how he proceeds:  
She's tickled now; her fume needs no spurs,  
She'll gallop far enough to her destruction.

*Exit*

*Re-enter GLOUCESTER*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Now, lords, my choler being over-blown  
With walking once about the quadrangle,  
I come to talk of commonwealth affairs.  
As for your spiteful false objections,  
Prove them, and I lie open to the law:  
But God in mercy so deal with my soul,  
As I in duty love my king and country!  
But, to the matter that we have in hand:  
I say, my sovereign, York is meetest man  
To be your regent in the realm of France.

## **SUFFOLK**

Before we make election, give me leave  
To show some reason, of no little force,  
That York is most unmeet of any man.

## **YORK**

I'll tell thee, Suffolk, why I am unmeet:  
First, for I cannot flatter thee in pride;  
Next, if I be appointed for the place,  
My Lord of Somerset will keep me here,  
Without discharge, money, or furniture,  
Till France be won into the Dauphin's hands:  
Last time, I danced attendance on his will  
Till Paris was besieged, famish'd, and lost.

## **WARWICK**

That can I witness; and a fouler fact  
Did never traitor in the land commit.

## **SUFFOLK**

Peace, headstrong Warwick!

## **WARWICK**

Image of pride, why should I hold my peace?

*Enter HORNER, the Armourer, and his man PETER, guarded*

## **SUFFOLK**

Because here is a man accused of treason:  
Pray God the Duke of York excuse himself!

## **YORK**

Doth any one accuse York for a traitor?

## **KING HENRY VI**

What mean'st thou, Suffolk; tell me, what are these?

## **SUFFOLK**

Please it your majesty, this is the man  
That doth accuse his master of high treason:  
His words were these: that Richard, Duke of York,  
Was rightful heir unto the English crown  
And that your majesty was a usurper.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Say, man, were these thy words?

## **HORNER**

An't shall please your majesty, I never said nor  
thought any such matter: God is my witness, I am  
falsely accused by the villain.

## **PETER**

By these ten bones, my lords, he did speak them to  
me in the garret one night, as we were scouring my  
Lord of York's armour.

## **YORK**

Base dunghill villain and mechanical,  
I'll have thy head for this thy traitor's speech.  
I do beseech your royal majesty,  
Let him have all the rigor of the law.

## **HORNER**

Alas, my lord, hang me, if ever I spake the words.  
My accuser is my 'prentice; and when I did correct  
him for his fault the other day, he did vow upon his  
knees he would be even with me: I have good

witness of this: therefore I beseech your majesty,  
do not cast away an honest man for a villain's  
accusation.

**KING HENRY VI**

Uncle, what shall we say to this in law?

**GLOUCESTER**

This doom, my lord, if I may judge:  
Let Somerset be regent over the French,  
Because in York this breeds suspicion:  
And let these have a day appointed them  
For single combat in convenient place,  
For he hath witness of his servant's malice:  
This is the law, and this Duke Humphrey's doom.

**SOMERSET**

I humbly thank your royal majesty.

**HORNER**

And I accept the combat willingly.

**PETER**

Alas, my lord, I cannot fight; for God's sake, pity  
my case. The spite of man prevaileth against me. O  
Lord, have mercy upon me! I shall never be able to  
fight a blow. O Lord, my heart!

**GLOUCESTER**

Sirrah, or you must fight, or else be hang'd.

**KING HENRY VI**

Away with them to prison; and the day of combat  
shall be the last of the next month. Come,

Somerset, we'll see thee sent away.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. GLOUCESTER's garden.

*Enter MARGARET JOURDAIN, HUME, SOUTHWELL, and BOLINGBROKE*

**HUME**

Come, my masters; the duchess, I tell you, expects performance of your promises.

**BOLINGBROKE**

Master Hume, we are therefore provided: will her ladyship behold and hear our exorcisms?

**HUME**

Ay, what else? fear you not her courage.

**BOLINGBROKE**

I have heard her reported to be a woman of an invincible spirit: but it shall be convenient, Master Hume, that you be by her aloft, while we be busy below; and so, I pray you, go, in God's name, and leave us.

*Exit HUME*

Mother Jourdain, be you prostrate and grovel on the earth; John Southwell, read you; and let us to our work.

*Enter the DUCHESS aloft, HUME following*

**DUCHESS**

Well said, my masters; and welcome all. To this  
gear the sooner the better.

## **BOLINGBROKE**

Patience, good lady; wizards know their times:  
Deep night, dark night, the silent of the night,  
The time of night when Troy was set on fire;  
The time when screech-owls cry and ban-dogs howl,  
And spirits walk and ghosts break up their graves,  
That time best fits the work we have in hand.  
Madam, sit you and fear not: whom we raise,  
We will make fast within a hallow'd verge.

*Here they do the ceremonies belonging, and make the circle; BOLINGBROKE or  
SOUTHWELL reads, Conjuro te, & c. It thunders and lightens terribly; then the Spirit  
riseth*

## **Spirit**

Adsum.

## **MARGARET JOURDAIN**

Asmath,  
By the eternal God, whose name and power  
Thou tremblest at, answer that I shall ask;  
For, till thou speak, thou shalt not pass from hence.

## **Spirit**

Ask what thou wilt. That I had said and done!

## **BOLINGBROKE**

'First of the king: what shall of him become?'

*Reading out of a paper*

## **Spirit**

The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose;  
But him outlive, and die a violent death.

*As the Spirit speaks, SOUTHWELL writes the answer*

**BOLINGBROKE**

'What fates await the Duke of Suffolk?'

**Spirit**

By water shall he die, and take his end.

**BOLINGBROKE**

'What shall befall the Duke of Somerset?'

**Spirit**

Let him shun castles;  
Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains  
Than where castles mounted stand.  
Have done, for more I hardly can endure.

**BOLINGBROKE**

Descend to darkness and the burning lake!  
False fiend, avoid!

*Thunder and lightning. Exit Spirit*

*Enter YORK and BUCKINGHAM with their Guard and break in*

**YORK**

Lay hands upon these traitors and their trash.  
Beldam, I think we watch'd you at an inch.  
What, madam, are you there? the king and commonweal  
Are deeply indebted for this piece of pains:  
My lord protector will, I doubt it not,  
See you well guerdon'd for these good deserts.

## DUCHESS

Not half so bad as thine to England's king,  
Injurious duke, that threatest where's no cause.

## BUCKINGHAM

True, madam, none at all: what call you this?  
Away with them! let them be clapp'd up close.  
And kept asunder. You, madam, shall with us.  
Stafford, take her to thee.

*Exeunt above DUCHESS and HUME, guarded*

We'll see your trinkets here all forthcoming.  
All, away!

*Exeunt guard with MARGARET JOURDAIN, SOUTHWELL, & c*

## YORK

Lord Buckingham, methinks, you watch'd her well:  
A pretty plot, well chosen to build upon!  
Now, pray, my lord, let's see the devil's writ.  
What have we here?

*Reads*

'The duke yet lives, that Henry shall depose;  
But him outlive, and die a violent death.'  
Why, this is just  
'Aio te, AEacida, Romanos vincere posse.'  
Well, to the rest:  
'Tell me what fate awaits the Duke of Suffolk?  
By water shall he die, and take his end.  
What shall betide the Duke of Somerset?  
Let him shun castles;  
Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains  
Than where castles mounted stand.'  
Come, come, my lords;  
These oracles are hardly attain'd,

And hardly understood.  
The king is now in progress towards Saint Alban's,  
With him the husband of this lovely lady:  
Thither go these news, as fast as horse can  
carry them:  
A sorry breakfast for my lord protector.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Your grace shall give me leave, my Lord of York,  
To be the post, in hope of his reward.

## **YORK**

At your pleasure, my good lord. Who's within  
there, ho!

*Enter a Servingman*

Invite my Lords of Salisbury and Warwick  
To sup with me to-morrow night. Away!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Saint Alban's.

*Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, GLOUCESTER, CARDINAL, and SUFFOLK, with Falconers halloing*

### QUEEN MARGARET

Believe me, lords, for flying at the brook,  
I saw not better sport these seven years' day:  
Yet, by your leave, the wind was very high;  
And, ten to one, old Joan had not gone out.

### KING HENRY VI

But what a point, my lord, your falcon made,  
And what a pitch she flew above the rest!  
To see how God in all his creatures works!  
Yea, man and birds are fain of climbing high.

### SUFFOLK

No marvel, an it like your majesty,  
My lord protector's hawks do tower so well;  
They know their master loves to be aloft,  
And bears his thoughts above his falcon's pitch.

### GLOUCESTER

My lord, 'tis but a base ignoble mind  
That mounts no higher than a bird can soar.

### CARDINAL

I thought as much; he would be above the clouds.

### GLOUCESTER

Ay, my lord cardinal? how think you by that?  
Were it not good your grace could fly to heaven?

**KING HENRY VI**

The treasury of everlasting joy.

**CARDINAL**

Thy heaven is on earth; thine eyes and thoughts  
Beat on a crown, the treasure of thy heart;  
Pernicious protector, dangerous peer,  
That smooth'st it so with king and commonweal!

**GLOUCESTER**

What, cardinal, is your priesthood grown peremptory?  
Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?  
Churchmen so hot? good uncle, hide such malice;  
With such holiness can you do it?

**SUFFOLK**

No malice, sir; no more than well becomes  
So good a quarrel and so bad a peer.

**GLOUCESTER**

As who, my lord?

**SUFFOLK**

Why, as you, my lord,  
An't like your lordly lord-protectorship.

**GLOUCESTER**

Why, Suffolk, England knows thine insolence.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

And thy ambition, Gloucester.

**KING HENRY VI**

I prithee, peace, good queen,  
And whet not on these furious peers;  
For blessed are the peacemakers on earth.

**CARDINAL**

Let me be blessed for the peace I make,  
Against this proud protector, with my sword!

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CARDINAL] Faith, holy uncle, would  
'twere come to that!

**CARDINAL**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Marry, when thou darest.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CARDINAL] Make up no factious  
numbers for the matter;  
In thine own person answer thy abuse.

**CARDINAL**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Ay, where thou darest  
not peep: an if thou darest,  
This evening, on the east side of the grove.

**KING HENRY VI**

How now, my lords!

**CARDINAL**



Believe me, cousin Gloucester,  
Had not your man put up the fowl so suddenly,  
We had had more sport.

*Aside to GLOUCESTER*

Come with thy two-hand sword.

**GLOUCESTER**

True, uncle.

**CARDINAL**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Are ye advised? the  
east side of the grove?

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CARDINAL] Cardinal, I am with you.

**KING HENRY VI**

Why, how now, uncle Gloucester!

**GLOUCESTER**

Talking of hawking; nothing else, my lord.

*Aside to CARDINAL*

Now, by God's mother, priest, I'll shave your crown for this,  
Or all my fence shall fail.

**CARDINAL**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] Medice, teipsum--  
Protector, see to't well, protect yourself.

**KING HENRY VI**

The winds grow high; so do your stomachs, lords.  
How irksome is this music to my heart!  
When such strings jar, what hope of harmony?  
I pray, my lords, let me compound this strife.

*Enter a Townsman of Saint Alban's, crying 'A miracle!'*

## **GLOUCESTER**

What means this noise?  
Fellow, what miracle dost thou proclaim?

## **Townsman**

A miracle! a miracle!

## **SUFFOLK**

Come to the king and tell him what miracle.

## **Townsman**

Forsooth, a blind man at Saint Alban's shrine,  
Within this half-hour, hath received his sight;  
A man that ne'er saw in his life before.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Now, God be praised, that to believing souls  
Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair!

*Enter the Mayor of Saint Alban's and his brethren, bearing SIMPCOX, between two in a chair, SIMPCOX's Wife following*

## **CARDINAL**

Here comes the townsmen on procession,  
To present your highness with the man.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Great is his comfort in this earthly vale,  
Although by his sight his sin be multiplied.

**GLOUCESTER**

Stand by, my masters: bring him near the king;  
His highness' pleasure is to talk with him.

**KING HENRY VI**

Good fellow, tell us here the circumstance,  
That we for thee may glorify the Lord.  
What, hast thou been long blind and now restored?

**SIMPCOX**

Born blind, an't please your grace.

**Wife**

Ay, indeed, was he.

**SUFFOLK**

What woman is this?

**Wife**

His wife, an't like your worship.

**GLOUCESTER**

Hadst thou been his mother, thou couldst have  
better told.

**KING HENRY VI**

Where wert thou born?

**SIMPCOX**

At Berwick in the north, an't like your grace.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Poor soul, God's goodness hath been great to thee:  
Let never day nor night unhallow'd pass,  
But still remember what the Lord hath done.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Tell me, good fellow, camest thou here by chance,  
Or of devotion, to this holy shrine?

## **SIMPCOX**

God knows, of pure devotion; being call'd  
A hundred times and oftener, in my sleep,  
By good Saint Alban; who said, 'Simpcox, come,  
Come, offer at my shrine, and I will help thee.'

## **Wife**

Most true, forsooth; and many time and oft  
Myself have heard a voice to call him so.

## **CARDINAL**

What, art thou lame?

## **SIMPCOX**

Ay, God Almighty help me!

## **SUFFOLK**

How camest thou so?

## **SIMPCOX**

A fall off of a tree.

**Wife**

A plum-tree, master.

**GLOUCESTER**

How long hast thou been blind?

**SIMPCOX**

Born so, master.

**GLOUCESTER**

What, and wouldst climb a tree?

**SIMPCOX**

But that in all my life, when I was a youth.

**Wife**

Too true; and bought his climbing very dear.

**GLOUCESTER**

Mass, thou lovedst plums well, that wouldst  
venture so.

**SIMPCOX**

Alas, good master, my wife desired some damsons,  
And made me climb, with danger of my life.

**GLOUCESTER**

A subtle knave! but yet it shall not serve.  
Let me see thine eyes: wink now: now open them:  
In my opinion yet thou seest not well.

**SIMPCOX**

Yes, master, clear as day, I thank God and  
Saint Alban.

**GLOUCESTER**

Say'st thou me so? What colour is this cloak of?

**SIMPCOX**

Red, master; red as blood.

**GLOUCESTER**

Why, that's well said. What colour is my gown of?

**SIMPCOX**

Black, forsooth: coal-black as jet.

**KING HENRY VI**

Why, then, thou know'st what colour jet is of?

**SUFFOLK**

And yet, I think, jet did he never see.

**GLOUCESTER**

But cloaks and gowns, before this day, a many.

**Wife**

Never, before this day, in all his life.

**GLOUCESTER**

Tell me, sirrah, what's my name?

**SIMPCOX**

Alas, master, I know not.

**GLOUCESTER**

What's his name?

**SIMPCOX**

I know not.

**GLOUCESTER**

Nor his?

**SIMPCOX**

No, indeed, master.

**GLOUCESTER**

What's thine own name?

**SIMPCOX**

Saunders Simpcox, an if it please you, master.

**GLOUCESTER**

Then, Saunders, sit there, the lyingest knave in Christendom. If thou hadst been born blind, thou mightest as well have known all our names as thus to name the several colours we do wear. Sight may distinguish of colours, but suddenly to nominate them all, it is impossible. My lords, Saint Alban here hath done a miracle; and would ye not think his cunning to be great, that could restore this cripple to his legs again?

**SIMPCOX**

O master, that you could!

**GLOUCESTER**

My masters of Saint Alban's, have you not beadles in your town, and things called whips?

**Mayor**

Yes, my lord, if it please your grace.

**GLOUCESTER**

Then send for one presently.

**Mayor**

Sirrah, go fetch the beadle hither straight.

*Exit an Attendant*

**GLOUCESTER**

Now fetch me a stool hither by and by. Now, sirrah, if you mean to save yourself from whipping, leap me over this stool and run away.

**SIMPCOX**

Alas, master, I am not able to stand alone:  
You go about to torture me in vain.

*Enter a Beadle with whips*

**GLOUCESTER**

Well, sir, we must have you find your legs. Sirrah beadle, whip him till he leap over that same stool.

**Beadle**



I will, my lord. Come on, sirrah; off with your doublet quickly.

**SIMPCOX**

Alas, master, what shall I do? I am not able to stand.

*After the Beadle hath hit him once, he leaps over the stool and runs away; and they follow and cry, 'A miracle!'*

**KING HENRY VI**

O God, seest Thou this, and bearest so long?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

It made me laugh to see the villain run.

**GLOUCESTER**

Follow the knave; and take this drab away.

**Wife**

Alas, sir, we did it for pure need.

**GLOUCESTER**

Let them be whipped through every market-town, till they come to Berwick, from whence they came.

*Exeunt Wife, Beadle, Mayor, & c*

**CARDINAL**

Duke Humphrey has done a miracle to-day.

**SUFFOLK**

True; made the lame to leap and fly away.

## **GLOUCESTER**

But you have done more miracles than I;  
You made in a day, my lord, whole towns to fly.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM*

## **KING HENRY VI**

What tidings with our cousin Buckingham?

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Such as my heart doth tremble to unfold.  
A sort of naughty persons, lewdly bent,  
Under the countenance and confederacy  
Of Lady Eleanor, the protector's wife,  
The ringleader and head of all this rout,  
Have practised dangerously against your state,  
Dealing with witches and with conjurers:  
Whom we have apprehended in the fact;  
Raising up wicked spirits from under ground,  
Demanding of King Henry's life and death,  
And other of your highness' privy-council;  
As more at large your grace shall understand.

## **CARDINAL**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] And so, my lord protector,  
by this means  
Your lady is forthcoming yet at London.  
This news, I think, hath turn'd your weapon's edge;  
'Tis like, my lord, you will not keep your hour.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ambitious churchman, leave to afflict my heart:  
Sorrow and grief have vanquish'd all my powers;  
And, vanquish'd as I am, I yield to thee,  
Or to the meanest groom.

## **KING HENRY VI**

O God, what mischiefs work the wicked ones,  
Heaping confusion on their own heads thereby!

## QUEEN MARGARET

Gloucester, see here the tainture of thy nest.  
And look thyself be faultless, thou wert best.

## GLOUCESTER

Madam, for myself, to heaven I do appeal,  
How I have loved my king and commonweal:  
And, for my wife, I know not how it stands;  
Sorry I am to hear what I have heard:  
Noble she is, but if she have forgot  
Honour and virtue and conversed with such  
As, like to pitch, defile nobility,  
I banish her my bed and company  
And give her as a prey to law and shame,  
That hath dishonour'd Gloucester's honest name.

## KING HENRY VI

Well, for this night we will repose us here:  
To-morrow toward London back again,  
To look into this business thoroughly  
And call these foul offenders to their answers  
And poise the cause in justice' equal scales,  
Whose beam stands sure, whose rightful cause prevails.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. London. YORK'S garden.

*Enter YORK, SALISBURY, and WARWICK*

### YORK

Now, my good Lords of Salisbury and Warwick,  
Our simple supper ended, give me leave  
In this close walk to satisfy myself,  
In craving your opinion of my title,  
Which is infallible, to England's crown.

### SALISBURY

My lord, I long to hear it at full.

### WARWICK

Sweet York, begin: and if thy claim be good,  
The Nevils are thy subjects to command.

### YORK

Then thus:  
Edward the Third, my lords, had seven sons:  
The first, Edward the Black Prince, Prince of Wales;  
The second, William of Hatfield, and the third,  
Lionel Duke of Clarence: next to whom  
Was John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster;  
The fifth was Edmund Langley, Duke of York;  
The sixth was Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester;  
William of Windsor was the seventh and last.  
Edward the Black Prince died before his father  
And left behind him Richard, his only son,  
Who after Edward the Third's death reign'd as king;  
Till Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster,

The eldest son and heir of John of Gaunt,  
Crown'd by the name of Henry the Fourth,  
Seized on the realm, deposed the rightful king,  
Sent his poor queen to France, from whence she came,  
And him to Pomfret; where, as all you know,  
Harmless Richard was murder'd traitorously.

## **WARWICK**

Father, the duke hath told the truth:  
Thus got the house of Lancaster the crown.

## **YORK**

Which now they hold by force and not by right;  
For Richard, the first son's heir, being dead,  
The issue of the next son should have reign'd.

## **SALISBURY**

But William of Hatfield died without an heir.

## **YORK**

The third son, Duke of Clarence, from whose line  
I claimed the crown, had issue, Philippe, a daughter,  
Who married Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March:  
Edmund had issue, Roger Earl of March;  
Roger had issue, Edmund, Anne and Eleanor.

## **SALISBURY**

This Edmund, in the reign of Bolingbroke,  
As I have read, laid claim unto the crown;  
And, but for Owen Glendower, had been king,  
Who kept him in captivity till he died.  
But to the rest.

## **YORK**

His eldest sister, Anne,  
My mother, being heir unto the crown

Married Richard Earl of Cambridge; who was son  
To Edmund Langley, Edward the Third's fifth son.  
By her I claim the kingdom: she was heir  
To Roger Earl of March, who was the son  
Of Edmund Mortimer, who married Philippe,  
Sole daughter unto Lionel Duke of Clarence:  
So, if the issue of the elder son  
Succeed before the younger, I am king.

## **WARWICK**

What plain proceeding is more plain than this?  
Henry doth claim the crown from John of Gaunt,  
The fourth son; York claims it from the third.  
Till Lionel's issue fails, his should not reign:  
It fails not yet, but flourishes in thee  
And in thy sons, fair slips of such a stock.  
Then, father Salisbury, kneel we together;  
And in this private plot be we the first  
That shall salute our rightful sovereign  
With honour of his birthright to the crown.

## **BOTH**

Long live our sovereign Richard, England's king!

## **YORK**

We thank you, lords. But I am not your king  
Till I be crown'd and that my sword be stain'd  
With heart-blood of the house of Lancaster;  
And that's not suddenly to be perform'd,  
But with advice and silent secrecy.  
Do you as I do in these dangerous days:  
Wink at the Duke of Suffolk's insolence,  
At Beaufort's pride, at Somerset's ambition,  
At Buckingham and all the crew of them,  
Till they have snared the shepherd of the flock,  
That virtuous prince, the good Duke Humphrey:  
'Tis that they seek, and they in seeking that  
Shall find their deaths, if York can prophesy.

## **SALISBURY**

My lord, break we off; we know your mind at full.

## **WARWICK**

My heart assures me that the Earl of Warwick  
Shall one day make the Duke of York a king.

## **YORK**

And, Nevil, this I do assure myself:  
Richard shall live to make the Earl of Warwick  
The greatest man in England but the king.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A hall of justice.

*Sound trumpets. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, GLOUCESTER, YORK, SUFFOLK, and SALISBURY; the DUCHESS, MARGARET JOURDAIN, SOUTHWELL, HUME, and BOLINGBROKE, under guard*

### KING HENRY VI

Stand forth, Dame Eleanor Cobham, Gloucester's wife:  
In sight of God and us, your guilt is great:  
Receive the sentence of the law for sins  
Such as by God's book are adjudged to death.  
You four, from hence to prison back again;  
From thence unto the place of execution:  
The witch in Smithfield shall be burn'd to ashes,  
And you three shall be strangled on the gallows.  
You, madam, for you are more nobly born,  
Despoiled of your honour in your life,  
Shall, after three days' open penance done,  
Live in your country here in banishment,  
With Sir John Stanley, in the Isle of Man.

### DUCHESS

Welcome is banishment; welcome were my death.

### GLOUCESTER

Eleanor, the law, thou see'st, hath judged thee:  
I cannot justify whom the law condemns.

*Exeunt DUCHESS and other prisoners, guarded*

Mine eyes are full of tears, my heart of grief.  
Ah, Humphrey, this dishonour in thine age  
Will bring thy head with sorrow to the ground!



I beseech your majesty, give me leave to go;  
Sorrow would solace and mine age would ease.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Stay, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester: ere thou go,  
Give up thy staff: Henry will to himself  
Protector be; and God shall be my hope,  
My stay, my guide and lantern to my feet:  
And go in peace, Humphrey, no less beloved  
Than when thou wert protector to thy King.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

I see no reason why a king of years  
Should be to be protected like a child.  
God and King Henry govern England's realm.  
Give up your staff, sir, and the king his realm.

## **GLOUCESTER**

My staff? here, noble Henry, is my staff:  
As willingly do I the same resign  
As e'er thy father Henry made it mine;  
And even as willingly at thy feet I leave it  
As others would ambitiously receive it.  
Farewell, good king: when I am dead and gone,  
May honourable peace attend thy throne!

*Exit*

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Why, now is Henry king, and Margaret queen;  
And Humphrey Duke of Gloucester scarce himself,  
That bears so shrewd a maim; two pulls at once;  
His lady banish'd, and a limb lopp'd off.  
This staff of honour raught, there let it stand  
Where it best fits to be, in Henry's hand.

## **SUFFOLK**

Thus droops this lofty pine and hangs his sprays;  
Thus Eleanor's pride dies in her youngest days.

## **YORK**

Lords, let him go. Please it your majesty,  
This is the day appointed for the combat;  
And ready are the appellant and defendant,  
The armourer and his man, to enter the lists,  
So please your highness to behold the fight.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Ay, good my lord; for purposely therefore  
Left I the court, to see this quarrel tried.

## **KING HENRY VI**

O God's name, see the lists and all things fit:  
Here let them end it; and God defend the right!

## **YORK**

I never saw a fellow worse bested,  
Or more afraid to fight, than is the appellant,  
The servant of this armourer, my lords.

*Enter at one door, HORNER, the Armourer, and his Neighbours, drinking to him so much that he is drunk; and he enters with a drum before him and his staff with a sand-bag fastened to it; and at the other door PETER, his man, with a drum and sand-bag, and 'Prentices drinking to him*

## **First Neighbour**

Here, neighbour Horner, I drink to you in a cup of  
sack: and fear not, neighbour, you shall do well enough.

## **Second Neighbour**

And here, neighbour, here's a cup of charneco.

### **Third Neighbour**

And here's a pot of good double beer, neighbour:  
drink, and fear not your man.

### **HORNER**

Let it come, i' faith, and I'll pledge you all; and  
a fig for Peter!  
First 'Prentice Here, Peter, I drink to thee: and be not afraid.  
Second 'Prentice Be merry, Peter, and fear not thy master: fight  
for credit of the 'prentices.

### **PETER**

I thank you all: drink, and pray for me, I pray  
you; for I think I have taken my last draught in  
this world. Here, Robin, an if I die, I give thee  
my apron: and, Will, thou shalt have my hammer:  
and here, Tom, take all the money that I have. O  
Lord bless me! I pray God! for I am never able to  
deal with my master, he hath learnt me so much fence already.

### **SALISBURY**

Come, leave your drinking, and fall to blows.  
Sirrah, what's thy name?

### **PETER**

Peter, forsooth.

### **SALISBURY**

Peter! what more?

### **PETER**

Thump.

### **SALISBURY**

Thump! then see thou thump thy master well.

**HORNER**

Masters, I am come hither, as it were, upon my man's instigation, to prove him a knave and myself an honest man: and touching the Duke of York, I will take my death, I never meant him any ill, nor the king, nor the queen: and therefore, Peter, have at thee with a downright blow!

**YORK**

Dispatch: this knave's tongue begins to double.  
Sound, trumpets, alarum to the combatants!

*Alarum. They fight, and PETER strikes him down*

**HORNER**

Hold, Peter, hold! I confess, I confess treason.

*Dies*

**YORK**

Take away his weapon. Fellow, thank God, and the good wine in thy master's way.

**PETER**

O God, have I overcome mine enemy in this presence?  
O Peter, thou hast prevailed in right!

**KING HENRY VI**

Go, take hence that traitor from our sight;  
For his death we do perceive his guilt:  
And God in justice hath revealed to us  
The truth and innocence of this poor fellow,  
Which he had thought to have murder'd wrongfully.

Come, fellow, follow us for thy reward.

*Sound a flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A street.

*Enter GLOUCESTER and his Servingmen, in mourning cloaks*

### GLOUCESTER

Thus sometimes hath the brightest day a cloud;  
And after summer evermore succeeds  
Barren winter, with his wrathful nipping cold:  
So cares and joys abound, as seasons fleet.  
Sirs, what's o'clock?

### Servants

Ten, my lord.

### GLOUCESTER

Ten is the hour that was appointed me  
To watch the coming of my punish'd duchess:  
Uneath may she endure the flinty streets,  
To tread them with her tender-feeling feet.  
Sweet Nell, ill can thy noble mind abrook  
The abject people gazing on thy face,  
With envious looks, laughing at thy shame,  
That erst did follow thy proud chariot-wheels  
When thou didst ride in triumph through the streets.  
But, soft! I think she comes; and I'll prepare  
My tear-stain'd eyes to see her miseries.

*Enter the DUCHESS in a white sheet, and a taper burning in her hand; with STANLEY, the Sheriff, and Officers*

### Servant

So please your grace, we'll take her from the sheriff.

## **GLOUCESTER**

No, stir not, for your lives; let her pass by.

## **DUCHESS**

Come you, my lord, to see my open shame?  
Now thou dost penance too. Look how they gaze!  
See how the giddy multitude do point,  
And nod their heads, and throw their eyes on thee!  
Ah, Gloucester, hide thee from their hateful looks,  
And, in thy closet pent up, rue my shame,  
And ban thine enemies, both mine and thine!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Be patient, gentle Nell; forget this grief.

## **DUCHESS**

Ah, Gloucester, teach me to forget myself!  
For whilst I think I am thy married wife  
And thou a prince, protector of this land,  
Methinks I should not thus be led along,  
Mail'd up in shame, with papers on my back,  
And followed with a rabble that rejoice  
To see my tears and hear my deep-fet groans.  
The ruthless flint doth cut my tender feet,  
And when I start, the envious people laugh  
And bid me be advised how I tread.  
Ah, Humphrey, can I bear this shameful yoke?  
Trow'st thou that e'er I'll look upon the world,  
Or count them happy that enjoy the sun?  
No; dark shall be my light and night my day;  
To think upon my pomp shall be my hell.  
Sometime I'll say, I am Duke Humphrey's wife,  
And he a prince and ruler of the land:  
Yet so he ruled and such a prince he was  
As he stood by whilst I, his forlorn duchess,  
Was made a wonder and a pointing-stock  
To every idle rascal follower.

But be thou mild and blush not at my shame,  
Nor stir at nothing till the axe of death  
Hang over thee, as, sure, it shortly will;  
For Suffolk, he that can do all in all  
With her that hateth thee and hates us all,  
And York and impious Beaufort, that false priest,  
Have all limed bushes to betray thy wings,  
And, fly thou how thou canst, they'll tangle thee:  
But fear not thou, until thy foot be snared,  
Nor never seek prevention of thy foes.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ah, Nell, forbear! thou aimest all awry;  
I must offend before I be attained;  
And had I twenty times so many foes,  
And each of them had twenty times their power,  
All these could not procure me any scathe,  
So long as I am loyal, true and crimeless.  
Wouldst have me rescue thee from this reproach?  
Why, yet thy scandal were not wiped away  
But I in danger for the breach of law.  
Thy greatest help is quiet, gentle Nell:  
I pray thee, sort thy heart to patience;  
These few days' wonder will be quickly worn.

*Enter a Herald*

## **Herald**

I summon your grace to his majesty's parliament,  
Holden at Bury the first of this next month.

## **GLOUCESTER**

And my consent ne'er ask'd herein before!  
This is close dealing. Well, I will be there.

*Exit Herald*

My Nell, I take my leave: and, master sheriff,  
Let not her penance exceed the king's commission.



**Sheriff**

An't please your grace, here my commission stays,  
And Sir John Stanley is appointed now  
To take her with him to the Isle of Man.

**GLOUCESTER**

Must you, Sir John, protect my lady here?

**STANLEY**

So am I given in charge, may't please your grace.

**GLOUCESTER**

Entreat her not the worse in that I pray  
You use her well: the world may laugh again;  
And I may live to do you kindness if  
You do it her: and so, Sir John, farewell!

**DUCHESS**

What, gone, my lord, and bid me not farewell!

**GLOUCESTER**

Witness my tears, I cannot stay to speak.

*Exeunt GLOUCESTER and Servingmen*

**DUCHESS**

Art thou gone too? all comfort go with thee!  
For none abides with me: my joy is death;  
Death, at whose name I oft have been afear'd,  
Because I wish'd this world's eternity.  
Stanley, I prithee, go, and take me hence;  
I care not whither, for I beg no favour,  
Only convey me where thou art commanded.

**STANLEY**

Why, madam, that is to the Isle of Man;  
There to be used according to your state.

**DUCHESS**

That's bad enough, for I am but reproach:  
And shall I then be used reproachfully?

**STANLEY**

Like to a duchess, and Duke Humphrey's lady;  
According to that state you shall be used.

**DUCHESS**

Sheriff, farewell, and better than I fare,  
Although thou hast been conduct of my shame.

**Sheriff**

It is my office; and, madam, pardon me.

**DUCHESS**

Ay, ay, farewell; thy office is discharged.  
Come, Stanley, shall we go?

**STANLEY**

Madam, your penance done, throw off this sheet,  
And go we to attire you for our journey.

**DUCHESS**

My shame will not be shifted with my sheet:  
No, it will hang upon my richest robes  
And show itself, attire me how I can.  
Go, lead the way; I long to see my prison.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The Abbey at Bury St. Edmund's.

*Sound a sennet. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, CARDINAL, SUFFOLK, YORK, BUCKINGHAM, SALISBURY and WARWICK to the Parliament*

### KING HENRY VI

I muse my Lord of Gloucester is not come:  
'Tis not his wont to be the hindmost man,  
Whate'er occasion keeps him from us now.

### QUEEN MARGARET

Can you not see? or will ye not observe  
The strangeness of his alter'd countenance?  
With what a majesty he bears himself,  
How insolent of late he is become,  
How proud, how peremptory, and unlike himself?  
We know the time since he was mild and affable,  
And if we did but glance a far-off look,  
Immediately he was upon his knee,  
That all the court admired him for submission:  
But meet him now, and, be it in the morn,  
When every one will give the time of day,  
He knits his brow and shows an angry eye,  
And passeth by with stiff unbowed knee,  
Disdaining duty that to us belongs.  
Small curs are not regarded when they grin;  
But great men tremble when the lion roars;  
And Humphrey is no little man in England.  
First note that he is near you in descent,  
And should you fall, he as the next will mount.  
Me seemeth then it is no policy,  
Respecting what a rancorous mind he bears  
And his advantage following your decease,  
That he should come about your royal person  
Or be admitted to your highness' council.

By flattery hath he won the commons' hearts,  
And when he please to make commotion,  
'Tis to be fear'd they all will follow him.  
Now 'tis the spring, and weeds are shallow-rooted;  
Suffer them now, and they'll o'ergrow the garden  
And choke the herbs for want of husbandry.  
The reverent care I bear unto my lord  
Made me collect these dangers in the duke.  
If it be fond, call it a woman's fear;  
Which fear if better reasons can supplant,  
I will subscribe and say I wrong'd the duke.  
My Lord of Suffolk, Buckingham, and York,  
Reprove my allegation, if you can;  
Or else conclude my words effectual.

## **SUFFOLK**

Well hath your highness seen into this duke;  
And, had I first been put to speak my mind,  
I think I should have told your grace's tale.  
The duchess, by his subornation,  
Upon my life, began her devilish practises:  
Or, if he were not privy to those faults,  
Yet, by reputed of his high descent,  
As next the king he was successive heir,  
And such high vaunts of his nobility,  
Did instigate the bedlam brain-sick duchess  
By wicked means to frame our sovereign's fall.  
Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep;  
And in his simple show he harbours treason.  
The fox barks not when he would steal the lamb.  
No, no, my sovereign; Gloucester is a man  
Unsound yet and full of deep deceit.

## **CARDINAL**

Did he not, contrary to form of law,  
Devise strange deaths for small offences done?

## **YORK**

And did he not, in his protectorship,

Levy great sums of money through the realm  
For soldiers' pay in France, and never sent it?  
By means whereof the towns each day revolted.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Tut, these are petty faults to faults unknown.  
Which time will bring to light in smooth  
Duke Humphrey.

## **KING HENRY VI**

My lords, at once: the care you have of us,  
To mow down thorns that would annoy our foot,  
Is worthy praise: but, shall I speak my conscience,  
Our kinsman Gloucester is as innocent  
From meaning treason to our royal person  
As is the sucking lamb or harmless dove:  
The duke is virtuous, mild and too well given  
To dream on evil or to work my downfall.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Ah, what's more dangerous than this fond affiance!  
Seems he a dove? his feathers are but borrowed,  
For he's disposed as the hateful raven:  
Is he a lamb? his skin is surely lent him,  
For he's inclined as is the ravenous wolf.  
Who cannot steal a shape that means deceit?  
Take heed, my lord; the welfare of us all  
Hangs on the cutting short that fraudulent man.

*Enter SOMERSET*

## **SOMERSET**

All health unto my gracious sovereign!

## **KING HENRY VI**

Welcome, Lord Somerset. What news from France?

## **SOMERSET**

That all your interest in those territories  
Is utterly bereft you; all is lost.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Cold news, Lord Somerset: but God's will be done!

## **YORK**

[Aside] Cold news for me; for I had hope of France  
As firmly as I hope for fertile England.  
Thus are my blossoms blasted in the bud  
And caterpillars eat my leaves away;  
But I will remedy this gear ere long,  
Or sell my title for a glorious grave.

*Enter GLOUCESTER*

## **GLOUCESTER**

All happiness unto my lord the king!  
Pardon, my liege, that I have stay'd so long.

## **SUFFOLK**

Nay, Gloucester, know that thou art come too soon,  
Unless thou wert more loyal than thou art:  
I do arrest thee of high treason here.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Well, Suffolk, thou shalt not see me blush  
Nor change my countenance for this arrest:  
A heart unspotted is not easily daunted.  
The purest spring is not so free from mud  
As I am clear from treason to my sovereign:  
Who can accuse me? wherein am I guilty?

## **YORK**

'Tis thought, my lord, that you took bribes of France,  
And, being protector, stayed the soldiers' pay;  
By means whereof his highness hath lost France.

**GLOUCESTER**

Is it but thought so? what are they that think it?  
I never robb'd the soldiers of their pay,  
Nor ever had one penny bribe from France.  
So help me God, as I have watch'd the night,  
Ay, night by night, in studying good for England,  
That do it that e'er I wrested from the king,  
Or any groat I hoarded to my use,  
Be brought against me at my trial-day!  
No; many a pound of mine own proper store,  
Because I would not tax the needy commons,  
Have I disbursed to the garrisons,  
And never ask'd for restitution.

**CARDINAL**

It serves you well, my lord, to say so much.

**GLOUCESTER**

I say no more than truth, so help me God!

**YORK**

In your protectorship you did devise  
Strange tortures for offenders never heard of,  
That England was defamed by tyranny.

**GLOUCESTER**

Why, 'tis well known that, whiles I was  
protector,  
Pity was all the fault that was in me;  
For I should melt at an offender's tears,  
And lowly words were ransom for their fault.  
Unless it were a bloody murderer,



Or foul felonious thief that fleeced poor passengers,  
I never gave them condign punishment:  
Murder indeed, that bloody sin, I tortured  
Above the felon or what trespass else.

## **SUFFOLK**

My lord, these faults are easy, quickly answered:  
But mightier crimes are laid unto your charge,  
Whereof you cannot easily purge yourself.  
I do arrest you in his highness' name;  
And here commit you to my lord cardinal  
To keep, until your further time of trial.

## **KING HENRY VI**

My lord of Gloucester, 'tis my special hope  
That you will clear yourself from all suspect:  
My conscience tells me you are innocent.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ah, gracious lord, these days are dangerous:  
Virtue is choked with foul ambition  
And charity chased hence by rancour's hand;  
Foul subornation is predominant  
And equity exiled your highness' land.  
I know their complot is to have my life,  
And if my death might make this island happy,  
And prove the period of their tyranny,  
I would expend it with all willingness:  
But mine is made the prologue to their play;  
For thousands more, that yet suspect no peril,  
Will not conclude their plotted tragedy.  
Beaufort's red sparkling eyes blab his heart's malice,  
And Suffolk's cloudy brow his stormy hate;  
Sharp Buckingham unburthens with his tongue  
The envious load that lies upon his heart;  
And dogged York, that reaches at the moon,  
Whose overweening arm I have pluck'd back,  
By false accuse doth level at my life:  
And you, my sovereign lady, with the rest,

Causeless have laid disgraces on my head,  
And with your best endeavour have stirr'd up  
My liefest liege to be mine enemy:  
Ay, all you have laid your heads together--  
Myself had notice of your conventicles--  
And all to make away my guiltless life.  
I shall not want false witness to condemn me,  
Nor store of treasons to augment my guilt;  
The ancient proverb will be well effected:  
'A staff is quickly found to beat a dog.'

## **CARDINAL**

My liege, his railing is intolerable:  
If those that care to keep your royal person  
From treason's secret knife and traitors' rage  
Be thus upbraided, chid and rated at,  
And the offender granted scope of speech,  
'Twill make them cool in zeal unto your grace.

## **SUFFOLK**

Hath he not twit our sovereign lady here  
With ignominious words, though clerkly couch'd,  
As if she had suborned some to swear  
False allegations to o'erthrow his state?

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

But I can give the loser leave to chide.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Far truer spoke than meant: I lose, indeed;  
Beshrew the winners, for they play'd me false!  
And well such losers may have leave to speak.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

He'll wrest the sense and hold us here all day:  
Lord cardinal, he is your prisoner.

## **CARDINAL**

Sirs, take away the duke, and guard him sure.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ah! thus King Henry throws away his crutch  
Before his legs be firm to bear his body.  
Thus is the shepherd beaten from thy side,  
And wolves are gnarling who shall gnaw thee first.  
Ah, that my fear were false! ah, that it were!  
For, good King Henry, thy decay I fear.

*Exit, guarded*

## **KING HENRY VI**

My lords, what to your wisdoms seemeth best,  
Do or undo, as if ourself were here.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

What, will your highness leave the parliament?

## **KING HENRY VI**

Ay, Margaret; my heart is drown'd with grief,  
Whose flood begins to flow within mine eyes,  
My body round engirt with misery,  
For what's more miserable than discontent?  
Ah, uncle Humphrey! in thy face I see  
The map of honour, truth and loyalty:  
And yet, good Humphrey, is the hour to come  
That e'er I proved thee false or fear'd thy faith.  
What luring star now envies thy estate,  
That these great lords and Margaret our queen  
Do seek subversion of thy harmless life?  
Thou never didst them wrong, nor no man wrong;  
And as the butcher takes away the calf  
And binds the wretch, and beats it when it strays,  
Bearing it to the bloody slaughter-house,  
Even so remorseless have they borne him hence;

And as the dam runs lowing up and down,  
Looking the way her harmless young one went,  
And can do nought but wail her darling's loss,  
Even so myself bewails good Gloucester's case  
With sad unhelpful tears, and with dimm'd eyes  
Look after him and cannot do him good,  
So mighty are his vowed enemies.  
His fortunes I will weep; and, 'twixt each groan  
Say 'Who's a traitor? Gloucester he is none.'

*Exeunt all but QUEEN MARGARET, CARDINAL, SUFFOLK, and YORK; SOMERSET  
remains apart*

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Free lords, cold snow melts with the sun's hot beams.  
Henry my lord is cold in great affairs,  
Too full of foolish pity, and Gloucester's show  
Beguiles him as the mournful crocodile  
With sorrow snares relenting passengers,  
Or as the snake roll'd in a flowering bank,  
With shining chequer'd slough, doth sting a child  
That for the beauty thinks it excellent.  
Believe me, lords, were none more wise than I--  
And yet herein I judge mine own wit good--  
This Gloucester should be quickly rid the world,  
To rid us of the fear we have of him.

## **CARDINAL**

That he should die is worthy policy;  
But yet we want a colour for his death:  
'Tis meet he be condemn'd by course of law.

## **SUFFOLK**

But, in my mind, that were no policy:  
The king will labour still to save his life,  
The commons haply rise, to save his life;  
And yet we have but trivial argument,  
More than mistrust, that shows him worthy death.

**YORK**

So that, by this, you would not have him die.

**SUFFOLK**

Ah, York, no man alive so fain as I!

**YORK**

'Tis York that hath more reason for his death.  
But, my lord cardinal, and you, my Lord of Suffolk,  
Say as you think, and speak it from your souls,  
Were't not all one, an empty eagle were set  
To guard the chicken from a hungry kite,  
As place Duke Humphrey for the king's protector?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

So the poor chicken should be sure of death.

**SUFFOLK**

Madam, 'tis true; and were't not madness, then,  
To make the fox surveyor of the fold?  
Who being accused a crafty murderer,  
His guilt should be but idly posted over,  
Because his purpose is not executed.  
No; let him die, in that he is a fox,  
By nature proved an enemy to the flock,  
Before his chaps be stain'd with crimson blood,  
As Humphrey, proved by reasons, to my liege.  
And do not stand on quilllets how to slay him:  
Be it by gins, by snares, by subtlety,  
Sleeping or waking, 'tis no matter how,  
So he be dead; for that is good deceit  
Which mates him first that first intends deceit.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Thrice-noble Suffolk, 'tis resolutely spoke.

## **SUFFOLK**

Not resolute, except so much were done;  
For things are often spoke and seldom meant:  
But that my heart accordeth with my tongue,  
Seeing the deed is meritorious,  
And to preserve my sovereign from his foe,  
Say but the word, and I will be his priest.

## **CARDINAL**

But I would have him dead, my Lord of Suffolk,  
Ere you can take due orders for a priest:  
Say you consent and censure well the deed,  
And I'll provide his executioner,  
I tender so the safety of my liege.

## **SUFFOLK**

Here is my hand, the deed is worthy doing.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

And so say I.

## **YORK**

And I and now we three have spoke it,  
It skills not greatly who impugns our doom.

*Enter a Post*

## **Post**

Great lords, from Ireland am I come amain,  
To signify that rebels there are up  
And put the Englishmen unto the sword:  
Send succors, lords, and stop the rage betime,  
Before the wound do grow uncurable;  
For, being green, there is great hope of help.

## **CARDINAL**

A breach that craves a quick expedient stop!  
What counsel give you in this weighty cause?

## **YORK**

That Somerset be sent as regent thither:  
'Tis meet that lucky ruler be employ'd;  
Witness the fortune he hath had in France.

## **SOMERSET**

If York, with all his far-fet policy,  
Had been the regent there instead of me,  
He never would have stay'd in France so long.

## **YORK**

No, not to lose it all, as thou hast done:  
I rather would have lost my life betimes  
Than bring a burthen of dishonour home  
By staying there so long till all were lost.  
Show me one scar character'd on thy skin:  
Men's flesh preserved so whole do seldom win.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Nay, then, this spark will prove a raging fire,  
If wind and fuel be brought to feed it with:  
No more, good York; sweet Somerset, be still:  
Thy fortune, York, hadst thou been regent there,  
Might happily have proved far worse than his.

## **YORK**

What, worse than nought? nay, then, a shame take all!

## **SOMERSET**

And, in the number, thee that wishest shame!

## **CARDINAL**

My Lord of York, try what your fortune is.  
The uncivil kerns of Ireland are in arms  
And temper clay with blood of Englishmen:  
To Ireland will you lead a band of men,  
Collected choicely, from each county some,  
And try your hap against the Irishmen?

## **YORK**

I will, my lord, so please his majesty.

## **SUFFOLK**

Why, our authority is his consent,  
And what we do establish he confirms:  
Then, noble York, take thou this task in hand.

## **YORK**

I am content: provide me soldiers, lords,  
Whiles I take order for mine own affairs.

## **SUFFOLK**

A charge, Lord York, that I will see perform'd.  
But now return we to the false Duke Humphrey.

## **CARDINAL**

No more of him; for I will deal with him  
That henceforth he shall trouble us no more.  
And so break off; the day is almost spent:  
Lord Suffolk, you and I must talk of that event.

## **YORK**

My Lord of Suffolk, within fourteen days  
At Bristol I expect my soldiers;  
For there I'll ship them all for Ireland.



## SUFFOLK

I'll see it truly done, my Lord of York.

*Exeunt all but YORK*

## YORK

Now, York, or never, steel thy fearful thoughts,  
And change misdoubt to resolution:  
Be that thou hopest to be, or what thou art  
Resign to death; it is not worth the enjoying:  
Let pale-faced fear keep with the mean-born man,  
And find no harbour in a royal heart.  
Faster than spring-time showers comes thought  
on thought,  
And not a thought but thinks on dignity.  
My brain more busy than the labouring spider  
Weaves tedious snares to trap mine enemies.  
Well, nobles, well, 'tis politicly done,  
To send me packing with an host of men:  
I fear me you but warm the starved snake,  
Who, cherish'd in your breasts, will sting  
your hearts.  
'Twas men I lack'd and you will give them me:  
I take it kindly; and yet be well assured  
You put sharp weapons in a madman's hands.  
Whiles I in Ireland nourish a mighty band,  
I will stir up in England some black storm  
Shall blow ten thousand souls to heaven or hell;  
And this fell tempest shall not cease to rage  
Until the golden circuit on my head,  
Like to the glorious sun's transparent beams,  
Do calm the fury of this mad-bred flaw.  
And, for a minister of my intent,  
I have seduced a headstrong Kentishman,  
John Cade of Ashford,  
To make commotion, as full well he can,  
Under the title of John Mortimer.  
In Ireland have I seen this stubborn Cade  
Oppose himself against a troop of kerns,  
And fought so long, till that his thighs with darts

Were almost like a sharp-quill'd porpentine;  
And, in the end being rescued, I have seen  
Him caper upright like a wild Morisco,  
Shaking the bloody darts as he his bells.  
Full often, like a shag-hair'd crafty kern,  
Hath he conversed with the enemy,  
And undiscover'd come to me again  
And given me notice of their villanies.  
This devil here shall be my substitute;  
For that John Mortimer, which now is dead,  
In face, in gait, in speech, he doth resemble:  
By this I shall perceive the commons' mind,  
How they affect the house and claim of York.  
Say he be taken, rack'd and tortured,  
I know no pain they can inflict upon him  
Will make him say I moved him to those arms.  
Say that he thrive, as 'tis great like he will,  
Why, then from Ireland come I with my strength  
And reap the harvest which that rascal sow'd;  
For Humphrey being dead, as he shall be,  
And Henry put apart, the next for me.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Bury St. Edmund's. A room of state.

*Enter certain Murderers, hastily*

### First Murderer

Run to my Lord of Suffolk; let him know  
We have dispatch'd the duke, as he commanded.

### Second Murderer

O that it were to do! What have we done?  
Didst ever hear a man so penitent?

*Enter SUFFOLK*

### First Murderer

Here comes my lord.

### SUFFOLK

Now, sirs, have you dispatch'd this thing?

### First Murderer

Ay, my good lord, he's dead.

### SUFFOLK

Why, that's well said. Go, get you to my house;  
I will reward you for this venturous deed.  
The king and all the peers are here at hand.  
Have you laid fair the bed? Is all things well,  
According as I gave directions?

## **First Murderer**

'Tis, my good lord.

## **SUFFOLK**

Away! be gone.

*Exeunt Murderers*

*Sound trumpets. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, CARDINAL, SOMERSET, with Attendants*

## **KING HENRY VI**

Go, call our uncle to our presence straight;  
Say we intend to try his grace to-day.  
If he be guilty, as 'tis published.

## **SUFFOLK**

I'll call him presently, my noble lord.

*Exit*

## **KING HENRY VI**

Lords, take your places; and, I pray you all,  
Proceed no straiter 'gainst our uncle Gloucester  
Than from true evidence of good esteem  
He be approved in practise culpable.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

God forbid any malice should prevail,  
That faultless may condemn a nobleman!  
Pray God he may acquit him of suspicion!

## **KING HENRY VI**

I thank thee, Meg; these words content me much.

*Re-enter SUFFOLK*

How now! why look'st thou pale? why tremblest thou?  
Where is our uncle? what's the matter, Suffolk?

**SUFFOLK**

Dead in his bed, my lord; Gloucester is dead.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Marry, God forfend!

**CARDINAL**

God's secret judgment: I did dream to-night  
The duke was dumb and could not speak a word.

*KING HENRY VI swoons*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

How fares my lord? Help, lords! the king is dead.

**SOMERSET**

Rear up his body; wring him by the nose.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Run, go, help, help! O Henry, ope thine eyes!

**SUFFOLK**

He doth revive again: madam, be patient.

**KING HENRY VI**

O heavenly God!

## QUEEN MARGARET

How fares my gracious lord?

## SUFFOLK

Comfort, my sovereign! gracious Henry, comfort!

## KING HENRY VI

What, doth my Lord of Suffolk comfort me?  
Came he right now to sing a raven's note,  
Whose dismal tune bereft my vital powers;  
And thinks he that the chirping of a wren,  
By crying comfort from a hollow breast,  
Can chase away the first-conceived sound?  
Hide not thy poison with such sugar'd words;  
Lay not thy hands on me; forbear, I say;  
Their touch affrights me as a serpent's sting.  
Thou baleful messenger, out of my sight!  
Upon thy eye-balls murderous tyranny  
Sits in grim majesty, to fright the world.  
Look not upon me, for thine eyes are wounding:  
Yet do not go away: come, basilisk,  
And kill the innocent gazer with thy sight;  
For in the shade of death I shall find joy;  
In life but double death, now Gloucester's dead.

## QUEEN MARGARET

Why do you rate my Lord of Suffolk thus?  
Although the duke was enemy to him,  
Yet he most Christian-like laments his death:  
And for myself, foe as he was to me,  
Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans  
Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life,  
I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans,  
Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs,  
And all to have the noble duke alive.  
What know I how the world may deem of me?  
For it is known we were but hollow friends:  
It may be judged I made the duke away;

So shall my name with slander's tongue be wounded,  
And princes' courts be fill'd with my reproach.  
This get I by his death: ay me, unhappy!  
To be a queen, and crown'd with infamy!

## **KING HENRY VI**

Ah, woe is me for Gloucester, wretched man!

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Be woe for me, more wretched than he is.  
What, dost thou turn away and hide thy face?  
I am no loathsome leper; look on me.  
What! art thou, like the adder, waxen deaf?  
Be poisonous too and kill thy forlorn queen.  
Is all thy comfort shut in Gloucester's tomb?  
Why, then, dame Margaret was ne'er thy joy.  
Erect his statue and worship it,  
And make my image but an alehouse sign.  
Was I for this nigh wreck'd upon the sea  
And twice by awkward wind from England's bank  
Drove back again unto my native clime?  
What boded this, but well forewarning wind  
Did seem to say 'Seek not a scorpion's nest,  
Nor set no footing on this unkind shore'?  
What did I then, but cursed the gentle gusts  
And he that loosed them forth their brazen caves:  
And bid them blow towards England's blessed shore,  
Or turn our stern upon a dreadful rock  
Yet AEolus would not be a murderer,  
But left that hateful office unto thee:  
The pretty-vaulting sea refused to drown me,  
Knowing that thou wouldst have me drown'd on shore,  
With tears as salt as sea, through thy unkindness:  
The splitting rocks cower'd in the sinking sands  
And would not dash me with their ragged sides,  
Because thy flinty heart, more hard than they,  
Might in thy palace perish Margaret.  
As far as I could ken thy chalky cliffs,  
When from thy shore the tempest beat us back,  
I stood upon the hatches in the storm,  
And when the dusky sky began to rob

My earnest-gaping sight of thy land's view,  
I took a costly jewel from my neck,  
A heart it was, bound in with diamonds,  
And threw it towards thy land: the sea received it,  
And so I wish'd thy body might my heart:  
And even with this I lost fair England's view  
And bid mine eyes be packing with my heart  
And call'd them blind and dusky spectacles,  
For losing ken of Albion's wished coast.  
How often have I tempted Suffolk's tongue,  
The agent of thy foul inconstancy,  
To sit and witch me, as Ascanius did  
When he to madding Dido would unfold  
His father's acts commenced in burning Troy!  
Am I not witch'd like her? or thou not false like him?  
Ay me, I can no more! die, Margaret!  
For Henry weeps that thou dost live so long.

*Noise within. Enter WARWICK, SALISBURY, and many Commons*

## **WARWICK**

It is reported, mighty sovereign,  
That good Duke Humphrey traitorously is murder'd  
By Suffolk and the Cardinal Beaufort's means.  
The commons, like an angry hive of bees  
That want their leader, scatter up and down  
And care not who they sting in his revenge.  
Myself have calm'd their spleenful mutiny,  
Until they hear the order of his death.

## **KING HENRY VI**

That he is dead, good Warwick, 'tis too true;  
But how he died God knows, not Henry:  
Enter his chamber, view his breathless corpse,  
And comment then upon his sudden death.

## **WARWICK**

That shall I do, my liege. Stay, Salisbury,  
With the rude multitude till I return.



*Exit*

**KING HENRY VI**

O Thou that judgest all things, stay my thoughts,  
My thoughts, that labour to persuade my soul  
Some violent hands were laid on Humphrey's life!  
If my suspect be false, forgive me, God,  
For judgment only doth belong to thee.  
Fain would I go to chafe his paly lips  
With twenty thousand kisses, and to drain  
Upon his face an ocean of salt tears,  
To tell my love unto his dumb deaf trunk,  
And with my fingers feel his hand unfeeling:  
But all in vain are these mean obsequies;  
And to survey his dead and earthly image,  
What were it but to make my sorrow greater?

*Re-enter WARWICK and others, bearing GLOUCESTER'S body on a bed*

**WARWICK**

Come hither, gracious sovereign, view this body.

**KING HENRY VI**

That is to see how deep my grave is made;  
For with his soul fled all my worldly solace,  
For seeing him I see my life in death.

**WARWICK**

As surely as my soul intends to live  
With that dread King that took our state upon him  
To free us from his father's wrathful curse,  
I do believe that violent hands were laid  
Upon the life of this thrice-famed duke.

**SUFFOLK**

A dreadful oath, sworn with a solemn tongue!

What instance gives Lord Warwick for his vow?

## **WARWICK**

See how the blood is settled in his face.  
Oft have I seen a timely-parted ghost,  
Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale and bloodless,  
Being all descended to the labouring heart;  
Who, in the conflict that it holds with death,  
Attracts the same for aidance 'gainst the enemy;  
Which with the heart there cools and ne'er returneth  
To blush and beautify the cheek again.  
But see, his face is black and full of blood,  
His eye-balls further out than when he lived,  
Staring full ghastly like a strangled man;  
His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretched with struggling;  
His hands abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd  
And tugg'd for life and was by strength subdued:  
Look, on the sheets his hair you see, is sticking;  
His well-proportion'd beard made rough and rugged,  
Like to the summer's corn by tempest lodged.  
It cannot be but he was murder'd here;  
The least of all these signs were probable.

## **SUFFOLK**

Why, Warwick, who should do the duke to death?  
Myself and Beaufort had him in protection;  
And we, I hope, sir, are no murderers.

## **WARWICK**

But both of you were vow'd Duke Humphrey's foes,  
And you, forsooth, had the good duke to keep:  
'Tis like you would not feast him like a friend;  
And 'tis well seen he found an enemy.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Then you, belike, suspect these noblemen  
As guilty of Duke Humphrey's timeless death.

## WARWICK

Who finds the heifer dead and bleeding fresh  
And sees fast by a butcher with an axe,  
But will suspect 'twas he that made the slaughter?  
Who finds the partridge in the puttock's nest,  
But may imagine how the bird was dead,  
Although the kite soar with unbloodied beak?  
Even so suspicious is this tragedy.

## QUEEN MARGARET

Are you the butcher, Suffolk? Where's your knife?  
Is Beaufort term'd a kite? Where are his talons?

## SUFFOLK

I wear no knife to slaughter sleeping men;  
But here's a vengeful sword, rusted with ease,  
That shall be scoured in his rancorous heart  
That slanders me with murder's crimson badge.  
Say, if thou darest, proud Lord of Warwick-shire,  
That I am faulty in Duke Humphrey's death.

*Exeunt CARDINAL, SOMERSET, and others*

## WARWICK

What dares not Warwick, if false Suffolk dare him?

## QUEEN MARGARET

He dares not calm his contumelious spirit  
Nor cease to be an arrogant controller,  
Though Suffolk dare him twenty thousand times.

## WARWICK

Madam, be still; with reverence may I say;  
For every word you speak in his behalf  
Is slander to your royal dignity.

## SUFFOLK

Blunt-witted lord, ignoble in demeanor!  
If ever lady wrong'd her lord so much,  
Thy mother took into her blameful bed  
Some stern untutor'd churl, and noble stock  
Was graft with crab-tree slip; whose fruit thou art,  
And never of the Nevils' noble race.

## WARWICK

But that the guilt of murder bucklers thee  
And I should rob the deathsman of his fee,  
Quitting thee thereby of ten thousand shames,  
And that my sovereign's presence makes me mild,  
I would, false murderous coward, on thy knee  
Make thee beg pardon for thy passed speech,  
And say it was thy mother that thou meant'st  
That thou thyself was born in bastardy;  
And after all this fearful homage done,  
Give thee thy hire and send thy soul to hell,  
Pernicious blood-sucker of sleeping men!

## SUFFOLK

Thou shall be waking well I shed thy blood,  
If from this presence thou darest go with me.

## WARWICK

Away even now, or I will drag thee hence:  
Unworthy though thou art, I'll cope with thee  
And do some service to Duke Humphrey's ghost.

*Exeunt SUFFOLK and WARWICK*

## KING HENRY VI

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!  
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,  
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel  
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

*A noise within*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

What noise is this?

*Re-enter SUFFOLK and WARWICK, with their weapons drawn*

**KING HENRY VI**

Why, how now, lords! your wrathful weapons drawn  
Here in our presence! dare you be so bold?  
Why, what tumultuous clamour have we here?

**SUFFOLK**

The traitorous Warwick with the men of Bury  
Set all upon me, mighty sovereign.

**SALISBURY**

[To the Commons, entering] Sirs, stand apart;  
the king shall know your mind.  
Dread lord, the commons send you word by me,  
Unless Lord Suffolk straight be done to death,  
Or banished fair England's territories,  
They will by violence tear him from your palace  
And torture him with grievous lingering death.  
They say, by him the good Duke Humphrey died;  
They say, in him they fear your highness' death;  
And mere instinct of love and loyalty,  
Free from a stubborn opposite intent,  
As being thought to contradict your liking,  
Makes them thus forward in his banishment.  
They say, in care of your most royal person,  
That if your highness should intend to sleep  
And charge that no man should disturb your rest  
In pain of your dislike or pain of death,  
Yet, notwithstanding such a strait edict,  
Were there a serpent seen, with forked tongue,  
That slyly glided towards your majesty,

It were but necessary you were waked,  
Lest, being suffer'd in that harmful slumber,  
The mortal worm might make the sleep eternal;  
And therefore do they cry, though you forbid,  
That they will guard you, whether you will or no,  
From such fell serpents as false Suffolk is,  
With whose envenomed and fatal sting,  
Your loving uncle, twenty times his worth,  
They say, is shamefully bereft of life.

## **Commons**

[Within] An answer from the king, my  
Lord of Salisbury!

## **SUFFOLK**

'Tis like the commons, rude unpolish'd hinds,  
Could send such message to their sovereign:  
But you, my lord, were glad to be employ'd,  
To show how quaint an orator you are:  
But all the honour Salisbury hath won  
Is, that he was the lord ambassador  
Sent from a sort of tinkers to the king.

## **Commons**

[Within] An answer from the king, or we will all break in!

## **KING HENRY VI**

Go, Salisbury, and tell them all from me.  
I thank them for their tender loving care;  
And had I not been cited so by them,  
Yet did I purpose as they do entreat;  
For, sure, my thoughts do hourly prophesy  
Mischance unto my state by Suffolk's means:  
And therefore, by His majesty I swear,  
Whose far unworthy deputy I am,  
He shall not breathe infection in this air  
But three days longer, on the pain of death.

*Exit SALISBURY*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

O Henry, let me plead for gentle Suffolk!

**KING HENRY VI**

Ungentle queen, to call him gentle Suffolk!  
No more, I say: if thou dost plead for him,  
Thou wilt but add increase unto my wrath.  
Had I but said, I would have kept my word,  
But when I swear, it is irrevocable.  
If, after three days' space, thou here be'st found  
On any ground that I am ruler of,  
The world shall not be ransom for thy life.  
Come, Warwick, come, good Warwick, go with me;  
I have great matters to impart to thee.

*Exeunt all but QUEEN MARGARET and SUFFOLK*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Mischance and sorrow go along with you!  
Heart's discontent and sour affliction  
Be playfellows to keep you company!  
There's two of you; the devil make a third!  
And threefold vengeance tend upon your steps!

**SUFFOLK**

Cease, gentle queen, these execrations,  
And let thy Suffolk take his heavy leave.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Fie, coward woman and soft-hearted wretch!  
Hast thou not spirit to curse thine enemy?

**SUFFOLK**

A plague upon them! wherefore should I curse them?  
Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan,  
I would invent as bitter-searching terms,  
As curst, as harsh and horrible to hear,  
Deliver'd strongly through my fixed teeth,  
With full as many signs of deadly hate,  
As lean-faced Envy in her loathsome cave:  
My tongue should stumble in mine earnest words;  
Mine eyes should sparkle like the beaten flint;  
Mine hair be fixed on end, as one distract;  
Ay, every joint should seem to curse and ban:  
And even now my burthen'd heart would break,  
Should I not curse them. Poison be their drink!  
Gall, worse than gall, the daintiest that they taste!  
Their sweetest shade a grove of cypress trees!  
Their chiefest prospect murdering basilisks!  
Their softest touch as smart as lizards' sting!  
Their music frightful as the serpent's hiss,  
And boding screech-owls make the concert full!  
All the foul terrors in dark-seated hell--

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Enough, sweet Suffolk; thou torment'st thyself;  
And these dread curses, like the sun 'gainst glass,  
Or like an overcharged gun, recoil,  
And turn the force of them upon thyself.

## **SUFFOLK**

You bade me ban, and will you bid me leave?  
Now, by the ground that I am banish'd from,  
Well could I curse away a winter's night,  
Though standing naked on a mountain top,  
Where biting cold would never let grass grow,  
And think it but a minute spent in sport.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

O, let me entreat thee cease. Give me thy hand,  
That I may dew it with my mournful tears;  
Nor let the rain of heaven wet this place,



To wash away my woful monuments.  
O, could this kiss be printed in thy hand,  
That thou mightst think upon these by the seal,  
Through whom a thousand sighs are breathed for thee!  
So, get thee gone, that I may know my grief;  
'Tis but surmised whiles thou art standing by,  
As one that surfeits thinking on a want.  
I will repeal thee, or, be well assured,  
Adventure to be banished myself:  
And banished I am, if but from thee.  
Go; speak not to me; even now be gone.  
O, go not yet! Even thus two friends condemn'd  
Embrace and kiss and take ten thousand leaves,  
Loather a hundred times to part than die.  
Yet now farewell; and farewell life with thee!

## **SUFFOLK**

Thus is poor Suffolk ten times banished;  
Once by the king, and three times thrice by thee.  
'Tis not the land I care for, wert thou thence;  
A wilderness is populous enough,  
So Suffolk had thy heavenly company:  
For where thou art, there is the world itself,  
With every several pleasure in the world,  
And where thou art not, desolation.  
I can no more: live thou to joy thy life;  
Myself no joy in nought but that thou livest.

*Enter VAUX*

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Wither goes Vaux so fast? what news, I prithee?

## **VAUX**

To signify unto his majesty  
That Cardinal Beaufort is at point of death;  
For suddenly a grievous sickness took him,  
That makes him gasp and stare and catch the air,  
Blaspheming God and cursing men on earth.

Sometimes he talks as if Duke Humphrey's ghost  
Were by his side; sometime he calls the king,  
And whispers to his pillow, as to him,  
The secrets of his overcharged soul;  
And I am sent to tell his majesty  
That even now he cries aloud for him.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Go tell this heavy message to the king.

*Exit VAUX*

Ay me! what is this world! what news are these!  
But wherefore grieve I at an hour's poor loss,  
Omitting Suffolk's exile, my soul's treasure?  
Why only, Suffolk, mourn I not for thee,  
And with the southern clouds contend in tears,  
Theirs for the earth's increase, mine for my sorrows?  
Now get thee hence: the king, thou know'st, is coming;  
If thou be found by me, thou art but dead.

## **SUFFOLK**

If I depart from thee, I cannot live;  
And in thy sight to die, what were it else  
But like a pleasant slumber in thy lap?  
Here could I breathe my soul into the air,  
As mild and gentle as the cradle-babe  
Dying with mother's dug between its lips:  
Where, from thy sight, I should be raging mad,  
And cry out for thee to close up mine eyes,  
To have thee with thy lips to stop my mouth;  
So shouldst thou either turn my flying soul,  
Or I should breathe it so into thy body,  
And then it lived in sweet Elysium.  
To die by thee were but to die in jest;  
From thee to die were torture more than death:  
O, let me stay, befall what may befall!

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Away! though parting be a fretful corrosive,  
It is applied to a deathful wound.  
To France, sweet Suffolk: let me hear from thee;  
For wheresoe'er thou art in this world's globe,  
I'll have an Iris that shall find thee out.

**SUFFOLK**

I go.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

And take my heart with thee.

**SUFFOLK**

A jewel, lock'd into the wofull'st cask  
That ever did contain a thing of worth.  
Even as a splitted bark, so sunder we  
This way fall I to death.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

This way for me.

*Exeunt severally*

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A bedchamber.

*Enter the KING, SALISBURY, WARWICK, to the CARDINAL in bed*

### KING HENRY VI

How fares my lord? speak, Beaufort, to  
thy sovereign.

### CARDINAL

If thou be'st death, I'll give thee England's treasure,  
Enough to purchase such another island,  
So thou wilt let me live, and feel no pain.

### KING HENRY VI

Ah, what a sign it is of evil life,  
Where death's approach is seen so terrible!

### WARWICK

Beaufort, it is thy sovereign speaks to thee.

### CARDINAL

Bring me unto my trial when you will.  
Died he not in his bed? where should he die?  
Can I make men live, whether they will or no?  
O, torture me no more! I will confess.  
Alive again? then show me where he is:  
I'll give a thousand pound to look upon him.  
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.  
Comb down his hair; look, look! it stands upright,  
Like lime-twigs set to catch my winged soul.  
Give me some drink; and bid the apothecary

Bring the strong poison that I bought of him.

**KING HENRY VI**

O thou eternal Mover of the heavens.  
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch!  
O, beat away the busy meddling fiend  
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul.  
And from his bosom purge this black despair!

**WARWICK**

See, how the pangs of death do make him grin!

**SALISBURY**

Disturb him not; let him pass peaceably.

**KING HENRY VI**

Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be!  
Lord cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,  
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.  
He dies, and makes no sign. O God, forgive him!

**WARWICK**

So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

**KING HENRY VI**

Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.  
Close up his eyes and draw the curtain close;  
And let us all to meditation.

*Exeunt*

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The coast of Kent.

*Alarum. Fight at sea. Ordnance goes off. Enter a Captain, a Master, a Master's-mate, WALTER WHITMORE, and others; with them SUFFOLK, and others, prisoners*

### Captain

The gaudy, blabbing and remorseful day  
Is crept into the bosom of the sea;  
And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades  
That drag the tragic melancholy night;  
Who, with their drowsy, slow and flagging wings,  
Clip dead men's graves and from their misty jaws  
Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air.  
Therefore bring forth the soldiers of our prize;  
For, whilst our pinnace anchors in the Downs,  
Here shall they make their ransom on the sand,  
Or with their blood stain this discolour'd shore.  
Master, this prisoner freely give I thee;  
And thou that art his mate, make boot of this;  
The other, Walter Whitmore, is thy share.

### First Gentleman

What is my ransom, master? let me know.

### Master

A thousand crowns, or else lay down your head.  
Master's-Mate And so much shall you give, or off goes yours.

### Captain

What, think you much to pay two thousand crowns,  
And bear the name and port of gentlemen?  
Cut both the villains' throats; for die you shall:

The lives of those which we have lost in fight  
Be counterpoised with such a petty sum!

**First Gentleman**

I'll give it, sir; and therefore spare my life.

**Second Gentleman**

And so will I and write home for it straight.

**WHITMORE**

I lost mine eye in laying the prize aboard,  
And therefore to revenge it, shalt thou die;

*To SUFFOLK*

And so should these, if I might have my will.

**Captain**

Be not so rash; take ransom, let him live.

**SUFFOLK**

Look on my George; I am a gentleman:  
Rate me at what thou wilt, thou shalt be paid.

**WHITMORE**

And so am I; my name is Walter Whitmore.  
How now! why start'st thou? what, doth  
death affright?

**SUFFOLK**

Thy name affrights me, in whose sound is death.  
A cunning man did calculate my birth  
And told me that by water I should die:  
Yet let not this make thee be bloody-minded;

Thy name is Gaultier, being rightly sounded.

## **WHITMORE**

Gaultier or Walter, which it is, I care not:  
Never yet did base dishonour blur our name,  
But with our sword we wiped away the blot;  
Therefore, when merchant-like I sell revenge,  
Broke be my sword, my arms torn and defaced,  
And I proclaim'd a coward through the world!

## **SUFFOLK**

Stay, Whitmore; for thy prisoner is a prince,  
The Duke of Suffolk, William de la Pole.

## **WHITMORE**

The Duke of Suffolk muffled up in rags!

## **SUFFOLK**

Ay, but these rags are no part of the duke:  
Jove sometimes went disguised, and why not I?

## **Captain**

But Jove was never slain, as thou shalt be.

## **SUFFOLK**

Obscure and lowly swain, King Henry's blood,  
The honourable blood of Lancaster,  
Must not be shed by such a jaded groom.  
Hast thou not kiss'd thy hand and held my stirrup?  
Bare-headed plodded by my foot-cloth mule  
And thought thee happy when I shook my head?  
How often hast thou waited at my cup,  
Fed from my trencher, kneel'd down at the board.  
When I have feasted with Queen Margaret?  
Remember it and let it make thee crest-fall'n,  
Ay, and allay this thy abortive pride;



How in our voiding lobby hast thou stood  
And duly waited for my coming forth?  
This hand of mine hath writ in thy behalf,  
And therefore shall it charm thy riotous tongue.

**WHITMORE**

Speak, captain, shall I stab the forlorn swain?

**Captain**

First let my words stab him, as he hath me.

**SUFFOLK**

Base slave, thy words are blunt and so art thou.

**Captain**

Convey him hence and on our longboat's side  
Strike off his head.

**SUFFOLK**

Thou darest not, for thy own.

**Captain**

Yes, Pole.

**SUFFOLK**

Pole!

**Captain**

Pool! Sir Pool! lord!  
Ay, kennel, puddle, sink; whose filth and dirt  
Troubles the silver spring where England drinks.  
Now will I dam up this thy yawning mouth  
For swallowing the treasure of the realm:

Thy lips that kiss'd the queen shall sweep the ground;  
And thou that smiledst at good Duke Humphrey's death,  
Against the senseless winds shalt grin in vain,  
Who in contempt shall hiss at thee again:  
And wedded be thou to the hags of hell,  
For daring to affy a mighty lord  
Unto the daughter of a worthless king,  
Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem.  
By devilish policy art thou grown great,  
And, like ambitious Sylla, overgorged  
With gobbets of thy mother's bleeding heart.  
By thee Anjou and Maine were sold to France,  
The false revolting Normans thorough thee  
Disdain to call us lord, and Picardy  
Hath slain their governors, surprised our forts,  
And sent the ragged soldiers wounded home.  
The princely Warwick, and the Nevils all,  
Whose dreadful swords were never drawn in vain,  
As hating thee, are rising up in arms:  
And now the house of York, thrust from the crown  
By shameful murder of a guiltless king  
And lofty proud encroaching tyranny,  
Burns with revenging fire; whose hopeful colours  
Advance our half-faced sun, striving to shine,  
Under the which is writ 'Invitis nubibus.'  
The commons here in Kent are up in arms:  
And, to conclude, reproach and beggary  
Is crept into the palace of our king.  
And all by thee. Away! convey him hence.

## SUFFOLK

O that I were a god, to shoot forth thunder  
Upon these paltry, servile, abject drudges!  
Small things make base men proud: this villain here,  
Being captain of a pinnace, threatens more  
Than Bargulus the strong Illyrian pirate.  
Drones suck not eagles' blood but rob beehives:  
It is impossible that I should die  
By such a lowly vassal as thyself.  
Thy words move rage and not remorse in me:  
I go of message from the queen to France;  
I charge thee waft me safely cross the Channel.

**Captain**

Walter,--

**WHITMORE**

Come, Suffolk, I must waft thee to thy death.

**SUFFOLK**

Gelidus timor occupat artus it is thee I fear.

**WHITMORE**

Thou shalt have cause to fear before I leave thee.  
What, are ye daunted now? now will ye stoop?

**First Gentleman**

My gracious lord, entreat him, speak him fair.

**SUFFOLK**

Suffolk's imperial tongue is stern and rough,  
Used to command, untaught to plead for favour.  
Far be it we should honour such as these  
With humble suit: no, rather let my head  
Stoop to the block than these knees bow to any  
Save to the God of heaven and to my king;  
And sooner dance upon a bloody pole  
Than stand uncover'd to the vulgar groom.  
True nobility is exempt from fear:  
More can I bear than you dare execute.

**Captain**

Hale him away, and let him talk no more.

**SUFFOLK**

Come, soldiers, show what cruelty ye can,  
That this my death may never be forgot!  
Great men oft die by vile bezonians:  
A Roman sworder and banditto slave  
Murder'd sweet Tully; Brutus' bastard hand  
Stabb'd Julius Caesar; savage islanders  
Pompey the Great; and Suffolk dies by pirates.

*Exeunt Whitmore and others with Suffolk*

## **Captain**

And as for these whose ransom we have set,  
It is our pleasure one of them depart;  
Therefore come you with us and let him go.

*Exeunt all but the First Gentleman*

*Re-enter WHITMORE with SUFFOLK's body*

## **WHITMORE**

There let his head and lifeless body lie,  
Until the queen his mistress bury it.

*Exit*

## **First Gentleman**

O barbarous and bloody spectacle!  
His body will I bear unto the king:  
If he revenge it not, yet will his friends;  
So will the queen, that living held him dear.

*Exit with the body*

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Blackheath.

*Enter GEORGE BEVIS and JOHN HOLLAND*

**BEVIS**

Come, and get thee a sword, though made of a lath;  
they have been up these two days.

**HOLLAND**

They have the more need to sleep now, then.

**BEVIS**

I tell thee, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress  
the commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap upon it.

**HOLLAND**

So he had need, for 'tis threadbare. Well, I say it  
was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

**BEVIS**

O miserable age! virtue is not regarded in handicrafts-men.

**HOLLAND**

The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons.

**BEVIS**

Nay, more, the king's council are no good workmen.

## **HOLLAND**

True; and yet it is said, labour in thy vocation;  
which is as much to say as, let the magistrates be  
labouring men; and therefore should we be  
magistrates.

## **BEVIS**

Thou hast hit it; for there's no better sign of a  
brave mind than a hard hand.

## **HOLLAND**

I see them! I see them! there's Best's son, the  
tanner of Wingham,--

## **BEVIS**

He shall have the skin of our enemies, to make  
dog's-leather of.

## **HOLLAND**

And Dick the Butcher,--

## **BEVIS**

Then is sin struck down like an ox, and iniquity's  
throat cut like a calf.

## **HOLLAND**

And Smith the weaver,--

## **BEVIS**

Argo, their thread of life is spun.

## **HOLLAND**

Come, come, let's fall in with them.

*Drum. Enter CADE, DICK the Butcher, SMITH the Weaver, and a Sawyer, with infinite numbers*

**CADE**

We John Cade, so termed of our supposed father,--

**DICK**

[Aside] Or rather, of stealing a cade of herrings.

**CADE**

For our enemies shall fall before us, inspired with  
the spirit of putting down kings and princes,  
--Command silence.

**DICK**

Silence!

**CADE**

My father was a Mortimer,--

**DICK**

[Aside] He was an honest man, and a good  
bricklayer.

**CADE**

My mother a Plantagenet,--

**DICK**

[Aside] I knew her well; she was a midwife.

**CADE**

My wife descended of the Lacies,--

**DICK**

[Aside] She was, indeed, a pedler's daughter, and sold many laces.

**SMITH**

[Aside] But now of late, notable to travel with her furred pack, she washes bucks here at home.

**CADE**

Therefore am I of an honourable house.

**DICK**

[Aside] Ay, by my faith, the field is honourable; and there was he borne, under a hedge, for his father had never a house but the cage.

**CADE**

Valiant I am.

**SMITH**

[Aside] A' must needs; for beggary is valiant.

**CADE**

I am able to endure much.

**DICK**

[Aside] No question of that; for I have seen him whipped three market-days together.

**CADE**



I fear neither sword nor fire.

**SMITH**

[Aside] He need not fear the sword; for his coat is of proof.

**DICK**

[Aside] But methinks he should stand in fear of fire, being burnt i' the hand for stealing of sheep.

**CADE**

Be brave, then; for your captain is brave, and vows reformation. There shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny: the three-hooped pot; shall have ten hoops and I will make it felony to drink small beer: all the realm shall be in common; and in Cheapside shall my palfrey go to grass: and when I am king, as king I will be,--

**ALL**

God save your majesty!

**CADE**

I thank you, good people: there shall be no money; all shall eat and drink on my score; and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they may agree like brothers and worship me their lord.

**DICK**

The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers.

**CADE**

Nay, that I mean to do. Is not this a lamentable thing, that of the skin of an innocent lamb should

be made parchment? that parchment, being scribbled  
o'er, should undo a man? Some say the bee stings:  
but I say, 'tis the bee's wax; for I did but seal  
once to a thing, and I was never mine own man  
since. How now! who's there?

*Enter some, bringing forward the Clerk of Chatham*

**SMITH**

The clerk of Chatham: he can write and read and  
cast accompt.

**CADE**

O monstrous!

**SMITH**

We took him setting of boys' copies.

**CADE**

Here's a villain!

**SMITH**

Has a book in his pocket with red letters in't.

**CADE**

Nay, then, he is a conjurer.

**DICK**

Nay, he can make obligations, and write court-hand.

**CADE**

I am sorry for't: the man is a proper man, of mine  
honour; unless I find him guilty, he shall not die.

Come hither, sirrah, I must examine thee: what is thy name?

**Clerk**

Emmanuel.

**DICK**

They use to write it on the top of letters: 'twill go hard with you.

**CADE**

Let me alone. Dost thou use to write thy name? or hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest plain-dealing man?

**CLERK**

Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name.

**ALL**

He hath confessed: away with him! he's a villain and a traitor.

**CADE**

Away with him, I say! hang him with his pen and ink-horn about his neck.

*Exit one with the Clerk*

*Enter MICHAEL*

**MICHAEL**

Where's our general?

**CADE**

Here I am, thou particular fellow.

**MICHAEL**

Fly, fly, fly! Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother are hard by, with the king's forces.

**CADE**

Stand, villain, stand, or I'll fell thee down. He shall be encountered with a man as good as himself: he is but a knight, is a'?

**MICHAEL**

No.

**CADE**

To equal him, I will make myself a knight presently.

*Kneels*

Rise up Sir John Mortimer.

*Rises*

Now have at him!

*Enter SIR HUMPHREY and WILLIAM STAFFORD, with drum and soldiers*

**SIR HUMPHREY**

Rebellious hinds, the filth and scum of Kent,  
Mark'd for the gallows, lay your weapons down;  
Home to your cottages, forsake this groom:  
The king is merciful, if you revolt.

**WILLIAM STAFFORD**

But angry, wrathful, and inclined to blood,  
If you go forward; therefore yield, or die.

**CADE**

As for these silken-coated slaves, I pass not:  
It is to you, good people, that I speak,  
Over whom, in time to come, I hope to reign;  
For I am rightful heir unto the crown.

**SIR HUMPHREY**

Villain, thy father was a plasterer;  
And thou thyself a shearman, art thou not?

**CADE**

And Adam was a gardener.

**WILLIAM STAFFORD**

And what of that?

**CADE**

Marry, this: Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.  
Married the Duke of Clarence' daughter, did he not?

**SIR HUMPHREY**

Ay, sir.

**CADE**

By her he had two children at one birth.

**WILLIAM STAFFORD**

That's false.

**CADE**

Ay, there's the question; but I say, 'tis true:  
The elder of them, being put to nurse,  
Was by a beggar-woman stolen away;  
And, ignorant of his birth and parentage,  
Became a bricklayer when he came to age:  
His son am I; deny it, if you can.

**DICK**

Nay, 'tis too true; therefore he shall be king.

**SMITH**

Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and  
the bricks are alive at this day to testify it;  
therefore deny it not.

**SIR HUMPHREY**

And will you credit this base drudge's words,  
That speaks he knows not what?

**ALL**

Ay, marry, will we; therefore get ye gone.

**WILLIAM STAFFORD**

Jack Cade, the Duke of York hath taught you this.

**CADE**

[Aside] He lies, for I invented it myself.  
Go to, sirrah, tell the king from me, that, for his  
father's sake, Henry the Fifth, in whose time boys  
went to span-counter for French crowns, I am content  
he shall reign; but I'll be protector over him.

**DICK**

And furthermore, well have the Lord Say's head for  
selling the dukedom of Maine.

**CADE**

And good reason; for thereby is England mained, and  
fain to go with a staff, but that my puissance holds  
it up. Fellow kings, I tell you that that Lord Say  
hath gelded the commonwealth, and made it an eunuch:  
and more than that, he can speak French; and  
therefore he is a traitor.

**SIR HUMPHREY**

O gross and miserable ignorance!

**CADE**

Nay, answer, if you can: the Frenchmen are our  
enemies; go to, then, I ask but this: can he that  
speaks with the tongue of an enemy be a good  
counsellor, or no?

**ALL**

No, no; and therefore we'll have his head.

**WILLIAM STAFFORD**

Well, seeing gentle words will not prevail,  
Assail them with the army of the king.

**SIR HUMPHREY**

Herald, away; and throughout every town  
Proclaim them traitors that are up with Cade;  
That those which fly before the battle ends  
May, even in their wives' and children's sight,  
Be hang'd up for example at their doors:  
And you that be the king's friends, follow me.

*Exeunt WILLIAM STAFFORD and SIR HUMPHREY, and soldiers*

**CADE**

And you that love the commons, follow me.  
Now show yourselves men; 'tis for liberty.  
We will not leave one lord, one gentleman:  
Spare none but such as go in clouted shoon;  
For they are thrifty honest men, and such  
As would, but that they dare not, take our parts.

**DICK**

They are all in order and march toward us.

**CADE**

But then are we in order when we are most  
out of order. Come, march forward.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another part of Blackheath.

*Alarums to the fight, wherein SIR HUMPHREY and WILLIAM STAFFORD are slain.  
Enter CADE and the rest*

**CADE**

Where's Dick, the butcher of Ashford?

**DICK**

Here, sir.

**CADE**

They fell before thee like sheep and oxen, and thou behavedst thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughter-house: therefore thus will I reward thee, the Lent shall be as long again as it is; and thou shalt have a licence to kill for a hundred lacking one.

**DICK**

I desire no more.

**CADE**

And, to speak truth, thou deservest no less. This monument of the victory will I bear;

*Putting on SIR HUMPHREY'S brigandine*

and the bodies shall be dragged at my horse' heels till I do come to London, where we will have the mayor's sword borne before us.

**DICK**

If we mean to thrive and do good, break open the  
gaols and let out the prisoners.

**CADE**

Fear not that, I warrant thee. Come, let's march  
towards London.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. London. The palace.

*Enter KING HENRY VI with a supplication, and the QUEEN with SUFFOLK'S head, BUCKINGHAM and Lord SAY*

### QUEEN MARGARET

Oft have I heard that grief softens the mind,  
And makes it fearful and degenerate;  
Think therefore on revenge and cease to weep.  
But who can cease to weep and look on this?  
Here may his head lie on my throbbing breast:  
But where's the body that I should embrace?

### BUCKINGHAM

What answer makes your grace to the rebels'  
supplication?

### KING HENRY VI

I'll send some holy bishop to entreat;  
For God forbid so many simple souls  
Should perish by the sword! And I myself,  
Rather than bloody war shall cut them short,  
Will parley with Jack Cade their general:  
But stay, I'll read it over once again.

### QUEEN MARGARET

Ah, barbarous villains! hath this lovely face  
Ruled, like a wandering planet, over me,  
And could it not enforce them to relent,  
That were unworthy to behold the same?

### KING HENRY VI

Lord Say, Jack Cade hath sworn to have thy head.

**SAY**

Ay, but I hope your highness shall have his.

**KING HENRY VI**

How now, madam!  
Still lamenting and mourning for Suffolk's death?  
I fear me, love, if that I had been dead,  
Thou wouldst not have mourn'd so much for me.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

No, my love, I should not mourn, but die for thee.

*Enter a Messenger*

**KING HENRY VI**

How now! what news? why comest thou in such haste?

**Messenger**

The rebels are in Southwark; fly, my lord!  
Jack Cade proclaims himself Lord Mortimer,  
Descended from the Duke of Clarence' house,  
And calls your grace usurper openly  
And vows to crown himself in Westminster.  
His army is a ragged multitude  
Of hinds and peasants, rude and merciless:  
Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother's death  
Hath given them heart and courage to proceed:  
All scholars, lawyers, courtiers, gentlemen,  
They call false caterpillars, and intend their death.

**KING HENRY VI**

O graceless men! they know not what they do.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

My gracious lord, return to Killingworth,  
Until a power be raised to put them down.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Ah, were the Duke of Suffolk now alive,  
These Kentish rebels would be soon appeased!

## **KING HENRY VI**

Lord Say, the traitors hate thee;  
Therefore away with us to Killingworth.

## **SAY**

So might your grace's person be in danger.  
The sight of me is odious in their eyes;  
And therefore in this city will I stay  
And live alone as secret as I may.

*Enter another Messenger*

## **Messenger**

Jack Cade hath gotten London bridge:  
The citizens fly and forsake their houses:  
The rascal people, thirsting after prey,  
Join with the traitor, and they jointly swear  
To spoil the city and your royal court.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Then linger not, my lord, away, take horse.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Come, Margaret; God, our hope, will succor us.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

My hope is gone, now Suffolk is deceased.

**KING HENRY VI**

Farewell, my lord: trust not the Kentish rebels.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Trust nobody, for fear you be betray'd.

**SAY**

The trust I have is in mine innocence,  
And therefore am I bold and resolute.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. London. The Tower.

*Enter SCALES upon the Tower, walking. Then enter two or three Citizens below*

**SCALES**

How now! is Jack Cade slain?

**First Citizen**

No, my lord, nor likely to be slain; for they have won the bridge, killing all those that withstand them: the lord mayor craves aid of your honour from the Tower, to defend the city from the rebels.

**SCALES**

Such aid as I can spare you shall command;  
But I am troubled here with them myself;  
The rebels have assay'd to win the Tower.  
But get you to Smithfield, and gather head,  
And thither I will send you Matthew Goffe;  
Fight for your king, your country and your lives;  
And so, farewell, for I must hence again.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. London. Cannon Street.

*Enter CADE and the rest, and strikes his staff on London-stone*

**CADE**

Now is Mortimer lord of this city. And here, sitting upon London-stone, I charge and command that, of the city's cost, the pissing-conduit run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign. And now henceforward it shall be treason for any that calls me other than Lord Mortimer.

*Enter a Soldier, running*

**Soldier**

Jack Cade! Jack Cade!

**CADE**

Knock him down there.

*They kill him*

**SMITH**

If this fellow be wise, he'll never call ye Jack Cade more: I think he hath a very fair warning.

**DICK**

My lord, there's an army gathered together in Smithfield.

**CADE**



Come, then, let's go fight with them; but first, go  
and set London bridge on fire; and, if you can, burn  
down the Tower too. Come, let's away.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. London. Smithfield.

*Alarums. MATTHEW GOFFE is slain, and all the rest. Then enter CADE, with his company.*

**CADE**

So, sirs: now go some and pull down the Savoy;  
others to the inns of court; down with them all.

**DICK**

I have a suit unto your lordship.

**CADE**

Be it a lordship, thou shalt have it for that word.

**DICK**

Only that the laws of England may come out of your mouth.

**HOLLAND**

[Aside] Mass, 'twill be sore law, then; for he was  
thrust in the mouth with a spear, and 'tis not whole  
yet.

**SMITH**

[Aside] Nay, John, it will be stinking law for his  
breath stinks with eating toasted cheese.

**CADE**

I have thought upon it, it shall be so. Away, burn all the records of the realm: my mouth shall be the parliament of England.

## **HOLLAND**

[Aside] Then we are like to have biting statutes, unless his teeth be pulled out.

## **CADE**

And henceforward all things shall be in common.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

My lord, a prize, a prize! here's the Lord Say, which sold the towns in France; he that made us pay one and twenty fifteens, and one shilling to the pound, the last subsidy.

*Enter BEVIS, with Lord SAY*

## **CADE**

Well, he shall be beheaded for it ten times. Ah, thou say, thou serge, nay, thou buckram lord! now art thou within point-blank of our jurisdiction regal. What canst thou answer to my majesty for giving up of Normandy unto Mounsieur Basimecu, the dauphin of France? Be it known unto thee by these presence, even the presence of Lord Mortimer, that I am the besom that must sweep the court clean of such filth as thou art. Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school; and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used, and, contrary to the king, his crown and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and

a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear. Thou hast appointed justices of peace, to call poor men before them about matters they were not able to answer. Moreover, thou hast put them in prison; and because they could not read, thou hast hanged them; when, indeed, only for that cause they have been most worthy to live. Thou dost ride in a foot-cloth, dost thou not?

**SAY**

What of that?

**CADE**

Marry, thou oughtest not to let thy horse wear a cloak, when honest men than thou go in their hose and doublets.

**DICK**

And work in their shirt too; as myself, for example, that am a butcher.

**SAY**

You men of Kent,--

**DICK**

What say you of Kent?

**SAY**

Nothing but this; 'tis 'bona terra, mala gens.'

**CADE**

Away with him, away with him! he speaks Latin.

**SAY**

Hear me but speak, and bear me where you will.  
Kent, in the Commentaries Caesar writ,  
Is term'd the civil'st place of this isle:  
Sweet is the country, because full of riches;  
The people liberal, valiant, active, wealthy;  
Which makes me hope you are not void of pity.  
I sold not Maine, I lost not Normandy,  
Yet, to recover them, would lose my life.  
Justice with favour have I always done;  
Prayers and tears have moved me, gifts could never.  
When have I aught exacted at your hands,  
But to maintain the king, the realm and you?  
Large gifts have I bestow'd on learned clerks,  
Because my book preferr'd me to the king,  
And seeing ignorance is the curse of God,  
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven,  
Unless you be possess'd with devilish spirits,  
You cannot but forbear to murder me:  
This tongue hath parley'd unto foreign kings  
For your behoof,--

## **CADE**

Tut, when struck'st thou one blow in the field?

## **SAY**

Great men have reaching hands: oft have I struck  
Those that I never saw and struck them dead.

## **BEVIS**

O monstrous coward! what, to come behind folks?

## **SAY**

These cheeks are pale for watching for your good.

## **CADE**

Give him a box o' the ear and that will make 'em red again.

**SAY**

Long sitting to determine poor men's causes  
Hath made me full of sickness and diseases.

**CADE**

Ye shall have a hempen caudle, then, and the help of hatchet.

**DICK**

Why dost thou quiver, man?

**SAY**

The palsy, and not fear, provokes me.

**CADE**

Nay, he nods at us, as who should say, I'll be even  
with you: I'll see if his head will stand steadier  
on a pole, or no. Take him away, and behead him.

**SAY**

Tell me wherein have I offended most?  
Have I affected wealth or honour? speak.  
Are my chests fill'd up with extorted gold?  
Is my apparel sumptuous to behold?  
Whom have I injured, that ye seek my death?  
These hands are free from guiltless bloodshedding,  
This breast from harbouring foul deceitful thoughts.  
O, let me live!

**CADE**

[Aside] I feel remorse in myself with his words;  
but I'll bridle it: he shall die, an it be but for  
pleading so well for his life. Away with him! he  
has a familiar under his tongue; he speaks not o'  
God's name. Go, take him away, I say, and strike

off his head presently; and then break into his son-in-law's house, Sir James Cromer, and strike off his head, and bring them both upon two poles hither.

**ALL**

It shall be done.

**SAY**

Ah, countrymen! if when you make your prayers,  
God should be so obdurate as yourselves,  
How would it fare with your departed souls?  
And therefore yet relent, and save my life.

**CADE**

Away with him! and do as I command ye.

*Exeunt some with Lord SAY*

The proudest peer in the realm shall not wear a head on his shoulders, unless he pay me tribute; there shall not a maid be married, but she shall pay to me her maidenhead ere they have it: men shall hold of me in capite; and we charge and command that their wives be as free as heart can wish or tongue can tell.

**DICK**

My lord, when shall we go to Cheapside and take up commodities upon our bills?

**CADE**

Marry, presently.

**ALL**

O, brave!

*Re-enter one with the heads*

**CADE**

But is not this braver? Let them kiss one another,  
for they loved well when they were alive. Now part  
them again, lest they consult about the giving up of  
some more towns in France. Soldiers, defer the  
spoil of the city until night: for with these borne  
before us, instead of maces, will we ride through  
the streets, and at every corner have them kiss. Away!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. Southwark.

*Alarum and retreat. Enter CADE and all his rabblement*

### CADE

Up Fish Street! down Saint Magnus' Corner! Kill  
and knock down! throw them into Thames!

*Sound a parley*

What noise is this I hear? Dare any be so bold to  
sound retreat or parley, when I command them kill?

*Enter BUCKINGHAM and CLIFFORD, attended*

### BUCKINGHAM

Ay, here they be that dare and will disturb thee:  
Know, Cade, we come ambassadors from the king  
Unto the commons whom thou hast misled;  
And here pronounce free pardon to them all  
That will forsake thee and go home in peace.

### CLIFFORD

What say ye, countrymen? will ye relent,  
And yield to mercy whilst 'tis offer'd you;  
Or let a rebel lead you to your deaths?  
Who loves the king and will embrace his pardon,  
Fling up his cap, and say 'God save his majesty!'  
Who hateth him and honours not his father,  
Henry the Fifth, that made all France to quake,  
Shake he his weapon at us and pass by.

### ALL

God save the king! God save the king!

## **CADE**

What, Buckingham and Clifford, are ye so brave? And you, base peasants, do ye believe him? will you needs be hanged with your pardons about your necks? Hath my sword therefore broke through London gates, that you should leave me at the White Hart in Southwark? I thought ye would never have given out these arms till you had recovered your ancient freedom: but you are all recreants and dastards, and delight to live in slavery to the nobility. Let them break your backs with burthens, take your houses over your heads, ravish your wives and daughters before your faces: for me, I will make shift for one; and so, God's curse light upon you all!

## **ALL**

We'll follow Cade, we'll follow Cade!

## **CLIFFORD**

Is Cade the son of Henry the Fifth,  
That thus you do exclaim you'll go with him?  
Will he conduct you through the heart of France,  
And make the meanest of you earls and dukes?  
Alas, he hath no home, no place to fly to;  
Nor knows he how to live but by the spoil,  
Unless by robbing of your friends and us.  
Were't not a shame, that whilst you live at jar,  
The fearful French, whom you late vanquished,  
Should make a start o'er seas and vanquish you?  
Methinks already in this civil broil  
I see them lording it in London streets,  
Crying 'Villiago!' unto all they meet.  
Better ten thousand base-born Cades miscarry  
Than you should stoop unto a Frenchman's mercy.  
To France, to France, and get what you have lost;

Spare England, for it is your native coast;  
Henry hath money, you are strong and manly;  
God on our side, doubt not of victory.

**ALL**

A Clifford! a Clifford! we'll follow the king and Clifford.

**CADE**

Was ever feather so lightly blown to and fro as this  
multitude? The name of Henry the Fifth hales them  
to an hundred mischiefs, and makes them leave me  
desolate. I see them lay their heads together to  
surprise me. My sword make way for me, for here is  
no staying. In despite of the devils and hell, have  
through the very midst of you? and heavens and  
honour be witness, that no want of resolution in me.  
but only my followers' base and ignominious  
treasons, makes me betake me to my heels.

*Exit*

**BUCKINGHAM**

What, is he fled? Go some, and follow him;  
And he that brings his head unto the king  
Shall have a thousand crowns for his reward.

*Exeunt some of them*

Follow me, soldiers: we'll devise a mean  
To reconcile you all unto the king.

*Exeunt*

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IX. Kenilworth Castle.

*Sound Trumpets. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, and SOMERSET, on the terrace*

### KING HENRY VI

Was ever king that joy'd an earthly throne,  
And could command no more content than I?  
No sooner was I crept out of my cradle  
But I was made a king, at nine months old.  
Was never subject long'd to be a king  
As I do long and wish to be a subject.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM and CLIFFORD*

### BUCKINGHAM

Health and glad tidings to your majesty!

### KING HENRY VI

Why, Buckingham, is the traitor Cade surprised?  
Or is he but retired to make him strong?

*Enter below, multitudes, with halters about their necks*

### CLIFFORD

He is fled, my lord, and all his powers do yield;  
And humbly thus, with halters on their necks,  
Expect your highness' doom of life or death.

### KING HENRY VI

Then, heaven, set ope thy everlasting gates,

To entertain my vows of thanks and praise!  
Soldiers, this day have you redeemed your lives,  
And show'd how well you love your prince and country:  
Continue still in this so good a mind,  
And Henry, though he be infortunate,  
Assure yourselves, will never be unkind:  
And so, with thanks and pardon to you all,  
I do dismiss you to your several countries.

**ALL**

God save the king! God save the king!

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Please it your grace to be advertised  
The Duke of York is newly come from Ireland,  
And with a puissant and a mighty power  
Of gallowglasses and stout kerns  
Is marching hitherward in proud array,  
And still proclaimeth, as he comes along,  
His arms are only to remove from thee  
The Duke of Somerset, whom he terms traitor.

**KING HENRY VI**

Thus stands my state, 'twixt Cade and York distress'd.  
Like to a ship that, having 'scaped a tempest,  
Is straightway calm'd and boarded with a pirate:  
But now is Cade driven back, his men dispersed;  
And now is York in arms to second him.  
I pray thee, Buckingham, go and meet him,  
And ask him what's the reason of these arms.  
Tell him I'll send Duke Edmund to the Tower;  
And, Somerset, we'll commit thee thither,  
Until his army be dismiss'd from him.

**SOMERSET**

My lord,

I'll yield myself to prison willingly,  
Or unto death, to do my country good.

**KING HENRY VI**

In any case, be not too rough in terms;  
For he is fierce and cannot brook hard language.

**BUCKINGHAM**

I will, my lord; and doubt not so to deal  
As all things shall redound unto your good.

**KING HENRY VI**

Come, wife, let's in, and learn to govern better;  
For yet may England curse my wretched reign.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 9  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 10

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE X. Kent. IDEN's garden.

*Enter CADE*

**CADE**

Fie on ambition! fie on myself, that have a sword,  
and yet am ready to famish! These five days have I  
hid me in these woods and durst not peep out, for  
all the country is laid for me; but now am I so  
hungry that if I might have a lease of my life for a  
thousand years I could stay no longer. Wherefore,  
on a brick wall have I climbed into this garden, to  
see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet another  
while, which is not amiss to cool a man's stomach  
this hot weather. And I think this word 'sallet'  
was born to do me good: for many a time, but for a  
sallet, my brainpan had been cleft with a brown  
bill; and many a time, when I have been dry and  
bravely marching, it hath served me instead of a  
quart pot to drink in; and now the word 'sallet'  
must serve me to feed on.

*Enter IDEN*

**IDEN**

Lord, who would live turmoiled in the court,  
And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?  
This small inheritance my father left me  
Contenteth me, and worth a monarchy.  
I seek not to wax great by others' waning,  
Or gather wealth, I care not, with what envy:  
Sufficeth that I have maintains my state  
And sends the poor well pleased from my gate.

## CADE

Here's the lord of the soil come to seize me for a  
stray, for entering his fee-simple without leave.  
Ah, villain, thou wilt betray me, and get a thousand  
crowns of the king carrying my head to him: but  
I'll make thee eat iron like an ostrich, and swallow  
my sword like a great pin, ere thou and I part.

## IDEN

Why, rude companion, whatsoe'er thou be,  
I know thee not; why, then, should I betray thee?  
Is't not enough to break into my garden,  
And, like a thief, to come to rob my grounds,  
Climbing my walls in spite of me the owner,  
But thou wilt brave me with these saucy terms?

## CADE

Brave thee! ay, by the best blood that ever was  
broached, and beard thee too. Look on me well: I  
have eat no meat these five days; yet, come thou and  
thy five men, and if I do not leave you all as dead  
as a doornail, I pray God I may never eat grass more.

## IDEN

Nay, it shall ne'er be said, while England stands,  
That Alexander Iden, an esquire of Kent,  
Took odds to combat a poor famish'd man.  
Oppose thy steadfast-gazing eyes to mine,  
See if thou canst outface me with thy looks:  
Set limb to limb, and thou art far the lesser;  
Thy hand is but a finger to my fist,  
Thy leg a stick compared with this truncheon;  
My foot shall fight with all the strength thou hast;  
And if mine arm be heaved in the air,  
Thy grave is digg'd already in the earth.  
As for words, whose greatness answers words,  
Let this my sword report what speech forbears.



## CADE

By my valour, the most complete champion that ever I  
heard! Steel, if thou turn the edge, or cut not out  
the burly-boned clown in chins of beef ere thou  
sleep in thy sheath, I beseech God on my knees thou  
mayst be turned to hobnails.

*Here they fight. CADE falls*

O, I am slain! famine and no other hath slain me:  
let ten thousand devils come against me, and give me  
but the ten meals I have lost, and I'll defy them  
all. Wither, garden; and be henceforth a  
burying-place to all that do dwell in this house,  
because the unconquered soul of Cade is fled.

## IDEN

Is't Cade that I have slain, that monstrous traitor?  
Sword, I will hollow thee for this thy deed,  
And hang thee o'er my tomb when I am dead:  
Ne'er shall this blood be wiped from thy point;  
But thou shalt wear it as a herald's coat,  
To emblaze the honour that thy master got.

## CADE

Iden, farewell, and be proud of thy victory. Tell  
Kent from me, she hath lost her best man, and exhort  
all the world to be cowards; for I, that never  
feared any, am vanquished by famine, not by valour.

*Dies*

## IDEN

How much thou wrong'st me, heaven be my judge.  
Die, damned wretch, the curse of her that bare thee;  
And as I thrust thy body in with my sword,  
So wish I, I might thrust thy soul to hell.  
Hence will I drag thee headlong by the heels

Unto a dunghill which shall be thy grave,  
And there cut off thy most ungracious head;  
Which I will bear in triumph to the king,  
Leaving thy trunk for crows to feed upon.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 4, Scene 10  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Fields between Dartford and Blackheath.

*Enter YORK, and his army of Irish, with drum and colours*

**YORK**

From Ireland thus comes York to claim his right,  
And pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head:  
Ring, bells, aloud; burn, bonfires, clear and bright,  
To entertain great England's lawful king.  
Ah! sancta majestas, who would not buy thee dear?  
Let them obey that know not how to rule;  
This hand was made to handle naught but gold.  
I cannot give due action to my words,  
Except a sword or sceptre balance it:  
A sceptre shall it have, have I a soul,  
On which I'll toss the flower-de-luce of France.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM*

Whom have we here? Buckingham, to disturb me?  
The king hath sent him, sure: I must dissemble.

**BUCKINGHAM**

York, if thou meanest well, I greet thee well.

**YORK**

Humphrey of Buckingham, I accept thy greeting.  
Art thou a messenger, or come of pleasure?

**BUCKINGHAM**

A messenger from Henry, our dread liege,  
To know the reason of these arms in peace;

Or why thou, being a subject as I am,  
Against thy oath and true allegiance sworn,  
Should raise so great a power without his leave,  
Or dare to bring thy force so near the court.

## **YORK**

[Aside] Scarce can I speak, my choler is so great:  
O, I could hew up rocks and fight with flint,  
I am so angry at these abject terms;  
And now, like Ajax Telamonius,  
On sheep or oxen could I spend my fury.  
I am far better born than is the king,  
More like a king, more kingly in my thoughts:  
But I must make fair weather yet a while,  
Till Henry be more weak and I more strong,--  
Buckingham, I prithee, pardon me,  
That I have given no answer all this while;  
My mind was troubled with deep melancholy.  
The cause why I have brought this army hither  
Is to remove proud Somerset from the king,  
Seditious to his grace and to the state.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

That is too much presumption on thy part:  
But if thy arms be to no other end,  
The king hath yielded unto thy demand:  
The Duke of Somerset is in the Tower.

## **YORK**

Upon thine honour, is he prisoner?

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Upon mine honour, he is prisoner.

## **YORK**

Then, Buckingham, I do dismiss my powers.  
Soldiers, I thank you all; disperse yourselves;

Meet me to-morrow in St. George's field,  
You shall have pay and every thing you wish.  
And let my sovereign, virtuous Henry,  
Command my eldest son, nay, all my sons,  
As pledges of my fealty and love;  
I'll send them all as willing as I live:  
Lands, goods, horse, armour, any thing I have,  
Is his to use, so Somerset may die.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

York, I commend this kind submission:  
We twain will go into his highness' tent.

*Enter KING HENRY VI and Attendants*

## **KING HENRY VI**

Buckingham, doth York intend no harm to us,  
That thus he marcheth with thee arm in arm?

## **YORK**

In all submission and humility  
York doth present himself unto your highness.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Then what intends these forces thou dost bring?

## **YORK**

To heave the traitor Somerset from hence,  
And fight against that monstrous rebel Cade,  
Who since I heard to be discomfited.

*Enter IDEN, with CADE'S head*

## **IDEN**

If one so rude and of so mean condition

May pass into the presence of a king,  
Lo, I present your grace a traitor's head,  
The head of Cade, whom I in combat slew.

**KING HENRY VI**

The head of Cade! Great God, how just art Thou!  
O, let me view his visage, being dead,  
That living wrought me such exceeding trouble.  
Tell me, my friend, art thou the man that slew him?

**IDEN**

I was, an't like your majesty.

**KING HENRY VI**

How art thou call'd? and what is thy degree?

**IDEN**

Alexander Iden, that's my name;  
A poor esquire of Kent, that loves his king.

**BUCKINGHAM**

So please it you, my lord, 'twere not amiss  
He were created knight for his good service.

**KING HENRY VI**

Iden, kneel down.

*He kneels*

Rise up a knight.  
We give thee for reward a thousand marks,  
And will that thou henceforth attend on us.

**IDEN**

May Iden live to merit such a bounty.  
And never live but true unto his liege!

*Rises*

*Enter QUEEN MARGARET and SOMERSET*

## **KING HENRY VI**

See, Buckingham, Somerset comes with the queen:  
Go, bid her hide him quickly from the duke.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

For thousand Yorks he shall not hide his head,  
But boldly stand and front him to his face.

## **YORK**

How now! is Somerset at liberty?  
Then, York, unloose thy long-imprison'd thoughts,  
And let thy tongue be equal with thy heart.  
Shall I endure the sight of Somerset?  
False king! why hast thou broken faith with me,  
Knowing how hardly I can brook abuse?  
King did I call thee? no, thou art not king,  
Not fit to govern and rule multitudes,  
Which darest not, no, nor canst not rule a traitor.  
That head of thine doth not become a crown;  
Thy hand is made to grasp a palmer's staff,  
And not to grace an awful princely sceptre.  
That gold must round engirt these brows of mine,  
Whose smile and frown, like to Achilles' spear,  
Is able with the change to kill and cure.  
Here is a hand to hold a sceptre up  
And with the same to act controlling laws.  
Give place: by heaven, thou shalt rule no more  
O'er him whom heaven created for thy ruler.

## **SOMERSET**

O monstrous traitor! I arrest thee, York,

Of capital treason 'gainst the king and crown;  
Obey, audacious traitor; kneel for grace.

## **YORK**

Wouldst have me kneel? first let me ask of these,  
If they can brook I bow a knee to man.  
Sirrah, call in my sons to be my bail;

*Exit Attendant*

I know, ere they will have me go to ward,  
They'll pawn their swords for my enfranchisement.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Call hither Clifford! bid him come amain,  
To say if that the bastard boys of York  
Shall be the surety for their traitor father.

*Exit BUCKINGHAM*

## **YORK**

O blood-besotted Neapolitan,  
Outcast of Naples, England's bloody scourge!  
The sons of York, thy betters in their birth,  
Shall be their father's bail; and bane to those  
That for my surety will refuse the boys!

*Enter EDWARD and RICHARD*

See where they come: I'll warrant they'll  
make it good.

*Enter CLIFFORD and YOUNG CLIFFORD*

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

And here comes Clifford to deny their bail.



## **CLIFFORD**

Health and all happiness to my lord the king!

*Kneels*

## **YORK**

I thank thee, Clifford: say, what news with thee?  
Nay, do not fright us with an angry look;  
We are thy sovereign, Clifford, kneel again;  
For thy mistaking so, we pardon thee.

## **CLIFFORD**

This is my king, York, I do not mistake;  
But thou mistakest me much to think I do:  
To Bedlam with him! is the man grown mad?

## **KING HENRY VI**

Ay, Clifford; a bedlam and ambitious humour  
Makes him oppose himself against his king.

## **CLIFFORD**

He is a traitor; let him to the Tower,  
And chop away that factious pate of his.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

He is arrested, but will not obey;  
His sons, he says, shall give their words for him.

## **YORK**

Will you not, sons?

## **EDWARD**

Ay, noble father, if our words will serve.

**RICHARD**

And if words will not, then our weapons shall.

**CLIFFORD**

Why, what a brood of traitors have we here!

**YORK**

Look in a glass, and call thy image so:  
I am thy king, and thou a false-heart traitor.  
Call hither to the stake my two brave bears,  
That with the very shaking of their chains  
They may astonish these fell-lurking curs:  
Bid Salisbury and Warwick come to me.

*Enter the WARWICK and SALISBURY*

**CLIFFORD**

Are these thy bears? we'll bait thy bears to death.  
And manacle the bear-ward in their chains,  
If thou darest bring them to the baiting place.

**RICHARD**

Oft have I seen a hot o'erweening cur  
Run back and bite, because he was withheld;  
Who, being suffer'd with the bear's fell paw,  
Hath clapp'd his tail between his legs and cried:  
And such a piece of service will you do,  
If you oppose yourselves to match Lord Warwick.

**CLIFFORD**

Hence, heap of wrath, foul indigested lump,  
As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!

**YORK**

Nay, we shall heat you thoroughly anon.

**CLIFFORD**

Take heed, lest by your heat you burn yourselves.

**KING HENRY VI**

Why, Warwick, hath thy knee forgot to bow?  
Old Salisbury, shame to thy silver hair,  
Thou mad misleader of thy brain-sick son!  
What, wilt thou on thy death-bed play the ruffian,  
And seek for sorrow with thy spectacles?  
O, where is faith? O, where is loyalty?  
If it be banish'd from the frosty head,  
Where shall it find a harbour in the earth?  
Wilt thou go dig a grave to find out war,  
And shame thine honourable age with blood?  
Why art thou old, and want'st experience?  
Or wherefore dost abuse it, if thou hast it?  
For shame! in duty bend thy knee to me  
That bows unto the grave with mickle age.

**SALISBURY**

My lord, I have consider'd with myself  
The title of this most renowned duke;  
And in my conscience do repute his grace  
The rightful heir to England's royal seat.

**KING HENRY VI**

Hast thou not sworn allegiance unto me?

**SALISBURY**

I have.

**KING HENRY VI**

Canst thou dispense with heaven for such an oath?

## **SALISBURY**

It is great sin to swear unto a sin,  
But greater sin to keep a sinful oath.  
Who can be bound by any solemn vow  
To do a murderous deed, to rob a man,  
To force a spotless virgin's chastity,  
To reave the orphan of his patrimony,  
To wring the widow from her custom'd right,  
And have no other reason for this wrong  
But that he was bound by a solemn oath?

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

A subtle traitor needs no sophister.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Call Buckingham, and bid him arm himself.

## **YORK**

Call Buckingham, and all the friends thou hast,  
I am resolved for death or dignity.

## **CLIFFORD**

The first I warrant thee, if dreams prove true.

## **WARWICK**

You were best to go to bed and dream again,  
To keep thee from the tempest of the field.

## **CLIFFORD**

I am resolved to bear a greater storm  
Than any thou canst conjure up to-day;  
And that I'll write upon thy burgonet,  
Might I but know thee by thy household badge.

## **WARWICK**

Now, by my father's badge, old Nevil's crest,  
The rampant bear chain'd to the ragged staff,  
This day I'll wear aloft my burgonet,  
As on a mountain top the cedar shows  
That keeps his leaves in spite of any storm,  
Even to affright thee with the view thereof.

## **CLIFFORD**

And from thy burgonet I'll rend thy bear  
And tread it under foot with all contempt,  
Despite the bear-ward that protects the bear.

## **YOUNG CLIFFORD**

And so to arms, victorious father,  
To quell the rebels and their complices.

## **RICHARD**

Fie! charity, for shame! speak not in spite,  
For you shall sup with Jesu Christ to-night.

## **YOUNG CLIFFORD**

Foul stigmatic, that's more than thou canst tell.

## **RICHARD**

If not in heaven, you'll surely sup in hell.

*Exeunt severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Saint Alban's.

*Alarums to the battle. Enter WARWICK*

### WARWICK

Clifford of Cumberland, 'tis Warwick calls:  
And if thou dost not hide thee from the bear,  
Now, when the angry trumpet sounds alarum  
And dead men's cries do fill the empty air,  
Clifford, I say, come forth and fight with me:  
Proud northern lord, Clifford of Cumberland,  
Warwick is hoarse with calling thee to arms.

*Enter YORK*

How now, my noble lord? what, all afoot?

### YORK

The deadly-handed Clifford slew my steed,  
But match to match I have encounter'd him  
And made a prey for carrion kites and crows  
Even of the bonny beast he loved so well.

*Enter CLIFFORD*

### WARWICK

Of one or both of us the time is come.

### YORK

Hold, Warwick, seek thee out some other chase,  
For I myself must hunt this deer to death.

## **WARWICK**

Then, nobly, York; 'tis for a crown thou fight'st.  
As I intend, Clifford, to thrive to-day,  
It grieves my soul to leave thee unassail'd.

*Exit*

## **CLIFFORD**

What seest thou in me, York? why dost thou pause?

## **YORK**

With thy brave bearing should I be in love,  
But that thou art so fast mine enemy.

## **CLIFFORD**

Nor should thy prowess want praise and esteem,  
But that 'tis shown ignobly and in treason.

## **YORK**

So let it help me now against thy sword  
As I in justice and true right express it.

## **CLIFFORD**

My soul and body on the action both!

## **YORK**

A dreadful lay! Address thee instantly.

*They fight, and CLIFFORD falls*

## **CLIFFORD**

La fin couronne les oeuvres.

*Dies*

**YORK**

Thus war hath given thee peace, for thou art still.  
Peace with his soul, heaven, if it be thy will!

*Exit*

*Enter YOUNG CLIFFORD*

**YOUNG CLIFFORD**

Shame and confusion! all is on the rout;  
Fear frames disorder, and disorder wounds  
Where it should guard. O war, thou son of hell,  
Whom angry heavens do make their minister  
Throw in the frozen bosoms of our part  
Hot coals of vengeance! Let no soldier fly.  
He that is truly dedicate to war  
Hath no self-love, nor he that loves himself  
Hath not essentially but by circumstance  
The name of valour.

*Seeing his dead father*

O, let the vile world end,  
And the promised flames of the last day  
Knit earth and heaven together!  
Now let the general trumpet blow his blast,  
Particularities and petty sounds  
To cease! Wast thou ordain'd, dear father,  
To lose thy youth in peace, and to achieve  
The silver livery of advised age,  
And, in thy reverence and thy chair-days, thus  
To die in ruffian battle? Even at this sight  
My heart is turn'd to stone: and while 'tis mine,  
It shall be stony. York not our old men spares;  
No more will I their babes: tears virginal  
Shall be to me even as the dew to fire,  
And beauty that the tyrant oft reclaims  
Shall to my flaming wrath be oil and flax.



Henceforth I will not have to do with pity:  
Meet I an infant of the house of York,  
Into as many gobbets will I cut it  
As wild Medea young Absyrtus did:  
In cruelty will I seek out my fame.  
Come, thou new ruin of old Clifford's house:  
As did AEneas old Anchises bear,  
So bear I thee upon my manly shoulders;  
But then AEneas bare a living load,  
Nothing so heavy as these woes of mine.

*Exit, bearing off his father*

*Enter RICHARD and SOMERSET to fight. SOMERSET is killed*

## **RICHARD**

So, lie thou there;  
For underneath an alehouse' paltry sign,  
The Castle in Saint Alban's, Somerset  
Hath made the wizard famous in his death.  
Sword, hold thy temper; heart, be wrathful still:  
Priests pray for enemies, but princes kill.

*Exit*

*Fight: excursions. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, and others*

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Away, my lord! you are slow; for shame, away!

## **KING HENRY VI**

Can we outrun the heavens? good Margaret, stay.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

What are you made of? you'll nor fight nor fly:  
Now is it manhood, wisdom and defence,  
To give the enemy way, and to secure us  
By what we can, which can no more but fly.

*Alarum afar off*

If you be ta'en, we then should see the bottom  
Of all our fortunes: but if we haply scape,  
As well we may, if not through your neglect,  
We shall to London get, where you are loved  
And where this breach now in our fortunes made  
May readily be stopp'd.

*Re-enter YOUNG CLIFFORD*

**YOUNG CLIFFORD**

But that my heart's on future mischief set,  
I would speak blasphemy ere bid you fly:  
But fly you must; uncurable discomfit  
Reigns in the hearts of all our present parts.  
Away, for your relief! and we will live  
To see their day and them our fortune give:  
Away, my lord, away!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Second part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 2](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE III. Fields near St. Alban's.

*Alarum. Retreat. Enter YORK, RICHARD, WARWICK, and Soldiers, with drum and colours*

### YORK

Of Salisbury, who can report of him,  
That winter lion, who in rage forgets  
Aged contusions and all brush of time,  
And, like a gallant in the brow of youth,  
Repairs him with occasion? This happy day  
Is not itself, nor have we won one foot,  
If Salisbury be lost.

### RICHARD

My noble father,  
Three times to-day I holp him to his horse,  
Three times bestrid him; thrice I led him off,  
Persuaded him from any further act:  
But still, where danger was, still there I met him;  
And like rich hangings in a homely house,  
So was his will in his old feeble body.  
But, noble as he is, look where he comes.

*Enter SALISBURY*

### SALISBURY

Now, by my sword, well hast thou fought to-day;  
By the mass, so did we all. I thank you, Richard:  
God knows how long it is I have to live;  
And it hath pleased him that three times to-day  
You have defended me from imminent death.  
Well, lords, we have not got that which we have:

'Tis not enough our foes are this time fled,  
Being opposites of such repairing nature.

## **YORK**

I know our safety is to follow them;  
For, as I hear, the king is fled to London,  
To call a present court of parliament.  
Let us pursue him ere the writs go forth.  
What says Lord Warwick? shall we after them?

## **WARWICK**

After them! nay, before them, if we can.  
Now, by my faith, lords, 'twas a glorious day:  
Saint Alban's battle won by famous York  
Shall be eternized in all age to come.  
Sound drums and trumpets, and to London all:  
And more such days as these to us befall!

*Exeunt*

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Henry VI, part 3

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [London. The Parliament-house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [Sandal Castle.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [Field of battle betwixt Sandal Castle and Wakefield.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Before York.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A field of battle between Towton and Saxton, in](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 2, Scene 6: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A forest in the north of England.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [France. KING LEWIS XI's palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [A plain in Warwickshire.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Edward's camp, near Warwick.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [A park near Middleham Castle In Yorkshire.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [London. The Tower.](#)

Act 4, Scene 7: [Before York.](#)

Act 4, Scene 8: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Coventry.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [A field of battle near Barnet.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Plains near Tewksbury.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 6: [London. The Tower.](#)

Act 5, Scene 7: [London. The palace.](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. The Parliament-house.

*Alarum. Enter YORK, EDWARD, RICHARD, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, WARWICK, and Soldiers*

### WARWICK

I wonder how the king escaped our hands.

### YORK

While we pursued the horsemen of the north,  
He slily stole away and left his men:  
Whereat the great Lord of Northumberland,  
Whose warlike ears could never brook retreat,  
Cheer'd up the drooping army; and himself,  
Lord Clifford and Lord Stafford, all abreast,  
Charged our main battle's front, and breaking in  
Were by the swords of common soldiers slain.

### EDWARD

Lord Stafford's father, Duke of Buckingham,  
Is either slain or wounded dangerously;  
I cleft his beaver with a downright blow:  
That this is true, father, behold his blood.

### MONTAGUE

And, brother, here's the Earl of Wiltshire's blood,  
Whom I encounter'd as the battles join'd.

### RICHARD

Speak thou for me and tell them what I did.

*Throwing down SOMERSET's head*

**YORK**

Richard hath best deserved of all my sons.  
But is your grace dead, my Lord of Somerset?

**NORFOLK**

Such hope have all the line of John of Gaunt!

**RICHARD**

Thus do I hope to shake King Henry's head.

**WARWICK**

And so do I. Victorious Prince of York,  
Before I see thee seated in that throne  
Which now the house of Lancaster usurps,  
I vow by heaven these eyes shall never close.  
This is the palace of the fearful king,  
And this the regal seat: possess it, York;  
For this is thine and not King Henry's heirs'

**YORK**

Assist me, then, sweet Warwick, and I will;  
For hither we have broken in by force.

**NORFOLK**

We'll all assist you; he that flies shall die.

**YORK**

Thanks, gentle Norfolk: stay by me, my lords;  
And, soldiers, stay and lodge by me this night.

*They go up*

## **WARWICK**

And when the king comes, offer no violence,  
Unless he seek to thrust you out perforce.

## **YORK**

The queen this day here holds her parliament,  
But little thinks we shall be of her council:  
By words or blows here let us win our right.

## **RICHARD**

Arm'd as we are, let's stay within this house.

## **WARWICK**

The bloody parliament shall this be call'd,  
Unless Plantagenet, Duke of York, be king,  
And bashful Henry deposed, whose cowardice  
Hath made us by-words to our enemies.

## **YORK**

Then leave me not, my lords; be resolute;  
I mean to take possession of my right.

## **WARWICK**

Neither the king, nor he that loves him best,  
The proudest he that holds up Lancaster,  
Dares stir a wing, if Warwick shake his bells.  
I'll plant Plantagenet, root him up who dares:  
Resolve thee, Richard; claim the English crown.

*Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND,  
WESTMORELAND, EXETER, and the rest*

## **KING HENRY VI**

My lords, look where the sturdy rebel sits,



Even in the chair of state: belike he means,  
Back'd by the power of Warwick, that false peer,  
To aspire unto the crown and reign as king.  
Earl of Northumberland, he slew thy father.  
And thine, Lord Clifford; and you both have vow'd revenge  
On him, his sons, his favourites and his friends.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

If I be not, heavens be revenged on me!

## **CLIFFORD**

The hope thereof makes Clifford mourn in steel.

## **WESTMORELAND**

What, shall we suffer this? let's pluck him down:  
My heart for anger burns; I cannot brook it.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Be patient, gentle Earl of Westmoreland.

## **CLIFFORD**

Patience is for poltroons, such as he:  
He durst not sit there, had your father lived.  
My gracious lord, here in the parliament  
Let us assail the family of York.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Well hast thou spoken, cousin: be it so.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Ah, know you not the city favours them,  
And they have troops of soldiers at their beck?

## **EXETER**

But when the duke is slain, they'll quickly fly.

**KING HENRY VI**

Far be the thought of this from Henry's heart,  
To make a shambles of the parliament-house!  
Cousin of Exeter, frowns, words and threats  
Shall be the war that Henry means to use.  
Thou factious Duke of York, descend my throne,  
and kneel for grace and mercy at my feet;  
I am thy sovereign.

**YORK**

I am thine.

**EXETER**

For shame, come down: he made thee Duke of York.

**YORK**

'Twas my inheritance, as the earldom was.

**EXETER**

Thy father was a traitor to the crown.

**WARWICK**

Exeter, thou art a traitor to the crown  
In following this usurping Henry.

**CLIFFORD**

Whom should he follow but his natural king?

**WARWICK**

True, Clifford; and that's Richard Duke of York.

## **KING HENRY VI**

And shall I stand, and thou sit in my throne?

## **YORK**

It must and shall be so: content thyself.

## **WARWICK**

Be Duke of Lancaster; let him be king.

## **WESTMORELAND**

He is both king and Duke of Lancaster;  
And that the Lord of Westmoreland shall maintain.

## **WARWICK**

And Warwick shall disprove it. You forget  
That we are those which chased you from the field  
And slew your fathers, and with colours spread  
March'd through the city to the palace gates.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Yes, Warwick, I remember it to my grief;  
And, by his soul, thou and thy house shall rue it.

## **WESTMORELAND**

Plantagenet, of thee and these thy sons,  
Thy kinsman and thy friends, I'll have more lives  
Than drops of blood were in my father's veins.

## **CLIFFORD**

Urge it no more; lest that, instead of words,  
I send thee, Warwick, such a messenger  
As shall revenge his death before I stir.

## **WARWICK**

Poor Clifford! how I scorn his worthless threats!

## **YORK**

Will you we show our title to the crown?  
If not, our swords shall plead it in the field.

## **KING HENRY VI**

What title hast thou, traitor, to the crown?  
Thy father was, as thou art, Duke of York;  
Thy grandfather, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March:  
I am the son of Henry the Fifth,  
Who made the Dauphin and the French to stoop  
And seized upon their towns and provinces.

## **WARWICK**

Talk not of France, sith thou hast lost it all.

## **KING HENRY VI**

The lord protector lost it, and not I:  
When I was crown'd I was but nine months old.

## **RICHARD**

You are old enough now, and yet, methinks, you lose.  
Father, tear the crown from the usurper's head.

## **EDWARD**

Sweet father, do so; set it on your head.

## **MONTAGUE**

Good brother, as thou lovest and honourest arms,  
Let's fight it out and not stand cavilling thus.

**RICHARD**

Sound drums and trumpets, and the king will fly.

**YORK**

Sons, peace!

**KING HENRY VI**

Peace, thou! and give King Henry leave to speak.

**WARWICK**

Plantagenet shall speak first: hear him, lords;  
And be you silent and attentive too,  
For he that interrupts him shall not live.

**KING HENRY VI**

Think'st thou that I will leave my kingly throne,  
Wherein my grandsire and my father sat?  
No: first shall war unpeople this my realm;  
Ay, and their colours, often borne in France,  
And now in England to our heart's great sorrow,  
Shall be my winding-sheet. Why faint you, lords?  
My title's good, and better far than his.

**WARWICK**

Prove it, Henry, and thou shalt be king.

**KING HENRY VI**

Henry the Fourth by conquest got the crown.

**YORK**

'Twas by rebellion against his king.

**KING HENRY VI**

[Aside] I know not what to say; my title's weak.--  
Tell me, may not a king adopt an heir?

**YORK**

What then?

**KING HENRY VI**

An if he may, then am I lawful king;  
For Richard, in the view of many lords,  
Resign'd the crown to Henry the Fourth,  
Whose heir my father was, and I am his.

**YORK**

He rose against him, being his sovereign,  
And made him to resign his crown perforce.

**WARWICK**

Suppose, my lords, he did it unconstrain'd,  
Think you 'twere prejudicial to his crown?

**EXETER**

No; for he could not so resign his crown  
But that the next heir should succeed and reign.

**KING HENRY VI**

Art thou against us, Duke of Exeter?

**EXETER**

His is the right, and therefore pardon me.

**YORK**

Why whisper you, my lords, and answer not?

## **EXETER**

My conscience tells me he is lawful king.

## **KING HENRY VI**

[Aside] All will revolt from me, and turn to him.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Plantagenet, for all the claim thou lay'st,  
Think not that Henry shall be so deposed.

## **WARWICK**

Deposed he shall be, in despite of all.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Thou art deceived: 'tis not thy southern power,  
Of Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, nor of Kent,  
Which makes thee thus presumptuous and proud,  
Can set the duke up in despite of me.

## **CLIFFORD**

King Henry, be thy title right or wrong,  
Lord Clifford vows to fight in thy defence:  
May that ground gape and swallow me alive,  
Where I shall kneel to him that slew my father!

## **KING HENRY VI**

O Clifford, how thy words revive my heart!

## **YORK**

Henry of Lancaster, resign thy crown.  
What mutter you, or what conspire you, lords?

## **WARWICK**

Do right unto this princely Duke of York,  
Or I will fill the house with armed men,  
And over the chair of state, where now he sits,  
Write up his title with usurping blood.

*He stamps with his foot and the soldiers show themselves*

## **KING HENRY VI**

My Lord of Warwick, hear me but one word:  
Let me for this my life-time reign as king.

## **YORK**

Confirm the crown to me and to mine heirs,  
And thou shalt reign in quiet while thou livest.

## **KING HENRY VI**

I am content: Richard Plantagenet,  
Enjoy the kingdom after my decease.

## **CLIFFORD**

What wrong is this unto the prince your son!

## **WARWICK**

What good is this to England and himself!

## **WESTMORELAND**

Base, fearful and despairing Henry!

## **CLIFFORD**

How hast thou injured both thyself and us!

## **WESTMORELAND**



I cannot stay to hear these articles.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Nor I.

**CLIFFORD**

Come, cousin, let us tell the queen these news.

**WESTMORELAND**

Farewell, faint-hearted and degenerate king,  
In whose cold blood no spark of honour bides.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Be thou a prey unto the house of York,  
And die in bands for this unmanly deed!

**CLIFFORD**

In dreadful war mayst thou be overcome,  
Or live in peace abandon'd and despised!

*Exeunt NORTHUMBERLAND, CLIFFORD, and WESTMORELAND*

**WARWICK**

Turn this way, Henry, and regard them not.

**EXETER**

They seek revenge and therefore will not yield.

**KING HENRY VI**

Ah, Exeter!

**WARWICK**

Why should you sigh, my lord?

**KING HENRY VI**

Not for myself, Lord Warwick, but my son,  
Whom I unnaturally shall disinherit.  
But be it as it may: I here entail  
The crown to thee and to thine heirs for ever;  
Conditionally, that here thou take an oath  
To cease this civil war, and, whilst I live,  
To honour me as thy king and sovereign,  
And neither by treason nor hostility  
To seek to put me down and reign thyself.

**YORK**

This oath I willingly take and will perform.

**WARWICK**

Long live King Henry! Plantagenet embrace him.

**KING HENRY VI**

And long live thou and these thy forward sons!

**YORK**

Now York and Lancaster are reconciled.

**EXETER**

Accursed be he that seeks to make them foes!

*Sennet. Here they come down*

**YORK**

Farewell, my gracious lord; I'll to my castle.

## **WARWICK**

And I'll keep London with my soldiers.

## **NORFOLK**

And I to Norfolk with my followers.

## **MONTAGUE**

And I unto the sea from whence I came.

*Exeunt YORK, EDWARD, EDMUND, GEORGE, RICHARD, WARWICK, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE, their Soldiers, and Attendants*

## **KING HENRY VI**

And I, with grief and sorrow, to the court.

*Enter QUEEN MARGARET and PRINCE EDWARD*

## **EXETER**

Here comes the queen, whose looks bewray her anger:  
I'll steal away.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Exeter, so will I.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Nay, go not from me; I will follow thee.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Be patient, gentle queen, and I will stay.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Who can be patient in such extremes?

Ah, wretched man! would I had died a maid  
And never seen thee, never borne thee son,  
Seeing thou hast proved so unnatural a father  
Hath he deserved to lose his birthright thus?  
Hadst thou but loved him half so well as I,  
Or felt that pain which I did for him once,  
Or nourish'd him as I did with my blood,  
Thou wouldst have left thy dearest heart-blood there,  
Rather than have that savage duke thine heir  
And disinherited thine only son.

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

Father, you cannot disinherit me:  
If you be king, why should not I succeed?

## **KING HENRY VI**

Pardon me, Margaret; pardon me, sweet son:  
The Earl of Warwick and the duke enforced me.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Enforced thee! art thou king, and wilt be forced?  
I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch!  
Thou hast undone thyself, thy son and me;  
And given unto the house of York such head  
As thou shalt reign but by their sufferance.  
To entail him and his heirs unto the crown,  
What is it, but to make thy sepulchre  
And creep into it far before thy time?  
Warwick is chancellor and the lord of Calais;  
Stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas;  
The duke is made protector of the realm;  
And yet shalt thou be safe? such safety finds  
The trembling lamb environed with wolves.  
Had I been there, which am a silly woman,  
The soldiers should have toss'd me on their pikes  
Before I would have granted to that act.  
But thou preferr'st thy life before thine honour:  
And seeing thou dost, I here divorce myself  
Both from thy table, Henry, and thy bed,

Until that act of parliament be repeal'd  
Whereby my son is disinherited.  
The northern lords that have forsworn thy colours  
Will follow mine, if once they see them spread;  
And spread they shall be, to thy foul disgrace  
And utter ruin of the house of York.  
Thus do I leave thee. Come, son, let's away;  
Our army is ready; come, we'll after them.

**KING HENRY VI**

Stay, gentle Margaret, and hear me speak.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Thou hast spoke too much already: get thee gone.

**KING HENRY VI**

Gentle son Edward, thou wilt stay with me?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Ay, to be murder'd by his enemies.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

When I return with victory from the field  
I'll see your grace: till then I'll follow her.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Come, son, away; we may not linger thus.

*Exeunt QUEEN MARGARET and PRINCE EDWARD*

**KING HENRY VI**

Poor queen! how love to me and to her son  
Hath made her break out into terms of rage!  
Revenged may she be on that hateful duke,

Whose haughty spirit, winged with desire,  
Will cost my crown, and like an empty eagle  
Tire on the flesh of me and of my son!  
The loss of those three lords torments my heart:  
I'll write unto them and entreat them fair.  
Come, cousin you shall be the messenger.

## **EXETER**

And I, I hope, shall reconcile them all.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Sandal Castle.

*Enter RICHARD, EDWARD, and MONTAGUE*

**RICHARD**

Brother, though I be youngest, give me leave.

**EDWARD**

No, I can better play the orator.

**MONTAGUE**

But I have reasons strong and forcible.

*Enter YORK*

**YORK**

Why, how now, sons and brother! at a strife?  
What is your quarrel? how began it first?

**EDWARD**

No quarrel, but a slight contention.

**YORK**

About what?

**RICHARD**

About that which concerns your grace and us;  
The crown of England, father, which is yours.

**YORK**

Mine boy? not till King Henry be dead.

**RICHARD**

Your right depends not on his life or death.

**EDWARD**

Now you are heir, therefore enjoy it now:  
By giving the house of Lancaster leave to breathe,  
It will outrun you, father, in the end.

**YORK**

I took an oath that he should quietly reign.

**EDWARD**

But for a kingdom any oath may be broken:  
I would break a thousand oaths to reign one year.

**RICHARD**

No; God forbid your grace should be forsworn.

**YORK**

I shall be, if I claim by open war.

**RICHARD**

I'll prove the contrary, if you'll hear me speak.

**YORK**

Thou canst not, son; it is impossible.

**RICHARD**



An oath is of no moment, being not took  
Before a true and lawful magistrate,  
That hath authority over him that swears:  
Henry had none, but did usurp the place;  
Then, seeing 'twas he that made you to depose,  
Your oath, my lord, is vain and frivolous.  
Therefore, to arms! And, father, do but think  
How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown;  
Within whose circuit is Elysium  
And all that poets feign of bliss and joy.  
Why do we finger thus? I cannot rest  
Until the white rose that I wear be dyed  
Even in the lukewarm blood of Henry's heart.

## **YORK**

Richard, enough; I will be king, or die.  
Brother, thou shalt to London presently,  
And whet on Warwick to this enterprise.  
Thou, Richard, shalt to the Duke of Norfolk,  
And tell him privily of our intent.  
You Edward, shall unto my Lord Cobham,  
With whom the Kentishmen will willingly rise:  
In them I trust; for they are soldiers,  
Witty, courteous, liberal, full of spirit.  
While you are thus employ'd, what resteth more,  
But that I seek occasion how to rise,  
And yet the king not privy to my drift,  
Nor any of the house of Lancaster?

*Enter a Messenger*

But, stay: what news? Why comest thou in such post?

## **Messenger**

The queen with all the northern earls and lords  
Intend here to besiege you in your castle:  
She is hard by with twenty thousand men;  
And therefore fortify your hold, my lord.

## **YORK**

Ay, with my sword. What! think'st thou that we fear them?  
Edward and Richard, you shall stay with me;  
My brother Montague shall post to London:  
Let noble Warwick, Cobham, and the rest,  
Whom we have left protectors of the king,  
With powerful policy strengthen themselves,  
And trust not simple Henry nor his oaths.

## **MONTAGUE**

Brother, I go; I'll win them, fear it not:  
And thus most humbly I do take my leave.

*Exit*

*Enter JOHN MORTIMER and HUGH MORTIMER*

Sir John and Sir Hugh Mortimer, mine uncles,  
You are come to Sandal in a happy hour;  
The army of the queen mean to besiege us.

## **JOHN MORTIMER**

She shall not need; we'll meet her in the field.

## **YORK**

What, with five thousand men?

## **RICHARD**

Ay, with five hundred, father, for a need:  
A woman's general; what should we fear?

*A march afar off*

## **EDWARD**

I hear their drums: let's set our men in order,  
And issue forth and bid them battle straight.

## YORK

Five men to twenty! though the odds be great,  
I doubt not, uncle, of our victory.  
Many a battle have I won in France,  
When as the enemy hath been ten to one:  
Why should I not now have the like success?

*Alarum. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Field of battle betwixt Sandal Castle and Wakefield.

*Alarums. Enter RUTLAND and his Tutor*

**RUTLAND**

Ah, whither shall I fly to 'scape their hands?  
Ah, tutor, look where bloody Clifford comes!

*Enter CLIFFORD and Soldiers*

**CLIFFORD**

Chaplain, away! thy priesthood saves thy life.  
As for the brat of this accursed duke,  
Whose father slew my father, he shall die.

**Tutor**

And I, my lord, will bear him company.

**CLIFFORD**

Soldiers, away with him!

**Tutor**

Ah, Clifford, murder not this innocent child,  
Lest thou be hated both of God and man!

*Exit, dragged off by Soldiers*

**CLIFFORD**

How now! is he dead already? or is it fear

That makes him close his eyes? I'll open them.

## **RUTLAND**

So looks the pent-up lion o'er the wretch  
That trembles under his devouring paws;  
And so he walks, insulting o'er his prey,  
And so he comes, to rend his limbs asunder.  
Ah, gentle Clifford, kill me with thy sword,  
And not with such a cruel threatening look.  
Sweet Clifford, hear me speak before I die.  
I am too mean a subject for thy wrath:  
Be thou revenged on men, and let me live.

## **CLIFFORD**

In vain thou speak'st, poor boy; my father's blood  
Hath stopp'd the passage where thy words should enter.

## **RUTLAND**

Then let my father's blood open it again:  
He is a man, and, Clifford, cope with him.

## **CLIFFORD**

Had thy brethren here, their lives and thine  
Were not revenge sufficient for me;  
No, if I digg'd up thy forefathers' graves  
And hung their rotten coffins up in chains,  
It could not slake mine ire, nor ease my heart.  
The sight of any of the house of York  
Is as a fury to torment my soul;  
And till I root out their accursed line  
And leave not one alive, I live in hell.  
Therefore--

*Lifting his hand*

## **RUTLAND**

O, let me pray before I take my death!

To thee I pray; sweet Clifford, pity me!

**CLIFFORD**

Such pity as my rapier's point affords.

**RUTLAND**

I never did thee harm: why wilt thou slay me?

**CLIFFORD**

Thy father hath.

**RUTLAND**

But 'twas ere I was born.  
Thou hast one son; for his sake pity me,  
Lest in revenge thereof, sith God is just,  
He be as miserably slain as I.  
Ah, let me live in prison all my days;  
And when I give occasion of offence,  
Then let me die, for now thou hast no cause.

**CLIFFORD**

No cause!  
Thy father slew my father; therefore, die.

*Stabs him*

**RUTLAND**

Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae!

*Dies*

**CLIFFORD**

Plantagenet! I come, Plantagenet!  
And this thy son's blood cleaving to my blade

Shall rust upon my weapon, till thy blood,  
Congeal'd with this, do make me wipe off both.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

*Alarum. Enter YORK*

**YORK**

The army of the queen hath got the field:  
My uncles both are slain in rescuing me;  
And all my followers to the eager foe  
Turn back and fly, like ships before the wind  
Or lambs pursued by hunger-starved wolves.  
My sons, God knows what hath bechanced them:  
But this I know, they have demean'd themselves  
Like men born to renown by life or death.  
Three times did Richard make a lane to me.  
And thrice cried 'Courage, father! fight it out!'  
And full as oft came Edward to my side,  
With purple falchion, painted to the hilt  
In blood of those that had encounter'd him:  
And when the hardiest warriors did retire,  
Richard cried 'Charge! and give no foot of ground!'  
And cried 'A crown, or else a glorious tomb!  
A sceptre, or an earthly sepulchre!'  
With this, we charged again: but, out, alas!  
We bodged again; as I have seen a swan  
With bootless labour swim against the tide  
And spend her strength with over-matching waves.

*A short alarum within*

Ah, hark! the fatal followers do pursue;  
And I am faint and cannot fly their fury:  
And were I strong, I would not shun their fury:  
The sands are number'd that make up my life;  
Here must I stay, and here my life must end.

*Enter QUEEN MARGARET, CLIFFORD, NORTHUMBERLAND, PRINCE EDWARD,*



*and Soldiers*

Come, bloody Clifford, rough Northumberland,  
I dare your quenchless fury to more rage:  
I am your butt, and I abide your shot.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Yield to our mercy, proud Plantagenet.

## **CLIFFORD**

Ay, to such mercy as his ruthless arm,  
With downright payment, show'd unto my father.  
Now Phaethon hath tumbled from his car,  
And made an evening at the noontide prick.

## **YORK**

My ashes, as the phoenix, may bring forth  
A bird that will revenge upon you all:  
And in that hope I throw mine eyes to heaven,  
Scorning whate'er you can afflict me with.  
Why come you not? what! multitudes, and fear?

## **CLIFFORD**

So cowards fight when they can fly no further;  
So doves do peck the falcon's piercing talons;  
So desperate thieves, all hopeless of their lives,  
Breathe out invectives 'gainst the officers.

## **YORK**

O Clifford, but bethink thee once again,  
And in thy thought o'er-run my former time;  
And, if though canst for blushing, view this face,  
And bite thy tongue, that slanders him with cowardice  
Whose frown hath made thee faint and fly ere this!

## **CLIFFORD**

I will not bandy with thee word for word,  
But buckle with thee blows, twice two for one.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Hold, valiant Clifford! for a thousand causes  
I would prolong awhile the traitor's life.  
Wrath makes him deaf: speak thou, Northumberland.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Hold, Clifford! do not honour him so much  
To prick thy finger, though to wound his heart:  
What valour were it, when a cur doth grin,  
For one to thrust his hand between his teeth,  
When he might spurn him with his foot away?  
It is war's prize to take all vantages;  
And ten to one is no impeach of valour.

*They lay hands on YORK, who struggles*

## **CLIFFORD**

Ay, ay, so strives the woodcock with the gin.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

So doth the cony struggle in the net.

## **YORK**

So triumph thieves upon their conquer'd booty;  
So true men yield, with robbers so o'ermatch'd.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

What would your grace have done unto him now?

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland,

Come, make him stand upon this molehill here,  
That raught at mountains with outstretched arms,  
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand.  
What! was it you that would be England's king?  
Was't you that revell'd in our parliament,  
And made a preachment of your high descent?  
Where are your mess of sons to back you now?  
The wanton Edward, and the lusty George?  
And where's that valiant crook-back prodigy,  
Dicky your boy, that with his grumbling voice  
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?  
Or, with the rest, where is your darling Rutland?  
Look, York: I stain'd this napkin with the blood  
That valiant Clifford, with his rapier's point,  
Made issue from the bosom of the boy;  
And if thine eyes can water for his death,  
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal.  
Alas poor York! but that I hate thee deadly,  
I should lament thy miserable state.  
I prithee, grieve, to make me merry, York.  
What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thine entrails  
That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death?  
Why art thou patient, man? thou shouldst be mad;  
And I, to make thee mad, do mock thee thus.  
Stamp, rave, and fret, that I may sing and dance.  
Thou wouldst be fee'd, I see, to make me sport:  
York cannot speak, unless he wear a crown.  
A crown for York! and, lords, bow low to him:  
Hold you his hands, whilst I do set it on.

*Putting a paper crown on his head*

Ay, marry, sir, now looks he like a king!  
Ay, this is he that took King Henry's chair,  
And this is he was his adopted heir.  
But how is it that great Plantagenet  
Is crown'd so soon, and broke his solemn oath?  
As I bethink me, you should not be king  
Till our King Henry had shook hands with death.  
And will you pale your head in Henry's glory,  
And rob his temples of the diadem,  
Now in his life, against your holy oath?  
O, 'tis a fault too too unpardonable!

Off with the crown, and with the crown his head;  
And, whilst we breathe, take time to do him dead.

## **CLIFFORD**

That is my office, for my father's sake.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Nay, stay; lets hear the orisons he makes.

## **YORK**

She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,  
Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!  
How ill-beseeming is it in thy sex  
To triumph, like an Amazonian trull,  
Upon their woes whom fortune captivates!  
But that thy face is, vizard-like, unchanging,  
Made impudent with use of evil deeds,  
I would assay, proud queen, to make thee blush.  
To tell thee whence thou camest, of whom derived,  
Were shame enough to shame thee, wert thou not shameless.  
Thy father bears the type of King of Naples,  
Of both the Sicils and Jerusalem,  
Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman.  
Hath that poor monarch taught thee to insult?  
It needs not, nor it boots thee not, proud queen,  
Unless the adage must be verified,  
That beggars mounted run their horse to death.  
'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud;  
But, God he knows, thy share thereof is small:  
'Tis virtue that doth make them most admired;  
The contrary doth make thee wonder'd at:  
'Tis government that makes them seem divine;  
The want thereof makes thee abominable:  
Thou art as opposite to every good  
As the Antipodes are unto us,  
Or as the south to the septentrion.  
O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide!  
How couldst thou drain the life-blood of the child,  
To bid the father wipe his eyes withal,

And yet be seen to bear a woman's face?  
Women are soft, mild, pitiful and flexible;  
Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless.  
Bids't thou me rage? why, now thou hast thy wish:  
Wouldst have me weep? why, now thou hast thy will:  
For raging wind blows up incessant showers,  
And when the rage allays, the rain begins.  
These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies:  
And every drop cries vengeance for his death,  
'Gainst thee, fell Clifford, and thee, false  
Frenchwoman.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Beshrew me, but his passion moves me so  
That hardly can I cheque my eyes from tears.

## **YORK**

That face of his the hungry cannibals  
Would not have touch'd, would not have stain'd with blood:  
But you are more inhuman, more inexorable,  
O, ten times more, than tigers of Hyrcania.  
See, ruthless queen, a hapless father's tears:  
This cloth thou dip'dst in blood of my sweet boy,  
And I with tears do wash the blood away.  
Keep thou the napkin, and go boast of this:  
And if thou tell'st the heavy story right,  
Upon my soul, the hearers will shed tears;  
Yea even my foes will shed fast-falling tears,  
And say 'Alas, it was a piteous deed!'  
There, take the crown, and, with the crown, my curse;  
And in thy need such comfort come to thee  
As now I reap at thy too cruel hand!  
Hard-hearted Clifford, take me from the world:  
My soul to heaven, my blood upon your heads!

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Had he been slaughter-man to all my kin,  
I should not for my life but weep with him.  
To see how inly sorrow gripes his soul.

## QUEEN MARGARET

What, weeping-ripe, my Lord Northumberland?  
Think but upon the wrong he did us all,  
And that will quickly dry thy melting tears.

## CLIFFORD

Here's for my oath, here's for my father's death.

*Stabbing him*

## QUEEN MARGARET

And here's to right our gentle-hearted king.

*Stabbing him*

## YORK

Open Thy gate of mercy, gracious God!  
My soul flies through these wounds to seek out Thee.

*Dies*

## QUEEN MARGARET

Off with his head, and set it on York gates;  
So York may overlook the town of York.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A plain near Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire.

*A march. Enter EDWARD, RICHARD, and their power*

### EDWARD

I wonder how our princely father 'scaped,  
Or whether he be 'scaped away or no  
From Clifford's and Northumberland's pursuit:  
Had he been ta'en, we should have heard the news;  
Had he been slain, we should have heard the news;  
Or had he 'scaped, methinks we should have heard  
The happy tidings of his good escape.  
How fares my brother? why is he so sad?

### RICHARD

I cannot joy, until I be resolved  
Where our right valiant father is become.  
I saw him in the battle range about;  
And watch'd him how he singled Clifford forth.  
Methought he bore him in the thickest troop  
As doth a lion in a herd of neat;  
Or as a bear, encompass'd round with dogs,  
Who having pinch'd a few and made them cry,  
The rest stand all aloof, and bark at him.  
So fared our father with his enemies;  
So fled his enemies my warlike father:  
Methinks, 'tis prize enough to be his son.  
See how the morning opes her golden gates,  
And takes her farewell of the glorious sun!  
How well resembles it the prime of youth,  
Trimm'd like a younker prancing to his love!

### EDWARD

Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?

**RICHARD**

Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;  
Not separated with the racking clouds,  
But sever'd in a pale clear-shining sky.  
See, see! they join, embrace, and seem to kiss,  
As if they vow'd some league inviolable:  
Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.  
In this the heaven figures some event.

**EDWARD**

'Tis wondrous strange, the like yet never heard of.  
I think it cites us, brother, to the field,  
That we, the sons of brave Plantagenet,  
Each one already blazing by our meeds,  
Should notwithstanding join our lights together  
And over-shine the earth as this the world.  
Whate'er it bodes, henceforward will I bear  
Upon my target three fair-shining suns.

**RICHARD**

Nay, bear three daughters: by your leave I speak it,  
You love the breeder better than the male.

*Enter a Messenger*

But what art thou, whose heavy looks foretell  
Some dreadful story hanging on thy tongue?

**Messenger**

Ah, one that was a woful looker-on  
When as the noble Duke of York was slain,  
Your princely father and my loving lord!

**EDWARD**

O, speak no more, for I have heard too much.



## **RICHARD**

Say how he died, for I will hear it all.

## **Messenger**

Environed he was with many foes,  
And stood against them, as the hope of Troy  
Against the Greeks that would have enter'd Troy.  
But Hercules himself must yield to odds;  
And many strokes, though with a little axe,  
Hew down and fell the hardest-timber'd oak.  
By many hands your father was subdued;  
But only slaughter'd by the ireful arm  
Of unrelenting Clifford and the queen,  
Who crown'd the gracious duke in high despite,  
Laugh'd in his face; and when with grief he wept,  
The ruthless queen gave him to dry his cheeks  
A napkin steeped in the harmless blood  
Of sweet young Rutland, by rough Clifford slain:  
And after many scorns, many foul taunts,  
They took his head, and on the gates of York  
They set the same; and there it doth remain,  
The saddest spectacle that e'er I view'd.

## **EDWARD**

Sweet Duke of York, our prop to lean upon,  
Now thou art gone, we have no staff, no stay.  
O Clifford, boisterous Clifford! thou hast slain  
The flower of Europe for his chivalry;  
And treacherously hast thou vanquish'd him,  
For hand to hand he would have vanquish'd thee.  
Now my soul's palace is become a prison:  
Ah, would she break from hence, that this my body  
Might in the ground be closed up in rest!  
For never henceforth shall I joy again,  
Never, O never shall I see more joy!

## **RICHARD**

I cannot weep; for all my body's moisture  
Scarce serves to quench my furnace-burning heart:  
Nor can my tongue unload my heart's great burthen;  
For selfsame wind that I should speak withal  
Is kindling coals that fires all my breast,  
And burns me up with flames that tears would quench.  
To weep is to make less the depth of grief:  
Tears then for babes; blows and revenge for me  
Richard, I bear thy name; I'll venge thy death,  
Or die renowned by attempting it.

## **EDWARD**

His name that valiant duke hath left with thee;  
His dukedom and his chair with me is left.

## **RICHARD**

Nay, if thou be that princely eagle's bird,  
Show thy descent by gazing 'gainst the sun:  
For chair and dukedom, throne and kingdom say;  
Either that is thine, or else thou wert not his.

*March. Enter WARWICK, MONTAGUE, and their army*

## **WARWICK**

How now, fair lords! What fare? what news abroad?

## **RICHARD**

Great Lord of Warwick, if we should recount  
Our baleful news, and at each word's deliverance  
Stab poniards in our flesh till all were told,  
The words would add more anguish than the wounds.  
O valiant lord, the Duke of York is slain!

## **EDWARD**

O Warwick, Warwick! that Plantagenet,  
Which held three dearly as his soul's redemption,  
Is by the stern Lord Clifford done to death.

## WARWICK

Ten days ago I drown'd these news in tears;  
And now, to add more measure to your woes,  
I come to tell you things sith then befall'n.  
After the bloody fray at Wakefield fought,  
Where your brave father breathed his latest gasp,  
Tidings, as swiftly as the posts could run,  
Were brought me of your loss and his depart.  
I, then in London keeper of the king,  
Muster'd my soldiers, gather'd flocks of friends,  
And very well appointed, as I thought,  
March'd toward Saint Alban's to intercept the queen,  
Bearing the king in my behalf along;  
For by my scouts I was advertised  
That she was coming with a full intent  
To dash our late decree in parliament  
Touching King Henry's oath and your succession.  
Short tale to make, we at Saint Alban's met  
Our battles join'd, and both sides fiercely fought:  
But whether 'twas the coldness of the king,  
Who look'd full gently on his warlike queen,  
That robb'd my soldiers of their heated spleen;  
Or whether 'twas report of her success;  
Or more than common fear of Clifford's rigour,  
Who thunders to his captives blood and death,  
I cannot judge: but to conclude with truth,  
Their weapons like to lightning came and went;  
Our soldiers', like the night-owl's lazy flight,  
Or like an idle thresher with a flail,  
Fell gently down, as if they struck their friends.  
I cheer'd them up with justice of our cause,  
With promise of high pay and great rewards:  
But all in vain; they had no heart to fight,  
And we in them no hope to win the day;  
So that we fled; the king unto the queen;  
Lord George your brother, Norfolk and myself,  
In haste, post-haste, are come to join with you:  
For in the marches here we heard you were,  
Making another head to fight again.

## EDWARD

Where is the Duke of Norfolk, gentle Warwick?  
And when came George from Burgundy to England?

**WARWICK**

Some six miles off the duke is with the soldiers;  
And for your brother, he was lately sent  
From your kind aunt, Duchess of Burgundy,  
With aid of soldiers to this needful war.

**RICHARD**

'Twas odds, belike, when valiant Warwick fled:  
Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit,  
But ne'er till now his scandal of retire.

**WARWICK**

Nor now my scandal, Richard, dost thou hear;  
For thou shalt know this strong right hand of mine  
Can pluck the diadem from faint Henry's head,  
And wring the awful sceptre from his fist,  
Were he as famous and as bold in war  
As he is famed for mildness, peace, and prayer.

**RICHARD**

I know it well, Lord Warwick; blame me not:  
'Tis love I bear thy glories makes me speak.  
But in this troublous time what's to be done?  
Shall we go throw away our coats of steel,  
And wrap our bodies in black mourning gowns,  
Numbering our Ave-Maries with our beads?  
Or shall we on the helmets of our foes  
Tell our devotion with revengeful arms?  
If for the last, say ay, and to it, lords.

**WARWICK**

Why, therefore Warwick came to seek you out;  
And therefore comes my brother Montague.

Attend me, lords. The proud insulting queen,  
With Clifford and the haught Northumberland,  
And of their feather many more proud birds,  
Have wrought the easy-melting king like wax.  
He swore consent to your succession,  
His oath enrolled in the parliament;  
And now to London all the crew are gone,  
To frustrate both his oath and what beside  
May make against the house of Lancaster.  
Their power, I think, is thirty thousand strong:  
Now, if the help of Norfolk and myself,  
With all the friends that thou, brave Earl of March,  
Amongst the loving Welshmen canst procure,  
Will but amount to five and twenty thousand,  
Why, Via! to London will we march amain,  
And once again bestride our foaming steeds,  
And once again cry 'Charge upon our foes!'  
But never once again turn back and fly.

## **RICHARD**

Ay, now methinks I hear great Warwick speak:  
Ne'er may he live to see a sunshine day,  
That cries 'Retire,' if Warwick bid him stay.

## **EDWARD**

Lord Warwick, on thy shoulder will I lean;  
And when thou fail'st--as God forbid the hour!--  
Must Edward fall, which peril heaven forbend!

## **WARWICK**

No longer Earl of March, but Duke of York:  
The next degree is England's royal throne;  
For King of England shalt thou be proclaim'd  
In every borough as we pass along;  
And he that throws not up his cap for joy  
Shall for the fault make forfeit of his head.  
King Edward, valiant Richard, Montague,  
Stay we no longer, dreaming of renown,  
But sound the trumpets, and about our task.

## **RICHARD**

Then, Clifford, were thy heart as hard as steel,  
As thou hast shown it flinty by thy deeds,  
I come to pierce it, or to give thee mine.

## **EDWARD**

Then strike up drums: God and Saint George for us!

*Enter a Messenger*

## **WARWICK**

How now! what news?

## **Messenger**

The Duke of Norfolk sends you word by me,  
The queen is coming with a puissant host;  
And craves your company for speedy counsel.

## **WARWICK**

Why then it sorts, brave warriors, let's away.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before York.

*Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, CLIFFORD, and NORTHUMBERLAND, with drum and trumpets*

### QUEEN MARGARET

Welcome, my lord, to this brave town of York.  
Yonder's the head of that arch-enemy  
That sought to be encompass'd with your crown:  
Doth not the object cheer your heart, my lord?

### KING HENRY VI

Ay, as the rocks cheer them that fear their wreck:  
To see this sight, it irks my very soul.  
Withhold revenge, dear God! 'tis not my fault,  
Nor wittingly have I infringed my vow.

### CLIFFORD

My gracious liege, this too much lenity  
And harmful pity must be laid aside.  
To whom do lions cast their gentle looks?  
Not to the beast that would usurp their den.  
Whose hand is that the forest bear doth lick?  
Not his that spoils her young before her face.  
Who 'scapes the lurking serpent's mortal sting?  
Not he that sets his foot upon her back.  
The smallest worm will turn being trodden on,  
And doves will peck in safeguard of their brood.  
Ambitious York doth level at thy crown,  
Thou smiling while he knit his angry brows:  
He, but a duke, would have his son a king,  
And raise his issue, like a loving sire;  
Thou, being a king, blest with a goodly son,

Didst yield consent to disinherit him,  
Which argued thee a most unloving father.  
Unreasonable creatures feed their young;  
And though man's face be fearful to their eyes,  
Yet, in protection of their tender ones,  
Who hath not seen them, even with those wings  
Which sometime they have used with fearful flight,  
Make war with him that climb'd unto their nest,  
Offer their own lives in their young's defence?  
For shame, my liege, make them your precedent!  
Were it not pity that this goodly boy  
Should lose his birthright by his father's fault,  
And long hereafter say unto his child,  
'What my great-grandfather and his grandsire got  
My careless father fondly gave away'?  
Ah, what a shame were this! Look on the boy;  
And let his manly face, which promiseth  
Successful fortune, steel thy melting heart  
To hold thine own and leave thine own with him.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Full well hath Clifford play'd the orator,  
Inferring arguments of mighty force.  
But, Clifford, tell me, didst thou never hear  
That things ill-got had ever bad success?  
And happy always was it for that son  
Whose father for his hoarding went to hell?  
I'll leave my son my virtuous deeds behind;  
And would my father had left me no more!  
For all the rest is held at such a rate  
As brings a thousand-fold more care to keep  
Than in possession and jot of pleasure.  
Ah, cousin York! would thy best friends did know  
How it doth grieve me that thy head is here!

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

My lord, cheer up your spirits: our foes are nigh,  
And this soft courage makes your followers faint.  
You promised knighthood to our forward son:  
Unsheathe your sword, and dub him presently.  
Edward, kneel down.



## **KING HENRY VI**

Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight;  
And learn this lesson, draw thy sword in right.

## **PRINCE**

My gracious father, by your kingly leave,  
I'll draw it as apparent to the crown,  
And in that quarrel use it to the death.

## **CLIFFORD**

Why, that is spoken like a toward prince.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

Royal commanders, be in readiness:  
For with a band of thirty thousand men  
Comes Warwick, backing of the Duke of York;  
And in the towns, as they do march along,  
Proclaims him king, and many fly to him:  
Darraign your battle, for they are at hand.

## **CLIFFORD**

I would your highness would depart the field:  
The queen hath best success when you are absent.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Ay, good my lord, and leave us to our fortune.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Why, that's my fortune too; therefore I'll stay.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Be it with resolution then to fight.

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

My royal father, cheer these noble lords  
And hearten those that fight in your defence:  
Unsheathe your sword, good father; cry 'Saint George!'

*March. Enter EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, WARWICK, NORFOLK, MONTAGUE,  
and Soldiers*

## **EDWARD**

Now, perjured Henry! wilt thou kneel for grace,  
And set thy diadem upon my head;  
Or bide the mortal fortune of the field?

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Go, rate thy minions, proud insulting boy!  
Becomes it thee to be thus bold in terms  
Before thy sovereign and thy lawful king?

## **EDWARD**

I am his king, and he should bow his knee;  
I was adopted heir by his consent:  
Since when, his oath is broke; for, as I hear,  
You, that are king, though he do wear the crown,  
Have caused him, by new act of parliament,  
To blot out me, and put his own son in.

## **CLIFFORD**

And reason too:  
Who should succeed the father but the son?

## **RICHARD**

Are you there, butcher? O, I cannot speak!

**CLIFFORD**

Ay, crook-back, here I stand to answer thee,  
Or any he the proudest of thy sort.

**RICHARD**

'Twas you that kill'd young Rutland, was it not?

**CLIFFORD**

Ay, and old York, and yet not satisfied.

**RICHARD**

For God's sake, lords, give signal to the fight.

**WARWICK**

What say'st thou, Henry, wilt thou yield the crown?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Why, how now, long-tongued Warwick! dare you speak?  
When you and I met at Saint Alban's last,  
Your legs did better service than your hands.

**WARWICK**

Then 'twas my turn to fly, and now 'tis thine.

**CLIFFORD**

You said so much before, and yet you fled.

**WARWICK**

'Twas not your valour, Clifford, drove me thence.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

No, nor your manhood that durst make you stay.

**RICHARD**

Northumberland, I hold thee reverently.  
Break off the parley; for scarce I can refrain  
The execution of my big-swoln heart  
Upon that Clifford, that cruel child-killer.

**CLIFFORD**

I slew thy father, call'st thou him a child?

**RICHARD**

Ay, like a dastard and a treacherous coward,  
As thou didst kill our tender brother Rutland;  
But ere sunset I'll make thee curse the deed.

**KING HENRY VI**

Have done with words, my lords, and hear me speak.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Defy them then, or else hold close thy lips.

**KING HENRY VI**

I prithee, give no limits to my tongue:  
I am a king, and privileged to speak.

**CLIFFORD**

My liege, the wound that bred this meeting here  
Cannot be cured by words; therefore be still.

**RICHARD**

Then, executioner, unsheathe thy sword:  
By him that made us all, I am resolved

that Clifford's manhood lies upon his tongue.

## **EDWARD**

Say, Henry, shall I have my right, or no?  
A thousand men have broke their fasts to-day,  
That ne'er shall dine unless thou yield the crown.

## **WARWICK**

If thou deny, their blood upon thy head;  
For York in justice puts his armour on.

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

If that be right which Warwick says is right,  
There is no wrong, but every thing is right.

## **RICHARD**

Whoever got thee, there thy mother stands;  
For, well I wot, thou hast thy mother's tongue.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

But thou art neither like thy sire nor dam;  
But like a foul mis-shapen stigmatic,  
Mark'd by the destinies to be avoided,  
As venom toads, or lizards' dreadful stings.

## **RICHARD**

Iron of Naples hid with English guilt,  
Whose father bears the title of a king,--  
As if a channel should be call'd the sea,--  
Shamest thou not, knowing whence thou art extraught,  
To let thy tongue detect thy base-born heart?

## **EDWARD**

A wisp of straw were worth a thousand crowns,

To make this shameless callet know herself.  
Helen of Greece was fairer far than thou,  
Although thy husband may be Menelaus;  
And ne'er was Agamemnon's brother wrong'd  
By that false woman, as this king by thee.  
His father revell'd in the heart of France,  
And tamed the king, and made the dauphin stoop;  
And had he match'd according to his state,  
He might have kept that glory to this day;  
But when he took a beggar to his bed,  
And graced thy poor sire with his bridal-day,  
Even then that sunshine brew'd a shower for him,  
That wash'd his father's fortunes forth of France,  
And heap'd sedition on his crown at home.  
For what hath broach'd this tumult but thy pride?  
Hadst thou been meek, our title still had slept;  
And we, in pity of the gentle king,  
Had slipp'd our claim until another age.

## **GEORGE**

But when we saw our sunshine made thy spring,  
And that thy summer bred us no increase,  
We set the axe to thy usurping root;  
And though the edge hath something hit ourselves,  
Yet, know thou, since we have begun to strike,  
We'll never leave till we have hewn thee down,  
Or bathed thy growing with our heated bloods.

## **EDWARD**

And, in this resolution, I defy thee;  
Not willing any longer conference,  
Since thou deniest the gentle king to speak.  
Sound trumpets! let our bloody colours wave!  
And either victory, or else a grave.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Stay, Edward.

## **EDWARD**

No, wrangling woman, we'll no longer stay:  
These words will cost ten thousand lives this day.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A field of battle between Towton and Saxton, in

Yorkshire.

*Alarum. Excursions. Enter WARWICK*

### WARWICK

Forspent with toil, as runners with a race,  
I lay me down a little while to breathe;  
For strokes received, and many blows repaid,  
Have robb'd my strong-knit sinews of their strength,  
And spite of spite needs must I rest awhile.

*Enter EDWARD, running*

### EDWARD

Smile, gentle heaven! or strike, ungentle death!  
For this world frowns, and Edward's sun is clouded.

### WARWICK

How now, my lord! what hap? what hope of good?

*Enter GEORGE*

### GEORGE

Our hap is loss, our hope but sad despair;  
Our ranks are broke, and ruin follows us:  
What counsel give you? whither shall we fly?

### EDWARD

Bootless is flight, they follow us with wings;



And weak we are and cannot shun pursuit.

*Enter RICHARD*

## **RICHARD**

Ah, Warwick, why hast thou withdrawn thyself?  
Thy brother's blood the thirsty earth hath drunk,  
Broach'd with the steely point of Clifford's lance;  
And in the very pangs of death he cried,  
Like to a dismal clangour heard from far,  
'Warwick, revenge! brother, revenge my death!'  
So, underneath the belly of their steeds,  
That stain'd their fetlocks in his smoking blood,  
The noble gentleman gave up the ghost.

## **WARWICK**

Then let the earth be drunken with our blood:  
I'll kill my horse, because I will not fly.  
Why stand we like soft-hearted women here,  
Wailing our losses, whiles the foe doth rage;  
And look upon, as if the tragedy  
Were play'd in jest by counterfeiting actors?  
Here on my knee I vow to God above,  
I'll never pause again, never stand still,  
Till either death hath closed these eyes of mine  
Or fortune given me measure of revenge.

## **EDWARD**

O Warwick, I do bend my knee with thine;  
And in this vow do chain my soul to thine!  
And, ere my knee rise from the earth's cold face,  
I throw my hands, mine eyes, my heart to thee,  
Thou setter up and plucker down of kings,  
Beseeching thee, if with they will it stands  
That to my foes this body must be prey,  
Yet that thy brazen gates of heaven may ope,  
And give sweet passage to my sinful soul!  
Now, lords, take leave until we meet again,  
Where'er it be, in heaven or in earth.

## **RICHARD**

Brother, give me thy hand; and, gentle Warwick,  
Let me embrace thee in my weary arms:  
I, that did never weep, now melt with woe  
That winter should cut off our spring-time so.

## **WARWICK**

Away, away! Once more, sweet lords farewell.

## **GEORGE**

Yet let us all together to our troops,  
And give them leave to fly that will not stay;  
And call them pillars that will stand to us;  
And, if we thrive, promise them such rewards  
As victors wear at the Olympian games:  
This may plant courage in their quailing breasts;  
For yet is hope of life and victory.  
Forslow no longer, make we hence amain.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

*Excursions. Enter RICHARD and CLIFFORD*

### RICHARD

Now, Clifford, I have singled thee alone:  
Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York,  
And this for Rutland; both bound to revenge,  
Wert thou environ'd with a brazen wall.

### CLIFFORD

Now, Richard, I am with thee here alone:  
This is the hand that stabb'd thy father York;  
And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland;  
And here's the heart that triumphs in their death  
And cheers these hands that slew thy sire and brother  
To execute the like upon thyself;  
And so, have at thee!

*They fight. WARWICK comes; CLIFFORD flies*

### RICHARD

Nay Warwick, single out some other chase;  
For I myself will hunt this wolf to death.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the field.

*Alarum. Enter KING HENRY VI alone*

### KING HENRY VI

This battle fares like to the morning's war,  
When dying clouds contend with growing light,  
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,  
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.  
Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea  
Forced by the tide to combat with the wind;  
Now sways it that way, like the selfsame sea  
Forced to retire by fury of the wind:  
Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;  
Now one the better, then another best;  
Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,  
Yet neither conqueror nor conquered:  
So is the equal of this fell war.  
Here on this molehill will I sit me down.  
To whom God will, there be the victory!  
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,  
Have chid me from the battle; swearing both  
They prosper best of all when I am thence.  
Would I were dead! if God's good will were so;  
For what is in this world but grief and woe?  
O God! methinks it were a happy life,  
To be no better than a homely swain;  
To sit upon a hill, as I do now,  
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,  
Thereby to see the minutes how they run,  
How many make the hour full complete;  
How many hours bring about the day;  
How many days will finish up the year;  
How many years a mortal man may live.  
When this is known, then to divide the times:  
So many hours must I tend my flock;

So many hours must I take my rest;  
So many hours must I contemplate;  
So many hours must I sport myself;  
So many days my ewes have been with young;  
So many weeks ere the poor fools will ean:  
So many years ere I shall shear the fleece:  
So minutes, hours, days, months, and years,  
Pass'd over to the end they were created,  
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.  
Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!  
Gives not the hawthorn-bush a sweeter shade  
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,  
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy  
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?  
O, yes, it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.  
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,  
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle.  
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,  
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,  
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,  
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,  
His body couched in a curious bed,  
When care, mistrust, and treason waits on him.

*Alarum. Enter a Son that has killed his father, dragging in the dead body*

## **Son**

Ill blows the wind that profits nobody.  
This man, whom hand to hand I slew in fight,  
May be possessed with some store of crowns;  
And I, that haply take them from him now,  
May yet ere night yield both my life and them  
To some man else, as this dead man doth me.  
Who's this? O God! it is my father's face,  
Whom in this conflict I unwares have kill'd.  
O heavy times, begetting such events!  
From London by the king was I press'd forth;  
My father, being the Earl of Warwick's man,  
Came on the part of York, press'd by his master;  
And I, who at his hands received my life, him  
Have by my hands of life bereaved him.  
Pardon me, God, I knew not what I did!

And pardon, father, for I knew not thee!  
My tears shall wipe away these bloody marks;  
And no more words till they have flow'd their fill.

## **KING HENRY VI**

O piteous spectacle! O bloody times!  
Whiles lions war and battle for their dens,  
Poor harmless lambs abide their enmity.  
Weep, wretched man, I'll aid thee tear for tear;  
And let our hearts and eyes, like civil war,  
Be blind with tears, and break o'ercharged with grief.

*Enter a Father that has killed his son, bringing in the body*

## **Father**

Thou that so stoutly hast resisted me,  
Give me thy gold, if thou hast any gold:  
For I have bought it with an hundred blows.  
But let me see: is this our foeman's face?  
Ah, no, no, no, it is mine only son!  
Ah, boy, if any life be left in thee,  
Throw up thine eye! see, see what showers arise,  
Blown with the windy tempest of my heart,  
Upon thy words, that kill mine eye and heart!  
O, pity, God, this miserable age!  
What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,  
Erroneous, mutinous and unnatural,  
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget!  
O boy, thy father gave thee life too soon,  
And hath bereft thee of thy life too late!

## **KING HENRY VI**

Woe above woe! grief more than common grief!  
O that my death would stay these ruthless deeds!  
O pity, pity, gentle heaven, pity!  
The red rose and the white are on his face,  
The fatal colours of our striving houses:  
The one his purple blood right well resembles;  
The other his pale cheeks, methinks, presenteth:

Wither one rose, and let the other flourish;  
If you contend, a thousand lives must wither.

**Son**

How will my mother for a father's death  
Take on with me and ne'er be satisfied!

**Father**

How will my wife for slaughter of my son  
Shed seas of tears and ne'er be satisfied!

**KING HENRY VI**

How will the country for these woful chances  
Misthink the king and not be satisfied!

**Son**

Was ever son so rued a father's death?

**Father**

Was ever father so bemoan'd his son?

**KING HENRY VI**

Was ever king so grieved for subjects' woe?  
Much is your sorrow; mine ten times so much.

**Son**

I'll bear thee hence, where I may weep my fill.

*Exit with the body*

**Father**

These arms of mine shall be thy winding-sheet;  
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre,

For from my heart thine image ne'er shall go;  
My sighing breast shall be thy funeral bell;  
And so obsequious will thy father be,  
Even for the loss of thee, having no more,  
As Priam was for all his valiant sons.  
I'll bear thee hence; and let them fight that will,  
For I have murdered where I should not kill.

*Exit with the body*

## **KING HENRY VI**

Sad-hearted men, much overgone with care,  
Here sits a king more woful than you are.

*Alarums: excursions. Enter QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, and EXETER*

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

Fly, father, fly! for all your friends are fled,  
And Warwick rages like a chafed bull:  
Away! for death doth hold us in pursuit.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Mount you, my lord; towards Berwick post amain:  
Edward and Richard, like a brace of greyhounds  
Having the fearful flying hare in sight,  
With fiery eyes sparkling for very wrath,  
And bloody steel grasp'd in their ireful hands,  
Are at our backs; and therefore hence amain.

## **EXETER**

Away! for vengeance comes along with them:  
Nay, stay not to expostulate, make speed;  
Or else come after: I'll away before.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Nay, take me with thee, good sweet Exeter:  
Not that I fear to stay, but love to go



Whither the queen intends. Forward; away!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Another part of the field.

*A loud alarum. Enter CLIFFORD, wounded*

### CLIFFORD

Here burns my candle out; ay, here it dies,  
Which, whiles it lasted, gave King Henry light.  
O Lancaster, I fear thy overthrow  
More than my body's parting with my soul!  
My love and fear glued many friends to thee;  
And, now I fall, thy tough commixture melts.  
Impairing Henry, strengthening misproud York,  
The common people swarm like summer flies;  
And whither fly the gnats but to the sun?  
And who shines now but Henry's enemies?  
O Phoebus, hadst thou never given consent  
That Phaethon should cheque thy fiery steeds,  
Thy burning car never had scorch'd the earth!  
And, Henry, hadst thou sway'd as kings should do,  
Or as thy father and his father did,  
Giving no ground unto the house of York,  
They never then had sprung like summer flies;  
I and ten thousand in this luckless realm  
Had left no mourning widows for our death;  
And thou this day hadst kept thy chair in peace.  
For what doth cherish weeds but gentle air?  
And what makes robbers bold but too much lenity?  
Bootless are plaints, and cureless are my wounds;  
No way to fly, nor strength to hold out flight:  
The foe is merciless, and will not pity;  
For at their hands I have deserved no pity.  
The air hath got into my deadly wounds,  
And much effuse of blood doth make me faint.  
Come, York and Richard, Warwick and the rest;  
I stabb'd your fathers' bosoms, split my breast.

*He faints*

*Alarum and retreat. Enter EDWARD, GEORGE, RICHARD, MONTAGUE, WARWICK,  
and Soldiers*

**EDWARD**

Now breathe we, lords: good fortune bids us pause,  
And smooth the frowns of war with peaceful looks.  
Some troops pursue the bloody-minded queen,  
That led calm Henry, though he were a king,  
As doth a sail, fill'd with a fretting gust,  
Command an argosy to stem the waves.  
But think you, lords, that Clifford fled with them?

**WARWICK**

No, 'tis impossible he should escape,  
For, though before his face I speak the words  
Your brother Richard mark'd him for the grave:  
And wheresoe'er he is, he's surely dead.

*CLIFFORD groans, and dies*

**EDWARD**

Whose soul is that which takes her heavy leave?

**RICHARD**

A deadly groan, like life and death's departing.

**EDWARD**

See who it is: and, now the battle's ended,  
If friend or foe, let him be gently used.

**RICHARD**

Revoke that doom of mercy, for 'tis Clifford;  
Who not contented that he lopp'd the branch

In hewing Rutland when his leaves put forth,  
But set his murdering knife unto the root  
From whence that tender spray did sweetly spring,  
I mean our princely father, Duke of York.

## **WARWICK**

From off the gates of York fetch down the head,  
Your father's head, which Clifford placed there;  
Instead whereof let this supply the room:  
Measure for measure must be answered.

## **EDWARD**

Bring forth that fatal screech-owl to our house,  
That nothing sung but death to us and ours:  
Now death shall stop his dismal threatening sound,  
And his ill-boding tongue no more shall speak.

## **WARWICK**

I think his understanding is bereft.  
Speak, Clifford, dost thou know who speaks to thee?  
Dark cloudy death o'ershades his beams of life,  
And he nor sees nor hears us what we say.

## **RICHARD**

O, would he did! and so perhaps he doth:  
'Tis but his policy to counterfeit,  
Because he would avoid such bitter taunts  
Which in the time of death he gave our father.

## **GEORGE**

If so thou think'st, vex him with eager words.

## **RICHARD**

Clifford, ask mercy and obtain no grace.

**EDWARD**

Clifford, repent in bootless penitence.

**WARWICK**

Clifford, devise excuses for thy faults.

**GEORGE**

While we devise fell tortures for thy faults.

**RICHARD**

Thou didst love York, and I am son to York.

**EDWARD**

Thou pitied'st Rutland; I will pity thee.

**GEORGE**

Where's Captain Margaret, to fence you now?

**WARWICK**

They mock thee, Clifford: swear as thou wast wont.

**RICHARD**

What, not an oath? nay, then the world goes hard  
When Clifford cannot spare his friends an oath.  
I know by that he's dead; and, by my soul,  
If this right hand would buy two hour's life,  
That I in all despite might rail at him,  
This hand should chop it off, and with the  
issuing blood  
Stifle the villain whose unstanched thirst  
York and young Rutland could not satisfy.

**WARWICK**

Ay, but he's dead: off with the traitor's head,  
And rear it in the place your father's stands.  
And now to London with triumphant march,  
There to be crowned England's royal king:  
From whence shall Warwick cut the sea to France,  
And ask the Lady Bona for thy queen:  
So shalt thou sinew both these lands together;  
And, having France thy friend, thou shalt not dread  
The scatter'd foe that hopes to rise again;  
For though they cannot greatly sting to hurt,  
Yet look to have them buzz to offend thine ears.  
First will I see the coronation;  
And then to Brittany I'll cross the sea,  
To effect this marriage, so it please my lord.

## **EDWARD**

Even as thou wilt, sweet Warwick, let it be;  
For in thy shoulder do I build my seat,  
And never will I undertake the thing  
Wherein thy counsel and consent is wanting.  
Richard, I will create thee Duke of Gloucester,  
And George, of Clarence: Warwick, as ourself,  
Shall do and undo as him pleaseth best.

## **RICHARD**

Let me be Duke of Clarence, George of Gloucester;  
For Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous.

## **WARWICK**

Tut, that's a foolish observation:  
Richard, be Duke of Gloucester. Now to London,  
To see these honours in possession.

*Exeunt*

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A forest in the north of England.

*Enter two Keepers, with cross-bows in their hands*

### First Keeper

Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves;  
For through this laund anon the deer will come;  
And in this covert will we make our stand,  
Culling the principal of all the deer.

### Second Keeper

I'll stay above the hill, so both may shoot.

### First Keeper

That cannot be; the noise of thy cross-bow  
Will scare the herd, and so my shoot is lost.  
Here stand we both, and aim we at the best:  
And, for the time shall not seem tedious,  
I'll tell thee what befell me on a day  
In this self-place where now we mean to stand.

### Second Keeper

Here comes a man; let's stay till he be past.

*Enter KING HENRY VI, disguised, with a prayerbook*

### KING HENRY VI

From Scotland am I stol'n, even of pure love,  
To greet mine own land with my wishful sight.  
No, Harry, Harry, 'tis no land of thine;  
Thy place is fill'd, thy sceptre wrung from thee,

Thy balm wash'd off wherewith thou wast anointed:  
No bending knee will call thee Caesar now,  
No humble suitors press to speak for right,  
No, not a man comes for redress of thee;  
For how can I help them, and not myself?

### **First Keeper**

Ay, here's a deer whose skin's a keeper's fee:  
This is the quondam king; let's seize upon him.

### **KING HENRY VI**

Let me embrace thee, sour adversity,  
For wise men say it is the wisest course.

### **Second Keeper**

Why linger we? let us lay hands upon him.

### **First Keeper**

Forbear awhile; we'll hear a little more.

### **KING HENRY VI**

My queen and son are gone to France for aid;  
And, as I hear, the great commanding Warwick  
Is thither gone, to crave the French king's sister  
To wife for Edward: if this news be true,  
Poor queen and son, your labour is but lost;  
For Warwick is a subtle orator,  
And Lewis a prince soon won with moving words.  
By this account then Margaret may win him;  
For she's a woman to be pitied much:  
Her sighs will make a battery in his breast;  
Her tears will pierce into a marble heart;  
The tiger will be mild whiles she doth mourn;  
And Nero will be tainted with remorse,  
To hear and see her plaints, her brinish tears.  
Ay, but she's come to beg, Warwick to give;  
She, on his left side, craving aid for Henry,



He, on his right, asking a wife for Edward.  
She weeps, and says her Henry is deposed;  
He smiles, and says his Edward is install'd;  
That she, poor wretch, for grief can speak no more;  
Whiles Warwick tells his title, smooths the wrong,  
Inferreth arguments of mighty strength,  
And in conclusion wins the king from her,  
With promise of his sister, and what else,  
To strengthen and support King Edward's place.  
O Margaret, thus 'twill be; and thou, poor soul,  
Art then forsaken, as thou went'st forlorn!

### **Second Keeper**

Say, what art thou that talk'st of kings and queens?

### **KING HENRY VI**

More than I seem, and less than I was born to:  
A man at least, for less I should not be;  
And men may talk of kings, and why not I?

### **Second Keeper**

Ay, but thou talk'st as if thou wert a king.

### **KING HENRY VI**

Why, so I am, in mind; and that's enough.

### **Second Keeper**

But, if thou be a king, where is thy crown?

### **KING HENRY VI**

My crown is in my heart, not on my head;  
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones,  
Nor to be seen: my crown is called content:  
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

## **Second Keeper**

Well, if you be a king crown'd with content,  
Your crown content and you must be contented  
To go along with us; for as we think,  
You are the king King Edward hath deposed;  
And we his subjects sworn in all allegiance  
Will apprehend you as his enemy.

## **KING HENRY VI**

But did you never swear, and break an oath?

## **Second Keeper**

No, never such an oath; nor will not now.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Where did you dwell when I was King of England?

## **Second Keeper**

Here in this country, where we now remain.

## **KING HENRY VI**

I was anointed king at nine months old;  
My father and my grandfather were kings,  
And you were sworn true subjects unto me:  
And tell me, then, have you not broke your oaths?

## **First Keeper**

No;  
For we were subjects but while you were king.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Why, am I dead? do I not breathe a man?  
Ah, simple men, you know not what you swear!

Look, as I blow this feather from my face,  
And as the air blows it to me again,  
Obeying with my wind when I do blow,  
And yielding to another when it blows,  
Commanded always by the greater gust;  
Such is the lightness of you common men.  
But do not break your oaths; for of that sin  
My mild entreaty shall not make you guilty.  
Go where you will, the king shall be commanded;  
And be you kings, command, and I'll obey.

**First Keeper**

We are true subjects to the king, King Edward.

**KING HENRY VI**

So would you be again to Henry,  
If he were seated as King Edward is.

**First Keeper**

We charge you, in God's name, and the king's,  
To go with us unto the officers.

**KING HENRY VI**

In God's name, lead; your king's name be obey'd:  
And what God will, that let your king perform;  
And what he will, I humbly yield unto.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. London. The palace.

*Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and LADY GREY*

### KING EDWARD IV

Brother of Gloucester, at Saint Alban's field  
This lady's husband, Sir Richard Grey, was slain,  
His lands then seized on by the conqueror:  
Her suit is now to repossess those lands;  
Which we in justice cannot well deny,  
Because in quarrel of the house of York  
The worthy gentleman did lose his life.

### GLOUCESTER

Your highness shall do well to grant her suit;  
It were dishonour to deny it her.

### KING EDWARD IV

It were no less; but yet I'll make a pause.

### GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] Yea, is it so?  
I see the lady hath a thing to grant,  
Before the king will grant her humble suit.

### CLARENCE

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] He knows the game: how true  
he keeps the wind!

### GLOUCESTER

[Aside to CLARENCE] Silence!

**KING EDWARD IV**

Widow, we will consider of your suit;  
And come some other time to know our mind.

**LADY GREY**

Right gracious lord, I cannot brook delay:  
May it please your highness to resolve me now;  
And what your pleasure is, shall satisfy me.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] Ay, widow? then I'll warrant  
you all your lands,  
An if what pleases him shall pleasure you.  
Fight closer, or, good faith, you'll catch a blow.

**CLARENCE**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] I fear her not, unless she  
chance to fall.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] God forbid that! for he'll  
take vantages.

**KING EDWARD IV**

How many children hast thou, widow? tell me.

**CLARENCE**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] I think he means to beg a  
child of her.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] Nay, whip me then: he'll rather give her two.

**LADY GREY**

Three, my most gracious lord.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] You shall have four, if you'll be ruled by him.

**KING EDWARD IV**

'Twere pity they should lose their father's lands.

**LADY GREY**

Be pitiful, dread lord, and grant it then.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Lords, give us leave: I'll try this widow's wit.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] Ay, good leave have you; for you will have leave,  
Till youth take leave and leave you to the crutch.

*GLOUCESTER and CLARENCE retire*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Now tell me, madam, do you love your children?

**LADY GREY**

Ay, full as dearly as I love myself.

**KING EDWARD IV**

And would you not do much to do them good?

**LADY GREY**

To do them good, I would sustain some harm.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Then get your husband's lands, to do them good.

**LADY GREY**

Therefore I came unto your majesty.

**KING EDWARD IV**

I'll tell you how these lands are to be got.

**LADY GREY**

So shall you bind me to your highness' service.

**KING EDWARD IV**

What service wilt thou do me, if I give them?

**LADY GREY**

What you command, that rests in me to do.

**KING EDWARD IV**

But you will take exceptions to my boon.

**LADY GREY**

No, gracious lord, except I cannot do it.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Ay, but thou canst do what I mean to ask.

**LADY GREY**

Why, then I will do what your grace commands.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] He plies her hard; and much rain wears the marble.

**CLARENCE**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] As red as fire! nay, then her wax must melt.

**LADY GREY**

Why stops my lord, shall I not hear my task?

**KING EDWARD IV**

An easy task; 'tis but to love a king.

**LADY GREY**

That's soon perform'd, because I am a subject.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Why, then, thy husband's lands I freely give thee.

**LADY GREY**

I take my leave with many thousand thanks.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] The match is made; she seals it with a curtsy.



**KING EDWARD IV**

But stay thee, 'tis the fruits of love I mean.

**LADY GREY**

The fruits of love I mean, my loving liege.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Ay, but, I fear me, in another sense.  
What love, think'st thou, I sue so much to get?

**LADY GREY**

My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers;  
That love which virtue begs and virtue grants.

**KING EDWARD IV**

No, by my troth, I did not mean such love.

**LADY GREY**

Why, then you mean not as I thought you did.

**KING EDWARD IV**

But now you partly may perceive my mind.

**LADY GREY**

My mind will never grant what I perceive  
Your highness aims at, if I aim aright.

**KING EDWARD IV**

To tell thee plain, I aim to lie with thee.

**LADY GREY**

To tell you plain, I had rather lie in prison.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Why, then thou shalt not have thy husband's lands.

**LADY GREY**

Why, then mine honesty shall be my dower;  
For by that loss I will not purchase them.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Therein thou wrong'st thy children mightily.

**LADY GREY**

Herein your highness wrongs both them and me.  
But, mighty lord, this merry inclination  
Accords not with the sadness of my suit:  
Please you dismiss me either with 'ay' or 'no.'

**KING EDWARD IV**

Ay, if thou wilt say 'ay' to my request;  
No if thou dost say 'no' to my demand.

**LADY GREY**

Then, no, my lord. My suit is at an end.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] The widow likes him not, she  
knits her brows.

**CLARENCE**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] He is the bluntest wooer in  
Christendom.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

[Aside] Her looks do argue her replete with modesty;  
Her words do show her wit incomparable;  
All her perfections challenge sovereignty:  
One way or other, she is for a king;  
And she shall be my love, or else my queen.--  
Say that King Edward take thee for his queen?

## **LADY GREY**

'Tis better said than done, my gracious lord:  
I am a subject fit to jest withal,  
But far unfit to be a sovereign.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Sweet widow, by my state I swear to thee  
I speak no more than what my soul intends;  
And that is, to enjoy thee for my love.

## **LADY GREY**

And that is more than I will yield unto:  
I know I am too mean to be your queen,  
And yet too good to be your concubine.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

You cavil, widow: I did mean, my queen.

## **LADY GREY**

'Twill grieve your grace my sons should call you father.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

No more than when my daughters call thee mother.  
Thou art a widow, and thou hast some children;  
And, by God's mother, I, being but a bachelor,  
Have other some: why, 'tis a happy thing

To be the father unto many sons.  
Answer no more, for thou shalt be my queen.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside to CLARENCE] The ghostly father now hath done  
his shrift.

**CLARENCE**

[Aside to GLOUCESTER] When he was made a shriver,  
'twas for shift.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Brothers, you muse what chat we two have had.

**GLOUCESTER**

The widow likes it not, for she looks very sad.

**KING EDWARD IV**

You'll think it strange if I should marry her.

**CLARENCE**

To whom, my lord?

**KING EDWARD IV**

Why, Clarence, to myself.

**GLOUCESTER**

That would be ten days' wonder at the least.

**CLARENCE**

That's a day longer than a wonder lasts.

## **GLOUCESTER**

By so much is the wonder in extremes.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Well, jest on, brothers: I can tell you both  
Her suit is granted for her husband's lands.

*Enter a Nobleman*

## **Nobleman**

My gracious lord, Henry your foe is taken,  
And brought your prisoner to your palace gate.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

See that he be convey'd unto the Tower:  
And go we, brothers, to the man that took him,  
To question of his apprehension.  
Widow, go you along. Lords, use her honourably.

*Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ay, Edward will use women honourably.  
Would he were wasted, marrow, bones and all,  
That from his loins no hopeful branch may spring,  
To cross me from the golden time I look for!  
And yet, between my soul's desire and me--  
The lustful Edward's title buried--  
Is Clarence, Henry, and his son young Edward,  
And all the unlook'd for issue of their bodies,  
To take their rooms, ere I can place myself:  
A cold premeditation for my purpose!  
Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty;  
Like one that stands upon a promontory,  
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,  
Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,  
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,

Saying, he'll lade it dry to have his way:  
So do I wish the crown, being so far off;  
And so I chide the means that keeps me from it;  
And so I say, I'll cut the causes off,  
Flattering me with impossibilities.  
My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,  
Unless my hand and strength could equal them.  
Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;  
What other pleasure can the world afford?  
I'll make my heaven in a lady's lap,  
And deck my body in gay ornaments,  
And witch sweet ladies with my words and looks.  
O miserable thought! and more unlikely  
Than to accomplish twenty golden crowns!  
Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb:  
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,  
She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,  
To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;  
To make an envious mountain on my back,  
Where sits deformity to mock my body;  
To shape my legs of an unequal size;  
To disproportion me in every part,  
Like to a chaos, or an unlick'd bear-whelp  
That carries no impression like the dam.  
And am I then a man to be beloved?  
O monstrous fault, to harbour such a thought!  
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,  
But to command, to cheque, to o'erbear such  
As are of better person than myself,  
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,  
And, whiles I live, to account this world but hell,  
Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head  
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.  
And yet I know not how to get the crown,  
For many lives stand between me and home:  
And I,--like one lost in a thorny wood,  
That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,  
Seeking a way and straying from the way;  
Not knowing how to find the open air,  
But toiling desperately to find it out,--  
Torment myself to catch the English crown:  
And from that torment I will free myself,  
Or hew my way out with a bloody axe.

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,  
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart,  
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,  
And frame my face to all occasions.  
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall;  
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk;  
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,  
Deceive more silyly than Ulysses could,  
And, like a Sinon, take another Troy.  
I can add colours to the chameleon,  
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,  
And set the murderous Machiavel to school.  
Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?  
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. France. KING LEWIS XI's palace.

*Flourish. Enter KING LEWIS XI, his sister BONA, his Admiral, called BOURBON, PRINCE EDWARD, QUEEN MARGARET, and OXFORD. KING LEWIS XI sits, and riseth up again*

### KING LEWIS XI

Fair Queen of England, worthy Margaret,  
Sit down with us: it ill befits thy state  
And birth, that thou shouldst stand while Lewis doth sit.

### QUEEN MARGARET

No, mighty King of France: now Margaret  
Must strike her sail and learn awhile to serve  
Where kings command. I was, I must confess,  
Great Albion's queen in former golden days:  
But now mischance hath trod my title down,  
And with dishonour laid me on the ground;  
Where I must take like seat unto my fortune,  
And to my humble seat conform myself.

### KING LEWIS XI

Why, say, fair queen, whence springs this deep despair?

### QUEEN MARGARET

From such a cause as fills mine eyes with tears  
And stops my tongue, while heart is drown'd in cares.

### KING LEWIS XI

Whate'er it be, be thou still like thyself,  
And sit thee by our side:



*Seats her by him*

Yield not thy neck  
To fortune's yoke, but let thy dauntless mind  
Still ride in triumph over all mischance.  
Be plain, Queen Margaret, and tell thy grief;  
It shall be eased, if France can yield relief.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Those gracious words revive my drooping thoughts  
And give my tongue-tied sorrows leave to speak.  
Now, therefore, be it known to noble Lewis,  
That Henry, sole possessor of my love,  
Is of a king become a banish'd man,  
And forced to live in Scotland a forlorn;  
While proud ambitious Edward Duke of York  
Usurps the regal title and the seat  
Of England's true-anointed lawful king.  
This is the cause that I, poor Margaret,  
With this my son, Prince Edward, Henry's heir,  
Am come to crave thy just and lawful aid;  
And if thou fail us, all our hope is done:  
Scotland hath will to help, but cannot help;  
Our people and our peers are both misled,  
Our treasures seized, our soldiers put to flight,  
And, as thou seest, ourselves in heavy plight.

## **KING LEWIS XI**

Renowned queen, with patience calm the storm,  
While we bethink a means to break it off.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

The more we stay, the stronger grows our foe.

## **KING LEWIS XI**

The more I stay, the more I'll succor thee.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

O, but impatience waiteth on true sorrow.  
And see where comes the breeder of my sorrow!

*Enter WARWICK*

## **KING LEWIS XI**

What's he approacheth boldly to our presence?

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Our Earl of Warwick, Edward's greatest friend.

## **KING LEWIS XI**

Welcome, brave Warwick! What brings thee to France?

*He descends. She ariseth*

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Ay, now begins a second storm to rise;  
For this is he that moves both wind and tide.

## **WARWICK**

From worthy Edward, King of Albion,  
My lord and sovereign, and thy vowed friend,  
I come, in kindness and unfeigned love,  
First, to do greetings to thy royal person;  
And then to crave a league of amity;  
And lastly, to confirm that amity  
With a nuptial knot, if thou vouchsafe to grant  
That virtuous Lady Bona, thy fair sister,  
To England's king in lawful marriage.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

[Aside] If that go forward, Henry's hope is done.

## **WARWICK**

[To BONA] And, gracious madam, in our king's behalf,  
I am commanded, with your leave and favour,  
Humbly to kiss your hand, and with my tongue  
To tell the passion of my sovereign's heart;  
Where fame, late entering at his heedful ears,  
Hath placed thy beauty's image and thy virtue.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

King Lewis and Lady Bona, hear me speak,  
Before you answer Warwick. His demand  
Springs not from Edward's well-meant honest love,  
But from deceit bred by necessity;  
For how can tyrants safely govern home,  
Unless abroad they purchase great alliance?  
To prove him tyrant this reason may suffice,  
That Henry liveth still: but were he dead,  
Yet here Prince Edward stands, King Henry's son.  
Look, therefore, Lewis, that by this league and marriage  
Thou draw not on thy danger and dishonour;  
For though usurpers sway the rule awhile,  
Yet heavens are just, and time suppresseth wrongs.

## **WARWICK**

Injurious Margaret!

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

And why not queen?

## **WARWICK**

Because thy father Henry did usurp;  
And thou no more are prince than she is queen.

## **OXFORD**

Then Warwick disannuls great John of Gaunt,

Which did subdue the greatest part of Spain;  
And, after John of Gaunt, Henry the Fourth,  
Whose wisdom was a mirror to the wisest;  
And, after that wise prince, Henry the Fifth,  
Who by his prowess conquered all France:  
From these our Henry lineally descends.

## **WARWICK**

Oxford, how haps it, in this smooth discourse,  
You told not how Henry the Sixth hath lost  
All that which Henry Fifth had gotten?  
Methinks these peers of France should smile at that.  
But for the rest, you tell a pedigree  
Of threescore and two years; a silly time  
To make prescription for a kingdom's worth.

## **OXFORD**

Why, Warwick, canst thou speak against thy liege,  
Whom thou obeyed'st thirty and six years,  
And not bewray thy treason with a blush?

## **WARWICK**

Can Oxford, that did ever fence the right,  
Now buckler falsehood with a pedigree?  
For shame! leave Henry, and call Edward king.

## **OXFORD**

Call him my king by whose injurious doom  
My elder brother, the Lord Aubrey Vere,  
Was done to death? and more than so, my father,  
Even in the downfall of his mellow'd years,  
When nature brought him to the door of death?  
No, Warwick, no; while life upholds this arm,  
This arm upholds the house of Lancaster.

## **WARWICK**

And I the house of York.

**KING LEWIS XI**

Queen Margaret, Prince Edward, and Oxford,  
Vouchsafe, at our request, to stand aside,  
While I use further conference with Warwick.

*They stand aloof*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Heavens grant that Warwick's words bewitch him not!

**KING LEWIS XI**

Now Warwick, tell me, even upon thy conscience,  
Is Edward your true king? for I were loath  
To link with him that were not lawful chosen.

**WARWICK**

Thereon I pawn my credit and mine honour.

**KING LEWIS XI**

But is he gracious in the people's eye?

**WARWICK**

The more that Henry was unfortunate.

**KING LEWIS XI**

Then further, all dissembling set aside,  
Tell me for truth the measure of his love  
Unto our sister Bona.

**WARWICK**

Such it seems  
As may beseem a monarch like himself.

Myself have often heard him say and swear  
That this his love was an eternal plant,  
Whereof the root was fix'd in virtue's ground,  
The leaves and fruit maintain'd with beauty's sun,  
Exempt from envy, but not from disdain,  
Unless the Lady Bona quit his pain.

**KING LEWIS XI**

Now, sister, let us hear your firm resolve.

**BONA**

Your grant, or your denial, shall be mine:

*To WARWICK*

Yet I confess that often ere this day,  
When I have heard your king's desert recounted,  
Mine ear hath tempted judgment to desire.

**KING LEWIS XI**

Then, Warwick, thus: our sister shall be Edward's;  
And now forthwith shall articles be drawn  
Touching the jointure that your king must make,  
Which with her dowry shall be counterpoised.  
Draw near, Queen Margaret, and be a witness  
That Bona shall be wife to the English king.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

To Edward, but not to the English king.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Deceitful Warwick! it was thy device  
By this alliance to make void my suit:  
Before thy coming Lewis was Henry's friend.

**KING LEWIS XI**

And still is friend to him and Margaret:  
But if your title to the crown be weak,  
As may appear by Edward's good success,  
Then 'tis but reason that I be released  
From giving aid which late I promised.  
Yet shall you have all kindness at my hand  
That your estate requires and mine can yield.

## **WARWICK**

Henry now lives in Scotland at his ease,  
Where having nothing, nothing can he lose.  
And as for you yourself, our quondam queen,  
You have a father able to maintain you;  
And better 'twere you troubled him than France.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Peace, impudent and shameless Warwick, peace,  
Proud setter up and puller down of kings!  
I will not hence, till, with my talk and tears,  
Both full of truth, I make King Lewis behold  
Thy sly conveyance and thy lord's false love;  
For both of you are birds of selfsame feather.

*Post blows a horn within*

## **KING LEWIS XI**

Warwick, this is some post to us or thee.

*Enter a Post*

## **Post**

[To WARWICK] My lord ambassador, these letters are for you,  
Sent from your brother, Marquess Montague:

*To KING LEWIS XI*

These from our king unto your majesty:

*To QUEEN MARGARET*

And, madam, these for you; from whom I know not.

*They all read their letters*

**OXFORD**

I like it well that our fair queen and mistress  
Smiles at her news, while Warwick frowns at his.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

Nay, mark how Lewis stamps, as he were nettled:  
I hope all's for the best.

**KING LEWIS XI**

Warwick, what are thy news? and yours, fair queen?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Mine, such as fill my heart with unhoped joys.

**WARWICK**

Mine, full of sorrow and heart's discontent.

**KING LEWIS XI**

What! has your king married the Lady Grey!  
And now, to soothe your forgery and his,  
Sends me a paper to persuade me patience?  
Is this the alliance that he seeks with France?  
Dare he presume to scorn us in this manner?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

I told your majesty as much before:  
This proveth Edward's love and Warwick's honesty.



## WARWICK

King Lewis, I here protest, in sight of heaven,  
And by the hope I have of heavenly bliss,  
That I am clear from this misdeed of Edward's,  
No more my king, for he dishonours me,  
But most himself, if he could see his shame.  
Did I forget that by the house of York  
My father came untimely to his death?  
Did I let pass the abuse done to my niece?  
Did I impale him with the regal crown?  
Did I put Henry from his native right?  
And am I guerdon'd at the last with shame?  
Shame on himself! for my desert is honour:  
And to repair my honour lost for him,  
I here renounce him and return to Henry.  
My noble queen, let former grudges pass,  
And henceforth I am thy true servitor:  
I will revenge his wrong to Lady Bona,  
And replant Henry in his former state.

## QUEEN MARGARET

Warwick, these words have turn'd my hate to love;  
And I forgive and quite forget old faults,  
And joy that thou becomest King Henry's friend.

## WARWICK

So much his friend, ay, his unfeigned friend,  
That, if King Lewis vouchsafe to furnish us  
With some few bands of chosen soldiers,  
I'll undertake to land them on our coast  
And force the tyrant from his seat by war.  
'Tis not his new-made bride shall succor him:  
And as for Clarence, as my letters tell me,  
He's very likely now to fall from him,  
For matching more for wanton lust than honour,  
Or than for strength and safety of our country.

## BONA

Dear brother, how shall Bona be revenged  
But by thy help to this distressed queen?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Renowned prince, how shall poor Henry live,  
Unless thou rescue him from foul despair?

**BONA**

My quarrel and this English queen's are one.

**WARWICK**

And mine, fair lady Bona, joins with yours.

**KING LEWIS XI**

And mine with hers, and thine, and Margaret's.  
Therefore at last I firmly am resolved  
You shall have aid.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Let me give humble thanks for all at once.

**KING LEWIS XI**

Then, England's messenger, return in post,  
And tell false Edward, thy supposed king,  
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers  
To revel it with him and his new bride:  
Thou seest what's past, go fear thy king withal.

**BONA**

Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,  
I'll wear the willow garland for his sake.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Tell him, my mourning weeds are laid aside,  
And I am ready to put armour on.

## **WARWICK**

Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,  
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long.  
There's thy reward: be gone.

*Exit Post*

## **KING LEWIS XI**

But, Warwick,  
Thou and Oxford, with five thousand men,  
Shall cross the seas, and bid false Edward battle;  
And, as occasion serves, this noble queen  
And prince shall follow with a fresh supply.  
Yet, ere thou go, but answer me one doubt,  
What pledge have we of thy firm loyalty?

## **WARWICK**

This shall assure my constant loyalty,  
That if our queen and this young prince agree,  
I'll join mine eldest daughter and my joy  
To him forthwith in holy wedlock bands.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Yes, I agree, and thank you for your motion.  
Son Edward, she is fair and virtuous,  
Therefore delay not, give thy hand to Warwick;  
And, with thy hand, thy faith irrevocable,  
That only Warwick's daughter shall be thine.

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

Yes, I accept her, for she well deserves it;  
And here, to pledge my vow, I give my hand.

*He gives his hand to WARWICK*

## KING LEWIS XI

Why stay we now? These soldiers shall be levied,  
And thou, Lord Bourbon, our high admiral,  
Shalt waft them over with our royal fleet.  
I long till Edward fall by war's mischance,  
For mocking marriage with a dame of France.

*Exeunt all but WARWICK*

## WARWICK

I came from Edward as ambassador,  
But I return his sworn and mortal foe:  
Matter of marriage was the charge he gave me,  
But dreadful war shall answer his demand.  
Had he none else to make a stale but me?  
Then none but I shall turn his jest to sorrow.  
I was the chief that raised him to the crown,  
And I'll be chief to bring him down again:  
Not that I pity Henry's misery,  
But seek revenge on Edward's mockery.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. The palace.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, SOMERSET, and MONTAGUE*

### GLOUCESTER

Now tell me, brother Clarence, what think you  
Of this new marriage with the Lady Grey?  
Hath not our brother made a worthy choice?

### CLARENCE

Alas, you know, 'tis far from hence to France;  
How could he stay till Warwick made return?

### SOMERSET

My lords, forbear this talk; here comes the king.

### GLOUCESTER

And his well-chosen bride.

### CLARENCE

I mind to tell him plainly what I think.

*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, attended; QUEEN ELIZABETH, PEMBROKE, STAFFORD, HASTINGS, and others*

### KING EDWARD IV

Now, brother of Clarence, how like you our choice,  
That you stand pensive, as half malcontent?

## **CLARENCE**

As well as Lewis of France, or the Earl of Warwick,  
Which are so weak of courage and in judgment  
That they'll take no offence at our abuse.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Suppose they take offence without a cause,  
They are but Lewis and Warwick: I am Edward,  
Your king and Warwick's, and must have my will.

## **GLOUCESTER**

And shall have your will, because our king:  
Yet hasty marriage seldom proveth well.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Yea, brother Richard, are you offended too?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Not I:  
No, God forbid that I should wish them sever'd  
Whom God hath join'd together; ay, and 'twere pity  
To sunder them that yoke so well together.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Setting your scorns and your mislike aside,  
Tell me some reason why the Lady Grey  
Should not become my wife and England's queen.  
And you too, Somerset and Montague,  
Speak freely what you think.

## **CLARENCE**

Then this is mine opinion: that King Lewis  
Becomes your enemy, for mocking him  
About the marriage of the Lady Bona.

## **GLOUCESTER**

And Warwick, doing what you gave in charge,  
Is now dishonoured by this new marriage.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

What if both Lewis and Warwick be appeased  
By such invention as I can devise?

## **MONTAGUE**

Yet, to have join'd with France in such alliance  
Would more have strengthen'd this our commonwealth  
'Gainst foreign storms than any home-bred marriage.

## **HASTINGS**

Why, knows not Montague that of itself  
England is safe, if true within itself?

## **MONTAGUE**

But the safer when 'tis back'd with France.

## **HASTINGS**

'Tis better using France than trusting France:  
Let us be back'd with God and with the seas  
Which He hath given for fence impregnable,  
And with their helps only defend ourselves;  
In them and in ourselves our safety lies.

## **CLARENCE**

For this one speech Lord Hastings well deserves  
To have the heir of the Lord Hungerford.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Ay, what of that? it was my will and grant;

And for this once my will shall stand for law.

## **GLOUCESTER**

And yet methinks your grace hath not done well,  
To give the heir and daughter of Lord Scales  
Unto the brother of your loving bride;  
She better would have fitted me or Clarence:  
But in your bride you bury brotherhood.

## **CLARENCE**

Or else you would not have bestow'd the heir  
Of the Lord Bonville on your new wife's son,  
And leave your brothers to go speed elsewhere.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Alas, poor Clarence! is it for a wife  
That thou art malcontent? I will provide thee.

## **CLARENCE**

In choosing for yourself, you show'd your judgment,  
Which being shallow, you give me leave  
To play the broker in mine own behalf;  
And to that end I shortly mind to leave you.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Leave me, or tarry, Edward will be king,  
And not be tied unto his brother's will.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

My lords, before it pleased his majesty  
To raise my state to title of a queen,  
Do me but right, and you must all confess  
That I was not ignoble of descent;  
And meaner than myself have had like fortune.  
But as this title honours me and mine,  
So your dislike, to whom I would be pleasing,



Doth cloud my joys with danger and with sorrow.

**KING EDWARD IV**

My love, forbear to fawn upon their frowns:  
What danger or what sorrow can befall thee,  
So long as Edward is thy constant friend,  
And their true sovereign, whom they must obey?  
Nay, whom they shall obey, and love thee too,  
Unless they seek for hatred at my hands;  
Which if they do, yet will I keep thee safe,  
And they shall feel the vengeance of my wrath.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside] I hear, yet say not much, but think the more.

*Enter a Post*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Now, messenger, what letters or what news  
From France?

**Post**

My sovereign liege, no letters; and few words,  
But such as I, without your special pardon,  
Dare not relate.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Go to, we pardon thee: therefore, in brief,  
Tell me their words as near as thou canst guess them.  
What answer makes King Lewis unto our letters?

**Post**

At my depart, these were his very words:  
'Go tell false Edward, thy supposed king,  
That Lewis of France is sending over masquers

To revel it with him and his new bride.'

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Is Lewis so brave? belike he thinks me Henry.  
But what said Lady Bona to my marriage?

### **Post**

These were her words, utter'd with mad disdain:  
'Tell him, in hope he'll prove a widower shortly,  
I'll wear the willow garland for his sake.'

## **KING EDWARD IV**

I blame not her, she could say little less;  
She had the wrong. But what said Henry's queen?  
For I have heard that she was there in place.

### **Post**

'Tell him,' quoth she, 'my mourning weeds are done,  
And I am ready to put armour on.'

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Belike she minds to play the Amazon.  
But what said Warwick to these injuries?

### **Post**

He, more incensed against your majesty  
Than all the rest, discharged me with these words:  
'Tell him from me that he hath done me wrong,  
And therefore I'll uncrown him ere't be long.'

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Ha! durst the traitor breathe out so proud words?  
Well I will arm me, being thus forewarn'd:  
They shall have wars and pay for their presumption.

But say, is Warwick friends with Margaret?

## Post

Ay, gracious sovereign; they are so link'd in  
friendship

That young Prince Edward marries Warwick's daughter.

## CLARENCE

Belike the elder; Clarence will have the younger.  
Now, brother king, farewell, and sit you fast,  
For I will hence to Warwick's other daughter;  
That, though I want a kingdom, yet in marriage  
I may not prove inferior to yourself.  
You that love me and Warwick, follow me.

*Exit CLARENCE, and SOMERSET follows*

## GLOUCESTER

[Aside] Not I:  
My thoughts aim at a further matter; I  
Stay not for the love of Edward, but the crown.

## KING EDWARD IV

Clarence and Somerset both gone to Warwick!  
Yet am I arm'd against the worst can happen;  
And haste is needful in this desperate case.  
Pembroke and Stafford, you in our behalf  
Go levy men, and make prepare for war;  
They are already, or quickly will be landed:  
Myself in person will straight follow you.

*Exeunt PEMBROKE and STAFFORD*

But, ere I go, Hastings and Montague,  
Resolve my doubt. You twain, of all the rest,  
Are near to Warwick by blood and by alliance:  
Tell me if you love Warwick more than me?  
If it be so, then both depart to him;

I rather wish you foes than hollow friends:  
But if you mind to hold your true obedience,  
Give me assurance with some friendly vow,  
That I may never have you in suspect.

**MONTAGUE**

So God help Montague as he proves true!

**HASTINGS**

And Hastings as he favours Edward's cause!

**KING EDWARD IV**

Now, brother Richard, will you stand by us?

**GLOUCESTER**

Ay, in despite of all that shall withstand you.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Why, so! then am I sure of victory.  
Now therefore let us hence; and lose no hour,  
Till we meet Warwick with his foreign power.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A plain in Warwickshire.

*Enter WARWICK and OXFORD, with French soldiers*

### WARWICK

Trust me, my lord, all hitherto goes well;  
The common people by numbers swarm to us.

*Enter CLARENCE and SOMERSET*

But see where Somerset and Clarence come!  
Speak suddenly, my lords, are we all friends?

### CLARENCE

Fear not that, my lord.

### WARWICK

Then, gentle Clarence, welcome unto Warwick;  
And welcome, Somerset: I hold it cowardice  
To rest mistrustful where a noble heart  
Hath pawn'd an open hand in sign of love;  
Else might I think that Clarence, Edward's brother,  
Were but a feigned friend to our proceedings:  
But welcome, sweet Clarence; my daughter shall be thine.  
And now what rests but, in night's coverture,  
Thy brother being carelessly encamp'd,  
His soldiers lurking in the towns about,  
And but attended by a simple guard,  
We may surprise and take him at our pleasure?  
Our scouts have found the adventure very easy:  
That as Ulysses and stout Diomed  
With sleight and manhood stole to Rhesus' tents,  
And brought from thence the Thracian fatal steeds,

So we, well cover'd with the night's black mantle,  
At unawares may beat down Edward's guard  
And seize himself; I say not, slaughter him,  
For I intend but only to surprise him.  
You that will follow me to this attempt,  
Applaud the name of Henry with your leader.

*They all cry, 'Henry!'*

Why, then, let's on our way in silent sort:  
For Warwick and his friends, God and Saint George!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Edward's camp, near Warwick.

*Enter three Watchmen, to guard KING EDWARD IV's tent*

### First Watchman

Come on, my masters, each man take his stand:  
The king by this is set him down to sleep.

### Second Watchman

What, will he not to bed?

### First Watchman

Why, no; for he hath made a solemn vow  
Never to lie and take his natural rest  
Till Warwick or himself be quite suppress'd.

### Second Watchman

To-morrow then belike shall be the day,  
If Warwick be so near as men report.

### Third Watchman

But say, I pray, what nobleman is that  
That with the king here resteth in his tent?

### First Watchman

'Tis the Lord Hastings, the king's chiefest friend.

### Third Watchman

O, is it so? But why commands the king  
That his chief followers lodge in towns about him,  
While he himself keeps in the cold field?

### **Second Watchman**

'Tis the more honour, because more dangerous.

### **Third Watchman**

Ay, but give me worship and quietness;  
I like it better than a dangerous honour.  
If Warwick knew in what estate he stands,  
'Tis to be doubted he would waken him.

### **First Watchman**

Unless our halberds did shut up his passage.

### **Second Watchman**

Ay, wherefore else guard we his royal tent,  
But to defend his person from night-foes?

*Enter WARWICK, CLARENCE, OXFORD, SOMERSET, and French soldiers, silent all*

### **WARWICK**

This is his tent; and see where stand his guard.  
Courage, my masters! honour now or never!  
But follow me, and Edward shall be ours.

### **First Watchman**

Who goes there?

### **Second Watchman**

Stay, or thou diest!

*WARWICK and the rest cry all, 'Warwick! Warwick!' and set upon the Guard, who fly,*



*crying, 'Arm! arm!' WARWICK and the rest following them*

*The drum playing and trumpet sounding, reenter WARWICK, SOMERSET, and the rest, bringing KING EDWARD IV out in his gown, sitting in a chair. RICHARD and HASTINGS fly over the stage*

## **SOMERSET**

What are they that fly there?

## **WARWICK**

Richard and Hastings: let them go; here is The duke.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

The duke! Why, Warwick, when we parted,  
Thou call'dst me king.

## **WARWICK**

Ay, but the case is alter'd:  
When you disgraced me in my embassy,  
Then I degraded you from being king,  
And come now to create you Duke of York.  
Alas! how should you govern any kingdom,  
That know not how to use ambassadors,  
Nor how to be contented with one wife,  
Nor how to use your brothers brotherly,  
Nor how to study for the people's welfare,  
Nor how to shroud yourself from enemies?

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Yea, brother of Clarence, are thou here too?  
Nay, then I see that Edward needs must down.  
Yet, Warwick, in despite of all mischance,  
Of thee thyself and all thy complices,  
Edward will always bear himself as king:  
Though fortune's malice overthrow my state,  
My mind exceeds the compass of her wheel.

## WARWICK

Then, for his mind, be Edward England's king:

*Takes off his crown*

But Henry now shall wear the English crown,  
And be true king indeed, thou but the shadow.  
My Lord of Somerset, at my request,  
See that forthwith Duke Edward be convey'd  
Unto my brother, Archbishop of York.  
When I have fought with Pembroke and his fellows,  
I'll follow you, and tell what answer  
Lewis and the Lady Bona send to him.  
Now, for a while farewell, good Duke of York.

*They lead him out forcibly*

## KING EDWARD IV

What fates impose, that men must needs abide;  
It boots not to resist both wind and tide.

*Exit, guarded*

## OXFORD

What now remains, my lords, for us to do  
But march to London with our soldiers?

## WARWICK

Ay, that's the first thing that we have to do;  
To free King Henry from imprisonment  
And see him seated in the regal throne.

*Exeunt*

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. London. The palace.

*Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and RIVERS*

**RIVERS**

Madam, what makes you in this sudden change?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Why brother Rivers, are you yet to learn  
What late misfortune is befall'n King Edward?

**RIVERS**

What! loss of some pitch'd battle against Warwick?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

No, but the loss of his own royal person.

**RIVERS**

Then is my sovereign slain?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Ay, almost slain, for he is taken prisoner,  
Either betray'd by falsehood of his guard  
Or by his foe surprised at unawares:  
And, as I further have to understand,  
Is new committed to the Bishop of York,  
Fell Warwick's brother and by that our foe.

**RIVERS**

These news I must confess are full of grief;  
Yet, gracious madam, bear it as you may:  
Warwick may lose, that now hath won the day.

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

Till then fair hope must hinder life's decay.  
And I the rather wean me from despair  
For love of Edward's offspring in my womb:  
This is it that makes me bridle passion  
And bear with mildness my misfortune's cross;  
Ay, ay, for this I draw in many a tear  
And stop the rising of blood-sucking sighs,  
Lest with my sighs or tears I blast or drown  
King Edward's fruit, true heir to the English crown.

## RIVERS

But, madam, where is Warwick then become?

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

I am inform'd that he comes towards London,  
To set the crown once more on Henry's head:  
Guess thou the rest; King Edward's friends must down,  
But, to prevent the tyrant's violence,--  
For trust not him that hath once broken faith,--  
I'll hence forthwith unto the sanctuary,  
To save at least the heir of Edward's right:  
There shall I rest secure from force and fraud.  
Come, therefore, let us fly while we may fly:  
If Warwick take us we are sure to die.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. A park near Middleham Castle In Yorkshire.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, and STANLEY*

### GLOUCESTER

Now, my Lord Hastings and Sir William Stanley,  
Leave off to wonder why I drew you hither,  
Into this chiefest thicket of the park.  
Thus stands the case: you know our king, my brother,  
Is prisoner to the bishop here, at whose hands  
He hath good usage and great liberty,  
And, often but attended with weak guard,  
Comes hunting this way to disport himself.  
I have advertised him by secret means  
That if about this hour he make his way  
Under the colour of his usual game,  
He shall here find his friends with horse and men  
To set him free from his captivity.

*Enter KING EDWARD IV and a Huntsman with him*

### Huntsman

This way, my lord; for this way lies the game.

### KING EDWARD IV

Nay, this way, man: see where the huntsmen stand.  
Now, brother of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and the rest,  
Stand you thus close, to steal the bishop's deer?

### GLOUCESTER

Brother, the time and case requireth haste:  
Your horse stands ready at the park-corner.

**KING EDWARD IV**

But whither shall we then?

**HASTINGS**

To Lynn, my lord,  
And ship from thence to Flanders.

**GLOUCESTER**

Well guess'd, believe me; for that was my meaning.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Stanley, I will requite thy forwardness.

**GLOUCESTER**

But wherefore stay we? 'tis no time to talk.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Huntsman, what say'st thou? wilt thou go along?

**Huntsman**

Better do so than tarry and be hang'd.

**GLOUCESTER**

Come then, away; let's ha' no more ado.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Bishop, farewell: shield thee from Warwick's frown;  
And pray that I may repossess the crown.

*Exeunt*



# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. London. The Tower.

*Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, CLARENCE, WARWICK, SOMERSET, HENRY OF RICHMOND, OXFORD, MONTAGUE, and Lieutenant of the Tower*

### KING HENRY VI

Master lieutenant, now that God and friends  
Have shaken Edward from the regal seat,  
And turn'd my captive state to liberty,  
My fear to hope, my sorrows unto joys,  
At our enlargement what are thy due fees?

### Lieutenant

Subjects may challenge nothing of their sovereigns;  
But if an humble prayer may prevail,  
I then crave pardon of your majesty.

### KING HENRY VI

For what, lieutenant? for well using me?  
Nay, be thou sure I'll well requite thy kindness,  
For that it made my imprisonment a pleasure;  
Ay, such a pleasure as incaged birds  
Conceive when after many moody thoughts  
At last by notes of household harmony  
They quite forget their loss of liberty.  
But, Warwick, after God, thou set'st me free,  
And chiefly therefore I thank God and thee;  
He was the author, thou the instrument.  
Therefore, that I may conquer fortune's spite  
By living low, where fortune cannot hurt me,  
And that the people of this blessed land  
May not be punish'd with my thwarting stars,  
Warwick, although my head still wear the crown,



I here resign my government to thee,  
For thou art fortunate in all thy deeds.

## **WARWICK**

Your grace hath still been famed for virtuous;  
And now may seem as wise as virtuous,  
By spying and avoiding fortune's malice,  
For few men rightly temper with the stars:  
Yet in this one thing let me blame your grace,  
For choosing me when Clarence is in place.

## **CLARENCE**

No, Warwick, thou art worthy of the sway,  
To whom the heavens in thy nativity  
Adjudged an olive branch and laurel crown,  
As likely to be blest in peace and war;  
And therefore I yield thee my free consent.

## **WARWICK**

And I choose Clarence only for protector.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Warwick and Clarence give me both your hands:  
Now join your hands, and with your hands your hearts,  
That no dissension hinder government:  
I make you both protectors of this land,  
While I myself will lead a private life  
And in devotion spend my latter days,  
To sin's rebuke and my Creator's praise.

## **WARWICK**

What answers Clarence to his sovereign's will?

## **CLARENCE**

That he consents, if Warwick yield consent;  
For on thy fortune I repose myself.

## **WARWICK**

Why, then, though loath, yet must I be content:  
We'll yoke together, like a double shadow  
To Henry's body, and supply his place;  
I mean, in bearing weight of government,  
While he enjoys the honour and his ease.  
And, Clarence, now then it is more than needful  
Forthwith that Edward be pronounced a traitor,  
And all his lands and goods be confiscate.

## **CLARENCE**

What else? and that succession be determined.

## **WARWICK**

Ay, therein Clarence shall not want his part.

## **KING HENRY VI**

But, with the first of all your chief affairs,  
Let me entreat, for I command no more,  
That Margaret your queen and my son Edward  
Be sent for, to return from France with speed;  
For, till I see them here, by doubtful fear  
My joy of liberty is half eclipsed.

## **CLARENCE**

It shall be done, my sovereign, with all speed.

## **KING HENRY VI**

My Lord of Somerset, what youth is that,  
Of whom you seem to have so tender care?

## **SOMERSET**

My liege, it is young Henry, earl of Richmond.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Come hither, England's hope.

*Lays his hand on his head*

If secret powers  
Suggest but truth to my divining thoughts,  
This pretty lad will prove our country's bliss.  
His looks are full of peaceful majesty,  
His head by nature framed to wear a crown,  
His hand to wield a sceptre, and himself  
Likely in time to bless a regal throne.  
Make much of him, my lords, for this is he  
Must help you more than you are hurt by me.

*Enter a Post*

## **WARWICK**

What news, my friend?

**Post**

That Edward is escaped from your brother,  
And fled, as he hears since, to Burgundy.

## **WARWICK**

Unsavoury news! but how made he escape?

**Post**

He was convey'd by Richard Duke of Gloucester  
And the Lord Hastings, who attended him  
In secret ambush on the forest side  
And from the bishop's huntsmen rescued him;  
For hunting was his daily exercise.

## **WARWICK**

My brother was too careless of his charge.  
But let us hence, my sovereign, to provide  
A salve for any sore that may betide.

*Exeunt all but SOMERSET, HENRY OF RICHMOND, and OXFORD*

## **SOMERSET**

My lord, I like not of this flight of Edward's;  
For doubtless Burgundy will yield him help,  
And we shall have more wars before 't be long.  
As Henry's late presaging prophecy  
Did glad my heart with hope of this young Richmond,  
So doth my heart misgive me, in these conflicts  
What may befall him, to his harm and ours:  
Therefore, Lord Oxford, to prevent the worst,  
Forthwith we'll send him hence to Brittany,  
Till storms be past of civil enmity.

## **OXFORD**

Ay, for if Edward repossess the crown,  
'Tis like that Richmond with the rest shall down.

## **SOMERSET**

It shall be so; he shall to Brittany.  
Come, therefore, let's about it speedily.

*Exeunt*

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Before York.

*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, and Soldiers*

### KING EDWARD IV

Now, brother Richard, Lord Hastings, and the rest,  
Yet thus far fortune maketh us amends,  
And says that once more I shall interchange  
My waned state for Henry's regal crown.  
Well have we pass'd and now repass'd the seas  
And brought desired help from Burgundy:  
What then remains, we being thus arrived  
From Ravenspurgh haven before the gates of York,  
But that we enter, as into our dukedom?

### GLOUCESTER

The gates made fast! Brother, I like not this;  
For many men that stumble at the threshold  
Are well foretold that danger lurks within.

### KING EDWARD IV

Tush, man, abodements must not now affright us:  
By fair or foul means we must enter in,  
For hither will our friends repair to us.

### HASTINGS

My liege, I'll knock once more to summon them.

*Enter, on the walls, the Mayor of York, and his Brethren*

### Mayor

My lords, we were forewarned of your coming,  
And shut the gates for safety of ourselves;  
For now we owe allegiance unto Henry.

**KING EDWARD IV**

But, master mayor, if Henry be your king,  
Yet Edward at the least is Duke of York.

**Mayor**

True, my good lord; I know you for no less.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Why, and I challenge nothing but my dukedom,  
As being well content with that alone.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside] But when the fox hath once got in his nose,  
He'll soon find means to make the body follow.

**HASTINGS**

Why, master mayor, why stand you in a doubt?  
Open the gates; we are King Henry's friends.

**Mayor**

Ay, say you so? the gates shall then be open'd.

*They descend*

**GLOUCESTER**

A wise stout captain, and soon persuaded!

**HASTINGS**

The good old man would fain that all were well,

So 'twere not 'long of him; but being enter'd,  
I doubt not, I, but we shall soon persuade  
Both him and all his brothers unto reason.

*Enter the Mayor and two Aldermen, below*

**KING EDWARD IV**

So, master mayor: these gates must not be shut  
But in the night or in the time of war.  
What! fear not, man, but yield me up the keys;

*Takes his keys*

For Edward will defend the town and thee,  
And all those friends that deign to follow me.

*March. Enter MONTGOMERY, with drum and soldiers*

**GLOUCESTER**

Brother, this is Sir John Montgomery,  
Our trusty friend, unless I be deceived.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Welcome, Sir John! But why come you in arms?

**MONTAGUE**

To help King Edward in his time of storm,  
As every loyal subject ought to do.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Thanks, good Montgomery; but we now forget  
Our title to the crown and only claim  
Our dukedom till God please to send the rest.

**MONTAGUE**

Then fare you well, for I will hence again:  
I came to serve a king and not a duke.  
Drummer, strike up, and let us march away.

*The drum begins to march*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Nay, stay, Sir John, awhile, and we'll debate  
By what safe means the crown may be recover'd.

**MONTAGUE**

What talk you of debating? in few words,  
If you'll not here proclaim yourself our king,  
I'll leave you to your fortune and be gone  
To keep them back that come to succor you:  
Why shall we fight, if you pretend no title?

**GLOUCESTER**

Why, brother, wherefore stand you on nice points?

**KING EDWARD IV**

When we grow stronger, then we'll make our claim:  
Till then, 'tis wisdom to conceal our meaning.

**HASTINGS**

Away with scrupulous wit! now arms must rule.

**GLOUCESTER**

And fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns.  
Brother, we will proclaim you out of hand:  
The bruit thereof will bring you many friends.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Then be it as you will; for 'tis my right,



And Henry but usurps the diadem.

## **MONTAGUE**

Ay, now my sovereign speaketh like himself;  
And now will I be Edward's champion.

## **HASTINGS**

Sound trumpet; Edward shall be here proclaim'd:  
Come, fellow-soldier, make thou proclamation.

*Flourish*

## **Soldier**

Edward the Fourth, by the grace of God, king of  
England and France, and lord of Ireland, & c.

## **MONTAGUE**

And whosoe'er gainsays King Edward's right,  
By this I challenge him to single fight.

*Throws down his gauntlet*

## **All**

Long live Edward the Fourth!

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Thanks, brave Montgomery; and thanks unto you all:  
If fortune serve me, I'll requite this kindness.  
Now, for this night, let's harbour here in York;  
And when the morning sun shall raise his car  
Above the border of this horizon,  
We'll forward towards Warwick and his mates;  
For well I wot that Henry is no soldier.  
Ah, froward Clarence! how evil it beseems thee  
To flatter Henry and forsake thy brother!

Yet, as we may, we'll meet both thee and Warwick.  
Come on, brave soldiers: doubt not of the day,  
And, that once gotten, doubt not of large pay.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. London. The palace.

*Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VI, WARWICK, MONTAGUE, CLARENCE, EXETER, and OXFORD*

### WARWICK

What counsel, lords? Edward from Belgia,  
With hasty Germans and blunt Hollanders,  
Hath pass'd in safety through the narrow seas,  
And with his troops doth march amain to London;  
And many giddy people flock to him.

### KING HENRY VI

Let's levy men, and beat him back again.

### CLARENCE

A little fire is quickly trodden out;  
Which, being suffer'd, rivers cannot quench.

### WARWICK

In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,  
Not mutinous in peace, yet bold in war;  
Those will I muster up: and thou, son Clarence,  
Shalt stir up in Suffolk, Norfolk, and in Kent,  
The knights and gentlemen to come with thee:  
Thou, brother Montague, in Buckingham,  
Northampton and in Leicestershire, shalt find  
Men well inclined to hear what thou command'st:  
And thou, brave Oxford, wondrous well beloved,  
In Oxfordshire shalt muster up thy friends.  
My sovereign, with the loving citizens,  
Like to his island girt in with the ocean,

Or modest Dian circled with her nymphs,  
Shall rest in London till we come to him.  
Fair lords, take leave and stand not to reply.  
Farewell, my sovereign.

**KING HENRY VI**

Farewell, my Hector, and my Troy's true hope.

**CLARENCE**

In sign of truth, I kiss your highness' hand.

**KING HENRY VI**

Well-minded Clarence, be thou fortunate!

**MONTAGUE**

Comfort, my lord; and so I take my leave.

**OXFORD**

And thus I seal my truth, and bid adieu.

**KING HENRY VI**

Sweet Oxford, and my loving Montague,  
And all at once, once more a happy farewell.

**WARWICK**

Farewell, sweet lords: let's meet at Coventry.

*Exeunt all but KING HENRY VI and EXETER*

**KING HENRY VI**

Here at the palace I will rest awhile.  
Cousin of Exeter, what thinks your lordship?  
Methinks the power that Edward hath in field

Should not be able to encounter mine.

## **EXETER**

The doubt is that he will seduce the rest.

## **KING HENRY VI**

That's not my fear; my meed hath got me fame:  
I have not stopp'd mine ears to their demands,  
Nor posted off their suits with slow delays;  
My pity hath been balm to heal their wounds,  
My mildness hath allay'd their swelling griefs,  
My mercy dried their water-flowing tears;  
I have not been desirous of their wealth,  
Nor much oppress'd them with great subsidies.  
Nor forward of revenge, though they much err'd:  
Then why should they love Edward more than me?  
No, Exeter, these graces challenge grace:  
And when the lion fawns upon the lamb,  
The lamb will never cease to follow him.

*Shout within. 'A Lancaster! A Lancaster!'*

## **EXETER**

Hark, hark, my lord! what shouts are these?

*Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, and soldiers*

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Seize on the shame-faced Henry, bear him hence;  
And once again proclaim us King of England.  
You are the fount that makes small brooks to flow:  
Now stops thy spring; my sea shall suck them dry,  
And swell so much the higher by their ebb.  
Hence with him to the Tower; let him not speak.

*Exeunt some with KING HENRY VI*

And, lords, towards Coventry bend we our course

Where peremptory Warwick now remains:  
The sun shines hot; and, if we use delay,  
Cold biting winter mars our hoped-for hay.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Away betimes, before his forces join,  
And take the great-grown traitor unawares:  
Brave warriors, march amain towards Coventry.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 4, Scene 8  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Coventry.

*Enter WARWICK, the Mayor of Coventry, two Messengers, and others upon the walls*

**WARWICK**

Where is the post that came from valiant Oxford?  
How far hence is thy lord, mine honest fellow?

**First Messenger**

By this at Dunsmore, marching hitherward.

**WARWICK**

How far off is our brother Montague?  
Where is the post that came from Montague?

**Second Messenger**

By this at Daintry, with a puissant troop.

*Enter SIR JOHN SOMERVILLE*

**WARWICK**

Say, Somerville, what says my loving son?  
And, by thy guess, how nigh is Clarence now?

**SOMERSET**

At Southam I did leave him with his forces,  
And do expect him here some two hours hence.

*Drum heard*

**WARWICK**

Then Clarence is at hand, I hear his drum.

**SOMERSET**

It is not his, my lord; here Southam lies:  
The drum your honour hears marcheth from Warwick.

**WARWICK**

Who should that be? belike, unlook'd-for friends.

**SOMERSET**

They are at hand, and you shall quickly know.

*March: flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, and soldiers*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Go, trumpet, to the walls, and sound a parle.

**GLOUCESTER**

See how the surly Warwick mans the wall!

**WARWICK**

O unbid spite! is sportful Edward come?  
Where slept our scouts, or how are they seduced,  
That we could hear no news of his repair?

**KING EDWARD IV**

Now, Warwick, wilt thou ope the city gates,  
Speak gentle words and humbly bend thy knee,  
Call Edward king and at his hands beg mercy?  
And he shall pardon thee these outrages.

**WARWICK**



Nay, rather, wilt thou draw thy forces hence,  
Confess who set thee up and pluck'd thee own,  
Call Warwick patron and be penitent?  
And thou shalt still remain the Duke of York.

**GLOUCESTER**

I thought, at least, he would have said the king;  
Or did he make the jest against his will?

**WARWICK**

Is not a dukedom, sir, a goodly gift?

**GLOUCESTER**

Ay, by my faith, for a poor earl to give:  
I'll do thee service for so good a gift.

**WARWICK**

'Twas I that gave the kingdom to thy brother.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Why then 'tis mine, if but by Warwick's gift.

**WARWICK**

Thou art no Atlas for so great a weight:  
And weakling, Warwick takes his gift again;  
And Henry is my king, Warwick his subject.

**KING EDWARD IV**

But Warwick's king is Edward's prisoner:  
And, gallant Warwick, do but answer this:  
What is the body when the head is off?

**GLOUCESTER**

Alas, that Warwick had no more forecast,  
But, whiles he thought to steal the single ten,  
The king was slyly finger'd from the deck!  
You left poor Henry at the Bishop's palace,  
And, ten to one, you'll meet him in the Tower.

## **EDWARD**

'Tis even so; yet you are Warwick still.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Come, Warwick, take the time; kneel down, kneel down:  
Nay, when? strike now, or else the iron cools.

## **WARWICK**

I had rather chop this hand off at a blow,  
And with the other fling it at thy face,  
Than bear so low a sail, to strike to thee.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Sail how thou canst, have wind and tide thy friend,  
This hand, fast wound about thy coal-black hair  
Shall, whiles thy head is warm and new cut off,  
Write in the dust this sentence with thy blood,  
'Wind-changing Warwick now can change no more.'

*Enter OXFORD, with drum and colours*

## **WARWICK**

O cheerful colours! see where Oxford comes!

## **OXFORD**

Oxford, Oxford, for Lancaster!

*He and his forces enter the city*

## **GLOUCESTER**

The gates are open, let us enter too.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

So other foes may set upon our backs.  
Stand we in good array; for they no doubt  
Will issue out again and bid us battle:  
If not, the city being but of small defence,  
We'll quickly rouse the traitors in the same.

## **WARWICK**

O, welcome, Oxford! for we want thy help.

*Enter MONTAGUE with drum and colours*

## **MONTAGUE**

Montague, Montague, for Lancaster!

*He and his forces enter the city*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Thou and thy brother both shall buy this treason  
Even with the dearest blood your bodies bear.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

The harder match'd, the greater victory:  
My mind presageth happy gain and conquest.

*Enter SOMERSET, with drum and colours*

## **SOMERSET**

Somerset, Somerset, for Lancaster!

*He and his forces enter the city*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Two of thy name, both Dukes of Somerset,  
Have sold their lives unto the house of York;  
And thou shalt be the third if this sword hold.

*Enter CLARENCE, with drum and colours*

## **WARWICK**

And lo, where George of Clarence sweeps along,  
Of force enough to bid his brother battle;  
With whom an upright zeal to right prevails  
More than the nature of a brother's love!  
Come, Clarence, come; thou wilt, if Warwick call.

## **CLARENCE**

Father of Warwick, know you what this means?

*Taking his red rose out of his hat*

Look here, I throw my infamy at thee  
I will not ruinate my father's house,  
Who gave his blood to lime the stones together,  
And set up Lancaster. Why, trow'st thou, Warwick,  
That Clarence is so harsh, so blunt, unnatural,  
To bend the fatal instruments of war  
Against his brother and his lawful king?  
Perhaps thou wilt object my holy oath:  
To keep that oath were more impiety  
Than Jephthah's, when he sacrificed his daughter.  
I am so sorry for my trespass made  
That, to deserve well at my brother's hands,  
I here proclaim myself thy mortal foe,  
With resolution, wheresoe'er I meet thee--  
As I will meet thee, if thou stir abroad--  
To plague thee for thy foul misleading me.  
And so, proud-hearted Warwick, I defy thee,  
And to my brother turn my blushing cheeks.

Pardon me, Edward, I will make amends:  
And, Richard, do not frown upon my faults,  
For I will henceforth be no more unconstant.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Now welcome more, and ten times more beloved,  
Than if thou never hadst deserved our hate.

**GLOUCESTER**

Welcome, good Clarence; this is brotherlike.

**WARWICK**

O passing traitor, perjured and unjust!

**KING EDWARD IV**

What, Warwick, wilt thou leave the town and fight?  
Or shall we beat the stones about thine ears?

**WARWICK**

Alas, I am not coop'd here for defence!  
I will away towards Barnet presently,  
And bid thee battle, Edward, if thou darest.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Yes, Warwick, Edward dares, and leads the way.  
Lords, to the field; Saint George and victory!

*Exeunt King Edward and his company. March. Warwick and his company follow*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A field of battle near Barnet.

*Alarum and excursions. Enter KING EDWARD IV, bringing forth WARWICK wounded*

### KING EDWARD IV

So, lie thou there: die thou, and die our fear;  
For Warwick was a bug that fear'd us all.  
Now, Montague, sit fast; I seek for thee,  
That Warwick's bones may keep thine company.

*Exit*

### WARWICK

Ah, who is nigh? come to me, friend or foe,  
And tell me who is victor, York or Warwick?  
Why ask I that? my mangled body shows,  
My blood, my want of strength, my sick heart shows.  
That I must yield my body to the earth  
And, by my fall, the conquest to my foe.  
Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,  
Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,  
Under whose shade the ramping lion slept,  
Whose top-branch overpeer'd Jove's spreading tree  
And kept low shrubs from winter's powerful wind.  
These eyes, that now are dimm'd with death's black veil,  
Have been as piercing as the mid-day sun,  
To search the secret treasons of the world:  
The wrinkles in my brows, now filled with blood,  
Were liken'd oft to kingly sepulchres;  
For who lived king, but I could dig his grave?  
And who durst mine when Warwick bent his brow?  
Lo, now my glory smear'd in dust and blood!  
My parks, my walks, my manors that I had.  
Even now forsake me, and of all my lands  
Is nothing left me but my body's length.

Why, what is pomp, rule, reign, but earth and dust?  
And, live we how we can, yet die we must.

*Enter OXFORD and SOMERSET*

**SOMERSET**

Ah, Warwick, Warwick! wert thou as we are.  
We might recover all our loss again;  
The queen from France hath brought a puissant power:  
Even now we heard the news: ah, could'st thou fly!

**WARWICK**

Why, then I would not fly. Ah, Montague,  
If thou be there, sweet brother, take my hand.  
And with thy lips keep in my soul awhile!  
Thou lovest me not; for, brother, if thou didst,  
Thy tears would wash this cold congealed blood  
That glues my lips and will not let me speak.  
Come quickly, Montague, or I am dead.

**SOMERSET**

Ah, Warwick! Montague hath breathed his last;  
And to the latest gasp cried out for Warwick,  
And said 'Commend me to my valiant brother.'  
And more he would have said, and more he spoke,  
Which sounded like a clamour in a vault,  
That mought not be distinguished; but at last  
I well might hear, delivered with a groan,  
'O, farewell, Warwick!'

**WARWICK**

Sweet rest his soul! Fly, lords, and save yourselves;  
For Warwick bids you all farewell to meet in heaven.

*Dies*

**OXFORD**

Away, away, to meet the queen's great power!

*Here they bear away his body. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another part of the field.

*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV in triumph; with GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and the rest*

### KING EDWARD IV

Thus far our fortune keeps an upward course,  
And we are graced with wreaths of victory.  
But, in the midst of this bright-shining day,  
I spy a black, suspicious, threatening cloud,  
That will encounter with our glorious sun,  
Ere he attain his easeful western bed:  
I mean, my lords, those powers that the queen  
Hath raised in Gallia have arrived our coast  
And, as we hear, march on to fight with us.

### CLARENCE

A little gale will soon disperse that cloud  
And blow it to the source from whence it came:  
The very beams will dry those vapours up,  
For every cloud engenders not a storm.

### GLOUCESTER

The queen is valued thirty thousand strong,  
And Somerset, with Oxford fled to her:  
If she have time to breathe be well assured  
Her faction will be full as strong as ours.

### KING EDWARD IV

We are advertised by our loving friends  
That they do hold their course toward Tewksbury:  
We, having now the best at Barnet field,

Will thither straight, for willingness rids way;  
And, as we march, our strength will be augmented  
In every county as we go along.  
Strike up the drum; cry 'Courage!' and away.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Plains near Tewksbury.

*March. Enter QUEEN MARGARET, PRINCE EDWARD, SOMERSET, OXFORD, and soldiers*

### QUEEN MARGARET

Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,  
But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.  
What though the mast be now blown overboard,  
The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost,  
And half our sailors swallow'd in the flood?  
Yet lives our pilot still. Is't meet that he  
Should leave the helm and like a fearful lad  
With tearful eyes add water to the sea  
And give more strength to that which hath too much,  
Whiles, in his moan, the ship splits on the rock,  
Which industry and courage might have saved?  
Ah, what a shame! ah, what a fault were this!  
Say Warwick was our anchor; what of that?  
And Montague our topmost; what of him?  
Our slaughter'd friends the tackles; what of these?  
Why, is not Oxford here another anchor?  
And Somerset another goodly mast?  
The friends of France our shrouds and tacklings?  
And, though unskilful, why not Ned and I  
For once allow'd the skilful pilot's charge?  
We will not from the helm to sit and weep,  
But keep our course, though the rough wind say no,  
From shelves and rocks that threaten us with wreck.  
As good to chide the waves as speak them fair.  
And what is Edward but ruthless sea?  
What Clarence but a quicksand of deceit?  
And Richard but a ragged fatal rock?  
All these the enemies to our poor bark.  
Say you can swim; alas, 'tis but a while!  
Tread on the sand; why, there you quickly sink:

Bestride the rock; the tide will wash you off,  
Or else you famish; that's a threefold death.  
This speak I, lords, to let you understand,  
If case some one of you would fly from us,  
That there's no hoped-for mercy with the brothers  
More than with ruthless waves, with sands and rocks.  
Why, courage then! what cannot be avoided  
'Twere childish weakness to lament or fear.

### **PRINCE EDWARD**

Methinks a woman of this valiant spirit  
Should, if a coward heard her speak these words,  
Infuse his breast with magnanimity  
And make him, naked, foil a man at arms.  
I speak not this as doubting any here  
For did I but suspect a fearful man  
He should have leave to go away betimes,  
Lest in our need he might infect another  
And make him of like spirit to himself.  
If any such be here--as God forbid!--  
Let him depart before we need his help.

### **OXFORD**

Women and children of so high a courage,  
And warriors faint! why, 'twere perpetual shame.  
O brave young prince! thy famous grandfather  
Doth live again in thee: long mayst thou live  
To bear his image and renew his glories!

### **SOMERSET**

And he that will not fight for such a hope.  
Go home to bed, and like the owl by day,  
If he arise, be mock'd and wonder'd at.

### **QUEEN MARGARET**

Thanks, gentle Somerset; sweet Oxford, thanks.

### **PRINCE EDWARD**

And take his thanks that yet hath nothing else.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Prepare you, lords, for Edward is at hand.  
Ready to fight; therefore be resolute.

**OXFORD**

I thought no less: it is his policy  
To haste thus fast, to find us unprovided.

**SOMERSET**

But he's deceived; we are in readiness.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

This cheers my heart, to see your forwardness.

**OXFORD**

Here pitch our battle; hence we will not budge.

*Flourish and march. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and soldiers*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Brave followers, yonder stands the thorny wood,  
Which, by the heavens' assistance and your strength,  
Must by the roots be hewn up yet ere night.  
I need not add more fuel to your fire,  
For well I wot ye blaze to burn them out  
Give signal to the fight, and to it, lords!

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Lords, knights, and gentlemen, what I should say  
My tears gainsay; for every word I speak,  
Ye see, I drink the water of mine eyes.  
Therefore, no more but this: Henry, your sovereign,  
Is prisoner to the foe; his state usurp'd,  
His realm a slaughter-house, his subjects slain,  
His statutes cancell'd and his treasure spent;  
And yonder is the wolf that makes this spoil.  
You fight in justice: then, in God's name, lords,  
Be valiant and give signal to the fight.

*Alarum. Retreat. Excursions. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the field.

*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, GLOUCESTER, CLARENCE, and soldiers; with QUEEN MARGARET, OXFORD, and SOMERSET, prisoners*

### KING EDWARD IV

Now here a period of tumultuous broils.  
Away with Oxford to Hames Castle straight:  
For Somerset, off with his guilty head.  
Go, bear them hence; I will not hear them speak.

### OXFORD

For my part, I'll not trouble thee with words.

### SOMERSET

Nor I, but stoop with patience to my fortune.

*Exeunt Oxford and Somerset, guarded*

### QUEEN MARGARET

So part we sadly in this troublous world,  
To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.

### KING EDWARD IV

Is proclamation made, that who finds Edward  
Shall have a high reward, and he his life?

### GLOUCESTER

It is: and lo, where youthful Edward comes!

*Enter soldiers, with PRINCE EDWARD*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Bring forth the gallant, let us hear him speak.  
What! can so young a thorn begin to prick?  
Edward, what satisfaction canst thou make  
For bearing arms, for stirring up my subjects,  
And all the trouble thou hast turn'd me to?

**PRINCE EDWARD**

Speak like a subject, proud ambitious York!  
Suppose that I am now my father's mouth;  
Resign thy chair, and where I stand kneel thou,  
Whilst I propose the selfsame words to thee,  
Which traitor, thou wouldst have me answer to.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Ah, that thy father had been so resolved!

**GLOUCESTER**

That you might still have worn the petticoat,  
And ne'er have stol'n the breech from Lancaster.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

Let AEsop fable in a winter's night;  
His currish riddles sort not with this place.

**GLOUCESTER**

By heaven, brat, I'll plague ye for that word.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Ay, thou wast born to be a plague to men.

**GLOUCESTER**



For God's sake, take away this captive scold.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

Nay, take away this scolding crookback rather.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Peace, wilful boy, or I will charm your tongue.

**CLARENCE**

Untutor'd lad, thou art too malapert.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

I know my duty; you are all undutiful:  
Lascivious Edward, and thou perjured George,  
And thou mis-shapen Dick, I tell ye all  
I am your better, traitors as ye are:  
And thou usurp'st my father's right and mine.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Take that, thou likeness of this railer here.

*Stabs him*

**GLOUCESTER**

Sprawl'st thou? take that, to end thy agony.

*Stabs him*

**CLARENCE**

And there's for twitting me with perjury.

*Stabs him*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

O, kill me too!

**GLOUCESTER**

Marry, and shall.

*Offers to kill her*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Hold, Richard, hold; for we have done too much.

**GLOUCESTER**

Why should she live, to fill the world with words?

**KING EDWARD IV**

What, doth she swoon? use means for her recovery.

**GLOUCESTER**

Clarence, excuse me to the king my brother;  
I'll hence to London on a serious matter:  
Ere ye come there, be sure to hear some news.

**CLARENCE**

What? what?

**GLOUCESTER**

The Tower, the Tower.

*Exit*

**QUEEN MARGARET**

O Ned, sweet Ned! speak to thy mother, boy!

Canst thou not speak? O traitors! murderers!  
They that stabb'd Caesar shed no blood at all,  
Did not offend, nor were not worthy blame,  
If this foul deed were by to equal it:  
He was a man; this, in respect, a child:  
And men ne'er spend their fury on a child.  
What's worse than murderer, that I may name it?  
No, no, my heart will burst, and if I speak:  
And I will speak, that so my heart may burst.  
Butchers and villains! bloody cannibals!  
How sweet a plant have you untimely cropp'd!  
You have no children, butchers! if you had,  
The thought of them would have stirr'd up remorse:  
But if you ever chance to have a child,  
Look in his youth to have him so cut off  
As, deathmen, you have rid this sweet young prince!

#### **KING EDWARD IV**

Away with her; go, bear her hence perforce.

#### **QUEEN MARGARET**

Nay, never bear me hence, dispatch me here,  
Here sheathe thy sword, I'll pardon thee my death:  
What, wilt thou not? then, Clarence, do it thou.

#### **CLARENCE**

By heaven, I will not do thee so much ease.

#### **QUEEN MARGARET**

Good Clarence, do; sweet Clarence, do thou do it.

#### **CLARENCE**

Didst thou not hear me swear I would not do it?

#### **QUEEN MARGARET**

Ay, but thou usest to forswear thyself:

'Twas sin before, but now 'tis charity.  
What, wilt thou not? Where is that devil's butcher,  
Hard-favour'd Richard? Richard, where art thou?  
Thou art not here: murder is thy alms-deed;  
Petitioners for blood thou ne'er put'st back.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Away, I say; I charge ye, bear her hence.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

So come to you and yours, as to this Prince!

*Exit, led out forcibly*

**KING EDWARD IV**

Where's Richard gone?

**CLARENCE**

To London, all in post; and, as I guess,  
To make a bloody supper in the Tower.

**KING EDWARD IV**

He's sudden, if a thing comes in his head.  
Now march we hence: discharge the common sort  
With pay and thanks, and let's away to London  
And see our gentle queen how well she fares:  
By this, I hope, she hath a son for me.

*Exeunt*

# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. London. The Tower.

*Enter KING HENRY VI and GLOUCESTER, with the Lieutenant, on the walls*

### GLOUCESTER

Good day, my lord. What, at your book so hard?

### KING HENRY VI

Ay, my good lord:--my lord, I should say rather;  
'Tis sin to flatter; 'good' was little better:  
'Good Gloucester' and 'good devil' were alike,  
And both preposterous; therefore, not 'good lord.'

### GLOUCESTER

Sirrah, leave us to ourselves: we must confer.

*Exit Lieutenant*

### KING HENRY VI

So flies the reckless shepherd from the wolf;  
So first the harmless sheep doth yield his fleece  
And next his throat unto the butcher's knife.  
What scene of death hath Roscius now to act?

### GLOUCESTER

Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind;  
The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

### KING HENRY VI

The bird that hath been limed in a bush,

With trembling wings misdoubteth every bush;  
And I, the hapless male to one sweet bird,  
Have now the fatal object in my eye  
Where my poor young was limed, was caught and kill'd.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Why, what a peevish fool was that of Crete,  
That taught his son the office of a fowl!  
An yet, for all his wings, the fool was drown'd.

## **KING HENRY VI**

I, Daedalus; my poor boy, Icarus;  
Thy father, Minos, that denied our course;  
The sun that sear'd the wings of my sweet boy  
Thy brother Edward, and thyself the sea  
Whose envious gulf did swallow up his life.  
Ah, kill me with thy weapon, not with words!  
My breast can better brook thy dagger's point  
Than can my ears that tragic history.  
But wherefore dost thou come? is't for my life?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Think'st thou I am an executioner?

## **KING HENRY VI**

A persecutor, I am sure, thou art:  
If murdering innocents be executing,  
Why, then thou art an executioner.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Thy son I kill'd for his presumption.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Hadst thou been kill'd when first thou didst presume,  
Thou hadst not lived to kill a son of mine.

And thus I prophesy, that many a thousand,  
Which now mistrust no parcel of my fear,  
And many an old man's sigh and many a widow's,  
And many an orphan's water-standing eye--  
Men for their sons, wives for their husbands,  
And orphans for their parents timeless death--  
Shall rue the hour that ever thou wast born.  
The owl shriek'd at thy birth,--an evil sign;  
The night-crow cried, aboding luckless time;  
Dogs howl'd, and hideous tempest shook down trees;  
The raven rook'd her on the chimney's top,  
And chattering pies in dismal discords sung.  
Thy mother felt more than a mother's pain,  
And, yet brought forth less than a mother's hope,  
To wit, an indigested and deformed lump,  
Not like the fruit of such a goodly tree.  
Teeth hadst thou in thy head when thou wast born,  
To signify thou camest to bite the world:  
And, if the rest be true which I have heard,  
Thou camest--

## **GLOUCESTER**

I'll hear no more: die, prophet in thy speech:

*Stabs him*

For this amongst the rest, was I ordain'd.

## **KING HENRY VI**

Ay, and for much more slaughter after this.  
God forgive my sins, and pardon thee!

*Dies*

## **GLOUCESTER**

What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster  
Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted.  
See how my sword weeps for the poor king's death!  
O, may such purple tears be always shed

From those that wish the downfall of our house!  
If any spark of life be yet remaining,  
Down, down to hell; and say I sent thee thither:

*Stabs him again*

I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.  
Indeed, 'tis true that Henry told me of;  
For I have often heard my mother say  
I came into the world with my legs forward:  
Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,  
And seek their ruin that usurp'd our right?  
The midwife wonder'd and the women cried  
'O, Jesus bless us, he is born with teeth!'  
And so I was; which plainly signified  
That I should snarl and bite and play the dog.  
Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,  
Let hell make crook'd my mind to answer it.  
I have no brother, I am like no brother;  
And this word 'love,' which graybeards call divine,  
Be resident in men like one another  
And not in me: I am myself alone.  
Clarence, beware; thou keep'st me from the light:  
But I will sort a pitchy day for thee;  
For I will buz abroad such prophecies  
That Edward shall be fearful of his life,  
And then, to purge his fear, I'll be thy death.  
King Henry and the prince his son are gone:  
Clarence, thy turn is next, and then the rest,  
Counting myself but bad till I be best.  
I'll throw thy body in another room  
And triumph, Henry, in thy day of doom.

*Exit, with the body*



# The Third part of King Henry the Sixth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VI, part 3](#) | Act 5, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE VII. London. The palace.

*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV, QUEEN ELIZABETH, CLARENCE, GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, a Nurse with the young Prince, and Attendants*

### KING EDWARD IV

Once more we sit in England's royal throne,  
Re-purchased with the blood of enemies.  
What valiant foemen, like to autumn's corn,  
Have we mow'd down, in tops of all their pride!  
Three Dukes of Somerset, threefold renown'd  
For hardy and undoubted champions;  
Two Cliffords, as the father and the son,  
And two Northumberlands; two braver men  
Ne'er spurr'd their coursers at the trumpet's sound;  
With them, the two brave bears, Warwick and Montague,  
That in their chains fetter'd the kingly lion  
And made the forest tremble when they roar'd.  
Thus have we swept suspicion from our seat  
And made our footstool of security.  
Come hither, Bess, and let me kiss my boy.  
Young Ned, for thee, thine uncles and myself  
Have in our armours watch'd the winter's night,  
Went all afoot in summer's scalding heat,  
That thou mightst repossess the crown in peace;  
And of our labours thou shalt reap the gain.

### GLOUCESTER

[Aside] I'll blast his harvest, if your head were laid;  
For yet I am not look'd on in the world.  
This shoulder was ordain'd so thick to heave;  
And heave it shall some weight, or break my back:  
Work thou the way,--and thou shalt execute.

### KING EDWARD IV

Clarence and Gloucester, love my lovely queen;  
And kiss your princely nephew, brothers both.

**CLARENCE**

The duty that I owe unto your majesty  
I seal upon the lips of this sweet babe.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Thanks, noble Clarence; worthy brother, thanks.

**GLOUCESTER**

And, that I love the tree from whence thou sprang'st,  
Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.

*Aside*

And cried 'all hail!' when as he meant all harm.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Now am I seated as my soul delights,  
Having my country's peace and brothers' loves.

**CLARENCE**

What will your grace have done with Margaret?  
Reignier, her father, to the king of France  
Hath pawn'd the Sicils and Jerusalem,  
And hither have they sent it for her ransom.

**KING EDWARD IV**

Away with her, and waft her hence to France.  
And now what rests but that we spend the time  
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows,  
Such as befits the pleasure of the court?  
Sound drums and trumpets! farewell sour annoy!

For here, I hope, begins our lasting joy.

*Exeunt*

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Henry VIII

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 1, Scene 1: [London. An ante-chamber in the palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The same. The council-chamber.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [An ante-chamber in the palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [A Hall in York Place.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Westminster. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [An ante-chamber in the palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [An ante-chamber of the QUEEN'S apartments.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [A hall in Black-Friars.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [London. QUEEN KATHARINE's apartments.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Ante-chamber to KING HENRY VIII's apartment.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [A street in Westminster.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Kimbolton.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [London. A gallery in the palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Before the council-chamber. Pursuivants, Pages, & c.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [The Council-Chamber.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [The palace yard.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [The palace.](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Prologue

[Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

I come no more to make you laugh: things now,  
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,  
Sad, high, and working, full of state and woe,  
Such noble scenes as draw the eye to flow,  
We now present. Those that can pity, here  
May, if they think it well, let fall a tear;  
The subject will deserve it. Such as give  
Their money out of hope they may believe,  
May here find truth too. Those that come to see  
Only a show or two, and so agree  
The play may pass, if they be still and willing,  
I'll undertake may see away their shilling  
Richly in two short hours. Only they  
That come to hear a merry bawdy play,  
A noise of targets, or to see a fellow  
In a long motley coat guarded with yellow,  
Will be deceived; for, gentle hearers, know,  
To rank our chosen truth with such a show  
As fool and fight is, beside forfeiting  
Our own brains, and the opinion that we bring,  
To make that only true we now intend,  
Will leave us never an understanding friend.  
Therefore, for goodness' sake, and as you are known  
The first and happiest hearers of the town,  
Be sad, as we would make ye: think ye see  
The very persons of our noble story  
As they were living; think you see them great,  
And follow'd with the general throng and sweat  
Of thousand friends; then in a moment, see  
How soon this mightiness meets misery:  
And, if you can be merry then, I'll say  
A man may weep upon his wedding-day.

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Prologue

[Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. An ante-chamber in the palace.

*Enter NORFOLK at one door; at the other, BUCKINGHAM and ABERGAVENNY*

### BUCKINGHAM

Good morrow, and well met. How have ye done  
Since last we saw in France?

### NORFOLK

I thank your grace,  
Healthful; and ever since a fresh admirer  
Of what I saw there.

### BUCKINGHAM

An untimely ague  
Stay'd me a prisoner in my chamber when  
Those suns of glory, those two lights of men,  
Met in the vale of Andren.

### NORFOLK

'Twixt Guynes and Arde:  
I was then present, saw them salute on horseback;  
Beheld them, when they lighted, how they clung  
In their embracement, as they grew together;  
Which had they, what four throned ones could have weigh'd  
Such a compounded one?

### BUCKINGHAM

All the whole time  
I was my chamber's prisoner.

## NORFOLK

Then you lost  
The view of earthly glory: men might say,  
Till this time pomp was single, but now married  
To one above itself. Each following day  
Became the next day's master, till the last  
Made former wonders its. To-day the French,  
All clinquant, all in gold, like heathen gods,  
Shone down the English; and, to-morrow, they  
Made Britain India: every man that stood  
Show'd like a mine. Their dwarfish pages were  
As cherubins, all guilt: the madams too,  
Not used to toil, did almost sweat to bear  
The pride upon them, that their very labour  
Was to them as a painting: now this masque  
Was cried incomparable; and the ensuing night  
Made it a fool and beggar. The two kings,  
Equal in lustre, were now best, now worst,  
As presence did present them; him in eye,  
Still him in praise: and, being present both  
'Twas said they saw but one; and no discerners  
Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns--  
For so they phrase 'em--by their heralds challenged  
The noble spirits to arms, they did perform  
Beyond thought's compass; that former fabulous story,  
Being now seen possible enough, got credit,  
That Bevis was believed.

## BUCKINGHAM

O, you go far.

## NORFOLK

As I belong to worship and affect  
In honour honesty, the tract of every thing  
Would by a good discourser lose some life,  
Which action's self was tongue to. All was royal;  
To the disposing of it nought rebell'd.  
Order gave each thing view; the office did  
Distinctly his full function.



## **BUCKINGHAM**

Who did guide,  
I mean, who set the body and the limbs  
Of this great sport together, as you guess?

## **NORFOLK**

One, certes, that promises no element  
In such a business.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

I pray you, who, my lord?

## **NORFOLK**

All this was order'd by the good discretion  
Of the right reverend Cardinal of York.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

The devil speed him! no man's pie is freed  
From his ambitious finger. What had he  
To do in these fierce vanities? I wonder  
That such a keech can with his very bulk  
Take up the rays o' the beneficial sun  
And keep it from the earth.

## **NORFOLK**

Surely, sir,  
There's in him stuff that puts him to these ends;  
For, being not propp'd by ancestry, whose grace  
Chalks successors their way, nor call'd upon  
For high feats done to the crown; neither allied  
For eminent assistants; but, spider-like,  
Out of his self-drawing web, he gives us note,  
The force of his own merit makes his way  
A gift that heaven gives for him, which buys  
A place next to the king.

## **ABERGAVENNY**

I cannot tell  
What heaven hath given him,--let some graver eye  
Pierce into that; but I can see his pride  
Peep through each part of him: whence has he that,  
If not from hell? the devil is a niggard,  
Or has given all before, and he begins  
A new hell in himself.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Why the devil,  
Upon this French going out, took he upon him,  
Without the privity o' the king, to appoint  
Who should attend on him? He makes up the file  
Of all the gentry; for the most part such  
To whom as great a charge as little honour  
He meant to lay upon: and his own letter,  
The honourable board of council out,  
Must fetch him in the papers.

## **ABERGAVENNY**

I do know  
Kinsmen of mine, three at the least, that have  
By this so sickened their estates, that never  
They shall abound as formerly.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

O, many  
Have broke their backs with laying manors on 'em  
For this great journey. What did this vanity  
But minister communication of  
A most poor issue?

## **NORFOLK**

Grievingly I think,  
The peace between the French and us not values

The cost that did conclude it.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Every man,  
After the hideous storm that follow'd, was  
A thing inspired; and, not consulting, broke  
Into a general prophecy; That this tempest,  
Dashing the garment of this peace, aboded  
The sudden breach on't.

## **NORFOLK**

Which is budded out;  
For France hath flaw'd the league, and hath attach'd  
Our merchants' goods at Bourdeaux.

## **ABERGAVENNY**

Is it therefore  
The ambassador is silenced?

## **NORFOLK**

Marry, is't.

## **ABERGAVENNY**

A proper title of a peace; and purchased  
At a superfluous rate!

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Why, all this business  
Our reverend cardinal carried.

## **NORFOLK**

Like it your grace,  
The state takes notice of the private difference  
Betwixt you and the cardinal. I advise you--

And take it from a heart that wishes towards you  
Honour and plenteous safety--that you read  
The cardinal's malice and his potency  
Together; to consider further that  
What his high hatred would effect wants not  
A minister in his power. You know his nature,  
That he's revengeful, and I know his sword  
Hath a sharp edge: it's long and, 't may be said,  
It reaches far, and where 'twill not extend,  
Thither he darts it. Bosom up my counsel,  
You'll find it wholesome. Lo, where comes that rock  
That I advise your shunning.

*Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY, the purse borne before him, certain of the Guard, and two Secretaries with papers. CARDINAL WOLSEY in his passage fixeth his eye on BUCKINGHAM, and BUCKINGHAM on him, both full of disdain*

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

The Duke of Buckingham's surveyor, ha?  
Where's his examination?

**First Secretary**

Here, so please you.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Is he in person ready?

**First Secretary**

Ay, please your grace.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Well, we shall then know more; and Buckingham  
Shall lessen this big look.

*Exeunt CARDINAL WOLSEY and his Train*

## BUCKINGHAM

This butcher's cur is venom-mouth'd, and I  
Have not the power to muzzle him; therefore best  
Not wake him in his slumber. A beggar's book  
Outworths a noble's blood.

## NORFOLK

What, are you chafed?  
Ask God for temperance; that's the appliance only  
Which your disease requires.

## BUCKINGHAM

I read in's looks  
Matter against me; and his eye reviled  
Me, as his abject object: at this instant  
He bores me with some trick: he's gone to the king;  
I'll follow and outstare him.

## NORFOLK

Stay, my lord,  
And let your reason with your choleric question  
What 'tis you go about: to climb steep hills  
Requires slow pace at first: anger is like  
A full-hot horse, who being allow'd his way,  
Self-mettle tires him. Not a man in England  
Can advise me like you: be to yourself  
As you would to your friend.

## BUCKINGHAM

I'll to the king;  
And from a mouth of honour quite cry down  
This Ipswich fellow's insolence; or proclaim  
There's difference in no persons.

## NORFOLK

Be advised;

Heat not a furnace for your foe so hot  
That it do singe yourself: we may outrun,  
By violent swiftness, that which we run at,  
And lose by over-running. Know you not,  
The fire that mounts the liquor til run o'er,  
In seeming to augment it wastes it? Be advised:  
I say again, there is no English soul  
More stronger to direct you than yourself,  
If with the sap of reason you would quench,  
Or but allay, the fire of passion.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Sir,  
I am thankful to you; and I'll go along  
By your prescription: but this top-proud fellow,  
Whom from the flow of gall I name not but  
From sincere motions, by intelligence,  
And proofs as clear as founts in July when  
We see each grain of gravel, I do know  
To be corrupt and treasonous.

## **NORFOLK**

Say not 'treasonous.'

## **BUCKINGHAM**

To the king I'll say't; and make my vouch as strong  
As shore of rock. Attend. This holy fox,  
Or wolf, or both,--for he is equal ravenous  
As he is subtle, and as prone to mischief  
As able to perform't; his mind and place  
Infecting one another, yea, reciprocally--  
Only to show his pomp as well in France  
As here at home, suggests the king our master  
To this last costly treaty, the interview,  
That swallow'd so much treasure, and like a glass  
Did break i' the rinsing.

## **NORFOLK**

Faith, and so it did.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Pray, give me favour, sir. This cunning cardinal  
The articles o' the combination drew  
As himself pleased; and they were ratified  
As he cried 'Thus let be': to as much end  
As give a crutch to the dead: but our count-cardinal  
Has done this, and 'tis well; for worthy Wolsey,  
Who cannot err, he did it. Now this follows,--  
Which, as I take it, is a kind of puppy  
To the old dam, treason,--Charles the emperor,  
Under pretence to see the queen his aunt--  
For 'twas indeed his colour, but he came  
To whisper Wolsey,--here makes visitation:  
His fears were, that the interview betwixt  
England and France might, through their amity,  
Breed him some prejudice; for from this league  
Peep'd harms that menaced him: he privily  
Deals with our cardinal; and, as I trow,--  
Which I do well; for I am sure the emperor  
Paid ere he promised; whereby his suit was granted  
Ere it was ask'd; but when the way was made,  
And paved with gold, the emperor thus desired,  
That he would please to alter the king's course,  
And break the foresaid peace. Let the king know,  
As soon he shall by me, that thus the cardinal  
Does buy and sell his honour as he pleases,  
And for his own advantage.

## **NORFOLK**

I am sorry  
To hear this of him; and could wish he were  
Something mistaken in't.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

No, not a syllable:  
I do pronounce him in that very shape  
He shall appear in proof.

*Enter BRANDON, a Sergeant-at-arms before him, and two or three of the Guard*

**BRANDON**

Your office, sergeant; execute it.

**Sergeant**

Sir,  
My lord the Duke of Buckingham, and Earl  
Of Hereford, Stafford, and Northampton, I  
Arrest thee of high treason, in the name  
Of our most sovereign king.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Lo, you, my lord,  
The net has fall'n upon me! I shall perish  
Under device and practise.

**BRANDON**

I am sorry  
To see you ta'en from liberty, to look on  
The business present: 'tis his highness' pleasure  
You shall to the Tower.

**BUCKINGHAM**

It will help me nothing  
To plead mine innocence; for that dye is on me  
Which makes my whitest part black. The will of heaven  
Be done in this and all things! I obey.  
O my Lord Abergavenny, fare you well!

**BRANDON**

Nay, he must bear you company. The king

*To ABERGAVENNY*



Is pleased you shall to the Tower, till you know  
How he determines further.

**ABERGAVENNY**

As the duke said,  
The will of heaven be done, and the king's pleasure  
By me obey'd!

**BRANDON**

Here is a warrant from  
The king to attach Lord Montacute; and the bodies  
Of the duke's confessor, John de la Car,  
One Gilbert Peck, his chancellor--

**BUCKINGHAM**

So, so;  
These are the limbs o' the plot: no more, I hope.

**BRANDON**

A monk o' the Chartreux.

**BUCKINGHAM**

O, Nicholas Hopkins?

**BRANDON**

He.

**BUCKINGHAM**

My surveyor is false; the o'er-great cardinal  
Hath show'd him gold; my life is spann'd already:  
I am the shadow of poor Buckingham,  
Whose figure even this instant cloud puts on,  
By darkening my clear sun. My lord, farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. The council-chamber.

*Cornets. Enter KING HENRY VIII, leaning on CARDINAL WOLSEY's shoulder, the Nobles, and LOVELL; CARDINAL WOLSEY places himself under KING HENRY VIII's feet on his right side*

### KING HENRY VIII

My life itself, and the best heart of it,  
Thanks you for this great care: I stood i' the level  
Of a full-charged confederacy, and give thanks  
To you that choked it. Let be call'd before us  
That gentleman of Buckingham's; in person  
I'll hear him his confessions justify;  
And point by point the treasons of his master  
He shall again relate.

*A noise within, crying 'Room for the Queen!' Enter QUEEN KATHARINE, ushered by NORFOLK, and SUFFOLK: she kneels. KING HENRY VIII riseth from his state, takes her up, kisses and placeth her by him*

### QUEEN KATHARINE

Nay, we must longer kneel: I am a suitor.

### KING HENRY VIII

Arise, and take place by us: half your suit  
Never name to us; you have half our power:  
The other moiety, ere you ask, is given;  
Repeat your will and take it.

### QUEEN KATHARINE

Thank your majesty.  
That you would love yourself, and in that love

Not unconsider'd leave your honour, nor  
The dignity of your office, is the point  
Of my petition.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Lady mine, proceed.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

I am solicited, not by a few,  
And those of true condition, that your subjects  
Are in great grievance: there have been commissions  
Sent down among 'em, which hath flaw'd the heart  
Of all their loyalties: wherein, although,  
My good lord cardinal, they vent reproaches  
Most bitterly on you, as putter on  
Of these exactions, yet the king our master--  
Whose honour heaven shield from soil!--even he  
escapes not  
Language unmannerly, yea, such which breaks  
The sides of loyalty, and almost appears  
In loud rebellion.

## **NORFOLK**

Not almost appears,  
It doth appear; for, upon these taxations,  
The clothiers all, not able to maintain  
The many to them longing, have put off  
The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers, who,  
Unfit for other life, compell'd by hunger  
And lack of other means, in desperate manner  
Daring the event to the teeth, are all in uproar,  
And danger serves among them!

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Taxation!  
Wherein? and what taxation? My lord cardinal,  
You that are blamed for it alike with us,  
Know you of this taxation?

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Please you, sir,  
I know but of a single part, in aught  
Pertains to the state; and front but in that file  
Where others tell steps with me.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

No, my lord,  
You know no more than others; but you frame  
Things that are known alike; which are not wholesome  
To those which would not know them, and yet must  
Perforce be their acquaintance. These exactions,  
Whereof my sovereign would have note, they are  
Most pestilent to the bearing; and, to bear 'em,  
The back is sacrifice to the load. They say  
They are devised by you; or else you suffer  
Too hard an exclamation.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Still exaction!  
The nature of it? in what kind, let's know,  
Is this exaction?

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

I am much too venturous  
In tempting of your patience; but am bolden'd  
Under your promised pardon. The subjects' grief  
Comes through commissions, which compel from each  
The sixth part of his substance, to be levied  
Without delay; and the pretence for this  
Is named, your wars in France: this makes bold mouths:  
Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze  
Allegiance in them; their curses now  
Live where their prayers did: and it's come to pass,  
This tractable obedience is a slave  
To each incensed will. I would your highness  
Would give it quick consideration, for

There is no primer business.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

By my life,  
This is against our pleasure.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

And for me,  
I have no further gone in this than by  
A single voice; and that not pass'd me but  
By learned approbation of the judges. If I am  
Traduced by ignorant tongues, which neither know  
My faculties nor person, yet will be  
The chronicles of my doing, let me say  
'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake  
That virtue must go through. We must not stint  
Our necessary actions, in the fear  
To cope malicious censurers; which ever,  
As ravenous fishes, do a vessel follow  
That is new-trimm'd, but benefit no further  
Than vainly longing. What we oft do best,  
By sick interpreters, once weak ones, is  
Not ours, or not allow'd; what worst, as oft,  
Hitting a grosser quality, is cried up  
For our best act. If we shall stand still,  
In fear our motion will be mock'd or carp'd at,  
We should take root here where we sit, or sit  
State-statues only.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Things done well,  
And with a care, exempt themselves from fear;  
Things done without example, in their issue  
Are to be fear'd. Have you a precedent  
Of this commission? I believe, not any.  
We must not rend our subjects from our laws,  
And stick them in our will. Sixth part of each?  
A trembling contribution! Why, we take  
From every tree lop, bark, and part o' the timber;

And, though we leave it with a root, thus hack'd,  
The air will drink the sap. To every county  
Where this is question'd send our letters, with  
Free pardon to each man that has denied  
The force of this commission: pray, look to't;  
I put it to your care.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

A word with you.

*To the Secretary*

Let there be letters writ to every shire,  
Of the king's grace and pardon. The griev'd commons  
Hardly conceive of me; let it be noised  
That through our intercession this revokement  
And pardon comes: I shall anon advise you  
Further in the proceeding.

*Exit Secretary*

*Enter Surveyor*

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

I am sorry that the Duke of Buckingham  
Is run in your displeasure.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

It grieves many:  
The gentleman is learn'd, and a most rare speaker;  
To nature none more bound; his training such,  
That he may furnish and instruct great teachers,  
And never seek for aid out of himself. Yet see,  
When these so noble benefits shall prove  
Not well disposed, the mind growing once corrupt,  
They turn to vicious forms, ten times more ugly  
Than ever they were fair. This man so complete,  
Who was enroll'd 'mongst wonders, and when we,  
Almost with ravish'd listening, could not find

His hour of speech a minute; he, my lady,  
Hath into monstrous habits put the graces  
That once were his, and is become as black  
As if besmear'd in hell. Sit by us; you shall hear--  
This was his gentleman in trust--of him  
Things to strike honour sad. Bid him recount  
The fore-recited practises; whereof  
We cannot feel too little, hear too much.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Stand forth, and with bold spirit relate what you,  
Most like a careful subject, have collected  
Out of the Duke of Buckingham.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Speak freely.

## **Surveyor**

First, it was usual with him, every day  
It would infect his speech, that if the king  
Should without issue die, he'll carry it so  
To make the sceptre his: these very words  
I've heard him utter to his son-in-law,  
Lord Abergavenny; to whom by oath he menaced  
Revenge upon the cardinal.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Please your highness, note  
This dangerous conception in this point.  
Not friended by by his wish, to your high person  
His will is most malignant; and it stretches  
Beyond you, to your friends.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

My learn'd lord cardinal,  
Deliver all with charity.



## **KING HENRY VIII**

Speak on:

How grounded he his title to the crown,  
Upon our fail? to this point hast thou heard him  
At any time speak aught?

### **Surveyor**

He was brought to this  
By a vain prophecy of Nicholas Hopkins.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

What was that Hopkins?

### **Surveyor**

Sir, a Chartreux friar,  
His confessor, who fed him every minute  
With words of sovereignty.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

How know'st thou this?

### **Surveyor**

Not long before your highness sped to France,  
The duke being at the Rose, within the parish  
Saint Lawrence Poultney, did of me demand  
What was the speech among the Londoners  
Concerning the French journey: I replied,  
Men fear'd the French would prove perfidious,  
To the king's danger. Presently the duke  
Said, 'twas the fear, indeed; and that he doubted  
'Twould prove the verity of certain words  
Spoke by a holy monk; 'that oft,' says he,  
'Hath sent to me, wishing me to permit  
John de la Car, my chaplain, a choice hour  
To hear from him a matter of some moment:  
Whom after under the confession's seal

He solemnly had sworn, that what he spoke  
My chaplain to no creature living, but  
To me, should utter, with demure confidence  
This pausingly ensued: neither the king nor's heirs,  
Tell you the duke, shall prosper: bid him strive  
To gain the love o' the commonalty: the duke  
Shall govern England.'

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

If I know you well,  
You were the duke's surveyor, and lost your office  
On the complaint o' the tenants: take good heed  
You charge not in your spleen a noble person  
And spoil your nobler soul: I say, take heed;  
Yes, heartily beseech you.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Let him on.  
Go forward.

## **Surveyor**

On my soul, I'll speak but truth.  
I told my lord the duke, by the devil's illusions  
The monk might be deceived; and that 'twas dangerous for him  
To ruminare on this so far, until  
It forged him some design, which, being believed,  
It was much like to do: he answer'd, 'Tush,  
It can do me no damage;' adding further,  
That, had the king in his last sickness fail'd,  
The cardinal's and Sir Thomas Lovell's heads  
Should have gone off.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Ha! what, so rank? Ah ha!  
There's mischief in this man: canst thou say further?

## **Surveyor**

I can, my liege.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Proceed.

**Surveyor**

Being at Greenwich,  
After your highness had reproved the duke  
About Sir William Blomer,--

**KING HENRY VIII**

I remember  
Of such a time: being my sworn servant,  
The duke retain'd him his. But on; what hence?

**Surveyor**

'If,' quoth he, 'I for this had been committed,  
As, to the Tower, I thought, I would have play'd  
The part my father meant to act upon  
The usurper Richard; who, being at Salisbury,  
Made suit to come in's presence; which if granted,  
As he made semblance of his duty, would  
Have put his knife to him.'

**KING HENRY VIII**

A giant traitor!

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Now, madam, may his highness live in freedom,  
and this man out of prison?

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

God mend all!

## KING HENRY VIII

There's something more would out of thee; what say'st?

### Surveyor

After 'the duke his father,' with 'the knife,'  
He stretch'd him, and, with one hand on his dagger,  
Another spread on's breast, mounting his eyes  
He did discharge a horrible oath; whose tenor  
Was,--were he evil used, he would outgo  
His father by as much as a performance  
Does an irresolute purpose.

## KING HENRY VIII

There's his period,  
To sheathe his knife in us. He is attach'd;  
Call him to present trial: if he may  
Find mercy in the law, 'tis his: if none,  
Let him not seek 't of us: by day and night,  
He's traitor to the height.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. An ante-chamber in the palace.

*Enter Chamberlain and SANDS*

### Chamberlain

Is't possible the spells of France should juggle  
Men into such strange mysteries?

### SANDS

New customs,  
Though they be never so ridiculous,  
Nay, let 'em be unmanly, yet are follow'd.

### Chamberlain

As far as I see, all the good our English  
Have got by the late voyage is but merely  
A fit or two o' the face; but they are shrewd ones;  
For when they hold 'em, you would swear directly  
Their very noses had been counsellors  
To Pepin or Clotharius, they keep state so.

### SANDS

They have all new legs, and lame ones: one would take it,  
That never saw 'em pace before, the spavin  
Or springhalt reign'd among 'em.

### Chamberlain

Death! my lord,  
Their clothes are after such a pagan cut too,  
That, sure, they've worn out Christendom.

*Enter LOVELL*

How now!

What news, Sir Thomas Lovell?

**LOVELL**

Faith, my lord,  
I hear of none, but the new proclamation  
That's clapp'd upon the court-gate.

**Chamberlain**

What is't for?

**LOVELL**

The reformation of our travell'd gallants,  
That fill the court with quarrels, talk, and tailors.

**Chamberlain**

I'm glad 'tis there: now I would pray our monsieurs  
To think an English courtier may be wise,  
And never see the Louvre.

**LOVELL**

They must either,  
For so run the conditions, leave those remnants  
Of fool and feather that they got in France,  
With all their honourable point of ignorance  
Pertaining thereunto, as fights and fireworks,  
Abusing better men than they can be,  
Out of a foreign wisdom, renouncing clean  
The faith they have in tennis, and tall stockings,  
Short blister'd breeches, and those types of travel,  
And understand again like honest men;  
Or pack to their old playfellows: there, I take it,  
They may, 'cum privilegio,' wear away  
The lag end of their lewdness and be laugh'd at.

## **SANDS**

'Tis time to give 'em physic, their diseases  
Are grown so catching.

## **Chamberlain**

What a loss our ladies  
Will have of these trim vanities!

## **LOVELL**

Ay, marry,  
There will be woe indeed, lords: the sly whoresons  
Have got a speeding trick to lay down ladies;  
A French song and a fiddle has no fellow.

## **SANDS**

The devil fiddle 'em! I am glad they are going,  
For, sure, there's no converting of 'em: now  
An honest country lord, as I am, beaten  
A long time out of play, may bring his plainsong  
And have an hour of hearing; and, by'r lady,  
Held current music too.

## **Chamberlain**

Well said, Lord Sands;  
Your colt's tooth is not cast yet.

## **SANDS**

No, my lord;  
Nor shall not, while I have a stump.

## **Chamberlain**

Sir Thomas,  
Whither were you a-going?

## **LOVELL**

To the cardinal's:  
Your lordship is a guest too.

## **Chamberlain**

O, 'tis true:  
This night he makes a supper, and a great one,  
To many lords and ladies; there will be  
The beauty of this kingdom, I'll assure you.

## **LOVELL**

That churchman bears a bounteous mind indeed,  
A hand as fruitful as the land that feeds us;  
His dews fall every where.

## **Chamberlain**

No doubt he's noble;  
He had a black mouth that said other of him.

## **SANDS**

He may, my lord; has wherewithal: in him  
Sparing would show a worse sin than ill doctrine:  
Men of his way should be most liberal;  
They are set here for examples.

## **Chamberlain**

True, they are so:  
But few now give so great ones. My barge stays;  
Your lordship shall along. Come, good Sir Thomas,  
We shall be late else; which I would not be,  
For I was spoke to, with Sir Henry Guildford  
This night to be comptrollers.

## **SANDS**



I am your lordship's.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A Hall in York Place.

*Hautboys. A small table under a state for CARDINAL WOLSEY, a longer table for the guests. Then enter ANNE and divers other Ladies and Gentlemen as guests, at one door; at another door, enter GUILDFORD*

### GUILDFORD

Ladies, a general welcome from his grace  
Salutes ye all; this night he dedicates  
To fair content and you: none here, he hopes,  
In all this noble bevy, has brought with her  
One care abroad; he would have all as merry  
As, first, good company, good wine, good welcome,  
Can make good people. O, my lord, you're tardy:

*Enter Chamberlain, SANDS, and LOVELL*

The very thought of this fair company  
Clapp'd wings to me.

### Chamberlain

You are young, Sir Harry Guildford.

### SANDS

Sir Thomas Lovell, had the cardinal  
But half my lay thoughts in him, some of these  
Should find a running banquet ere they rested,  
I think would better please 'em: by my life,  
They are a sweet society of fair ones.

### LOVELL

O, that your lordship were but now confessor

To one or two of these!

**SANDS**

I would I were;  
They should find easy penance.

**LOVELL**

Faith, how easy?

**SANDS**

As easy as a down-bed would afford it.

**Chamberlain**

Sweet ladies, will it please you sit? Sir Harry,  
Place you that side; I'll take the charge of this:  
His grace is entering. Nay, you must not freeze;  
Two women placed together makes cold weather:  
My Lord Sands, you are one will keep 'em waking;  
Pray, sit between these ladies.

**SANDS**

By my faith,  
And thank your lordship. By your leave, sweet ladies:  
If I chance to talk a little wild, forgive me;  
I had it from my father.

**ANNE**

Was he mad, sir?

**SANDS**

O, very mad, exceeding mad, in love too:  
But he would bite none; just as I do now,  
He would kiss you twenty with a breath.

*Kisses her*

**Chamberlain**

Well said, my lord.  
So, now you're fairly seated. Gentlemen,  
The penance lies on you, if these fair ladies  
Pass away frowning.

**SANDS**

For my little cure,  
Let me alone.

*Hautboys. Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY, and takes his state*

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

You're welcome, my fair guests: that noble lady,  
Or gentleman, that is not freely merry,  
Is not my friend: this, to confirm my welcome;  
And to you all, good health.

*Drinks*

**SANDS**

Your grace is noble:  
Let me have such a bowl may hold my thanks,  
And save me so much talking.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

My Lord Sands,  
I am beholding to you: cheer your neighbours.  
Ladies, you are not merry: gentlemen,  
Whose fault is this?

**SANDS**

The red wine first must rise

In their fair cheeks, my lord; then we shall have 'em  
Talk us to silence.

**ANNE**

You are a merry gamester,  
My Lord Sands.

**SANDS**

Yes, if I make my play.  
Here's to your ladyship: and pledge it, madam,  
For 'tis to such a thing,--

**ANNE**

You cannot show me.

**SANDS**

I told your grace they would talk anon.

*Drum and trumpet, chambers discharged*

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

What's that?

**Chamberlain**

Look out there, some of ye.

*Exit Servant*

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

What warlike voice,  
And to what end is this? Nay, ladies, fear not;  
By all the laws of war you're privileged.

*Re-enter Servant*

## Chamberlain

How now! what is't?

## Servant

A noble troop of strangers;  
For so they seem: they've left their barge and landed;  
And hither make, as great ambassadors  
From foreign princes.

## CARDINAL WOLSEY

Good lord chamberlain,  
Go, give 'em welcome; you can speak the French tongue;  
And, pray, receive 'em nobly, and conduct 'em  
Into our presence, where this heaven of beauty  
Shall shine at full upon them. Some attend him.

*Exit Chamberlain, attended. All rise, and tables removed*

You have now a broken banquet; but we'll mend it.  
A good digestion to you all: and once more  
I shower a welcome on ye; welcome all.

*Hautboys. Enter KING HENRY VIII and others, as masquers, habited like shepherds, ushered by the Chamberlain. They pass directly before CARDINAL WOLSEY, and gracefully salute him*

A noble company! what are their pleasures?

## Chamberlain

Because they speak no English, thus they pray'd  
To tell your grace, that, having heard by fame  
Of this so noble and so fair assembly  
This night to meet here, they could do no less  
Out of the great respect they bear to beauty,  
But leave their flocks; and, under your fair conduct,  
Crave leave to view these ladies and entreat  
An hour of revels with 'em.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Say, lord chamberlain,  
They have done my poor house grace; for which I pay 'em  
A thousand thanks, and pray 'em take their pleasures.

*They choose Ladies for the dance. KING HENRY VIII chooses ANNE*

## **KING HENRY VIII**

The fairest hand I ever touch'd! O beauty,  
Till now I never knew thee!

*Music. Dance*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

My lord!

### **Chamberlain**

Your grace?

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Pray, tell 'em thus much from me:  
There should be one amongst 'em, by his person,  
More worthy this place than myself; to whom,  
If I but knew him, with my love and duty  
I would surrender it.

### **Chamberlain**

I will, my lord.

*Whispers the Masquers*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

What say they?

**Chamberlain**

Such a one, they all confess,  
There is indeed; which they would have your grace  
Find out, and he will take it.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Let me see, then.  
By all your good leaves, gentlemen; here I'll make  
My royal choice.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Ye have found him, cardinal:

*Unmasking*

You hold a fair assembly; you do well, lord:  
You are a churchman, or, I'll tell you, cardinal,  
I should judge now unhappily.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

I am glad  
Your grace is grown so pleasant.

**KING HENRY VIII**

My lord chamberlain,  
Prithee, come hither: what fair lady's that?

**Chamberlain**

An't please your grace, Sir Thomas Bullen's daughter--  
The Viscount Rochford,--one of her highness' women.

**KING HENRY VIII**

By heaven, she is a dainty one. Sweetheart,



I were unmannerly, to take you out,  
And not to kiss you. A health, gentlemen!  
Let it go round.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Sir Thomas Lovell, is the banquet ready  
I' the privy chamber?

**LOVELL**

Yes, my lord.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Your grace,  
I fear, with dancing is a little heated.

**KING HENRY VIII**

I fear, too much.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

There's fresher air, my lord,  
In the next chamber.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Lead in your ladies, every one: sweet partner,  
I must not yet forsake you: let's be merry:  
Good my lord cardinal, I have half a dozen healths  
To drink to these fair ladies, and a measure  
To lead 'em once again; and then let's dream  
Who's best in favour. Let the music knock it.

*Exeunt with trumpets*

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Westminster. A street.

*Enter two Gentlemen, meeting*

### First Gentleman

Whither away so fast?

### Second Gentleman

O, God save ye!  
Even to the hall, to hear what shall become  
Of the great Duke of Buckingham.

### First Gentleman

I'll save you  
That labour, sir. All's now done, but the ceremony  
Of bringing back the prisoner.

### Second Gentleman

Were you there?

### First Gentleman

Yes, indeed, was I.

### Second Gentleman

Pray, speak what has happen'd.

### First Gentleman

You may guess quickly what.

**Second Gentleman**

Is he found guilty?

**First Gentleman**

Yes, truly is he, and condemn'd upon't.

**Second Gentleman**

I am sorry for't.

**First Gentleman**

So are a number more.

**Second Gentleman**

But, pray, how pass'd it?

**First Gentleman**

I'll tell you in a little. The great duke  
Came to the bar; where to his accusations  
He pleaded still not guilty and alleged  
Many sharp reasons to defeat the law.  
The king's attorney on the contrary  
Urged on the examinations, proofs, confessions  
Of divers witnesses; which the duke desired  
To have brought viva voce to his face:  
At which appear'd against him his surveyor;  
Sir Gilbert Peck his chancellor; and John Car,  
Confessor to him; with that devil-monk,  
Hopkins, that made this mischief.

**Second Gentleman**

That was he  
That fed him with his prophecies?

**First Gentleman**

The same.  
All these accused him strongly; which he fain  
Would have flung from him, but, indeed, he could not:  
And so his peers, upon this evidence,  
Have found him guilty of high treason. Much  
He spoke, and learnedly, for life; but all  
Was either pitied in him or forgotten.

### **Second Gentleman**

After all this, how did he bear himself?

### **First Gentleman**

When he was brought again to the bar, to hear  
His knell rung out, his judgment, he was stirr'd  
With such an agony, he sweat extremely,  
And something spoke in choler, ill, and hasty:  
But he fell to himself again, and sweetly  
In all the rest show'd a most noble patience.

### **Second Gentleman**

I do not think he fears death.

### **First Gentleman**

Sure, he does not:  
He never was so womanish; the cause  
He may a little grieve at.

### **Second Gentleman**

Certainly  
The cardinal is the end of this.

### **First Gentleman**

'Tis likely,  
By all conjectures: first, Kildare's attainder,  
Then deputy of Ireland; who removed,

Earl Surrey was sent thither, and in haste too,  
Lest he should help his father.

## **Second Gentleman**

That trick of state  
Was a deep envious one.

## **First Gentleman**

At his return  
No doubt he will requite it. This is noted,  
And generally, whoever the king favours,  
The cardinal instantly will find employment,  
And far enough from court too.

## **Second Gentleman**

All the commons  
Hate him perniciously, and, o' my conscience,  
Wish him ten fathom deep: this duke as much  
They love and dote on; call him bounteous Buckingham,  
The mirror of all courtesy;--

## **First Gentleman**

Stay there, sir,  
And see the noble ruin'd man you speak of.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM from his arraignment; tip-staves before him; the axe with the edge towards him; halberds on each side: accompanied with LOVELL, VAUX, SANDS, and common people*

## **Second Gentleman**

Let's stand close, and behold him.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

All good people,  
You that thus far have come to pity me,

Hear what I say, and then go home and lose me.  
I have this day received a traitor's judgment,  
And by that name must die: yet, heaven bear witness,  
And if I have a conscience, let it sink me,  
Even as the axe falls, if I be not faithful!  
The law I bear no malice for my death;  
'T has done, upon the premises, but justice:  
But those that sought it I could wish more Christians:  
Be what they will, I heartily forgive 'em:  
Yet let 'em look they glory not in mischief,  
Nor build their evils on the graves of great men;  
For then my guiltless blood must cry against 'em.  
For further life in this world I ne'er hope,  
Nor will I sue, although the king have mercies  
More than I dare make faults. You few that loved me,  
And dare be bold to weep for Buckingham,  
His noble friends and fellows, whom to leave  
Is only bitter to him, only dying,  
Go with me, like good angels, to my end;  
And, as the long divorce of steel falls on me,  
Make of your prayers one sweet sacrifice,  
And lift my soul to heaven. Lead on, o' God's name.

## **LOVELL**

I do beseech your grace, for charity,  
If ever any malice in your heart  
Were hid against me, now to forgive me frankly.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Sir Thomas Lovell, I as free forgive you  
As I would be forgiven: I forgive all;  
There cannot be those numberless offences  
'Gainst me, that I cannot take peace with:  
no black envy  
Shall mark my grave. Commend me to his grace;  
And if he speak of Buckingham, pray, tell him  
You met him half in heaven: my vows and prayers  
Yet are the king's; and, till my soul forsake,  
Shall cry for blessings on him: may he live  
Longer than I have time to tell his years!  
Ever beloved and loving may his rule be!

And when old time shall lead him to his end,  
Goodness and he fill up one monument!

## **LOVELL**

To the water side I must conduct your grace;  
Then give my charge up to Sir Nicholas Vaux,  
Who undertakes you to your end.

## **VAUX**

Prepare there,  
The duke is coming: see the barge be ready;  
And fit it with such furniture as suits  
The greatness of his person.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Nay, Sir Nicholas,  
Let it alone; my state now will but mock me.  
When I came hither, I was lord high constable  
And Duke of Buckingham; now, poor Edward Bohun:  
Yet I am richer than my base accusers,  
That never knew what truth meant: I now seal it;  
And with that blood will make 'em one day groan for't.  
My noble father, Henry of Buckingham,  
Who first raised head against usurping Richard,  
Flying for succor to his servant Banister,  
Being distress'd, was by that wretch betray'd,  
And without trial fell; God's peace be with him!  
Henry the Seventh succeeding, truly pitying  
My father's loss, like a most royal prince,  
Restored me to my honours, and, out of ruins,  
Made my name once more noble. Now his son,  
Henry the Eighth, life, honour, name and all  
That made me happy at one stroke has taken  
For ever from the world. I had my trial,  
And, must needs say, a noble one; which makes me,  
A little happier than my wretched father:  
Yet thus far we are one in fortunes: both  
Fell by our servants, by those men we loved most;  
A most unnatural and faithless service!

Heaven has an end in all: yet, you that hear me,  
This from a dying man receive as certain:  
Where you are liberal of your loves and counsels  
Be sure you be not loose; for those you make friends  
And give your hearts to, when they once perceive  
The least rub in your fortunes, fall away  
Like water from ye, never found again  
But where they mean to sink ye. All good people,  
Pray for me! I must now forsake ye: the last hour  
Of my long weary life is come upon me. Farewell:  
And when you would say something that is sad,  
Speak how I fell. I have done; and God forgive me!

*Exeunt BUCKINGHAM and Train*

### **First Gentleman**

O, this is full of pity! Sir, it calls,  
I fear, too many curses on their beads  
That were the authors.

### **Second Gentleman**

If the duke be guiltless,  
'Tis full of woe: yet I can give you inkling  
Of an ensuing evil, if it fall,  
Greater than this.

### **First Gentleman**

Good angels keep it from us!  
What may it be? You do not doubt my faith, sir?

### **Second Gentleman**

This secret is so weighty, 'twill require  
A strong faith to conceal it.

### **First Gentleman**

Let me have it;  
I do not talk much.



## **Second Gentleman**

I am confident,  
You shall, sir: did you not of late days hear  
A buzzing of a separation  
Between the king and Katharine?

## **First Gentleman**

Yes, but it held not:  
For when the king once heard it, out of anger  
He sent command to the lord mayor straight  
To stop the rumor, and allay those tongues  
That durst disperse it.

## **Second Gentleman**

But that slander, sir,  
Is found a truth now: for it grows again  
Fresher than e'er it was; and held for certain  
The king will venture at it. Either the cardinal,  
Or some about him near, have, out of malice  
To the good queen, possess'd him with a scruple  
That will undo her: to confirm this too,  
Cardinal Campeius is arrived, and lately;  
As all think, for this business.

## **First Gentleman**

'Tis the cardinal;  
And merely to revenge him on the emperor  
For not bestowing on him, at his asking,  
The archbishopric of Toledo, this is purposed.

## **Second Gentleman**

I think you have hit the mark: but is't not cruel  
That she should feel the smart of this? The cardinal  
Will have his will, and she must fall.

## **First Gentleman**

'Tis woful.  
We are too open here to argue this;  
Let's think in private more.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. An ante-chamber in the palace.

*Enter Chamberlain, reading a letter*

### Chamberlain

'My lord, the horses your lordship sent for, with all the care I had, I saw well chosen, ridden, and furnished. They were young and handsome, and of the best breed in the north. When they were ready to set out for London, a man of my lord cardinal's, by commission and main power, took 'em from me; with this reason: His master would be served before a subject, if not before the king; which stopped our mouths, sir.'

I fear he will indeed: well, let him have them:  
He will have all, I think.

*Enter, to Chamberlain, NORFOLK and SUFFOLK*

### NORFOLK

Well met, my lord chamberlain.

### Chamberlain

Good day to both your graces.

### SUFFOLK

How is the king employ'd?

### Chamberlain

I left him private,  
Full of sad thoughts and troubles.

## NORFOLK

What's the cause?

## Chamberlain

It seems the marriage with his brother's wife  
Has crept too near his conscience.

## SUFFOLK

No, his conscience  
Has crept too near another lady.

## NORFOLK

'Tis so:  
This is the cardinal's doing, the king-cardinal:  
That blind priest, like the eldest son of fortune,  
Turns what he list. The king will know him one day.

## SUFFOLK

Pray God he do! he'll never know himself else.

## NORFOLK

How holily he works in all his business!  
And with what zeal! for, now he has crack'd the league  
Between us and the emperor, the queen's great nephew,  
He dives into the king's soul, and there scatters  
Dangers, doubts, wringing of the conscience,  
Fears, and despairs; and all these for his marriage:  
And out of all these to restore the king,  
He counsels a divorce; a loss of her  
That, like a jewel, has hung twenty years  
About his neck, yet never lost her lustre;  
Of her that loves him with that excellence  
That angels love good men with; even of her  
That, when the greatest stroke of fortune falls,  
Will bless the king: and is not this course pious?

## **Chamberlain**

Heaven keep me from such counsel! 'Tis most true  
These news are every where; every tongue speaks 'em,  
And every true heart weeps for't: all that dare  
Look into these affairs see this main end,  
The French king's sister. Heaven will one day open  
The king's eyes, that so long have slept upon  
This bold bad man.

## **SUFFOLK**

And free us from his slavery.

## **NORFOLK**

We had need pray,  
And heartily, for our deliverance;  
Or this imperious man will work us all  
From princes into pages: all men's honours  
Lie like one lump before him, to be fashion'd  
Into what pitch he please.

## **SUFFOLK**

For me, my lords,  
I love him not, nor fear him; there's my creed:  
As I am made without him, so I'll stand,  
If the king please; his curses and his blessings  
Touch me alike, they're breath I not believe in.  
I knew him, and I know him; so I leave him  
To him that made him proud, the pope.

## **NORFOLK**

Let's in;  
And with some other business put the king  
From these sad thoughts, that work too much upon him:  
My lord, you'll bear us company?

## **Chamberlain**

Excuse me;  
The king has sent me elsewhere: besides,  
You'll find a most unfit time to disturb him:  
Health to your lordships.

**NORFOLK**

Thanks, my good lord chamberlain.

*Exit Chamberlain; and KING HENRY VIII draws the curtain, and sits reading pensively*

**SUFFOLK**

How sad he looks! sure, he is much afflicted.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Who's there, ha?

**NORFOLK**

Pray God he be not angry.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Who's there, I say? How dare you thrust yourselves  
Into my private meditations?  
Who am I? ha?

**NORFOLK**

A gracious king that pardons all offences  
Malice ne'er meant: our breach of duty this way  
Is business of estate; in which we come  
To know your royal pleasure.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Ye are too bold:  
Go to; I'll make ye know your times of business:

Is this an hour for temporal affairs, ha?

*Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY and CARDINAL CAMPEIUS, with a commission*

Who's there? my good lord cardinal? O my Wolsey,  
The quiet of my wounded conscience;  
Thou art a cure fit for a king.

*To CARDINAL CAMPEIUS*

You're welcome,  
Most learned reverend sir, into our kingdom:  
Use us and it.

*To CARDINAL WOLSEY*

My good lord, have great care  
I be not found a talker.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Sir, you cannot.  
I would your grace would give us but an hour  
Of private conference.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

[To NORFOLK and SUFFOLK]  
We are busy; go.

## **NORFOLK**

[Aside to SUFFOLK]  
This priest has no pride in him?

## **SUFFOLK**

[Aside to NORFOLK] Not to speak of:  
I would not be so sick though for his place:  
But this cannot continue.

## **NORFOLK**

[Aside to SUFFOLK] If it do,  
I'll venture one have-at-him.

## **SUFFOLK**

[Aside to NORFOLK] I another.

*Exeunt NORFOLK and SUFFOLK*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Your grace has given a precedent of wisdom  
Above all princes, in committing freely  
Your scruple to the voice of Christendom:  
Who can be angry now? what envy reach you?  
The Spaniard, tied blood and favour to her,  
Must now confess, if they have any goodness,  
The trial just and noble. All the clerks,  
I mean the learned ones, in Christian kingdoms  
Have their free voices: Rome, the nurse of judgment,  
Invited by your noble self, hath sent  
One general tongue unto us, this good man,  
This just and learned priest, Cardinal Campeius;  
Whom once more I present unto your highness.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

And once more in mine arms I bid him welcome,  
And thank the holy conclave for their loves:  
They have sent me such a man I would have wish'd for.

## **CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

Your grace must needs deserve all strangers' loves,  
You are so noble. To your highness' hand  
I tender my commission; by whose virtue,  
The court of Rome commanding, you, my lord  
Cardinal of York, are join'd with me their servant  
In the impartial judging of this business.



## **KING HENRY VIII**

Two equal men. The queen shall be acquainted  
Forthwith for what you come. Where's Gardiner?

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

I know your majesty has always loved her  
So dear in heart, not to deny her that  
A woman of less place might ask by law:  
Scholars allow'd freely to argue for her.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Ay, and the best she shall have; and my favour  
To him that does best: God forbid else. Cardinal,  
Prithee, call Gardiner to me, my new secretary:  
I find him a fit fellow.

*Exit CARDINAL WOLSEY*

*Re-enter CARDINAL WOLSEY, with GARDINER*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

[Aside to GARDINER] Give me your hand much joy and  
favour to you;  
You are the king's now.

## **GARDINER**

[Aside to CARDINAL WOLSEY]  
But to be commanded  
For ever by your grace, whose hand has raised me.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Come hither, Gardiner.

*Walks and whispers*

**CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

My Lord of York, was not one Doctor Pace  
In this man's place before him?

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Yes, he was.

**CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

Was he not held a learned man?

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Yes, surely.

**CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

Believe me, there's an ill opinion spread then  
Even of yourself, lord cardinal.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

How! of me?

**CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

They will not stick to say you envied him,  
And fearing he would rise, he was so virtuous,  
Kept him a foreign man still; which so grieved him,  
That he ran mad and died.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Heaven's peace be with him!  
That's Christian care enough: for living murmurers  
There's places of rebuke. He was a fool;  
For he would needs be virtuous: that good fellow,  
If I command him, follows my appointment:  
I will have none so near else. Learn this, brother,

We live not to be grip'd by meaner persons.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Deliver this with modesty to the queen.

*Exit GARDINER*

The most convenient place that I can think of  
For such receipt of learning is Black-Friars;  
There ye shall meet about this weighty business.  
My Wolsey, see it furnish'd. O, my lord,  
Would it not grieve an able man to leave  
So sweet a bedfellow? But, conscience, conscience!  
O, 'tis a tender place; and I must leave her.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. An ante-chamber of the QUEEN'S apartments.

*Enter ANNE and an Old Lady*

ANNE

Not for that neither: here's the pang that pinches:  
His highness having lived so long with her, and she  
So good a lady that no tongue could ever  
Pronounce dishonour of her; by my life,  
She never knew harm-doing: O, now, after  
So many courses of the sun enthroned,  
Still growing in a majesty and pomp, the which  
To leave a thousand-fold more bitter than  
'Tis sweet at first to acquire,--after this process,  
To give her the avaunt! it is a pity  
Would move a monster.

Old Lady

Hearts of most hard temper  
Melt and lament for her.

ANNE

O, God's will! much better  
She ne'er had known pomp: though't be temporal,  
Yet, if that quarrel, fortune, do divorce  
It from the bearer, 'tis a sufferance panging  
As soul and body's severing.

Old Lady

Alas, poor lady!  
She's a stranger now again.

**ANNE**

So much the more  
Must pity drop upon her. Verily,  
I swear, 'tis better to be lowly born,  
And range with humble livers in content,  
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,  
And wear a golden sorrow.

**Old Lady**

Our content  
Is our best having.

**ANNE**

By my troth and maidenhead,  
I would not be a queen.

**Old Lady**

Beshrew me, I would,  
And venture maidenhead for't; and so would you,  
For all this spice of your hypocrisy:  
You, that have so fair parts of woman on you,  
Have too a woman's heart; which ever yet  
Affected eminence, wealth, sovereignty;  
Which, to say sooth, are blessings; and which gifts,  
Saving your mincing, the capacity  
Of your soft cheveril conscience would receive,  
If you might please to stretch it.

**ANNE**

Nay, good troth.

**Old Lady**

Yes, troth, and troth; you would not be a queen?

**ANNE**

No, not for all the riches under heaven.  
Old Lady: 'Tis strange: a three-pence bow'd would hire me,  
Old as I am, to queen it: but, I pray you,  
What think you of a duchess? have you limbs  
To bear that load of title?

**ANNE**

No, in truth.

**Old Lady**

Then you are weakly made: pluck off a little;  
I would not be a young count in your way,  
For more than blushing comes to: if your back  
Cannot vouchsafe this burthen, 'tis too weak  
Ever to get a boy.

**ANNE**

How you do talk!  
I swear again, I would not be a queen  
For all the world.

**Old Lady**

In faith, for little England  
You'd venture an emballing: I myself  
Would for Carnarvonshire, although there long'd  
No more to the crown but that. Lo, who comes here?

*Enter Chamberlain*

**Chamberlain**

Good morrow, ladies. What were't worth to know  
The secret of your conference?

**ANNE**

My good lord,

Not your demand; it values not your asking:  
Our mistress' sorrows we were pitying.

**Chamberlain**

It was a gentle business, and becoming  
The action of good women: there is hope  
All will be well.

**ANNE**

Now, I pray God, amen!

**Chamberlain**

You bear a gentle mind, and heavenly blessings  
Follow such creatures. That you may, fair lady,  
Perceive I speak sincerely, and high note's  
Ta'en of your many virtues, the king's majesty  
Commends his good opinion of you, and  
Does purpose honour to you no less flowing  
Than Marchioness of Pembroke: to which title  
A thousand pound a year, annual support,  
Out of his grace he adds.

**ANNE**

I do not know  
What kind of my obedience I should tender;  
More than my all is nothing: nor my prayers  
Are not words duly hallow'd, nor my wishes  
More worth than empty vanities; yet prayers and wishes  
Are all I can return. Beseech your lordship,  
Vouchsafe to speak my thanks and my obedience,  
As from a blushing handmaid, to his highness;  
Whose health and royalty I pray for.

**Chamberlain**

Lady,  
I shall not fail to approve the fair conceit  
The king hath of you.

*Aside*

I have perused her well;  
Beauty and honour in her are so mingled  
That they have caught the king: and who knows yet  
But from this lady may proceed a gem  
To lighten all this isle? I'll to the king,  
And say I spoke with you.

*Exit Chamberlain*

**ANNE**

My honour'd lord.

**Old Lady**

Why, this it is; see, see!  
I have been begging sixteen years in court,  
Am yet a courtier beggarly, nor could  
Come pat betwixt too early and too late  
For any suit of pounds; and you, O fate!  
A very fresh-fish here--fie, fie, fie upon  
This compell'd fortune!--have your mouth fill'd up  
Before you open it.

**ANNE**

This is strange to me.

**Old Lady**

How tastes it? is it bitter? forty pence, no.  
There was a lady once, 'tis an old story,  
That would not be a queen, that would she not,  
For all the mud in Egypt: have you heard it?

**ANNE**

Come, you are pleasant.



## Old Lady

With your theme, I could  
O'ermount the lark. The Marchioness of Pembroke!  
A thousand pounds a year for pure respect!  
No other obligation! By my life,  
That promises moe thousands: honour's train  
Is longer than his foreskirt. By this time  
I know your back will bear a duchess: say,  
Are you not stronger than you were?

## ANNE

Good lady,  
Make yourself mirth with your particular fancy,  
And leave me out on't. Would I had no being,  
If this salute my blood a jot: it faints me,  
To think what follows.  
The queen is comfortless, and we forgetful  
In our long absence: pray, do not deliver  
What here you've heard to her.

## Old Lady

What do you think me?

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A hall in Black-Friars.

*Trumpets, sennet, and cornets. Enter two Vergers, with short silver wands; next them, two Scribes, in the habit of doctors; after them, CANTERBURY alone; after him, LINCOLN, Ely, Rochester, and Saint Asaph; next them, with some small distance, follows a Gentleman bearing the purse, with the great seal, and a cardinal's hat; then two Priests, bearing each a silver cross; then a Gentleman-usher bare-headed, accompanied with a Sergeant-at-arms bearing a silver mace; then two Gentlemen bearing two great silver pillars; after them, side by side, CARDINAL WOLSEY and CARDINAL CAMPEIUS; two Noblemen with the sword and mace. KING HENRY VIII takes place under the cloth of state; CARDINAL WOLSEY and CARDINAL CAMPEIUS sit under him as judges. QUEEN KATHARINE takes place some distance from KING HENRY VIII. The Bishops place themselves on each side the court, in manner of a consistory; below them, the Scribes. The Lords sit next the Bishops. The rest of the Attendants stand in convenient order about the stage*

### CARDINAL WOLSEY

Whilst our commission from Rome is read,  
Let silence be commanded.

### KING HENRY VIII

What's the need?  
It hath already publicly been read,  
And on all sides the authority allow'd;  
You may, then, spare that time.

### CARDINAL WOLSEY

Be't so. Proceed.

### Scribe

Say, Henry King of England, come into the court.

**Crier**

Henry King of England, & c.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Here.

**Scribe**

Say, Katharine Queen of England, come into the court.

**Crier**

Katharine Queen of England, & c.

*QUEEN KATHARINE makes no answer, rises out of her chair, goes about the court, comes to KING HENRY VIII, and kneels at his feet; then speaks*

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

Sir, I desire you do me right and justice;  
And to bestow your pity on me: for  
I am a most poor woman, and a stranger,  
Born out of your dominions; having here  
No judge indifferent, nor no more assurance  
Of equal friendship and proceeding. Alas, sir,  
In what have I offended you? what cause  
Hath my behavior given to your displeasure,  
That thus you should proceed to put me off,  
And take your good grace from me? Heaven witness,  
I have been to you a true and humble wife,  
At all times to your will conformable;  
Ever in fear to kindle your dislike,  
Yea, subject to your countenance, glad or sorry  
As I saw it inclined: when was the hour  
I ever contradicted your desire,  
Or made it not mine too? Or which of your friends  
Have I not strove to love, although I knew  
He were mine enemy? what friend of mine  
That had to him derived your anger, did I  
Continue in my liking? nay, gave notice

He was from thence discharged. Sir, call to mind  
That I have been your wife, in this obedience,  
Upward of twenty years, and have been blest  
With many children by you: if, in the course  
And process of this time, you can report,  
And prove it too, against mine honour aught,  
My bond to wedlock, or my love and duty,  
Against your sacred person, in God's name,  
Turn me away; and let the foul'st contempt  
Shut door upon me, and so give me up  
To the sharp'st kind of justice. Please you sir,  
The king, your father, was reputed for  
A prince most prudent, of an excellent  
And unmatch'd wit and judgment: Ferdinand,  
My father, king of Spain, was reckon'd one  
The wisest prince that there had reign'd by many  
A year before: it is not to be question'd  
That they had gather'd a wise council to them  
Of every realm, that did debate this business,  
Who deem'd our marriage lawful: wherefore I humbly  
Beseech you, sir, to spare me, till I may  
Be by my friends in Spain advised; whose counsel  
I will implore: if not, i' the name of God,  
Your pleasure be fulfill'd!

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

You have here, lady,  
And of your choice, these reverend fathers; men  
Of singular integrity and learning,  
Yea, the elect o' the land, who are assembled  
To plead your cause: it shall be therefore bootless  
That longer you desire the court; as well  
For your own quiet, as to rectify  
What is unsettled in the king.

## **CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

His grace  
Hath spoken well and justly: therefore, madam,  
It's fit this royal session do proceed;  
And that, without delay, their arguments  
Be now produced and heard.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

Lord cardinal,  
To you I speak.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Your pleasure, madam?

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

Sir,  
I am about to weep; but, thinking that  
We are a queen, or long have dream'd so, certain  
The daughter of a king, my drops of tears  
I'll turn to sparks of fire.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Be patient yet.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

I will, when you are humble; nay, before,  
Or God will punish me. I do believe,  
Induced by potent circumstances, that  
You are mine enemy, and make my challenge  
You shall not be my judge: for it is you  
Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me;  
Which God's dew quench! Therefore I say again,  
I utterly abhor, yea, from my soul  
Refuse you for my judge; whom, yet once more,  
I hold my most malicious foe, and think not  
At all a friend to truth.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

I do profess  
You speak not like yourself; who ever yet  
Have stood to charity, and display'd the effects

Of disposition gentle, and of wisdom  
O'ertopping woman's power. Madam, you do me wrong:  
I have no spleen against you; nor injustice  
For you or any: how far I have proceeded,  
Or how far further shall, is warranted  
By a commission from the consistory,  
Yea, the whole consistory of Rome. You charge me  
That I have blown this coal: I do deny it:  
The king is present: if it be known to him  
That I gainsay my deed, how may he wound,  
And worthily, my falsehood! yea, as much  
As you have done my truth. If he know  
That I am free of your report, he knows  
I am not of your wrong. Therefore in him  
It lies to cure me: and the cure is, to  
Remove these thoughts from you: the which before  
His highness shall speak in, I do beseech  
You, gracious madam, to unthink your speaking  
And to say so no more.

## QUEEN KATHARINE

My lord, my lord,  
I am a simple woman, much too weak  
To oppose your cunning. You're meek and  
humble-mouth'd;  
You sign your place and calling, in full seeming,  
With meekness and humility; but your heart  
Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.  
You have, by fortune and his highness' favours,  
Gone slightly o'er low steps and now are mounted  
Where powers are your retainers, and your words,  
Domestics to you, serve your will as't please  
Yourself pronounce their office. I must tell you,  
You tender more your person's honour than  
Your high profession spiritual: that again  
I do refuse you for my judge; and here,  
Before you all, appeal unto the pope,  
To bring my whole cause 'fore his holiness,  
And to be judged by him.

*She curtsies to KING HENRY VIII, and offers to depart*

## **CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

The queen is obstinate,  
Stubborn to justice, apt to accuse it, and  
Disdainful to be tried by't: 'tis not well.  
She's going away.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Call her again.

## **Crier**

Katharine Queen of England, come into the court.

## **GRIFFITH**

Madam, you are call'd back.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

What need you note it? pray you, keep your way:  
When you are call'd, return. Now, the Lord help,  
They vex me past my patience! Pray you, pass on:  
I will not tarry; no, nor ever more  
Upon this business my appearance make  
In any of their courts.

*Exeunt QUEEN KATHARINE and her Attendants*

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Go thy ways, Kate:  
That man i' the world who shall report he has  
A better wife, let him in nought be trusted,  
For speaking false in that: thou art, alone,  
If thy rare qualities, sweet gentleness,  
Thy meekness saint-like, wife-like government,  
Obeying in commanding, and thy parts  
Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out,  
The queen of earthly queens: she's noble born;

And, like her true nobility, she has  
Carried herself towards me.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Most gracious sir,  
In humblest manner I require your highness,  
That it shall please you to declare, in hearing  
Of all these ears,--for where I am robb'd and bound,  
There must I be unloosed, although not there  
At once and fully satisfied,--whether ever I  
Did broach this business to your highness; or  
Laid any scruple in your way, which might  
Induce you to the question on't? or ever  
Have to you, but with thanks to God for such  
A royal lady, spake one the least word that might  
Be to the prejudice of her present state,  
Or touch of her good person?

## **KING HENRY VIII**

My lord cardinal,  
I do excuse you; yea, upon mine honour,  
I free you from't. You are not to be taught  
That you have many enemies, that know not  
Why they are so, but, like to village-curs,  
Bark when their fellows do: by some of these  
The queen is put in anger. You're excused:  
But will you be more justified? You ever  
Have wish'd the sleeping of this business; never desired  
It to be stirr'd; but oft have hinder'd, oft,  
The passages made toward it: on my honour,  
I speak my good lord cardinal to this point,  
And thus far clear him. Now, what moved me to't,  
I will be bold with time and your attention:  
Then mark the inducement. Thus it came; give heed to't:  
My conscience first received a tenderness,  
Scruple, and prick, on certain speeches utter'd  
By the Bishop of Bayonne, then French ambassador;  
Who had been hither sent on the debating  
A marriage 'twixt the Duke of Orleans and  
Our daughter Mary: i' the progress of this business,  
Ere a determinate resolution, he,



I mean the bishop, did require a respite;  
Wherein he might the king his lord advertise  
Whether our daughter were legitimate,  
Respecting this our marriage with the dowager,  
Sometimes our brother's wife. This respite shook  
The bosom of my conscience, enter'd me,  
Yea, with a splitting power, and made to tremble  
The region of my breast; which forced such way,  
That many mazed considerings did throng  
And press'd in with this caution. First, methought  
I stood not in the smile of heaven; who had  
Commanded nature, that my lady's womb,  
If it conceived a male child by me, should  
Do no more offices of life to't than  
The grave does to the dead; for her male issue  
Or died where they were made, or shortly after  
This world had air'd them: hence I took a thought,  
This was a judgment on me; that my kingdom,  
Well worthy the best heir o' the world, should not  
Be gladdened in't by me: then follows, that  
I weigh'd the danger which my realms stood in  
By this my issue's fail; and that gave to me  
Many a groaning throe. Thus hulling in  
The wild sea of my conscience, I did steer  
Toward this remedy, whereupon we are  
Now present here together: that's to say,  
I meant to rectify my conscience,--which  
I then did feel full sick, and yet not well,--  
By all the reverend fathers of the land  
And doctors learn'd: first I began in private  
With you, my Lord of Lincoln; you remember  
How under my oppression I did reek,  
When I first moved you.

## **LINCOLN**

Very well, my liege.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

I have spoke long: be pleased yourself to say  
How far you satisfied me.

## LINCOLN

So please your highness,  
The question did at first so stagger me,  
Bearing a state of mighty moment in't  
And consequence of dread, that I committed  
The daring'st counsel which I had to doubt;  
And did entreat your highness to this course  
Which you are running here.

## KING HENRY VIII

I then moved you,  
My Lord of Canterbury; and got your leave  
To make this present summons: unsolicited  
I left no reverend person in this court;  
But by particular consent proceeded  
Under your hands and seals: therefore, go on:  
For no dislike i' the world against the person  
Of the good queen, but the sharp thorny points  
Of my alleged reasons, drive this forward:  
Prove but our marriage lawful, by my life  
And kingly dignity, we are contented  
To wear our mortal state to come with her,  
Katharine our queen, before the primest creature  
That's paragon'd o' the world.

## CARDINAL CAMPEIUS

So please your highness,  
The queen being absent, 'tis a needful fitness  
That we adjourn this court till further day:  
Meanwhile must be an earnest motion  
Made to the queen, to call back her appeal  
She intends unto his holiness.

## KING HENRY VIII

[Aside] I may perceive  
These cardinals trifle with me: I abhor  
This dilatory sloth and tricks of Rome.  
My learn'd and well-beloved servant, Cranmer,

Prithee, return: with thy approach, I know,  
My comfort comes along. Break up the court:  
I say, set on.

*Exeunt in manner as they entered*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. QUEEN KATHARINE's apartments.

*Enter QUEEN KATHARINE and her Women, as at work*

### QUEEN KATHARINE

Take thy lute, wench: my soul grows sad with troubles;  
Sing, and disperse 'em, if thou canst: leave working.

### SONG

Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze,  
Bow themselves when he did sing:  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever sprung; as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.  
Every thing that heard him play,  
Even the billows of the sea,  
Hung their heads, and then lay by.  
In sweet music is such art,  
Killing care and grief of heart  
Fall asleep, or hearing, die.

*Enter a Gentleman*

### QUEEN KATHARINE

How now!

### Gentleman

An't please your grace, the two great cardinals  
Wait in the presence.

### QUEEN KATHARINE

Would they speak with me?

**Gentleman**

They will'd me say so, madam.

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

Pray their graces  
To come near.

*Exit Gentleman*

What can be their business  
With me, a poor weak woman, fall'n from favour?  
I do not like their coming. Now I think on't,  
They should be good men; their affairs as righteous:  
But all hoods make not monks.

*Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY and CARDINAL CAMPEIUS*

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Peace to your highness!

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

Your graces find me here part of a housewife,  
I would be all, against the worst may happen.  
What are your pleasures with me, reverend lords?

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

May it please you noble madam, to withdraw  
Into your private chamber, we shall give you  
The full cause of our coming.

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

Speak it here:

There's nothing I have done yet, o' my conscience,  
Deserves a corner: would all other women  
Could speak this with as free a soul as I do!  
My lords, I care not, so much I am happy  
Above a number, if my actions  
Were tried by every tongue, every eye saw 'em,  
Envy and base opinion set against 'em,  
I know my life so even. If your business  
Seek me out, and that way I am wife in,  
Out with it boldly: truth loves open dealing.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Tanta est erga te mentis integritas, regina  
serenissima,--

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

O, good my lord, no Latin;  
I am not such a truant since my coming,  
As not to know the language I have lived in:  
A strange tongue makes my cause more strange,  
suspicious;  
Pray, speak in English: here are some will thank you,  
If you speak truth, for their poor mistress' sake;  
Believe me, she has had much wrong: lord cardinal,  
The willing'st sin I ever yet committed  
May be absolved in English.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Noble lady,  
I am sorry my integrity should breed,  
And service to his majesty and you,  
So deep suspicion, where all faith was meant.  
We come not by the way of accusation,  
To taint that honour every good tongue blesses,  
Nor to betray you any way to sorrow,  
You have too much, good lady; but to know  
How you stand minded in the weighty difference  
Between the king and you; and to deliver,  
Like free and honest men, our just opinions

And comforts to your cause.

## **CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

Most honour'd madam,  
My Lord of York, out of his noble nature,  
Zeal and obedience he still bore your grace,  
Forgetting, like a good man your late censure  
Both of his truth and him, which was too far,  
Offers, as I do, in a sign of peace,  
His service and his counsel.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

[Aside] To betray me.--  
My lords, I thank you both for your good wills;  
Ye speak like honest men; pray God, ye prove so!  
But how to make ye suddenly an answer,  
In such a point of weight, so near mine honour,--  
More near my life, I fear,--with my weak wit,  
And to such men of gravity and learning,  
In truth, I know not. I was set at work  
Among my maids: full little, God knows, looking  
Either for such men or such business.  
For her sake that I have been,--for I feel  
The last fit of my greatness,--good your graces,  
Let me have time and counsel for my cause:  
Alas, I am a woman, friendless, hopeless!

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Madam, you wrong the king's love with these fears:  
Your hopes and friends are infinite.

## **QUEEN KATHARINE**

In England  
But little for my profit: can you think, lords,  
That any Englishman dare give me counsel?  
Or be a known friend, 'gainst his highness' pleasure,  
Though he be grown so desperate to be honest,  
And live a subject? Nay, forsooth, my friends,

They that must weigh out my afflictions,  
They that my trust must grow to, live not here:  
They are, as all my other comforts, far hence  
In mine own country, lords.

**CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

I would your grace  
Would leave your griefs, and take my counsel.

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

How, sir?

**CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

Put your main cause into the king's protection;  
He's loving and most gracious: 'twill be much  
Both for your honour better and your cause;  
For if the trial of the law o'ertake ye,  
You'll part away disgraced.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

He tells you rightly.

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

Ye tell me what ye wish for both,--my ruin:  
Is this your Christian counsel? out upon ye!  
Heaven is above all yet; there sits a judge  
That no king can corrupt.

**CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

Your rage mistakes us.

**QUEEN KATHARINE**

The more shame for ye: holy men I thought ye,  
Upon my soul, two reverend cardinal virtues;



But cardinal sins and hollow hearts I fear ye:  
Mend 'em, for shame, my lords. Is this your comfort?  
The cordial that ye bring a wretched lady,  
A woman lost among ye, laugh'd at, scorn'd?  
I will not wish ye half my miseries;  
I have more charity: but say, I warn'd ye;  
Take heed, for heaven's sake, take heed, lest at once  
The burthen of my sorrows fall upon ye.

### **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Madam, this is a mere distraction;  
You turn the good we offer into envy.

### **QUEEN KATHARINE**

Ye turn me into nothing: woe upon ye  
And all such false professors! would you have me--  
If you have any justice, any pity;  
If ye be any thing but churchmen's habits--  
Put my sick cause into his hands that hates me?  
Alas, has banish'd me his bed already,  
His love, too long ago! I am old, my lords,  
And all the fellowship I hold now with him  
Is only my obedience. What can happen  
To me above this wretchedness? all your studies  
Make me a curse like this.

### **CARDINAL CAMPEIUS**

Your fears are worse.

### **QUEEN KATHARINE**

Have I lived thus long--let me speak myself,  
Since virtue finds no friends--a wife, a true one?  
A woman, I dare say without vain-glory,  
Never yet branded with suspicion?  
Have I with all my full affections  
Still met the king? loved him next heaven?  
obey'd him?  
Been, out of fondness, superstitious to him?

Almost forgot my prayers to content him?  
And am I thus rewarded? 'tis not well, lords.  
Bring me a constant woman to her husband,  
One that ne'er dream'd a joy beyond his pleasure;  
And to that woman, when she has done most,  
Yet will I add an honour, a great patience.

### **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Madam, you wander from the good we aim at.

### **QUEEN KATHARINE**

My lord, I dare not make myself so guilty,  
To give up willingly that noble title  
Your master wed me to: nothing but death  
Shall e'er divorce my dignities.

### **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Pray, hear me.

### **QUEEN KATHARINE**

Would I had never trod this English earth,  
Or felt the flatteries that grow upon it!  
Ye have angels' faces, but heaven knows your hearts.  
What will become of me now, wretched lady!  
I am the most unhappy woman living.  
Alas, poor wenches, where are now your fortunes!  
Shipwreck'd upon a kingdom, where no pity,  
No friend, no hope; no kindred weep for me;  
Almost no grave allow'd me: like the lily,  
That once was mistress of the field and flourish'd,  
I'll hang my head and perish.

### **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

If your grace  
Could but be brought to know our ends are honest,  
You'd feel more comfort: why should we, good lady,  
Upon what cause, wrong you? alas, our places,

The way of our profession is against it:  
We are to cure such sorrows, not to sow 'em.  
For goodness' sake, consider what you do;  
How you may hurt yourself, ay, utterly  
Grow from the king's acquaintance, by this carriage.  
The hearts of princes kiss obedience,  
So much they love it; but to stubborn spirits  
They swell, and grow as terrible as storms.  
I know you have a gentle, noble temper,  
A soul as even as a calm: pray, think us  
Those we profess, peace-makers, friends, and servants.

## CARDINAL CAMPEIUS

Madam, you'll find it so. You wrong your virtues  
With these weak women's fears: a noble spirit,  
As yours was put into you, ever casts  
Such doubts, as false coin, from it. The king loves you;  
Beware you lose it not: for us, if you please  
To trust us in your business, we are ready  
To use our utmost studies in your service.

## QUEEN KATHARINE

Do what ye will, my lords: and, pray, forgive me,  
If I have used myself unmannerly;  
You know I am a woman, lacking wit  
To make a seemly answer to such persons.  
Pray, do my service to his majesty:  
He has my heart yet; and shall have my prayers  
While I shall have my life. Come, reverend fathers,  
Bestow your counsels on me: she now begs,  
That little thought, when she set footing here,  
She should have bought her dignities so dear.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Ante-chamber to KING HENRY VIII's apartment.

*Enter NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, SURREY, and Chamberlain*

### NORFOLK

If you will now unite in your complaints,  
And force them with a constancy, the cardinal  
Cannot stand under them: if you omit  
The offer of this time, I cannot promise  
But that you shall sustain moe new disgraces,  
With these you bear already.

### SURREY

I am joyful  
To meet the least occasion that may give me  
Remembrance of my father-in-law, the duke,  
To be revenged on him.

### SUFFOLK

Which of the peers  
Have uncontentn'd gone by him, or at least  
Strangely neglected? when did he regard  
The stamp of nobleness in any person  
Out of himself?

### Chamberlain

My lords, you speak your pleasures:  
What he deserves of you and me I know;  
What we can do to him, though now the time  
Gives way to us, I much fear. If you cannot  
Bar his access to the king, never attempt  
Any thing on him; for he hath a witchcraft

Over the king in's tongue.

## **NORFOLK**

O, fear him not;  
His spell in that is out: the king hath found  
Matter against him that for ever mars  
The honey of his language. No, he's settled,  
Not to come off, in his displeasure.

## **SURREY**

Sir,  
I should be glad to hear such news as this  
Once every hour.

## **NORFOLK**

Believe it, this is true:  
In the divorce his contrary proceedings  
Are all unfolded wherein he appears  
As I would wish mine enemy.

## **SURREY**

How came  
His practises to light?

## **SUFFOLK**

Most strangely.

## **SURREY**

O, how, how?

## **SUFFOLK**

The cardinal's letters to the pope miscarried,  
And came to the eye o' the king: wherein was read,  
How that the cardinal did entreat his holiness

To stay the judgment o' the divorce; for if  
It did take place, 'I do,' quoth he, 'perceive  
My king is tangled in affection to  
A creature of the queen's, Lady Anne Bullen.'

**SURREY**

Has the king this?

**SUFFOLK**

Believe it.

**SURREY**

Will this work?

**Chamberlain**

The king in this perceives him, how he coasts  
And hedges his own way. But in this point  
All his tricks founder, and he brings his physic  
After his patient's death: the king already  
Hath married the fair lady.

**SURREY**

Would he had!

**SUFFOLK**

May you be happy in your wish, my lord  
For, I profess, you have it.

**SURREY**

Now, all my joy  
Trace the conjunction!

**SUFFOLK**

My amen to't!

## **NORFOLK**

All men's!

## **SUFFOLK**

There's order given for her coronation:  
Marry, this is yet but young, and may be left  
To some ears unrecounted. But, my lords,  
She is a gallant creature, and complete  
In mind and feature: I persuade me, from her  
Will fall some blessing to this land, which shall  
In it be memorised.

## **SURREY**

But, will the king  
Digest this letter of the cardinal's?  
The Lord forbid!

## **NORFOLK**

Marry, amen!

## **SUFFOLK**

No, no;  
There be moe wasps that buzz about his nose  
Will make this sting the sooner. Cardinal Campeius  
Is stol'n away to Rome; hath ta'en no leave;  
Has left the cause o' the king unhandled; and  
Is posted, as the agent of our cardinal,  
To second all his plot. I do assure you  
The king cried Ha! at this.

## **Chamberlain**

Now, God incense him,  
And let him cry Ha! louder!

## NORFOLK

But, my lord,  
When returns Cranmer?

## SUFFOLK

He is return'd in his opinions; which  
Have satisfied the king for his divorce,  
Together with all famous colleges  
Almost in Christendom: shortly, I believe,  
His second marriage shall be publish'd, and  
Her coronation. Katharine no more  
Shall be call'd queen, but princess dowager  
And widow to Prince Arthur.

## NORFOLK

This same Cranmer's  
A worthy fellow, and hath ta'en much pain  
In the king's business.

## SUFFOLK

He has; and we shall see him  
For it an archbishop.

## NORFOLK

So I hear.

## SUFFOLK

'Tis so.  
The cardinal!

*Enter CARDINAL WOLSEY and CROMWELL*

## NORFOLK

Observe, observe, he's moody.



**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

The packet, Cromwell.  
Gave't you the king?

**CROMWELL**

To his own hand, in's bedchamber.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Look'd he o' the inside of the paper?

**CROMWELL**

Presently  
He did unseal them: and the first he view'd,  
He did it with a serious mind; a heed  
Was in his countenance. You he bade  
Attend him here this morning.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Is he ready  
To come abroad?

**CROMWELL**

I think, by this he is.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Leave me awhile.

*Exit CROMWELL*

*Aside*

It shall be to the Duchess of Alencon,  
The French king's sister: he shall marry her.

Anne Bullen! No; I'll no Anne Bullens for him:  
There's more in't than fair visage. Bullen!  
No, we'll no Bullens. Speedily I wish  
To hear from Rome. The Marchioness of Pembroke!

## **NORFOLK**

He's discontented.

## **SUFFOLK**

May be, he hears the king  
Does whet his anger to him.

## **SURREY**

Sharp enough,  
Lord, for thy justice!

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

[Aside] The late queen's gentlewoman,  
a knight's daughter,  
To be her mistress' mistress! the queen's queen!  
This candle burns not clear: 'tis I must snuff it;  
Then out it goes. What though I know her virtuous  
And well deserving? yet I know her for  
A spleeny Lutheran; and not wholesome to  
Our cause, that she should lie i' the bosom of  
Our hard-ruled king. Again, there is sprung up  
An heretic, an arch one, Cranmer; one  
Hath crawl'd into the favour of the king,  
And is his oracle.

## **NORFOLK**

He is vex'd at something.

## **SURREY**

I would 'twere something that would fret the string,  
The master-cord on's heart!

*Enter KING HENRY VIII, reading of a schedule, and LOVELL*

**SUFFOLK**

The king, the king!

**KING HENRY VIII**

What piles of wealth hath he accumulated  
To his own portion! and what expense by the hour  
Seems to flow from him! How, i' the name of thrift,  
Does he rake this together! Now, my lords,  
Saw you the cardinal?

**NORFOLK**

My lord, we have  
Stood here observing him: some strange commotion  
Is in his brain: he bites his lip, and starts;  
Stops on a sudden, looks upon the ground,  
Then lays his finger on his temple, straight  
Springs out into fast gait; then stops again,  
Strikes his breast hard, and anon he casts  
His eye against the moon: in most strange postures  
We have seen him set himself.

**KING HENRY VIII**

It may well be;  
There is a mutiny in's mind. This morning  
Papers of state he sent me to peruse,  
As I required: and wot you what I found  
There,--on my conscience, put unwittingly?  
Forsooth, an inventory, thus importing;  
The several parcels of his plate, his treasure,  
Rich stuffs, and ornaments of household; which  
I find at such proud rate, that it out-speaks  
Possession of a subject.

**NORFOLK**

It's heaven's will:  
Some spirit put this paper in the packet,  
To bless your eye withal.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

If we did think  
His contemplation were above the earth,  
And fix'd on spiritual object, he should still  
Dwell in his musings: but I am afraid  
His thinkings are below the moon, not worth  
His serious considering.

*King HENRY VIII takes his seat; whispers LOVELL, who goes to CARDINAL WOLSEY*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Heaven forgive me!  
Ever God bless your highness!

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Good my lord,  
You are full of heavenly stuff, and bear the inventory  
Of your best graces in your mind; the which  
You were now running o'er: you have scarce time  
To steal from spiritual leisure a brief span  
To keep your earthly audit: sure, in that  
I deem you an ill husband, and am glad  
To have you therein my companion.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Sir,  
For holy offices I have a time; a time  
To think upon the part of business which  
I bear i' the state; and nature does require  
Her times of preservation, which perforce  
I, her frail son, amongst my brethren mortal,  
Must give my tendence to.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

You have said well.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

And ever may your highness yoke together,  
As I will lend you cause, my doing well  
With my well saying!

**KING HENRY VIII**

'Tis well said again;  
And 'tis a kind of good deed to say well:  
And yet words are no deeds. My father loved you:  
His said he did; and with his deed did crown  
His word upon you. Since I had my office,  
I have kept you next my heart; have not alone  
Employ'd you where high profits might come home,  
But pared my present havings, to bestow  
My bounties upon you.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

[Aside] What should this mean?

**SURREY**

[Aside] The Lord increase this business!

**KING HENRY VIII**

Have I not made you,  
The prime man of the state? I pray you, tell me,  
If what I now pronounce you have found true:  
And, if you may confess it, say withal,  
If you are bound to us or no. What say you?

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

My sovereign, I confess your royal graces,  
Shower'd on me daily, have been more than could

My studied purposes requite; which went  
Beyond all man's endeavours: my endeavours  
Have ever come too short of my desires,  
Yet filed with my abilities: mine own ends  
Have been mine so that evermore they pointed  
To the good of your most sacred person and  
The profit of the state. For your great graces  
Heap'd upon me, poor undeserver, I  
Can nothing render but allegiant thanks,  
My prayers to heaven for you, my loyalty,  
Which ever has and ever shall be growing,  
Till death, that winter, kill it.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Fairly answer'd;  
A loyal and obedient subject is  
Therein illustrated: the honour of it  
Does pay the act of it; as, i' the contrary,  
The foulness is the punishment. I presume  
That, as my hand has open'd bounty to you,  
My heart dropp'd love, my power rain'd honour, more  
On you than any; so your hand and heart,  
Your brain, and every function of your power,  
Should, notwithstanding that your bond of duty,  
As 'twere in love's particular, be more  
To me, your friend, than any.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

I do profess  
That for your highness' good I ever labour'd  
More than mine own; that am, have, and will be--  
Though all the world should crack their duty to you,  
And throw it from their soul; though perils did  
Abound, as thick as thought could make 'em, and  
Appear in forms more horrid,--yet my duty,  
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,  
Should the approach of this wild river break,  
And stand unshaken yours.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

'Tis nobly spoken:  
Take notice, lords, he has a loyal breast,  
For you have seen him open't. Read o'er this;

*Giving him papers*

And after, this: and then to breakfast with  
What appetite you have.

*Exit KING HENRY VIII, frowning upon CARDINAL WOLSEY: the Nobles throng after him, smiling and whispering*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

What should this mean?  
What sudden anger's this? how have I reap'd it?  
He parted frowning from me, as if ruin  
Leap'd from his eyes: so looks the chafed lion  
Upon the daring huntsman that has gall'd him;  
Then makes him nothing. I must read this paper;  
I fear, the story of his anger. 'Tis so;  
This paper has undone me: 'tis the account  
Of all that world of wealth I have drawn together  
For mine own ends; indeed, to gain the popedom,  
And fee my friends in Rome. O negligence!  
Fit for a fool to fall by: what cross devil  
Made me put this main secret in the packet  
I sent the king? Is there no way to cure this?  
No new device to beat this from his brains?  
I know 'twill stir him strongly; yet I know  
A way, if it take right, in spite of fortune  
Will bring me off again. What's this? 'To the Pope!'  
The letter, as I live, with all the business  
I writ to's holiness. Nay then, farewell!  
I have touch'd the highest point of all my greatness;  
And, from that full meridian of my glory,  
I haste now to my setting: I shall fall  
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,  
And no man see me more.

*Re-enter to CARDINAL WOLSEY, NORFOLK and SUFFOLK, SURREY, and the Chamberlain*

## **NORFOLK**

Hear the king's pleasure, cardinal: who commands you  
To render up the great seal presently  
Into our hands; and to confine yourself  
To Asher House, my Lord of Winchester's,  
Till you hear further from his highness.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Stay:  
Where's your commission, lords? words cannot carry  
Authority so weighty.

## **SUFFOLK**

Who dare cross 'em,  
Bearing the king's will from his mouth expressly?

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Till I find more than will or words to do it,  
I mean your malice, know, officious lords,  
I dare and must deny it. Now I feel  
Of what coarse metal ye are moulded, envy:  
How eagerly ye follow my disgraces,  
As if it fed ye! and how sleek and wanton  
Ye appear in every thing may bring my ruin!  
Follow your envious courses, men of malice;  
You have Christian warrant for 'em, and, no doubt,  
In time will find their fit rewards. That seal,  
You ask with such a violence, the king,  
Mine and your master, with his own hand gave me;  
Bade me enjoy it, with the place and honours,  
During my life; and, to confirm his goodness,  
Tied it by letters-patents: now, who'll take it?

## **SURREY**

The king, that gave it.



## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

It must be himself, then.

## **SURREY**

Thou art a proud traitor, priest.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Proud lord, thou liest:  
Within these forty hours Surrey durst better  
Have burnt that tongue than said so.

## **SURREY**

Thy ambition,  
Thou scarlet sin, robb'd this bewailing land  
Of noble Buckingham, my father-in-law:  
The heads of all thy brother cardinals,  
With thee and all thy best parts bound together,  
Weigh'd not a hair of his. Plague of your policy!  
You sent me deputy for Ireland;  
Far from his succor, from the king, from all  
That might have mercy on the fault thou gavest him;  
Whilst your great goodness, out of holy pity,  
Absolved him with an axe.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

This, and all else  
This talking lord can lay upon my credit,  
I answer is most false. The duke by law  
Found his deserts: how innocent I was  
From any private malice in his end,  
His noble jury and foul cause can witness.  
If I loved many words, lord, I should tell you  
You have as little honesty as honour,  
That in the way of loyalty and truth  
Toward the king, my ever royal master,  
Dare mate a sounder man than Surrey can be,  
And all that love his follies.

## **SURREY**

By my soul,  
Your long coat, priest, protects you; thou  
shouldst feel  
My sword i' the life-blood of thee else. My lords,  
Can ye endure to hear this arrogance?  
And from this fellow? if we live thus tamely,  
To be thus jaded by a piece of scarlet,  
Farewell nobility; let his grace go forward,  
And dare us with his cap like larks.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

All goodness  
Is poison to thy stomach.

## **SURREY**

Yes, that goodness  
Of gleaning all the land's wealth into one,  
Into your own hands, cardinal, by extortion;  
The goodness of your intercepted packets  
You writ to the pope against the king: your goodness,  
Since you provoke me, shall be most notorious.  
My Lord of Norfolk, as you are truly noble,  
As you respect the common good, the state  
Of our despised nobility, our issues,  
Who, if he live, will scarce be gentlemen,  
Produce the grand sum of his sins, the articles  
Collected from his life. I'll startle you  
Worse than the scaring bell, when the brown wench  
Lay kissing in your arms, lord cardinal.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

How much, methinks, I could despise this man,  
But that I am bound in charity against it!

## **NORFOLK**

Those articles, my lord, are in the king's hand:  
But, thus much, they are foul ones.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

So much fairer  
And spotless shall mine innocence arise,  
When the king knows my truth.

## **SURREY**

This cannot save you:  
I thank my memory, I yet remember  
Some of these articles; and out they shall.  
Now, if you can blush and cry 'guilty,' cardinal,  
You'll show a little honesty.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Speak on, sir;  
I dare your worst objections: if I blush,  
It is to see a nobleman want manners.

## **SURREY**

I had rather want those than my head. Have at you!  
First, that, without the king's assent or knowledge,  
You wrought to be a legate; by which power  
You maim'd the jurisdiction of all bishops.

## **NORFOLK**

Then, that in all you writ to Rome, or else  
To foreign princes, 'Ego et Rex meus'  
Was still inscribed; in which you brought the king  
To be your servant.

## **SUFFOLK**

Then that, without the knowledge  
Either of king or council, when you went  
Ambassador to the emperor, you made bold

To carry into Flanders the great seal.

## **SURREY**

Item, you sent a large commission  
To Gregory de Cassado, to conclude,  
Without the king's will or the state's allowance,  
A league between his highness and Ferrara.

## **SUFFOLK**

That, out of mere ambition, you have caused  
Your holy hat to be stamp'd on the king's coin.

## **SURREY**

Then that you have sent innumerable substance--  
By what means got, I leave to your own conscience--  
To furnish Rome, and to prepare the ways  
You have for dignities; to the mere undoing  
Of all the kingdom. Many more there are;  
Which, since they are of you, and odious,  
I will not taint my mouth with.

## **Chamberlain**

O my lord,  
Press not a falling man too far! 'tis virtue:  
His faults lie open to the laws; let them,  
Not you, correct him. My heart weeps to see him  
So little of his great self.

## **SURREY**

I forgive him.

## **SUFFOLK**

Lord cardinal, the king's further pleasure is,  
Because all those things you have done of late,  
By your power legatine, within this kingdom,

Fall into the compass of a praemunire,  
That therefore such a writ be sued against you;  
To forfeit all your goods, lands, tenements,  
Chattels, and whatsoever, and to be  
Out of the king's protection. This is my charge.

## **NORFOLK**

And so we'll leave you to your meditations  
How to live better. For your stubborn answer  
About the giving back the great seal to us,  
The king shall know it, and, no doubt, shall thank you.  
So fare you well, my little good lord cardinal.

*Exeunt all but CARDINAL WOLSEY*

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

So farewell to the little good you bear me.  
Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness!  
This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,  
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,  
And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,  
This many summers in a sea of glory,  
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride  
At length broke under me and now has left me,  
Weary and old with service, to the mercy  
Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.  
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye:  
I feel my heart new open'd. O, how wretched  
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!  
There is, betwixt that smile we would aspire to,  
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,  
More pangs and fears than wars or women have:  
And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,  
Never to hope again.

*Enter CROMWELL, and stands amazed*

Why, how now, Cromwell!

**CROMWELL**

I have no power to speak, sir.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

What, amazed  
At my misfortunes? can thy spirit wonder  
A great man should decline? Nay, an you weep,  
I am fall'n indeed.

**CROMWELL**

How does your grace?

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Why, well;  
Never so truly happy, my good Cromwell.  
I know myself now; and I feel within me  
A peace above all earthly dignities,  
A still and quiet conscience. The king has cured me,  
I humbly thank his grace; and from these shoulders,  
These ruin'd pillars, out of pity, taken  
A load would sink a navy, too much honour:  
O, 'tis a burthen, Cromwell, 'tis a burthen  
Too heavy for a man that hopes for heaven!

**CROMWELL**

I am glad your grace has made that right use of it.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

I hope I have: I am able now, methinks,  
Out of a fortitude of soul I feel,  
To endure more miseries and greater far

Than my weak-hearted enemies dare offer.  
What news abroad?

**CROMWELL**

The heaviest and the worst  
Is your displeasure with the king.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

God bless him!

**CROMWELL**

The next is, that Sir Thomas More is chosen  
Lord chancellor in your place.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

That's somewhat sudden:  
But he's a learned man. May he continue  
Long in his highness' favour, and do justice  
For truth's sake and his conscience; that his bones,  
When he has run his course and sleeps in blessings,  
May have a tomb of orphans' tears wept on em! What more?

**CROMWELL**

That Cranmer is return'd with welcome,  
Install'd lord archbishop of Canterbury.

**CARDINAL WOLSEY**

That's news indeed.

**CROMWELL**

Last, that the Lady Anne,  
Whom the king hath in secrecy long married,  
This day was view'd in open as his queen,  
Going to chapel; and the voice is now

Only about her coronation.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

There was the weight that pull'd me down. O Cromwell,  
The king has gone beyond me: all my glories  
In that one woman I have lost for ever:  
No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,  
Or gild again the noble troops that waited  
Upon my smiles. Go, get thee from me, Cromwell;  
I am a poor fall'n man, unworthy now  
To be thy lord and master: seek the king;  
That sun, I pray, may never set! I have told him  
What and how true thou art: he will advance thee;  
Some little memory of me will stir him--  
I know his noble nature--not to let  
Thy hopeful service perish too: good Cromwell,  
Neglect him not; make use now, and provide  
For thine own future safety.

## **CROMWELL**

O my lord,  
Must I, then, leave you? must I needs forego  
So good, so noble and so true a master?  
Bear witness, all that have not hearts of iron,  
With what a sorrow Cromwell leaves his lord.  
The king shall have my service: but my prayers  
For ever and for ever shall be yours.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear  
In all my miseries; but thou hast forced me,  
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.  
Let's dry our eyes: and thus far hear me, Cromwell;  
And, when I am forgotten, as I shall be,  
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention  
Of me more must be heard of, say, I taught thee,  
Say, Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,  
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,  
Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in;



A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.  
Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.  
Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition:  
By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,  
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it?  
Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee;  
Corruption wins not more than honesty.  
Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,  
To silence envious tongues. Be just, and fear not:  
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,  
Thy God's, and truth's; then if thou fall'st,  
O Cromwell,  
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr! Serve the king;  
And,--prithee, lead me in:  
There take an inventory of all I have,  
To the last penny; 'tis the king's: my robe,  
And my integrity to heaven, is all  
I dare now call mine own. O Cromwell, Cromwell!  
Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my king, he would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

## **CROMWELL**

Good sir, have patience.

## **CARDINAL WOLSEY**

So I have. Farewell  
The hopes of court! my hopes in heaven do dwell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A street in Westminster.

*Enter two Gentlemen, meeting one another*

### First Gentleman

You're well met once again.

### Second Gentleman

So are you.

### First Gentleman

You come to take your stand here, and behold  
The Lady Anne pass from her coronation?

### Second Gentleman

'Tis all my business. At our last encounter,  
The Duke of Buckingham came from his trial.

### First Gentleman

'Tis very true: but that time offer'd sorrow;  
This, general joy.

### Second Gentleman

'Tis well: the citizens,  
I am sure, have shown at full their royal minds--  
As, let 'em have their rights, they are ever forward--  
In celebration of this day with shows,  
Pageants and sights of honour.

### First Gentleman

Never greater,  
Nor, I'll assure you, better taken, sir.

**Second Gentleman**

May I be bold to ask at what that contains,  
That paper in your hand?

**First Gentleman**

Yes; 'tis the list  
Of those that claim their offices this day  
By custom of the coronation.  
The Duke of Suffolk is the first, and claims  
To be high-steward; next, the Duke of Norfolk,  
He to be earl marshal: you may read the rest.

**Second Gentleman**

I thank you, sir: had I not known those customs,  
I should have been beholding to your paper.  
But, I beseech you, what's become of Katharine,  
The princess dowager? how goes her business?

**First Gentleman**

That I can tell you too. The Archbishop  
Of Canterbury, accompanied with other  
Learned and reverend fathers of his order,  
Held a late court at Dunstable, six miles off  
From Amptill where the princess lay; to which  
She was often cited by them, but appear'd not:  
And, to be short, for not appearance and  
The king's late scruple, by the main assent  
Of all these learned men she was divorced,  
And the late marriage made of none effect  
Since which she was removed to Kimbolton,  
Where she remains now sick.

**Second Gentleman**

Alas, good lady!

*Trumpets*

The trumpets sound: stand close, the queen is coming.

*Hautboys*

*THE ORDER OF THE CORONATION*

1. A lively flourish of Trumpets.
2. Then, two Judges.
3. Lord Chancellor, with the purse and mace before him.
4. Choristers, singing.

*Music*

5. Mayor of London, bearing the mace. Then Garter, in his coat of arms, and on his head a gilt copper crown.
6. Marquess Dorset, bearing a sceptre of gold, on his head a demi-coronal of gold. With him, SURREY, bearing the rod of silver with the dove, crowned with an earl's coronet.  
Collars of SS.
7. SUFFOLK, in his robe of estate, his coronet on his head, bearing a long white wand, as high-steward. With him, NORFOLK, with the rod of marshalship, a coronet on his head.  
Collars of SS.
8. A canopy borne by four of the Cinque-ports; under it, QUEEN ANNE in her robe; in her hair richly adorned with pearl, crowned. On each side her, the Bishops of London and Winchester.
9. The old Duchess of Norfolk, in a coronal of gold, wrought with flowers, bearing QUEEN ANNE's train.
10. Certain Ladies or Countesses, with plain circlets of gold without flowers.

*They pass over the stage in order and state*

**Second Gentleman**

A royal train, believe me. These I know:  
Who's that that bears the sceptre?

**First Gentleman**

Marquess Dorset:  
And that the Earl of Surrey, with the rod.

**Second Gentleman**

A bold brave gentleman. That should be  
The Duke of Suffolk?

**First Gentleman**

'Tis the same: high-steward.

**Second Gentleman**

And that my Lord of Norfolk?

**First Gentleman**

Yes;

**Second Gentleman**

Heaven bless thee!

*Looking on QUEEN ANNE*

Thou hast the sweetest face I ever look'd on.  
Sir, as I have a soul, she is an angel;  
Our king has all the Indies in his arms,  
And more and richer, when he strains that lady:  
I cannot blame his conscience.

**First Gentleman**

They that bear  
The cloth of honour over her, are four barons  
Of the Cinque-ports.

**Second Gentleman**

Those men are happy; and so are all are near her.  
I take it, she that carries up the train  
Is that old noble lady, Duchess of Norfolk.

**First Gentleman**

It is; and all the rest are countesses.

**Second Gentleman**

Their coronets say so. These are stars indeed;  
And sometimes falling ones.

**First Gentleman**

No more of that.

*Exit procession, and then a great flourish of trumpets*

*Enter a third Gentleman*

**First Gentleman**

God save you, sir! where have you been broiling?

**Third Gentleman**

Among the crowd i' the Abbey; where a finger  
Could not be wedged in more: I am stifled  
With the mere rankness of their joy.

**Second Gentleman**

You saw  
The ceremony?

**Third Gentleman**

That I did.

**First Gentleman**

How was it?

**Third Gentleman**

Well worth the seeing.

**Second Gentleman**

Good sir, speak it to us.

**Third Gentleman**

As well as I am able. The rich stream  
Of lords and ladies, having brought the queen  
To a prepared place in the choir, fell off  
A distance from her; while her grace sat down  
To rest awhile, some half an hour or so,  
In a rich chair of state, opposing freely  
The beauty of her person to the people.  
Believe me, sir, she is the goodliest woman  
That ever lay by man: which when the people  
Had the full view of, such a noise arose  
As the shrouds make at sea in a stiff tempest,  
As loud, and to as many tunes: hats, cloaks--  
Doublets, I think,--flew up; and had their faces  
Been loose, this day they had been lost. Such joy  
I never saw before. Great-bellied women,  
That had not half a week to go, like rams  
In the old time of war, would shake the press,  
And make 'em reel before 'em. No man living  
Could say 'This is my wife' there; all were woven  
So strangely in one piece.

## **Second Gentleman**

But, what follow'd?

## **Third Gentleman**

At length her grace rose, and with modest paces  
Came to the altar; where she kneel'd, and saint-like  
Cast her fair eyes to heaven and pray'd devoutly.  
Then rose again and bow'd her to the people:  
When by the Archbishop of Canterbury  
She had all the royal makings of a queen;  
As holy oil, Edward Confessor's crown,  
The rod, and bird of peace, and all such emblems  
Laid nobly on her: which perform'd, the choir,  
With all the choicest music of the kingdom,  
Together sung 'Te Deum.' So she parted,  
And with the same full state paced back again  
To York-place, where the feast is held.

## **First Gentleman**

Sir,  
You must no more call it York-place, that's past;  
For, since the cardinal fell, that title's lost:  
'Tis now the king's, and call'd Whitehall.

## **Third Gentleman**

I know it;  
But 'tis so lately alter'd, that the old name  
Is fresh about me.

## **Second Gentleman**

What two reverend bishops  
Were those that went on each side of the queen?

## **Third Gentleman**

Stokesly and Gardiner; the one of Winchester,  
Newly preferr'd from the king's secretary,



The other, London.

**Second Gentleman**

He of Winchester  
Is held no great good lover of the archbishop's,  
The virtuous Cranmer.

**Third Gentleman**

All the land knows that:  
However, yet there is no great breach; when it comes,  
Cranmer will find a friend will not shrink from him.

**Second Gentleman**

Who may that be, I pray you?

**Third Gentleman**

Thomas Cromwell;  
A man in much esteem with the king, and truly  
A worthy friend. The king has made him master  
O' the jewel house,  
And one, already, of the privy council.

**Second Gentleman**

He will deserve more.

**Third Gentleman**

Yes, without all doubt.  
Come, gentlemen, ye shall go my way, which  
Is to the court, and there ye shall be my guests:  
Something I can command. As I walk thither,  
I'll tell ye more.

**Both**

You may command us, sir.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Kimbolton.

*Enter KATHARINE, Dowager, sick; led between GRIFFITH, her gentleman usher, and PATIENCE, her woman*

### GRIFFITH

How does your grace?

### KATHARINE

O Griffith, sick to death!  
My legs, like loaden branches, bow to the earth,  
Willing to leave their burthen. Reach a chair:  
So; now, methinks, I feel a little ease.  
Didst thou not tell me, Griffith, as thou led'st me,  
That the great child of honour, Cardinal Wolsey, Was dead?

### GRIFFITH

Yes, madam; but I think your grace,  
Out of the pain you suffer'd, gave no ear to't.

### KATHARINE

Prithee, good Griffith, tell me how he died:  
If well, he stepp'd before me, happily  
For my example.

### GRIFFITH

Well, the voice goes, madam:  
For after the stout Earl Northumberland  
Arrested him at York, and brought him forward,  
As a man sorely tainted, to his answer,  
He fell sick suddenly, and grew so ill

He could not sit his mule.

## **KATHARINE**

Alas, poor man!

## **GRIFFITH**

At last, with easy roads, he came to Leicester,  
Lodged in the abbey; where the reverend abbot,  
With all his covent, honourably received him;  
To whom he gave these words, 'O, father abbot,  
An old man, broken with the storms of state,  
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye;  
Give him a little earth for charity!'  
So went to bed; where eagerly his sickness  
Pursued him still: and, three nights after this,  
About the hour of eight, which he himself  
Foretold should be his last, full of repentance,  
Continual meditations, tears, and sorrows,  
He gave his honours to the world again,  
His blessed part to heaven, and slept in peace.

## **KATHARINE**

So may he rest; his faults lie gently on him!  
Yet thus far, Griffith, give me leave to speak him,  
And yet with charity. He was a man  
Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking  
Himself with princes; one that, by suggestion,  
Tied all the kingdom: simony was fair-play;  
His own opinion was his law: i' the presence  
He would say untruths; and be ever double  
Both in his words and meaning: he was never,  
But where he meant to ruin, pitiful:  
His promises were, as he then was, mighty;  
But his performance, as he is now, nothing:  
Of his own body he was ill, and gave  
The clergy in example.

## **GRIFFITH**

Noble madam,  
Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues  
We write in water. May it please your highness  
To hear me speak his good now?

## **KATHARINE**

Yes, good Griffith;  
I were malicious else.

## **GRIFFITH**

This cardinal,  
Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly  
Was fashion'd to much honour from his cradle.  
He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;  
Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading:  
Lofty and sour to them that loved him not;  
But to those men that sought him sweet as summer.  
And though he were unsatisfied in getting,  
Which was a sin, yet in bestowing, madam,  
He was most princely: ever witness for him  
Those twins Of learning that he raised in you,  
Ipswich and Oxford! one of which fell with him,  
Unwilling to outlive the good that did it;  
The other, though unfinish'd, yet so famous,  
So excellent in art, and still so rising,  
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.  
His overthrow heap'd happiness upon him;  
For then, and not till then, he felt himself,  
And found the blessedness of being little:  
And, to add greater honours to his age  
Than man could give him, he died fearing God.

## **KATHARINE**

After my death I wish no other herald,  
No other speaker of my living actions,  
To keep mine honour from corruption,  
But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.  
Whom I most hated living, thou hast made me,  
With thy religious truth and modesty,

Now in his ashes honour: peace be with him!  
Patience, be near me still; and set me lower:  
I have not long to trouble thee. Good Griffith,  
Cause the musicians play me that sad note  
I named my knell, whilst I sit meditating  
On that celestial harmony I go to.

*Sad and solemn music*

## **GRIFFITH**

She is asleep: good wench, let's sit down quiet,  
For fear we wake her: softly, gentle Patience.

*The vision. Enter, solemnly tripping one after another, six personages, clad in white robes, wearing on their heads garlands of bays, and golden vizards on their faces; branches of bays or palm in their hands. They first congee unto her, then dance; and, at certain changes, the first two hold a spare garland over her head; at which the other four make reverent curtsies; then the two that held the garland deliver the same to the other next two, who observe the same order in their changes, and holding the garland over her head: which done, they deliver the same garland to the last two, who likewise observe the same order: at which, as it were by inspiration, she makes in her sleep signs of rejoicing, and holdeth up her hands to heaven: and so in their dancing vanish, carrying the garland with them. The music continues*

## **KATHARINE**

Spirits of peace, where are ye? are ye all gone,  
And leave me here in wretchedness behind ye?

## **GRIFFITH**

Madam, we are here.

## **KATHARINE**

It is not you I call for:  
Saw ye none enter since I slept?

## **GRIFFITH**

None, madam.

## **KATHARINE**

No? Saw you not, even now, a blessed troop  
Invite me to a banquet; whose bright faces  
Cast thousand beams upon me, like the sun?  
They promised me eternal happiness;  
And brought me garlands, Griffith, which I feel  
I am not worthy yet to wear: I shall, assuredly.

## **GRIFFITH**

I am most joyful, madam, such good dreams  
Possess your fancy.

## **KATHARINE**

Bid the music leave,  
They are harsh and heavy to me.

*Music ceases*

## **PATIENCE**

Do you note  
How much her grace is alter'd on the sudden?  
How long her face is drawn? how pale she looks,  
And of an earthy cold? Mark her eyes!

## **GRIFFITH**

She is going, wench: pray, pray.

## **PATIENCE**

Heaven comfort her!

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

An't like your grace,--

**KATHARINE**

You are a saucy fellow:  
Deserve we no more reverence?

**GRIFFITH**

You are to blame,  
Knowing she will not lose her wonted greatness,  
To use so rude behavior; go to, kneel.

**Messenger**

I humbly do entreat your highness' pardon;  
My haste made me unmannerly. There is staying  
A gentleman, sent from the king, to see you.

**KATHARINE**

Admit him entrance, Griffith: but this fellow  
Let me ne'er see again.

*Exeunt GRIFFITH and Messenger*

*Re-enter GRIFFITH, with CAPUCIUS*

If my sight fail not,  
You should be lord ambassador from the emperor,  
My royal nephew, and your name Capucius.

**CAPUCIUS**

Madam, the same; your servant.

**KATHARINE**

O, my lord,  
The times and titles now are alter'd strangely  
With me since first you knew me. But, I pray you,



What is your pleasure with me?

**CAPUCIUS**

Noble lady,  
First mine own service to your grace; the next,  
The king's request that I would visit you;  
Who grieves much for your weakness, and by me  
Sends you his princely commendations,  
And heartily entreats you take good comfort.

**KATHARINE**

O my good lord, that comfort comes too late;  
'Tis like a pardon after execution:  
That gentle physic, given in time, had cured me;  
But now I am past an comforts here, but prayers.  
How does his highness?

**CAPUCIUS**

Madam, in good health.

**KATHARINE**

So may he ever do! and ever flourish,  
When I shal I dwell with worms, and my poor name  
Banish'd the kingdom! Patience, is that letter,  
I caused you write, yet sent away?

**PATIENCE**

No, madam.

*Giving it to KATHARINE*

**KATHARINE**

Sir, I most humbly pray you to deliver  
This to my lord the king.

## CAPUCIUS

Most willing, madam.

## KATHARINE

In which I have commended to his goodness  
The model of our chaste loves, his young daughter;  
The dews of heaven fall thick in blessings on her!  
Beseeching him to give her virtuous breeding--  
She is young, and of a noble modest nature,  
I hope she will deserve well,--and a little  
To love her for her mother's sake, that loved him,  
Heaven knows how dearly. My next poor petition  
Is, that his noble grace would have some pity  
Upon my wretched women, that so long  
Have follow'd both my fortunes faithfully:  
Of which there is not one, I dare avow,  
And now I should not lie, but will deserve  
For virtue and true beauty of the soul,  
For honesty and decent carriage,  
A right good husband, let him be a noble  
And, sure, those men are happy that shall have 'em.  
The last is, for my men; they are the poorest,  
But poverty could never draw 'em from me;  
That they may have their wages duly paid 'em,  
And something over to remember me by:  
If heaven had pleased to have given me longer life  
And able means, we had not parted thus.  
These are the whole contents: and, good my lord,  
By that you love the dearest in this world,  
As you wish Christian peace to souls departed,  
Stand these poor people's friend, and urge the king  
To do me this last right.

## CAPUCIUS

By heaven, I will,  
Or let me lose the fashion of a man!

## KATHARINE

I thank you, honest lord. Remember me  
In all humility unto his highness:  
Say his long trouble now is passing  
Out of this world; tell him, in death I bless'd him,  
For so I will. Mine eyes grow dim. Farewell,  
My lord. Griffith, farewell. Nay, Patience,  
You must not leave me yet: I must to bed;  
Call in more women. When I am dead, good wench,  
Let me be used with honour: strew me over  
With maiden flowers, that all the world may know  
I was a chaste wife to my grave: embalm me,  
Then lay me forth: although unqueen'd, yet like  
A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me.  
I can no more.

*Exeunt, leading KATHARINE*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. A gallery in the palace.

*Enter GARDINER, Bishop of Winchester, a Page with a torch before him, met by LOVELL*

**GARDINER**

It's one o'clock, boy, is't not?

**Boy**

It hath struck.

**GARDINER**

These should be hours for necessities,  
Not for delights; times to repair our nature  
With comforting repose, and not for us  
To waste these times. Good hour of night, Sir Thomas!  
Whither so late?

**LOVELL**

Came you from the king, my lord

**GARDINER**

I did, Sir Thomas: and left him at primero  
With the Duke of Suffolk.

**LOVELL**

I must to him too,  
Before he go to bed. I'll take my leave.

**GARDINER**

Not yet, Sir Thomas Lovell. What's the matter?  
It seems you are in haste: an if there be  
No great offence belongs to't, give your friend  
Some touch of your late business: affairs, that walk,  
As they say spirits do, at midnight, have  
In them a wilder nature than the business  
That seeks dispatch by day.

## **LOVELL**

My lord, I love you;  
And durst commend a secret to your ear  
Much weightier than this work. The queen's in labour,  
They say, in great extremity; and fear'd  
She'll with the labour end.

## **GARDINER**

The fruit she goes with  
I pray for heartily, that it may find  
Good time, and live: but for the stock, Sir Thomas,  
I wish it grubb'd up now.

## **LOVELL**

Methinks I could  
Cry the amen; and yet my conscience says  
She's a good creature, and, sweet lady, does  
Deserve our better wishes.

## **GARDINER**

But, sir, sir,  
Hear me, Sir Thomas: you're a gentleman  
Of mine own way; I know you wise, religious;  
And, let me tell you, it will ne'er be well,  
'Twill not, Sir Thomas Lovell, take't of me,  
Till Cranmer, Cromwell, her two hands, and she,  
Sleep in their graves.

## **LOVELL**

Now, sir, you speak of two  
The most remark'd i' the kingdom. As for Cromwell,  
Beside that of the jewel house, is made master  
O' the rolls, and the king's secretary; further, sir,  
Stands in the gap and trade of moe preferments,  
With which the time will load him. The archbishop  
Is the king's hand and tongue; and who dare speak  
One syllable against him?

## **GARDINER**

Yes, yes, Sir Thomas,  
There are that dare; and I myself have ventured  
To speak my mind of him: and indeed this day,  
Sir, I may tell it you, I think I have  
Incensed the lords o' the council, that he is,  
For so I know he is, they know he is,  
A most arch heretic, a pestilence  
That does infect the land: with which they moved  
Have broken with the king; who hath so far  
Given ear to our complaint, of his great grace  
And princely care foreseeing those fell mischiefs  
Our reasons laid before him, hath commanded  
To-morrow morning to the council-board  
He be convented. He's a rank weed, Sir Thomas,  
And we must root him out. From your affairs  
I hinder you too long: good night, Sir Thomas.

## **LOVELL**

Many good nights, my lord: I rest your servant.

*Exeunt GARDINER and Page*

*Enter KING HENRY VIII and SUFFOLK*

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Charles, I will play no more tonight;  
My mind's not on't; you are too hard for me.

## **SUFFOLK**

Sir, I did never win of you before.

**KING HENRY VIII**

But little, Charles;  
Nor shall not, when my fancy's on my play.  
Now, Lovell, from the queen what is the news?

**LOVELL**

I could not personally deliver to her  
What you commanded me, but by her woman  
I sent your message; who return'd her thanks  
In the great'st humbleness, and desired your highness  
Most heartily to pray for her.

**KING HENRY VIII**

What say'st thou, ha?  
To pray for her? what, is she crying out?

**LOVELL**

So said her woman; and that her sufferance made  
Almost each pang a death.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Alas, good lady!

**SUFFOLK**

God safely quit her of her burthen, and  
With gentle travail, to the gladding of  
Your highness with an heir!

**KING HENRY VIII**

'Tis midnight, Charles;  
Prithee, to bed; and in thy prayers remember

The estate of my poor queen. Leave me alone;  
For I must think of that which company  
Would not be friendly to.

**SUFFOLK**

I wish your highness  
A quiet night; and my good mistress will  
Remember in my prayers.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Charles, good night.

*Exit SUFFOLK*

*Enter DENNY*

Well, sir, what follows?

**DENNY**

Sir, I have brought my lord the archbishop,  
As you commanded me.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Ha! Canterbury?

**DENNY**

Ay, my good lord.

**KING HENRY VIII**

'Tis true: where is he, Denny?

**DENNY**

He attends your highness' pleasure.



*Exit DENNY*

**LOVELL**

[Aside] This is about that which the bishop spake:  
I am happily come hither.

*Re-enter DENNY, with CRANMER*

**KING HENRY VIII**

Avoid the gallery.

*LOVELL seems to stay*

Ha! I have said. Be gone. What!

*Exeunt LOVELL and DENNY*

**CRANMER**

[Aside]  
I am fearful: wherefore frowns he thus?  
'Tis his aspect of terror. All's not well.

**KING HENRY VIII**

How now, my lord! you desire to know  
Wherefore I sent for you.

**CRANMER**

[Kneeling] It is my duty  
To attend your highness' pleasure.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Pray you, arise,  
My good and gracious Lord of Canterbury.  
Come, you and I must walk a turn together;  
I have news to tell you: come, come, give me your hand.

Ah, my good lord, I grieve at what I speak,  
And am right sorry to repeat what follows  
I have, and most unwillingly, of late  
Heard many grievous, I do say, my lord,  
Grievous complaints of you; which, being consider'd,  
Have moved us and our council, that you shall  
This morning come before us; where, I know,  
You cannot with such freedom purge yourself,  
But that, till further trial in those charges  
Which will require your answer, you must take  
Your patience to you, and be well contented  
To make your house our Tower: you a brother of us,  
It fits we thus proceed, or else no witness  
Would come against you.

## **CRANMER**

[Kneeling]  
I humbly thank your highness;  
And am right glad to catch this good occasion  
Most throughly to be winnow'd, where my chaff  
And corn shall fly asunder: for, I know,  
There's none stands under more calumnious tongues  
Than I myself, poor man.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Stand up, good Canterbury:  
Thy truth and thy integrity is rooted  
In us, thy friend: give me thy hand, stand up:  
Prithee, let's walk. Now, by my holidame.  
What manner of man are you? My lord, I look'd  
You would have given me your petition, that  
I should have ta'en some pains to bring together  
Yourself and your accusers; and to have heard you,  
Without indurance, further.

## **CRANMER**

Most dread liege,  
The good I stand on is my truth and honesty:  
If they shall fail, I, with mine enemies,

Will triumph o'er my person; which I weigh not,  
Being of those virtues vacant. I fear nothing  
What can be said against me.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Know you not  
How your state stands i' the world, with the whole world?  
Your enemies are many, and not small; their practises  
Must bear the same proportion; and not ever  
The justice and the truth o' the question carries  
The due o' the verdict with it: at what ease  
Might corrupt minds procure knaves as corrupt  
To swear against you? such things have been done.  
You are potently opposed; and with a malice  
Of as great size. Ween you of better luck,  
I mean, in perjured witness, than your master,  
Whose minister you are, whiles here he lived  
Upon this naughty earth? Go to, go to;  
You take a precipice for no leap of danger,  
And woo your own destruction.

## **CRANMER**

God and your majesty  
Protect mine innocence, or I fall into  
The trap is laid for me!

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Be of good cheer;  
They shall no more prevail than we give way to.  
Keep comfort to you; and this morning see  
You do appear before them: if they shall chance,  
In charging you with matters, to commit you,  
The best persuasions to the contrary  
Fail not to use, and with what vehemency  
The occasion shall instruct you: if entreaties  
Will render you no remedy, this ring  
Deliver them, and your appeal to us  
There make before them. Look, the good man weeps!  
He's honest, on mine honour. God's blest mother!

I swear he is true--hearted; and a soul  
None better in my kingdom. Get you gone,  
And do as I have bid you.

*Exit CRANMER*

He has strangled  
His language in his tears.

*Enter Old Lady, LOVELL following*

### **Gentleman**

[Within] Come back: what mean you?

### **Old Lady**

I'll not come back; the tidings that I bring  
Will make my boldness manners. Now, good angels  
Fly o'er thy royal head, and shade thy person  
Under their blessed wings!

### **KING HENRY VIII**

Now, by thy looks  
I guess thy message. Is the queen deliver'd?  
Say, ay; and of a boy.

### **Old Lady**

Ay, ay, my liege;  
And of a lovely boy: the God of heaven  
Both now and ever bless her! 'tis a girl,  
Promises boys hereafter. Sir, your queen  
Desires your visitation, and to be  
Acquainted with this stranger 'tis as like you  
As cherry is to cherry.

### **KING HENRY VIII**

Lovell!

**LOVELL**

Sir?

**KING HENRY VIII**

Give her an hundred marks. I'll to the queen.

*Exit*

**Old Lady**

An hundred marks! By this light, I'll ha' more.  
An ordinary groom is for such payment.  
I will have more, or scold it out of him.  
Said I for this, the girl was like to him?  
I will have more, or else unsay't; and now,  
While it is hot, I'll put it to the issue.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before the council-chamber. Pursuivants, Pages, & c.

attending.

*Enter CRANMER*

**CRANMER**

I hope I am not too late; and yet the gentleman,  
That was sent to me from the council, pray'd me  
To make great haste. All fast? what means this? Ho!  
Who waits there? Sure, you know me?

*Enter Keeper*

**Keeper**

Yes, my lord;  
But yet I cannot help you.

**CRANMER**

Why?

*Enter DOCTOR BUTTS*

**Keeper**

Your grace must wait till you be call'd for.

**CRANMER**

So.

**DOCTOR BUTTS**

[Aside] This is a piece of malice. I am glad  
I came this way so happily: the king  
Shall understand it presently.

*Exit*

**CRANMER**

[Aside] 'Tis Butts,  
The king's physician: as he pass'd along,  
How earnestly he cast his eyes upon me!  
Pray heaven, he sound not my disgrace! For certain,  
This is of purpose laid by some that hate me--  
God turn their hearts! I never sought their malice--  
To quench mine honour: they would shame to make me  
Wait else at door, a fellow-counsellor,  
'Mong boys, grooms, and lackeys. But their pleasures  
Must be fulfill'd, and I attend with patience.

*Enter the KING HENRY VIII and DOCTOR BUTTS at a window above*

**DOCTOR BUTTS**

I'll show your grace the strangest sight--

**KING HENRY VIII**

What's that, Butts?

**DOCTOR BUTTS**

I think your highness saw this many a day.

**KING HENRY VIII**

Body o' me, where is it?

**DOCTOR BUTTS**

There, my lord:  
The high promotion of his grace of Canterbury;

Who holds his state at door, 'mongst pursuivants,  
Pages, and footboys.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Ha! 'tis he, indeed:

Is this the honour they do one another?

'Tis well there's one above 'em yet. I had thought

They had parted so much honesty among 'em

At least, good manners, as not thus to suffer

A man of his place, and so near our favour,

To dance attendance on their lordships' pleasures,

And at the door too, like a post with packets.

By holy Mary, Butts, there's knavery:

Let 'em alone, and draw the curtain close:

We shall hear more anon.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The Council-Chamber.

*Enter Chancellor; places himself at the upper end of the table on the left hand; a seat being left void above him, as for CRANMER's seat. SUFFOLK, NORFOLK, SURREY, Chamberlain, GARDINER, seat themselves in order on each side. CROMWELL at lower end, as secretary. Keeper at the door*

### Chancellor

Speak to the business, master-secretary:  
Why are we met in council?

### CROMWELL

Please your honours,  
The chief cause concerns his grace of Canterbury.

### GARDINER

Has he had knowledge of it?

### CROMWELL

Yes.

### NORFOLK

Who waits there?

### Keeper

Without, my noble lords?

### GARDINER

Yes.

**Keeper**

My lord archbishop;  
And has done half an hour, to know your pleasures.

**Chancellor**

Let him come in.

**Keeper**

Your grace may enter now.

*CRANMER enters and approaches the council-table*

**Chancellor**

My good lord archbishop, I'm very sorry  
To sit here at this present, and behold  
That chair stand empty: but we all are men,  
In our own natures frail, and capable  
Of our flesh; few are angels: out of which frailty  
And want of wisdom, you, that best should teach us,  
Have misdemean'd yourself, and not a little,  
Toward the king first, then his laws, in filling  
The whole realm, by your teaching and your chaplains,  
For so we are inform'd, with new opinions,  
Divers and dangerous; which are heresies,  
And, not reform'd, may prove pernicious.

**GARDINER**

Which reformation must be sudden too,  
My noble lords; for those that tame wild horses  
Pace 'em not in their hands to make 'em gentle,  
But stop their mouths with stubborn bits, and spur 'em,  
Till they obey the manage. If we suffer,  
Out of our easiness and childish pity  
To one man's honour, this contagious sickness,  
Farewell all physic: and what follows then?

Commotions, uproars, with a general taint  
Of the whole state: as, of late days, our neighbours,  
The upper Germany, can dearly witness,  
Yet freshly pitied in our memories.

## **CRANMER**

My good lords, hitherto, in all the progress  
Both of my life and office, I have labour'd,  
And with no little study, that my teaching  
And the strong course of my authority  
Might go one way, and safely; and the end  
Was ever, to do well: nor is there living,  
I speak it with a single heart, my lords,  
A man that more detests, more stirs against,  
Both in his private conscience and his place,  
Defacers of a public peace, than I do.  
Pray heaven, the king may never find a heart  
With less allegiance in it! Men that make  
Envy and crooked malice nourishment  
Dare bite the best. I do beseech your lordships,  
That, in this case of justice, my accusers,  
Be what they will, may stand forth face to face,  
And freely urge against me.

## **SUFFOLK**

Nay, my lord,  
That cannot be: you are a counsellor,  
And, by that virtue, no man dare accuse you.

## **GARDINER**

My lord, because we have business of more moment,  
We will be short with you. 'Tis his highness' pleasure,  
And our consent, for better trial of you,  
From hence you be committed to the Tower;  
Where, being but a private man again,  
You shall know many dare accuse you boldly,  
More than, I fear, you are provided for.

## **CRANMER**

Ah, my good Lord of Winchester, I thank you;  
You are always my good friend; if your will pass,  
I shall both find your lordship judge and juror,  
You are so merciful: I see your end;  
'Tis my undoing: love and meekness, lord,  
Become a churchman better than ambition:  
Win straying souls with modesty again,  
Cast none away. That I shall clear myself,  
Lay all the weight ye can upon my patience,  
I make as little doubt, as you do conscience  
In doing daily wrongs. I could say more,  
But reverence to your calling makes me modest.

**GARDINER**

My lord, my lord, you are a sectary,  
That's the plain truth: your painted gloss discovers,  
To men that understand you, words and weakness.

**CROMWELL**

My Lord of Winchester, you are a little,  
By your good favour, too sharp; men so noble,  
However faulty, yet should find respect  
For what they have been: 'tis a cruelty  
To load a falling man.

**GARDINER**

Good master secretary,  
I cry your honour mercy; you may, worst  
Of all this table, say so.

**CROMWELL**

Why, my lord?

**GARDINER**

Do not I know you for a favourer  
Of this new sect? ye are not sound.

**CROMWELL**

Not sound?

**GARDINER**

Not sound, I say.

**CROMWELL**

Would you were half so honest!  
Men's prayers then would seek you, not their fears.

**GARDINER**

I shall remember this bold language.

**CROMWELL**

Do.  
Remember your bold life too.

**Chancellor**

This is too much;  
Forbear, for shame, my lords.

**GARDINER**

I have done.

**CROMWELL**

And I.

**Chancellor**

Then thus for you, my lord: it stands agreed,  
I take it, by all voices, that forthwith  
You be convey'd to the Tower a prisoner;

There to remain till the king's further pleasure  
Be known unto us: are you all agreed, lords?

**All**

We are.

**CRANMER**

Is there no other way of mercy,  
But I must needs to the Tower, my lords?

**GARDINER**

What other  
Would you expect? you are strangely troublesome.  
Let some o' the guard be ready there.

*Enter Guard*

**CRANMER**

For me?  
Must I go like a traitor thither?

**GARDINER**

Receive him,  
And see him safe i' the Tower.

**CRANMER**

Stay, good my lords,  
I have a little yet to say. Look there, my lords;  
By virtue of that ring, I take my cause  
Out of the gripes of cruel men, and give it  
To a most noble judge, the king my master.

**Chamberlain**

This is the king's ring.

## **SURREY**

'Tis no counterfeit.

## **SUFFOLK**

'Tis the right ring, by heaven: I told ye all,  
When ye first put this dangerous stone a-rolling,  
'Twould fall upon ourselves.

## **NORFOLK**

Do you think, my lords,  
The king will suffer but the little finger  
Of this man to be vex'd?

## **Chancellor**

'Tis now too certain:  
How much more is his life in value with him?  
Would I were fairly out on't!

## **CROMWELL**

My mind gave me,  
In seeking tales and informations  
Against this man, whose honesty the devil  
And his disciples only envy at,  
Ye blew the fire that burns ye: now have at ye!

*Enter KING, frowning on them; takes his seat*

## **GARDINER**

Dread sovereign, how much are we bound to heaven  
In daily thanks, that gave us such a prince;  
Not only good and wise, but most religious:  
One that, in all obedience, makes the church  
The chief aim of his honour; and, to strengthen  
That holy duty, out of dear respect,  
His royal self in judgment comes to hear

The cause betwixt her and this great offender.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

You were ever good at sudden commendations,  
Bishop of Winchester. But know, I come not  
To hear such flattery now, and in my presence;  
They are too thin and bare to hide offences.  
To me you cannot reach, you play the spaniel,  
And think with wagging of your tongue to win me;  
But, whatsoe'er thou takest me for, I'm sure  
Thou hast a cruel nature and a bloody.

*To CRANMER*

Good man, sit down. Now let me see the proudest  
He, that dares most, but wag his finger at thee:  
By all that's holy, he had better starve  
Than but once think this place becomes thee not.

## **SURREY**

May it please your grace,--

## **KING HENRY VIII**

No, sir, it does not please me.  
I had thought I had had men of some understanding  
And wisdom of my council; but I find none.  
Was it discretion, lords, to let this man,  
This good man,--few of you deserve that title,--  
This honest man, wait like a lousy footboy  
At chamber--door? and one as great as you are?  
Why, what a shame was this! Did my commission  
Bid ye so far forget yourselves? I gave ye  
Power as he was a counsellor to try him,  
Not as a groom: there's some of ye, I see,  
More out of malice than integrity,  
Would try him to the utmost, had ye mean;  
Which ye shall never have while I live.

## **Chancellor**



Thus far,  
My most dread sovereign, may it like your grace  
To let my tongue excuse all. What was purposed  
Concerning his imprisonment, was rather,  
If there be faith in men, meant for his trial,  
And fair purgation to the world, than malice,  
I'm sure, in me.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Well, well, my lords, respect him;  
Take him, and use him well, he's worthy of it.  
I will say thus much for him, if a prince  
May be beholding to a subject, I  
Am, for his love and service, so to him.  
Make me no more ado, but all embrace him:  
Be friends, for shame, my lords! My Lord of  
Canterbury,  
I have a suit which you must not deny me;  
That is, a fair young maid that yet wants baptism,  
You must be godfather, and answer for her.

## **CRANMER**

The greatest monarch now alive may glory  
In such an honour: how may I deserve it  
That am a poor and humble subject to you?

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Come, come, my lord, you'd spare your spoons: you  
shall have two noble partners with you; the old  
Duchess of Norfolk, and Lady Marquess Dorset: will  
these please you?  
Once more, my Lord of Winchester, I charge you,  
Embrace and love this man.

## **GARDINER**

With a true heart  
And brother-love I do it.

## **CRANMER**

And let heaven  
Witness, how dear I hold this confirmation.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Good man, those joyful tears show thy true heart:  
The common voice, I see, is verified  
Of thee, which says thus, 'Do my Lord of Canterbury  
A shrewd turn, and he is your friend for ever.'  
Come, lords, we trifle time away; I long  
To have this young one made a Christian.  
As I have made ye one, lords, one remain;  
So I grow stronger, you more honour gain.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The palace yard.

*Noise and tumult within. Enter Porter and his Man*

**Porter**

You'll leave your noise anon, ye rascals: do you take the court for Paris-garden? ye rude slaves, leave your gaping.

*Within*

Good master porter, I belong to the larder.

**Porter**

Belong to the gallows, and be hanged, ye rogue! is this a place to roar in? Fetch me a dozen crab-tree staves, and strong ones: these are but switches to 'em. I'll scratch your heads: you must be seeing christenings? do you look for ale and cakes here, you rude rascals?

**Man**

Pray, sir, be patient: 'tis as much impossible--  
Unless we sweep 'em from the door with cannons--  
To scatter 'em, as 'tis to make 'em sleep  
On May-day morning; which will never be:  
We may as well push against Powle's, as stir em.

**Porter**

How got they in, and be hang'd?

**Man**

Alas, I know not; how gets the tide in?  
As much as one sound cudgel of four foot--  
You see the poor remainder--could distribute,  
I made no spare, sir.

**Porter**

You did nothing, sir.

**Man**

I am not Samson, nor Sir Guy, nor Colbrand,  
To mow 'em down before me: but if I spared any  
That had a head to hit, either young or old,  
He or she, cuckold or cuckold-maker,  
Let me ne'er hope to see a chine again  
And that I would not for a cow, God save her!

*Within*

Do you hear, master porter?

**Porter**

I shall be with you presently, good master puppy.  
Keep the door close, sirrah.

**Man**

What would you have me do?

**Porter**

What should you do, but knock 'em down by the  
dozens? Is this Moorfields to muster in? or have  
we some strange Indian with the great tool come to  
court, the women so besiege us? Bless me, what a  
fry of fornication is at door! On my Christian  
conscience, this one christening will beget a  
thousand; here will be father, godfather, and all together.

## Man

The spoons will be the bigger, sir. There is a fellow somewhat near the door, he should be a brazier by his face, for, o' my conscience, twenty of the dog-days now reign in's nose; all that stand about him are under the line, they need no other penance: that fire-drake did I hit three times on the head, and three times was his nose discharged against me; he stands there, like a mortar-piece, to blow us. There was a haberdasher's wife of small wit near him, that railed upon me till her pinked porringer fell off her head, for kindling such a combustion in the state. I missed the meteor once, and hit that woman; who cried out 'Clubs!' when I might see from far some forty truncheoners draw to her succor, which were the hope o' the Strand, where she was quartered. They fell on; I made good my place: at length they came to the broom-staff to me; I defied 'em still: when suddenly a file of boys behind 'em, loose shot, delivered such a shower of pebbles, that I was fain to draw mine honour in, and let 'em win the work: the devil was amongst 'em, I think, surely.

## Porter

These are the youths that thunder at a playhouse, and fight for bitten apples; that no audience, but the tribulation of Tower-hill, or the limbs of Limehouse, their dear brothers, are able to endure. I have some of 'em in Limbo Patrum, and there they are like to dance these three days; besides the running banquet of two beadles that is to come.

*Enter Chamberlain*

## Chamberlain

Mercy o' me, what a multitude are here!  
They grow still too; from all parts they are coming,  
As if we kept a fair here! Where are these porters,

These lazy knaves? Ye have made a fine hand, fellows:  
There's a trim rabble let in: are all these  
Your faithful friends o' the suburbs? We shall have  
Great store of room, no doubt, left for the ladies,  
When they pass back from the christening.

**Porter**

An't please  
your honour,  
We are but men; and what so many may do,  
Not being torn a-pieces, we have done:  
An army cannot rule 'em.

**Chamberlain**

As I live,  
If the king blame me for't, I'll lay ye all  
By the heels, and suddenly; and on your heads  
Clap round fines for neglect: ye are lazy knaves;  
And here ye lie baiting of bombards, when  
Ye should do service. Hark! the trumpets sound;  
They're come already from the christening:  
Go, break among the press, and find a way out  
To let the troop pass fairly; or I'll find  
A Marshalsea shall hold ye play these two months.

**Porter**

Make way there for the princess.

**Man**

You great fellow,  
Stand close up, or I'll make your head ache.

**Porter**

You i' the camlet, get up o' the rail;  
I'll peck you o'er the pales else.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life of King Henry the Eighth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Henry VIII](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. The palace.

*Enter trumpets, sounding; then two Aldermen, Lord Mayor, Garter, CRANMER, NORFOLK with his marshal's staff, SUFFOLK, two Noblemen bearing great standing-bowls for the christening-gifts; then four Noblemen bearing a canopy, under which the Duchess of Norfolk, godmother, bearing the child richly habited in a mantle, & c., train borne by a Lady; then follows the Marchioness Dorset, the other godmother, and Ladies. The troop pass once about the stage, and Garter speaks*

### Garter

Heaven, from thy endless goodness, send prosperous  
life, long, and ever happy, to the high and mighty  
princess of England, Elizabeth!

*Flourish. Enter KING HENRY VIII and Guard*

### CRANMER

[Kneeling] And to your royal grace, and the good queen,  
My noble partners, and myself, thus pray:  
All comfort, joy, in this most gracious lady,  
Heaven ever laid up to make parents happy,  
May hourly fall upon ye!

### KING HENRY VIII

Thank you, good lord archbishop:  
What is her name?

### CRANMER

Elizabeth.

### KING HENRY VIII



Stand up, lord.

*KING HENRY VIII kisses the child*

With this kiss take my blessing: God protect thee!  
Into whose hand I give thy life.

**CRANMER**

Amen.

**KING HENRY VIII**

My noble gossips, ye have been too prodigal:  
I thank ye heartily; so shall this lady,  
When she has so much English.

**CRANMER**

Let me speak, sir,  
For heaven now bids me; and the words I utter  
Let none think flattery, for they'll find 'em truth.  
This royal infant--heaven still move about her!--  
Though in her cradle, yet now promises  
Upon this land a thousand thousand blessings,  
Which time shall bring to ripeness: she shall be--  
But few now living can behold that goodness--  
A pattern to all princes living with her,  
And all that shall succeed: Saba was never  
More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue  
Than this pure soul shall be: all princely graces,  
That mould up such a mighty piece as this is,  
With all the virtues that attend the good,  
Shall still be doubled on her: truth shall nurse her,  
Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her:  
She shall be loved and fear'd: her own shall bless her;  
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,  
And hang their heads with sorrow: good grows with her:  
In her days every man shall eat in safety,  
Under his own vine, what he plants; and sing  
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours:  
God shall be truly known; and those about her

From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,  
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.  
Nor shall this peace sleep with her: but as when  
The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,  
Her ashes new create another heir,  
As great in admiration as herself;  
So shall she leave her blessedness to one,  
When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness,  
Who from the sacred ashes of her honour  
Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,  
And so stand fix'd: peace, plenty, love, truth, terror,  
That were the servants to this chosen infant,  
Shall then be his, and like a vine grow to him:  
Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,  
His honour and the greatness of his name  
Shall be, and make new nations: he shall flourish,  
And, like a mountain cedar, reach his branches  
To all the plains about him: our children's children  
Shall see this, and bless heaven.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

Thou speakest wonders.

## **CRANMER**

She shall be, to the happiness of England,  
An aged princess; many days shall see her,  
And yet no day without a deed to crown it.  
Would I had known no more! but she must die,  
She must, the saints must have her; yet a virgin,  
A most unspotted lily shall she pass  
To the ground, and all the world shall mourn her.

## **KING HENRY VIII**

O lord archbishop,  
Thou hast made me now a man! never, before  
This happy child, did I get any thing:  
This oracle of comfort has so pleased me,  
That when I am in heaven I shall desire  
To see what this child does, and praise my Maker.

I thank ye all. To you, my good lord mayor,  
And your good brethren, I am much beholding;  
I have received much honour by your presence,  
And ye shall find me thankful. Lead the way, lords:  
Ye must all see the queen, and she must thank ye,  
She will be sick else. This day, no man think  
Has business at his house; for all shall stay:  
This little one shall make it holiday.

*Exeunt*

## EPILOGUE

'Tis ten to one this play can never please  
All that are here: some come to take their ease,  
And sleep an act or two; but those, we fear,  
We have frighted with our trumpets; so, 'tis clear,  
They'll say 'tis naught: others, to hear the city  
Abused extremely, and to cry 'That's witty!'  
Which we have not done neither: that, I fear,  
All the expected good we're like to hear  
For this play at this time, is only in  
The merciful construction of good women;  
For such a one we show'd 'em: if they smile,  
And say 'twill do, I know, within a while  
All the best men are ours; for 'tis ill hap,  
If they hold when their ladies bid 'em clap.

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | King John

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [KING JOHN'S palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [France. Before Angiers.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [The French King's pavilion.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The same. Plains near Angiers.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [The same.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [The same. KING PHILIP'S tent.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [A room in a castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [KING JOHN'S palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Before the castle.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [KING JOHN'S palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [LEWIS's camp at St. Edmundsbury.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [The field of battle.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [The French camp.](#)

Act 5, Scene 6: [An open place in the neighbourhood of Swinstead Abbey.](#)

Act 5, Scene 7: [The orchard in Swinstead Abbey.](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. KING JOHN'S palace.

*Enter KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, SALISBURY, and others,  
with CHATILLON*

### KING JOHN

Now, say, Chatillon, what would France with us?

### CHATILLON

Thus, after greeting, speaks the King of France  
In my behavior to the majesty,  
The borrow'd majesty, of England here.

### QUEEN ELINOR

A strange beginning: 'borrow'd majesty!'

### KING JOHN

Silence, good mother; hear the embassy.

### CHATILLON

Philip of France, in right and true behalf  
Of thy deceased brother Geoffrey's son,  
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim  
To this fair island and the territories,  
To Ireland, Poictiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,  
Desiring thee to lay aside the sword  
Which sways usurpingly these several titles,  
And put these same into young Arthur's hand,  
Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

### KING JOHN

What follows if we disallow of this?

**CHATILLON**

The proud control of fierce and bloody war,  
To enforce these rights so forcibly withheld.

**KING JOHN**

Here have we war for war and blood for blood,  
Controlment for controlment: so answer France.

**CHATILLON**

Then take my king's defiance from my mouth,  
The farthest limit of my embassy.

**KING JOHN**

Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace:  
Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France;  
For ere thou canst report I will be there,  
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard:  
So hence! Be thou the trumpet of our wrath  
And sullen presage of your own decay.  
An honourable conduct let him have:  
Pembroke, look to 't. Farewell, Chatillon.

*Exeunt CHATILLON and PEMBROKE*

**QUEEN ELINOR**

What now, my son! have I not ever said  
How that ambitious Constance would not cease  
Till she had kindled France and all the world,  
Upon the right and party of her son?  
This might have been prevented and made whole  
With very easy arguments of love,  
Which now the manage of two kingdoms must  
With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

**KING JOHN**

Our strong possession and our right for us.

**QUEEN ELINOR**

Your strong possession much more than your right,  
Or else it must go wrong with you and me:  
So much my conscience whispers in your ear,  
Which none but heaven and you and I shall hear.

*Enter a Sheriff*

**ESSEX**

My liege, here is the strangest controversy  
Come from country to be judged by you,  
That e'er I heard: shall I produce the men?

**KING JOHN**

Let them approach.  
Our abbeys and our priories shall pay  
This expedition's charge.

*Enter ROBERT and the BASTARD*

What men are you?

**BASTARD**

Your faithful subject I, a gentleman  
Born in Northamptonshire and eldest son,  
As I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge,  
A soldier, by the honour-giving hand  
Of Coeur-de-lion knighted in the field.

**KING JOHN**

What art thou?

## **ROBERT**

The son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.

## **KING JOHN**

Is that the elder, and art thou the heir?  
You came not of one mother then, it seems.

## **BASTARD**

Most certain of one mother, mighty king;  
That is well known; and, as I think, one father:  
But for the certain knowledge of that truth  
I put you o'er to heaven and to my mother:  
Of that I doubt, as all men's children may.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

Out on thee, rude man! thou dost shame thy mother  
And wound her honour with this diffidence.

## **BASTARD**

I, madam? no, I have no reason for it;  
That is my brother's plea and none of mine;  
The which if he can prove, a' pops me out  
At least from fair five hundred pound a year:  
Heaven guard my mother's honour and my land!

## **KING JOHN**

A good blunt fellow. Why, being younger born,  
Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance?

## **BASTARD**

I know not why, except to get the land.  
But once he slander'd me with bastardy:  
But whether I be as true begot or no,  
That still I lay upon my mother's head,



But that I am as well begot, my liege,--  
Fair fall the bones that took the pains for me!--  
Compare our faces and be judge yourself.  
If old sir Robert did beget us both  
And were our father and this son like him,  
O old sir Robert, father, on my knee  
I give heaven thanks I was not like to thee!

**KING JOHN**

Why, what a madcap hath heaven lent us here!

**QUEEN ELINOR**

He hath a trick of Coeur-de-lion's face;  
The accent of his tongue affecteth him.  
Do you not read some tokens of my son  
In the large composition of this man?

**KING JOHN**

Mine eye hath well examined his parts  
And finds them perfect Richard. Sirrah, speak,  
What doth move you to claim your brother's land?

**BASTARD**

Because he hath a half-face, like my father.  
With half that face would he have all my land:  
A half-faced goat five hundred pound a year!

**ROBERT**

My gracious liege, when that my father lived,  
Your brother did employ my father much,--

**BASTARD**

Well, sir, by this you cannot get my land:  
Your tale must be how he employ'd my mother.

## **ROBERT**

And once dispatch'd him in an embassy  
To Germany, there with the emperor  
To treat of high affairs touching that time.  
The advantage of his absence took the king  
And in the mean time sojourn'd at my father's;  
Where how he did prevail I shame to speak,  
But truth is truth: large lengths of seas and shores  
Between my father and my mother lay,  
As I have heard my father speak himself,  
When this same lusty gentleman was got.  
Upon his death-bed he by will bequeath'd  
His lands to me, and took it on his death  
That this my mother's son was none of his;  
And if he were, he came into the world  
Full fourteen weeks before the course of time.  
Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,  
My father's land, as was my father's will.

## **KING JOHN**

Sirrah, your brother is legitimate;  
Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him,  
And if she did play false, the fault was hers;  
Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands  
That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother,  
Who, as you say, took pains to get this son,  
Had of your father claim'd this son for his?  
In sooth, good friend, your father might have kept  
This calf bred from his cow from all the world;  
In sooth he might; then, if he were my brother's,  
My brother might not claim him; nor your father,  
Being none of his, refuse him: this concludes;  
My mother's son did get your father's heir;  
Your father's heir must have your father's land.

## **ROBERT**

Shall then my father's will be of no force  
To dispossess that child which is not his?

## **BASTARD**

Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,  
Than was his will to get me, as I think.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

Whether hadst thou rather be a Faulconbridge  
And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,  
Or the reputed son of Coeur-de-lion,  
Lord of thy presence and no land beside?

## **BASTARD**

Madam, an if my brother had my shape,  
And I had his, sir Robert's his, like him;  
And if my legs were two such riding-rods,  
My arms such eel-skins stuff'd, my face so thin  
That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose  
Lest men should say 'Look, where three-farthings goes!'  
And, to his shape, were heir to all this land,  
Would I might never stir from off this place,  
I would give it every foot to have this face;  
I would not be sir Nob in any case.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

I like thee well: wilt thou forsake thy fortune,  
Bequeath thy land to him and follow me?  
I am a soldier and now bound to France.

## **BASTARD**

Brother, take you my land, I'll take my chance.  
Your face hath got five hundred pound a year,  
Yet sell your face for five pence and 'tis dear.  
Madam, I'll follow you unto the death.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

## **BASTARD**

Our country manners give our betters way.

## **KING JOHN**

What is thy name?

## **BASTARD**

Philip, my liege, so is my name begun,  
Philip, good old sir Robert's wife's eldest son.

## **KING JOHN**

From henceforth bear his name whose form thou bear'st:  
Kneel thou down Philip, but rise more great,  
Arise sir Richard and Plantagenet.

## **BASTARD**

Brother by the mother's side, give me your hand:  
My father gave me honour, yours gave land.  
Now blessed by the hour, by night or day,  
When I was got, sir Robert was away!

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

The very spirit of Plantagenet!  
I am thy grandam, Richard; call me so.

## **BASTARD**

Madam, by chance but not by truth; what though?  
Something about, a little from the right,  
In at the window, or else o'er the hatch:  
Who dares not stir by day must walk by night,  
And have is have, however men do catch:  
Near or far off, well won is still well shot,  
And I am I, howe'er I was begot.

## KING JOHN

Go, Faulconbridge: now hast thou thy desire;  
A landless knight makes thee a landed squire.  
Come, madam, and come, Richard, we must speed  
For France, for France, for it is more than need.

## BASTARD

Brother, adieu: good fortune come to thee!  
For thou wast got i' the way of honesty.

*Exeunt all but BASTARD*

A foot of honour better than I was;  
But many a many foot of land the worse.  
Well, now can I make any Joan a lady.  
'Good den, sir Richard!'--'God-a-mercy, fellow!'--  
And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter;  
For new-made honour doth forget men's names;  
'Tis too respectful and too sociable  
For your conversion. Now your traveller,  
He and his toothpick at my worship's mess,  
And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,  
Why then I suck my teeth and catechise  
My picked man of countries: 'My dear sir,'  
Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin,  
'I shall beseech you'--that is question now;  
And then comes answer like an Absey book:  
'O sir,' says answer, 'at your best command;  
At your employment; at your service, sir;'  
'No, sir,' says question, 'I, sweet sir, at yours:'  
And so, ere answer knows what question would,  
Saving in dialogue of compliment,  
And talking of the Alps and Apennines,  
The Pyrenean and the river Po,  
It draws toward supper in conclusion so.  
But this is worshipful society  
And fits the mounting spirit like myself,  
For he is but a bastard to the time  
That doth not smack of observation;  
And so am I, whether I smack or no;

And not alone in habit and device,  
Exterior form, outward accoutrement,  
But from the inward motion to deliver  
Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth:  
Which, though I will not practise to deceive,  
Yet, to avoid deceit, I mean to learn;  
For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.  
But who comes in such haste in riding-robcs?  
What woman-post is this? hath she no husband  
That will take pains to blow a horn before her?

*Enter LADY FAULCONBRIDGE and GURNEY*

O me! it is my mother. How now, good lady!  
What brings you here to court so hastily?

**LADY FAULCONBRIDGE**

Where is that slave, thy brother? where is he,  
That holds in chase mine honour up and down?

**BASTARD**

My brother Robert? old sir Robert's son?  
Colbrand the giant, that same mighty man?  
Is it sir Robert's son that you seek so?

**LADY FAULCONBRIDGE**

Sir Robert's son! Ay, thou unreverend boy,  
Sir Robert's son: why scorn'st thou at sir Robert?  
He is sir Robert's son, and so art thou.

**BASTARD**

James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile?

**GURNEY**

Good leave, good Philip.

## **BASTARD**

Philip! sparrow: James,  
There's toys abroad: anon I'll tell thee more.

*Exit GURNEY*

Madam, I was not old sir Robert's son:  
Sir Robert might have eat his part in me  
Upon Good-Friday and ne'er broke his fast:  
Sir Robert could do well: marry, to confess,  
Could he get me? Sir Robert could not do it:  
We know his handiwork: therefore, good mother,  
To whom am I beholding for these limbs?  
Sir Robert never holp to make this leg.

## **LADY FAULCONBRIDGE**

Hast thou conspired with thy brother too,  
That for thine own gain shouldst defend mine honour?  
What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave?

## **BASTARD**

Knight, knight, good mother, Basilisco-like.  
What! I am dubb'd! I have it on my shoulder.  
But, mother, I am not sir Robert's son;  
I have disclaim'd sir Robert and my land;  
Legitimation, name and all is gone:  
Then, good my mother, let me know my father;  
Some proper man, I hope: who was it, mother?

## **LADY FAULCONBRIDGE**

Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge?

## **BASTARD**

As faithfully as I deny the devil.

## **LADY FAULCONBRIDGE**

King Richard Coeur-de-lion was thy father:  
By long and vehement suit I was seduced  
To make room for him in my husband's bed:  
Heaven lay not my transgression to my charge!  
Thou art the issue of my dear offence,  
Which was so strongly urged past my defence.

## **BASTARD**

Now, by this light, were I to get again,  
Madam, I would not wish a better father.  
Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,  
And so doth yours; your fault was not your folly:  
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose,  
Subjected tribute to commanding love,  
Against whose fury and unmatched force  
The aweless lion could not wage the fight,  
Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.  
He that perforce robs lions of their hearts  
May easily win a woman's. Ay, my mother,  
With all my heart I thank thee for my father!  
Who lives and dares but say thou didst not well  
When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell.  
Come, lady, I will show thee to my kin;  
And they shall say, when Richard me begot,  
If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin:  
Who says it was, he lies; I say 'twas not.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. France. Before Angiers.

*Enter AUSTRIA and forces, drums, etc. on one side: on the other KING PHILIP and his power; LEWIS, ARTHUR, CONSTANCE and attendants*

### LEWIS

Before Angiers well met, brave Austria.  
Arthur, that great forerunner of thy blood,  
Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart  
And fought the holy wars in Palestine,  
By this brave duke came early to his grave:  
And for amends to his posterity,  
At our importance hither is he come,  
To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf,  
And to rebuke the usurpation  
Of thy unnatural uncle, English John:  
Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

### ARTHUR

God shall forgive you Coeur-de-lion's death  
The rather that you give his offspring life,  
Shadowing their right under your wings of war:  
I give you welcome with a powerless hand,  
But with a heart full of unstained love:  
Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.

### LEWIS

A noble boy! Who would not do thee right?

### AUSTRIA

Upon thy cheek lay I this zealous kiss,  
As seal to this indenture of my love,

That to my home I will no more return,  
Till Angiers and the right thou hast in France,  
Together with that pale, that white-faced shore,  
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides  
And coops from other lands her islanders,  
Even till that England, hedged in with the main,  
That water-walled bulwark, still secure  
And confident from foreign purposes,  
Even till that utmost corner of the west  
Salute thee for her king: till then, fair boy,  
Will I not think of home, but follow arms.

## **CONSTANCE**

O, take his mother's thanks, a widow's thanks,  
Till your strong hand shall help to give him strength  
To make a more requital to your love!

## **AUSTRIA**

The peace of heaven is theirs that lift their swords  
In such a just and charitable war.

## **KING PHILIP**

Well then, to work: our cannon shall be bent  
Against the brows of this resisting town.  
Call for our chiefest men of discipline,  
To cull the plots of best advantages:  
We'll lay before this town our royal bones,  
Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,  
But we will make it subject to this boy.

## **CONSTANCE**

Stay for an answer to your embassy,  
Lest unadvised you stain your swords with blood:  
My Lord Chatillon may from England bring,  
That right in peace which here we urge in war,  
And then we shall repent each drop of blood  
That hot rash haste so indirectly shed.

*Enter CHATILLON*

**KING PHILIP**

A wonder, lady! lo, upon thy wish,  
Our messenger Chatillon is arrived!  
What England says, say briefly, gentle lord;  
We coldly pause for thee; Chatillon, speak.

**CHATILLON**

Then turn your forces from this paltry siege  
And stir them up against a mightier task.  
England, impatient of your just demands,  
Hath put himself in arms: the adverse winds,  
Whose leisure I have stay'd, have given him time  
To land his legions all as soon as I;  
His marches are expedient to this town,  
His forces strong, his soldiers confident.  
With him along is come the mother-queen,  
An Ate, stirring him to blood and strife;  
With her her niece, the Lady Blanch of Spain;  
With them a bastard of the king's deceased,  
And all the unsettled humours of the land,  
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,  
With ladies' faces and fierce dragons' spleens,  
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,  
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,  
To make hazard of new fortunes here:  
In brief, a braver choice of dauntless spirits  
Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er  
Did nearer float upon the swelling tide,  
To do offence and scath in Christendom.

*Drum beats*

The interruption of their churlish drums  
Cuts off more circumstance: they are at hand,  
To parley or to fight; therefore prepare.

**KING PHILIP**

How much unlook'd for is this expedition!

## AUSTRIA

By how much unexpected, by so much  
We must awake endeavour for defence;  
For courage mounteth with occasion:  
Let them be welcome then: we are prepared.

*Enter KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, BLANCH, the BASTARD, Lords, and forces*

## KING JOHN

Peace be to France, if France in peace permit  
Our just and lineal entrance to our own;  
If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven,  
Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct  
Their proud contempt that beats His peace to heaven.

## KING PHILIP

Peace be to England, if that war return  
From France to England, there to live in peace.  
England we love; and for that England's sake  
With burden of our armour here we sweat.  
This toil of ours should be a work of thine;  
But thou from loving England art so far,  
That thou hast under-wrought his lawful king  
Cut off the sequence of posterity,  
Out-faced infant state and done a rape  
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.  
Look here upon thy brother Geoffrey's face;  
These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his:  
This little abstract doth contain that large  
Which died in Geoffrey, and the hand of time  
Shall draw this brief into as huge a volume.  
That Geoffrey was thy elder brother born,  
And this his son; England was Geoffrey's right  
And this is Geoffrey's: in the name of God  
How comes it then that thou art call'd a king,  
When living blood doth in these temples beat,  
Which owe the crown that thou o'ermasterest?

**KING JOHN**

From whom hast thou this great commission, France,  
To draw my answer from thy articles?

**KING PHILIP**

From that supernal judge, that stirs good thoughts  
In any breast of strong authority,  
To look into the blots and stains of right:  
That judge hath made me guardian to this boy:  
Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong  
And by whose help I mean to chastise it.

**KING JOHN**

Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

**KING PHILIP**

Excuse; it is to beat usurping down.

**QUEEN ELINOR**

Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?

**CONSTANCE**

Let me make answer; thy usurping son.

**QUEEN ELINOR**

Out, insolent! thy bastard shall be king,  
That thou mayst be a queen, and cheque the world!

**CONSTANCE**

My bed was ever to thy son as true  
As thine was to thy husband; and this boy  
Liker in feature to his father Geoffrey  
Than thou and John in manners; being as like

As rain to water, or devil to his dam.  
My boy a bastard! By my soul, I think  
His father never was so true begot:  
It cannot be, an if thou wert his mother.

**QUEEN ELINOR**

There's a good mother, boy, that blots thy father.

**CONSTANCE**

There's a good grandam, boy, that would blot thee.

**AUSTRIA**

Peace!

**BASTARD**

Hear the crier.

**AUSTRIA**

What the devil art thou?

**BASTARD**

One that will play the devil, sir, with you,  
An a' may catch your hide and you alone:  
You are the hare of whom the proverb goes,  
Whose valour plucks dead lions by the beard;  
I'll smoke your skin-coat, an I catch you right;  
Sirrah, look to't; i' faith, I will, i' faith.

**BLANCH**

O, well did he become that lion's robe  
That did disrobe the lion of that robe!

**BASTARD**

It lies as sightly on the back of him  
As great Alcides' shows upon an ass:  
But, ass, I'll take that burthen from your back,  
Or lay on that shall make your shoulders crack.

## **AUSTRIA**

What craker is this same that deafs our ears  
With this abundance of superfluous breath?

## **KING PHILIP**

Lewis, determine what we shall do straight.

## **LEWIS**

Women and fools, break off your conference.  
King John, this is the very sum of all;  
England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,  
In right of Arthur do I claim of thee:  
Wilt thou resign them and lay down thy arms?

## **KING JOHN**

My life as soon: I do defy thee, France.  
Arthur of Bretagne, yield thee to my hand;  
And out of my dear love I'll give thee more  
Than e'er the coward hand of France can win:  
Submit thee, boy.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

Come to thy grandam, child.

## **CONSTANCE**

Do, child, go to it grandam, child:  
Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will  
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig:  
There's a good grandam.

## **ARTHUR**

Good my mother, peace!  
I would that I were low laid in my grave:  
I am not worth this coil that's made for me.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

His mother shames him so, poor boy, he weeps.

## **CONSTANCE**

Now shame upon you, whether she does or no!  
His grandam's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,  
Draws those heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,  
Which heaven shall take in nature of a fee;  
Ay, with these crystal beads heaven shall be bribed  
To do him justice and revenge on you.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

Thou monstrous slanderer of heaven and earth!

## **CONSTANCE**

Thou monstrous injurer of heaven and earth!  
Call not me slanderer; thou and thine usurp  
The dominations, royalties and rights  
Of this oppressed boy: this is thy eld'st son's son,  
Infortunate in nothing but in thee:  
Thy sins are visited in this poor child;  
The canon of the law is laid on him,  
Being but the second generation  
Removed from thy sin-conceiving womb.

## **KING JOHN**

Bedlam, have done.

## **CONSTANCE**



I have but this to say,  
That he is not only plagued for her sin,  
But God hath made her sin and her the plague  
On this removed issue, plague for her  
And with her plague; her sin his injury,  
Her injury the beadle to her sin,  
All punish'd in the person of this child,  
And all for her; a plague upon her!

**QUEEN ELINOR**

Thou unadvised scold, I can produce  
A will that bars the title of thy son.

**CONSTANCE**

Ay, who doubts that? a will! a wicked will:  
A woman's will; a canker'd grandam's will!

**KING PHILIP**

Peace, lady! pause, or be more temperate:  
It ill beseems this presence to cry aim  
To these ill-tuned repetitions.  
Some trumpet summon hither to the walls  
These men of Angiers: let us hear them speak  
Whose title they admit, Arthur's or John's.

*Trumpet sounds. Enter certain Citizens upon the walls*

**First Citizen**

Who is it that hath warn'd us to the walls?

**KING PHILIP**

'Tis France, for England.

**KING JOHN**

England, for itself.

You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects--

**KING PHILIP**

You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,  
Our trumpet call'd you to this gentle parle--

**KING JOHN**

For our advantage; therefore hear us first.  
These flags of France, that are advanced here  
Before the eye and prospect of your town,  
Have hither march'd to your endamagement:  
The cannons have their bowels full of wrath,  
And ready mounted are they to spit forth  
Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls:  
All preparation for a bloody siege  
All merciless proceeding by these French  
Confronts your city's eyes, your winking gates;  
And but for our approach those sleeping stones,  
That as a waist doth girdle you about,  
By the compulsion of their ordinance  
By this time from their fixed beds of lime  
Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made  
For bloody power to rush upon your peace.  
But on the sight of us your lawful king,  
Who painfully with much expedient march  
Have brought a countercheque before your gates,  
To save unscratch'd your city's threatened cheeks,  
Behold, the French amazed vouchsafe a parle;  
And now, instead of bullets wrapp'd in fire,  
To make a shaking fever in your walls,  
They shoot but calm words folded up in smoke,  
To make a faithless error in your ears:  
Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,  
And let us in, your king, whose labour'd spirits,  
Forwearied in this action of swift speed,  
Crave harbourage within your city walls.

**KING PHILIP**

When I have said, make answer to us both.

Lo, in this right hand, whose protection  
Is most divinely vow'd upon the right  
Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,  
Son to the elder brother of this man,  
And king o'er him and all that he enjoys:  
For this down-trodden equity, we tread  
In warlike march these greens before your town,  
Being no further enemy to you  
Than the constraint of hospitable zeal  
In the relief of this oppressed child  
Religiously provokes. Be pleased then  
To pay that duty which you truly owe  
To that owes it, namely this young prince:  
And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear,  
Save in aspect, hath all offence seal'd up;  
Our cannons' malice vainly shall be spent  
Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven;  
And with a blessed and unvex'd retire,  
With unhack'd swords and helmets all unbruised,  
We will bear home that lusty blood again  
Which here we came to spout against your town,  
And leave your children, wives and you in peace.  
But if you fondly pass our proffer'd offer,  
'Tis not the roundure of your old-faced walls  
Can hide you from our messengers of war,  
Though all these English and their discipline  
Were harbour'd in their rude circumference.  
Then tell us, shall your city call us lord,  
In that behalf which we have challenged it?  
Or shall we give the signal to our rage  
And stalk in blood to our possession?

### **First Citizen**

In brief, we are the king of England's subjects:  
For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

### **KING JOHN**

Acknowledge then the king, and let me in.

### **First Citizen**

That can we not; but he that proves the king,  
To him will we prove loyal: till that time  
Have we ramm'd up our gates against the world.

**KING JOHN**

Doth not the crown of England prove the king?  
And if not that, I bring you witnesses,  
Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed,--

**BASTARD**

Bastards, and else.

**KING JOHN**

To verify our title with their lives.

**KING PHILIP**

As many and as well-born bloods as those,--

**BASTARD**

Some bastards too.

**KING PHILIP**

Stand in his face to contradict his claim.

**First Citizen**

Till you compound whose right is worthiest,  
We for the worthiest hold the right from both.

**KING JOHN**

Then God forgive the sin of all those souls  
That to their everlasting residence,  
Before the dew of evening fall, shall fleet,  
In dreadful trial of our kingdom's king!

## **KING PHILIP**

Amen, amen! Mount, chevaliers! to arms!

## **BASTARD**

Saint George, that swung the dragon, and e'er since  
Sits on his horseback at mine hostess' door,  
Teach us some fence!

*To AUSTRIA*

Sirrah, were I at home,  
At your den, sirrah, with your lioness  
I would set an ox-head to your lion's hide,  
And make a monster of you.

## **AUSTRIA**

Peace! no more.

## **BASTARD**

O tremble, for you hear the lion roar.

## **KING JOHN**

Up higher to the plain; where we'll set forth  
In best appointment all our regiments.

## **BASTARD**

Speed then, to take advantage of the field.

## **KING PHILIP**

It shall be so; and at the other hill  
Command the rest to stand. God and our right!

*Exeunt*

*Here after excursions, enter the Herald of France, with trumpets, to the gates*

## **French Herald**

You men of Angiers, open wide your gates,  
And let young Arthur, Duke of Bretagne, in,  
Who by the hand of France this day hath made  
Much work for tears in many an English mother,  
Whose sons lie scattered on the bleeding ground;  
Many a widow's husband grovelling lies,  
Coldly embracing the discolour'd earth;  
And victory, with little loss, doth play  
Upon the dancing banners of the French,  
Who are at hand, triumphantly display'd,  
To enter conquerors and to proclaim  
Arthur of Bretagne England's king and yours.

*Enter English Herald, with trumpet*

## **English Herald**

Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your bells:  
King John, your king and England's doth approach,  
Commander of this hot malicious day:  
Their armours, that march'd hence so silver-bright,  
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood;  
There stuck no plume in any English crest  
That is removed by a staff of France;  
Our colours do return in those same hands  
That did display them when we first march'd forth;  
And, like a troop of jolly huntsmen, come  
Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,  
Dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes:  
Open your gates and give the victors way.

## **First Citizen**

Heralds, from off our towers we might behold,  
From first to last, the onset and retire  
Of both your armies; whose equality  
By our best eyes cannot be censured:

Blood hath bought blood and blows have answered blows;  
Strength match'd with strength, and power confronted power:  
Both are alike; and both alike we like.  
One must prove greatest: while they weigh so even,  
We hold our town for neither, yet for both.

*Re-enter KING JOHN and KING PHILIP, with their powers, severally*

## **KING JOHN**

France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away?  
Say, shall the current of our right run on?  
Whose passage, vex'd with thy impediment,  
Shall leave his native channel and o'erswell  
With course disturb'd even thy confining shores,  
Unless thou let his silver water keep  
A peaceful progress to the ocean.

## **KING PHILIP**

England, thou hast not saved one drop of blood,  
In this hot trial, more than we of France;  
Rather, lost more. And by this hand I swear,  
That sways the earth this climate overlooks,  
Before we will lay down our just-borne arms,  
We'll put thee down, 'gainst whom these arms we bear,  
Or add a royal number to the dead,  
Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss  
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

## **BASTARD**

Ha, majesty! how high thy glory towers,  
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire!  
O, now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel;  
The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs;  
And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,  
In undetermined differences of kings.  
Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus?  
Cry, 'havoc!' kings; back to the stained field,  
You equal potents, fiery kindled spirits!  
Then let confusion of one part confirm

The other's peace: till then, blows, blood and death!

**KING JOHN**

Whose party do the townsmen yet admit?

**KING PHILIP**

Speak, citizens, for England; who's your king?

**First Citizen**

The king of England; when we know the king.

**KING PHILIP**

Know him in us, that here hold up his right.

**KING JOHN**

In us, that are our own great deputy  
And bear possession of our person here,  
Lord of our presence, Angiers, and of you.

**First Citizen**

A greater power then we denies all this;  
And till it be undoubted, we do lock  
Our former scruple in our strong-barr'd gates;  
King'd of our fears, until our fears, resolved,  
Be by some certain king purged and deposed.

**BASTARD**

By heaven, these scroyles of Angiers flout you, kings,  
And stand securely on their battlements,  
As in a theatre, whence they gape and point  
At your industrious scenes and acts of death.  
Your royal presences be ruled by me:  
Do like the mutines of Jerusalem,  
Be friends awhile and both conjointly bend



Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town:  
By east and west let France and England mount  
Their battering cannon charged to the mouths,  
Till their soul-fearing clamours have brawl'd down  
The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city:  
I'd play incessantly upon these jades,  
Even till unfenced desolation  
Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.  
That done, dissever your united strengths,  
And part your mingled colours once again;  
Turn face to face and bloody point to point;  
Then, in a moment, Fortune shall cull forth  
Out of one side her happy minion,  
To whom in favour she shall give the day,  
And kiss him with a glorious victory.  
How like you this wild counsel, mighty states?  
Smacks it not something of the policy?

## **KING JOHN**

Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads,  
I like it well. France, shall we knit our powers  
And lay this Angiers even to the ground;  
Then after fight who shall be king of it?

## **BASTARD**

An if thou hast the mettle of a king,  
Being wronged as we are by this peevish town,  
Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery,  
As we will ours, against these saucy walls;  
And when that we have dash'd them to the ground,  
Why then defy each other and pell-mell  
Make work upon ourselves, for heaven or hell.

## **KING PHILIP**

Let it be so. Say, where will you assault?

## **KING JOHN**

We from the west will send destruction

Into this city's bosom.

## **AUSTRIA**

I from the north.

## **KING PHILIP**

Our thunder from the south  
Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town.

## **BASTARD**

O prudent discipline! From north to south:  
Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth:  
I'll stir them to it. Come, away, away!

## **First Citizen**

Hear us, great kings: vouchsafe awhile to stay,  
And I shall show you peace and fair-faced league;  
Win you this city without stroke or wound;  
Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds,  
That here come sacrifices for the field:  
Persever not, but hear me, mighty kings.

## **KING JOHN**

Speak on with favour; we are bent to hear.

## **First Citizen**

That daughter there of Spain, the Lady Blanch,  
Is niece to England: look upon the years  
Of Lewis the Dauphin and that lovely maid:  
If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,  
Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch?  
If zealous love should go in search of virtue,  
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch?  
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,  
Whose veins bound richer blood than Lady Blanch?  
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,

Is the young Dauphin every way complete:  
If not complete of, say he is not she;  
And she again wants nothing, to name want,  
If want it be not that she is not he:  
He is the half part of a blessed man,  
Left to be finished by such as she;  
And she a fair divided excellence,  
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.  
O, two such silver currents, when they join,  
Do glorify the banks that bound them in;  
And two such shores to two such streams made one,  
Two such controlling bounds shall you be, kings,  
To these two princes, if you marry them.  
This union shall do more than battery can  
To our fast-closed gates; for at this match,  
With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,  
The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,  
And give you entrance: but without this match,  
The sea enraged is not half so deaf,  
Lions more confident, mountains and rocks  
More free from motion, no, not Death himself  
In moral fury half so peremptory,  
As we to keep this city.

## **BASTARD**

Here's a stay  
That shakes the rotten carcass of old Death  
Out of his rags! Here's a large mouth, indeed,  
That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas,  
Talks as familiarly of roaring lions  
As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs!  
What cannoneer begot this lusty blood?  
He speaks plain cannon fire, and smoke and bounce;  
He gives the bastinado with his tongue:  
Our ears are cudgell'd; not a word of his  
But buffets better than a fist of France:  
Zounds! I was never so bethump'd with words  
Since I first call'd my brother's father dad.

## **QUEEN ELINOR**

Son, list to this conjunction, make this match;  
Give with our niece a dowry large enough:  
For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie  
Thy now unsured assurance to the crown,  
That yon green boy shall have no sun to ripe  
The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.  
I see a yielding in the looks of France;  
Mark, how they whisper: urge them while their souls  
Are capable of this ambition,  
Lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath  
Of soft petitions, pity and remorse,  
Cool and congeal again to what it was.

### **First Citizen**

Why answer not the double majesties  
This friendly treaty of our threaten'd town?

### **KING PHILIP**

Speak England first, that hath been forward first  
To speak unto this city: what say you?

### **KING JOHN**

If that the Dauphin there, thy princely son,  
Can in this book of beauty read 'I love,'  
Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen:  
For Anjou and fair Touraine, Maine, Poitiers,  
And all that we upon this side the sea,  
Except this city now by us besieged,  
Find liable to our crown and dignity,  
Shall gild her bridal bed and make her rich  
In titles, honours and promotions,  
As she in beauty, education, blood,  
Holds hand with any princess of the world.

### **KING PHILIP**

What say'st thou, boy? look in the lady's face.

### **LEWIS**

I do, my lord; and in her eye I find  
A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,  
The shadow of myself form'd in her eye:  
Which being but the shadow of your son,  
Becomes a sun and makes your son a shadow:  
I do protest I never loved myself  
Till now infixed I beheld myself  
Drawn in the flattering table of her eye.

*Whispers with BLANCH*

## **BASTARD**

Drawn in the flattering table of her eye!  
Hang'd in the frowning wrinkle of her brow!  
And quarter'd in her heart! he doth espy  
Himself love's traitor: this is pity now,  
That hang'd and drawn and quartered, there should be  
In such a love so vile a lout as he.

## **BLANCH**

My uncle's will in this respect is mine:  
If he see aught in you that makes him like,  
That any thing he sees, which moves his liking,  
I can with ease translate it to my will;  
Or if you will, to speak more properly,  
I will enforce it easily to my love.  
Further I will not flatter you, my lord,  
That all I see in you is worthy love,  
Than this; that nothing do I see in you,  
Though churlish thoughts themselves should be your judge,  
That I can find should merit any hate.

## **KING JOHN**

What say these young ones? What say you my niece?

## **BLANCH**

That she is bound in honour still to do

What you in wisdom still vouchsafe to say.

**KING JOHN**

Speak then, prince Dauphin; can you love this lady?

**LEWIS**

Nay, ask me if I can refrain from love;  
For I do love her most unfeignedly.

**KING JOHN**

Then do I give Volquessen, Touraine, Maine,  
Poitiers and Anjou, these five provinces,  
With her to thee; and this addition more,  
Full thirty thousand marks of English coin.  
Philip of France, if thou be pleased withal,  
Command thy son and daughter to join hands.

**KING PHILIP**

It likes us well; young princes, close your hands.

**AUSTRIA**

And your lips too; for I am well assured  
That I did so when I was first assured.

**KING PHILIP**

Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your gates,  
Let in that amity which you have made;  
For at Saint Mary's chapel presently  
The rites of marriage shall be solemnized.  
Is not the Lady Constance in this troop?  
I know she is not, for this match made up  
Her presence would have interrupted much:  
Where is she and her son? tell me, who knows.

**LEWIS**

She is sad and passionate at your highness' tent.

## **KING PHILIP**

And, by my faith, this league that we have made  
Will give her sadness very little cure.  
Brother of England, how may we content  
This widow lady? In her right we came;  
Which we, God knows, have turn'd another way,  
To our own vantage.

## **KING JOHN**

We will heal up all;  
For we'll create young Arthur Duke of Bretagne  
And Earl of Richmond; and this rich fair town  
We make him lord of. Call the Lady Constance;  
Some speedy messenger bid her repair  
To our solemnity: I trust we shall,  
If not fill up the measure of her will,  
Yet in some measure satisfy her so  
That we shall stop her exclamation.  
Go we, as well as haste will suffer us,  
To this unlook'd for, unprepared pomp.

*Exeunt all but the BASTARD*

## **BASTARD**

Mad world! mad kings! mad composition!  
John, to stop Arthur's title in the whole,  
Hath willingly departed with a part,  
And France, whose armour conscience buckled on,  
Whom zeal and charity brought to the field  
As God's own soldier, rounded in the ear  
With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,  
That broker, that still breaks the pate of faith,  
That daily break-vow, he that wins of all,  
Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids,  
Who, having no external thing to lose  
But the word 'maid,' cheats the poor maid of that,  
That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling Commodity,

Commodity, the bias of the world,  
The world, who of itself is peised well,  
Made to run even upon even ground,  
Till this advantage, this vile-drawing bias,  
This sway of motion, this Commodity,  
Makes it take head from all indifferency,  
From all direction, purpose, course, intent:  
And this same bias, this Commodity,  
This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,  
Clapp'd on the outward eye of fickle France,  
Hath drawn him from his own determined aid,  
From a resolved and honourable war,  
To a most base and vile-concluded peace.  
And why rail I on this Commodity?  
But for because he hath not woo'd me yet:  
Not that I have the power to clutch my hand,  
When his fair angels would salute my palm;  
But for my hand, as unattempted yet,  
Like a poor beggar, railleth on the rich.  
Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail  
And say there is no sin but to be rich;  
And being rich, my virtue then shall be  
To say there is no vice but beggary.  
Since kings break faith upon commodity,  
Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The French King's pavilion.

*Enter CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY*

### CONSTANCE

Gone to be married! gone to swear a peace!  
False blood to false blood join'd! gone to be friends!  
Shall Lewis have Blanch, and Blanch those provinces?  
It is not so; thou hast misspoke, misheard:  
Be well advised, tell o'er thy tale again:  
It cannot be; thou dost but say 'tis so:  
I trust I may not trust thee; for thy word  
Is but the vain breath of a common man:  
Believe me, I do not believe thee, man;  
I have a king's oath to the contrary.  
Thou shalt be punish'd for thus frightening me,  
For I am sick and capable of fears,  
Oppress'd with wrongs and therefore full of fears,  
A widow, husbandless, subject to fears,  
A woman, naturally born to fears;  
And though thou now confess thou didst but jest,  
With my vex'd spirits I cannot take a truce,  
But they will quake and tremble all this day.  
What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head?  
Why dost thou look so sadly on my son?  
What means that hand upon that breast of thine?  
Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,  
Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds?  
Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words?  
Then speak again; not all thy former tale,  
But this one word, whether thy tale be true.

### SALISBURY

As true as I believe you think them false  
That give you cause to prove my saying true.

## CONSTANCE

O, if thou teach me to believe this sorrow,  
Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die,  
And let belief and life encounter so  
As doth the fury of two desperate men  
Which in the very meeting fall and die.  
Lewis marry Blanch! O boy, then where art thou?  
France friend with England, what becomes of me?  
Fellow, be gone: I cannot brook thy sight:  
This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

## SALISBURY

What other harm have I, good lady, done,  
But spoke the harm that is by others done?

## CONSTANCE

Which harm within itself so heinous is  
As it makes harmful all that speak of it.

## ARTHUR

I do beseech you, madam, be content.

## CONSTANCE

If thou, that bid'st me be content, wert grim,  
Ugly and slanderous to thy mother's womb,  
Full of unpleasing blots and sightless stains,  
Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,  
Patch'd with foul moles and eye-offending marks,  
I would not care, I then would be content,  
For then I should not love thee, no, nor thou  
Become thy great birth nor deserve a crown.  
But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,  
Nature and Fortune join'd to make thee great:  
Of Nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast,  
And with the half-blown rose. But Fortune, O,  
She is corrupted, changed and won from thee;

She adulterates hourly with thine uncle John,  
And with her golden hand hath pluck'd on France  
To tread down fair respect of sovereignty,  
And made his majesty the bawd to theirs.  
France is a bawd to Fortune and King John,  
That strumpet Fortune, that usurping John!  
Tell me, thou fellow, is not France forsworn?  
Envenom him with words, or get thee gone  
And leave those woes alone which I alone  
Am bound to under-bear.

## **SALISBURY**

Pardon me, madam,  
I may not go without you to the kings.

## **CONSTANCE**

Thou mayst, thou shalt; I will not go with thee:  
I will instruct my sorrows to be proud;  
For grief is proud and makes his owner stoop.  
To me and to the state of my great grief  
Let kings assemble; for my grief's so great  
That no supporter but the huge firm earth  
Can hold it up: here I and sorrows sit;  
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

*Seats herself on the ground*

*Enter KING JOHN, KING PHILLIP, LEWIS, BLANCH, QUEEN ELINOR, the BASTARD,  
AUSTRIA, and Attendants*

## **KING PHILIP**

'Tis true, fair daughter; and this blessed day  
Ever in France shall be kept festival:  
To solemnize this day the glorious sun  
Stays in his course and plays the alchemist,  
Turning with splendor of his precious eye  
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold:  
The yearly course that brings this day about  
Shall never see it but a holiday.

## CONSTANCE

A wicked day, and not a holy day!

*Rising*

What hath this day deserved? what hath it done,  
That it in golden letters should be set  
Among the high tides in the calendar?  
Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,  
This day of shame, oppression, perjury.  
Or, if it must stand still, let wives with child  
Pray that their burthens may not fall this day,  
Lest that their hopes prodigiously be cross'd:  
But on this day let seamen fear no wreck;  
No bargains break that are not this day made:  
This day, all things begun come to ill end,  
Yea, faith itself to hollow falsehood change!

## KING PHILIP

By heaven, lady, you shall have no cause  
To curse the fair proceedings of this day:  
Have I not pawn'd to you my majesty?

## CONSTANCE

You have beguiled me with a counterfeit  
Resembling majesty, which, being touch'd and tried,  
Proves valueless: you are forsworn, forsworn;  
You came in arms to spill mine enemies' blood,  
But now in arms you strengthen it with yours:  
The grappling vigour and rough frown of war  
Is cold in amity and painted peace,  
And our oppression hath made up this league.  
Arm, arm, you heavens, against these perjured kings!  
A widow cries; be husband to me, heavens!  
Let not the hours of this ungodly day  
Wear out the day in peace; but, ere sunset,  
Set armed discord 'twixt these perjured kings!  
Hear me, O, hear me!

## AUSTRIA

Lady Constance, peace!

## CONSTANCE

War! war! no peace! peace is to me a war  
O Lymoges! O Austria! thou dost shame  
That bloody spoil: thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward!  
Thou little valiant, great in villany!  
Thou ever strong upon the stronger side!  
Thou Fortune's champion that dost never fight  
But when her humorous ladyship is by  
To teach thee safety! thou art perjured too,  
And soothest up greatness. What a fool art thou,  
A ramping fool, to brag and stamp and swear  
Upon my party! Thou cold-blooded slave,  
Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side,  
Been sworn my soldier, bidding me depend  
Upon thy stars, thy fortune and thy strength,  
And dost thou now fall over to my foes?  
Thou wear a lion's hide! doff it for shame,  
And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

## AUSTRIA

O, that a man should speak those words to me!

## BASTARD

And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

## AUSTRIA

Thou darest not say so, villain, for thy life.

## BASTARD

And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

## KING JOHN

We like not this; thou dost forget thyself.

*Enter CARDINAL PANDULPH*

**KING PHILIP**

Here comes the holy legate of the pope.

**CARDINAL PANDULPH**

Hail, you anointed deputies of heaven!  
To thee, King John, my holy errand is.  
I Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal,  
And from Pope Innocent the legate here,  
Do in his name religiously demand  
Why thou against the church, our holy mother,  
So wilfully dost spurn; and force perforce  
Keep Stephen Langton, chosen archbishop  
Of Canterbury, from that holy see?  
This, in our foresaid holy father's name,  
Pope Innocent, I do demand of thee.

**KING JOHN**

What earthy name to interrogatories  
Can task the free breath of a sacred king?  
Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name  
So slight, unworthy and ridiculous,  
To charge me to an answer, as the pope.  
Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England  
Add thus much more, that no Italian priest  
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions;  
But as we, under heaven, are supreme head,  
So under Him that great supremacy,  
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,  
Without the assistance of a mortal hand:  
So tell the pope, all reverence set apart  
To him and his usurp'd authority.

**KING PHILIP**

Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

## **KING JOHN**

Though you and all the kings of Christendom  
Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,  
Dreading the curse that money may buy out;  
And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,  
Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,  
Who in that sale sells pardon from himself,  
Though you and all the rest so grossly led  
This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish,  
Yet I alone, alone do me oppose  
Against the pope and count his friends my foes.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

Then, by the lawful power that I have,  
Thou shalt stand cursed and excommunicate.  
And blessed shall he be that doth revolt  
From his allegiance to an heretic;  
And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,  
Canonized and worshipped as a saint,  
That takes away by any secret course  
Thy hateful life.

## **CONSTANCE**

O, lawful let it be  
That I have room with Rome to curse awhile!  
Good father cardinal, cry thou amen  
To my keen curses; for without my wrong  
There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

There's law and warrant, lady, for my curse.

## **CONSTANCE**

And for mine too: when law can do no right,  
Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong:

Law cannot give my child his kingdom here,  
For he that holds his kingdom holds the law;  
Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,  
How can the law forbid my tongue to curse?

**CARDINAL PANDULPH**

Philip of France, on peril of a curse,  
Let go the hand of that arch-heretic;  
And raise the power of France upon his head,  
Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

**QUEEN ELINOR**

Look'st thou pale, France? do not let go thy hand.

**CONSTANCE**

Look to that, devil; lest that France repent,  
And by disjoining hands, hell lose a soul.

**AUSTRIA**

King Philip, listen to the cardinal.

**BASTARD**

And hang a calf's-skin on his recreant limbs.

**AUSTRIA**

Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs, Because--

**BASTARD**

Your breeches best may carry them.

**KING JOHN**

Philip, what say'st thou to the cardinal?



**CONSTANCE**

What should he say, but as the cardinal?

**LEWIS**

Bethink you, father; for the difference  
Is purchase of a heavy curse from Rome,  
Or the light loss of England for a friend:  
Forego the easier.

**BLANCH**

That's the curse of Rome.

**CONSTANCE**

O Lewis, stand fast! the devil tempts thee here  
In likeness of a new untrimmed bride.

**BLANCH**

The Lady Constance speaks not from her faith,  
But from her need.

**CONSTANCE**

O, if thou grant my need,  
Which only lives but by the death of faith,  
That need must needs infer this principle,  
That faith would live again by death of need.  
O then, tread down my need, and faith mounts up;  
Keep my need up, and faith is trodden down!

**KING JOHN**

The king is moved, and answers not to this.

**CONSTANCE**

O, be removed from him, and answer well!

## **AUSTRIA**

Do so, King Philip; hang no more in doubt.

## **BASTARD**

Hang nothing but a calf's-skin, most sweet lout.

## **KING PHILIP**

I am perplex'd, and know not what to say.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,  
If thou stand excommunicate and cursed?

## **KING PHILIP**

Good reverend father, make my person yours,  
And tell me how you would bestow yourself.  
This royal hand and mine are newly knit,  
And the conjunction of our inward souls  
Married in league, coupled and linked together  
With all religious strength of sacred vows;  
The latest breath that gave the sound of words  
Was deep-sworn faith, peace, amity, true love  
Between our kingdoms and our royal selves,  
And even before this truce, but new before,  
No longer than we well could wash our hands  
To clap this royal bargain up of peace,  
Heaven knows, they were besmear'd and over-stain'd  
With slaughter's pencil, where revenge did paint  
The fearful difference of incensed kings:  
And shall these hands, so lately purged of blood,  
So newly join'd in love, so strong in both,  
Unyoke this seizure and this kind regret?  
Play fast and loose with faith? so jest with heaven,  
Make such unconstant children of ourselves,  
As now again to snatch our palm from palm,  
Unswear faith sworn, and on the marriage-bed

Of smiling peace to march a bloody host,  
And make a riot on the gentle brow  
Of true sincerity? O, holy sir,  
My reverend father, let it not be so!  
Out of your grace, devise, ordain, impose  
Some gentle order; and then we shall be blest  
To do your pleasure and continue friends.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

All form is formless, order orderless,  
Save what is opposite to England's love.  
Therefore to arms! be champion of our church,  
Or let the church, our mother, breathe her curse,  
A mother's curse, on her revolting son.  
France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,  
A chafed lion by the mortal paw,  
A fasting tiger safer by the tooth,  
Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.

## **KING PHILIP**

I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

So makest thou faith an enemy to faith;  
And like a civil war set'st oath to oath,  
Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow  
First made to heaven, first be to heaven perform'd,  
That is, to be the champion of our church!  
What since thou sworest is sworn against thyself  
And may not be performed by thyself,  
For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss  
Is not amiss when it is truly done,  
And being not done, where doing tends to ill,  
The truth is then most done not doing it:  
The better act of purposes mistook  
Is to mistake again; though indirect,  
Yet indirection thereby grows direct,  
And falsehood falsehood cures, as fire cools fire  
Within the scorched veins of one new-burn'd.

It is religion that doth make vows kept;  
But thou hast sworn against religion,  
By what thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,  
And makest an oath the surety for thy truth  
Against an oath: the truth thou art unsure  
To swear, swears only not to be forsworn;  
Else what a mockery should it be to swear!  
But thou dost swear only to be forsworn;  
And most forsworn, to keep what thou dost swear.  
Therefore thy later vows against thy first  
Is in thyself rebellion to thyself;  
And better conquest never canst thou make  
Than arm thy constant and thy nobler parts  
Against these giddy loose suggestions:  
Upon which better part our prayers come in,  
If thou vouchsafe them. But if not, then know  
The peril of our curses light on thee  
So heavy as thou shalt not shake them off,  
But in despair die under their black weight.

## **AUSTRIA**

Rebellion, flat rebellion!

## **BASTARD**

Will't not be?  
Will not a calfs-skin stop that mouth of thine?

## **LEWIS**

Father, to arms!

## **BLANCH**

Upon thy wedding-day?  
Against the blood that thou hast married?  
What, shall our feast be kept with slaughter'd men?  
Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,  
Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp?  
O husband, hear me! ay, alack, how new  
Is husband in my mouth! even for that name,

Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce,  
Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms  
Against mine uncle.

**CONSTANCE**

O, upon my knee,  
Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,  
Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom  
Forethought by heaven!

**BLANCH**

Now shall I see thy love: what motive may  
Be stronger with thee than the name of wife?

**CONSTANCE**

That which upholdeth him that thee upholds,  
His honour: O, thine honour, Lewis, thine honour!

**LEWIS**

I muse your majesty doth seem so cold,  
When such profound respects do pull you on.

**CARDINAL PANDULPH**

I will denounce a curse upon his head.

**KING PHILIP**

Thou shalt not need. England, I will fall from thee.

**CONSTANCE**

O fair return of banish'd majesty!

**QUEEN ELINOR**

O foul revolt of French inconstancy!

**KING JOHN**

France, thou shalt rue this hour within this hour.

**BASTARD**

Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton Time,  
Is it as he will? well then, France shall rue.

**BLANCH**

The sun's o'er-cast with blood: fair day, adieu!  
Which is the side that I must go withal?  
I am with both: each army hath a hand;  
And in their rage, I having hold of both,  
They swirl asunder and dismember me.  
Husband, I cannot pray that thou mayst win;  
Uncle, I needs must pray that thou mayst lose;  
Father, I may not wish the fortune thine;  
Grandam, I will not wish thy fortunes thrive:  
Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose  
Assured loss before the match be play'd.

**LEWIS**

Lady, with me, with me thy fortune lies.

**BLANCH**

There where my fortune lives, there my life dies.

**KING JOHN**

Cousin, go draw our puissance together.

*Exit BASTARD*

France, I am burn'd up with inflaming wrath;  
A rage whose heat hath this condition,  
That nothing can allay, nothing but blood,  
The blood, and dearest-valued blood, of France.

## **KING PHILIP**

Thy rage sham burn thee up, and thou shalt turn  
To ashes, ere our blood shall quench that fire:  
Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.

## **KING JOHN**

No more than he that threats. To arms let's hie!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. Plains near Angiers.

*Alarums, excursions. Enter the BASTARD, with AUSTRIA'S head*

### BASTARD

Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot;  
Some airy devil hovers in the sky  
And pours down mischief. Austria's head lie there,  
While Philip breathes.

*Enter KING JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT*

### KING JOHN

Hubert, keep this boy. Philip, make up:  
My mother is assailed in our tent,  
And ta'en, I fear.

### BASTARD

My lord, I rescued her;  
Her highness is in safety, fear you not:  
But on, my liege; for very little pains  
Will bring this labour to an happy end.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same.

*Alarums, excursions, retreat. Enter KING JOHN, QUEEN ELINOR, ARTHUR, the BASTARD, HUBERT, and Lords*

### KING JOHN

[To QUEEN ELINOR] So shall it be; your grace shall  
stay behind  
So strongly guarded.

*To ARTHUR*

Cousin, look not sad:  
Thy grandam loves thee; and thy uncle will  
As dear be to thee as thy father was.

### ARTHUR

O, this will make my mother die with grief!

### KING JOHN

[To the BASTARD] Cousin, away for England!  
haste before:  
And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags  
Of hoarding abbots; imprisoned angels  
Set at liberty: the fat ribs of peace  
Must by the hungry now be fed upon:  
Use our commission in his utmost force.

### BASTARD

Bell, book, and candle shall not drive me back,  
When gold and silver beck me to come on.  
I leave your highness. Grandam, I will pray,

If ever I remember to be holy,  
For your fair safety; so, I kiss your hand.

**ELINOR**

Farewell, gentle cousin.

**KING JOHN**

Coz, farewell.

*Exit the BASTARD*

**QUEEN ELINOR**

Come hither, little kinsman; hark, a word.

**KING JOHN**

Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,  
We owe thee much! within this wall of flesh  
There is a soul counts thee her creditor  
And with advantage means to pay thy love:  
And my good friend, thy voluntary oath  
Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.  
Give me thy hand. I had a thing to say,  
But I will fit it with some better time.  
By heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed  
To say what good respect I have of thee.

**HUBERT**

I am much bounden to your majesty.

**KING JOHN**

Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet,  
But thou shalt have; and creep time ne'er so slow,  
Yet it shall come from me to do thee good.  
I had a thing to say, but let it go:  
The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day,

Attended with the pleasures of the world,  
Is all too wanton and too full of gawds  
To give me audience: if the midnight bell  
Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,  
Sound on into the drowsy race of night;  
If this same were a churchyard where we stand,  
And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs,  
Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,  
Had baked thy blood and made it heavy-thick,  
Which else runs tickling up and down the veins,  
Making that idiot, laughter, keep men's eyes  
And strain their cheeks to idle merriment,  
A passion hateful to my purposes,  
Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,  
Hear me without thine ears, and make reply  
Without a tongue, using conceit alone,  
Without eyes, ears and harmful sound of words;  
Then, in despite of brooded watchful day,  
I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts:  
But, ah, I will not! yet I love thee well;  
And, by my troth, I think thou lovest me well.

## **HUBERT**

So well, that what you bid me undertake,  
Though that my death were adjunct to my act,  
By heaven, I would do it.

## **KING JOHN**

Do not I know thou wouldst?  
Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye  
On yon young boy: I'll tell thee what, my friend,  
He is a very serpent in my way;  
And whereso'er this foot of mine doth tread,  
He lies before me: dost thou understand me?  
Thou art his keeper.

## **HUBERT**

And I'll keep him so,  
That he shall not offend your majesty.

**KING JOHN**

Death.

**HUBERT**

My lord?

**KING JOHN**

A grave.

**HUBERT**

He shall not live.

**KING JOHN**

Enough.

I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee;

Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee:

Remember. Madam, fare you well:

I'll send those powers o'er to your majesty.

**ELINOR**

My blessing go with thee!

**KING JOHN**

For England, cousin, go:

Hubert shall be your man, attend on you

With all true duty. On toward Calais, ho!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. KING PHILIP'S tent.

*Enter KING PHILIP, LEWIS, CARDINAL PANDULPH, and Attendants*

### KING PHILIP

So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,  
A whole armado of convicted sail  
Is scatter'd and disjoin'd from fellowship.

### CARDINAL PANDULPH

Courage and comfort! all shall yet go well.

### KING PHILIP

What can go well, when we have run so ill?  
Are we not beaten? Is not Angiers lost?  
Arthur ta'en prisoner? divers dear friends slain?  
And bloody England into England gone,  
O'erbearing interruption, spite of France?

### LEWIS

What he hath won, that hath he fortified:  
So hot a speed with such advice disposed,  
Such temperate order in so fierce a cause,  
Doth want example: who hath read or heard  
Of any kindred action like to this?

### KING PHILIP

Well could I bear that England had this praise,  
So we could find some pattern of our shame.

*Enter CONSTANCE*

Look, who comes here! a grave unto a soul;  
Holding the eternal spirit against her will,  
In the vile prison of afflicted breath.  
I prithee, lady, go away with me.

**CONSTANCE**

Lo, now I now see the issue of your peace.

**KING PHILIP**

Patience, good lady! comfort, gentle Constance!

**CONSTANCE**

No, I defy all counsel, all redress,  
But that which ends all counsel, true redress,  
Death, death; O amiable lovely death!  
Thou odouriferous stench! sound rottenness!  
Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,  
Thou hate and terror to prosperity,  
And I will kiss thy detestable bones  
And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows  
And ring these fingers with thy household worms  
And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust  
And be a carrion monster like thyself:  
Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smilest  
And buss thee as thy wife. Misery's love,  
O, come to me!

**KING PHILIP**

O fair affliction, peace!

**CONSTANCE**

No, no, I will not, having breath to cry:  
O, that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth!  
Then with a passion would I shake the world;  
And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy  
Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,

Which scorns a modern invocation.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow.

## **CONSTANCE**

Thou art not holy to belie me so;  
I am not mad: this hair I tear is mine;  
My name is Constance; I was Geffrey's wife;  
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost:  
I am not mad: I would to heaven I were!  
For then, 'tis like I should forget myself:  
O, if I could, what grief should I forget!  
Preach some philosophy to make me mad,  
And thou shalt be canonized, cardinal;  
For being not mad but sensible of grief,  
My reasonable part produces reason  
How I may be deliver'd of these woes,  
And teaches me to kill or hang myself:  
If I were mad, I should forget my son,  
Or madly think a babe of clouts were he:  
I am not mad; too well, too well I feel  
The different plague of each calamity.

## **KING PHILIP**

Bind up those tresses. O, what love I note  
In the fair multitude of those her hairs!  
Where but by chance a silver drop hath fallen,  
Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends  
Do glue themselves in sociable grief,  
Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,  
Sticking together in calamity.

## **CONSTANCE**

To England, if you will.

## **KING PHILIP**

Bind up your hairs.

**CONSTANCE**

Yes, that I will; and wherefore will I do it?  
I tore them from their bonds and cried aloud  
'O that these hands could so redeem my son,  
As they have given these hairs their liberty!'  
But now I envy at their liberty,  
And will again commit them to their bonds,  
Because my poor child is a prisoner.  
And, father cardinal, I have heard you say  
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven:  
If that be true, I shall see my boy again;  
For since the birth of Cain, the first male child,  
To him that did but yesterday suspire,  
There was not such a gracious creature born.  
But now will canker-sorrow eat my bud  
And chase the native beauty from his cheek  
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,  
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,  
And so he'll die; and, rising so again,  
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven  
I shall not know him: therefore never, never  
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

**CARDINAL PANDULPH**

You hold too heinous a respect of grief.

**CONSTANCE**

He talks to me that never had a son.

**KING PHILIP**

You are as fond of grief as of your child.

**CONSTANCE**

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,



Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;  
Then, have I reason to be fond of grief?  
Fare you well: had you such a loss as I,  
I could give better comfort than you do.  
I will not keep this form upon my head,  
When there is such disorder in my wit.  
O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!  
My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!  
My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure!

*Exit*

## **KING PHILIP**

I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her.

*Exit*

## **LEWIS**

There's nothing in this world can make me joy:  
Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale  
Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man;  
And bitter shame hath spoil'd the sweet world's taste  
That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

Before the curing of a strong disease,  
Even in the instant of repair and health,  
The fit is strongest; evils that take leave,  
On their departure most of all show evil:  
What have you lost by losing of this day?

## **LEWIS**

All days of glory, joy and happiness.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

If you had won it, certainly you had.  
No, no; when Fortune means to men most good,  
She looks upon them with a threatening eye.  
'Tis strange to think how much King John hath lost  
In this which he accounts so clearly won:  
Are not you grieved that Arthur is his prisoner?

**LEWIS**

As heartily as he is glad he hath him.

**CARDINAL PANDULPH**

Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.  
Now hear me speak with a prophetic spirit;  
For even the breath of what I mean to speak  
Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub,  
Out of the path which shall directly lead  
Thy foot to England's throne; and therefore mark.  
John hath seized Arthur; and it cannot be  
That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,  
The misplaced John should entertain an hour,  
One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest.  
A sceptre snatch'd with an unruly hand  
Must be as boisterously maintain'd as gain'd;  
And he that stands upon a slippery place  
Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up:  
That John may stand, then Arthur needs must fall;  
So be it, for it cannot be but so.

**LEWIS**

But what shall I gain by young Arthur's fall?

**CARDINAL PANDULPH**

You, in the right of Lady Blanch your wife,  
May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

**LEWIS**

And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

## CARDINAL PANDULPH

How green you are and fresh in this old world!  
John lays you plots; the times conspire with you;  
For he that steeps his safety in true blood  
Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.  
This act so evilly born shall cool the hearts  
Of all his people and freeze up their zeal,  
That none so small advantage shall step forth  
To cheque his reign, but they will cherish it;  
No natural exhalation in the sky,  
No scope of nature, no distemper'd day,  
No common wind, no custom'd event,  
But they will pluck away his natural cause  
And call them meteors, prodigies and signs,  
Abortives, presages and tongues of heaven,  
Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

## LEWIS

May be he will not touch young Arthur's life,  
But hold himself safe in his prisonment.

## CARDINAL PANDULPH

O, sir, when he shall hear of your approach,  
If that young Arthur be not gone already,  
Even at that news he dies; and then the hearts  
Of all his people shall revolt from him  
And kiss the lips of unacquainted change  
And pick strong matter of revolt and wrath  
Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John.  
Methinks I see this hurly all on foot:  
And, O, what better matter breeds for you  
Than I have named! The bastard Faulconbridge  
Is now in England, ransacking the church,  
Offending charity: if but a dozen French  
Were there in arms, they would be as a call  
To train ten thousand English to their side,  
Or as a little snow, tumbled about,  
Anon becomes a mountain. O noble Dauphin,

Go with me to the king: 'tis wonderful  
What may be wrought out of their discontent,  
Now that their souls are topful of offence.  
For England go: I will whet on the king.

## LEWIS

Strong reasons make strong actions: let us go:  
If you say ay, the king will not say no.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in a castle.

*Enter HUBERT and Executioners*

**HUBERT**

Heat me these irons hot; and look thou stand  
Within the arras: when I strike my foot  
Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth,  
And bind the boy which you shall find with me  
Fast to the chair: be heedful: hence, and watch.

**First Executioner**

I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

**HUBERT**

Uncleanly scruples! fear not you: look to't.

*Exeunt Executioners*

Young lad, come forth; I have to say with you.

*Enter ARTHUR*

**ARTHUR**

Good morrow, Hubert.

**HUBERT**

Good morrow, little prince.

**ARTHUR**

As little prince, having so great a title  
To be more prince, as may be. You are sad.

**HUBERT**

Indeed, I have been merrier.

**ARTHUR**

Mercy on me!  
Methinks no body should be sad but I:  
Yet, I remember, when I was in France,  
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,  
Only for wantonness. By my christendom,  
So I were out of prison and kept sheep,  
I should be as merry as the day is long;  
And so I would be here, but that I doubt  
My uncle practises more harm to me:  
He is afraid of me and I of him:  
Is it my fault that I was Geffrey's son?  
No, indeed, is't not; and I would to heaven  
I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

**HUBERT**

[Aside] If I talk to him, with his innocent prate  
He will awake my mercy which lies dead:  
Therefore I will be sudden and dispatch.

**ARTHUR**

Are you sick, Hubert? you look pale to-day:  
In sooth, I would you were a little sick,  
That I might sit all night and watch with you:  
I warrant I love you more than you do me.

**HUBERT**

[Aside] His words do take possession of my bosom.  
Read here, young Arthur.

*Showing a paper*

*Aside*

How now, foolish rheum!  
Turning despiteous torture out of door!  
I must be brief, lest resolution drop  
Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears.  
Can you not read it? Is it not fair writ?

**ARTHUR**

Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect:  
Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes?

**HUBERT**

Young boy, I must.

**ARTHUR**

And will you?

**HUBERT**

And I will.

**ARTHUR**

Have you the heart? When your head did but ache,  
I knit my handkercher about your brows,  
The best I had, a princess wrought it me,  
And I did never ask it you again;  
And with my hand at midnight held your head,  
And like the watchful minutes to the hour,  
Still and anon cheer'd up the heavy time,  
Saying, 'What lack you?' and 'Where lies your grief?'  
Or 'What good love may I perform for you?'  
Many a poor man's son would have lien still  
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you;  
But you at your sick service had a prince.  
Nay, you may think my love was crafty love

And call it cunning: do, an if you will:  
If heaven be pleased that you must use me ill,  
Why then you must. Will you put out mine eyes?  
These eyes that never did nor never shall  
So much as frown on you.

**HUBERT**

I have sworn to do it;  
And with hot irons must I burn them out.

**ARTHUR**

Ah, none but in this iron age would do it!  
The iron of itself, though heat red-hot,  
Approaching near these eyes, would drink my tears  
And quench his fiery indignation  
Even in the matter of mine innocence;  
Nay, after that, consume away in rust  
But for containing fire to harm mine eye.  
Are you more stubborn-hard than hammer'd iron?  
An if an angel should have come to me  
And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,  
I would not have believed him,--no tongue but Hubert's.

**HUBERT**

Come forth.

*Stamps*

*Re-enter Executioners, with a cord, irons, & c*

Do as I bid you do.

**ARTHUR**

O, save me, Hubert, save me! my eyes are out  
Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

**HUBERT**



Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

**ARTHUR**

Alas, what need you be so boisterous-rough?  
I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.  
For heaven sake, Hubert, let me not be bound!  
Nay, hear me, Hubert, drive these men away,  
And I will sit as quiet as a lamb;  
I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,  
Nor look upon the iron angrily:  
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,  
Whatever torment you do put me to.

**HUBERT**

Go, stand within; let me alone with him.

**First Executioner**

I am best pleased to be from such a deed.

*Exeunt Executioners*

**ARTHUR**

Alas, I then have chid away my friend!  
He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart:  
Let him come back, that his compassion may  
Give life to yours.

**HUBERT**

Come, boy, prepare yourself.

**ARTHUR**

Is there no remedy?

**HUBERT**

None, but to lose your eyes.

**ARTHUR**

O heaven, that there were but a mote in yours,  
A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,  
Any annoyance in that precious sense!  
Then feeling what small things are boisterous there,  
Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

**HUBERT**

Is this your promise? go to, hold your tongue.

**ARTHUR**

Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues  
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes:  
Let me not hold my tongue, let me not, Hubert;  
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,  
So I may keep mine eyes: O, spare mine eyes.  
Though to no use but still to look on you!  
Lo, by my truth, the instrument is cold  
And would not harm me.

**HUBERT**

I can heat it, boy.

**ARTHUR**

No, in good sooth: the fire is dead with grief,  
Being create for comfort, to be used  
In undeserved extremes: see else yourself;  
There is no malice in this burning coal;  
The breath of heaven has blown his spirit out  
And strew'd repentent ashes on his head.

**HUBERT**

But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

## **ARTHUR**

An if you do, you will but make it blush  
And glow with shame of your proceedings, Hubert:  
Nay, it perchance will sparkle in your eyes;  
And like a dog that is compell'd to fight,  
Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.  
All things that you should use to do me wrong  
Deny their office: only you do lack  
That mercy which fierce fire and iron extends,  
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.

## **HUBERT**

Well, see to live; I will not touch thine eye  
For all the treasure that thine uncle owes:  
Yet am I sworn and I did purpose, boy,  
With this same very iron to burn them out.

## **ARTHUR**

O, now you look like Hubert! all this while  
You were disguised.

## **HUBERT**

Peace; no more. Adieu.  
Your uncle must not know but you are dead;  
I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports:  
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure,  
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,  
Will not offend thee.

## **ARTHUR**

O heaven! I thank you, Hubert.

## **HUBERT**

Silence; no more: go closely in with me:  
Much danger do I undergo for thee.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. KING JOHN'S palace.

*Enter KING JOHN, PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and other Lords*

### KING JOHN

Here once again we sit, once again crown'd,  
And looked upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.

### PEMBROKE

This 'once again,' but that your highness pleased,  
Was once superfluous: you were crown'd before,  
And that high royalty was ne'er pluck'd off,  
The faiths of men ne'er stained with revolt;  
Fresh expectation troubled not the land  
With any long'd-for change or better state.

### SALISBURY

Therefore, to be possess'd with double pomp,  
To guard a title that was rich before,  
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,  
To throw a perfume on the violet,  
To smooth the ice, or add another hue  
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light  
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,  
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

### PEMBROKE

But that your royal pleasure must be done,  
This act is as an ancient tale new told,  
And in the last repeating troublesome,  
Being urged at a time unseasonable.

## **SALISBURY**

In this the antique and well noted face  
Of plain old form is much disfigured;  
And, like a shifted wind unto a sail,  
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about,  
Startles and frights consideration,  
Makes sound opinion sick and truth suspected,  
For putting on so new a fashion'd robe.

## **PEMBROKE**

When workmen strive to do better than well,  
They do confound their skill in covetousness;  
And oftentimes excusing of a fault  
Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse,  
As patches set upon a little breach  
Discredit more in hiding of the fault  
Than did the fault before it was so patch'd.

## **SALISBURY**

To this effect, before you were new crown'd,  
We breathed our counsel: but it pleased your highness  
To overbear it, and we are all well pleased,  
Since all and every part of what we would  
Doth make a stand at what your highness will.

## **KING JOHN**

Some reasons of this double coronation  
I have possess'd you with and think them strong;  
And more, more strong, then lesser is my fear,  
I shall indue you with: meantime but ask  
What you would have reform'd that is not well,  
And well shall you perceive how willingly  
I will both hear and grant you your requests.

## **PEMBROKE**

Then I, as one that am the tongue of these,  
To sound the purpose of all their hearts,

Both for myself and them, but, chief of all,  
Your safety, for the which myself and them  
Bend their best studies, heartily request  
The enfranchisement of Arthur; whose restraint  
Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent  
To break into this dangerous argument,--  
If what in rest you have in right you hold,  
Why then your fears, which, as they say, attend  
The steps of wrong, should move you to mew up  
Your tender kinsman and to choke his days  
With barbarous ignorance and deny his youth  
The rich advantage of good exercise?  
That the time's enemies may not have this  
To grace occasions, let it be our suit  
That you have bid us ask his liberty;  
Which for our goods we do no further ask  
Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,  
Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

*Enter HUBERT*

## **KING JOHN**

Let it be so: I do commit his youth  
To your direction. Hubert, what news with you?

*Taking him apart*

## **PEMBROKE**

This is the man should do the bloody deed;  
He show'd his warrant to a friend of mine:  
The image of a wicked heinous fault  
Lives in his eye; that close aspect of his  
Does show the mood of a much troubled breast;  
And I do fearfully believe 'tis done,  
What we so fear'd he had a charge to do.

## **SALISBURY**

The colour of the king doth come and go  
Between his purpose and his conscience,

Like heralds 'twixt two dreadful battles set:  
His passion is so ripe, it needs must break.

**PEMBROKE**

And when it breaks, I fear will issue thence  
The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.

**KING JOHN**

We cannot hold mortality's strong hand:  
Good lords, although my will to give is living,  
The suit which you demand is gone and dead:  
He tells us Arthur is deceased to-night.

**SALISBURY**

Indeed we fear'd his sickness was past cure.

**PEMBROKE**

Indeed we heard how near his death he was  
Before the child himself felt he was sick:  
This must be answer'd either here or hence.

**KING JOHN**

Why do you bend such solemn brows on me?  
Think you I bear the shears of destiny?  
Have I commandment on the pulse of life?

**SALISBURY**

It is apparent foul play; and 'tis shame  
That greatness should so grossly offer it:  
So thrive it in your game! and so, farewell.

**PEMBROKE**

Stay yet, Lord Salisbury; I'll go with thee,  
And find the inheritance of this poor child,



His little kingdom of a forced grave.  
That blood which owed the breadth of all this isle,  
Three foot of it doth hold: bad world the while!  
This must not be thus borne: this will break out  
To all our sorrows, and ere long I doubt.

*Exeunt Lords*

## **KING JOHN**

They burn in indignation. I repent:  
There is no sure foundation set on blood,  
No certain life achieved by others' death.

*Enter a Messenger*

A fearful eye thou hast: where is that blood  
That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks?  
So foul a sky clears not without a storm:  
Pour down thy weather: how goes all in France?

## **Messenger**

From France to England. Never such a power  
For any foreign preparation  
Was levied in the body of a land.  
The copy of your speed is learn'd by them;  
For when you should be told they do prepare,  
The tidings come that they are all arrived.

## **KING JOHN**

O, where hath our intelligence been drunk?  
Where hath it slept? Where is my mother's care,  
That such an army could be drawn in France,  
And she not hear of it?

## **Messenger**

My liege, her ear  
Is stopp'd with dust; the first of April died  
Your noble mother: and, as I hear, my lord,

The Lady Constance in a frenzy died  
Three days before: but this from rumour's tongue  
I idly heard; if true or false I know not.

**KING JOHN**

Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion!  
O, make a league with me, till I have pleased  
My discontented peers! What! mother dead!  
How wildly then walks my estate in France!  
Under whose conduct came those powers of France  
That thou for truth givest out are landed here?

**Messenger**

Under the Dauphin.

**KING JOHN**

Thou hast made me giddy  
With these ill tidings.

*Enter the BASTARD and PETER of Pomfret*

Now, what says the world  
To your proceedings? do not seek to stuff  
My head with more ill news, for it is full.

**BASTARD**

But if you be afeard to hear the worst,  
Then let the worst unheard fall on your bead.

**KING JOHN**

Bear with me cousin, for I was amazed  
Under the tide: but now I breathe again  
Aloft the flood, and can give audience  
To any tongue, speak it of what it will.

**BASTARD**

How I have sped among the clergymen,  
The sums I have collected shall express.  
But as I travell'd hither through the land,  
I find the people strangely fantasied;  
Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,  
Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear:  
And here a prophet, that I brought with me  
From forth the streets of Pomfret, whom I found  
With many hundreds treading on his heels;  
To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes,  
That, ere the next Ascension-day at noon,  
Your highness should deliver up your crown.

**KING JOHN**

Thou idle dreamer, wherefore didst thou so?

**PETER**

Foreknowing that the truth will fall out so.

**KING JOHN**

Hubert, away with him; imprison him;  
And on that day at noon whereon he says  
I shall yield up my crown, let him be hang'd.  
Deliver him to safety; and return,  
For I must use thee.

*Exeunt HUBERT with PETER*

O my gentle cousin,  
Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arrived?

**BASTARD**

The French, my lord; men's mouths are full of it:  
Besides, I met Lord Bigot and Lord Salisbury,  
With eyes as red as new-enkindled fire,  
And others more, going to seek the grave  
Of Arthur, who they say is kill'd to-night

On your suggestion.

**KING JOHN**

Gentle kinsman, go,  
And thrust thyself into their companies:  
I have a way to win their loves again;  
Bring them before me.

**BASTARD**

I will seek them out.

**KING JOHN**

Nay, but make haste; the better foot before.  
O, let me have no subject enemies,  
When adverse foreigners affright my towns  
With dreadful pomp of stout invasion!  
Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,  
And fly like thought from them to me again.

**BASTARD**

The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.

*Exit*

**KING JOHN**

Spoke like a sprightly noble gentleman.  
Go after him; for he perhaps shall need  
Some messenger betwixt me and the peers;  
And be thou he.

**Messenger**

With all my heart, my liege.

*Exit*

## **KING JOHN**

My mother dead!

*Re-enter HUBERT*

## **HUBERT**

My lord, they say five moons were seen to-night;  
Four fixed, and the fifth did whirl about  
The other four in wondrous motion.

## **KING JOHN**

Five moons!

## **HUBERT**

Old men and beldams in the streets  
Do prophesy upon it dangerously:  
Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths:  
And when they talk of him, they shake their heads  
And whisper one another in the ear;  
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,  
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,  
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.  
I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,  
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,  
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news;  
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,  
Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste  
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,  
Told of a many thousand warlike French  
That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent:  
Another lean unwash'd artificer  
Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death.

## **KING JOHN**

Why seek'st thou to possess me with these fears?  
Why urgest thou so oft young Arthur's death?  
Thy hand hath murder'd him: I had a mighty cause

To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him.

**HUBERT**

No had, my lord! why, did you not provoke me?

**KING JOHN**

It is the curse of kings to be attended  
By slaves that take their humours for a warrant  
To break within the bloody house of life,  
And on the winking of authority  
To understand a law, to know the meaning  
Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns  
More upon humour than advised respect.

**HUBERT**

Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

**KING JOHN**

O, when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth  
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal  
Witness against us to damnation!  
How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds  
Make deeds ill done! Hadst not thou been by,  
A fellow by the hand of nature mark'd,  
Quoted and sign'd to do a deed of shame,  
This murder had not come into my mind:  
But taking note of thy abhorr'd aspect,  
Finding thee fit for bloody villany,  
Apt, liable to be employ'd in danger,  
I faintly broke with thee of Arthur's death;  
And thou, to be endeared to a king,  
Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

**HUBERT**

My lord--

**KING JOHN**

Hadst thou but shook thy head or made a pause  
When I spake darkly what I purposed,  
Or turn'd an eye of doubt upon my face,  
As bid me tell my tale in express words,  
Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,  
And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me:  
But thou didst understand me by my signs  
And didst in signs again parley with sin;  
Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart consent,  
And consequently thy rude hand to act  
The deed, which both our tongues held vile to name.  
Out of my sight, and never see me more!  
My nobles leave me; and my state is braved,  
Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign powers:  
Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,  
This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,  
Hostility and civil tumult reigns  
Between my conscience and my cousin's death.

## **HUBERT**

Arm you against your other enemies,  
I'll make a peace between your soul and you.  
Young Arthur is alive: this hand of mine  
Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand,  
Not painted with the crimson spots of blood.  
Within this bosom never enter'd yet  
The dreadful motion of a murderous thought;  
And you have slander'd nature in my form,  
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,  
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind  
Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

## **KING JOHN**

Doth Arthur live? O, haste thee to the peers,  
Throw this report on their incensed rage,  
And make them tame to their obedience!  
Forgive the comment that my passion made  
Upon thy feature; for my rage was blind,  
And foul imaginary eyes of blood

Presented thee more hideous than thou art.  
O, answer not, but to my closet bring  
The angry lords with all expedient haste.  
I conjure thee but slowly; run more fast.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Before the castle.

*Enter ARTHUR, on the walls*

### ARTHUR

The wall is high, and yet will I leap down:  
Good ground, be pitiful and hurt me not!  
There's few or none do know me: if they did,  
This ship-boy's semblance hath disguised me quite.  
I am afraid; and yet I'll venture it.  
If I get down, and do not break my limbs,  
I'll find a thousand shifts to get away:  
As good to die and go, as die and stay.

*Leaps down*

O me! my uncle's spirit is in these stones:  
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones!

*Dies*

*Enter PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT*

### SALISBURY

Lords, I will meet him at Saint Edmundsbury:  
It is our safety, and we must embrace  
This gentle offer of the perilous time.

### PEMBROKE

Who brought that letter from the cardinal?

### SALISBURY

The Count Melun, a noble lord of France,  
Whose private with me of the Dauphin's love  
Is much more general than these lines import.

**BIGOT**

To-morrow morning let us meet him then.

**SALISBURY**

Or rather then set forward; for 'twill be  
Two long days' journey, lords, or ere we meet.

*Enter the BASTARD*

**BASTARD**

Once more to-day well met, distemper'd lords!  
The king by me requests your presence straight.

**SALISBURY**

The king hath dispossess'd himself of us:  
We will not line his thin bestained cloak  
With our pure honours, nor attend the foot  
That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks.  
Return and tell him so: we know the worst.

**BASTARD**

Whate'er you think, good words, I think, were best.

**SALISBURY**

Our griefs, and not our manners, reason now.

**BASTARD**

But there is little reason in your grief;  
Therefore 'twere reason you had manners now.

## **PEMBROKE**

Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

## **BASTARD**

'Tis true, to hurt his master, no man else.

## **SALISBURY**

This is the prison. What is he lies here?

*Seeing ARTHUR*

## **PEMBROKE**

O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!  
The earth had not a hole to hide this deed.

## **SALISBURY**

Murder, as hating what himself hath done,  
Doth lay it open to urge on revenge.

## **BIGOT**

Or, when he doom'd this beauty to a grave,  
Found it too precious-princely for a grave.

## **SALISBURY**

Sir Richard, what think you? have you beheld,  
Or have you read or heard? or could you think?  
Or do you almost think, although you see,  
That you do see? could thought, without this object,  
Form such another? This is the very top,  
The height, the crest, or crest unto the crest,  
Of murder's arms: this is the bloodiest shame,  
The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke,  
That ever wall-eyed wrath or staring rage  
Presented to the tears of soft remorse.

## **PEMBROKE**

All murders past do stand excused in this:  
And this, so sole and so unmatched,  
Shall give a holiness, a purity,  
To the yet unbegotten sin of times;  
And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,  
Exemplified by this heinous spectacle.

## **BASTARD**

It is a damned and a bloody work;  
The graceless action of a heavy hand,  
If that it be the work of any hand.

## **SALISBURY**

If that it be the work of any hand!  
We had a kind of light what would ensue:  
It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand;  
The practise and the purpose of the king:  
From whose obedience I forbid my soul,  
Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,  
And breathing to his breathless excellence  
The incense of a vow, a holy vow,  
Never to taste the pleasures of the world,  
Never to be infected with delight,  
Nor conversant with ease and idleness,  
Till I have set a glory to this hand,  
By giving it the worship of revenge.

## **PEMBROKE BIGOT**

Our souls religiously confirm thy words.

*Enter HUBERT*

## **HUBERT**

Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you:  
Arthur doth live; the king hath sent for you.

**SALISBURY**

O, he is old and blushes not at death.  
Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone!

**HUBERT**

I am no villain.

**SALISBURY**

Must I rob the law?

*Drawing his sword*

**BASTARD**

Your sword is bright, sir; put it up again.

**SALISBURY**

Not till I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

**HUBERT**

Stand back, Lord Salisbury, stand back, I say;  
By heaven, I think my sword's as sharp as yours:  
I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,  
Nor tempt the danger of my true defence;  
Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget  
Your worth, your greatness and nobility.

**BIGOT**

Out, dunghill! darest thou brave a nobleman?

**HUBERT**

Not for my life: but yet I dare defend  
My innocent life against an emperor.

**SALISBURY**

Thou art a murderer.

**HUBERT**

Do not prove me so;  
Yet I am none: whose tongue soe'er speaks false,  
Not truly speaks; who speaks not truly, lies.

**PEMBROKE**

Cut him to pieces.

**BASTARD**

Keep the peace, I say.

**SALISBURY**

Stand by, or I shall gall you, Faulconbridge.

**BASTARD**

Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury:  
If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,  
Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,  
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime;  
Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron,  
That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

**BIGOT**

What wilt thou do, renowned Faulconbridge?  
Second a villain and a murderer?

**HUBERT**

Lord Bigot, I am none.

**BIGOT**

Who kill'd this prince?

**HUBERT**

'Tis not an hour since I left him well:  
I honour'd him, I loved him, and will weep  
My date of life out for his sweet life's loss.

**SALISBURY**

Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,  
For villany is not without such rheum;  
And he, long traded in it, makes it seem  
Like rivers of remorse and innocency.  
Away with me, all you whose souls abhor  
The uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house;  
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

**BIGOT**

Away toward Bury, to the Dauphin there!

**PEMBROKE**

There tell the king he may inquire us out.

*Exeunt Lords*

**BASTARD**

Here's a good world! Knew you of this fair work?  
Beyond the infinite and boundless reach  
Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,  
Art thou damn'd, Hubert.

**HUBERT**

Do but hear me, sir.

**BASTARD**

Ha! I'll tell thee what;  
Thou'rt damn'd as black--nay, nothing is so black;  
Thou art more deep damn'd than Prince Lucifer:  
There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell  
As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child.

**HUBERT**

Upon my soul--

**BASTARD**

If thou didst but consent  
To this most cruel act, do but despair;  
And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread  
That ever spider twisted from her womb  
Will serve to strangle thee, a rush will be a beam  
To hang thee on; or wouldst thou drown thyself,  
Put but a little water in a spoon,  
And it shall be as all the ocean,  
Enough to stifle such a villain up.  
I do suspect thee very grievously.

**HUBERT**

If I in act, consent, or sin of thought,  
Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath  
Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,  
Let hell want pains enough to torture me.  
I left him well.

**BASTARD**

Go, bear him in thine arms.  
I am amazed, methinks, and lose my way  
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.  
How easy dost thou take all England up!  
From forth this morsel of dead royalty,  
The life, the right and truth of all this realm  
Is fled to heaven; and England now is left  
To tug and scramble and to part by the teeth  
The unowed interest of proud-swelling state.



Now for the bare-pick'd bone of majesty  
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest  
And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace:  
Now powers from home and discontents at home  
Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits,  
As doth a raven on a sick-fall'n beast,  
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.  
Now happy he whose cloak and cincture can  
Hold out this tempest. Bear away that child  
And follow me with speed: I'll to the king:  
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,  
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. KING JOHN'S palace.

*Enter KING JOHN, CARDINAL PANDULPH, and Attendants*

### KING JOHN

Thus have I yielded up into your hand  
The circle of my glory.

*Giving the crown*

### CARDINAL PANDULPH

Take again  
From this my hand, as holding of the pope  
Your sovereign greatness and authority.

### KING JOHN

Now keep your holy word: go meet the French,  
And from his holiness use all your power  
To stop their marches 'fore we are inflamed.  
Our discontented counties do revolt;  
Our people quarrel with obedience,  
Swearing allegiance and the love of soul  
To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.  
This inundation of mistemper'd humour  
Rests by you only to be qualified:  
Then pause not; for the present time's so sick,  
That present medicine must be minister'd,  
Or overthrow incurable ensues.

### CARDINAL PANDULPH

It was my breath that blew this tempest up,  
Upon your stubborn usage of the pope;

But since you are a gentle convertite,  
My tongue shall hush again this storm of war  
And make fair weather in your blustering land.  
On this Ascension-day, remember well,  
Upon your oath of service to the pope,  
Go I to make the French lay down their arms.

*Exit*

**KING JOHN**

Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet  
Say that before Ascension-day at noon  
My crown I should give off? Even so I have:  
I did suppose it should be on constraint:  
But, heaven be thank'd, it is but voluntary.

*Enter the BASTARD*

**BASTARD**

All Kent hath yielded; nothing there holds out  
But Dover castle: London hath received,  
Like a kind host, the Dauphin and his powers:  
Your nobles will not hear you, but are gone  
To offer service to your enemy,  
And wild amazement hurries up and down  
The little number of your doubtful friends.

**KING JOHN**

Would not my lords return to me again,  
After they heard young Arthur was alive?

**BASTARD**

They found him dead and cast into the streets,  
An empty casket, where the jewel of life  
By some damn'd hand was robb'd and ta'en away.

**KING JOHN**

That villain Hubert told me he did live.

## **BASTARD**

So, on my soul, he did, for aught he knew.  
But wherefore do you droop? why look you sad?  
Be great in act, as you have been in thought;  
Let not the world see fear and sad distrust  
Govern the motion of a kingly eye:  
Be stirring as the time; be fire with fire;  
Threaten the threatener and outface the brow  
Of bragging horror: so shall inferior eyes,  
That borrow their behaviors from the great,  
Grow great by your example and put on  
The dauntless spirit of resolution.  
Away, and glister like the god of war,  
When he intendeth to become the field:  
Show boldness and aspiring confidence.  
What, shall they seek the lion in his den,  
And fright him there? and make him tremble there?  
O, let it not be said: forage, and run  
To meet displeasure farther from the doors,  
And grapple with him ere he comes so nigh.

## **KING JOHN**

The legate of the pope hath been with me,  
And I have made a happy peace with him;  
And he hath promised to dismiss the powers  
Led by the Dauphin.

## **BASTARD**

O inglorious league!  
Shall we, upon the footing of our land,  
Send fair-play orders and make compromise,  
Insinuation, parley and base truce  
To arms invasive? shall a beardless boy,  
A cocker'd silken wanton, brave our fields,  
And flesh his spirit in a warlike soil,  
Mocking the air with colours idly spread,  
And find no cheque? Let us, my liege, to arms:

Perchance the cardinal cannot make your peace;  
Or if he do, let it at least be said  
They saw we had a purpose of defence.

**KING JOHN**

Have thou the ordering of this present time.

**BASTARD**

Away, then, with good courage! yet, I know,  
Our party may well meet a prouder foe.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. LEWIS's camp at St. Edmundsbury.

*Enter, in arms, LEWIS, SALISBURY, MELUN, PEMBROKE, BIGOT, and Soldiers*

### LEWIS

My Lord Melun, let this be copied out,  
And keep it safe for our remembrance:  
Return the precedent to these lords again;  
That, having our fair order written down,  
Both they and we, perusing o'er these notes,  
May know wherefore we took the sacrament  
And keep our faiths firm and inviolable.

### SALISBURY

Upon our sides it never shall be broken.  
And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear  
A voluntary zeal and an unurged faith  
To your proceedings; yet believe me, prince,  
I am not glad that such a sore of time  
Should seek a plaster by contemn'd revolt,  
And heal the inveterate canker of one wound  
By making many. O, it grieves my soul,  
That I must draw this metal from my side  
To be a widow-maker! O, and there  
Where honourable rescue and defence  
Cries out upon the name of Salisbury!  
But such is the infection of the time,  
That, for the health and physic of our right,  
We cannot deal but with the very hand  
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.  
And is't not pity, O my grieved friends,  
That we, the sons and children of this isle,  
Were born to see so sad an hour as this;  
Wherein we step after a stranger march  
Upon her gentle bosom, and fill up

Her enemies' ranks,--I must withdraw and weep  
Upon the spot of this enforced cause,--  
To grace the gentry of a land remote,  
And follow unacquainted colours here?  
What, here? O nation, that thou couldst remove!  
That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,  
Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself,  
And grapple thee unto a pagan shore;  
Where these two Christian armies might combine  
The blood of malice in a vein of league,  
And not to spend it so unneighbourly!

## LEWIS

A noble temper dost thou show in this;  
And great affections wrestling in thy bosom  
Doth make an earthquake of nobility.  
O, what a noble combat hast thou fought  
Between compulsion and a brave respect!  
Let me wipe off this honourable dew,  
That silverly doth progress on thy cheeks:  
My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,  
Being an ordinary inundation;  
But this effusion of such manly drops,  
This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul,  
Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amazed  
Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven  
Figured quite o'er with burning meteors.  
Lift up thy brow, renowned Salisbury,  
And with a great heart heave away the storm:  
Commend these waters to those baby eyes  
That never saw the giant world enraged;  
Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,  
Full of warm blood, of mirth, of gossiping.  
Come, come; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep  
Into the purse of rich prosperity  
As Lewis himself: so, nobles, shall you all,  
That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.  
And even there, methinks, an angel spake:

*Enter CARDINAL PANDULPH*

Look, where the holy legate comes apace,

To give us warrant from the hand of heaven  
And on our actions set the name of right  
With holy breath.

## CARDINAL PANDULPH

Hail, noble prince of France!  
The next is this, King John hath reconciled  
Himself to Rome; his spirit is come in,  
That so stood out against the holy church,  
The great metropolis and see of Rome:  
Therefore thy threatening colours now wind up;  
And tame the savage spirit of wild war,  
That like a lion foster'd up at hand,  
It may lie gently at the foot of peace,  
And be no further harmful than in show.

## LEWIS

Your grace shall pardon me, I will not back:  
I am too high-born to be propertied,  
To be a secondary at control,  
Or useful serving-man and instrument,  
To any sovereign state throughout the world.  
Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars  
Between this chastised kingdom and myself,  
And brought in matter that should feed this fire;  
And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out  
With that same weak wind which enkindled it.  
You taught me how to know the face of right,  
Acquainted me with interest to this land,  
Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart;  
And come ye now to tell me John hath made  
His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?  
I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,  
After young Arthur, claim this land for mine;  
And, now it is half-conquer'd, must I back  
Because that John hath made his peace with Rome?  
Am I Rome's slave? What penny hath Rome borne,  
What men provided, what munition sent,  
To underprop this action? Is't not I  
That undergo this charge? who else but I,  
And such as to my claim are liable,



Sweat in this business and maintain this war?  
Have I not heard these islanders shout out  
'Vive le roi!' as I have bank'd their towns?  
Have I not here the best cards for the game,  
To win this easy match play'd for a crown?  
And shall I now give o'er the yielded set?  
No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

You look but on the outside of this work.

## **LEWIS**

Outside or inside, I will not return  
Till my attempt so much be glorified  
As to my ample hope was promised  
Before I drew this gallant head of war,  
And cull'd these fiery spirits from the world,  
To outlook conquest and to win renown  
Even in the jaws of danger and of death.

*Trumpet sounds*

What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us?

*Enter the BASTARD, attended*

## **BASTARD**

According to the fair play of the world,  
Let me have audience; I am sent to speak:  
My holy lord of Milan, from the king  
I come, to learn how you have dealt for him;  
And, as you answer, I do know the scope  
And warrant limited unto my tongue.

## **CARDINAL PANDULPH**

The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,  
And will not temporize with my entreaties;  
He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms.

## **BASTARD**

By all the blood that ever fury breathed,  
The youth says well. Now hear our English king;  
For thus his royalty doth speak in me.  
He is prepared, and reason too he should:  
This apish and unmannerly approach,  
This harness'd masque and unadvised revel,  
This unhair'd sauciness and boyish troops,  
The king doth smile at; and is well prepared  
To whip this dwarfish war, these pigmy arms,  
From out the circle of his territories.  
That hand which had the strength, even at your door,  
To cudgel you and make you take the hatch,  
To dive like buckets in concealed wells,  
To crouch in litter of your stable planks,  
To lie like pawns lock'd up in chests and trunks,  
To hug with swine, to seek sweet safety out  
In vaults and prisons, and to thrill and shake  
Even at the crying of your nation's crow,  
Thinking his voice an armed Englishman;  
Shall that victorious hand be feebled here,  
That in your chambers gave you chastisement?  
No: know the gallant monarch is in arms  
And like an eagle o'er his aery towers,  
To souse annoyance that comes near his nest.  
And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,  
You bloody Neroes, ripping up the womb  
Of your dear mother England, blush for shame;  
For your own ladies and pale-visaged maids  
Like Amazons come tripping after drums,  
Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,  
Their needles to lances, and their gentle hearts  
To fierce and bloody inclination.

## **LEWIS**

There end thy brave, and turn thy face in peace;  
We grant thou canst outscold us: fare thee well;  
We hold our time too precious to be spent  
With such a brabblers.

**CARDINAL PANDULPH**

Give me leave to speak.

**BASTARD**

No, I will speak.

**LEWIS**

We will attend to neither.  
Strike up the drums; and let the tongue of war  
Plead for our interest and our being here.

**BASTARD**

Indeed your drums, being beaten, will cry out;  
And so shall you, being beaten: do but start  
An echo with the clamour of thy drum,  
And even at hand a drum is ready braced  
That shall reverberate all as loud as thine;  
Sound but another, and another shall  
As loud as thine rattle the welkin's ear  
And mock the deep-mouth'd thunder: for at hand,  
Not trusting to this halting legate here,  
Whom he hath used rather for sport than need  
Is warlike John; and in his forehead sits  
A bare-ribb'd death, whose office is this day  
To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

**LEWIS**

Strike up our drums, to find this danger out.

**BASTARD**

And thou shalt find it, Dauphin, do not doubt.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The field of battle.

*Alarums. Enter KING JOHN and HUBERT*

**KING JOHN**

How goes the day with us? O, tell me, Hubert.

**HUBERT**

Badly, I fear. How fares your majesty?

**KING JOHN**

This fever, that hath troubled me so long,  
Lies heavy on me; O, my heart is sick!

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

My lord, your valiant kinsman, Faulconbridge,  
Desires your majesty to leave the field  
And send him word by me which way you go.

**KING JOHN**

Tell him, toward Swinstead, to the abbey there.

**Messenger**

Be of good comfort; for the great supply  
That was expected by the Dauphin here,  
Are wreck'd three nights ago on Goodwin Sands.  
This news was brought to Richard but even now:  
The French fight coldly, and retire themselves.

## KING JOHN

Ay me! this tyrant fever burns me up,  
And will not let me welcome this good news.  
Set on toward Swinstead: to my litter straight;  
Weakness possesseth me, and I am faint.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

*Enter SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, and BIGOT*

**SALISBURY**

I did not think the king so stored with friends.

**PEMBROKE**

Up once again; put spirit in the French:  
If they miscarry, we miscarry too.

**SALISBURY**

That misbegotten devil, Faulconbridge,  
In spite of spite, alone upholds the day.

**PEMBROKE**

They say King John sore sick hath left the field.

*Enter MELUN, wounded*

**MELUN**

Lead me to the revolts of England here.

**SALISBURY**

When we were happy we had other names.

**PEMBROKE**

It is the Count Melun.

## **SALISBURY**

Wounded to death.

## **MELUN**

Fly, noble English, you are bought and sold;  
Unthread the rude eye of rebellion  
And welcome home again discarded faith.  
Seek out King John and fall before his feet;  
For if the French be lords of this loud day,  
He means to recompense the pains you take  
By cutting off your heads: thus hath he sworn  
And I with him, and many moe with me,  
Upon the altar at Saint Edmundsbury;  
Even on that altar where we swore to you  
Dear amity and everlasting love.

## **SALISBURY**

May this be possible? may this be true?

## **MELUN**

Have I not hideous death within my view,  
Retaining but a quantity of life,  
Which bleeds away, even as a form of wax  
Resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire?  
What in the world should make me now deceive,  
Since I must lose the use of all deceit?  
Why should I then be false, since it is true  
That I must die here and live hence by truth?  
I say again, if Lewis do win the day,  
He is forsworn, if e'er those eyes of yours  
Behold another day break in the east:  
But even this night, whose black contagious breath  
Already smokes about the burning crest  
Of the old, feeble and day-wearied sun,  
Even this ill night, your breathing shall expire,  
Paying the fine of rated treachery  
Even with a treacherous fine of all your lives,  
If Lewis by your assistance win the day.



Commend me to one Hubert with your king:  
The love of him, and this respect besides,  
For that my grandsire was an Englishman,  
Awakes my conscience to confess all this.  
In lieu whereof, I pray you, bear me hence  
From forth the noise and rumour of the field,  
Where I may think the remnant of my thoughts  
In peace, and part this body and my soul  
With contemplation and devout desires.

## **SALISBURY**

We do believe thee: and beshrew my soul  
But I do love the favour and the form  
Of this most fair occasion, by the which  
We will untread the steps of damned flight,  
And like a bated and retired flood,  
Leaving our rankness and irregular course,  
Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlook'd  
And cabby run on in obedience  
Even to our ocean, to our great King John.  
My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence;  
For I do see the cruel pangs of death  
Right in thine eye. Away, my friends! New flight;  
And happy newness, that intends old right.

*Exeunt, leading off MELUN*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The French camp.

*Enter LEWIS and his train*

**LEWIS**

The sun of heaven methought was loath to set,  
But stay'd and made the western welkin blush,  
When English measure backward their own ground  
In faint retire. O, bravely came we off,  
When with a volley of our needless shot,  
After such bloody toil, we bid good night;  
And wound our tattering colours clearly up,  
Last in the field, and almost lords of it!

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Where is my prince, the Dauphin?

**LEWIS**

Here: what news?

**Messenger**

The Count Melun is slain; the English lords  
By his persuasion are again fall'n off,  
And your supply, which you have wish'd so long,  
Are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands.

**LEWIS**

Ah, foul shrewd news! beshrew thy very heart!  
I did not think to be so sad to-night

As this hath made me. Who was he that said  
King John did fly an hour or two before  
The stumbling night did part our weary powers?

**Messenger**

Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord.

**LEWIS**

Well; keep good quarter and good care to-night:  
The day shall not be up so soon as I,  
To try the fair adventure of to-morrow.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. An open place in the neighbourhood of Swinstead Abbey.

*Enter the BASTARD and HUBERT, severally*

**HUBERT**

Who's there? speak, ho! speak quickly, or I shoot.

**BASTARD**

A friend. What art thou?

**HUBERT**

Of the part of England.

**BASTARD**

Whither dost thou go?

**HUBERT**

What's that to thee? why may not I demand  
Of thine affairs, as well as thou of mine?

**BASTARD**

Hubert, I think?

**HUBERT**

Thou hast a perfect thought:  
I will upon all hazards well believe  
Thou art my friend, that know'st my tongue so well.  
Who art thou?

## **BASTARD**

Who thou wilt: and if thou please,  
Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think  
I come one way of the Plantagenets.

## **HUBERT**

Unkind remembrance! thou and eyeless night  
Have done me shame: brave soldier, pardon me,  
That any accent breaking from thy tongue  
Should 'scape the true acquaintance of mine ear.

## **BASTARD**

Come, come; sans compliment, what news abroad?

## **HUBERT**

Why, here walk I in the black brow of night,  
To find you out.

## **BASTARD**

Brief, then; and what's the news?

## **HUBERT**

O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,  
Black, fearful, comfortless and horrible.

## **BASTARD**

Show me the very wound of this ill news:  
I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

## **HUBERT**

The king, I fear, is poison'd by a monk:  
I left him almost speechless; and broke out  
To acquaint you with this evil, that you might

The better arm you to the sudden time,  
Than if you had at leisure known of this.

**BASTARD**

How did he take it? who did taste to him?

**HUBERT**

A monk, I tell you; a resolved villain,  
Whose bowels suddenly burst out: the king  
Yet speaks and peradventure may recover.

**BASTARD**

Who didst thou leave to tend his majesty?

**HUBERT**

Why, know you not? the lords are all come back,  
And brought Prince Henry in their company;  
At whose request the king hath pardon'd them,  
And they are all about his majesty.

**BASTARD**

Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,  
And tempt us not to bear above our power!  
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,  
Passing these flats, are taken by the tide;  
These Lincoln Washes have devoured them;  
Myself, well mounted, hardly have escaped.  
Away before: conduct me to the king;  
I doubt he will be dead ere I come.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of King John

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King John](#) | Act 5, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE VII. The orchard in Swinstead Abbey.

*Enter PRINCE HENRY, SALISBURY, and BIGOT*

### PRINCE HENRY

It is too late: the life of all his blood  
Is touch'd corruptibly, and his pure brain,  
Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house,  
Doth by the idle comments that it makes  
Foretell the ending of mortality.

*Enter PEMBROKE*

### PEMBROKE

His highness yet doth speak, and holds belief  
That, being brought into the open air,  
It would allay the burning quality  
Of that fell poison which assaileth him.

### PRINCE HENRY

Let him be brought into the orchard here.  
Doth he still rage?

*Exit BIGOT*

### PEMBROKE

He is more patient  
Than when you left him; even now he sung.

### PRINCE HENRY

O vanity of sickness! fierce extremes

In their continuance will not feel themselves.  
Death, having prey'd upon the outward parts,  
Leaves them invisible, and his siege is now  
Against the mind, the which he pricks and wounds  
With many legions of strange fantasies,  
Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,  
Confound themselves. 'Tis strange that death  
should sing.

I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan,  
Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death,  
And from the organ-pipe of frailty sings  
His soul and body to their lasting rest.

## **SALISBURY**

Be of good comfort, prince; for you are born  
To set a form upon that indigest  
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.

*Enter Attendants, and BIGOT, carrying KING JOHN in a chair*

## **KING JOHN**

Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow-room;  
It would not out at windows nor at doors.  
There is so hot a summer in my bosom,  
That all my bowels crumble up to dust:  
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen  
Upon a parchment, and against this fire  
Do I shrink up.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

How fares your majesty?

## **KING JOHN**

Poison'd,--ill fare--dead, forsook, cast off:  
And none of you will bid the winter come  
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw,  
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course  
Through my burn'd bosom, nor entreat the north



To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips  
And comfort me with cold. I do not ask you much,  
I beg cold comfort; and you are so strait  
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

**PRINCE HENRY**

O that there were some virtue in my tears,  
That might relieve you!

**KING JOHN**

The salt in them is hot.  
Within me is a hell; and there the poison  
Is as a fiend confined to tyrannize  
On unreprievable condemned blood.

*Enter the BASTARD*

**BASTARD**

O, I am scalded with my violent motion,  
And spleen of speed to see your majesty!

**KING JOHN**

O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye:  
The tackle of my heart is crack'd and burn'd,  
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail  
Are turned to one thread, one little hair:  
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,  
Which holds but till thy news be uttered;  
And then all this thou seest is but a clod  
And module of confounded royalty.

**BASTARD**

The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,  
Where heaven He knows how we shall answer him;  
For in a night the best part of my power,  
As I upon advantage did remove,  
Were in the Washes all unwarily

Devoured by the unexpected flood.

*KING JOHN dies*

**SALISBURY**

You breathe these dead news in as dead an ear.  
My liege! my lord! but now a king, now thus.

**PRINCE HENRY**

Even so must I run on, and even so stop.  
What surety of the world, what hope, what stay,  
When this was now a king, and now is clay?

**BASTARD**

Art thou gone so? I do but stay behind  
To do the office for thee of revenge,  
And then my soul shall wait on thee to heaven,  
As it on earth hath been thy servant still.  
Now, now, you stars that move in your right spheres,  
Where be your powers? show now your mended faiths,  
And instantly return with me again,  
To push destruction and perpetual shame  
Out of the weak door of our fainting land.  
Straight let us seek, or straight we shall be sought;  
The Dauphin rages at our very heels.

**SALISBURY**

It seems you know not, then, so much as we:  
The Cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,  
Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin,  
And brings from him such offers of our peace  
As we with honour and respect may take,  
With purpose presently to leave this war.

**BASTARD**

He will the rather do it when he sees  
Ourselves well sinewed to our defence.

## **SALISBURY**

Nay, it is in a manner done already;  
For many carriages he hath dispatch'd  
To the sea-side, and put his cause and quarrel  
To the disposing of the cardinal:  
With whom yourself, myself and other lords,  
If you think meet, this afternoon will post  
To consummate this business happily.

## **BASTARD**

Let it be so: and you, my noble prince,  
With other princes that may best be spared,  
Shall wait upon your father's funeral.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

At Worcester must his body be interr'd;  
For so he will'd it.

## **BASTARD**

Thither shall it then:  
And happily may your sweet self put on  
The lineal state and glory of the land!  
To whom with all submission, on my knee  
I do bequeath my faithful services  
And true subjection everlastingly.

## **SALISBURY**

And the like tender of our love we make,  
To rest without a spot for evermore.

## **PRINCE HENRY**

I have a kind soul that would give you thanks  
And knows not how to do it but with tears.

## **BASTARD**

O, let us pay the time but needful woe,  
Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.  
This England never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,  
But when it first did help to wound itself.  
Now these her princes are come home again,  
Come the three corners of the world in arms,  
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,  
If England to itself do rest but true.

*Exeunt*

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Richard II

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [London. KING RICHARD II's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The DUKE OF LANCASTER'S palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The lists at Coventry.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [The court.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Ely House.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [The palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [Wilds in Gloucestershire.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [A camp in Wales.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Bristol. Before the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The coast of Wales. A castle in view.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Wales. Before Flint castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [LANGLEY. The DUKE OF YORK's garden.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Westminster Hall.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [London. A street leading to the Tower.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The DUKE OF YORK's palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [A royal palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [The same.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Pomfret castle.](#)

Act 5, Scene 6: [Windsor castle.](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. KING RICHARD II's palace.

*Enter KING RICHARD II, JOHN OF GAUNT, with other Nobles and Attendants*

### KING RICHARD II

Old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster,  
Hast thou, according to thy oath and band,  
Brought hither Henry Hereford thy bold son,  
Here to make good the boisterous late appeal,  
Which then our leisure would not let us hear,  
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

### JOHN OF GAUNT

I have, my liege.

### KING RICHARD II

Tell me, moreover, hast thou sounded him,  
If he appeal the duke on ancient malice;  
Or worthily, as a good subject should,  
On some known ground of treachery in him?

### JOHN OF GAUNT

As near as I could sift him on that argument,  
On some apparent danger seen in him  
Aim'd at your highness, no inveterate malice.

### KING RICHARD II

Then call them to our presence; face to face,  
And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear  
The accuser and the accused freely speak:  
High-stomach'd are they both, and full of ire,

In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

*Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE and THOMAS MOWBRAY*

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Many years of happy days befall  
My gracious sovereign, my most loving liege!

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

Each day still better other's happiness;  
Until the heavens, envying earth's good hap,  
Add an immortal title to your crown!

## **KING RICHARD II**

We thank you both: yet one but flatters us,  
As well appeareth by the cause you come;  
Namely to appeal each other of high treason.  
Cousin of Hereford, what dost thou object  
Against the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray?

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

First, heaven be the record to my speech!  
In the devotion of a subject's love,  
Tendering the precious safety of my prince,  
And free from other misbegotten hate,  
Come I appellant to this princely presence.  
Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee,  
And mark my greeting well; for what I speak  
My body shall make good upon this earth,  
Or my divine soul answer it in heaven.  
Thou art a traitor and a miscreant,  
Too good to be so and too bad to live,  
Since the more fair and crystal is the sky,  
The uglier seem the clouds that in it fly.  
Once more, the more to aggravate the note,  
With a foul traitor's name stuff I thy throat;  
And wish, so please my sovereign, ere I move,  
What my tongue speaks my right drawn sword may prove.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

Let not my cold words here accuse my zeal:  
'Tis not the trial of a woman's war,  
The bitter clamour of two eager tongues,  
Can arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain;  
The blood is hot that must be cool'd for this:  
Yet can I not of such tame patience boast  
As to be hush'd and nought at all to say:  
First, the fair reverence of your highness curbs me  
From giving reins and spurs to my free speech;  
Which else would post until it had return'd  
These terms of treason doubled down his throat.  
Setting aside his high blood's royalty,  
And let him be no kinsman to my liege,  
I do defy him, and I spit at him;  
Call him a slanderous coward and a villain:  
Which to maintain I would allow him odds,  
And meet him, were I tied to run afoot  
Even to the frozen ridges of the Alps,  
Or any other ground inhabitable,  
Where ever Englishman durst set his foot.  
Mean time let this defend my loyalty,  
By all my hopes, most falsely doth he lie.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage,  
Disclaiming here the kindred of the king,  
And lay aside my high blood's royalty,  
Which fear, not reverence, makes thee to except.  
If guilty dread have left thee so much strength  
As to take up mine honour's pawn, then stoop:  
By that and all the rites of knighthood else,  
Will I make good against thee, arm to arm,  
What I have spoke, or thou canst worse devise.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

I take it up; and by that sword I swear  
Which gently laid my knighthood on my shoulder,  
I'll answer thee in any fair degree,



Or chivalrous design of knightly trial:  
And when I mount, alive may I not light,  
If I be traitor or unjustly fight!

## **KING RICHARD II**

What doth our cousin lay to Mowbray's charge?  
It must be great that can inherit us  
So much as of a thought of ill in him.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Look, what I speak, my life shall prove it true;  
That Mowbray hath received eight thousand nobles  
In name of lendings for your highness' soldiers,  
The which he hath detain'd for lewd employments,  
Like a false traitor and injurious villain.  
Besides I say and will in battle prove,  
Or here or elsewhere to the furthest verge  
That ever was survey'd by English eye,  
That all the treasons for these eighteen years  
Complotted and contrived in this land  
Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring.  
Further I say and further will maintain  
Upon his bad life to make all this good,  
That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death,  
Suggest his soon-believing adversaries,  
And consequently, like a traitor coward,  
Sluic'd out his innocent soul through streams of blood:  
Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,  
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,  
To me for justice and rough chastisement;  
And, by the glorious worth of my descent,  
This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.

## **KING RICHARD II**

How high a pitch his resolution soars!  
Thomas of Norfolk, what say'st thou to this?

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

O, let my sovereign turn away his face  
And bid his ears a little while be deaf,  
Till I have told this slander of his blood,  
How God and good men hate so foul a liar.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Mowbray, impartial are our eyes and ears:  
Were he my brother, nay, my kingdom's heir,  
As he is but my father's brother's son,  
Now, by my sceptre's awe, I make a vow,  
Such neighbour nearness to our sacred blood  
Should nothing privilege him, nor partialize  
The unstooping firmness of my upright soul:  
He is our subject, Mowbray; so art thou:  
Free speech and fearless I to thee allow.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

Then, Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart,  
Through the false passage of thy throat, thou liest.  
Three parts of that receipt I had for Calais  
Disbursed I duly to his highness' soldiers;  
The other part reserved I by consent,  
For that my sovereign liege was in my debt  
Upon remainder of a dear account,  
Since last I went to France to fetch his queen:  
Now swallow down that lie. For Gloucester's death,  
I slew him not; but to my own disgrace  
Neglected my sworn duty in that case.  
For you, my noble Lord of Lancaster,  
The honourable father to my foe  
Once did I lay an ambush for your life,  
A trespass that doth vex my grieved soul  
But ere I last received the sacrament  
I did confess it, and exactly begg'd  
Your grace's pardon, and I hope I had it.  
This is my fault: as for the rest appeall'd,  
It issues from the rancour of a villain,  
A recreant and most degenerate traitor  
Which in myself I boldly will defend;  
And interchangeably hurl down my gage  
Upon this overweening traitor's foot,

To prove myself a loyal gentleman  
Even in the best blood chamber'd in his bosom.  
In haste whereof, most heartily I pray  
Your highness to assign our trial day.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Wrath-kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me;  
Let's purge this choler without letting blood:  
This we prescribe, though no physician;  
Deep malice makes too deep incision;  
Forget, forgive; conclude and be agreed;  
Our doctors say this is no month to bleed.  
Good uncle, let this end where it begun;  
We'll calm the Duke of Norfolk, you your son.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

To be a make-peace shall become my age:  
Throw down, my son, the Duke of Norfolk's gage.

## **KING RICHARD II**

And, Norfolk, throw down his.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

When, Harry, when?  
Obedience bids I should not bid again.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Norfolk, throw down, we bid; there is no boot.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

Myself I throw, dread sovereign, at thy foot.  
My life thou shalt command, but not my shame:  
The one my duty owes; but my fair name,  
Despite of death that lives upon my grave,  
To dark dishonour's use thou shalt not have.

I am disgraced, impeach'd and baffled here,  
Pierced to the soul with slander's venom'd spear,  
The which no balm can cure but his heart-blood  
Which breathed this poison.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Rage must be withstood:  
Give me his gage: lions make leopards tame.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

Yea, but not change his spots: take but my shame.  
And I resign my gage. My dear dear lord,  
The purest treasure mortal times afford  
Is spotless reputation: that away,  
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.  
A jewel in a ten-times-barr'd-up chest  
Is a bold spirit in a loyal breast.  
Mine honour is my life; both grow in one:  
Take honour from me, and my life is done:  
Then, dear my liege, mine honour let me try;  
In that I live and for that will I die.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Cousin, throw up your gage; do you begin.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

O, God defend my soul from such deep sin!  
Shall I seem crest-fall'n in my father's sight?  
Or with pale beggar-fear impeach my height  
Before this out-dared dastard? Ere my tongue  
Shall wound my honour with such feeble wrong,  
Or sound so base a parle, my teeth shall tear  
The slavish motive of recanting fear,  
And spit it bleeding in his high disgrace,  
Where shame doth harbour, even in Mowbray's face.

*Exit JOHN OF GAUNT*

## KING RICHARD II

We were not born to sue, but to command;  
Which since we cannot do to make you friends,  
Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,  
At Coventry, upon Saint Lambert's day:  
There shall your swords and lances arbitrate  
The swelling difference of your settled hate:  
Since we can not atone you, we shall see  
Justice design the victor's chivalry.  
Lord marshal, command our officers at arms  
Be ready to direct these home alarms.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The DUKE OF LANCASTER'S palace.

*Enter JOHN OF GAUNT with DUCHESS*

### JOHN OF GAUNT

Alas, the part I had in Woodstock's blood  
Doth more solicit me than your exclams,  
To stir against the butchers of his life!  
But since correction lieth in those hands  
Which made the fault that we cannot correct,  
Put we our quarrel to the will of heaven;  
Who, when they see the hours ripe on earth,  
Will rain hot vengeance on offenders' heads.

### DUCHESS

Finds brotherhood in thee no sharper spur?  
Hath love in thy old blood no living fire?  
Edward's seven sons, whereof thyself art one,  
Were as seven vials of his sacred blood,  
Or seven fair branches springing from one root:  
Some of those seven are dried by nature's course,  
Some of those branches by the Destinies cut;  
But Thomas, my dear lord, my life, my Gloucester,  
One vial full of Edward's sacred blood,  
One flourishing branch of his most royal root,  
Is crack'd, and all the precious liquor spilt,  
Is hack'd down, and his summer leaves all faded,  
By envy's hand and murder's bloody axe.  
Ah, Gaunt, his blood was thine! that bed, that womb,  
That metal, that self-mould, that fashion'd thee  
Made him a man; and though thou livest and breathest,  
Yet art thou slain in him: thou dost consent  
In some large measure to thy father's death,  
In that thou seest thy wretched brother die,  
Who was the model of thy father's life.

Call it not patience, Gaunt; it is despair:  
In suffering thus thy brother to be slaughter'd,  
Thou showest the naked pathway to thy life,  
Teaching stern murder how to butcher thee:  
That which in mean men we intitle patience  
Is pale cold cowardice in noble breasts.  
What shall I say? to safeguard thine own life,  
The best way is to venge my Gloucester's death.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

God's is the quarrel; for God's substitute,  
His deputy anointed in His sight,  
Hath caused his death: the which if wrongfully,  
Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift  
An angry arm against His minister.

## **DUCHESS**

Where then, alas, may I complain myself?

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

To God, the widow's champion and defence.

## **DUCHESS**

Why, then, I will. Farewell, old Gaunt.  
Thou goest to Coventry, there to behold  
Our cousin Hereford and fell Mowbray fight:  
O, sit my husband's wrongs on Hereford's spear,  
That it may enter butcher Mowbray's breast!  
Or, if misfortune miss the first career,  
Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom,  
They may break his foaming courser's back,  
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,  
A caitiff recreant to my cousin Hereford!  
Farewell, old Gaunt: thy sometimes brother's wife  
With her companion grief must end her life.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

Sister, farewell; I must to Coventry:  
As much good stay with thee as go with me!

## DUCHESS

Yet one word more: grief boundeth where it falls,  
Not with the empty hollowness, but weight:  
I take my leave before I have begun,  
For sorrow ends not when it seemeth done.  
Commend me to thy brother, Edmund York.  
Lo, this is all:--nay, yet depart not so;  
Though this be all, do not so quickly go;  
I shall remember more. Bid him--ah, what?--  
With all good speed at Plashy visit me.  
Alack, and what shall good old York there see  
But empty lodgings and unfurnish'd walls,  
Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?  
And what hear there for welcome but my groans?  
Therefore commend me; let him not come there,  
To seek out sorrow that dwells every where.  
Desolate, desolate, will I hence and die:  
The last leave of thee takes my weeping eye.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The lists at Coventry.

*Enter the Lord Marshal and the DUKE OF AUMERLE*

**Lord Marshal**

My Lord Aumerle, is Harry Hereford arm'd?

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Yea, at all points; and longs to enter in.

**Lord Marshal**

The Duke of Norfolk, sprightly and bold,  
Stays but the summons of the appellant's trumpet.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Why, then, the champions are prepared, and stay  
For nothing but his majesty's approach.

*The trumpets sound, and KING RICHARD enters with his nobles, JOHN OF GAUNT, BUSHY, BAGOT, GREEN, and others. When they are set, enter THOMAS MOWBRAY in arms, defendant, with a Herald*

**KING RICHARD II**

Marshal, demand of yonder champion  
The cause of his arrival here in arms:  
Ask him his name and orderly proceed  
To swear him in the justice of his cause.

**Lord Marshal**

In God's name and the king's, say who thou art

And why thou comest thus knightly clad in arms,  
Against what man thou comest, and what thy quarrel:  
Speak truly, on thy knighthood and thy oath;  
As so defend thee heaven and thy valour!

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

My name is Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk;  
Who hither come engaged by my oath--  
Which God defend a knight should violate!--  
Both to defend my loyalty and truth  
To God, my king and my succeeding issue,  
Against the Duke of Hereford that appeals me  
And, by the grace of God and this mine arm,  
To prove him, in defending of myself,  
A traitor to my God, my king, and me:  
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

*The trumpets sound. Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, appellant, in armour, with a Herald*

## **KING RICHARD II**

Marshal, ask yonder knight in arms,  
Both who he is and why he cometh hither  
Thus plated in habiliments of war,  
And formally, according to our law,  
Depose him in the justice of his cause.

## **Lord Marshal**

What is thy name? and wherefore comest thou hither,  
Before King Richard in his royal lists?  
Against whom comest thou? and what's thy quarrel?  
Speak like a true knight, so defend thee heaven!

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby  
Am I; who ready here do stand in arms,  
To prove, by God's grace and my body's valour,  
In lists, on Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,  
That he is a traitor, foul and dangerous,

To God of heaven, King Richard and to me;  
And as I truly fight, defend me heaven!

### **Lord Marshal**

On pain of death, no person be so bold  
Or daring-hardy as to touch the lists,  
Except the marshal and such officers  
Appointed to direct these fair designs.

### **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Lord marshal, let me kiss my sovereign's hand,  
And bow my knee before his majesty:  
For Mowbray and myself are like two men  
That vow a long and weary pilgrimage;  
Then let us take a ceremonious leave  
And loving farewell of our several friends.

### **Lord Marshal**

The appellant in all duty greets your highness,  
And craves to kiss your hand and take his leave.

### **KING RICHARD II**

We will descend and fold him in our arms.  
Cousin of Hereford, as thy cause is right,  
So be thy fortune in this royal fight!  
Farewell, my blood; which if to-day thou shed,  
Lament we may, but not revenge thee dead.

### **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

O let no noble eye profane a tear  
For me, if I be gored with Mowbray's spear:  
As confident as is the falcon's flight  
Against a bird, do I with Mowbray fight.  
My loving lord, I take my leave of you;  
Of you, my noble cousin, Lord Aumerle;  
Not sick, although I have to do with death,  
But lusty, young, and cheerly drawing breath.

Lo, as at English feasts, so I regret  
The daintiest last, to make the end most sweet:  
O thou, the earthly author of my blood,  
Whose youthful spirit, in me regenerate,  
Doth with a twofold vigour lift me up  
To reach at victory above my head,  
Add proof unto mine armour with thy prayers;  
And with thy blessings steel my lance's point,  
That it may enter Mowbray's waxen coat,  
And furbish new the name of John a Gaunt,  
Even in the lusty havior of his son.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

God in thy good cause make thee prosperous!  
Be swift like lightning in the execution;  
And let thy blows, doubly redoubled,  
Fall like amazing thunder on the casque  
Of thy adverse pernicious enemy:  
Rouse up thy youthful blood, be valiant and live.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Mine innocency and Saint George to thrive!

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

However God or fortune cast my lot,  
There lives or dies, true to King Richard's throne,  
A loyal, just and upright gentleman:  
Never did captive with a freer heart  
Cast off his chains of bondage and embrace  
His golden uncontroll'd enfranchisement,  
More than my dancing soul doth celebrate  
This feast of battle with mine adversary.  
Most mighty liege, and my companion peers,  
Take from my mouth the wish of happy years:  
As gentle and as jocund as to jest  
Go I to fight: truth hath a quiet breast.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Farewell, my lord: securely I espy  
Virtue with valour couched in thine eye.  
Order the trial, marshal, and begin.

**Lord Marshal**

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby,  
Receive thy lance; and God defend the right!

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Strong as a tower in hope, I cry amen.

**Lord Marshal**

Go bear this lance to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk.

**First Herald**

Harry of Hereford, Lancaster and Derby,  
Stands here for God, his sovereign and himself,  
On pain to be found false and recreant,  
To prove the Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Mowbray,  
A traitor to his God, his king and him;  
And dares him to set forward to the fight.

**Second Herald**

Here standeth Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk,  
On pain to be found false and recreant,  
Both to defend himself and to approve  
Henry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,  
To God, his sovereign and to him disloyal;  
Courageously and with a free desire  
Attending but the signal to begin.

**Lord Marshal**

Sound, trumpets; and set forward, combatants.

*A charge sounded*

Stay, the king hath thrown his warder down.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Let them lay by their helmets and their spears,  
And both return back to their chairs again:  
Withdraw with us: and let the trumpets sound  
While we return these dukes what we decree.

*A long flourish*

Draw near,  
And list what with our council we have done.  
For that our kingdom's earth should not be soil'd  
With that dear blood which it hath fostered;  
And for our eyes do hate the dire aspect  
Of civil wounds plough'd up with neighbours' sword;  
And for we think the eagle-winged pride  
Of sky-aspiring and ambitious thoughts,  
With rival-hating envy, set on you  
To wake our peace, which in our country's cradle  
Draws the sweet infant breath of gentle sleep;  
Which so roused up with boisterous untuned drums,  
With harsh resounding trumpets' dreadful bray,  
And grating shock of wrathful iron arms,  
Might from our quiet confines fright fair peace  
And make us wade even in our kindred's blood,  
Therefore, we banish you our territories:  
You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of life,  
Till twice five summers have enrich'd our fields  
Shall not regret our fair dominions,  
But tread the stranger paths of banishment.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Your will be done: this must my comfort be,  
Sun that warms you here shall shine on me;  
And those his golden beams to you here lent  
Shall point on me and gild my banishment.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Norfolk, for thee remains a heavier doom,  
Which I with some unwillingness pronounce:  
The sly slow hours shall not determinate  
The dateless limit of thy dear exile;  
The hopeless word of 'never to return'  
Breathe I against thee, upon pain of life.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,  
And all unlook'd for from your highness' mouth:  
A dearer merit, not so deep a maim  
As to be cast forth in the common air,  
Have I deserved at your highness' hands.  
The language I have learn'd these forty years,  
My native English, now I must forego:  
And now my tongue's use is to me no more  
Than an unstringed viol or a harp,  
Or like a cunning instrument cased up,  
Or, being open, put into his hands  
That knows no touch to tune the harmony:  
Within my mouth you have engaol'd my tongue,  
Doubly portcullis'd with my teeth and lips;  
And dull unfeeling barren ignorance  
Is made my gaoler to attend on me.  
I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,  
Too far in years to be a pupil now:  
What is thy sentence then but speechless death,  
Which robs my tongue from breathing native breath?

## **KING RICHARD II**

It boots thee not to be compassionate:  
After our sentence plaining comes too late.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

Then thus I turn me from my country's light,  
To dwell in solemn shades of endless night.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Return again, and take an oath with thee.  
Lay on our royal sword your banish'd hands;  
Swear by the duty that you owe to God--  
Our part therein we banish with yourselves--  
To keep the oath that we administer:  
You never shall, so help you truth and God!  
Embrace each other's love in banishment;  
Nor never look upon each other's face;  
Nor never write, regret, nor reconcile  
This luring tempest of your home-bred hate;  
Nor never by advised purpose meet  
To plot, contrive, or complot any ill  
'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

I swear.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

And I, to keep all this.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy:--  
By this time, had the king permitted us,  
One of our souls had wander'd in the air.  
Banish'd this frail sepulchre of our flesh,  
As now our flesh is banish'd from this land:  
Confess thy treasons ere thou fly the realm;  
Since thou hast far to go, bear not along  
The clogging burthen of a guilty soul.

## **THOMAS MOWBRAY**

No, Bolingbroke: if ever I were traitor,  
My name be blotted from the book of life,  
And I from heaven banish'd as from hence!  
But what thou art, God, thou, and I do know;  
And all too soon, I fear, the king shall rue.  
Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray;  
Save back to England, all the world's my way.



*Exit*

**KING RICHARD II**

Uncle, even in the glasses of thine eyes  
I see thy grieved heart: thy sad aspect  
Hath from the number of his banish'd years  
Pluck'd four away.

*To HENRY BOLINGBROKE*

Six frozen winter spent,  
Return with welcome home from banishment.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

How long a time lies in one little word!  
Four lagging winters and four wanton springs  
End in a word: such is the breath of kings.

**JOHN OF GAUNT**

I thank my liege, that in regard of me  
He shortens four years of my son's exile:  
But little vantage shall I reap thereby;  
For, ere the six years that he hath to spend  
Can change their moons and bring their times about  
My oil-dried lamp and time-bewasted light  
Shall be extinct with age and endless night;  
My inch of taper will be burnt and done,  
And blindfold death not let me see my son.

**KING RICHARD II**

Why uncle, thou hast many years to live.

**JOHN OF GAUNT**

But not a minute, king, that thou canst give:  
Shorten my days thou canst with sullen sorrow,  
And pluck nights from me, but not lend a morrow;

Thou canst help time to furrow me with age,  
But stop no wrinkle in his pilgrimage;  
Thy word is current with him for my death,  
But dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Thy son is banish'd upon good advice,  
Whereto thy tongue a party-verdict gave:  
Why at our justice seem'st thou then to lour?

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

Things sweet to taste prove in digestion sour.  
You urged me as a judge; but I had rather  
You would have bid me argue like a father.  
O, had it been a stranger, not my child,  
To smooth his fault I should have been more mild:  
A partial slander sought I to avoid,  
And in the sentence my own life destroy'd.  
Alas, I look'd when some of you should say,  
I was too strict to make mine own away;  
But you gave leave to my unwilling tongue  
Against my will to do myself this wrong.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Cousin, farewell; and, uncle, bid him so:  
Six years we banish him, and he shall go.

*Flourish. Exeunt KING RICHARD II and train*

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Cousin, farewell: what presence must not know,  
From where you do remain let paper show.

## **Lord Marshal**

My lord, no leave take I; for I will ride,  
As far as land will let me, by your side.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

O, to what purpose dost thou hoard thy words,  
That thou return'st no greeting to thy friends?

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

I have too few to take my leave of you,  
When the tongue's office should be prodigal  
To breathe the abundant dolour of the heart.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

Thy grief is but thy absence for a time.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Joy absent, grief is present for that time.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

What is six winters? they are quickly gone.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

To men in joy; but grief makes one hour ten.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

Call it a travel that thou takest for pleasure.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

My heart will sigh when I miscall it so,  
Which finds it an inforced pilgrimage.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

The sullen passage of thy weary steps  
Esteem as foil wherein thou art to set  
The precious jewel of thy home return.

## HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Nay, rather, every tedious stride I make  
Will but remember me what a deal of world  
I wander from the jewels that I love.  
Must I not serve a long apprenticeship  
To foreign passages, and in the end,  
Having my freedom, boast of nothing else  
But that I was a journeyman to grief?

## JOHN OF GAUNT

All places that the eye of heaven visits  
Are to a wise man ports and happy havens.  
Teach thy necessity to reason thus;  
There is no virtue like necessity.  
Think not the king did banish thee,  
But thou the king. Woe doth the heavier sit,  
Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.  
Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour  
And not the king exiled thee; or suppose  
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air  
And thou art flying to a fresher clime:  
Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it  
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou comest:  
Suppose the singing birds musicians,  
The grass whereon thou tread'st the presence strew'd,  
The flowers fair ladies, and thy steps no more  
Than a delightful measure or a dance;  
For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite  
The man that mocks at it and sets it light.

## HENRY BOLINGBROKE

O, who can hold a fire in his hand  
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?  
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite  
By bare imagination of a feast?  
Or wallow naked in December snow  
By thinking on fantastic summer's heat?  
O, no! the apprehension of the good

Gives but the greater feeling to the worse:  
Fell sorrow's tooth doth never rankle more  
Than when he bites, but lanceth not the sore.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

Come, come, my son, I'll bring thee on thy way:  
Had I thy youth and cause, I would not stay.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Then, England's ground, farewell; sweet soil, adieu;  
My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet!  
Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,  
Though banish'd, yet a trueborn Englishman.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The court.

*Enter KING RICHARD II, with BAGOT and GREEN at one door; and the DUKE OF AUMERLE at another*

### KING RICHARD II

We did observe. Cousin Aumerle,  
How far brought you high Hereford on his way?

### DUKE OF AUMERLE

I brought high Hereford, if you call him so,  
But to the next highway, and there I left him.

### KING RICHARD II

And say, what store of parting tears were shed?

### DUKE OF AUMERLE

Faith, none for me; except the north-east wind,  
Which then blew bitterly against our faces,  
Awaked the sleeping rheum, and so by chance  
Did grace our hollow parting with a tear.

### KING RICHARD II

What said our cousin when you parted with him?

### DUKE OF AUMERLE

'Farewell:'  
And, for my heart disdained that my tongue  
Should so profane the word, that taught me craft  
To counterfeit oppression of such grief

That words seem'd buried in my sorrow's grave.  
Marry, would the word 'farewell' have lengthen'd hours  
And added years to his short banishment,  
He should have had a volume of farewells;  
But since it would not, he had none of me.

## **KING RICHARD II**

He is our cousin, cousin; but 'tis doubt,  
When time shall call him home from banishment,  
Whether our kinsman come to see his friends.  
Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green  
Observed his courtship to the common people;  
How he did seem to dive into their hearts  
With humble and familiar courtesy,  
What reverence he did throw away on slaves,  
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles  
And patient underbearing of his fortune,  
As 'twere to banish their affects with him.  
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;  
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well  
And had the tribute of his supple knee,  
With 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends;'  
As were our England in reversion his,  
And he our subjects' next degree in hope.

## **GREEN**

Well, he is gone; and with him go these thoughts.  
Now for the rebels which stand out in Ireland,  
Expedient manage must be made, my liege,  
Ere further leisure yield them further means  
For their advantage and your highness' loss.

## **KING RICHARD II**

We will ourself in person to this war:  
And, for our coffers, with too great a court  
And liberal largess, are grown somewhat light,  
We are inforced to farm our royal realm;  
The revenue whereof shall furnish us  
For our affairs in hand: if that come short,

Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters;  
Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,  
They shall subscribe them for large sums of gold  
And send them after to supply our wants;  
For we will make for Ireland presently.

*Enter BUSHY*

Bushy, what news?

**BUSHY**

Old John of Gaunt is grievous sick, my lord,  
Suddenly taken; and hath sent post haste  
To entreat your majesty to visit him.

**KING RICHARD II**

Where lies he?

**BUSHY**

At Ely House.

**KING RICHARD II**

Now put it, God, in the physician's mind  
To help him to his grave immediately!  
The lining of his coffers shall make coats  
To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.  
Come, gentlemen, let's all go visit him:  
Pray God we may make haste, and come too late!

**All**

Amen.

*Exeunt*



# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Ely House.

*Enter JOHN OF GAUNT sick, with the DUKE OF YORK, & c*

### JOHN OF GAUNT

Will the king come, that I may breathe my last  
In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?

### DUKE OF YORK

Vex not yourself, nor strive not with your breath;  
For all in vain comes counsel to his ear.

### JOHN OF GAUNT

O, but they say the tongues of dying men  
Enforce attention like deep harmony:  
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,  
For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain.  
He that no more must say is listen'd more  
Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose;  
More are men's ends mark'd than their lives before:  
The setting sun, and music at the close,  
As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,  
Writ in remembrance more than things long past:  
Though Richard my life's counsel would not hear,  
My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

### DUKE OF YORK

No; it is stopp'd with other flattering sounds,  
As praises, of whose taste the wise are fond,  
Lascivious metres, to whose venom sound  
The open ear of youth doth always listen;  
Report of fashions in proud Italy,

Whose manners still our tardy apish nation  
Limps after in base imitation.  
Where doth the world thrust forth a vanity--  
So it be new, there's no respect how vile--  
That is not quickly buzzed into his ears?  
Then all too late comes counsel to be heard,  
Where will doth mutiny with wit's regard.  
Direct not him whose way himself will choose:  
'Tis breath thou lack'st, and that breath wilt thou lose.

## JOHN OF GAUNT

Methinks I am a prophet new inspired  
And thus expiring do foretell of him:  
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,  
For violent fires soon burn out themselves;  
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;  
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes;  
With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder:  
Light vanity, insatiate cormorant,  
Consuming means, soon preys upon itself.  
This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands,  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,  
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,  
Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth,  
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,  
For Christian service and true chivalry,  
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,  
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son,  
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,  
Dear for her reputation through the world,  
Is now leased out, I die pronouncing it,  
Like to a tenement or pelting farm:  
England, bound in with the triumphant sea

Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege  
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,  
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds:  
That England, that was wont to conquer others,  
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.  
Ah, would the scandal vanish with my life,  
How happy then were my ensuing death!

*Enter KING RICHARD II and QUEEN, DUKE OF AUMERLE, BUSHY, GREEN, BAGOT,  
LORD ROSS, and LORD WILLOUGHBY*

## **DUKE OF YORK**

The king is come: deal mildly with his youth;  
For young hot colts being raged do rage the more.

## **QUEEN**

How fares our noble uncle, Lancaster?

## **KING RICHARD II**

What comfort, man? how is't with aged Gaunt?

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

O how that name befits my composition!  
Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old:  
Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;  
And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?  
For sleeping England long time have I watch'd;  
Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt:  
The pleasure that some fathers feed upon,  
Is my strict fast; I mean, my children's looks;  
And therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt:  
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,  
Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

No, misery makes sport to mock itself:  
Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,  
I mock my name, great king, to flatter thee.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Should dying men flatter with those that live?

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

No, no, men living flatter those that die.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Thou, now a-dying, say'st thou flatterest me.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

O, no! thou diest, though I the sicker be.

## **KING RICHARD II**

I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

Now He that made me knows I see thee ill;  
Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.  
Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land  
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;  
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,  
Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure  
Of those physicians that first wounded thee:  
A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown,  
Whose compass is no bigger than thy head;  
And yet, incaged in so small a verge,  
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.  
O, had thy grandsire with a prophet's eye  
Seen how his son's son should destroy his sons,

From forth thy reach he would have laid thy shame,  
Deposing thee before thou wert possess'd,  
Which art possess'd now to depose thyself.  
Why, cousin, wert thou regent of the world,  
It were a shame to let this land by lease;  
But for thy world enjoying but this land,  
Is it not more than shame to shame it so?  
Landlord of England art thou now, not king:  
Thy state of law is bondslave to the law; And thou--

## **KING RICHARD II**

A lunatic lean-witted fool,  
Presuming on an ague's privilege,  
Darest with thy frozen admonition  
Make pale our cheek, chasing the royal blood  
With fury from his native residence.  
Now, by my seat's right royal majesty,  
Wert thou not brother to great Edward's son,  
This tongue that runs so roundly in thy head  
Should run thy head from thy unreverent shoulders.

## **JOHN OF GAUNT**

O, spare me not, my brother Edward's son,  
For that I was his father Edward's son;  
That blood already, like the pelican,  
Hast thou tapp'd out and drunkenly caroused:  
My brother Gloucester, plain well-meaning soul,  
Whom fair befall in heaven 'mongst happy souls!  
May be a precedent and witness good  
That thou respect'st not spilling Edward's blood:  
Join with the present sickness that I have;  
And thy unkindness be like crooked age,  
To crop at once a too long wither'd flower.  
Live in thy shame, but die not shame with thee!  
These words hereafter thy tormentors be!  
Convey me to my bed, then to my grave:  
Love they to live that love and honour have.

*Exit, borne off by his Attendants*

## **KING RICHARD II**

And let them die that age and sullens have;  
For both hast thou, and both become the grave.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

I do beseech your majesty, impute his words  
To wayward sickliness and age in him:  
He loves you, on my life, and holds you dear  
As Harry Duke of Hereford, were he here.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Right, you say true: as Hereford's love, so his;  
As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is.

*Enter NORTHUMBERLAND*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

My liege, old Gaunt commends him to your majesty.

## **KING RICHARD II**

What says he?

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Nay, nothing; all is said  
His tongue is now a stringless instrument;  
Words, life and all, old Lancaster hath spent.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Be York the next that must be bankrupt so!  
Though death be poor, it ends a mortal woe.

## **KING RICHARD II**

The ripest fruit first falls, and so doth he;

His time is spent, our pilgrimage must be.  
So much for that. Now for our Irish wars:  
We must supplant those rough rug-headed kerns,  
Which live like venom where no venom else  
But only they have privilege to live.  
And for these great affairs do ask some charge,  
Towards our assistance we do seize to us  
The plate, corn, revenues and moveables,  
Whereof our uncle Gaunt did stand possess'd.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

How long shall I be patient? ah, how long  
Shall tender duty make me suffer wrong?  
Not Gloucester's death, nor Hereford's banishment  
Not Gaunt's rebukes, nor England's private wrongs,  
Nor the prevention of poor Bolingbroke  
About his marriage, nor my own disgrace,  
Have ever made me sour my patient cheek,  
Or bend one wrinkle on my sovereign's face.  
I am the last of noble Edward's sons,  
Of whom thy father, Prince of Wales, was first:  
In war was never lion raged more fierce,  
In peace was never gentle lamb more mild,  
Than was that young and princely gentleman.  
His face thou hast, for even so look'd he,  
Accomplish'd with the number of thy hours;  
But when he frown'd, it was against the French  
And not against his friends; his noble hand  
Did will what he did spend and spent not that  
Which his triumphant father's hand had won;  
His hands were guilty of no kindred blood,  
But bloody with the enemies of his kin.  
O Richard! York is too far gone with grief,  
Or else he never would compare between.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Why, uncle, what's the matter?

## **DUKE OF YORK**

O my liege,  
Pardon me, if you please; if not, I, pleased  
Not to be pardon'd, am content withal.  
Seek you to seize and gripe into your hands  
The royalties and rights of banish'd Hereford?  
Is not Gaunt dead, and doth not Hereford live?  
Was not Gaunt just, and is not Harry true?  
Did not the one deserve to have an heir?  
Is not his heir a well-deserving son?  
Take Hereford's rights away, and take from Time  
His charters and his customary rights;  
Let not to-morrow then ensue to-day;  
Be not thyself; for how art thou a king  
But by fair sequence and succession?  
Now, afore God--God forbid I say true!--  
If you do wrongfully seize Hereford's rights,  
Call in the letters patent that he hath  
By his attorneys-general to sue  
His livery, and deny his offer'd homage,  
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,  
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts  
And prick my tender patience, to those thoughts  
Which honour and allegiance cannot think.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Think what you will, we seize into our hands  
His plate, his goods, his money and his lands.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

I'll not be by the while: my liege, farewell:  
What will ensue hereof, there's none can tell;  
But by bad courses may be understood  
That their events can never fall out good.

*Exit*

## **KING RICHARD II**

Go, Bushy, to the Earl of Wiltshire straight:  
Bid him repair to us to Ely House



To see this business. To-morrow next  
We will for Ireland; and 'tis time, I trow:  
And we create, in absence of ourself,  
Our uncle York lord governor of England;  
For he is just and always loved us well.  
Come on, our queen: to-morrow must we part;  
Be merry, for our time of stay is short

*Flourish. Exeunt KING RICHARD II, QUEEN, DUKE OF AUMERLE, BUSHY, GREEN,  
and BAGOT*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Well, lords, the Duke of Lancaster is dead.

## **LORD ROSS**

And living too; for now his son is duke.

## **LORD WILLOUGHBY**

Barely in title, not in revenue.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Richly in both, if justice had her right.

## **LORD ROSS**

My heart is great; but it must break with silence,  
Ere't be disburden'd with a liberal tongue.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Nay, speak thy mind; and let him ne'er speak more  
That speaks thy words again to do thee harm!

## **LORD WILLOUGHBY**

Tends that thou wouldst speak to the Duke of Hereford?  
If it be so, out with it boldly, man;

Quick is mine ear to hear of good towards him.

## **LORD ROSS**

No good at all that I can do for him;  
Unless you call it good to pity him,  
Bereft and gelded of his patrimony.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Now, afore God, 'tis shame such wrongs are borne  
In him, a royal prince, and many moe  
Of noble blood in this declining land.  
The king is not himself, but basely led  
By flatterers; and what they will inform,  
Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us all,  
That will the king severely prosecute  
'Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.

## **LORD ROSS**

The commons hath he pill'd with grievous taxes,  
And quite lost their hearts: the nobles hath he fined  
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.

## **LORD WILLOUGHBY**

And daily new exactions are devised,  
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what:  
But what, o' God's name, doth become of this?

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Wars have not wasted it, for warr'd he hath not,  
But basely yielded upon compromise  
That which his noble ancestors achieved with blows:  
More hath he spent in peace than they in wars.

## **LORD ROSS**

The Earl of Wiltshire hath the realm in farm.

## **LORD WILLOUGHBY**

The king's grown bankrupt, like a broken man.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Reproach and dissolution hangeth over him.

## **LORD ROSS**

He hath not money for these Irish wars,  
His burthenous taxations notwithstanding,  
But by the robbing of the banish'd duke.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

His noble kinsman: most degenerate king!  
But, lords, we hear this fearful tempest sing,  
Yet see no shelter to avoid the storm;  
We see the wind sit sore upon our sails,  
And yet we strike not, but securely perish.

## **LORD ROSS**

We see the very wreck that we must suffer;  
And unavoided is the danger now,  
For suffering so the causes of our wreck.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Not so; even through the hollow eyes of death  
I spy life peering; but I dare not say  
How near the tidings of our comfort is.

## **LORD WILLOUGHBY**

Nay, let us share thy thoughts, as thou dost ours.

## **LORD ROSS**

Be confident to speak, Northumberland:

We three are but thyself; and, speaking so,  
Thy words are but as thoughts; therefore, be bold.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Then thus: I have from Port le Blanc, a bay  
In Brittany, received intelligence  
That Harry Duke of Hereford, Rainold Lord Cobham,  
That late broke from the Duke of Exeter,  
His brother, Archbishop late of Canterbury,  
Sir Thomas Erpingham, Sir John Ramston,  
Sir John Norbery, Sir Robert Waterton and Francis Quoint,  
All these well furnish'd by the Duke of Bretagne  
With eight tall ships, three thousand men of war,  
Are making hither with all due expedience  
And shortly mean to touch our northern shore:  
Perhaps they had ere this, but that they stay  
The first departing of the king for Ireland.  
If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke,  
Imp out our drooping country's broken wing,  
Redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown,  
Wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre's gilt  
And make high majesty look like itself,  
Away with me in post to Ravenspurgh;  
But if you faint, as fearing to do so,  
Stay and be secret, and myself will go.

## **LORD ROSS**

To horse, to horse! urge doubts to them that fear.

## **LORD WILLOUGHBY**

Hold out my horse, and I will first be there.

*Exeunt*

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The palace.

*Enter QUEEN, BUSHY, and BAGOT*

### BUSHY

Madam, your majesty is too much sad:  
You promised, when you parted with the king,  
To lay aside life-harming heaviness  
And entertain a cheerful disposition.

### QUEEN

To please the king I did; to please myself  
I cannot do it; yet I know no cause  
Why I should welcome such a guest as grief,  
Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest  
As my sweet Richard: yet again, methinks,  
Some unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb,  
Is coming towards me, and my inward soul  
With nothing trembles: at some thing it grieves,  
More than with parting from my lord the king.

### BUSHY

Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,  
Which shows like grief itself, but is not so;  
For sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,  
Divides one thing entire to many objects;  
Like perspectives, which rightly gazed upon  
Show nothing but confusion, eyed awry  
Distinguish form: so your sweet majesty,  
Looking awry upon your lord's departure,  
Find shapes of grief, more than himself, to wail;  
Which, look'd on as it is, is nought but shadows  
Of what it is not. Then, thrice-gracious queen,

More than your lord's departure weep not: more's not seen;  
Or if it be, 'tis with false sorrow's eye,  
Which for things true weeps things imaginary.

**QUEEN**

It may be so; but yet my inward soul  
Persuades me it is otherwise: howe'er it be,  
I cannot but be sad; so heavy sad  
As, though on thinking on no thought I think,  
Makes me with heavy nothing faint and shrink.

**BUSHY**

'Tis nothing but conceit, my gracious lady.

**QUEEN**

'Tis nothing less: conceit is still derived  
From some forefather grief; mine is not so,  
For nothing had begot my something grief;  
Or something hath the nothing that I grieve:  
'Tis in reversion that I do possess;  
But what it is, that is not yet known; what  
I cannot name; 'tis nameless woe, I wot.

*Enter GREEN*

**GREEN**

God save your majesty! and well met, gentlemen:  
I hope the king is not yet shipp'd for Ireland.

**QUEEN**

Why hopest thou so? 'tis better hope he is;  
For his designs crave haste, his haste good hope:  
Then wherefore dost thou hope he is not shipp'd?

**GREEN**

That he, our hope, might have retired his power,  
And driven into despair an enemy's hope,  
Who strongly hath set footing in this land:  
The banish'd Bolingbroke repeals himself,  
And with uplifted arms is safe arrived  
At Ravenspurgh.

**QUEEN**

Now God in heaven forbid!

**GREEN**

Ah, madam, 'tis too true: and that is worse,  
The Lord Northumberland, his son young Henry Percy,  
The Lords of Ross, Beaumont, and Willoughby,  
With all their powerful friends, are fled to him.

**BUSHY**

Why have you not proclaim'd Northumberland  
And all the rest revolted faction traitors?

**GREEN**

We have: whereupon the Earl of Worcester  
Hath broke his staff, resign'd his stewardship,  
And all the household servants fled with him  
To Bolingbroke.

**QUEEN**

So, Green, thou art the midwife to my woe,  
And Bolingbroke my sorrow's dismal heir:  
Now hath my soul brought forth her prodigy,  
And I, a gasping new-deliver'd mother,  
Have woe to woe, sorrow to sorrow join'd.

**BUSHY**

Despair not, madam.

## **QUEEN**

Who shall hinder me?  
I will despair, and be at enmity  
With cozening hope: he is a flatterer,  
A parasite, a keeper back of death,  
Who gently would dissolve the bands of life,  
Which false hope lingers in extremity.

*Enter DUKE OF YORK*

## **GREEN**

Here comes the Duke of York.

## **QUEEN**

With signs of war about his aged neck:  
O, full of careful business are his looks!  
Uncle, for God's sake, speak comfortable words.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Should I do so, I should belie my thoughts:  
Comfort's in heaven; and we are on the earth,  
Where nothing lives but crosses, cares and grief.  
Your husband, he is gone to save far off,  
Whilst others come to make him lose at home:  
Here am I left to underprop his land,  
Who, weak with age, cannot support myself:  
Now comes the sick hour that his surfeit made;  
Now shall he try his friends that flatter'd him.

*Enter a Servant*

## **Servant**

My lord, your son was gone before I came.

## **DUKE OF YORK**



He was? Why, so! go all which way it will!  
The nobles they are fled, the commons they are cold,  
And will, I fear, revolt on Hereford's side.  
Sirrah, get thee to Plashy, to my sister Gloucester;  
Bid her send me presently a thousand pound:  
Hold, take my ring.

**Servant**

My lord, I had forgot to tell your lordship,  
To-day, as I came by, I called there;  
But I shall grieve you to report the rest.

**DUKE OF YORK**

What is't, knave?

**Servant**

An hour before I came, the duchess died.

**DUKE OF YORK**

God for his mercy! what a tide of woes  
Comes rushing on this woeful land at once!  
I know not what to do: I would to God,  
So my untruth had not provoked him to it,  
The king had cut off my head with my brother's.  
What, are there no posts dispatch'd for Ireland?  
How shall we do for money for these wars?  
Come, sister,--cousin, I would say--pray, pardon me.  
Go, fellow, get thee home, provide some carts  
And bring away the armour that is there.

*Exit Servant*

Gentlemen, will you go muster men?  
If I know how or which way to order these affairs  
Thus thrust disorderly into my hands,  
Never believe me. Both are my kinsmen:  
The one is my sovereign, whom both my oath  
And duty bids defend; the other again

Is my kinsman, whom the king hath wrong'd,  
Whom conscience and my kindred bids to right.  
Well, somewhat we must do. Come, cousin, I'll  
Dispose of you.  
Gentlemen, go, muster up your men,  
And meet me presently at Berkeley.  
I should to Plashy too;  
But time will not permit: all is uneven,  
And every thing is left at six and seven.

*Exeunt DUKE OF YORK and QUEEN*

**BUSHY**

The wind sits fair for news to go to Ireland,  
But none returns. For us to levy power  
Proportionable to the enemy  
Is all unpossible.

**GREEN**

Besides, our nearness to the king in love  
Is near the hate of those love not the king.

**BAGOT**

And that's the wavering commons: for their love  
Lies in their purses, and whoso empties them  
By so much fills their hearts with deadly hate.

**BUSHY**

Wherein the king stands generally condemn'd.

**BAGOT**

If judgement lie in them, then so do we,  
Because we ever have been near the king.

**GREEN**

Well, I will for refuge straight to Bristol castle:  
The Earl of Wiltshire is already there.

**BUSHY**

Thither will I with you; for little office  
The hateful commons will perform for us,  
Except like curs to tear us all to pieces.  
Will you go along with us?

**BAGOT**

No; I will to Ireland to his majesty.  
Farewell: if heart's presages be not vain,  
We three here art that ne'er shall meet again.

**BUSHY**

That's as York thrives to beat back Bolingbroke.

**GREEN**

Alas, poor duke! the task he undertakes  
Is numbering sands and drinking oceans dry:  
Where one on his side fights, thousands will fly.  
Farewell at once, for once, for all, and ever.

**BUSHY**

Well, we may meet again.

**BAGOT**

I fear me, never.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Wilds in Gloucestershire.

*Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE and NORTHUMBERLAND, with Forces*

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

How far is it, my lord, to Berkeley now?

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Believe me, noble lord,  
I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire:  
These high wild hills and rough uneven ways  
Draws out our miles, and makes them wearisome,  
And yet your fair discourse hath been as sugar,  
Making the hard way sweet and delectable.  
But I bethink me what a weary way  
From Ravenspurgh to Cotswold will be found  
In Ross and Willoughby, wanting your company,  
Which, I protest, hath very much beguiled  
The tediousness and process of my travel:  
But theirs is sweetened with the hope to have  
The present benefit which I possess;  
And hope to joy is little less in joy  
Than hope enjoy'd: by this the weary lords  
Shall make their way seem short, as mine hath done  
By sight of what I have, your noble company.

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Of much less value is my company  
Than your good words. But who comes here?

*Enter HENRY PERCY*

### NORTHUMBERLAND

It is my son, young Harry Percy,  
Sent from my brother Worcester, whencesoever.  
Harry, how fares your uncle?

**HENRY PERCY**

I had thought, my lord, to have learn'd his health of you.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Why, is he not with the queen?

**HENRY PERCY**

No, my good Lord; he hath forsook the court,  
Broken his staff of office and dispersed  
The household of the king.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

What was his reason?  
He was not so resolved when last we spake together.

**HENRY PERCY**

Because your lordship was proclaimed traitor.  
But he, my lord, is gone to Ravenspurgh,  
To offer service to the Duke of Hereford,  
And sent me over by Berkeley, to discover  
What power the Duke of York had levied there;  
Then with directions to repair to Ravenspurgh.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Have you forgot the Duke of Hereford, boy?

**HENRY PERCY**

No, my good lord, for that is not forgot  
Which ne'er I did remember: to my knowledge,  
I never in my life did look on him.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Then learn to know him now; this is the duke.

## **HENRY PERCY**

My gracious lord, I tender you my service,  
Such as it is, being tender, raw and young:  
Which elder days shall ripen and confirm  
To more approved service and desert.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

I thank thee, gentle Percy; and be sure  
I count myself in nothing else so happy  
As in a soul remembering my good friends;  
And, as my fortune ripens with thy love,  
It shall be still thy true love's recompense:  
My heart this covenant makes, my hand thus seals it.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

How far is it to Berkeley? and what stir  
Keeps good old York there with his men of war?

## **HENRY PERCY**

There stands the castle, by yon tuft of trees,  
Mann'd with three hundred men, as I have heard;  
And in it are the Lords of York, Berkeley, and Seymour;  
None else of name and noble estimate.

*Enter LORD ROSS and LORD WILLOUGHBY*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Here come the Lords of Ross and Willoughby,  
Bloody with spurring, fiery-red with haste.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Welcome, my lords. I wot your love pursues  
A banish'd traitor: all my treasury  
Is yet but unfelt thanks, which more enrich'd  
Shall be your love and labour's recompense.

**LORD ROSS**

Your presence makes us rich, most noble lord.

**LORD WILLOUGHBY**

And far surmounts our labour to attain it.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor;  
Which, till my infant fortune comes to years,  
Stands for my bounty. But who comes here?

*Enter LORD BERKELEY*

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

It is my Lord of Berkeley, as I guess.

**LORD BERKELEY**

My Lord of Hereford, my message is to you.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

My lord, my answer is--to Lancaster;  
And I am come to seek that name in England;  
And I must find that title in your tongue,  
Before I make reply to aught you say.

**LORD BERKELEY**

Mistake me not, my lord; 'tis not my meaning  
To raze one title of your honour out:  
To you, my lord, I come, what lord you will,

From the most gracious regent of this land,  
The Duke of York, to know what pricks you on  
To take advantage of the absent time  
And fright our native peace with self-born arms.

*Enter DUKE OF YORK attended*

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

I shall not need transport my words by you;  
Here comes his grace in person. My noble uncle!

*Kneels*

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Show me thy humble heart, and not thy knee,  
Whose duty is deceiveable and false.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

My gracious uncle--

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Tut, tut!  
Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncle:  
I am no traitor's uncle; and that word 'grace.'  
In an ungracious mouth is but profane.  
Why have those banish'd and forbidden legs  
Dared once to touch a dust of England's ground?  
But then more 'why?' why have they dared to march  
So many miles upon her peaceful bosom,  
Frighting her pale-faced villages with war  
And ostentation of despised arms?  
Comest thou because the anointed king is hence?  
Why, foolish boy, the king is left behind,  
And in my loyal bosom lies his power.  
Were I but now the lord of such hot youth  
As when brave Gaunt, thy father, and myself  
Rescued the Black Prince, that young Mars of men,  
From forth the ranks of many thousand French,



O, then how quickly should this arm of mine.  
Now prisoner to the palsy, chastise thee  
And minister correction to thy fault!

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

My gracious uncle, let me know my fault:  
On what condition stands it and wherein?

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Even in condition of the worst degree,  
In gross rebellion and detested treason:  
Thou art a banish'd man, and here art come  
Before the expiration of thy time,  
In braving arms against thy sovereign.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

As I was banish'd, I was banish'd Hereford;  
But as I come, I come for Lancaster.  
And, noble uncle, I beseech your grace  
Look on my wrongs with an indifferent eye:  
You are my father, for methinks in you  
I see old Gaunt alive; O, then, my father,  
Will you permit that I shall stand condemn'd  
A wandering vagabond; my rights and royalties  
Pluck'd from my arms perforce and given away  
To upstart unthrifths? Wherefore was I born?  
If that my cousin king be King of England,  
It must be granted I am Duke of Lancaster.  
You have a son, Aumerle, my noble cousin;  
Had you first died, and he been thus trod down,  
He should have found his uncle Gaunt a father,  
To rouse his wrongs and chase them to the bay.  
I am denied to sue my livery here,  
And yet my letters-patents give me leave:  
My father's goods are all distrain'd and sold,  
And these and all are all amiss employ'd.  
What would you have me do? I am a subject,  
And I challenge law: attorneys are denied me;  
And therefore, personally I lay my claim

To my inheritance of free descent.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

The noble duke hath been too much abused.

## **LORD ROSS**

It stands your grace upon to do him right.

## **LORD WILLOUGHBY**

Base men by his endowments are made great.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

My lords of England, let me tell you this:  
I have had feeling of my cousin's wrongs  
And laboured all I could to do him right;  
But in this kind to come, in braving arms,  
Be his own carver and cut out his way,  
To find out right with wrong, it may not be;  
And you that do abet him in this kind  
Cherish rebellion and are rebels all.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

The noble duke hath sworn his coming is  
But for his own; and for the right of that  
We all have strongly sworn to give him aid;  
And let him ne'er see joy that breaks that oath!

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Well, well, I see the issue of these arms:  
I cannot mend it, I must needs confess,  
Because my power is weak and all ill left:  
But if I could, by Him that gave me life,  
I would attach you all and make you stoop  
Unto the sovereign mercy of the king;  
But since I cannot, be it known to you  
I do remain as neuter. So, fare you well;

Unless you please to enter in the castle  
And there repose you for this night.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

An offer, uncle, that we will accept:  
But we must win your grace to go with us  
To Bristol castle, which they say is held  
By Bushy, Bagot and their complices,  
The caterpillars of the commonwealth,  
Which I have sworn to weed and pluck away.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

It may be I will go with you: but yet I'll pause;  
For I am loath to break our country's laws.  
Nor friends nor foes, to me welcome you are:  
Things past redress are now with me past care.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A camp in Wales.

*Enter EARL OF SALISBURY and a Welsh Captain*

### Captain

My lord of Salisbury, we have stay'd ten days,  
And hardly kept our countrymen together,  
And yet we hear no tidings from the king;  
Therefore we will disperse ourselves: farewell.

### EARL OF SALISBURY

Stay yet another day, thou trusty Welshman:  
The king reposeth all his confidence in thee.

### Captain

'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay.  
The bay-trees in our country are all wither'd  
And meteors fright the fixed stars of heaven;  
The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth  
And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change;  
Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap,  
The one in fear to lose what they enjoy,  
The other to enjoy by rage and war:  
These signs forerun the death or fall of kings.  
Farewell: our countrymen are gone and fled,  
As well assured Richard their king is dead.

*Exit*

### EARL OF SALISBURY

Ah, Richard, with the eyes of heavy mind  
I see thy glory like a shooting star

Fall to the base earth from the firmament.  
Thy sun sets weeping in the lowly west,  
Witnessing storms to come, woe and unrest:  
Thy friends are fled to wait upon thy foes,  
And crossly to thy good all fortune goes.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Bristol. Before the castle.

*Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND, LORD ROSS, HENRY PERCY, LORD WILLOUGHBY, with BUSHY and GREEN, prisoners*

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Bring forth these men.

Bushy and Green, I will not vex your souls--  
Since presently your souls must part your bodies--  
With too much urging your pernicious lives,  
For 'twere no charity; yet, to wash your blood  
From off my hands, here in the view of men  
I will unfold some causes of your deaths.  
You have misled a prince, a royal king,  
A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments,  
By you unhappied and disfigured clean:  
You have in manner with your sinful hours  
Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him,  
Broke the possession of a royal bed  
And stain'd the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks  
With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs.  
Myself, a prince by fortune of my birth,  
Near to the king in blood, and near in love  
Till you did make him misinterpret me,  
Have stoop'd my neck under your injuries,  
And sigh'd my English breath in foreign clouds,  
Eating the bitter bread of banishment;  
Whilst you have fed upon my signories,  
Dispark'd my parks and fell'd my forest woods,  
From my own windows torn my household coat,  
Razed out my imprese, leaving me no sign,  
Save men's opinions and my living blood,  
To show the world I am a gentleman.  
This and much more, much more than twice all this,  
Condemns you to the death. See them deliver'd over  
To execution and the hand of death.

## **BUSHY**

More welcome is the stroke of death to me  
Than Bolingbroke to England. Lords, farewell.

## **GREEN**

My comfort is that heaven will take our souls  
And plague injustice with the pains of hell.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

My Lord Northumberland, see them dispatch'd.

*Exeunt NORTHUMBERLAND and others, with the prisoners*

Uncle, you say the queen is at your house;  
For God's sake, fairly let her be entreated:  
Tell her I send to her my kind commends;  
Take special care my greetings be deliver'd.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

A gentleman of mine I have dispatch'd  
With letters of your love to her at large.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Thank, gentle uncle. Come, lords, away.  
To fight with Glendower and his complices:  
Awhile to work, and after holiday.

*Exeunt*

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The coast of Wales. A castle in view.

*Drums; flourish and colours. Enter KING RICHARD II, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, and Soldiers*

### KING RICHARD II

Barkloughly castle call they this at hand?

### DUKE OF AUMERLE

Yea, my lord. How brooks your grace the air,  
After your late tossing on the breaking seas?

### KING RICHARD II

Needs must I like it well: I weep for joy  
To stand upon my kingdom once again.  
Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,  
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs:  
As a long-parted mother with her child  
Plays fondly with her tears and smiles in meeting,  
So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,  
And do thee favours with my royal hands.  
Feed not thy sovereign's foe, my gentle earth,  
Nor with thy sweets comfort his ravenous sense;  
But let thy spiders, that suck up thy venom,  
And heavy-gaited toads lie in their way,  
Doing annoyance to the treacherous feet  
Which with usurping steps do trample thee:  
Yield stinging nettles to mine enemies;  
And when they from thy bosom pluck a flower,  
Guard it, I pray thee, with a lurking adder  
Whose double tongue may with a mortal touch  
Throw death upon thy sovereign's enemies.  
Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords:



This earth shall have a feeling and these stones  
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king  
Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms.

## **BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

Fear not, my lord: that Power that made you king  
Hath power to keep you king in spite of all.  
The means that heaven yields must be embraced,  
And not neglected; else, if heaven would,  
And we will not, heaven's offer we refuse,  
The proffer'd means of succor and redress.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

He means, my lord, that we are too remiss;  
Whilst Bolingbroke, through our security,  
Grows strong and great in substance and in power.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Discomfortable cousin! know'st thou not  
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid,  
Behind the globe, that lights the lower world,  
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen  
In murders and in outrage, boldly here;  
But when from under this terrestrial ball  
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines  
And darts his light through every guilty hole,  
Then murders, treasons and detested sins,  
The cloak of night being pluck'd from off their backs,  
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves?  
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke,  
Who all this while hath revell'd in the night  
Whilst we were wandering with the antipodes,  
Shall see us rising in our throne, the east,  
His treasons will sit blushing in his face,  
Not able to endure the sight of day,  
But self-affrighted tremble at his sin.  
Not all the water in the rough rude sea  
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;  
The breath of worldly men cannot depose

The deputy elected by the Lord:  
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd  
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,  
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay  
A glorious angel: then, if angels fight,  
Weak men must fall, for heaven still guards the right.

*Enter EARL OF SALISBURY*

Welcome, my lord how far off lies your power?

**EARL OF SALISBURY**

Nor near nor farther off, my gracious lord,  
Than this weak arm: discomfort guides my tongue  
And bids me speak of nothing but despair.  
One day too late, I fear me, noble lord,  
Hath clouded all thy happy days on earth:  
O, call back yesterday, bid time return,  
And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!  
To-day, to-day, unhappy day, too late,  
O'erthrows thy joys, friends, fortune and thy state:  
For all the Welshmen, hearing thou wert dead,  
Are gone to Bolingbroke, dispersed and fled.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Comfort, my liege; why looks your grace so pale?

**KING RICHARD II**

But now the blood of twenty thousand men  
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled;  
And, till so much blood thither come again,  
Have I not reason to look pale and dead?  
All souls that will be safe fly from my side,  
For time hath set a blot upon my pride.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Comfort, my liege; remember who you are.

## **KING RICHARD II**

I had forgot myself; am I not king?  
Awake, thou coward majesty! thou sleepest.  
Is not the king's name twenty thousand names?  
Arm, arm, my name! a puny subject strikes  
At thy great glory. Look not to the ground,  
Ye favourites of a king: are we not high?  
High be our thoughts: I know my uncle York  
Hath power enough to serve our turn. But who comes here?

*Enter SIR STEPHEN SCROOP*

## **SIR STEPHEN SCROOP**

More health and happiness betide my liege  
Than can my care-tuned tongue deliver him!

## **KING RICHARD II**

Mine ear is open and my heart prepared;  
The worst is worldly loss thou canst unfold.  
Say, is my kingdom lost? why, 'twas my care  
And what loss is it to be rid of care?  
Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?  
Greater he shall not be; if he serve God,  
We'll serve Him too and be his fellow so:  
Revolt our subjects? that we cannot mend;  
They break their faith to God as well as us:  
Cry woe, destruction, ruin and decay:  
The worst is death, and death will have his day.

## **SIR STEPHEN SCROOP**

Glad am I that your highness is so arm'd  
To bear the tidings of calamity.  
Like an unseasonable stormy day,  
Which makes the silver rivers drown their shores,  
As if the world were all dissolved to tears,  
So high above his limits swells the rage  
Of Bolingbroke, covering your fearful land  
With hard bright steel and hearts harder than steel.

White-beards have arm'd their thin and hairless scalps  
Against thy majesty; boys, with women's voices,  
Strive to speak big and clap their female joints  
In stiff unwieldy arms against thy crown:  
The very beadsmen learn to bend their bows  
Of double-fatal yew against thy state;  
Yea, distaff-women manage rusty bills  
Against thy seat: both young and old rebel,  
And all goes worse than I have power to tell.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Too well, too well thou tell'st a tale so ill.  
Where is the Earl of Wiltshire? where is Bagot?  
What is become of Bushy? where is Green?  
That they have let the dangerous enemy  
Measure our confines with such peaceful steps?  
If we prevail, their heads shall pay for it:  
I warrant they have made peace with Bolingbroke.

## **SIR STEPHEN SCROOP**

Peace have they made with him indeed, my lord.

## **KING RICHARD II**

O villains, vipers, damn'd without redemption!  
Dogs, easily won to fawn on any man!  
Snakes, in my heart-blood warm'd, that sting my heart!  
Three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas!  
Would they make peace? terrible hell make war  
Upon their spotted souls for this offence!

## **SIR STEPHEN SCROOP**

Sweet love, I see, changing his property,  
Turns to the sourest and most deadly hate:  
Again uncurse their souls; their peace is made  
With heads, and not with hands; those whom you curse  
Have felt the worst of death's destroying wound  
And lie full low, grav'd in the hollow ground.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Is Bushy, Green, and the Earl of Wiltshire dead?

## **SIR STEPHEN SCROOP**

Ay, all of them at Bristol lost their heads.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Where is the duke my father with his power?

## **KING RICHARD II**

No matter where; of comfort no man speak:  
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;  
Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth,  
Let's choose executors and talk of wills:  
And yet not so, for what can we bequeath  
Save our deposed bodies to the ground?  
Our lands, our lives and all are Bolingbroke's,  
And nothing can we call our own but death  
And that small model of the barren earth  
Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.  
For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings;  
How some have been deposed; some slain in war,  
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed;  
Some poison'd by their wives: some sleeping kill'd;  
All murder'd: for within the hollow crown  
That rounds the mortal temples of a king  
Keeps Death his court and there the antic sits,  
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,  
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,  
To monarchize, be fear'd and kill with looks,  
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,  
As if this flesh which walls about our life,  
Were brass impregnable, and humour'd thus  
Comes at the last and with a little pin  
Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!  
Cover your heads and mock not flesh and blood

With solemn reverence: throw away respect,  
Tradition, form and ceremonious duty,  
For you have but mistook me all this while:  
I live with bread like you, feel want,  
Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,  
How can you say to me, I am a king?

## **BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

My lord, wise men ne'er sit and wail their woes,  
But presently prevent the ways to wail.  
To fear the foe, since fear oppresseth strength,  
Gives in your weakness strength unto your foe,  
And so your follies fight against yourself.  
Fear and be slain; no worse can come to fight:  
And fight and die is death destroying death;  
Where fearing dying pays death servile breath.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

My father hath a power; inquire of him  
And learn to make a body of a limb.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Thou chidest me well: proud Bolingbroke, I come  
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.  
This ague fit of fear is over-blown;  
An easy task it is to win our own.  
Say, Scroop, where lies our uncle with his power?  
Speak sweetly, man, although thy looks be sour.

## **SIR STEPHEN SCROOP**

Men judge by the complexion of the sky  
The state and inclination of the day:  
So may you by my dull and heavy eye,  
My tongue hath but a heavier tale to say.  
I play the torturer, by small and small  
To lengthen out the worst that must be spoken:  
Your uncle York is join'd with Bolingbroke,  
And all your northern castles yielded up,

And all your southern gentlemen in arms  
Upon his party.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Thou hast said enough.  
Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth

*To DUKE OF AUMERLE*

Of that sweet way I was in to despair!  
What say you now? what comfort have we now?  
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly  
That bids me be of comfort any more.  
Go to Flint castle: there I'll pine away;  
A king, woe's slave, shall kingly woe obey.  
That power I have, discharge; and let them go  
To ear the land that hath some hope to grow,  
For I have none: let no man speak again  
To alter this, for counsel is but vain.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

My liege, one word.

## **KING RICHARD II**

He does me double wrong  
That wounds me with the flatteries of his tongue.  
Discharge my followers: let them hence away,  
From Richard's night to Bolingbroke's fair day.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Wales. Before Flint castle.

*Enter, with drum and colours, HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK, NORTHUMBERLAND, Attendants, and forces*

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

So that by this intelligence we learn  
The Welshmen are dispersed, and Salisbury  
Is gone to meet the king, who lately landed  
With some few private friends upon this coast.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

The news is very fair and good, my lord:  
Richard not far from hence hath hid his head.

### DUKE OF YORK

It would beseem the Lord Northumberland  
To say 'King Richard:' alack the heavy day  
When such a sacred king should hide his head.

### NORTHUMBERLAND

Your grace mistakes; only to be brief  
Left I his title out.

### DUKE OF YORK

The time hath been,  
Would you have been so brief with him, he would  
Have been so brief with you, to shorten you,  
For taking so the head, your whole head's length.

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE



Mistake not, uncle, further than you should.

**DUKE OF YORK**

Take not, good cousin, further than you should.  
Lest you mistake the heavens are o'er our heads.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

I know it, uncle, and oppose not myself  
Against their will. But who comes here?

*Enter HENRY PERCY*

Welcome, Harry: what, will not this castle yield?

**HENRY PERCY**

The castle royally is mann'd, my lord,  
Against thy entrance.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Royally!  
Why, it contains no king?

**HENRY PERCY**

Yes, my good lord,  
It doth contain a king; King Richard lies  
Within the limits of yon lime and stone:  
And with him are the Lord Aumerle, Lord Salisbury,  
Sir Stephen Scroop, besides a clergyman  
Of holy reverence; who, I cannot learn.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

O, belike it is the Bishop of Carlisle.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Noble lords,  
Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle;  
Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parley  
Into his ruin'd ears, and thus deliver:  
Henry Bolingbroke  
On both his knees doth kiss King Richard's hand  
And sends allegiance and true faith of heart  
To his most royal person, hither come  
Even at his feet to lay my arms and power,  
Provided that my banishment repeal'd  
And lands restored again be freely granted:  
If not, I'll use the advantage of my power  
And lay the summer's dust with showers of blood  
Rain'd from the wounds of slaughter'd Englishmen:  
The which, how far off from the mind of Bolingbroke  
It is, such crimson tempest should bedrench  
The fresh green lap of fair King Richard's land,  
My stooping duty tenderly shall show.  
Go, signify as much, while here we march  
Upon the grassy carpet of this plain.  
Let's march without the noise of threatening drum,  
That from this castle's tatter'd battlements  
Our fair appointments may be well perused.  
Methinks King Richard and myself should meet  
With no less terror than the elements  
Of fire and water, when their thundering shock  
At meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven.  
Be he the fire, I'll be the yielding water:  
The rage be his, whilst on the earth I rain  
My waters; on the earth, and not on him.  
March on, and mark King Richard how he looks.

*Parle without, and answer within. Then a flourish. Enter on the walls, KING RICHARD II, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, SIR STEPHEN SCROOP, and EARL OF SALISBURY*

See, see, King Richard doth himself appear,  
As doth the blushing discontented sun  
From out the fiery portal of the east,  
When he perceives the envious clouds are bent  
To dim his glory and to stain the track  
Of his bright passage to the occident.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Yet looks he like a king: behold, his eye,  
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth  
Controlling majesty: alack, alack, for woe,  
That any harm should stain so fair a show!

## **KING RICHARD II**

We are amazed; and thus long have we stood  
To watch the fearful bending of thy knee,

### *To NORTHUMBERLAND*

Because we thought ourself thy lawful king:  
And if we be, how dare thy joints forget  
To pay their awful duty to our presence?  
If we be not, show us the hand of God  
That hath dismissed us from our stewardship;  
For well we know, no hand of blood and bone  
Can gripe the sacred handle of our sceptre,  
Unless he do profane, steal, or usurp.  
And though you think that all, as you have done,  
Have torn their souls by turning them from us,  
And we are barren and bereft of friends;  
Yet know, my master, God omnipotent,  
Is mustering in his clouds on our behalf  
Armies of pestilence; and they shall strike  
Your children yet unborn and unbegot,  
That lift your vassal hands against my head  
And threat the glory of my precious crown.  
Tell Bolingbroke--for yond methinks he stands--  
That every stride he makes upon my land  
Is dangerous treason: he is come to open  
The purple testament of bleeding war;  
But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,  
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons  
Shall ill become the flower of England's face,  
Change the complexion of her maid-pale peace  
To scarlet indignation and bedew  
Her pastures' grass with faithful English blood.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

The king of heaven forbid our lord the king  
Should so with civil and uncivil arms  
Be rush'd upon! Thy thrice noble cousin  
Harry Bolingbroke doth humbly kiss thy hand;  
And by the honourable tomb he swears,  
That stands upon your royal grandsire's bones,  
And by the royalties of both your bloods,  
Currents that spring from one most gracious head,  
And by the buried hand of warlike Gaunt,  
And by the worth and honour of himself,  
Comprising all that may be sworn or said,  
His coming hither hath no further scope  
Than for his lineal royalties and to beg  
Enfranchisement immediate on his knees:  
Which on thy royal party granted once,  
His glittering arms he will commend to rust,  
His barbed steeds to stables, and his heart  
To faithful service of your majesty.  
This swears he, as he is a prince, is just;  
And, as I am a gentleman, I credit him.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Northumberland, say thus the king returns:  
His noble cousin is right welcome hither;  
And all the number of his fair demands  
Shall be accomplish'd without contradiction:  
With all the gracious utterance thou hast  
Speak to his gentle hearing kind commends.  
We do debase ourselves, cousin, do we not,

*To DUKE OF AUMERLE*

To look so poorly and to speak so fair?  
Shall we call back Northumberland, and send  
Defiance to the traitor, and so die?

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

No, good my lord; let's fight with gentle words

Till time lend friends and friends their helpful swords.

## **KING RICHARD II**

O God, O God! that e'er this tongue of mine,  
That laid the sentence of dread banishment  
On yon proud man, should take it off again  
With words of sooth! O that I were as great  
As is my grief, or lesser than my name!  
Or that I could forget what I have been,  
Or not remember what I must be now!  
Swell'st thou, proud heart? I'll give thee scope to beat,  
Since foes have scope to beat both thee and me.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Northumberland comes back from Bolingbroke.

## **KING RICHARD II**

What must the king do now? must he submit?  
The king shall do it: must he be deposed?  
The king shall be contented: must he lose  
The name of king? o' God's name, let it go:  
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,  
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,  
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,  
My figured goblets for a dish of wood,  
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,  
My subjects for a pair of carved saints  
And my large kingdom for a little grave,  
A little little grave, an obscure grave;  
Or I'll be buried in the king's highway,  
Some way of common trade, where subjects' feet  
May hourly trample on their sovereign's head;  
For on my heart they tread now whilst I live;  
And buried once, why not upon my head?  
Aumerle, thou weep'st, my tender-hearted cousin!  
We'll make foul weather with despised tears;  
Our sighs and they shall lodge the summer corn,  
And make a dearth in this revolting land.  
Or shall we play the wantons with our woes,

And make some pretty match with shedding tears?  
As thus, to drop them still upon one place,  
Till they have fretted us a pair of graves  
Within the earth; and, therein laid,--there lies  
Two kinsmen digg'd their graves with weeping eyes.  
Would not this ill do well? Well, well, I see  
I talk but idly, and you laugh at me.  
Most mighty prince, my Lord Northumberland,  
What says King Bolingbroke? will his majesty  
Give Richard leave to live till Richard die?  
You make a leg, and Bolingbroke says ay.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

My lord, in the base court he doth attend  
To speak with you; may it please you to come down.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Down, down I come; like glistering Phaethon,  
Wanting the manage of unruly jades.  
In the base court? Base court, where kings grow base,  
To come at traitors' calls and do them grace.  
In the base court? Come down? Down, court!  
down, king!  
For night-owls shriek where mounting larks  
should sing.

*Exeunt from above*

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

What says his majesty?

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Sorrow and grief of heart  
Makes him speak fondly, like a frantic man  
Yet he is come.

*Enter KING RICHARD and his attendants below*

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Stand all apart,  
And show fair duty to his majesty.

*He kneels down*

My gracious lord,--

## **KING RICHARD II**

Fair cousin, you debase your princely knee  
To make the base earth proud with kissing it:  
Me rather had my heart might feel your love  
Than my unpleased eye see your courtesy.  
Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know,  
Thus high at least, although your knee be low.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

My gracious lord, I come but for mine own.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Your own is yours, and I am yours, and all.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

So far be mine, my most redoubted lord,  
As my true service shall deserve your love.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Well you deserve: they well deserve to have,  
That know the strong'st and surest way to get.  
Uncle, give me your hands: nay, dry your eyes;  
Tears show their love, but want their remedies.  
Cousin, I am too young to be your father,  
Though you are old enough to be my heir.  
What you will have, I'll give, and willing too;  
For do we must what force will have us do.

Set on towards London, cousin, is it so?

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Yea, my good lord.

**KING RICHARD II**

Then I must not say no.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. LANGLEY. The DUKE OF YORK's garden.

*Enter the QUEEN and two Ladies*

**QUEEN**

What sport shall we devise here in this garden,  
To drive away the heavy thought of care?

**Lady**

Madam, we'll play at bowls.

**QUEEN**

'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs,  
And that my fortune rubs against the bias.

**Lady**

Madam, we'll dance.

**QUEEN**

My legs can keep no measure in delight,  
When my poor heart no measure keeps in grief:  
Therefore, no dancing, girl; some other sport.

**Lady**

Madam, we'll tell tales.

**QUEEN**

Of sorrow or of joy?

**Lady**

Of either, madam.

**QUEEN**

Of neither, girl:  
For of joy, being altogether wanting,  
It doth remember me the more of sorrow;  
Or if of grief, being altogether had,  
It adds more sorrow to my want of joy:  
For what I have I need not to repeat;  
And what I want it boots not to complain.

**Lady**

Madam, I'll sing.

**QUEEN**

'Tis well that thou hast cause  
But thou shouldst please me better, wouldst thou weep.

**Lady**

I could weep, madam, would it do you good.

**QUEEN**

And I could sing, would weeping do me good,  
And never borrow any tear of thee.

*Enter a Gardener, and two Servants*

But stay, here come the gardeners:  
Let's step into the shadow of these trees.  
My wretchedness unto a row of pins,  
They'll talk of state; for every one doth so  
Against a change; woe is forerun with woe.

*QUEEN and Ladies retire*

## **Gardener**

Go, bind thou up yon dangling apricocks,  
Which, like unruly children, make their sire  
Stoop with oppression of their prodigal weight:  
Give some supportance to the bending twigs.  
Go thou, and like an executioner,  
Cut off the heads of too fast growing sprays,  
That look too lofty in our commonwealth:  
All must be even in our government.  
You thus employ'd, I will go root away  
The noisome weeds, which without profit suck  
The soil's fertility from wholesome flowers.

## **Servant**

Why should we in the compass of a pale  
Keep law and form and due proportion,  
Showing, as in a model, our firm estate,  
When our sea-walled garden, the whole land,  
Is full of weeds, her fairest flowers choked up,  
Her fruit-trees all upturned, her hedges ruin'd,  
Her knots disorder'd and her wholesome herbs  
Swarming with caterpillars?

## **Gardener**

Hold thy peace:  
He that hath suffer'd this disorder'd spring  
Hath now himself met with the fall of leaf:  
The weeds which his broad-spreading leaves did shelter,  
That seem'd in eating him to hold him up,  
Are pluck'd up root and all by Bolingbroke,  
I mean the Earl of Wiltshire, Bushy, Green.

## **Servant**

What, are they dead?

## **Gardener**

They are; and Bolingbroke  
Hath seized the wasteful king. O, what pity is it  
That he had not so trimm'd and dress'd his land  
As we this garden! We at time of year  
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees,  
Lest, being over-proud in sap and blood,  
With too much riches it confound itself:  
Had he done so to great and growing men,  
They might have lived to bear and he to taste  
Their fruits of duty: superfluous branches  
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live:  
Had he done so, himself had borne the crown,  
Which waste of idle hours hath quite thrown down.

### **Servant**

What, think you then the king shall be deposed?

### **Gardener**

Depress'd he is already, and deposed  
'Tis doubt he will be: letters came last night  
To a dear friend of the good Duke of York's,  
That tell black tidings.

### **QUEEN**

O, I am press'd to death through want of speaking!

*Coming forward*

Thou, old Adam's likeness, set to dress this garden,  
How dares thy harsh rude tongue sound this unpleasing news?  
What Eve, what serpent, hath suggested thee  
To make a second fall of cursed man?  
Why dost thou say King Richard is deposed?  
Darest thou, thou little better thing than earth,  
Divine his downfall? Say, where, when, and how,  
Camest thou by this ill tidings? speak, thou wretch.

### **Gardener**

Pardon me, madam: little joy have I  
To breathe this news; yet what I say is true.  
King Richard, he is in the mighty hold  
Of Bolingbroke: their fortunes both are weigh'd:  
In your lord's scale is nothing but himself,  
And some few vanities that make him light;  
But in the balance of great Bolingbroke,  
Besides himself, are all the English peers,  
And with that odds he weighs King Richard down.  
Post you to London, and you will find it so;  
I speak no more than every one doth know.

## QUEEN

Nimble mischance, that art so light of foot,  
Doth not thy embassy belong to me,  
And am I last that knows it? O, thou think'st  
To serve me last, that I may longest keep  
Thy sorrow in my breast. Come, ladies, go,  
To meet at London London's king in woe.  
What, was I born to this, that my sad look  
Should grace the triumph of great Bolingbroke?  
Gardener, for telling me these news of woe,  
Pray God the plants thou graft'st may never grow.

*Exeunt QUEEN and Ladies*

## GARDENER

Poor queen! so that thy state might be no worse,  
I would my skill were subject to thy curse.  
Here did she fall a tear; here in this place  
I'll set a bank of rue, sour herb of grace:  
Rue, even for ruth, here shortly shall be seen,  
In the remembrance of a weeping queen.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Westminster Hall.

*Enter, as to the Parliament, HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF AUMERLE, NORTHUMBERLAND, HENRY PERCY, LORD FITZWATER, DUKE OF SURREY, the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, the Abbot Of Westminster, and another Lord, Herald, Officers, and BAGOT*

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Call forth Bagot.  
Now, Bagot, freely speak thy mind;  
What thou dost know of noble Gloucester's death,  
Who wrought it with the king, and who perform'd  
The bloody office of his timeless end.

### BAGOT

Then set before my face the Lord Aumerle.

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Cousin, stand forth, and look upon that man.

### BAGOT

My Lord Aumerle, I know your daring tongue  
Scorns to unsay what once it hath deliver'd.  
In that dead time when Gloucester's death was plotted,  
I heard you say, 'Is not my arm of length,  
That reacheth from the restful English court  
As far as Calais, to mine uncle's head?'  
Amongst much other talk, that very time,  
I heard you say that you had rather refuse  
The offer of an hundred thousand crowns  
Than Bolingbroke's return to England;  
Adding withal how blest this land would be

In this your cousin's death.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Princes and noble lords,  
What answer shall I make to this base man?  
Shall I so much dishonour my fair stars,  
On equal terms to give him chastisement?  
Either I must, or have mine honour soil'd  
With the attainder of his slanderous lips.  
There is my gage, the manual seal of death,  
That marks thee out for hell: I say, thou liest,  
And will maintain what thou hast said is false  
In thy heart-blood, though being all too base  
To stain the temper of my knightly sword.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Bagot, forbear; thou shalt not take it up.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Excepting one, I would he were the best  
In all this presence that hath moved me so.

**LORD FITZWATER**

If that thy valour stand on sympathy,  
There is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine:  
By that fair sun which shows me where thou stand'st,  
I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spakest it  
That thou wert cause of noble Gloucester's death.  
If thou deny'st it twenty times, thou liest;  
And I will turn thy falsehood to thy heart,  
Where it was forged, with my rapier's point.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Thou darest not, coward, live to see that day.

**LORD FITZWATER**

Now by my soul, I would it were this hour.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Fitzwater, thou art damn'd to hell for this.

**HENRY PERCY**

Aumerle, thou liest; his honour is as true  
In this appeal as thou art all unjust;  
And that thou art so, there I throw my gage,  
To prove it on thee to the extremest point  
Of mortal breathing: seize it, if thou darest.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

An if I do not, may my hands rot off  
And never brandish more revengeful steel  
Over the glittering helmet of my foe!

**Lord**

I task the earth to the like, forsworn Aumerle;  
And spur thee on with full as many lies  
As may be holloa'd in thy treacherous ear  
From sun to sun: there is my honour's pawn;  
Engage it to the trial, if thou darest.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Who sets me else? by heaven, I'll throw at all:  
I have a thousand spirits in one breast,  
To answer twenty thousand such as you.

**DUKE OF SURREY**

My Lord Fitzwater, I do remember well  
The very time Aumerle and you did talk.

**LORD FITZWATER**



'Tis very true: you were in presence then;  
And you can witness with me this is true.

## **DUKE OF SURREY**

As false, by heaven, as heaven itself is true.

## **LORD FITZWATER**

Surrey, thou liest.

## **DUKE OF SURREY**

Dishonourable boy!  
That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword,  
That it shall render vengeance and revenge  
Till thou the lie-giver and that lie do lie  
In earth as quiet as thy father's skull:  
In proof whereof, there is my honour's pawn;  
Engage it to the trial, if thou darest.

## **LORD FITZWATER**

How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse!  
If I dare eat, or drink, or breathe, or live,  
I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness,  
And spit upon him, whilst I say he lies,  
And lies, and lies: there is my bond of faith,  
To tie thee to my strong correction.  
As I intend to thrive in this new world,  
Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal:  
Besides, I heard the banish'd Norfolk say  
That thou, Aumerle, didst send two of thy men  
To execute the noble duke at Calais.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Some honest Christian trust me with a gage  
That Norfolk lies: here do I throw down this,  
If he may be repeal'd, to try his honour.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

These differences shall all rest under gage  
Till Norfolk be repeal'd: repeal'd he shall be,  
And, though mine enemy, restored again  
To all his lands and signories: when he's return'd,  
Against Aumerle we will enforce his trial.

### **BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

That honourable day shall ne'er be seen.  
Many a time hath banish'd Norfolk fought  
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,  
Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross  
Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens:  
And toil'd with works of war, retired himself  
To Italy; and there at Venice gave  
His body to that pleasant country's earth,  
And his pure soul unto his captain Christ,  
Under whose colours he had fought so long.

### **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Why, bishop, is Norfolk dead?

### **BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

As surely as I live, my lord.

### **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom  
Of good old Abraham! Lords appellants,  
Your differences shall all rest under gage  
Till we assign you to your days of trial.

*Enter DUKE OF YORK, attended*

### **DUKE OF YORK**

Great Duke of Lancaster, I come to thee  
From plume-pluck'd Richard; who with willing soul  
Adopts thee heir, and his high sceptre yields

To the possession of thy royal hand:  
Ascend his throne, descending now from him;  
And long live Henry, fourth of that name!

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

In God's name, I'll ascend the regal throne.

## **BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

Marry. God forbid!  
Worst in this royal presence may I speak,  
Yet best beseeming me to speak the truth.  
Would God that any in this noble presence  
Were enough noble to be upright judge  
Of noble Richard! then true noblesse would  
Learn him forbearance from so foul a wrong.  
What subject can give sentence on his king?  
And who sits here that is not Richard's subject?  
Thieves are not judged but they are by to hear,  
Although apparent guilt be seen in them;  
And shall the figure of God's majesty,  
His captain, steward, deputy-elect,  
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,  
Be judged by subject and inferior breath,  
And he himself not present? O, forfend it, God,  
That in a Christian climate souls refined  
Should show so heinous, black, obscene a deed!  
I speak to subjects, and a subject speaks,  
Stirr'd up by God, thus boldly for his king:  
My Lord of Hereford here, whom you call king,  
Is a foul traitor to proud Hereford's king:  
And if you crown him, let me prophesy:  
The blood of English shall manure the ground,  
And future ages groan for this foul act;  
Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,  
And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars  
Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound;  
Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny  
Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd  
The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.  
O, if you raise this house against this house,

It will the woefullest division prove  
That ever fell upon this cursed earth.  
Prevent it, resist it, let it not be so,  
Lest child, child's children, cry against you woe!

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Well have you argued, sir; and, for your pains,  
Of capital treason we arrest you here.  
My Lord of Westminster, be it your charge  
To keep him safely till his day of trial.  
May it please you, lords, to grant the commons' suit.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Fetch hither Richard, that in common view  
He may surrender; so we shall proceed  
Without suspicion.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

I will be his conduct.

*Exit*

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Lords, you that here are under our arrest,  
Procure your sureties for your days of answer.  
Little are we beholding to your love,  
And little look'd for at your helping hands.

*Re-enter DUKE OF YORK, with KING RICHARD II, and Officers bearing the regalia*

## **KING RICHARD II**

Alack, why am I sent for to a king,  
Before I have shook off the regal thoughts  
Wherewith I reign'd? I hardly yet have learn'd  
To insinuate, flatter, bow, and bend my limbs:  
Give sorrow leave awhile to tutor me  
To this submission. Yet I well remember

The favours of these men: were they not mine?  
Did they not sometime cry, 'all hail!' to me?  
So Judas did to Christ: but he, in twelve,  
Found truth in all but one: I, in twelve thousand, none.  
God save the king! Will no man say amen?  
Am I both priest and clerk? well then, amen.  
God save the king! although I be not he;  
And yet, amen, if heaven do think him me.  
To do what service am I sent for hither?

## **DUKE OF YORK**

To do that office of thine own good will  
Which tired majesty did make thee offer,  
The resignation of thy state and crown  
To Henry Bolingbroke.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Give me the crown. Here, cousin, seize the crown;  
Here cousin:  
On this side my hand, and on that side yours.  
Now is this golden crown like a deep well  
That owes two buckets, filling one another,  
The emptier ever dancing in the air,  
The other down, unseen and full of water:  
That bucket down and full of tears am I,  
Drinking my griefs, whilst you mount up on high.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

I thought you had been willing to resign.

## **KING RICHARD II**

My crown I am; but still my griefs are mine:  
You may my glories and my state depose,  
But not my griefs; still am I king of those.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Part of your cares you give me with your crown.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Your cares set up do not pluck my cares down.  
My care is loss of care, by old care done;  
Your care is gain of care, by new care won:  
The cares I give I have, though given away;  
They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Are you contented to resign the crown?

## **KING RICHARD II**

Ay, no; no, ay; for I must nothing be;  
Therefore no no, for I resign to thee.  
Now mark me, how I will undo myself;  
I give this heavy weight from off my head  
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,  
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart;  
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,  
With mine own hands I give away my crown,  
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,  
With mine own breath release all duty's rites:  
All pomp and majesty I do forswear;  
My manors, rents, revenues I forego;  
My acts, decrees, and statutes I deny:  
God pardon all oaths that are broke to me!  
God keep all vows unbroke that swear to thee!  
Make me, that nothing have, with nothing grieved,  
And thou with all pleased, that hast all achieved!  
Long mayst thou live in Richard's seat to sit,  
And soon lie Richard in an earthly pit!  
God save King Harry, unking'd Richard says,  
And send him many years of sunshine days!  
What more remains?

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

No more, but that you read  
These accusations and these grievous crimes

Committed by your person and your followers  
Against the state and profit of this land;  
That, by confessing them, the souls of men  
May deem that you are worthily deposed.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Must I do so? and must I ravel out  
My weaved-up folly? Gentle Northumberland,  
If thy offences were upon record,  
Would it not shame thee in so fair a troop  
To read a lecture of them? If thou wouldst,  
There shouldst thou find one heinous article,  
Containing the deposing of a king  
And cracking the strong warrant of an oath,  
Mark'd with a blot, damn'd in the book of heaven:  
Nay, all of you that stand and look upon,  
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself,  
Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands  
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates  
Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross,  
And water cannot wash away your sin.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

My lord, dispatch; read o'er these articles.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see:  
And yet salt water blinds them not so much  
But they can see a sort of traitors here.  
Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,  
I find myself a traitor with the rest;  
For I have given here my soul's consent  
To undeck the pompous body of a king;  
Made glory base and sovereignty a slave,  
Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

My lord,--

## **KING RICHARD II**

No lord of thine, thou haught insulting man,  
Nor no man's lord; I have no name, no title,  
No, not that name was given me at the font,  
But 'tis usurp'd: alack the heavy day,  
That I have worn so many winters out,  
And know not now what name to call myself!  
O that I were a mockery king of snow,  
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,  
To melt myself away in water-drops!  
Good king, great king, and yet not greatly good,  
An if my word be sterling yet in England,  
Let it command a mirror hither straight,  
That it may show me what a face I have,  
Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Go some of you and fetch a looking-glass.

*Exit an attendant*

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

Read o'er this paper while the glass doth come.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Fiend, thou torment'st me ere I come to hell!

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Urge it no more, my Lord Northumberland.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

The commons will not then be satisfied.

## **KING RICHARD II**



They shall be satisfied: I'll read enough,  
When I do see the very book indeed  
Where all my sins are writ, and that's myself.

*Re-enter Attendant, with a glass*

Give me the glass, and therein will I read.  
No deeper wrinkles yet? hath sorrow struck  
So many blows upon this face of mine,  
And made no deeper wounds? O flattering glass,  
Like to my followers in prosperity,  
Thou dost beguile me! Was this face the face  
That every day under his household roof  
Did keep ten thousand men? was this the face  
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?  
Was this the face that faced so many follies,  
And was at last out-faced by Bolingbroke?  
A brittle glory shineth in this face:  
As brittle as the glory is the face;

*Dashes the glass against the ground*

For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers.  
Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport,  
How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd  
The shadow of your face.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Say that again.  
The shadow of my sorrow! ha! let's see:  
'Tis very true, my grief lies all within;  
And these external manners of laments  
Are merely shadows to the unseen grief  
That swells with silence in the tortured soul;  
There lies the substance: and I thank thee, king,  
For thy great bounty, that not only givest  
Me cause to wail but teachest me the way

How to lament the cause. I'll beg one boon,  
And then be gone and trouble you no more.  
Shall I obtain it?

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Name it, fair cousin.

**KING RICHARD II**

'Fair cousin'? I am greater than a king:  
For when I was a king, my flatterers  
Were then but subjects; being now a subject,  
I have a king here to my flatterer.  
Being so great, I have no need to beg.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Yet ask.

**KING RICHARD II**

And shall I have?

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

You shall.

**KING RICHARD II**

Then give me leave to go.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Whither?

**KING RICHARD II**

Whither you will, so I were from your sights.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Go, some of you convey him to the Tower.

**KING RICHARD II**

O, good! convey? conveyers are you all,  
That rise thus nimbly by a true king's fall.

*Exeunt KING RICHARD II, some Lords, and a Guard*

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

On Wednesday next we solemnly set down  
Our coronation: lords, prepare yourselves.

*Exeunt all except the BISHOP OF CARLISLE, the Abbot of Westminster, and DUKE OF AUMERLE*

**Abbot**

A woeful pageant have we here beheld.

**BISHOP OF CARLISLE**

The woe's to come; the children yet unborn.  
Shall feel this day as sharp to them as thorn.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

You holy clergymen, is there no plot  
To rid the realm of this pernicious blot?

**Abbot**

My lord,  
Before I freely speak my mind herein,  
You shall not only take the sacrament  
To bury mine intents, but also to effect  
Whatever I shall happen to devise.  
I see your brows are full of discontent,  
Your hearts of sorrow and your eyes of tears:

Come home with me to supper; and I'll lay  
A plot shall show us all a merry day.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. A street leading to the Tower.

*Enter QUEEN and Ladies*

### QUEEN

This way the king will come; this is the way  
To Julius Caesar's ill-erected tower,  
To whose flint bosom my condemned lord  
Is doom'd a prisoner by proud Bolingbroke:  
Here let us rest, if this rebellious earth  
Have any resting for her true king's queen.

*Enter KING RICHARD II and Guard*

But soft, but see, or rather do not see,  
My fair rose wither: yet look up, behold,  
That you in pity may dissolve to dew,  
And wash him fresh again with true-love tears.  
Ah, thou, the model where old Troy did stand,  
Thou map of honour, thou King Richard's tomb,  
And not King Richard; thou most beauteous inn,  
Why should hard-favour'd grief be lodged in thee,  
When triumph is become an alehouse guest?

### KING RICHARD II

Join not with grief, fair woman, do not so,  
To make my end too sudden: learn, good soul,  
To think our former state a happy dream;  
From which awaked, the truth of what we are  
Shows us but this: I am sworn brother, sweet,  
To grim Necessity, and he and I  
Will keep a league till death. Hie thee to France  
And cloister thee in some religious house:  
Our holy lives must win a new world's crown,

Which our profane hours here have stricken down.

## QUEEN

What, is my Richard both in shape and mind  
Transform'd and weaken'd? hath Bolingbroke deposed  
Thine intellect? hath he been in thy heart?  
The lion dying thrusteth forth his paw,  
And wounds the earth, if nothing else, with rage  
To be o'erpower'd; and wilt thou, pupil-like,  
Take thy correction mildly, kiss the rod,  
And fawn on rage with base humility,  
Which art a lion and a king of beasts?

## KING RICHARD II

A king of beasts, indeed; if aught but beasts,  
I had been still a happy king of men.  
Good sometime queen, prepare thee hence for France:  
Think I am dead and that even here thou takest,  
As from my death-bed, thy last living leave.  
In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire  
With good old folks and let them tell thee tales  
Of woeful ages long ago betid;  
And ere thou bid good night, to quit their griefs,  
Tell thou the lamentable tale of me  
And send the hearers weeping to their beds:  
For why, the senseless brands will sympathize  
The heavy accent of thy moving tongue  
And in compassion weep the fire out;  
And some will mourn in ashes, some coal-black,  
For the deposing of a rightful king.

*Enter NORTHUMBERLAND and others*

## NORTHUMBERLAND

My lord, the mind of Bolingbroke is changed:  
You must to Pomfret, not unto the Tower.  
And, madam, there is order ta'en for you;  
With all swift speed you must away to France.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal  
The mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne,  
The time shall not be many hours of age  
More than it is ere foul sin gathering head  
Shalt break into corruption: thou shalt think,  
Though he divide the realm and give thee half,  
It is too little, helping him to all;  
And he shall think that thou, which know'st the way  
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,  
Being ne'er so little urged, another way  
To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.  
The love of wicked men converts to fear;  
That fear to hate, and hate turns one or both  
To worthy danger and deserved death.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

My guilt be on my head, and there an end.  
Take leave and part; for you must part forthwith.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Doubly divorced! Bad men, you violate  
A twofold marriage, 'twixt my crown and me,  
And then betwixt me and my married wife.  
Let me unkiss the oath 'twixt thee and me;  
And yet not so, for with a kiss 'twas made.  
Part us, Northumberland; I toward the north,  
Where shivering cold and sickness pines the clime;  
My wife to France: from whence, set forth in pomp,  
She came adorned hither like sweet May,  
Sent back like Hallowmas or short'st of day.

## **QUEEN**

And must we be divided? must we part?

## **KING RICHARD II**

Ay, hand from hand, my love, and heart from heart.

## **QUEEN**

Banish us both and send the king with me.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND**

That were some love but little policy.

## **QUEEN**

Then whither he goes, thither let me go.

## **KING RICHARD II**

So two, together weeping, make one woe.  
Weep thou for me in France, I for thee here;  
Better far off than near, be ne'er the near.  
Go, count thy way with sighs; I mine with groans.

## **QUEEN**

So longest way shall have the longest moans.

## **KING RICHARD II**

Twice for one step I'll groan, the way being short,  
And piece the way out with a heavy heart.  
Come, come, in wooing sorrow let's be brief,  
Since, wedding it, there is such length in grief;  
One kiss shall stop our mouths, and dumbly part;  
Thus give I mine, and thus take I thy heart.

## **QUEEN**

Give me mine own again; 'twere no good part  
To take on me to keep and kill thy heart.  
So, now I have mine own again, be gone,  
That I might strive to kill it with a groan.

## **KING RICHARD II**



We make woe wanton with this fond delay:  
Once more, adieu; the rest let sorrow say.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The DUKE OF YORK's palace.

*Enter DUKE OF YORK and DUCHESS OF YORK*

### DUCHESS OF YORK

My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,  
When weeping made you break the story off,  
of our two cousins coming into London.

### DUKE OF YORK

Where did I leave?

### DUCHESS OF YORK

At that sad stop, my lord,  
Where rude misgovern'd hands from windows' tops  
Threw dust and rubbish on King Richard's head.

### DUKE OF YORK

Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,  
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed  
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,  
With slow but stately pace kept on his course,  
Whilst all tongues cried 'God save thee,  
Bolingbroke!'  
You would have thought the very windows spake,  
So many greedy looks of young and old  
Through casements darted their desiring eyes  
Upon his visage, and that all the walls  
With painted imagery had said at once  
'Jesu preserve thee! welcome, Bolingbroke!'  
Whilst he, from the one side to the other turning,  
Bareheaded, lower than his proud steed's neck,

Bespake them thus: 'I thank you, countrymen:'  
And thus still doing, thus he pass'd along.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Alack, poor Richard! where rode he the whilst?

## **DUKE OF YORK**

As in a theatre, the eyes of men,  
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,  
Are idly bent on him that enters next,  
Thinking his prattle to be tedious;  
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes  
Did scowl on gentle Richard; no man cried 'God save him!'  
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:  
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head:  
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,  
His face still combating with tears and smiles,  
The badges of his grief and patience,  
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd  
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted  
And barbarism itself have pitied him.  
But heaven hath a hand in these events,  
To whose high will we bound our calm contents.  
To Bolingbroke are we sworn subjects now,  
Whose state and honour I for aye allow.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Here comes my son Aumerle.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Aumerle that was;  
But that is lost for being Richard's friend,  
And, madam, you must call him Rutland now:  
I am in parliament pledge for his truth  
And lasting fealty to the new-made king.

*Enter DUKE OF AUMERLE*

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Welcome, my son: who are the violets now  
That strew the green lap of the new come spring?

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Madam, I know not, nor I greatly care not:  
God knows I had as lief be none as one.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Well, bear you well in this new spring of time,  
Lest you be cropp'd before you come to prime.  
What news from Oxford? hold those justs and triumphs?

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

For aught I know, my lord, they do.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

You will be there, I know.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

If God prevent not, I purpose so.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

What seal is that, that hangs without thy bosom?  
Yea, look'st thou pale? let me see the writing.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

My lord, 'tis nothing.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

No matter, then, who see it;  
I will be satisfied; let me see the writing.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

I do beseech your grace to pardon me:  
It is a matter of small consequence,  
Which for some reasons I would not have seen.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Which for some reasons, sir, I mean to see.  
I fear, I fear,--

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

What should you fear?  
'Tis nothing but some bond, that he is enter'd into  
For gay apparel 'gainst the triumph day.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Bound to himself! what doth he with a bond  
That he is bound to? Wife, thou art a fool.  
Boy, let me see the writing.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

I do beseech you, pardon me; I may not show it.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

I will be satisfied; let me see it, I say.

*He plucks it out of his bosom and reads it*

Treason! foul treason! Villain! traitor! slave!

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

What is the matter, my lord?

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Ho! who is within there?

*Enter a Servant*

Saddle my horse.  
God for his mercy, what treachery is here!

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Why, what is it, my lord?

**DUKE OF YORK**

Give me my boots, I say; saddle my horse.  
Now, by mine honour, by my life, by my troth,  
I will appeach the villain.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

What is the matter?

**DUKE OF YORK**

Peace, foolish woman.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

I will not peace. What is the matter, Aumerle.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Good mother, be content; it is no more  
Than my poor life must answer.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Thy life answer!

**DUKE OF YORK**

Bring me my boots: I will unto the king.

*Re-enter Servant with boots*

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Strike him, Aumerle. Poor boy, thou art amazed.  
Hence, villain! never more come in my sight.

**DUKE OF YORK**

Give me my boots, I say.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Why, York, what wilt thou do?  
Wilt thou not hide the trespass of thine own?  
Have we more sons? or are we like to have?  
Is not my teeming date drunk up with time?  
And wilt thou pluck my fair son from mine age,  
And rob me of a happy mother's name?  
Is he not like thee? is he not thine own?

**DUKE OF YORK**

Thou fond mad woman,  
Wilt thou conceal this dark conspiracy?  
A dozen of them here have ta'en the sacrament,  
And interchangeably set down their hands,  
To kill the king at Oxford.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

He shall be none;  
We'll keep him here: then what is that to him?

**DUKE OF YORK**

Away, fond woman! were he twenty times my son,  
I would appeach him.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Hadst thou groan'd for him  
As I have done, thou wouldst be more pitiful.  
But now I know thy mind; thou dost suspect  
That I have been disloyal to thy bed,  
And that he is a bastard, not thy son:  
Sweet York, sweet husband, be not of that mind:  
He is as like thee as a man may be,  
Not like to me, or any of my kin,  
And yet I love him.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Make way, unruly woman!

*Exit*

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

After, Aumerle! mount thee upon his horse;  
Spur post, and get before him to the king,  
And beg thy pardon ere he do accuse thee.  
I'll not be long behind; though I be old,  
I doubt not but to ride as fast as York:  
And never will I rise up from the ground  
Till Bolingbroke have pardon'd thee. Away, be gone!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A royal palace.

*Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, HENRY PERCY, and other Lords*

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Can no man tell me of my unthrifty son?  
'Tis full three months since I did see him last;  
If any plague hang over us, 'tis he.  
I would to God, my lords, he might be found:  
Inquire at London, 'mongst the taverns there,  
For there, they say, he daily doth frequent,  
With unrestrained loose companions,  
Even such, they say, as stand in narrow lanes,  
And beat our watch, and rob our passengers;  
Which he, young wanton and effeminate boy,  
Takes on the point of honour to support  
So dissolute a crew.

### HENRY PERCY

My lord, some two days since I saw the prince,  
And told him of those triumphs held at Oxford.

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

And what said the gallant?

### HENRY PERCY

His answer was, he would unto the stews,  
And from the common'st creature pluck a glove,  
And wear it as a favour; and with that  
He would unhorse the lustiest challenger.

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

As dissolute as desperate; yet through both  
I see some sparks of better hope, which elder years  
May happily bring forth. But who comes here?

*Enter DUKE OF AUMERLE*

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Where is the king?

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

What means our cousin, that he stares and looks  
So wildly?

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

God save your grace! I do beseech your majesty,  
To have some conference with your grace alone.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Withdraw yourselves, and leave us here alone.

*Exeunt HENRY PERCY and Lords*

What is the matter with our cousin now?

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

For ever may my knees grow to the earth,  
My tongue cleave to my roof within my mouth  
Unless a pardon ere I rise or speak.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Intended or committed was this fault?  
If on the first, how heinous e'er it be,  
To win thy after-love I pardon thee.

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Then give me leave that I may turn the key,  
That no man enter till my tale be done.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Have thy desire.

**DUKE OF YORK**

[Within] My liege, beware; look to thyself;  
Thou hast a traitor in thy presence there.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Villain, I'll make thee safe.

*Drawing*

**DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Stay thy revengeful hand; thou hast no cause to fear.

**DUKE OF YORK**

[Within] Open the door, secure, foolhardy king:  
Shall I for love speak treason to thy face?  
Open the door, or I will break it open.

*Enter DUKE OF YORK*

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

What is the matter, uncle? speak;  
Recover breath; tell us how near is danger,  
That we may arm us to encounter it.

**DUKE OF YORK**

Peruse this writing here, and thou shalt know

The treason that my haste forbids me show.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Remember, as thou read'st, thy promise pass'd:  
I do repent me; read not my name there  
My heart is not confederate with my hand.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

It was, villain, ere thy hand did set it down.  
I tore it from the traitor's bosom, king;  
Fear, and not love, begets his penitence:  
Forget to pity him, lest thy pity prove  
A serpent that will sting thee to the heart.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

O heinous, strong and bold conspiracy!  
O loyal father of a treacherous son!  
Thou sheer, immaculate and silver fountain,  
From when this stream through muddy passages  
Hath held his current and defiled himself!  
Thy overflow of good converts to bad,  
And thy abundant goodness shall excuse  
This deadly blot in thy digressing son.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

So shall my virtue be his vice's bawd;  
And he shall spend mine honour with his shame,  
As thriftless sons their scraping fathers' gold.  
Mine honour lives when his dishonour dies,  
Or my shamed life in his dishonour lies:  
Thou kill'st me in his life; giving him breath,  
The traitor lives, the true man's put to death.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

[Within] What ho, my liege! for God's sake,  
let me in.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

What shrill-voiced suppliant makes this eager cry?

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

A woman, and thy aunt, great king; 'tis I.  
Speak with me, pity me, open the door.  
A beggar begs that never begg'd before.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Our scene is alter'd from a serious thing,  
And now changed to 'The Beggar and the King.'  
My dangerous cousin, let your mother in:  
I know she is come to pray for your foul sin.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

If thou do pardon, whosoever pray,  
More sins for this forgiveness prosper may.  
This fester'd joint cut off, the rest rest sound;  
This let alone will all the rest confound.

*Enter DUCHESS OF YORK*

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

O king, believe not this hard-hearted man!  
Love loving not itself none other can.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Thou frantic woman, what dost thou make here?  
Shall thy old dugs once more a traitor rear?

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Sweet York, be patient. Hear me, gentle liege.

*Kneels*

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Rise up, good aunt.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Not yet, I thee beseech:  
For ever will I walk upon my knees,  
And never see day that the happy sees,  
Till thou give joy; until thou bid me joy,  
By pardoning Rutland, my transgressing boy.

## **DUKE OF AUMERLE**

Unto my mother's prayers I bend my knee.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Against them both my true joints bended be.  
Ill mayst thou thrive, if thou grant any grace!

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Pleas he in earnest? look upon his face;  
His eyes do drop no tears, his prayers are in jest;  
His words come from his mouth, ours from our breast:  
He prays but faintly and would be denied;  
We pray with heart and soul and all beside:  
His weary joints would gladly rise, I know;  
Our knees shall kneel till to the ground they grow:  
His prayers are full of false hypocrisy;  
Ours of true zeal and deep integrity.  
Our prayers do out-pray his; then let them have  
That mercy which true prayer ought to have.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Good aunt, stand up.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Nay, do not say, 'stand up;'  
Say, 'pardon' first, and afterwards 'stand up.'  
And if I were thy nurse, thy tongue to teach,  
'Pardon' should be the first word of thy speech.  
I never long'd to hear a word till now;  
Say 'pardon,' king; let pity teach thee how:  
The word is short, but not so short as sweet;  
No word like 'pardon' for kings' mouths so meet.

## **DUKE OF YORK**

Speak it in French, king; say, 'pardonne moi.'

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Dost thou teach pardon pardon to destroy?  
Ah, my sour husband, my hard-hearted lord,  
That set'st the word itself against the word!  
Speak 'pardon' as 'tis current in our land;  
The chopping French we do not understand.  
Thine eye begins to speak; set thy tongue there;  
Or in thy piteous heart plant thou thine ear;  
That hearing how our plaints and prayers do pierce,  
Pity may move thee 'pardon' to rehearse.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Good aunt, stand up.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

I do not sue to stand;  
Pardon is all the suit I have in hand.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

I pardon him, as God shall pardon me.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

O happy vantage of a kneeling knee!  
Yet am I sick for fear: speak it again;

Twice saying 'pardon' doth not pardon twain,  
But makes one pardon strong.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

With all my heart  
I pardon him.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

A god on earth thou art.

**HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

But for our trusty brother-in-law and the abbot,  
With all the rest of that consorted crew,  
Destruction straight shall dog them at the heels.  
Good uncle, help to order several powers  
To Oxford, or where'er these traitors are:  
They shall not live within this world, I swear,  
But I will have them, if I once know where.  
Uncle, farewell: and, cousin too, adieu:  
Your mother well hath pray'd, and prove you true.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Come, my old son: I pray God make thee new.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same.

*Enter EXTON and Servant*

**EXTON**

Didst thou not mark the king, what words he spake,  
'Have I no friend will rid me of this living fear?'  
Was it not so?

**Servant**

These were his very words.

**EXTON**

'Have I no friend?' quoth he: he spake it twice,  
And urged it twice together, did he not?

**Servant**

He did.

**EXTON**

And speaking it, he wistly look'd on me,  
And who should say, 'I would thou wert the man'  
That would divorce this terror from my heart;'  
Meaning the king at Pomfret. Come, let's go:  
I am the king's friend, and will rid his foe.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Pomfret castle.

*Enter KING RICHARD*

### KING RICHARD II

I have been studying how I may compare  
This prison where I live unto the world:  
And for because the world is populous  
And here is not a creature but myself,  
I cannot do it; yet I'll hammer it out.  
My brain I'll prove the female to my soul,  
My soul the father; and these two beget  
A generation of still-breeding thoughts,  
And these same thoughts people this little world,  
In humours like the people of this world,  
For no thought is contented. The better sort,  
As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd  
With scruples and do set the word itself  
Against the word:  
As thus, 'Come, little ones,' and then again,  
'It is as hard to come as for a camel  
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'  
Thoughts tending to ambition, they do plot  
Unlikely wonders; how these vain weak nails  
May tear a passage through the flinty ribs  
Of this hard world, my ragged prison walls,  
And, for they cannot, die in their own pride.  
Thoughts tending to content flatter themselves  
That they are not the first of fortune's slaves,  
Nor shall not be the last; like silly beggars  
Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,  
That many have and others must sit there;  
And in this thought they find a kind of ease,  
Bearing their own misfortunes on the back  
Of such as have before endured the like.  
Thus play I in one person many people,

And none contented: sometimes am I king;  
Then treasons make me wish myself a beggar,  
And so I am: then crushing penury  
Persuades me I was better when a king;  
Then am I king'd again: and by and by  
Think that I am unking'd by Bolingbroke,  
And straight am nothing: but whate'er I be,  
Nor I nor any man that but man is  
With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased  
With being nothing. Music do I hear?

*Music*

Ha, ha! keep time: how sour sweet music is,  
When time is broke and no proportion kept!  
So is it in the music of men's lives.  
And here have I the daintiness of ear  
To cheque time broke in a disorder'd string;  
But for the concord of my state and time  
Had not an ear to hear my true time broke.  
I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;  
For now hath time made me his numbering clock:  
My thoughts are minutes; and with sighs they jar  
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,  
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,  
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.  
Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is  
Are clamorous groans, which strike upon my heart,  
Which is the bell: so sighs and tears and groans  
Show minutes, times, and hours: but my time  
Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,  
While I stand fooling here, his Jack o' the clock.  
This music mads me; let it sound no more;  
For though it have help madmen to their wits,  
In me it seems it will make wise men mad.  
Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me!  
For 'tis a sign of love; and love to Richard  
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

*Enter a Groom of the Stable*

**Groom**

Hail, royal prince!

**KING RICHARD II**

Thanks, noble peer;  
The cheapest of us is ten groats too dear.  
What art thou? and how comest thou hither,  
Where no man never comes but that sad dog  
That brings me food to make misfortune live?

**Groom**

I was a poor groom of thy stable, king,  
When thou wert king; who, travelling towards York,  
With much ado at length have gotten leave  
To look upon my sometimes royal master's face.  
O, how it yearn'd my heart when I beheld  
In London streets, that coronation-day,  
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary,  
That horse that thou so often hast bestrid,  
That horse that I so carefully have dress'd!

**KING RICHARD II**

Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,  
How went he under him?

**Groom**

So proudly as if he disdain'd the ground.

**KING RICHARD II**

So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back!  
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;  
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.  
Would he not stumble? would he not fall down,  
Since pride must have a fall, and break the neck  
Of that proud man that did usurp his back?  
Forgiveness, horse! why do I rail on thee,  
Since thou, created to be awed by man,  
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse;

And yet I bear a burthen like an ass,  
Spurr'd, gall'd and tired by jouncing Bolingbroke.

*Enter Keeper, with a dish*

**Keeper**

Fellow, give place; here is no longer stay.

**KING RICHARD II**

If thou love me, 'tis time thou wert away.

**Groom**

What my tongue dares not, that my heart shall say.

*Exit*

**Keeper**

My lord, will't please you to fall to?

**KING RICHARD II**

Taste of it first, as thou art wont to do.

**Keeper**

My lord, I dare not: Sir Pierce of Exton, who  
lately came from the king, commands the contrary.

**KING RICHARD II**

The devil take Henry of Lancaster and thee!  
Patience is stale, and I am weary of it.

*Beats the keeper*

**Keeper**

Help, help, help!

*Enter EXTON and Servants, armed*

## **KING RICHARD II**

How now! what means death in this rude assault?  
Villain, thy own hand yields thy death's instrument.

*Snatching an axe from a Servant and killing him*

Go thou, and fill another room in hell.

*He kills another. Then Exton strikes him down*

That hand shall burn in never-quickning fire  
That staggers thus my person. Exton, thy fierce hand  
Hath with the king's blood stain'd the king's own land.  
Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high;  
Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward, here to die.

*Dies*

## **EXTON**

As full of valour as of royal blood:  
Both have I spill'd; O would the deed were good!  
For now the devil, that told me I did well,  
Says that this deed is chronicled in hell.  
This dead king to the living king I'll bear  
Take hence the rest, and give them burial here.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Second

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard II](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Windsor castle.

*Flourish. Enter HENRY BOLINGBROKE, DUKE OF YORK, with other Lords, and Attendants*

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

Kind uncle York, the latest news we hear  
Is that the rebels have consumed with fire  
Our town of Cicester in Gloucestershire;  
But whether they be ta'en or slain we hear not.

*Enter NORTHUMBERLAND*

Welcome, my lord what is the news?

### NORTHUMBERLAND

First, to thy sacred state wish I all happiness.  
The next news is, I have to London sent  
The heads of Oxford, Salisbury, Blunt, and Kent:  
The manner of their taking may appear  
At large discoursed in this paper here.

### HENRY BOLINGBROKE

We thank thee, gentle Percy, for thy pains;  
And to thy worth will add right worthy gains.

*Enter LORD FITZWATER*

### LORD FITZWATER

My lord, I have from Oxford sent to London  
The heads of Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely,  
Two of the dangerous consorted traitors

That sought at Oxford thy dire overthrow.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Thy pains, Fitzwater, shall not be forgot;  
Right noble is thy merit, well I wot.

*Enter HENRY PERCY, and the BISHOP OF CARLISLE*

## **HENRY PERCY**

The grand conspirator, Abbot of Westminster,  
With clog of conscience and sour melancholy  
Hath yielded up his body to the grave;  
But here is Carlisle living, to abide  
Thy kingly doom and sentence of his pride.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Carlisle, this is your doom:  
Choose out some secret place, some reverend room,  
More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life;  
So as thou livest in peace, die free from strife:  
For though mine enemy thou hast ever been,  
High sparks of honour in thee have I seen.

*Enter EXTON, with persons bearing a coffin*

## **EXTON**

Great king, within this coffin I present  
Thy buried fear: herein all breathless lies  
The mightiest of thy greatest enemies,  
Richard of Bordeaux, by me hither brought.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

Exton, I thank thee not; for thou hast wrought  
A deed of slander with thy fatal hand  
Upon my head and all this famous land.



## **EXTON**

From your own mouth, my lord, did I this deed.

## **HENRY BOLINGBROKE**

They love not poison that do poison need,  
Nor do I thee: though I did wish him dead,  
I hate the murderer, love him murdered.  
The guilt of conscience take thou for thy labour,  
But neither my good word nor princely favour:  
With Cain go wander through shades of night,  
And never show thy head by day nor light.  
Lords, I protest, my soul is full of woe,  
That blood should sprinkle me to make me grow:  
Come, mourn with me for that I do lament,  
And put on sullen black incontinent:  
I'll make a voyage to the Holy Land,  
To wash this blood off from my guilty hand:  
March sadly after; grace my mournings here;  
In weeping after this untimely bier.

*Exeunt*

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Richard III

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [London. A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The same. Another street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [London. The Tower.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [The palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [London. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [London. A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Before Lord Hastings' house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Pomfret Castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [The Tower of London.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [The Tower-walls.](#)

Act 3, Scene 6: [The same.](#)

Act 3, Scene 7: [Baynard's Castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Before the Tower.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [London. The palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [Before the palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Lord Derby's house.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Salisbury. An open place.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The camp near Tamworth.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Bosworth Field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Another part of the field.](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. A street.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, solus*

### GLOUCESTER

Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;  
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house  
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.  
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;  
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;  
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,  
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.  
Grim-visaged war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;  
And now, instead of mounting barded steeds  
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,  
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber  
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.  
But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;  
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,  
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time  
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
And that so lamely and unfashionable  
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;  
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,  
Have no delight to pass away the time,  
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun  
And descant on mine own deformity:  
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,  
I am determin'd to prove a villain  
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,  
By drunken prophecies, libels and dreams,  
To set my brother Clarence and the king  
In deadly hate the one against the other:  
And if King Edward be as true and just  
As I am subtle, false and treacherous,  
This day should Clarence closely be mew'd up,  
About a prophecy, which says that 'G'  
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.  
Dive, thoughts, down to my soul: here  
Clarence comes.

*Enter CLARENCE, guarded, and BRAKENBURY*

Brother, good day; what means this armed guard  
That waits upon your grace?

**CLARENCE**

His majesty  
Tendering my person's safety, hath appointed  
This conduct to convey me to the Tower.

**GLOUCESTER**

Upon what cause?

**CLARENCE**

Because my name is George.

**GLOUCESTER**

Alack, my lord, that fault is none of yours;  
He should, for that, commit your godfathers:  
O, belike his majesty hath some intent  
That you shall be new-christen'd in the Tower.  
But what's the matter, Clarence? may I know?

**CLARENCE**

Yea, Richard, when I know; for I protest

As yet I do not: but, as I can learn,  
He hearkens after prophecies and dreams;  
And from the cross-row plucks the letter G.  
And says a wizard told him that by G  
His issue disinherited should be;  
And, for my name of George begins with G,  
It follows in his thought that I am he.  
These, as I learn, and such like toys as these  
Have moved his highness to commit me now.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Why, this it is, when men are ruled by women:  
'Tis not the king that sends you to the Tower:  
My Lady Grey his wife, Clarence, 'tis she  
That tempers him to this extremity.  
Was it not she and that good man of worship,  
Anthony Woodville, her brother there,  
That made him send Lord Hastings to the Tower,  
From whence this present day he is deliver'd?  
We are not safe, Clarence; we are not safe.

## **CLARENCE**

By heaven, I think there's no man is secure  
But the queen's kindred and night-walking heralds  
That trudge betwixt the king and Mistress Shore.  
Heard ye not what an humble suppliant  
Lord Hastings was to her for his delivery?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Humbly complaining to her deity  
Got my lord chamberlain his liberty.  
I'll tell you what; I think it is our way,  
If we will keep in favour with the king,  
To be her men and wear her livery:  
The jealous o'erworn widow and herself,  
Since that our brother dubb'd them gentlewomen.  
Are mighty gossips in this monarchy.

## **BRAKENBURY**

I beseech your graces both to pardon me;  
His majesty hath straitly given in charge  
That no man shall have private conference,  
Of what degree soever, with his brother.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Even so; an't please your worship, Brakenbury,  
You may partake of any thing we say:  
We speak no treason, man: we say the king  
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen  
Well struck in years, fair, and not jealous;  
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,  
A cherry lip, a bonny eye, a passing pleasing tongue;  
And that the queen's kindred are made gentle-folks:  
How say you sir? Can you deny all this?

## **BRAKENBURY**

With this, my lord, myself have nought to do.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Naught to do with mistress Shore! I tell thee, fellow,  
He that doth naught with her, excepting one,  
Were best he do it secretly, alone.

## **BRAKENBURY**

What one, my lord?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Her husband, knave: wouldst thou betray me?

## **BRAKENBURY**

I beseech your grace to pardon me, and withal  
Forbear your conference with the noble duke.

## **CLARENCE**

We know thy charge, Brakenbury, and will obey.

**GLOUCESTER**

We are the queen's abjects, and must obey.  
Brother, farewell: I will unto the king;  
And whatsoever you will employ me in,  
Were it to call King Edward's widow sister,  
I will perform it to enfranchise you.  
Meantime, this deep disgrace in brotherhood  
Touches me deeper than you can imagine.

**CLARENCE**

I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

**GLOUCESTER**

Well, your imprisonment shall not be long;  
Meantime, have patience.

**CLARENCE**

I must perforce. Farewell.

*Exeunt CLARENCE, BRAKENBURY, and Guard*

**GLOUCESTER**

Go, tread the path that thou shalt ne'er return.  
Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,  
That I will shortly send thy soul to heaven,  
If heaven will take the present at our hands.  
But who comes here? the new-deliver'd Hastings?

*Enter HASTINGS*

**HASTINGS**

Good time of day unto my gracious lord!

## **GLOUCESTER**

As much unto my good lord chamberlain!  
Well are you welcome to the open air.  
How hath your lordship brook'd imprisonment?

## **HASTINGS**

With patience, noble lord, as prisoners must:  
But I shall live, my lord, to give them thanks  
That were the cause of my imprisonment.

## **GLOUCESTER**

No doubt, no doubt; and so shall Clarence too;  
For they that were your enemies are his,  
And have prevail'd as much on him as you.

## **HASTINGS**

More pity that the eagle should be mew'd,  
While kites and buzzards prey at liberty.

## **GLOUCESTER**

What news abroad?

## **HASTINGS**

No news so bad abroad as this at home;  
The King is sickly, weak and melancholy,  
And his physicians fear him mightily.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Now, by Saint Paul, this news is bad indeed.  
O, he hath kept an evil diet long,  
And overmuch consumed his royal person:  
'Tis very grievous to be thought upon.  
What, is he in his bed?



## HASTINGS

He is.

## GLOUCESTER

Go you before, and I will follow you.

*Exit HASTINGS*

He cannot live, I hope; and must not die  
Till George be pack'd with post-horse up to heaven.  
I'll in, to urge his hatred more to Clarence,  
With lies well steel'd with weighty arguments;  
And, if I fall not in my deep intent,  
Clarence hath not another day to live:  
Which done, God take King Edward to his mercy,  
And leave the world for me to bustle in!  
For then I'll marry Warwick's youngest daughter.  
What though I kill'd her husband and her father?  
The readiest way to make the wench amends  
Is to become her husband and her father:  
The which will I; not all so much for love  
As for another secret close intent,  
By marrying her which I must reach unto.  
But yet I run before my horse to market:  
Clarence still breathes; Edward still lives and reigns:  
When they are gone, then must I count my gains.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. Another street.

*Enter the corpse of KING HENRY the Sixth, Gentlemen with halberds to guard it; LADY ANNE being the mourner*

### LADY ANNE

Set down, set down your honourable load,  
If honour may be shrouded in a hearse,  
Whilst I awhile obsequiously lament  
The untimely fall of virtuous Lancaster.  
Poor key-cold figure of a holy king!  
Pale ashes of the house of Lancaster!  
Thou bloodless remnant of that royal blood!  
Be it lawful that I invoke thy ghost,  
To hear the lamentations of Poor Anne,  
Wife to thy Edward, to thy slaughter'd son,  
Stabb'd by the selfsame hand that made these wounds!  
Lo, in these windows that let forth thy life,  
I pour the helpless balm of my poor eyes.  
Cursed be the hand that made these fatal holes!  
Cursed be the heart that had the heart to do it!  
Cursed the blood that let this blood from hence!  
More direful hap betide that hated wretch,  
That makes us wretched by the death of thee,  
Than I can wish to adders, spiders, toads,  
Or any creeping venom'd thing that lives!  
If ever he have child, abortive be it,  
Prodigious, and untimely brought to light,  
Whose ugly and unnatural aspect  
May fright the hopeful mother at the view;  
And that be heir to his unhappiness!  
If ever he have wife, let her he made  
A miserable by the death of him  
As I am made by my poor lord and thee!  
Come, now towards Chertsey with your holy load,  
Taken from Paul's to be interred there;

And still, as you are weary of the weight,  
Rest you, whiles I lament King Henry's corse.

*Enter GLOUCESTER*

**GLOUCESTER**

Stay, you that bear the corse, and set it down.

**LADY ANNE**

What black magician conjures up this fiend,  
To stop devoted charitable deeds?

**GLOUCESTER**

Villains, set down the corse; or, by Saint Paul,  
I'll make a corse of him that disobeys.

**Gentleman**

My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass.

**GLOUCESTER**

Unmanner'd dog! stand thou, when I command:  
Advance thy halbert higher than my breast,  
Or, by Saint Paul, I'll strike thee to my foot,  
And spurn upon thee, beggar, for thy boldness.

**LADY ANNE**

What, do you tremble? are you all afraid?  
Alas, I blame you not; for you are mortal,  
And mortal eyes cannot endure the devil.  
Avaunt, thou dreadful minister of hell!  
Thou hadst but power over his mortal body,  
His soul thou canst not have; therefore be gone.

**GLOUCESTER**

Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst.

**LADY ANNE**

Foul devil, for God's sake, hence, and trouble us not;  
For thou hast made the happy earth thy hell,  
Fill'd it with cursing cries and deep exclaims.  
If thou delight to view thy heinous deeds,  
Behold this pattern of thy butcheries.  
O, gentlemen, see, see! dead Henry's wounds  
Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh!  
Blush, Blush, thou lump of foul deformity;  
For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood  
From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells;  
Thy deed, inhuman and unnatural,  
Provokes this deluge most unnatural.  
O God, which this blood madest, revenge his death!  
O earth, which this blood drink'st revenge his death!  
Either heaven with lightning strike the  
murderer dead,  
Or earth, gape open wide and eat him quick,  
As thou dost swallow up this good king's blood  
Which his hell-govern'd arm hath butchered!

**GLOUCESTER**

Lady, you know no rules of charity,  
Which renders good for bad, blessings for curses.

**LADY ANNE**

Villain, thou know'st no law of God nor man:  
No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity.

**GLOUCESTER**

But I know none, and therefore am no beast.

**LADY ANNE**

O wonderful, when devils tell the truth!

**GLOUCESTER**

More wonderful, when angels are so angry.  
Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman,  
Of these supposed-evils, to give me leave,  
By circumstance, but to acquit myself.

**LADY ANNE**

Vouchsafe, defused infection of a man,  
For these known evils, but to give me leave,  
By circumstance, to curse thy cursed self.

**GLOUCESTER**

Fairer than tongue can name thee, let me have  
Some patient leisure to excuse myself.

**LADY ANNE**

Fouler than heart can think thee, thou canst make  
No excuse current, but to hang thyself.

**GLOUCESTER**

By such despair, I should accuse myself.

**LADY ANNE**

And, by despairing, shouldst thou stand excused;  
For doing worthy vengeance on thyself,  
Which didst unworthy slaughter upon others.

**GLOUCESTER**

Say that I slew them not?

**LADY ANNE**

Why, then they are not dead:  
But dead they are, and devilish slave, by thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

I did not kill your husband.

**LADY ANNE**

Why, then he is alive.

**GLOUCESTER**

Nay, he is dead; and slain by Edward's hand.

**LADY ANNE**

In thy foul throat thou liest: Queen Margaret saw  
Thy murderous falchion smoking in his blood;  
The which thou once didst bend against her breast,  
But that thy brothers beat aside the point.

**GLOUCESTER**

I was provoked by her slanderous tongue,  
which laid their guilt upon my guiltless shoulders.

**LADY ANNE**

Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind.  
Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries:  
Didst thou not kill this king?

**GLOUCESTER**

I grant ye.

**LADY ANNE**

Dost grant me, hedgehog? then, God grant me too  
Thou mayst be damned for that wicked deed!  
O, he was gentle, mild, and virtuous!

**GLOUCESTER**

The fitter for the King of heaven, that hath him.

**LADY ANNE**

He is in heaven, where thou shalt never come.

**GLOUCESTER**

Let him thank me, that help to send him thither;  
For he was fitter for that place than earth.

**LADY ANNE**

And thou unfit for any place but hell.

**GLOUCESTER**

Yes, one place else, if you will hear me name it.

**LADY ANNE**

Some dungeon.

**GLOUCESTER**

Your bed-chamber.

**LADY ANNE**

I'll rest betide the chamber where thou liest!

**GLOUCESTER**

So will it, madam till I lie with you.

**LADY ANNE**

I hope so.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I know so. But, gentle Lady Anne,  
To leave this keen encounter of our wits,  
And fall somewhat into a slower method,  
Is not the causer of the timeless deaths  
Of these Plantagenets, Henry and Edward,  
As blameful as the executioner?

## **LADY ANNE**

Thou art the cause, and most accursed effect.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Your beauty was the cause of that effect;  
Your beauty: which did haunt me in my sleep  
To undertake the death of all the world,  
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.

## **LADY ANNE**

If I thought that, I tell thee, homicide,  
These nails should rend that beauty from my cheeks.

## **GLOUCESTER**

These eyes could never endure sweet beauty's wreck;  
You should not blemish it, if I stood by:  
As all the world is cheered by the sun,  
So I by that; it is my day, my life.

## **LADY ANNE**

Black night o'ershade thy day, and death thy life!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Curse not thyself, fair creature thou art both.

## **LADY ANNE**



I would I were, to be revenged on thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

It is a quarrel most unnatural,  
To be revenged on him that loveth you.

**LADY ANNE**

It is a quarrel just and reasonable,  
To be revenged on him that slew my husband.

**GLOUCESTER**

He that bereft thee, lady, of thy husband,  
Did it to help thee to a better husband.

**LADY ANNE**

His better doth not breathe upon the earth.

**GLOUCESTER**

He lives that loves thee better than he could.

**LADY ANNE**

Name him.

**GLOUCESTER**

Plantagenet.

**LADY ANNE**

Why, that was he.

**GLOUCESTER**

The selfsame name, but one of better nature.

**LADY ANNE**

Where is he?

**GLOUCESTER**

Here.

*She spitteth at him*

Why dost thou spit at me?

**LADY ANNE**

Would it were mortal poison, for thy sake!

**GLOUCESTER**

Never came poison from so sweet a place.

**LADY ANNE**

Never hung poison on a fouler toad.  
Out of my sight! thou dost infect my eyes.

**GLOUCESTER**

Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

**LADY ANNE**

Would they were basilisks, to strike thee dead!

**GLOUCESTER**

I would they were, that I might die at once;  
For now they kill me with a living death.  
Those eyes of thine from mine have drawn salt tears,  
Shamed their aspect with store of childish drops:  
These eyes that never shed remorseful tear,

No, when my father York and Edward wept,  
To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made  
When black-faced Clifford shook his sword at him;  
Nor when thy warlike father, like a child,  
Told the sad story of my father's death,  
And twenty times made pause to sob and weep,  
That all the standers-by had wet their cheeks  
Like trees bedash'd with rain: in that sad time  
My manly eyes did scorn an humble tear;  
And what these sorrows could not thence exhale,  
Thy beauty hath, and made them blind with weeping.  
I never sued to friend nor enemy;  
My tongue could never learn sweet smoothing word;  
But now thy beauty is proposed my fee,  
My proud heart sues, and prompts my tongue to speak.

*She looks scornfully at him*

Teach not thy lips such scorn, for they were made  
For kissing, lady, not for such contempt.  
If thy revengeful heart cannot forgive,  
Lo, here I lend thee this sharp-pointed sword;  
Which if thou please to hide in this true bosom.  
And let the soul forth that adareth thee,  
I lay it naked to the deadly stroke,  
And humbly beg the death upon my knee.

*He lays his breast open: she offers at it with his sword*

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,  
But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.  
Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabb'd young Edward,  
But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

*Here she lets fall the sword*

Take up the sword again, or take up me.

## **LADY ANNE**

Arise, dissembler: though I wish thy death,  
I will not be the executioner.

**GLOUCESTER**

Then bid me kill myself, and I will do it.

**LADY ANNE**

I have already.

**GLOUCESTER**

Tush, that was in thy rage:  
Speak it again, and, even with the word,  
That hand, which, for thy love, did kill thy love,  
Shall, for thy love, kill a far truer love;  
To both their deaths thou shalt be accessory.

**LADY ANNE**

I would I knew thy heart.

**GLOUCESTER**

'Tis figured in my tongue.

**LADY ANNE**

I fear me both are false.

**GLOUCESTER**

Then never man was true.

**LADY ANNE**

Well, well, put up your sword.

**GLOUCESTER**

Say, then, my peace is made.

**LADY ANNE**

That shall you know hereafter.

**GLOUCESTER**

But shall I live in hope?

**LADY ANNE**

All men, I hope, live so.

**GLOUCESTER**

Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

**LADY ANNE**

To take is not to give.

**GLOUCESTER**

Look, how this ring encompasseth finger.  
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart;  
Wear both of them, for both of them are thine.  
And if thy poor devoted suppliant may  
But beg one favour at thy gracious hand,  
Thou dost confirm his happiness for ever.

**LADY ANNE**

What is it?

**GLOUCESTER**

That it would please thee leave these sad designs  
To him that hath more cause to be a mourner,  
And presently repair to Crosby Place;  
Where, after I have solemnly interr'd  
At Chertsey monastery this noble king,  
And wet his grave with my repentant tears,

I will with all expedient duty see you:  
For divers unknown reasons. I beseech you,  
Grant me this boon.

**LADY ANNE**

With all my heart; and much it joys me too,  
To see you are become so penitent.  
Tressel and Berkeley, go along with me.

**GLOUCESTER**

Bid me farewell.

**LADY ANNE**

'Tis more than you deserve;  
But since you teach me how to flatter you,  
Imagine I have said farewell already.

*Exeunt LADY ANNE, TRESSEL, and BERKELEY*

**GLOUCESTER**

Sirs, take up the corse.

**GENTLEMEN**

Towards Chertsey, noble lord?

**GLOUCESTER**

No, to White-Friars; there attend my coining.

*Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER*

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?  
Was ever woman in this humour won?  
I'll have her; but I will not keep her long.  
What! I, that kill'd her husband and his father,  
To take her in her heart's extremest hate,

With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,  
The bleeding witness of her hatred by;  
Having God, her conscience, and these bars  
against me,  
And I nothing to back my suit at all,  
But the plain devil and dissembling looks,  
And yet to win her, all the world to nothing!  
Ha!  
Hath she forgot already that brave prince,  
Edward, her lord, whom I, some three months since,  
Stabb'd in my angry mood at Tewksbury?  
A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman,  
Framed in the prodigality of nature,  
Young, valiant, wise, and, no doubt, right royal,  
The spacious world cannot again afford  
And will she yet debase her eyes on me,  
That cropp'd the golden prime of this sweet prince,  
And made her widow to a woful bed?  
On me, whose all not equals Edward's moiety?  
On me, that halt and am unshapen thus?  
My dukedom to a beggarly denier,  
I do mistake my person all this while:  
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,  
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.  
I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,  
And entertain some score or two of tailors,  
To study fashions to adorn my body:  
Since I am crept in favour with myself,  
Will maintain it with some little cost.  
But first I'll turn yon fellow in his grave;  
And then return lamenting to my love.  
Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass,  
That I may see my shadow as I pass.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The palace.

*Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, RIVERS, and GREY*

### RIVERS

Have patience, madam: there's no doubt his majesty  
Will soon recover his accustom'd health.

### GREY

In that you brook it in, it makes him worse:  
Therefore, for God's sake, entertain good comfort,  
And cheer his grace with quick and merry words.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

If he were dead, what would betide of me?

### RIVERS

No other harm but loss of such a lord.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

The loss of such a lord includes all harm.

### GREY

The heavens have bless'd you with a goodly son,  
To be your comforter when he is gone.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

Oh, he is young and his minority



Is put unto the trust of Richard Gloucester,  
A man that loves not me, nor none of you.

## **RIVERS**

Is it concluded that he shall be protector?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

It is determined, not concluded yet:  
But so it must be, if the king miscarry.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM and DERBY*

## **GREY**

Here come the lords of Buckingham and Derby.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Good time of day unto your royal grace!

## **DERBY**

God make your majesty joyful as you have been!

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

The Countess Richmond, good my Lord of Derby.  
To your good prayers will scarcely say amen.  
Yet, Derby, notwithstanding she's your wife,  
And loves not me, be you, good lord, assured  
I hate not you for her proud arrogance.

## **DERBY**

I do beseech you, either not believe  
The envious slanders of her false accusers;  
Or, if she be accused in true report,  
Bear with her weakness, which, I think proceeds  
From wayward sickness, and no grounded malice.

## **RIVERS**

Saw you the king to-day, my Lord of Derby?

## **DERBY**

But now the Duke of Buckingham and I  
Are come from visiting his majesty.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What likelihood of his amendment, lords?

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Madam, good hope; his grace speaks cheerfully.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

God grant him health! Did you confer with him?

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Madam, we did: he desires to make atonement  
Betwixt the Duke of Gloucester and your brothers,  
And betwixt them and my lord chamberlain;  
And sent to warn them to his royal presence.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Would all were well! but that will never be  
I fear our happiness is at the highest.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, HASTINGS, and DORSET*

## **GLOUCESTER**

They do me wrong, and I will not endure it:  
Who are they that complain unto the king,  
That I, forsooth, am stern, and love them not?

By holy Paul, they love his grace but lightly  
That fill his ears with such dissentious rumours.  
Because I cannot flatter and speak fair,  
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive and cog,  
Duck with French nods and apish courtesy,  
I must be held a rancorous enemy.  
Cannot a plain man live and think no harm,  
But thus his simple truth must be abused  
By silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?

## **RIVERS**

To whom in all this presence speaks your grace?

## **GLOUCESTER**

To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace.  
When have I injured thee? when done thee wrong?  
Or thee? or thee? or any of your faction?  
A plague upon you all! His royal person,--  
Whom God preserve better than you would wish!--  
Cannot be quiet scarce a breathing-while,  
But you must trouble him with lewd complaints.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Brother of Gloucester, you mistake the matter.  
The king, of his own royal disposition,  
And not provoked by any suitor else;  
Aiming, belike, at your interior hatred,  
Which in your outward actions shows itself  
Against my kindred, brothers, and myself,  
Makes him to send; that thereby he may gather  
The ground of your ill-will, and so remove it.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad,  
That wrens make prey where eagles dare not perch:  
Since every Jack became a gentleman  
There's many a gentle person made a Jack.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Come, come, we know your meaning, brother  
Gloucester;  
You envy my advancement and my friends':  
God grant we never may have need of you!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Meantime, God grants that we have need of you:  
Your brother is imprison'd by your means,  
Myself disgraced, and the nobility  
Held in contempt; whilst many fair promotions  
Are daily given to ennoble those  
That scarce, some two days since, were worth a noble.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

By Him that raised me to this careful height  
From that contented hap which I enjoy'd,  
I never did incense his majesty  
Against the Duke of Clarence, but have been  
An earnest advocate to plead for him.  
My lord, you do me shameful injury,  
Falsely to draw me in these vile suspects.

## **GLOUCESTER**

You may deny that you were not the cause  
Of my Lord Hastings' late imprisonment.

## **RIVERS**

She may, my lord, for--

## **GLOUCESTER**

She may, Lord Rivers! why, who knows not so?  
She may do more, sir, than denying that:  
She may help you to many fair preferments,  
And then deny her aiding hand therein,  
And lay those honours on your high deserts.

What may she not? She may, yea, marry, may she--

## **RIVERS**

What, marry, may she?

## **GLOUCESTER**

What, marry, may she! marry with a king,  
A bachelor, a handsome stripling too:  
I wis your grandam had a worsen match.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

My Lord of Gloucester, I have too long borne  
Your blunt upbraidings and your bitter scoffs:  
By heaven, I will acquaint his majesty  
With those gross taunts I often have endured.  
I had rather be a country servant-maid  
Than a great queen, with this condition,  
To be thus taunted, scorn'd, and baited at:

*Enter QUEEN MARGARET, behind*

Small joy have I in being England's queen.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

And lessen'd be that small, God, I beseech thee!  
Thy honour, state and seat is due to me.

## **GLOUCESTER**

What! threat you me with telling of the king?  
Tell him, and spare not: look, what I have said  
I will avouch in presence of the king:  
I dare adventure to be sent to the Tower.  
'Tis time to speak; my pains are quite forgot.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Out, devil! I remember them too well:  
Thou slewest my husband Henry in the Tower,  
And Edward, my poor son, at Tewksbury.

**GLOUCESTER**

Ere you were queen, yea, or your husband king,  
I was a pack-horse in his great affairs;  
A weeder-out of his proud adversaries,  
A liberal rewarder of his friends:  
To royalize his blood I spilt mine own.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Yea, and much better blood than his or thine.

**GLOUCESTER**

In all which time you and your husband Grey  
Were factious for the house of Lancaster;  
And, Rivers, so were you. Was not your husband  
In Margaret's battle at Saint Alban's slain?  
Let me put in your minds, if you forget,  
What you have been ere now, and what you are;  
Withal, what I have been, and what I am.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

A murderous villain, and so still thou art.

**GLOUCESTER**

Poor Clarence did forsake his father, Warwick;  
Yea, and forswore himself,--which Jesu pardon!--

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Which God revenge!

**GLOUCESTER**

To fight on Edward's party for the crown;  
And for his meed, poor lord, he is mew'd up.  
I would to God my heart were flint, like Edward's;  
Or Edward's soft and pitiful, like mine  
I am too childish-foolish for this world.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Hie thee to hell for shame, and leave the world,  
Thou cacodemon! there thy kingdom is.

## **RIVERS**

My Lord of Gloucester, in those busy days  
Which here you urge to prove us enemies,  
We follow'd then our lord, our lawful king:  
So should we you, if you should be our king.

## **GLOUCESTER**

If I should be! I had rather be a pedlar:  
Far be it from my heart, the thought of it!

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

As little joy, my lord, as you suppose  
You should enjoy, were you this country's king,  
As little joy may you suppose in me.  
That I enjoy, being the queen thereof.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

A little joy enjoys the queen thereof;  
For I am she, and altogether joyless.  
I can no longer hold me patient.

*Advancing*

Hear me, you wrangling pirates, that fall out  
In sharing that which you have pill'd from me!  
Which of you trembles not that looks on me?  
If not, that, I being queen, you bow like subjects,

Yet that, by you deposed, you quake like rebels?  
O gentle villain, do not turn away!

**GLOUCESTER**

Foul wrinkled witch, what makest thou in my sight?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

But repetition of what thou hast marr'd;  
That will I make before I let thee go.

**GLOUCESTER**

Wert thou not banished on pain of death?

**QUEEN MARGARET**

I was; but I do find more pain in banishment  
Than death can yield me here by my abode.  
A husband and a son thou owest to me;  
And thou a kingdom; all of you allegiance:  
The sorrow that I have, by right is yours,  
And all the pleasures you usurp are mine.

**GLOUCESTER**

The curse my noble father laid on thee,  
When thou didst crown his warlike brows with paper  
And with thy scorns drew'st rivers from his eyes,  
And then, to dry them, gavest the duke a clout  
Steep'd in the faultless blood of pretty Rutland--  
His curses, then from bitterness of soul  
Denounced against thee, are all fall'n upon thee;  
And God, not we, hath plagued thy bloody deed.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

So just is God, to right the innocent.

**HASTINGS**



O, 'twas the foulest deed to slay that babe,  
And the most merciless that e'er was heard of!

## **RIVERS**

Tyrants themselves wept when it was reported.

## **DORSET**

No man but prophesied revenge for it.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Northumberland, then present, wept to see it.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

What were you snarling all before I came,  
Ready to catch each other by the throat,  
And turn you all your hatred now on me?  
Did York's dread curse prevail so much with heaven?  
That Henry's death, my lovely Edward's death,  
Their kingdom's loss, my woful banishment,  
Could all but answer for that peevish brat?  
Can curses pierce the clouds and enter heaven?  
Why, then, give way, dull clouds, to my quick curses!  
If not by war, by surfeit die your king,  
As ours by murder, to make him a king!  
Edward thy son, which now is Prince of Wales,  
For Edward my son, which was Prince of Wales,  
Die in his youth by like untimely violence!  
Thyself a queen, for me that was a queen,  
Outlive thy glory, like my wretched self!  
Long mayst thou live to wail thy children's loss;  
And see another, as I see thee now,  
Deck'd in thy rights, as thou art stall'd in mine!  
Long die thy happy days before thy death;  
And, after many lengthen'd hours of grief,  
Die neither mother, wife, nor England's queen!  
Rivers and Dorset, you were standers by,  
And so wast thou, Lord Hastings, when my son  
Was stabb'd with bloody daggers: God, I pray him,

That none of you may live your natural age,  
But by some unlook'd accident cut off!

**GLOUCESTER**

Have done thy charm, thou hateful wither'd hag!

**QUEEN MARGARET**

And leave out thee? stay, dog, for thou shalt hear me.  
If heaven have any grievous plague in store  
Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee,  
O, let them keep it till thy sins be ripe,  
And then hurl down their indignation  
On thee, the troubler of the poor world's peace!  
The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!  
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest,  
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!  
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,  
Unless it be whilst some tormenting dream  
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!  
Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog!  
Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity  
The slave of nature and the son of hell!  
Thou slander of thy mother's heavy womb!  
Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins!  
Thou rag of honour! thou detested--

**GLOUCESTER**

Margaret.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Richard!

**GLOUCESTER**

Ha!

**QUEEN MARGARET**

I call thee not.

**GLOUCESTER**

I cry thee mercy then, for I had thought  
That thou hadst call'd me all these bitter names.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Why, so I did; but look'd for no reply.  
O, let me make the period to my curse!

**GLOUCESTER**

'Tis done by me, and ends in 'Margaret.'

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Thus have you breathed your curse against yourself.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Poor painted queen, vain flourish of my fortune!  
Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider,  
Whose deadly web ensnareth thee about?  
Fool, fool! thou whet'st a knife to kill thyself.  
The time will come when thou shalt wish for me  
To help thee curse that poisonous bunchback'd toad.

**HASTINGS**

False-boding woman, end thy frantic curse,  
Lest to thy harm thou move our patience.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Foul shame upon you! you have all moved mine.

**RIVERS**

Were you well served, you would be taught your duty.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

To serve me well, you all should do me duty,  
Teach me to be your queen, and you my subjects:  
O, serve me well, and teach yourselves that duty!

## **DORSET**

Dispute not with her; she is lunatic.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Peace, master marquess, you are malapert:  
Your fire-new stamp of honour is scarce current.  
O, that your young nobility could judge  
What 'twere to lose it, and be miserable!  
They that stand high have many blasts to shake them;  
And if they fall, they dash themselves to pieces.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Good counsel, marry: learn it, learn it, marquess.

## **DORSET**

It toucheth you, my lord, as much as me.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Yea, and much more: but I was born so high,  
Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,  
And dallies with the wind and scorns the sun.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

And turns the sun to shade; alas! alas!  
Witness my son, now in the shade of death;  
Whose bright out-shining beams thy cloudy wrath  
Hath in eternal darkness folded up.  
Your aery buildeth in our aery's nest.

O God, that seest it, do not suffer it!  
As it was won with blood, lost be it so!

**BUCKINGHAM**

Have done! for shame, if not for charity.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

Urge neither charity nor shame to me:  
Uncharitably with me have you dealt,  
And shamefully by you my hopes are butcher'd.  
My charity is outrage, life my shame  
And in that shame still live my sorrow's rage.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Have done, have done.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

O princely Buckingham I'll kiss thy hand,  
In sign of league and amity with thee:  
Now fair befall thee and thy noble house!  
Thy garments are not spotted with our blood,  
Nor thou within the compass of my curse.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Nor no one here; for curses never pass  
The lips of those that breathe them in the air.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

I'll not believe but they ascend the sky,  
And there awake God's gentle-sleeping peace.  
O Buckingham, take heed of yonder dog!  
Look, when he fawns, he bites; and when he bites,  
His venom tooth will rankle to the death:  
Have not to do with him, beware of him;  
Sin, death, and hell have set their marks on him,  
And all their ministers attend on him.

**GLOUCESTER**

What doth she say, my Lord of Buckingham?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Nothing that I respect, my gracious lord.

**QUEEN MARGARET**

What, dost thou scorn me for my gentle counsel?  
And soothe the devil that I warn thee from?  
O, but remember this another day,  
When he shall split thy very heart with sorrow,  
And say poor Margaret was a prophetess!  
Live each of you the subjects to his hate,  
And he to yours, and all of you to God's!

*Exit*

**HASTINGS**

My hair doth stand on end to hear her curses.

**RIVERS**

And so doth mine: I muse why she's at liberty.

**GLOUCESTER**

I cannot blame her: by God's holy mother,  
She hath had too much wrong; and I repent  
My part thereof that I have done to her.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I never did her any, to my knowledge.

**GLOUCESTER**

But you have all the vantage of her wrong.  
I was too hot to do somebody good,  
That is too cold in thinking of it now.  
Marry, as for Clarence, he is well repaid,  
He is frank'd up to fattening for his pains  
God pardon them that are the cause of it!

## **RIVERS**

A virtuous and a Christian-like conclusion,  
To pray for them that have done scathe to us.

## **GLOUCESTER**

So do I ever:

*Aside*

being well-advised.  
For had I cursed now, I had cursed myself.

*Enter CATESBY*

## **CATESBY**

Madam, his majesty doth call for you,  
And for your grace; and you, my noble lords.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Catesby, we come. Lords, will you go with us?

## **RIVERS**

Madam, we will attend your grace.

*Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER*

## **GLOUCESTER**

I do the wrong, and first begin to brawl.

The secret mischiefs that I set abroad  
I lay unto the grievous charge of others.  
Clarence, whom I, indeed, have laid in darkness,  
I do bewep to many simple gulls  
Namely, to Hastings, Derby, Buckingham;  
And say it is the queen and her allies  
That stir the king against the duke my brother.  
Now, they believe it; and withal whet me  
To be revenged on Rivers, Vaughan, Grey:  
But then I sigh; and, with a piece of scripture,  
Tell them that God bids us do good for evil:  
And thus I clothe my naked villany  
With old odd ends stolen out of holy writ;  
And seem a saint, when most I play the devil.

*Enter two Murderers*

But, soft! here come my executioners.  
How now, my hardy, stout resolved mates!  
Are you now going to dispatch this deed?

### **First Murderer**

We are, my lord; and come to have the warrant  
That we may be admitted where he is.

### **GLOUCESTER**

Well thought upon; I have it here about me.

*Gives the warrant*

When you have done, repair to Crosby Place.  
But, sirs, be sudden in the execution,  
Withal obdurate, do not hear him plead;  
For Clarence is well-spoken, and perhaps  
May move your hearts to pity if you mark him.

### **First Murderer**

Tush!  
Fear not, my lord, we will not stand to prate;



Talkers are no good doers: be assured  
We come to use our hands and not our tongues.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Your eyes drop millstones, when fools' eyes drop tears:  
I like you, lads; about your business straight;  
Go, go, dispatch.

## **First Murderer**

We will, my noble lord.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. London. The Tower.

*Enter CLARENCE and BRAKENBURY*

### BRAKENBURY

Why looks your grace so heavily today?

### CLARENCE

O, I have pass'd a miserable night,  
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,  
That, as I am a Christian faithful man,  
I would not spend another such a night,  
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days,  
So full of dismal terror was the time!

### BRAKENBURY

What was your dream? I long to hear you tell it.

### CLARENCE

Methoughts that I had broken from the Tower,  
And was embark'd to cross to Burgundy;  
And, in my company, my brother Gloucester;  
Who from my cabin tempted me to walk  
Upon the hatches: thence we looked toward England,  
And cited up a thousand fearful times,  
During the wars of York and Lancaster  
That had befall'n us. As we paced along  
Upon the giddy footing of the hatches,  
Methought that Gloucester stumbled; and, in falling,  
Struck me, that thought to stay him, overboard,  
Into the tumbling billows of the main.  
Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!

What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!  
What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!  
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;  
Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;  
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,  
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,  
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea:  
Some lay in dead men's skulls; and, in those holes  
Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept,  
As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,  
Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,  
And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by.

## **BRAKENBURY**

Had you such leisure in the time of death  
To gaze upon the secrets of the deep?

## **CLARENCE**

Methought I had; and often did I strive  
To yield the ghost: but still the envious flood  
Kept in my soul, and would not let it forth  
To seek the empty, vast and wandering air;  
But smother'd it within my panting bulk,  
Which almost burst to belch it in the sea.

## **BRAKENBURY**

Awaked you not with this sore agony?

## **CLARENCE**

O, no, my dream was lengthen'd after life;  
O, then began the tempest to my soul,  
Who pass'd, methought, the melancholy flood,  
With that grim ferryman which poets write of,  
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.  
The first that there did greet my stranger soul,  
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick;  
Who cried aloud, 'What scourge for perjury  
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?'

And so he vanish'd: then came wandering by  
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair  
Dabbled in blood; and he squeak'd out aloud,  
'Clarence is come; false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,  
That stabb'd me in the field by Tewksbury;  
Seize on him, Furies, take him to your torments!  
With that, methoughts, a legion of foul fiends  
Environ'd me about, and howled in mine ears  
Such hideous cries, that with the very noise  
I trembling waked, and for a season after  
Could not believe but that I was in hell,  
Such terrible impression made the dream.

## **BRAKENBURY**

No marvel, my lord, though it affrighted you;  
I promise, I am afraid to hear you tell it.

## **CLARENCE**

O Brakenbury, I have done those things,  
Which now bear evidence against my soul,  
For Edward's sake; and see how he requites me!  
O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease thee,  
But thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds,  
Yet execute thy wrath in me alone,  
O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!  
I pray thee, gentle keeper, stay by me;  
My soul is heavy, and I fain would sleep.

## **BRAKENBURY**

I will, my lord: God give your grace good rest!

*CLARENCE sleeps*

Sorrow breaks seasons and reposing hours,  
Makes the night morning, and the noon-tide night.  
Princes have but their tides for their glories,  
An outward honour for an inward toil;  
And, for unfelt imagination,  
They often feel a world of restless cares:

So that, betwixt their tides and low names,  
There's nothing differs but the outward fame.

*Enter the two Murderers*

**First Murderer**

Ho! who's here?

**BRAKENBURY**

In God's name what are you, and how came you hither?

**First Murderer**

I would speak with Clarence, and I came hither on my legs.

**BRAKENBURY**

Yea, are you so brief?

**Second Murderer**

O sir, it is better to be brief than tedious. Show  
him our commission; talk no more.

*BRAKENBURY reads it*

**BRAKENBURY**

I am, in this, commanded to deliver  
The noble Duke of Clarence to your hands:  
I will not reason what is meant hereby,  
Because I will be guiltless of the meaning.  
Here are the keys, there sits the duke asleep:  
I'll to the king; and signify to him  
That thus I have resign'd my charge to you.

**First Murderer**

Do so, it is a point of wisdom: fare you well.

*Exit BRAKENBURY*

**Second Murderer**

What, shall we stab him as he sleeps?

**First Murderer**

No; then he will say 'twas done cowardly, when he wakes.

**Second Murderer**

When he wakes! why, fool, he shall never wake till  
the judgment-day.

**First Murderer**

Why, then he will say we stabbed him sleeping.

**Second Murderer**

The urging of that word 'judgment' hath bred a kind  
of remorse in me.

**First Murderer**

What, art thou afraid?

**Second Murderer**

Not to kill him, having a warrant for it; but to be  
damned for killing him, from which no warrant can defend us.

**First Murderer**

I thought thou hadst been resolute.

**Second Murderer**

So I am, to let him live.

**First Murderer**

Back to the Duke of Gloucester, tell him so.

**Second Murderer**

I pray thee, stay a while: I hope my holy humour will change; 'twas wont to hold me but while one would tell twenty.

**First Murderer**

How dost thou feel thyself now?

**Second Murderer**

'Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are yet within me.

**First Murderer**

Remember our reward, when the deed is done.

**Second Murderer**

'Zounds, he dies: I had forgot the reward.

**First Murderer**

Where is thy conscience now?

**Second Murderer**

In the Duke of Gloucester's purse.

**First Murderer**

So when he opens his purse to give us our reward, thy conscience flies out.

## **Second Murderer**

Let it go; there's few or none will entertain it.

## **First Murderer**

How if it come to thee again?

## **Second Murderer**

I'll not meddle with it: it is a dangerous thing: it makes a man a coward: a man cannot steal, but it accuseth him; he cannot swear, but it cheques him; he cannot lie with his neighbour's wife, but it detects him: 'tis a blushing shamefast spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles: it made me once restore a purse of gold that I found; it beggars any man that keeps it: it is turned out of all towns and cities for a dangerous thing; and every man that means to live well endeavours to trust to himself and to live without it.

## **First Murderer**

'Zounds, it is even now at my elbow, persuading me not to kill the duke.

## **Second Murderer**

Take the devil in thy mind, and relieve him not: he would insinuate with thee but to make thee sigh.

## **First Murderer**

Tut, I am strong-framed, he cannot prevail with me, I warrant thee.

## **Second Murderer**

Spoke like a tail fellow that respects his



reputation. Come, shall we to this gear?

**First Murderer**

Take him over the costard with the hilts of thy sword, and then we will chop him in the malmsey-butt in the next room.

**Second Murderer**

O excellent devise! make a sop of him.

**First Murderer**

Hark! he stirs: shall I strike?

**Second Murderer**

No, first let's reason with him.

**CLARENCE**

Where art thou, keeper? give me a cup of wine.

**Second murderer**

You shall have wine enough, my lord, anon.

**CLARENCE**

In God's name, what art thou?

**Second Murderer**

A man, as you are.

**CLARENCE**

But not, as I am, royal.

**Second Murderer**

Nor you, as we are, loyal.

**CLARENCE**

Thy voice is thunder, but thy looks are humble.

**Second Murderer**

My voice is now the king's, my looks mine own.

**CLARENCE**

How darkly and how deadly dost thou speak!  
Your eyes do menace me: why look you pale?  
Who sent you hither? Wherefore do you come?

**Both**

To, to, to--

**CLARENCE**

To murder me?

**Both**

Ay, ay.

**CLARENCE**

You scarcely have the hearts to tell me so,  
And therefore cannot have the hearts to do it.  
Wherein, my friends, have I offended you?

**First Murderer**

Offended us you have not, but the king.

**CLARENCE**

I shall be reconciled to him again.

**Second Murderer**

Never, my lord; therefore prepare to die.

**CLARENCE**

Are you call'd forth from out a world of men  
To slay the innocent? What is my offence?  
Where are the evidence that do accuse me?  
What lawful quest have given their verdict up  
Unto the frowning judge? or who pronounced  
The bitter sentence of poor Clarence' death?  
Before I be convict by course of law,  
To threaten me with death is most unlawful.  
I charge you, as you hope to have redemption  
By Christ's dear blood shed for our grievous sins,  
That you depart and lay no hands on me  
The deed you undertake is damnable.

**First Murderer**

What we will do, we do upon command.

**Second Murderer**

And he that hath commanded is the king.

**CLARENCE**

Erroneous vassal! the great King of kings  
Hath in the tables of his law commanded  
That thou shalt do no murder: and wilt thou, then,  
Spurn at his edict and fulfil a man's?  
Take heed; for he holds vengeance in his hands,  
To hurl upon their heads that break his law.

**Second Murderer**

And that same vengeance doth he hurl on thee,

For false forswearing and for murder too:  
Thou didst receive the holy sacrament,  
To fight in quarrel of the house of Lancaster.

**First Murderer**

And, like a traitor to the name of God,  
Didst break that vow; and with thy treacherous blade  
Unrip'dst the bowels of thy sovereign's son.

**Second Murderer**

Whom thou wert sworn to cherish and defend.

**First Murderer**

How canst thou urge God's dreadful law to us,  
When thou hast broke it in so dear degree?

**CLARENCE**

Alas! for whose sake did I that ill deed?  
For Edward, for my brother, for his sake: Why, sirs,  
He sends ye not to murder me for this  
For in this sin he is as deep as I.  
If God will be revenged for this deed.  
O, know you yet, he doth it publicly,  
Take not the quarrel from his powerful arm;  
He needs no indirect nor lawless course  
To cut off those that have offended him.

**First Murderer**

Who made thee, then, a bloody minister,  
When gallant-springing brave Plantagenet,  
That princely novice, was struck dead by thee?

**CLARENCE**

My brother's love, the devil, and my rage.

## **First Murderer**

Thy brother's love, our duty, and thy fault,  
Provoke us hither now to slaughter thee.

## **CLARENCE**

Oh, if you love my brother, hate not me;  
I am his brother, and I love him well.  
If you be hired for meed, go back again,  
And I will send you to my brother Gloucester,  
Who shall reward you better for my life  
Than Edward will for tidings of my death.

## **Second Murderer**

You are deceived, your brother Gloucester hates you.

## **CLARENCE**

O, no, he loves me, and he holds me dear:  
Go you to him from me.

## **Both**

Ay, so we will.

## **CLARENCE**

Tell him, when that our princely father York  
Bless'd his three sons with his victorious arm,  
And charged us from his soul to love each other,  
He little thought of this divided friendship:  
Bid Gloucester think of this, and he will weep.

## **First Murderer**

Ay, millstones; as be lesson'd us to weep.

## **CLARENCE**

O, do not slander him, for he is kind.

**First Murderer**

Right,  
As snow in harvest. Thou deceivest thyself:  
'Tis he that sent us hither now to slaughter thee.

**CLARENCE**

It cannot be; for when I parted with him,  
He hugg'd me in his arms, and swore, with sobs,  
That he would labour my delivery.

**Second Murderer**

Why, so he doth, now he delivers thee  
From this world's thralldom to the joys of heaven.

**First Murderer**

Make peace with God, for you must die, my lord.

**CLARENCE**

Hast thou that holy feeling in thy soul,  
To counsel me to make my peace with God,  
And art thou yet to thy own soul so blind,  
That thou wilt war with God by murdering me?  
Ah, sirs, consider, he that set you on  
To do this deed will hate you for the deed.

**Second Murderer**

What shall we do?

**CLARENCE**

Relent, and save your souls.

**First Murderer**

Relent! 'tis cowardly and womanish.

## **CLARENCE**

Not to relent is beastly, savage, devilish.  
Which of you, if you were a prince's son,  
Being pent from liberty, as I am now,  
if two such murderers as yourselves came to you,  
Would not entreat for life?  
My friend, I spy some pity in thy looks:  
O, if thine eye be not a flatterer,  
Come thou on my side, and entreat for me,  
As you would beg, were you in my distress  
A begging prince what beggar pities not?

## **Second Murderer**

Look behind you, my lord.

## **First Murderer**

Take that, and that: if all this will not do,

*Stabs him*

I'll drown you in the malmsey-butt within.

*Exit, with the body*

## **Second Murderer**

A bloody deed, and desperately dispatch'd!  
How fain, like Pilate, would I wash my hands  
Of this most grievous guilty murder done!

*Re-enter First Murderer*

## **First Murderer**

How now! what mean'st thou, that thou help'st me not?  
By heavens, the duke shall know how slack thou art!

## Second Murderer

I would he knew that I had saved his brother!  
Take thou the fee, and tell him what I say;  
For I repent me that the duke is slain.

*Exit*

## First Murderer

So do not I: go, coward as thou art.  
Now must I hide his body in some hole,  
Until the duke take order for his burial:  
And when I have my meed, I must away;  
For this will out, and here I must not stay.

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. The palace.

*Flourish. Enter KING EDWARD IV sick, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DORSET, RIVERS, HASTINGS, BUCKINGHAM, GREY, and others*

### KING EDWARD IV

Why, so: now have I done a good day's work:  
You peers, continue this united league:  
I every day expect an embassy  
From my Redeemer to redeem me hence;  
And now in peace my soul shall part to heaven,  
Since I have set my friends at peace on earth.  
Rivers and Hastings, take each other's hand;  
Dissemble not your hatred, swear your love.

### RIVERS

By heaven, my heart is purged from grudging hate:  
And with my hand I seal my true heart's love.

### HASTINGS

So thrive I, as I truly swear the like!

### KING EDWARD IV

Take heed you dally not before your king;  
Lest he that is the supreme King of kings  
Confound your hidden falsehood, and award  
Either of you to be the other's end.

### HASTINGS

So prosper I, as I swear perfect love!

## **RIVERS**

And I, as I love Hastings with my heart!

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Madam, yourself are not exempt in this,  
Nor your son Dorset, Buckingham, nor you;  
You have been factious one against the other,  
Wife, love Lord Hastings, let him kiss your hand;  
And what you do, do it unfeignedly.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Here, Hastings; I will never more remember  
Our former hatred, so thrive I and mine!

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Dorset, embrace him; Hastings, love lord marquess.

## **DORSET**

This interchange of love, I here protest,  
Upon my part shall be unviolable.

## **HASTINGS**

And so swear I, my lord

*They embrace*

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Now, princely Buckingham, seal thou this league  
With thy embracements to my wife's allies,  
And make me happy in your unity.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Whenever Buckingham doth turn his hate

On you or yours,

*To the Queen*

but with all duteous love  
Doth cherish you and yours, God punish me  
With hate in those where I expect most love!  
When I have most need to employ a friend,  
And most assured that he is a friend  
Deep, hollow, treacherous, and full of guile,  
Be he unto me! this do I beg of God,  
When I am cold in zeal to yours.

#### **KING EDWARD IV**

A pleasing cordial, princely Buckingham,  
is this thy vow unto my sickly heart.  
There wanteth now our brother Gloucester here,  
To make the perfect period of this peace.

#### **BUCKINGHAM**

And, in good time, here comes the noble duke.

*Enter GLOUCESTER*

#### **GLOUCESTER**

Good morrow to my sovereign king and queen:  
And, princely peers, a happy time of day!

#### **KING EDWARD IV**

Happy, indeed, as we have spent the day.  
Brother, we done deeds of charity;  
Made peace enmity, fair love of hate,  
Between these swelling wrong-incensed peers.

#### **GLOUCESTER**

A blessed labour, my most sovereign liege:

Amongst this princely heap, if any here,  
By false intelligence, or wrong surmise,  
Hold me a foe;  
If I unwittingly, or in my rage,  
Have aught committed that is hardly borne  
By any in this presence, I desire  
To reconcile me to his friendly peace:  
'Tis death to me to be at enmity;  
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.  
First, madam, I entreat true peace of you,  
Which I will purchase with my duteous service;  
Of you, my noble cousin Buckingham,  
If ever any grudge were lodged between us;  
Of you, Lord Rivers, and, Lord Grey, of you;  
That without desert have frown'd on me;  
Dukes, earls, lords, gentlemen; indeed, of all.  
I do not know that Englishman alive  
With whom my soul is any jot at odds  
More than the infant that is born to-night  
I thank my God for my humility.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

A holy day shall this be kept hereafter:  
I would to God all strifes were well compounded.  
My sovereign liege, I do beseech your majesty  
To take our brother Clarence to your grace.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Why, madam, have I offer'd love for this  
To be so bouted in this royal presence?  
Who knows not that the noble duke is dead?

*They all start*

You do him injury to scorn his corse.

## **RIVERS**

Who knows not he is dead! who knows he is?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

All seeing heaven, what a world is this!

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?

## **DORSET**

Ay, my good lord; and no one in this presence  
But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Is Clarence dead? the order was reversed.

## **GLOUCESTER**

But he, poor soul, by your first order died,  
And that a winged Mercury did bear:  
Some tardy cripple bore the countermand,  
That came too lag to see him buried.  
God grant that some, less noble and less loyal,  
Nearer in bloody thoughts, but not in blood,  
Deserve not worse than wretched Clarence did,  
And yet go current from suspicion!

*Enter DERBY*

## **DORSET**

A boon, my sovereign, for my service done!

## **KING EDWARD IV**

I pray thee, peace: my soul is full of sorrow.

## **DORSET**

I will not rise, unless your highness grant.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Then speak at once what is it thou demand'st.

## **DORSET**

The forfeit, sovereign, of my servant's life;  
Who slew to-day a righteous gentleman  
Lately attendant on the Duke of Norfolk.

## **KING EDWARD IV**

Have a tongue to doom my brother's death,  
And shall the same give pardon to a slave?  
My brother slew no man; his fault was thought,  
And yet his punishment was cruel death.  
Who sued to me for him? who, in my rage,  
Kneel'd at my feet, and bade me be advised  
Who spake of brotherhood? who spake of love?  
Who told me how the poor soul did forsake  
The mighty Warwick, and did fight for me?  
Who told me, in the field by Tewksbury  
When Oxford had me down, he rescued me,  
And said, 'Dear brother, live, and be a king'?  
Who told me, when we both lay in the field  
Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me  
Even in his own garments, and gave himself,  
All thin and naked, to the numb cold night?  
All this from my remembrance brutish wrath  
Sinfully pluck'd, and not a man of you  
Had so much grace to put it in my mind.  
But when your carters or your waiting-vassals  
Have done a drunken slaughter, and defaced  
The precious image of our dear Redeemer,  
You straight are on your knees for pardon, pardon;  
And I unjustly too, must grant it you  
But for my brother not a man would speak,  
Nor I, ungracious, speak unto myself  
For him, poor soul. The proudest of you all  
Have been beholding to him in his life;  
Yet none of you would once plead for his life.  
O God, I fear thy justice will take hold

On me, and you, and mine, and yours for this!  
Come, Hastings, help me to my closet.  
Oh, poor Clarence!

*Exeunt some with KING EDWARD IV and QUEEN MARGARET*

## **GLOUCESTER**

This is the fruit of rashness! Mark'd you not  
How that the guilty kindred of the queen  
Look'd pale when they did hear of Clarence' death?  
O, they did urge it still unto the king!  
God will revenge it. But come, let us in,  
To comfort Edward with our company.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

We wait upon your grace.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The palace.

*Enter the DUCHESS OF YORK, with the two children of CLARENCE*

**Boy**

Tell me, good grandam, is our father dead?

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

No, boy.

**Boy**

Why do you wring your hands, and beat your breast,  
And cry 'O Clarence, my unhappy son!'

**Girl**

Why do you look on us, and shake your head,  
And call us wretches, orphans, castaways  
If that our noble father be alive?

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

My pretty cousins, you mistake me much;  
I do lament the sickness of the king.  
As loath to lose him, not your father's death;  
It were lost sorrow to wail one that's lost.

**Boy**

Then, grandam, you conclude that he is dead.  
The king my uncle is to blame for this:  
God will revenge it; whom I will importune  
With daily prayers all to that effect.



**Girl**

And so will I.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Peace, children, peace! the king doth love you well:  
Incapable and shallow innocents,  
You cannot guess who caused your father's death.

**Boy**

Grandam, we can; for my good uncle Gloucester  
Told me, the king, provoked by the queen,  
Devised impeachments to imprison him :  
And when my uncle told me so, he wept,  
And hugg'd me in his arm, and kindly kiss'd my cheek;  
Bade me rely on him as on my father,  
And he would love me dearly as his child.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Oh, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes,  
And with a virtuous vizard hide foul guile!  
He is my son; yea, and therein my shame;  
Yet from my dugs he drew not this deceit.

**Boy**

Think you my uncle did dissemble, grandam?

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Ay, boy.

**Boy**

I cannot think it. Hark! what noise is this?

*Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH, with her hair about her ears; RIVERS, and DORSET after her*

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Oh, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,  
To chide my fortune, and torment myself?  
I'll join with black despair against my soul,  
And to myself become an enemy.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

What means this scene of rude impatience?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

To make an act of tragic violence:  
Edward, my lord, your son, our king, is dead.  
Why grow the branches now the root is wither'd?  
Why wither not the leaves the sap being gone?  
If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,  
That our swift-winged souls may catch the king's;  
Or, like obedient subjects, follow him  
To his new kingdom of perpetual rest.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Ah, so much interest have I in thy sorrow  
As I had title in thy noble husband!  
I have bewept a worthy husband's death,  
And lived by looking on his images:  
But now two mirrors of his princely semblance  
Are crack'd in pieces by malignant death,  
And I for comfort have but one false glass,  
Which grieves me when I see my shame in him.  
Thou art a widow; yet thou art a mother,  
And hast the comfort of thy children left thee:  
But death hath snatch'd my husband from mine arms,  
And pluck'd two crutches from my feeble limbs,  
Edward and Clarence. O, what cause have I,  
Thine being but a moiety of my grief,  
To overgo thy plaints and drown thy cries!

## **Boy**

Good aunt, you wept not for our father's death;  
How can we aid you with our kindred tears?

**Girl**

Our fatherless distress was left unmoan'd;  
Your widow-dolour likewise be unwept!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Give me no help in lamentation;  
I am not barren to bring forth complaints  
All springs reduce their currents to mine eyes,  
That I, being govern'd by the watery moon,  
May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world!  
Oh for my husband, for my dear lord Edward!

**Children**

Oh for our father, for our dear lord Clarence!

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Alas for both, both mine, Edward and Clarence!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What stay had I but Edward? and he's gone.

**Children**

What stay had we but Clarence? and he's gone.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

What stays had I but they? and they are gone.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Was never widow had so dear a loss!

## **Children**

Were never orphans had so dear a loss!

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Was never mother had so dear a loss!  
Alas, I am the mother of these moans!  
Their woes are parcell'd, mine are general.  
She for an Edward weeps, and so do I;  
I for a Clarence weep, so doth not she:  
These babes for Clarence weep and so do I;  
I for an Edward weep, so do not they:  
Alas, you three, on me, threefold distress'd,  
Pour all your tears! I am your sorrow's nurse,  
And I will pamper it with lamentations.

## **DORSET**

Comfort, dear mother: God is much displeas'd  
That you take with unthankfulness, his doing:  
In common worldly things, 'tis call'd ungrateful,  
With dull unwillingness to repay a debt  
Which with a bounteous hand was kindly lent;  
Much more to be thus opposite with heaven,  
For it requires the royal debt it lent you.

## **RIVERS**

Madam, bethink you, like a careful mother,  
Of the young prince your son: send straight for him  
Let him be crown'd; in him your comfort lives:  
Drown desperate sorrow in dead Edward's grave,  
And plant your joys in living Edward's throne.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, and RATCLIFF*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Madam, have comfort: all of us have cause  
To wail the dimming of our shining star;  
But none can cure their harms by wailing them.

Madam, my mother, I do cry you mercy;  
I did not see your grace: humbly on my knee  
I crave your blessing.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

God bless thee; and put meekness in thy mind,  
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty!

## **GLOUCESTER**

[Aside] Amen; and make me die a good old man!  
That is the butt-end of a mother's blessing:  
I marvel why her grace did leave it out.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

You cloudy princes and heart-sorrowing peers,  
That bear this mutual heavy load of moan,  
Now cheer each other in each other's love  
Though we have spent our harvest of this king,  
We are to reap the harvest of his son.  
The broken rancour of your high-swoln hearts,  
But lately splinter'd, knit, and join'd together,  
Must gently be preserved, cherish'd, and kept:  
Me seemeth good, that, with some little train,  
Forthwith from Ludlow the young prince be fetch'd  
Hither to London, to be crown'd our king.

## **RIVERS**

Why with some little train, my Lord of Buckingham?

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Marry, my lord, lest, by a multitude,  
The new-heal'd wound of malice should break out,  
Which would be so much the more dangerous  
By how much the estate is green and yet ungovern'd:  
Where every horse bears his commanding rein,  
And may direct his course as please himself,  
As well the fear of harm, as harm apparent,

In my opinion, ought to be prevented.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I hope the king made peace with all of us  
And the compact is firm and true in me.

## **RIVERS**

And so in me; and so, I think, in all:  
Yet, since it is but green, it should be put  
To no apparent likelihood of breach,  
Which haply by much company might be urged:  
Therefore I say with noble Buckingham,  
That it is meet so few should fetch the prince.

## **HASTINGS**

And so say I.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Then be it so; and go we to determine  
Who they shall be that straight shall post to Ludlow.  
Madam, and you, my mother, will you go  
To give your censures in this weighty business?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH DUCHESS OF YORK**

With all our harts.

*Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM and GLOUCESTER*

## **BUCKINGHAM**

My lord, whoever journeys to the Prince,  
For God's sake, let not us two be behind;  
For, by the way, I'll sort occasion,  
As index to the story we late talk'd of,  
To part the queen's proud kindred from the king.

## GLOUCESTER

My other self, my counsel's consistory,  
My oracle, my prophet! My dear cousin,  
I, like a child, will go by thy direction.  
Towards Ludlow then, for we'll not stay behind.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. London. A street.

*Enter two Citizens meeting*

### First Citizen

Neighbour, well met: whither away so fast?

### Second Citizen

I promise you, I scarcely know myself:  
Hear you the news abroad?

### First Citizen

Ay, that the king is dead.

### Second Citizen

Bad news, by'r lady; seldom comes the better:  
I fear, I fear 'twill prove a troublous world.

*Enter another Citizen*

### Third Citizen

Neighbours, God speed!

### First Citizen

Give you good morrow, sir.

### Third Citizen

Doth this news hold of good King Edward's death?



**Second Citizen**

Ay, sir, it is too true; God help the while!

**Third Citizen**

Then, masters, look to see a troublous world.

**First Citizen**

No, no; by God's good grace his son shall reign.

**Third Citizen**

Woe to the land that's govern'd by a child!

**Second Citizen**

In him there is a hope of government,  
That in his nonage council under him,  
And in his full and ripen'd years himself,  
No doubt, shall then and till then govern well.

**First Citizen**

So stood the state when Henry the Sixth  
Was crown'd in Paris but at nine months old.

**Third Citizen**

Stood the state so? No, no, good friends, God wot;  
For then this land was famously enrich'd  
With politic grave counsel; then the king  
Had virtuous uncles to protect his grace.

**First Citizen**

Why, so hath this, both by the father and mother.

**Third Citizen**

Better it were they all came by the father,  
Or by the father there were none at all;  
For emulation now, who shall be nearest,  
Will touch us all too near, if God prevent not.  
O, full of danger is the Duke of Gloucester!  
And the queen's sons and brothers haught and proud:  
And were they to be ruled, and not to rule,  
This sickly land might solace as before.

**First Citizen**

Come, come, we fear the worst; all shall be well.

**Third Citizen**

When clouds appear, wise men put on their cloaks;  
When great leaves fall, the winter is at hand;  
When the sun sets, who doth not look for night?  
Untimely storms make men expect a dearth.  
All may be well; but, if God sort it so,  
'Tis more than we deserve, or I expect.

**Second Citizen**

Truly, the souls of men are full of dread:  
Ye cannot reason almost with a man  
That looks not heavily and full of fear.

**Third Citizen**

Before the times of change, still is it so:  
By a divine instinct men's minds mistrust  
Ensuing dangers; as by proof, we see  
The waters swell before a boisterous storm.  
But leave it all to God. whither away?

**Second Citizen**

Marry, we were sent for to the justices.

**Third Citizen**

And so was I: I'll bear you company.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. London. The palace.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, young YORK, QUEEN ELIZABETH, and the DUCHESS OF YORK*

### ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Last night, I hear, they lay at Northampton;  
At Stony-Stratford will they be to-night:  
To-morrow, or next day, they will be here.

### DUCHESS OF YORK

I long with all my heart to see the prince:  
I hope he is much grown since last I saw him.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

But I hear, no; they say my son of York  
Hath almost overta'en him in his growth.

### YORK

Ay, mother; but I would not have it so.

### DUCHESS OF YORK

Why, my young cousin, it is good to grow.

### YORK

Grandam, one night, as we did sit at supper,  
My uncle Rivers talk'd how I did grow  
More than my brother: 'Ay,' quoth my uncle  
Gloucester,  
'Small herbs have grace, great weeds do grow apace:'

And since, methinks, I would not grow so fast,  
Because sweet flowers are slow and weeds make haste.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Good faith, good faith, the saying did not hold  
In him that did object the same to thee;  
He was the wretched'st thing when he was young,  
So long a-growing and so leisurely,  
That, if this rule were true, he should be gracious.

**ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Why, madam, so, no doubt, he is.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

I hope he is; but yet let mothers doubt.

**YORK**

Now, by my troth, if I had been remember'd,  
I could have given my uncle's grace a flout,  
To touch his growth nearer than he touch'd mine.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

How, my pretty York? I pray thee, let me hear it.

**YORK**

Marry, they say my uncle grew so fast  
That he could gnaw a crust at two hours old  
'Twas full two years ere I could get a tooth.  
Grandam, this would have been a biting jest.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

I pray thee, pretty York, who told thee this?

**YORK**

Grandam, his nurse.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

His nurse! why, she was dead ere thou wert born.

**YORK**

If 'twere not she, I cannot tell who told me.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

A parlous boy: go to, you are too shrewd.

**ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Good madam, be not angry with the child.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Pitchers have ears.

*Enter a Messenger*

**ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

Here comes a messenger. What news?

**Messenger**

Such news, my lord, as grieves me to unfold.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

How fares the prince?

**Messenger**

Well, madam, and in health.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

What is thy news then?

### **Messenger**

Lord Rivers and Lord Grey are sent to Pomfret,  
With them Sir Thomas Vaughan, prisoners.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Who hath committed them?

### **Messenger**

The mighty dukes  
Gloucester and Buckingham.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

For what offence?

### **Messenger**

The sum of all I can, I have disclosed;  
Why or for what these nobles were committed  
Is all unknown to me, my gracious lady.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Ay me, I see the downfall of our house!  
The tiger now hath seized the gentle hind;  
Insulting tyranny begins to jet  
Upon the innocent and aweless throne:  
Welcome, destruction, death, and massacre!  
I see, as in a map, the end of all.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Accursed and unquiet wrangling days,  
How many of you have mine eyes beheld!

My husband lost his life to get the crown;  
And often up and down my sons were toss'd,  
For me to joy and weep their gain and loss:  
And being seated, and domestic broils  
Clean over-blown, themselves, the conquerors.  
Make war upon themselves; blood against blood,  
Self against self: O, preposterous  
And frantic outrage, end thy damned spleen;  
Or let me die, to look on death no more!

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Come, come, my boy; we will to sanctuary.  
Madam, farewell.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

I'll go along with you.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

You have no cause.

## **ARCHBISHOP OF YORK**

My gracious lady, go;  
And thither bear your treasure and your goods.  
For my part, I'll resign unto your grace  
The seal I keep: and so betide to me  
As well I tender you and all of yours!  
Come, I'll conduct you to the sanctuary.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. London. A street.

*The trumpets sound. Enter the young PRINCE EDWARD, GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM, CARDINAL, CATESBY, and others*

### BUCKINGHAM

Welcome, sweet prince, to London, to your chamber.

### GLOUCESTER

Welcome, dear cousin, my thoughts' sovereign  
The weary way hath made you melancholy.

### PRINCE EDWARD

No, uncle; but our crosses on the way  
Have made it tedious, wearisome, and heavy  
I want more uncles here to welcome me.

### GLOUCESTER

Sweet prince, the untainted virtue of your years  
Hath not yet dived into the world's deceit  
Nor more can you distinguish of a man  
Than of his outward show; which, God he knows,  
Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart.  
Those uncles which you want were dangerous;  
Your grace attended to their sugar'd words,  
But look'd not on the poison of their hearts :  
God keep you from them, and from such false friends!

### PRINCE EDWARD

God keep me from false friends! but they were none.

## **GLOUCESTER**

My lord, the mayor of London comes to greet you.

*Enter the Lord Mayor and his train*

## **Lord Mayor**

God bless your grace with health and happy days!

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

I thank you, good my lord; and thank you all.  
I thought my mother, and my brother York,  
Would long ere this have met us on the way  
Fie, what a slug is Hastings, that he comes not  
To tell us whether they will come or no!

*Enter HASTINGS*

## **BUCKINGHAM**

And, in good time, here comes the sweating lord.

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

Welcome, my lord: what, will our mother come?

## **HASTINGS**

On what occasion, God he knows, not I,  
The queen your mother, and your brother York,  
Have taken sanctuary: the tender prince  
Would fain have come with me to meet your grace,  
But by his mother was perforce withheld.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Fie, what an indirect and peevish course  
Is this of hers! Lord cardinal, will your grace  
Persuade the queen to send the Duke of York

Unto his princely brother presently?  
If she deny, Lord Hastings, go with him,  
And from her jealous arms pluck him perforce.

## **CARDINAL**

My Lord of Buckingham, if my weak oratory  
Can from his mother win the Duke of York,  
Anon expect him here; but if she be obdurate  
To mild entreaties, God in heaven forbid  
We should infringe the holy privilege  
Of blessed sanctuary! not for all this land  
Would I be guilty of so deep a sin.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

You are too senseless--obstinate, my lord,  
Too ceremonious and traditional  
Weigh it but with the grossness of this age,  
You break not sanctuary in seizing him.  
The benefit thereof is always granted  
To those whose dealings have deserved the place,  
And those who have the wit to claim the place:  
This prince hath neither claim'd it nor deserved it;  
And therefore, in mine opinion, cannot have it:  
Then, taking him from thence that is not there,  
You break no privilege nor charter there.  
Oft have I heard of sanctuary men;  
But sanctuary children ne'er till now.

## **CARDINAL**

My lord, you shall o'er-rule my mind for once.  
Come on, Lord Hastings, will you go with me?

## **HASTINGS**

I go, my lord.

## **PRINCE EDWARD**

Good lords, make all the speedy haste you may.

*Exeunt CARDINAL and HASTINGS*

Say, uncle Gloucester, if our brother come,  
Where shall we sojourn till our coronation?

**GLOUCESTER**

Where it seems best unto your royal self.  
If I may counsel you, some day or two  
Your highness shall repose you at the Tower:  
Then where you please, and shall be thought most fit  
For your best health and recreation.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

I do not like the Tower, of any place.  
Did Julius Caesar build that place, my lord?

**BUCKINGHAM**

He did, my gracious lord, begin that place;  
Which, since, succeeding ages have re-edified.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

Is it upon record, or else reported  
Successively from age to age, he built it?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Upon record, my gracious lord.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

But say, my lord, it were not register'd,  
Methinks the truth should live from age to age,  
As 'twere retail'd to all posterity,  
Even to the general all-ending day.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside] So wise so young, they say, do never  
live long.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

What say you, uncle?

**GLOUCESTER**

I say, without characters, fame lives long.

*Aside*

Thus, like the formal vice, Iniquity,  
I moralize two meanings in one word.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

That Julius Caesar was a famous man;  
With what his valour did enrich his wit,  
His wit set down to make his valour live  
Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;  
For now he lives in fame, though not in life.  
I'll tell you what, my cousin Buckingham,--

**BUCKINGHAM**

What, my gracious lord?

**PRINCE EDWARD**

An if I live until I be a man,  
I'll win our ancient right in France again,  
Or die a soldier, as I lived a king.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Aside] Short summers lightly have a forward spring.

*Enter young YORK, HASTINGS, and the CARDINAL*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Now, in good time, here comes the Duke of York.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

Richard of York! how fares our loving brother?

**YORK**

Well, my dread lord; so must I call you now.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

Ay, brother, to our grief, as it is yours:  
Too late he died that might have kept that title,  
Which by his death hath lost much majesty.

**GLOUCESTER**

How fares our cousin, noble Lord of York?

**YORK**

I thank you, gentle uncle. O, my lord,  
You said that idle weeds are fast in growth  
The prince my brother hath outgrown me far.

**GLOUCESTER**

He hath, my lord.

**YORK**

And therefore is he idle?

**GLOUCESTER**

O, my fair cousin, I must not say so.

**YORK**

Then is he more beholding to you than I.

**GLOUCESTER**

He may command me as my sovereign;  
But you have power in me as in a kinsman.

**YORK**

I pray you, uncle, give me this dagger.

**GLOUCESTER**

My dagger, little cousin? with all my heart.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

A beggar, brother?

**YORK**

Of my kind uncle, that I know will give;  
And being but a toy, which is no grief to give.

**GLOUCESTER**

A greater gift than that I'll give my cousin.

**YORK**

A greater gift! O, that's the sword to it.

**GLOUCESTER**

A gentle cousin, were it light enough.

**YORK**

O, then, I see, you will part but with light gifts;  
In weightier things you'll say a beggar nay.

**GLOUCESTER**

It is too heavy for your grace to wear.

**YORK**

I weigh it lightly, were it heavier.

**GLOUCESTER**

What, would you have my weapon, little lord?

**YORK**

I would, that I might thank you as you call me.

**GLOUCESTER**

How?

**YORK**

Little.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

My Lord of York will still be cross in talk:  
Uncle, your grace knows how to bear with him.

**YORK**

You mean, to bear me, not to bear with me:  
Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;  
Because that I am little, like an ape,  
He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.

**BUCKINGHAM**

With what a sharp-provided wit he reasons!  
To mitigate the scorn he gives his uncle,



He prettily and aptly taunts himself:  
So cunning and so young is wonderful.

**GLOUCESTER**

My lord, will't please you pass along?  
Myself and my good cousin Buckingham  
Will to your mother, to entreat of her  
To meet you at the Tower and welcome you.

**YORK**

What, will you go unto the Tower, my lord?

**PRINCE EDWARD**

My lord protector needs will have it so.

**YORK**

I shall not sleep in quiet at the Tower.

**GLOUCESTER**

Why, what should you fear?

**YORK**

Marry, my uncle Clarence' angry ghost:  
My grandam told me he was murdered there.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

I fear no uncles dead.

**GLOUCESTER**

Nor none that live, I hope.

**PRINCE EDWARD**

An if they live, I hope I need not fear.  
But come, my lord; and with a heavy heart,  
Thinking on them, go I unto the Tower.

*A Sennet. Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM and CATESBY*

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Think you, my lord, this little prating York  
Was not incensed by his subtle mother  
To taunt and scorn you thus opprobriously?

## **GLOUCESTER**

No doubt, no doubt; O, 'tis a parlous boy;  
Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable  
He is all the mother's, from the top to toe.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Well, let them rest. Come hither, Catesby.  
Thou art sworn as deeply to effect what we intend  
As closely to conceal what we impart:  
Thou know'st our reasons urged upon the way;  
What think'st thou? is it not an easy matter  
To make William Lord Hastings of our mind,  
For the instalment of this noble duke  
In the seat royal of this famous isle?

## **CATESBY**

He for his father's sake so loves the prince,  
That he will not be won to aught against him.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

What think'st thou, then, of Stanley? what will he?

## **CATESBY**

He will do all in all as Hastings doth.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Well, then, no more but this: go, gentle Catesby,  
And, as it were far off sound thou Lord Hastings,  
How doth he stand affected to our purpose;  
And summon him to-morrow to the Tower,  
To sit about the coronation.  
If thou dost find him tractable to us,  
Encourage him, and show him all our reasons:  
If he be leaden, icy-cold, unwilling,  
Be thou so too; and so break off your talk,  
And give us notice of his inclination:  
For we to-morrow hold divided councils,  
Wherein thyself shalt highly be employ'd.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Commend me to Lord William: tell him, Catesby,  
His ancient knot of dangerous adversaries  
To-morrow are let blood at Pomfret-castle;  
And bid my friend, for joy of this good news,  
Give mistress Shore one gentle kiss the more.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Good Catesby, go, effect this business soundly.

## **CATESBY**

My good lords both, with all the heed I may.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Shall we hear from you, Catesby, ere we sleep?

## **CATESBY**

You shall, my lord.

## **GLOUCESTER**

At Crosby Place, there shall you find us both.

*Exit CATESBY*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Now, my lord, what shall we do, if we perceive  
Lord Hastings will not yield to our complots?

**GLOUCESTER**

Chop off his head, man; somewhat we will do:  
And, look, when I am king, claim thou of me  
The earldom of Hereford, and the moveables  
Whereof the king my brother stood possess'd.

**BUCKINGHAM**

I'll claim that promise at your grace's hands.

**GLOUCESTER**

And look to have it yielded with all willingness.  
Come, let us sup betimes, that afterwards  
We may digest our complots in some form.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before Lord Hastings' house.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

What, ho! my lord!

**HASTINGS**

[Within] Who knocks at the door?

**Messenger**

A messenger from the Lord Stanley.

*Enter HASTINGS*

**HASTINGS**

What is't o'clock?

**Messenger**

Upon the stroke of four.

**HASTINGS**

Cannot thy master sleep these tedious nights?

**Messenger**

So it should seem by that I have to say.  
First, he commends him to your noble lordship.

## HASTINGS

And then?

### Messenger

And then he sends you word  
He dreamt to-night the boar had razed his helm:  
Besides, he says there are two councils held;  
And that may be determined at the one  
which may make you and him to rue at the other.  
Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure,  
If presently you will take horse with him,  
And with all speed post with him toward the north,  
To shun the danger that his soul divines.

## HASTINGS

Go, fellow, go, return unto thy lord;  
Bid him not fear the separated councils  
His honour and myself are at the one,  
And at the other is my servant Catesby  
Where nothing can proceed that toucheth us  
Whereof I shall not have intelligence.  
Tell him his fears are shallow, wanting instance:  
And for his dreams, I wonder he is so fond  
To trust the mockery of unquiet slumbers  
To fly the boar before the boar pursues,  
Were to incense the boar to follow us  
And make pursuit where he did mean no chase.  
Go, bid thy master rise and come to me  
And we will both together to the Tower,  
Where, he shall see, the boar will use us kindly.

### Messenger

My gracious lord, I'll tell him what you say.

*Exit*

*Enter CATESBY*

## **CATESBY**

Many good morrows to my noble lord!

## **HASTINGS**

Good morrow, Catesby; you are early stirring  
What news, what news, in this our tottering state?

## **CATESBY**

It is a reeling world, indeed, my lord;  
And I believe twill never stand upright  
Tim Richard wear the garland of the realm.

## **HASTINGS**

How! wear the garland! dost thou mean the crown?

## **CATESBY**

Ay, my good lord.

## **HASTINGS**

I'll have this crown of mine cut from my shoulders  
Ere I will see the crown so foul misplaced.  
But canst thou guess that he doth aim at it?

## **CATESBY**

Ay, on my life; and hopes to find forward  
Upon his party for the gain thereof:  
And thereupon he sends you this good news,  
That this same very day your enemies,  
The kindred of the queen, must die at Pomfret.

## **HASTINGS**

Indeed, I am no mourner for that news,  
Because they have been still mine enemies:

But, that I'll give my voice on Richard's side,  
To bar my master's heirs in true descent,  
God knows I will not do it, to the death.

**CATESBY**

God keep your lordship in that gracious mind!

**HASTINGS**

But I shall laugh at this a twelve-month hence,  
That they who brought me in my master's hate  
I live to look upon their tragedy.  
I tell thee, Catesby--

**CATESBY**

What, my lord?

**HASTINGS**

Ere a fortnight make me elder,  
I'll send some packing that yet think not on it.

**CATESBY**

'Tis a vile thing to die, my gracious lord,  
When men are unprepared and look not for it.

**HASTINGS**

O monstrous, monstrous! and so falls it out  
With Rivers, Vaughan, Grey: and so 'twill do  
With some men else, who think themselves as safe  
As thou and I; who, as thou know'st, are dear  
To princely Richard and to Buckingham.

**CATESBY**

The princes both make high account of you;



*Aside*

For they account his head upon the bridge.

**HASTINGS**

I know they do; and I have well deserved it.

*Enter STANLEY*

Come on, come on; where is your boar-spear, man?  
Fear you the boar, and go so unprovided?

**STANLEY**

My lord, good morrow; good morrow, Catesby:  
You may jest on, but, by the holy rood,  
I do not like these several councils, I.

**HASTINGS**

My lord,  
I hold my life as dear as you do yours;  
And never in my life, I do protest,  
Was it more precious to me than 'tis now:  
Think you, but that I know our state secure,  
I would be so triumphant as I am?

**STANLEY**

The lords at Pomfret, when they rode from London,  
Were jocund, and supposed their state was sure,  
And they indeed had no cause to mistrust;  
But yet, you see how soon the day o'ercast.  
This sudden stag of rancour I misdoubt:  
Pray God, I say, I prove a needless coward!  
What, shall we toward the Tower? the day is spent.

**HASTINGS**

Come, come, have with you. Wot you what, my lord?

To-day the lords you talk of are beheaded.

**LORD STANLEY**

They, for their truth, might better wear their heads  
Than some that have accused them wear their hats.  
But come, my lord, let us away.

*Enter a Pursuivant*

**HASTINGS**

Go on before; I'll talk with this good fellow.

*Exeunt STANLEY and CATESBY*

How now, sirrah! how goes the world with thee?

**Pursuivant**

The better that your lordship please to ask.

**HASTINGS**

I tell thee, man, 'tis better with me now  
Than when I met thee last where now we meet:  
Then was I going prisoner to the Tower,  
By the suggestion of the queen's allies;  
But now, I tell thee--keep it to thyself--  
This day those enemies are put to death,  
And I in better state than e'er I was.

**Pursuivant**

God hold it, to your honour's good content!

**HASTINGS**

Gramercy, fellow: there, drink that for me.

*Throws him his purse*

## **Pursuivant**

God save your lordship!

*Exit*

*Enter a Priest*

## **Priest**

Well met, my lord; I am glad to see your honour.

## **HASTINGS**

I thank thee, good Sir John, with all my heart.  
I am in your debt for your last exercise;  
Come the next Sabbath, and I will content you.

*He whispers in his ear*

*Enter BUCKINGHAM*

## **BUCKINGHAM**

What, talking with a priest, lord chamberlain?  
Your friends at Pomfret, they do need the priest;  
Your honour hath no shriving work in hand.

## **HASTINGS**

Good faith, and when I met this holy man,  
Those men you talk of came into my mind.  
What, go you toward the Tower?

## **BUCKINGHAM**

I do, my lord; but long I shall not stay  
I shall return before your lordship thence.

## **HASTINGS**

'Tis like enough, for I stay dinner there.

**BUCKINGHAM**

[Aside] And supper too, although thou know'st it not.  
Come, will you go?

**HASTINGS**

I'll wait upon your lordship.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Pomfret Castle.

*Enter RATCLIFF, with halberds, carrying RIVERS, GREY, and VAUGHAN to death*

**RATCLIFF**

Come, bring forth the prisoners.

**RIVERS**

Sir Richard Ratcliff, let me tell thee this:  
To-day shalt thou behold a subject die  
For truth, for duty, and for loyalty.

**GREY**

God keep the prince from all the pack of you!  
A knot you are of damned blood-suckers!

**VAUGHAN**

You live that shall cry woe for this after.

**RATCLIFF**

Dispatch; the limit of your lives is out.

**RIVERS**

O Pomfret, Pomfret! O thou bloody prison,  
Fatal and ominous to noble peers!  
Within the guilty closure of thy walls  
Richard the second here was hack'd to death;  
And, for more slander to thy dismal seat,  
We give thee up our guiltless blood to drink.

## **GREY**

Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads,  
For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.

## **RIVERS**

Then cursed she Hastings, then cursed she Buckingham,  
Then cursed she Richard. O, remember, God  
To hear her prayers for them, as now for us  
And for my sister and her princely sons,  
Be satisfied, dear God, with our true blood,  
Which, as thou know'st, unjustly must be spilt.

## **RATCLIFF**

Make haste; the hour of death is expiate.

## **RIVERS**

Come, Grey, come, Vaughan, let us all embrace:  
And take our leave, until we meet in heaven.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The Tower of London.

*Enter BUCKINGHAM, DERBY, HASTINGS, the BISHOP OF ELY, RATCLIFF, LOVEL, with others, and take their seats at a table*

### HASTINGS

My lords, at once: the cause why we are met  
Is, to determine of the coronation.  
In God's name, speak: when is the royal day?

### BUCKINGHAM

Are all things fitting for that royal time?

### DERBY

It is, and wants but nomination.

### BISHOP OF ELY

To-morrow, then, I judge a happy day.

### BUCKINGHAM

Who knows the lord protector's mind herein?  
Who is most inward with the royal duke?

### BISHOP OF ELY

Your grace, we think, should soonest know his mind.

### BUCKINGHAM

Who, I, my lord I we know each other's faces,

But for our hearts, he knows no more of mine,  
Than I of yours;  
Nor I no more of his, than you of mine.  
Lord Hastings, you and he are near in love.

## **HASTINGS**

I thank his grace, I know he loves me well;  
But, for his purpose in the coronation.  
I have not sounded him, nor he deliver'd  
His gracious pleasure any way therein:  
But you, my noble lords, may name the time;  
And in the duke's behalf I'll give my voice,  
Which, I presume, he'll take in gentle part.

*Enter GLOUCESTER*

## **BISHOP OF ELY**

Now in good time, here comes the duke himself.

## **GLOUCESTER**

My noble lords and cousins all, good morrow.  
I have been long a sleeper; but, I hope,  
My absence doth neglect no great designs,  
Which by my presence might have been concluded.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Had not you come upon your cue, my lord  
William Lord Hastings had pronounced your part,--  
I mean, your voice,--for crowning of the king.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Than my Lord Hastings no man might be bolder;  
His lordship knows me well, and loves me well.

## **HASTINGS**



I thank your grace.

**GLOUCESTER**

My lord of Ely!

**BISHOP OF ELY**

My lord?

**GLOUCESTER**

When I was last in Holborn,  
I saw good strawberries in your garden there  
I do beseech you send for some of them.

**BISHOP OF ELY**

Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart.

*Exit*

**GLOUCESTER**

Cousin of Buckingham, a word with you.

*Drawing him aside*

Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business,  
And finds the testy gentleman so hot,  
As he will lose his head ere give consent  
His master's son, as worshipful as he terms it,  
Shall lose the royalty of England's throne.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Withdraw you hence, my lord, I'll follow you.

*Exit GLOUCESTER, BUCKINGHAM following*

**DERBY**

We have not yet set down this day of triumph.  
To-morrow, in mine opinion, is too sudden;  
For I myself am not so well provided  
As else I would be, were the day prolong'd.

*Re-enter BISHOP OF ELY*

## **BISHOP OF ELY**

Where is my lord protector? I have sent for these  
strawberries.

## **HASTINGS**

His grace looks cheerfully and smooth to-day;  
There's some conceit or other likes him well,  
When he doth bid good morrow with such a spirit.  
I think there's never a man in Christendom  
That can less hide his love or hate than he;  
For by his face straight shall you know his heart.

## **DERBY**

What of his heart perceive you in his face  
By any likelihood he show'd to-day?

## **HASTINGS**

Marry, that with no man here he is offended;  
For, were he, he had shown it in his looks.

## **DERBY**

I pray God he be not, I say.

*Re-enter GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM*

## **GLOUCESTER**

I pray you all, tell me what they deserve

That do conspire my death with devilish plots  
Of damned witchcraft, and that have prevail'd  
Upon my body with their hellish charms?

## **HASTINGS**

The tender love I bear your grace, my lord,  
Makes me most forward in this noble presence  
To doom the offenders, whatsoever they be  
I say, my lord, they have deserved death.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Then be your eyes the witness of this ill:  
See how I am bewitch'd; behold mine arm  
Is, like a blasted sapling, wither'd up:  
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch,  
Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,  
That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.

## **HASTINGS**

If they have done this thing, my gracious lord--

## **GLOUCESTER**

If I thou protector of this damned strumpet--  
Tellest thou me of 'ifs'? Thou art a traitor:  
Off with his head! Now, by Saint Paul I swear,  
I will not dine until I see the same.  
Lovel and Ratcliff, look that it be done:  
The rest, that love me, rise and follow me.

*Exeunt all but HASTINGS, RATCLIFF, and LOVEL*

## **HASTINGS**

Woe, woe for England! not a whit for me;  
For I, too fond, might have prevented this.  
Stanley did dream the boar did raze his helm;  
But I disdain'd it, and did scorn to fly:  
Three times to-day my foot-cloth horse did stumble,

And startled, when he look'd upon the Tower,  
As loath to bear me to the slaughter-house.  
O, now I want the priest that spake to me:  
I now repent I told the pursuivant  
As 'twere triumphing at mine enemies,  
How they at Pomfret bloodily were butcher'd,  
And I myself secure in grace and favour.  
O Margaret, Margaret, now thy heavy curse  
Is lighted on poor Hastings' wretched head!

## **RATCLIFF**

Dispatch, my lord; the duke would be at dinner:  
Make a short shrift; he longs to see your head.

## **HASTINGS**

O momentary grace of mortal men,  
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!  
Who builds his hopes in air of your good looks,  
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,  
Ready, with every nod, to tumble down  
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

## **LOVEL**

Come, come, dispatch; 'tis bootless to exclaim.

## **HASTINGS**

O bloody Richard! miserable England!  
I prophesy the fearful'st time to thee  
That ever wretched age hath look'd upon.  
Come, lead me to the block; bear him my head.  
They smile at me that shortly shall be dead.

*Exeunt*

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The Tower-walls.

*Enter GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM, in rotten armour, marvellous ill-favoured*

### GLOUCESTER

Come, cousin, canst thou quake, and change thy colour,  
Murder thy breath in the middle of a word,  
And then begin again, and stop again,  
As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?

### BUCKINGHAM

Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian;  
Speak and look back, and pry on every side,  
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,  
Intending deep suspicion: ghastly looks  
Are at my service, like enforced smiles;  
And both are ready in their offices,  
At any time, to grace my stratagems.  
But what, is Catesby gone?

### GLOUCESTER

He is; and, see, he brings the mayor along.

*Enter the Lord Mayor and CATESBY*

### BUCKINGHAM

Lord mayor,--

### GLOUCESTER

Look to the drawbridge there!

**BUCKINGHAM**

Hark! a drum.

**GLOUCESTER**

Catesby, o'erlook the walls.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Lord mayor, the reason we have sent--

**GLOUCESTER**

Look back, defend thee, here are enemies.

**BUCKINGHAM**

God and our innocency defend and guard us!

**GLOUCESTER**

Be patient, they are friends, Ratcliff and Level.

*Enter LOVEL and RATCLIFF, with HASTINGS' head*

**LEVEL**

Here is the head of that ignoble traitor,  
The dangerous and unsuspected Hastings.

**GLOUCESTER**

So dear I loved the man, that I must weep.  
I took him for the plainest harmless creature  
That breathed upon this earth a Christian;  
Made him my book wherein my soul recorded  
The history of all her secret thoughts:  
So smooth he daub'd his vice with show of virtue,  
That, his apparent open guilt omitted,  
I mean, his conversation with Shore's wife,

He lived from all attainder of suspect.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Well, well, he was the covert'st shelter'd traitor  
That ever lived.

Would you imagine, or almost believe,  
Were't not that, by great preservation,  
We live to tell it you, the subtle traitor  
This day had plotted, in the council-house  
To murder me and my good Lord of Gloucester?

## **Lord Mayor**

What, had he so?

## **GLOUCESTER**

What, think You we are Turks or infidels?  
Or that we would, against the form of law,  
Proceed thus rashly to the villain's death,  
But that the extreme peril of the case,  
The peace of England and our persons' safety,  
Enforced us to this execution?

## **Lord Mayor**

Now, fair befall you! he deserved his death;  
And you my good lords, both have well proceeded,  
To warn false traitors from the like attempts.  
I never look'd for better at his hands,  
After he once fell in with Mistress Shore.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Yet had not we determined he should die,  
Until your lordship came to see his death;  
Which now the loving haste of these our friends,  
Somewhat against our meaning, have prevented:  
Because, my lord, we would have had you heard  
The traitor speak, and timorously confess  
The manner and the purpose of his treason;

That you might well have signified the same  
Unto the citizens, who haply may  
Misconstrue us in him and wail his death.

### **Lord Mayor**

But, my good lord, your grace's word shall serve,  
As well as I had seen and heard him speak  
And doubt you not, right noble princes both,  
But I'll acquaint our duteous citizens  
With all your just proceedings in this cause.

### **GLOUCESTER**

And to that end we wish'd your lord-ship here,  
To avoid the carping censures of the world.

### **BUCKINGHAM**

But since you come too late of our intents,  
Yet witness what you hear we did intend:  
And so, my good lord mayor, we bid farewell.

*Exit Lord Mayor*

### **GLOUCESTER**

Go, after, after, cousin Buckingham.  
The mayor towards Guildhall hies him in all post:  
There, at your meet'st advantage of the time,  
Infer the bastardy of Edward's children:  
Tell them how Edward put to death a citizen,  
Only for saying he would make his son  
Heir to the crown; meaning indeed his house,  
Which, by the sign thereof was termed so.  
Moreover, urge his hateful luxury  
And bestial appetite in change of lust;  
Which stretched to their servants, daughters, wives,  
Even where his lustful eye or savage heart,  
Without control, listed to make his prey.  
Nay, for a need, thus far come near my person:  
Tell them, when that my mother went with child



Of that unsatiate Edward, noble York  
My princely father then had wars in France  
And, by just computation of the time,  
Found that the issue was not his begot;  
Which well appeared in his lineaments,  
Being nothing like the noble duke my father:  
But touch this sparingly, as 'twere far off,  
Because you know, my lord, my mother lives.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Fear not, my lord, I'll play the orator  
As if the golden fee for which I plead  
Were for myself: and so, my lord, adieu.

## **GLOUCESTER**

If you thrive well, bring them to Baynard's Castle;  
Where you shall find me well accompanied  
With reverend fathers and well-learned bishops.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

I go: and towards three or four o'clock  
Look for the news that the Guildhall affords.

*Exit BUCKINGHAM*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Go, Lovel, with all speed to Doctor Shaw;

*To CATESBY*

Go thou to Friar Penker; bid them both  
Meet me within this hour at Baynard's Castle.

*Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER*

Now will I in, to take some privy order,  
To draw the brats of Clarence out of sight;

And to give notice, that no manner of person  
At any time have recourse unto the princes.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The same.

*Enter a Scrivener, with a paper in his hand*

### Scrivener

This is the indictment of the good Lord Hastings;  
Which in a set hand fairly is engross'd,  
That it may be this day read over in Paul's.  
And mark how well the sequel hangs together:  
Eleven hours I spent to write it over,  
For yesternight by Catesby was it brought me;  
The precedent was full as long a-doing:  
And yet within these five hours lived Lord Hastings,  
Untainted, unexamined, free, at liberty  
Here's a good world the while! Why who's so gross,  
That seeth not this palpable device?  
Yet who's so blind, but says he sees it not?  
Bad is the world; and all will come to nought,  
When such bad dealings must be seen in thought.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Baynard's Castle.

*Enter GLOUCESTER and BUCKINGHAM, at several doors*

### GLOUCESTER

How now, my lord, what say the citizens?

### BUCKINGHAM

Now, by the holy mother of our Lord,  
The citizens are mum and speak not a word.

### GLOUCESTER

Touch'd you the bastardy of Edward's children?

### BUCKINGHAM

I did; with his contract with Lady Lucy,  
And his contract by deputy in France;  
The insatiate greediness of his desires,  
And his enforcement of the city wives;  
His tyranny for trifles; his own bastardy,  
As being got, your father then in France,  
His resemblance, being not like the duke;  
Withal I did infer your lineaments,  
Being the right idea of your father,  
Both in your form and nobleness of mind;  
Laid open all your victories in Scotland,  
Your discipline in war, wisdom in peace,  
Your bounty, virtue, fair humility:  
Indeed, left nothing fitting for the purpose  
Untouch'd, or slightly handled, in discourse  
And when mine oratory grew to an end  
I bid them that did love their country's good

Cry 'God save Richard, England's royal king!'

**GLOUCESTER**

Ah! and did they so?

**BUCKINGHAM**

No, so God help me, they spake not a word;  
But, like dumb statues or breathing stones,  
Gazed each on other, and look'd deadly pale.  
Which when I saw, I reprehended them;  
And ask'd the mayor what meant this wilful silence:  
His answer was, the people were not wont  
To be spoke to but by the recorder.  
Then he was urged to tell my tale again,  
'Thus saith the duke, thus hath the duke inferr'd;  
But nothing spake in warrant from himself.  
When he had done, some followers of mine own,  
At the lower end of the hall, hurl'd up their caps,  
And some ten voices cried 'God save King Richard!'  
And thus I took the vantage of those few,  
'Thanks, gentle citizens and friends,' quoth I;  
'This general applause and loving shout  
Argues your wisdoms and your love to Richard:'  
And even here brake off, and came away.

**GLOUCESTER**

What tongueless blocks were they! would not they speak?

**BUCKINGHAM**

No, by my troth, my lord.

**GLOUCESTER**

Will not the mayor then and his brethren come?

**BUCKINGHAM**

The mayor is here at hand: intend some fear;

Be not you spoke with, but by mighty suit:  
And look you get a prayer-book in your hand,  
And stand betwixt two churchmen, good my lord;  
For on that ground I'll build a holy descant:  
And be not easily won to our request:  
Play the maid's part, still answer nay, and take it.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I go; and if you plead as well for them  
As I can say nay to thee for myself,  
No doubt well bring it to a happy issue.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Go, go, up to the leads; the lord mayor knocks.

*Exit GLOUCESTER*

*Enter the Lord Mayor and Citizens*

Welcome my lord; I dance attendance here;  
I think the duke will not be spoke withal.

*Enter CATESBY*

Here comes his servant: how now, Catesby,  
What says he?

## **CATESBY**

My lord: he doth entreat your grace;  
To visit him to-morrow or next day:  
He is within, with two right reverend fathers,  
Divinely bent to meditation;  
And no worldly suit would he be moved,  
To draw him from his holy exercise.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Return, good Catesby, to thy lord again;

Tell him, myself, the mayor and citizens,  
In deep designs and matters of great moment,  
No less importing than our general good,  
Are come to have some conference with his grace.

**CATESBY**

I'll tell him what you say, my lord.

*Exit*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Ah, ha, my lord, this prince is not an Edward!  
He is not lolling on a lewd day-bed,  
But on his knees at meditation;  
Not dallying with a brace of courtezans,  
But meditating with two deep divines;  
Not sleeping, to engross his idle body,  
But praying, to enrich his watchful soul:  
Happy were England, would this gracious prince  
Take on himself the sovereignty thereof:  
But, sure, I fear, we shall ne'er win him to it.

**Lord Mayor**

Marry, God forbid his grace should say us nay!

**BUCKINGHAM**

I fear he will.

*Re-enter CATESBY*

How now, Catesby, what says your lord?

**CATESBY**

My lord,  
He wonders to what end you have assembled  
Such troops of citizens to speak with him,

His grace not being warn'd thereof before:  
My lord, he fears you mean no good to him.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Sorry I am my noble cousin should  
Suspect me, that I mean no good to him:  
By heaven, I come in perfect love to him;  
And so once more return and tell his grace.

*Exit CATESBY*

When holy and devout religious men  
Are at their beads, 'tis hard to draw them thence,  
So sweet is zealous contemplation.

*Enter GLOUCESTER aloft, between two Bishops. CATESBY returns*

## **Lord Mayor**

See, where he stands between two clergymen!

## **BUCKINGHAM**

Two props of virtue for a Christian prince,  
To stay him from the fall of vanity:  
And, see, a book of prayer in his hand,  
True ornaments to know a holy man.  
Famous Plantagenet, most gracious prince,  
Lend favourable ears to our request;  
And pardon us the interruption  
Of thy devotion and right Christian zeal.

## **GLOUCESTER**

My lord, there needs no such apology:  
I rather do beseech you pardon me,  
Who, earnest in the service of my God,  
Neglect the visitation of my friends.  
But, leaving this, what is your grace's pleasure?

## **BUCKINGHAM**



Even that, I hope, which pleaseth God above,  
And all good men of this ungovern'd isle.

**GLOUCESTER**

I do suspect I have done some offence  
That seems disgracious in the city's eyes,  
And that you come to reprehend my ignorance.

**BUCKINGHAM**

You have, my lord: would it might please your grace,  
At our entreaties, to amend that fault!

**GLOUCESTER**

Else wherefore breathe I in a Christian land?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Then know, it is your fault that you resign  
The supreme seat, the throne majestic,  
The scepter'd office of your ancestors,  
Your state of fortune and your due of birth,  
The lineal glory of your royal house,  
To the corruption of a blemished stock:  
Whilst, in the mildness of your sleepy thoughts,  
Which here we waken to our country's good,  
This noble isle doth want her proper limbs;  
Her face defaced with scars of infamy,  
Her royal stock graft with ignoble plants,  
And almost shoulder'd in the swallowing gulf  
Of blind forgetfulness and dark oblivion.  
Which to recure, we heartily solicit  
Your gracious self to take on you the charge  
And kingly government of this your land,  
Not as protector, steward, substitute,  
Or lowly factor for another's gain;  
But as successively from blood to blood,  
Your right of birth, your empery, your own.  
For this, consorted with the citizens,

Your very worshipful and loving friends,  
And by their vehement instigation,  
In this just suit come I to move your grace.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I know not whether to depart in silence,  
Or bitterly to speak in your reproof.  
Best fitteth my degree or your condition  
If not to answer, you might haply think  
Tongue-tied ambition, not replying, yielded  
To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty,  
Which fondly you would here impose on me;  
If to reprove you for this suit of yours,  
So season'd with your faithful love to me.  
Then, on the other side, I cheque'd my friends.  
Therefore, to speak, and to avoid the first,  
And then, in speaking, not to incur the last,  
Definitively thus I answer you.  
Your love deserves my thanks; but my desert  
Unmeritable shuns your high request.  
First if all obstacles were cut away,  
And that my path were even to the crown,  
As my ripe revenue and due by birth  
Yet so much is my poverty of spirit,  
So mighty and so many my defects,  
As I had rather hide me from my greatness,  
Being a bark to brook no mighty sea,  
Than in my greatness covet to be hid,  
And in the vapour of my glory smother'd.  
But, God be thank'd, there's no need of me,  
And much I need to help you, if need were;  
The royal tree hath left us royal fruit,  
Which, mellow'd by the stealing hours of time,  
Will well become the seat of majesty,  
And make, no doubt, us happy by his reign.  
On him I lay what you would lay on me,  
The right and fortune of his happy stars;  
Which God defend that I should wring from him!

## **BUCKINGHAM**

My lord, this argues conscience in your grace;

But the respects thereof are nice and trivial,  
All circumstances well considered.  
You say that Edward is your brother's son:  
So say we too, but not by Edward's wife;  
For first he was contract to Lady Lucy--  
Your mother lives a witness to that vow--  
And afterward by substitute betroth'd  
To Bona, sister to the King of France.  
These both put by a poor petitioner,  
A care-crazed mother of a many children,  
A beauty-waning and distressed widow,  
Even in the afternoon of her best days,  
Made prize and purchase of his lustful eye,  
Seduced the pitch and height of all his thoughts  
To base declension and loathed bigamy  
By her, in his unlawful bed, he got  
This Edward, whom our manners term the prince.  
More bitterly could I expostulate,  
Save that, for reverence to some alive,  
I give a sparing limit to my tongue.  
Then, good my lord, take to your royal self  
This proffer'd benefit of dignity;  
If non to bless us and the land withal,  
Yet to draw forth your noble ancestry  
From the corruption of abusing times,  
Unto a lineal true-derived course.

### **Lord Mayor**

Do, good my lord, your citizens entreat you.

### **BUCKINGHAM**

Refuse not, mighty lord, this proffer'd love.

### **CATESBY**

O, make them joyful, grant their lawful suit!

### **GLOUCESTER**

Alas, why would you heap these cares on me?

I am unfit for state and majesty;  
I do beseech you, take it not amiss;  
I cannot nor I will not yield to you.

## **BUCKINGHAM**

If you refuse it,--as, in love and zeal,  
Loath to depose the child, Your brother's son;  
As well we know your tenderness of heart  
And gentle, kind, effeminate remorse,  
Which we have noted in you to your kin,  
And egally indeed to all estates,--  
Yet whether you accept our suit or no,  
Your brother's son shall never reign our king;  
But we will plant some other in the throne,  
To the disgrace and downfall of your house:  
And in this resolution here we leave you.--  
Come, citizens: 'zounds! I'll entreat no more.

## **GLOUCESTER**

O, do not swear, my lord of Buckingham.

*Exit BUCKINGHAM with the Citizens*

## **CATESBY**

Call them again, my lord, and accept their suit.

## **ANOTHER**

Do, good my lord, lest all the land do rue it.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Would you enforce me to a world of care?  
Well, call them again. I am not made of stone,  
But penetrable to your. kind entreats,  
Albeit against my conscience and my soul.

*Re-enter BUCKINGHAM and the rest*

Cousin of Buckingham, and you sage, grave men,  
Since you will buckle fortune on my back,  
To bear her burthen, whether I will or no,  
I must have patience to endure the load:  
But if black scandal or foul-faced reproach  
Attend the sequel of your imposition,  
Your mere enforcement shall acquittance me  
From all the impure blots and stains thereof;  
For God he knows, and you may partly see,  
How far I am from the desire thereof.

**Lord Mayor**

God bless your grace! we see it, and will say it.

**GLOUCESTER**

In saying so, you shall but say the truth.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Then I salute you with this kingly title:  
Long live Richard, England's royal king!

**Lord Mayor Citizens**

Amen.

**BUCKINGHAM**

To-morrow will it please you to be crown'd?

**GLOUCESTER**

Even when you please, since you will have it so.

**BUCKINGHAM**

To-morrow, then, we will attend your grace:  
And so most joyfully we take our leave.

## GLOUCESTER

Come, let us to our holy task again.  
Farewell, good cousin; farewell, gentle friends.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 3, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before the Tower.

*Enter, on one side, QUEEN ELIZABETH, DUCHESS OF YORK, and DORSET; on the other, ANNE, Duchess of Gloucester, leading Lady Margaret Plantagenet, CLARENCE's young Daughter*

### DUCHESS OF YORK

Who meets us here? my niece Plantagenet  
Led in the hand of her kind aunt of Gloucester?  
Now, for my life, she's wandering to the Tower,  
On pure heart's love to greet the tender princes.  
Daughter, well met.

### LADY ANNE

God give your graces both  
A happy and a joyful time of day!

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

As much to you, good sister! Whither away?

### LADY ANNE

No farther than the Tower; and, as I guess,  
Upon the like devotion as yourselves,  
To gratulate the gentle princes there.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

Kind sister, thanks: we'll enter all together.

*Enter BRAKENBURY*

And, in good time, here the lieutenant comes.

Master lieutenant, pray you, by your leave,  
How doth the prince, and my young son of York?

**BRAKENBURY**

Right well, dear madam. By your patience,  
I may not suffer you to visit them;  
The king hath straitly charged the contrary.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

The king! why, who's that?

**BRAKENBURY**

I cry you mercy: I mean the lord protector.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

The Lord protect him from that kingly title!  
Hath he set bounds betwixt their love and me?  
I am their mother; who should keep me from them?

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

I am their fathers mother; I will see them.

**LADY ANNE**

Their aunt I am in law, in love their mother:  
Then bring me to their sights; I'll bear thy blame  
And take thy office from thee, on my peril.

**BRAKENBURY**

No, madam, no; I may not leave it so:  
I am bound by oath, and therefore pardon me.

*Exit*

*Enter LORD STANLEY*



## **LORD STANLEY**

Let me but meet you, ladies, one hour hence,  
And I'll salute your grace of York as mother,  
And reverend looker on, of two fair queens.

*To LADY ANNE*

Come, madam, you must straight to Westminster,  
There to be crowned Richard's royal queen.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

O, cut my lace in sunder, that my pent heart  
May have some scope to beat, or else I swoon  
With this dead-killing news!

## **LADY ANNE**

Despiteful tidings! O unpleasing news!

## **DORSET**

Be of good cheer: mother, how fares your grace?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

O Dorset, speak not to me, get thee hence!  
Death and destruction dog thee at the heels;  
Thy mother's name is ominous to children.  
If thou wilt outstrip death, go cross the seas,  
And live with Richmond, from the reach of hell  
Go, hie thee, hie thee from this slaughter-house,  
Lest thou increase the number of the dead;  
And make me die the thrall of Margaret's curse,  
Nor mother, wife, nor England's counted queen.

## **LORD STANLEY**

Full of wise care is this your counsel, madam.  
Take all the swift advantage of the hours;

You shall have letters from me to my son  
To meet you on the way, and welcome you.  
Be not ta'en tardy by unwise delay.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

O ill-dispersing wind of misery!  
O my accursed womb, the bed of death!  
A cockatrice hast thou hatch'd to the world,  
Whose unavoyded eye is murderous.

## **LORD STANLEY**

Come, madam, come; I in all haste was sent.

## **LADY ANNE**

And I in all unwillingness will go.  
I would to God that the inclusive verge  
Of golden metal that must round my brow  
Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!  
Anointed let me be with deadly venom,  
And die, ere men can say, God save the queen!

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Go, go, poor soul, I envy not thy glory  
To feed my humour, wish thyself no harm.

## **LADY ANNE**

No! why? When he that is my husband now  
Came to me, as I follow'd Henry's corse,  
When scarce the blood was well wash'd from his hands  
Which issued from my other angel husband  
And that dead saint which then I weeping follow'd;  
O, when, I say, I look'd on Richard's face,  
This was my wish: 'Be thou,' quoth I, 'accursed,  
For making me, so young, so old a widow!  
And, when thou wed'st, let sorrow haunt thy bed;  
And be thy wife--if any be so mad--  
As miserable by the life of thee

As thou hast made me by my dear lord's death!  
Lo, ere I can repeat this curse again,  
Even in so short a space, my woman's heart  
Grossly grew captive to his honey words  
And proved the subject of my own soul's curse,  
Which ever since hath kept my eyes from rest;  
For never yet one hour in his bed  
Have I enjoy'd the golden dew of sleep,  
But have been waked by his timorous dreams.  
Besides, he hates me for my father Warwick;  
And will, no doubt, shortly be rid of me.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Poor heart, adieu! I pity thy complaining.

### **LADY ANNE**

No more than from my soul I mourn for yours.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Farewell, thou woful welcomer of glory!

### **LADY ANNE**

Adieu, poor soul, that takest thy leave of it!

### **DUCHESS OF YORK**

[To DORSET]

Go thou to Richmond, and good fortune guide thee!

*To LADY ANNE*

Go thou to Richard, and good angels guard thee!

*To QUEEN ELIZABETH*

Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee!  
I to my grave, where peace and rest lie with me!

Eighty odd years of sorrow have I seen,  
And each hour's joy wrecked with a week of teen.

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

Stay, yet look back with me unto the Tower.  
Pity, you ancient stones, those tender babes  
Whom envy hath immured within your walls!  
Rough cradle for such little pretty ones!  
Rude ragged nurse, old sullen playfellow  
For tender princes, use my babies well!  
So foolish sorrow bids your stones farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. London. The palace.

*Sennet. Enter KING RICHARD III, in pomp, crowned; BUCKINGHAM, CATESBY, a page, and others*

### KING RICHARD III

Stand all apart Cousin of Buckingham!

### BUCKINGHAM

My gracious sovereign?

### KING RICHARD III

Give me thy hand.

*Here he ascendeth his throne*

Thus high, by thy advice  
And thy assistance, is King Richard seated;  
But shall we wear these honours for a day?  
Or shall they last, and we rejoice in them?

### BUCKINGHAM

Still live they and for ever may they last!

### KING RICHARD III

O Buckingham, now do I play the touch,  
To try if thou be current gold indeed  
Young Edward lives: think now what I would say.

### BUCKINGHAM

Say on, my loving lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

Why, Buckingham, I say, I would be king,

**BUCKINGHAM**

Why, so you are, my thrice renowned liege.

**KING RICHARD III**

Ha! am I king? 'tis so: but Edward lives.

**BUCKINGHAM**

True, noble prince.

**KING RICHARD III**

O bitter consequence,  
That Edward still should live! 'True, noble prince!'  
Cousin, thou wert not wont to be so dull:  
Shall I be plain? I wish the bastards dead;  
And I would have it suddenly perform'd.  
What sayest thou? speak suddenly; be brief.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Your grace may do your pleasure.

**KING RICHARD III**

Tut, tut, thou art all ice, thy kindness freezeth:  
Say, have I thy consent that they shall die?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Give me some breath, some little pause, my lord  
Before I positively herein:  
I will resolve your grace immediately.

*Exit*

**CATESBY**

[Aside to a stander by]

The king is angry: see, he bites the lip.

**KING RICHARD III**

I will converse with iron-witted fools  
And unrespective boys: none are for me  
That look into me with considerate eyes:  
High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect.  
Boy!

**Page**

My lord?

**KING RICHARD III**

Know'st thou not any whom corrupting gold  
Would tempt unto a close exploit of death?

**Page**

My lord, I know a discontented gentleman,  
Whose humble means match not his haughty mind:  
Gold were as good as twenty orators,  
And will, no doubt, tempt him to any thing.

**KING RICHARD III**

What is his name?

**Page**

His name, my lord, is Tyrrel.

**KING RICHARD III**

I partly know the man: go, call him hither.

*Exit Page*

The deep-revolving witty Buckingham  
No more shall be the neighbour to my counsel:  
Hath he so long held out with me untired,  
And stops he now for breath?

*Enter STANLEY*

How now! what news with you?

**STANLEY**

My lord, I hear the Marquis Dorset's fled  
To Richmond, in those parts beyond the sea  
Where he abides.

*Stands apart*

**KING RICHARD III**

Catesby!

**CATESBY**

My lord?

**KING RICHARD III**

Rumour it abroad  
That Anne, my wife, is sick and like to die:  
I will take order for her keeping close.  
Inquire me out some mean-born gentleman,  
Whom I will marry straight to Clarence' daughter:  
The boy is foolish, and I fear not him.  
Look, how thou dream'st! I say again, give out  
That Anne my wife is sick and like to die:  
About it; for it stands me much upon,  
To stop all hopes whose growth may damage me.



*Exit CATESBY*

I must be married to my brother's daughter,  
Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass.  
Murder her brothers, and then marry her!  
Uncertain way of gain! But I am in  
So far in blood that sin will pluck on sin:  
Tear-falling pity dwells not in this eye.

*Re-enter Page, with TYRREL*

Is thy name Tyrrel?

**TYRREL**

James Tyrrel, and your most obedient subject.

**KING RICHARD III**

Art thou, indeed?

**TYRREL**

Prove me, my gracious sovereign.

**KING RICHARD III**

Darest thou resolve to kill a friend of mine?

**TYRREL**

Ay, my lord;  
But I had rather kill two enemies.

**KING RICHARD III**

Why, there thou hast it: two deep enemies,  
Foes to my rest and my sweet sleep's disturbers  
Are they that I would have thee deal upon:  
Tyrrel, I mean those bastards in the Tower.

**TYRREL**

Let me have open means to come to them,  
And soon I'll rid you from the fear of them.

**KING RICHARD III**

Thou sing'st sweet music. Hark, come hither, Tyrrel  
Go, by this token: rise, and lend thine ear:

*Whispers*

There is no more but so: say it is done,  
And I will love thee, and prefer thee too.

**TYRREL**

'Tis done, my gracious lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

Shall we hear from thee, Tyrrel, ere we sleep?

**TYRREL**

Ye shall, my Lord.

*Exit*

*Re-enter BUCKINGHAM*

**BUCKINGHAM**

My Lord, I have consider'd in my mind  
The late demand that you did sound me in.

**KING RICHARD III**

Well, let that pass. Dorset is fled to Richmond.

**BUCKINGHAM**

I hear that news, my lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

Stanley, he is your wife's son well, look to it.

**BUCKINGHAM**

My lord, I claim your gift, my due by promise,  
For which your honour and your faith is pawn'd;  
The earldom of Hereford and the moveables  
The which you promised I should possess.

**KING RICHARD III**

Stanley, look to your wife; if she convey  
Letters to Richmond, you shall answer it.

**BUCKINGHAM**

What says your highness to my just demand?

**KING RICHARD III**

As I remember, Henry the Sixth  
Did prophesy that Richmond should be king,  
When Richmond was a little peevish boy.  
A king, perhaps, perhaps,--

**BUCKINGHAM**

My lord!

**KING RICHARD III**

How chance the prophet could not at that time  
Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?

**BUCKINGHAM**

My lord, your promise for the earldom,--

**KING RICHARD III**

Richmond! When last I was at Exeter,  
The mayor in courtesy show'd me the castle,  
And call'd it Rougemont: at which name I started,  
Because a bard of Ireland told me once  
I should not live long after I saw Richmond.

**BUCKINGHAM**

My Lord!

**KING RICHARD III**

Ay, what's o'clock?

**BUCKINGHAM**

I am thus bold to put your grace in mind  
Of what you promised me.

**KING RICHARD III**

Well, but what's o'clock?

**BUCKINGHAM**

Upon the stroke of ten.

**KING RICHARD III**

Well, let it strike.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Why let it strike?

**KING RICHARD III**

Because that, like a Jack, thou keep'st the stroke  
Betwixt thy begging and my meditation.  
I am not in the giving vein to-day.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Why, then resolve me whether you will or no.

**KING RICHARD III**

Tut, tut,  
Thou troublest me; am not in the vein.

*Exeunt all but BUCKINGHAM*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Is it even so? rewards he my true service  
With such deep contempt made I him king for this?  
O, let me think on Hastings, and be gone  
To Brecknock, while my fearful head is on!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same.

*Enter TYRREL*

**TYRREL**

The tyrannous and bloody deed is done.  
The most arch of piteous massacre  
That ever yet this land was guilty of.  
Dighton and Forrest, whom I did suborn  
To do this ruthless piece of butchery,  
Although they were flesh'd villains, bloody dogs,  
Melting with tenderness and kind compassion  
Wept like two children in their deaths' sad stories.  
'Lo, thus' quoth Dighton, 'lay those tender babes:'  
'Thus, thus,' quoth Forrest, 'girdling one another  
Within their innocent alabaster arms:  
Their lips were four red roses on a stalk,  
Which in their summer beauty kiss'd each other.  
A book of prayers on their pillow lay;  
Which once,' quoth Forrest, 'almost changed my mind;  
But O! the devil'--there the villain stopp'd  
Whilst Dighton thus told on: 'We smothered  
The most replenished sweet work of nature,  
That from the prime creation e'er she framed.'  
Thus both are gone with conscience and remorse;  
They could not speak; and so I left them both,  
To bring this tidings to the bloody king.  
And here he comes.

*Enter KING RICHARD III*

All hail, my sovereign liege!

**KING RICHARD III**

Kind Tyrrel, am I happy in thy news?

**TYRREL**

If to have done the thing you gave in charge  
Beget your happiness, be happy then,  
For it is done, my lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

But didst thou see them dead?

**TYRREL**

I did, my lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

And buried, gentle Tyrrel?

**TYRREL**

The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them;  
But how or in what place I do not know.

**KING RICHARD III**

Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at after supper,  
And thou shalt tell the process of their death.  
Meantime, but think how I may do thee good,  
And be inheritor of thy desire.  
Farewell till soon.

*Exit TYRREL*

The son of Clarence have I pent up close;  
His daughter meanly have I match'd in marriage;  
The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom,  
And Anne my wife hath bid the world good night.  
Now, for I know the Breton Richmond aims  
At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,

And, by that knot, looks proudly o'er the crown,  
To her I go, a jolly thriving wooer.

*Enter CATESBY*

**CATESBY**

My lord!

**KING RICHARD III**

Good news or bad, that thou comest in so bluntly?

**CATESBY**

Bad news, my lord: Ely is fled to Richmond;  
And Buckingham, back'd with the hardy Welshmen,  
Is in the field, and still his power increaseth.

**KING RICHARD III**

Ely with Richmond troubles me more near  
Than Buckingham and his rash-levied army.  
Come, I have heard that fearful commenting  
Is leaden servitor to dull delay;  
Delay leads impotent and snail-paced beggary  
Then fiery expedition be my wing,  
Jove's Mercury, and herald for a king!  
Come, muster men: my counsel is my shield;  
We must be brief when traitors brave the field.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Before the palace.

*Enter QUEEN MARGARET*

### QUEEN MARGARET

So, now prosperity begins to mellow  
And drop into the rotten mouth of death.  
Here in these confines slyly have I lurk'd,  
To watch the waning of mine adversaries.  
A dire induction am I witness to,  
And will to France, hoping the consequence  
Will prove as bitter, black, and tragical.  
Withdraw thee, wretched Margaret: who comes here?

*Enter QUEEN ELIZABETH and the DUCHESS OF YORK*

### QUEEN ELIZABETH

Ah, my young princes! ah, my tender babes!  
My unblown flowers, new-appearing sweets!  
If yet your gentle souls fly in the air  
And be not fix'd in doom perpetual,  
Hover about me with your airy wings  
And hear your mother's lamentation!

### QUEEN MARGARET

Hover about her; say, that right for right  
Hath dimm'd your infant morn to aged night.

### DUCHESS OF YORK

So many miseries have crazed my voice,  
That my woe-wearied tongue is mute and dumb,  
Edward Plantagenet, why art thou dead?

## QUEEN MARGARET

Plantagenet doth quit Plantagenet.  
Edward for Edward pays a dying debt.

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

Wilt thou, O God, fly from such gentle lambs,  
And throw them in the entrails of the wolf?  
When didst thou sleep when such a deed was done?

## QUEEN MARGARET

When holy Harry died, and my sweet son.

## DUCHESS OF YORK

Blind sight, dead life, poor mortal living ghost,  
Woe's scene, world's shame, grave's due by life usurp'd,  
Brief abstract and record of tedious days,  
Rest thy unrest on England's lawful earth,

*Sitting down*

Unlawfully made drunk with innocents' blood!

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

O, that thou wouldst as well afford a grave  
As thou canst yield a melancholy seat!  
Then would I hide my bones, not rest them here.  
O, who hath any cause to mourn but I?

*Sitting down by her*

## QUEEN MARGARET

If ancient sorrow be most reverend,  
Give mine the benefit of seniory,  
And let my woes frown on the upper hand.  
If sorrow can admit society,

*Sitting down with them*

Tell o'er your woes again by viewing mine:  
I had an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;  
I had a Harry, till a Richard kill'd him:  
Thou hadst an Edward, till a Richard kill'd him;  
Thou hadst a Richard, till a Richard killed him;

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

I had a Richard too, and thou didst kill him;  
I had a Rutland too, thou holp'st to kill him.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Thou hadst a Clarence too, and Richard kill'd him.  
From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept  
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:  
That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,  
To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood,  
That foul defacer of God's handiwork,  
That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,  
That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls,  
Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves.  
O upright, just, and true-disposing God,  
How do I thank thee, that this carnal cur  
Preys on the issue of his mother's body,  
And makes her pew-fellow with others' moan!

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

O Harry's wife, triumph not in my woes!  
God witness with me, I have wept for thine.

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

Bear with me; I am hungry for revenge,  
And now I cloy me with beholding it.  
Thy Edward he is dead, that stabb'd my Edward:  
Thy other Edward dead, to quit my Edward;  
Young York he is but boot, because both they

Match not the high perfection of my loss:  
Thy Clarence he is dead that kill'd my Edward;  
And the beholders of this tragic play,  
The adulterate Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,  
Untimely smother'd in their dusky graves.  
Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,  
Only reserved their factor, to buy souls  
And send them thither: but at hand, at hand,  
Ensues his piteous and unpitied end:  
Earth gapes, hell burns, fiends roar, saints pray.  
To have him suddenly convey'd away.  
Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray,  
That I may live to say, The dog is dead!

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

O, thou didst prophesy the time would come  
That I should wish for thee to help me curse  
That bottled spider, that foul bunch-back'd toad!

## **QUEEN MARGARET**

I call'd thee then vain flourish of my fortune;  
I call'd thee then poor shadow, painted queen;  
The presentation of but what I was;  
The flattering index of a direful pageant;  
One heaved a-high, to be hurl'd down below;  
A mother only mock'd with two sweet babes;  
A dream of what thou wert, a breath, a bubble,  
A sign of dignity, a garish flag,  
To be the aim of every dangerous shot,  
A queen in jest, only to fill the scene.  
Where is thy husband now? where be thy brothers?  
Where are thy children? wherein dost thou, joy?  
Who sues to thee and cries 'God save the queen'?  
Where be the bending peers that flatter'd thee?  
Where be the thronging troops that follow'd thee?  
Decline all this, and see what now thou art:  
For happy wife, a most distressed widow;  
For joyful mother, one that wails the name;  
For queen, a very caitiff crown'd with care;  
For one being sued to, one that humbly sues;  
For one that scorn'd at me, now scorn'd of me;

For one being fear'd of all, now fearing one;  
For one commanding all, obey'd of none.  
Thus hath the course of justice wheel'd about,  
And left thee but a very prey to time;  
Having no more but thought of what thou wert,  
To torture thee the more, being what thou art.  
Thou didst usurp my place, and dost thou not  
Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?  
Now thy proud neck bears half my burthen'd yoke;  
From which even here I slip my weary neck,  
And leave the burthen of it all on thee.  
Farewell, York's wife, and queen of sad mischance:  
These English woes will make me smile in France.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

O thou well skill'd in curses, stay awhile,  
And teach me how to curse mine enemies!

### **QUEEN MARGARET**

Forbear to sleep the nights, and fast the days;  
Compare dead happiness with living woe;  
Think that thy babes were fairer than they were,  
And he that slew them fouler than he is:  
Bettering thy loss makes the bad causer worse:  
Revolving this will teach thee how to curse.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

My words are dull; O, quicken them with thine!

### **QUEEN MARGARET**

Thy woes will make them sharp, and pierce like mine.

*Exit*

### **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Why should calamity be full of words?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Windy attorneys to their client woes,  
Airy succeeders of intestate joys,  
Poor breathing orators of miseries!  
Let them have scope: though what they do impart  
Help not all, yet do they ease the heart.

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

If so, then be not tongue-tied: go with me.  
And in the breath of bitter words let's smother  
My damned son, which thy two sweet sons smother'd.  
I hear his drum: be copious in exclams.

*Enter KING RICHARD III, marching, with drums and trumpets*

## **KING RICHARD III**

Who intercepts my expedition?

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

O, she that might have intercepted thee,  
By strangling thee in her accursed womb  
From all the slaughters, wretch, that thou hast done!

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Hidest thou that forehead with a golden crown,  
Where should be graven, if that right were right,  
The slaughter of the prince that owed that crown,  
And the dire death of my two sons and brothers?  
Tell me, thou villain slave, where are my children?

## **DUCHESS OF YORK**

Thou toad, thou toad, where is thy brother Clarence?  
And little Ned Plantagenet, his son?

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Where is kind Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey?

**KING RICHARD III**

A flourish, trumpets! strike alarum, drums!  
Let not the heavens hear these tell-tale women  
Rail on the Lord's enointed: strike, I say!

*Flourish. Alarums*

Either be patient, and entreat me fair,  
Or with the clamorous report of war  
Thus will I drown your exclamations.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Art thou my son?

**KING RICHARD III**

Ay, I thank God, my father, and yourself.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Then patiently hear my impatience.

**KING RICHARD III**

Madam, I have a touch of your condition,  
Which cannot brook the accent of reproof.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

O, let me speak!

**KING RICHARD III**

Do then: but I'll not hear.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

I will be mild and gentle in my speech.

**KING RICHARD III**

And brief, good mother; for I am in haste.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Art thou so hasty? I have stay'd for thee,  
God knows, in anguish, pain and agony.

**KING RICHARD III**

And came I not at last to comfort you?

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

No, by the holy rood, thou know'st it well,  
Thou camest on earth to make the earth my hell.  
A grievous burthen was thy birth to me;  
Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;  
Thy school-days frightful, desperate, wild, and furious,  
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous,  
Thy age confirm'd, proud, subdued, bloody,  
treacherous,  
More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred:  
What comfortable hour canst thou name,  
That ever graced me in thy company?

**KING RICHARD III**

Faith, none, but Humphrey Hour, that call'd  
your grace  
To breakfast once forth of my company.  
If I be so disgracious in your sight,  
Let me march on, and not offend your grace.  
Strike the drum.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

I prithee, hear me speak.



**KING RICHARD III**

You speak too bitterly.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Hear me a word;  
For I shall never speak to thee again.

**KING RICHARD III**

So.

**DUCHESS OF YORK**

Either thou wilt die, by God's just ordinance,  
Ere from this war thou turn a conqueror,  
Or I with grief and extreme age shall perish  
And never look upon thy face again.  
Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse;  
Which, in the day of battle, tire thee more  
Than all the complete armour that thou wear'st!  
My prayers on the adverse party fight;  
And there the little souls of Edward's children  
Whisper the spirits of thine enemies  
And promise them success and victory.  
Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;  
Shame serves thy life and doth thy death attend.

*Exit*

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Though far more cause, yet much less spirit to curse  
Abides in me; I say amen to all.

**KING RICHARD III**

Stay, madam; I must speak a word with you.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I have no more sons of the royal blood  
For thee to murder: for my daughters, Richard,  
They shall be praying nuns, not weeping queens;  
And therefore level not to hit their lives.

**KING RICHARD III**

You have a daughter call'd Elizabeth,  
Virtuous and fair, royal and gracious.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

And must she die for this? O, let her live,  
And I'll corrupt her manners, stain her beauty;  
Slander myself as false to Edward's bed;  
Throw over her the veil of infamy:  
So she may live unscarr'd of bleeding slaughter,  
I will confess she was not Edward's daughter.

**KING RICHARD III**

Wrong not her birth, she is of royal blood.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

To save her life, I'll say she is not so.

**KING RICHARD III**

Her life is only safest in her birth.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

And only in that safety died her brothers.

**KING RICHARD III**

Lo, at their births good stars were opposite.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

No, to their lives bad friends were contrary.

**KING RICHARD III**

All unavoids is the doom of destiny.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

True, when avoided grace makes destiny:  
My babes were destined to a fairer death,  
If grace had bless'd thee with a fairer life.

**KING RICHARD III**

You speak as if that I had slain my cousins.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cozen'd  
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life.  
Whose hand soever lanced their tender hearts,  
Thy head, all indirectly, gave direction:  
No doubt the murderous knife was dull and blunt  
Till it was whetted on thy stone-hard heart,  
To revel in the entrails of my lambs.  
But that still use of grief makes wild grief tame,  
My tongue should to thy ears not name my boys  
Till that my nails were anchor'd in thine eyes;  
And I, in such a desperate bay of death,  
Like a poor bark, of sails and tackling reft,  
Rush all to pieces on thy rocky bosom.

**KING RICHARD III**

Madam, so thrive I in my enterprise  
And dangerous success of bloody wars,  
As I intend more good to you and yours,  
Than ever you or yours were by me wrong'd!

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What good is cover'd with the face of heaven,  
To be discover'd, that can do me good?

**KING RICHARD III**

The advancement of your children, gentle lady.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Up to some scaffold, there to lose their heads?

**KING RICHARD III**

No, to the dignity and height of honour  
The high imperial type of this earth's glory.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Flatter my sorrows with report of it;  
Tell me what state, what dignity, what honour,  
Canst thou demise to any child of mine?

**KING RICHARD III**

Even all I have; yea, and myself and all,  
Will I withal endow a child of thine;  
So in the Lethe of thy angry soul  
Thou drown the sad remembrance of those wrongs  
Which thou supposest I have done to thee.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Be brief, lest that be process of thy kindness  
Last longer telling than thy kindness' date.

**KING RICHARD III**

Then know, that from my soul I love thy daughter.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

My daughter's mother thinks it with her soul.

**KING RICHARD III**

What do you think?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

That thou dost love my daughter from thy soul:  
So from thy soul's love didst thou love her brothers;  
And from my heart's love I do thank thee for it.

**KING RICHARD III**

Be not so hasty to confound my meaning:  
I mean, that with my soul I love thy daughter,  
And mean to make her queen of England.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Say then, who dost thou mean shall be her king?

**KING RICHARD III**

Even he that makes her queen who should be else?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What, thou?

**KING RICHARD III**

I, even I: what think you of it, madam?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

How canst thou woo her?

**KING RICHARD III**

That would I learn of you,

As one that are best acquainted with her humour.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

And wilt thou learn of me?

**KING RICHARD III**

Madam, with all my heart.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Send to her, by the man that slew her brothers,  
A pair of bleeding-hearts; thereon engrave  
Edward and York; then haply she will weep:  
Therefore present to her--as sometime Margaret  
Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood,--  
A handkerchief; which, say to her, did drain  
The purple sap from her sweet brother's body  
And bid her dry her weeping eyes therewith.  
If this inducement force her not to love,  
Send her a story of thy noble acts;  
Tell her thou madest away her uncle Clarence,  
Her uncle Rivers; yea, and, for her sake,  
Madest quick conveyance with her good aunt Anne.

**KING RICHARD III**

Come, come, you mock me; this is not the way  
To win our daughter.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

There is no other way  
Unless thou couldst put on some other shape,  
And not be Richard that hath done all this.

**KING RICHARD III**

Say that I did all this for love of her.

## QUEEN ELIZABETH

Nay, then indeed she cannot choose but hate thee,  
Having bought love with such a bloody spoil.

## KING RICHARD III

Look, what is done cannot be now amended:  
Men shall deal unadvisedly sometimes,  
Which after hours give leisure to repent.  
If I did take the kingdom from your sons,  
To make amends, Ill give it to your daughter.  
If I have kill'd the issue of your womb,  
To quicken your increase, I will beget  
Mine issue of your blood upon your daughter  
A grandam's name is little less in love  
Than is the doting title of a mother;  
They are as children but one step below,  
Even of your mettle, of your very blood;  
Of an one pain, save for a night of groans  
Endured of her, for whom you bid like sorrow.  
Your children were vexation to your youth,  
But mine shall be a comfort to your age.  
The loss you have is but a son being king,  
And by that loss your daughter is made queen.  
I cannot make you what amends I would,  
Therefore accept such kindness as I can.  
Dorset your son, that with a fearful soul  
Leads discontented steps in foreign soil,  
This fair alliance quickly shall call home  
To high promotions and great dignity:  
The king, that calls your beauteous daughter wife.  
Familiarly shall call thy Dorset brother;  
Again shall you be mother to a king,  
And all the ruins of distressful times  
Repair'd with double riches of content.  
What! we have many goodly days to see:  
The liquid drops of tears that you have shed  
Shall come again, transform'd to orient pearl,  
Advantaging their loan with interest  
Of ten times double gain of happiness.  
Go, then my mother, to thy daughter go  
Make bold her bashful years with your experience;

Prepare her ears to hear a wooer's tale  
Put in her tender heart the aspiring flame  
Of golden sovereignty; acquaint the princess  
With the sweet silent hours of marriage joys  
And when this arm of mine hath chastised  
The petty rebel, dull-brain'd Buckingham,  
Bound with triumphant garlands will I come  
And lead thy daughter to a conqueror's bed;  
To whom I will retail my conquest won,  
And she shall be sole victress, Caesar's Caesar.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

What were I best to say? her father's brother  
Would be her lord? or shall I say, her uncle?  
Or, he that slew her brothers and her uncles?  
Under what title shall I woo for thee,  
That God, the law, my honour and her love,  
Can make seem pleasing to her tender years?

### **KING RICHARD III**

Infer fair England's peace by this alliance.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Which she shall purchase with still lasting war.

### **KING RICHARD III**

Say that the king, which may command, entreats.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

That at her hands which the king's King forbids.

### **KING RICHARD III**

Say, she shall be a high and mighty queen.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**



To wail the tide, as her mother doth.

**KING RICHARD III**

Say, I will love her everlastingly.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

But how long shall that title 'ever' last?

**KING RICHARD III**

Sweetly in force unto her fair life's end.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

But how long fairly shall her sweet lie last?

**KING RICHARD III**

So long as heaven and nature lengthens it.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

So long as hell and Richard likes of it.

**KING RICHARD III**

Say, I, her sovereign, am her subject love.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

But she, your subject, loathes such sovereignty.

**KING RICHARD III**

Be eloquent in my behalf to her.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

An honest tale speeds best being plainly told.

**KING RICHARD III**

Then in plain terms tell her my loving tale.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Plain and not honest is too harsh a style.

**KING RICHARD III**

Your reasons are too shallow and too quick.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

O no, my reasons are too deep and dead;  
Too deep and dead, poor infants, in their grave.

**KING RICHARD III**

Harp not on that string, madam; that is past.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Harp on it still shall I till heart-strings break.

**KING RICHARD III**

Now, by my George, my garter, and my crown,--

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Profaned, dishonour'd, and the third usurp'd.

**KING RICHARD III**

I swear--

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

By nothing; for this is no oath:  
The George, profaned, hath lost his holy honour;  
The garter, blemish'd, pawn'd his knightly virtue;  
The crown, usurp'd, disgraced his kingly glory.  
if something thou wilt swear to be believed,  
Swear then by something that thou hast not wrong'd.

**KING RICHARD III**

Now, by the world--

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

'Tis full of thy foul wrongs.

**KING RICHARD III**

My father's death--

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Thy life hath that dishonour'd.

**KING RICHARD III**

Then, by myself--

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Thyself thyself misusest.

**KING RICHARD III**

Why then, by God--

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

God's wrong is most of all.  
If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,  
The unity the king thy brother made  
Had not been broken, nor my brother slain:

If thou hadst fear'd to break an oath by Him,  
The imperial metal, circling now thy brow,  
Had graced the tender temples of my child,  
And both the princes had been breathing here,  
Which now, two tender playfellows to dust,  
Thy broken faith hath made a prey for worms.  
What canst thou swear by now?

### **KING RICHARD III**

The time to come.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

That thou hast wronged in the time o'erpast;  
For I myself have many tears to wash  
Hereafter time, for time past wrong'd by thee.  
The children live, whose parents thou hast  
slaughter'd,  
Ungovern'd youth, to wail it in their age;  
The parents live, whose children thou hast butcher'd,  
Old wither'd plants, to wail it with their age.  
Swear not by time to come; for that thou hast  
Misused ere used, by time misused o'erpast.

### **KING RICHARD III**

As I intend to prosper and repent,  
So thrive I in my dangerous attempt  
Of hostile arms! myself myself confound!  
Heaven and fortune bar me happy hours!  
Day, yield me not thy light; nor, night, thy rest!  
Be opposite all planets of good luck  
To my proceedings, if, with pure heart's love,  
Immaculate devotion, holy thoughts,  
I tender not thy beauteous princely daughter!  
In her consists my happiness and thine;  
Without her, follows to this land and me,  
To thee, herself, and many a Christian soul,  
Death, desolation, ruin and decay:  
It cannot be avoided but by this;  
It will not be avoided but by this.

Therefore, good mother,--I must can you so--  
Be the attorney of my love to her:  
Plead what I will be, not what I have been;  
Not my deserts, but what I will deserve:  
Urge the necessity and state of times,  
And be not peevish-fond in great designs.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?

**KING RICHARD III**

Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Shall I forget myself to be myself?

**KING RICHARD III**

Ay, if yourself's remembrance wrong yourself.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

But thou didst kill my children.

**KING RICHARD III**

But in your daughter's womb I bury them:  
Where in that nest of spicery they shall breed  
Selves of themselves, to your recomforture.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH**

Shall I go win my daughter to thy will?

**KING RICHARD III**

And be a happy mother by the deed.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH**

I go. Write to me very shortly.  
And you shall understand from me her mind.

## **KING RICHARD III**

Bear her my true love's kiss; and so, farewell.

*Exit QUEEN ELIZABETH*

Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman!

*Enter RATCLIFF; CATESBY following*

How now! what news?

## **RATCLIFF**

My gracious sovereign, on the western coast  
Rideth a puissant navy; to the shore  
Throng many doubtful hollow-hearted friends,  
Unarm'd, and unresolved to beat them back:  
'Tis thought that Richmond is their admiral;  
And there they hull, expecting but the aid  
Of Buckingham to welcome them ashore.

## **KING RICHARD III**

Some light-foot friend post to the Duke of Norfolk:  
Ratcliff, thyself, or Catesby; where is he?

## **CATESBY**

Here, my lord.

## **KING RICHARD III**

Fly to the duke:

*To RATCLIFF*

Post thou to Salisbury  
When thou comest thither--

*To CATESBY*

Dull, unmindful villain,  
Why stand'st thou still, and go'st not to the duke?

**CATESBY**

First, mighty sovereign, let me know your mind,  
What from your grace I shall deliver to him.

**KING RICHARD III**

O, true, good Catesby: bid him levy straight  
The greatest strength and power he can make,  
And meet me presently at Salisbury.

**CATESBY**

I go.

*Exit*

**RATCLIFF**

What is't your highness' pleasure I shall do at  
Salisbury?

**KING RICHARD III**

Why, what wouldst thou do there before I go?

**RATCLIFF**

Your highness told me I should post before.

**KING RICHARD III**

My mind is changed, sir, my mind is changed.

*Enter STANLEY*

How now, what news with you?

**STANLEY**

None good, my lord, to please you with the hearing;  
Nor none so bad, but it may well be told.

**KING RICHARD III**

Hoyday, a riddle! neither good nor bad!  
Why dost thou run so many mile about,  
When thou mayst tell thy tale a nearer way?  
Once more, what news?

**STANLEY**

Richmond is on the seas.

**KING RICHARD III**

There let him sink, and be the seas on him!  
White-liver'd runagate, what doth he there?

**STANLEY**

I know not, mighty sovereign, but by guess.

**KING RICHARD III**

Well, sir, as you guess, as you guess?

**STANLEY**

Stirr'd up by Dorset, Buckingham, and Ely,  
He makes for England, there to claim the crown.

**KING RICHARD III**



Is the chair empty? is the sword unsway'd?  
Is the king dead? the empire unpossess'd?  
What heir of York is there alive but we?  
And who is England's king but great York's heir?  
Then, tell me, what doth he upon the sea?

**STANLEY**

Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess.

**KING RICHARD III**

Unless for that he comes to be your liege,  
You cannot guess wherefore the Welshman comes.  
Thou wilt revolt, and fly to him, I fear.

**STANLEY**

No, mighty liege; therefore mistrust me not.

**KING RICHARD III**

Where is thy power, then, to beat him back?  
Where are thy tenants and thy followers?  
Are they not now upon the western shore.  
Safe-conducting the rebels from their ships!

**STANLEY**

No, my good lord, my friends are in the north.

**KING RICHARD III**

Cold friends to Richard: what do they in the north,  
When they should serve their sovereign in the west?

**STANLEY**

They have not been commanded, mighty sovereign:  
Please it your majesty to give me leave,

I'll muster up my friends, and meet your grace  
Where and what time your majesty shall please.

**KING RICHARD III**

Ay, ay. thou wouldst be gone to join with Richmond:  
I will not trust you, sir.

**STANLEY**

Most mighty sovereign,  
You have no cause to hold my friendship doubtful:  
I never was nor never will be false.

**KING RICHARD III**

Well,  
Go muster men; but, hear you, leave behind  
Your son, George Stanley: look your faith be firm.  
Or else his head's assurance is but frail.

**STANLEY**

So deal with him as I prove true to you.

*Exit*

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

My gracious sovereign, now in Devonshire,  
As I by friends am well advertised,  
Sir Edward Courtney, and the haughty prelate  
Bishop of Exeter, his brother there,  
With many more confederates, are in arms.

*Enter another Messenger*

**Second Messenger**

My liege, in Kent the Guildfords are in arms;  
And every hour more competitors  
Flock to their aid, and still their power increaseth.

*Enter another Messenger*

**Third Messenger**

My lord, the army of the Duke of Buckingham--

**KING RICHARD III**

Out on you, owls! nothing but songs of death?

*He striketh him*

Take that, until thou bring me better news.

**Third Messenger**

The news I have to tell your majesty  
Is, that by sudden floods and fall of waters,  
Buckingham's army is dispersed and scatter'd;  
And he himself wander'd away alone,  
No man knows whither.

**KING RICHARD III**

I cry thee mercy:  
There is my purse to cure that blow of thine.  
Hath any well-advised friend proclaim'd  
Reward to him that brings the traitor in?

**Third Messenger**

Such proclamation hath been made, my liege.

*Enter another Messenger*

**Fourth Messenger**

Sir Thomas Lovel and Lord Marquis Dorset,  
'Tis said, my liege, in Yorkshire are in arms.  
Yet this good comfort bring I to your grace,  
The Breton navy is dispersed by tempest:  
Richmond, in Yorkshire, sent out a boat  
Unto the shore, to ask those on the banks  
If they were his assistants, yea or no;  
Who answer'd him, they came from Buckingham.  
Upon his party: he, mistrusting them,  
Hoisted sail and made away for Brittany.

### **KING RICHARD III**

March on, march on, since we are up in arms;  
If not to fight with foreign enemies,  
Yet to beat down these rebels here at home.

*Re-enter CATESBY*

### **CATESBY**

My liege, the Duke of Buckingham is taken;  
That is the best news: that the Earl of Richmond  
Is with a mighty power landed at Milford,  
Is colder tidings, yet they must be told.

### **KING RICHARD III**

Away towards Salisbury! while we reason here,  
A royal battle might be won and lost  
Some one take order Buckingham be brought  
To Salisbury; the rest march on with me.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Lord Derby's house.

*Enter DERBY and SIR CHRISTOPHER URSWICK*

### DERBY

Sir Christopher, tell Richmond this from me:  
That in the sty of this most bloody boar  
My son George Stanley is frank'd up in hold:  
If I revolt, off goes young George's head;  
The fear of that withholds my present aid.  
But, tell me, where is princely Richmond now?

### CHRISTOPHER

At Pembroke, or at Harford-west, in Wales.

### DERBY

What men of name resort to him?

### CHRISTOPHER

Sir Walter Herbert, a renowned soldier;  
Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sir William Stanley;  
Oxford, redoubted Pembroke, Sir James Blunt,  
And Rice ap Thomas with a valiant crew;  
And many more of noble fame and worth:  
And towards London they do bend their course,  
If by the way they be not fought withal.

### DERBY

Return unto thy lord; commend me to him:  
Tell him the queen hath heartily consented  
He shall espouse Elizabeth her daughter.

These letters will resolve him of my mind. Farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 4, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Salisbury. An open place.

*Enter the Sheriff, and BUCKINGHAM, with halberds, led to execution*

**BUCKINGHAM**

Will not King Richard let me speak with him?

**Sheriff**

No, my good lord; therefore be patient.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Hastings, and Edward's children, Rivers, Grey,  
Holy King Henry, and thy fair son Edward,  
Vaughan, and all that have miscarried  
By underhand corrupted foul injustice,  
If that your moody discontented souls  
Do through the clouds behold this present hour,  
Even for revenge mock my destruction!  
This is All-Souls' day, fellows, is it not?

**Sheriff**

It is, my lord.

**BUCKINGHAM**

Why, then All-Souls' day is my body's doomsday.  
This is the day that, in King Edward's time,  
I wish't might fall on me, when I was found  
False to his children or his wife's allies  
This is the day wherein I wish'd to fall  
By the false faith of him I trusted most;  
This, this All-Souls' day to my fearful soul

Is the determined respite of my wrongs:  
That high All-Seer that I dallied with  
Hath turn'd my feigned prayer on my head  
And given in earnest what I begg'd in jest.  
Thus doth he force the swords of wicked men  
To turn their own points on their masters' bosoms:  
Now Margaret's curse is fallen upon my head;  
'When he,' quoth she, 'shall split thy heart with sorrow,  
Remember Margaret was a prophetess.'  
Come, sirs, convey me to the block of shame;  
Wrong hath but wrong, and blame the due of blame.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The camp near Tamworth.

*Enter RICHMOND, OXFORD, BLUNT, HERBERT, and others, with drum and colours*

### RICHMOND

Fellows in arms, and my most loving friends,  
Bruised underneath the yoke of tyranny,  
Thus far into the bowels of the land  
Have we march'd on without impediment;  
And here receive we from our father Stanley  
Lines of fair comfort and encouragement.  
The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar,  
That spoil'd your summer fields and fruitful vines,  
Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his trough  
In your embowell'd bosoms, this foul swine  
Lies now even in the centre of this isle,  
Near to the town of Leicester, as we learn  
From Tamworth thither is but one day's march.  
In God's name, cheerly on, courageous friends,  
To reap the harvest of perpetual peace  
By this one bloody trial of sharp war.

### OXFORD

Every man's conscience is a thousand swords,  
To fight against that bloody homicide.

### HERBERT

I doubt not but his friends will fly to us.

### BLUNT

He hath no friends but who are friends for fear.  
Which in his greatest need will shrink from him.

## **RICHMOND**

All for our vantage. Then, in God's name, march:  
True hope is swift, and flies with swallow's wings:  
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Bosworth Field.

*Enter KING RICHARD III in arms, with NORFOLK, SURREY, and others*

### KING RICHARD III

Here pitch our tents, even here in Bosworth field.  
My Lord of Surrey, why look you so sad?

### SURREY

My heart is ten times lighter than my looks.

### KING RICHARD III

My Lord of Norfolk,--

### NORFOLK

Here, most gracious liege.

### KING RICHARD III

Norfolk, we must have knocks; ha! must we not?

### NORFOLK

We must both give and take, my gracious lord.

### KING RICHARD III

Up with my tent there! here will I lie tonight;  
But where to-morrow? Well, all's one for that.  
Who hath descried the number of the foe?

## **NORFOLK**

Six or seven thousand is their utmost power.

## **KING RICHARD III**

Why, our battalion trebles that account:  
Besides, the king's name is a tower of strength,  
Which they upon the adverse party want.  
Up with my tent there! Valiant gentlemen,  
Let us survey the vantage of the field  
Call for some men of sound direction  
Let's want no discipline, make no delay,  
For, lords, to-morrow is a busy day.

*Exeunt*

*Enter, on the other side of the field, RICHMOND, Sir William Brandon, OXFORD, and others. Some of the Soldiers pitch RICHMOND's tent*

## **RICHMOND**

The weary sun hath made a golden set,  
And by the bright track of his fiery car,  
Gives signal, of a goodly day to-morrow.  
Sir William Brandon, you shall bear my standard.  
Give me some ink and paper in my tent  
I'll draw the form and model of our battle,  
Limit each leader to his several charge,  
And part in just proportion our small strength.  
My Lord of Oxford, you, Sir William Brandon,  
And you, Sir Walter Herbert, stay with me.  
The Earl of Pembroke keeps his regiment:  
Good Captain Blunt, bear my good night to him  
And by the second hour in the morning  
Desire the earl to see me in my tent:  
Yet one thing more, good Blunt, before thou go'st,  
Where is Lord Stanley quarter'd, dost thou know?

## **BLUNT**

Unless I have mista'en his colours much,

Which well I am assured I have not done,  
His regiment lies half a mile at least  
South from the mighty power of the king.

**RICHMOND**

If without peril it be possible,  
Good Captain Blunt, bear my good-night to him,  
And give him from me this most needful scroll.

**BLUNT**

Upon my life, my lord, I'll under-take it;  
And so, God give you quiet rest to-night!

**RICHMOND**

Good night, good Captain Blunt. Come gentlemen,  
Let us consult upon to-morrow's business  
In to our tent; the air is raw and cold.

*They withdraw into the tent*

*Enter, to his tent, KING RICHARD III, NORFOLK, RATCLIFF, CATESBY, and others*

**KING RICHARD III**

What is't o'clock?

**CATESBY**

It's supper-time, my lord;  
It's nine o'clock.

**KING RICHARD III**

I will not sup to-night.  
Give me some ink and paper.  
What, is my beaver easier than it was?  
And all my armour laid into my tent?

**CATESBY**

If is, my liege; and all things are in readiness.

**KING RICHARD III**

Good Norfolk, hie thee to thy charge;  
Use careful watch, choose trusty sentinels.

**NORFOLK**

I go, my lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

Stir with the lark to-morrow, gentle Norfolk.

**NORFOLK**

I warrant you, my lord.

*Exit*

**KING RICHARD III**

Catesby!

**CATESBY**

My lord?

**KING RICHARD III**

Send out a pursuivant at arms  
To Stanley's regiment; bid him bring his power  
Before sunrising, lest his son George fall  
Into the blind cave of eternal night.

*Exit CATESBY*

Fill me a bowl of wine. Give me a watch.

Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow.  
Look that my staves be sound, and not too heavy.  
Ratcliff!

**RATCLIFF**

My lord?

**KING RICHARD III**

Saw'st thou the melancholy Lord Northumberland?

**RATCLIFF**

Thomas the Earl of Surrey, and himself,  
Much about cock-shut time, from troop to troop  
Went through the army, cheering up the soldiers.

**KING RICHARD III**

So, I am satisfied. Give me a bowl of wine:  
I have not that alacrity of spirit,  
Nor cheer of mind, that I was wont to have.  
Set it down. Is ink and paper ready?

**RATCLIFF**

It is, my lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

Bid my guard watch; leave me.  
Ratcliff, about the mid of night come to my tent  
And help to arm me. Leave me, I say.

*Exeunt RATCLIFF and the other Attendants*

*Enter DERBY to RICHMOND in his tent, Lords and others attending*

**DERBY**

Fortune and victory sit on thy helm!

## **RICHMOND**

All comfort that the dark night can afford  
Be to thy person, noble father-in-law!  
Tell me, how fares our loving mother?

## **DERBY**

I, by attorney, bless thee from thy mother  
Who prays continually for Richmond's good:  
So much for that. The silent hours steal on,  
And flaky darkness breaks within the east.  
In brief,--for so the season bids us be,--  
Prepare thy battle early in the morning,  
And put thy fortune to the arbitrement  
Of bloody strokes and mortal-staring war.  
I, as I may--that which I would I cannot,--  
With best advantage will deceive the time,  
And aid thee in this doubtful shock of arms:  
But on thy side I may not be too forward  
Lest, being seen, thy brother, tender George,  
Be executed in his father's sight.  
Farewell: the leisure and the fearful time  
Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love  
And ample interchange of sweet discourse,  
Which so long sunder'd friends should dwell upon:  
God give us leisure for these rites of love!  
Once more, adieu: be valiant, and speed well!

## **RICHMOND**

Good lords, conduct him to his regiment:  
I'll strive, with troubled thoughts, to take a nap,  
Lest leaden slumber peise me down to-morrow,  
When I should mount with wings of victory:  
Once more, good night, kind lords and gentlemen.

*Exeunt all but RICHMOND*

O Thou, whose captain I account myself,



Look on my forces with a gracious eye;  
Put in their hands thy bruising irons of wrath,  
That they may crush down with a heavy fall  
The usurping helmets of our adversaries!  
Make us thy ministers of chastisement,  
That we may praise thee in the victory!  
To thee I do commend my watchful soul,  
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes:  
Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still!

*Sleeps*

*Enter the Ghost of Prince Edward, son to King Henry VI*

Ghost

### **of Prince Edward**

[To KING RICHARD III]  
Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!  
Think, how thou stab'dst me in my prime of youth  
At Tewksbury: despair, therefore, and die!

*To RICHMOND*

Be cheerful, Richmond; for the wronged souls  
Of butcher'd princes fight in thy behalf  
King Henry's issue, Richmond, comforts thee.

*Enter the Ghost of King Henry VI*

Ghost

### **of King Henry VI**

[To KING RICHARD III]  
When I was mortal, my anointed body  
By thee was punched full of deadly holes  
Think on the Tower and me: despair, and die!  
Harry the Sixth bids thee despair, and die!

*To RICHMOND*

Virtuous and holy, be thou conqueror!  
Harry, that prophesied thou shouldst be king,  
Doth comfort thee in thy sleep: live, and flourish!

*Enter the Ghost of CLARENCE*

**Ghost of CLARENCE**

[To KING RICHARD III]  
Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow!  
I, that was wash'd to death with fulsome wine,  
Poor Clarence, by thy guile betrayed to death!  
To-morrow in the battle think on me,  
And fall thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!--

*To RICHMOND*

Thou offspring of the house of Lancaster  
The wronged heirs of York do pray for thee  
Good angels guard thy battle! live, and flourish!

*Enter the Ghosts of RIVERS, GRAY, and VAUGHAN*

**Ghost of RIVERS**

[To KING RICHARD III]  
Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow,  
Rivers. that died at Pomfret! despair, and die!

**Ghost of GREY**

[To KING RICHARD III]  
Think upon Grey, and let thy soul despair!

**Ghost of VAUGHAN**

[To KING RICHARD III]  
Think upon Vaughan, and, with guilty fear,  
Let fall thy lance: despair, and die!

**All**

[To RICHMOND]

Awake, and think our wrongs in Richard's bosom  
Will conquer him! awake, and win the day!

*Enter the Ghost of HASTINGS*

**Ghost of HASTINGS**

[To KING RICHARD III]

Bloody and guilty, guiltily awake,  
And in a bloody battle end thy days!  
Think on Lord Hastings: despair, and die!

*To RICHMOND*

Quiet untroubled soul, awake, awake!  
Arm, fight, and conquer, for fair England's sake!

*Enter the Ghosts of the two young Princes*

Ghosts

**of young Princes**

[To KING RICHARD III]

Dream on thy cousins smother'd in the Tower:  
Let us be led within thy bosom, Richard,  
And weigh thee down to ruin, shame, and death!  
Thy nephews' souls bid thee despair and die!

*To RICHMOND*

Sleep, Richmond, sleep in peace, and wake in joy;  
Good angels guard thee from the boar's annoy!  
Live, and beget a happy race of kings!  
Edward's unhappy sons do bid thee flourish.

*Enter the Ghost of LADY ANNE*

## **Ghost of LADY ANNE**

[To KING RICHARD III]

Richard, thy wife, that wretched Anne thy wife,  
That never slept a quiet hour with thee,  
Now fills thy sleep with perturbations  
To-morrow in the battle think on me,  
And fall thy edgeless sword: despair, and die!

*To RICHMOND*

Thou quiet soul, sleep thou a quiet sleep  
Dream of success and happy victory!  
Thy adversary's wife doth pray for thee.

*Enter the Ghost of BUCKINGHAM*

Ghost

## **of BUCKINGHAM**

[To KING RICHARD III]

The last was I that helped thee to the crown;  
The last was I that felt thy tyranny:  
O, in the battle think on Buckingham,  
And die in terror of thy guiltiness!  
Dream on, dream on, of bloody deeds and death:  
Fainting, despair; despairing, yield thy breath!

*To RICHMOND*

I died for hope ere I could lend thee aid:  
But cheer thy heart, and be thou not dismay'd:  
God and good angel fight on Richmond's side;  
And Richard falls in height of all his pride.

*The Ghosts vanish*

*KING RICHARD III starts out of his dream*

## **KING RICHARD III**

Give me another horse: bind up my wounds.  
Have mercy, Jesu!--Soft! I did but dream.  
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!  
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.  
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.  
What do I fear? myself? there's none else by:  
Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I.  
Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am:  
Then fly. What, from myself? Great reason why:  
Lest I revenge. What, myself upon myself?  
Alack. I love myself. Wherefore? for any good  
That I myself have done unto myself?  
O, no! alas, I rather hate myself  
For hateful deeds committed by myself!  
I am a villain: yet I lie. I am not.  
Fool, of thyself speak well: fool, do not flatter.  
My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns me for a villain.  
Perjury, perjury, in the high'st degree  
Murder, stem murder, in the direst degree;  
All several sins, all used in each degree,  
Throng to the bar, crying all, Guilty! guilty!  
I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;  
And if I die, no soul shall pity me:  
Nay, wherefore should they, since that I myself  
Find in myself no pity to myself?  
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd  
Came to my tent; and every one did threat  
To-morrow's vengeance on the head of Richard.

*Enter RATCLIFF*

**RATCLIFF**

My lord!

**KING RICHARD III**

'Zounds! who is there?

**RATCLIFF**

Ratcliff, my lord; 'tis I. The early village-cock  
Hath twice done salutation to the morn;  
Your friends are up, and buckle on their armour.

**KING RICHARD III**

O Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!  
What thinkest thou, will our friends prove all true?

**RATCLIFF**

No doubt, my lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear,--

**RATCLIFF**

Nay, good my lord, be not afraid of shadows.

**KING RICHARD III**

By the apostle Paul, shadows to-night  
Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard  
Than can the substance of ten thousand soldiers  
Armed in proof, and led by shallow Richmond.  
It is not yet near day. Come, go with me;  
Under our tents I'll play the eaves-dropper,  
To see if any mean to shrink from me.

*Exeunt*

*Enter the Lords to RICHMOND, sitting in his tent*

**LORDS**

Good morrow, Richmond!

**RICHMOND**

Cry mercy, lords and watchful gentlemen,  
That you have ta'en a tardy sluggard here.

## LORDS

How have you slept, my lord?

## RICHMOND

The sweetest sleep, and fairest-boding dreams  
That ever enter'd in a drowsy head,  
Have I since your departure had, my lords.  
Methought their souls, whose bodies Richard murder'd,  
Came to my tent, and cried on victory:  
I promise you, my soul is very jocund  
In the remembrance of so fair a dream.  
How far into the morning is it, lords?

## LORDS

Upon the stroke of four.

## RICHMOND

Why, then 'tis time to arm and give direction.

*His oration to his soldiers*

More than I have said, loving countrymen,  
The leisure and enforcement of the time  
Forbids to dwell upon: yet remember this,  
God and our good cause fight upon our side;  
The prayers of holy saints and wronged souls,  
Like high-rear'd bulwarks, stand before our faces;  
Richard except, those whom we fight against  
Had rather have us win than him they follow:  
For what is he they follow? truly, gentlemen,  
A bloody tyrant and a homicide;  
One raised in blood, and one in blood establish'd;  
One that made means to come by what he hath,  
And slaughter'd those that were the means to help him;

Abase foul stone, made precious by the foil  
Of England's chair, where he is falsely set;  
One that hath ever been God's enemy:  
Then, if you fight against God's enemy,  
God will in justice ward you as his soldiers;  
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,  
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain;  
If you do fight against your country's foes,  
Your country's fat shall pay your pains the hire;  
If you do fight in safeguard of your wives,  
Your wives shall welcome home the conquerors;  
If you do free your children from the sword,  
Your children's children quit it in your age.  
Then, in the name of God and all these rights,  
Advance your standards, draw your willing swords.  
For me, the ransom of my bold attempt  
Shall be this cold corpse on the earth's cold face;  
But if I thrive, the gain of my attempt  
The least of you shall share his part thereof.  
Sound drums and trumpets boldly and cheerfully;  
God and Saint George! Richmond and victory!

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter KING RICHARD, RATCLIFF, Attendants and Forces*

**KING RICHARD III**

What said Northumberland as touching Richmond?

**RATCLIFF**

That he was never trained up in arms.

**KING RICHARD III**

He said the truth: and what said Surrey then?

**RATCLIFF**

He smiled and said 'The better for our purpose.'



**KING RICHARD III**

He was in the right; and so indeed it is.

*Clock striketh*

Ten the clock there. Give me a calendar.  
Who saw the sun to-day?

**RATCLIFF**

Not I, my lord.

**KING RICHARD III**

Then he disdains to shine; for by the book  
He should have braved the east an hour ago  
A black day will it be to somebody. Ratcliff!

**RATCLIFF**

My lord?

**KING RICHARD III**

The sun will not be seen to-day;  
The sky doth frown and lour upon our army.  
I would these dewy tears were from the ground.  
Not shine to-day! Why, what is that to me  
More than to Richmond? for the selfsame heaven  
That frowns on me looks sadly upon him.

*Enter NORFOLK*

**NORFOLK**

Arm, arm, my lord; the foe vaunts in the field.

**KING RICHARD III**

Come, bustle, bustle; caparison my horse.

Call up Lord Stanley, bid him bring his power:  
I will lead forth my soldiers to the plain,  
And thus my battle shall be ordered:  
My foreward shall be drawn out all in length,  
Consisting equally of horse and foot;  
Our archers shall be placed in the midst  
John Duke of Norfolk, Thomas Earl of Surrey,  
Shall have the leading of this foot and horse.  
They thus directed, we will follow  
In the main battle, whose puissance on either side  
Shall be well winged with our chiefest horse.  
This, and Saint George to boot! What think'st thou, Norfolk?

## **NORFOLK**

A good direction, warlike sovereign.  
This found I on my tent this morning.

*He sheweth him a paper*

## **KING RICHARD III**

[Reads]  
'Jockey of Norfolk, be not too bold,  
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold.'  
A thing devised by the enemy.  
Go, gentleman, every man unto his charge  
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:  
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,  
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:  
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.  
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell  
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

*His oration to his Army*

What shall I say more than I have inferr'd?  
Remember whom you are to cope withal;  
A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways,  
A scum of Bretons, and base lackey peasants,  
Whom their o'er-cloyed country vomits forth  
To desperate ventures and assured destruction.

You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest;  
You having lands, and blest with beauteous wives,  
They would restrain the one, distain the other.  
And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,  
Long kept in Bretagne at our mother's cost?  
A milk-sop, one that never in his life  
Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow?  
Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again;  
Lash hence these overweening rags of France,  
These famish'd beggars, weary of their lives;  
Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,  
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves:  
If we be conquer'd, let men conquer us,  
And not these bastard Bretons; whom our fathers  
Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd,  
And in record, left them the heirs of shame.  
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?  
Ravish our daughters?

*Drum afar off*

Hark! I hear their drum.  
Fight, gentlemen of England! fight, bold yoemen!  
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!  
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood;  
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves!

*Enter a Messenger*

What says Lord Stanley? will he bring his power?

**Messenger**

My lord, he doth deny to come.

**KING RICHARD III**

Off with his son George's head!

**NORFOLK**

My lord, the enemy is past the marsh

After the battle let George Stanley die.

## **KING RICHARD III**

A thousand hearts are great within my bosom:  
Advance our standards, set upon our foes  
Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George,  
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons!  
Upon them! victory sits on our helms.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

*Alarum: excursions. Enter NORFOLK and forces fighting; to him CATESBY*

### CATESBY

Rescue, my Lord of Norfolk, rescue, rescue!  
The king enacts more wonders than a man,  
Daring an opposite to every danger:  
His horse is slain, and all on foot he fights,  
Seeking for Richmond in the throat of death.  
Rescue, fair lord, or else the day is lost!

*Alarums. Enter KING RICHARD III*

### KING RICHARD III

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

### CATESBY

Withdraw, my lord; I'll help you to a horse.

### KING RICHARD III

Slave, I have set my life upon a cast,  
And I will stand the hazard of the die:  
I think there be six Richmonds in the field;  
Five have I slain to-day instead of him.  
A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Richard the Third

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Richard III](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the field.

*Alarum. Enter KING RICHARD III and RICHMOND; they fight. KING RICHARD III is slain. Retreat and flourish. Re-enter RICHMOND, DERBY bearing the crown, with divers other Lords*

### RICHMOND

God and your arms be praised, victorious friends,  
The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead.

### DERBY

Courageous Richmond, well hast thou acquit thee.  
Lo, here, this long-usurped royalty  
From the dead temples of this bloody wretch  
Have I pluck'd off, to grace thy brows withal:  
Wear it, enjoy it, and make much of it.

### RICHMOND

Great God of heaven, say Amen to all!  
But, tell me, is young George Stanley living?

### DERBY

He is, my lord, and safe in Leicester town;  
Whither, if it please you, we may now withdraw us.

### RICHMOND

What men of name are slain on either side?

### DERBY

John Duke of Norfolk, Walter Lord Ferrers,

Sir Robert Brakenbury, and Sir William Brandon.

## **RICHMOND**

Inter their bodies as becomes their births:  
Proclaim a pardon to the soldiers fled  
That in submission will return to us:  
And then, as we have ta'en the sacrament,  
We will unite the white rose and the red:  
Smile heaven upon this fair conjunction,  
That long have frown'd upon their enmity!  
What traitor hears me, and says not amen?  
England hath long been mad, and scarr'd herself;  
The brother blindly shed the brother's blood,  
The father rashly slaughter'd his own son,  
The son, compell'd, been butcher to the sire:  
All this divided York and Lancaster,  
Divided in their dire division,  
O, now, let Richmond and Elizabeth,  
The true succeeders of each royal house,  
By God's fair ordinance conjoin together!  
And let their heirs, God, if thy will be so,  
Enrich the time to come with smooth-faced peace,  
With smiling plenty and fair prosperous days!  
Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,  
That would reduce these bloody days again,  
And make poor England weep in streams of blood!  
Let them not live to taste this land's increase  
That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!  
Now civil wounds are stopp'd, peace lives again:  
That she may long live here, God say amen!

*Exeunt*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Antony and Cleopatra

[Entire play](#) in one page

- Act 1, Scene 1: [Alexandria. A room in CLEOPATRA's palace.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 2: [The same. Another room.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 3: [The same. Another room.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 4: [Rome. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 5: [Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.](#)
- 
- Act 2, Scene 1: [Messina. POMPEY's house.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 2: [Rome. The house of LEPIDUS.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 3: [The same. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 4: [The same. A street.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 5: [Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 6: [Near Misenum.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 7: [On board POMPEY's galley, off Misenum.](#)
- 
- Act 3, Scene 1: [A plain in Syria.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 2: [Rome. An ante-chamber in OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 3: [Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 4: [Athens. A room in MARK ANTONY's house.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 5: [The same. Another room.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 6: [Rome. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 7: [Near Actium. MARK ANTONY's camp.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 8: [A plain near Actium.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 9: [Another part of the plain.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 10: [Another part of the plain.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 11: [Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 12: [Egypt. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 13: [Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.](#)
- 
- Act 4, Scene 1: [Before Alexandria. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 2: [Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 3: [The same. Before the palace.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 4: [The same. A room in the palace.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 5: [Alexandria. MARK ANTONY's camp.](#)



Act 4, Scene 6: [Alexandria. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.](#)

Act 4, Scene 7: [Field of battle between the camps.](#)

Act 4, Scene 8: [Under the walls of Alexandria.](#)

Act 4, Scene 9: [OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.](#)

Act 4, Scene 10: [Between the two camps.](#)

Act 4, Scene 11: [Another part of the same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 12: [Another part of the same.](#)

Act 4, Scene 13: [Alexandria. Cleopatra's palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 14: [The same. Another room.](#)

Act 4, Scene 15: [The same. A monument.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Alexandria. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Alexandria. A room in the monument.](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Alexandria. A room in CLEOPATRA's palace.

*Enter DEMETRIUS and PHILO*

### PHILO

Nay, but this dotage of our general's  
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes,  
That o'er the files and musters of the war  
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,  
The office and devotion of their view  
Upon a tawny front: his captain's heart,  
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst  
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,  
And is become the bellows and the fan  
To cool a gipsy's lust.

*Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her Ladies, the Train, with Eunuchs fanning her*

Look, where they come:  
Take but good note, and you shall see in him.  
The triple pillar of the world transform'd  
Into a strumpet's fool: behold and see.

### CLEOPATRA

If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

### MARK ANTONY

There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd.

### CLEOPATRA

I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.

## MARK ANTONY

Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

*Enter an Attendant*

## Attendant

News, my good lord, from Rome.

## MARK ANTONY

Grates me: the sum.

## CLEOPATRA

Nay, hear them, Antony:  
Fulvia perchance is angry; or, who knows  
If the scarce-bearded Caesar have not sent  
His powerful mandate to you, 'Do this, or this;  
Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that;  
Perform 't, or else we damn thee.'

## MARK ANTONY

How, my love!

## CLEOPATRA

Perchance! nay, and most like:  
You must not stay here longer, your dismissal  
Is come from Caesar; therefore hear it, Antony.  
Where's Fulvia's process? Caesar's I would say? both?  
Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,  
Thou blushest, Antony; and that blood of thine  
Is Caesar's homager: else so thy cheek pays shame  
When shrill-tongued Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

## MARK ANTONY

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch

Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space.  
Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike  
Feeds beast as man: the nobleness of life  
Is to do thus; when such a mutual pair

*Embracing*

And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,  
On pain of punishment, the world to weet  
We stand up peerless.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Excellent falsehood!  
Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?  
I'll seem the fool I am not; Antony  
Will be himself.

## **MARK ANTONY**

But stirr'd by Cleopatra.  
Now, for the love of Love and her soft hours,  
Let's not confound the time with conference harsh:  
There's not a minute of our lives should stretch  
Without some pleasure now. What sport tonight?

## **CLEOPATRA**

Hear the ambassadors.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Fie, wrangling queen!  
Whom every thing becomes, to chide, to laugh,  
To weep; whose every passion fully strives  
To make itself, in thee, fair and admired!  
No messenger, but thine; and all alone  
To-night we'll wander through the streets and note  
The qualities of people. Come, my queen;  
Last night you did desire it: speak not to us.

*Exeunt MARK ANTONY and CLEOPATRA with their train*

**DEMETRIUS**

Is Caesar with Antonius prized so slight?

**PHILO**

Sir, sometimes, when he is not Antony,  
He comes too short of that great property  
Which still should go with Antony.

**DEMETRIUS**

I am full sorry  
That he approves the common liar, who  
Thus speaks of him at Rome: but I will hope  
Of better deeds to-morrow. Rest you happy!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. Another room.

*Enter CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, and a Soothsayer*

**CHARMIAN**

Lord Alexas, sweet Alexas, most any thing Alexas,  
almost most absolute Alexas, where's the soothsayer  
that you praised so to the queen? O, that I knew  
this husband, which, you say, must charge his horns  
with garlands!

**ALEXAS**

Soothsayer!

**Soothsayer**

Your will?

**CHARMIAN**

Is this the man? Is't you, sir, that know things?

**Soothsayer**

In nature's infinite book of secrecy  
A little I can read.

**ALEXAS**

Show him your hand.

*Enter DOMITIUS ENOBRABUS*

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Bring in the banquet quickly; wine enough  
Cleopatra's health to drink.

## **CHARMIAN**

Good sir, give me good fortune.

## **Soothsayer**

I make not, but foresee.

## **CHARMIAN**

Pray, then, foresee me one.

## **Soothsayer**

You shall be yet far fairer than you are.

## **CHARMIAN**

He means in flesh.

## **IRAS**

No, you shall paint when you are old.

## **CHARMIAN**

Wrinkles forbid!

## **ALEXAS**

Vex not his prescience; be attentive.

## **CHARMIAN**

Hush!

**Soothsayer**

You shall be more believing than beloved.

**CHARMIAN**

I had rather heat my liver with drinking.

**ALEXAS**

Nay, hear him.

**CHARMIAN**

Good now, some excellent fortune! Let me be married  
to three kings in a forenoon, and widow them all:  
let me have a child at fifty, to whom Herod of Jewry  
may do homage: find me to marry me with Octavius  
Caesar, and companion me with my mistress.

**Soothsayer**

You shall outlive the lady whom you serve.

**CHARMIAN**

O excellent! I love long life better than figs.

**Soothsayer**

You have seen and proved a fairer former fortune  
Than that which is to approach.

**CHARMIAN**

Then belike my children shall have no names:  
prithee, how many boys and wenches must I have?

**Soothsayer**

If every of your wishes had a womb.



And fertile every wish, a million.

**CHARMIAN**

Out, fool! I forgive thee for a witch.

**ALEXAS**

You think none but your sheets are privy to your wishes.

**CHARMIAN**

Nay, come, tell Iras hers.

**ALEXAS**

We'll know all our fortunes.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Mine, and most of our fortunes, to-night, shall  
be--drunk to bed.

**IRAS**

There's a palm presages chastity, if nothing else.

**CHARMIAN**

E'en as the o'erflowing Nilus presageth famine.

**IRAS**

Go, you wild bedfellow, you cannot soothsay.

**CHARMIAN**

Nay, if an oily palm be not a fruitful  
prognostication, I cannot scratch mine ear. Prithee,  
tell her but a worky-day fortune.

**Soothsayer**

Your fortunes are alike.

**IRAS**

But how, but how? give me particulars.

**Soothsayer**

I have said.

**IRAS**

Am I not an inch of fortune better than she?

**CHARMIAN**

Well, if you were but an inch of fortune better than I, where would you choose it?

**IRAS**

Not in my husband's nose.

**CHARMIAN**

Our worser thoughts heavens mend! Alexas,--come, his fortune, his fortune! O, let him marry a woman that cannot go, sweet Isis, I beseech thee! and let her die too, and give him a worse! and let worst follow worst, till the worst of all follow him laughing to his grave, fifty-fold a cuckold! Good Isis, hear me this prayer, though thou deny me a matter of more weight; good Isis, I beseech thee!

**IRAS**

Amen. Dear goddess, hear that prayer of the people! for, as it is a heartbreaking to see a handsome man loose-wived, so it is a deadly sorrow to behold a

foul knave uncuckolded: therefore, dear Isis, keep decorum, and fortune him accordingly!

**CHARMIAN**

Amen.

**ALEXAS**

Lo, now, if it lay in their hands to make me a cuckold, they would make themselves whores, but they'ld do't!

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Hush! here comes Antony.

**CHARMIAN**

Not he; the queen.

*Enter CLEOPATRA*

**CLEOPATRA**

Saw you my lord?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

No, lady.

**CLEOPATRA**

Was he not here?

**CHARMIAN**

No, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

He was disposed to mirth; but on the sudden  
A Roman thought hath struck him. Enobarbus!

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

Seek him, and bring him hither.  
Where's Alexas?

**ALEXAS**

Here, at your service. My lord approaches.

**CLEOPATRA**

We will not look upon him: go with us.

*Exeunt*

*Enter MARK ANTONY with a Messenger and Attendants*

**Messenger**

Fulvia thy wife first came into the field.

**MARK ANTONY**

Against my brother Lucius?

**Messenger**

Ay:  
But soon that war had end, and the time's state  
Made friends of them, joining their force 'gainst Caesar;  
Whose better issue in the war, from Italy,  
Upon the first encounter, drave them.

**MARK ANTONY**

Well, what worst?

**Messenger**

The nature of bad news infects the teller.

**MARK ANTONY**

When it concerns the fool or coward. On:  
Things that are past are done with me. 'Tis thus:  
Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death,  
I hear him as he flatter'd.

**Messenger**

Labienus--  
This is stiff news--hath, with his Parthian force,  
Extended Asia from Euphrates;  
His conquering banner shook from Syria  
To Lydia and to Ionia; Whilst--

**MARK ANTONY**

Antony, thou wouldst say,--

**Messenger**

O, my lord!

**MARK ANTONY**

Speak to me home, mince not the general tongue:  
Name Cleopatra as she is call'd in Rome;  
Rail thou in Fulvia's phrase; and taunt my faults  
With such full licence as both truth and malice  
Have power to utter. O, then we bring forth weeds,  
When our quick minds lie still; and our ills told us  
Is as our earring. Fare thee well awhile.

**Messenger**

At your noble pleasure.

*Exit*

**MARK ANTONY**

From Sicyon, ho, the news! Speak there!

**First Attendant**

The man from Sicyon,--is there such an one?

**Second Attendant**

He stays upon your will.

**MARK ANTONY**

Let him appear.  
These strong Egyptian fetters I must break,  
Or lose myself in dotage.

*Enter another Messenger*

What are you?

**Second Messenger**

Fulvia thy wife is dead.

**MARK ANTONY**

Where died she?

**Second Messenger**

In Sicyon:  
Her length of sickness, with what else more serious  
Importeth thee to know, this bears.

*Gives a letter*

**MARK ANTONY**

Forbear me.

*Exit Second Messenger*

There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I desire it:  
What our contempt doth often hurl from us,  
We wish it ours again; the present pleasure,  
By revolution lowering, does become  
The opposite of itself: she's good, being gone;  
The hand could pluck her back that shoved her on.  
I must from this enchanting queen break off:  
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,  
My idleness doth hatch. How now! Enobarbus!

*Re-enter DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

What's your pleasure, sir?

**MARK ANTONY**

I must with haste from hence.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Why, then, we kill all our women:  
we see how mortal an unkindness is to them;  
if they suffer our departure, death's the word.

**MARK ANTONY**

I must be gone.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Under a compelling occasion, let women die; it were

pity to cast them away for nothing; though, between them and a great cause, they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this, dies instantly; I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment: I do think there is mettle in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying.

**MARK ANTONY**

She is cunning past man's thought.

*Exit ALEXAS*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Alack, sir, no; her passions are made of nothing but the finest part of pure love: we cannot call her winds and waters sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report: this cannot be cunning in her; if it be, she makes a shower of rain as well as Jove.

**MARK ANTONY**

Would I had never seen her.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

O, sir, you had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work; which not to have been blest withal would have discredited your travel.

**MARK ANTONY**

Fulvia is dead.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Sir?



**MARK ANTONY**

Fulvia is dead.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Fulvia!

**MARK ANTONY**

Dead.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it shows to man the tailors of the earth; comforting therein, that when old robes are worn out, there are members to make new. If there were no more women but Fulvia, then had you indeed a cut, and the case to be lamented: this grief is crowned with consolation; your old smock brings forth a new petticoat: and indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow.

**MARK ANTONY**

The business she hath broached in the state  
Cannot endure my absence.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

And the business you have broached here cannot be without you; especially that of Cleopatra's, which wholly depends on your abode.

**MARK ANTONY**

No more light answers. Let our officers  
Have notice what we purpose. I shall break  
The cause of our expedience to the queen,

And get her leave to part. For not alone  
The death of Fulvia, with more urgent touches,  
Do strongly speak to us; but the letters too  
Of many our contriving friends in Rome  
Petition us at home: Sextus Pompeius  
Hath given the dare to Caesar, and commands  
The empire of the sea: our slippery people,  
Whose love is never link'd to the deserver  
Till his deserts are past, begin to throw  
Pompey the Great and all his dignities  
Upon his son; who, high in name and power,  
Higher than both in blood and life, stands up  
For the main soldier: whose quality, going on,  
The sides o' the world may danger: much is breeding,  
Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life,  
And not a serpent's poison. Say, our pleasure,  
To such whose place is under us, requires  
Our quick remove from hence.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I shall do't.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. Another room.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS*

**CLEOPATRA**

Where is he?

**CHARMIAN**

I did not see him since.

**CLEOPATRA**

See where he is, who's with him, what he does:  
I did not send you: if you find him sad,  
Say I am dancing; if in mirth, report  
That I am sudden sick: quick, and return.

*Exit ALEXAS*

**CHARMIAN**

Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,  
You do not hold the method to enforce  
The like from him.

**CLEOPATRA**

What should I do, I do not?

**CHARMIAN**

In each thing give him way, cross him nothing.

**CLEOPATRA**

Thou teachest like a fool; the way to lose him.

**CHARMIAN**

Tempt him not so too far; I wish, forbear:  
In time we hate that which we often fear.  
But here comes Antony.

*Enter MARK ANTONY*

**CLEOPATRA**

I am sick and sullen.

**MARK ANTONY**

I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose,--

**CLEOPATRA**

Help me away, dear Charmian; I shall fall:  
It cannot be thus long, the sides of nature  
Will not sustain it.

**MARK ANTONY**

Now, my dearest queen,--

**CLEOPATRA**

Pray you, stand further from me.

**MARK ANTONY**

What's the matter?

**CLEOPATRA**

I know, by that same eye, there's some good news.

What says the married woman? You may go:  
Would she had never given you leave to come!  
Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here:  
I have no power upon you; hers you are.

**MARK ANTONY**

The gods best know,--

**CLEOPATRA**

O, never was there queen  
So mightily betray'd! yet at the first  
I saw the treasons planted.

**MARK ANTONY**

Cleopatra,--

**CLEOPATRA**

Why should I think you can be mine and true,  
Though you in swearing shake the throned gods,  
Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,  
To be entangled with those mouth-made vows,  
Which break themselves in swearing!

**MARK ANTONY**

Most sweet queen,--

**CLEOPATRA**

Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,  
But bid farewell, and go: when you sued staying,  
Then was the time for words: no going then;  
Eternity was in our lips and eyes,  
Bliss in our brows' bent; none our parts so poor,  
But was a race of heaven: they are so still,  
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,  
Art turn'd the greatest liar.

## **MARK ANTONY**

How now, lady!

## **CLEOPATRA**

I would I had thy inches; thou shouldst know  
There were a heart in Egypt.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Hear me, queen:  
The strong necessity of time commands  
Our services awhile; but my full heart  
Remains in use with you. Our Italy  
Shines o'er with civil swords: Sextus Pompeius  
Makes his approaches to the port of Rome:  
Equality of two domestic powers  
Breed scrupulous faction: the hated, grown to strength,  
Are newly grown to love: the condemn'd Pompey,  
Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace,  
Into the hearts of such as have not thrived  
Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;  
And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge  
By any desperate change: my more particular,  
And that which most with you should save my going,  
Is Fulvia's death.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Though age from folly could not give me freedom,  
It does from childishness: can Fulvia die?

## **MARK ANTONY**

She's dead, my queen:  
Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read  
The garboils she awaked; at the last, best:  
See when and where she died.

## **CLEOPATRA**

O most false love!  
Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill  
With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,  
In Fulvia's death, how mine received shall be.

**MARK ANTONY**

Quarrel no more, but be prepared to know  
The purposes I bear; which are, or cease,  
As you shall give the advice. By the fire  
That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence  
Thy soldier, servant; making peace or war  
As thou affect'st.

**CLEOPATRA**

Cut my lace, Charmian, come;  
But let it be: I am quickly ill, and well,  
So Antony loves.

**MARK ANTONY**

My precious queen, forbear;  
And give true evidence to his love, which stands  
An honourable trial.

**CLEOPATRA**

So Fulvia told me.  
I prithee, turn aside and weep for her,  
Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears  
Belong to Egypt: good now, play one scene  
Of excellent dissembling; and let it look  
Life perfect honour.

**MARK ANTONY**

You'll heat my blood: no more.

**CLEOPATRA**

You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

**MARK ANTONY**

Now, by my sword,--

**CLEOPATRA**

And target. Still he mends;  
But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,  
How this Herculean Roman does become  
The carriage of his chafe.

**MARK ANTONY**

I'll leave you, lady.

**CLEOPATRA**

Courteous lord, one word.  
Sir, you and I must part, but that's not it:  
Sir, you and I have loved, but there's not it;  
That you know well: something it is I would,  
O, my oblivion is a very Antony,  
And I am all forgotten.

**MARK ANTONY**

But that your royalty  
Holds idleness your subject, I should take you  
For idleness itself.

**CLEOPATRA**

'Tis sweating labour  
To bear such idleness so near the heart  
As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me;  
Since my becoming kill me, when they do not  
Eye well to you: your honour calls you hence;  
Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly.  
And all the gods go with you! upon your sword  
Sit laurel victory! and smooth success



Be strew'd before your feet!

**MARK ANTONY**

Let us go. Come;  
Our separation so abides, and flies,  
That thou, residing here, go'st yet with me,  
And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee. Away!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Rome. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, reading a letter, LEPIDUS, and their Train*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

You may see, Lepidus, and henceforth know,  
It is not Caesar's natural vice to hate  
Our great competitor: from Alexandria  
This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes  
The lamps of night in revel; is not more man-like  
Than Cleopatra; nor the queen of Ptolemy  
More womanly than he; hardly gave audience, or  
Vouchsafed to think he had partners: you shall find there  
A man who is the abstract of all faults  
That all men follow.

### LEPIDUS

I must not think there are  
Evils enow to darken all his goodness:  
His faults in him seem as the spots of heaven,  
More fiery by night's blackness; hereditary,  
Rather than purchased; what he cannot change,  
Than what he chooses.

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

You are too indulgent. Let us grant, it is not  
Amis to tumble on the bed of Ptolemy;  
To give a kingdom for a mirth; to sit  
And keep the turn of tippling with a slave;  
To reel the streets at noon, and stand the buffet  
With knaves that smell of sweat: say this  
becomes him,--  
As his composure must be rare indeed

Whom these things cannot blemish,--yet must Antony  
No way excuse his soils, when we do bear  
So great weight in his lightness. If he fill'd  
His vacancy with his voluptuousness,  
Full surfeits, and the dryness of his bones,  
Call on him for't: but to confound such time,  
That drums him from his sport, and speaks as loud  
As his own state and ours,--'tis to be chid  
As we rate boys, who, being mature in knowledge,  
Pawn their experience to their present pleasure,  
And so rebel to judgment.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **LEPIDUS**

Here's more news.

## **Messenger**

Thy biddings have been done; and every hour,  
Most noble Caesar, shalt thou have report  
How 'tis abroad. Pompey is strong at sea;  
And it appears he is beloved of those  
That only have fear'd Caesar: to the ports  
The discontents repair, and men's reports  
Give him much wrong'd.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I should have known no less.  
It hath been taught us from the primal state,  
That he which is was wish'd until he were;  
And the ebb'd man, ne'er loved till ne'er worth love,  
Comes dear'd by being lack'd. This common body,  
Like to a vagabond flag upon the stream,  
Goes to and back, lackeying the varying tide,  
To rot itself with motion.

## **Messenger**

Caesar, I bring thee word,

Menecrates and Menas, famous pirates,  
Make the sea serve them, which they ear and wound  
With keels of every kind: many hot inroads  
They make in Italy; the borders maritime  
Lack blood to think on't, and flush youth revolt:  
No vessel can peep forth, but 'tis as soon  
Taken as seen; for Pompey's name strikes more  
Than could his war resisted.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Antony,  
Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once  
Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st  
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel  
Did famine follow; whom thou fought'st against,  
Though daintily brought up, with patience more  
Than savages could suffer: thou didst drink  
The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle  
Which beasts would cough at: thy palate then did deign  
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;  
Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,  
The barks of trees thou browsed'st; on the Alps  
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,  
Which some did die to look on: and all this--  
It wounds thine honour that I speak it now--  
Was borne so like a soldier, that thy cheek  
So much as lank'd not.

## **LEPIDUS**

'Tis pity of him.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Let his shames quickly  
Drive him to Rome: 'tis time we twain  
Did show ourselves i' the field; and to that end  
Assemble we immediate council: Pompey  
Thrives in our idleness.

## **LEPIDUS**

To-morrow, Caesar,  
I shall be furnish'd to inform you rightly  
Both what by sea and land I can be able  
To front this present time.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Till which encounter,  
It is my business too. Farewell.

**LEPIDUS**

Farewell, my lord: what you shall know meantime  
Of stirs abroad, I shall beseech you, sir,  
To let me be partaker.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Doubt not, sir;  
I knew it for my bond.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN*

**CLEOPATRA**

Charmian!

**CHARMIAN**

Madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

Ha, ha!  
Give me to drink mandragora.

**CHARMIAN**

Why, madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

That I might sleep out this great gap of time  
My Antony is away.

**CHARMIAN**

You think of him too much.

**CLEOPATRA**

O, 'tis treason!

**CHARMIAN**

Madam, I trust, not so.

**CLEOPATRA**

Thou, eunuch Mardian!

**MARDIAN**

What's your highness' pleasure?

**CLEOPATRA**

Not now to hear thee sing; I take no pleasure  
In aught an eunuch has: 'tis well for thee,  
That, being unseminar'd, thy freer thoughts  
May not fly forth of Egypt. Hast thou affections?

**MARDIAN**

Yes, gracious madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

Indeed!

**MARDIAN**

Not in deed, madam; for I can do nothing  
But what indeed is honest to be done:  
Yet have I fierce affections, and think  
What Venus did with Mars.

**CLEOPATRA**

O Charmian,  
Where think'st thou he is now? Stands he, or sits he?  
Or does he walk? or is he on his horse?  
O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!  
Do bravely, horse! for wot'st thou whom thou movest?  
The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm  
And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,

Or murmuring 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?'  
For so he calls me: now I feed myself  
With most delicious poison. Think on me,  
That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black,  
And wrinkled deep in time? Broad-fronted Caesar,  
When thou wast here above the ground, I was  
A morsel for a monarch: and great Pompey  
Would stand and make his eyes grow in my brow;  
There would he anchor his aspect and die  
With looking on his life.

*Enter ALEXAS, from OCTAVIUS CAESAR*

**ALEXAS**

Sovereign of Egypt, hail!

**CLEOPATRA**

How much unlike art thou Mark Antony!  
Yet, coming from him, that great medicine hath  
With his tinct gilded thee.  
How goes it with my brave Mark Antony?

**ALEXAS**

Last thing he did, dear queen,  
He kiss'd,--the last of many doubled kisses,--  
This orient pearl. His speech sticks in my heart.

**CLEOPATRA**

Mine ear must pluck it thence.

**ALEXAS**

'Good friend,' quoth he,  
'Say, the firm Roman to great Egypt sends  
This treasure of an oyster; at whose foot,  
To mend the petty present, I will piece  
Her opulent throne with kingdoms; all the east,  
Say thou, shall call her mistress.' So he nodded,



And soberly did mount an arm-gaunt steed,  
Who neigh'd so high, that what I would have spoke  
Was beastly dumb'd by him.

**CLEOPATRA**

What, was he sad or merry?

**ALEXAS**

Like to the time o' the year between the extremes  
Of hot and cold, he was nor sad nor merry.

**CLEOPATRA**

O well-divided disposition! Note him,  
Note him good Charmian, 'tis the man; but note him:  
He was not sad, for he would shine on those  
That make their looks by his; he was not merry,  
Which seem'd to tell them his remembrance lay  
In Egypt with his joy; but between both:  
O heavenly mingle! Be'st thou sad or merry,  
The violence of either thee becomes,  
So does it no man else. Met'st thou my posts?

**ALEXAS**

Ay, madam, twenty several messengers:  
Why do you send so thick?

**CLEOPATRA**

Who's born that day  
When I forget to send to Antony,  
Shall die a beggar. Ink and paper, Charmian.  
Welcome, my good Alexas. Did I, Charmian,  
Ever love Caesar so?

**CHARMIAN**

O that brave Caesar!

## CLEOPATRA

Be choked with such another emphasis!  
Say, the brave Antony.

## CHARMIAN

The valiant Caesar!

## CLEOPATRA

By Isis, I will give thee bloody teeth,  
If thou with Caesar paragon again  
My man of men.

## CHARMIAN

By your most gracious pardon,  
I sing but after you.

## CLEOPATRA

My salad days,  
When I was green in judgment: cold in blood,  
To say as I said then! But, come, away;  
Get me ink and paper:  
He shall have every day a several greeting,  
Or I'll unpeople Egypt.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 1, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Messina. POMPEY's house.

*Enter POMPEY, MENECRATES, and MENAS, in warlike manner*

### POMPEY

If the great gods be just, they shall assist  
The deeds of justest men.

### MENECRATES

Know, worthy Pompey,  
That what they do delay, they not deny.

### POMPEY

Whiles we are suitors to their throne, decays  
The thing we sue for.

### MENECRATES

We, ignorant of ourselves,  
Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers  
Deny us for our good; so find we profit  
By losing of our prayers.

### POMPEY

I shall do well:  
The people love me, and the sea is mine;  
My powers are crescent, and my auguring hope  
Says it will come to the full. Mark Antony  
In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make  
No wars without doors: Caesar gets money where  
He loses hearts: Lepidus flatters both,  
Of both is flatter'd; but he neither loves,

Nor either cares for him.

**MENAS**

Caesar and Lepidus  
Are in the field: a mighty strength they carry.

**POMPEY**

Where have you this? 'tis false.

**MENAS**

From Silvius, sir.

**POMPEY**

He dreams: I know they are in Rome together,  
Looking for Antony. But all the charms of love,  
Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip!  
Let witchcraft join with beauty, lust with both!  
Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,  
Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks  
Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite;  
That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour  
Even till a Lethe'd dulness!

*Enter VARRIUS*

How now, Varrius!

**VARRIUS**

This is most certain that I shall deliver:  
Mark Antony is every hour in Rome  
Expected: since he went from Egypt 'tis  
A space for further travel.

**POMPEY**

I could have given less matter

A better ear. Menas, I did not think  
This amorous surfeiter would have donn'd his helm  
For such a petty war: his soldiership  
Is twice the other twain: but let us rear  
The higher our opinion, that our stirring  
Can from the lap of Egypt's widow pluck  
The ne'er-lust-wearied Antony.

## **MENAS**

I cannot hope  
Caesar and Antony shall well greet together:  
His wife that's dead did trespasses to Caesar;  
His brother warr'd upon him; although, I think,  
Not moved by Antony.

## **POMPEY**

I know not, Menas,  
How lesser enmities may give way to greater.  
Were't not that we stand up against them all,  
'Twere pregnant they should square between  
themselves;  
For they have entertained cause enough  
To draw their swords: but how the fear of us  
May cement their divisions and bind up  
The petty difference, we yet not know.  
Be't as our gods will have't! It only stands  
Our lives upon to use our strongest hands.  
Come, Menas.

*Exeunt*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Rome. The house of LEPIDUS.

*Enter DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS and LEPIDUS*

### LEPIDUS

Good Enobarbus, 'tis a worthy deed,  
And shall become you well, to entreat your captain  
To soft and gentle speech.

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

I shall entreat him  
To answer like himself: if Caesar move him,  
Let Antony look over Caesar's head  
And speak as loud as Mars. By Jupiter,  
Were I the wearer of Antonius' beard,  
I would not shave't to-day.

### LEPIDUS

'Tis not a time  
For private stomaching.

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

Every time  
Serves for the matter that is then born in't.

### LEPIDUS

But small to greater matters must give way.

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

Not if the small come first.

## **LEPIDUS**

Your speech is passion:  
But, pray you, stir no embers up. Here comes  
The noble Antony.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and VENTIDIUS*

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

And yonder, Caesar.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, MECAENAS, and AGRIPPA*

## **MARK ANTONY**

If we compose well here, to Parthia:  
Hark, Ventidius.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I do not know,  
Mecenas; ask Agrippa.

## **LEPIDUS**

Noble friends,  
That which combined us was most great, and let not  
A leaner action rend us. What's amiss,  
May it be gently heard: when we debate  
Our trivial difference loud, we do commit  
Murder in healing wounds: then, noble partners,  
The rather, for I earnestly beseech,  
Touch you the sourest points with sweetest terms,  
Nor curstness grow to the matter.

## **MARK ANTONY**

'Tis spoken well.  
Were we before our armies, and to fight.  
I should do thus.

*Flourish*

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Welcome to Rome.

**MARK ANTONY**

Thank you.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Sit.

**MARK ANTONY**

Sit, sir.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Nay, then.

**MARK ANTONY**

I learn, you take things ill which are not so,  
Or being, concern you not.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I must be laugh'd at,  
If, or for nothing or a little, I  
Should say myself offended, and with you  
Chiefly i' the world; more laugh'd at, that I should  
Once name you derogately, when to sound your name  
It not concern'd me.

**MARK ANTONY**

My being in Egypt, Caesar,  
What was't to you?



## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

No more than my residing here at Rome  
Might be to you in Egypt: yet, if you there  
Did practise on my state, your being in Egypt  
Might be my question.

## **MARK ANTONY**

How intend you, practised?

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

You may be pleased to catch at mine intent  
By what did here befall me. Your wife and brother  
Made wars upon me; and their contestation  
Was theme for you, you were the word of war.

## **MARK ANTONY**

You do mistake your business; my brother never  
Did urge me in his act: I did inquire it;  
And have my learning from some true reports,  
That drew their swords with you. Did he not rather  
Discredit my authority with yours;  
And make the wars alike against my stomach,  
Having alike your cause? Of this my letters  
Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,  
As matter whole you have not to make it with,  
It must not be with this.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

You praise yourself  
By laying defects of judgment to me; but  
You patch'd up your excuses.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Not so, not so;  
I know you could not lack, I am certain on't,  
Very necessity of this thought, that I,

Your partner in the cause 'gainst which he fought,  
Could not with graceful eyes attend those wars  
Which fronted mine own peace. As for my wife,  
I would you had her spirit in such another:  
The third o' the world is yours; which with a snaffle  
You may pace easy, but not such a wife.

### **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Would we had all such wives, that the men might go  
to wars with the women!

### **MARK ANTONY**

So much uncurbable, her garboils, Caesar  
Made out of her impatience, which not wanted  
Shrewdness of policy too, I grieving grant  
Did you too much disquiet: for that you must  
But say, I could not help it.

### **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I wrote to you  
When rioting in Alexandria; you  
Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts  
Did gibe my missive out of audience.

### **MARK ANTONY**

Sir,  
He fell upon me ere admitted: then  
Three kings I had newly feasted, and did want  
Of what I was i' the morning: but next day  
I told him of myself; which was as much  
As to have ask'd him pardon. Let this fellow  
Be nothing of our strife; if we contend,  
Out of our question wipe him.

### **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

You have broken  
The article of your oath; which you shall never

Have tongue to charge me with.

**LEPIDUS**

Soft, Caesar!

**MARK ANTONY**

No,  
Lepidus, let him speak:  
The honour is sacred which he talks on now,  
Supposing that I lack'd it. But, on, Caesar;  
The article of my oath.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

To lend me arms and aid when I required them;  
The which you both denied.

**MARK ANTONY**

Neglected, rather;  
And then when poison'd hours had bound me up  
From mine own knowledge. As nearly as I may,  
I'll play the penitent to you: but mine honesty  
Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power  
Work without it. Truth is, that Fulvia,  
To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;  
For which myself, the ignorant motive, do  
So far ask pardon as befits mine honour  
To stoop in such a case.

**LEPIDUS**

'Tis noble spoken.

**MECAENAS**

If it might please you, to enforce no further  
The griefs between ye: to forget them quite  
Were to remember that the present need  
Speaks to atone you.

## **LEPIDUS**

Worthily spoken, Mecaenas.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Or, if you borrow one another's love for the instant, you may, when you hear no more words of Pompey, return it again: you shall have time to wrangle in when you have nothing else to do.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Thou art a soldier only: speak no more.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

That truth should be silent I had almost forgot.

## **MARK ANTONY**

You wrong this presence; therefore speak no more.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Go to, then; your considerate stone.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I do not much dislike the matter, but  
The manner of his speech; for't cannot be  
We shall remain in friendship, our conditions  
So differing in their acts. Yet if I knew  
What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge  
O' the world I would pursue it.

## **AGRIPPA**

Give me leave, Caesar,--

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Speak, Agrippa.

## **AGRIPPA**

Thou hast a sister by the mother's side,  
Admired Octavia: great Mark Antony  
Is now a widower.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Say not so, Agrippa:  
If Cleopatra heard you, your reproof  
Were well deserved of rashness.

## **MARK ANTONY**

I am not married, Caesar: let me hear  
Agrippa further speak.

## **AGRIPPA**

To hold you in perpetual amity,  
To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts  
With an unslipping knot, take Antony  
Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims  
No worse a husband than the best of men;  
Whose virtue and whose general graces speak  
That which none else can utter. By this marriage,  
All little jealousies, which now seem great,  
And all great fears, which now import their dangers,  
Would then be nothing: truths would be tales,  
Where now half tales be truths: her love to both  
Would, each to other and all loves to both,  
Draw after her. Pardon what I have spoke;  
For 'tis a studied, not a present thought,  
By duty ruminated.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Will Caesar speak?

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Not till he hears how Antony is touch'd  
With what is spoke already.

## **MARK ANTONY**

What power is in Agrippa,  
If I would say, 'Agrippa, be it so,'  
To make this good?

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

The power of Caesar, and  
His power unto Octavia.

## **MARK ANTONY**

May I never  
To this good purpose, that so fairly shows,  
Dream of impediment! Let me have thy hand:  
Further this act of grace: and from this hour  
The heart of brothers govern in our loves  
And sway our great designs!

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

There is my hand.  
A sister I bequeath you, whom no brother  
Did ever love so dearly: let her live  
To join our kingdoms and our hearts; and never  
Fly off our loves again!

## **LEPIDUS**

Happily, amen!

## **MARK ANTONY**

I did not think to draw my sword 'gainst Pompey;

For he hath laid strange courtesies and great  
Of late upon me: I must thank him only,  
Lest my remembrance suffer ill report;  
At heel of that, defy him.

**LEPIDUS**

Time calls upon's:  
Of us must Pompey presently be sought,  
Or else he seeks out us.

**MARK ANTONY**

Where lies he?

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

About the mount Misenum.

**MARK ANTONY**

What is his strength by land?

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Great and increasing: but by sea  
He is an absolute master.

**MARK ANTONY**

So is the fame.  
Would we had spoke together! Haste we for it:  
Yet, ere we put ourselves in arms, dispatch we  
The business we have talk'd of.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

With most gladness:  
And do invite you to my sister's view,  
Whither straight I'll lead you.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Let us, Lepidus,  
Not lack your company.

## **LEPIDUS**

Noble Antony,  
Not sickness should detain me.

*Flourish. Exeunt OCTAVIUS CAESAR, MARK ANTONY, and LEPIDUS*

## **MECAENAS**

Welcome from Egypt, sir.

## **DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**

Half the heart of Caesar, worthy Mecaenas! My  
honourable friend, Agrippa!

## **AGRIPPA**

Good Enobarbus!

## **MECAENAS**

We have cause to be glad that matters are so well  
digested. You stayed well by 't in Egypt.

## **DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**

Ay, sir; we did sleep day out of countenance, and  
made the night light with drinking.

## **MECAENAS**

Eight wild-boars roasted whole at a breakfast, and  
but twelve persons there; is this true?

## **DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**



This was but as a fly by an eagle: we had much more monstrous matter of feast, which worthily deserved noting.

### **MECAENAS**

She's a most triumphant lady, if report be square to her.

### **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

When she first met Mark Antony, she pursed up his heart, upon the river of Cydnus.

### **AGRIPPA**

There she appeared indeed; or my reporter devised well for her.

### **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I will tell you.  
The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that  
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,  
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
The water which they beat to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,  
It beggar'd all description: she did lie  
In her pavilion--cloth-of-gold of tissue--  
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see  
The fancy outwork nature: on each side her  
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,  
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem  
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,  
And what they undid did.

### **AGRIPPA**

O, rare for Antony!

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,  
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,  
And made their bends adornings: at the helm  
A seeming mermaid steers: the silken tackle  
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands,  
That yarely frame the office. From the barge  
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense  
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast  
Her people out upon her; and Antony,  
Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,  
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,  
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,  
And made a gap in nature.

## **AGRIPPA**

Rare Egyptian!

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,  
Invited her to supper: she replied,  
It should be better he became her guest;  
Which she entreated: our courteous Antony,  
Whom ne'er the word of 'No' woman heard speak,  
Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast,  
And for his ordinary pays his heart  
For what his eyes eat only.

## **AGRIPPA**

Royal wench!  
She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed:  
He plough'd her, and she cropp'd.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I saw her once  
Hop forty paces through the public street;  
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,

That she did make defect perfection,  
And, breathless, power breathe forth.

**MECAENAS**

Now Antony must leave her utterly.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Never; he will not:  
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety: other women cloy  
The appetites they feed: but she makes hungry  
Where most she satisfies; for vilest things  
Become themselves in her: that the holy priests  
Bless her when she is riggish.

**MECAENAS**

If beauty, wisdom, modesty, can settle  
The heart of Antony, Octavia is  
A blessed lottery to him.

**AGRIPPA**

Let us go.  
Good Enobarbus, make yourself my guest  
Whilst you abide here.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Humbly, sir, I thank you.

*Exeunt*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.

*Enter MARK ANTONY, OCTAVIUS CAESAR, OCTAVIA between them, and Attendants*

**MARK ANTONY**

The world and my great office will sometimes  
Divide me from your bosom.

**OCTAVIA**

All which time  
Before the gods my knee shall bow my prayers  
To them for you.

**MARK ANTONY**

Good night, sir. My Octavia,  
Read not my blemishes in the world's report:  
I have not kept my square; but that to come  
Shall all be done by the rule. Good night, dear lady.  
Good night, sir.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Good night.

*Exeunt OCTAVIUS CAESAR and OCTAVIA*

*Enter Soothsayer*

**MARK ANTONY**

Now, sirrah; you do wish yourself in Egypt?

**Soothsayer**

Would I had never come from thence, nor you Thither!

**MARK ANTONY**

If you can, your reason?

**Soothsayer**

I see it in  
My motion, have it not in my tongue: but yet  
Hie you to Egypt again.

**MARK ANTONY**

Say to me,  
Whose fortunes shall rise higher, Caesar's or mine?

**Soothsayer**

Caesar's.  
Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side:  
Thy demon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is  
Noble, courageous high, unmatched,  
Where Caesar's is not; but, near him, thy angel  
Becomes a fear, as being o'erpower'd: therefore  
Make space enough between you.

**MARK ANTONY**

Speak this no more.

**Soothsayer**

To none but thee; no more, but when to thee.  
If thou dost play with him at any game,  
Thou art sure to lose; and, of that natural luck,  
He beats thee 'gainst the odds: thy lustre thickens,  
When he shines by: I say again, thy spirit  
Is all afraid to govern thee near him;  
But, he away, 'tis noble.

## MARK ANTONY

Get thee gone:  
Say to Ventidius I would speak with him:

*Exit Soothsayer*

He shall to Parthia. Be it art or hap,  
He hath spoken true: the very dice obey him;  
And in our sports my better cunning faints  
Under his chance: if we draw lots, he speeds;  
His cocks do win the battle still of mine,  
When it is all to nought; and his quails ever  
Beat mine, inhoop'd, at odds. I will to Egypt:  
And though I make this marriage for my peace,  
I' the east my pleasure lies.

*Enter VENTIDIUS*

O, come, Ventidius,  
You must to Parthia: your commission's ready;  
Follow me, and receive't.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. A street.

*Enter LEPIDUS, MECAENAS, and AGRIPPA*

**LEPIDUS**

Trouble yourselves no further: pray you, hasten  
Your generals after.

**AGRIPPA**

Sir, Mark Antony  
Will e'en but kiss Octavia, and we'll follow.

**LEPIDUS**

Till I shall see you in your soldier's dress,  
Which will become you both, farewell.

**MECAENAS**

We shall,  
As I conceive the journey, be at the Mount  
Before you, Lepidus.

**LEPIDUS**

Your way is shorter;  
My purposes do draw me much about:  
You'll win two days upon me.

**MECAENAS AGRIPPA**

Sir, good success!

**LEPIDUS**

Farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS*

**CLEOPATRA**

Give me some music; music, moody food  
Of us that trade in love.

**Attendants**

The music, ho!

*Enter MARDIAN*

**CLEOPATRA**

Let it alone; let's to billiards: come, Charmian.

**CHARMIAN**

My arm is sore; best play with Mardian.

**CLEOPATRA**

As well a woman with an eunuch play'd  
As with a woman. Come, you'll play with me, sir?

**MARDIAN**

As well as I can, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

And when good will is show'd, though't come

too short,  
The actor may plead pardon. I'll none now:  
Give me mine angle; we'll to the river: there,  
My music playing far off, I will betray  
Tawny-finn'd fishes; my bended hook shall pierce  
Their slimy jaws; and, as I draw them up,  
I'll think them every one an Antony,  
And say 'Ah, ha! you're caught.'

## **CHARMIAN**

'Twas merry when  
You wager'd on your angling; when your diver  
Did hang a salt-fish on his hook, which he  
With fervency drew up.

## **CLEOPATRA**

That time,--O times!--  
I laugh'd him out of patience; and that night  
I laugh'd him into patience; and next morn,  
Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed;  
Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst  
I wore his sword Philippan.

*Enter a Messenger*

O, from Italy  
Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears,  
That long time have been barren.

## **Messenger**

Madam, madam,--

## **CLEOPATRA**

Antonius dead!--If thou say so, villain,  
Thou kill'st thy mistress: but well and free,  
If thou so yield him, there is gold, and here  
My bluest veins to kiss; a hand that kings  
Have lipp'd, and trembled kissing.

**Messenger**

First, madam, he is well.

**CLEOPATRA**

Why, there's more gold.  
But, sirrah, mark, we use  
To say the dead are well: bring it to that,  
The gold I give thee will I melt and pour  
Down thy ill-uttering throat.

**Messenger**

Good madam, hear me.

**CLEOPATRA**

Well, go to, I will;  
But there's no goodness in thy face: if Antony  
Be free and healthful,--so tart a favour  
To trumpet such good tidings! If not well,  
Thou shouldst come like a Fury crown'd with snakes,  
Not like a formal man.

**Messenger**

Will't please you hear me?

**CLEOPATRA**

I have a mind to strike thee ere thou speak'st:  
Yet if thou say Antony lives, is well,  
Or friends with Caesar, or not captive to him,  
I'll set thee in a shower of gold, and hail  
Rich pearls upon thee.

**Messenger**

Madam, he's well.

**CLEOPATRA**

Well said.

**Messenger**

And friends with Caesar.

**CLEOPATRA**

Thou'rt an honest man.

**Messenger**

Caesar and he are greater friends than ever.

**CLEOPATRA**

Make thee a fortune from me.

**Messenger**

But yet, madam,--

**CLEOPATRA**

I do not like 'But yet,' it does allay  
The good precedence; fie upon 'But yet!'  
'But yet' is as a gaoler to bring forth  
Some monstrous malefactor. Prithee, friend,  
Pour out the pack of matter to mine ear,  
The good and bad together: he's friends with Caesar:  
In state of health thou say'st; and thou say'st free.

**Messenger**

Free, madam! no; I made no such report:  
He's bound unto Octavia.

**CLEOPATRA**

For what good turn?

**Messenger**

For the best turn i' the bed.

**CLEOPATRA**

I am pale, Charmian.

**Messenger**

Madam, he's married to Octavia.

**CLEOPATRA**

The most infectious pestilence upon thee!

*Strikes him down*

**Messenger**

Good madam, patience.

**CLEOPATRA**

What say you? Hence,

*Strikes him again*

Horrible villain! or I'll spurn thine eyes  
Like balls before me; I'll unhair thy head:

*She hales him up and down*

Thou shalt be whipp'd with wire, and stew'd in brine,  
Smarting in lingering pickle.

**Messenger**

Gracious madam,  
I that do bring the news made not the match.

**CLEOPATRA**

Say 'tis not so, a province I will give thee,  
And make thy fortunes proud: the blow thou hadst  
Shall make thy peace for moving me to rage;  
And I will boot thee with what gift beside  
Thy modesty can beg.

**Messenger**

He's married, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

Rogue, thou hast lived too long.

*Draws a knife*

**Messenger**

Nay, then I'll run.  
What mean you, madam? I have made no fault.

*Exit*

**CHARMIAN**

Good madam, keep yourself within yourself:  
The man is innocent.

**CLEOPATRA**

Some innocents 'scape not the thunderbolt.  
Melt Egypt into Nile! and kindly creatures  
Turn all to serpents! Call the slave again:  
Though I am mad, I will not bite him: call.

**CHARMIAN**

He is afeard to come.

**CLEOPATRA**

I will not hurt him.

*Exit CHARMIAN*

These hands do lack nobility, that they strike  
A meaner than myself; since I myself  
Have given myself the cause.

*Re-enter CHARMIAN and Messenger*

Come hither, sir.  
Though it be honest, it is never good  
To bring bad news: give to a gracious message.  
An host of tongues; but let ill tidings tell  
Themselves when they be felt.

**Messenger**

I have done my duty.

**CLEOPATRA**

Is he married?  
I cannot hate thee worser than I do,  
If thou again say 'Yes.'

**Messenger**

He's married, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

The gods confound thee! dost thou hold there still?

**Messenger**

Should I lie, madam?

**CLEOPATRA**

O, I would thou didst,  
So half my Egypt were submerged and made  
A cistern for scaled snakes! Go, get thee hence:  
Hadst thou Narcissus in thy face, to me  
Thou wouldst appear most ugly. He is married?

**Messenger**

I crave your highness' pardon.

**CLEOPATRA**

He is married?

**Messenger**

Take no offence that I would not offend you:  
To punish me for what you make me do.  
Seems much unequal: he's married to Octavia.

**CLEOPATRA**

O, that his fault should make a knave of thee,  
That art not what thou'rt sure of! Get thee hence:  
The merchandise which thou hast brought from Rome  
Are all too dear for me: lie they upon thy hand,  
And be undone by 'em!

*Exit Messenger*

**CHARMIAN**

Good your highness, patience.

**CLEOPATRA**

In praising Antony, I have dispraised Caesar.



## CHARMIAN

Many times, madam.

## CLEOPATRA

I am paid for't now.

Lead me from hence:

I faint: O Iras, Charmian! 'tis no matter.

Go to the fellow, good Alexas; bid him

Report the feature of Octavia, her years,

Her inclination, let him not leave out

The colour of her hair: bring me word quickly.

*Exit ALEXAS*

Let him for ever go:--let him not--Charmian,

Though he be painted one way like a Gorgon,

The other way's a Mars. Bid you Alexas

*To MARDIAN*

Bring me word how tall she is. Pity me, Charmian,

But do not speak to me. Lead me to my chamber.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Near Misenum.

*Flourish. Enter POMPEY and MENAS at one door, with drum and trumpet: at another, OCTAVIUS CAESAR, MARK ANTONY, LEPIDUS, DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS, MECAENAS, with Soldiers marching*

### POMPEY

Your hostages I have, so have you mine;  
And we shall talk before we fight.

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Most meet  
That first we come to words; and therefore have we  
Our written purposes before us sent;  
Which, if thou hast consider'd, let us know  
If 'twill tie up thy discontented sword,  
And carry back to Sicily much tall youth  
That else must perish here.

### POMPEY

To you all three,  
The senators alone of this great world,  
Chief factors for the gods, I do not know  
Wherefore my father should revengers want,  
Having a son and friends; since Julius Caesar,  
Who at Philippi the good Brutus ghosted,  
There saw you labouring for him. What was't  
That moved pale Cassius to conspire; and what  
Made the all-honour'd, honest Roman, Brutus,  
With the arm'd rest, courtiers and beauteous freedom,  
To drench the Capitol; but that they would  
Have one man but a man? And that is it  
Hath made me rig my navy; at whose burthen

The anger'd ocean foams; with which I meant  
To scourge the ingratitude that despiteful Rome  
Cast on my noble father.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Take your time.

**MARK ANTONY**

Thou canst not fear us, Pompey, with thy sails;  
We'll speak with thee at sea: at land, thou know'st  
How much we do o'er-count thee.

**POMPEY**

At land, indeed,  
Thou dost o'er-count me of my father's house:  
But, since the cuckoo builds not for himself,  
Remain in't as thou mayst.

**LEPIDUS**

Be pleased to tell us--  
For this is from the present--how you take  
The offers we have sent you.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

There's the point.

**MARK ANTONY**

Which do not be entreated to, but weigh  
What it is worth embraced.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

And what may follow,  
To try a larger fortune.

## **POMPEY**

You have made me offer  
Of Sicily, Sardinia; and I must  
Rid all the sea of pirates; then, to send  
Measures of wheat to Rome; this 'greed upon  
To part with unhack'd edges, and bear back  
Our targes undinted.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR MARK ANTONY LEPIDUS**

That's our offer.

## **POMPEY**

Know, then,  
I came before you here a man prepared  
To take this offer: but Mark Antony  
Put me to some impatience: though I lose  
The praise of it by telling, you must know,  
When Caesar and your brother were at blows,  
Your mother came to Sicily and did find  
Her welcome friendly.

## **MARK ANTONY**

I have heard it, Pompey;  
And am well studied for a liberal thanks  
Which I do owe you.

## **POMPEY**

Let me have your hand:  
I did not think, sir, to have met you here.

## **MARK ANTONY**

The beds i' the east are soft; and thanks to you,  
That call'd me timelier than my purpose hither;  
For I have gain'd by 't.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Since I saw you last,  
There is a change upon you.

**POMPEY**

Well, I know not  
What counts harsh fortune casts upon my face;  
But in my bosom shall she never come,  
To make my heart her vassal.

**LEPIDUS**

Well met here.

**POMPEY**

I hope so, Lepidus. Thus we are agreed:  
I crave our composition may be written,  
And seal'd between us.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

That's the next to do.

**POMPEY**

We'll feast each other ere we part; and let's  
Draw lots who shall begin.

**MARK ANTONY**

That will I, Pompey.

**POMPEY**

No, Antony, take the lot: but, first  
Or last, your fine Egyptian cookery  
Shall have the fame. I have heard that Julius Caesar  
Grew fat with feasting there.

**MARK ANTONY**

You have heard much.

**POMPEY**

I have fair meanings, sir.

**MARK ANTONY**

And fair words to them.

**POMPEY**

Then so much have I heard:  
And I have heard, Apollodorus carried--

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

No more of that: he did so.

**POMPEY**

What, I pray you?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

A certain queen to Caesar in a mattress.

**POMPEY**

I know thee now: how farest thou, soldier?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Well;  
And well am like to do; for, I perceive,  
Four feasts are toward.

**POMPEY**

Let me shake thy hand;  
I never hated thee: I have seen thee fight,  
When I have envied thy behavior.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Sir,  
I never loved you much; but I ha' praised ye,  
When you have well deserved ten times as much  
As I have said you did.

**POMPEY**

Enjoy thy plainness,  
It nothing ill becomes thee.  
Aboard my galley I invite you all:  
Will you lead, lords?

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR MARK ANTONY LEPIDUS**

Show us the way, sir.

**POMPEY**

Come.

*Exeunt all but MENAS and ENOBARBUS*

**MENAS**

[Aside] Thy father, Pompey, would ne'er have  
made this treaty.--You and I have known, sir.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

At sea, I think.

**MENAS**

We have, sir.

**DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**

You have done well by water.

**MENAS**

And you by land.

**DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**

I will praise any man that will praise me; though it cannot be denied what I have done by land.

**MENAS**

Nor what I have done by water.

**DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**

Yes, something you can deny for your own safety: you have been a great thief by sea.

**MENAS**

And you by land.

**DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**

There I deny my land service. But give me your hand, Menas: if our eyes had authority, here they might take two thieves kissing.

**MENAS**

All men's faces are true, whosome'er their hands are.

**DOMITIUS ENO BARBUS**

But there is never a fair woman has a true face.

**MENAS**



No slander; they steal hearts.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

We came hither to fight with you.

**MENAS**

For my part, I am sorry it is turned to a drinking.  
Pompey doth this day laugh away his fortune.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

If he do, sure, he cannot weep't back again.

**MENAS**

You've said, sir. We looked not for Mark Antony  
here: pray you, is he married to Cleopatra?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Caesar's sister is called Octavia.

**MENAS**

True, sir; she was the wife of Caius Marcellus.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

But she is now the wife of Marcus Antonius.

**MENAS**

Pray ye, sir?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

'Tis true.

**MENAS**

Then is Caesar and he for ever knit together.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

If I were bound to divine of this unity, I would not prophesy so.

**MENAS**

I think the policy of that purpose made more in the marriage than the love of the parties.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I think so too. But you shall find, the band that seems to tie their friendship together will be the very strangler of their amity: Octavia is of a holy, cold, and still conversation.

**MENAS**

Who would not have his wife so?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Not he that himself is not so; which is Mark Antony. He will to his Egyptian dish again: then shall the sighs of Octavia blow the fire up in Caesar; and, as I said before, that which is the strength of their amity shall prove the immediate author of their variance. Antony will use his affection where it is: he married but his occasion here.

**MENAS**

And thus it may be. Come, sir, will you aboard?  
I have a health for you.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I shall take it, sir: we have used our throats in Egypt.

**MENAS**

Come, let's away.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. On board POMPEY's galley, off Misenum.

*Music plays. Enter two or three Servants with a banquet*

### First Servant

Here they'll be, man. Some o' their plants are  
ill-rooted already: the least wind i' the world  
will blow them down.

### Second Servant

Lepidus is high-coloured.

### First Servant

They have made him drink alms-drink.

### Second Servant

As they pinch one another by the disposition, he  
cries out 'No more;' reconciles them to his  
entreaty, and himself to the drink.

### First Servant

But it raises the greater war between him and  
his discretion.

### Second Servant

Why, this is to have a name in great men's  
fellowship: I had as lief have a reed that will do  
me no service as a partisan I could not heave.

### First Servant

To be called into a huge sphere, and not to be seen  
to move in't, are the holes where eyes should be,  
which pitifully disaster the cheeks.

*A sennet sounded. Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, MARK ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POMPEY,  
AGRIPPA, MECAENAS, DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS, MENAS, with other captains*

**MARK ANTONY**

[To OCTAVIUS CAESAR] Thus do they, sir: they take  
the flow o' the Nile  
By certain scales i' the pyramid; they know,  
By the height, the lowness, or the mean, if dearth  
Or foison follow: the higher Nilus swells,  
The more it promises: as it ebbs, the seedsman  
Upon the slime and ooze scatters his grain,  
And shortly comes to harvest.

**LEPIDUS**

You've strange serpents there.

**MARK ANTONY**

Ay, Lepidus.

**LEPIDUS**

Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud by the  
operation of your sun: so is your crocodile.

**MARK ANTONY**

They are so.

**POMPEY**

Sit,--and some wine! A health to Lepidus!

**LEPIDUS**

I am not so well as I should be, but I'll ne'er out.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Not till you have slept; I fear me you'll be in till then.

**LEPIDUS**

Nay, certainly, I have heard the Ptolemies'  
pyramises are very goodly things; without  
contradiction, I have heard that.

**MENAS**

[Aside to POMPEY] Pompey, a word.

**POMPEY**

[Aside to MENAS] Say in mine ear:  
what is't?

**MENAS**

[Aside to POMPEY] Forsake thy seat, I do beseech  
thee, captain,  
And hear me speak a word.

**POMPEY**

[Aside to MENAS] Forbear me till anon.  
This wine for Lepidus!

**LEPIDUS**

What manner o' thing is your crocodile?

**MARK ANTONY**

It is shaped, sir, like itself; and it is as broad  
as it hath breadth: it is just so high as it is,

and moves with its own organs: it lives by that which nourisheth it; and the elements once out of it, it transmigrates.

**LEPIDUS**

What colour is it of?

**MARK ANTONY**

Of its own colour too.

**LEPIDUS**

'Tis a strange serpent.

**MARK ANTONY**

'Tis so. And the tears of it are wet.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Will this description satisfy him?

**MARK ANTONY**

With the health that Pompey gives him, else he is a very epicure.

**POMPEY**

[Aside to MENAS] Go hang, sir, hang! Tell me of that? away!

Do as I bid you. Where's this cup I call'd for?

**MENAS**

[Aside to POMPEY] If for the sake of merit thou wilt hear me,  
Rise from thy stool.

**POMPEY**

[Aside to MENAS] I think thou'rt mad.  
The matter?

*Rises, and walks aside*

**MENAS**

I have ever held my cap off to thy fortunes.

**POMPEY**

Thou hast served me with much faith. What's else to say?  
Be jolly, lords.

**MARK ANTONY**

These quick-sands, Lepidus,  
Keep off them, for you sink.

**MENAS**

Wilt thou be lord of all the world?

**POMPEY**

What say'st thou?

**MENAS**

Wilt thou be lord of the whole world? That's twice.

**POMPEY**

How should that be?

**MENAS**

But entertain it,  
And, though thou think me poor, I am the man



Will give thee all the world.

**POMPEY**

Hast thou drunk well?

**MENAS**

Now, Pompey, I have kept me from the cup.  
Thou art, if thou darest be, the earthly Jove:  
Whate'er the ocean pales, or sky inclips,  
Is thine, if thou wilt ha't.

**POMPEY**

Show me which way.

**MENAS**

These three world-sharers, these competitors,  
Are in thy vessel: let me cut the cable;  
And, when we are put off, fall to their throats:  
All there is thine.

**POMPEY**

Ah, this thou shouldst have done,  
And not have spoke on't! In me 'tis villany;  
In thee't had been good service. Thou must know,  
'Tis not my profit that does lead mine honour;  
Mine honour, it. Repent that e'er thy tongue  
Hath so betray'd thine act: being done unknown,  
I should have found it afterwards well done;  
But must condemn it now. Desist, and drink.

**MENAS**

[Aside] For this,  
I'll never follow thy pall'd fortunes more.  
Who seeks, and will not take when once 'tis offer'd,  
Shall never find it more.

**POMPEY**

This health to Lepidus!

**MARK ANTONY**

Bear him ashore. I'll pledge it for him, Pompey.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Here's to thee, Menas!

**MENAS**

Enobarbus, welcome!

**POMPEY**

Fill till the cup be hid.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

There's a strong fellow, Menas.

*Pointing to the Attendant who carries off LEPIDUS*

**MENAS**

Why?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

A' bears the third part of the world, man; see'st  
not?

**MENAS**

The third part, then, is drunk: would it were all,  
That it might go on wheels!

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Drink thou; increase the reels.

## **MENAS**

Come.

## **POMPEY**

This is not yet an Alexandrian feast.

## **MARK ANTONY**

It ripens towards it. Strike the vessels, ho?  
Here is to Caesar!

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I could well forbear't.  
It's monstrous labour, when I wash my brain,  
And it grows fouler.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Be a child o' the time.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Possess it, I'll make answer:  
But I had rather fast from all four days  
Than drink so much in one.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Ha, my brave emperor!

*To MARK ANTONY*

Shall we dance now the Egyptian Bacchanals,  
And celebrate our drink?

## **POMPEY**

Let's ha't, good soldier.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Come, let's all take hands,  
Till that the conquering wine hath steep'd our sense  
In soft and delicate Lethe.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

All take hands.  
Make battery to our ears with the loud music:  
The while I'll place you: then the boy shall sing;  
The holding every man shall bear as loud  
As his strong sides can volley.

*Music plays. DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS places them hand in hand*

### **THE SONG.**

Come, thou monarch of the vine,  
Plumpy Bacchus with pink eyne!  
In thy fats our cares be drown'd,  
With thy grapes our hairs be crown'd:  
Cup us, till the world go round,  
Cup us, till the world go round!

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

What would you more? Pompey, good night. Good brother,  
Let me request you off: our graver business  
Frowns at this levity. Gentle lords, let's part;  
You see we have burnt our cheeks: strong Enobarb  
Is weaker than the wine; and mine own tongue  
Splits what it speaks: the wild disguise hath almost  
Antick'd us all. What needs more words? Good night.  
Good Antony, your hand.

## **POMPEY**

I'll try you on the shore.

**MARK ANTONY**

And shall, sir; give's your hand.

**POMPEY**

O Antony,  
You have my father's house,--But, what? we are friends.  
Come, down into the boat.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Take heed you fall not.

*Exeunt all but DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS and MENAS*

Menas, I'll not on shore.

**MENAS**

No, to my cabin.  
These drums! these trumpets, flutes! what!  
Let Neptune hear we bid a loud farewell  
To these great fellows: sound and be hang'd, sound out!

*Sound a flourish, with drums*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Ho! says a' There's my cap.

**MENAS**

Ho! Noble captain, come.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 2, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A plain in Syria.

*Enter VENTIDIUS as it were in triumph, with SILIUS, and other Romans, Officers, and Soldiers; the dead body of PACORUS borne before him*

### VENTIDIUS

Now, darting Parthia, art thou struck; and now  
Pleased fortune does of Marcus Crassus' death  
Make me revenger. Bear the king's son's body  
Before our army. Thy Pacorus, Orodes,  
Pays this for Marcus Crassus.

### SILIUS

Noble Ventidius,  
Whilst yet with Parthian blood thy sword is warm,  
The fugitive Parthians follow; spur through Media,  
Mesopotamia, and the shelters whither  
The routed fly: so thy grand captain Antony  
Shall set thee on triumphant chariots and  
Put garlands on thy head.

### VENTIDIUS

O Silius, Silius,  
I have done enough; a lower place, note well,  
May make too great an act: for learn this, Silius;  
Better to leave undone, than by our deed  
Acquire too high a fame when him we serve's away.  
Caesar and Antony have ever won  
More in their officer than person: Sossius,  
One of my place in Syria, his lieutenant,  
For quick accumulation of renown,  
Which he achieved by the minute, lost his favour.  
Who does i' the wars more than his captain can

Becomes his captain's captain: and ambition,  
The soldier's virtue, rather makes choice of loss,  
Than gain which darkens him.  
I could do more to do Antonius good,  
But 'twould offend him; and in his offence  
Should my performance perish.

## **SILIUS**

Thou hast, Ventidius,  
that  
Without the which a soldier, and his sword,  
Grants scarce distinction. Thou wilt write to Antony!

## **VENTIDIUS**

I'll humbly signify what in his name,  
That magical word of war, we have effected;  
How, with his banners and his well-paid ranks,  
The ne'er-yet-beaten horse of Parthia  
We have jaded out o' the field.

## **SILIUS**

Where is he now?

## **VENTIDIUS**

He purposeth to Athens: whither, with what haste  
The weight we must convey with's will permit,  
We shall appear before him. On there; pass along!

*Exeunt*



# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Rome. An ante-chamber in OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.

*Enter AGRIPPA at one door, DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS at another*

**AGRIPPA**

What, are the brothers parted?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

They have dispatch'd with Pompey, he is gone;  
The other three are sealing. Octavia weeps  
To part from Rome; Caesar is sad; and Lepidus,  
Since Pompey's feast, as Menas says, is troubled  
With the green sickness.

**AGRIPPA**

'Tis a noble Lepidus.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

A very fine one: O, how he loves Caesar!

**AGRIPPA**

Nay, but how dearly he adores Mark Antony!

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Caesar? Why, he's the Jupiter of men.

**AGRIPPA**

What's Antony? The god of Jupiter.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Spake you of Caesar? How! the non-pareil!

**AGRIPPA**

O Antony! O thou Arabian bird!

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Would you praise Caesar, say 'Caesar:' go no further.

**AGRIPPA**

Indeed, he plied them both with excellent praises.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

But he loves Caesar best; yet he loves Antony:  
Ho! hearts, tongues, figures, scribes, bards,  
poets, cannot  
Think, speak, cast, write, sing, number, ho!  
His love to Antony. But as for Caesar,  
Kneel down, kneel down, and wonder.

**AGRIPPA**

Both he loves.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

They are his shards, and he their beetle.

*Trumpets within*

So;  
This is to horse. Adieu, noble Agrippa.

**AGRIPPA**

Good fortune, worthy soldier; and farewell.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, MARK ANTONY, LEPIDUS, and OCTAVIA*

**MARK ANTONY**

No further, sir.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

You take from me a great part of myself;  
Use me well in 't. Sister, prove such a wife  
As my thoughts make thee, and as my farthest band  
Shall pass on thy approval. Most noble Antony,  
Let not the piece of virtue, which is set  
Betwixt us as the cement of our love,  
To keep it builded, be the ram to batter  
The fortress of it; for better might we  
Have loved without this mean, if on both parts  
This be not cherish'd.

**MARK ANTONY**

Make me not offended  
In your distrust.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I have said.

**MARK ANTONY**

You shall not find,  
Though you be therein curious, the least cause  
For what you seem to fear: so, the gods keep you,  
And make the hearts of Romans serve your ends!  
We will here part.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Farewell, my dearest sister, fare thee well:  
The elements be kind to thee, and make

Thy spirits all of comfort! fare thee well.

**OCTAVIA**

My noble brother!

**MARK ANTONY**

The April 's in her eyes: it is love's spring,  
And these the showers to bring it on. Be cheerful.

**OCTAVIA**

Sir, look well to my husband's house; and--

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

What, Octavia?

**OCTAVIA**

I'll tell you in your ear.

**MARK ANTONY**

Her tongue will not obey her heart, nor can  
Her heart inform her tongue,--the swan's  
down-feather,  
That stands upon the swell at full of tide,  
And neither way inclines.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside to AGRIPPA] Will Caesar weep?

**AGRIPPA**

[Aside to DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS] He has a cloud in 's face.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside to AGRIPPA] He were the worse for that,  
were he a horse;  
So is he, being a man.

## **AGRIPPA**

[Aside to DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS] Why, Enobarbus,  
When Antony found Julius Caesar dead,  
He cried almost to roaring; and he wept  
When at Philippi he found Brutus slain.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside to AGRIPPA] That year, indeed, he was  
troubled with a rheum;  
What willingly he did confound he wail'd,  
Believe't, till I wept too.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

No, sweet Octavia,  
You shall hear from me still; the time shall not  
Out-go my thinking on you.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Come, sir, come;  
I'll wrestle with you in my strength of love:  
Look, here I have you; thus I let you go,  
And give you to the gods.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Adieu; be happy!

## **LEPIDUS**

Let all the number of the stars give light  
To thy fair way!

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Farewell, fa rewell!

*Kisses OCTAVIA*

**MARK ANTONY**

Farewell!

*Trumpets sound. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and ALEXAS*

**CLEOPATRA**

Where is the fellow?

**ALEXAS**

Half afeard to come.

**CLEOPATRA**

Go to, go to.

*Enter the Messenger as before*

Come hither, sir.

**ALEXAS**

Good majesty,  
Herod of Jewry dare not look upon you  
But when you are well pleased.

**CLEOPATRA**

That Herod's head  
I'll have: but how, when Antony is gone  
Through whom I might command it? Come thou near.

**Messenger**

Most gracious majesty,--

**CLEOPATRA**

Didst thou behold Octavia?

**Messenger**

Ay, dread queen.

**CLEOPATRA**

Where?

**Messenger**

Madam, in Rome;  
I look'd her in the face, and saw her led  
Between her brother and Mark Antony.

**CLEOPATRA**

Is she as tall as me?

**Messenger**

She is not, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

Didst hear her speak? is she shrill-tongued or low?

**Messenger**

Madam, I heard her speak; she is low-voiced.

**CLEOPATRA**

That's not so good: he cannot like her long.

**CHARMIAN**



Like her! O Isis! 'tis impossible.

**CLEOPATRA**

I think so, Charmian: dull of tongue, and dwarfish!  
What majesty is in her gait? Remember,  
If e'er thou look'dst on majesty.

**Messenger**

She creeps:  
Her motion and her station are as one;  
She shows a body rather than a life,  
A statue than a breather.

**CLEOPATRA**

Is this certain?

**Messenger**

Or I have no observance.

**CHARMIAN**

Three in Egypt  
Cannot make better note.

**CLEOPATRA**

He's very knowing;  
I do perceive't: there's nothing in her yet:  
The fellow has good judgment.

**CHARMIAN**

Excellent.

**CLEOPATRA**

Guess at her years, I prithee.

**Messenger**

Madam,  
She was a widow,--

**CLEOPATRA**

Widow! Charmian, hark.

**Messenger**

And I do think she's thirty.

**CLEOPATRA**

Bear'st thou her face in mind? is't long or round?

**Messenger**

Round even to faultiness.

**CLEOPATRA**

For the most part, too, they are foolish that are so.  
Her hair, what colour?

**Messenger**

Brown, madam: and her forehead  
As low as she would wish it.

**CLEOPATRA**

There's gold for thee.  
Thou must not take my former sharpness ill:  
I will employ thee back again; I find thee  
Most fit for business: go make thee ready;  
Our letters are prepared.

*Exit Messenger*

**CHARMIAN**

A proper man.

**CLEOPATRA**

Indeed, he is so: I repent me much  
That so I harried him. Why, methinks, by him,  
This creature's no such thing.

**CHARMIAN**

Nothing, madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

The man hath seen some majesty, and should know.

**CHARMIAN**

Hath he seen majesty? Isis else defend,  
And serving you so long!

**CLEOPATRA**

I have one thing more to ask him yet, good Charmian:  
But 'tis no matter; thou shalt bring him to me  
Where I will write. All may be well enough.

**CHARMIAN**

I warrant you, madam.

*Exeunt*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Athens. A room in MARK ANTONY's house.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and OCTAVIA*

### MARK ANTONY

Nay, nay, Octavia, not only that,--  
That were excusable, that, and thousands more  
Of semblable import,--but he hath waged  
New wars 'gainst Pompey; made his will, and read it  
To public ear:  
Spoke scantily of me: when perforce he could not  
But pay me terms of honour, cold and sickly  
He vented them; most narrow measure lent me:  
When the best hint was given him, he not took't,  
Or did it from his teeth.

### OCTAVIA

O my good lord,  
Believe not all; or, if you must believe,  
Stomach not all. A more unhappy lady,  
If this division chance, ne'er stood between,  
Praying for both parts:  
The good gods me presently,  
When I shall pray, 'O bless my lord and husband!'  
Undo that prayer, by crying out as loud,  
'O, bless my brother!' Husband win, win brother,  
Prays, and destroys the prayer; no midway  
'Twixt these extremes at all.

### MARK ANTONY

Gentle Octavia,  
Let your best love draw to that point, which seeks  
Best to preserve it: if I lose mine honour,

I lose myself: better I were not yours  
Than yours so branchless. But, as you requested,  
Yourself shall go between 's: the mean time, lady,  
I'll raise the preparation of a war  
Shall stain your brother: make your soonest haste;  
So your desires are yours.

## **OCTAVIA**

Thanks to my lord.  
The Jove of power make me most weak, most weak,  
Your reconciler! Wars 'twixt you twain would be  
As if the world should cleave, and that slain men  
Should solder up the rift.

## **MARK ANTONY**

When it appears to you where this begins,  
Turn your displeasure that way: for our faults  
Can never be so equal, that your love  
Can equally move with them. Provide your going;  
Choose your own company, and command what cost  
Your heart has mind to.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same. Another room.

*Enter DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS and EROS, meeting*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

How now, friend Eros!

**EROS**

There's strange news come, sir.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

What, man?

**EROS**

Caesar and Lepidus have made wars upon Pompey.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

This is old: what is the success?

**EROS**

Caesar, having made use of him in the wars 'gainst Pompey, presently denied him rivalry; would not let him partake in the glory of the action: and not resting here, accuses him of letters he had formerly wrote to Pompey; upon his own appeal, seizes him: so the poor third is up, till death enlarge his confine.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Then, world, thou hast a pair of chaps, no more;  
And throw between them all the food thou hast,  
They'll grind the one the other. Where's Antony?

**EROS**

He's walking in the garden--thus; and spurns  
The rush that lies before him; cries, 'Fool Lepidus!'  
And threats the throat of that his officer  
That murder'd Pompey.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Our great navy's rigg'd.

**EROS**

For Italy and Caesar. More, Domitius;  
My lord desires you presently: my news  
I might have told hereafter.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

'Twill be naught:  
But let it be. Bring me to Antony.

**EROS**

Come, sir.

*Exeunt*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Rome. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's house.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, AGRIPPA, and MECAENAS*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Contemning Rome, he has done all this, and more,  
In Alexandria: here's the manner of 't:  
I' the market-place, on a tribunal silver'd,  
Cleopatra and himself in chairs of gold  
Were publicly enthroned: at the feet sat  
Caesarion, whom they call my father's son,  
And all the unlawful issue that their lust  
Since then hath made between them. Unto her  
He gave the stablishment of Egypt; made her  
Of lower Syria, Cyprus, Lydia,  
Absolute queen.

### MECAENAS

This in the public eye?

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

I' the common show-place, where they exercise.  
His sons he there proclaim'd the kings of kings:  
Great Media, Parthia, and Armenia.  
He gave to Alexander; to Ptolemy he assign'd  
Syria, Cilicia, and Phoenicia: she  
In the habiliments of the goddess Isis  
That day appear'd; and oft before gave audience,  
As 'tis reported, so.

### MECAENAS

Let Rome be thus Inform'd.



**AGRIPPA**

Who, queasy with his insolence  
Already, will their good thoughts call from him.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

The people know it; and have now received  
His accusations.

**AGRIPPA**

Who does he accuse?

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Caesar: and that, having in Sicily  
Sextus Pompeius spoil'd, we had not rated him  
His part o' the isle: then does he say, he lent me  
Some shipping unrestored: lastly, he frets  
That Lepidus of the triumvirate  
Should be deposed; and, being, that we detain  
All his revenue.

**AGRIPPA**

Sir, this should be answer'd.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

'Tis done already, and the messenger gone.  
I have told him, Lepidus was grown too cruel;  
That he his high authority abused,  
And did deserve his change: for what I have conquer'd,  
I grant him part; but then, in his Armenia,  
And other of his conquer'd kingdoms, I  
Demand the like.

**MECAENAS**

He'll never yield to that.

## OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Nor must not then be yielded to in this.

*Enter OCTAVIA with her train*

## OCTAVIA

Hail, Caesar, and my lord! hail, most dear Caesar!

## OCTAVIUS CAESAR

That ever I should call thee castaway!

## OCTAVIA

You have not call'd me so, nor have you cause.

## OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Why have you stol'n upon us thus! You come not  
Like Caesar's sister: the wife of Antony  
Should have an army for an usher, and  
The neighs of horse to tell of her approach  
Long ere she did appear; the trees by the way  
Should have borne men; and expectation fainted,  
Longing for what it had not; nay, the dust  
Should have ascended to the roof of heaven,  
Raised by your populous troops: but you are come  
A market-maid to Rome; and have prevented  
The ostentation of our love, which, left unshown,  
Is often left unloved; we should have met you  
By sea and land; supplying every stage  
With an augmented greeting.

## OCTAVIA

Good my lord,  
To come thus was I not constrain'd, but did  
On my free will. My lord, Mark Antony,  
Hearing that you prepared for war, acquainted

My grieved ear withal; whereon, I begg'd  
His pardon for return.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Which soon he granted,  
Being an obstruct 'tween his lust and him.

**OCTAVIA**

Do not say so, my lord.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

I have eyes upon him,  
And his affairs come to me on the wind.  
Where is he now?

**OCTAVIA**

My lord, in Athens.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

No, my most wronged sister; Cleopatra  
Hath nodded him to her. He hath given his empire  
Up to a whore; who now are levying  
The kings o' the earth for war; he hath assembled  
Bocchus, the king of Libya; Archelaus,  
Of Cappadocia; Philadelphos, king  
Of Paphlagonia; the Thracian king, Adallas;  
King Malchus of Arabia; King of Pont;  
Herod of Jewry; Mithridates, king  
Of Comagene; Polemon and Amyntas,  
The kings of Mede and Lycaonia,  
With a more larger list of sceptres.

**OCTAVIA**

Ay me, most wretched,  
That have my heart parted betwixt two friends

That do afflict each other!

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Welcome hither:

Your letters did withhold our breaking forth;  
Till we perceived, both how you were wrong led,  
And we in negligent danger. Cheer your heart;  
Be you not troubled with the time, which drives  
O'er your content these strong necessities;  
But let determined things to destiny  
Hold unbewail'd their way. Welcome to Rome;  
Nothing more dear to me. You are abused  
Beyond the mark of thought: and the high gods,  
To do you justice, make them ministers  
Of us and those that love you. Best of comfort;  
And ever welcome to us.

## **AGRIPPA**

Welcome, lady.

## **MECAENAS**

Welcome, dear madam.  
Each heart in Rome does love and pity you:  
Only the adulterous Antony, most large  
In his abominations, turns you off;  
And gives his potent regiment to a trull,  
That noises it against us.

## **OCTAVIA**

Is it so, sir?

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Most certain. Sister, welcome: pray you,  
Be ever known to patience: my dear'st sister!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Near Actium. MARK ANTONY's camp.

*Enter CLEOPATRA and DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

**CLEOPATRA**

I will be even with thee, doubt it not.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

But why, why, why?

**CLEOPATRA**

Thou hast forspoke my being in these wars,  
And say'st it is not fit.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Well, is it, is it?

**CLEOPATRA**

If not denounced against us, why should not we  
Be there in person?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside] Well, I could reply:  
If we should serve with horse and mares together,  
The horse were merely lost; the mares would bear  
A soldier and his horse.

**CLEOPATRA**

What is't you say?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Your presence needs must puzzle Antony;  
Take from his heart, take from his brain,  
from's time,  
What should not then be spared. He is already  
Traduced for levity; and 'tis said in Rome  
That Photinus an eunuch and your maids  
Manage this war.

**CLEOPATRA**

Sink Rome, and their tongues rot  
That speak against us! A charge we bear i' the war,  
And, as the president of my kingdom, will  
Appear there for a man. Speak not against it:  
I will not stay behind.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Nay, I have done.  
Here comes the emperor.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and CANIDIUS*

**MARK ANTONY**

Is it not strange, Canidius,  
That from Tarentum and Brundisium  
He could so quickly cut the Ionian sea,  
And take in Toryne? You have heard on't, sweet?

**CLEOPATRA**

Celerity is never more admired  
Than by the negligent.

**MARK ANTONY**

A good rebuke,  
Which might have well becomeed the best of men,  
To taunt at slackness. Canidius, we  
Will fight with him by sea.

**CLEOPATRA**

By sea! what else?

**CANIDIUS**

Why will my lord do so?

**MARK ANTONY**

For that he dares us to't.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

So hath my lord dared him to single fight.

**CANIDIUS**

Ay, and to wage this battle at Pharsalia.  
Where Caesar fought with Pompey: but these offers,  
Which serve not for his vantage, be shakes off;  
And so should you.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Your ships are not well mann'd;  
Your mariners are muleters, reapers, people  
Ingross'd by swift impress; in Caesar's fleet  
Are those that often have 'gainst Pompey fought:  
Their ships are yare; yours, heavy: no disgrace  
Shall fall you for refusing him at sea,  
Being prepared for land.

**MARK ANTONY**

By sea, by sea.



## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Most worthy sir, you therein throw away  
The absolute soldiership you have by land;  
Distract your army, which doth most consist  
Of war-mark'd footmen; leave unexecuted  
Your own renowned knowledge; quite forego  
The way which promises assurance; and  
Give up yourself merely to chance and hazard,  
From firm security.

## **MARK ANTONY**

I'll fight at sea.

## **CLEOPATRA**

I have sixty sails, Caesar none better.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Our overplus of shipping will we burn;  
And, with the rest full-mann'd, from the head of Actium  
Beat the approaching Caesar. But if we fail,  
We then can do't at land.

*Enter a Messenger*

Thy business?

## **Messenger**

The news is true, my lord; he is descried;  
Caesar has taken Toryne.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Can he be there in person? 'tis impossible;  
Strange that power should be. Canidius,  
Our nineteen legions thou shalt hold by land,  
And our twelve thousand horse. We'll to our ship:

Away, my Thetis!

*Enter a Soldier*

How now, worthy soldier?

**Soldier**

O noble emperor, do not fight by sea;  
Trust not to rotten planks: do you misdoubt  
This sword and these my wounds? Let the Egyptians  
And the Phoenicians go a-ducking; we  
Have used to conquer, standing on the earth,  
And fighting foot to foot.

**MARK ANTONY**

Well, well: away!

*Exeunt MARK ANTONY, QUEEN CLEOPATRA, and DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

**Soldier**

By Hercules, I think I am i' the right.

**CANIDIUS**

Soldier, thou art: but his whole action grows  
Not in the power on't: so our leader's led,  
And we are women's men.

**Soldier**

You keep by land  
The legions and the horse whole, do you not?

**CANIDIUS**

Marcus Octavius, Marcus Justeius,  
Publicola, and Caelius, are for sea:  
But we keep whole by land. This speed of Caesar's

Carries beyond belief.

**Soldier**

While he was yet in Rome,  
His power went out in such distractions as  
Beguiled all spies.

**CANIDIUS**

Who's his lieutenant, hear you?

**Soldier**

They say, one Taurus.

**CANIDIUS**

Well I know the man.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

The emperor calls Canidius.

**CANIDIUS**

With news the time's with labour, and throes forth,  
Each minute, some.

*Exeunt*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. A plain near Actium.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, and TAURUS, with his army, marching*

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Taurus!

**TAURUS**

My lord?

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Strike not by land; keep whole: provoke not battle,  
Till we have done at sea. Do not exceed  
The prescript of this scroll: our fortune lies  
Upon this jump.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IX. Another part of the plain.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

### MARK ANTONY

Set we our squadrons on yond side o' the hill,  
In eye of Caesar's battle; from which place  
We may the number of the ships behold,  
And so proceed accordingly.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 10

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE X. Another part of the plain.

*CANIDIUS marcheth with his land army one way over the stage; and TAURUS, the lieutenant of OCTAVIUS CAESAR, the other way. After their going in, is heard the noise of a sea-fight*

*Alarum. Enter DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

Naught, naught all, naught! I can behold no longer:  
The Antoniad, the Egyptian admiral,  
With all their sixty, fly and turn the rudder:  
To see't mine eyes are blasted.

*Enter SCARUS*

### SCARUS

Gods and goddesses,  
All the whole synod of them!

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

What's thy passion!

### SCARUS

The greater cantle of the world is lost  
With very ignorance; we have kiss'd away  
Kingdoms and provinces.

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

How appears the fight?

## SCARUS

On our side like the token'd pestilence,  
Where death is sure. Yon ribaudred nag of Egypt,--  
Whom leprosy o'ertake!--i' the midst o' the fight,  
When vantage like a pair of twins appear'd,  
Both as the same, or rather ours the elder,  
The breese upon her, like a cow in June,  
Hoists sails and flies.

## DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

That I beheld:  
Mine eyes did sicken at the sight, and could not  
Endure a further view.

## SCARUS

She once being loof'd,  
The noble ruin of her magic, Antony,  
Claps on his sea-wing, and, like a doting mallard,  
Leaving the fight in height, flies after her:  
I never saw an action of such shame;  
Experience, manhood, honour, ne'er before  
Did violate so itself.

## DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

Alack, alack!

*Enter CANIDIUS*

## CANIDIUS

Our fortune on the sea is out of breath,  
And sinks most lamentably. Had our general  
Been what he knew himself, it had gone well:  
O, he has given example for our flight,  
Most grossly, by his own!

## DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

Ay, are you thereabouts?  
Why, then, good night indeed.

**CANIDIUS**

Toward Peloponnesus are they fled.

**SCARUS**

'Tis easy to't; and there I will attend  
What further comes.

**CANIDIUS**

To Caesar will I render  
My legions and my horse: six kings already  
Show me the way of yielding.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I'll yet follow  
The wounded chance of Antony, though my reason  
Sits in the wind against me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 10  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 11

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XI. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.

*Enter MARK ANTONY with Attendants*

**MARK ANTONY**

Hark! the land bids me tread no more upon't;  
It is ashamed to bear me! Friends, come hither:  
I am so lated in the world, that I  
Have lost my way for ever: I have a ship  
Laden with gold; take that, divide it; fly,  
And make your peace with Caesar.

**All**

Fly! not we.

**MARK ANTONY**

I have fled myself; and have instructed cowards  
To run and show their shoulders. Friends, be gone;  
I have myself resolved upon a course  
Which has no need of you; be gone:  
My treasure's in the harbour, take it. O,  
I follow'd that I blush to look upon:  
My very hairs do mutiny; for the white  
Reprove the brown for rashness, and they them  
For fear and doting. Friends, be gone: you shall  
Have letters from me to some friends that will  
Sweep your way for you. Pray you, look not sad,  
Nor make replies of loathness: take the hint  
Which my despair proclaims; let that be left  
Which leaves itself: to the sea-side straightway:  
I will possess you of that ship and treasure.  
Leave me, I pray, a little: pray you now:  
Nay, do so; for, indeed, I have lost command,

Therefore I pray you: I'll see you by and by.

*Sits down*

*Enter CLEOPATRA led by CHARMIAN and IRAS; EROS following*

**EROS**

Nay, gentle madam, to him, comfort him.

**IRAS**

Do, most dear queen.

**CHARMIAN**

Do! why: what else?

**CLEOPATRA**

Let me sit down. O Juno!

**MARK ANTONY**

No, no, no, no, no.

**EROS**

See you here, sir?

**MARK ANTONY**

O fie, fie, fie!

**CHARMIAN**

Madam!

**IRAS**

Madam, O good empress!

**EROS**

Sir, sir,--

**MARK ANTONY**

Yes, my lord, yes; he at Philippi kept  
His sword e'en like a dancer; while I struck  
The lean and wrinkled Cassius; and 'twas I  
That the mad Brutus ended: he alone  
Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practise had  
In the brave squares of war: yet now--No matter.

**CLEOPATRA**

Ah, stand by.

**EROS**

The queen, my lord, the queen.

**IRAS**

Go to him, madam, speak to him:  
He is unqualified with very shame.

**CLEOPATRA**

Well then, sustain him: O!

**EROS**

Most noble sir, arise; the queen approaches:  
Her head's declined, and death will seize her, but  
Your comfort makes the rescue.

**MARK ANTONY**

I have offended reputation,  
A most unnoble swerving.

## **EROS**

Sir, the queen.

## **MARK ANTONY**

O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See,  
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes  
By looking back what I have left behind  
'Stroy'd in dishonour.

## **CLEOPATRA**

O my lord, my lord,  
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought  
You would have follow'd.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Egypt, thou knew'st too well  
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,  
And thou shouldst tow me after: o'er my spirit  
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that  
Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods  
Command me.

## **CLEOPATRA**

O, my pardon!

## **MARK ANTONY**

Now I must  
To the young man send humble treaties, dodge  
And palter in the shifts of lowness; who  
With half the bulk o' the world play'd as I pleased,  
Making and marring fortunes. You did know  
How much you were my conqueror; and that  
My sword, made weak by my affection, would  
Obey it on all cause.

## CLEOPATRA

Pardon, pardon!

## MARK ANTONY

Fall not a tear, I say; one of them rates  
All that is won and lost: give me a kiss;  
Even this repays me. We sent our schoolmaster;  
Is he come back? Love, I am full of lead.  
Some wine, within there, and our viands! Fortune knows  
We scorn her most when most she offers blows.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 11  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 12

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XII. Egypt. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, DOLABELLA, THYREUS, with others*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Let him appear that's come from Antony.  
Know you him?

### DOLABELLA

Caesar, 'tis his schoolmaster:  
An argument that he is pluck'd, when hither  
He sends so poor a pinion off his wing,  
Which had superfluous kings for messengers  
Not many moons gone by.

*Enter EUPHRONIUS, ambassador from MARK ANTONY*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Approach, and speak.

### EUPHRONIUS

Such as I am, I come from Antony:  
I was of late as petty to his ends  
As is the morn-dew on the myrtle-leaf  
To his grand sea.

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Be't so: declare thine office.

### EUPHRONIUS

Lord of his fortunes he salutes thee, and  
Requires to live in Egypt: which not granted,  
He lessens his requests; and to thee sues  
To let him breathe between the heavens and earth,  
A private man in Athens: this for him.  
Next, Cleopatra does confess thy greatness;  
Submits her to thy might; and of thee craves  
The circle of the Ptolemies for her heirs,  
Now hazarded to thy grace.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

For Antony,  
I have no ears to his request. The queen  
Of audience nor desire shall fail, so she  
From Egypt drive her all-disgraced friend,  
Or take his life there: this if she perform,  
She shall not sue unheard. So to them both.

## **EUPHRONIUS**

Fortune pursue thee!

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Bring him through the bands.

*Exit EUPHRONIUS*

*To THYREUS*

From Antony win Cleopatra: promise,  
And in our name, what she requires; add more,  
From thine invention, offers: women are not  
In their best fortunes strong; but want will perjure  
The ne'er touch'd vestal: try thy cunning, Thyreus;  
Make thine own edict for thy pains, which we  
Will answer as a law.

## **THYREUS**

Caesar, I go.

## OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Observe how Antony becomes his flaw,  
And what thou think'st his very action speaks  
In every power that moves.

## THYREUS

Caesar, I shall.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 12

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 13

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XIII. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, and IRAS*

**CLEOPATRA**

What shall we do, Enobarbus?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Think, and die.

**CLEOPATRA**

Is Antony or we in fault for this?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Antony only, that would make his will  
Lord of his reason. What though you fled  
From that great face of war, whose several ranges  
Frighted each other? why should he follow?  
The itch of his affection should not then  
Have nick'd his captainship; at such a point,  
When half to half the world opposed, he being  
The meered question: 'twas a shame no less  
Than was his loss, to course your flying flags,  
And leave his navy gazing.

**CLEOPATRA**

Prithee, peace.

*Enter MARK ANTONY with EUPHRONIUS, the Ambassador*

**MARK ANTONY**

Is that his answer?

**EUPHRONIUS**

Ay, my lord.

**MARK ANTONY**

The queen shall then have courtesy, so she  
Will yield us up.

**EUPHRONIUS**

He says so.

**MARK ANTONY**

Let her know't.  
To the boy Caesar send this grizzled head,  
And he will fill thy wishes to the brim  
With principalities.

**CLEOPATRA**

That head, my lord?

**MARK ANTONY**

To him again: tell him he wears the rose  
Of youth upon him; from which the world should note  
Something particular: his coin, ships, legions,  
May be a coward's; whose ministers would prevail  
Under the service of a child as soon  
As i' the command of Caesar: I dare him therefore  
To lay his gay comparisons apart,  
And answer me declined, sword against sword,  
Ourselves alone. I'll write it: follow me.

*Exeunt MARK ANTONY and EUPHRONIUS*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside] Yes, like enough, high-battled Caesar will  
Unstate his happiness, and be staged to the show,  
Against a sworder! I see men's judgments are  
A parcel of their fortunes; and things outward  
Do draw the inward quality after them,  
To suffer all alike. That he should dream,  
Knowing all measures, the full Caesar will  
Answer his emptiness! Caesar, thou hast subdued  
His judgment too.

*Enter an Attendant*

**Attendant**

A messenger from CAESAR.

**CLEOPATRA**

What, no more ceremony? See, my women!  
Against the blown rose may they stop their nose  
That kneel'd unto the buds. Admit him, sir.

*Exit Attendant*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside] Mine honesty and I begin to square.  
The loyalty well held to fools does make  
Our faith mere folly: yet he that can endure  
To follow with allegiance a fall'n lord  
Does conquer him that did his master conquer  
And earns a place i' the story.

*Enter THYREUS*

**CLEOPATRA**

Caesar's will?

**THYREUS**

Hear it apart.

**CLEOPATRA**

None but friends: say boldly.

**THYREUS**

So, haply, are they friends to Antony.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

He needs as many, sir, as Caesar has;  
Or needs not us. If Caesar please, our master  
Will leap to be his friend: for us, you know,  
Whose he is we are, and that is, Caesar's.

**THYREUS**

So.  
Thus then, thou most renown'd: Caesar entreats,  
Not to consider in what case thou stand'st,  
Further than he is Caesar.

**CLEOPATRA**

Go on: right royal.

**THYREUS**

He knows that you embrace not Antony  
As you did love, but as you fear'd him.

**CLEOPATRA**

O!

**THYREUS**

The scars upon your honour, therefore, he  
Does pity, as constrained blemishes,

Not as deserved.

**CLEOPATRA**

He is a god, and knows  
What is most right: mine honour was not yielded,  
But conquer'd merely.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside] To be sure of that,  
I will ask Antony. Sir, sir, thou art so leaky,  
That we must leave thee to thy sinking, for  
Thy dearest quit thee.

*Exit*

**THYREUS**

Shall I say to Caesar  
What you require of him? for he partly begs  
To be desired to give. It much would please him,  
That of his fortunes you should make a staff  
To lean upon: but it would warm his spirits,  
To hear from me you had left Antony,  
And put yourself under his shroud,  
The universal landlord.

**CLEOPATRA**

What's your name?

**THYREUS**

My name is Thyreus.

**CLEOPATRA**

Most kind messenger,  
Say to great Caesar this: in deputation  
I kiss his conquering hand: tell him, I am prompt

To lay my crown at 's feet, and there to kneel:  
Tell him from his all-obeying breath I hear  
The doom of Egypt.

## **THYREUS**

'Tis your noblest course.  
Wisdom and fortune combating together,  
If that the former dare but what it can,  
No chance may shake it. Give me grace to lay  
My duty on your hand.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Your Caesar's father oft,  
When he hath mused of taking kingdoms in,  
Bestow'd his lips on that unworthy place,  
As it rain'd kisses.

*Re-enter MARK ANTONY and DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

## **MARK ANTONY**

Favours, by Jove that thunders!  
What art thou, fellow?

## **THYREUS**

One that but performs  
The bidding of the fullest man, and worthiest  
To have command obey'd.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside] You will be whipp'd.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Approach, there! Ah, you kite! Now, gods  
and devils!  
Authority melts from me: of late, when I cried 'Ho!'

Like boys unto a muss, kings would start forth,  
And cry 'Your will?' Have you no ears? I am  
Antony yet.

*Enter Attendants*

Take hence this Jack, and whip him.

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside] 'Tis better playing with a lion's whelp  
Than with an old one dying.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Moon and stars!  
Whip him. Were't twenty of the greatest tributaries  
That do acknowledge Caesar, should I find them  
So saucy with the hand of she here,--what's her name,  
Since she was Cleopatra? Whip him, fellows,  
Till, like a boy, you see him cringe his face,  
And whine aloud for mercy: take him hence.

## **THYREUS**

Mark Antony!

## **MARK ANTONY**

Tug him away: being whipp'd,  
Bring him again: this Jack of Caesar's shall  
Bear us an errand to him.

*Exeunt Attendants with THYREUS*

You were half blasted ere I knew you: ha!  
Have I my pillow left unpress'd in Rome,  
Forborne the getting of a lawful race,  
And by a gem of women, to be abused  
By one that looks on feeders?

## CLEOPATRA

Good my lord,--

## MARK ANTONY

You have been a boggler ever:  
But when we in our viciousness grow hard--  
O misery on't!--the wise gods seel our eyes;  
In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us  
Adore our errors; laugh at's, while we strut  
To our confusion.

## CLEOPATRA

O, is't come to this?

## MARK ANTONY

I found you as a morsel cold upon  
Dead Caesar's trencher; nay, you were a fragment  
Of Cneius Pompey's; besides what hotter hours,  
Unregister'd in vulgar fame, you have  
Luxuriously pick'd out: for, I am sure,  
Though you can guess what temperance should be,  
You know not what it is.

## CLEOPATRA

Wherefore is this?

## MARK ANTONY

To let a fellow that will take rewards  
And say 'God quit you!' be familiar with  
My playfellow, your hand; this kingly seal  
And plighter of high hearts! O, that I were  
Upon the hill of Basan, to outroar  
The horned herd! for I have savage cause;  
And to proclaim it civilly, were like  
A halter'd neck which does the hangman thank  
For being yare about him.



*Re-enter Attendants with THYREUS*

Is he whipp'd?

**First Attendant**

Soundly, my lord.

**MARK ANTONY**

Cried he? and begg'd a' pardon?

**First Attendant**

He did ask favour.

**MARK ANTONY**

If that thy father live, let him repent  
Thou wast not made his daughter; and be thou sorry  
To follow Caesar in his triumph, since  
Thou hast been whipp'd for following him: henceforth  
The white hand of a lady fever thee,  
Shake thou to look on 't. Get thee back to Caesar,  
Tell him thy entertainment: look, thou say  
He makes me angry with him; for he seems  
Proud and disdainful, harping on what I am,  
Not what he knew I was: he makes me angry;  
And at this time most easy 'tis to do't,  
When my good stars, that were my former guides,  
Have empty left their orbs, and shot their fires  
Into the abysm of hell. If he mislike  
My speech and what is done, tell him he has  
Hipparchus, my enfranchised bondman, whom  
He may at pleasure whip, or hang, or torture,  
As he shall like, to quit me: urge it thou:  
Hence with thy stripes, begone!

*Exit THYREUS*

**CLEOPATRA**

Have you done yet?

**MARK ANTONY**

Alack, our terrene moon  
Is now eclipsed; and it portends alone  
The fall of Antony!

**CLEOPATRA**

I must stay his time.

**MARK ANTONY**

To flatter Caesar, would you mingle eyes  
With one that ties his points?

**CLEOPATRA**

Not know me yet?

**MARK ANTONY**

Cold-hearted toward me?

**CLEOPATRA**

Ah, dear, if I be so,  
From my cold heart let heaven engender hail,  
And poison it in the source; and the first stone  
Drop in my neck: as it determines, so  
Dissolve my life! The next Caesarion smite!  
Till by degrees the memory of my womb,  
Together with my brave Egyptians all,  
By the discandying of this pelleted storm,  
Lie graveless, till the flies and gnats of Nile  
Have buried them for prey!

**MARK ANTONY**

I am satisfied.  
Caesar sits down in Alexandria; where  
I will oppose his fate. Our force by land  
Hath nobly held; our sever'd navy too  
Have knit again, and fleet, threatening most sea-like.  
Where hast thou been, my heart? Dost thou hear, lady?  
If from the field I shall return once more  
To kiss these lips, I will appear in blood;  
I and my sword will earn our chronicle:  
There's hope in't yet.

**CLEOPATRA**

That's my brave lord!

**MARK ANTONY**

I will be treble-sinew'd, hearted, breathed,  
And fight maliciously: for when mine hours  
Were nice and lucky, men did ransom lives  
Of me for jests; but now I'll set my teeth,  
And send to darkness all that stop me. Come,  
Let's have one other gaudy night: call to me  
All my sad captains; fill our bowls once more;  
Let's mock the midnight bell.

**CLEOPATRA**

It is my birth-day:  
I had thought to have held it poor: but, since my lord  
Is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.

**MARK ANTONY**

We will yet do well.

**CLEOPATRA**

Call all his noble captains to my lord.

**MARK ANTONY**

Do so, we'll speak to them; and to-night I'll force  
The wine peep through their scars. Come on, my queen;  
There's sap in't yet. The next time I do fight,  
I'll make death love me; for I will contend  
Even with his pestilent scythe.

*Exeunt all but DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Now he'll outstare the lightning. To be furious,  
Is to be frighted out of fear; and in that mood  
The dove will peck the estridge; and I see still,  
A diminution in our captain's brain  
Restores his heart: when valour preys on reason,  
It eats the sword it fights with. I will seek  
Some way to leave him.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 3, Scene 13  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before Alexandria. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, AGRIPPA, and MECAENAS, with his Army; OCTAVIUS CAESAR reading a letter*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

He calls me boy; and chides, as he had power  
To beat me out of Egypt; my messenger  
He hath whipp'd with rods; dares me to personal combat,  
Caesar to Antony: let the old ruffian know  
I have many other ways to die; meantime  
Laugh at his challenge.

### MECAENAS

Caesar must think,  
When one so great begins to rage, he's hunted  
Even to falling. Give him no breath, but now  
Make boot of his distraction: never anger  
Made good guard for itself.

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Let our best heads  
Know, that to-morrow the last of many battles  
We mean to fight: within our files there are,  
Of those that served Mark Antony but late,  
Enough to fetch him in. See it done:  
And feast the army; we have store to do't,  
And they have earn'd the waste. Poor Antony!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Alexandria. CLEOPATRA's palace.

*Enter MARK ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS, CHARMIAN, IRAS, ALEXAS, with others*

**MARK ANTONY**

He will not fight with me, Domitius.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

No.

**MARK ANTONY**

Why should he not?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

He thinks, being twenty times of better fortune,  
He is twenty men to one.

**MARK ANTONY**

To-morrow, soldier,  
By sea and land I'll fight: or I will live,  
Or bathe my dying honour in the blood  
Shall make it live again. Woo't thou fight well?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I'll strike, and cry 'Take all.'

**MARK ANTONY**

Well said; come on.  
Call forth my household servants: let's to-night  
Be bounteous at our meal.

*Enter three or four Servitors*

Give me thy hand,  
Thou hast been rightly honest;--so hast thou;--  
Thou,--and thou,--and thou:--you have served me well,  
And kings have been your fellows.

## **CLEOPATRA**

[Aside to DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS] What means this?

## **DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside to CLEOPATRA] 'Tis one of those odd  
tricks which sorrow shoots  
Out of the mind.

## **MARK ANTONY**

And thou art honest too.  
I wish I could be made so many men,  
And all of you clapp'd up together in  
An Antony, that I might do you service  
So good as you have done.

## **All**

The gods forbid!

## **MARK ANTONY**

Well, my good fellows, wait on me to-night:  
Scant not my cups; and make as much of me  
As when mine empire was your fellow too,  
And suffer'd my command.

## **CLEOPATRA**



[Aside to DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS] What does he mean?

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

[Aside to CLEOPATRA] To make his followers weep.

**MARK ANTONY**

Tend me to-night;  
May be it is the period of your duty:  
Haply you shall not see me more; or if,  
A mangled shadow: perchance to-morrow  
You'll serve another master. I look on you  
As one that takes his leave. Mine honest friends,  
I turn you not away; but, like a master  
Married to your good service, stay till death:  
Tend me to-night two hours, I ask no more,  
And the gods yield you for't!

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

What mean you, sir,  
To give them this discomfort? Look, they weep;  
And I, an ass, am onion-eyed: for shame,  
Transform us not to women.

**MARK ANTONY**

Ho, ho, ho!  
Now the witch take me, if I meant it thus!  
Grace grow where those drops fall!  
My hearty friends,  
You take me in too dolorous a sense;  
For I spake to you for your comfort; did desire you  
To burn this night with torches: know, my hearts,  
I hope well of to-morrow; and will lead you  
Where rather I'll expect victorious life  
Than death and honour. Let's to supper, come,  
And drown consideration.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. Before the palace.

*Enter two Soldiers to their guard*

### First Soldier

Brother, good night: to-morrow is the day.

### Second Soldier

It will determine one way: fare you well.  
Heard you of nothing strange about the streets?

### First Soldier

Nothing. What news?

### Second Soldier

Belike 'tis but a rumour. Good night to you.

### First Soldier

Well, sir, good night.

*Enter two other Soldiers*

### Second Soldier

Soldiers, have careful watch.

### Third Soldier

And you. Good night, good night.

*They place themselves in every corner of the stage*

**Fourth Soldier**

Here we: and if to-morrow  
Our navy thrive, I have an absolute hope  
Our landmen will stand up.

**Third Soldier**

'Tis a brave army,  
And full of purpose.

*Music of the hautboys as under the stage*

**Fourth Soldier**

Peace! what noise?

**First Soldier**

List, list!

**Second Soldier**

Hark!

**First Soldier**

Music i' the air.

**Third Soldier**

Under the earth.

**Fourth Soldier**

It signs well, does it not?

**Third Soldier**

No.

**First Soldier**

Peace, I say!  
What should this mean?

**Second Soldier**

'Tis the god Hercules, whom Antony loved,  
Now leaves him.

**First Soldier**

Walk; let's see if other watchmen  
Do hear what we do?

*They advance to another post*

**Second Soldier**

How now, masters!

**All**

[Speaking together] How now!  
How now! do you hear this?

**First Soldier**

Ay; is't not strange?

**Third Soldier**

Do you hear, masters? do you hear?

**First Soldier**

Follow the noise so far as we have quarter;  
Let's see how it will give off.

All

Content. 'Tis strange.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. A room in the palace.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, and others attending*

**MARK ANTONY**

Eros! mine armour, Eros!

**CLEOPATRA**

Sleep a little.

**MARK ANTONY**

No, my chuck. Eros, come; mine armour, Eros!

*Enter EROS with armour*

Come good fellow, put mine iron on:  
If fortune be not ours to-day, it is  
Because we brave her: come.

**CLEOPATRA**

Nay, I'll help too.  
What's this for?

**MARK ANTONY**

Ah, let be, let be! thou art  
The armourer of my heart: false, false; this, this.

**CLEOPATRA**

Sooth, la, I'll help: thus it must be.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Well, well;  
We shall thrive now. Seest thou, my good fellow?  
Go put on thy defences.

## **EROS**

Briefly, sir.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Is not this buckled well?

## **MARK ANTONY**

Rarely, rarely:  
He that unbuckles this, till we do please  
To daff't for our repose, shall hear a storm.  
Thou fumblest, Eros; and my queen's a squire  
More tight at this than thou: dispatch. O love,  
That thou couldst see my wars to-day, and knew'st  
The royal occupation! thou shouldst see  
A workman in't.

*Enter an armed Soldier*

Good morrow to thee; welcome:  
Thou look'st like him that knows a warlike charge:  
To business that we love we rise betime,  
And go to't with delight.

## **Soldier**

A thousand, sir,  
Early though't be, have on their riveted trim,  
And at the port expect you.

*Shout. Trumpets flourish*

*Enter Captains and Soldiers*



## **Captain**

The morn is fair. Good morrow, general.

## **All**

Good morrow, general.

## **MARK ANTONY**

'Tis well blown, lads:

This morning, like the spirit of a youth

That means to be of note, begins betimes.

So, so; come, give me that: this way; well said.

Fare thee well, dame, whate'er becomes of me:

This is a soldier's kiss: rebukeable

*Kisses her*

And worthy shameful cheque it were, to stand

On more mechanic compliment; I'll leave thee

Now, like a man of steel. You that will fight,

Follow me close; I'll bring you to't. Adieu.

*Exeunt MARK ANTONY, EROS, Captains, and Soldiers*

## **CHARMIAN**

Please you, retire to your chamber.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Lead me.

He goes forth gallantly. That he and Caesar might

Determine this great war in single fight!

Then Antony,--but now--Well, on.

*Exeunt*



# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Alexandria. MARK ANTONY's camp.

*Trumpets sound. Enter MARK ANTONY and EROS; a Soldier meeting them*

**Soldier**

The gods make this a happy day to Antony!

**MARK ANTONY**

Would thou and those thy scars had once prevail'd  
To make me fight at land!

**Soldier**

Hadst thou done so,  
The kings that have revolted, and the soldier  
That has this morning left thee, would have still  
Follow'd thy heels.

**MARK ANTONY**

Who's gone this morning?

**Soldier**

Who!  
One ever near thee: call for Enobarbus,  
He shall not hear thee; or from Caesar's camp  
Say 'I am none of thine.'

**MARK ANTONY**

What say'st thou?

**Soldier**

Sir,  
He is with Caesar.

**EROS**

Sir, his chests and treasure  
He has not with him.

**MARK ANTONY**

Is he gone?

**Soldier**

Most certain.

**MARK ANTONY**

Go, Eros, send his treasure after; do it;  
Detain no jot, I charge thee: write to him--  
I will subscribe--gentle adieus and greetings;  
Say that I wish he never find more cause  
To change a master. O, my fortunes have  
Corrupted honest men! Dispatch.--Enobarbus!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Alexandria. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.

*Flourish. Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, AGRIPPA, with DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS, and others*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Go forth, Agrippa, and begin the fight:  
Our will is Antony be took alive;  
Make it so known.

### AGRIPPA

Caesar, I shall.

*Exit*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

The time of universal peace is near:  
Prove this a prosperous day, the three-nook'd world  
Shall bear the olive freely.

*Enter a Messenger*

### Messenger

Antony  
Is come into the field.

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Go charge Agrippa  
Plant those that have revolted in the van,  
That Antony may seem to spend his fury  
Upon himself.

*Exeunt all but DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

Alexas did revolt; and went to Jewry on  
Affairs of Antony; there did persuade  
Great Herod to incline himself to Caesar,  
And leave his master Antony: for this pains  
Caesar hath hang'd him. Canidius and the rest  
That fell away have entertainment, but  
No honourable trust. I have done ill;  
Of which I do accuse myself so sorely,  
That I will joy no more.

*Enter a Soldier of CAESAR's*

**Soldier**

Enobarbus, Antony  
Hath after thee sent all thy treasure, with  
His bounty overplus: the messenger  
Came on my guard; and at thy tent is now  
Unloading of his mules.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I give it you.

**Soldier**

Mock not, Enobarbus.  
I tell you true: best you safed the bringer  
Out of the host; I must attend mine office,  
Or would have done't myself. Your emperor  
Continues still a Jove.

*Exit*

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

I am alone the villain of the earth,  
And feel I am so most. O Antony,

Thou mine of bounty, how wouldst thou have paid  
My better service, when my turpitude  
Thou dost so crown with gold! This blows my heart:  
If swift thought break it not, a swifter mean  
Shall outstrike thought: but thought will do't, I feel.  
I fight against thee! No: I will go seek  
Some ditch wherein to die; the foul'st best fits  
My latter part of life.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Field of battle between the camps.

*Alarum. Drums and trumpets. Enter AGRIPPA and others*

### AGRIPPA

Retire, we have engaged ourselves too far:  
Caesar himself has work, and our oppression  
Exceeds what we expected.

*Exeunt*

*Alarums. Enter MARK ANTONY and SCARUS wounded*

### SCARUS

O my brave emperor, this is fought indeed!  
Had we done so at first, we had droven them home  
With clouts about their heads.

### MARK ANTONY

Thou bleed'st apace.

### SCARUS

I had a wound here that was like a T,  
But now 'tis made an H.

### MARK ANTONY

They do retire.

### SCARUS



We'll beat 'em into bench-holes: I have yet  
Room for six scotches more.

*Enter EROS*

## **EROS**

They are beaten, sir, and our advantage serves  
For a fair victory.

## **SCARUS**

Let us score their backs,  
And snatch 'em up, as we take hares, behind:  
'Tis sport to maul a runner.

## **MARK ANTONY**

I will reward thee  
Once for thy spritely comfort, and ten-fold  
For thy good valour. Come thee on.

## **SCARUS**

I'll halt after.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. Under the walls of Alexandria.

*Alarum. Enter MARK ANTONY, in a march; SCARUS, with others*

### MARK ANTONY

We have beat him to his camp: run one before,  
And let the queen know of our gests. To-morrow,  
Before the sun shall see 's, we'll spill the blood  
That has to-day escaped. I thank you all;  
For doughty-handed are you, and have fought  
Not as you served the cause, but as 't had been  
Each man's like mine; you have shown all Hectors.  
Enter the city, clip your wives, your friends,  
Tell them your feats; whilst they with joyful tears  
Wash the congealment from your wounds, and kiss  
The honour'd gashes whole.

*To SCARUS*

Give me thy hand

*Enter CLEOPATRA, attended*

To this great fairy I'll commend thy acts,  
Make her thanks bless thee.

*To CLEOPATRA*

O thou day o' the world,  
Chain mine arm'd neck; leap thou, attire and all,  
Through proof of harness to my heart, and there  
Ride on the pants triumphing!

### CLEOPATRA

Lord of lords!  
O infinite virtue, comest thou smiling from  
The world's great snare uncaught?

## MARK ANTONY

My nightingale,  
We have beat them to their beds. What, girl!  
though grey  
Do something mingle with our younger brown, yet ha' we  
A brain that nourishes our nerves, and can  
Get goal for goal of youth. Behold this man;  
Commend unto his lips thy favouring hand:  
Kiss it, my warrior: he hath fought to-day  
As if a god, in hate of mankind, had  
Destroy'd in such a shape.

## CLEOPATRA

I'll give thee, friend,  
An armour all of gold; it was a king's.

## MARK ANTONY

He has deserved it, were it carbuncled  
Like holy Phoebus' car. Give me thy hand:  
Through Alexandria make a jolly march;  
Bear our hack'd targets like the men that owe them:  
Had our great palace the capacity  
To camp this host, we all would sup together,  
And drink carouses to the next day's fate,  
Which promises royal peril. Trumpeters,  
With brazen din blast you the city's ear;  
Make mingle with rattling tabourines;  
That heaven and earth may strike their sounds together,  
Applauding our approach.

*Exeunt*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IX. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.

*Sentinels at their post*

### First Soldier

If we be not relieved within this hour,  
We must return to the court of guard: the night  
Is shiny; and they say we shall embattle  
By the second hour i' the morn.

### Second Soldier

This last day was  
A shrewd one to's.

*Enter DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS*

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

O, bear me witness, night,--

### Third Soldier

What man is this?

### Second Soldier

Stand close, and list him.

### DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS

Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,  
When men revolted shall upon record  
Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did  
Before thy face repent!

**First Soldier**

Enobarbus!

**Third Soldier**

Peace!  
Hark further.

**DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS**

O sovereign mistress of true melancholy,  
The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me,  
That life, a very rebel to my will,  
May hang no longer on me: throw my heart  
Against the flint and hardness of my fault:  
Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,  
And finish all foul thoughts. O Antony,  
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,  
Forgive me in thine own particular;  
But let the world rank me in register  
A master-leaver and a fugitive:  
O Antony! O Antony!

*Dies*

**Second Soldier**

Let's speak To him.

**First Soldier**

Let's hear him, for the things he speaks  
May concern Caesar.

**Third Soldier**

Let's do so. But he sleeps.

**First Soldier**

Swoons rather; for so bad a prayer as his  
Was never yet for sleep.

**Second Soldier**

Go we to him.

**Third Soldier**

Awake, sir, awake; speak to us.

**Second Soldier**

Hear you, sir?

**First Soldier**

The hand of death hath raught him.

*Drums afar off*

Hark! the drums  
Demurely wake the sleepers. Let us bear him  
To the court of guard; he is of note: our hour  
Is fully out.

**Third Soldier**

Come on, then;  
He may recover yet.

*Exeunt with the body*

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 10

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE X. Between the two camps.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and SCARUS, with their Army*

**MARK ANTONY**

Their preparation is to-day by sea;  
We please them not by land.

**SCARUS**

For both, my lord.

**MARK ANTONY**

I would they'd fight i' the fire or i' the air;  
We'd fight there too. But this it is; our foot  
Upon the hills adjoining to the city  
Shall stay with us: order for sea is given;  
They have put forth the haven  
Where their appointment we may best discover,  
And look on their endeavour.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 10

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 11

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XI. Another part of the same.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, and his Army*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

But being charged, we will be still by land,  
Which, as I take't, we shall; for his best force  
Is forth to man his galleys. To the vales,  
And hold our best advantage.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 11

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 12

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XII. Another part of the same.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and SCARUS*

### MARK ANTONY

Yet they are not join'd: where yond pine  
does stand,  
I shall discover all: I'll bring thee word  
Straight, how 'tis like to go.

*Exit*

### SCARUS

Swallows have built  
In Cleopatra's sails their nests: the augurers  
Say they know not, they cannot tell; look grimly,  
And dare not speak their knowledge. Antony  
Is valiant, and dejected; and, by starts,  
His fretted fortunes give him hope, and fear,  
Of what he has, and has not.

*Alarum afar off, as at a sea-fight*

*Re-enter MARK ANTONY*

### MARK ANTONY

All is lost;  
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me:  
My fleet hath yielded to the foe; and yonder  
They cast their caps up and carouse together  
Like friends long lost. Triple-turn'd whore!  
'tis thou  
Hast sold me to this novice; and my heart

Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly;  
For when I am revenged upon my charm,  
I have done all. Bid them all fly; begone.

*Exit SCARUS*

O sun, thy uprise shall I see no more:  
Fortune and Antony part here; even here  
Do we shake hands. All come to this? The hearts  
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave  
Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets  
On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd,  
That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am:  
O this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm,--  
Whose eye beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home;  
Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end,--  
Like a right gipsy, hath, at fast and loose,  
Beguiled me to the very heart of loss.  
What, Eros, Eros!

*Enter CLEOPATRA*

Ah, thou spell! Avaunt!

**CLEOPATRA**

Why is my lord enraged against his love?

**MARK ANTONY**

Vanish, or I shall give thee thy deserving,  
And blemish Caesar's triumph. Let him take thee,  
And hoist thee up to the shouting plebeians:  
Follow his chariot, like the greatest spot  
Of all thy sex; most monster-like, be shown  
For poor'st diminutives, for doits; and let  
Patient Octavia plough thy visage up  
With her prepared nails.

*Exit CLEOPATRA*

'Tis well thou'rt gone,

If it be well to live; but better 'twere  
Thou fell'st into my fury, for one death  
Might have prevented many. Eros, ho!  
The shirt of Nessus is upon me: teach me,  
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage:  
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o' the moon;  
And with those hands, that grasp'd the heaviest club,  
Subdue my worthiest self. The witch shall die:  
To the young Roman boy she hath sold me, and I fall  
Under this plot; she dies for't. Eros, ho!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 12  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 13

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XIII. Alexandria. Cleopatra's palace.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, IRAS, and MARDIAN*

### CLEOPATRA

Help me, my women! O, he is more mad  
Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly  
Was never so emboss'd.

### CHARMIAN

To the monument!  
There lock yourself, and send him word you are dead.  
The soul and body rive not more in parting  
Than greatness going off.

### CLEOPATRA

To the monument!  
Mardian, go tell him I have slain myself;  
Say, that the last I spoke was 'Antony,'  
And word it, prithee, piteously: hence, Mardian,  
And bring me how he takes my death.  
To the monument!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 13

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 14

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XIV. The same. Another room.

*Enter MARK ANTONY and EROS*

**MARK ANTONY**

Eros, thou yet behold'st me?

**EROS**

Ay, noble lord.

**MARK ANTONY**

Sometimes we see a cloud that's dragonish;  
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,  
A tower'd citadel, a pendent rock,  
A forked mountain, or blue promontory  
With trees upon't, that nod unto the world,  
And mock our eyes with air: thou hast seen  
these signs;  
They are black vesper's pageants.

**EROS**

Ay, my lord,

**MARK ANTONY**

That which is now a horse, even with a thought  
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct,  
As water is in water.

**EROS**

It does, my lord.

## MARK ANTONY

My good knave Eros, now thy captain is  
Even such a body: here I am Antony:  
Yet cannot hold this visible shape, my knave.  
I made these wars for Egypt: and the queen,--  
Whose heart I thought I had, for she had mine;  
Which whilst it was mine had annex'd unto't  
A million more, now lost,--she, Eros, has  
Pack'd cards with Caesar, and false-play'd my glory  
Unto an enemy's triumph.  
Nay, weep not, gentle Eros; there is left us  
Ourselves to end ourselves.

*Enter MARDIAN*

O! thy vile lady!  
She has robb'd me of my sword.

## MARDIAN

No, Antony;  
My mistress loved thee, and her fortunes mingled  
With thine entirely.

## MARK ANTONY

Hence, saucy eunuch; peace!  
She hath betray'd me and shall die the death.

## MARDIAN

Death of one person can be paid but once,  
And that she has discharged: what thou wouldst do  
Is done unto thy hand: the last she spake  
Was 'Antony! most noble Antony!'  
Then in the midst a tearing groan did break  
The name of Antony; it was divided  
Between her heart and lips: she render'd life,  
Thy name so buried in her.

## MARK ANTONY

Dead, then?

**MARDIAN**

Dead.

**MARK ANTONY**

Unarm, Eros; the long day's task is done,  
And we must sleep.

*To MARDIAN*

That thou depart'st hence safe,  
Does pay thy labour richly; go.

*Exit MARDIAN*

Off, pluck off:  
The seven-fold shield of Ajax cannot keep  
The battery from my heart. O, cleave, my sides!  
Heart, once be stronger than thy continent,  
Crack thy frail case! Apace, Eros, apace.  
No more a soldier: bruised pieces, go;  
You have been nobly borne. From me awhile.

*Exit EROS*

I will o'ertake thee, Cleopatra, and  
Weep for my pardon. So it must be, for now  
All length is torture: since the torch is out,  
Lie down, and stray no farther: now all labour  
Mars what it does; yea, very force entangles  
Itself with strength: seal then, and all is done.  
Eros!--I come, my queen!--Eros!--Stay for me:  
Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,  
And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:  
Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,  
And all the haunt be ours. Come, Eros, Eros!

*Re-enter EROS*

## **EROS**

What would my lord?

## **MARK ANTONY**

Since Cleopatra died,  
I have lived in such dishonour, that the gods  
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword  
Quarter'd the world, and o'er green Neptune's back  
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack  
The courage of a woman; less noble mind  
Than she which by her death our Caesar tells  
'I am conqueror of myself.' Thou art sworn, Eros,  
That, when the exigent should come, which now  
Is come indeed, when I should see behind me  
The inevitable prosecution of  
Disgrace and horror, that, on my command,  
Thou then wouldst kill me: do't; the time is come:  
Thou strikest not me, 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st.  
Put colour in thy cheek.

## **EROS**

The gods withhold me!  
Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,  
Though enemy, lost aim, and could not?

## **MARK ANTONY**

Eros,  
Wouldst thou be window'd in great Rome and see  
Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down  
His corrigible neck, his face subdued  
To penetrative shame, whilst the wheel'd seat  
Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded  
His baseness that ensued?

## **EROS**

I would not see't.



**MARK ANTONY**

Come, then; for with a wound I must be cured.  
Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn  
Most useful for thy country.

**EROS**

O, sir, pardon me!

**MARK ANTONY**

When I did make thee free, swore'st thou not then  
To do this when I bade thee? Do it at once;  
Or thy precedent services are all  
But accidents unpurposed. Draw, and come.

**EROS**

Turn from me, then, that noble countenance,  
Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.

**MARK ANTONY**

Lo thee!

*Turning from him*

**EROS**

My sword is drawn.

**MARK ANTONY**

Then let it do at once  
The thing why thou hast drawn it.

**EROS**

My dear master,

My captain, and my emperor, let me say,  
Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.

**MARK ANTONY**

'Tis said, man; and farewell.

**EROS**

Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?

**MARK ANTONY**

Now, Eros.

**EROS**

Why, there then: thus I do escape the sorrow  
Of Antony's death.

*Kills himself*

**MARK ANTONY**

Thrice-nobler than myself!  
Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what  
I should, and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros  
Have by their brave instruction got upon me  
A nobleness in record: but I will be  
A bridegroom in my death, and run into't  
As to a lover's bed. Come, then; and, Eros,  
Thy master dies thy scholar: to do thus

*Falling on his sword*

I learn'd of thee. How! not dead? not dead?  
The guard, ho! O, dispatch me!

*Enter DERCEITAS and Guard*

**First Guard**

What's the noise?

**MARK ANTONY**

I have done my work in, friends: O, make an end  
Of what I have begun.

**Second Guard**

The star is fall'n.

**First Guard**

And time is at his period.

**All**

Alas, and woe!

**MARK ANTONY**

Let him that loves me strike me dead.

**First Guard**

Not I.

**Second Guard**

Nor I.

**Third Guard**

Nor any one.

*Exeunt Guard*

**DERCETAS**

Thy death and fortunes bid thy followers fly.

This sword but shown to Caesar, with this tidings,  
Shall enter me with him.

*Enter DIOMEDES*

**DIOMEDES**

Where's Antony?

**DERCETAS**

There, Diomed there.

**DIOMEDES**

Lives he?

Wilt thou not answer, man?

*Exit DERCETAS*

**MARK ANTONY**

Art thou there, Diomed? Draw thy sword, and give me  
Sufficing strokes for death.

**DIOMEDES**

Most absolute lord,  
My mistress Cleopatra sent me to thee.

**MARK ANTONY**

When did she send thee?

**DIOMEDES**

Now, my lord.

**MARK ANTONY**

Where is she?

## **DIOMEDES**

Lock'd in her monument. She had a prophesying fear  
Of what hath come to pass: for when she saw--  
Which never shall be found--you did suspect  
She had disposed with Caesar, and that your rage  
Would not be purged, she sent you word she was dead;  
But, fearing since how it might work, hath sent  
Me to proclaim the truth; and I am come,  
I dread, too late.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Too late, good Diomed: call my guard, I prithee.

## **DIOMEDES**

What, ho, the emperor's guard! The guard, what, ho!  
Come, your lord calls!

*Enter four or five of the Guard of MARK ANTONY*

## **MARK ANTONY**

Bear me, good friends, where Cleopatra bides;  
'Tis the last service that I shall command you.

## **First Guard**

Woe, woe are we, sir, you may not live to wear  
All your true followers out.

## **All**

Most heavy day!

## **MARK ANTONY**

Nay, good my fellows, do not please sharp fate  
To grace it with your sorrows: bid that welcome

Which comes to punish us, and we punish it  
Seeming to bear it lightly. Take me up:  
I have led you oft: carry me now, good friends,  
And have my thanks for all.

*Exeunt, bearing MARK ANTONY*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 14  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 15

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE XV. The same. A monument.

*Enter CLEOPATRA and her maids aloft, with CHARMIAN and IRAS*

**CLEOPATRA**

O Charmian, I will never go from hence.

**CHARMIAN**

Be comforted, dear madam.

**CLEOPATRA**

No, I will not:  
All strange and terrible events are welcome,  
But comforts we despise; our size of sorrow,  
Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great  
As that which makes it.

*Enter, below, DIOMEDES*

How now! is he dead?

**DIOMEDES**

His death's upon him, but not dead.  
Look out o' the other side your monument;  
His guard have brought him thither.

*Enter, below, MARK ANTONY, borne by the Guard*

**CLEOPATRA**

O sun,  
Burn the great sphere thou movest in!

darkling stand  
The varying shore o' the world. O Antony,  
Antony, Antony! Help, Charmian, help, Iras, help;  
Help, friends below; let's draw him hither.

## **MARK ANTONY**

Peace!  
Not Caesar's valour hath o'erthrown Antony,  
But Antony's hath triumph'd on itself.

## **CLEOPATRA**

So it should be, that none but Antony  
Should conquer Antony; but woe 'tis so!

## **MARK ANTONY**

I am dying, Egypt, dying; only  
I here importune death awhile, until  
Of many thousand kisses the poor last  
I lay up thy lips.

## **CLEOPATRA**

I dare not, dear,--  
Dear my lord, pardon,--I dare not,  
Lest I be taken: not the imperious show  
Of the full-fortuned Caesar ever shall  
Be brooch'd with me; if knife, drugs,  
serpents, have  
Edge, sting, or operation, I am safe:  
Your wife Octavia, with her modest eyes  
And still conclusion, shall acquire no honour  
Demuring upon me. But come, come, Antony,--  
Help me, my women,--we must draw thee up:  
Assist, good friends.

## **MARK ANTONY**

O, quick, or I am gone.



## CLEOPATRA

Here's sport indeed! How heavy weighs my lord!  
Our strength is all gone into heaviness,  
That makes the weight: had I great Juno's power,  
The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up,  
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little,--  
Wishes were ever fools,--O, come, come, come;

*They heave MARK ANTONY aloft to CLEOPATRA*

And welcome, welcome! die where thou hast lived:  
Quicken with kissing: had my lips that power,  
Thus would I wear them out.

## All

A heavy sight!

## MARK ANTONY

I am dying, Egypt, dying:  
Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.

## CLEOPATRA

No, let me speak; and let me rail so high,  
That the false housewife Fortune break her wheel,  
Provoked by my offence.

## MARK ANTONY

One word, sweet queen:  
Of Caesar seek your honour, with your safety. O!

## CLEOPATRA

They do not go together.

## MARK ANTONY

Gentle, hear me:  
None about Caesar trust but Proculeius.

## CLEOPATRA

My resolution and my hands I'll trust;  
None about Caesar.

## MARK ANTONY

The miserable change now at my end  
Lament nor sorrow at; but please your thoughts  
In feeding them with those my former fortunes  
Wherein I lived, the greatest prince o' the world,  
The noblest; and do now not basely die,  
Not cowardly put off my helmet to  
My countryman,--a Roman by a Roman  
Valiantly vanquish'd. Now my spirit is going;  
I can no more.

## CLEOPATRA

Noblest of men, woo't die?  
Hast thou no care of me? shall I abide  
In this dull world, which in thy absence is  
No better than a sty? O, see, my women,

*MARK ANTONY dies*

The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!  
O, wither'd is the garland of the war,  
The soldier's pole is fall'n: young boys and girls  
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,  
And there is nothing left remarkable  
Beneath the visiting moon.

*Faints*

## CHARMIAN

O, quietness, lady!

**IRAS**

She is dead too, our sovereign.

**CHARMIAN**

Lady!

**IRAS**

Madam!

**CHARMIAN**

O madam, madam, madam!

**IRAS**

Royal Egypt, Empress!

**CHARMIAN**

Peace, peace, Iras!

**CLEOPATRA**

No more, but e'en a woman, and commanded  
By such poor passion as the maid that milks  
And does the meanest chares. It were for me  
To throw my sceptre at the injurious gods;  
To tell them that this world did equal theirs  
Till they had stol'n our jewel. All's but naught;  
Patience is scottish, and impatience does  
Become a dog that's mad: then is it sin  
To rush into the secret house of death,  
Ere death dare come to us? How do you, women?  
What, what! good cheer! Why, how now, Charmian!  
My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look,  
Our lamp is spent, it's out! Good sirs, take heart:  
We'll bury him; and then, what's brave,  
what's noble,

Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,  
And make death proud to take us. Come, away:  
This case of that huge spirit now is cold:  
Ah, women, women! come; we have no friend  
But resolution, and the briefest end.

*Exeunt; those above bearing off MARK ANTONY's body*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 4, Scene 15  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Alexandria. OCTAVIUS CAESAR's camp.

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, AGRIPPA, DOLABELLA, MECAENAS, GALLUS, PROCULEIUS, and others, his council of war*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Go to him, Dolabella, bid him yield;  
Being so frustrate, tell him he mocks  
The pauses that he makes.

### DOLABELLA

Caesar, I shall.

*Exit*

*Enter DER CETAS, with the sword of MARK ANTONY*

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

Wherefore is that? and what art thou that darest  
Appear thus to us?

### DER CETAS

I am call'd Dercetas;  
Mark Antony I served, who best was worthy  
Best to be served: whilst he stood up and spoke,  
He was my master; and I wore my life  
To spend upon his haters. If thou please  
To take me to thee, as I was to him  
I'll be to Caesar; if thou pleasest not,  
I yield thee up my life.

### OCTAVIUS CAESAR

What is't thou say'st?

**DERCETAS**

I say, O Caesar, Antony is dead.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

The breaking of so great a thing should make  
A greater crack: the round world  
Should have shook lions into civil streets,  
And citizens to their dens: the death of Antony  
Is not a single doom; in the name lay  
A moiety of the world.

**DERCETAS**

He is dead, Caesar:  
Not by a public minister of justice,  
Nor by a hired knife; but that self hand,  
Which writ his honour in the acts it did,  
Hath, with the courage which the heart did lend it,  
Splitted the heart. This is his sword;  
I robb'd his wound of it; behold it stain'd  
With his most noble blood.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Look you sad, friends?  
The gods rebuke me, but it is tidings  
To wash the eyes of kings.

**AGRIPPA**

And strange it is,  
That nature must compel us to lament  
Our most persisted deeds.

**MECAENAS**

His taints and honours

Waged equal with him.

## **AGRIPPA**

A rarer spirit never  
Did steer humanity: but you, gods, will give us  
Some faults to make us men. Caesar is touch'd.

## **MECAENAS**

When such a spacious mirror's set before him,  
He needs must see himself.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

O Antony!  
I have follow'd thee to this; but we do lance  
Diseases in our bodies: I must perforce  
Have shown to thee such a declining day,  
Or look on thine; we could not stall together  
In the whole world: but yet let me lament,  
With tears as sovereign as the blood of hearts,  
That thou, my brother, my competitor  
In top of all design, my mate in empire,  
Friend and companion in the front of war,  
The arm of mine own body, and the heart  
Where mine his thoughts did kindle,--that our stars,  
Unreconcilable, should divide  
Our equalness to this. Hear me, good friends--  
But I will tell you at some meeter season:

*Enter an Egyptian*

The business of this man looks out of him;  
We'll hear him what he says. Whence are you?

## **Egyptian**

A poor Egyptian yet. The queen my mistress,  
Confined in all she has, her monument,  
Of thy intents desires instruction,  
That she preparedly may frame herself

To the way she's forced to.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Bid her have good heart:  
She soon shall know of us, by some of ours,  
How honourable and how kindly we  
Determine for her; for Caesar cannot live  
To be ungentle.

## **Egyptian**

So the gods preserve thee!

*Exit*

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Come hither, Proculeius. Go and say,  
We purpose her no shame: give her what comforts  
The quality of her passion shall require,  
Lest, in her greatness, by some mortal stroke  
She do defeat us; for her life in Rome  
Would be eternal in our triumph: go,  
And with your speediest bring us what she says,  
And how you find of her.

## **PROCULEIUS**

Caesar, I shall.

*Exit*

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Gallus, go you along.

*Exit GALLUS*

Where's Dolabella,  
To second Proculeius?



**All**

Dolabella!

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Let him alone, for I remember now  
How he's employ'd: he shall in time be ready.  
Go with me to my tent; where you shall see  
How hardly I was drawn into this war;  
How calm and gentle I proceeded still  
In all my writings: go with me, and see  
What I can show in this.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Antony and Cleopatra

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Antony and Cleopatra](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE II. Alexandria. A room in the monument.

*Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN, and IRAS*

### CLEOPATRA

My desolation does begin to make  
A better life. 'Tis paltry to be Caesar;  
Not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave,  
A minister of her will: and it is great  
To do that thing that ends all other deeds;  
Which shackles accidents and bolts up change;  
Which sleeps, and never palates more the dug,  
The beggar's nurse and Caesar's.

*Enter, to the gates of the monument, PROCULEIUS, GALLUS and Soldiers*

### PROCULEIUS

Caesar sends greeting to the Queen of Egypt;  
And bids thee study on what fair demands  
Thou mean'st to have him grant thee.

### CLEOPATRA

What's thy name?

### PROCULEIUS

My name is Proculeius.

### CLEOPATRA

Antony  
Did tell me of you, bade me trust you; but  
I do not greatly care to be deceived,

That have no use for trusting. If your master  
Would have a queen his beggar, you must tell him,  
That majesty, to keep decorum, must  
No less beg than a kingdom: if he please  
To give me conquer'd Egypt for my son,  
He gives me so much of mine own, as I  
Will kneel to him with thanks.

## **PROCULEIUS**

Be of good cheer;  
You're fall'n into a princely hand, fear nothing:  
Make your full reference freely to my lord,  
Who is so full of grace, that it flows over  
On all that need: let me report to him  
Your sweet dependency; and you shall find  
A conqueror that will pray in aid for kindness,  
Where he for grace is kneel'd to.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Pray you, tell him  
I am his fortune's vassal, and I send him  
The greatness he has got. I hourly learn  
A doctrine of obedience; and would gladly  
Look him i' the face.

## **PROCULEIUS**

This I'll report, dear lady.  
Have comfort, for I know your plight is pitied  
Of him that caused it.

## **GALLUS**

You see how easily she may be surprised:

*Here PROCULEIUS and two of the Guard ascend the monument by a ladder placed against a window, and, having descended, come behind CLEOPATRA. Some of the Guard unbar and open the gates*

*To PROCULEIUS and the Guard*

Guard her till Caesar come.

*Exit*

**IRAS**

Royal queen!

**CHARMIAN**

O Cleopatra! thou art taken, queen:

**CLEOPATRA**

Quick, quick, good hands.

*Drawing a dagger*

**PROCULEIUS**

Hold, worthy lady, hold:

*Seizes and disarms her*

Do not yourself such wrong, who are in this  
Relieved, but not betray'd.

**CLEOPATRA**

What, of death too,  
That rids our dogs of languish?

**PROCULEIUS**

Cleopatra,  
Do not abuse my master's bounty by  
The undoing of yourself: let the world see  
His nobleness well acted, which your death  
Will never let come forth.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Where art thou, death?  
Come hither, come! come, come, and take a queen  
Worthy many babes and beggars!

## **PROCULEIUS**

O, temperance, lady!

## **CLEOPATRA**

Sir, I will eat no meat, I'll not drink, sir;  
If idle talk will once be necessary,  
I'll not sleep neither: this mortal house I'll ruin,  
Do Caesar what he can. Know, sir, that I  
Will not wait pinion'd at your master's court;  
Nor once be chastised with the sober eye  
Of dull Octavia. Shall they hoist me up  
And show me to the shouting varletry  
Of censuring Rome? Rather a ditch in Egypt  
Be gentle grave unto me! rather on Nilus' mud  
Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies  
Blow me into abhorring! rather make  
My country's high pyramides my gibbet,  
And hang me up in chains!

## **PROCULEIUS**

You do extend  
These thoughts of horror further than you shall  
Find cause in Caesar.

*Enter DOLABELLA*

## **DOLABELLA**

Proculeius,  
What thou hast done thy master Caesar knows,  
And he hath sent for thee: for the queen,  
I'll take her to my guard.

## **PROCULEIUS**

So, Dolabella,  
It shall content me best: be gentle to her.

*To CLEOPATRA*

To Caesar I will speak what you shall please,  
If you'll employ me to him.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Say, I would die.

*Exeunt PROCULEIUS and Soldiers*

## **DOLABELLA**

Most noble empress, you have heard of me?

## **CLEOPATRA**

I cannot tell.

## **DOLABELLA**

Assuredly you know me.

## **CLEOPATRA**

No matter, sir, what I have heard or known.  
You laugh when boys or women tell their dreams;  
Is't not your trick?

## **DOLABELLA**

I understand not, madam.

## **CLEOPATRA**

I dream'd there was an Emperor Antony:

O, such another sleep, that I might see  
But such another man!

**DOLABELLA**

If it might please ye,--

**CLEOPATRA**

His face was as the heavens; and therein stuck  
A sun and moon, which kept their course,  
and lighted  
The little O, the earth.

**DOLABELLA**

Most sovereign creature,--

**CLEOPATRA**

His legs bestrid the ocean: his rear'd arm  
Crested the world: his voice was propertied  
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;  
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,  
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,  
There was no winter in't; an autumn 'twas  
That grew the more by reaping: his delights  
Were dolphin-like; they show'd his back above  
The element they lived in: in his livery  
Walk'd crowns and crownets; realms and islands were  
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

**DOLABELLA**

Cleopatra!

**CLEOPATRA**

Think you there was, or might be, such a man  
As this I dream'd of?

**DOLABELLA**

Gentle madam, no.

**CLEOPATRA**

You lie, up to the hearing of the gods.  
But, if there be, or ever were, one such,  
It's past the size of dreaming: nature wants stuff  
To vie strange forms with fancy; yet, to imagine  
And Antony, were nature's piece 'gainst fancy,  
Condemning shadows quite.

**DOLABELLA**

Hear me, good madam.  
Your loss is as yourself, great; and you bear it  
As answering to the weight: would I might never  
O'ertake pursued success, but I do feel,  
By the rebound of yours, a grief that smites  
My very heart at root.

**CLEOPATRA**

I thank you, sir,  
Know you what Caesar means to do with me?

**DOLABELLA**

I am loath to tell you what I would you knew.

**CLEOPATRA**

Nay, pray you, sir,--

**DOLABELLA**

Though he be honourable,--

**CLEOPATRA**



He'll lead me, then, in triumph?

**DOLABELLA**

Madam, he will; I know't.

*Flourish, and shout within, 'Make way there: Octavius Caesar!'*

*Enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR, GALLUS, PROCULEIUS, MECAENAS, SELEUCUS, and others of his Train*

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Which is the Queen of Egypt?

**DOLABELLA**

It is the emperor, madam.

*CLEOPATRA kneels*

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Arise, you shall not kneel:  
I pray you, rise; rise, Egypt.

**CLEOPATRA**

Sir, the gods  
Will have it thus; my master and my lord  
I must obey.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Take to you no hard thoughts:  
The record of what injuries you did us,  
Though written in our flesh, we shall remember  
As things but done by chance.

**CLEOPATRA**

Sole sir o' the world,  
I cannot project mine own cause so well  
To make it clear; but do confess I have  
Been laden with like frailties which before  
Have often shamed our sex.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Cleopatra, know,  
We will extenuate rather than enforce:  
If you apply yourself to our intents,  
Which towards you are most gentle, you shall find  
A benefit in this change; but if you seek  
To lay on me a cruelty, by taking  
Antony's course, you shall bereave yourself  
Of my good purposes, and put your children  
To that destruction which I'll guard them from,  
If thereon you rely. I'll take my leave.

## **CLEOPATRA**

And may, through all the world: 'tis yours; and we,  
Your scutcheons and your signs of conquest, shall  
Hang in what place you please. Here, my good lord.

## **OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

You shall advise me in all for Cleopatra.

## **CLEOPATRA**

This is the brief of money, plate, and jewels,  
I am possess'd of: 'tis exactly valued;  
Not petty things admitted. Where's Seleucus?

## **SELEUCUS**

Here, madam.

## **CLEOPATRA**

This is my treasurer: let him speak, my lord,

Upon his peril, that I have reserved  
To myself nothing. Speak the truth, Seleucus.

**SELEUCUS**

Madam,  
I had rather seal my lips, than, to my peril,  
Speak that which is not.

**CLEOPATRA**

What have I kept back?

**SELEUCUS**

Enough to purchase what you have made known.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Nay, blush not, Cleopatra; I approve  
Your wisdom in the deed.

**CLEOPATRA**

See, Caesar! O, behold,  
How pomp is follow'd! mine will now be yours;  
And, should we shift estates, yours would be mine.  
The ingratitude of this Seleucus does  
Even make me wild: O slave, of no more trust  
Than love that's hired! What, goest thou back? thou shalt  
Go back, I warrant thee; but I'll catch thine eyes,  
Though they had wings: slave, soulless villain, dog!  
O rarely base!

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Good queen, let us entreat you.

**CLEOPATRA**

O Caesar, what a wounding shame is this,

That thou, vouchsafing here to visit me,  
Doing the honour of thy lordliness  
To one so meek, that mine own servant should  
Parcel the sum of my disgraces by  
Addition of his envy! Say, good Caesar,  
That I some lady trifles have reserved,  
Immoment toys, things of such dignity  
As we greet modern friends withal; and say,  
Some nobler token I have kept apart  
For Livia and Octavia, to induce  
Their mediation; must I be unfolded  
With one that I have bred? The gods! it smites me  
Beneath the fall I have.

*To SELEUCUS*

Prithee, go hence;  
Or I shall show the cinders of my spirits  
Through the ashes of my chance: wert thou a man,  
Thou wouldst have mercy on me.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Forbear, Seleucus.

*Exit SELEUCUS*

**CLEOPATRA**

Be it known, that we, the greatest, are misthought  
For things that others do; and, when we fall,  
We answer others' merits in our name,  
Are therefore to be pitied.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Cleopatra,  
Not what you have reserved, nor what acknowledged,  
Put we i' the roll of conquest: still be't yours,  
Bestow it at your pleasure; and believe,  
Caesar's no merchant, to make prize with you  
Of things that merchants sold. Therefore be cheer'd;

Make not your thoughts your prisons: no, dear queen;  
For we intend so to dispose you as  
Yourself shall give us counsel. Feed, and sleep:  
Our care and pity is so much upon you,  
That we remain your friend; and so, adieu.

**CLEOPATRA**

My master, and my lord!

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Not so. Adieu.

*Flourish. Exeunt OCTAVIUS CAESAR and his train*

**CLEOPATRA**

He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not  
Be noble to myself: but, hark thee, Charmian.

*Whispers CHARMIAN*

**IRAS**

Finish, good lady; the bright day is done,  
And we are for the dark.

**CLEOPATRA**

Hie thee again:  
I have spoke already, and it is provided;  
Go put it to the haste.

**CHARMIAN**

Madam, I will.

*Re-enter DOLABELLA*

**DOLABELLA**

Where is the queen?

**CHARMIAN**

Behold, sir.

*Exit*

**CLEOPATRA**

Dolabella!

**DOLABELLA**

Madam, as thereto sworn by your command,  
Which my love makes religion to obey,  
I tell you this: Caesar through Syria  
Intends his journey; and within three days  
You with your children will he send before:  
Make your best use of this: I have perform'd  
Your pleasure and my promise.

**CLEOPATRA**

Dolabella,  
I shall remain your debtor.

**DOLABELLA**

I your servant,  
Adieu, good queen; I must attend on Caesar.

**CLEOPATRA**

Farewell, and thanks.

*Exit DOLABELLA*

Now, Iras, what think'st thou?  
Thou, an Egyptian puppet, shalt be shown

In Rome, as well as I mechanic slaves  
With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers, shall  
Uplift us to the view; in their thick breaths,  
Rank of gross diet, shall be enclouded,  
And forced to drink their vapour.

**IRAS**

The gods forbid!

**CLEOPATRA**

Nay, 'tis most certain, Iras: saucy lictors  
Will catch at us, like strumpets; and scald rhymers  
Ballad us out o' tune: the quick comedians  
Extemporally will stage us, and present  
Our Alexandrian revels; Antony  
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see  
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness  
I' the posture of a whore.

**IRAS**

O the good gods!

**CLEOPATRA**

Nay, that's certain.

**IRAS**

I'll never see 't; for, I am sure, my nails  
Are stronger than mine eyes.

**CLEOPATRA**

Why, that's the way  
To fool their preparation, and to conquer  
Their most absurd intents.

*Re-enter CHARMIAN*

Now, Charmian!  
Show me, my women, like a queen: go fetch  
My best attires: I am again for Cydnus,  
To meet Mark Antony: sirrah Iras, go.  
Now, noble Charmian, we'll dispatch indeed;  
And, when thou hast done this chare, I'll give thee leave  
To play till doomsday. Bring our crown and all.  
Wherefore's this noise?

*Exit IRAS. A noise within*

*Enter a Guardsman*

## **Guard**

Here is a rural fellow  
That will not be denied your highness presence:  
He brings you figs.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Let him come in.

*Exit Guardsman*

What poor an instrument  
May do a noble deed! he brings me liberty.  
My resolution's placed, and I have nothing  
Of woman in me: now from head to foot  
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon  
No planet is of mine.

*Re-enter Guardsman, with Clown bringing in a basket*

## **Guard**

This is the man.

## **CLEOPATRA**

Avoid, and leave him.



*Exit Guardsman*

Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,  
That kills and pains not?

**Clown**

Truly, I have him: but I would not be the party  
that should desire you to touch him, for his biting  
is immortal; those that do die of it do seldom or  
never recover.

**CLEOPATRA**

Rememberest thou any that have died on't?

**Clown**

Very many, men and women too. I heard of one of  
them no longer than yesterday: a very honest woman,  
but something given to lie; as a woman should not  
do, but in the way of honesty: how she died of the  
biting of it, what pain she felt: truly, she makes  
a very good report o' the worm; but he that will  
believe all that they say, shall never be saved by  
half that they do: but this is most fallible, the  
worm's an odd worm.

**CLEOPATRA**

Get thee hence; farewell.

**Clown**

I wish you all joy of the worm.

*Setting down his basket*

**CLEOPATRA**

Farewell.

**Clown**

You must think this, look you, that the worm will do his kind.

**CLEOPATRA**

Ay, ay; farewell.

**Clown**

Look you, the worm is not to be trusted but in the keeping of wise people; for, indeed, there is no goodness in worm.

**CLEOPATRA**

Take thou no care; it shall be heeded.

**Clown**

Very good. Give it nothing, I pray you, for it is not worth the feeding.

**CLEOPATRA**

Will it eat me?

**Clown**

You must not think I am so simple but I know the devil himself will not eat a woman: I know that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the devil dress her not. But, truly, these same whoreson devils do the gods great harm in their women; for in every ten that they make, the devils mar five.

**CLEOPATRA**

Well, get thee gone; farewell.

## Clown

Yes, forsooth: I wish you joy o' the worm.

*Exit*

*Re-enter IRAS with a robe, crown, & c*

## CLEOPATRA

Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have  
Immortal longings in me: now no more  
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip:  
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear  
Antony call; I see him rouse himself  
To praise my noble act; I hear him mock  
The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men  
To excuse their after wrath: husband, I come:  
Now to that name my courage prove my title!  
I am fire and air; my other elements  
I give to baser life. So; have you done?  
Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.  
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell.

*Kisses them. IRAS falls and dies*

Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?  
If thou and nature can so gently part,  
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,  
Which hurts, and is desired. Dost thou lie still?  
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world  
It is not worth leave-taking.

## CHARMIAN

Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain; that I may say,  
The gods themselves do weep!

## CLEOPATRA

This proves me base:

If she first meet the curled Antony,  
He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss  
Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou  
mortal wretch,

*To an asp, which she applies to her breast*

With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate  
Of life at once untie: poor venomous fool  
Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,  
That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass  
Unpolicied!

**CHARMIAN**

O eastern star!

**CLEOPATRA**

Peace, peace!  
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,  
That sucks the nurse asleep?

**CHARMIAN**

O, break! O, break!

**CLEOPATRA**

As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,--  
O Antony!--Nay, I will take thee too.

*Applying another asp to her arm*

What should I stay--

*Dies*

**CHARMIAN**

In this vile world? So, fare thee well.

Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies  
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;  
And golden Phoebus never be beheld  
Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;  
I'll mend it, and then play.

*Enter the Guard, rushing in*

**First Guard**

Where is the queen?

**CHARMIAN**

Speak softly, wake her not.

**First Guard**

Caesar hath sent--

**CHARMIAN**

Too slow a messenger.

*Applies an asp*

O, come apace, dispatch! I partly feel thee.

**First Guard**

Approach, ho! All's not well: Caesar's beguiled.

**Second Guard**

There's Dolabella sent from Caesar; call him.

**First Guard**

What work is here! Charmian, is this well done?

**CHARMIAN**

It is well done, and fitting for a princess  
Descended of so many royal kings.  
Ah, soldier!

*Dies*

*Re-enter DOLABELLA*

**DOLABELLA**

How goes it here?

**Second Guard**

All dead.

**DOLABELLA**

Caesar, thy thoughts  
Touch their effects in this: thyself art coming  
To see perform'd the dreaded act which thou  
So sought'st to hinder.

*Within 'A way there, a way for Caesar!'*

*Re-enter OCTAVIUS CAESAR and all his train marching*

**DOLABELLA**

O sir, you are too sure an augurer;  
That you did fear is done.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Bravest at the last,  
She levell'd at our purposes, and, being royal,  
Took her own way. The manner of their deaths?  
I do not see them bleed.

**DOLABELLA**

Who was last with them?

**First Guard**

A simple countryman, that brought her figs:  
This was his basket.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Poison'd, then.

**First Guard**

O Caesar,  
This Charmian lived but now; she stood and spake:  
I found her trimming up the diadem  
On her dead mistress; tremblingly she stood  
And on the sudden dropp'd.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

O noble weakness!  
If they had swallow'd poison, 'twould appear  
By external swelling: but she looks like sleep,  
As she would catch another Antony  
In her strong toil of grace.

**DOLABELLA**

Here, on her breast,  
There is a vent of blood and something blown:  
The like is on her arm.

**First Guard**

This is an asp's trail: and these fig-leaves  
Have slime upon them, such as the asp's leaves  
Upon the caves of Nile.

**OCTAVIUS CAESAR**

Most probable  
That so she died; for her physician tells me  
She hath pursued conclusions infinite  
Of easy ways to die. Take up her bed;  
And bear her women from the monument:  
She shall be buried by her Antony:  
No grave upon the earth shall clip in it  
A pair so famous. High events as these  
Strike those that make them; and their story is  
No less in pity than his glory which  
Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall  
In solemn show attend this funeral;  
And then to Rome. Come, Dolabella, see  
High order in this great solemnity.

*Exeunt*



# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Coriolanus

[Entire play](#) in one page

- Act 1, Scene 1: [Rome. A street.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 2: [Corioli. The Senate-house.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 3: [Rome. A room in Marcius' house.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 4: [Before Corioli.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 5: [Corioli. A street.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 6: [Near the camp of Cominius.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 7: [The gates of Corioli.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 8: [A field of battle.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 9: [The Roman camp.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 10: [The camp of the Volsces.](#)
- 
- Act 2, Scene 1: [Rome. A public place.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 2: [The same. The Capitol.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 3: [The same. The Forum.](#)
- 
- Act 3, Scene 1: [Rome. A street.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 2: [A room in CORIOLANUS'S house.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 3: [The same. The Forum.](#)
- 
- Act 4, Scene 1: [Rome. Before a gate of the city.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 2: [The same. A street near the gate.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 3: [A highway between Rome and Antium.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 4: [Antium. Before Aufidius's house.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 5: [The same. A hall in Aufidius's house.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 6: [Rome. A public place.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 7: [A camp, at a small distance from Rome.](#)
- 
- Act 5, Scene 1: [Rome. A public place.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 2: [Entrance of the Volscian camp before Rome.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 3: [The tent of Coriolanus.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 4: [Rome. A public place.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 5: [The same. A street near the gate.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 6: [Antium. A public place.](#)



# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. A street.

*Enter a company of mutinous Citizens, with staves, clubs, and other weapons*

**First Citizen**

Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

**All**

Speak, speak.

**First Citizen**

You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?

**All**

Resolved. resolved.

**First Citizen**

First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

**All**

We know't, we know't.

**First Citizen**

Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price.  
Is't a verdict?

**All**

No more talking on't; let it be done: away, away!

**Second Citizen**

One word, good citizens.

**First Citizen**

We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us: if they would yield us but the superfluity, while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear: the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularise their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes: for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge.

**Second Citizen**

Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius?

**All**

Against him first: he's a very dog to the commonalty.

**Second Citizen**

Consider you what services he has done for his country?

**First Citizen**

Very well; and could be content to give him good report fort, but that he pays himself with being proud.

**Second Citizen**

Nay, but speak not maliciously.

**First Citizen**

I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end: though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country he did it to please his mother and to be partly proud; which he is, even till the altitude of his virtue.

## **Second Citizen**

What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.

## **First Citizen**

If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition.

*Shouts within*

What shouts are these? The other side o' the city is risen: why stay we prating here? to the Capitol!

## **All**

Come, come.

## **First Citizen**

Soft! who comes here?

*Enter MENENIUS AGRIPPA*

## **Second Citizen**

Worthy Menenius Agrippa; one that hath always loved the people.

## **First Citizen**

He's one honest enough: would all the rest were so!

## **MENENIUS**

What work's, my countrymen, in hand? where go you  
With bats and clubs? The matter? speak, I pray you.

## **First Citizen**

Our business is not unknown to the senate; they have  
had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do,  
which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say poor  
suitors have strong breaths: they shall know we  
have strong arms too.

## **MENENIUS**

Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours,  
Will you undo yourselves?

## **First Citizen**

We cannot, sir, we are undone already.

## **MENENIUS**

I tell you, friends, most charitable care  
Have the patricians of you. For your wants,  
Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well  
Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift them  
Against the Roman state, whose course will on  
The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs  
Of more strong link asunder than can ever  
Appear in your impediment. For the dearth,  
The gods, not the patricians, make it, and  
Your knees to them, not arms, must help. Alack,  
You are transported by calamity  
Thither where more attends you, and you slander  
The helms o' the state, who care for you like fathers,  
When you curse them as enemies.

## **First Citizen**

Care for us! True, indeed! They ne'er cared for us

yet: suffer us to famish, and their store-houses  
crammed with grain; make edicts for usury, to  
support usurers; repeal daily any wholesome act  
established against the rich, and provide more  
piercing statutes daily, to chain up and restrain  
the poor. If the wars eat us not up, they will; and  
there's all the love they bear us.

## **MENENIUS**

Either you must  
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,  
Or be accused of folly. I shall tell you  
A pretty tale: it may be you have heard it;  
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture  
To stale 't a little more.

## **First Citizen**

Well, I'll hear it, sir: yet you must not think to  
fob off our disgrace with a tale: but, an 't please  
you, deliver.

## **MENENIUS**

There was a time when all the body's members  
Rebell'd against the belly, thus accused it:  
That only like a gulf it did remain  
I' the midst o' the body, idle and unactive,  
Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing  
Like labour with the rest, where the other instruments  
Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel,  
And, mutually participate, did minister  
Unto the appetite and affection common  
Of the whole body. The belly answer'd--

## **First Citizen**

Well, sir, what answer made the belly?

## **MENENIUS**

Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile,  
Which ne'er came from the lungs, but even thus--  
For, look you, I may make the belly smile  
As well as speak--it tauntingly replied  
To the discontented members, the mutinous parts  
That envied his receipt; even so most fitly  
As you malign our senators for that  
They are not such as you.

**First Citizen**

Your belly's answer? What!  
The kingly-crowned head, the vigilant eye,  
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier,  
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter.  
With other muniments and petty helps  
In this our fabric, if that they--

**MENENIUS**

What then?  
'Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? what then?

**First Citizen**

Should by the cormorant belly be restrain'd,  
Who is the sink o' the body,--

**MENENIUS**

Well, what then?

**First Citizen**

The former agents, if they did complain,  
What could the belly answer?

**MENENIUS**

I will tell you  
If you'll bestow a small--of what you have little--  
Patience awhile, you'll hear the belly's answer.



**First Citizen**

Ye're long about it.

**MENENIUS**

Note me this, good friend;  
Your most grave belly was deliberate,  
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answer'd:  
'True is it, my incorporate friends,' quoth he,  
'That I receive the general food at first,  
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,  
Because I am the store-house and the shop  
Of the whole body: but, if you do remember,  
I send it through the rivers of your blood,  
Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the brain;  
And, through the cranks and offices of man,  
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins  
From me receive that natural competency  
Whereby they live: and though that all at once,  
You, my good friends,'--this says the belly, mark me,--

**First Citizen**

Ay, sir; well, well.

**MENENIUS**

'Though all at once cannot  
See what I do deliver out to each,  
Yet I can make my audit up, that all  
From me do back receive the flour of all,  
And leave me but the bran.' What say you to't?

**First Citizen**

It was an answer: how apply you this?

**MENENIUS**

The senators of Rome are this good belly,  
And you the mutinous members; for examine  
Their counsels and their cares, digest things rightly  
Touching the weal o' the common, you shall find  
No public benefit which you receive  
But it proceeds or comes from them to you  
And no way from yourselves. What do you think,  
You, the great toe of this assembly?

**First Citizen**

I the great toe! why the great toe?

**MENENIUS**

For that, being one o' the lowest, basest, poorest,  
Of this most wise rebellion, thou go'st foremost:  
Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run,  
Lead'st first to win some vantage.  
But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs:  
Rome and her rats are at the point of battle;  
The one side must have bale.

*Enter CAIUS MARCIUS*

Hail, noble Marcius!

**MARCIUS**

Thanks. What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,  
That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion,  
Make yourselves scabs?

**First Citizen**

We have ever your good word.

**MARCIUS**

He that will give good words to thee will flatter  
Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you curs,  
That like nor peace nor war? the one affrights you,

The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,  
Where he should find you lions, finds you hares;  
Where foxes, geese: you are no surer, no,  
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,  
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is  
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him  
And curse that justice did it.  
Who deserves greatness  
Deserves your hate; and your affections are  
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that  
Which would increase his evil. He that depends  
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead  
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust Ye?  
With every minute you do change a mind,  
And call him noble that was now your hate,  
Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter,  
That in these several places of the city  
You cry against the noble senate, who,  
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else  
Would feed on one another? What's their seeking?

## **MENENIUS**

For corn at their own rates; whereof, they say,  
The city is well stored.

## **MARCIUS**

Hang 'em! They say!  
They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know  
What's done i' the Capitol; who's like to rise,  
Who thrives and who declines; side factions  
and give out  
Conjectural marriages; making parties strong  
And feebling such as stand not in their liking  
Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's  
grain enough!  
Would the nobility lay aside their ruth,  
And let me use my sword, I'll make a quarry  
With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high  
As I could pick my lance.

## **MENENIUS**

Nay, these are almost thoroughly persuaded;  
For though abundantly they lack discretion,  
Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech you,  
What says the other troop?

## **MARCIUS**

They are dissolved: hang 'em!  
They said they were an-hungry; sigh'd forth proverbs,  
That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must eat,  
That meat was made for mouths, that the gods sent not  
Corn for the rich men only: with these shreds  
They vented their complainings; which being answer'd,  
And a petition granted them, a strange one--  
To break the heart of generosity,  
And make bold power look pale--they threw their caps  
As they would hang them on the horns o' the moon,  
Shouting their emulation.

## **MENENIUS**

What is granted them?

## **MARCIUS**

Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms,  
Of their own choice: one's Junius Brutus,  
Sicinius Velutus, and I know not--'Sdeath!  
The rabble should have first unroof'd the city,  
Ere so prevail'd with me: it will in time  
Win upon power and throw forth greater themes  
For insurrection's arguing.

## **MENENIUS**

This is strange.

## **MARCIUS**

Go, get you home, you fragments!

*Enter a Messenger, hastily*

**Messenger**

Where's Caius Marcius?

**MARCIUS**

Here: what's the matter?

**Messenger**

The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

**MARCIUS**

I am glad on 't: then we shall ha' means to vent  
Our musty superfluity. See, our best elders.

*Enter COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, and other Senators; JUNIUS BRUTUS and  
SICINIUS VELUTUS*

**First Senator**

Marcus, 'tis true that you have lately told us;  
The Volsces are in arms.

**MARCIUS**

They have a leader,  
Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to 't.  
I sin in envying his nobility,  
And were I any thing but what I am,  
I would wish me only he.

**COMINIUS**

You have fought together.

**MARCIUS**

Were half to half the world by the ears and he.  
Upon my party, I'd revolt to make  
Only my wars with him: he is a lion  
That I am proud to hunt.

**First Senator**

Then, worthy Marcius,  
Attend upon Cominius to these wars.

**COMINIUS**

It is your former promise.

**MARCIUS**

Sir, it is;  
And I am constant. Titus Lartius, thou  
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.  
What, art thou stiff? stand'st out?

**TITUS**

No, Caius Marcius;  
I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t'other,  
Ere stay behind this business.

**MENENIUS**

O, true-bred!

**First Senator**

Your company to the Capitol; where, I know,  
Our greatest friends attend us.

**TITUS**

[To COMINIUS] Lead you on.

*To MARCIUS*

Right worthy you priority.

**COMINIUS**

Noble Marcius!

**First Senator**

[To the Citizens] Hence to your homes; be gone!

**MARCIUS**

Nay, let them follow:  
The Volsces have much corn; take these rats thither  
To gnaw their garner. Worshipful mutiners,  
Your valour puts well forth: pray, follow.

*Citizens steal away. Exeunt all but SICINIUS and BRUTUS*

**SICINIUS**

Was ever man so proud as is this Marcius?

**BRUTUS**

He has no equal.

**SICINIUS**

When we were chosen tribunes for the people,--

**BRUTUS**

Mark'd you his lip and eyes?

**SICINIUS**

Nay. but his taunts.

## **BRUTUS**

Being moved, he will not spare to gird the gods.

## **SICINIUS**

Be-mock the modest moon.

## **BRUTUS**

The present wars devour him: he is grown  
Too proud to be so valiant.

## **SICINIUS**

Such a nature,  
Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow  
Which he treads on at noon: but I do wonder  
His insolence can brook to be commanded  
Under Cominius.

## **BRUTUS**

Fame, at the which he aims,  
In whom already he's well graced, can not  
Better be held nor more attain'd than by  
A place below the first: for what miscarries  
Shall be the general's fault, though he perform  
To the utmost of a man, and giddy censure  
Will then cry out of Marcius 'O if he  
Had borne the business!'

## **SICINIUS**

Besides, if things go well,  
Opinion that so sticks on Marcius shall  
Of his demerits rob Cominius.

## **BRUTUS**

Come:



Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius.  
Though Marcius earned them not, and all his faults  
To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed  
In aught he merit not.

## **SICINIUS**

Let's hence, and hear  
How the dispatch is made, and in what fashion,  
More than his singularity, he goes  
Upon this present action.

## **BRUTUS**

Lets along.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Corioli. The Senate-house.

*Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS and certain Senators*

### First Senator

So, your opinion is, Aufidius,  
That they of Rome are entered in our counsels  
And know how we proceed.

### AUFIDIUS

Is it not yours?  
What ever have been thought on in this state,  
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome  
Had circumvention? 'Tis not four days gone  
Since I heard thence; these are the words: I think  
I have the letter here; yes, here it is.

*Reads*

'They have press'd a power, but it is not known  
Whether for east or west: the dearth is great;  
The people mutinous; and it is rumour'd,  
Cominius, Marcius your old enemy,  
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,  
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,  
These three lead on this preparation  
Whither 'tis bent: most likely 'tis for you:  
Consider of it.'

### First Senator

Our army's in the field  
We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready  
To answer us.

## **AUFIDIUS**

Nor did you think it folly  
To keep your great pretences veil'd till when  
They needs must show themselves; which  
in the hatching,  
It seem'd, appear'd to Rome. By the discovery.  
We shall be shorten'd in our aim, which was  
To take in many towns ere almost Rome  
Should know we were afoot.

## **Second Senator**

Noble Aufidius,  
Take your commission; hie you to your bands:  
Let us alone to guard Corioli:  
If they set down before 's, for the remove  
Bring your army; but, I think, you'll find  
They've not prepared for us.

## **AUFIDIUS**

O, doubt not that;  
I speak from certainties. Nay, more,  
Some parcels of their power are forth already,  
And only hitherward. I leave your honours.  
If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,  
'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike  
Till one can do no more.

## **All**

The gods assist you!

## **AUFIDIUS**

And keep your honours safe!

## **First Senator**

Farewell.

**Second Senator**

Farewell.

**All**

Farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Rome. A room in Marcius' house.

*Enter VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA they set them down on two low stools, and sew*

### VOLUMNIA

I pray you, daughter, sing; or express yourself in a more comfortable sort: if my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied and the only son of my womb, when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way, when for a day of kings' entreaties a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding, I, considering how honour would become such a person. that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir, was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

### VIRGILIA

But had he died in the business, madam; how then?

### VOLUMNIA

Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely: had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their

country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action.

*Enter a Gentlewoman*

**Gentlewoman**

Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

**VIRGILIA**

Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself.

**VOLUMNIA**

Indeed, you shall not.  
Methinks I hear hither your husband's drum,  
See him pluck Aufidius down by the hair,  
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him:  
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus:  
'Come on, you cowards! you were got in fear,  
Though you were born in Rome:' his bloody brow  
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,  
Like to a harvest-man that's task'd to mow  
Or all or lose his hire.

**VIRGILIA**

His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood!

**VOLUMNIA**

Away, you fool! it more becomes a man  
Than gilt his trophy: the breasts of Hecuba,  
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier  
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood  
At Grecian sword, contemning. Tell Valeria,  
We are fit to bid her welcome.

*Exit Gentlewoman*

**VIRGILIA**

Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius!

**VOLUMNIA**

He'll beat Aufidius 'head below his knee  
And tread upon his neck.

*Enter VALERIA, with an Usher and Gentlewoman*

**VALERIA**

My ladies both, good day to you.

**VOLUMNIA**

Sweet madam.

**VIRGILIA**

I am glad to see your ladyship.

**VALERIA**

How do you both? you are manifest house-keepers.  
What are you sewing here? A fine spot, in good  
faith. How does your little son?

**VIRGILIA**

I thank your ladyship; well, good madam.

**VOLUMNIA**

He had rather see the swords, and hear a drum, than  
look upon his school-master.

**VALERIA**

O' my word, the father's son: I'll swear, 'tis a  
very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon him o'  
Wednesday half an hour together: has such a

confirmed countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly: and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again; and over and over he comes, and again; caught it again; or whether his fall enraged him, or how 'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it; O, I warrant it, how he mammocked it!

**VOLUMNIA**

One on 's father's moods.

**VALERIA**

Indeed, la, 'tis a noble child.

**VIRGILIA**

A crack, madam.

**VALERIA**

Come, lay aside your stitchery; I must have you play the idle husewife with me this afternoon.

**VIRGILIA**

No, good madam; I will not out of doors.

**VALERIA**

Not out of doors!

**VOLUMNIA**

She shall, she shall.

**VIRGILIA**

Indeed, no, by your patience; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.



**VALERIA**

Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably: come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

**VIRGILIA**

I will wish her speedy strength, and visit her with my prayers; but I cannot go thither.

**VOLUMNIA**

Why, I pray you?

**VIRGILIA**

'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want love.

**VALERIA**

You would be another Penelope: yet, they say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence did but fill Ithaca full of moths. Come; I would your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity. Come, you shall go with us.

**VIRGILIA**

No, good madam, pardon me; indeed, I will not forth.

**VALERIA**

In truth, la, go with me; and I'll tell you excellent news of your husband.

**VIRGILIA**

O, good madam, there can be none yet.

**VALERIA**

Verily, I do not jest with you; there came news from him last night.

**VIRGILIA**

Indeed, madam?

**VALERIA**

In earnest, it's true; I heard a senator speak it. Thus it is: the Volsces have an army forth; against whom Cominius the general is gone, with one part of our Roman power: your lord and Titus Lartius are set down before their city Corioli; they nothing doubt prevailing and to make it brief wars. This is true, on mine honour; and so, I pray, go with us.

**VIRGILIA**

Give me excuse, good madam; I will obey you in every thing hereafter.

**VOLUMNIA**

Let her alone, lady: as she is now, she will but disease our better mirth.

**VALERIA**

In troth, I think she would. Fare you well, then. Come, good sweet lady. Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemnness out o' door. and go along with us.

**VIRGILIA**

No, at a word, madam; indeed, I must not. I wish you much mirth.

**VALERIA**

Well, then, farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Before Corioli.

*Enter, with drum and colours, MARCIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, Captains and Soldiers. To them a Messenger*

**MARCIUS**

Yonder comes news. A wager they have met.

**LARTIUS**

My horse to yours, no.

**MARCIUS**

'Tis done.

**LARTIUS**

Agreed.

**MARCIUS**

Say, has our general met the enemy?

**Messenger**

They lie in view; but have not spoke as yet.

**LARTIUS**

So, the good horse is mine.

**MARCIUS**

I'll buy him of you.

**LARTIUS**

No, I'll nor sell nor give him: lend you him I will  
For half a hundred years. Summon the town.

**MARCIUS**

How far off lie these armies?

**Messenger**

Within this mile and half.

**MARCIUS**

Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours.  
Now, Mars, I prithee, make us quick in work,  
That we with smoking swords may march from hence,  
To help our fielded friends! Come, blow thy blast.

*They sound a parley. Enter two Senators with others on the walls*

Tutus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

**First Senator**

No, nor a man that fears you less than he,  
That's lesser than a little.

*Drums afar off*

Hark! our drums  
Are bringing forth our youth. We'll break our walls,  
Rather than they shall pound us up: our gates,  
Which yet seem shut, we, have but pinn'd with rushes;  
They'll open of themselves.

*Alarum afar off*

Hark you. far off!  
There is Aufidius; list, what work he makes  
Amongst your cloven army.

## MARCIUS

O, they are at it!

## LARTIUS

Their noise be our instruction. Ladders, ho!

*Enter the army of the Volsces*

## MARCIUS

They fear us not, but issue forth their city.  
Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight  
With hearts more proof than shields. Advance,  
brave Titus:  
They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,  
Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on, my fellows:  
He that retires I'll take him for a Volsce,  
And he shall feel mine edge.

*Alarum. The Romans are beat back to their trenches. Re-enter MARCIUS cursing*

## MARCIUS

All the contagion of the south light on you,  
You shames of Rome! you herd of--Boils and plagues  
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd  
Further than seen and one infect another  
Against the wind a mile! You souls of geese,  
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run  
From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and hell!  
All hurt behind; backs red, and faces pale  
With flight and agued fear! Mend and charge home,  
Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe  
And make my wars on you: look to't: come on;  
If you'll stand fast, we'll beat them to their wives,  
As they us to our trenches followed.

*Another alarum. The Volsces fly, and MARCIUS follows them to the gates*

So, now the gates are ope: now prove good seconds:  
'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,  
Not for the fliers: mark me, and do the like.

*Enters the gates*

**First Soldier**

Fool-hardiness; not I.

**Second Soldier**

Nor I.

*MARCIUS is shut in*

**First Soldier**

See, they have shut him in.

**All**

To the pot, I warrant him.

*Alarum continues*

*Re-enter TITUS LARTIUS*

**LARTIUS**

What is become of Marcius?

**All**

Slain, sir, doubtless.

**First Soldier**

Following the fliers at the very heels,  
With them he enters; who, upon the sudden,  
Clapp'd to their gates: he is himself alone,  
To answer all the city.

## **LARTIUS**

O noble fellow!  
Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,  
And, when it bows, stands up. Thou art left, Marcius:  
A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art,  
Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier  
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible  
Only in strokes; but, with thy grim looks and  
The thunder-like percussion of thy sounds,  
Thou madst thine enemies shake, as if the world  
Were feverous and did tremble.

*Re-enter MARCIUS, bleeding, assaulted by the enemy*

## **First Soldier**

Look, sir.

## **LARTIUS**

O,'tis Marcius!  
Let's fetch him off, or make remain alike.

*They fight, and all enter the city*



# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Corioli. A street.

*Enter certain Romans, with spoils*

### First Roman

This will I carry to Rome.

### Second Roman

And I this.

### Third Roman

A murrain on't! I took this for silver.

*Alarum continues still afar off*

*Enter MARCIUS and TITUS LARTIUS with a trumpet*

### MARCIUS

See here these movers that do prize their hours  
At a crack'd drachm! Cushions, leaden spoons,  
Irons of a doit, doublets that hangmen would  
Bury with those that wore them, these base slaves,  
Ere yet the fight be done, pack up: down with them!  
And hark, what noise the general makes! To him!  
There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,  
Piercing our Romans: then, valiant Titus, take  
Convenient numbers to make good the city;  
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will haste  
To help Cominius.

### LARTIUS

Worthy sir, thou bleed'st;  
Thy exercise hath been too violent for  
A second course of fight.

**MARCIUS**

Sir, praise me not;  
My work hath yet not warm'd me: fare you well:  
The blood I drop is rather physical  
Than dangerous to me: to Aufidius thus  
I will appear, and fight.

**LARTIUS**

Now the fair goddess, Fortune,  
Fall deep in love with thee; and her great charms  
Misguide thy opposers' swords! Bold gentleman,  
Prosperity be thy page!

**MARCIUS**

Thy friend no less  
Than those she placeth highest! So, farewell.

**LARTIUS**

Thou worthiest Marcius!

*Exit MARCIUS*

Go, sound thy trumpet in the market-place;  
Call thither all the officers o' the town,  
Where they shall know our mind: away!

*Exeunt*

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Near the camp of Cominius.

*Enter COMINIUS, as it were in retire, with soldiers*

### COMINIUS

Breathe you, my friends: well fought;  
we are come off  
Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands,  
Nor cowardly in retire: believe me, sirs,  
We shall be charged again. Whiles we have struck,  
By interims and conveying gusts we have heard  
The charges of our friends. Ye Roman gods!  
Lead their successes as we wish our own,  
That both our powers, with smiling  
fronts encountering,  
May give you thankful sacrifice.

*Enter a Messenger*

Thy news?

### Messenger

The citizens of Corioli have issued,  
And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle:  
I saw our party to their trenches driven,  
And then I came away.

### COMINIUS

Though thou speak'st truth,  
Methinks thou speak'st not well.  
How long is't since?

### Messenger

Above an hour, my lord.

**COMINIUS**

'Tis not a mile; briefly we heard their drums:  
How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour,  
And bring thy news so late?

**Messenger**

Spies of the Volsces  
Held me in chase, that I was forced to wheel  
Three or four miles about, else had I, sir,  
Half an hour since brought my report.

**COMINIUS**

Who's yonder,  
That does appear as he were flay'd? O gods  
He has the stamp of Marcius; and I have  
Before-time seen him thus.

**MARCIUS**

[Within] Come I too late?

**COMINIUS**

The shepherd knows not thunder from a tabour  
More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue  
From every meaner man.

*Enter MARCIUS*

**MARCIUS**

Come I too late?

**COMINIUS**

Ay, if you come not in the blood of others,  
But mantled in your own.

**MARCIUS**

O, let me clip ye  
In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart  
As merry as when our nuptial day was done,  
And tapers burn'd to bedward!

**COMINIUS**

Flower of warriors,  
How is it with Titus Lartius?

**MARCIUS**

As with a man busied about decrees:  
Condemning some to death, and some to exile;  
Ransoming him, or pitying, threatening the other;  
Holding Corioli in the name of Rome,  
Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,  
To let him slip at will.

**COMINIUS**

Where is that slave  
Which told me they had beat you to your trenches?  
Where is he? call him hither.

**MARCIUS**

Let him alone;  
He did inform the truth: but for our gentlemen,  
The common file--a plague! tribunes for them!--  
The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did budge  
From rascals worse than they.

**COMINIUS**

But how prevail'd you?

## MARCIUS

Will the time serve to tell? I do not think.  
Where is the enemy? are you lords o' the field?  
If not, why cease you till you are so?

## COMINIUS

Marcus,  
We have at disadvantage fought and did  
Retire to win our purpose.

## MARCIUS

How lies their battle? know you on which side  
They have placed their men of trust?

## COMINIUS

As I guess, Marcus,  
Their bands i' the vaward are the Antiates,  
Of their best trust; o'er them Aufidius,  
Their very heart of hope.

## MARCIUS

I do beseech you,  
By all the battles wherein we have fought,  
By the blood we have shed together, by the vows  
We have made to endure friends, that you directly  
Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates;  
And that you not delay the present, but,  
Filling the air with swords advanced and darts,  
We prove this very hour.

## COMINIUS

Though I could wish  
You were conducted to a gentle bath  
And balms applied to, you, yet dare I never  
Deny your asking: take your choice of those

That best can aid your action.

## MARCIUS

Those are they  
That most are willing. If any such be here--  
As it were sin to doubt--that love this painting  
Wherein you see me smear'd; if any fear  
Lesser his person than an ill report;  
If any think brave death outweighs bad life  
And that his country's dearer than himself;  
Let him alone, or so many so minded,  
Wave thus, to express his disposition,  
And follow Marcius.

*They all shout and wave their swords, take him up in their arms, and cast up their caps*

O, me alone! make you a sword of me?  
If these shows be not outward, which of you  
But is four Volsces? none of you but is  
Able to bear against the great Aufidius  
A shield as hard as his. A certain number,  
Though thanks to all, must I select  
from all: the rest  
Shall bear the business in some other fight,  
As cause will be obey'd. Please you to march;  
And four shall quickly draw out my command,  
Which men are best inclined.

## COMINIUS

March on, my fellows:  
Make good this ostentation, and you shall  
Divide in all with us.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. The gates of Corioli.

*TITUS LARTIUS, having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward COMINIUS and CAIUS MARCIUS, enters with Lieutenant, other Soldiers, and a Scout*

### LARTIUS

So, let the ports be guarded: keep your duties,  
As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch  
Those centuries to our aid: the rest will serve  
For a short holding: if we lose the field,  
We cannot keep the town.

### Lieutenant

Fear not our care, sir.

### LARTIUS

Hence, and shut your gates upon's.  
Our guider, come; to the Roman camp conduct us.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. A field of battle.

*Alarum as in battle. Enter, from opposite sides, MARCIUS and AUFIDIUS*

**MARCIUS**

I'll fight with none but thee; for I do hate thee  
Worse than a promise-breaker.

**AUFIDIUS**

We hate alike:  
Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor  
More than thy fame and envy. Fix thy foot.

**MARCIUS**

Let the first budger die the other's slave,  
And the gods doom him after!

**AUFIDIUS**

If I fly, Marcius,  
Holloa me like a hare.

**MARCIUS**

Within these three hours, Tullus,  
Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,  
And made what work I pleased: 'tis not my blood  
Wherein thou seest me mask'd; for thy revenge  
Wrench up thy power to the highest.

**AUFIDIUS**

Wert thou the Hector

That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,  
Thou shouldst not scape me here.

*They fight, and certain Volsces come to the aid of AUFIDIUS. MARCIUS fights till they be driven in breathless*

Officious, and not valiant, you have shamed me  
In your condemned seconds.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 8  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IX. The Roman camp.

*Flourish. Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Flourish. Enter, from one side, COMINIUS with the Romans; from the other side, MARCIUS, with his arm in a scarf*

### COMINIUS

If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's work,  
Thou'ldst not believe thy deeds: but I'll report it  
Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles,  
Where great patricians shall attend and shrug,  
I' the end admire, where ladies shall be frighted,  
And, gladly quaked, hear more; where the  
dull tribunes,  
That, with the fusty plebeians, hate thine honours,  
Shall say against their hearts 'We thank the gods  
Our Rome hath such a soldier.'  
Yet camest thou to a morsel of this feast,  
Having fully dined before.

*Enter TITUS LARTIUS, with his power, from the pursuit*

### LARTIUS

O general,  
Here is the steed, we the caparison:  
Hadst thou beheld--

### MARCIUS

Pray now, no more: my mother,  
Who has a charter to extol her blood,  
When she does praise me grieves me. I have done  
As you have done; that's what I can; induced  
As you have been; that's for my country:  
He that has but effected his good will

Hath overta'en mine act.

## COMINIUS

You shall not be  
The grave of your deserving; Rome must know  
The value of her own: 'twere a concealment  
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,  
To hide your doings; and to silence that,  
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,  
Would seem but modest: therefore, I beseech you  
In sign of what you are, not to reward  
What you have done--before our army hear me.

## MARCIUS

I have some wounds upon me, and they smart  
To hear themselves remember'd.

## COMINIUS

Should they not,  
Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude,  
And tent themselves with death. Of all the horses,  
Whereof we have ta'en good and good store, of all  
The treasure in this field achieved and city,  
We render you the tenth, to be ta'en forth,  
Before the common distribution, at  
Your only choice.

## MARCIUS

I thank you, general;  
But cannot make my heart consent to take  
A bribe to pay my sword: I do refuse it;  
And stand upon my common part with those  
That have beheld the doing.

*A long flourish. They all cry 'Marcius! Marcius!' cast up their caps and lances:  
COMINIUS and LARTIUS stand bare*

## MARCIUS

May these same instruments, which you profane,  
Never sound more! when drums and trumpets shall  
I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be  
Made all of false-faced soothing!  
When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk,  
Let him be made a coverture for the wars!  
No more, I say! For that I have not wash'd  
My nose that bled, or foil'd some debile wretch.--  
Which, without note, here's many else have done,--  
You shout me forth  
In acclamations hyperbolic;  
As if I loved my little should be dieted  
In praises sauced with lies.

## COMINIUS

Too modest are you;  
More cruel to your good report than grateful  
To us that give you truly: by your patience,  
If 'gainst yourself you be incensed, we'll put you,  
Like one that means his proper harm, in manacles,  
Then reason safely with you. Therefore, be it known,  
As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius  
Wears this war's garland: in token of the which,  
My noble steed, known to the camp, I give him,  
With all his trim belonging; and from this time,  
For what he did before Corioli, call him,  
With all the applause and clamour of the host,  
CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS! Bear  
The addition nobly ever!

*Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums*

## All

Caius Marcius Coriolanus!

## CORIOLANUS

I will go wash;  
And when my face is fair, you shall perceive

Whether I blush or no: howbeit, I thank you.  
I mean to stride your steed, and at all times  
To undercrest your good addition  
To the fairness of my power.

## COMINIUS

So, to our tent;  
Where, ere we do repose us, we will write  
To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius,  
Must to Corioli back: send us to Rome  
The best, with whom we may articulate,  
For their own good and ours.

## LARTIUS

I shall, my lord.

## CORIOLANUS

The gods begin to mock me. I, that now  
Refused most princely gifts, am bound to beg  
Of my lord general.

## COMINIUS

Take't; 'tis yours. What is't?

## CORIOLANUS

I sometime lay here in Corioli  
At a poor man's house; he used me kindly:  
He cried to me; I saw him prisoner;  
But then Aufidius was with in my view,  
And wrath o'erwhelm'd my pity: I request you  
To give my poor host freedom.

## COMINIUS

O, well begg'd!  
Were he the butcher of my son, he should  
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

## LARTIUS

Marcus, his name?

## CORIOLANUS

By Jupiter! forgot.  
I am weary; yea, my memory is tired.  
Have we no wine here?

## COMINIUS

Go we to our tent:  
The blood upon your visage dries; 'tis time  
It should be look'd to: come.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 9

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 10

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE X. The camp of the Volsces.

*A flourish. Cornets. Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, bloody, with two or three Soldiers*

**AUFIDIUS**

The town is ta'en!

**First Soldier**

'Twill be deliver'd back on good condition.

**AUFIDIUS**

Condition!

I would I were a Roman; for I cannot,  
Being a Volsce, be that I am. Condition!  
What good condition can a treaty find  
I' the part that is at mercy? Five times, Marcius,  
I have fought with thee: so often hast thou beat me,  
And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter  
As often as we eat. By the elements,  
If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,  
He's mine, or I am his: mine emulation  
Hath not that honour in't it had; for where  
I thought to crush him in an equal force,  
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some way  
Or wrath or craft may get him.

**First Soldier**

He's the devil.

**AUFIDIUS**

Bolder, though not so subtle. My valour's poison'd



With only suffering stain by him; for him  
Shall fly out of itself: nor sleep nor sanctuary,  
Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol,  
The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,  
Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up  
Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst  
My hate to Marcius: where I find him, were it  
At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,  
Against the hospitable canon, would I  
Wash my fierce hand in's heart. Go you to the city;  
Learn how 'tis held; and what they are that must  
Be hostages for Rome.

**First Soldier**

Will not you go?

**AUFIDIUS**

I am attended at the cypress grove: I pray you--  
'Tis south the city mills--bring me word thither  
How the world goes, that to the pace of it  
I may spur on my journey.

**First Soldier**

I shall, sir.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 1, Scene 10  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. A public place.

*Enter MENENIUS with the two Tribunes of the people, SICINIUS and BRUTUS.*

**MENENIUS**

The augurer tells me we shall have news to-night.

**BRUTUS**

Good or bad?

**MENENIUS**

Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius.

**SICINIUS**

Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

**MENENIUS**

Pray you, who does the wolf love?

**SICINIUS**

The lamb.

**MENENIUS**

Ay, to devour him; as the hungry plebeians would the noble Marcius.

**BRUTUS**

He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

**MENENIUS**

He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb. You two are old men: tell me one thing that I shall ask you.

**Both**

Well, sir.

**MENENIUS**

In what enormity is Marcius poor in, that you two have not in abundance?

**BRUTUS**

He's poor in no one fault, but stored with all.

**SICINIUS**

Especially in pride.

**BRUTUS**

And topping all others in boasting.

**MENENIUS**

This is strange now: do you two know how you are censured here in the city, I mean of us o' the right-hand file? do you?

**Both**

Why, how are we censured?

**MENENIUS**

Because you talk of pride now,--will you not be angry?

**Both**

Well, well, sir, well.

**MENENIUS**

Why, 'tis no great matter; for a very little thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of patience: give your dispositions the reins, and be angry at your pleasures; at the least if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so. You blame Marcius for being proud?

**BRUTUS**

We do it not alone, sir.

**MENENIUS**

I know you can do very little alone; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wondrous single: your abilities are too infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of pride: O that you could turn your eyes toward the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! O that you could!

**BRUTUS**

What then, sir?

**MENENIUS**

Why, then you should discover a brace of unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias fools, as any in Rome.

**SICINIUS**

Menenius, you are known well enough too.

## **MENENIUS**

I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint; hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning: what I think I utter, and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such wealsmen as you are--I cannot call you Lycurguses--if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it. I can't say your worships have delivered the matter well, when I find the ass in compound with the major part of your syllables: and though I must be content to bear with those that say you are reverend grave men, yet they lie deadly that tell you you have good faces. If you see this in the map of my microcosm, follows it that I am known well enough too? what barm can your bisson conspectuities glean out of this character, if I be known well enough too?

## **BRUTUS**

Come, sir, come, we know you well enough.

## **MENENIUS**

You know neither me, yourselves nor any thing. You are ambitious for poor knaves' caps and legs: you wear out a good wholesome forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange wife and a fosset-seller; and then rejoin the controversy of three pence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinched with the colic, you make faces like mummers; set up the bloody flag against all patience; and, in roaring for a chamber-pot, dismiss the controversy bleeding the more entangled

by your hearing: all the peace you make in their cause is, calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones.

## **BRUTUS**

Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol.

## **MENENIUS**

Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be entombed in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying, Marcius is proud; who in a cheap estimation, is worth predecessors since Deucalion, though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships: more of your conversation would infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians: I will be bold to take my leave of you.

*BRUTUS and SICINIUS go aside*

*Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and VALERIA*

How now, my as fair as noble ladies,--and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler,--whither do you follow your eyes so fast?

## **VOLUMNIA**

Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius approaches; for the love of Juno, let's go.

## **MENENIUS**

Ha! Marcius coming home!

## **VOLUMNIA**

Ay, worthy Menenius; and with most prosperous approbation.

## **MENENIUS**

Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee. Hoo!  
Marcius coming home!

## **VOLUMNIA VIRGILIA**

Nay, 'tis true.

## **VOLUMNIA**

Look, here's a letter from him: the state hath another, his wife another; and, I think, there's one at home for you.

## **MENENIUS**

I will make my very house reel tonight: a letter for me!

## **VIRGILIA**

Yes, certain, there's a letter for you; I saw't.

## **MENENIUS**

A letter for me! it gives me an estate of seven years' health; in which time I will make a lip at the physician: the most sovereign prescription in Galen is but empiricitic, and, to this preservative, of no better report than a horse-drench. Is he not wounded? he was wont to come home wounded.

## **VIRGILIA**

O, no, no, no.

**VOLUMNIA**

O, he is wounded; I thank the gods for't.

**MENENIUS**

So do I too, if it be not too much: brings a'  
victory in his pocket? the wounds become him.

**VOLUMNIA**

On's brows: Menenius, he comes the third time home  
with the oaken garland.

**MENENIUS**

Has he disciplined Aufidius soundly?

**VOLUMNIA**

Titus Lartius writes, they fought together, but  
Aufidius got off.

**MENENIUS**

And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that:  
an he had stayed by him, I would not have been so  
fidiused for all the chests in Corioli, and the gold  
that's in them. Is the senate possessed of this?

**VOLUMNIA**

Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes; the senate  
has letters from the general, wherein he gives my  
son the whole name of the war: he hath in this  
action outdone his former deeds doubly

**VALERIA**



In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of him.

**MENENIUS**

Wondrous! ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

**VIRGILIA**

The gods grant them true!

**VOLUMNIA**

True! pow, wow.

**MENENIUS**

True! I'll be sworn they are true.  
Where is he wounded?

*To the Tribunes*

God save your good worships! Marcius is coming home: he has more cause to be proud. Where is he wounded?

**VOLUMNIA**

I' the shoulder and i' the left arm there will be large cicatrices to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' the body.

**MENENIUS**

One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh,--there's nine that I know.

**VOLUMNIA**

He had, before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him.

## **MENENIUS**

Now it's twenty-seven: every gash was an enemy's grave.

*A shout and flourish*

Hark! the trumpets.

## **VOLUMNIA**

These are the ushers of Marcius: before him he  
carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears:  
Death, that dark spirit, in 's nervy arm doth lie;  
Which, being advanced, declines, and then men die.

*A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter COMINIUS the general, and TITUS LARTIUS; between  
them, CORIOLANUS, crowned with an oaken garland; with Captains and Soldiers, and a  
Herald*

## **Herald**

Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight  
Within Corioli gates: where he hath won,  
With fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these  
In honour follows Coriolanus.  
Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

*Flourish*

## **All**

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

## **CORIOLANUS**

No more of this; it does offend my heart:  
Pray now, no more.

## **COMINIUS**

Look, sir, your mother!

## **CORIOLANUS**

O,  
You have, I know, petition'd all the gods  
For my prosperity!

*Kneels*

## **VOLUMNIA**

Nay, my good soldier, up;  
My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and  
By deed-achieving honour newly named,--  
What is it?--Coriolanus must I call thee?--  
But O, thy wife!

## **CORIOLANUS**

My gracious silence, hail!  
Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd home,  
That weep'st to see me triumph? Ay, my dear,  
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,  
And mothers that lack sons.

## **MENENIUS**

Now, the gods crown thee!

## **CORIOLANUS**

And live you yet?

*To VALERIA*

O my sweet lady, pardon.

## **VOLUMNIA**

I know not where to turn: O, welcome home:

And welcome, general: and ye're welcome all.

## **MENENIUS**

A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep  
And I could laugh, I am light and heavy. Welcome.  
A curse begin at very root on's heart,  
That is not glad to see thee! You are three  
That Rome should dote on: yet, by the faith of men,  
We have some old crab-trees here  
at home that will not  
Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors:  
We call a nettle but a nettle and  
The faults of fools but folly.

## **COMINIUS**

Ever right.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Menenius ever, ever.

## **Herald**

Give way there, and go on!

## **CORIOLANUS**

[To VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA] Your hand, and yours:  
Ere in our own house I do shade my head,  
The good patricians must be visited;  
From whom I have received not only greetings,  
But with them change of honours.

## **VOLUMNIA**

I have lived  
To see inherited my very wishes  
And the buildings of my fancy: only  
There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but  
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

## CORIOLANUS

Know, good mother,  
I had rather be their servant in my way,  
Than sway with them in theirs.

## COMINIUS

On, to the Capitol!

*Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before. BRUTUS and SICINIUS come forward*

## BRUTUS

All tongues speak of him, and the bleared sights  
Are spectacled to see him: your prattling nurse  
Into a rapture lets her baby cry  
While she chats him: the kitchen malkin pins  
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,  
Clambering the walls to eye him: stalls, bulks, windows,  
Are smother'd up, leads fill'd, and ridges horsed  
With variable complexions, all agreeing  
In earnestness to see him: seld-shown flamens  
Do press among the popular throngs and puff  
To win a vulgar station: or veil'd dames  
Commit the war of white and damask in  
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil  
Of Phoebus' burning kisses: such a pother  
As if that whatsoever god who leads him  
Were slily crept into his human powers  
And gave him graceful posture.

## SICINIUS

On the sudden,  
I warrant him consul.

## BRUTUS

Then our office may,  
During his power, go sleep.

**SICINIUS**

He cannot temperately transport his honours  
From where he should begin and end, but will  
Lose those he hath won.

**BRUTUS**

In that there's comfort.

**SICINIUS**

Doubt not  
The commoners, for whom we stand, but they  
Upon their ancient malice will forget  
With the least cause these his new honours, which  
That he will give them make I as little question  
As he is proud to do't.

**BRUTUS**

I heard him swear,  
Were he to stand for consul, never would he  
Appear i' the market-place nor on him put  
The napless vesture of humility;  
Nor showing, as the manner is, his wounds  
To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

**SICINIUS**

'Tis right.

**BRUTUS**

It was his word: O, he would miss it rather  
Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to him,  
And the desire of the nobles.

**SICINIUS**

I wish no better  
Than have him hold that purpose and to put it  
In execution.

**BRUTUS**

'Tis most like he will.

**SICINIUS**

It shall be to him then as our good wills,  
A sure destruction.

**BRUTUS**

So it must fall out  
To him or our authorities. For an end,  
We must suggest the people in what hatred  
He still hath held them; that to's power he would  
Have made them mules, silenced their pleaders and  
Dispropertied their freedoms, holding them,  
In human action and capacity,  
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world  
Than camels in the war, who have their provand  
Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows  
For sinking under them.

**SICINIUS**

This, as you say, suggested  
At some time when his soaring insolence  
Shall touch the people--which time shall not want,  
If he be put upon 't; and that's as easy  
As to set dogs on sheep--will be his fire  
To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze  
Shall darken him for ever.

*Enter a Messenger*

**BRUTUS**

What's the matter?

## **Messenger**

You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis thought  
That Marcius shall be consul:  
I have seen the dumb men throng to see him and  
The blind to bear him speak: matrons flung gloves,  
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers,  
Upon him as he pass'd: the nobles bended,  
As to Jove's statue, and the commons made  
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts:  
I never saw the like.

## **BRUTUS**

Let's to the Capitol;  
And carry with us ears and eyes for the time,  
But hearts for the event.

## **SICINIUS**

Have with you.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. The Capitol.

*Enter two Officers, to lay cushions*

### First Officer

Come, come, they are almost here. How many stand for consulships?

### Second Officer

Three, they say: but 'tis thought of every one Coriolanus will carry it.

### First Officer

That's a brave fellow; but he's vengeance proud, and loves not the common people.

### Second Officer

Faith, there had been many great men that have flattered the people, who ne'er loved them; and there be many that they have loved, they know not wherefore: so that, if they love they know not why, they hate upon no better a ground: therefore, for Coriolanus neither to care whether they love or hate him manifests the true knowledge he has in their disposition; and out of his noble carelessness lets them plainly see't.

### First Officer

If he did not care whether he had their love or no, he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm: but he seeks their hate with greater

devotion than can render it him; and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite. Now, to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love.

## **Second Officer**

He hath deserved worthily of his country: and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, bonneted, without any further deed to have them at an into their estimation and report: but he hath so planted his honours in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent, and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury; to report otherwise, were a malice, that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it.

## **First Officer**

No more of him; he is a worthy man: make way, they are coming.

*A sennet. Enter, with actors before them, COMINIUS the consul, MENENIUS, CORIOLANUS, Senators, SICINIUS and BRUTUS. The Senators take their places; the Tribunes take their Places by themselves. CORIOLANUS stands*

## **MENENIUS**

Having determined of the Volsces and  
To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,  
As the main point of this our after-meeting,  
To gratify his noble service that  
Hath thus stood for his country: therefore,  
please you,  
Most reverend and grave elders, to desire  
The present consul, and last general  
In our well-found successes, to report  
A little of that worthy work perform'd  
By Caius Marcius Coriolanus, whom

We met here both to thank and to remember  
With honours like himself.

### **First Senator**

Speak, good Cominius:  
Leave nothing out for length, and make us think  
Rather our state's defective for requital  
Than we to stretch it out.

*To the Tribunes*

Masters o' the people,  
We do request your kindest ears, and after,  
Your loving motion toward the common body,  
To yield what passes here.

### **SICINIUS**

We are convented  
Upon a pleasing treaty, and have hearts  
Inclinable to honour and advance  
The theme of our assembly.

### **BRUTUS**

Which the rather  
We shall be blest to do, if he remember  
A kinder value of the people than  
He hath hereto prized them at.

### **MENENIUS**

That's off, that's off;  
I would you rather had been silent. Please you  
To hear Cominius speak?

### **BRUTUS**

Most willingly;  
But yet my caution was more pertinent  
Than the rebuke you give it.

## **MENENIUS**

He loves your people  
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.  
Worthy Cominius, speak.

*CORIOLANUS offers to go away*

Nay, keep your place.

## **First Senator**

Sit, Coriolanus; never shame to hear  
What you have nobly done.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Your horror's pardon:  
I had rather have my wounds to heal again  
Than hear say how I got them.

## **BRUTUS**

Sir, I hope  
My words disbench'd you not.

## **CORIOLANUS**

No, sir: yet oft,  
When blows have made me stay, I fled from words.  
You soothed not, therefore hurt not: but  
your people,  
I love them as they weigh.

## **MENENIUS**

Pray now, sit down.

## **CORIOLANUS**

I had rather have one scratch my head i' the sun  
When the alarum were struck than idly sit  
To hear my nothings monster'd.

*Exit*

## **MENENIUS**

Masters of the people,  
Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter--  
That's thousand to one good one--when you now see  
He had rather venture all his limbs for honour  
Than one on's ears to hear it? Proceed, Cominius.

## **COMINIUS**

I shall lack voice: the deeds of Coriolanus  
Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held  
That valour is the chiefest virtue, and  
Most dignifies the haver: if it be,  
The man I speak of cannot in the world  
Be singly counterpoised. At sixteen years,  
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought  
Beyond the mark of others: our then dictator,  
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight,  
When with his Amazonian chin he drove  
The bristled lips before him: he bestrid  
An o'er-press'd Roman and i' the consul's view  
Slew three opposers: Tarquin's self he met,  
And struck him on his knee: in that day's feats,  
When he might act the woman in the scene,  
He proved best man i' the field, and for his meed  
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age  
Man-enter'd thus, he waxed like a sea,  
And in the brunt of seventeen battles since  
He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this last,  
Before and in Corioli, let me say,  
I cannot speak him home: he stopp'd the fliers;  
And by his rare example made the coward  
Turn terror into sport: as weeds before  
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd  
And fell below his stem: his sword, death's stamp,

Where it did mark, it took; from face to foot  
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion  
Was timed with dying cries: alone he enter'd  
The mortal gate of the city, which he painted  
With shunless destiny; aidless came off,  
And with a sudden reinforcement struck  
Corioli like a planet: now all's his:  
When, by and by, the din of war gan pierce  
His ready sense; then straight his doubled spirit  
Re-quicken'd what in flesh was fatigate,  
And to the battle came he; where he did  
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if  
'Twere a perpetual spoil: and till we call'd  
Both field and city ours, he never stood  
To ease his breast with panting.

## **MENENIUS**

Worthy man!

## **First Senator**

He cannot but with measure fit the honours  
Which we devise him.

## **COMINIUS**

Our spoils he kick'd at,  
And look'd upon things precious as they were  
The common muck of the world: he covets less  
Than misery itself would give; rewards  
His deeds with doing them, and is content  
To spend the time to end it.

## **MENENIUS**

He's right noble:  
Let him be call'd for.

## **First Senator**

Call Coriolanus.

**Officer**

He doth appear.

*Re-enter CORIOLANUS*

**MENENIUS**

The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleased  
To make thee consul.

**CORIOLANUS**

I do owe them still  
My life and services.

**MENENIUS**

It then remains  
That you do speak to the people.

**CORIOLANUS**

I do beseech you,  
Let me o'erleap that custom, for I cannot  
Put on the gown, stand naked and entreat them,  
For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage: please you  
That I may pass this doing.

**SICINIUS**

Sir, the people  
Must have their voices; neither will they bate  
One jot of ceremony.

**MENENIUS**

Put them not to't:  
Pray you, go fit you to the custom and  
Take to you, as your predecessors have,

Your honour with your form.

## **CORIOLANUS**

It is apart  
That I shall blush in acting, and might well  
Be taken from the people.

## **BRUTUS**

Mark you that?

## **CORIOLANUS**

To brag unto them, thus I did, and thus;  
Show them the unaching scars which I should hide,  
As if I had received them for the hire  
Of their breath only!

## **MENENIUS**

Do not stand upon't.  
We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,  
Our purpose to them: and to our noble consul  
Wish we all joy and honour.

## **Senators**

To Coriolanus come all joy and honour!

*Flourish of cornets. Exeunt all but SICINIUS and BRUTUS*

## **BRUTUS**

You see how he intends to use the people.

## **SICINIUS**

May they perceive's intent! He will require them,  
As if he did contemn what he requested  
Should be in them to give.



## BRUTUS

Come, we'll inform them  
Of our proceedings here: on the marketplace,  
I know, they do attend us.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. The Forum.

*Enter seven or eight Citizens*

### First Citizen

Once, if he do require our voices, we ought not to deny him.

### Second Citizen

We may, sir, if we will.

### Third Citizen

We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do; for if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is monstrous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful, were to make a monster of the multitude: of the which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members.

### First Citizen

And to make us no better thought of, a little help will serve; for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.

### Third Citizen

We have been called so of many; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured: and

truly I think if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass.

**Second Citizen**

Think you so? Which way do you judge my wit would fly?

**Third Citizen**

Nay, your wit will not so soon out as another man's will; 'tis strongly wedged up in a block-head, but if it were at liberty, 'twould, sure, southward.

**Second Citizen**

Why that way?

**Third Citizen**

To lose itself in a fog, where being three parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth would return for conscience sake, to help to get thee a wife.

**Second Citizen**

You are never without your tricks: you may, you may.

**Third Citizen**

Are you all resolved to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

*Enter CORIOLANUS in a gown of humility, with MENENIUS*

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility: mark his behavior. We are not to stay all together, but to

come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars; wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues: therefore follow me, and I direct you how you shall go by him.

**All**

Content, content.

*Exeunt Citizens*

**MENENIUS**

O sir, you are not right: have you not known  
The worthiest men have done't?

**CORIOLANUS**

What must I say?  
'I Pray, sir'--Plague upon't! I cannot bring  
My tongue to such a pace:--'Look, sir, my wounds!  
I got them in my country's service, when  
Some certain of your brethren roar'd and ran  
From the noise of our own drums.'

**MENENIUS**

O me, the gods!  
You must not speak of that: you must desire them  
To think upon you.

**CORIOLANUS**

Think upon me! hang 'em!  
I would they would forget me, like the virtues  
Which our divines lose by 'em.

**MENENIUS**

You'll mar all:  
I'll leave you: pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,  
In wholesome manner.

*Exit*

## **CORIOLANUS**

Bid them wash their faces  
And keep their teeth clean.

*Re-enter two of the Citizens*

So, here comes a brace.

*Re-enter a third Citizen*

You know the cause, air, of my standing here.

### **Third Citizen**

We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Mine own desert.

### **Second Citizen**

Your own desert!

## **CORIOLANUS**

Ay, but not mine own desire.

### **Third Citizen**

How not your own desire?

## **CORIOLANUS**

No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble the poor with begging.

**Third Citizen**

You must think, if we give you any thing, we hope to gain by you.

**CORIOLANUS**

Well then, I pray, your price o' the consulship?

**First Citizen**

The price is to ask it kindly.

**CORIOLANUS**

Kindly! Sir, I pray, let me ha't: I have wounds to show you, which shall be yours in private. Your good voice, sir; what say you?

**Second Citizen**

You shall ha' it, worthy sir.

**CORIOLANUS**

A match, sir. There's in all two worthy voices begged. I have your alms: adieu.

**Third Citizen**

But this is something odd.

**Second Citizen**

An 'twere to give again,--but 'tis no matter.

*Exeunt the three Citizens*

*Re-enter two other Citizens*

**CORIOLANUS**

Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune of your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

**Fourth Citizen**

You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly.

**CORIOLANUS**

Your enigma?

**Fourth Citizen**

You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you have not indeed loved the common people.

**CORIOLANUS**

You should account me the more virtuous that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle: and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul.

**Fifth Citizen**

We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give you our voices heartily.

## **Fourth Citizen**

You have received many wounds for your country.

## **CORIOLANUS**

I will not seal your knowledge with showing them. I  
will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

## **Both Citizens**

The gods give you joy, sir, heartily!

*Exeunt*

## **CORIOLANUS**

Most sweet voices!  
Better it is to die, better to starve,  
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.  
Why in this woolvish toge should I stand here,  
To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear,  
Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't:  
What custom wills, in all things should we do't,  
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,  
And mountainous error be too highly heapt  
For truth to o'er-peer. Rather than fool it so,  
Let the high office and the honour go  
To one that would do thus. I am half through;  
The one part suffer'd, the other will I do.

*Re-enter three Citizens more*

Here come more voices.  
Your voices: for your voices I have fought;  
Watch'd for your voices; for Your voices bear  
Of wounds two dozen odd; battles thrice six  
I have seen and heard of; for your voices have  
Done many things, some less, some more your voices:  
Indeed I would be consul.



## **Sixth Citizen**

He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

## **Seventh Citizen**

Therefore let him be consul: the gods give him joy,  
and make him good friend to the people!

## **All Citizens**

Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul!

*Exeunt*

## **CORIOLANUS**

Worthy voices!

*Re-enter MENENIUS, with BRUTUS and SICINIUS*

## **MENENIUS**

You have stood your limitation; and the tribunes  
Endue you with the people's voice: remains  
That, in the official marks invested, you  
Anon do meet the senate.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Is this done?

## **SICINIUS**

The custom of request you have discharged:  
The people do admit you, and are summon'd  
To meet anon, upon your approbation.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Where? at the senate-house?

**SICINIUS**

There, Coriolanus.

**CORIOLANUS**

May I change these garments?

**SICINIUS**

You may, sir.

**CORIOLANUS**

That I'll straight do; and, knowing myself again,  
Repair to the senate-house.

**MENENIUS**

I'll keep you company. Will you along?

**BRUTUS**

We stay here for the people.

**SICINIUS**

Fare you well.

*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and MENENIUS*

He has it now, and by his looks methink  
'Tis warm at 's heart.

**BRUTUS**

With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds.  
will you dismiss the people?

*Re-enter Citizens*

**SICINIUS**

How now, my masters! have you chose this man?

**First Citizen**

He has our voices, sir.

**BRUTUS**

We pray the gods he may deserve your loves.

**Second Citizen**

Amen, sir: to my poor unworthy notice,  
He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

**Third Citizen**

Certainly  
He flouted us downright.

**First Citizen**

No,'tis his kind of speech: he did not mock us.

**Second Citizen**

Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says  
He used us scornfully: he should have show'd us  
His marks of merit, wounds received for's country.

**SICINIUS**

Why, so he did, I am sure.

**Citizens**

No, no; no man saw 'em.

### **Third Citizen**

He said he had wounds, which he could show  
in private;  
And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn,  
'I would be consul,' says he: 'aged custom,  
But by your voices, will not so permit me;  
Your voices therefore.' When we granted that,  
Here was 'I thank you for your voices: thank you:  
Your most sweet voices: now you have left  
your voices,  
I have no further with you.' Was not this mockery?

### **SICINIUS**

Why either were you ignorant to see't,  
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness  
To yield your voices?

### **BRUTUS**

Could you not have told him  
As you were lesson'd, when he had no power,  
But was a petty servant to the state,  
He was your enemy, ever spake against  
Your liberties and the charters that you bear  
I' the body of the weal; and now, arriving  
A place of potency and sway o' the state,  
If he should still malignantly remain  
Fast foe to the plebeii, your voices might  
Be curses to yourselves? You should have said  
That as his worthy deeds did claim no less  
Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature  
Would think upon you for your voices and  
Translate his malice towards you into love,  
Standing your friendly lord.

### **SICINIUS**

Thus to have said,  
As you were fore-advised, had touch'd his spirit

And tried his inclination; from him pluck'd  
Either his gracious promise, which you might,  
As cause had call'd you up, have held him to  
Or else it would have gall'd his surly nature,  
Which easily endures not article  
Tying him to aught; so putting him to rage,  
You should have ta'en the advantage of his choler  
And pass'd him unelected.

## **BRUTUS**

Did you perceive  
He did solicit you in free contempt  
When he did need your loves, and do you think  
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you,  
When he hath power to crush? Why, had your bodies  
No heart among you? or had you tongues to cry  
Against the rectorship of judgment?

## **SICINIUS**

Have you  
Ere now denied the asker? and now again  
Of him that did not ask, but mock, bestow  
Your sued-for tongues?

## **Third Citizen**

He's not confirm'd; we may deny him yet.

## **Second Citizen**

And will deny him:  
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

## **First Citizen**

I twice five hundred and their friends to piece 'em.

## **BRUTUS**

Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends,

They have chose a consul that will from them take  
Their liberties; make them of no more voice  
Than dogs that are as often beat for barking  
As therefore kept to do so.

## **SICINIUS**

Let them assemble,  
And on a safer judgment all revoke  
Your ignorant election; enforce his pride,  
And his old hate unto you; besides, forget not  
With what contempt he wore the humble weed,  
How in his suit he scorn'd you; but your loves,  
Thinking upon his services, took from you  
The apprehension of his present portance,  
Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion  
After the inveterate hate he bears you.

## **BRUTUS**

Lay  
A fault on us, your tribunes; that we laboured,  
No impediment between, but that you must  
Cast your election on him.

## **SICINIUS**

Say, you chose him  
More after our commandment than as guided  
By your own true affections, and that your minds,  
Preoccupied with what you rather must do  
Than what you should, made you against the grain  
To voice him consul: lay the fault on us.

## **BRUTUS**

Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures to you.  
How youngly he began to serve his country,  
How long continued, and what stock he springs of,  
The noble house o' the Marcians, from whence came  
That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,  
Who, after great Hostilius, here was king;

Of the same house Publius and Quintus were,  
That our beat water brought by conduits hither;  
And [Censorinus,] nobly named so,  
Twice being [by the people chosen] censor,  
Was his great ancestor.

## **SICINIUS**

One thus descended,  
That hath beside well in his person wrought  
To be set high in place, we did commend  
To your remembrances: but you have found,  
Scaling his present bearing with his past,  
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke  
Your sudden approbation.

## **BRUTUS**

Say, you ne'er had done't--  
Harp on that still--but by our putting on;  
And presently, when you have drawn your number,  
Repair to the Capitol.

## **All**

We will so: almost all  
Repent in their election.

*Exeunt Citizens*

## **BRUTUS**

Let them go on;  
This mutiny were better put in hazard,  
Than stay, past doubt, for greater:  
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage  
With their refusal, both observe and answer  
The vantage of his anger.

## **SICINIUS**

To the Capitol, come:

We will be there before the stream o' the people;  
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own,  
Which we have goaded onward.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. A street.

*Cornets. Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, all the Gentry, COMINIUS, TITUS LARTIUS, and other Senators*

### CORIOLANUS

Tullus Aufidius then had made new head?

### LARTIUS

He had, my lord; and that it was which caused  
Our swifter composition.

### CORIOLANUS

So then the Volsces stand but as at first,  
Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road.  
Upon's again.

### COMINIUS

They are worn, lord consul, so,  
That we shall hardly in our ages see  
Their banners wave again.

### CORIOLANUS

Saw you Aufidius?

### LARTIUS

On safe-guard he came to me; and did curse  
Against the Volsces, for they had so vilely  
Yielded the town: he is retired to Antium.

## **CORIO LANUS**

Spoke he of me?

## **LARTIUS**

He did, my lord.

## **CORIO LANUS**

How? what?

## **LARTIUS**

How often he had met you, sword to sword;  
That of all things upon the earth he hated  
Your person most, that he would pawn his fortunes  
To hopeless restitution, so he might  
Be call'd your vanquisher.

## **CORIO LANUS**

At Antium lives he?

## **LARTIUS**

At Antium.

## **CORIO LANUS**

I wish I had a cause to seek him there,  
To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home.

*Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS*

Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,  
The tongues o' the common mouth: I do despise them;  
For they do prank them in authority,  
Against all noble sufferance.

## **SICINIUS**

Pass no further.

**CORIOLANUS**

Ha! what is that?

**BRUTUS**

It will be dangerous to go on: no further.

**CORIOLANUS**

What makes this change?

**MENENIUS**

The matter?

**COMINIUS**

Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common?

**BRUTUS**

Cominius, no.

**CORIOLANUS**

Have I had children's voices?

**First Senator**

Tribunes, give way; he shall to the market-place.

**BRUTUS**

The people are incensed against him.

**SICINIUS**

Stop,  
Or all will fall in broil.

## **CORIO LANUS**

Are these your herd?  
Must these have voices, that can yield them now  
And straight disclaim their tongues? What are  
your offices?  
You being their mouths, why rule you not their teeth?  
Have you not set them on?

## **MENENIUS**

Be calm, be calm.

## **CORIO LANUS**

It is a purposed thing, and grows by plot,  
To curb the will of the nobility:  
Suffer't, and live with such as cannot rule  
Nor ever will be ruled.

## **BRUTUS**

Call't not a plot:  
The people cry you mock'd them, and of late,  
When corn was given them gratis, you repined;  
Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd them  
Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness.

## **CORIO LANUS**

Why, this was known before.

## **BRUTUS**

Not to them all.

## **CORIO LANUS**

Have you inform'd them sithence?

**BRUTUS**

How! I inform them!

**CORIOLANUS**

You are like to do such business.

**BRUTUS**

Not unlike,  
Each way, to better yours.

**CORIOLANUS**

Why then should I be consul? By yond clouds,  
Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me  
Your fellow tribune.

**SICINIUS**

You show too much of that  
For which the people stir: if you will pass  
To where you are bound, you must inquire your way,  
Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit,  
Or never be so noble as a consul,  
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

**MENENIUS**

Let's be calm.

**COMINIUS**

The people are abused; set on. This paltering  
Becomes not Rome, nor has Coriolanus  
Deserved this so dishonour'd rub, laid falsely  
I' the plain way of his merit.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Tell me of corn!  
This was my speech, and I will speak't again--

## **MENENIUS**

Not now, not now.

## **First Senator**

Not in this heat, sir, now.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Now, as I live, I will. My nobler friends,  
I crave their pardons:  
For the mutable, rank-scented many, let them  
Regard me as I do not flatter, and  
Therein behold themselves: I say again,  
In soothing them, we nourish 'gainst our senate  
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,  
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd,  
and scatter'd,  
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number,  
Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that  
Which they have given to beggars.

## **MENENIUS**

Well, no more.

## **First Senator**

No more words, we beseech you.

## **CORIOLANUS**

How! no more!  
As for my country I have shed my blood,  
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs

Coin words till their decay against those measles,  
Which we disdain should tatter us, yet sought  
The very way to catch them.

**BRUTUS**

You speak o' the people,  
As if you were a god to punish, not  
A man of their infirmity.

**SICINIUS**

'Twere well  
We let the people know't.

**MENENIUS**

What, what? his choler?

**CORIOLANUS**

Choler!  
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,  
By Jove, 'twould be my mind!

**SICINIUS**

It is a mind  
That shall remain a poison where it is,  
Not poison any further.

**CORIOLANUS**

Shall remain!  
Hear you this Triton of the minnows? mark you  
His absolute 'shall'?

**COMINIUS**

'Twas from the canon.

## CORIO LANUS

'Shall'!

O good but most unwise patricians! why,  
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus  
Given Hydra here to choose an officer,  
That with his peremptory 'shall,' being but  
The horn and noise o' the monster's, wants not spirit  
To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,  
And make your channel his? If he have power  
Then veil your ignorance; if none, awake  
Your dangerous lenity. If you are learn'd,  
Be not as common fools; if you are not,  
Let them have cushions by you. You are plebeians,  
If they be senators: and they are no less,  
When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste  
Most palates theirs. They choose their magistrate,  
And such a one as he, who puts his 'shall,'  
His popular 'shall' against a graver bench  
Than ever frown in Greece. By Jove himself!  
It makes the consuls base: and my soul aches  
To know, when two authorities are up,  
Neither supreme, how soon confusion  
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take  
The one by the other.

## COMINIUS

Well, on to the market-place.

## CORIO LANUS

Whoever gave that counsel, to give forth  
The corn o' the storehouse gratis, as 'twas used  
Sometime in Greece,--

## MENENIUS

Well, well, no more of that.

## CORIO LANUS



Though there the people had more absolute power,  
I say, they nourish'd disobedience, fed  
The ruin of the state.

## **BRUTUS**

Why, shall the people give  
One that speaks thus their voice?

## **CORIOLANUS**

I'll give my reasons,  
More worthier than their voices. They know the corn  
Was not our recompense, resting well assured  
That ne'er did service for't: being press'd to the war,  
Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,  
They would not thread the gates. This kind of service  
Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' the war  
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd  
Most valour, spoke not for them: the accusation  
Which they have often made against the senate,  
All cause unborn, could never be the motive  
Of our so frank donation. Well, what then?  
How shall this bisson multitude digest  
The senate's courtesy? Let deeds express  
What's like to be their words: 'we did request it;  
We are the greater poll, and in true fear  
They gave us our demands.' Thus we debase  
The nature of our seats and make the rabble  
Call our cares fears; which will in time  
Break ope the locks o' the senate and bring in  
The crows to peck the eagles.

## **MENENIUS**

Come, enough.

## **BRUTUS**

Enough, with over-measure.

## **CORIOLANUS**

No, take more:  
What may be sworn by, both divine and human,  
Seal what I end withal! This double worship,  
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other  
Insult without all reason, where gentry, title, wisdom,  
Cannot conclude but by the yea and no  
Of general ignorance,--it must omit  
Real necessities, and give way the while  
To unstable slightness: purpose so barr'd,  
it follows,  
Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech you,--  
You that will be less fearful than discreet,  
That love the fundamental part of state  
More than you doubt the change on't, that prefer  
A noble life before a long, and wish  
To jump a body with a dangerous physic  
That's sure of death without it, at once pluck out  
The multitudinous tongue; let them not lick  
The sweet which is their poison: your dishonour  
Mangles true judgment and bereaves the state  
Of that integrity which should become't,  
Not having the power to do the good it would,  
For the in which doth control't.

## **BRUTUS**

Has said enough.

## **SICINIUS**

Has spoken like a traitor, and shall answer  
As traitors do.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Thou wretch, despite o'erwhelm thee!  
What should the people do with these bald tribunes?  
On whom depending, their obedience fails  
To the greater bench: in a rebellion,  
When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,  
Then were they chosen: in a better hour,

Let what is meet be said it must be meet,  
And throw their power i' the dust.

**BRUTUS**

Manifest treason!

**SICINIUS**

This a consul? no.

**BRUTUS**

The aediles, ho!

*Enter an AEdile*

Let him be apprehended.

**SICINIUS**

Go, call the people:

*Exit AEdile*

in whose name myself  
Attach thee as a traitorous innovator,  
A foe to the public weal: obey, I charge thee,  
And follow to thine answer.

**CORIOLANUS**

Hence, old goat!  
Senators, & C We'll surety him.

**COMINIUS**

Aged sir, hands off.

**CORIOLANUS**

Hence, rotten thing! or I shall shake thy bones  
Out of thy garments.

**SICINIUS**

Help, ye citizens!

*Enter a rabble of Citizens (Plebeians), with the AEdiles*

**MENENIUS**

On both sides more respect.

**SICINIUS**

Here's he that would take from you all your power.

**BRUTUS**

Seize him, AEdiles!

**Citizens**

Down with him! down with him!  
Senators, & C Weapons, weapons, weapons!

*They all bustle about CORIOLANUS, crying*

'Tribunes!' 'Patricians!' 'Citizens!' 'What, ho!'  
'Sicinius!' 'Brutus!' 'Coriolanus!' 'Citizens!'  
'Peace, peace, peace!' 'Stay, hold, peace!'

**MENENIUS**

What is about to be? I am out of breath;  
Confusion's near; I cannot speak. You, tribunes  
To the people! Coriolanus, patience!  
Speak, good Sicinius.

**SICINIUS**

Hear me, people; peace!

**Citizens**

Let's hear our tribune: peace Speak, speak, speak.

**SICINIUS**

You are at point to lose your liberties:  
Marcius would have all from you; Marcius,  
Whom late you have named for consul.

**MENENIUS**

Fie, fie, fie!  
This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

**First Senator**

To unbuild the city and to lay all flat.

**SICINIUS**

What is the city but the people?

**Citizens**

True,  
The people are the city.

**BRUTUS**

By the consent of all, we were establish'd  
The people's magistrates.

**Citizens**

You so remain.

**MENENIUS**

And so are like to do.

## **COMINIUS**

That is the way to lay the city flat;  
To bring the roof to the foundation,  
And bury all, which yet distinctly ranges,  
In heaps and piles of ruin.

## **SICINIUS**

This deserves death.

## **BRUTUS**

Or let us stand to our authority,  
Or let us lose it. We do here pronounce,  
Upon the part o' the people, in whose power  
We were elected theirs, Marcius is worthy  
Of present death.

## **SICINIUS**

Therefore lay hold of him;  
Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence  
Into destruction cast him.

## **BRUTUS**

AEdiles, seize him!

## **Citizens**

Yield, Marcius, yield!

## **MENENIUS**

Hear me one word;  
Beseech you, tribunes, hear me but a word.

## **AEdile**

Peace, peace!

**MENENIUS**

[To BRUTUS] Be that you seem, truly your  
country's friend,  
And temperately proceed to what you would  
Thus violently redress.

**BRUTUS**

Sir, those cold ways,  
That seem like prudent helps, are very poisonous  
Where the disease is violent. Lay hands upon him,  
And bear him to the rock.

**CORIOLANUS**

No, I'll die here.

*Drawing his sword*

There's some among you have beheld me fighting:  
Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen me.

**MENENIUS**

Down with that sword! Tribunes, withdraw awhile.

**BRUTUS**

Lay hands upon him.

**COMINIUS**

Help Marcius, help,  
You that be noble; help him, young and old!

**Citizens**

Down with him, down with him!

*In this mutiny, the Tribunes, the AEdiles, and the People, are beat in*

**MENENIUS**

Go, get you to your house; be gone, away!  
All will be naught else.

**Second Senator**

Get you gone.

**COMINIUS**

Stand fast;  
We have as many friends as enemies.

**MENENIUS**

Sham it be put to that?

**First Senator**

The gods forbid!  
I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house;  
Leave us to cure this cause.

**MENENIUS**

For 'tis a sore upon us,  
You cannot tent yourself: be gone, beseech you.

**COMINIUS**

Come, sir, along with us.

**CORIOLANUS**

I would they were barbarians--as they are,  
Though in Rome litter'd--not Romans--as they are not,



Though calved i' the porch o' the Capitol--

## **MENENIUS**

Be gone;  
Put not your worthy rage into your tongue;  
One time will owe another.

## **CORIOLANUS**

On fair ground  
I could beat forty of them.

## **COMINIUS**

I could myself  
Take up a brace o' the best of them; yea, the  
two tribunes:  
But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic;  
And manhood is call'd foolery, when it stands  
Against a falling fabric. Will you hence,  
Before the tag return? whose rage doth rend  
Like interrupted waters and o'erbear  
What they are used to bear.

## **MENENIUS**

Pray you, be gone:  
I'll try whether my old wit be in request  
With those that have but little: this must be patch'd  
With cloth of any colour.

## **COMINIUS**

Nay, come away.

*Exeunt CORIOLANUS, COMINIUS, and others*

## **A Patrician**

This man has marr'd his fortune.

## **MENENIUS**

His nature is too noble for the world:  
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,  
Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his mouth:  
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent;  
And, being angry, does forget that ever  
He heard the name of death.

*A noise within*

Here's goodly work!

## **Second Patrician**

I would they were abed!

## **MENENIUS**

I would they were in Tiber! What the vengeance!  
Could he not speak 'em fair?

*Re-enter BRUTUS and SICINIUS, with the rabble*

## **SICINIUS**

Where is this viper  
That would depopulate the city and  
Be every man himself?

## **MENENIUS**

You worthy tribunes,--

## **SICINIUS**

He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock  
With rigorous hands: he hath resisted law,  
And therefore law shall scorn him further trial  
Than the severity of the public power  
Which he so sets at nought.

## **First Citizen**

He shall well know  
The noble tribunes are the people's mouths,  
And we their hands.

## **Citizens**

He shall, sure on't.

## **MENENIUS**

Sir, sir,--

## **SICINIUS**

Peace!

## **MENENIUS**

Do not cry havoc, where you should but hunt  
With modest warrant.

## **SICINIUS**

Sir, how comes't that you  
Have holp to make this rescue?

## **MENENIUS**

Hear me speak:  
As I do know the consul's worthiness,  
So can I name his faults,--

## **SICINIUS**

Consul! what consul?

## **MENENIUS**

The consul Coriolanus.

**BRUTUS**

He consul!

**CITIZENS**

No, no, no, no, no.

**MENENIUS**

If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours, good people,  
I may be heard, I would crave a word or two;  
The which shall turn you to no further harm  
Than so much loss of time.

**SICINIUS**

Speak briefly then;  
For we are peremptory to dispatch  
This viperous traitor: to eject him hence  
Were but one danger, and to keep him here  
Our certain death: therefore it is decreed  
He dies to-night.

**MENENIUS**

Now the good gods forbid  
That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude  
Towards her deserved children is enroll'd  
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam  
Should now eat up her own!

**SICINIUS**

He's a disease that must be cut away.

**MENENIUS**

O, he's a limb that has but a disease;

Mortal, to cut it off; to cure it, easy.  
What has he done to Rome that's worthy death?  
Killing our enemies, the blood he hath lost--  
Which, I dare vouch, is more than that he hath,  
By many an ounce--he dropp'd it for his country;  
And what is left, to lose it by his country,  
Were to us all, that do't and suffer it,  
A brand to the end o' the world.

**SICINIUS**

This is clean kam.

**BRUTUS**

Merely awry: when he did love his country,  
It honour'd him.

**MENENIUS**

The service of the foot  
Being once gangrened, is not then respected  
For what before it was.

**BRUTUS**

We'll hear no more.  
Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence:  
Lest his infection, being of catching nature,  
Spread further.

**MENENIUS**

One word more, one word.  
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find  
The harm of unscann'd swiftness, will too late  
Tie leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed by process;  
Lest parties, as he is beloved, break out,  
And sack great Rome with Romans.

**BRUTUS**

If it were so,--

## **SICINIUS**

What do ye talk?  
Have we not had a taste of his obedience?  
Our aediles smote? ourselves resisted? Come.

## **MENENIUS**

Consider this: he has been bred i' the wars  
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill school'd  
In bolted language; meal and bran together  
He throws without distinction. Give me leave,  
I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him  
Where he shall answer, by a lawful form,  
In peace, to his utmost peril.

## **First Senator**

Noble tribunes,  
It is the humane way: the other course  
Will prove too bloody, and the end of it  
Unknown to the beginning.

## **SICINIUS**

Noble Menenius,  
Be you then as the people's officer.  
Masters, lay down your weapons.

## **BRUTUS**

Go not home.

## **SICINIUS**

Meet on the market-place. We'll attend you there:  
Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed  
In our first way.

## MENENIUS

I'll bring him to you.

*To the Senators*

Let me desire your company: he must come,  
Or what is worst will follow.

## First Senator

Pray you, let's to him.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in CORIOLANUS'S house.

*Enter CORIOLANUS with Patricians*

### CORIOLANUS

Let them puff all about mine ears, present me  
Death on the wheel or at wild horses' heels,  
Or pile ten hills on the Tarpeian rock,  
That the precipitation might down stretch  
Below the beam of sight, yet will I still  
Be thus to them.

### A Patrician

You do the nobler.

### CORIOLANUS

I muse my mother  
Does not approve me further, who was wont  
To call them woollen vassals, things created  
To buy and sell with groats, to show bare heads  
In congregations, to yawn, be still and wonder,  
When one but of my ordinance stood up  
To speak of peace or war.

*Enter VOLUMNIA*

I talk of you:  
Why did you wish me milder? would you have me  
False to my nature? Rather say I play  
The man I am.

### VOLUMNIA



O, sir, sir, sir,  
I would have had you put your power well on,  
Before you had worn it out.

**CORIOLANUS**

Let go.

**VOLUMNIA**

You might have been enough the man you are,  
With striving less to be so; lesser had been  
The thwartings of your dispositions, if  
You had not show'd them how ye were disposed  
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

**CORIOLANUS**

Let them hang.

**A Patrician**

Ay, and burn too.

*Enter MENENIUS and Senators*

**MENENIUS**

Come, come, you have been too rough, something  
too rough;  
You must return and mend it.

**First Senator**

There's no remedy;  
Unless, by not so doing, our good city  
Cleave in the midst, and perish.

**VOLUMNIA**

Pray, be counsell'd:

I have a heart as little apt as yours,  
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger  
To better vantage.

**MENENIUS**

Well said, noble woman?  
Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that  
The violent fit o' the time craves it as physic  
For the whole state, I would put mine armour on,  
Which I can scarcely bear.

**CORIOLANUS**

What must I do?

**MENENIUS**

Return to the tribunes.

**CORIOLANUS**

Well, what then? what then?

**MENENIUS**

Repent what you have spoke.

**CORIOLANUS**

For them! I cannot do it to the gods;  
Must I then do't to them?

**VOLUMNIA**

You are too absolute;  
Though therein you can never be too noble,  
But when extremities speak. I have heard you say,  
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,  
I' the war do grow together: grant that, and tell me,  
In peace what each of them by the other lose,

That they combine not there.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Tush, tush!

## **MENENIUS**

A good demand.

## **VOLUMNIA**

If it be honour in your wars to seem  
The same you are not, which, for your best ends,  
You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse,  
That it shall hold companionship in peace  
With honour, as in war, since that to both  
It stands in like request?

## **CORIOLANUS**

Why force you this?

## **VOLUMNIA**

Because that now it lies you on to speak  
To the people; not by your own instruction,  
Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,  
But with such words that are but rooted in  
Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables  
Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.  
Now, this no more dishonours you at all  
Than to take in a town with gentle words,  
Which else would put you to your fortune and  
The hazard of much blood.  
I would dissemble with my nature where  
My fortunes and my friends at stake required  
I should do so in honour: I am in this,  
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles;  
And you will rather show our general louts  
How you can frown than spend a fawn upon 'em,  
For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard

Of what that want might ruin.

## **MENENIUS**

Noble lady!

Come, go with us; speak fair: you may salve so,  
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss  
Of what is past.

## **VOLUMNIA**

I prithee now, my son,  
Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand;  
And thus far having stretch'd it--here be with them--  
Thy knee bussing the stones--for in such business  
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant  
More learned than the ears--waving thy head,  
Which often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,  
Now humble as the ripest mulberry  
That will not hold the handling: or say to them,  
Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils  
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,  
Were fit for thee to use as they to claim,  
In asking their good loves, but thou wilt frame  
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far  
As thou hast power and person.

## **MENENIUS**

This but done,  
Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours;  
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free  
As words to little purpose.

## **VOLUMNIA**

Prithee now,  
Go, and be ruled: although I know thou hadst rather  
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf  
Than flatter him in a bower. Here is Cominius.

*Enter COMINIUS*

## COMINIUS

I have been i' the market-place; and, sir, 'tis fit  
You make strong party, or defend yourself  
By calmness or by absence: all's in anger.

## MENENIUS

Only fair speech.

## COMINIUS

I think 'twill serve, if he  
Can thereto frame his spirit.

## VOLUMNIA

He must, and will  
Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

## CORIOLANUS

Must I go show them my unbarbed sconce?  
Must I with base tongue give my noble heart  
A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do't:  
Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,  
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind it  
And throw't against the wind. To the market-place!  
You have put me now to such a part which never  
I shall discharge to the life.

## COMINIUS

Come, come, we'll prompt you.

## VOLUMNIA

I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast said  
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,  
To have my praise for this, perform a part  
Thou hast not done before.

## CORIOLANUS

Well, I must do't:  
Away, my disposition, and possess me  
Some harlot's spirit! my throat of war be turn'd,  
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe  
Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice  
That babies lulls asleep! the smiles of knaves  
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up  
The glasses of my sight! a beggar's tongue  
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd knees,  
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his  
That hath received an alms! I will not do't,  
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth  
And by my body's action teach my mind  
A most inherent baseness.

## VOLUMNIA

At thy choice, then:  
To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour  
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin; let  
Thy mother rather feel thy pride than fear  
Thy dangerous stoutness, for I mock at death  
With as big heart as thou. Do as thou list  
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from me,  
But owe thy pride thyself.

## CORIOLANUS

Pray, be content:  
Mother, I am going to the market-place;  
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,  
Cog their hearts from them, and come home beloved  
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going:  
Commend me to my wife. I'll return consul;  
Or never trust to what my tongue can do  
I' the way of flattery further.

## VOLUMNIA

Do your will.

*Exit*

## **COMINIUS**

Away! the tribunes do attend you: arm yourself  
To answer mildly; for they are prepared  
With accusations, as I hear, more strong  
Than are upon you yet.

## **CORIOLANUS**

The word is 'mildly.' Pray you, let us go:  
Let them accuse me by invention, I  
Will answer in mine honour.

## **MENENIUS**

Ay, but mildly.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Well, mildly be it then. Mildly!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

























# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. Before a gate of the city.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, MENENIUS, COMINIUS, with the young Nobility of Rome*

### CORIOLANUS

Come, leave your tears: a brief farewell: the beast  
With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,  
Where is your ancient courage? you were used  
To say extremity was the trier of spirits;  
That common chances common men could bear;  
That when the sea was calm all boats alike  
Show'd mastership in floating; fortune's blows,  
When most struck home, being gentle wounded, craves  
A noble cunning: you were used to load me  
With precepts that would make invincible  
The heart that conn'd them.

### VIRGILIA

O heavens! O heavens!

### CORIOLANUS

Nay! prithee, woman,--

### VOLUMNIA

Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,  
And occupations perish!

### CORIOLANUS

What, what, what!  
I shall be loved when I am lack'd. Nay, mother.

Resume that spirit, when you were wont to say,  
If you had been the wife of Hercules,  
Six of his labours you'd have done, and saved  
Your husband so much sweat. Cominius,  
Droop not; adieu. Farewell, my wife, my mother:  
I'll do well yet. Thou old and true Menenius,  
Thy tears are salter than a younger man's,  
And venomous to thine eyes. My sometime general,  
I have seen thee stem, and thou hast oft beheld  
Heart-hardening spectacles; tell these sad women  
'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes,  
As 'tis to laugh at 'em. My mother, you wot well  
My hazards still have been your solace: and  
Believe't not lightly--though I go alone,  
Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen  
Makes fear'd and talk'd of more than seen--your son  
Will or exceed the common or be caught  
With cautelous baits and practise.

## **VOLUMNIA**

My first son.  
Whither wilt thou go? Take good Cominius  
With thee awhile: determine on some course,  
More than a wild exposture to each chance  
That starts i' the way before thee.

## **CORIOLANUS**

O the gods!

## **COMINIUS**

I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee  
Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us  
And we of thee: so if the time thrust forth  
A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send  
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,  
And lose advantage, which doth ever cool  
I' the absence of the needer.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Fare ye well:

Thou hast years upon thee; and thou art too full  
Of the wars' surfeits, to go rove with one  
That's yet unbruised: bring me but out at gate.  
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and  
My friends of noble touch, when I am forth,  
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come.  
While I remain above the ground, you shall  
Hear from me still, and never of me aught  
But what is like me formerly.

## **MENENIUS**

That's worthily  
As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.  
If I could shake off but one seven years  
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,  
I'd with thee every foot.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Give me thy hand: Come.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. A street near the gate.

*Enter SICINIUS, BRUTUS, and an AEdile*

**SICINIUS**

Bid them all home; he's gone, and we'll no further.  
The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided  
In his behalf.

**BRUTUS**

Now we have shown our power,  
Let us seem humbler after it is done  
Than when it was a-doing.

**SICINIUS**

Bid them home:  
Say their great enemy is gone, and they  
Stand in their ancient strength.

**BRUTUS**

Dismiss them home.

*Exit AEdile*

Here comes his mother.

**SICINIUS**

Let's not meet her.

**BRUTUS**

Why?

**SICINIUS**

They say she's mad.

**BRUTUS**

They have ta'en note of us: keep on your way.

*Enter VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, and MENENIUS*

**VOLUMNIA**

O, ye're well met: the hoarded plague o' the gods  
Requite your love!

**MENENIUS**

Peace, peace; be not so loud.

**VOLUMNIA**

If that I could for weeping, you should hear,--  
Nay, and you shall hear some.

*To BRUTUS*

Will you be gone?

**VIRGILIA**

[To SICINIUS] You shall stay too: I would I had the power  
To say so to my husband.

**SICINIUS**

Are you mankind?

**VOLUMNIA**

Ay, fool; is that a shame? Note but this fool.  
Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship  
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome  
Than thou hast spoken words?

**SICINIUS**

O blessed heavens!

**VOLUMNIA**

More noble blows than ever thou wise words;  
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what; yet go:  
Nay, but thou shalt stay too: I would my son  
Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,  
His good sword in his hand.

**SICINIUS**

What then?

**VIRGILIA**

What then!  
He'd make an end of thy posterity.

**VOLUMNIA**

Bastards and all.  
Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

**MENENIUS**

Come, come, peace.

**SICINIUS**

I would he had continued to his country  
As he began, and not unknit himself  
The noble knot he made.

## **BRUTUS**

I would he had.

## **VOLUMNIA**

'I would he had'! 'Twas you incensed the rabble:  
Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth  
As I can of those mysteries which heaven  
Will not have earth to know.

## **BRUTUS**

Pray, let us go.

## **VOLUMNIA**

Now, pray, sir, get you gone:  
You have done a brave deed. Ere you go, hear this:--  
As far as doth the Capitol exceed  
The meanest house in Rome, so far my son--  
This lady's husband here, this, do you see--  
Whom you have banish'd, does exceed you all.

## **BRUTUS**

Well, well, we'll leave you.

## **SICINIUS**

Why stay we to be baited  
With one that wants her wits?

## **VOLUMNIA**

Take my prayers with you.

*Exeunt Tribunes*

I would the gods had nothing else to do  
But to confirm my curses! Could I meet 'em



But once a-day, it would unclog my heart  
Of what lies heavy to't.

**MENENIUS**

You have told them home;  
And, by my troth, you have cause. You'll sup with me?

**VOLUMNIA**

Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself,  
And so shall starve with feeding. Come, let's go:  
Leave this faint puling and lament as I do,  
In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come.

**MENENIUS**

Fie, fie, fie!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A highway between Rome and Antium.

*Enter a Roman and a Volsce, meeting*

**Roman**

I know you well, sir, and you know me: your name, I think, is Adrian.

**Volsce**

It is so, sir: truly, I have forgot you.

**Roman**

I am a Roman; and my services are, as you are, against 'em: know you me yet?

**Volsce**

Nicanor? no.

**Roman**

The same, sir.

**Volsce**

You had more beard when I last saw you; but your favour is well approved by your tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have a note from the Volscian state, to find you out there: you have well saved me a day's journey.

**Roman**

There hath been in Rome strange insurrections; the people against the senators, patricians, and nobles.

**Volsce**

Hath been! is it ended, then? Our state thinks not so: they are in a most warlike preparation, and hope to come upon them in the heat of their division.

**Roman**

The main blaze of it is past, but a small thing would make it flame again: for the nobles receive so to heart the banishment of that worthy Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe aptness to take all power from the people and to pluck from them their tribunes for ever. This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost mature for the violent breaking out.

**Volsce**

Coriolanus banished!

**Roman**

Banished, sir.

**Volsce**

You will be welcome with this intelligence, Nicanor.

**Roman**

The day serves well for them now. I have heard it said, the fittest time to corrupt a man's wife is when she's fallen out with her husband. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will appear well in these wars, his great opposer, Coriolanus, being now in no request of his country.

## **Volsce**

He cannot choose. I am most fortunate, thus  
accidentally to encounter you: you have ended my  
business, and I will merrily accompany you home.

## **Roman**

I shall, between this and supper, tell you most  
strange things from Rome; all tending to the good of  
their adversaries. Have you an army ready, say you?

## **Volsce**

A most royal one; the centurions and their charges,  
distinctly billeted, already in the entertainment,  
and to be on foot at an hour's warning.

## **Roman**

I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the  
man, I think, that shall set them in present action.  
So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of your company.

## **Volsce**

You take my part from me, sir; I have the most cause  
to be glad of yours.

## **Roman**

Well, let us go together.

*Exeunt*

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Antium. Before Aufidius's house.

*Enter CORIOLANUS in mean apparel, disguised and muffled*

### CORIOLANUS

A goodly city is this Antium. City,  
'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir  
Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars  
Have I heard groan and drop: then know me not,  
Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones  
In puny battle slay me.

*Enter a Citizen*

Save you, sir.

### Citizen

And you.

### CORIOLANUS

Direct me, if it be your will,  
Where great Aufidius lies: is he in Antium?

### Citizen

He is, and feasts the nobles of the state  
At his house this night.

### CORIOLANUS

Which is his house, beseech you?

### Citizen

This, here before you.

## CORIOLANUS

Thank you, sir: farewell.

*Exit Citizen*

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast sworn,  
Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,  
Whose house, whose bed, whose meal, and exercise,  
Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love  
Unseparable, shall within this hour,  
On a dissension of a doit, break out  
To bitterest enmity: so, fellest foes,  
Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep,  
To take the one the other, by some chance,  
Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends  
And interjoin their issues. So with me:  
My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon  
This enemy town. I'll enter: if he slay me,  
He does fair justice; if he give me way,  
I'll do his country service.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same. A hall in Aufidius's house.

*Music within. Enter a Servingman*

### First Servingman

Wine, wine, wine! What service  
is here! I think our fellows are asleep.

*Exit*

*Enter a second Servingman*

### Second Servingman

Where's Cotus? my master calls  
for him. Cotus!

*Exit*

*Enter CORIOLANUS*

### CORIOLANUS

A goodly house: the feast smells well; but I  
Appear not like a guest.

*Re-enter the first Servingman*

### First Servingman

What would you have, friend? whence are you?  
Here's no place for you: pray, go to the door.

*Exit*

## **CORIOLANUS**

I have deserved no better entertainment,  
In being Coriolanus.

*Re-enter second Servingman*

### **Second Servingman**

Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his eyes in his  
head; that he gives entrance to such companions?  
Pray, get you out.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Away!

### **Second Servingman**

Away! get you away.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Now thou'rt troublesome.

### **Second Servingman**

Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with anon.

*Enter a third Servingman. The first meets him*

### **Third Servingman**

What fellow's this?

### **First Servingman**

A strange one as ever I looked on: I cannot get him  
out of the house: prithee, call my master to him.



*Retires*

**Third Servingman**

What have you to do here, fellow? Pray you, avoid the house.

**CORIOLANUS**

Let me but stand; I will not hurt your hearth.

**Third Servingman**

What are you?

**CORIOLANUS**

A gentleman.

**Third Servingman**

A marvellous poor one.

**CORIOLANUS**

True, so I am.

**Third Servingman**

Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other station; here's no place for you; pray you, avoid: come.

**CORIOLANUS**

Follow your function, go, and batten on cold bits.

*Pushes him away*

**Third Servingman**

What, you will not? Prithee, tell my master what a

strange guest he has here.

**Second Servingman**

And I shall.

*Exit*

**Third Servingman**

Where dwellest thou?

**CORIOLANUS**

Under the canopy.

**Third Servingman**

Under the canopy!

**CORIOLANUS**

Ay.

**Third Servingman**

Where's that?

**CORIOLANUS**

I' the city of kites and crows.

**Third Servingman**

I' the city of kites and crows! What an ass it is!  
Then thou dwellest with daws too?

**CORIOLANUS**

No, I serve not thy master.

### **Third Servingman**

How, sir! do you meddle with my master?

### **CORIOLANUS**

Ay; 'tis an honest service than to meddle with thy mistress. Thou pratest, and pratest; serve with thy trencher, hence!

*Beats him away. Exit third Servingman*

*Enter AUFIDIUS with the second Servingman*

### **AUFIDIUS**

Where is this fellow?

### **Second Servingman**

Here, sir: I'd have beaten him like a dog, but for disturbing the lords within.

*Retires*

### **AUFIDIUS**

Whence comest thou? what wouldst thou? thy name?  
Why speak'st not? speak, man: what's thy name?

### **CORIOLANUS**

If, Tullus,

*Unmuffling*

Not yet thou knowest me, and, seeing me, dost not  
Think me for the man I am, necessity  
Commands me name myself.

### **AUFIDIUS**

What is thy name?

**CORIO LANUS**

A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,  
And harsh in sound to thine.

**AUFIDIUS**

Say, what's thy name?  
Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face  
Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn.  
Thou show'st a noble vessel: what's thy name?

**CORIO LANUS**

Prepare thy brow to frown: know'st  
thou me yet?

**AUFIDIUS**

I know thee not: thy name?

**CORIO LANUS**

My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done  
To thee particularly and to all the Volscies  
Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may  
My surname, Coriolanus: the painful service,  
The extreme dangers and the drops of blood  
Shed for my thankless country are requited  
But with that surname; a good memory,  
And witness of the malice and displeasure  
Which thou shouldst bear me: only that name remains;  
The cruelty and envy of the people,  
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who  
Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest;  
And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be  
Whoop'd out of Rome. Now this extremity  
Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of hope--  
Mistake me not--to save my life, for if

I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world  
I would have 'voided thee, but in mere spite,  
To be full quit of those my banishers,  
Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast  
A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge  
Thine own particular wrongs and stop those maims  
Of shame seen through thy country, speed  
thee straight,  
And make my misery serve thy turn: so use it  
That my revengeful services may prove  
As benefits to thee, for I will fight  
Against my canker'd country with the spleen  
Of all the under fiends. But if so be  
Thou darest not this and that to prove more fortunes  
Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am  
Longer to live most weary, and present  
My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice;  
Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,  
Since I have ever follow'd thee with hate,  
Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast,  
And cannot live but to thy shame, unless  
It be to do thee service.

## AUFIDIUS

O Marcius, Marcius!  
Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my heart  
A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter  
Should from yond cloud speak divine things,  
And say 'Tis true,' I'd not believe them more  
Than thee, all noble Marcius. Let me twine  
Mine arms about that body, where against  
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke  
And scarr'd the moon with splinters: here I clip  
The anvil of my sword, and do contest  
As hotly and as nobly with thy love  
As ever in ambitious strength I did  
Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,  
I loved the maid I married; never man  
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,  
Thou noble thing! more dances my rapt heart  
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw  
Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars! I tell thee,

We have a power on foot; and I had purpose  
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,  
Or lose mine arm fort: thou hast beat me out  
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since  
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me;  
We have been down together in my sleep,  
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat,  
And waked half dead with nothing. Worthy Marcius,  
Had we no quarrel else to Rome, but that  
Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all  
From twelve to seventy, and pouring war  
Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,  
Like a bold flood o'er-bear. O, come, go in,  
And take our friendly senators by the hands;  
Who now are here, taking their leaves of me,  
Who am prepared against your territories,  
Though not for Rome itself.

## **CORIOLANUS**

You bless me, gods!

## **AUFIDIUS**

Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have  
The leading of thine own revenges, take  
The one half of my commission; and set down--  
As best thou art experienced, since thou know'st  
Thy country's strength and weakness,--thine own ways;  
Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,  
Or rudely visit them in parts remote,  
To fright them, ere destroy. But come in:  
Let me commend thee first to those that shall  
Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes!  
And more a friend than e'er an enemy;  
Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand: most welcome!

*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS. The two Servingmen come forward*

## **First Servingman**

Here's a strange alteration!

## **Second Servingman**

By my hand, I had thought to have stricken him with  
a cudgel; and yet my mind gave me his clothes made a  
false report of him.

## **First Servingman**

What an arm he has! he turned me about with his  
finger and his thumb, as one would set up a top.

## **Second Servingman**

Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in  
him: he had, sir, a kind of face, methought,--I  
cannot tell how to term it.

## **First Servingman**

He had so; looking as it were--would I were hanged,  
but I thought there was more in him than I could think.

## **Second Servingman**

So did I, I'll be sworn: he is simply the rarest  
man i' the world.

## **First Servingman**

I think he is: but a greater soldier than he you wot on.

## **Second Servingman**

Who, my master?

## **First Servingman**

Nay, it's no matter for that.

## **Second Servingman**

Worth six on him.

**First Servingman**

Nay, not so neither: but I take him to be the greater soldier.

**Second Servingman**

Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that: for the defence of a town, our general is excellent.

**First Servingman**

Ay, and for an assault too.

*Re-enter third Servingman*

**Third Servingman**

O slaves, I can tell you news,-- news, you rascals!

**First Servingman Second Servingman**

What, what, what? let's partake.

**Third Servingman**

I would not be a Roman, of all nations; I had as lieve be a condemned man.

**First Servingman Second Servingman**

Wherefore? wherefore?

**Third Servingman**

Why, here's he that was wont to thwack our general, Caius Marcius.



## **First Servingman**

Why do you say 'thwack our general '?

## **Third Servingman**

I do not say 'thwack our general;' but he was always good enough for him.

## **Second Servingman**

Come, we are fellows and friends: he was ever too hard for him; I have heard him say so himself.

## **First Servingman**

He was too hard for him directly, to say the troth on't: before Corioli he scotched him and notched him like a carbon ado.

## **Second Servingman**

An he had been cannibally given, he might have broiled and eaten him too.

## **First Servingman**

But, more of thy news?

## **Third Servingman**

Why, he is so made on here within, as if he were son and heir to Mars; set at upper end o' the table; no question asked him by any of the senators, but they stand bald before him: our general himself makes a mistress of him: sanctifies himself with's hand and turns up the white o' the eye to his discourse. But the bottom of the news is that our general is cut i' the middle and but one half of what he was yesterday; for the other has half, by the entreaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says,

and sowl the porter of Rome gates by the ears: he  
will mow all down before him, and leave his passage polled.

### **Second Servingman**

And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

### **Third Servingman**

Do't! he will do't; for, look you, sir, he has as  
many friends as enemies; which friends, sir, as it  
were, durst not, look you, sir, show themselves, as  
we term it, his friends whilst he's in directitude.

### **First Servingman**

Directitude! what's that?

### **Third Servingman**

But when they shall see, sir, his crest up again,  
and the man in blood, they will out of their  
burrows, like conies after rain, and revel all with  
him.

### **First Servingman**

But when goes this forward?

### **Third Servingman**

To-morrow; to-day; presently; you shall have the  
drum struck up this afternoon: 'tis, as it were, a  
parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they  
wipe their lips.

### **Second Servingman**

Why, then we shall have a stirring world again.  
This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, increase  
tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

## First Servingman

Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men.

## Second Servingman

'Tis so: and as war, in some sort, may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds.

## First Servingman

Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

## Third Servingman

Reason; because they then less need one another. The wars for my money. I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. They are rising, they are rising.

## All

In, in, in, in!

*Exeunt*

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Rome. A public place.

*Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS*

### SICINIUS

We hear not of him, neither need we fear him;  
His remedies are tame i' the present peace  
And quietness of the people, which before  
Were in wild hurry. Here do we make his friends  
Blush that the world goes well, who rather had,  
Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold  
Dissentious numbers pestering streets than see  
Our tradesmen with in their shops and going  
About their functions friendly.

### BRUTUS

We stood to't in good time.

*Enter MENENIUS*

Is this Menenius?

### SICINIUS

'Tis he, 'tis he: O, he is grown most kind of late.

### Both Tribunes

Hail sir!

### MENENIUS

Hail to you both!

## **SICINIUS**

Your Coriolanus  
Is not much miss'd, but with his friends:  
The commonwealth doth stand, and so would do,  
Were he more angry at it.

## **MENENIUS**

All's well; and might have been much better, if  
He could have temporized.

## **SICINIUS**

Where is he, hear you?

## **MENENIUS**

Nay, I hear nothing: his mother and his wife  
Hear nothing from him.

*Enter three or four Citizens*

## **Citizens**

The gods preserve you both!

## **SICINIUS**

God-den, our neighbours.

## **BRUTUS**

God-den to you all, god-den to you all.

## **First Citizen**

Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our knees,  
Are bound to pray for you both.

## **SICINIUS**

Live, and thrive!

**BRUTUS**

Farewell, kind neighbours: we wish'd Coriolanus  
Had loved you as we did.

**Citizens**

Now the gods keep you!

**Both Tribunes**

Farewell, farewell.

*Exeunt Citizens*

**SICINIUS**

This is a happier and more comely time  
Than when these fellows ran about the streets,  
Crying confusion.

**BRUTUS**

Caius Marcius was  
A worthy officer i' the war; but insolent,  
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,  
Self-loving,--

**SICINIUS**

And affecting one sole throne,  
Without assistance.

**MENENIUS**

I think not so.

**SICINIUS**

We should by this, to all our lamentation,  
If he had gone forth consul, found it so.

## **BRUTUS**

The gods have well prevented it, and Rome  
Sits safe and still without him.

*Enter an AEdile*

## **AEdile**

Worthy tribunes,  
There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,  
Reports, the Volsces with two several powers  
Are enter'd in the Roman territories,  
And with the deepest malice of the war  
Destroy what lies before 'em.

## **MENENIUS**

'Tis Aufidius,  
Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,  
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world;  
Which were inshell'd when Marcius stood for Rome,  
And durst not once peep out.

## **SICINIUS**

Come, what talk you  
Of Marcius?

## **BRUTUS**

Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It cannot be  
The Volsces dare break with us.

## **MENENIUS**

Cannot be!  
We have record that very well it can,

And three examples of the like have been  
Within my age. But reason with the fellow,  
Before you punish him, where he heard this,  
Lest you shall chance to whip your information  
And beat the messenger who bids beware  
Of what is to be dreaded.

**SICINIUS**

Tell not me:  
I know this cannot be.

**BRUTUS**

Not possible.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

The nobles in great earnestness are going  
All to the senate-house: some news is come  
That turns their countenances.

**SICINIUS**

'Tis this slave;--  
Go whip him, 'fore the people's eyes;--his raising;  
Nothing but his report.

**Messenger**

Yes, worthy sir,  
The slave's report is seconded; and more,  
More fearful, is deliver'd.

**SICINIUS**

What more fearful?

**Messenger**



It is spoke freely out of many mouths--  
How probable I do not know--that Marcius,  
Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,  
And vows revenge as spacious as between  
The young'st and oldest thing.

**SICINIUS**

This is most likely!

**BRUTUS**

Raised only, that the weaker sort may wish  
Good Marcius home again.

**SICINIUS**

The very trick on't.

**MENENIUS**

This is unlikely:  
He and Aufidius can no more atone  
Than violentest contrariety.

*Enter a second Messenger*

**Second Messenger**

You are sent for to the senate:  
A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius  
Associated with Aufidius, rages  
Upon our territories; and have already  
O'erborne their way, consumed with fire, and took  
What lay before them.

*Enter COMINIUS*

**COMINIUS**

O, you have made good work!

## **MENENIUS**

What news? what news?

## **COMINIUS**

You have help to ravish your own daughters and  
To melt the city leads upon your pates,  
To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses,--

## **MENENIUS**

What's the news? what's the news?

## **COMINIUS**

Your temples burned in their cement, and  
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confined  
Into an auger's bore.

## **MENENIUS**

Pray now, your news?  
You have made fair work, I fear me.--Pray, your news?--  
If Marcius should be join'd with Volscians,--

## **COMINIUS**

If!  
He is their god: he leads them like a thing  
Made by some other deity than nature,  
That shapes man better; and they follow him,  
Against us brats, with no less confidence  
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,  
Or butchers killing flies.

## **MENENIUS**

You have made good work,  
You and your apron-men; you that stood so up much

on the voice of occupation and  
The breath of garlic-eaters!

## **COMINIUS**

He will shake  
Your Rome about your ears.

## **MENENIUS**

As Hercules  
Did shake down mellow fruit.  
You have made fair work!

## **BRUTUS**

But is this true, sir?

## **COMINIUS**

Ay; and you'll look pale  
Before you find it other. All the regions  
Do smilingly revolt; and who resist  
Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,  
And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame him?  
Your enemies and his find something in him.

## **MENENIUS**

We are all undone, unless  
The noble man have mercy.

## **COMINIUS**

Who shall ask it?  
The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people  
Deserve such pity of him as the wolf  
Does of the shepherds: for his best friends, if they  
Should say 'Be good to Rome,' they charged him even  
As those should do that had deserved his hate,  
And therein show'd like enemies.

## **MENENIUS**

'Tis true:  
If he were putting to my house the brand  
That should consume it, I have not the face  
To say 'Beseech you, cease.' You have made fair hands,  
You and your crafts! you have crafted fair!

## **COMINIUS**

You have brought  
A trembling upon Rome, such as was never  
So incapable of help.

## **Both Tribunes**

Say not we brought it.

## **MENENIUS**

How! Was it we? we loved him but, like beasts  
And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,  
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

## **COMINIUS**

But I fear  
They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,  
The second name of men, obeys his points  
As if he were his officer: desperation  
Is all the policy, strength and defence,  
That Rome can make against them.

*Enter a troop of Citizens*

## **MENENIUS**

Here come the clusters.  
And is Aufidius with him? You are they  
That made the air unwholesome, when you cast  
Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at

Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming;  
And not a hair upon a soldier's head  
Which will not prove a whip: as many coxcombs  
As you threw caps up will he tumble down,  
And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;  
if he could burn us all into one coal,  
We have deserved it.

## **Citizens**

Faith, we hear fearful news.

## **First Citizen**

For mine own part,  
When I said, banish him, I said 'twas pity.

## **Second Citizen**

And so did I.

## **Third Citizen**

And so did I; and, to say the truth, so did very  
many of us: that we did, we did for the best; and  
though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet  
it was against our will.

## **COMINIUS**

Ye re goodly things, you voices!

## **MENENIUS**

You have made  
Good work, you and your cry! Shall's to the Capitol?

## **COMINIUS**

O, ay, what else?

*Exeunt COMINIUS and MENENIUS*

**SICINIUS**

Go, masters, get you home; be not dismay'd:  
These are a side that would be glad to have  
This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,  
And show no sign of fear.

**First Citizen**

The gods be good to us! Come, masters, let's home.  
I ever said we were i' the wrong when we banished  
him.

**Second Citizen**

So did we all. But, come, let's home.

*Exeunt Citizens*

**BRUTUS**

I do not like this news.

**SICINIUS**

Nor I.

**BRUTUS**

Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth  
Would buy this for a lie!

**SICINIUS**

Pray, let us go.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. A camp, at a small distance from Rome.

*Enter AUFIDIUS and his Lieutenant*

**AUFIDIUS**

Do they still fly to the Roman?

**Lieutenant**

I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but  
Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,  
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end;  
And you are darken'd in this action, sir,  
Even by your own.

**AUFIDIUS**

I cannot help it now,  
Unless, by using means, I lame the foot  
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,  
Even to my person, than I thought he would  
When first I did embrace him: yet his nature  
In that's no changeling; and I must excuse  
What cannot be amended.

**Lieutenant**

Yet I wish, sir,--  
I mean for your particular,--you had not  
Join'd in commission with him; but either  
Had borne the action of yourself, or else  
To him had left it solely.

**AUFIDIUS**



I understand thee well; and be thou sure,  
when he shall come to his account, he knows not  
What I can urge against him. Although it seems,  
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent  
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly.  
And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,  
Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon  
As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone  
That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,  
Whene'er we come to our account.

## **Lieutenant**

Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry Rome?

## **AUFIDIUS**

All places yield to him ere he sits down;  
And the nobility of Rome are his:  
The senators and patricians love him too:  
The tribunes are no soldiers; and their people  
Will be as rash in the repeal, as hasty  
To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome  
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it  
By sovereignty of nature. First he was  
A noble servant to them; but he could not  
Carry his honours even: whether 'twas pride,  
Which out of daily fortune ever taints  
The happy man; whether defect of judgment,  
To fail in the disposing of those chances  
Which he was lord of; or whether nature,  
Not to be other than one thing, not moving  
From the casque to the cushion, but commanding peace  
Even with the same austerity and garb  
As he controll'd the war; but one of these--  
As he hath spices of them all, not all,  
For I dare so far free him--made him fear'd,  
So hated, and so banish'd: but he has a merit,  
To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues  
Lie in the interpretation of the time:  
And power, unto itself most commendable,  
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair  
To extol what it hath done.

One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;  
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.  
Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,  
Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 4, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. A public place.

*Enter MENENIUS, COMINIUS, SICINIUS, BRUTUS, and others*

### MENENIUS

No, I'll not go: you hear what he hath said  
Which was sometime his general; who loved him  
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father:  
But what o' that? Go, you that banish'd him;  
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee  
The way into his mercy: nay, if he coy'd  
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.

### COMINIUS

He would not seem to know me.

### MENENIUS

Do you hear?

### COMINIUS

Yet one time he did call me by my name:  
I urged our old acquaintance, and the drops  
That we have bled together. Coriolanus  
He would not answer to: forbad all names;  
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,  
Till he had forged himself a name o' the fire  
Of burning Rome.

### MENENIUS

Why, so: you have made good work!  
A pair of tribunes that have rack'd for Rome,

To make coals cheap,--a noble memory!

## COMINIUS

I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon  
When it was less expected: he replied,  
It was a bare petition of a state  
To one whom they had punish'd.

## MENENIUS

Very well:  
Could he say less?

## COMINIUS

I offer'd to awaken his regard  
For's private friends: his answer to me was,  
He could not stay to pick them in a pile  
Of noisome musty chaff: he said 'twas folly,  
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt,  
And still to nose the offence.

## MENENIUS

For one poor grain or two!  
I am one of those; his mother, wife, his child,  
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains:  
You are the musty chaff; and you are smelt  
Above the moon: we must be burnt for you.

## SICINIUS

Nay, pray, be patient: if you refuse your aid  
In this so never-needed help, yet do not  
Upbraid's with our distress. But, sure, if you  
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,  
More than the instant army we can make,  
Might stop our countryman.

## MENENIUS

No, I'll not meddle.

**SICINIUS**

Pray you, go to him.

**MENENIUS**

What should I do?

**BRUTUS**

Only make trial what your love can do  
For Rome, towards Marcius.

**MENENIUS**

Well, and say that Marcius  
Return me, as Cominius is return'd,  
Unheard; what then?  
But as a discontented friend, grief-shot  
With his unkindness? say't be so?

**SICINIUS**

Yet your good will  
must have that thanks from Rome, after the measure  
As you intended well.

**MENENIUS**

I'll undertake 't:  
I think he'll hear me. Yet, to bite his lip  
And hum at good Cominius, much unhearts me.  
He was not taken well; he had not dined:  
The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then  
We pout upon the morning, are unapt  
To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd  
These and these conveyances of our blood  
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls  
Than in our priest-like fasts: therefore I'll watch him

Till he be dieted to my request,  
And then I'll set upon him.

**BRUTUS**

You know the very road into his kindness,  
And cannot lose your way.

**MENENIUS**

Good faith, I'll prove him,  
Speed how it will. I shall ere long have knowledge  
Of my success.

*Exit*

**COMINIUS**

He'll never hear him.

**SICINIUS**

Not?

**COMINIUS**

I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye  
Red as 'twould burn Rome; and his injury  
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him;  
'Twas very faintly he said 'Rise;' dismiss'd me  
Thus, with his speechless hand: what he would do,  
He sent in writing after me; what he would not,  
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions:  
So that all hope is vain.  
Unless his noble mother, and his wife;  
Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him  
For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,  
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Entrance of the Volscian camp before Rome.

Two Sentinels on guard.

*Enter to them, MENENIUS*

### First Senator

Stay: whence are you?

### Second Senator

Stand, and go back.

### MENENIUS

You guard like men; 'tis well: but, by your leave,  
I am an officer of state, and come  
To speak with Coriolanus.

### First Senator

From whence?

### MENENIUS

From Rome.

### First Senator

You may not pass, you must return: our general  
Will no more hear from thence.

### Second Senator



You'll see your Rome embraced with fire before  
You'll speak with Coriolanus.

## **MENENIUS**

Good my friends,  
If you have heard your general talk of Rome,  
And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks,  
My name hath touch'd your ears it is Menenius.

## **First Senator**

Be it so; go back: the virtue of your name  
Is not here passable.

## **MENENIUS**

I tell thee, fellow,  
The general is my lover: I have been  
The book of his good acts, whence men have read  
His name unparallel'd, haply amplified;  
For I have ever verified my friends,  
Of whom he's chief, with all the size that verity  
Would without lapsing suffer: nay, sometimes,  
Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground,  
I have tumbled past the throw; and in his praise  
Have almost stamp'd the leasing: therefore, fellow,  
I must have leave to pass.

## **First Senator**

Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies in his  
behalf as you have uttered words in your own, you  
should not pass here; no, though it were as virtuous  
to lie as to live chastely. Therefore, go back.

## **MENENIUS**

Prithee, fellow, remember my name is Menenius,  
always factionary on the party of your general.

## **Second Senator**

Howsoever you have been his liar, as you say you have, I am one that, telling true under him, must say, you cannot pass. Therefore, go back.

**MENENIUS**

Has he dined, canst thou tell? for I would not speak with him till after dinner.

**First Senator**

You are a Roman, are you?

**MENENIUS**

I am, as thy general is.

**First Senator**

Then you should hate Rome, as he does. Can you, when you have pushed out your gates the very defender of them, and, in a violent popular ignorance, given your enemy your shield, think to front his revenges with the easy groans of old women, the virginal palms of your daughters, or with the palsied intercession of such a decayed dotant as you seem to be? Can you think to blow out the intended fire your city is ready to flame in, with such weak breath as this? No, you are deceived; therefore, back to Rome, and prepare for your execution: you are condemned, our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon.

**MENENIUS**

Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here, he would use me with estimation.

**Second Senator**

Come, my captain knows you not.

**MENENIUS**

I mean, thy general.

**First Senator**

My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go; lest  
I let forth your half-pint of blood; back,--that's  
the utmost of your having: back.

**MENENIUS**

Nay, but, fellow, fellow,--

*Enter CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS*

**CORIOLANUS**

What's the matter?

**MENENIUS**

Now, you companion, I'll say an errand for you:  
You shall know now that I am in estimation; you shall  
perceive that a Jack guardant cannot office me from  
my son Coriolanus: guess, but by my entertainment  
with him, if thou standest not i' the state of  
hanging, or of some death more long in  
spectatorship, and crueller in suffering; behold now  
presently, and swoon for what's to come upon thee.

*To CORIOLANUS*

The glorious gods sit in hourly synod about thy  
particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than  
thy old father Menenius does! O my son, my son!  
thou art preparing fire for us; look thee, here's  
water to quench it. I was hardly moved to come to  
thee; but being assured none but myself could move

thee, I have been blown out of your gates with sighs; and conjure thee to pardon Rome, and thy petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here,--this, who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Away!

## **MENENIUS**

How! away!

## **CORIOLANUS**

Wife, mother, child, I know not. My affairs  
Are servanted to others: though I owe  
My revenge properly, my remission lies  
In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,  
Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison, rather  
Than pity note how much. Therefore, be gone.  
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than  
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved thee,  
Take this along; I writ it for thy sake

*Gives a letter*

And would have rent it. Another word, Menenius,  
I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,  
Was my beloved in Rome: yet thou behold'st!

## **AUFIDIUS**

You keep a constant temper.

*Exeunt CORIOLANUS and AUFIDIUS*

## **First Senator**

Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

**Second Senator**

'Tis a spell, you see, of much power: you know the way home again.

**First Senator**

Do you hear how we are shent for keeping your greatness back?

**Second Senator**

What cause, do you think, I have to swoon?

**MENENIUS**

I neither care for the world nor your general: for such things as you, I can scarce think there's any, ye're so slight. He that hath a will to die by himself fears it not from another: let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are, long; and your misery increase with your age! I say to you, as I was said to, Away!

*Exit*

**First Senator**

A noble fellow, I warrant him.

**Second Senator**

The worthy fellow is our general: he's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken.

*Exeunt*























# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Rome. A public place.

*Enter MENENIUS and SICINIUS*

### MENENIUS

See you yond coign o' the Capitol, yond  
corner-stone?

### SICINIUS

Why, what of that?

### MENENIUS

If it be possible for you to displace it with your  
little finger, there is some hope the ladies of  
Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him.  
But I say there is no hope in't: our throats are  
sentenced and stay upon execution.

### SICINIUS

Is't possible that so short a time can alter the  
condition of a man!

### MENENIUS

There is differency between a grub and a butterfly;  
yet your butterfly was a grub. This Marcius is grown  
from man to dragon: he has wings; he's more than a  
creeping thing.

### SICINIUS

He loved his mother dearly.



## **MENENIUS**

So did he me: and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse. The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes: when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading: he is able to pierce a corslet with his eye; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in.

## **SICINIUS**

Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

## **MENENIUS**

I paint him in the character. Mark what mercy his mother shall bring from him: there is no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger; that shall our poor city find: and all this is long of you.

## **SICINIUS**

The gods be good unto us!

## **MENENIUS**

No, in such a case the gods will not be good unto us. When we banished him, we respected not them; and, he returning to break our necks, they respect not us.

*Enter a Messenger*

## **Messenger**

Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your house: The plebeians have got your fellow-tribune And hale him up and down, all swearing, if

The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,  
They'll give him death by inches.

*Enter a second Messenger*

**SICINIUS**

What's the news?

**Second Messenger**

Good news, good news; the ladies have prevail'd,  
The Volscians are dislodged, and Marcius gone:  
A merrier day did never yet greet Rome,  
No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

**SICINIUS**

Friend,  
Art thou certain this is true? is it most certain?

**Second Messenger**

As certain as I know the sun is fire:  
Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of it?  
Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide,  
As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you!

*Trumpets; hautboys; drums beat; all together*

The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries and fifes,  
Tabours and cymbals and the shouting Romans,  
Make the sun dance. Hark you!

*A shout within*

**MENENIUS**

This is good news:  
I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia  
Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,

A city full; of tribunes, such as you,  
A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day:  
This morning for ten thousand of your throats  
I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

*Music still, with shouts*

**SICINIUS**

First, the gods bless you for your tidings; next,  
Accept my thankfulness.

**Second Messenger**

Sir, we have all  
Great cause to give great thanks.

**SICINIUS**

They are near the city?

**Second Messenger**

Almost at point to enter.

**SICINIUS**

We will meet them,  
And help the joy.

*Exeunt*

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same. A street near the gate.

*Enter two Senators with VOLUMNIA, VIRGILIA, VALERIA, & c. passing over the stage, followed by Patricians and others*

### First Senator

Behold our patroness, the life of Rome!  
Call all your tribes together, praise the gods,  
And make triumphant fires; strew flowers before them:  
Unshout the noise that banish'd Marcius,  
Repeal him with the welcome of his mother;  
Cry 'Welcome, ladies, welcome!'

### All

Welcome, ladies, Welcome!

*A flourish with drums and trumpets. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Coriolanus](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Antium. A public place.

*Enter TULLUS AUFIDIUS, with Attendants*

### AUFIDIUS

Go tell the lords o' the city I am here:  
Deliver them this paper: having read it,  
Bid them repair to the market place; where I,  
Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,  
Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse  
The city ports by this hath enter'd and  
Intends to appear before the people, hoping  
To purge herself with words: dispatch.

*Exeunt Attendants*

*Enter three or four Conspirators of AUFIDIUS' faction*

Most welcome!

### First Conspirator

How is it with our general?

### AUFIDIUS

Even so  
As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,  
And with his charity slain.

### Second Conspirator

Most noble sir,  
If you do hold the same intent wherein  
You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you

Of your great danger.

## **AUFIDIUS**

Sir, I cannot tell:

We must proceed as we do find the people.

## **Third Conspirator**

The people will remain uncertain whilst  
'Twi't you there's difference; but the fall of either  
Makes the survivor heir of all.

## **AUFIDIUS**

I know it;  
And my pretext to strike at him admits  
A good construction. I raised him, and I pawn'd  
Mine honour for his truth: who being so heighten'd,  
He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery,  
Seducing so my friends; and, to this end,  
He bow'd his nature, never known before  
But to be rough, unswayable and free.

## **Third Conspirator**

Sir, his stoutness  
When he did stand for consul, which he lost  
By lack of stooping,--

## **AUFIDIUS**

That I would have spoke of:  
Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth;  
Presented to my knife his throat: I took him;  
Made him joint-servant with me; gave him way  
In all his own desires; nay, let him choose  
Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,  
My best and freshest men; served his designments  
In mine own person; help to reap the fame  
Which he did end all his; and took some pride  
To do myself this wrong: till, at the last,

I seem'd his follower, not partner, and  
He waged me with his countenance, as if  
I had been mercenary.

### **First Conspirator**

So he did, my lord:  
The army marvell'd at it, and, in the last,  
When he had carried Rome and that we look'd  
For no less spoil than glory,--

### **AUFIDIUS**

There was it:  
For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon him.  
At a few drops of women's rheum, which are  
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour  
Of our great action: therefore shall he die,  
And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!

*Drums and trumpets sound, with great shouts of the People*

### **First Conspirator**

Your native town you enter'd like a post,  
And had no welcomes home: but he returns,  
Splitting the air with noise.

### **Second Conspirator**

And patient fools,  
Whose children he hath slain, their base throats tear  
With giving him glory.

### **Third Conspirator**

Therefore, at your vantage,  
Ere he express himself, or move the people  
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,  
Which we will second. When he lies along,  
After your way his tale pronounced shall bury  
His reasons with his body.

## **AUFIDIUS**

Say no more:  
Here come the lords.

*Enter the Lords of the city*

## **All The Lords**

You are most welcome home.

## **AUFIDIUS**

I have not deserved it.  
But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused  
What I have written to you?

## **Lords**

We have.

## **First Lord**

And grieve to hear't.  
What faults he made before the last, I think  
Might have found easy fines: but there to end  
Where he was to begin and give away  
The benefit of our levies, answering us  
With our own charge, making a treaty where  
There was a yielding,--this admits no excuse.

## **AUFIDIUS**

He approaches: you shall hear him.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, marching with drum and colours; commoners being with him*

## **CORIOLANUS**

Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier,



No more infected with my country's love  
Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting  
Under your great command. You are to know  
That prosperously I have attempted and  
With bloody passage led your wars even to  
The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought home  
Do more than counterpoise a full third part  
The charges of the action. We have made peace  
With no less honour to the Antiates  
Than shame to the Romans: and we here deliver,  
Subscribed by the consuls and patricians,  
Together with the seal o' the senate, what  
We have compounded on.

## **AUFIDIUS**

Read it not, noble lords;  
But tell the traitor, in the high'st degree  
He hath abused your powers.

## **CORIOLANUS**

Traitor! how now!

## **AUFIDIUS**

Ay, traitor, Marcius!

## **CORIOLANUS**

Marcius!

## **AUFIDIUS**

Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius: dost thou think  
I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stol'n name  
Coriolanus in Corioli?  
You lords and heads o' the state, perfidiously  
He has betray'd your business, and given up,  
For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,  
I say 'your city,' to his wife and mother;  
Breaking his oath and resolution like

A twist of rotten silk, never admitting  
Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears  
He whined and roar'd away your victory,  
That pages blush'd at him and men of heart  
Look'd wondering each at other.

**CORIOLANUS**

Hear'st thou, Mars?

**AUFIDIUS**

Name not the god, thou boy of tears!

**CORIOLANUS**

Ha!

**AUFIDIUS**

No more.

**CORIOLANUS**

Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart  
Too great for what contains it. Boy! O slave!  
Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever  
I was forced to scold. Your judgments, my grave lords,  
Must give this cur the lie: and his own notion--  
Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him; that  
Must bear my beating to his grave--shall join  
To thrust the lie unto him.

**First Lord**

Peace, both, and hear me speak.

**CORIOLANUS**

Cut me to pieces, Volsces; men and lads,  
Stain all your edges on me. Boy! false hound!

If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,  
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I  
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli:  
Alone I did it. Boy!

## **AUFIDIUS**

Why, noble lords,  
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,  
Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,  
'Fore your own eyes and ears?

## **All Conspirators**

Let him die for't.

## **All The People**

'Tear him to pieces.' 'Do it presently.' 'He kill'd  
my son.' 'My daughter.' 'He killed my cousin  
Marcus.' 'He killed my father.'

## **Second Lord**

Peace, ho! no outrage: peace!  
The man is noble and his fame folds-in  
This orb o' the earth. His last offences to us  
Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,  
And trouble not the peace.

## **CORIOLANUS**

O that I had him,  
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,  
To use my lawful sword!

## **AUFIDIUS**

Insolent villain!

## **All Conspirators**

Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

*The Conspirators draw, and kill CORIOLANUS: AUFIDIUS stands on his body*

**Lords**

Hold, hold, hold, hold!

**AUFIDIUS**

My noble masters, hear me speak.

**First Lord**

O Tullus,--

**Second Lord**

Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will weep.

**Third Lord**

Tread not upon him. Masters all, be quiet;  
Put up your swords.

**AUFIDIUS**

My lords, when you shall know--as in this rage,  
Provoked by him, you cannot--the great danger  
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice  
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours  
To call me to your senate, I'll deliver  
Myself your loyal servant, or endure  
Your heaviest censure.

**First Lord**

Bear from hence his body;  
And mourn you for him: let him be regarded  
As the most noble corse that ever herald  
Did follow to his urn.

## **Second Lord**

His own impatience  
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.  
Let's make the best of it.

## **AUFIDIUS**

My rage is gone;  
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.  
Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers; I'll be one.  
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully:  
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he  
Hath widow'd and unchilded many a one,  
Which to this hour bewail the injury,  
Yet he shall have a noble memory. Assist.

*Exeunt, bearing the body of CORIOLANUS. A dead march sounded*

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Hamlet

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Elsinore. A platform before the castle.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [A room of state in the castle.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [A room in Polonius' house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [The platform.](#)

Act 1, Scene 5: [Another part of the platform.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A room in POLONIUS' house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A room in the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A room in the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [A hall in the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [A room in the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [The Queen's closet.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [A room in the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Another room in the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Another room in the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [A plain in Denmark.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Elsinore. A room in the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [Another room in the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 7: [Another room in the castle.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [A churchyard.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [A hall in the castle.](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Elsinore. A platform before the castle.

*FRANCISCO at his post. Enter to him BERNARDO*

**BERNARDO**

Who's there?

**FRANCISCO**

Nay, answer me: stand, and unfold yourself.

**BERNARDO**

Long live the king!

**FRANCISCO**

Bernardo?

**BERNARDO**

He.

**FRANCISCO**

You come most carefully upon your hour.

**BERNARDO**

'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

**FRANCISCO**

For this relief much thanks: 'tis bitter cold,

And I am sick at heart.

**BERNARDO**

Have you had quiet guard?

**FRANCISCO**

Not a mouse stirring.

**BERNARDO**

Well, good night.  
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,  
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

**FRANCISCO**

I think I hear them. Stand, ho! Who's there?

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS*

**HORATIO**

Friends to this ground.

**MARCELLUS**

And liegemen to the Dane.

**FRANCISCO**

Give you good night.

**MARCELLUS**

O, farewell, honest soldier:  
Who hath relieved you?

**FRANCISCO**



Bernardo has my place.  
Give you good night.

*Exit*

**MARCELLUS**

Holla! Bernardo!

**BERNARDO**

Say,  
What, is Horatio there?

**HORATIO**

A piece of him.

**BERNARDO**

Welcome, Horatio: welcome, good Marcellus.

**MARCELLUS**

What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

**BERNARDO**

I have seen nothing.

**MARCELLUS**

Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,  
And will not let belief take hold of him  
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us:  
Therefore I have entreated him along  
With us to watch the minutes of this night;  
That if again this apparition come,  
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

**HORATIO**

Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

**BERNARDO**

Sit down awhile;  
And let us once again assail your ears,  
That are so fortified against our story  
What we have two nights seen.

**HORATIO**

Well, sit we down,  
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

**BERNARDO**

Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one,--

*Enter Ghost*

**MARCELLUS**

Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!

**BERNARDO**

In the same figure, like the king that's dead.

**MARCELLUS**

Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

**BERNARDO**

Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

**HORATIO**

Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

**BERNARDO**

It would be spoke to.

**MARCELLUS**

Question it, Horatio.

**HORATIO**

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,  
Together with that fair and warlike form  
In which the majesty of buried Denmark  
Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

**MARCELLUS**

It is offended.

**BERNARDO**

See, it stalks away!

**HORATIO**

Stay! speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!

*Exit Ghost*

**MARCELLUS**

'Tis gone, and will not answer.

**BERNARDO**

How now, Horatio! you tremble and look pale:  
Is not this something more than fantasy?

What think you on't?

**HORATIO**

Before my God, I might not this believe  
Without the sensible and true avouch  
Of mine own eyes.

**MARCELLUS**

Is it not like the king?

**HORATIO**

As thou art to thyself:  
Such was the very armour he had on  
When he the ambitious Norway combated;  
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,  
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.  
'Tis strange.

**MARCELLUS**

Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,  
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.

**HORATIO**

In what particular thought to work I know not;  
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,  
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

**MARCELLUS**

Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,  
Why this same strict and most observant watch  
So nightly toils the subject of the land,  
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,  
And foreign mart for implements of war;  
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task  
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;  
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste

Doth make the night joint-labourer with the day:  
Who is't that can inform me?

## **HORATIO**

That can I;  
At least, the whisper goes so. Our last king,  
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,  
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,  
Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride,  
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet--  
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him--  
Did slay this Fortinbras; who by a seal'd compact,  
Well ratified by law and heraldry,  
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands  
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror:  
Against the which, a moiety competent  
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd  
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,  
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant,  
And carriage of the article design'd,  
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,  
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,  
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there  
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolute,  
For food and diet, to some enterprise  
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other--  
As it doth well appear unto our state--  
But to recover of us, by strong hand  
And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands  
So by his father lost: and this, I take it,  
Is the main motive of our preparations,  
The source of this our watch and the chief head  
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

## **BERNARDO**

I think it be no other but e'en so:  
Well may it sort that this portentous figure  
Comes armed through our watch; so like the king  
That was and is the question of these wars.

## HORATIO

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets:  
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star  
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands  
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse:  
And even the like precursor of fierce events,  
As harbingers preceding still the fates  
And prologue to the omen coming on,  
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
Unto our climatures and countrymen.--  
But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!

### *Re-enter Ghost*

I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!  
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,  
Speak to me:  
If there be any good thing to be done,  
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,  
Speak to me:

### *Cock crows*

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,  
Which, happily, foreknowing may avoid, O, speak!  
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life  
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,  
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,  
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.

## MARCELLUS

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

## HORATIO

Do, if it will not stand.

**BERNARDO**

'Tis here!

**HORATIO**

'Tis here!

**MARCELLUS**

'Tis gone!

*Exit Ghost*

We do it wrong, being so majestic,  
To offer it the show of violence;  
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,  
And our vain blows malicious mockery.

**BERNARDO**

It was about to speak, when the cock crew.

**HORATIO**

And then it started like a guilty thing  
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,  
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,  
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat  
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,  
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,  
The extravagant and erring spirit hies  
To his confine: and of the truth herein  
This present object made probation.

**MARCELLUS**

It faded on the crowing of the cock.  
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes

Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:  
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;  
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

## **HORATIO**

So have I heard and do in part believe it.  
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill:  
Break we our watch up; and by my advice,  
Let us impart what we have seen to-night  
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,  
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.  
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,  
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

## **MARCELLUS**

Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know  
Where we shall find him most conveniently.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room of state in the castle.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords, and Attendants*

### KING CLAUDIUS

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death  
The memory be green, and that it us befitted  
To bear our hearts in grief and our whole kingdom  
To be contracted in one brow of woe,  
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature  
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,  
Together with remembrance of ourselves.  
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,  
The imperial jointress to this warlike state,  
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,--  
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,  
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,  
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,--  
Taken to wife: nor have we herein barr'd  
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone  
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.  
Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,  
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,  
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death  
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,  
Colleagued with the dream of his advantage,  
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,  
Importing the surrender of those lands  
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,  
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.  
Now for ourself and for this time of meeting:  
Thus much the business is: we have here writ  
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,--  
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears  
Of this his nephew's purpose,--to suppress

His further gait herein; in that the levies,  
The lists and full proportions, are all made  
Out of his subject: and we here dispatch  
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,  
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway;  
Giving to you no further personal power  
To business with the king, more than the scope  
Of these delated articles allow.  
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

## **CORNELIUS VOLTIMAND**

In that and all things will we show our duty.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

We doubt it nothing: heartily farewell.

*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS*

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?  
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?  
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,  
And loose your voice: what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,  
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?  
The head is not more native to the heart,  
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,  
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.  
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

## **LAERTES**

My dread lord,  
Your leave and favour to return to France;  
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark,  
To show my duty in your coronation,  
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,  
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France  
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

**LORD POLONIUS**

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave  
By laboursome petition, and at last  
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:  
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,  
And thy best graces spend it at thy will!  
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son,--

**HAMLET**

[Aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

**HAMLET**

Not so, my lord; I am too much i' the sun.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,  
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.  
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:  
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

**HAMLET**

Ay, madam, it is common.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?

## HAMLET

Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,  
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play:  
But I have that within which passeth show;  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

## KING CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,  
To give these mourning duties to your father:  
But, you must know, your father lost a father;  
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound  
In filial obligation for some term  
To do obsequious sorrow: but to persever  
In obstinate condolement is a course  
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;  
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,  
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,  
An understanding simple and unschool'd:  
For what we know must be and is as common  
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,  
Why should we in our peevish opposition  
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,  
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,  
To reason most absurd: whose common theme  
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,  
From the first corse till he that died to-day,  
'This must be so.' We pray you, throw to earth  
This unprevailing woe, and think of us  
As of a father: for let the world take note,  
You are the most immediate to our throne;

And with no less nobility of love  
Than that which dearest father bears his son,  
Do I impart toward you. For your intent  
In going back to school in Wittenberg,  
It is most retrograde to our desire:  
And we beseech you, bend you to remain  
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,  
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:  
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.

## **HAMLET**

I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply:  
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;  
This gentle and unforced accord of Hamlet  
Sits smiling to my heart: in grace whereof,  
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,  
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,  
And the king's rouse the heavens all bruit again,  
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

## **HAMLET**

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!  
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't! ah fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!

But two months dead: nay, not so much, not two:  
So excellent a king; that was, to this,  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month--  
Let me not think on't--Frailty, thy name is woman!--  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe, all tears:--why she, even she--  
O, God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,  
Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules: within a month:  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,  
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not nor it cannot come to good:  
But break, my heart; for I must hold my tongue.

*Enter HORATIO, MARCELLUS, and BERNARDO*

**HORATIO**

Hail to your lordship!

**HAMLET**

I am glad to see you well:  
Horatio,--or I do forget myself.

**HORATIO**

The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.

**HAMLET**

Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name with you:  
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio? Marcellus?

## **MARCELLUS**

My good lord--

## **HAMLET**

I am very glad to see you. Good even, sir.  
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

## **HORATIO**

A truant disposition, good my lord.

## **HAMLET**

I would not hear your enemy say so,  
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,  
To make it truster of your own report  
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.  
But what is your affair in Elsinore?  
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

## **HORATIO**

My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

## **HAMLET**

I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;  
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

## **HORATIO**

Indeed, my lord, it follow'd hard upon.

## **HAMLET**

Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral baked meats  
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.  
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven

Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!  
My father!--methinks I see my father.

**HORATIO**

Where, my lord?

**HAMLET**

In my mind's eye, Horatio.

**HORATIO**

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

**HAMLET**

He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again.

**HORATIO**

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

**HAMLET**

Saw? who?

**HORATIO**

My lord, the king your father.

**HAMLET**

The king my father!

**HORATIO**

Season your admiration for awhile  
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,  
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,



This marvel to you.

**HAMLET**

For God's love, let me hear.

**HORATIO**

Two nights together had these gentlemen,  
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,  
In the dead vast and middle of the night,  
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,  
Armed at point exactly, cap-a-pe,  
Appears before them, and with solemn march  
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd  
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,  
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled  
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,  
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me  
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;  
And I with them the third night kept the watch;  
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,  
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,  
The apparition comes: I knew your father;  
These hands are not more like.

**HAMLET**

But where was this?

**MARCELLUS**

My lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

**HAMLET**

Did you not speak to it?

**HORATIO**

My lord, I did;  
But answer made it none: yet once methought

It lifted up its head and did address  
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;  
But even then the morning cock crew loud,  
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,  
And vanish'd from our sight.

**HAMLET**

'Tis very strange.

**HORATIO**

As I do live, my honour'd lord, 'tis true;  
And we did think it writ down in our duty  
To let you know of it.

**HAMLET**

Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.  
Hold you the watch to-night?

**MARCELLUS BERNARDO**

We do, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Arm'd, say you?

**MARCELLUS BERNARDO**

Arm'd, my lord.

**HAMLET**

From top to toe?

**MARCELLUS BERNARDO**

My lord, from head to foot.

**HAMLET**

Then saw you not his face?

**HORATIO**

O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.

**HAMLET**

What, look'd he frowningly?

**HORATIO**

A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.

**HAMLET**

Pale or red?

**HORATIO**

Nay, very pale.

**HAMLET**

And fix'd his eyes upon you?

**HORATIO**

Most constantly.

**HAMLET**

I would I had been there.

**HORATIO**

It would have much amazed you.

**HAMLET**

Very like, very like. Stay'd it long?

**HORATIO**

While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.

**MARCELLUS BERNARDO**

Longer, longer.

**HORATIO**

Not when I saw't.

**HAMLET**

His beard was grizzled--no?

**HORATIO**

It was, as I have seen it in his life,  
A sable silver'd.

**HAMLET**

I will watch to-night;  
Perchance 'twill walk again.

**HORATIO**

I warrant it will.

**HAMLET**

If it assume my noble father's person,  
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape  
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,  
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,  
Let it be tenable in your silence still;  
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night,

Give it an understanding, but no tongue:  
I will requite your loves. So, fare you well:  
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,  
I'll visit you.

**All**

Our duty to your honour.

**HAMLET**

Your loves, as mine to you: farewell.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;  
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!  
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,  
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in Polonius' house.

*Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA*

### LAERTES

My necessaries are embark'd: farewell:  
And, sister, as the winds give benefit  
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,  
But let me hear from you.

### OPHELIA

Do you doubt that?

### LAERTES

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,  
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,  
A violet in the youth of primy nature,  
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute; No more.

### OPHELIA

No more but so?

### LAERTES

Think it no more;  
For nature, crescent, does not grow alone  
In thews and bulk, but, as this temple waxes,  
The inward service of the mind and soul  
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,  
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch  
The virtue of his will: but you must fear,

His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;  
For he himself is subject to his birth:  
He may not, as unvalued persons do,  
Carve for himself; for on his choice depends  
The safety and health of this whole state;  
And therefore must his choice be circumscribed  
Unto the voice and yielding of that body  
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,  
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it  
As he in his particular act and place  
May give his saying deed; which is no further  
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.  
Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,  
If with too credent ear you list his songs,  
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open  
To his unmaster'd importunity.  
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire.  
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon:  
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:  
The canker galls the infants of the spring,  
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed,  
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth  
Contagious blastments are most imminent.  
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear:  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

## **OPHELIA**

I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,  
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven;  
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own rede.

## **LAERTES**

O, fear me not.  
I stay too long: but here my father comes.

*Enter POLONIUS*

A double blessing is a double grace,  
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame!  
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,  
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!  
And these few precepts in thy memory  
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledged comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,  
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all: to thine ownself be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.  
Farewell: my blessing season this in thee!

**LAERTES**

Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

**LORD POLONIUS**



The time invites you; go; your servants tend.

**LAERTES**

Farewell, Ophelia; and remember well  
What I have said to you.

**OPHELIA**

'Tis in my memory lock'd,  
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

**LAERTES**

Farewell.

*Exit*

**LORD POLONIUS**

What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

**OPHELIA**

So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, well bethought:  
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late  
Given private time to you; and you yourself  
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:  
If it be so, as so 'tis put on me,  
And that in way of caution, I must tell you,  
You do not understand yourself so clearly  
As it behoves my daughter and your honour.  
What is between you? give me up the truth.

**OPHELIA**

He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders

Of his affection to me.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,  
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.  
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

**OPHELIA**

I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby;  
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,  
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;  
Or--not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,  
Running it thus--you'll tender me a fool.

**OPHELIA**

My lord, he hath importuned me with love  
In honourable fashion.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

**OPHELIA**

And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,  
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,  
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul  
Lends the tongue vows: these blazes, daughter,  
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,  
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,

You must not take for fire. From this time  
Be somewhat scanted of your maiden presence;  
Set your entreatments at a higher rate  
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,  
Believe so much in him, that he is young  
And with a larger tether may he walk  
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,  
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,  
Not of that dye which their investments show,  
But mere implorators of unholy suits,  
Breathing like sanctified and pious bawds,  
The better to beguile. This is for all:  
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,  
Have you so slander any moment leisure,  
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.  
Look to't, I charge you: come your ways.

## **OPHELIA**

I shall obey, my lord.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The platform.

*Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS*

**HAMLET**

The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

**HORATIO**

It is a nipping and an eager air.

**HAMLET**

What hour now?

**HORATIO**

I think it lacks of twelve.

**HAMLET**

No, it is struck.

**HORATIO**

Indeed? I heard it not: then it draws near the season  
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

*A flourish of trumpets, and ordnance shot off, within*

What does this mean, my lord?

**HAMLET**

The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse,  
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;  
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,  
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out  
The triumph of his pledge.

## **HORATIO**

Is it a custom?

## **HAMLET**

Ay, marry, is't:  
But to my mind, though I am native here  
And to the manner born, it is a custom  
More honour'd in the breach than the observance.  
This heavy-headed revel east and west  
Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:  
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase  
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes  
From our achievements, though perform'd at height,  
The pith and marrow of our attribute.  
So, oft it chanches in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As, in their birth--wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin--  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens  
The form of plausible manners, that these men,  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,--  
Their virtues else--be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo--  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault: the dram of eale  
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt  
To his own scandal.

## **HORATIO**

Look, my lord, it comes!

*Enter Ghost*

**HAMLET**

Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane: O, answer me!  
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,  
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel  
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature  
So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

*Ghost beckons HAMLET*

**HORATIO**

It beckons you to go away with it,  
As if it some impartment did desire  
To you alone.

**MARCELLUS**

Look, with what courteous action  
It waves you to a more removed ground:  
But do not go with it.

**HORATIO**

No, by no means.

## **HAMLET**

It will not speak; then I will follow it.

## **HORATIO**

Do not, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Why, what should be the fear?  
I do not set my life in a pin's fee;  
And for my soul, what can it do to that,  
Being a thing immortal as itself?  
It waves me forth again: I'll follow it.

## **HORATIO**

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,  
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff  
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,  
And there assume some other horrible form,  
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason  
And draw you into madness? think of it:  
The very place puts toys of desperation,  
Without more motive, into every brain  
That looks so many fathoms to the sea  
And hears it roar beneath.

## **HAMLET**

It waves me still.  
Go on; I'll follow thee.

## **MARCELLUS**

You shall not go, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Hold off your hands.

**HORATIO**

Be ruled; you shall not go.

**HAMLET**

My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen.  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!  
I say, away! Go on; I'll follow thee.

*Exeunt Ghost and HAMLET*

**HORATIO**

He waxes desperate with imagination.

**MARCELLUS**

Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

**HORATIO**

Have after. To what issue will this come?

**MARCELLUS**

Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

**HORATIO**

Heaven will direct it.

**MARCELLUS**

Nay, let's follow him.

*Exeunt*



[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the platform.

*Enter GHOST and HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

**Ghost**

Mark me.

**HAMLET**

I will.

**Ghost**

My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames  
Must render up myself.

**HAMLET**

Alas, poor ghost!

**Ghost**

Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing  
To what I shall unfold.

**HAMLET**

Speak; I am bound to hear.

## **Ghost**

So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

## **HAMLET**

What?

## **Ghost**

I am thy father's spirit,  
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confined to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and combined locks to part  
And each particular hair to stand on end,  
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:  
But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!  
If thou didst ever thy dear father love--

## **HAMLET**

O God!

## **Ghost**

Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

## **HAMLET**

Murder!

## **Ghost**

Murder most foul, as in the best it is;

But this most foul, strange and unnatural.

## HAMLET

Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift  
As meditation or the thoughts of love,  
May sweep to my revenge.

## Ghost

I find thee apt;  
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,  
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:  
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,  
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death  
Rankly abused: but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

## HAMLET

O my prophetic soul! My uncle!

## Ghost

Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,--  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce!--won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen:  
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!  
From me, whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage, and to decline  
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine!  
But virtue, as it never will be moved,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,

And prey on garbage.  
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leperous distilment; whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
And with a sudden vigour doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;  
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body.  
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand  
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd:  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd,  
No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head:  
O, horrible! O, horrible! most horrible!  
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
But, howsoever thou pursuest this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught: leave her to heaven  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire:  
Adieu, adieu! Hamlet, remember me.

*Exit*

## **HAMLET**

O all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?  
And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;  
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,

But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee!  
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat  
In this distracted globe. Remember thee!  
Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!  
O most pernicious woman!  
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!  
My tables,—meet it is I set it down,  
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;  
At least I'm sure it may be so in Denmark:

*Writing*

So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;  
It is 'Adieu, adieu! remember me.'  
I have sworn 't.

**MARCELLUS HORATIO**

[Within] My lord, my lord,—

**MARCELLUS**

[Within] Lord Hamlet,—

**HORATIO**

[Within] Heaven secure him!

**HAMLET**

So be it!

**HORATIO**

[Within] Hillo, ho, ho, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS*

**MARCELLUS**

How is't, my noble lord?

**HORATIO**

What news, my lord?

**HAMLET**

O, wonderful!

**HORATIO**

Good my lord, tell it.

**HAMLET**

No; you'll reveal it.

**HORATIO**

Not I, my lord, by heaven.

**MARCELLUS**

Nor I, my lord.

**HAMLET**

How say you, then; would heart of man once think it?  
But you'll be secret?

**HORATIO MARCELLUS**

Ay, by heaven, my lord.

**HAMLET**

There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark  
But he's an arrant knave.

**HORATIO**

There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave  
To tell us this.

**HAMLET**

Why, right; you are i' the right;  
And so, without more circumstance at all,  
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part:  
You, as your business and desire shall point you;  
For every man has business and desire,  
Such as it is; and for mine own poor part,  
Look you, I'll go pray.

**HORATIO**

These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;  
Yes, 'faith heartily.

**HORATIO**

There's no offence, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,  
And much offence too. Touching this vision here,  
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you:  
For your desire to know what is between us,



O'ermaster 't as you may. And now, good friends,  
As you are friends, scholars and soldiers,  
Give me one poor request.

**HORATIO**

What is't, my lord? we will.

**HAMLET**

Never make known what you have seen to-night.

**HORATIO MARCELLUS**

My lord, we will not.

**HAMLET**

Nay, but swear't.

**HORATIO**

In faith,  
My lord, not I.

**MARCELLUS**

Nor I, my lord, in faith.

**HAMLET**

Upon my sword.

**MARCELLUS**

We have sworn, my lord, already.

**HAMLET**

Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

**Ghost**

[Beneath] Swear.

**HAMLET**

Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there,  
truepenny?  
Come on--you hear this fellow in the cellarage--  
Consent to swear.

**HORATIO**

Propose the oath, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Never to speak of this that you have seen,  
Swear by my sword.

**Ghost**

[Beneath] Swear.

**HAMLET**

Hic et ubique? then we'll shift our ground.  
Come hither, gentlemen,  
And lay your hands again upon my sword:  
Never to speak of this that you have heard,  
Swear by my sword.

**Ghost**

[Beneath] Swear.

**HAMLET**

Well said, old mole! canst work i' the earth so fast?  
A worthy pioner! Once more remove, good friends.

## HORATIO

O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

## HAMLET

And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.  
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come;  
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,  
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,  
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet  
To put an antic disposition on,  
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,  
With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,  
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,  
As 'Well, well, we know,' or 'We could, an if we would,'  
Or 'If we list to speak,' or 'There be, an if they might,'  
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note  
That you know aught of me: this not to do,  
So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.

## Ghost

[Beneath] Swear.

## HAMLET

Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!

*They swear*

So, gentlemen,  
With all my love I do commend me to you:  
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is  
May do, to express his love and friending to you,  
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;  
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.  
The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right!  
Nay, come, let's go together.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 1, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in POLONIUS' house.

*Enter POLONIUS and REYNALDO*

**LORD POLONIUS**

Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

**REYNALDO**

I will, my lord.

**LORD POLONIUS**

You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynaldo,  
Before you visit him, to make inquire  
Of his behavior.

**REYNALDO**

My lord, I did intend it.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, well said; very well said. Look you, sir,  
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;  
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,  
What company, at what expense; and finding  
By this encompassment and drift of question  
That they do know my son, come you more nearer  
Than your particular demands will touch it:  
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;  
As thus, 'I know his father and his friends,  
And in part him: ' do you mark this, Reynaldo?

**REYNALDO**

Ay, very well, my lord.

**LORD POLONIUS**

'And in part him; but' you may say 'not well:  
But, if't be he I mean, he's very wild;  
Addicted so and so:' and there put on him  
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank  
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;  
But, sir, such wanton, wild and usual slips  
As are companions noted and most known  
To youth and liberty.

**REYNALDO**

As gaming, my lord.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,  
Drabbing: you may go so far.

**REYNALDO**

My lord, that would dishonour him.

**LORD POLONIUS**

'Faith, no; as you may season it in the charge  
You must not put another scandal on him,  
That he is open to incontinency;  
That's not my meaning: but breathe his faults so quaintly  
That they may seem the taints of liberty,  
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,  
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,  
Of general assault.

**REYNALDO**

But, my good lord,--

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Wherefore should you do this?

## **REYNALDO**

Ay, my lord,  
I would know that.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Marry, sir, here's my drift;  
And I believe, it is a fetch of wit:  
You laying these slight sullies on my son,  
As 'twere a thing a little soil'd i' the working, Mark you,  
Your party in converse, him you would sound,  
Having ever seen in the prenominate crimes  
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assured  
He closes with you in this consequence;  
'Good sir,' or so, or 'friend,' or 'gentleman,'  
According to the phrase or the addition  
Of man and country.

## **REYNALDO**

Very good, my lord.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

And then, sir, does he this--he does--what was I  
about to say? By the mass, I was about to say  
something: where did I leave?

## **REYNALDO**

At 'closes in the consequence,' at 'friend or so,'  
and 'gentleman.'

## **LORD POLONIUS**

At 'closes in the consequence,' ay, marry;

He closes thus: 'I know the gentleman;  
I saw him yesterday, or t' other day,  
Or then, or then; with such, or such; and, as you say,  
There was a' gaming; there o'ertook in's rouse;  
There falling out at tennis:' or perchance,  
'I saw him enter such a house of sale,'  
Videlicet, a brothel, or so forth.  
See you now;  
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth:  
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,  
With windlasses and with assays of bias,  
By indirections find directions out:  
So by my former lecture and advice,  
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

**REYNALDO**

My lord, I have.

**LORD POLONIUS**

God be wi' you; fare you well.

**REYNALDO**

Good my lord!

**LORD POLONIUS**

Observe his inclination in yourself.

**REYNALDO**

I shall, my lord.

**LORD POLONIUS**

And let him ply his music.

**REYNALDO**



Well, my lord.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Farewell!

*Exit REYNALDO*

*Enter OPHELIA*

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?

**OPHELIA**

O, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!

**LORD POLONIUS**

With what, i' the name of God?

**OPHELIA**

My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced;  
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,  
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;  
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;  
And with a look so piteous in purport  
As if he had been loosed out of hell  
To speak of horrors,--he comes before me.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Mad for thy love?

**OPHELIA**

My lord, I do not know;  
But truly, I do fear it.

**LORD POLONIUS**

What said he?

**OPHELIA**

He took me by the wrist and held me hard;  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;  
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face  
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;  
At last, a little shaking of mine arm  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk  
And end his being: that done, he lets me go:  
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;  
For out o' doors he went without their helps,  
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Come, go with me: I will go seek the king.  
This is the very ecstasy of love,  
Whose violent property fordoes itself  
And leads the will to desperate undertakings  
As oft as any passion under heaven  
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry.  
What, have you given him any hard words of late?

**OPHELIA**

No, my good lord, but, as you did command,  
I did repel his fetters and denied  
His access to me.

**LORD POLONIUS**

That hath made him mad.  
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment  
I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle,  
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!

By heaven, it is as proper to our age  
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions  
As it is common for the younger sort  
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:  
This must be known; which, being kept close, might  
move  
More grief to hide than hate to utter love.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in the castle.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Attendants*

### KING CLAUDIUS

Welcome, dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern!  
Moreover that we much did long to see you,  
The need we have to use you did provoke  
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard  
Of Hamlet's transformation; so call it,  
Sith nor the exterior nor the inward man  
Resembles that it was. What it should be,  
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him  
So much from the understanding of himself,  
I cannot dream of: I entreat you both,  
That, being of so young days brought up with him,  
And sith so neighbour'd to his youth and havior,  
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court  
Some little time: so by your companies  
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,  
So much as from occasion you may glean,  
Whether aught, to us unknown, afflicts him thus,  
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;  
And sure I am two men there are not living  
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you  
To show us so much gentry and good will  
As to expend your time with us awhile,  
For the supply and profit of our hope,  
Your visitation shall receive such thanks  
As fits a king's remembrance.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Both your majesties  
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,  
Put your dread pleasures more into command  
Than to entreaty.

## **GULDENSTERN**

But we both obey,  
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent  
To lay our service freely at your feet,  
To be commanded.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz:  
And I beseech you instantly to visit  
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,  
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

## **GULDENSTERN**

Heavens make our presence and our practises  
Pleasant and helpful to him!

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Ay, amen!

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ, GULDENSTERN, and some Attendants*

*Enter POLONIUS*

## **LORD POLONIUS**

The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,

Are joyfully return'd.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thou still hast been the father of good news.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Have I, my lord? I assure my good liege,  
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,  
Both to my God and to my gracious king:  
And I do think, or else this brain of mine  
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure  
As it hath used to do, that I have found  
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

O, speak of that; that do I long to hear.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Give first admittance to the ambassadors;  
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

*Exit POLONIUS*

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found  
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I doubt it is no other but the main;  
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Well, we shall sift him.

*Re-enter POLONIUS, with VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS*

Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

## **VOLTIMAND**

Most fair return of greetings and desires.  
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress  
His nephew's levies; which to him appear'd  
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack;  
But, better look'd into, he truly found  
It was against your highness: whereat grieved,  
That so his sickness, age and impotence  
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests  
On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;  
Receives rebuke from Norway, and in fine  
Makes vow before his uncle never more  
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.  
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,  
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,  
And his commission to employ those soldiers,  
So levied as before, against the Polack:  
With an entreaty, herein further shown,

*Giving a paper*

That it might please you to give quiet pass  
Through your dominions for this enterprise,  
On such regards of safety and allowance  
As therein are set down.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

It likes us well;  
And at our more consider'd time well read,  
Answer, and think upon this business.  
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labour:  
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together:  
Most welcome home!

*Exeunt VOLTIMAND and CORNELIUS*

**LORD POLONIUS**

This business is well ended.  
My liege, and madam, to expostulate  
What majesty should be, what duty is,  
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,  
Were nothing but to waste night, day and time.  
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,  
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,  
I will be brief: your noble son is mad:  
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,  
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?  
But let that go.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

More matter, with less art.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.  
That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity;  
And pity 'tis 'tis true: a foolish figure;  
But farewell it, for I will use no art.  
Mad let us grant him, then: and now remains  
That we find out the cause of this effect,  
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,  
For this effect defective comes by cause:  
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus. Perpend.  
I have a daughter--have while she is mine--  
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,  
Hath given me this: now gather, and surmise.

*Reads*

'To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most  
beautified Ophelia,'--  
That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; 'beautified' is  
a vile phrase: but you shall hear. Thus:



*Reads*

'In her excellent white bosom, these, & c.'

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Came this from Hamlet to her?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

*Reads*

'Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.  
'O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers;  
I have not art to reckon my groans: but that  
I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.  
'Thine evermore most dear lady, whilst  
this machine is to him, HAMLET.'  
This, in obedience, hath my daughter shown me,  
And more above, hath his solicitings,  
As they fell out by time, by means and place,  
All given to mine ear.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

But how hath she  
Received his love?

**LORD POLONIUS**

What do you think of me?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

As of a man faithful and honourable.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

I would fain prove so. But what might you think,  
When I had seen this hot love on the wing--  
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,  
Before my daughter told me--what might you,  
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,  
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,  
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,  
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;  
What might you think? No, I went round to work,  
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:  
'Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;  
This must not be:' and then I precepts gave her,  
That she should lock herself from his resort,  
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.  
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;  
And he, repulsed--a short tale to make--  
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,  
Into the madness wherein now he raves,  
And all we mourn for.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Do you think 'tis this?

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

It may be, very likely.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Hath there been such a time--I'd fain know that--  
That I have positively said 'Tis so,'  
When it proved otherwise?

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Not that I know.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

[Pointing to his head and shoulder]  
Take this from this, if this be otherwise:  
If circumstances lead me, I will find  
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed  
Within the centre.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

How may we try it further?

## **LORD POLONIUS**

You know, sometimes he walks four hours together  
Here in the lobby.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

So he does indeed.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him:  
Be you and I behind an arras then;  
Mark the encounter: if he love her not  
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,  
Let me be no assistant for a state,  
But keep a farm and carters.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

We will try it.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

But, look, where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Away, I do beseech you, both away:

I'll board him presently.

*Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, and Attendants*

*Enter HAMLET, reading*

O, give me leave:  
How does my good Lord Hamlet?

**HAMLET**

Well, God-a-mercy.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Do you know me, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Excellent well; you are a fishmonger.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Not I, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Then I would you were so honest a man.

**LORD POLONIUS**

Honest, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be  
one man picked out of ten thousand.

**LORD POLONIUS**

That's very true, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a  
god kissing carrion,--Have you a daughter?

## **LORD POLONIUS**

I have, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a  
blessing: but not as your daughter may conceive.  
Friend, look to 't.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

[Aside] How say you by that? Still harping on my  
daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I  
was a fishmonger: he is far gone, far gone: and  
truly in my youth I suffered much extremity for  
love; very near this. I'll speak to him again.  
What do you read, my lord?

## **HAMLET**

Words, words, words.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

What is the matter, my lord?

## **HAMLET**

Between who?

## **LORD POLONIUS**

I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have grey beards, that their faces are wrinkled, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down, for yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if like a crab you could go backward.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

[Aside] Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't. Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

## **HAMLET**

Into my grave.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Indeed, that is out o' the air.

*Aside*

How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter.--My honourable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

## **HAMLET**

You cannot, sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal: except my life, except my life, except my life.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Fare you well, my lord.

**HAMLET**

These tedious old fools!

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

**LORD POLONIUS**

You go to seek the Lord Hamlet; there he is.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

[To POLONIUS] God save you, sir!

*Exit POLONIUS*

**GUILDENSTERN**

My honoured lord!

**ROSENCRANTZ**

My most dear lord!

**HAMLET**

My excellent good friends! How dost thou,  
Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz! Good lads, how do ye both?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

As the indifferent children of the earth.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Happy, in that we are not over-happy;  
On fortune's cap we are not the very button.

**HAMLET**

Nor the soles of her shoe?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Neither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

**GUILDENSTERN**

'Faith, her privates we.

**HAMLET**

In the secret parts of fortune? O, most true; she is a strumpet. What's the news?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

**HAMLET**

Then is doomsday near: but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

**GUILDENSTERN**

Prison, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Denmark's a prison.



## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Then is the world one.

## **HAMLET**

A goodly one; in which there are many confines,  
wards and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

We think not so, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing  
either good or bad, but thinking makes it so: to me  
it is a prison.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Why then, your ambition makes it one; 'tis too  
narrow for your mind.

## **HAMLET**

O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count  
myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I  
have bad dreams.

## **GULDENSTERN**

Which dreams indeed are ambition, for the very  
substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

## **HAMLET**

A dream itself is but a shadow.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

## **HAMLET**

Then are our beggars bodies, and our monarchs and outstretched heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

## **ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN**

We'll wait upon you.

## **HAMLET**

No such matter: I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

## **HAMLET**

Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

## **GUILDENSTERN**

What should we say, my lord?

## **HAMLET**

Why, any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks which your modesties have not craft enough to colour:

I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

To what end, my lord?

**HAMLET**

That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

[Aside to GUILDENSTERN] What say you?

**HAMLET**

[Aside] Nay, then, I have an eye of you.--If you love me, hold not off.

**GUILDENSTERN**

My lord, we were sent for.

**HAMLET**

I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late--but wherefore I know not--lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!

how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how  
express and admirable! in action how like an angel!  
in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the  
world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,  
what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not  
me: no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling  
you seem to say so.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

## **HAMLET**

Why did you laugh then, when I said 'man delights not me'?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what  
lenten entertainment the players shall receive from  
you: we coted them on the way; and hither are they  
coming, to offer you service.

## **HAMLET**

He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty  
shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight  
shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not  
sigh gratis; the humourous man shall end his part  
in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose  
lungs are tickled o' the sere; and the lady shall  
say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt  
for't. What players are they?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Even those you were wont to take delight in, the  
tragedians of the city.

## **HAMLET**

How chances it they travel? their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

**HAMLET**

Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so followed?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

No, indeed, are they not.

**HAMLET**

How comes it? do they grow rusty?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages--so they call them--that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.

**HAMLET**

What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players--as it is most like, if their means are no better--their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

'Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

## **HAMLET**

Is't possible?

## **GUILDENSTERN**

O, there has been much throwing about of brains.

## **HAMLET**

Do the boys carry it away?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

## **HAMLET**

It is not very strange; for mine uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats a-piece for his picture in little. 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out.

*Flourish of trumpets within*

## **GUILDENSTERN**

There are the players.

## **HAMLET**

Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come then: the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony: let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome: but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

## **GULDENSTERN**

In what, my dear lord?

## **HAMLET**

I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw.

*Enter POLONIUS*

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Well be with you, gentlemen!

## **HAMLET**

Hark you, Guildenstern; and you too: at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Happily he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

## **HAMLET**

I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. You say right, sir: o' Monday morning; 'twas so indeed.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

My lord, I have news to tell you.

**HAMLET**

My lord, I have news to tell you.  
When Roscius was an actor in Rome,--

**LORD POLONIUS**

The actors are come hither, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Buz, buz!

**LORD POLONIUS**

Upon mine honour,--

**HAMLET**

Then came each actor on his ass,--

**LORD POLONIUS**

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy,  
comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical,  
historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-  
comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or  
poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor  
Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the  
liberty, these are the only men.

**HAMLET**

O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

**LORD POLONIUS**

What a treasure had he, my lord?



## HAMLET

Why,  
'One fair daughter and no more,  
The which he loved passing well.'

## LORD POLONIUS

[Aside] Still on my daughter.

## HAMLET

Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

## LORD POLONIUS

If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter  
that I love passing well.

## HAMLET

Nay, that follows not.

## LORD POLONIUS

What follows, then, my lord?

## HAMLET

Why,  
'As by lot, God wot,'  
and then, you know,  
'It came to pass, as most like it was,'--  
the first row of the pious chanson will show you  
more; for look, where my abridgement comes.

*Enter four or five Players*

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad  
to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old  
friend! thy face is valenced since I saw thee last:

comest thou to beard me in Denmark? What, my young lady and mistress! By'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at any thing we see: we'll have a speech straight: come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

## First Player

What speech, my lord?

## HAMLET

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general: but it was--as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine--an excellent play, well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines to make the matter savoury, nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Aeneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter: if it live in your memory, begin at this line: let me see, let me see--  
'The rugged Pyrrhus, like the Hyrcanian beast,'--  
it is not so:--it begins with Pyrrhus:--  
'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,  
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble  
When he lay couched in the ominous horse,  
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd  
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot  
Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd  
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,  
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,

That lend a tyrannous and damned light  
To their lord's murder: roasted in wrath and fire,  
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,  
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus  
Old grandsire Priam seeks.'  
So, proceed you.

## LORD POLONIUS

'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and  
good discretion.

## First Player

'Anon he finds him  
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,  
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,  
Repugnant to command: unequal match'd,  
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;  
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword  
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,  
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top  
Stoops to his base, and with a hideous crash  
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,  
Which was declining on the milky head  
Of reverend Priam, seem'd i' the air to stick:  
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood,  
And like a neutral to his will and matter,  
Did nothing.  
But, as we often see, against some storm,  
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,  
The bold winds speechless and the orb below  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Doth rend the region, so, after Pyrrhus' pause,  
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;  
And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall  
On Mars's armour forged for proof eterne  
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword  
Now falls on Priam.  
Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! All you gods,  
In general synod 'take away her power;  
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,  
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven,

As low as to the fiends!'

**LORD POLONIUS**

This is too long.

**HAMLET**

It shall to the barber's, with your beard. Prithee,  
say on: he's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or he  
sleeps: say on: come to Hecuba.

**First Player**

'But who, O, who had seen the mobled queen--'

**HAMLET**

'The mobled queen?'

**LORD POLONIUS**

That's good; 'mobled queen' is good.

**First Player**

'Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames  
With bisson rheum; a clout upon that head  
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,  
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,  
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up;  
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,  
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have  
pronounced:  
But if the gods themselves did see her then  
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport  
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,  
The instant burst of clamour that she made,  
Unless things mortal move them not at all,  
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,  
And passion in the gods.'

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Look, whether he has not turned his colour and has tears in's eyes. Pray you, no more.

## **HAMLET**

'Tis well: I'll have thee speak out the rest soon.  
Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

## **HAMLET**

God's bodykins, man, much better: use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honour and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Come, sirs.

## **HAMLET**

Follow him, friends: we'll hear a play to-morrow.

*Exit POLONIUS with all the Players but the First*

Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the Murder of Gonzago?

## **First Player**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need,  
study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which  
I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

**First Player**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him  
not.

*Exit First Player*

My good friends, I'll leave you till night: you are  
welcome to Elsinore.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Good my lord!

**HAMLET**

Ay, so, God be wi' ye;

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

Now I am alone.

O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!  
Is it not monstrous that this player here,  
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,  
Could force his soul so to his own conceit  
That from her working all his visage wann'd,  
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,  
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting  
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her? What would he do,  
Had he the motive and the cue for passion  
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears  
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,  
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,  
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed  
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,  
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,  
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,  
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,  
Upon whose property and most dear life  
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?  
Who calls me villain? breaks my pate across?  
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face?  
Tweaks me by the nose? gives me the lie i' the throat,  
As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?

Ha!

'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be  
But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall  
To make oppression bitter, or ere this  
I should have fatted all the region kites  
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!  
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!  
O, vengeance!

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,  
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,  
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,  
A scullion!

Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard  
That guilty creatures sitting at a play  
Have by the very cunning of the scene  
Been struck so to the soul that presently  
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;  
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players  
Play something like the murder of my father  
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;  
I'll tent him to the quick: if he but blench,  
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen

May be the devil: and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps  
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,  
As he is very potent with such spirits,  
Abuses me to damn me: I'll have grounds  
More relative than this: the play 's the thing  
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in the castle.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

### KING CLAUDIUS

And can you, by no drift of circumstance,  
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,  
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet  
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

### ROSENCRANTZ

He does confess he feels himself distracted;  
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

### GUILDENSTERN

Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,  
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,  
When we would bring him on to some confession  
Of his true state.

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

Did he receive you well?

### ROSENCRANTZ

Most like a gentleman.

### GUILDENSTERN

But with much forcing of his disposition.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Niggard of question; but, of our demands,  
Most free in his reply.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Did you assay him?  
To any pastime?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Madam, it so fell out, that certain players  
We o'er-raught on the way: of these we told him;  
And there did seem in him a kind of joy  
To hear of it: they are about the court,  
And, as I think, they have already order  
This night to play before him.

## **LORD POLONIUS**

'Tis most true:  
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties  
To hear and see the matter.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

With all my heart; and it doth much content me  
To hear him so inclined.  
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,  
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

We shall, my lord.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Sweet Gertrude, leave us too;

For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,  
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here  
Affront Ophelia:  
Her father and myself, lawful espials,  
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing, unseen,  
We may of their encounter frankly judge,  
And gather by him, as he is behaved,  
If 't be the affliction of his love or no  
That thus he suffers for.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I shall obey you.  
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish  
That your good beauties be the happy cause  
Of Hamlet's wildness: so shall I hope your virtues  
Will bring him to his wonted way again,  
To both your honours.

## **OPHELIA**

Madam, I wish it may.

*Exit QUEEN GERTRUDE*

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,  
We will bestow ourselves.

*To OPHELIA*

Read on this book;  
That show of such an exercise may colour  
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this,--  
'Tis too much proved--that with devotion's visage  
And pious action we do sugar o'er  
The devil himself.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

[Aside] O, 'tis too true!

How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!  
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word:  
O heavy burthen!

## **LORD POLONIUS**

I hear him coming: let's withdraw, my lord.

*Exeunt KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS*

*Enter HAMLET*

## **HAMLET**

To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.--Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.

## **OPHELIA**

Good my lord,  
How does your honour for this many a day?

## **HAMLET**

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

## **OPHELIA**

My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longed long to re-deliver;  
I pray you, now receive them.

## **HAMLET**

No, not I;  
I never gave you aught.

## **OPHELIA**

My honour'd lord, you know right well you did;  
And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed  
As made the things more rich: their perfume lost,  
Take these again; for to the noble mind  
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.  
There, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Ha, ha! are you honest?

**OPHELIA**

My lord?

**HAMLET**

Are you fair?

**OPHELIA**

What means your lordship?

**HAMLET**

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

**OPHELIA**

Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

**HAMLET**

Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

**OPHELIA**

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

**HAMLET**

You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

## **OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived.

## **HAMLET**

Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

## **OPHELIA**

At home, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

## **OPHELIA**

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

## **HAMLET**

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

## **OPHELIA**

O heavenly powers, restore him!

## **HAMLET**

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

*Exit*

## **OPHELIA**

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;  
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth  
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

*Re-enter KING CLAUDIUS and POLONIUS*

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Love! his affections do not that way tend;  
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,  
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul,  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;  
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose  
Will be some danger: which for to prevent,



I have in quick determination  
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,  
For the demand of our neglected tribute  
Haply the seas and countries different  
With variable objects shall expel  
This something-settled matter in his heart,  
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus  
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

## **LORD POLONIUS**

It shall do well: but yet do I believe  
The origin and commencement of his grief  
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!  
You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said;  
We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;  
But, if you hold it fit, after the play  
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him  
To show his grief: let her be round with him;  
And I'll be placed, so please you, in the ear  
Of all their conference. If she find him not,  
To England send him, or confine him where  
Your wisdom best shall think.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

It shall be so:  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A hall in the castle.

*Enter HAMLET and Players*

### HAMLET

Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumbshews and noise: I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.

### First Player

I warrant your honour.

### HAMLET

Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of

the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone,  
or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful  
laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the  
censure of the which one must in your allowance  
o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be  
players that I have seen play, and heard others  
praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely,  
that, neither having the accent of Christians nor  
the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so  
strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of  
nature's journeymen had made men and not made them  
well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

### **First Player**

I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us,  
sir.

### **HAMLET**

O, reform it altogether. And let those that play  
your clowns speak no more than is set down for them;  
for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to  
set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh  
too; though, in the mean time, some necessary  
question of the play be then to be considered:  
that's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition  
in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

*Exeunt Players*

*Enter POLONIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

How now, my lord! I will the king hear this piece of work?

### **LORD POLONIUS**

And the queen too, and that presently.

### **HAMLET**

Bid the players make haste.

*Exit POLONIUS*

Will you two help to hasten them?

**ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN**

We will, my lord.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

**HAMLET**

What ho! Horatio!

*Enter HORATIO*

**HORATIO**

Here, sweet lord, at your service.

**HAMLET**

Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man  
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

**HORATIO**

O, my dear lord,--

**HAMLET**

Nay, do not think I flatter;  
For what advancement may I hope from thee  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice  
And could of men distinguish, her election

Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those  
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,  
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,  
As I do thee.--Something too much of this.--  
There is a play to-night before the king;  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee of my father's death:  
I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,  
Even with the very comment of thy soul  
Observe mine uncle: if his occulted guilt  
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,  
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,  
And my imaginations are as foul  
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;  
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,  
And after we will both our judgments join  
In censure of his seeming.

## **HORATIO**

Well, my lord:  
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,  
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

## **HAMLET**

They are coming to the play; I must be idle:  
Get you a place.

*Danish march. A flourish. Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others*

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

How fares our cousin Hamlet?

## **HAMLET**

Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish: I eat  
the air, promise-crammed: you cannot feed capons so.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words  
are not mine.

## **HAMLET**

No, nor mine now.

*To POLONIUS*

My lord, you played once i' the university, you say?

## **LORD POLONIUS**

That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

## **HAMLET**

What did you enact?

## **LORD POLONIUS**

I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the  
Capitol; Brutus killed me.

## **HAMLET**

It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf  
there. Be the players ready?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

**HAMLET**

No, good mother, here's metal more attractive.

**LORD POLONIUS**

[To KING CLAUDIUS] O, ho! do you mark that?

**HAMLET**

Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

*Lying down at OPHELIA's feet*

**OPHELIA**

No, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I mean, my head upon your lap?

**OPHELIA**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Do you think I meant country matters?

**OPHELIA**

I think nothing, my lord.

**HAMLET**

That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

**OPHELIA**

What is, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Nothing.

**OPHELIA**

You are merry, my lord.

**HAMLET**

Who, I?

**OPHELIA**

Ay, my lord.

**HAMLET**

O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? for, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within these two hours.

**OPHELIA**

Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord.

**HAMLET**

So long? Nay then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year: but, by'r lady, he must build churches, then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is 'For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot.'



*Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters*

*Enter a King and a Queen very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love*

*Exeunt*

**OPHELIA**

What means this, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief.

**OPHELIA**

Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

*Enter Prologue*

**HAMLET**

We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

**OPHELIA**

Will he tell us what this show meant?

**HAMLET**

Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

## **OPHELIA**

You are naught, you are naught: I'll mark the play.

## **Prologue**

For us, and for our tragedy,  
Here stooping to your clemency,  
We beg your hearing patiently.

*Exit*

## **HAMLET**

Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?

## **OPHELIA**

'Tis brief, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

As woman's love.

*Enter two Players, King and Queen*

## **Player King**

Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round  
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground,  
And thirty dozen moons with borrow'd sheen  
About the world have times twelve thirties been,  
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands  
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

## **Player Queen**

So many journeys may the sun and moon  
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!  
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,  
So far from cheer and from your former state,

That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,  
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:  
For women's fear and love holds quantity;  
In neither aught, or in extremity.  
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know;  
And as my love is sized, my fear is so:  
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear;  
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

**Player King**

'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;  
My operant powers their functions leave to do:  
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,  
Honour'd, beloved; and haply one as kind  
For husband shalt thou--

**Player Queen**

O, confound the rest!  
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:  
In second husband let me be accurst!  
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

**HAMLET**

[Aside] Wormwood, wormwood.

**Player Queen**

The instances that second marriage move  
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love:  
A second time I kill my husband dead,  
When second husband kisses me in bed.

**Player King**

I do believe you think what now you speak;  
But what we do determine oft we break.  
Purpose is but the slave to memory,  
Of violent birth, but poor validity;  
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree;

But fall, unshaken, when they mellow be.  
Most necessary 'tis that we forget  
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:  
What to ourselves in passion we propose,  
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.  
The violence of either grief or joy  
Their own enactures with themselves destroy:  
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;  
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.  
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange  
That even our loves should with our fortunes change;  
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,  
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.  
The great man down, you mark his favourite flies;  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;  
For who not needs shall never lack a friend,  
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,  
Directly seasons him his enemy.  
But, orderly to end where I begun,  
Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown;  
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own:  
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;  
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

### **Player Queen**

Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!  
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!  
To desperation turn my trust and hope!  
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!  
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy  
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!  
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,  
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

### **HAMLET**

If she should break it now!

### **Player King**

'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile;  
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile  
The tedious day with sleep.

*Sleeps*

**Player Queen**

Sleep rock thy brain,  
And never come mischance between us twain!

*Exit*

**HAMLET**

Madam, how like you this play?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

The lady protests too much, methinks.

**HAMLET**

O, but she'll keep her word.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in 't?

**HAMLET**

No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence  
i' the world.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What do you call the play?

**HAMLET**

The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna: Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista: you shall see anon; 'tis a knavish piece of work: but what o' that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not: let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

*Enter LUCIANUS*

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

**OPHELIA**

You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

**OPHELIA**

You are keen, my lord, you are keen.

**HAMLET**

It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

**OPHELIA**

Still better, and worse.

**HAMLET**

So you must take your husbands. Begin, murderer; pox, leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'

**LUCIANUS**

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property,  
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ears*

## **HAMLET**

He poisons him i' the garden for's estate. His  
name's Gonzago: the story is extant, and writ in  
choice Italian: you shall see anon how the murderer  
gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

## **OPHELIA**

The king rises.

## **HAMLET**

What, frightened with false fire!

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

How fares my lord?

## **LORD POLONIUS**

Give o'er the play.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Give me some light: away!

## **All**

Lights, lights, lights!

*Exeunt all but HAMLET and HORATIO*

## **HAMLET**

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep:  
So runs the world away.  
Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers-- if  
the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me--with two  
Provincial roses on my razed shoes, get me a  
fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

## **HORATIO**

Half a share.

## **HAMLET**

A whole one, I.  
For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here  
A very, very--pajock.

## **HORATIO**

You might have rhymed.

## **HAMLET**

O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a  
thousand pound. Didst perceive?

## **HORATIO**

Very well, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Upon the talk of the poisoning?

## **HORATIO**



I did very well note him.

**HAMLET**

Ah, ha! Come, some music! come, the recorders!  
For if the king like not the comedy,  
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.  
Come, some music!

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

**GUILDENSTERN**

Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

**HAMLET**

Sir, a whole history.

**GUILDENSTERN**

The king, sir,--

**HAMLET**

Ay, sir, what of him?

**GUILDENSTERN**

Is in his retirement marvellous distempered.

**HAMLET**

With drink, sir?

**GUILDENSTERN**

No, my lord, rather with choler.

## **HAMLET**

Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

## **GULDENSTERN**

Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame and start not so wildly from my affair.

## **HAMLET**

I am tame, sir: pronounce.

## **GULDENSTERN**

The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

## **HAMLET**

You are welcome.

## **GULDENSTERN**

Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment: if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

## **HAMLET**

Sir, I cannot.

## **GULDENSTERN**

What, my lord?

## **HAMLET**

Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased: but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother: therefore no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say,--

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Then thus she says; your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

## **HAMLET**

O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

She desires to speak with you in her closet, ere you go to bed.

## **HAMLET**

We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

My lord, you once did love me.

## **HAMLET**

So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do, surely, bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

**HAMLET**

Sir, I lack advancement.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

**HAMLET**

Ay, but sir, 'While the grass grows,'--the proverb is something musty.

*Re-enter Players with recorders*

O, the recorders! let me see one. To withdraw with you:--why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

**GUILDENSTERN**

O, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

**HAMLET**

I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

**GUILDENSTERN**

My lord, I cannot.

**HAMLET**

I pray you.

**GUILDENSTERN**

Believe me, I cannot.

**HAMLET**

I do beseech you.

**GUILDENSTERN**

I know no touch of it, my lord.

**HAMLET**

'Tis as easy as lying: govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

**GUILDENSTERN**

But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

**HAMLET**

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me.

*Enter POLONIUS*

God bless you, sir!

**LORD POLONIUS**

My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

**HAMLET**

Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

**LORD POLONIUS**

By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

**HAMLET**

Methinks it is like a weasel.

**LORD POLONIUS**

It is backed like a weasel.

**HAMLET**

Or like a whale?

**LORD POLONIUS**

Very like a whale.

**HAMLET**

Then I will come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by.

**LORD POLONIUS**

I will say so.

**HAMLET**

By and by is easily said.

*Exit POLONIUS*

Leave me, friends.

*Exeunt all but HAMLET*

Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.  
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever  
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom:  
Let me be cruel, not unnatural:  
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;  
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;  
How in my words soever she be shent,  
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in the castle.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

### KING CLAUDIUS

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us  
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;  
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,  
And he to England shall along with you:  
The terms of our estate may not endure  
Hazard so dangerous as doth hourly grow  
Out of his lunacies.

### GUILDENSTERN

We will ourselves provide:  
Most holy and religious fear it is  
To keep those many many bodies safe  
That live and feed upon your majesty.

### ROSENCRANTZ

The single and peculiar life is bound,  
With all the strength and armour of the mind,  
To keep itself from noyance; but much more  
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest  
The lives of many. The cease of majesty  
Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw  
What's near it with it: it is a massy wheel,  
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,  
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things  
Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,  
Each small annexment, petty consequence,  
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone  
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.



## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;  
For we will fetters put upon this fear,  
Which now goes too free-footed.

## **ROSENCRANTZ GUILDENSTERN**

We will haste us.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

*Enter POLONIUS*

## **LORD POLONIUS**

My lord, he's going to his mother's closet:  
Behind the arras I'll convey myself,  
To hear the process; and warrant she'll tax him home:  
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,  
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,  
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear  
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege:  
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,  
And tell you what I know.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Thanks, dear my lord.

*Exit POLONIUS*

O, my offence is rank it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will:  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;  
And, like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offence?  
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;  
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?  
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen.  
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?  
Try what repentance can: what can it not?  
Yet what can it when one can not repent?  
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
O limed soul, that, struggling to be free,  
Art more engaged! Help, angels! Make assay!  
Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,  
Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe!  
All may be well.

*Retires and kneels*

*Enter HAMLET*

## **HAMLET**

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;  
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;  
And so am I revenged. That would be scann'd:  
A villain kills my father; and for that,  
I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
To heaven.  
O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
He took my father grossly, full of bread;

With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;  
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?  
But in our circumstance and course of thought,  
'Tis heavy with him: and am I then revenged,  
To take him in the purging of his soul,  
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?  
No!

Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:  
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;  
At gaming, swearing, or about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in't;  
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,  
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black  
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays:  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

*Exit*

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

[Rising] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:  
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The Queen's closet.

*Enter QUEEN MARGARET and POLONIUS*

### LORD POLONIUS

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him:  
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,  
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between  
Much heat and him. I'll sconce me even here.  
Pray you, be round with him.

### HAMLET

[Within] Mother, mother, mother!

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

I'll warrant you,  
Fear me not: withdraw, I hear him coming.

*POLONIUS hides behind the arras*

*Enter HAMLET*

### HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

### HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

**HAMLET**

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Why, how now, Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

What's the matter now?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Have you forgot me?

**HAMLET**

No, by the rood, not so:  
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;  
And--would it were not so!--you are my mother.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

**HAMLET**

Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;  
You go not till I set you up a glass  
Where you may see the inmost part of you.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

**LORD POLONIUS**

[Behind] What, ho! help, help, help!

**HAMLET**

[Drawing] How now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

*Makes a pass through the arras*

**LORD POLONIUS**

[Behind] O, I am slain!

*Falls and dies*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O me, what hast thou done?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not:  
Is it the king?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

**HAMLET**

A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,  
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

As kill a king!

**HAMLET**

Ay, lady, 'twas my word.

*Lifts up the array and discovers POLONIUS*

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!  
I took thee for thy better: take thy fortune;  
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.  
Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,  
And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,  
If it be made of penetrable stuff,  
If damned custom have not brass'd it so  
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue  
In noise so rude against me?

## **HAMLET**

Such an act  
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows  
As false as dicers' oaths: O, such a deed  
As from the body of contraction plucks  
The very soul, and sweet religion makes  
A rhapsody of words: heaven's face doth glow:  
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,  
With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
Is thought-sick at the act.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Ay me, what act,  
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?

## **HAMLET**

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See, what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man:  
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?  
You cannot call it love; for at your age  
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,  
And waits upon the judgment: and what judgment  
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,  
Else could you not have motion; but sure, that sense  
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,  
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
But it reserved some quantity of choice,  
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't  
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?  
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
Could not so mope.  
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,  
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame  
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge,  
Since frost itself as actively doth burn  
And reason panders will.

## QUEEN GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, speak no more:  
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;  
And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct.



## **HAMLET**

Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
Over the nasty sty,--

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O, speak to me no more;  
These words, like daggers, enter in mine ears;  
No more, sweet Hamlet!

## **HAMLET**

A murderer and a villain;  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,  
And put it in his pocket!

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No more!

## **HAMLET**

A king of shreds and patches,--

*Enter Ghost*

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, he's mad!

## **HAMLET**

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,  
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by  
The important acting of your dread command? O, say!

## **Ghost**

Do not forget: this visitation  
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.  
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:  
O, step between her and her fighting soul:  
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:  
Speak to her, Hamlet.

## **HAMLET**

How is it with you, lady?

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, how is't with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy  
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?  
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,  
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,  
Starts up, and stands on end. O gentle son,  
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper  
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

## **HAMLET**

On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!  
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,  
Would make them capable. Do not look upon me;  
Lest with this piteous action you convert  
My stern effects: then what I have to do  
Will want true colour; tears perchance for blood.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

To whom do you speak this?

## **HAMLET**

Do you see nothing there?

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.

## **HAMLET**

Nor did you nothing hear?

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No, nothing but ourselves.

## **HAMLET**

Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!  
My father, in his habit as he lived!  
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

*Exit Ghost*

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

This the very coinage of your brain:  
This bodiless creation ecstasy  
Is very cunning in.

## **HAMLET**

Ecstasy!  
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness  
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word; which madness  
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
Lay not that mattering unction to your soul,  
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks:  
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,

Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;  
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;  
And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;  
For in the fatness of these pury times  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,  
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.

## QUEEN GERTRUDE

O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

## HAMLET

O, throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.  
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;  
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.  
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,  
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,  
That to the use of actions fair and good  
He likewise gives a frock or livery,  
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence: the next more easy;  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either [ ] the devil, or throw him out  
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night:  
And when you are desirous to be bless'd,  
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

*Pointing to POLONIUS*

I do repent: but heaven hath pleased it so,  
To punish me with this and this with me,  
That I must be their scourge and minister.  
I will bestow him, and will answer well  
The death I gave him. So, again, good night.  
I must be cruel, only to be kind:  
Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.  
One word more, good lady.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What shall I do?

## **HAMLET**

Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:  
Let the bloating tempt you again to bed;  
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;  
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,  
Or paddling in your neck with his damn'd fingers,  
Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madness,  
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;  
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,  
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,  
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?  
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,  
Unpeg the basket on the house's top.  
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,  
To try conclusions, in the basket creep,  
And break your own neck down.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Be thou assured, if words be made of breath,  
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe  
What thou hast said to me.

## **HAMLET**

I must to England; you know that?

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alack,  
I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

## **HAMLET**

There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,

Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,  
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,  
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;  
For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard: and 't shall go hard  
But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,  
When in one line two crafts directly meet.  
This man shall set me packing:  
I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.  
Mother, good night. Indeed this counsellor  
Is now most still, most secret and most grave,  
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.  
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you.  
Good night, mother.

*Exeunt severally; HAMLET dragging in POLONIUS*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in the castle.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, ROSENCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN*

### KING CLAUDIUS

There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves:  
You must translate: 'tis fit we understand them.  
Where is your son?

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

Bestow this place on us a little while.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

### KING CLAUDIUS

What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend  
Which is the mightier: in his lawless fit,  
Behind the arras hearing something stir,  
Whips out his rapier, cries, 'A rat, a rat!'  
And, in this brainish apprehension, kills  
The unseen good old man.

### KING CLAUDIUS

O heavy deed!  
It had been so with us, had we been there:  
His liberty is full of threats to all;

To you yourself, to us, to every one.  
Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?  
It will be laid to us, whose providence  
Should have kept short, restrain'd and out of haunt,  
This mad young man: but so much was our love,  
We would not understand what was most fit;  
But, like the owner of a foul disease,  
To keep it from divulging, let it feed  
Even on the pith of Life. Where is he gone?

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

To draw apart the body he hath kill'd:  
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore  
Among a mineral of metals base,  
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

O Gertrude, come away!  
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,  
But we will ship him hence: and this vile deed  
We must, with all our majesty and skill,  
Both countenance and excuse. Ho, Guildenstern!

*Re-enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:  
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,  
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him:  
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body  
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends;  
And let them know, both what we mean to do,  
And what's untimely done. O, come away!  
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

*Exeunt*



[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another room in the castle.

*Enter HAMLET*

**HAMLET**

Safely stowed.

**ROSENCRANTZ: GUILDENSTERN:**

[Within] Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

**HAMLET**

What noise? who calls on Hamlet?  
O, here they come.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*

**ROSENCRANTZ**

What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

**HAMLET**

Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence  
And bear it to the chapel.

**HAMLET**

Do not believe it.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Believe what?

**HAMLET**

That I can keep your counsel and not mine own.  
Besides, to be demanded of a sponge! what  
replication should be made by the son of a king?

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his  
rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the  
king best service in the end: he keeps them, like  
an ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouthed, to  
be last swallowed: when he needs what you have  
gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you  
shall be dry again.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

I understand you not, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I am glad of it: a knavish speech sleeps in a  
foolish ear.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go  
with us to the king.

**HAMLET**

The body is with the king, but the king is not with

the body. The king is a thing--

**GUILDENSTERN**

A thing, my lord!

**HAMLET**

Of nothing: bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another room in the castle.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, attended*

### KING CLAUDIUS

I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.  
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!  
Yet must not we put the strong law on him:  
He's loved of the distracted multitude,  
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;  
And where tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,  
But never the offence. To bear all smooth and even,  
This sudden sending him away must seem  
Deliberate pause: diseases desperate grown  
By desperate appliance are relieved,  
Or not at all.

*Enter ROSENCRANTZ*

How now! what hath befall'n?

### ROSENCRANTZ

Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,  
We cannot get from him.

### KING CLAUDIUS

But where is he?

### ROSENCRANTZ

Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

### KING CLAUDIUS

Bring him before us.

**ROSENCRANTZ**

Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

*Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

**HAMLET**

At supper.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

At supper! where?

**HAMLET**

Not where he eats, but where he is eaten: a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet: we fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots: your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table: that's the end.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Alas, alas!

**HAMLET**

A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and cat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What dost you mean by this?

**HAMLET**

Nothing but to show you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Where is Polonius?

**HAMLET**

In heaven; send hither to see: if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Go seek him there.

*To some Attendants*

**HAMLET**

He will stay till ye come.

*Exeunt Attendants*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,--  
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve  
For that which thou hast done,--must send thee hence  
With fiery quickness: therefore prepare thyself;  
The bark is ready, and the wind at help,  
The associates tend, and every thing is bent  
For England.

**HAMLET**

For England!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Ay, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

**HAMLET**

I see a cherub that sees them. But, come; for  
England! Farewell, dear mother.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Thy loving father, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man  
and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England!

*Exit*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;  
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night:  
Away! for every thing is seal'd and done  
That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.

*Exeunt ROSENCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN*



And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught--  
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,  
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red  
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe  
Pays homage to us--thou mayst not coldly set  
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,  
By letters congruing to that effect,  
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;  
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,  
And thou must cure me: till I know 'tis done,  
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A plain in Denmark.

*Enter FORTINBRAS, a Captain, and Soldiers, marching*

### PRINCE FORTINBRAS

Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king;  
Tell him that, by his licence, Fortinbras  
Craves the conveyance of a promised march  
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.  
If that his majesty would aught with us,  
We shall express our duty in his eye;  
And let him know so.

### Captain

I will do't, my lord.

### PRINCE FORTINBRAS

Go softly on.

*Exeunt FORTINBRAS and Soldiers*

*Enter HAMLET, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and others*

### HAMLET

Good sir, whose powers are these?

### Captain

They are of Norway, sir.

### HAMLET

How purposed, sir, I pray you?

**Captain**

Against some part of Poland.

**HAMLET**

Who commands them, sir?

**Captain**

The nephews to old Norway, Fortinbras.

**HAMLET**

Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,  
Or for some frontier?

**Captain**

Truly to speak, and with no addition,  
We go to gain a little patch of ground  
That hath in it no profit but the name.  
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;  
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole  
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

**HAMLET**

Why, then the Polack never will defend it.

**Captain**

Yes, it is already garrison'd.

**HAMLET**

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats  
Will not debate the question of this straw:  
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,

That inward breaks, and shows no cause without  
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.

## **Captain**

God be wi' you, sir.

*Exit*

## **ROSENCRANTZ**

Wilt please you go, my lord?

## **HAMLET**

I'll be with you straight go a little before.

*Exeunt all except HAMLET*

How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and god-like reason  
To fust in us unused. Now, whether it be  
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple  
Of thinking too precisely on the event,  
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom  
And ever three parts coward, I do not know  
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do;'  
Sith I have cause and will and strength and means  
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me:  
Witness this army of such mass and charge  
Led by a delicate and tender prince,  
Whose spirit with divine ambition puff'd  
Makes mouths at the invisible event,  
Exposing what is mortal and unsure  
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,  
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument,

But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,  
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,  
Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Elsinore. A room in the castle.

*Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE, HORATIO, and a Gentleman*

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

I will not speak with her.

### Gentleman

She is importunate, indeed distract:  
Her mood will needs be pitied.

### QUEEN GERTRUDE

What would she have?

### Gentleman

She speaks much of her father; says she hears  
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;  
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,  
That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,  
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move  
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,  
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;  
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures  
yield them,  
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,  
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

### HORATIO

'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew  
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

## QUEEN GERTRUDE

Let her come in.

*Exit HORATIO*

To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

*Re-enter HORATIO, with OPHELIA*

## OPHELIA

Where is the beautiful majesty of Denmark?

## QUEEN GERTRUDE

How now, Ophelia!

## OPHELIA

[Sings]  
How should I your true love know  
From another one?  
By his cockle hat and staff,  
And his sandal shoon.

## QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

## OPHELIA

Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

*Sings*

He is dead and gone, lady,  
He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,  
At his heels a stone.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nay, but, Ophelia,--

**OPHELIA**

Pray you, mark.

*Sings*

White his shroud as the mountain snow,--

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS*

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, look here, my lord.

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]

Larded with sweet flowers  
Which bewept to the grave did go  
With true-love showers.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

How do you, pretty lady?

**OPHELIA**

Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's  
daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not  
what we may be. God be at your table!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Conceit upon her father.



## **OPHELIA**

Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

*Sings*

To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.  
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,  
And dupp'd the chamber-door;  
Let in the maid, that out a maid  
Never departed more.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Pretty Ophelia!

## **OPHELIA**

Indeed, la, without an oath, I'll make an end on't:

*Sings*

By Gis and by Saint Charity,  
Alack, and fie for shame!  
Young men will do't, if they come to't;  
By cock, they are to blame.  
Quoth she, before you tumbled me,  
You promised me to wed.  
So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,  
An thou hadst not come to my bed.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

How long hath she been thus?

## **OPHELIA**

I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they should lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it: and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night.

*Exit*

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Follow her close; give her good watch,  
I pray you.

*Exit HORATIO*

O, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs  
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude,  
When sorrows come, they come not single spies  
But in battalions. First, her father slain:  
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author  
Of his own just remove: the people muddied,  
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,  
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,  
In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia  
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,  
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts:  
Last, and as much containing as all these,  
Her brother is in secret come from France;  
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;  
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,  
Will nothing stick our person to arraign  
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,  
Like to a murdering-piece, in many places  
Gives me superfluous death.

*A noise within*

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alack, what noise is this?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door.

*Enter another Gentleman*

What is the matter?

**Gentleman**

Save yourself, my lord:  
The ocean, overpeering of his list,  
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste  
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;  
And, as the world were now but to begin,  
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,  
The ratifiers and props of every word,  
They cry 'Choose we: Laertes shall be king:'  
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds:  
'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!'

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!  
O, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

The doors are broke.

*Noise within*

*Enter LAERTES, armed; Danes following*

**LAERTES**

Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

**Danes**

No, let's come in.

**LAERTES**

I pray you, give me leave.

**Danes**

We will, we will.

*They retire without the door*

**LAERTES**

I thank you: keep the door. O thou vile king,  
Give me my father!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Calmly, good Laertes.

**LAERTES**

That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard,  
Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot  
Even here, between the chaste unsmirched brow  
Of my true mother.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

What is the cause, Laertes,  
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?  
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person:  
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,  
That treason can but peep to what it would,  
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,  
Why thou art thus incensed. Let him go, Gertrude.  
Speak, man.

**LAERTES**

Where is my father?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Dead.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

But not by him.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Let him demand his fill.

**LAERTES**

How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:  
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!  
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!  
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes; only I'll be revenged  
Most thoroughly for my father.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Who shall stay you?

**LAERTES**

My will, not all the world:  
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,  
They shall go far with little.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Good Laertes,  
If you desire to know the certainty  
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,

That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,  
Winner and loser?

**LAERTES**

None but his enemies.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Will you know them then?

**LAERTES**

To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms;  
And like the kind life-rendering pelican,  
Repast them with my blood.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Why, now you speak  
Like a good child and a true gentleman.  
That I am guiltless of your father's death,  
And am most sensible in grief for it,  
It shall as level to your judgment pierce  
As day does to your eye.

**Danes**

[Within] Let her come in.

**LAERTES**

How now! what noise is that?

*Re-enter OPHELIA*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt,  
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!  
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,  
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!  
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!

O heavens! is't possible, a young maid's wits  
Should be as moral as an old man's life?  
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,  
It sends some precious instance of itself  
After the thing it loves.

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
They bore him barefaced on the bier;  
Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;  
And in his grave rain'd many a tear:--  
Fare you well, my dove!

**LAERTES**

Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,  
It could not move thus.

**OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
You must sing a-down a-down,  
An you call him a-down-a.  
O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false  
steward, that stole his master's daughter.

**LAERTES**

This nothing's more than matter.

**OPHELIA**

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,  
love, remember: and there is pansies. that's for thoughts.

**LAERTES**

A document in madness, thoughts and remembrance fitted.

**OPHELIA**

There's fennel for you, and columbines: there's rue  
for you; and here's some for me: we may call it  
herb-grace o' Sundays: O you must wear your rue with  
a difference. There's a daisy: I would give you  
some violets, but they withered all when my father  
died: they say he made a good end,--

*Sings*

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

## **LAERTES**

Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,  
She turns to favour and to prettiness.

## **OPHELIA**

[Sings]  
And will he not come again?  
And will he not come again?  
No, no, he is dead:  
Go to thy death-bed:  
He never will come again.  
His beard was as white as snow,  
All flaxen was his poll:  
He is gone, he is gone,  
And we cast away moan:  
God ha' mercy on his soul!  
And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God be wi' ye.

*Exit*

## **LAERTES**

Do you see this, O God?

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Laertes, I must commune with your grief,  
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,



Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will.  
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me:  
If by direct or by collateral hand  
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,  
Our crown, our life, and all that we can ours,  
To you in satisfaction; but if not,  
Be you content to lend your patience to us,  
And we shall jointly labour with your soul  
To give it due content.

## **LAERTES**

Let this be so;  
His means of death, his obscure funeral--  
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,  
No noble rite nor formal ostentation--  
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,  
That I must call't in question.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

So you shall;  
And where the offence is let the great axe fall.  
I pray you, go with me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Another room in the castle.

*Enter HORATIO and a Servant*

**HORATIO**

What are they that would speak with me?

**Servant**

Sailors, sir: they say they have letters for you.

**HORATIO**

Let them come in.

*Exit Servant*

I do not know from what part of the world  
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

*Enter Sailors*

**First Sailor**

God bless you, sir.

**HORATIO**

Let him bless thee too.

**First Sailor**

He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir; it comes from the ambassador that was

bound for England; if your name be Horatio, as I am  
let to know it is.

## **HORATIO**

[Reads] 'Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked  
this, give these fellows some means to the king:  
they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old  
at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us  
chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on  
a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded  
them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so  
I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with  
me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they  
did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king  
have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me  
with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I  
have words to speak in thine ear will make thee  
dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of  
the matter. These good fellows will bring thee  
where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their  
course for England: of them I have much to tell  
thee. Farewell.

'He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.'

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;  
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me  
To him from whom you brought them.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Another room in the castle.

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS and LAERTES*

### KING CLAUDIUS

Now must your conscience my acquaintance seal,  
And you must put me in your heart for friend,  
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,  
That he which hath your noble father slain  
Pursued my life.

### LAERTES

It well appears: but tell me  
Why you proceeded not against these feats,  
So crimeful and so capital in nature,  
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,  
You mainly were stirr'd up.

### KING CLAUDIUS

O, for two special reasons;  
Which may to you, perhaps, seem much unseem'd,  
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother  
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself--  
My virtue or my plague, be it either which--  
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,  
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,  
I could not but by her. The other motive,  
Why to a public count I might not go,  
Is the great love the general gender bear him;  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,  
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,  
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,

Would have reverted to my bow again,  
And not where I had aim'd them.

## **LAERTES**

And so have I a noble father lost;  
A sister driven into desperate terms,  
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,  
Stood challenger on mount of all the age  
For her perfections: but my revenge will come.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Break not your sleeps for that: you must not think  
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull  
That we can let our beard be shook with danger  
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more:  
I loved your father, and we love ourself;  
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine--

*Enter a Messenger*

How now! what news?

## **Messenger**

Letters, my lord, from Hamlet:  
This to your majesty; this to the queen.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

From Hamlet! who brought them?

## **Messenger**

Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not:  
They were given me by Claudio; he received them  
Of him that brought them.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Laertes, you shall hear them. Leave us.

*Exit Messenger*

*Reads*

'High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes: when I shall, first asking your pardon thereunto, recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. 'HAMLET.'

What should this mean? Are all the rest come back?  
Or is it some abuse, and no such thing?

**LAERTES**

Know you the hand?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

'Tis Hamlets character. 'Naked!  
And in a postscript here, he says 'alone.'  
Can you advise me?

**LAERTES**

I'm lost in it, my lord. But let him come;  
It warms the very sickness in my heart,  
That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,  
'Thus didest thou.'

**KING CLAUDIUS**

If it be so, Laertes--  
As how should it be so? how otherwise?--  
Will you be ruled by me?

**LAERTES**

Ay, my lord;  
So you will not o'errule me to a peace.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,  
As checking at his voyage, and that he means  
No more to undertake it, I will work him  
To an exploit, now ripe in my device,  
Under the which he shall not choose but fall:  
And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe,  
But even his mother shall uncharge the practise  
And call it accident.

## **LAERTES**

My lord, I will be ruled;  
The rather, if you could devise it so  
That I might be the organ.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

It falls right.  
You have been talk'd of since your travel much,  
And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality  
Wherein, they say, you shine: your sum of parts  
Did not together pluck such envy from him  
As did that one, and that, in my regard,  
Of the unworthiest siege.

## **LAERTES**

What part is that, my lord?

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

A very riband in the cap of youth,  
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears  
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,  
Importing health and graveness. Two months since,  
Here was a gentleman of Normandy:--  
I've seen myself, and served against, the French,  
And they can well on horseback: but this gallant  
Had witchcraft in't; he grew unto his seat;

And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,  
As he had been incorpsed and demi-natured  
With the brave beast: so far he topp'd my thought,  
That I, in forgery of shapes and tricks,  
Come short of what he did.

**LAERTES**

A Norman was't?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

A Norman.

**LAERTES**

Upon my life, Lamond.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

The very same.

**LAERTES**

I know him well: he is the brooch indeed  
And gem of all the nation.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

He made confession of you,  
And gave you such a masterly report  
For art and exercise in your defence  
And for your rapier most especially,  
That he cried out, 'twould be a sight indeed,  
If one could match you: the scrimers of their nation,  
He swore, had had neither motion, guard, nor eye,  
If you opposed them. Sir, this report of his  
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy  
That he could nothing do but wish and beg  
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with him.  
Now, out of this,--



**LAERTES**

What out of this, my lord?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Laertes, was your father dear to you?  
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,  
A face without a heart?

**LAERTES**

Why ask you this?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Not that I think you did not love your father;  
But that I know love is begun by time;  
And that I see, in passages of proof,  
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.  
There lives within the very flame of love  
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it;  
And nothing is at a like goodness still;  
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,  
Dies in his own too much: that we would do  
We should do when we would; for this 'would' changes  
And hath abatements and delays as many  
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;  
And then this 'should' is like a spendthrift sigh,  
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:--  
Hamlet comes back: what would you undertake,  
To show yourself your father's son in deed  
More than in words?

**LAERTES**

To cut his throat i' the church.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,  
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.  
Hamlet return'd shall know you are come home:  
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence  
And set a double varnish on the fame  
The Frenchman gave you, bring you in fine together  
And wager on your heads: he, being remiss,  
Most generous and free from all contriving,  
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease,  
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose  
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practise  
Requite him for your father.

## LAERTES

I will do't:  
And, for that purpose, I'll anoint my sword.  
I bought an unction of a mountebank,  
So mortal that, but dip a knife in it,  
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,  
Collected from all simples that have virtue  
Under the moon, can save the thing from death  
That is but scratch'd withal: I'll touch my point  
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,  
It may be death.

## KING CLAUDIUS

Let's further think of this;  
Weigh what convenience both of time and means  
May fit us to our shape: if this should fail,  
And that our drift look through our bad performance,  
'Twere better not assay'd: therefore this project  
Should have a back or second, that might hold,  
If this should blast in proof. Soft! let me see:  
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings: I ha't.  
When in your motion you are hot and dry--  
As make your bouts more violent to that end--  
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him  
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,  
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,  
Our purpose may hold there.

*Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE*

How now, sweet queen!

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

One woe doth tread upon another's heel,  
So fast they follow; your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

**LAERTES**

Drown'd! O, where?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,  
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;  
There with fantastic garlands did she come  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:  
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;  
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element: but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

**LAERTES**

Alas, then, she is drown'd?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Drown'd, drown'd.

## LAERTES

Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,  
And therefore I forbid my tears: but yet  
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,  
Let shame say what it will: when these are gone,  
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord:  
I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly douts it.

*Exit*

## KING CLAUDIUS

Let's follow, Gertrude:  
How much I had to do to calm his rage!  
Now fear I this will give it start again;  
Therefore let's follow.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A churchyard.

*Enter two Clowns, with spades, & c*

### First Clown

Is she to be buried in Christian burial that wilfully seeks her own salvation?

### Second Clown

I tell thee she is: and therefore make her grave straight: the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

### First Clown

How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

### Second Clown

Why, 'tis found so.

### First Clown

It must be 'se offendendo;' it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act: and an act hath three branches: it is, to act, to do, to perform: argal, she drowned herself wittingly.

### Second Clown

Nay, but hear you, goodman delver,--

## **First Clown**

Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good; if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes,--mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.

## **Second Clown**

But is this law?

## **First Clown**

Ay, marry, is't; crowner's quest law.

## **Second Clown**

Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

## **First Clown**

Why, there thou say'st: and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentleman but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

## **Second Clown**

Was he a gentleman?

## **First Clown**

He was the first that ever bore arms.

## **Second Clown**

Why, he had none.

### **First Clown**

What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says 'Adam digged:' could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee: if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself--

### **Second Clown**

Go to.

### **First Clown**

What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

### **Second Clown**

The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

### **First Clown**

I like thy wit well, in good faith: the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do in: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

### **Second Clown**

'Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?'

### **First Clown**

Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

## **Second Clown**

Marry, now I can tell.

## **First Clown**

To't.

## **Second Clown**

Mass, I cannot tell.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance*

## **First Clown**

Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull  
ass will not mend his pace with beating; and, when  
you are asked this question next, say 'a  
grave-maker: 'the houses that he makes last till  
doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan: fetch me a  
stoup of liquor.

*Exit Second Clown*

*He digs and sings*

In youth, when I did love, did love,  
Methought it was very sweet,  
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,  
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

## **HAMLET**

Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he  
sings at grave-making?

## **HORATIO**

Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.



## HAMLET

'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath  
the daintier sense.

## First Clown

[Sings]

But age, with his stealing steps,  
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,  
And hath shipped me intil the land,  
As if I had never been such.

*Throws up a skull*

## HAMLET

That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once:  
how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were  
Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! It  
might be the pate of a politician, which this ass  
now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God,  
might it not?

## HORATIO

It might, my lord.

## HAMLET

Or of a courtier; which could say 'Good morrow,  
sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?' This might  
be my lord such-a-one, that praised my lord  
such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

## HORATIO

Ay, my lord.

## HAMLET

Why, e'en so: and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and  
knocked about the mazzard with a sexton's spade:  
here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to  
see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding,  
but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ache to think on't.

## **First Clown**

[Sings]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,  
For and a shrouding sheet:  
O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

*Throws up another skull*

## **HAMLET**

There's another: why may not that be the skull of a  
lawyer? Where be his quiddities now, his quilllets,  
his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? why does he  
suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the  
sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of  
his action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be  
in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes,  
his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers,  
his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines, and  
the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine  
pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him  
no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than  
the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The  
very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in  
this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

## **HORATIO**

Not a jot more, my lord.

## **HAMLET**

Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

## **HORATIO**

Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

## **HAMLET**

They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance  
in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose  
grave's this, sirrah?

## **First Clown**

Mine, sir.

*Sings*

O, a pit of clay for to be made  
For such a guest is meet.

## **HAMLET**

I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.

## **First Clown**

You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not  
yours: for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

## **HAMLET**

'Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine:  
'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

## **First Clown**

'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away gain, from me to  
you.

## **HAMLET**

What man dost thou dig it for?

**First Clown**

For no man, sir.

**HAMLET**

What woman, then?

**First Clown**

For none, neither.

**HAMLET**

Who is to be buried in't?

**First Clown**

One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

**HAMLET**

How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken a note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he gaffs his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

**First Clown**

Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet overcame Fortinbras.

**HAMLET**

How long is that since?

**First Clown**

Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

**HAMLET**

Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

**First Clown**

Why, because he was mad: he shall recover his wits there; or, if he do not, it's no great matter there.

**HAMLET**

Why?

**First Clown**

'Twill, a not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

**HAMLET**

How came he mad?

**First Clown**

Very strangely, they say.

**HAMLET**

How strangely?

**First Clown**

Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

**HAMLET**

Upon what ground?

**First Clown**

Why, here in Denmark: I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

**HAMLET**

How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

**First Clown**

I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die--as we have many pocky corsers now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in--he will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

**HAMLET**

Why he more than another?

**First Clown**

Why, sir, his hide is so tanned with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

**HAMLET**

Whose was it?

**First Clown**

A whoreson mad fellow's it was: whose do you think it was?

**HAMLET**

Nay, I know not.

## **First Clown**

A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a  
flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull,  
sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

## **HAMLET**

This?

## **First Clown**

E'en that.

## **HAMLET**

Let me see.

*Takes the skull*

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow  
of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath  
borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how  
abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at  
it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know  
not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your  
gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment,  
that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one  
now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen?  
Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let  
her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must  
come; make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell  
me one thing.

## **HORATIO**

What's that, my lord?

## **HAMLET**

Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i'

the earth?

**HORATIO**

E'en so.

**HAMLET**

And smelt so? pah!

*Puts down the skull*

**HORATIO**

E'en so, my lord.

**HAMLET**

To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

**HORATIO**

'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

**HAMLET**

No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it: as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel? Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay, Might stop a hole to keep the wind away: O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe, Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw! But soft! but soft! aside: here comes the king.

*Enter Priest, & c. in procession; the Corpse of OPHELIA, LAERTES and Mourners*



*following; KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, their trains, & c*

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?  
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken  
The corse they follow did with desperate hand  
Fordo its own life: 'twas of some estate.  
Couch we awhile, and mark.

*Retiring with HORATIO*

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else?

**HAMLET**

That is Laertes,  
A very noble youth: mark.

**LAERTES**

What ceremony else?

**First Priest**

Her obsequies have been as far enlarged  
As we have warrantise: her death was doubtful;  
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,  
She should in ground unsanctified have lodged  
Till the last trumpet: for charitable prayers,  
Shards, flints and pebbles should be thrown on her;  
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,  
Her maiden strewments and the bringing home  
Of bell and burial.

**LAERTES**

Must there no more be done?

**First Priest**

No more be done:  
We should profane the service of the dead  
To sing a requiem and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

## **LAERTES**

Lay her i' the earth:  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be,  
When thou liest howling.

## **HAMLET**

What, the fair Ophelia!

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Sweets to the sweet: farewell!

*Scattering flowers*

I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;  
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,  
And not have strew'd thy grave.

## **LAERTES**

O, treble woe  
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,  
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense  
Deprived thee of! Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms:

*Leaps into the grave*

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,  
To o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

## **HAMLET**

[Advancing] What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

*Leaps into the grave*

## **LAERTES**

The devil take thy soul!

*Grappling with him*

## **HAMLET**

Thou pray'st not well.  
I prithee, take thy fingers from my throat;  
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,  
Yet have I something in me dangerous,  
Which let thy wiseness fear: hold off thy hand.

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

Pluck them asunder.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Hamlet, Hamlet!

## **All**

Gentlemen,--

## **HORATIO**

Good my lord, be quiet.

*The Attendants part them, and they come out of the grave*

## **HAMLET**

Why I will fight with him upon this theme  
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

O my son, what theme?

## **HAMLET**

I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers  
Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

O, he is mad, Laertes.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

For love of God, forbear him.

## **HAMLET**

'Swounds, show me what thou'lt do:  
Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?  
Woo't drink up eisel? eat a crocodile?  
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?  
To outface me with leaping in her grave?  
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:  
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, an thou'lt mouth,  
I'll rant as well as thou.

## **QUEEN GERTRUDE**

This is mere madness:

And thus awhile the fit will work on him;  
Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
His silence will sit drooping.

## **HAMLET**

Hear you, sir;  
What is the reason that you use me thus?  
I loved you ever: but it is no matter;  
Let Hercules himself do what he may,  
The cat will mew and dog will have his day.

*Exit*

## **KING CLAUDIUS**

I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

*Exit HORATIO*

*To LAERTES*

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;  
We'll put the matter to the present push.  
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.  
This grave shall have a living monument:  
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;  
Till then, in patience our proceeding be.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Hamlet](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE II. A hall in the castle.

*Enter HAMLET and HORATIO*

**HAMLET**

So much for this, sir: now shall you see the other;  
You do remember all the circumstance?

**HORATIO**

Remember it, my lord?

**HAMLET**

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,  
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay  
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,  
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us  
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will,--

**HORATIO**

That is most certain.

**HAMLET**

Up from my cabin,  
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark  
Groped I to find out them; had my desire.  
Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew  
To mine own room again; making so bold,  
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal

Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio,--  
O royal knavery!--an exact command,  
Larded with many several sorts of reasons  
Importing Denmark's health and England's too,  
With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life,  
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,  
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,  
My head should be struck off.

**HORATIO**

Is't possible?

**HAMLET**

Here's the commission: read it at more leisure.  
But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?

**HORATIO**

I beseech you.

**HAMLET**

Being thus be-netted round with villanies,--  
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,  
They had begun the play--I sat me down,  
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair:  
I once did hold it, as our statist's do,  
A baseness to write fair and labour'd much  
How to forget that learning, but, sir, now  
It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know  
The effect of what I wrote?

**HORATIO**

Ay, good my lord.

**HAMLET**

An earnest conjuration from the king,  
As England was his faithful tributary,

As love between them like the palm might flourish,  
As peace should stiff her wheaten garland wear  
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,  
And many such-like 'As'es of great charge,  
That, on the view and knowing of these contents,  
Without debatement further, more or less,  
He should the bearers put to sudden death,  
Not shriving-time allow'd.

## **HORATIO**

How was this seal'd?

## **HAMLET**

Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.  
I had my father's signet in my purse,  
Which was the model of that Danish seal;  
Folded the writ up in form of the other,  
Subscribed it, gave't the impression, placed it safely,  
The changeling never known. Now, the next day  
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent  
Thou know'st already.

## **HORATIO**

So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

## **HAMLET**

Why, man, they did make love to this employment;  
They are not near my conscience; their defeat  
Does by their own insinuation grow:  
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes  
Between the pass and fell incensed points  
Of mighty opposites.

## **HORATIO**

Why, what a king is this!

## **HAMLET**



Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon--  
He that hath kill'd my king and whored my mother,  
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,  
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,  
And with such cozenage--is't not perfect conscience,  
To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

## **HORATIO**

It must be shortly known to him from England  
What is the issue of the business there.

## **HAMLET**

It will be short: the interim is mine;  
And a man's life's no more than to say 'One.'  
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,  
That to Laertes I forgot myself;  
For, by the image of my cause, I see  
The portraiture of his: I'll court his favours.  
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me  
Into a towering passion.

## **HORATIO**

Peace! who comes here?

*Enter OSRIC*

## **OSRIC**

Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

## **HAMLET**

I humbly thank you, sir. Dost know this water-fly?

## **HORATIO**

No, my good lord.

**HAMLET**

Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile: let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess: 'tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

**OSRIC**

Sweet lord, if your lordship were at leisure, I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

**HAMLET**

I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

**OSRIC**

I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

**HAMLET**

No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

**OSRIC**

It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

**HAMLET**

But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

**OSRIC**

Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry,--as

'twere,--I cannot tell how. But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head: sir, this is the matter,--

## **HAMLET**

I beseech you, remember--

*HAMLET moves him to put on his hat*

## **OSRIC**

Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

## **HAMLET**

Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory, and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror; and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

## **OSRIC**

Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

## **HAMLET**

The concernancy, sir? why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

**OSRIC**

Sir?

**HORATIO**

Is't not possible to understand in another tongue?  
You will do't, sir, really.

**HAMLET**

What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

**OSRIC**

Of Laertes?

**HORATIO**

His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

**HAMLET**

Of him, sir.

**OSRIC**

I know you are not ignorant--

**HAMLET**

I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did,  
it would not much approve me. Well, sir?

**OSRIC**

You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is--

**HAMLET**

I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with

him in excellence; but, to know a man well, were to know himself.

**OSRIC**

I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

**HAMLET**

What's his weapon?

**OSRIC**

Rapier and dagger.

**HAMLET**

That's two of his weapons: but, well.

**OSRIC**

The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses: against the which he has imponed, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

**HAMLET**

What call you the carriages?

**HORATIO**

I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

**OSRIC**

The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

## **HAMLET**

The phrase would be more german to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides: I would it might be hangers till then. But, on: six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this 'imponed,' as you call it?

## **OSRIC**

The king, sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits: he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

## **HAMLET**

How if I answer 'no'?

## **OSRIC**

I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

## **HAMLET**

Sir, I will walk here in the hall: if it please his majesty, 'tis the breathing time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him an I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits.

## **OSRIC**

Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

## **HAMLET**

To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

## **OSRIC**

I commend my duty to your lordship.

## **HAMLET**

Yours, yours.

*Exit OSRIC*

He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

## **HORATIO**

This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

## **HAMLET**

He did comply with his dug, before he sucked it.  
Thus has he--and many more of the same bevy that I know the dressy age dotes on--only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial, the bubbles are out.

*Enter a Lord*

## **Lord**

My lord, his majesty commended him to you by young Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time.

## **HAMLET**

I am constant to my purpose; they follow the king's pleasure: if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

**Lord**

The king and queen and all are coming down.

**HAMLET**

In happy time.

**Lord**

The queen desires you to use some gentle  
entertainment to Laertes before you fall to play.

**HAMLET**

She well instructs me.

*Exit Lord*

**HORATIO**

You will lose this wager, my lord.

**HAMLET**

I do not think so: since he went into France, I  
have been in continual practise: I shall win at the  
odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here  
about my heart: but it is no matter.

**HORATIO**

Nay, good my lord,--

**HAMLET**

It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of  
gain-giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman.

**HORATIO**



If your mind dislike any thing, obey it: I will  
forestall their repair hither, and say you are not  
fit.

## HAMLET

Not a whit, we defy augury: there's a special  
providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,  
'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be  
now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the  
readiness is all: since no man has aught of what he  
leaves, what is't to leave betimes?

*Enter KING CLAUDIUS, QUEEN GERTRUDE, LAERTES, Lords, OSRIC, and Attendants  
with foils, & c*

## KING CLAUDIUS

Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

*KING CLAUDIUS puts LAERTES' hand into HAMLET's*

## HAMLET

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;  
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.  
This presence knows,  
And you must needs have heard, how I am punish'd  
With sore distraction. What I have done,  
That might your nature, honour and exception  
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.  
Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? Never Hamlet:  
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,  
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,  
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.  
Who does it, then? His madness: if't be so,  
Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;  
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.  
Sir, in this audience,  
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil  
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,  
And hurt my brother.

**LAERTES**

I am satisfied in nature,  
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most  
To my revenge: but in my terms of honour  
I stand aloof; and will no reconciliation,  
Till by some elder masters, of known honour,  
I have a voice and precedent of peace,  
To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time,  
I do receive your offer'd love like love,  
And will not wrong it.

**HAMLET**

I embrace it freely;  
And will this brother's wager frankly play.  
Give us the foils. Come on.

**LAERTES**

Come, one for me.

**HAMLET**

I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance  
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,  
Stick fiery off indeed.

**LAERTES**

You mock me, sir.

**HAMLET**

No, by this hand.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,  
You know the wager?

**HAMLET**

Very well, my lord  
Your grace hath laid the odds o' the weaker side.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not fear it; I have seen you both:  
But since he is better'd, we have therefore odds.

**LAERTES**

This is too heavy, let me see another.

**HAMLET**

This likes me well. These foils have all a length?

*They prepare to play*

**OSRIC**

Ay, my good lord.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Set me the stoops of wine upon that table.  
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,  
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,  
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire:  
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;  
And in the cup an union shall he throw,  
Richer than that which four successive kings  
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;  
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,  
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,  
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,  
'Now the king dunks to Hamlet.' Come, begin:

And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

**HAMLET**

Come on, sir.

**LAERTES**

Come, my lord.

*They play*

**HAMLET**

One.

**LAERTES**

No.

**HAMLET**

Judgment.

**OSRIC**

A hit, a very palpable hit.

**LAERTES**

Well; again.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;  
Here's to thy health.

*Trumpets sound, and cannon shot off within*

Give him the cup.

**HAMLET**

I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile. Come.

*They play*

Another hit; what say you?

**LAERTES**

A touch, a touch, I do confess.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Our son shall win.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;

The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

**HAMLET**

Good madam!

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Gertrude, do not drink.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

[Aside] It is the poison'd cup: it is too late.

**HAMLET**

I dare not drink yet, madam; by and by.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Come, let me wipe thy face.

**LAERTES**

My lord, I'll hit him now.

**KING CLAUDIUS**

I do not think't.

**LAERTES**

[Aside] And yet 'tis almost 'gainst my conscience.

**HAMLET**

Come, for the third, Laertes: you but dally;  
I pray you, pass with your best violence;  
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.

**LAERTES**

Say you so? come on.

*They play*

**OSRIC**

Nothing, neither way.

**LAERTES**

Have at you now!

*LAERTES wounds HAMLET; then in scuffling, they change rapiers, and HAMLET wounds LAERTES*

**KING CLAUDIUS**

Part them; they are incensed.

**HAMLET**

Nay, come, again.

*QUEEN GERTRUDE falls*

**OSRIC**

Look to the queen there, ho!

**HORATIO**

They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?

**OSRIC**

How is't, Laertes?

**LAERTES**

Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;  
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

**HAMLET**

How does the queen?

**KING CLAUDIUS**

She swounds to see them bleed.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

No, no, the drink, the drink,--O my dear Hamlet,--  
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd.

*Dies*

## HAMLET

O villany! Ho! let the door be lock'd:  
Treachery! Seek it out.

## LAERTES

It is here, Hamlet: Hamlet, thou art slain;  
No medicine in the world can do thee good;  
In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenom'd: the foul practise  
Hath turn'd itself on me lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again: thy mother's poison'd:  
I can no more: the king, the king's to blame.

## HAMLET

The point!--envenom'd too!  
Then, venom, to thy work.

*Stabs KING CLAUDIUS*

## All

Treason! treason!

## KING CLAUDIUS

O, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.

## HAMLET

Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.

*KING CLAUDIUS dies*

## LAERTES



He is justly served;  
It is a poison temper'd by himself.  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet:  
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,  
Nor thine on me.

*Dies*

## **HAMLET**

Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.  
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!  
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,  
That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
Had I but time--as this fell sergeant, death,  
Is strict in his arrest--O, I could tell you--  
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;  
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.

## **HORATIO**

Never believe it:  
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane:  
Here's yet some liquor left.

## **HAMLET**

As thou'rt a man,  
Give me the cup: let go; by heaven, I'll have't.  
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,  
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!  
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart  
Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,  
To tell my story.

*March afar off, and shot within*

What warlike noise is this?

## **OSRIC**

Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,  
To the ambassadors of England gives  
This warlike volley.

## **HAMLET**

O, I die, Horatio;  
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:  
I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
But I do prophesy the election lights  
On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;  
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence.

*Dies*

## **HORATIO**

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night sweet prince:  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!  
Why does the drum come hither?

*March within*

*Enter FORTINBRAS, the English Ambassadors, and others*

## **PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Where is this sight?

## **HORATIO**

What is it ye would see?  
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

## **PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,  
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,

That thou so many princes at a shot  
So bloodily hast struck?

### **First Ambassador**

The sight is dismal;  
And our affairs from England come too late:  
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,  
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,  
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead:  
Where should we have our thanks?

### **HORATIO**

Not from his mouth,  
Had it the ability of life to thank you:  
He never gave commandment for their death.  
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,  
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,  
Are here arrived give order that these bodies  
High on a stage be placed to the view;  
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world  
How these things came about: so shall you hear  
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,  
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,  
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,  
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook  
Fall'n on the inventors' heads: all this can I  
Truly deliver.

### **PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Let us haste to hear it,  
And call the noblest to the audience.  
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune:  
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,  
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

### **HORATIO**

Of that I shall have also cause to speak,  
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more;

But let this same be presently perform'd,  
Even while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance  
On plots and errors, happen.

## **PRINCE FORTINBRAS**

Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,  
The soldiers' music and the rites of war  
Speak loudly for him.  
Take up the bodies: such a sight as this  
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.  
Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*A dead march. Exeunt, bearing off the dead bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*

# The Life and Death of Julius Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Julius Caesar

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Rome. A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [A public place.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The same. A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Rome. BRUTUS's orchard.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [CAESAR's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A street near the Capitol.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Another part of the same street, before the house of BRUTUS.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Rome. Before the Capitol; the Senate sitting above.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [The Forum.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [A street.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [A house in Rome.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Camp near Sardis. Before BRUTUS's tent.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Brutus's tent.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [The plains of Philippi.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [The same. The field of battle.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Another part of the field.](#)

Act 5, Scene 5: [Another part of the field.](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. A street.

*Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, and certain Commoners*

**FLAVIUS**

Hence! home, you idle creatures get you home:  
Is this a holiday? what! know you not,  
Being mechanical, you ought not walk  
Upon a labouring day without the sign  
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?

**First Commoner**

Why, sir, a carpenter.

**MARULLUS**

Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?  
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?  
You, sir, what trade are you?

**Second Commoner**

Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but,  
as you would say, a cobbler.

**MARULLUS**

But what trade art thou? answer me directly.

**Second Commoner**

A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safe  
conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

## **MARULLUS**

What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?

## **Second Commoner**

Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet,  
if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

## **MARULLUS**

What meanest thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

## **Second Commoner**

Why, sir, cobble you.

## **FLAVIUS**

Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

## **Second Commoner**

Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I  
meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's  
matters, but with awl. I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon  
to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I  
recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon  
neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.

## **FLAVIUS**

But wherefore art not in thy shop today?  
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

## **Second Commoner**

Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself  
into more work. But, indeed, sir, we make holiday,  
to see Caesar and to rejoice in his triumph.

## MARULLUS

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?  
What tributaries follow him to Rome,  
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?  
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!  
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,  
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft  
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,  
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,  
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat  
The livelong day, with patient expectation,  
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:  
And when you saw his chariot but appear,  
Have you not made an universal shout,  
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,  
To hear the replication of your sounds  
Made in her concave shores?  
And do you now put on your best attire?  
And do you now cull out a holiday?  
And do you now strew flowers in his way  
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood? Be gone!  
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,  
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague  
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

## FLAVIUS

Go, go, good countrymen, and, for this fault,  
Assemble all the poor men of your sort;  
Draw them to Tiber banks, and weep your tears  
Into the channel, till the lowest stream  
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

*Exeunt all the Commoners*

See whether their basest metal be not moved;  
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.  
Go you down that way towards the Capitol;

**This way will I**



disrobe the images,  
If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.

**MARULLUS**

May we do so?  
You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

**FLAVIUS**

It is no matter; let no images  
Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll about,  
And drive away the vulgar from the streets:  
So do you too, where you perceive them thick.  
These growing feathers pluck'd from Caesar's wing  
Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,  
Who else would soar above the view of men  
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A public place.

*Flourish. Enter CAESAR; ANTONY, for the course; CALPURNIA, PORTIA, DECIUS BRUTUS, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA; a great crowd following, among them a Soothsayer*

**CAESAR**

Calpurnia!

**CASCA**

Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

**CAESAR**

Calpurnia!

**CALPURNIA**

Here, my lord.

**CAESAR**

Stand you directly in Antonius' way,  
When he doth run his course. Antonius!

**ANTONY**

Caesar, my lord?

**CAESAR**

Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,  
To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say,

The barren, touched in this holy chase,  
Shake off their sterile curse.

**ANTONY**

I shall remember:  
When Caesar says 'do this,' it is perform'd.

**CAESAR**

Set on; and leave no ceremony out.

*Flourish*

**Soothsayer**

Caesar!

**CAESAR**

Ha! who calls?

**CASCA**

Bid every noise be still: peace yet again!

**CAESAR**

Who is it in the press that calls on me?  
I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,  
Cry 'Caesar!' Speak; Caesar is turn'd to hear.

**Soothsayer**

Beware the ides of March.

**CAESAR**

What man is that?

**BRUTUS**

A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

**CAESAR**

Set him before me; let me see his face.

**CASSIUS**

Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Caesar.

**CAESAR**

What say'st thou to me now? speak once again.

**Soothsayer**

Beware the ides of March.

**CAESAR**

He is a dreamer; let us leave him: pass.

*Sennet. Exeunt all except BRUTUS and CASSIUS*

**CASSIUS**

Will you go see the order of the course?

**BRUTUS**

Not I.

**CASSIUS**

I pray you, do.

**BRUTUS**

I am not gamesome: I do lack some part  
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.

Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;  
I'll leave you.

## **CASSIUS**

Brutus, I do observe you now of late:  
I have not from your eyes that gentleness  
And show of love as I was wont to have:  
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand  
Over your friend that loves you.

## **BRUTUS**

Cassius,  
Be not deceived: if I have veil'd my look,  
I turn the trouble of my countenance  
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am  
Of late with passions of some difference,  
Conceptions only proper to myself,  
Which give some soil perhaps to my behaviors;  
But let not therefore my good friends be grieved--  
Among which number, Cassius, be you one--  
Nor construe any further my neglect,  
Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,  
Forgets the shows of love to other men.

## **CASSIUS**

Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion;  
By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried  
Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.  
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

## **BRUTUS**

No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself,  
But by reflection, by some other things.

## **CASSIUS**

'Tis just:  
And it is very much lamented, Brutus,

That you have no such mirrors as will turn  
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,  
That you might see your shadow. I have heard,  
Where many of the best respect in Rome,  
Except immortal Caesar, speaking of Brutus  
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,  
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.

## **BRUTUS**

Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,  
That you would have me seek into myself  
For that which is not in me?

## **CASSIUS**

Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear:  
And since you know you cannot see yourself  
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,  
Will modestly discover to yourself  
That of yourself which you yet know not of.  
And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus:  
Were I a common laughers, or did use  
To stale with ordinary oaths my love  
To every new protester; if you know  
That I do fawn on men and hug them hard  
And after scandal them, or if you know  
That I profess myself in banqueting  
To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.

*Flourish, and shout*

## **BRUTUS**

What means this shouting? I do fear, the people  
Choose Caesar for their king.

## **CASSIUS**

Ay, do you fear it?  
Then must I think you would not have it so.

## BRUTUS

I would not, Cassius; yet I love him well.  
But wherefore do you hold me here so long?  
What is it that you would impart to me?  
If it be aught toward the general good,  
Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,  
And I will look on both indifferently,  
For let the gods so speed me as I love  
The name of honour more than I fear death.

## CASSIUS

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,  
As well as I do know your outward favour.  
Well, honour is the subject of my story.  
I cannot tell what you and other men  
Think of this life; but, for my single self,  
I had as lief not be as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself.  
I was born free as Caesar; so were you:  
We both have fed as well, and we can both  
Endure the winter's cold as well as he:  
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,  
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,  
Caesar said to me 'Darest thou, Cassius, now  
Leap in with me into this angry flood,  
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,  
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in  
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.  
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it  
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside  
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;  
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,  
Caesar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'  
I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,  
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder  
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber  
Did I the tired Caesar. And this man  
Is now become a god, and Cassius is  
A wretched creature and must bend his body,  
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.  
He had a fever when he was in Spain,

And when the fit was on him, I did mark  
How he did shake: 'tis true, this god did shake;  
His coward lips did from their colour fly,  
And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world  
Did lose his lustre: I did hear him groan:  
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans  
Mark him and write his speeches in their books,  
Alas, it cried 'Give me some drink, Titinius,'  
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me  
A man of such a feeble temper should  
So get the start of the majestic world  
And bear the palm alone.

*Shout. Flourish*

## **BRUTUS**

Another general shout!  
I do believe that these applauses are  
For some new honours that are heap'd on Caesar.

## **CASSIUS**

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.  
Men at some time are masters of their fates:  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.  
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that 'Caesar'?  
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
Write them together, yours is as fair a name;  
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;  
Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,  
Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Caesar.  
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,  
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed,  
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!  
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!  
When went there by an age, since the great flood,  
But it was famed with more than with one man?



When could they say till now, that talk'd of Rome,  
That her wide walls encompass'd but one man?  
Now is it Rome indeed and room enough,  
When there is in it but one only man.  
O, you and I have heard our fathers say,  
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd  
The eternal devil to keep his state in Rome  
As easily as a king.

## **BRUTUS**

That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;  
What you would work me to, I have some aim:  
How I have thought of this and of these times,  
I shall recount hereafter; for this present,  
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,  
Be any further moved. What you have said  
I will consider; what you have to say  
I will with patience hear, and find a time  
Both meet to hear and answer such high things.  
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:  
Brutus had rather be a villager  
Than to repute himself a son of Rome  
Under these hard conditions as this time  
Is like to lay upon us.

## **CASSIUS**

I am glad that my weak words  
Have struck but thus much show of fire from Brutus.

## **BRUTUS**

The games are done and Caesar is returning.

## **CASSIUS**

As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve;  
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you  
What hath proceeded worthy note to-day.

*Re-enter CAESAR and his Train*

## **BRUTUS**

I will do so. But, look you, Cassius,  
The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,  
And all the rest look like a chidden train:  
Calpurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero  
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes  
As we have seen him in the Capitol,  
Being cross'd in conference by some senators.

## **CASSIUS**

Casca will tell us what the matter is.

## **CAESAR**

Antonius!

## **ANTONY**

Caesar?

## **CAESAR**

Let me have men about me that are fat;  
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights:  
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;  
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

## **ANTONY**

Fear him not, Caesar; he's not dangerous;  
He is a noble Roman and well given.

## **CAESAR**

Would he were fatter! But I fear him not:  
Yet if my name were liable to fear,  
I do not know the man I should avoid  
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;  
He is a great observer and he looks

Quite through the deeds of men: he loves no plays,  
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;  
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort  
As if he mock'd himself and scorn'd his spirit  
That could be moved to smile at any thing.  
Such men as he be never at heart's ease  
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,  
And therefore are they very dangerous.  
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd  
Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar.  
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,  
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

*Sennet. Exeunt CAESAR and all his Train, but CASCA*

**CASCA**

You pull'd me by the cloak; would you speak with me?

**BRUTUS**

Ay, Casca; tell us what hath chanced to-day,  
That Caesar looks so sad.

**CASCA**

Why, you were with him, were you not?

**BRUTUS**

I should not then ask Casca what had chanced.

**CASCA**

Why, there was a crown offered him: and being  
offered him, he put it by with the back of his hand,  
thus; and then the people fell a-shouting.

**BRUTUS**

What was the second noise for?

**CASCA**

Why, for that too.

**CASSIUS**

They shouted thrice: what was the last cry for?

**CASCA**

Why, for that too.

**BRUTUS**

Was the crown offered him thrice?

**CASCA**

Ay, marry, was't, and he put it by thrice, every time gentler than other, and at every putting-by mine honest neighbours shouted.

**CASSIUS**

Who offered him the crown?

**CASCA**

Why, Antony.

**BRUTUS**

Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

**CASCA**

I can as well be hanged as tell the manner of it: it was mere foolery; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown;--yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one of these coronets;--and, as I told

you, he put it by once: but, for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again: but, to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by: and still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted and clapped their chapped hands and threw up their sweaty night-caps and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost choked Caesar; for he swounded and fell down at it: and for mine own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

## **CASSIUS**

But, soft, I pray you: what, did Caesar swound?

## **CASCA**

He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth, and was speechless.

## **BRUTUS**

'Tis very like: he hath the falling sickness.

## **CASSIUS**

No, Caesar hath it not; but you and I,  
And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness.

## **CASCA**

I know not what you mean by that; but, I am sure, Caesar fell down. If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man.

## **BRUTUS**

What said he when he came unto himself?

**CASCA**

Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, he plucked me ope his doublet and offered them his throat to cut. An I had been a man of any occupation, if I would not have taken him at a word, I would I might go to hell among the rogues. And so he fell. When he came to himself again, he said, If he had done or said any thing amiss, he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity. Three or four wenches, where I stood, cried 'Alas, good soul!' and forgave him with all their hearts: but there's no heed to be taken of them; if Caesar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done no less.

**BRUTUS**

And after that, he came, thus sad, away?

**CASCA**

Ay.

**CASSIUS**

Did Cicero say any thing?

**CASCA**

Ay, he spoke Greek.

**CASSIUS**

To what effect?

**CASCA**

Nay, an I tell you that, Ill ne'er look you i' the

face again: but those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but, for mine own part, it was Greek to me. I could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Caesar's images, are put to silence. Fare you well. There was more foolery yet, if I could remember it.

**CASSIUS**

Will you sup with me to-night, Casca?

**CASCA**

No, I am promised forth.

**CASSIUS**

Will you dine with me to-morrow?

**CASCA**

Ay, if I be alive and your mind hold and your dinner worth the eating.

**CASSIUS**

Good: I will expect you.

**CASCA**

Do so. Farewell, both.

*Exit*

**BRUTUS**

What a blunt fellow is this grown to be!  
He was quick mettle when he went to school.

**CASSIUS**

So is he now in execution  
Of any bold or noble enterprise,  
However he puts on this tardy form.  
This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,  
Which gives men stomach to digest his words  
With better appetite.

## **BRUTUS**

And so it is. For this time I will leave you:  
To-morrow, if you please to speak with me,  
I will come home to you; or, if you will,  
Come home to me, and I will wait for you.

## **CASSIUS**

I will do so: till then, think of the world.

*Exit BRUTUS*

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet, I see,  
Thy honourable metal may be wrought  
From that it is disposed: therefore it is meet  
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;  
For who so firm that cannot be seduced?  
Caesar doth bear me hard; but he loves Brutus:  
If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius,  
He should not humour me. I will this night,  
In several hands, in at his windows throw,  
As if they came from several citizens,  
Writings all tending to the great opinion  
That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely  
Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at:  
And after this let Caesar seat him sure;  
For we will shake him, or worse days endure.

*Exit*



# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. A street.

*Thunder and lightning. Enter from opposite sides, CASCA, with his sword drawn, and CICERO*

### CICERO

Good even, Casca: brought you Caesar home?  
Why are you breathless? and why stare you so?

### CASCA

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth  
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,  
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds  
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen  
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,  
To be exalted with the threatening clouds:  
But never till to-night, never till now,  
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.  
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,  
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,  
Incenses them to send destruction.

### CICERO

Why, saw you any thing more wonderful?

### CASCA

A common slave--you know him well by sight--  
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn  
Like twenty torches join'd, and yet his hand,  
Not sensible of fire, remain'd unscorch'd.  
Besides--I ha' not since put up my sword--  
Against the Capitol I met a lion,

Who glared upon me, and went surly by,  
Without annoying me: and there were drawn  
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,  
Transformed with their fear; who swore they saw  
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.  
And yesterday the bird of night did sit  
Even at noon-day upon the market-place,  
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies  
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say  
'These are their reasons; they are natural;'  
For, I believe, they are portentous things  
Unto the climate that they point upon.

## **CICERO**

Indeed, it is a strange-disposed time:  
But men may construe things after their fashion,  
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves.  
Come Caesar to the Capitol to-morrow?

## **CASCA**

He doth; for he did bid Antonius  
Send word to you he would be there to-morrow.

## **CICERO**

Good night then, Casca: this disturbed sky  
Is not to walk in.

## **CASCA**

Farewell, Cicero.

*Exit CICERO*

*Enter CASSIUS*

## **CASSIUS**

Who's there?

**CASCA**

A Roman.

**CASSIUS**

Casca, by your voice.

**CASCA**

Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this!

**CASSIUS**

A very pleasing night to honest men.

**CASCA**

Who ever knew the heavens menace so?

**CASSIUS**

Those that have known the earth so full of faults.  
For my part, I have walk'd about the streets,  
Submitting me unto the perilous night,  
And, thus unbraced, Casca, as you see,  
Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone;  
And when the cross blue lightning seem'd to open  
The breast of heaven, I did present myself  
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

**CASCA**

But wherefore did you so much tempt the heavens?  
It is the part of men to fear and tremble,  
When the most mighty gods by tokens send  
Such dreadful heralds to astonish us.

**CASSIUS**

You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life

That should be in a Roman you do want,  
Or else you use not. You look pale and gaze  
And put on fear and cast yourself in wonder,  
To see the strange impatience of the heavens:  
But if you would consider the true cause  
Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,  
Why birds and beasts from quality and kind,  
Why old men fool and children calculate,  
Why all these things change from their ordinance  
Their natures and preformed faculties  
To monstrous quality,--why, you shall find  
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits,  
To make them instruments of fear and warning  
Unto some monstrous state.  
Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man  
Most like this dreadful night,  
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars  
As doth the lion in the Capitol,  
A man no mightier than thyself or me  
In personal action, yet prodigious grown  
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

## **CASCA**

'Tis Caesar that you mean; is it not, Cassius?

## **CASSIUS**

Let it be who it is: for Romans now  
Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors;  
But, woe the while! our fathers' minds are dead,  
And we are govern'd with our mothers' spirits;  
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

## **CASCA**

Indeed, they say the senators tomorrow  
Mean to establish Caesar as a king;  
And he shall wear his crown by sea and land,  
In every place, save here in Italy.

## **CASSIUS**

I know where I will wear this dagger then;  
Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius:  
Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong;  
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat:  
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,  
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,  
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;  
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,  
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.  
If I know this, know all the world besides,  
That part of tyranny that I do bear  
I can shake off at pleasure.

*Thunder still*

## **CASCA**

So can I:  
So every bondman in his own hand bears  
The power to cancel his captivity.

## **CASSIUS**

And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?  
Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf,  
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep:  
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.  
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire  
Begin it with weak straws: what trash is Rome,  
What rubbish and what offal, when it serves  
For the base matter to illuminate  
So vile a thing as Caesar! But, O grief,  
Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this  
Before a willing bondman; then I know  
My answer must be made. But I am arm'd,  
And dangers are to me indifferent.

## **CASCA**

You speak to Casca, and to such a man  
That is no fleering tell-tale. Hold, my hand:  
Be factious for redress of all these griefs,

And I will set this foot of mine as far  
As who goes farthest.

**CASSIUS**

There's a bargain made.  
Now know you, Casca, I have moved already  
Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans  
To undergo with me an enterprise  
Of honourable-dangerous consequence;  
And I do know, by this, they stay for me  
In Pompey's porch: for now, this fearful night,  
There is no stir or walking in the streets;  
And the complexion of the element  
In favour's like the work we have in hand,  
Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

**CASCA**

Stand close awhile, for here comes one in haste.

**CASSIUS**

'Tis Cinna; I do know him by his gait;  
He is a friend.

*Enter CINNA*

Cinna, where haste you so?

**CINNA**

To find out you. Who's that? Metellus Cimber?

**CASSIUS**

No, it is Casca; one incorporate  
To our attempts. Am I not stay'd for, Cinna?

**CINNA**

I am glad on 't. What a fearful night is this!  
There's two or three of us have seen strange sights.

**CASSIUS**

Am I not stay'd for? tell me.

**CINNA**

Yes, you are.  
O Cassius, if you could  
But win the noble Brutus to our party--

**CASSIUS**

Be you content: good Cinna, take this paper,  
And look you lay it in the praetor's chair,  
Where Brutus may but find it; and throw this  
In at his window; set this up with wax  
Upon old Brutus' statue: all this done,  
Repair to Pompey's porch, where you shall find us.  
Is Decius Brutus and Trebonius there?

**CINNA**

All but Metellus Cimber; and he's gone  
To seek you at your house. Well, I will hie,  
And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

**CASSIUS**

That done, repair to Pompey's theatre.

*Exit CINNA*

Come, Casca, you and I will yet ere day  
See Brutus at his house: three parts of him  
Is ours already, and the man entire  
Upon the next encounter yields him ours.

**CASCA**

O, he sits high in all the people's hearts:  
And that which would appear offence in us,  
His countenance, like richest alchemy,  
Will change to virtue and to worthiness.

## CASSIUS

Him and his worth and our great need of him  
You have right well conceited. Let us go,  
For it is after midnight; and ere day  
We will awake him and be sure of him.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. BRUTUS's orchard.

*Enter BRUTUS*

**BRUTUS**

What, Lucius, ho!  
I cannot, by the progress of the stars,  
Give guess how near to day. Lucius, I say!  
I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.  
When, Lucius, when? awake, I say! what, Lucius!

*Enter LUCIUS*

**LUCIUS**

Call'd you, my lord?

**BRUTUS**

Get me a taper in my study, Lucius:  
When it is lighted, come and call me here.

**LUCIUS**

I will, my lord.

*Exit*

**BRUTUS**

It must be by his death: and for my part,  
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,  
But for the general. He would be crown'd:  
How that might change his nature, there's the question.  
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;

And that craves wary walking. Crown him?--that;--  
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,  
That at his will he may do danger with.  
The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins  
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Caesar,  
I have not known when his affections sway'd  
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,  
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,  
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;  
But when he once attains the upmost round,  
He then unto the ladder turns his back,  
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees  
By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.  
Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel  
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,  
Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,  
Would run to these and these extremities:  
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg  
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,  
And kill him in the shell.

*Re-enter LUCIUS*

**LUCIUS**

The taper burneth in your closet, sir.  
Searching the window for a flint, I found  
This paper, thus seal'd up; and, I am sure,  
It did not lie there when I went to bed.

*Gives him the letter*

**BRUTUS**

Get you to bed again; it is not day.  
Is not to-morrow, boy, the ides of March?

**LUCIUS**

I know not, sir.

**BRUTUS**

Look in the calendar, and bring me word.

**LUCIUS**

I will, sir.

*Exit*

**BRUTUS**

The exhalations whizzing in the air  
Give so much light that I may read by them.

*Opens the letter and reads*

'Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake, and see thyself.  
Shall Rome, & c. Speak, strike, redress!  
Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake!'  
Such instigations have been often dropp'd  
Where I have took them up.  
'Shall Rome, & c.' Thus must I piece it out:  
Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What, Rome?  
My ancestors did from the streets of Rome  
The Tarquin drive, when he was call'd a king.  
'Speak, strike, redress!' Am I entreated  
To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise:  
If the redress will follow, thou receivest  
Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!

*Re-enter LUCIUS*

**LUCIUS**

Sir, March is wasted fourteen days.

*Knocking within*

**BRUTUS**

'Tis good. Go to the gate; somebody knocks.

*Exit LUCIUS*

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,  
I have not slept.  
Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:  
The Genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council; and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection.

*Re-enter LUCIUS*

**LUCIUS**

Sir, 'tis your brother Cassius at the door,  
Who doth desire to see you.

**BRUTUS**

Is he alone?

**LUCIUS**

No, sir, there are moe with him.

**BRUTUS**

Do you know them?

**LUCIUS**

No, sir; their hats are pluck'd about their ears,  
And half their faces buried in their cloaks,  
That by no means I may discover them  
By any mark of favour.

**BRUTUS**

Let 'em enter.

*Exit LUCIUS*

They are the faction. O conspiracy,  
Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,  
When evils are most free? O, then by day  
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough  
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy;  
Hide it in smiles and affability:  
For if thou path, thy native semblance on,  
Not Erebus itself were dim enough  
To hide thee from prevention.

*Enter the conspirators, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS BRUTUS, CINNA, METELLUS  
CIMBER, and TREBONIUS*

**CASSIUS**

I think we are too bold upon your rest:  
Good morrow, Brutus; do we trouble you?

**BRUTUS**

I have been up this hour, awake all night.  
Know I these men that come along with you?

**CASSIUS**

Yes, every man of them, and no man here  
But honours you; and every one doth wish  
You had but that opinion of yourself  
Which every noble Roman bears of you.  
This is Trebonius.

**BRUTUS**

He is welcome hither.

**CASSIUS**

This, Decius Brutus.

## **BRUTUS**

He is welcome too.

## **CASSIUS**

This, Casca; this, Cinna; and this, Metellus Cimber.

## **BRUTUS**

They are all welcome.  
What watchful cares do interpose themselves  
Betwixt your eyes and night?

## **CASSIUS**

Shall I entreat a word?

*BRUTUS and CASSIUS whisper*

## **DECIUS BRUTUS**

Here lies the east: doth not the day break here?

## **CASCA**

No.

## **CINNA**

O, pardon, sir, it doth; and yon gray lines  
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.

## **CASCA**

You shall confess that you are both deceived.  
Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises,  
Which is a great way growing on the south,  
Weighing the youthful season of the year.  
Some two months hence up higher toward the north  
He first presents his fire; and the high east

Stands, as the Capitol, directly here.

**BRUTUS**

Give me your hands all over, one by one.

**CASSIUS**

And let us swear our resolution.

**BRUTUS**

No, not an oath: if not the face of men,  
The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse,--  
If these be motives weak, break off betimes,  
And every man hence to his idle bed;  
So let high-sighted tyranny range on,  
Till each man drop by lottery. But if these,  
As I am sure they do, bear fire enough  
To kindle cowards and to steel with valour  
The melting spirits of women, then, countrymen,  
What need we any spur but our own cause,  
To prick us to redress? what other bond  
Than secret Romans, that have spoke the word,  
And will not palter? and what other oath  
Than honesty to honesty engaged,  
That this shall be, or we will fall for it?  
Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous,  
Old feeble carrions and such suffering souls  
That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear  
Such creatures as men doubt; but do not stain  
The even virtue of our enterprise,  
Nor the insuppressive mettle of our spirits,  
To think that or our cause or our performance  
Did need an oath; when every drop of blood  
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,  
Is guilty of a several bastardy,  
If he do break the smallest particle  
Of any promise that hath pass'd from him.

**CASSIUS**

But what of Cicero? shall we sound him?  
I think he will stand very strong with us.

**CASCA**

Let us not leave him out.

**CINNA**

No, by no means.

**METELLUS CIMBER**

O, let us have him, for his silver hairs  
Will purchase us a good opinion  
And buy men's voices to commend our deeds:  
It shall be said, his judgment ruled our hands;  
Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,  
But all be buried in his gravity.

**BRUTUS**

O, name him not: let us not break with him;  
For he will never follow any thing  
That other men begin.

**CASSIUS**

Then leave him out.

**CASCA**

Indeed he is not fit.

**DECIUS BRUTUS**

Shall no man else be touch'd but only Caesar?

**CASSIUS**

Decius, well urged: I think it is not meet,



Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,  
Should outlive Caesar: we shall find of him  
A shrewd contriver; and, you know, his means,  
If he improve them, may well stretch so far  
As to annoy us all: which to prevent,  
Let Antony and Caesar fall together.

## **BRUTUS**

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,  
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,  
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards;  
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar:  
Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.  
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar;  
And in the spirit of men there is no blood:  
O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit,  
And not dismember Caesar! But, alas,  
Caesar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends,  
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;  
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,  
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds:  
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,  
Stir up their servants to an act of rage,  
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make  
Our purpose necessary and not envious:  
Which so appearing to the common eyes,  
We shall be call'd purgers, not murderers.  
And for Mark Antony, think not of him;  
For he can do no more than Caesar's arm  
When Caesar's head is off.

## **CASSIUS**

Yet I fear him;  
For in the ingrafted love he bears to Caesar--

## **BRUTUS**

Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him:  
If he love Caesar, all that he can do  
Is to himself, take thought and die for Caesar:

And that were much he should; for he is given  
To sports, to wildness and much company.

**TREBONIUS**

There is no fear in him; let him not die;  
For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.

*Clock strikes*

**BRUTUS**

Peace! count the clock.

**CASSIUS**

The clock hath stricken three.

**TREBONIUS**

'Tis time to part.

**CASSIUS**

But it is doubtful yet,  
Whether Caesar will come forth to-day, or no;  
For he is superstitious grown of late,  
Quite from the main opinion he held once  
Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies:  
It may be, these apparent prodigies,  
The unaccustom'd terror of this night,  
And the persuasion of his augurers,  
May hold him from the Capitol to-day.

**DECIUS BRUTUS**

Never fear that: if he be so resolved,  
I can o'ersway him; for he loves to hear  
That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,  
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,  
Lions with toils and men with flatterers;

But when I tell him he hates flatterers,  
He says he does, being then most flattered.  
Let me work;  
For I can give his humour the true bent,  
And I will bring him to the Capitol.

**CASSIUS**

Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

**BRUTUS**

By the eighth hour: is that the uttermost?

**CINNA**

Be that the uttermost, and fail not then.

**METELLUS CIMBER**

Caius Ligarius doth bear Caesar hard,  
Who rated him for speaking well of Pompey:  
I wonder none of you have thought of him.

**BRUTUS**

Now, good Metellus, go along by him:  
He loves me well, and I have given him reasons;  
Send him but hither, and I'll fashion him.

**CASSIUS**

The morning comes upon 's: we'll leave you, Brutus.  
And, friends, disperse yourselves; but all remember  
What you have said, and show yourselves true Romans.

**BRUTUS**

Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily;  
Let not our looks put on our purposes,  
But bear it as our Roman actors do,

With untired spirits and formal constancy:  
And so good morrow to you every one.

*Exeunt all but BRUTUS*

Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep? It is no matter;  
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber:  
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,  
Which busy care draws in the brains of men;  
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

*Enter PORTIA*

**PORTIA**

Brutus, my lord!

**BRUTUS**

Portia, what mean you? wherefore rise you now?  
It is not for your health thus to commit  
Your weak condition to the raw cold morning.

**PORTIA**

Nor for yours neither. You've ungently, Brutus,  
Stole from my bed: and yesternight, at supper,  
You suddenly arose, and walk'd about,  
Musing and sighing, with your arms across,  
And when I ask'd you what the matter was,  
You stared upon me with ungentle looks;  
I urged you further; then you scratch'd your head,  
And too impatiently stamp'd with your foot;  
Yet I insisted, yet you answer'd not,  
But, with an angry wafture of your hand,  
Gave sign for me to leave you: so I did;  
Fearing to strengthen that impatience  
Which seem'd too much enkindled, and withal  
Hoping it was but an effect of humour,  
Which sometime hath his hour with every man.  
It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep,  
And could it work so much upon your shape

As it hath much prevail'd on your condition,  
I should not know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,  
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.

**BRUTUS**

I am not well in health, and that is all.

**PORTIA**

Brutus is wise, and, were he not in health,  
He would embrace the means to come by it.

**BRUTUS**

Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed.

**PORTIA**

Is Brutus sick? and is it physical  
To walk unbraced and suck up the humours  
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick,  
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed,  
To dare the vile contagion of the night  
And tempt the rheumy and unpurged air  
To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus;  
You have some sick offence within your mind,  
Which, by the right and virtue of my place,  
I ought to know of: and, upon my knees,  
I charm you, by my once-commended beauty,  
By all your vows of love and that great vow  
Which did incorporate and make us one,  
That you unfold to me, yourself, your half,  
Why you are heavy, and what men to-night  
Have had to resort to you: for here have been  
Some six or seven, who did hide their faces  
Even from darkness.

**BRUTUS**

Kneel not, gentle Portia.

## PORTIA

I should not need, if you were gentle Brutus.  
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,  
Is it excepted I should know no secrets  
That appertain to you? Am I yourself  
But, as it were, in sort or limitation,  
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,  
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs  
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,  
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

## BRUTUS

You are my true and honourable wife,  
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops  
That visit my sad heart

## PORTIA

If this were true, then should I know this secret.  
I grant I am a woman; but withal  
A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife:  
I grant I am a woman; but withal  
A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.  
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,  
Being so father'd and so husbanded?  
Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose 'em:  
I have made strong proof of my constancy,  
Giving myself a voluntary wound  
Here, in the thigh: can I bear that with patience.  
And not my husband's secrets?

## BRUTUS

O ye gods,  
Render me worthy of this noble wife!

*Knocking within*

Hark, hark! one knocks: Portia, go in awhile;  
And by and by thy bosom shall partake

The secrets of my heart.  
All my engagements I will construe to thee,  
All the charactery of my sad brows:  
Leave me with haste.

*Exit PORTIA*

Lucius, who's that knocks?

*Re-enter LUCIUS with LIGARIUS*

**LUCIUS**

He is a sick man that would speak with you.

**BRUTUS**

Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of.  
Boy, stand aside. Caius Ligarius! how?

**LIGARIUS**

Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.

**BRUTUS**

O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,  
To wear a kerchief! Would you were not sick!

**LIGARIUS**

I am not sick, if Brutus have in hand  
Any exploit worthy the name of honour.

**BRUTUS**

Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,  
Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.

**LIGARIUS**

By all the gods that Romans bow before,  
I here discard my sickness! Soul of Rome!  
Brave son, derived from honourable loins!  
Thou, like an exorcist, hast conjured up  
My mortified spirit. Now bid me run,  
And I will strive with things impossible;  
Yea, get the better of them. What's to do?

**BRUTUS**

A piece of work that will make sick men whole.

**LIGARIUS**

But are not some whole that we must make sick?

**BRUTUS**

That must we also. What it is, my Caius,  
I shall unfold to thee, as we are going  
To whom it must be done.

**LIGARIUS**

Set on your foot,  
And with a heart new-fired I follow you,  
To do I know not what: but it sufficeth  
That Brutus leads me on.

**BRUTUS**

Follow me, then.

*Exeunt*



# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. CAESAR's house.

*Thunder and lightning. Enter CAESAR, in his night-gown*

**CAESAR**

Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace to-night:  
Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out,  
'Help, ho! they murder Caesar!' Who's within?

*Enter a Servant*

**Servant**

My lord?

**CAESAR**

Go bid the priests do present sacrifice  
And bring me their opinions of success.

**Servant**

I will, my lord.

*Exit*

*Enter CALPURNIA*

**CALPURNIA**

What mean you, Caesar? think you to walk forth?  
You shall not stir out of your house to-day.

**CAESAR**

Caesar shall forth: the things that threaten'd me  
Ne'er look'd but on my back; when they shall see  
The face of Caesar, they are vanished.

## **CALPURNIA**

Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,  
Yet now they fright me. There is one within,  
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,  
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.  
A lioness hath whelped in the streets;  
And graves have yawn'd, and yielded up their dead;  
Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,  
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,  
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;  
The noise of battle hurtled in the air,  
Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan,  
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.  
O Caesar! these things are beyond all use,  
And I do fear them.

## **CAESAR**

What can be avoided  
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?  
Yet Caesar shall go forth; for these predictions  
Are to the world in general as to Caesar.

## **CALPURNIA**

When beggars die, there are no comets seen;  
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

## **CAESAR**

Cowards die many times before their deaths;  
The valiant never taste of death but once.  
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,  
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;  
Seeing that death, a necessary end,  
Will come when it will come.

*Re-enter Servant*

What say the augurers?

**Servant**

They would not have you to stir forth to-day.  
Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,  
They could not find a heart within the beast.

**CAESAR**

The gods do this in shame of cowardice:  
Caesar should be a beast without a heart,  
If he should stay at home to-day for fear.  
No, Caesar shall not: danger knows full well  
That Caesar is more dangerous than he:  
We are two lions litter'd in one day,  
And I the elder and more terrible:  
And Caesar shall go forth.

**CALPURNIA**

Alas, my lord,  
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.  
Do not go forth to-day: call it my fear  
That keeps you in the house, and not your own.  
We'll send Mark Antony to the senate-house:  
And he shall say you are not well to-day:  
Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

**CAESAR**

Mark Antony shall say I am not well,  
And, for thy humour, I will stay at home.

*Enter DECIUS BRUTUS*

Here's Decius Brutus, he shall tell them so.

**DECIUS BRUTUS**

Caesar, all hail! good morrow, worthy Caesar:  
I come to fetch you to the senate-house.

## **CAESAR**

And you are come in very happy time,  
To bear my greeting to the senators  
And tell them that I will not come to-day:  
Cannot, is false, and that I dare not, falser:  
I will not come to-day: tell them so, Decius.

## **CALPURNIA**

Say he is sick.

## **CAESAR**

Shall Caesar send a lie?  
Have I in conquest stretch'd mine arm so far,  
To be afraid to tell graybeards the truth?  
Decius, go tell them Caesar will not come.

## **DECIUS BRUTUS**

Most mighty Caesar, let me know some cause,  
Lest I be laugh'd at when I tell them so.

## **CAESAR**

The cause is in my will: I will not come;  
That is enough to satisfy the senate.  
But for your private satisfaction,  
Because I love you, I will let you know:  
Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home:  
She dreamt to-night she saw my statua,  
Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,  
Did run pure blood: and many lusty Romans  
Came smiling, and did bathe their hands in it:  
And these does she apply for warnings, and portents,  
And evils imminent; and on her knee  
Hath begg'd that I will stay at home to-day.

## DECIUS BRUTUS

This dream is all amiss interpreted;  
It was a vision fair and fortunate:  
Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,  
In which so many smiling Romans bathed,  
Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck  
Reviving blood, and that great men shall press  
For tinctures, stains, relics and cognizance.  
This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.

## CAESAR

And this way have you well expounded it.

## DECIUS BRUTUS

I have, when you have heard what I can say:  
And know it now: the senate have concluded  
To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.  
If you shall send them word you will not come,  
Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock  
Apt to be render'd, for some one to say  
'Break up the senate till another time,  
When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams.'  
If Caesar hide himself, shall they not whisper  
'Lo, Caesar is afraid'?  
Pardon me, Caesar; for my dear dear love  
To our proceeding bids me tell you this;  
And reason to my love is liable.

## CAESAR

How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!  
I am ashamed I did yield to them.  
Give me my robe, for I will go.

*Enter PUBLIUS, BRUTUS, LIGARIUS, METELLUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, and CINNA*

And look where Publius is come to fetch me.

## **PUBLIUS**

Good morrow, Caesar.

## **CAESAR**

Welcome, Publius.

What, Brutus, are you stirr'd so early too?

Good morrow, Casca. Caius Ligarius,

Caesar was ne'er so much your enemy

As that same ague which hath made you lean.

What is 't o'clock?

## **BRUTUS**

Caesar, 'tis stricken eight.

## **CAESAR**

I thank you for your pains and courtesy.

*Enter ANTONY*

See! Antony, that revels long o' nights,

Is notwithstanding up. Good morrow, Antony.

## **ANTONY**

So to most noble Caesar.

## **CAESAR**

Bid them prepare within:

I am to blame to be thus waited for.

Now, Cinna: now, Metellus: what, Trebonius!

I have an hour's talk in store for you;

Remember that you call on me to-day:

Be near me, that I may remember you.

## **TREBONIUS**

Caesar, I will:

*Aside*

and so near will I be,  
That your best friends shall wish I had been further.

**CAESAR**

Good friends, go in, and taste some wine with me;  
And we, like friends, will straightway go together.

**BRUTUS**

[Aside] That every like is not the same, O Caesar,  
The heart of Brutus yearns to think upon!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A street near the Capitol.

*Enter ARTEMIDORUS, reading a paper*

### ARTEMIDORUS

'Caesar, beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius;  
come not near Casca; have an eye to Cinna, trust not  
Trebonyus: mark well Metellus Cimber: Decius Brutus  
loves thee not: thou hast wronged Caius Ligarius.  
There is but one mind in all these men, and it is  
bent against Caesar. If thou beest not immortal,  
look about you: security gives way to conspiracy.  
The mighty gods defend thee! Thy lover,  
'ARTEMIDORUS.'

Here will I stand till Caesar pass along,  
And as a suitor will I give him this.  
My heart laments that virtue cannot live  
Out of the teeth of emulation.  
If thou read this, O Caesar, thou mayst live;  
If not, the Fates with traitors do contrive.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the same street, before the house of BRUTUS.

*Enter PORTIA and LUCIUS*

**PORTIA**

I prithee, boy, run to the senate-house;  
Stay not to answer me, but get thee gone:  
Why dost thou stay?

**LUCIUS**

To know my errand, madam.

**PORTIA**

I would have had thee there, and here again,  
Ere I can tell thee what thou shouldst do there.  
O constancy, be strong upon my side,  
Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue!  
I have a man's mind, but a woman's might.  
How hard it is for women to keep counsel!  
Art thou here yet?

**LUCIUS**

Madam, what should I do?  
Run to the Capitol, and nothing else?  
And so return to you, and nothing else?

**PORTIA**

Yes, bring me word, boy, if thy lord look well,  
For he went sickly forth: and take good note  
What Caesar doth, what suitors press to him.

Hark, boy! what noise is that?

**LUCIUS**

I hear none, madam.

**PORTIA**

Prithee, listen well;  
I heard a bustling rumour, like a fray,  
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

**LUCIUS**

Sooth, madam, I hear nothing.

*Enter the Soothsayer*

**PORTIA**

Come hither, fellow: which way hast thou been?

**Soothsayer**

At mine own house, good lady.

**PORTIA**

What is't o'clock?

**Soothsayer**

About the ninth hour, lady.

**PORTIA**

Is Caesar yet gone to the Capitol?

**Soothsayer**

Madam, not yet: I go to take my stand,

To see him pass on to the Capitol.

**PORTIA**

Thou hast some suit to Caesar, hast thou not?

**Soothsayer**

That I have, lady: if it will please Caesar  
To be so good to Caesar as to hear me,  
I shall beseech him to befriend himself.

**PORTIA**

Why, know'st thou any harm's intended towards him?

**Soothsayer**

None that I know will be, much that I fear may chance.  
Good morrow to you. Here the street is narrow:  
The throng that follows Caesar at the heels,  
Of senators, of praetors, common suitors,  
Will crowd a feeble man almost to death:  
I'll get me to a place more void, and there  
Speak to great Caesar as he comes along.

*Exit*

**PORTIA**

I must go in. Ay me, how weak a thing  
The heart of woman is! O Brutus,  
The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!  
Sure, the boy heard me: Brutus hath a suit  
That Caesar will not grant. O, I grow faint.  
Run, Lucius, and commend me to my lord;  
Say I am merry: come to me again,  
And bring me word what he doth say to thee.

*Exeunt severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. Before the Capitol; the Senate sitting above.

*A crowd of people; among them ARTEMIDORUS and the Soothsayer. Flourish. Enter CAESAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS BRUTUS, METELLUS CIMBER, TREBONIUS, CINNA, ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POPILIUS, PUBLIUS, and others*

**CAESAR**

[To the Soothsayer] The ides of March are come.

**Soothsayer**

Ay, Caesar; but not gone.

**ARTEMIDORUS**

Hail, Caesar! read this schedule.

**DECIUS BRUTUS**

Trebonius doth desire you to o'erread,  
At your best leisure, this his humble suit.

**ARTEMIDORUS**

O Caesar, read mine first; for mine's a suit  
That touches Caesar nearer: read it, great Caesar.

**CAESAR**

What touches us ourself shall be last served.

**ARTEMIDORUS**

Delay not, Caesar; read it instantly.

**CAESAR**

What, is the fellow mad?

**PUBLIUS**

Sirrah, give place.

**CASSIUS**

What, urge you your petitions in the street?  
Come to the Capitol.

*CAESAR goes up to the Senate-House, the rest following*

**POPILIUS**

I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.

**CASSIUS**

What enterprise, Popilius?

**POPILIUS**

Fare you well.

*Advances to CAESAR*

**BRUTUS**

What said Popilius Lena?

**CASSIUS**

He wish'd to-day our enterprise might thrive.  
I fear our purpose is discovered.

**BRUTUS**

Look, how he makes to Caesar; mark him.

**CASSIUS**

Casca, be sudden, for we fear prevention.  
Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known,  
Cassius or Caesar never shall turn back,  
For I will slay myself.

**BRUTUS**

Cassius, be constant:  
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;  
For, look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change.

**CASSIUS**

Trebonius knows his time; for, look you, Brutus.  
He draws Mark Antony out of the way.

*Exeunt ANTONY and TREBONIUS*

**DECIUS BRUTUS**

Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go,  
And presently prefer his suit to Caesar.

**BRUTUS**

He is address'd: press near and second him.

**CINNA**

Casca, you are the first that rears your hand.

**CAESAR**

Are we all ready? What is now amiss  
That Caesar and his senate must redress?

**METELLUS CIMBER**

Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar,  
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat  
An humble heart,--

*Kneeling*

## **CAESAR**

I must prevent thee, Cimber.  
These couchings and these lowly courtesies  
Might fire the blood of ordinary men,  
And turn pre-ordinance and first decree  
Into the law of children. Be not fond,  
To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood  
That will be thaw'd from the true quality  
With that which melteth fools; I mean, sweet words,  
Low-crooked court'sies and base spaniel-fawning.  
Thy brother by decree is banished:  
If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,  
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.  
Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause  
Will he be satisfied.

## **METELLUS CIMBER**

Is there no voice more worthy than my own  
To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear  
For the repealing of my banish'd brother?

## **BRUTUS**

I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar;  
Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may  
Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

## **CAESAR**

What, Brutus!

## **CASSIUS**



Pardon, Caesar; Caesar, pardon:  
As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall,  
To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

## **CASSIUS**

I could be well moved, if I were as you:  
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me:  
But I am constant as the northern star,  
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality  
There is no fellow in the firmament.  
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,  
They are all fire and every one doth shine,  
But there's but one in all doth hold his place:  
So in the world; 'tis furnish'd well with men,  
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;  
Yet in the number I do know but one  
That unassailable holds on his rank,  
Unshaked of motion: and that I am he,  
Let me a little show it, even in this;  
That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,  
And constant do remain to keep him so.

## **CINNA**

O Caesar,--

## **CAESAR**

Hence! wilt thou lift up Olympus?

## **DECIUS BRUTUS**

Great Caesar,--

## **CAESAR**

Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

## **CASCA**

Speak, hands for me!

*CASCA first, then the other Conspirators and BRUTUS stab CAESAR*

**CAESAR**

Et tu, Brute! Then fall, Caesar.

*Dies*

**CINNA**

Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!  
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

**CASSIUS**

Some to the common pulpits, and cry out  
'Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!'

**BRUTUS**

People and senators, be not affrighted;  
Fly not; stand stiff: ambition's debt is paid.

**CASCA**

Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

**DECIUS BRUTUS**

And Cassius too.

**BRUTUS**

Where's Publius?

**CINNA**

Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.

**METELLUS CIMBER**

Stand fast together, lest some friend of Caesar's  
Should chance--

**BRUTUS**

Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer;  
There is no harm intended to your person,  
Nor to no Roman else: so tell them, Publius.

**CASSIUS**

And leave us, Publius; lest that the people,  
Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief.

**BRUTUS**

Do so: and let no man abide this deed,  
But we the doers.

*Re-enter TREBONIUS*

**CASSIUS**

Where is Antony?

**TREBONIUS**

Fled to his house amazed:  
Men, wives and children stare, cry out and run  
As it were doomsday.

**BRUTUS**

Fates, we will know your pleasures:  
That we shall die, we know; 'tis but the time  
And drawing days out, that men stand upon.

**CASSIUS**

Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life

Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

## **BRUTUS**

Grant that, and then is death a benefit:  
So are we Caesar's friends, that have abridged  
His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,  
And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood  
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords:  
Then walk we forth, even to the market-place,  
And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads,  
Let's all cry 'Peace, freedom and liberty!'

## **CASSIUS**

Stoop, then, and wash. How many ages hence  
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over  
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

## **BRUTUS**

How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,  
That now on Pompey's basis lies along  
No worthier than the dust!

## **CASSIUS**

So oft as that shall be,  
So often shall the knot of us be call'd  
The men that gave their country liberty.

## **DECIUS BRUTUS**

What, shall we forth?

## **CASSIUS**

Ay, every man away:  
Brutus shall lead; and we will grace his heels  
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome.

*Enter a Servant*

**BRUTUS**

Soft! who comes here? A friend of Antony's.

**Servant**

Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel:  
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down;  
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say:  
Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honest;  
Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving:  
Say I love Brutus, and I honour him;  
Say I fear'd Caesar, honour'd him and loved him.  
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony  
May safely come to him, and be resolved  
How Caesar hath deserved to lie in death,  
Mark Antony shall not love Caesar dead  
So well as Brutus living; but will follow  
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus  
Thorough the hazards of this untrod state  
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.

**BRUTUS**

Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman;  
I never thought him worse.  
Tell him, so please him come unto this place,  
He shall be satisfied; and, by my honour,  
Depart untouch'd.

**Servant**

I'll fetch him presently.

*Exit*

**BRUTUS**

I know that we shall have him well to friend.

## CASSIUS

I wish we may: but yet have I a mind  
That fears him much; and my misgiving still  
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.

## BRUTUS

But here comes Antony.

*Re-enter ANTONY*

Welcome, Mark Antony.

## ANTONY

O mighty Caesar! dost thou lie so low?  
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,  
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.  
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,  
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank:  
If I myself, there is no hour so fit  
As Caesar's death hour, nor no instrument  
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich  
With the most noble blood of all this world.  
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,  
Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,  
Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years,  
I shall not find myself so apt to die:  
No place will please me so, no mean of death,  
As here by Caesar, and by you cut off,  
The choice and master spirits of this age.

## BRUTUS

O Antony, beg not your death of us.  
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,  
As, by our hands and this our present act,  
You see we do, yet see you but our hands  
And this the bleeding business they have done:  
Our hearts you see not; they are pitiful;  
And pity to the general wrong of Rome--

As fire drives out fire, so pity pity--  
Hath done this deed on Caesar. For your part,  
To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony:  
Our arms, in strength of malice, and our hearts  
Of brothers' temper, do receive you in  
With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence.

## **CASSIUS**

Your voice shall be as strong as any man's  
In the disposing of new dignities.

## **BRUTUS**

Only be patient till we have appeased  
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,  
And then we will deliver you the cause,  
Why I, that did love Caesar when I struck him,  
Have thus proceeded.

## **ANTONY**

I doubt not of your wisdom.  
Let each man render me his bloody hand:  
First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you;  
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand;  
Now, Decius Brutus, yours: now yours, Metellus;  
Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours;  
Though last, not last in love, yours, good Trebonius.  
Gentlemen all,--alas, what shall I say?  
My credit now stands on such slippery ground,  
That one of two bad ways you must conceit me,  
Either a coward or a flatterer.  
That I did love thee, Caesar, O, 'tis true:  
If then thy spirit look upon us now,  
Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death,  
To see thy thy Anthony making his peace,  
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes,  
Most noble! in the presence of thy corse?  
Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,  
Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,  
It would become me better than to close

In terms of friendship with thine enemies.  
Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;  
Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand,  
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.  
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;  
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.  
How like a deer, stricken by many princes,  
Dost thou here lie!

## **CASSIUS**

Mark Antony,--

## **ANTONY**

Pardon me, Caius Cassius:  
The enemies of Caesar shall say this;  
Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.

## **CASSIUS**

I blame you not for praising Caesar so;  
But what compact mean you to have with us?  
Will you be prick'd in number of our friends;  
Or shall we on, and not depend on you?

## **ANTONY**

Therefore I took your hands, but was, indeed,  
Sway'd from the point, by looking down on Caesar.  
Friends am I with you all and love you all,  
Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons  
Why and wherein Caesar was dangerous.

## **BRUTUS**

Or else were this a savage spectacle:  
Our reasons are so full of good regard  
That were you, Antony, the son of Caesar,  
You should be satisfied.

## **ANTONY**



That's all I seek:  
And am moreover suitor that I may  
Produce his body to the market-place;  
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,  
Speak in the order of his funeral.

**BRUTUS**

You shall, Mark Antony.

**CASSIUS**

Brutus, a word with you.

*Aside to BRUTUS*

You know not what you do: do not consent  
That Antony speak in his funeral:  
Know you how much the people may be moved  
By that which he will utter?

**BRUTUS**

By your pardon;  
I will myself into the pulpit first,  
And show the reason of our Caesar's death:  
What Antony shall speak, I will protest  
He speaks by leave and by permission,  
And that we are contented Caesar shall  
Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.  
It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

**CASSIUS**

I know not what may fall; I like it not.

**BRUTUS**

Mark Antony, here, take you Caesar's body.  
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,

But speak all good you can devise of Caesar,  
And say you do't by our permission;  
Else shall you not have any hand at all  
About his funeral: and you shall speak  
In the same pulpit whereto I am going,  
After my speech is ended.

## **ANTONY**

Be it so.  
I do desire no more.

## **BRUTUS**

Prepare the body then, and follow us.

*Exeunt all but ANTONY*

## **ANTONY**

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,  
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!  
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man  
That ever lived in the tide of times.  
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!  
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,--  
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,  
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue--  
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;  
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife  
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;  
Blood and destruction shall be so in use  
And dreadful objects so familiar  
That mothers shall but smile when they behold  
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;  
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds:  
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,  
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,  
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice  
Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war;  
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth  
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

*Enter a Servant*

You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?

**Servant**

I do, Mark Antony.

**ANTONY**

Caesar did write for him to come to Rome.

**Servant**

He did receive his letters, and is coming;  
And bid me say to you by word of mouth--  
O Caesar!--

*Seeing the body*

**ANTONY**

Thy heart is big, get thee apart and weep.  
Passion, I see, is catching; for mine eyes,  
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,  
Began to water. Is thy master coming?

**Servant**

He lies to-night within seven leagues of Rome.

**ANTONY**

Post back with speed, and tell him what hath chanced:  
Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,  
No Rome of safety for Octavius yet;  
Hie hence, and tell him so. Yet, stay awhile;  
Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corse  
Into the market-place: there shall I try  
In my oration, how the people take  
The cruel issue of these bloody men;

According to the which, thou shalt discourse  
To young Octavius of the state of things.  
Lend me your hand.

*Exeunt with CAESAR's body*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The Forum.

*Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS, and a throng of Citizens*

### Citizens

We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

### BRUTUS

Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.  
Cassius, go you into the other street,  
And part the numbers.  
Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;  
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;  
And public reasons shall be rendered  
Of Caesar's death.

### First Citizen

I will hear Brutus speak.

### Second Citizen

I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons,  
When severally we hear them rendered.

*Exit CASSIUS, with some of the Citizens. BRUTUS goes into the pulpit*

### Third Citizen

The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

### BRUTUS

Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge. If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: --Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

**All**

None, Brutus, none.

**BRUTUS**

Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

*Enter ANTONY and others, with CAESAR's body*

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this

I depart,--that, as I slew my best lover for the  
good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself,  
when it shall please my country to need my death.

**All**

Live, Brutus! live, live!

**First Citizen**

Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

**Second Citizen**

Give him a statue with his ancestors.

**Third Citizen**

Let him be Caesar.

**Fourth Citizen**

Caesar's better parts  
Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

**First Citizen**

We'll bring him to his house  
With shouts and clamours.

**BRUTUS**

My countrymen,--

**Second Citizen**

Peace, silence! Brutus speaks.

**First Citizen**

Peace, ho!

## **BRUTUS**

Good countrymen, let me depart alone,  
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:  
Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech  
Tending to Caesar's glories; which Mark Antony,  
By our permission, is allow'd to make.  
I do entreat you, not a man depart,  
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

*Exit*

## **First Citizen**

Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

## **Third Citizen**

Let him go up into the public chair;  
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

## **ANTONY**

For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.

*Goes into the pulpit*

## **Fourth Citizen**

What does he say of Brutus?

## **Third Citizen**

He says, for Brutus' sake,  
He finds himself beholding to us all.

## **Fourth Citizen**

'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.



## **First Citizen**

This Caesar was a tyrant.

## **Third Citizen**

Nay, that's certain:  
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.

## **Second Citizen**

Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.

## **ANTONY**

You gentle Romans,--

## **Citizens**

Peace, ho! let us hear him.

## **ANTONY**

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;  
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.  
The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with their bones;  
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus  
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:  
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest--  
For Brutus is an honourable man;  
So are they all, all honourable men--  
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:  
But Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome  
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:  
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?  
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And, sure, he is an honourable man.  
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
But here I am to speak what I do know.  
You all did love him once, not without cause:  
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?  
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;  
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.

### **First Citizen**

Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

### **Second Citizen**

If thou consider rightly of the matter,  
Caesar has had great wrong.

### **Third Citizen**

Has he, masters?  
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

### **Fourth Citizen**

Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown;  
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

### **First Citizen**

If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

### **Second Citizen**

Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

### **Third Citizen**

There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

### **Fourth Citizen**

Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

### **ANTONY**

But yesterday the word of Caesar might  
Have stood against the world; now lies he there.  
And none so poor to do him reverence.  
O masters, if I were disposed to stir  
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,  
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,  
Who, you all know, are honourable men:  
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose  
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,  
Than I will wrong such honourable men.  
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;  
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will:  
Let but the commons hear this testament--  
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read--  
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds  
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,  
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,  
And, dying, mention it within their wills,  
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy  
Unto their issue.

### **Fourth Citizen**

We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

### **All**

The will, the will! we will hear Caesar's will.

### **ANTONY**

Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;  
It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you.  
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;  
And, being men, bearing the will of Caesar,  
It will inflame you, it will make you mad:  
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;  
For, if you should, O, what would come of it!

#### **Fourth Citizen**

Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;  
You shall read us the will, Caesar's will.

#### **ANTONY**

Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?  
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it:  
I fear I wrong the honourable men  
Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.

#### **Fourth Citizen**

They were traitors: honourable men!

#### **All**

The will! the testament!

#### **Second Citizen**

They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will.

#### **ANTONY**

You will compel me, then, to read the will?  
Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar,  
And let me show you him that made the will.  
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

#### **Several Citizens**

Come down.

**Second Citizen**

Descend.

**Third Citizen**

You shall have leave.

*ANTONY comes down*

**Fourth Citizen**

A ring; stand round.

**First Citizen**

Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

**Second Citizen**

Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

**ANTONY**

Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.

**Several Citizens**

Stand back; room; bear back.

**ANTONY**

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.  
You all do know this mantle: I remember  
The first time ever Caesar put it on;  
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,  
That day he overcame the Nervii:  
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:

See what a rent the envious Casca made:  
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;  
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,  
Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,  
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved  
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;  
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:  
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!  
This was the most unkindest cut of all;  
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,  
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,  
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;  
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,  
Even at the base of Pompey's statua,  
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.  
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!  
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,  
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.  
O, now you weep; and, I perceive, you feel  
The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.  
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold  
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,  
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

### **First Citizen**

O piteous spectacle!

### **Second Citizen**

O noble Caesar!

### **Third Citizen**

O woful day!

### **Fourth Citizen**

O traitors, villains!

### **First Citizen**

O most bloody sight!

**Second Citizen**

We will be revenged.

**All**

Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!  
Let not a traitor live!

**ANTONY**

Stay, countrymen.

**First Citizen**

Peace there! hear the noble Antony.

**Second Citizen**

We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

**ANTONY**

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up  
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.  
They that have done this deed are honourable:  
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,  
That made them do it: they are wise and honourable,  
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.  
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:  
I am no orator, as Brutus is;  
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,  
That love my friend; and that they know full well  
That gave me public leave to speak of him:  
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,  
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,  
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;  
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;  
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,  
And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,

And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony  
Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue  
In every wound of Caesar that should move  
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

**All**

We'll mutiny.

**First Citizen**

We'll burn the house of Brutus.

**Third Citizen**

Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.

**ANTONY**

Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

**All**

Peace, ho! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony!

**ANTONY**

Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:  
Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?  
Alas, you know not: I must tell you then:  
You have forgot the will I told you of.

**All**

Most true. The will! Let's stay and hear the will.

**ANTONY**

Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.  
To every Roman citizen he gives,  
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.



**Second Citizen**

Most noble Caesar! We'll revenge his death.

**Third Citizen**

O royal Caesar!

**ANTONY**

Hear me with patience.

**All**

Peace, ho!

**ANTONY**

Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,  
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,  
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,  
And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,  
To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.  
Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?

**First Citizen**

Never, never. Come, away, away!  
We'll burn his body in the holy place,  
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.  
Take up the body.

**Second Citizen**

Go fetch fire.

**Third Citizen**

Pluck down benches.

## **Fourth Citizen**

Pluck down forms, windows, any thing.

*Exeunt Citizens with the body*

## **ANTONY**

Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,  
Take thou what course thou wilt!

*Enter a Servant*

How now, fellow!

## **Servant**

Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

## **ANTONY**

Where is he?

## **Servant**

He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

## **ANTONY**

And thither will I straight to visit him:  
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,  
And in this mood will give us any thing.

## **Servant**

I heard him say, Brutus and Cassius  
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

## **ANTONY**

Belike they had some notice of the people,

How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caeser](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A street.

*Enter CINNA the poet*

### CINNA THE POET

I dreamt to-night that I did feast with Caesar,  
And things unlucky charge my fantasy:  
I have no will to wander forth of doors,  
Yet something leads me forth.

*Enter Citizens*

### First Citizen

What is your name?

### Second Citizen

Whither are you going?

### Third Citizen

Where do you dwell?

### Fourth Citizen

Are you a married man or a bachelor?

### Second Citizen

Answer every man directly.

### First Citizen

Ay, and briefly.

**Fourth Citizen**

Ay, and wisely.

**Third Citizen**

Ay, and truly, you were best.

**CINNA THE POET**

What is my name? Whither am I going? Where do I dwell? Am I a married man or a bachelor? Then, to answer every man directly and briefly, wisely and truly: wisely I say, I am a bachelor.

**Second Citizen**

That's as much as to say, they are fools that marry: you'll bear me a bang for that, I fear. Proceed; directly.

**CINNA THE POET**

Directly, I am going to Caesar's funeral.

**First Citizen**

As a friend or an enemy?

**CINNA THE POET**

As a friend.

**Second Citizen**

That matter is answered directly.

**Fourth Citizen**

For your dwelling,--briefly.

## **CINNA THE POET**

Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.

### **Third Citizen**

Your name, sir, truly.

## **CINNA THE POET**

Truly, my name is Cinna.

### **First Citizen**

Tear him to pieces; he's a conspirator.

## **CINNA THE POET**

I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

### **Fourth Citizen**

Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses.

## **CINNA THE POET**

I am not Cinna the conspirator.

### **Fourth Citizen**

It is no matter, his name's Cinna; pluck but his name out of his heart, and turn him going.

### **Third Citizen**

Tear him, tear him! Come, brands ho! fire-brands:  
to Brutus', to Cassius'; burn all: some to Decius'  
house, and some to Casca's; some to Ligarius': away, go!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A house in Rome.

*ANTONY, OCTAVIUS, and LEPIDUS, seated at a table*

**ANTONY**

These many, then, shall die; their names are prick'd.

**OCTAVIUS**

Your brother too must die; consent you, Lepidus?

**LEPIDUS**

I do consent--

**OCTAVIUS**

Prick him down, Antony.

**LEPIDUS**

Upon condition Publius shall not live,  
Who is your sister's son, Mark Antony.

**ANTONY**

He shall not live; look, with a spot I damn him.  
But, Lepidus, go you to Caesar's house;  
Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine  
How to cut off some charge in legacies.

**LEPIDUS**

What, shall I find you here?



## OCTAVIUS

Or here, or at the Capitol.

*Exit LEPIDUS*

## ANTONY

This is a slight unmeritable man,  
Meet to be sent on errands: is it fit,  
The three-fold world divided, he should stand  
One of the three to share it?

## OCTAVIUS

So you thought him;  
And took his voice who should be prick'd to die,  
In our black sentence and proscription.

## ANTONY

Octavius, I have seen more days than you:  
And though we lay these honours on this man,  
To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,  
He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,  
To groan and sweat under the business,  
Either led or driven, as we point the way;  
And having brought our treasure where we will,  
Then take we down his load, and turn him off,  
Like to the empty ass, to shake his ears,  
And graze in commons.

## OCTAVIUS

You may do your will;  
But he's a tried and valiant soldier.

## ANTONY

So is my horse, Octavius; and for that  
I do appoint him store of provender:

It is a creature that I teach to fight,  
To wind, to stop, to run directly on,  
His corporal motion govern'd by my spirit.  
And, in some taste, is Lepidus but so;  
He must be taught and train'd and bid go forth;  
A barren-spirited fellow; one that feeds  
On objects, orts and imitations,  
Which, out of use and staled by other men,  
Begin his fashion: do not talk of him,  
But as a property. And now, Octavius,  
Listen great things:--Brutus and Cassius  
Are levying powers: we must straight make head:  
Therefore let our alliance be combined,  
Our best friends made, our means stretch'd  
And let us presently go sit in council,  
How covert matters may be best disclosed,  
And open perils surest answered.

## OCTAVIUS

Let us do so: for we are at the stake,  
And bay'd about with many enemies;  
And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,  
Millions of mischiefs.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julius Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Camp near Sardis. Before BRUTUS's tent.

*Drum. Enter BRUTUS, LUCILIUS, LUCIUS, and Soldiers; TITINIUS and PINDARUS meeting them*

**BRUTUS**

Stand, ho!

**LUCILIUS**

Give the word, ho! and stand.

**BRUTUS**

What now, Lucilius! is Cassius near?

**LUCILIUS**

He is at hand; and Pindarus is come  
To do you salutation from his master.

**BRUTUS**

He greets me well. Your master, Pindarus,  
In his own change, or by ill officers,  
Hath given me some worthy cause to wish  
Things done, undone: but, if he be at hand,  
I shall be satisfied.

**PINDARUS**

I do not doubt  
But that my noble master will appear  
Such as he is, full of regard and honour.

## **BRUTUS**

He is not doubted. A word, Lucilius;  
How he received you, let me be resolved.

## **LUCILIUS**

With courtesy and with respect enough;  
But not with such familiar instances,  
Nor with such free and friendly conference,  
As he hath used of old.

## **BRUTUS**

Thou hast described  
A hot friend cooling: ever note, Lucilius,  
When love begins to sicken and decay,  
It useth an enforced ceremony.  
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;  
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,  
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;  
But when they should endure the bloody spur,  
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,  
Sink in the trial. Comes his army on?

## **LUCILIUS**

They mean this night in Sardis to be quarter'd;  
The greater part, the horse in general,  
Are come with Cassius.

## **BRUTUS**

Hark! he is arrived.

*Low march within*

March gently on to meet him.

*Enter CASSIUS and his powers*

**CASSIUS**

Stand, ho!

**BRUTUS**

Stand, ho! Speak the word along.

**First Soldier**

Stand!

**Second Soldier**

Stand!

**Third Soldier**

Stand!

**CASSIUS**

Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.

**BRUTUS**

Judge me, you gods! wrong I mine enemies?  
And, if not so, how should I wrong a brother?

**CASSIUS**

Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs;  
And when you do them--

**BRUTUS**

Cassius, be content.  
Speak your griefs softly: I do know you well.  
Before the eyes of both our armies here,  
Which should perceive nothing but love from us,  
Let us not wrangle: bid them move away;

Then in my tent, Cassius, enlarge your griefs,  
And I will give you audience.

## **CASSIUS**

Pindarus,  
Bid our commanders lead their charges off  
A little from this ground.

## **BRUTUS**

Lucilius, do you the like; and let no man  
Come to our tent till we have done our conference.  
Let Lucius and Titinius guard our door.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Brutus's tent.

*Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS*

### CASSIUS

That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this:  
You have condemn'd and noted Lucius Pella  
For taking bribes here of the Sardians;  
Wherein my letters, praying on his side,  
Because I knew the man, were slighted off.

### BRUTUS

You wronged yourself to write in such a case.

### CASSIUS

In such a time as this it is not meet  
That every nice offence should bear his comment.

### BRUTUS

Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself  
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm;  
To sell and mart your offices for gold  
To undeservers.

### CASSIUS

I an itching palm!  
You know that you are Brutus that speak this,  
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.

### BRUTUS

The name of Cassius honours this corruption,  
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.

**CASSIUS**

Chastisement!

**BRUTUS**

Remember March, the ides of March remember:  
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?  
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,  
And not for justice? What, shall one of us  
That struck the foremost man of all this world  
But for supporting robbers, shall we now  
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,  
And sell the mighty space of our large honours  
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?  
I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,  
Than such a Roman.

**CASSIUS**

Brutus, bay not me;  
I'll not endure it: you forget yourself,  
To hedge me in; I am a soldier, I,  
Older in practise, abler than yourself  
To make conditions.

**BRUTUS**

Go to; you are not, Cassius.

**CASSIUS**

I am.

**BRUTUS**

I say you are not.



**CASSIUS**

Urge me no more, I shall forget myself;  
Have mind upon your health, tempt me no further.

**BRUTUS**

Away, slight man!

**CASSIUS**

Is't possible?

**BRUTUS**

Hear me, for I will speak.  
Must I give way and room to your rash choler?  
Shall I be frightened when a madman stares?

**CASSIUS**

O ye gods, ye gods! must I endure all this?

**BRUTUS**

All this! ay, more: fret till your proud heart break;  
Go show your slaves how choleric you are,  
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge?  
Must I observe you? must I stand and crouch  
Under your testy humour? By the gods  
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,  
Though it do split you; for, from this day forth,  
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,  
When you are waspish.

**CASSIUS**

Is it come to this?

**BRUTUS**

You say you are a better soldier:  
Let it appear so; make your vaunting true,  
And it shall please me well: for mine own part,  
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.

**CASSIUS**

You wrong me every way; you wrong me, Brutus;  
I said, an elder soldier, not a better:  
Did I say 'better'?

**BRUTUS**

If you did, I care not.

**CASSIUS**

When Caesar lived, he durst not thus have moved me.

**BRUTUS**

Peace, peace! you durst not so have tempted him.

**CASSIUS**

I durst not!

**BRUTUS**

No.

**CASSIUS**

What, durst not tempt him!

**BRUTUS**

For your life you durst not!

**CASSIUS**

Do not presume too much upon my love;  
I may do that I shall be sorry for.

## **BRUTUS**

You have done that you should be sorry for.  
There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats,  
For I am arm'd so strong in honesty  
That they pass by me as the idle wind,  
Which I respect not. I did send to you  
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me:  
For I can raise no money by vile means:  
By heaven, I had rather coin my heart,  
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring  
From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash  
By any indirection: I did send  
To you for gold to pay my legions,  
Which you denied me: was that done like Cassius?  
Should I have answer'd Caius Cassius so?  
When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous,  
To lock such rascal counters from his friends,  
Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts;  
Dash him to pieces!

## **CASSIUS**

I denied you not.

## **BRUTUS**

You did.

## **CASSIUS**

I did not: he was but a fool that brought  
My answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart:  
A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,  
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

## **BRUTUS**

I do not, till you practise them on me.

## **CASSIUS**

You love me not.

## **BRUTUS**

I do not like your faults.

## **CASSIUS**

A friendly eye could never see such faults.

## **BRUTUS**

A flatterer's would not, though they do appear  
As huge as high Olympus.

## **CASSIUS**

Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,  
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,  
For Cassius is aweary of the world;  
Hated by one he loves; braved by his brother;  
Cheque'd like a bondman; all his faults observed,  
Set in a note-book, learn'd, and conn'd by rote,  
To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep  
My spirit from mine eyes! There is my dagger,  
And here my naked breast; within, a heart  
Dearer than Plutus' mine, richer than gold:  
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth;  
I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart:  
Strike, as thou didst at Caesar; for, I know,  
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him better  
Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.

## **BRUTUS**

Sheathe your dagger:  
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope;  
Do what you will, dishonour shall be humour.  
O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb

That carries anger as the flint bears fire;  
Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,  
And straight is cold again.

**CASSIUS**

Hath Cassius lived  
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus,  
When grief, and blood ill-temper'd, vexeth him?

**BRUTUS**

When I spoke that, I was ill-temper'd too.

**CASSIUS**

Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.

**BRUTUS**

And my heart too.

**CASSIUS**

O Brutus!

**BRUTUS**

What's the matter?

**CASSIUS**

Have not you love enough to bear with me,  
When that rash humour which my mother gave me  
Makes me forgetful?

**BRUTUS**

Yes, Cassius; and, from henceforth,  
When you are over-earnest with your Brutus,  
He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

**Poet**

[Within] Let me go in to see the generals;  
There is some grudge between 'em, 'tis not meet  
They be alone.

**LUCILIUS**

[Within] You shall not come to them.

**Poet**

[Within] Nothing but death shall stay me.

*Enter Poet, followed by LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, and LUCIUS*

**CASSIUS**

How now! what's the matter?

**Poet**

For shame, you generals! what do you mean?  
Love, and be friends, as two such men should be;  
For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye.

**CASSIUS**

Ha, ha! how vilely doth this cynic rhyme!

**BRUTUS**

Get you hence, sirrah; saucy fellow, hence!

**CASSIUS**

Bear with him, Brutus; 'tis his fashion.

**BRUTUS**

I'll know his humour, when he knows his time:  
What should the wars do with these jiggling fools?  
Companion, hence!

**CASSIUS**

Away, away, be gone.

*Exit Poet*

**BRUTUS**

Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders  
Prepare to lodge their companies to-night.

**CASSIUS**

And come yourselves, and bring Messala with you  
Immediately to us.

*Exeunt LUCILIUS and TITINIUS*

**BRUTUS**

Lucius, a bowl of wine!

*Exit LUCIUS*

**CASSIUS**

I did not think you could have been so angry.

**BRUTUS**

O Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.

**CASSIUS**

Of your philosophy you make no use,  
If you give place to accidental evils.

**BRUTUS**

No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.

**CASSIUS**

Ha! Portia!

**BRUTUS**

She is dead.

**CASSIUS**

How 'scaped I killing when I cross'd you so?  
O insupportable and touching loss!  
Upon what sickness?

**BRUTUS**

Impatient of my absence,  
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony  
Have made themselves so strong:--for with her death  
That tidings came;--with this she fell distract,  
And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire.

**CASSIUS**

And died so?

**BRUTUS**

Even so.

**CASSIUS**

O ye immortal gods!

*Re-enter LUCIUS, with wine and taper*

**BRUTUS**



Speak no more of her. Give me a bowl of wine.  
In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius.

**CASSIUS**

My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.  
Fill, Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup;  
I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love.

**BRUTUS**

Come in, Titinius!

*Exit LUCIUS*

*Re-enter TITINIUS, with MESSALA*

Welcome, good Messala.  
Now sit we close about this taper here,  
And call in question our necessities.

**CASSIUS**

Portia, art thou gone?

**BRUTUS**

No more, I pray you.  
Messala, I have here received letters,  
That young Octavius and Mark Antony  
Come down upon us with a mighty power,  
Bending their expedition toward Philippi.

**MESSALA**

Myself have letters of the selfsame tenor.

**BRUTUS**

With what addition?

**MESSALA**

That by proscription and bills of outlawry,  
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus,  
Have put to death an hundred senators.

**BRUTUS**

Therein our letters do not well agree;  
Mine speak of seventy senators that died  
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.

**CASSIUS**

Cicero one!

**MESSALA**

Cicero is dead,  
And by that order of proscription.  
Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?

**BRUTUS**

No, Messala.

**MESSALA**

Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?

**BRUTUS**

Nothing, Messala.

**MESSALA**

That, methinks, is strange.

**BRUTUS**

Why ask you? hear you aught of her in yours?

**MESSALA**

No, my lord.

**BRUTUS**

Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.

**MESSALA**

Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell:  
For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

**BRUTUS**

Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala:  
With meditating that she must die once,  
I have the patience to endure it now.

**MESSALA**

Even so great men great losses should endure.

**CASSIUS**

I have as much of this in art as you,  
But yet my nature could not bear it so.

**BRUTUS**

Well, to our work alive. What do you think  
Of marching to Philippi presently?

**CASSIUS**

I do not think it good.

**BRUTUS**

Your reason?

## **CASSIUS**

This it is:

'Tis better that the enemy seek us:  
So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers,  
Doing himself offence; whilst we, lying still,  
Are full of rest, defense, and nimbleness.

## **BRUTUS**

Good reasons must, of force, give place to better.  
The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground  
Do stand but in a forced affection;  
For they have grudged us contribution:  
The enemy, marching along by them,  
By them shall make a fuller number up,  
Come on refresh'd, new-added, and encouraged;  
From which advantage shall we cut him off,  
If at Philippi we do face him there,  
These people at our back.

## **CASSIUS**

Hear me, good brother.

## **BRUTUS**

Under your pardon. You must note beside,  
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,  
Our legions are brim-full, our cause is ripe:  
The enemy increaseth every day;  
We, at the height, are ready to decline.  
There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat;  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.

**CASSIUS**

Then, with your will, go on;  
We'll along ourselves, and meet them at Philippi.

**BRUTUS**

The deep of night is crept upon our talk,  
And nature must obey necessity;  
Which we will niggard with a little rest.  
There is no more to say?

**CASSIUS**

No more. Good night:  
Early to-morrow will we rise, and hence.

**BRUTUS**

Lucius!

*Enter LUCIUS*

My gown.

*Exit LUCIUS*

Farewell, good Messala:  
Good night, Titinius. Noble, noble Cassius,  
Good night, and good repose.

**CASSIUS**

O my dear brother!  
This was an ill beginning of the night:  
Never come such division 'tween our souls!  
Let it not, Brutus.

**BRUTUS**

Every thing is well.

**CASSIUS**

Good night, my lord.

**BRUTUS**

Good night, good brother.

**TITINIUS MESSALA**

Good night, Lord Brutus.

**BRUTUS**

Farewell, every one.

*Exeunt all but BRUTUS*

*Re-enter LUCIUS, with the gown*

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument?

**LUCIUS**

Here in the tent.

**BRUTUS**

What, thou speak'st drowsily?  
Poor knave, I blame thee not; thou art o'er-watch'd.  
Call Claudius and some other of my men:  
I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

**LUCIUS**

Varro and Claudius!

*Enter VARRO and CLAUDIUS*

**VARRO**

Calls my lord?

**BRUTUS**

I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep;  
It may be I shall raise you by and by  
On business to my brother Cassius.

**VARRO**

So please you, we will stand and watch your pleasure.

**BRUTUS**

I will not have it so: lie down, good sirs;  
It may be I shall otherwise bethink me.  
Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so;  
I put it in the pocket of my gown.

*VARRO and CLAUDIUS lie down*

**LUCIUS**

I was sure your lordship did not give it me.

**BRUTUS**

Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful.  
Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,  
And touch thy instrument a strain or two?

**LUCIUS**

Ay, my lord, an't please you.

**BRUTUS**

It does, my boy:  
I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.

**LUCIUS**

It is my duty, sir.

**BRUTUS**

I should not urge thy duty past thy might;  
I know young bloods look for a time of rest.

**LUCIUS**

I have slept, my lord, already.

**BRUTUS**

It was well done; and thou shalt sleep again;  
I will not hold thee long: if I do live,  
I will be good to thee.

*Music, and a song*

This is a sleepy tune. O murderous slumber,  
Lay'st thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,  
That plays thee music? Gentle knave, good night;  
I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee:  
If thou dost nod, thou break'st thy instrument;  
I'll take it from thee; and, good boy, good night.  
Let me see, let me see; is not the leaf turn'd down  
Where I left reading? Here it is, I think.

*Enter the Ghost of CAESAR*

How ill this taper burns! Ha! who comes here?  
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes  
That shapes this monstrous apparition.  
It comes upon me. Art thou any thing?  
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,  
That makest my blood cold and my hair to stare?  
Speak to me what thou art.

**GHOST**



Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

**BRUTUS**

Why comest thou?

**GHOST**

To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

**BRUTUS**

Well; then I shall see thee again?

**GHOST**

Ay, at Philippi.

**BRUTUS**

Why, I will see thee at Philippi, then.

*Exit Ghost*

Now I have taken heart thou vanishest:  
Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.  
Boy, Lucius! Varro! Claudius! Sirs, awake! Claudius!

**LUCIUS**

The strings, my lord, are false.

**BRUTUS**

He thinks he still is at his instrument.  
Lucius, awake!

**LUCIUS**

My lord?

**BRUTUS**

Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so criedst out?

**LUCIUS**

My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

**BRUTUS**

Yes, that thou didst: didst thou see any thing?

**LUCIUS**

Nothing, my lord.

**BRUTUS**

Sleep again, Lucius. Sirrah Claudius!

*To VARRO*

Fellow thou, awake!

**VARRO**

My lord?

**CLAUDIUS**

My lord?

**BRUTUS**

Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

**VARRO CLAUDIUS**

Did we, my lord?

**BRUTUS**

Ay: saw you any thing?

**VARRO**

No, my lord, I saw nothing.

**CLAUDIUS**

Nor I, my lord.

**BRUTUS**

Go and commend me to my brother Cassius;  
Bid him set on his powers betimes before,  
And we will follow.

**VARRO CLAUDIUS**

It shall be done, my lord.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The plains of Philippi.

*Enter OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, and their army*

### OCTAVIUS

Now, Antony, our hopes are answered:  
You said the enemy would not come down,  
But keep the hills and upper regions;  
It proves not so: their battles are at hand;  
They mean to warn us at Philippi here,  
Answering before we do demand of them.

### ANTONY

Tut, I am in their bosoms, and I know  
Wherefore they do it: they could be content  
To visit other places; and come down  
With fearful bravery, thinking by this face  
To fasten in our thoughts that they have courage;  
But 'tis not so.

*Enter a Messenger*

### Messenger

Prepare you, generals:  
The enemy comes on in gallant show;  
Their bloody sign of battle is hung out,  
And something to be done immediately.

### ANTONY

Octavius, lead your battle softly on,  
Upon the left hand of the even field.

## **OCTAVIUS**

Upon the right hand I; keep thou the left.

## **ANTONY**

Why do you cross me in this exigent?

## **OCTAVIUS**

I do not cross you; but I will do so.

*March*

*Drum. Enter BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and their Army; LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, MESSALA, and others*

## **BRUTUS**

They stand, and would have parley.

## **CASSIUS**

Stand fast, Titinius: we must out and talk.

## **OCTAVIUS**

Mark Antony, shall we give sign of battle?

## **ANTONY**

No, Caesar, we will answer on their charge.  
Make forth; the generals would have some words.

## **OCTAVIUS**

Stir not until the signal.

## **BRUTUS**

Words before blows: is it so, countrymen?

## **OCTAVIUS**

Not that we love words better, as you do.

## **BRUTUS**

Good words are better than bad strokes, Octavius.

## **ANTONY**

In your bad strokes, Brutus, you give good words:  
Witness the hole you made in Caesar's heart,  
Crying 'Long live! hail, Caesar!'

## **CASSIUS**

Antony,  
The posture of your blows are yet unknown;  
But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees,  
And leave them honeyless.

## **ANTONY**

Not stingless too.

## **BRUTUS**

O, yes, and soundless too;  
For you have stol'n their buzzing, Antony,  
And very wisely threat before you sting.

## **ANTONY**

Villains, you did not so, when your vile daggers  
Hack'd one another in the sides of Caesar:  
You show'd your teeth like apes, and fawn'd like hounds,  
And bow'd like bondmen, kissing Caesar's feet;  
Whilst damned Casca, like a cur, behind  
Struck Caesar on the neck. O you flatterers!

## **CASSIUS**

Flatterers! Now, Brutus, thank yourself:  
This tongue had not offended so to-day,  
If Cassius might have ruled.

## **OCTAVIUS**

Come, come, the cause: if arguing make us sweat,  
The proof of it will turn to redder drops. Look;  
I draw a sword against conspirators;  
When think you that the sword goes up again?  
Never, till Caesar's three and thirty wounds  
Be well avenged; or till another Caesar  
Have added slaughter to the sword of traitors.

## **BRUTUS**

Caesar, thou canst not die by traitors' hands,  
Unless thou bring'st them with thee.

## **OCTAVIUS**

So I hope;  
I was not born to die on Brutus' sword.

## **BRUTUS**

O, if thou wert the noblest of thy strain,  
Young man, thou couldst not die more honourable.

## **CASSIUS**

A peevish schoolboy, worthless of such honour,  
Join'd with a masker and a reveller!

## **ANTONY**

Old Cassius still!

## **OCTAVIUS**

Come, Antony, away!  
Defiance, traitors, hurl we in your teeth:  
If you dare fight to-day, come to the field;  
If not, when you have stomachs.

*Exeunt OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, and their army*

**CASSIUS**

Why, now, blow wind, swell billow and swim bark!  
The storm is up, and all is on the hazard.

**BRUTUS**

Ho, Lucilius! hark, a word with you.

**LUCILIUS**

[Standing forth] My lord?

*BRUTUS and LUCILIUS converse apart*

**CASSIUS**

Messala!

**MESSALA**

[Standing forth] What says my general?

**CASSIUS**

Messala,  
This is my birth-day; as this very day  
Was Cassius born. Give me thy hand, Messala:  
Be thou my witness that against my will,  
As Pompey was, am I compell'd to set  
Upon one battle all our liberties.  
You know that I held Epicurus strong  
And his opinion: now I change my mind,  
And partly credit things that do presage.



Coming from Sardis, on our former ensign  
Two mighty eagles fell, and there they perch'd,  
Gorging and feeding from our soldiers' hands;  
Who to Philippi here consorted us:  
This morning are they fled away and gone;  
And in their steads do ravens, crows and kites,  
Fly o'er our heads and downward look on us,  
As we were sickly prey: their shadows seem  
A canopy most fatal, under which  
Our army lies, ready to give up the ghost.

## **MESSALA**

Believe not so.

## **CASSIUS**

I but believe it partly;  
For I am fresh of spirit and resolved  
To meet all perils very constantly.

## **BRUTUS**

Even so, Lucilius.

## **CASSIUS**

Now, most noble Brutus,  
The gods to-day stand friendly, that we may,  
Lovers in peace, lead on our days to age!  
But since the affairs of men rest still uncertain,  
Let's reason with the worst that may befall.  
If we do lose this battle, then is this  
The very last time we shall speak together:  
What are you then determined to do?

## **BRUTUS**

Even by the rule of that philosophy  
By which I did blame Cato for the death  
Which he did give himself, I know not how,  
But I do find it cowardly and vile,

For fear of what might fall, so to prevent  
The time of life: arming myself with patience  
To stay the providence of some high powers  
That govern us below.

## **CASSIUS**

Then, if we lose this battle,  
You are contented to be led in triumph  
Thorough the streets of Rome?

## **BRUTUS**

No, Cassius, no: think not, thou noble Roman,  
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome;  
He bears too great a mind. But this same day  
Must end that work the ides of March begun;  
And whether we shall meet again I know not.  
Therefore our everlasting farewell take:  
For ever, and for ever, farewell, Cassius!  
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile;  
If not, why then, this parting was well made.

## **CASSIUS**

For ever, and for ever, farewell, Brutus!  
If we do meet again, we'll smile indeed;  
If not, 'tis true this parting was well made.

## **BRUTUS**

Why, then, lead on. O, that a man might know  
The end of this day's business ere it come!  
But it sufficeth that the day will end,  
And then the end is known. Come, ho! away!

*Exeunt*

# The Life and Death of Julius Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. The field of battle.

*Alarum. Enter BRUTUS and MESSALA*

### BRUTUS

Ride, ride, Messala, ride, and give these bills  
Unto the legions on the other side.

*Loud alarum*

Let them set on at once; for I perceive  
But cold demeanor in Octavius' wing,  
And sudden push gives them the overthrow.  
Ride, ride, Messala: let them all come down.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another part of the field.

*Alarums. Enter CASSIUS and TITINIUS*

### CASSIUS

O, look, Titinius, look, the villains fly!  
Myself have to mine own turn'd enemy:  
This ensign here of mine was turning back;  
I slew the coward, and did take it from him.

### TITINIUS

O Cassius, Brutus gave the word too early;  
Who, having some advantage on Octavius,  
Took it too eagerly: his soldiers fell to spoil,  
Whilst we by Antony are all enclosed.

*Enter PINDARUS*

### PINDARUS

Fly further off, my lord, fly further off;  
Mark Antony is in your tents, my lord  
Fly, therefore, noble Cassius, fly far off.

### CASSIUS

This hill is far enough. Look, look, Titinius;  
Are those my tents where I perceive the fire?

### TITINIUS

They are, my lord.

### CASSIUS

Titinius, if thou lovest me,  
Mount thou my horse, and hide thy spurs in him,  
Till he have brought thee up to yonder troops,  
And here again; that I may rest assured  
Whether yond troops are friend or enemy.

**TITINIUS**

I will be here again, even with a thought.

*Exit*

**CASSIUS**

Go, Pindarus, get higher on that hill;  
My sight was ever thick; regard Titinius,  
And tell me what thou notest about the field.

*PINDARUS ascends the hill*

This day I breathed first: time is come round,  
And where I did begin, there shall I end;  
My life is run his compass. Sirrah, what news?

**PINDARUS**

[Above] O my lord!

**CASSIUS**

What news?

**PINDARUS**

[Above] Titinius is enclosed round about  
With horsemen, that make to him on the spur;  
Yet he spurs on. Now they are almost on him.  
Now, Titinius! Now some light. O, he lights too.  
He's ta'en.

*Shout*

And, hark! they shout for joy.

## **CASSIUS**

Come down, behold no more.  
O, coward that I am, to live so long,  
To see my best friend ta'en before my face!

*PINDARUS descends*

Come hither, sirrah:  
In Parthia did I take thee prisoner;  
And then I swore thee, saving of thy life,  
That whatsoever I did bid thee do,  
Thou shouldst attempt it. Come now, keep thine oath;  
Now be a freeman: and with this good sword,  
That ran through Caesar's bowels, search this bosom.  
Stand not to answer: here, take thou the hilts;  
And, when my face is cover'd, as 'tis now,  
Guide thou the sword.

*PINDARUS stabs him*

Caesar, thou art revenged,  
Even with the sword that kill'd thee.

*Dies*

## **PINDARUS**

So, I am free; yet would not so have been,  
Durst I have done my will. O Cassius,  
Far from this country Pindarus shall run,  
Where never Roman shall take note of him.

*Exit*

*Re-enter TITINIUS with MESSALA*

## **MESSALA**

It is but change, Titinius; for Octavius  
Is overthrown by noble Brutus' power,  
As Cassius' legions are by Antony.

**TITINIUS**

These tidings will well comfort Cassius.

**MESSALA**

Where did you leave him?

**TITINIUS**

All disconsolate,  
With Pindarus his bondman, on this hill.

**MESSALA**

Is not that he t hat lies upon the ground?

**TITINIUS**

He lies not like the living. O my heart!

**MESSALA**

Is not that he?

**TITINIUS**

No, this was he, Messala,  
But Cassius is no more. O setting sun,  
As in thy red rays thou dost sink to-night,  
So in his red blood Cassius' day is set;  
The sun of Rome is set! Our day is gone;  
Clouds, dews, and dangers come; our deeds are done!  
Mistrust of my success hath done this deed.

**MESSALA**

Mistrust of good success hath done this deed.  
O hateful error, melancholy's child,  
Why dost thou show to the apt thoughts of men  
The things that are not? O error, soon conceived,  
Thou never comest unto a happy birth,  
But kill'st the mother that engender'd thee!

## **TITINIUS**

What, Pindarus! where art thou, Pindarus?

## **MESSALA**

Seek him, Titinius, whilst I go to meet  
The noble Brutus, thrusting this report  
Into his ears; I may say, thrusting it;  
For piercing steel and darts envenomed  
Shall be as welcome to the ears of Brutus  
As tidings of this sight.

## **TITINIUS**

Hie you, Messala,  
And I will seek for Pindarus the while.

*Exit MESSALA*

Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius?  
Did I not meet thy friends? and did not they  
Put on my brows this wreath of victory,  
And bid me give it thee? Didst thou not hear their shouts?  
Alas, thou hast misconstrued every thing!  
But, hold thee, take this garland on thy brow;  
Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I  
Will do his bidding. Brutus, come apace,  
And see how I regarded Caius Cassius.  
By your leave, gods:--this is a Roman's part  
Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart.

*Kills himself*

*Alarum. Re-enter MESSALA, with BRUTUS, CATO, STRATO, VOLUMNIUS, and*



*LUCILIUS*

**BRUTUS**

Where, where, Messala, doth his body lie?

**MESSALA**

Lo, yonder, and Titinius mourning it.

**BRUTUS**

Titinius' face is upward.

**CATO**

He is slain.

**BRUTUS**

O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy spirit walks abroad and turns our swords  
In our own proper entrails.

*Low alarums*

**CATO**

Brave Titinius!  
Look, whether he have not crown'd dead Cassius!

**BRUTUS**

Are yet two Romans living such as these?  
The last of all the Romans, fare thee well!  
It is impossible that ever Rome  
Should breed thy fellow. Friends, I owe more tears  
To this dead man than you shall see me pay.  
I shall find time, Cassius, I shall find time.  
Come, therefore, and to Thasos send his body:  
His funerals shall not be in our camp,

Lest it discomfort us. Lucilius, come;  
And come, young Cato; let us to the field.  
Labeo and Flavius, set our battles on:  
'Tis three o'clock; and, Romans, yet ere night  
We shall try fortune in a second fight.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julius Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the field.

*Alarum. Enter fighting, Soldiers of both armies; then BRUTUS, CATO, LUCILIUS, and others*

### BRUTUS

Yet, countrymen, O, yet hold up your heads!

### CATO

What bastard doth not? Who will go with me?  
I will proclaim my name about the field:  
I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!  
A foe to tyrants, and my country's friend;  
I am the son of Marcus Cato, ho!

### BRUTUS

And I am Brutus, Marcus Brutus, I;  
Brutus, my country's friend; know me for Brutus!

*Exit*

### LUCILIUS

O young and noble Cato, art thou down?  
Why, now thou diest as bravely as Titinius;  
And mayst be honour'd, being Cato's son.

### First Soldier

Yield, or thou diest.

### LUCILIUS

Only I yield to die:  
There is so much that thou wilt kill me straight;

*Offering money*

Kill Brutus, and be honour'd in his death.

**First Soldier**

We must not. A noble prisoner!

**Second Soldier**

Room, ho! Tell Antony, Brutus is ta'en.

**First Soldier**

I'll tell the news. Here comes the general.

*Enter ANTONY*

Brutus is ta'en, Brutus is ta'en, my lord.

**ANTONY**

Where is he?

**LUCILIUS**

Safe, Antony; Brutus is safe enough:  
I dare assure thee that no enemy  
Shall ever take alive the noble Brutus:  
The gods defend him from so great a shame!  
When you do find him, or alive or dead,  
He will be found like Brutus, like himself.

**ANTONY**

This is not Brutus, friend; but, I assure you,  
A prize no less in worth: keep this man safe;  
Give him all kindness: I had rather have

Such men my friends than enemies. Go on,  
And see whether Brutus be alive or dead;  
And bring us word unto Octavius' tent  
How every thing is chanced.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Life and Death of Julies Caesar

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Julius Caesar](#) | Act 5, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE V. Another part of the field.

*Enter BRUTUS, DARDANIUS, CLITUS, STRATO, and VOLUMNIUS*

**BRUTUS**

Come, poor remains of friends, rest on this rock.

**CLITUS**

Statilius show'd the torch-light, but, my lord,  
He came not back: he is or ta'en or slain.

**BRUTUS**

Sit thee down, Clitus: slaying is the word;  
It is a deed in fashion. Hark thee, Clitus.

*Whispers*

**CLITUS**

What, I, my lord? No, not for all the world.

**BRUTUS**

Peace then! no words.

**CLITUS**

I'll rather kill myself.

**BRUTUS**

Hark thee, Dardanius.

*Whispers*

**DARDANIUS**

Shall I do such a deed?

**CLITUS**

O Dardanius!

**DARDANIUS**

O Clitus!

**CLITUS**

What ill request did Brutus make to thee?

**DARDANIUS**

To kill him, Clitus. Look, he meditates.

**CLITUS**

Now is that noble vessel full of grief,  
That it runs over even at his eyes.

**BRUTUS**

Come hither, good Volumnius; list a word.

**VOLUMNIUS**

What says my lord?

**BRUTUS**

Why, this, Volumnius:  
The ghost of Caesar hath appear'd to me  
Two several times by night; at Sardis once,

And, this last night, here in Philippi fields:  
I know my hour is come.

**VOLUMNIUS**

Not so, my lord.

**BRUTUS**

Nay, I am sure it is, Volumnius.  
Thou seest the world, Volumnius, how it goes;  
Our enemies have beat us to the pit:

*Low alarums*

It is more worthy to leap in ourselves,  
Than tarry till they push us. Good Volumnius,  
Thou know'st that we two went to school together:  
Even for that our love of old, I prithee,  
Hold thou my sword-hilts, whilst I run on it.

**VOLUMNIUS**

That's not an office for a friend, my lord.

*Alarum still*

**CLITUS**

Fly, fly, my lord; there is no tarrying here.

**BRUTUS**

Farewell to you; and you; and you, Volumnius.  
Strato, thou hast been all this while asleep;  
Farewell to thee too, Strato. Countrymen,  
My heart doth joy that yet in all my life  
I found no man but he was true to me.  
I shall have glory by this losing day  
More than Octavius and Mark Antony  
By this vile conquest shall attain unto.



So fare you well at once; for Brutus' tongue  
Hath almost ended his life's history:  
Night hangs upon mine eyes; my bones would rest,  
That have but labour'd to attain this hour.

*Alarum. Cry within, 'Fly, fly, fly!'*

## **CLITUS**

Fly, my lord, fly.

## **BRUTUS**

Hence! I will follow.

*Exeunt CLITUS, DARDANIUS, and VOLUMNIUS*

I prithee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord:  
Thou art a fellow of a good respect;  
Thy life hath had some smatch of honour in it:  
Hold then my sword, and turn away thy face,  
While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato?

## **STRATO**

Give me your hand first. Fare you well, my lord.

## **BRUTUS**

Farewell, good Strato.

*Runs on his sword*

Caesar, now be still:  
I kill'd not thee with half so good a will.

*Dies*

*Alarum. Retreat. Enter OCTAVIUS, ANTONY, MESSALA, LUCILIUS, and the army*

## **OCTAVIUS**

What man is that?

**MESSALA**

My master's man. Strato, where is thy master?

**STRATO**

Free from the bondage you are in, Messala:  
The conquerors can but make a fire of him;  
For Brutus only overcame himself,  
And no man else hath honour by his death.

**LUCILIUS**

So Brutus should be found. I thank thee, Brutus,  
That thou hast proved Lucilius' saying true.

**OCTAVIUS**

All that served Brutus, I will entertain them.  
Fellow, wilt thou bestow thy time with me?

**STRATO**

Ay, if Messala will prefer me to you.

**OCTAVIUS**

Do so, good Messala.

**MESSALA**

How died my master, Strato?

**STRATO**

I held the sword, and he did run on it.

**MESSALA**

Octavius, then take him to follow thee,  
That did the latest service to my master.

## **ANTONY**

This was the noblest Roman of them all:  
All the conspirators save only he  
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;  
He only, in a general honest thought  
And common good to all, made one of them.  
His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world 'This was a man!'

## **OCTAVIUS**

According to his virtue let us use him,  
With all respect and rites of burial.  
Within my tent his bones to-night shall lie,  
Most like a soldier, order'd honourably.  
So call the field to rest; and let's away,  
To part the glories of this happy day.

*Exeunt*

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | King Lear

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [King Lear's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [The Earl of Gloucester's castle.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [The Duke of Albany's palace.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [A hall in the same.](#)

Act 1, Scene 5: [Court before the same.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [GLOUCESTER's castle.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Before Gloucester's castle.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A wood.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Before GLOUCESTER's castle. KENT in the stocks.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A heath.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Another part of the heath. Storm still.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Gloucester's castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [The heath. Before a hovel.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [Gloucester's castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 6: [A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 7: [Gloucester's castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [The heath.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Before ALBANY's palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The French camp near Dover.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [The same. A tent.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Gloucester's castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 6: [Fields near Dover.](#)

Act 4, Scene 7: [A tent in the French camp. LEAR on a bed asleep,](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [The British camp, near Dover.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [A field between the two camps.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [The British camp near Dover.](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. King Lear's palace.

*Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, and EDMUND*

**KENT**

I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

**GLOUCESTER**

It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weighed, that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

**KENT**

Is not this your son, my lord?

**GLOUCESTER**

His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.

**KENT**

I cannot conceive you.

**GLOUCESTER**

Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed.

Do you smell a fault?

**KENT**

I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

**GLOUCESTER**

But I have, sir, a son by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair; there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

**EDMUND**

No, my lord.

**GLOUCESTER**

My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

**EDMUND**

My services to your lordship.

**KENT**

I must love you, and sue to know you better.

**EDMUND**

Sir, I shall study deserving.

**GLOUCESTER**

He hath been out nine years, and away he shall

again. The king is coming.

*Sennet. Enter KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants*

## **KING LEAR**

Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I shall, my liege.

*Exeunt GLOUCESTER and EDMUND*

## **KING LEAR**

Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.  
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided  
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent  
To shake all cares and business from our age;  
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we  
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,  
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,  
We have this hour a constant will to publish  
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife  
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,  
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,  
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,  
And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,--  
Since now we will divest us both of rule,  
Interest of territory, cares of state,--  
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?  
That we our largest bounty may extend  
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,  
Our eldest-born, speak first.

## **GONERIL**

Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;  
Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;  
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;

No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;  
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;  
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;  
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

## **CORDELIA**

[Aside] What shall Cordelia do?  
Love, and be silent.

## **LEAR**

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,  
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,  
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,  
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue  
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,  
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

## **REGAN**

Sir, I am made  
Of the self-same metal that my sister is,  
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart  
I find she names my very deed of love;  
Only she comes too short: that I profess  
Myself an enemy to all other joys,  
Which the most precious square of sense possesses;  
And find I am alone felicitate  
In your dear highness' love.

## **CORDELIA**

[Aside] Then poor Cordelia!  
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's  
More richer than my tongue.

## **KING LEAR**

To thee and thine hereditary ever  
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom;  
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,



Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,  
Although the last, not least; to whose young love  
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy  
Strive to be interest'd; what can you say to draw  
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

**CORDELIA**

Nothing, my lord.

**KING LEAR**

Nothing!

**CORDELIA**

Nothing.

**KING LEAR**

Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

**CORDELIA**

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave  
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty  
According to my bond; nor more nor less.

**KING LEAR**

How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,  
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

**CORDELIA**

Good my lord,  
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.  
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say  
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,

That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry  
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:  
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,  
To love my father all.

**KING LEAR**

But goes thy heart with this?

**CORDELIA**

Ay, good my lord.

**KING LEAR**

So young, and so untender?

**CORDELIA**

So young, my lord, and true.

**KING LEAR**

Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower:  
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,  
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;  
By all the operation of the orbs  
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;  
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,  
Propinquity and property of blood,  
And as a stranger to my heart and me  
Hold thee, from this, for ever. The barbarous Scythian,  
Or he that makes his generation messes  
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom  
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and relieved,  
As thou my sometime daughter.

**KENT**

Good my liege,--

## **KING LEAR**

Peace, Kent!  
Come not between the dragon and his wrath.  
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest  
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!  
So be my grave my peace, as here I give  
Her father's heart from her! Call France; who stirs?  
Call Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany,  
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:  
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.  
I do invest you jointly with my power,  
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects  
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,  
With reservation of an hundred knights,  
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode  
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain  
The name, and all the additions to a king;  
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,  
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,  
This coronet part betwixt you.

*Giving the crown*

## **KENT**

Royal Lear,  
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,  
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,  
As my great patron thought on in my prayers,--

## **KING LEAR**

The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

## **KENT**

Let it fall rather, though the fork invade  
The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,  
When Lear is mad. What wilt thou do, old man?  
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,  
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,

When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;  
And, in thy best consideration, cheque  
This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,  
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;  
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound  
Reverbs no hollowness.

**KING LEAR**

Kent, on thy life, no more.

**KENT**

My life I never held but as a pawn  
To wage against thy enemies; nor fear to lose it,  
Thy safety being the motive.

**KING LEAR**

Out of my sight!

**KENT**

See better, Lear; and let me still remain  
The true blank of thine eye.

**KING LEAR**

Now, by Apollo,--

**KENT**

Now, by Apollo, king,  
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

**KING LEAR**

O, vassal! miscreant!

*Laying his hand on his sword*

## **ALBANY CORNWALL**

Dear sir, forbear.

## **KENT**

Do:

Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow  
Upon thy foul disease. Revoke thy doom;  
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,  
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

## **KING LEAR**

Hear me, recreant!  
On thine allegiance, hear me!  
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,  
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride  
To come between our sentence and our power,  
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,  
Our potency made good, take thy reward.  
Five days we do allot thee, for provision  
To shield thee from diseases of the world;  
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back  
Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following,  
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,  
The moment is thy death. Away! by Jupiter,  
This shall not be revoked.

## **KENT**

Fare thee well, king: sith thus thou wilt appear,  
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.

*To CORDELIA*

The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,  
That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said!

*To REGAN and GONERIL*

And your large speeches may your deeds approve,

That good effects may spring from words of love.  
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;  
He'll shape his old course in a country new.

*Exit*

*Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, with KING OF FRANCE, BURGUNDY, and Attendants*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

## **KING LEAR**

My lord of Burgundy.  
We first address towards you, who with this king  
Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what, in the least,  
Will you require in present dower with her,  
Or cease your quest of love?

## **BURGUNDY**

Most royal majesty,  
I crave no more than what your highness offer'd,  
Nor will you tender less.

## **KING LEAR**

Right noble Burgundy,  
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;  
But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:  
If aught within that little seeming substance,  
Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,  
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,  
She's there, and she is yours.

## **BURGUNDY**

I know no answer.

## **KING LEAR**

Will you, with those infirmities she owes,  
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,  
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,  
Take her, or leave her?

## **BURGUNDY**

Pardon me, royal sir;  
Election makes not up on such conditions.

## **KING LEAR**

Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,  
I tell you all her wealth.

*To KING OF FRANCE*

For you, great king,  
I would not from your love make such a stray,  
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you  
To avert your liking a more worthier way  
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed  
Almost to acknowledge hers.

## **KING OF FRANCE**

This is most strange,  
That she, that even but now was your best object,  
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,  
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time  
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle  
So many folds of favour. Sure, her offence  
Must be of such unnatural degree,  
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection  
Fall'n into taint: which to believe of her,  
Must be a faith that reason without miracle  
Could never plant in me.

## **CORDELIA**

I yet beseech your majesty,--  
If for I want that glib and oily art,  
To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,  
I'll do't before I speak,--that you make known  
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,  
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,  
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour;  
But even for want of that for which I am richer,  
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue  
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it  
Hath lost me in your liking.

## **KING LEAR**

Better thou  
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.

## **KING OF FRANCE**

Is it but this,--a tardiness in nature  
Which often leaves the history unspoke  
That it intends to do? My lord of Burgundy,  
What say you to the lady? Love's not love  
When it is mingled with regards that stand  
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?  
She is herself a dowry.

## **BURGUNDY**

Royal Lear,  
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,  
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,  
Duchess of Burgundy.

## **KING LEAR**

Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

## **BURGUNDY**

I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father  
That you must lose a husband.



## **CORDELIA**

Peace be with Burgundy!  
Since that respects of fortune are his love,  
I shall not be his wife.

## **KING OF FRANCE**

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;  
Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!  
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:  
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.  
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect  
My love should kindle to inflamed respect.  
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,  
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:  
Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy  
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.  
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:  
Thou lovest here, a better where to find.

## **KING LEAR**

Thou hast her, France: let her be thine; for we  
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see  
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone  
Without our grace, our love, our benison.  
Come, noble Burgundy.

*Flourish. Exeunt all but KING OF FRANCE, GONERIL, REGAN, and CORDELIA*

## **KING OF FRANCE**

Bid farewell to your sisters.

## **CORDELIA**

The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes  
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;  
And like a sister am most loath to call  
Your faults as they are named. Use well our father:

To your professed bosoms I commit him  
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,  
I would prefer him to a better place.  
So, farewell to you both.

**REGAN**

Prescribe not us our duties.

**GONERIL**

Let your study  
Be to content your lord, who hath received you  
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,  
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

**CORDELIA**

Time shall unfold what plaited cunning hides:  
Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.  
Well may you prosper!

**KING OF FRANCE**

Come, my fair Cordelia.

*Exeunt KING OF FRANCE and CORDELIA*

**GONERIL**

Sister, it is not a little I have to say of what  
most nearly appertains to us both. I think our  
father will hence to-night.

**REGAN**

That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

**GONERIL**

You see how full of changes his age is; the

observation we have made of it hath not been little: he always loved our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

**REGAN**

'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

**GONERIL**

The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

**REGAN**

Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

**GONERIL**

There is further compliment of leavetaking between France and him. Pray you, let's hit together: if our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

**REGAN**

We shall further think on't.

**GONERIL**

We must do something, and i' the heat.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The Earl of Gloucester's castle.

*Enter EDMUND, with a letter*

**EDMUND**

Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law  
My services are bound. Wherefore should I  
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit  
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,  
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines  
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,  
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us  
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?  
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take  
More composition and fierce quality  
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,  
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,  
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well, then,  
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:  
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund  
As to the legitimate: fine word,--legitimate!  
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,  
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base  
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:  
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

*Enter GLOUCESTER*

**GLOUCESTER**

Kent banish'd thus! and France in choler parted!  
And the king gone to-night! subscribed his power!  
Confined to exhibition! All this done  
Upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?

**EDMUND**

So please your lordship, none.

*Putting up the letter*

**GLOUCESTER**

Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

**EDMUND**

I know no news, my lord.

**GLOUCESTER**

What paper were you reading?

**EDMUND**

Nothing, my lord.

**GLOUCESTER**

No? What needed, then, that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see: come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

**EDMUND**

I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read; and for so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your o'er-looking.

**GLOUCESTER**

Give me the letter, sir.

## **EDMUND**

I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Let's see, let's see.

## **EDMUND**

I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

## **GLOUCESTER**

[Reads] 'This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, EDGAR.'

Hum--conspiracy!--'Sleep till I waked him,--you should enjoy half his revenue,--'My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in?--When came this to you? who brought it?

## **EDMUND**

It was not brought me, my lord; there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

## **GLOUCESTER**

You know the character to be your brother's?

**EDMUND**

If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear  
it were his; but, in respect of that, I would  
fain think it were not.

**GLOUCESTER**

It is his.

**EDMUND**

It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is  
not in the contents.

**GLOUCESTER**

Hath he never heretofore sounded you in this business?

**EDMUND**

Never, my lord: but I have heard him oft  
maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age,  
and fathers declining, the father should be as  
ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

**GLOUCESTER**

O villain, villain! His very opinion in the  
letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested,  
brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah,  
seek him; I'll apprehend him: abominable villain!  
Where is he?

**EDMUND**

I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please  
you to suspend your indignation against my  
brother till you can derive from him better  
testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain  
course; where, if you violently proceed against



him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath wrote this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no further pretence of danger.

**GLOUCESTER**

Think you so?

**EDMUND**

If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

**GLOUCESTER**

He cannot be such a monster--

**EDMUND**

Nor is not, sure.

**GLOUCESTER**

To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund, seek him out: wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.

**EDMUND**

I will seek him, sir, presently: convey the business as I shall find means and acquaint you withal.

**GLOUCESTER**

These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange.

*Exit*

## **EDMUND**

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,--often the surfeit of our own behavior,--we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail; and my nativity was under Ursa major; so that it follows, I am rough and lecherous. Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar--

*Enter EDGAR*

And pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! fa, sol, la, mi.

**EDGAR**

How now, brother Edmund! what serious contemplation are you in?

**EDMUND**

I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

**EDGAR**

Do you busy yourself about that?

**EDMUND**

I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

**EDGAR**

How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

**EDMUND**

Come, come; when saw you my father last?

**EDGAR**

Why, the night gone by.

**EDMUND**

Spake you with him?

**EDGAR**

Ay, two hours together.

**EDMUND**

Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word or countenance?

**EDGAR**

None at all.

**EDMUND**

Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

**EDGAR**

Some villain hath done me wrong.

**EDMUND**

That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance till the spied of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key: if you do stir abroad, go armed.

**EDGAR**

Armed, brother!

## **EDMUND**

Brother, I advise you to the best; go armed: I am no honest man if there be any good meaning towards you: I have told you what I have seen and heard; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it: pray you, away.

## **EDGAR**

Shall I hear from you anon?

## **EDMUND**

I do serve you in this business.

*Exit EDGAR*

A credulous father! and a brother noble,  
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,  
That he suspects none: on whose foolish honesty  
My practises ride easy! I see the business.  
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:  
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The Duke of Albany's palace.

*Enter GONERIL, and OSWALD, her steward*

**GONERIL**

Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

**OSWALD**

Yes, madam.

**GONERIL**

By day and night he wrongs me; every hour  
He flashes into one gross crime or other,  
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:  
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us  
On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,  
I will not speak with him; say I am sick:  
If you come slack of former services,  
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

**OSWALD**

He's coming, madam; I hear him.

*Horns within*

**GONERIL**

Put on what weary negligence you please,  
You and your fellows; I'll have it come to question:  
If he dislike it, let him to our sister,  
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,  
Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,

That still would manage those authorities  
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,  
Old fools are babes again; and must be used  
With cheques as flatteries,--when they are seen abused.  
Remember what I tell you.

## **OSWALD**

Well, madam.

## **GONERIL**

And let his knights have colder looks among you;  
What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:  
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,  
That I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister,  
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A hall in the same.

*Enter KENT, disguised*

**KENT**

If but as well I other accents borrow,  
That can my speech defuse, my good intent  
May carry through itself to that full issue  
For which I razed my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,  
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,  
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lovest,  
Shall find thee full of labours.

*Horns within. Enter KING LEAR, Knights, and Attendants*

**KING LEAR**

Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready.

*Exit an Attendant*

How now! what art thou?

**KENT**

A man, sir.

**KING LEAR**

What dost thou profess? what wouldst thou with us?

**KENT**

I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve  
him truly that will put me in trust: to love him



that is honest; to converse with him that is wise,  
and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I  
cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

**KING LEAR**

What art thou?

**KENT**

A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

**KING LEAR**

If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a  
king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

**KENT**

Service.

**KING LEAR**

Who wouldst thou serve?

**KENT**

You.

**KING LEAR**

Dost thou know me, fellow?

**KENT**

No, sir; but you have that in your countenance  
which I would fain call master.

**KING LEAR**

What's that?

**KENT**

Authority.

**KING LEAR**

What services canst thou do?

**KENT**

I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.

**KING LEAR**

How old art thou?

**KENT**

Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty eight.

**KING LEAR**

Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho, dinner! Where's my knave? my fool? Go you, and call my fool hither.

*Exit an Attendant*

*Enter OSWALD*

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

**OSWALD**

So please you,--

*Exit*

**KING LEAR**

What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.

*Exit a Knight*

Where's my fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

*Re-enter Knight*

How now! where's that mongrel?

**Knight**

He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

**KING LEAR**

Why came not the slave back to me when I called him.

**Knight**

Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

**KING LEAR**

He would not!

**Knight**

My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

## **KING LEAR**

Ha! sayest thou so?

### **Knight**

I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken;  
for my duty cannot be silent when I think your  
highness wronged.

## **KING LEAR**

Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I  
have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I  
have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity  
than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness:  
I will look further into't. But where's my fool? I  
have not seen him this two days.

### **Knight**

Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the  
fool hath much pined away.

## **KING LEAR**

No more of that; I have noted it well. Go you, and  
tell my daughter I would speak with her.

*Exit an Attendant*

Go you, call hither my fool.

*Exit an Attendant*

*Re-enter OSWALD*

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I,  
sir?

**OSWALD**

My lady's father.

**KING LEAR**

'My lady's father'! my lord's knave: your  
whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

**OSWALD**

I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

**KING LEAR**

Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

*Striking him*

**OSWALD**

I'll not be struck, my lord.

**KENT**

Nor tripped neither, you base football player.

*Tripping up his heels*

**KING LEAR**

I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll  
love thee.

**KENT**

Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences:  
away, away! if you will measure your lubber's  
length again, tarry: but away! go to; have you  
wisdom? so.

*Pushes OSWALD out*

**KING LEAR**

Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service.

*Giving KENT money*

*Enter Fool*

**Fool**

Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.

*Offering KENT his cap*

**KING LEAR**

How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

**Fool**

Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

**KENT**

Why, fool?

**Fool**

Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour:  
nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits,  
thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb:  
why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters,  
and did the third a blessing against his will; if  
thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb.  
How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

**KING LEAR**

Why, my boy?

**Fool**

If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs  
myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

**KING LEAR**

Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

**Fool**

Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped  
out, when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

**KING LEAR**

A pestilent gall to me!

**Fool**

Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

**KING LEAR**

Do.

**Fool**

Mark it, nuncle:  
Have more than thou showest,  
Speak less than thou knowest,  
Lend less than thou owest,  
Ride more than thou goest,  
Learn more than thou trowest,  
Set less than thou throwest;  
Leave thy drink and thy whore,  
And keep in-a-door,  
And thou shalt have more  
Than two tens to a score.

**KENT**

This is nothing, fool.

**Fool**

Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

**KING LEAR**

Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

**Fool**

[To KENT] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

**KING LEAR**

A bitter fool!

**Fool**

Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

**KING LEAR**

No, lad; teach me.

**Fool**

That lord that counsell'd thee  
To give away thy land,  
Come place him here by me,  
Do thou for him stand:  
The sweet and bitter fool  
Will presently appear;  
The one in motley here,



The other found out there.

## **KING LEAR**

Dost thou call me fool, boy?

### **Fool**

All thy other titles thou hast given away; that  
thou wast born with.

### **KENT**

This is not altogether fool, my lord.

### **Fool**

No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if  
I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't:  
and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool  
to myself; they'll be snatching. Give me an egg,  
nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

## **KING LEAR**

What two crowns shall they be?

### **Fool**

Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat  
up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou  
clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away  
both parts, thou borest thy ass on thy back o'er  
the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown,  
when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak  
like myself in this, let him be whipped that first  
finds it so.

*Singing*

Fools had ne'er less wit in a year;

For wise men are grown foppish,  
They know not how their wits to wear,  
Their manners are so apish.

## **KING LEAR**

When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

## **Fool**

I have used it, nuncle, ever since thou madest thy  
daughters thy mothers: for when thou gavest them  
the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

*Singing*

Then they for sudden joy did weep,  
And I for sorrow sung,  
That such a king should play bo-peep,  
And go the fools among.  
Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach  
thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

## **KING LEAR**

An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

## **Fool**

I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are:  
they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt  
have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am  
whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any  
kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be  
thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides,  
and left nothing i' the middle: here comes one o'  
the parings.

*Enter GONERIL*

## **KING LEAR**

How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on?  
Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

## **Fool**

Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to  
care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a  
figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a fool,  
thou art nothing.

*To GONERIL*

Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face  
bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,  
He that keeps nor crust nor crum,  
Weary of all, shall want some.

*Pointing to KING LEAR*

That's a shealed peascod.

## **GONERIL**

Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,  
But other of your insolent retinue  
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth  
In rank and not-to-be endured riots. Sir,  
I had thought, by making this well known unto you,  
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,  
By what yourself too late have spoke and done.  
That you protect this course, and put it on  
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault  
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,  
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,  
Might in their working do you that offence,  
Which else were shame, that then necessity  
Will call discreet proceeding.

## **Fool**

For, you trow, nuncle,  
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,

That it's had it head bit off by it young.  
So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

**KING LEAR**

Are you our daughter?

**GONERIL**

Come, sir,  
I would you would make use of that good wisdom,  
Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away  
These dispositions, that of late transform you  
From what you rightly are.

**Fool**

May not an ass know when the cart  
draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

**KING LEAR**

Doth any here know me? This is not Lear:  
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?  
Either his notion weakens, his discernings  
Are lethargied--Ha! waking? 'tis not so.  
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

**Fool**

Lear's shadow.

**KING LEAR**

I would learn that; for, by the  
marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason,  
I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

**Fool**

Which they will make an obedient father.

## **KING LEAR**

Your name, fair gentlewoman?

## **GONERIL**

This admiration, sir, is much o' the savour  
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you  
To understand my purposes aright:  
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.  
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;  
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd and bold,  
That this our court, infected with their manners,  
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust  
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel  
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth speak  
For instant remedy: be then desired  
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,  
A little to disquantity your train;  
And the remainder, that shall still depend,  
To be such men as may besort your age,  
And know themselves and you.

## **KING LEAR**

Darkness and devils!  
Saddle my horses; call my train together:  
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee.  
Yet have I left a daughter.

## **GONERIL**

You strike my people; and your disorder'd rabble  
Make servants of their betters.

*Enter ALBANY*

## **KING LEAR**

Woe, that too late repents,--

*To ALBANY*

O, sir, are you come?  
Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.  
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,  
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child  
Than the sea-monster!

**ALBANY**

Pray, sir, be patient.

**KING LEAR**

[To GONERIL] Detested kite! thou liest.  
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,  
That all particulars of duty know,  
And in the most exact regard support  
The worships of their name. O most small fault,  
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!  
That, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature  
From the fix'd place; drew from heart all love,  
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!  
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in,

*Striking his head*

And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.

**ALBANY**

My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant  
Of what hath moved you.

**KING LEAR**

It may be so, my lord.  
Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!  
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend  
To make this creature fruitful!  
Into her womb convey sterility!  
Dry up in her the organs of increase;

And from her derogate body never spring  
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,  
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,  
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!  
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;  
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;  
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits  
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel  
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child! Away, away!

*Exit*

**ALBANY**

Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

**GONERIL**

Never afflict yourself to know the cause;  
But let his disposition have that scope  
That dotage gives it.

*Re-enter KING LEAR*

**KING LEAR**

What, fifty of my followers at a clap!  
Within a fortnight!

**ALBANY**

What's the matter, sir?

**KING LEAR**

I'll tell thee:

*To GONERIL*

Life and death! I am ashamed

That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;  
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,  
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!  
The untented woundings of a father's curse  
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,  
Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,  
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,  
To temper clay. Yea, it is come to this?  
Let is be so: yet have I left a daughter,  
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:  
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails  
She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find  
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think  
I have cast off for ever: thou shalt,  
I warrant thee.

*Exeunt KING LEAR, KENT, and Attendants*

## **GONERIL**

Do you mark that, my lord?

## **ALBANY**

I cannot be so partial, Goneril,  
To the great love I bear you,--

## **GONERIL**

Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!

*To the Fool*

You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

## **Fool**

Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry and take the fool  
with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,  
And such a daughter,  
Should sure to the slaughter,



If my cap would buy a halter:  
So the fool follows after.

*Exit*

**GONERIL**

This man hath had good counsel:--a hundred knights!  
'Tis politic and safe to let him keep  
At point a hundred knights: yes, that, on every dream,  
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,  
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,  
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!

**ALBANY**

Well, you may fear too far.

**GONERIL**

Safer than trust too far:  
Let me still take away the harms I fear,  
Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.  
What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister  
If she sustain him and his hundred knights  
When I have show'd the unfitness,--

*Re-enter OSWALD*

How now, Oswald!  
What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

**OSWALD**

Yes, madam.

**GONERIL**

Take you some company, and away to horse:  
Inform her full of my particular fear;  
And thereto add such reasons of your own

As may compact it more. Get you gone;  
And hasten your return.

*Exit OSWALD*

No, no, my lord,  
This milky gentleness and course of yours  
Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,  
You are much more attask'd for want of wisdom  
Than praised for harmful mildness.

**ALBANY**

How far your eyes may pierce I can not tell:  
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

**GONERIL**

Nay, then--

**ALBANY**

Well, well; the event.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Court before the same.

*Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and Fool*

### KING LEAR

Go you before to Gloucester with these letters.  
Acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you  
know than comes from her demand out of the letter.  
If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

### KENT

I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered  
your letter.

*Exit*

### Fool

If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not in  
danger of kibes?

### KING LEAR

Ay, boy.

### Fool

Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er go  
slip-shod.

### KING LEAR

Ha, ha, ha!

**Fool**

Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly;  
for though she's as like this as a crab's like an  
apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

**KING LEAR**

Why, what canst thou tell, my boy?

**Fool**

She will taste as like this as a crab does to a  
crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i'  
the middle on's face?

**KING LEAR**

No.

**Fool**

Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose; that  
what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

**KING LEAR**

I did her wrong--

**Fool**

Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

**KING LEAR**

No.

**Fool**

Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

**KING LEAR**

Why?

**Fool**

Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

**KING LEAR**

I will forget my nature. So kind a father! Be my horses ready?

**Fool**

Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

**KING LEAR**

Because they are not eight?

**Fool**

Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

**KING LEAR**

To take 't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

**Fool**

If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

**KING LEAR**

How's that?

**Fool**

Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst  
been wise.

**KING LEAR**

O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven  
Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

*Enter Gentleman*

How now! are the horses ready?

**Gentleman**

Ready, my lord.

**KING LEAR**

Come, boy.

**Fool**

She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure,  
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 1, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. GLOUCESTER's castle.

*Enter EDMUND, and CURAN meets him*

**EDMUND**

Save thee, Curan.

**CURAN**

And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

**EDMUND**

How comes that?

**CURAN**

Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad; I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

**EDMUND**

Not I pray you, what are they?

**CURAN**

Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

**EDMUND**

Not a word.

## **CURAN**

You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir.

*Exit*

## **EDMUND**

The duke be here to-night? The better! best!  
This weaves itself perforce into my business.  
My father hath set guard to take my brother;  
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,  
Which I must act: briefness and fortune, work!  
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

*Enter EDGAR*

My father watches: O sir, fly this place;  
Intelligence is given where you are hid;  
You have now the good advantage of the night:  
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?  
He's coming hither: now, i' the night, i' the haste,  
And Regan with him: have you nothing said  
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?  
Advise yourself.

## **EDGAR**

I am sure on't, not a word.

## **EDMUND**

I hear my father coming: pardon me:  
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you  
Draw; seem to defend yourself; now quit you well.  
Yield: come before my father. Light, ho, here!  
Fly, brother. Torches, torches! So, farewell.

*Exit EDGAR*



Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion.

*Wounds his arm*

Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards  
Do more than this in sport. Father, father!  
Stop, stop! No help?

*Enter GLOUCESTER, and Servants with torches*

**GLOUCESTER**

Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

**EDMUND**

Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,  
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon  
To stand auspicious mistress,--

**GLOUCESTER**

But where is he?

**EDMUND**

Look, sir, I bleed.

**GLOUCESTER**

Where is the villain, Edmund?

**EDMUND**

Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could--

**GLOUCESTER**

Pursue him, ho! Go after.

*Exeunt some Servants*

By no means what?

## **EDMUND**

Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;  
But that I told him, the revenging gods  
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;  
Spoke, with how manifold and strong a bond  
The child was bound to the father; sir, in fine,  
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood  
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,  
With his prepared sword, he charges home  
My unprovided body, lanced mine arm:  
But when he saw my best alarm'd spirits,  
Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter,  
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,  
Full suddenly he fled.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Let him fly far:  
Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;  
And found--dispatch. The noble duke my master,  
My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:  
By his authority I will proclaim it,  
That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,  
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake;  
He that conceals him, death.

## **EDMUND**

When I dissuaded him from his intent,  
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech  
I threaten'd to discover him: he replied,  
'Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,  
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal  
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee  
Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny,--  
As this I would: ay, though thou didst produce  
My very character,--I'd turn it all  
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practise:

And thou must make a dullard of the world,  
If they not thought the profits of my death  
Were very pregnant and potential spurs  
To make thee seek it.'

## **GLOUCESTER**

Strong and fasten'd villain  
Would he deny his letter? I never got him.

*Tucket within*

Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes.  
All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape;  
The duke must grant me that: besides, his picture  
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom  
May have the due note of him; and of my land,  
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means  
To make thee capable.

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, and Attendants*

## **CORNWALL**

How now, my noble friend! since I came hither,  
Which I can call but now, I have heard strange news.

## **REGAN**

If it be true, all vengeance comes too short  
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?

## **GLOUCESTER**

O, madam, my old heart is crack'd, it's crack'd!

## **REGAN**

What, did my father's godson seek your life?  
He whom my father named? your Edgar?

## **GLOUCESTER**

O, lady, lady, shame would have it hid!

## **REGAN**

Was he not companion with the riotous knights  
That tend upon my father?

## **GLOUCESTER**

I know not, madam: 'tis too bad, too bad.

## **EDMUND**

Yes, madam, he was of that consort.

## **REGAN**

No marvel, then, though he were ill affected:  
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,  
To have the expense and waste of his revenues.  
I have this present evening from my sister  
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,  
That if they come to sojourn at my house,  
I'll not be there.

## **CORNWALL**

Nor I, assure thee, Regan.  
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father  
A child-like office.

## **EDMUND**

'Twas my duty, sir.

## **GLOUCESTER**

He did bewray his practise; and received  
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

**CORNWALL**

Is he pursued?

**GLOUCESTER**

Ay, my good lord.

**CORNWALL**

If he be taken, he shall never more  
Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,  
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund,  
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant  
So much commend itself, you shall be ours:  
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;  
You we first seize on.

**EDMUND**

I shall serve you, sir,  
Truly, however else.

**GLOUCESTER**

For him I thank your grace.

**CORNWALL**

You know not why we came to visit you,--

**REGAN**

Thus out of season, threading dark-eyed night:  
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,  
Wherein we must have use of your advice:  
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,  
Of differences, which I least thought it fit  
To answer from our home; the several messengers  
From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,  
Lay comforts to your bosom; and bestow

Your needful counsel to our business,  
Which craves the instant use.

**GLOUCESTER**

I serve you, madam:  
Your graces are right welcome.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before Gloucester's castle.

*Enter KENT and OSWALD, severally*

**OSWALD**

Good dawning to thee, friend: art of this house?

**KENT**

Ay.

**OSWALD**

Where may we set our horses?

**KENT**

I' the mire.

**OSWALD**

Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

**KENT**

I love thee not.

**OSWALD**

Why, then, I care not for thee.

**KENT**

If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee

care for me.

**OSWALD**

Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

**KENT**

Fellow, I know thee.

**OSWALD**

What dost thou know me for?

**KENT**

A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking knave, a whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that wouldst be a bawd, in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pandar, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

**OSWALD**

Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

**KENT**

What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days ago since I tripped up thy heels, and beat thee before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, yet the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you: draw, you whoreson cullionly barber-monger, draw.



*Drawing his sword*

**OSWALD**

Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

**KENT**

Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father: draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: draw, you rascal; come your ways.

**OSWALD**

Help, ho! murder! help!

**KENT**

Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand; you neat slave, strike.

*Beating him*

**OSWALD**

Help, ho! murder! murder!

*Enter EDMUND, with his rapier drawn, CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, and Servants*

**EDMUND**

How now! What's the matter?

**KENT**

With you, goodman boy, an you please: come, I'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

**GLOUCESTER**

Weapons! arms! What 's the matter here?

**CORNWALL**

Keep peace, upon your lives:  
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

**REGAN**

The messengers from our sister and the king.

**CORNWALL**

What is your difference? speak.

**OSWALD**

I am scarce in breath, my lord.

**KENT**

No marvel, you have so bestirred your valour. You  
cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee: a  
tailor made thee.

**CORNWALL**

Thou art a strange fellow: a tailor make a man?

**KENT**

Ay, a tailor, sir: a stone-cutter or painter could  
not have made him so ill, though he had been but two  
hours at the trade.

**CORNWALL**

Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

**OSWALD**

This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared  
at suit of his gray beard,--

**KENT**

Thou whoreson zed! thou unnecessary letter! My  
lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this  
unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall of  
a jakes with him. Spare my gray beard, you wagtail?

**CORNWALL**

Peace, sirrah!  
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

**KENT**

Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

**CORNWALL**

Why art thou angry?

**KENT**

That such a slave as this should wear a sword,  
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,  
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain  
Which are too intrinse t' unloose; smooth every passion  
That in the natures of their lords rebel;  
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;  
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks  
With every gale and vary of their masters,  
Knowing nought, like dogs, but following.  
A plague upon your epileptic visage!  
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?  
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,  
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

**CORNWALL**

Why, art thou mad, old fellow?

**GLOUCESTER**

How fell you out? say that.

**KENT**

No contraries hold more antipathy  
Than I and such a knave.

**CORNWALL**

Why dost thou call him a knave? What's his offence?

**KENT**

His countenance likes me not.

**CORNWALL**

No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.

**KENT**

Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:  
I have seen better faces in my time  
Than stands on any shoulder that I see  
Before me at this instant.

**CORNWALL**

This is some fellow,  
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect  
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb  
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he,  
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth!  
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.  
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness  
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends  
Than twenty silly ducking observants

That stretch their duties nicely.

**KENT**

Sir, in good sooth, in sincere verity,  
Under the allowance of your great aspect,  
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire  
On flickering Phoebus' front,--

**CORNWALL**

What mean'st by this?

**KENT**

To go out of my dialect, which you  
discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no  
flatterer: he that beguiled you in a plain  
accent was a plain knave; which for my part  
I will not be, though I should win your displeasure  
to entreat me to 't.

**CORNWALL**

What was the offence you gave him?

**OSWALD**

I never gave him any:  
It pleased the king his master very late  
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;  
When he, conjunct and flattering his displeasure,  
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,  
And put upon him such a deal of man,  
That worthied him, got praises of the king  
For him attempting who was self-subdued;  
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,  
Drew on me here again.

**KENT**

None of these rogues and cowards

But Ajax is their fool.

## **CORNWALL**

Fetch forth the stocks!  
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,  
We'll teach you--

## **KENT**

Sir, I am too old to learn:  
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king;  
On whose employment I was sent to you:  
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice  
Against the grace and person of my master,  
Stocking his messenger.

## **CORNWALL**

Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and honour,  
There shall he sit till noon.

## **REGAN**

Till noon! till night, my lord; and all night too.

## **KENT**

Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,  
You should not use me so.

## **REGAN**

Sir, being his knave, I will.

## **CORNWALL**

This is a fellow of the self-same colour  
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks!

*Stocks brought out*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Let me beseech your grace not to do so:  
His fault is much, and the good king his master  
Will cheque him for 't: your purposed low correction  
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches  
For pilferings and most common trespasses  
Are punish'd with: the king must take it ill,  
That he's so slightly valued in his messenger,  
Should have him thus restrain'd.

## **CORNWALL**

I'll answer that.

## **REGAN**

My sister may receive it much more worse,  
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,  
For following her affairs. Put in his legs.

*KENT is put in the stocks*

Come, my good lord, away.

*Exeunt all but GLOUCESTER and KENT*

## **GLOUCESTER**

I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's pleasure,  
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,  
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd: I'll entreat for thee.

## **KENT**

Pray, do not, sir: I have watched and travell'd hard;  
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.  
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:  
Give you good morrow!

## **GLOUCESTER**

The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.

*Exit*

**KENT**

Good king, that must approve the common saw,  
Thou out of heaven's benediction comest  
To the warm sun!  
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,  
That by thy comfortable beams I may  
Peruse this letter! Nothing almost sees miracles  
But misery: I know 'tis from Cordelia,  
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd  
Of my obscured course; and shall find time  
From this enormous state, seeking to give  
Losses their remedies. All weary and o'erwatch'd,  
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold  
This shameful lodging.  
Fortune, good night: smile once more: turn thy wheel!

*Sleeps*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A wood.

*Enter EDGAR*

**EDGAR**

I heard myself proclaim'd;  
And by the happy hollow of a tree  
Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,  
That guard, and most unusual vigilance,  
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape,  
I will preserve myself: and am bethought  
To take the basest and most poorest shape  
That ever penury, in contempt of man,  
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;  
Blanket my loins: elf all my hair in knots;  
And with presented nakedness out-face  
The winds and persecutions of the sky.  
The country gives me proof and precedent  
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,  
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms  
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;  
And with this horrible object, from low farms,  
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,  
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,  
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!  
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Before GLOUCESTER's castle. KENT in the stocks.

*Enter KING LEAR, Fool, and Gentleman*

### KING LEAR

'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,  
And not send back my messenger.

### Gentleman

As I learn'd,  
The night before there was no purpose in them  
Of this remove.

### KENT

Hail to thee, noble master!

### KING LEAR

Ha!  
Makest thou this shame thy pastime?

### KENT

No, my lord.

### Fool

Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied  
by the heads, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by  
the loins, and men by the legs: when a man's  
over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden  
nether-stocks.

**KING LEAR**

What's he that hath so much thy place mistook  
To set thee here?

**KENT**

It is both he and she;  
Your son and daughter.

**KING LEAR**

No.

**KENT**

Yes.

**KING LEAR**

No, I say.

**KENT**

I say, yea.

**KING LEAR**

No, no, they would not.

**KENT**

Yes, they have.

**KING LEAR**

By Jupiter, I swear, no.

**KENT**

By Juno, I swear, ay.

## **KING LEAR**

They durst not do 't;  
They could not, would not do 't; 'tis worse than murder,  
To do upon respect such violent outrage:  
Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way  
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,  
Coming from us.

## **KENT**

My lord, when at their home  
I did commend your highness' letters to them,  
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd  
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,  
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth  
From Goneril his mistress salutations;  
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,  
Which presently they read: on whose contents,  
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;  
Commanded me to follow, and attend  
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:  
And meeting here the other messenger,  
Whose welcome, I perceived, had poison'd mine,--  
Being the very fellow that of late  
Display'd so saucily against your highness,--  
Having more man than wit about me, drew:  
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.  
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth  
The shame which here it suffers.

## **Fool**

Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.  
Fathers that wear rags  
Do make their children blind;  
But fathers that bear bags  
Shall see their children kind.  
Fortune, that arrant whore,  
Ne'er turns the key to the poor.  
But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours

for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

**KING LEAR**

O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!  
Hysterica passio, down, thou climbing sorrow,  
Thy element's below! Where is this daughter?

**KENT**

With the earl, sir, here within.

**KING LEAR**

Follow me not;  
Stay here.

*Exit*

**Gentleman**

Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

**KENT**

None.  
How chance the king comes with so small a train?

**Fool**

And thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that  
question, thou hadst well deserved it.

**KENT**

Why, fool?

**Fool**

We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee  
there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow

their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and  
there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him  
that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel  
runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with  
following it: but the great one that goes up the  
hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man  
gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I  
would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.  
That sir which serves and seeks for gain,  
And follows but for form,  
Will pack when it begins to rain,  
And leave thee in the storm,  
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,  
And let the wise man fly:  
The knave turns fool that runs away;  
The fool no knave, perdy.

## **KENT**

Where learned you this, fool?

## **Fool**

Not i' the stocks, fool.

*Re-enter KING LEAR with GLOUCESTER*

## **KING LEAR**

Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?  
They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches;  
The images of revolt and flying off.  
Fetch me a better answer.

## **GLOUCESTER**

My dear lord,  
You know the fiery quality of the duke;  
How unremoveable and fix'd he is  
In his own course.

## **KING LEAR**

Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!  
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,  
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

**GLOUCESTER**

Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

**KING LEAR**

Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

**GLOUCESTER**

Ay, my good lord.

**KING LEAR**

The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father  
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:  
Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!  
Fiery? the fiery duke? Tell the hot duke that--  
No, but not yet: may be he is not well:  
Infirmity doth still neglect all office  
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves  
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind  
To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;  
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,  
To take the indisposed and sickly fit  
For the sound man. Death on my state! wherefore

*Looking on KENT*

Should he sit here? This act persuades me  
That this remotion of the duke and her  
Is practise only. Give me my servant forth.  
Go tell the duke and 's wife I'd speak with them,  
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,  
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum  
Till it cry sleep to death.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I would have all well betwixt you.

*Exit*

## **KING LEAR**

O me, my heart, my rising heart! but, down!

## **Fool**

Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels  
when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em  
o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried 'Down,  
wantons, down!' 'Twas her brother that, in pure  
kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, and Servants*

## **KING LEAR**

Good morrow to you both.

## **CORNWALL**

Hail to your grace!

*KENT is set at liberty*

## **REGAN**

I am glad to see your highness.

## **KING LEAR**

Regan, I think you are; I know what reason  
I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,  
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,  
Sepulchring an adultress.



*To KENT*

O, are you free?  
Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,  
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied  
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here:

*Points to his heart*

I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe  
With how depraved a quality--O Regan!

**REGAN**

I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope.  
You less know how to value her desert  
Than she to scant her duty.

**KING LEAR**

Say, how is that?

**REGAN**

I cannot think my sister in the least  
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance  
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,  
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,  
As clears her from all blame.

**KING LEAR**

My curses on her!

**REGAN**

O, sir, you are old.  
Nature in you stands on the very verge  
Of her confine: you should be ruled and led  
By some discretion, that discerns your state  
Better than you yourself. Therefore, I pray you,

That to our sister you do make return;  
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.

**KING LEAR**

Ask her forgiveness?  
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:  
'Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;

*Kneeling*

Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg  
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food.'

**REGAN**

Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:  
Return you to my sister.

**KING LEAR**

[Rising] Never, Regan:  
She hath abated me of half my train;  
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,  
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:  
All the stored vengeances of heaven fall  
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,  
You taking airs, with lameness!

**CORNWALL**

Fie, sir, fie!

**KING LEAR**

You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames  
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,  
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,  
To fall and blast her pride!

**REGAN**

O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,  
When the rash mood is on.

## **KING LEAR**

No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:  
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give  
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fierce; but thine  
Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee  
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,  
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,  
And in conclusion to oppose the bolt  
Against my coming in: thou better know'st  
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,  
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;  
Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,  
Wherein I thee endow'd.

## **REGAN**

Good sir, to the purpose.

## **KING LEAR**

Who put my man i' the stocks?

*Tucket within*

## **CORNWALL**

What trumpet's that?

## **REGAN**

I know't, my sister's: this approves her letter,  
That she would soon be here.

*Enter OSWALD*

Is your lady come?

## **KING LEAR**

This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride  
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.  
Out, varlet, from my sight!

## **CORNWALL**

What means your grace?

## **KING LEAR**

Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope  
Thou didst not know on't. Who comes here? O heavens,

*Enter GONERIL*

If you do love old men, if your sweet sway  
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,  
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!

*To GONERIL*

Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?  
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

## **GONERIL**

Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?  
All's not offence that indiscretion finds  
And dotage terms so.

## **KING LEAR**

O sides, you are too tough;  
Will you yet hold? How came my man i' the stocks?

## **CORNWALL**

I set him there, sir: but his own disorders  
Deserved much less advancement.

## **KING LEAR**

You! did you?

## **REGAN**

I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.  
If, till the expiration of your month,  
You will return and sojourn with my sister,  
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:  
I am now from home, and out of that provision  
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

## **KING LEAR**

Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?  
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose  
To wage against the enmity o' the air;  
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,--  
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her?  
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took  
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought  
To knee his throne, and, squire-like; pension beg  
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?  
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter  
To this detested groom.

*Pointing at OSWALD*

## **GONERIL**

At your choice, sir.

## **KING LEAR**

I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:  
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:  
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:  
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;  
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,  
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,

A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,  
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;  
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:  
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,  
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:  
Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure:  
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,  
I and my hundred knights.

## **REGAN**

Not altogether so:  
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided  
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;  
For those that mingle reason with your passion  
Must be content to think you old, and so--  
But she knows what she does.

## **KING LEAR**

Is this well spoken?

## **REGAN**

I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?  
Is it not well? What should you need of more?  
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger  
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,  
Should many people, under two commands,  
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

## **GONERIL**

Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance  
From those that she calls servants or from mine?

## **REGAN**

Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to slack you,  
We could control them. If you will come to me,--  
For now I spy a danger,--I entreat you  
To bring but five and twenty: to no more

Will I give place or notice.

**KING LEAR**

I gave you all--

**REGAN**

And in good time you gave it.

**KING LEAR**

Made you my guardians, my depositaries;  
But kept a reservation to be follow'd  
With such a number. What, must I come to you  
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?

**REGAN**

And speak't again, my lord; no more with me.

**KING LEAR**

Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,  
When others are more wicked: not being the worst  
Stands in some rank of praise.

*To GONERIL*

I'll go with thee:  
Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,  
And thou art twice her love.

**GONERIL**

Hear me, my lord;  
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,  
To follow in a house where twice so many  
Have a command to tend you?

**REGAN**

What need one?

## **KING LEAR**

O, reason not the need: our basest beggars  
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:  
Allow not nature more than nature needs,  
Man's life's as cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;  
If only to go warm were gorgeous,  
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,  
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need,--  
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!  
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,  
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!  
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts  
Against their father, fool me not so much  
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,  
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,  
Stain my man's cheeks! No, you unnatural hags,  
I will have such revenges on you both,  
That all the world shall--I will do such things,--  
What they are, yet I know not: but they shall be  
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep  
No, I'll not weep:  
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart  
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,  
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!

*Exeunt KING LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT, and Fool*

*Storm and tempest*

## **CORNWALL**

Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

## **REGAN**

This house is little: the old man and his people  
Cannot be well bestow'd.



**GONERIL**

'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest,  
And must needs taste his folly.

**REGAN**

For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,  
But not one follower.

**GONERIL**

So am I purposed.  
Where is my lord of Gloucester?

**CORNWALL**

Follow'd the old man forth: he is return'd.

*Re-enter GLOUCESTER*

**GLOUCESTER**

The king is in high rage.

**CORNWALL**

Whither is he going?

**GLOUCESTER**

He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

**CORNWALL**

'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

**GONERIL**

My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

## GLOUCESTER

Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds  
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles a bout  
There's scarce a bush.

## REGAN

O, sir, to wilful men,  
The injuries that they themselves procure  
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors:  
He is attended with a desperate train;  
And what they may incense him to, being apt  
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

## CORNWALL

Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:  
My Regan counsels well; come out o' the storm.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A heath.

*Storm still. Enter KENT and a Gentleman, meeting*

**KENT**

Who's there, besides foul weather?

**Gentleman**

One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

**KENT**

I know you. Where's the king?

**Gentleman**

Contending with the fretful element:  
Bids the winds blow the earth into the sea,  
Or swell the curled water 'bove the main,  
That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,  
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,  
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;  
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn  
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.  
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,  
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf  
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,  
And bids what will take all.

**KENT**

But who is with him?

**Gentleman**

None but the fool; who labours to out-jest  
His heart-struck injuries.

## **KENT**

Sir, I do know you;  
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,  
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,  
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd  
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;  
Who have--as who have not, that their great stars  
Throned and set high?--servants, who seem no less,  
Which are to France the spies and speculations  
Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,  
Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,  
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne  
Against the old kind king; or something deeper,  
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings;  
But, true it is, from France there comes a power  
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,  
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet  
In some of our best ports, and are at point  
To show their open banner. Now to you:  
If on my credit you dare build so far  
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find  
Some that will thank you, making just report  
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow  
The king hath cause to plain.  
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;  
And, from some knowledge and assurance, offer  
This office to you.

## **Gentleman**

I will talk further with you.

## **KENT**

No, do not.  
For confirmation that I am much more  
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take

What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,--  
As fear not but you shall,--show her this ring;  
And she will tell you who your fellow is  
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!  
I will go seek the king.

**Gentleman**

Give me your hand: have you no more to say?

**KENT**

Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet;  
That, when we have found the king,--in which your pain  
That way, I'll this,--he that first lights on him  
Holla the other.

*Exeunt severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another part of the heath. Storm still.

*Enter KING LEAR and Fool*

### KING LEAR

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!  
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout  
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!  
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,  
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!  
Crack nature's moulds, an germens spill at once,  
That make ingrateful man!

### Fool

O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry  
house is better than this rain-water out o' door.  
Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing:  
here's a night pities neither wise man nor fool.

### KING LEAR

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;  
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,  
You owe me no subscription: then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure: here I stand, your slave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd  
Your high engender'd battles 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!

## **Fool**

He that has a house to put's head in has a good  
head-piece.

The cod-piece that will house

Before the head has any,

The head and he shall louse;

So beggars marry many.

The man that makes his toe

What he his heart should make

Shall of a corn cry woe,

And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made  
mouths in a glass.

## **KING LEAR**

No, I will be the pattern of all patience;

I will say nothing.

*Enter KENT*

## **KENT**

Who's there?

## **Fool**

Marry, here's grace and a cod-piece; that's a wise  
man and a fool.

## **KENT**

Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night  
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies  
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,  
And make them keep their caves: since I was man,  
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,  
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never  
Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry  
The affliction nor the fear.

## **KING LEAR**

Let the great gods,  
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,  
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,  
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,  
Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand;  
Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue  
That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,  
That under covert and convenient seeming  
Hast practised on man's life: close pent-up guilts,  
Rive your concealing continents, and cry  
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man  
More sinn'd against than sinning.

## **KENT**

Alack, bare-headed!  
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;  
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest:  
Repose you there; while I to this hard house--  
More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised;  
Which even but now, demanding after you,  
Denied me to come in--return, and force  
Their scanted courtesy.

## **KING LEAR**

My wits begin to turn.  
Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?  
I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?  
The art of our necessities is strange,  
That can make vile things precious. Come,  
your hovel.  
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart  
That's sorry yet for thee.

## **Fool**

[Singing]  
He that has and a little tiny wit--  
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,--



Must make content with his fortunes fit,  
For the rain it raineth every day.

## **KING LEAR**

True, my good boy. Come, bring us to this hovel.

*Exeunt KING LEAR and KENT*

## **Fool**

This is a brave night to cool a courtezan.  
I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:  
When priests are more in word than matter;  
When brewers mar their malt with water;  
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;  
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;  
When every case in law is right;  
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;  
When slanders do not live in tongues;  
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;  
When usurers tell their gold i' the field;  
And bawds and whores do churches build;  
Then shall the realm of Albion  
Come to great confusion:  
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,  
That going shall be used with feet.  
This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Gloucester's castle.

*Enter GLOUCESTER and EDMUND*

### GLOUCESTER

Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desire their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

### EDMUND

Most savage and unnatural!

### GLOUCESTER

Go to; say you nothing. There's a division betwixt the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be spoken; I have locked the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there's part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him: go you and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived: if he ask for me. I am ill, and gone to bed. Though I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful.

*Exit*

### EDMUND

This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke  
Instantly know; and of that letter too:  
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me  
That which my father loses; no less than all:  
The younger rises when the old doth fall.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The heath. Before a hovel.

*Enter KING LEAR, KENT, and Fool*

**KENT**

Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:  
The tyranny of the open night's too rough  
For nature to endure.

*Storm still*

**KING LEAR**

Let me alone.

**KENT**

Good my lord, enter here.

**KING LEAR**

Wilt break my heart?

**KENT**

I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

**KING LEAR**

Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm  
Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;  
But where the greater malady is fix'd,  
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'ldst shun a bear;  
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea,  
Thou'ldst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the

mind's free,  
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind  
Doth from my senses take all feeling else  
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!  
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand  
For lifting food to't? But I will punish home:  
No, I will weep no more. In such a night  
To shut me out! Pour on; I will endure.  
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!  
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,--  
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;  
No more of that.

## **KENT**

Good my lord, enter here.

## **KING LEAR**

Prithee, go in thyself: seek thine own ease:  
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder  
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.

*To the Fool*

In, boy; go first. You houseless poverty,--  
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

*Fool goes in*

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en  
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;  
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,  
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,  
And show the heavens more just.

## **EDGAR**

[Within] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom!

*The Fool runs out from the hovel*

**Fool**

Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit  
Help me, help me!

**KENT**

Give me thy hand. Who's there?

**Fool**

A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

**KENT**

What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw?  
Come forth.

*Enter EDGAR disguised as a mad man*

**EDGAR**

Away! the foul fiend follows me!  
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.  
Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

**KING LEAR**

Hast thou given all to thy two daughters?  
And art thou come to this?

**EDGAR**

Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the foul  
fiend hath led through fire and through flame, and  
through ford and whirlpool e'er bog and quagmire;  
that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters

in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made film proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold,--O, do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: there could I have him now,--and there,--and there again, and there.

*Storm still*

## **KING LEAR**

What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?  
Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give them all?

## **Fool**

Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

## **KING LEAR**

Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air  
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

## **KENT**

He hath no daughters, sir.

## **KING LEAR**

Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued nature  
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.  
Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers  
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?  
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot  
Those pelican daughters.

## **EDGAR**

Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:

Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

## **Fool**

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

## **EDGAR**

Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents;  
keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with  
man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud  
array. Tom's a-cold.

## **KING LEAR**

What hast thou been?

## **EDGAR**

A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled  
my hair; wore gloves in my cap; served the lust of  
my mistress' heart, and did the act of darkness with  
her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and  
broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one that  
slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it:  
wine loved I deeply, dice dearly: and in woman  
out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of  
ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth,  
wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey.  
Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of  
silks betray thy poor heart to woman: keep thy foot  
out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen  
from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.  
Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind:  
Says suum, mun, ha, no, nonny.  
Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa! let him trot by.

*Storm still*

## **KING LEAR**

Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer



with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies.  
Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou  
owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep  
no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here's three on  
's are sophisticated! Thou art the thing itself:  
unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor bare,  
forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings!  
come unbutton here.

*Tearing off his clothes*

## **Fool**

Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty night  
to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were  
like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the  
rest on's body cold. Look, here comes a walking fire.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, with a torch*

## **EDGAR**

This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins  
at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives  
the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the  
hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the  
poor creature of earth.

S. Withold footed thrice the old;  
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;  
Bid her alight,  
And her troth plight,  
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

## **KENT**

How fares your grace?

## **KING LEAR**

What's he?

## **KENT**

Who's there? What is't you seek?

**GLOUCESTER**

What are you there? Your names?

**EDGAR**

Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad,  
the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in  
the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages,  
eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and  
the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the  
standing pool; who is whipped from tithing to  
tithing, and stock-punished, and imprisoned; who  
hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his  
body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear;  
But mice and rats, and such small deer,  
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.  
Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend!

**GLOUCESTER**

What, hath your grace no better company?

**EDGAR**

The prince of darkness is a gentleman:  
Moth he's call'd, and Mahu.

**GLOUCESTER**

Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,  
That it doth hate what gets it.

**EDGAR**

Poor Tom's a-cold.

**GLOUCESTER**

Go in with me: my duty cannot suffer  
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands:  
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,  
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,  
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out,  
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

**KING LEAR**

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

**KENT**

Good my lord, take his offer; go into the house.

**KING LEAR**

I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.  
What is your study?

**EDGAR**

How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

**KING LEAR**

Let me ask you one word in private.

**KENT**

Importune him once more to go, my lord;  
His wits begin to unsettle.

**GLOUCESTER**

Canst thou blame him?

*Storm still*

His daughters seek his death: ah, that good Kent!

He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!  
Thou say'st the king grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,  
I am almost mad myself: I had a son,  
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,  
But lately, very late: I loved him, friend;  
No father his son dearer: truth to tell thee,  
The grief hath crazed my wits. What a night's this!  
I do beseech your grace,--

## **KING LEAR**

O, cry your mercy, sir.  
Noble philosopher, your company.

## **EDGAR**

Tom's a-cold.

## **GLOUCESTER**

In, fellow, there, into the hovel: keep thee warm.

## **KING LEAR**

Come let's in all.

## **KENT**

This way, my lord.

## **KING LEAR**

With him;  
I will keep still with my philosopher.

## **KENT**

Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Take him you on.

**KENT**

Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

**KING LEAR**

Come, good Athenian.

**GLOUCESTER**

No words, no words: hush.

**EDGAR**

Child Rowland to the dark tower came,  
His word was still,--Fie, foh, and fum,  
I smell the blood of a British man.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Gloucester's castle.

*Enter CORNWALL and EDMUND*

**CORNWALL**

I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

**EDMUND**

How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

**CORNWALL**

I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death; but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reprobable badness in himself.

**EDMUND**

How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France: O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

**CORNWALL**

o with me to the duchess.

**EDMUND**

If the matter of this paper be certain, you have

mighty business in hand.

## **CORNWALL**

True or false, it hath made thee earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

## **EDMUND**

[Aside] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.--I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

## **CORNWALL**

I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining the castle.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, KING LEAR, KENT, Fool, and EDGAR*

### GLOUCESTER

Here is better than the open air; take it  
thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what  
addition I can: I will not be long from you.

### KENT

All the power of his wits have given way to his  
impatience: the gods reward your kindness!

*Exit GLOUCESTER*

### EDGAR

Frateretto calls me; and tells me  
Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness.  
Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

### Fool

Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a  
gentleman or a yeoman?

### KING LEAR

A king, a king!

### Fool

No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son;  
for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman



before him.

**KING LEAR**

To have a thousand with red burning spits  
Come hissing in upon 'em,--

**EDGAR**

The foul fiend bites my back.

**Fool**

He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a  
horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

**KING LEAR**

It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.

*To EDGAR*

Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;

*To the Fool*

Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she foxes!

**EDGAR**

Look, where he stands and glares!  
Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?  
Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me,--

**Fool**

Her boat hath a leak,  
And she must not speak  
Why she dares not come over to thee.

**EDGAR**

The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. Hopdance cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

**KENT**

How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed:  
Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

**KING LEAR**

I'll see their trial first. Bring in the evidence.

*To EDGAR*

Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;

*To the Fool*

And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,  
Bench by his side:

*To KENT*

you are o' the commission,  
Sit you too.

**EDGAR**

Let us deal justly.  
Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?  
Thy sheep be in the corn;  
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,  
Thy sheep shall take no harm.  
Pur! the cat is gray.

**KING LEAR**

Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my

oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father.

**Fool**

Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

**KING LEAR**

She cannot deny it.

**Fool**

Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

**KING LEAR**

And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim  
What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!  
Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!  
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

**EDGAR**

Bless thy five wits!

**KENT**

O pity! Sir, where is the patience now,  
That thou so oft have boasted to retain?

**EDGAR**

[Aside] My tears begin to take his part so much,  
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

**KING LEAR**

The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and  
Sweet-heart, see, they bark at me.

## **EDGAR**

Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs!  
Be thy mouth or black or white,  
Tooth that poisons if it bite;  
Mastiff, grey-hound, mongrel grim,  
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,  
Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,  
Tom will make them weep and wail:  
For, with throwing thus my head,  
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.  
Do de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and  
fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

## **KING LEAR**

Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds  
about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that  
makes these hard hearts?

*To EDGAR*

You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I  
do not like the fashion of your garments: you will  
say they are Persian attire: but let them be changed.

## **KENT**

Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

## **KING LEAR**

Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains:  
so, so, so. We'll go to supper i' he morning. So, so, so.

## **Fool**

And I'll go to bed at noon.

*Re-enter GLOUCESTER*

## **GLOUCESTER**

Come hither, friend: where is the king my master?

## **KENT**

Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms;  
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:  
There is a litter ready; lay him in 't,  
And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet  
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:  
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,  
With thine, and all that offer to defend him,  
Stand in assured loss: take up, take up;  
And follow me, that will to some provision  
Give thee quick conduct.

## **KENT**

Oppressed nature sleeps:  
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken senses,  
Which, if convenience will not allow,  
Stand in hard cure.

*To the Fool*

Come, help to bear thy master;  
Thou must not stay behind.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Come, come, away.

*Exeunt all but EDGAR*

## **EDGAR**

When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.  
Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,  
Leaving free things and happy shows behind:  
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'er skip,  
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.  
How light and portable my pain seems now,  
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow,  
He childed as I father'd! Tom, away!  
Mark the high noises; and thyself bewray,  
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,  
In thy just proof, repeals and reconciles thee.  
What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the king!  
Lurk, lurk.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Gloucester's castle.

*Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, and Servants*

### CORNWALL

Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter: the army of France is landed. Seek out the villain Gloucester.

*Exeunt some of the Servants*

### REGAN

Hang him instantly.

### GONERIL

Pluck out his eyes.

### CORNWALL

Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, keep you our sister company: the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation: we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister: farewell, my lord of Gloucester.

*Enter OSWALD*

How now! where's the king?

### OSWALD

My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:  
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,  
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;  
Who, with some other of the lords dependants,  
Are gone with him towards Dover; where they boast  
To have well-armed friends.

## **CORNWALL**

Get horses for your mistress.

## **GONERIL**

Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

## **CORNWALL**

Edmund, farewell.

*Exeunt GONERIL, EDMUND, and OSWALD*

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,  
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

*Exeunt other Servants*

Though well we may not pass upon his life  
Without the form of justice, yet our power  
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men  
May blame, but not control. Who's there? the traitor?

*Enter GLOUCESTER, brought in by two or three*

## **REGAN**

Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

## **CORNWALL**

Bind fast his corky arms.



## **GLOUCESTER**

What mean your graces? Good my friends, consider  
You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

## **CORNWALL**

Bind him, I say.

*Servants bind him*

## **REGAN**

Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

## **CORNWALL**

To this chair bind him. Villain, thou shalt find--

*REGAN plucks his beard*

## **GLOUCESTER**

By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done  
To pluck me by the beard.

## **REGAN**

So white, and such a traitor!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Naughty lady,  
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,  
Will quicken, and accuse thee: I am your host:  
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours  
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

**CORNWALL**

Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

**REGAN**

Be simple answerer, for we know the truth.

**CORNWALL**

And what confederacy have you with the traitors  
Late footed in the kingdom?

**REGAN**

To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king? Speak.

**GLOUCESTER**

I have a letter guessingly set down,  
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,  
And not from one opposed.

**CORNWALL**

Cunning.

**REGAN**

And false.

**CORNWALL**

Where hast thou sent the king?

**GLOUCESTER**

To Dover.

**REGAN**

Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril--

**CORNWALL**

Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

**GLOUCESTER**

I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.

**REGAN**

Wherefore to Dover, sir?

**GLOUCESTER**

Because I would not see thy cruel nails  
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister  
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.  
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head  
In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd up,  
And quench'd the stelled fires:  
Yet, poor old heart, he help the heavens to rain.  
If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,  
Thou shouldst have said 'Good porter, turn the key,'  
All cruels else subscribed: but I shall see  
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

**CORNWALL**

See't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.  
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

**GLOUCESTER**

He that will think to live till he be old,  
Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

**REGAN**

One side will mock another; the other too.

**CORNWALL**

If you see vengeance,--

**First Servant**

Hold your hand, my lord:  
I have served you ever since I was a child;  
But better service have I never done you  
Than now to bid you hold.

**REGAN**

How now, you dog!

**First Servant**

If you did wear a beard upon your chin,  
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

**CORNWALL**

My villain!

*They draw and fight*

**First Servant**

Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

**REGAN**

Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus!

*Takes a sword, and runs at him behind*

**First Servant**

O, I am slain! My lord, you have one eye left

To see some mischief on him. O!

*Dies*

**CORNWALL**

Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!  
Where is thy lustre now?

**GLOUCESTER**

All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmund?  
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,  
To quit this horrid act.

**REGAN**

Out, treacherous villain!  
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he  
That made the overture of thy treasons to us;  
Who is too good to pity thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

O my follies! then Edgar was abused.  
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

**REGAN**

Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell  
His way to Dover.

*Exit one with GLOUCESTER*

How is't, my lord? how look you?

**CORNWALL**

I have received a hurt: follow me, lady.  
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave  
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace:

Untimely comes this hurt: give me your arm.

*Exit CORNWALL, led by REGAN*

**Second Servant**

I'll never care what wickedness I do,  
If this man come to good.

**Third Servant**

If she live long,  
And in the end meet the old course of death,  
Women will all turn monsters.

**Second Servant**

Let's follow the old earl, and get the Bedlam  
To lead him where he would: his roguish madness  
Allows itself to any thing.

**Third Servant**

Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs  
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!

*Exeunt severally*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 3, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The heath.

*Enter EDGAR*

**EDGAR**

Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,  
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,  
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,  
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:  
The lamentable change is from the best;  
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,  
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!  
The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst  
Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here?

*Enter GLOUCESTER, led by an Old Man*

My father, poorly led? World, world, O world!  
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,  
Lie would not yield to age.

**Old Man**

O, my good lord, I have been your tenant, and  
your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

**GLOUCESTER**

Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:  
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;  
Thee they may hurt.

**Old Man**

Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

## **GLOUCESTER**

I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;  
I stumbled when I saw: full oft 'tis seen,  
Our means secure us, and our mere defects  
Prove our commodities. O dear son Edgar,  
The food of thy abused father's wrath!  
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,  
I'd say I had eyes again!

## **Old Man**

How now! Who's there?

## **EDGAR**

[Aside] O gods! Who is't can say 'I am at  
the worst'?  
I am worse than e'er I was.

## **Old Man**

'Tis poor mad Tom.

## **EDGAR**

[Aside] And worse I may be yet: the worst is not  
So long as we can say 'This is the worst.'

## **Old Man**

Fellow, where goest?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Is it a beggar-man?

## **Old Man**

Madman and beggar too.



## **GLOUCESTER**

He has some reason, else he could not beg.  
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;  
Which made me think a man a worm: my son  
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind  
Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard  
more since.  
As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods.  
They kill us for their sport.

## **EDGAR**

[Aside] How should this be?  
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,  
Angering itself and others.--Bless thee, master!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Is that the naked fellow?

## **Old Man**

Ay, my lord.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Then, prithee, get thee gone: if, for my sake,  
Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,  
I' the way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;  
And bring some covering for this naked soul,  
Who I'll entreat to lead me.

## **Old Man**

Alack, sir, he is mad.

## **GLOUCESTER**

'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind.  
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;

Above the rest, be gone.

**Old Man**

I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,  
Come on't what will.

*Exit*

**GLOUCESTER**

Sirrah, naked fellow,--

**EDGAR**

Poor Tom's a-cold.

*Aside*

I cannot daub it further.

**GLOUCESTER**

Come hither, fellow.

**EDGAR**

[Aside] And yet I must.--Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

**GLOUCESTER**

Know'st thou the way to Dover?

**EDGAR**

Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits: bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend! five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as Obidicut; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of

mopping and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids  
and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!

## **GLOUCESTER**

Here, take this purse, thou whom the heavens' plagues  
Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched  
Makes thee the happier: heavens, deal so still!  
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,  
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see  
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;  
So distribution should undo excess,  
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover?

## **EDGAR**

Ay, master.

## **GLOUCESTER**

There is a cliff, whose high and bending head  
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:  
Bring me but to the very brim of it,  
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear  
With something rich about me: from that place  
I shall no leading need.

## **EDGAR**

Give me thy arm:  
Poor Tom shall lead thee.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before ALBANY's palace.

*Enter GONERIL and EDMUND*

### GONERIL

Welcome, my lord: I marvel our mild husband  
Not met us on the way.

*Enter OSWALD*

Now, where's your master'?

### OSWALD

Madam, within; but never man so changed.  
I told him of the army that was landed;  
He smiled at it: I told him you were coming:  
His answer was 'The worse:' of Gloucester's treachery,  
And of the loyal service of his son,  
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot,  
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out:  
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him;  
What like, offensive.

### GONERIL

[To EDMUND] Then shall you go no further.  
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,  
That dares not undertake: he'll not feel wrongs  
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way  
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;  
Hasten his musters and conduct his powers:  
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff  
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant  
Shall pass between us: ere long you are like to hear,

If you dare venture in your own behalf,  
A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech;

*Giving a favour*

Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,  
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air:  
Conceive, and fare thee well.

**EDMUND**

Yours in the ranks of death.

**GONERIL**

My most dear Gloucester!

*Exit EDMUND*

O, the difference of man and man!  
To thee a woman's services are due:  
My fool usurps my body.

**OSWALD**

Madam, here comes my lord.

*Exit*

*Enter ALBANY*

**GONERIL**

I have been worth the whistle.

**ALBANY**

O Goneril!  
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind  
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition:  
That nature, which contemns its origin,

Cannot be border'd certain in itself;  
She that herself will sliver and disbranch  
From her material sap, perforce must wither  
And come to deadly use.

## **GONERIL**

No more; the text is foolish.

## **ALBANY**

Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:  
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?  
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?  
A father, and a gracious aged man,  
Whose reverence even the head-lugg'd bear would lick,  
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.  
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?  
A man, a prince, by him so benefited!  
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits  
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,  
It will come,  
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,  
Like monsters of the deep.

## **GONERIL**

Milk-liver'd man!  
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;  
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning  
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st  
Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd  
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?  
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land;  
With plumed helm thy slayer begins threats;  
Whiles thou, a moral fool, sit'st still, and criest  
'Alack, why does he so?'

## **ALBANY**

See thyself, devil!  
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend

So horrid as in woman.

**GONERIL**

O vain fool!

**ALBANY**

Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,  
Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness  
To let these hands obey my blood,  
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear  
Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,  
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

**GONERIL**

Marry, your manhood now--

*Enter a Messenger*

**ALBANY**

What news?

**Messenger**

O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead:  
Slain by his servant, going to put out  
The other eye of Gloucester.

**ALBANY**

Gloucester's eye!

**Messenger**

A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,  
Opposed against the act, bending his sword  
To his great master; who, thereat enraged,  
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;

But not without that harmful stroke, which since  
Hath pluck'd him after.

**ALBANY**

This shows you are above,  
You justicers, that these our nether crimes  
So speedily can venge! But, O poor Gloucester!  
Lost he his other eye?

**Messenger**

Both, both, my lord.  
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;  
'Tis from your sister.

**GONERIL**

[Aside] One way I like this well;  
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,  
May all the building in my fancy pluck  
Upon my hateful life: another way,  
The news is not so tart.--I'll read, and answer.

*Exit*

**ALBANY**

Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

**Messenger**

Come with my lady hither.

**ALBANY**

He is not here.

**Messenger**

No, my good lord; I met him back again.



**ALBANY**

Knows he the wickedness?

**Messenger**

Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd against him;  
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment  
Might have the freer course.

**ALBANY**

Gloucester, I live  
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,  
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend:  
Tell me what more thou know'st.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The French camp near Dover.

*Enter KENT and a Gentleman*

**KENT**

Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back  
know you the reason?

**Gentleman**

Something he left imperfect in the  
state, which since his coming forth is thought  
of; which imports to the kingdom so much  
fear and danger, that his personal return was  
most required and necessary.

**KENT**

Who hath he left behind him general?

**Gentleman**

The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

**KENT**

Did your letters pierce the queen to any  
demonstration of grief?

**Gentleman**

Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;  
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down  
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen  
Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,

Sought to be king o'er her.

**KENT**

O, then it moved her.

**Gentleman**

Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove  
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen  
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears  
Were like a better way: those happy smilets,  
That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know  
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,  
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,  
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,  
If all could so become it.

**KENT**

Made she no verbal question?

**Gentleman**

'Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of 'father'  
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart:  
Cried 'Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!  
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the night?  
Let pity not be believed!' There she shook  
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,  
And clamour moisten'd: then away she started  
To deal with grief alone.

**KENT**

It is the stars,  
The stars above us, govern our conditions;  
Else one self mate and mate could not beget  
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

**Gentleman**

No.

**KENT**

Was this before the king return'd?

**Gentleman**

No, since.

**KENT**

Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i' the town;  
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers  
What we are come about, and by no means  
Will yield to see his daughter.

**Gentleman**

Why, good sir?

**KENT**

A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own unkindness,  
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her  
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights  
To his dog-hearted daughters, these things sting  
His mind so venomously, that burning shame  
Detains him from Cordelia.

**Gentleman**

Alack, poor gentleman!

**KENT**

Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

**Gentleman**

'Tis so, they are afoot.

## KENT

Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,  
And leave you to attend him: some dear cause  
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;  
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve  
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go  
Along with me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. A tent.

*Enter, with drum and colours, CORDELIA, Doctor, and Soldiers*

### CORDELIA

Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now  
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;  
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,  
With bur-docks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,  
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow  
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;  
Search every acre in the high-grown field,  
And bring him to our eye.

*Exit an Officer*

What can man's wisdom  
In the restoring his bereaved sense?  
He that helps him take all my outward worth.

### Doctor

There is means, madam:  
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,  
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,  
Are many simples operative, whose power  
Will close the eye of anguish.

### CORDELIA

All blest secrets,  
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,  
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate  
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him;  
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life

That wants the means to lead it.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

News, madam;  
The British powers are marching hitherward.

**CORDELIA**

'Tis known before; our preparation stands  
In expectation of them. O dear father,  
It is thy business that I go about;  
Therefore great France  
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.  
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,  
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:  
Soon may I hear and see him!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Gloucester's castle.

*Enter REGAN and OSWALD*

**REGAN**

But are my brother's powers set forth?

**OSWALD**

Ay, madam.

**REGAN**

Himself in person there?

**OSWALD**

Madam, with much ado:  
Your sister is the better soldier.

**REGAN**

Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?

**OSWALD**

No, madam.

**REGAN**

What might import my sister's letter to him?

**OSWALD**



I know not, lady.

**REGAN**

'Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.  
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,  
To let him live: where he arrives he moves  
All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,  
In pity of his misery, to dispatch  
His nighted life: moreover, to descry  
The strength o' the enemy.

**OSWALD**

I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.

**REGAN**

Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;  
The ways are dangerous.

**OSWALD**

I may not, madam:  
My lady charged my duty in this business.

**REGAN**

Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you  
Transport her purposes by word? Belike,  
Something--I know not what: I'll love thee much,  
Let me unseal the letter.

**OSWALD**

Madam, I had rather--

**REGAN**

I know your lady does not love her husband;  
I am sure of that: and at her late being here

She gave strange oeillades and most speaking looks  
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

**OSWALD**

I, madam?

**REGAN**

I speak in understanding; you are; I know't:  
Therefore I do advise you, take this note:  
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;  
And more convenient is he for my hand  
Than for your lady's: you may gather more.  
If you do find him, pray you, give him this;  
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,  
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.  
So, fare you well.  
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,  
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

**OSWALD**

Would I could meet him, madam! I should show  
What party I do follow.

**REGAN**

Fare thee well.

*Exeunt*

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Fields near Dover.

*Enter GLOUCESTER, and EDGAR dressed like a peasant*

**GLOUCESTER**

When shall we come to the top of that same hill?

**EDGAR**

You do climb up it now: look, how we labour.

**GLOUCESTER**

Methinks the ground is even.

**EDGAR**

Horrible steep.

Hark, do you hear the sea?

**GLOUCESTER**

No, truly.

**EDGAR**

Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect

By your eyes' anguish.

**GLOUCESTER**

So may it be, indeed:

Methinks thy voice is alter'd; and thou speak'st

In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

**EDGAR**

You're much deceived: in nothing am I changed  
But in my garments.

**GLOUCESTER**

Methinks you're better spoken.

**EDGAR**

Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still. How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!  
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:  
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,  
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,  
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy  
Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,  
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,  
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
Topple down headlong.

**GLOUCESTER**

Set me where you stand.

**EDGAR**

Give me your hand: you are now within a foot  
Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon  
Would I not leap upright.

**GLOUCESTER**

Let go my hand.  
Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel  
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods

Prosper it with thee! Go thou farther off;  
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

**EDGAR**

Now fare you well, good sir.

**GLOUCESTER**

With all my heart.

**EDGAR**

Why I do trifle thus with his despair  
Is done to cure it.

**GLOUCESTER**

[Kneeling] O you mighty gods!  
This world I do renounce, and, in your sights,  
Shake patiently my great affliction off:  
If I could bear it longer, and not fall  
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,  
My snuff and loathed part of nature should  
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!  
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

*He falls forward*

**EDGAR**

Gone, sir: farewell.  
And yet I know not how conceit may rob  
The treasury of life, when life itself  
Yields to the theft: had he been where he thought,  
By this, had thought been past. Alive or dead?  
Ho, you sir! friend! Hear you, sir! speak!  
Thus might he pass indeed: yet he revives.  
What are you, sir?

**GLOUCESTER**

Away, and let me die.

**EDGAR**

Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,  
So many fathom down precipitating,  
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost breathe;  
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.  
Ten masts at each make not the altitude  
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:  
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

**GLOUCESTER**

But have I fall'n, or no?

**EDGAR**

From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.  
Look up a-height; the shrill-gorged lark so far  
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

**GLOUCESTER**

Alack, I have no eyes.  
Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,  
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,  
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,  
And frustrate his proud will.

**EDGAR**

Give me your arm:  
Up: so. How is 't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

**GLOUCESTER**

Too well, too well.

**EDGAR**

This is above all strangeness.  
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that  
Which parted from you?

**GLOUCESTER**

A poor unfortunate beggar.

**EDGAR**

As I stood here below, methought his eyes  
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,  
Horns whelk'd and waved like the enridged sea:  
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,  
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours  
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear  
Affliction till it do cry out itself  
'Enough, enough,' and die. That thing you speak of,  
I took it for a man; often 'twould say  
'The fiend, the fiend:' he led me to that place.

**EDGAR**

Bear free and patient thoughts. But who comes here?

*Enter KING LEAR, fantastically dressed with wild flowers*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate  
His master thus.

**KING LEAR**

No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the  
king himself.

**EDGAR**

O thou side-piercing sight!

**KING LEAR**

Nature's above art in that respect. There's your  
press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a  
crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard. Look,  
look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted  
cheese will do 't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove  
it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O, well  
flown, bird! i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh!  
Give the word.

**EDGAR**

Sweet marjoram.

**KING LEAR**

Pass.

**GLOUCESTER**

I know that voice.

**KING LEAR**

Ha! Goneril, with a white beard! They flattered  
me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my  
beard ere the black ones were there. To say 'ay'  
and 'no' to every thing that I said!--'Ay' and 'no'  
too was no good divinity. When the rain came to  
wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when  
the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I  
found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are  
not men o' their words: they told me I was every  
thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

**GLOUCESTER**

The trick of that voice I do well remember:  
Is 't not the king?



## **KING LEAR**

Ay, every inch a king:  
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.  
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause? Adultery?  
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:  
The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly  
Does lecher in my sight.  
Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son  
Was kinder to his father than my daughters  
Got 'tween the lawful sheets.  
To 't, luxury, pell-mell! for I lack soldiers.  
Behold yond simpering dame,  
Whose face between her forks presages snow;  
That minces virtue, and does shake the head  
To hear of pleasure's name;  
The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to 't  
With a more riotous appetite.  
Down from the waist they are Centaurs,  
Though women all above:  
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,  
Beneath is all the fiends';  
There's hell, there's darkness, there's the  
sulphurous pit,  
Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie,  
fie, fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet,  
good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination:  
there's money for thee.

## **GLOUCESTER**

O, let me kiss that hand!

## **KING LEAR**

Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

## **GLOUCESTER**

O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world  
Shall so wear out to nought. Dost thou know me?

**KING LEAR**

I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid! I'll not love. Read thou this challenge; mark but the penning of it.

**GLOUCESTER**

Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

**EDGAR**

I would not take this from report; it is,  
And my heart breaks at it.

**KING LEAR**

Read.

**GLOUCESTER**

What, with the case of eyes?

**KING LEAR**

O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light; yet you see how this world goes.

**GLOUCESTER**

I see it feelingly.

**KING LEAR**

What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in

thine ear: change places; and, handy-dandy, which  
is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen  
a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

## **GLOUCESTER**

Ay, sir.

## **KING LEAR**

And the creature run from the cur? There thou  
mightst behold the great image of authority: a  
dog's obeyed in office.  
Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!  
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;  
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind  
For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.  
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,  
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks:  
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.  
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:  
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power  
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;  
And like a scurvy politician, seem  
To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now:  
Pull off my boots: harder, harder: so.

## **EDGAR**

O, matter and impertinency mix'd! Reason in madness!

## **KING LEAR**

If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.  
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:  
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:  
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,  
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

## **GLOUCESTER**

Alack, alack the day!

**KING LEAR**

When we are born, we cry that we are come  
To this great stage of fools: this a good block;  
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe  
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put 't in proof;  
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,  
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

*Enter a Gentleman, with Attendants*

**Gentleman**

O, here he is: lay hand upon him. Sir,  
Your most dear daughter--

**KING LEAR**

No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even  
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;  
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons;  
I am cut to the brains.

**Gentleman**

You shall have any thing.

**KING LEAR**

No seconds? all myself?  
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,  
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,  
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

**Gentleman**

Good sir,--

**KING LEAR**

I will die bravely, like a bridegroom. What!  
I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,  
My masters, know you that.

**Gentleman**

You are a royal one, and we obey you.

**KING LEAR**

Then there's life in't. Nay, if you get it, you  
shall get it with running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

*Exit running; Attendants follow*

**Gentleman**

A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,  
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,  
Who redeems nature from the general curse  
Which twain have brought her to.

**EDGAR**

Hail, gentle sir.

**Gentleman**

Sir, speed you: what's your will?

**EDGAR**

Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward?

**Gentleman**

Most sure and vulgar: every one hears that,  
Which can distinguish sound.

**EDGAR**

But, by your favour,  
How near's the other army?

**Gentleman**

Near and on speedy foot; the main descry  
Stands on the hourly thought.

**EDGAR**

I thank you, sir: that's all.

**Gentleman**

Though that the queen on special cause is here,  
Her army is moved on.

**EDGAR**

I thank you, sir.

*Exit Gentleman*

**GLOUCESTER**

You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me:  
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again  
To die before you please!

**EDGAR**

Well pray you, father.

**GLOUCESTER**

Now, good sir, what are you?

**EDGAR**

A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows;  
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,

Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,  
I'll lead you to some biding.

**GLOUCESTER**

Hearty thanks:  
The bounty and the benison of heaven  
To boot, and boot!

*Enter OSWALD*

**OSWALD**

A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!  
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh  
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,  
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out  
That must destroy thee.

**GLOUCESTER**

Now let thy friendly hand  
Put strength enough to't.

*EDGAR interposes*

**OSWALD**

Wherefore, bold peasant,  
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;  
Lest that the infection of his fortune take  
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

**EDGAR**

Ch'ill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

**OSWALD**

Let go, slave, or thou diest!

## **EDGAR**

Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk  
pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered out of my life,  
'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight.  
Nay, come not near th' old man; keep out, che vor  
ye, or ise try whether your costard or my ballow be  
the harder: ch'll be plain with you.

## **OSWALD**

Out, dunghill!

## **EDGAR**

Ch'll pick your teeth, zir: come; no matter vor  
your foins.

*They fight, and EDGAR knocks him down*

## **OSWALD**

Slave, thou hast slain me: villain, take my purse:  
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;  
And give the letters which thou find'st about me  
To Edmund earl of Gloucester; seek him out  
Upon the British party: O, untimely death!

*Dies*

## **EDGAR**

I know thee well: a serviceable villain;  
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress  
As badness would desire.

## **GLOUCESTER**

What, is he dead?

## **EDGAR**



Sit you down, father; rest you  
Let's see these pockets: the letters that he speaks of  
May be my friends. He's dead; I am only sorry  
He had no other death's-man. Let us see:  
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:  
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;  
Their papers, is more lawful.

*Reads*

'Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have  
many opportunities to cut him off: if your will  
want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered.  
There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror:  
then am I the prisoner, and his bed my goal; from  
the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply  
the place for your labour.

'Your--wife, so I would say--

'Affectionate servant,

'GONERIL.'

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!  
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;  
And the exchange my brother! Here, in the sands,  
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified  
Of murderous lechers: and in the mature time  
With this ungracious paper strike the sight  
Of the death practised duke: for him 'tis well  
That of thy death and business I can tell.

## **GLOUCESTER**

The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,  
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling  
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:  
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,  
And woes by wrong imaginations lose  
The knowledge of themselves.

## **EDGAR**

Give me your hand:

*Drum afar off*

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:  
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. A tent in the French camp. LEAR on a bed asleep,

soft music playing; Gentleman, and others attending.

*Enter CORDELIA, KENT, and Doctor*

### CORDELIA

O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,  
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,  
And every measure fail me.

### KENT

To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.  
All my reports go with the modest truth;  
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

### CORDELIA

Be better suited:  
These weeds are memories of those worser hours:  
I prithee, put them off.

### KENT

Pardon me, dear madam;  
Yet to be known shortens my made intent:  
My boon I make it, that you know me not  
Till time and I think meet.

### CORDELIA

Then be't so, my good lord.

*To the Doctor*

How does the king?

**Doctor**

Madam, sleeps still.

**CORDELIA**

O you kind gods,  
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!  
The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up  
Of this child-changed father!

**Doctor**

So please your majesty  
That we may wake the king: he hath slept long.

**CORDELIA**

Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed  
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?

**Gentleman**

Ay, madam; in the heaviness of his sleep  
We put fresh garments on him.

**Doctor**

Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;  
I doubt not of his temperance.

**CORDELIA**

Very well.

**Doctor**

Please you, draw near. Louder the music there!

## **CORDELIA**

O my dear father! Restoration hang  
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss  
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters  
Have in thy reverence made!

## **KENT**

Kind and dear princess!

## **CORDELIA**

Had you not been their father, these white flakes  
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face  
To be opposed against the warring winds?  
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?  
In the most terrible and nimble stroke  
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch--poor perdu!--  
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,  
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night  
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,  
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,  
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!  
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once  
Had not concluded all. He wakes; speak to him.

## **Doctor**

Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

## **CORDELIA**

How does my royal lord? How fares your majesty?

## **KING LEAR**

You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave:  
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound  
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears  
Do scald like moulten lead.

**CORDELIA**

Sir, do you know me?

**KING LEAR**

You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?

**CORDELIA**

Still, still, far wide!

**Doctor**

He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

**KING LEAR**

Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?  
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,  
To see another thus. I know not what to say.  
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;  
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured  
Of my condition!

**CORDELIA**

O, look upon me, sir,  
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:  
No, sir, you must not kneel.

**KING LEAR**

Pray, do not mock me:  
I am a very foolish fond old man,  
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;  
And, to deal plainly,  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.  
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;  
Yet I am doubtful for I am mainly ignorant  
What place this is; and all the skill I have

Remembers not these garments; nor I know not  
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;  
For, as I am a man, I think this lady  
To be my child Cordelia.

**CORDELIA**

And so I am, I am.

**KING LEAR**

Be your tears wet? yes, 'faith. I pray, weep not:  
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.  
I know you do not love me; for your sisters  
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:  
You have some cause, they have not.

**CORDELIA**

No cause, no cause.

**KING LEAR**

Am I in France?

**KENT**

In your own kingdom, sir.

**KING LEAR**

Do not abuse me.

**Doctor**

Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,  
You see, is kill'd in him: and yet it is danger  
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.  
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more  
Till further settling.

## **CORDELIA**

Will't please your highness walk?

## **KING LEAR**

You must bear with me:  
Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

*Exeunt all but KENT and Gentleman*

## **Gentleman**

Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain?

## **KENT**

Most certain, sir.

## **Gentleman**

Who is conductor of his people?

## **KENT**

As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

## **Gentleman**

They say Edgar, his banished son, is with the Earl  
of Kent in Germany.

## **KENT**

Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look about; the  
powers of the kingdom approach apace.

## **Gentleman**

The arbitrement is like to be bloody. Fare you  
well, sir.



*Exit*

**KENT**

My point and period will be throughly wrought,  
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 4, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The British camp, near Dover.

*Enter, with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Gentlemen, and Soldiers.*

**EDMUND**

Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,  
Or whether since he is advised by aught  
To change the course: he's full of alteration  
And self-reproving: bring his constant pleasure.

*To a Gentleman, who goes out*

**REGAN**

Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

**EDMUND**

'Tis to be doubted, madam.

**REGAN**

Now, sweet lord,  
You know the goodness I intend upon you:  
Tell me--but truly--but then speak the truth,  
Do you not love my sister?

**EDMUND**

In honour'd love.

**REGAN**

But have you never found my brother's way  
To the forfended place?

**EDMUND**

That thought abuses you.

**REGAN**

I am doubtful that you have been conjunct  
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

**EDMUND**

No, by mine honour, madam.

**REGAN**

I never shall endure her: dear my lord,  
Be not familiar with her.

**EDMUND**

Fear me not:  
She and the duke her husband!

*Enter, with drum and colours, ALBANY, GONERIL, and Soldiers*

**GONERIL**

[Aside] I had rather lose the battle than that sister  
Should loosen him and me.

**ALBANY**

Our very loving sister, well be-met.  
Sir, this I hear; the king is come to his daughter,  
With others whom the rigor of our state  
Forced to cry out. Where I could not be honest,  
I never yet was valiant: for this business,  
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,  
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,  
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

**EDMUND**

Sir, you speak nobly.

**REGAN**

Why is this reason'd?

**GONERIL**

Combine together 'gainst the enemy;  
For these domestic and particular broils  
Are not the question here.

**ALBANY**

Let's then determine  
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

**EDMUND**

I shall attend you presently at your tent.

**REGAN**

Sister, you'll go with us?

**GONERIL**

No.

**REGAN**

'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.

**GONERIL**

[Aside] O, ho, I know the riddle.--I will go.

*As they are going out, enter EDGAR disguised*

**EDGAR**

If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,  
Hear me one word.

**ALBANY**

I'll overtake you. Speak.

*Exeunt all but ALBANY and EDGAR*

**EDGAR**

Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.  
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound  
For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,  
I can produce a champion that will prove  
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,  
Your business of the world hath so an end,  
And machination ceases. Fortune love you.

**ALBANY**

Stay till I have read the letter.

**EDGAR**

I was forbid it.  
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,  
And I'll appear again.

**ALBANY**

Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy paper.

*Exit EDGAR*

*Re-enter EDMUND*

**EDMUND**

The enemy's in view; draw up your powers.  
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces  
By diligent discovery; but your haste  
Is now urged on you.

## **ALBANY**

We will greet the time.

*Exit*

## **EDMUND**

To both these sisters have I sworn my love;  
Each jealous of the other, as the stung  
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?  
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,  
If both remain alive: to take the widow  
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;  
And hardly shall I carry out my side,  
Her husband being alive. Now then we'll use  
His countenance for the battle; which being done,  
Let her who would be rid of him devise  
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy  
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,  
The battle done, and they within our power,  
Shall never see his pardon; for my state  
Stands on me to defend, not to debate.

*Exit*

# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A field between the two camps.

*Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, KING LEAR, CORDELIA, and Soldiers, over the stage; and exeunt*

*Enter EDGAR and GLOUCESTER*

### EDGAR

Here, father, take the shadow of this tree  
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:  
If ever I return to you again,  
I'll bring you comfort.

### GLOUCESTER

Grace go with you, sir!

*Exit EDGAR*

*Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter EDGAR*

### EDGAR

Away, old man; give me thy hand; away!  
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en:  
Give me thy hand; come on.

### GLOUCESTER

No farther, sir; a man may rot even here.

### EDGAR

What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure  
Their going hence, even as their coming hither;

Ripeness is all: come on.

**GLOUCESTER**

And that's true too.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# King Lear

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [King Lear](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE III. The British camp near Dover.

*Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND, KING LEAR and CORDELIA, prisoners; Captain, Soldiers, & c*

### EDMUND

Some officers take them away: good guard,  
Until their greater pleasures first be known  
That are to censure them.

### CORDELIA

We are not the first  
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.  
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;  
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.  
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

### KING LEAR

No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:  
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:  
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,  
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,  
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh  
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues  
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,  
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;  
And take upon's the mystery of things,  
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,  
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,  
That ebb and flow by the moon.

### EDMUND

Take them away.

## **KING LEAR**

Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,  
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?  
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,  
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;  
The good-years shall devour them, flesh and fell,  
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starve  
first. Come.

*Exeunt KING LEAR and CORDELIA, guarded*

## **EDMUND**

Come hither, captain; hark.  
Take thou this note;

*Giving a paper*

go follow them to prison:  
One step I have advanced thee; if thou dost  
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way  
To noble fortunes: know thou this, that men  
Are as the time is: to be tender-minded  
Does not become a sword: thy great employment  
Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do 't,  
Or thrive by other means.

## **Captain**

I'll do 't, my lord.

## **EDMUND**

About it; and write happy when thou hast done.  
Mark, I say, instantly; and carry it so  
As I have set it down.

## **Captain**

I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;  
If it be man's work, I'll do 't.

*Exit*

*Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, another Captain, and Soldiers*

**ALBANY**

Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,  
And fortune led you well: you have the captives  
That were the opposites of this day's strife:  
We do require them of you, so to use them  
As we shall find their merits and our safety  
May equally determine.

**EDMUND**

Sir, I thought it fit  
To send the old and miserable king  
To some retention and appointed guard;  
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,  
To pluck the common bosom on his side,  
An turn our impress'd lances in our eyes  
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;  
My reason all the same; and they are ready  
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear  
Where you shall hold your session. At this time  
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;  
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed  
By those that feel their sharpness:  
The question of Cordelia and her father  
Requires a fitter place.

**ALBANY**

Sir, by your patience,  
I hold you but a subject of this war,  
Not as a brother.

**REGAN**

That's as we list to grace him.  
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,  
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;  
Bore the commission of my place and person;  
The which immediacy may well stand up,  
And call itself your brother.

**GONERIL**

Not so hot:  
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,  
More than in your addition.

**REGAN**

In my rights,  
By me invested, he compeers the best.

**GONERIL**

That were the most, if he should husband you.

**REGAN**

Jesters do oft prove prophets.

**GONERIL**

Holla, holla!  
That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.

**REGAN**

Lady, I am not well; else I should answer  
From a full-flowing stomach. General,  
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;  
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:  
Witness the world, that I create thee here  
My lord and master.

**GONERIL**

Mean you to enjoy him?

**ALBANY**

The let-alone lies not in your good will.

**EDMUND**

Nor in thine, lord.

**ALBANY**

Half-blooded fellow, yes.

**REGAN**

[To EDMUND] Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

**ALBANY**

Stay yet; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee  
On capital treason; and, in thine attaint,  
This gilded serpent

*Pointing to Goneril*

For your claim, fair sister,  
I bar it in the interest of my wife:  
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,  
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.  
If you will marry, make your loves to me,  
My lady is bespoke.

**GONERIL**

An interlude!

**ALBANY**

Thou art arm'd, Gloucester: let the trumpet sound:  
If none appear to prove upon thy head

Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,  
There is my pledge;

*Throwing down a glove*

I'll prove it on thy heart,  
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less  
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

**REGAN**

Sick, O, sick!

**GONERIL**

[Aside] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

**EDMUND**

There's my exchange:

*Throwing down a glove*

what in the world he is  
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:  
Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,  
On him, on you, who not? I will maintain  
My truth and honour firmly.

**ALBANY**

A herald, ho!

**EDMUND**

A herald, ho, a herald!

**ALBANY**

Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,  
All levied in my name, have in my name

Took their discharge.

**REGAN**

My sickness grows upon me.

**ALBANY**

She is not well; convey her to my tent.

*Exit Regan, led*

*Enter a Herald*

Come hither, herald,--Let the trumpet sound,  
And read out this.

**Captain**

Sound, trumpet!

*A trumpet sounds*

**Herald**

[Reads] 'If any man of quality or degree within  
the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund,  
supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold  
traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the  
trumpet: he is bold in his defence.'

**EDMUND**

Sound!

*First trumpet*

**Herald**

Again!

*Second trumpet*

**Herald**

Again!

*Third trumpet*

*Trumpet answers within*

*Enter EDGAR, at the third sound, armed, with a trumpet before him*

**ALBANY**

Ask him his purposes, why he appears  
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

**Herald**

What are you?  
Your name, your quality? and why you answer  
This present summons?

**EDGAR**

Know, my name is lost;  
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:  
Yet am I noble as the adversary  
I come to cope.

**ALBANY**

Which is that adversary?

**EDGAR**

What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?

**EDMUND**

Himself: what say'st thou to him?



## **EDGAR**

Draw thy sword,  
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,  
Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.  
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,  
My oath, and my profession: I protest,  
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,  
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,  
Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor;  
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;  
Conspirant 'gainst this high-illustrious prince;  
And, from the extremest upward of thy head  
To the descent and dust below thy foot,  
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou 'No,'  
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent  
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,  
Thou liest.

## **EDMUND**

In wisdom I should ask thy name;  
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,  
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,  
What safe and nicely I might well delay  
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn:  
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;  
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;  
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise,  
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,  
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets, speak!

*Alarums. They fight. EDMUND falls*

## **ALBANY**

Save him, save him!

## **GONERIL**

This is practise, Gloucester:

By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer  
An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,  
But cozen'd and beguiled.

**ALBANY**

Shut your mouth, dame,  
Or with this paper shall I stop it: Hold, sir:  
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:  
No tearing, lady: I perceive you know it.

*Gives the letter to EDMUND*

**GONERIL**

Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine:  
Who can arraign me for't.

**ALBANY**

Most monstrous! oh!  
Know'st thou this paper?

**GONERIL**

Ask me not what I know.

*Exit*

**ALBANY**

Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.

**EDMUND**

What you have charged me with, that have I done;  
And more, much more; the time will bring it out:  
'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou  
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,  
I do forgive thee.

## **EDGAR**

Let's exchange charity.  
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;  
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.  
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.  
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to plague us:  
The dark and vicious place where thee he got  
Cost him his eyes.

## **EDMUND**

Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;  
The wheel is come full circle: I am here.

## **ALBANY**

Methought thy very gait did prophesy  
A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee:  
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I  
Did hate thee or thy father!

## **EDGAR**

Worthy prince, I know't.

## **ALBANY**

Where have you hid yourself?  
How have you known the miseries of your father?

## **EDGAR**

By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;  
And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!  
The bloody proclamation to escape,  
That follow'd me so near,--O, our lives' sweetness!  
That we the pain of death would hourly die  
Rather than die at once!--taught me to shift  
Into a madman's rags; to assume a semblance  
That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit

Met I my father with his bleeding rings,  
Their precious stones new lost: became his guide,  
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair;  
Never,--O fault!--reveal'd myself unto him,  
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd:  
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,  
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last  
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,  
Alack, too weak the conflict to support!  
'Twi'xt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,  
Burst smilingly.

## **EDMUND**

This speech of yours hath moved me,  
And shall perchance do good: but speak you on;  
You look as you had something more to say.

## **ALBANY**

If there be more, more woeful, hold it in;  
For I am almost ready to dissolve,  
Hearing of this.

## **EDGAR**

This would have seem'd a period  
To such as love not sorrow; but another,  
To amplify too much, would make much more,  
And top extremity.  
Whilst I was big in clamour came there in a man,  
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,  
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding  
Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms  
He fastened on my neck, and bellow'd out  
As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;  
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him  
That ever ear received: which in recounting  
His grief grew puissant and the strings of life  
Began to crack: twice then the trumpets sounded,  
And there I left him tranced.

**ALBANY**

But who was this?

**EDGAR**

Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise  
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service  
Improper for a slave.

*Enter a Gentleman, with a bloody knife*

**Gentleman**

Help, help, O, help!

**EDGAR**

What kind of help?

**ALBANY**

Speak, man.

**EDGAR**

What means that bloody knife?

**Gentleman**

'Tis hot, it smokes;  
It came even from the heart of--O, she's dead!

**ALBANY**

Who dead? speak, man.

**Gentleman**

Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister  
By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.

**EDMUND**

I was contracted to them both: all three  
Now marry in an instant.

**EDGAR**

Here comes Kent.

**ALBANY**

Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead:  
This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,  
Touches us not with pity.

*Exit Gentleman*

*Enter KENT*

O, is this he?  
The time will not allow the compliment  
Which very manners urges.

**KENT**

I am come  
To bid my king and master aye good night:  
Is he not here?

**ALBANY**

Great thing of us forgot!  
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's Cordelia?  
See'st thou this object, Kent?

*The bodies of GONERIL and REGAN are brought in*

**KENT**

Alack, why thus?

**EDMUND**

Yet Edmund was beloved:  
The one the other poison'd for my sake,  
And after slew herself.

**ALBANY**

Even so. Cover their faces.

**EDMUND**

I pant for life: some good I mean to do,  
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,  
Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ  
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:  
Nay, send in time.

**ALBANY**

Run, run, O, run!

**EDGAR**

To who, my lord? Who hath the office? send  
Thy token of reprieve.

**EDMUND**

Well thought on: take my sword,  
Give it the captain.

**ALBANY**

Haste thee, for thy life.

*Exit EDGAR*

**EDMUND**

He hath commission from thy wife and me  
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and  
To lay the blame upon her own despair,  
That she fordid herself.

**ALBANY**

The gods defend her! Bear him hence awhile.

*EDMUND is borne off*

*Re-enter KING LEAR, with CORDELIA dead in his arms; EDGAR, Captain, and others following*

**KING LEAR**

Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:  
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so  
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!  
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;  
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;  
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,  
Why, then she lives.

**KENT**

Is this the promised end

**EDGAR**

Or image of that horror?

**ALBANY**

Fall, and cease!

**KING LEAR**

This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,  
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows  
That ever I have felt.



**KENT**

[Kneeling] O my good master!

**KING LEAR**

Prithee, away.

**EDGAR**

'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

**KING LEAR**

A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!  
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever!  
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!  
What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,  
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.  
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

**Captain**

'Tis true, my lords, he did.

**KING LEAR**

Did I not, fellow?  
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion  
I would have made them skip: I am old now,  
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?  
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight.

**KENT**

If fortune brag of two she loved and hated,  
One of them we behold.

**KING LEAR**

This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

**KENT**

The same,  
Your servant Kent: Where is your servant Caius?

**KING LEAR**

He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;  
He'll strike, and quickly too: he's dead and rotten.

**KENT**

No, my good lord; I am the very man,--

**KING LEAR**

I'll see that straight.

**KENT**

That, from your first of difference and decay,  
Have follow'd your sad steps.

**KING LEAR**

You are welcome hither.

**KENT**

Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark, and deadly.  
Your eldest daughters have fordone them selves,  
And desperately are dead.

**KING LEAR**

Ay, so I think.

**ALBANY**

He knows not what he says: and vain it is

That we present us to him.

## **EDGAR**

Very bootless.

*Enter a Captain*

## **Captain**

Edmund is dead, my lord.

## **ALBANY**

That's but a trifle here.  
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.  
What comfort to this great decay may come  
Shall be applied: for us we will resign,  
During the life of this old majesty,  
To him our absolute power:

*To EDGAR and KENT*

you, to your rights:  
With boot, and such addition as your honours  
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste  
The wages of their virtue, and all foes  
The cup of their deservings. O, see, see!

## **KING LEAR**

And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!  
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,  
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,  
Never, never, never, never, never!  
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.  
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,  
Look there, look there!

*Dies*

**EDGAR**

He faints! My lord, my lord!

**KENT**

Break, heart; I prithee, break!

**EDGAR**

Look up, my lord.

**KENT**

Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him much  
That would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer.

**EDGAR**

He is gone, indeed.

**KENT**

The wonder is, he hath endured so long:  
He but usurp'd his life.

**ALBANY**

Bear them from hence. Our present business  
Is general woe.

*To KENT and EDGAR*

Friends of my soul, you twain  
Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

**KENT**

I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;  
My master calls me, I must not say no.

## **ALBANY**

The weight of this sad time we must obey;  
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.  
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young  
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

*Exeunt, with a dead march*

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Macbeth

[Entire play](#) in one page

- Act 1, Scene 1: [A desert place.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 2: [A camp near Forres.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 3: [A heath near Forres.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 4: [Forres. The palace.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 5: [Inverness. Macbeth's castle.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 6: [Before Macbeth's castle.](#)
- Act 1, Scene 7: [Macbeth's castle.](#)
- 
- Act 2, Scene 1: [Court of Macbeth's castle.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 2: [The same.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 3: [The same.](#)
- Act 2, Scene 4: [Outside Macbeth's castle.](#)
- 
- Act 3, Scene 1: [Forres. The palace.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 2: [The palace.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 3: [A park near the palace.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 4: [The same. Hall in the palace.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 5: [A Heath.](#)
- Act 3, Scene 6: [Forres. The palace.](#)
- 
- Act 4, Scene 1: [A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 2: [Fife. Macduff's castle.](#)
- Act 4, Scene 3: [England. Before the King's palace.](#)
- 
- Act 5, Scene 1: [Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 2: [The country near Dunsinane.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 3: [Dunsinane. A room in the castle.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 4: [Country near Birnam wood.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 5: [Dunsinane. Within the castle.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 6: [Dunsinane. Before the castle.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 7: [Another part of the field.](#)
- Act 5, Scene 8: [Another part of the field.](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A desert place.

*Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches*

### First Witch

When shall we three meet again  
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

### Second Witch

When the hurlyburly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.

### Third Witch

That will be ere the set of sun.

### First Witch

Where the place?

### Second Witch

Upon the heath.

### Third Witch

There to meet with Macbeth.

### First Witch

I come, Graymalkin!

### Second Witch

Paddock calls.

**Third Witch**

Anon.

**ALL**

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:  
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A camp near Forres.

*Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant*

### DUNCAN

What bloody man is that? He can report,  
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt  
The newest state.

### MALCOLM

This is the sergeant  
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought  
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!  
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil  
As thou didst leave it.

### Sergeant

Doubtful it stood;  
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together  
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald--  
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that  
The multiplying villanies of nature  
Do swarm upon him--from the western isles  
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;  
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,  
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:  
For brave Macbeth--well he deserves that name--  
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,  
Which smoked with bloody execution,  
Like valour's minion carved out his passage  
Till he faced the slave;  
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,

Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,  
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

**DUNCAN**

O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

**Sergeant**

As whence the sun 'gins his reflection  
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,  
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come  
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:  
No sooner justice had with valour arm'd  
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,  
But the Norweyan lord surveying vantage,  
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men  
Began a fresh assault.

**DUNCAN**

Dismay'd not this  
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

**Sergeant**

Yes;  
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.  
If I say sooth, I must report they were  
As cannons overcharged with double cracks, so they  
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:  
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,  
Or memorise another Golgotha,  
I cannot tell.  
But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

**DUNCAN**

So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;  
They smack of honour both. Go get him surgeons.

*Exit Sergeant, attended*

Who comes here?

*Enter ROSS*

**MALCOLM**

The worthy thane of Ross.

**LENNOX**

What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look  
That seems to speak things strange.

**ROSS**

God save the king!

**DUNCAN**

Whence camest thou, worthy thane?

**ROSS**

From Fife, great king;  
Where the Norwegian banners flout the sky  
And fan our people cold. Norway himself,  
With terrible numbers,  
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor  
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;  
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,  
Confronted him with self-comparisons,  
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm.  
Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,  
The victory fell on us.

**DUNCAN**

Great happiness!

**ROSS**

That now  
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition:  
Nor would we deign him burial of his men  
Till he disbursed at Saint Colme's inch  
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

**DUNCAN**

No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive  
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,  
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

**ROSS**

I'll see it done.

**DUNCAN**

What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A heath near Forres.

*Thunder. Enter the three Witches*

### First Witch

Where hast thou been, sister?

### Second Witch

Killing swine.

### Third Witch

Sister, where thou?

### First Witch

A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,  
And munch'd, and munch'd, and munch'd:--  
'Give me,' quoth I:  
'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries.  
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:  
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,  
And, like a rat without a tail,  
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

### Second Witch

I'll give thee a wind.

### First Witch

Thou'rt kind.

### Third Witch

And I another.

### **First Witch**

I myself have all the other,  
And the very ports they blow,  
All the quarters that they know  
I' the shipman's card.  
I will drain him dry as hay:  
Sleep shall neither night nor day  
Hang upon his pent-house lid;  
He shall live a man forbid:  
Weary se'nnights nine times nine  
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine:  
Though his bark cannot be lost,  
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.  
Look what I have.

### **Second Witch**

Show me, show me.

### **First Witch**

Here I have a pilot's thumb,  
Wreck'd as homeward he did come.

*Drum within*

### **Third Witch**

A drum, a drum!  
Macbeth doth come.

### **ALL**

The weird sisters, hand in hand,  
Posters of the sea and land,  
Thus do go about, about:  
Thrice to thine and thrice to mine

And thrice again, to make up nine.  
Peace! the charm's wound up.

*Enter MACBETH and BANQUO*

**MACBETH**

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

**BANQUO**

How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these  
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,  
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,  
And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught  
That man may question? You seem to understand me,  
By each at once her chappy finger laying  
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,  
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret  
That you are so.

**MACBETH**

Speak, if you can: what are you?

**First Witch**

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

**Second Witch**

All hail, Macbeth, hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

**Third Witch**

All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!

**BANQUO**

Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear  
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,

Are ye fantastical, or that indeed  
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner  
You greet with present grace and great prediction  
Of noble having and of royal hope,  
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not.  
If you can look into the seeds of time,  
And say which grain will grow and which will not,  
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear  
Your favours nor your hate.

**First Witch**

Hail!

**Second Witch**

Hail!

**Third Witch**

Hail!

**First Witch**

Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

**Second Witch**

Not so happy, yet much happier.

**Third Witch**

Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:  
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

**First Witch**

Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

**MACBETH**



Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:  
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis;  
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,  
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king  
Stands not within the prospect of belief,  
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence  
You owe this strange intelligence? or why  
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way  
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.

*Witches vanish*

**BANQUO**

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,  
And these are of them. Whither are they vanish'd?

**MACBETH**

Into the air; and what seem'd corporal melted  
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

**BANQUO**

Were such things here as we do speak about?  
Or have we eaten on the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner?

**MACBETH**

Your children shall be kings.

**BANQUO**

You shall be king.

**MACBETH**

And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

**BANQUO**

To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

*Enter ROSS and ANGUS*

## **ROSS**

The king hath happily received, Macbeth,  
The news of thy success; and when he reads  
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,  
His wonders and his praises do contend  
Which should be thine or his: silenced with that,  
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,  
He finds thee in the stout Norwegian ranks,  
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,  
Strange images of death. As thick as hail  
Came post with post; and every one did bear  
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,  
And pour'd them down before him.

## **ANGUS**

We are sent  
To give thee from our royal master thanks;  
Only to herald thee into his sight,  
Not pay thee.

## **ROSS**

And, for an earnest of a greater honour,  
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:  
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!  
For it is thine.

## **BANQUO**

What, can the devil speak true?

## **MACBETH**

The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me  
In borrow'd robes?

## ANGUS

Who was the thane lives yet;  
But under heavy judgment bears that life  
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined  
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel  
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both  
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;  
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,  
Have overthrown him.

## MACBETH

[Aside] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!  
The greatest is behind.

*To ROSS and ANGUS*

Thanks for your pains.

*To BANQUO*

Do you not hope your children shall be kings,  
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me  
Promised no less to them?

## BANQUO

That trusted home  
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,  
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:  
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,  
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,  
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's  
In deepest consequence.  
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

## MACBETH

[Aside] Two truths are told,  
As happy prologues to the swelling act

Of the imperial theme.--I thank you, gentlemen.

*Aside*

Cannot be ill, cannot be good: if ill,  
Why hath it given me earnest of success,  
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:  
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion  
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair  
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,  
Against the use of nature? Present fears  
Are less than horrible imaginings:  
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,  
Shakes so my single state of man that function  
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is  
But what is not.

**BANQUO**

Look, how our partner's rapt.

**MACBETH**

[Aside] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,  
Without my stir.

**BANQUO**

New horrors come upon him,  
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould  
But with the aid of use.

**MACBETH**

[Aside] Come what come may,  
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

**BANQUO**

Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

## MACBETH

Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought  
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains  
Are register'd where every day I turn  
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.  
Think upon what hath chanced, and, at more time,  
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak  
Our free hearts each to other.

## BANQUO

Very gladly.

## MACBETH

Till then, enough. Come, friends.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Forres. The palace.

*Flourish. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, and Attendants*

**DUNCAN**

Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not  
Those in commission yet return'd?

**MALCOLM**

My liege,  
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke  
With one that saw him die: who did report  
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,  
Implored your highness' pardon and set forth  
A deep repentance: nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it; he died  
As one that had been studied in his death  
To throw away the dearest thing he owed,  
As 'twere a careless trifle.

**DUNCAN**

There's no art  
To find the mind's construction in the face:  
He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust.

*Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, and ANGUS*

O worthiest cousin!  
The sin of my ingratitude even now  
Was heavy on me: thou art so far before  
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow  
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,

That the proportion both of thanks and payment  
Might have been mine! only I have left to say,  
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

## **MACBETH**

The service and the loyalty I owe,  
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part  
Is to receive our duties; and our duties  
Are to your throne and state children and servants,  
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing  
Safe toward your love and honour.

## **DUNCAN**

Welcome hither:  
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour  
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,  
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known  
No less to have done so, let me enfold thee  
And hold thee to my heart.

## **BANQUO**

There if I grow,  
The harvest is your own.

## **DUNCAN**

My plenteous joys,  
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves  
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,  
And you whose places are the nearest, know  
We will establish our estate upon  
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter  
The Prince of Cumberland; which honour must  
Not unaccompanied invest him only,  
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine  
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,  
And bind us further to you.

## **MACBETH**

The rest is labour, which is not used for you:  
I'll be myself the harbinger and make joyful  
The hearing of my wife with your approach;  
So humbly take my leave.

**DUNCAN**

My worthy Cawdor!

**MACBETH**

[Aside] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step  
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,  
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;  
Let not light see my black and deep desires:  
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,  
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

*Exit*

**DUNCAN**

True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,  
And in his commendations I am fed;  
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,  
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:  
It is a peerless kinsman.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Inverness. Macbeth's castle.

*Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a letter*

### LADY MACBETH

'They met me in the day of success: and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.'

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be  
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;  
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;  
Art not without ambition, but without  
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,  
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,  
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,  
That which cries 'Thus thou must do, if thou have it;  
And that which rather thou dost fear to do  
Than wishest should be undone.' Hie thee hither,  
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear;  
And chastise with the valour of my tongue  
All that impedes thee from the golden round,  
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem  
To have thee crown'd withal.

*Enter a Messenger*

What is your tidings?

**Messenger**

The king comes here to-night.

**LADY MACBETH**

Thou'rt mad to say it:  
Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,  
Would have inform'd for preparation.

**Messenger**

So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:  
One of my fellows had the speed of him,  
Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more  
Than would make up his message.

**LADY MACBETH**

Give him tending;  
He brings great news.

*Exit Messenger*

The raven himself is hoarse  
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan  
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,  
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full  
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood;  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,

That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,  
To cry 'Hold, hold!'

*Enter MACBETH*

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!  
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!  
Thy letters have transported me beyond  
This ignorant present, and I feel now  
The future in the instant.

**MACBETH**

My dearest love,  
Duncan comes here to-night.

**LADY MACBETH**

And when goes hence?

**MACBETH**

To-morrow, as he purposes.

**LADY MACBETH**

O, never  
Shall sun that morrow see!  
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men  
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,  
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,  
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,  
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming  
Must be provided for: and you shall put  
This night's great business into my dispatch;  
Which shall to all our nights and days to come  
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

**MACBETH**

We will speak further.

## LADY MACBETH

Only look up clear;  
To alter favour ever is to fear:  
Leave all the rest to me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Before Macbeth's castle.

*Hautboys and torches. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, and Attendants*

### DUNCAN

This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air  
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself  
Unto our gentle senses.

### BANQUO

This guest of summer,  
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,  
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath  
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,  
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird  
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:  
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed,  
The air is delicate.

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

### DUNCAN

See, see, our honour'd hostess!  
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,  
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you  
How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,  
And thank us for your trouble.

### LADY MACBETH

All our service  
In every point twice done and then done double

Were poor and single business to contend  
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith  
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,  
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,  
We rest your hermits.

## **DUNCAN**

Where's the thane of Cawdor?  
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose  
To be his purveyor: but he rides well;  
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him  
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,  
We are your guest to-night.

## **LADY MACBETH**

Your servants ever  
Have theirs, themselves and what is theirs, in compt,  
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,  
Still to return your own.

## **DUNCAN**

Give me your hand;  
Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,  
And shall continue our graces towards him.  
By your leave, hostess.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Macbeth's castle.

*Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter MACBETH*

### MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly: if the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch  
With his surcease success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,  
We'd jump the life to come. But in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return  
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice  
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;  
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan  
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking-off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself  
And falls on the other.

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

How now! what news?

**LADY MACBETH**

He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

**MACBETH**

Hath he ask'd for me?

**LADY MACBETH**

Know you not he has?

**MACBETH**

We will proceed no further in this business:  
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought  
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,  
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,  
Not cast aside so soon.

**LADY MACBETH**

Was the hope drunk  
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?  
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale  
At what it did so freely? From this time  
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid  
To be the same in thine own act and valour  
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that  
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,  
And live a coward in thine own esteem,  
Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'  
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

**MACBETH**

Prithee, peace:  
I dare do all that may become a man;  
Who dares do more is none.



## LADY MACBETH

What beast was't, then,  
That made you break this enterprise to me?  
When you durst do it, then you were a man;  
And, to be more than what you were, you would  
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place  
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:  
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now  
Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know  
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,  
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you  
Have done to this.

## MACBETH

If we should fail?

## LADY MACBETH

We fail!  
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,  
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep--  
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey  
Soundly invite him--his two chamberlains  
Will I with wine and wassail so convince  
That memory, the warder of the brain,  
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason  
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep  
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,  
What cannot you and I perform upon  
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon  
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt  
Of our great quell?

## MACBETH

Bring forth men-children only;  
For thy undaunted mettle should compose

Nothing but males. Will it not be received,  
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two  
Of his own chamber and used their very daggers,  
That they have done't?

## **LADY MACBETH**

Who dares receive it other,  
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar  
Upon his death?

## **MACBETH**

I am settled, and bend up  
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.  
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:  
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 1, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Court of Macbeth's castle.

*Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE bearing a torch before him*

**BANQUO**

How goes the night, boy?

**FLEANCE**

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

**BANQUO**

And she goes down at twelve.

**FLEANCE**

I take't, 'tis later, sir.

**BANQUO**

Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven;  
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.  
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,  
And yet I would not sleep: merciful powers,  
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature  
Gives way to in repose!

*Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a torch*

Give me my sword.  
Who's there?

**MACBETH**

A friend.

**BANQUO**

What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:  
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and  
Sent forth great largess to your offices.  
This diamond he greets your wife withal,  
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up  
In measureless content.

**MACBETH**

Being unprepared,  
Our will became the servant to defect;  
Which else should free have wrought.

**BANQUO**

All's well.  
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:  
To you they have show'd some truth.

**MACBETH**

I think not of them:  
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,  
We would spend it in some words upon that business,  
If you would grant the time.

**BANQUO**

At your kind'st leisure.

**MACBETH**

If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,  
It shall make honour for you.

**BANQUO**

So I lose none  
In seeking to augment it, but still keep  
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,  
I shall be counsell'd.

## **MACBETH**

Good repose the while!

## **BANQUO**

Thanks, sir: the like to you!

*Exeunt BANQUO and FLEANCE*

## **MACBETH**

Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,  
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

*Exit Servant*

Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat-oppresed brain?  
I see thee yet, in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,  
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,  
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:  
It is the bloody business which informs  
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one halfworld  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates  
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,

Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace.  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

*A bell rings*

I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.  
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell  
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same.

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

### LADY MACBETH

That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;  
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire.  
Hark! Peace!  
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,  
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:  
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms  
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd  
their possets,  
That death and nature do contend about them,  
Whether they live or die.

### MACBETH

[Within] Who's there? what, ho!

### LADY MACBETH

Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,  
And 'tis not done. The attempt and not the deed  
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;  
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't.

*Enter MACBETH*

My husband!

### MACBETH

I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

**LADY MACBETH**

I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.  
Did not you speak?

**MACBETH**

When?

**LADY MACBETH**

Now.

**MACBETH**

As I descended?

**LADY MACBETH**

Ay.

**MACBETH**

Hark!  
Who lies i' the second chamber?

**LADY MACBETH**

Donalbain.

**MACBETH**

This is a sorry sight.

*Looking on his hands*

**LADY MACBETH**

A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.



## **MACBETH**

There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried  
'Murder!'  
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:  
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them  
Again to sleep.

## **LADY MACBETH**

There are two lodged together.

## **MACBETH**

One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other;  
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.  
Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'  
When they did say 'God bless us!'

## **LADY MACBETH**

Consider it not so deeply.

## **MACBETH**

But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?  
I had most need of blessing, and 'Amen'  
Stuck in my throat.

## **LADY MACBETH**

These deeds must not be thought  
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

## **MACBETH**

Methought I heard a voice cry 'Sleep no more!  
Macbeth does murder sleep', the innocent sleep,  
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,  
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,

Chief nourisher in life's feast,--

**LADY MACBETH**

What do you mean?

**MACBETH**

Still it cried 'Sleep no more!' to all the house:  
'Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor  
Shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

**LADY MACBETH**

Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,  
You do unbend your noble strength, to think  
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,  
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.  
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?  
They must lie there: go carry them; and smear  
The sleepy grooms with blood.

**MACBETH**

I'll go no more:  
I am afraid to think what I have done;  
Look on't again I dare not.

**LADY MACBETH**

Infirm of purpose!  
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead  
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood  
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,  
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal;  
For it must seem their guilt.

*Exit. Knocking within*

**MACBETH**

Whence is that knocking?  
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?  
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes.  
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood  
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather  
The multitudinous seas in incarnadine,  
Making the green one red.

*Re-enter LADY MACBETH*

## **LADY MACBETH**

My hands are of your colour; but I shame  
To wear a heart so white.

*Knocking within*

I hear a knocking  
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber;  
A little water clears us of this deed:  
How easy is it, then! Your constancy  
Hath left you unattended.

*Knocking within*

Hark! more knocking.  
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,  
And show us to be watchers. Be not lost  
So poorly in your thoughts.

## **MACBETH**

To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

*Knocking within*

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same.

*Knocking within. Enter a Porter*

### Porter

Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key.

*Knocking within*

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for't.

*Knocking within*

Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator.

*Knocking within*

Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose.

*Knocking within*

Knock,  
knock; never at quiet! What are you? But  
this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter  
it no further: I had thought to have let in  
some of all professions that go the primrose  
way to the everlasting bonfire.

*Knocking within*

Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

*Opens the gate*

*Enter MACDUFF and LENNOX*

**MACDUFF**

Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,  
That you do lie so late?

**Porter**

'Faith sir, we were carousing till the  
second cock: and drink, sir, is a great  
provoker of three things.

**MACDUFF**

What three things does drink especially provoke?

**Porter**

Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and  
urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes;  
it provokes the desire, but it takes  
away the performance: therefore, much drink  
may be said to be an equivocator with lechery:  
it makes him, and it mars him; it sets  
him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him,

and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

**MACDUFF**

I believe drink gave thee the lie last night.

**Porter**

That it did, sir, i' the very throat on me: but I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

**MACDUFF**

Is thy master stirring?

*Enter MACBETH*

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

**LENNOX**

Good morrow, noble sir.

**MACBETH**

Good morrow, both.

**MACDUFF**

Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

**MACBETH**

Not yet.

**MACDUFF**

He did command me to call timely on him:  
I have almost slipp'd the hour.

**MACBETH**

I'll bring you to him.

**MACDUFF**

I know this is a joyful trouble to you;  
But yet 'tis one.

**MACBETH**

The labour we delight in physics pain.  
This is the door.

**MACDUFF**

I'll make so bold to call,  
For 'tis my limited service.

*Exit*

**LENNOX**

Goes the king hence to-day?

**MACBETH**

He does: he did appoint so.

**LENNOX**

The night has been unruly: where we lay,  
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,  
Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death,  
And prophesying with accents terrible  
Of dire combustion and confused events  
New hatch'd to the woeful time: the obscure bird



Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth  
Was feverous and did shake.

**MACBETH**

'Twas a rough night.

**LENNOX**

My young remembrance cannot parallel  
A fellow to it.

*Re-enter MACDUFF*

**MACDUFF**

O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart  
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

**MACBETH LENNOX**

What's the matter.

**MACDUFF**

Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!  
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope  
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence  
The life o' the building!

**MACBETH**

What is 't you say? the life?

**LENNOX**

Mean you his majesty?

**MACDUFF**

Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight

With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;  
See, and then speak yourselves.

*Exeunt MACBETH and LENNOX*

Awake, awake!  
Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!  
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!  
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,  
And look on death itself! up, up, and see  
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!  
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,  
To countenance this horror! Ring the bell.

*Bell rings*

*Enter LADY MACBETH*

## **LADY MACBETH**

What's the business,  
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley  
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

## **MACDUFF**

O gentle lady,  
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:  
The repetition, in a woman's ear,  
Would murder as it fell.

*Enter BANQUO*

O Banquo, Banquo,  
Our royal master 's murder'd!

## **LADY MACBETH**

Woe, alas!  
What, in our house?

## **BANQUO**

Too cruel any where.  
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,  
And say it is not so.

*Re-enter MACBETH and LENNOX, with ROSS*

## **MACBETH**

Had I but died an hour before this chance,  
I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,  
There 's nothing serious in mortality:  
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;  
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees  
Is left this vault to brag of.

*Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN*

## **DONALBAIN**

What is amiss?

## **MACBETH**

You are, and do not know't:  
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood  
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.

## **MACDUFF**

Your royal father 's murder'd.

## **MALCOLM**

O, by whom?

## **LENNOX**

Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:  
Their hands and faces were an badged with blood;

So were their daggers, which unwiped we found  
Upon their pillows:  
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life  
Was to be trusted with them.

## **MACBETH**

O, yet I do repent me of my fury,  
That I did kill them.

## **MACDUFF**

Wherefore did you so?

## **MACBETH**

Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,  
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:  
The expedition my violent love  
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,  
His silver skin laced with his golden blood;  
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature  
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,  
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers  
Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,  
That had a heart to love, and in that heart  
Courage to make 's love known?

## **LADY MACBETH**

Help me hence, ho!

## **MACDUFF**

Look to the lady.

## **MALCOLM**

[Aside to DONALBAIN] Why do we hold our tongues,  
That most may claim this argument for ours?

## **DONALBAIN**

[Aside to MALCOLM] What should be spoken here,  
where our fate,  
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?  
Let 's away;  
Our tears are not yet brew'd.

## **MALCOLM**

[Aside to DONALBAIN] Nor our strong sorrow  
Upon the foot of motion.

## **BANQUO**

Look to the lady:

*LADY MACBETH is carried out*

And when we have our naked frailties hid,  
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,  
And question this most bloody piece of work,  
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:  
In the great hand of God I stand; and thence  
Against the undivulged pretence I fight  
Of treasonous malice.

## **MACDUFF**

And so do I.

## **ALL**

So all.

## **MACBETH**

Let's briefly put on manly readiness,  
And meet i' the hall together.

## **ALL**

Well contented.

*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.*

## **MALCOLM**

What will you do? Let's not consort with them:  
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office  
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.

## **DONALBAIN**

To Ireland, I; our separated fortune  
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,  
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,  
The nearer bloody.

## **MALCOLM**

This murderous shaft that's shot  
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way  
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;  
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,  
But shift away: there's warrant in that theft  
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Outside Macbeth's castle.

*Enter ROSS and an old Man*

### Old Man

Threescore and ten I can remember well:  
Within the volume of which time I have seen  
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this sore night  
Hath trifled former knowings.

### ROSS

Ah, good father,  
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,  
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock, 'tis day,  
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:  
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,  
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,  
When living light should kiss it?

### Old Man

'Tis unnatural,  
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,  
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,  
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

### ROSS

And Duncan's horses--a thing most strange and certain--  
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,  
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,  
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make  
War with mankind.

**Old Man**

'Tis said they eat each other.

**ROSS**

They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes  
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Macduff.

*Enter MACDUFF*

How goes the world, sir, now?

**MACDUFF**

Why, see you not?

**ROSS**

Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

**MACDUFF**

Those that Macbeth hath slain.

**ROSS**

Alas, the day!  
What good could they pretend?

**MACDUFF**

They were suborn'd:  
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,  
Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them  
Suspicion of the deed.

**ROSS**

'Gainst nature still!  
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up



Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like  
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

**MACDUFF**

He is already named, and gone to Scone  
To be invested.

**ROSS**

Where is Duncan's body?

**MACDUFF**

Carried to Colmekill,  
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,  
And guardian of their bones.

**ROSS**

Will you to Scone?

**MACDUFF**

No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

**ROSS**

Well, I will thither.

**MACDUFF**

Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!  
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

**ROSS**

Farewell, father.

**Old Man**

God's benison go with you; and with those  
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Forres. The palace.

*Enter BANQUO*

### BANQUO

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,  
As the weird women promised, and, I fear,  
Thou play'dst most foully for't: yet it was said  
It should not stand in thy posterity,  
But that myself should be the root and father  
Of many kings. If there come truth from them--  
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine--  
Why, by the verities on thee made good,  
May they not be my oracles as well,  
And set me up in hope? But hush! no more.

*Sennet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as king, LADY MACBETH, as queen, LENNOX, ROSS,  
Lords, Ladies, and Attendants*

### MACBETH

Here's our chief guest.

### LADY MACBETH

If he had been forgotten,  
It had been as a gap in our great feast,  
And all-thing unbecoming.

### MACBETH

To-night we hold a solemn supper sir,  
And I'll request your presence.

### BANQUO

Let your highness  
Command upon me; to the which my duties  
Are with a most indissoluble tie  
For ever knit.

**MACBETH**

Ride you this afternoon?

**BANQUO**

Ay, my good lord.

**MACBETH**

We should have else desired your good advice,  
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous,  
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.  
Is't far you ride?

**BANQUO**

As far, my lord, as will fill up the time  
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,  
I must become a borrower of the night  
For a dark hour or twain.

**MACBETH**

Fail not our feast.

**BANQUO**

My lord, I will not.

**MACBETH**

We hear, our bloody cousins are bestow'd  
In England and in Ireland, not confessing  
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers

With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,  
When therewithal we shall have cause of state  
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,  
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

## **BANQUO**

Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's.

## **MACBETH**

I wish your horses swift and sure of foot;  
And so I do commend you to their backs. Farewell.

*Exit BANQUO*

Let every man be master of his time  
Till seven at night: to make society  
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself  
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!

*Exeunt all but MACBETH, and an attendant*

Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men  
Our pleasure?

## **ATTENDANT**

They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

## **MACBETH**

Bring them before us.

*Exit Attendant*

To be thus is nothing;  
But to be safely thus.--Our fears in Banquo  
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature  
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares;  
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour  
To act in safety. There is none but he  
Whose being I do fear: and, under him,  
My Genius is rebuked; as, it is said,  
Mark Antony's was by Caesar. He chid the sisters  
When first they put the name of king upon me,  
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like  
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:  
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,  
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,  
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,  
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,  
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;  
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;  
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace  
Only for them; and mine eternal jewel  
Given to the common enemy of man,  
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!  
Rather than so, come fate into the list.  
And champion me to the utterance! Who's there!

*Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers*

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

*Exit Attendant*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

## **First Murderer**

It was, so please your highness.

## **MACBETH**

Well then, now  
Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know  
That it was he in the times past which held you  
So under fortune, which you thought had been  
Our innocent self: this I made good to you  
In our last conference, pass'd in probation with you,  
How you were borne in hand, how cross'd,

the instruments,  
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might  
To half a soul and to a notion crazed  
Say 'Thus did Banquo.'

### **First Murderer**

You made it known to us.

### **MACBETH**

I did so, and went further, which is now  
Our point of second meeting. Do you find  
Your patience so predominant in your nature  
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd  
To pray for this good man and for his issue,  
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave  
And beggar'd yours for ever?

### **First Murderer**

We are men, my liege.

### **MACBETH**

Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;  
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,  
Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept  
All by the name of dogs: the valued file  
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,  
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one  
According to the gift which bounteous nature  
Hath in him closed; whereby he does receive  
Particular addition. from the bill  
That writes them all alike: and so of men.  
Now, if you have a station in the file,  
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say 't;  
And I will put that business in your bosoms,  
Whose execution takes your enemy off,  
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,  
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,  
Which in his death were perfect.

## **Second Murderer**

I am one, my liege,  
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world  
Have so incensed that I am reckless what  
I do to spite the world.

## **First Murderer**

And I another  
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,  
That I would set my lie on any chance,  
To mend it, or be rid on't.

## **MACBETH**

Both of you  
Know Banquo was your enemy.

## **Both Murderers**

True, my lord.

## **MACBETH**

So is he mine; and in such bloody distance,  
That every minute of his being thrusts  
Against my near'st of life: and though I could  
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight  
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,  
For certain friends that are both his and mine,  
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall  
Who I myself struck down; and thence it is,  
That I to your assistance do make love,  
Masking the business from the common eye  
For sundry weighty reasons.

## **Second Murderer**

We shall, my lord,  
Perform what you command us.



## **First Murderer**

Though our lives--

## **MACBETH**

Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most  
I will advise you where to plant yourselves;  
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,  
The moment on't; for't must be done to-night,  
And something from the palace; always thought  
That I require a clearness: and with him--  
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work--  
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,  
Whose absence is no less material to me  
Than is his father's, must embrace the fate  
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:  
I'll come to you anon.

## **Both Murderers**

We are resolved, my lord.

## **MACBETH**

I'll call upon you straight: abide within.

*Exeunt Murderers*

It is concluded. Banquo, thy soul's flight,  
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The palace.

*Enter LADY MACBETH and a Servant*

**LADY MACBETH**

Is Banquo gone from court?

**Servant**

Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

**LADY MACBETH**

Say to the king, I would attend his leisure  
For a few words.

**Servant**

Madam, I will.

*Exit*

**LADY MACBETH**

Nought's had, all's spent,  
Where our desire is got without content:  
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy  
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

*Enter MACBETH*

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,  
Of sorriest fancies your companions making,  
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died  
With them they think on? Things without all remedy

Should be without regard: what's done is done.

## **MACBETH**

We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:  
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice  
Remains in danger of her former tooth.  
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the  
worlds suffer,  
Ere we will eat our meal in fear and sleep  
In the affliction of these terrible dreams  
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,  
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,  
Than on the torture of the mind to lie  
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;  
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;  
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,  
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,  
Can touch him further.

## **LADY MACBETH**

Come on;  
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;  
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

## **MACBETH**

So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:  
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;  
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:  
Unsafe the while, that we  
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,  
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,  
Disguising what they are.

## **LADY MACBETH**

You must leave this.

## **MACBETH**

O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!  
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

## LADY MACBETH

But in them nature's copy's not eterne.

## MACBETH

There's comfort yet; they are assailable;  
Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown  
His cloister'd flight, ere to black Hecate's summons  
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums  
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done  
A deed of dreadful note.

## LADY MACBETH

What's to be done?

## MACBETH

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,  
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,  
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;  
And with thy bloody and invisible hand  
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond  
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens; and the crow  
Makes wing to the rooky wood:  
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;  
While night's black agents to their preys do rouse.  
Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;  
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.  
So, prithee, go with me.

*Exeunt*

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A park near the palace.

*Enter three Murderers*

### First Murderer

But who did bid thee join with us?

### Third Murderer

Macbeth.

### Second Murderer

He needs not our mistrust, since he delivers  
Our offices and what we have to do  
To the direction just.

### First Murderer

Then stand with us.  
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:  
Now spurs the lated traveller apace  
To gain the timely inn; and near approaches  
The subject of our watch.

### Third Murderer

Hark! I hear horses.

### BANQUO

[Within] Give us a light there, ho!

### Second Murderer

Then 'tis he: the rest  
That are within the note of expectation  
Already are i' the court.

**First Murderer**

His horses go about.

**Third Murderer**

Almost a mile: but he does usually,  
So all men do, from hence to the palace gate  
Make it their walk.

**Second Murderer**

A light, a light!

*Enter BANQUO, and FLEANCE with a torch*

**Third Murderer**

'Tis he.

**First Murderer**

Stand to't.

**BANQUO**

It will be rain to-night.

**First Murderer**

Let it come down.

*They set upon BANQUO*

**BANQUO**

O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

Thou mayst revenge. O slave!

*Dies. FLEANCE escapes*

**Third Murderer**

Who did strike out the light?

**First Murderer**

Wast not the way?

**Third Murderer**

There's but one down; the son is fled.

**Second Murderer**

We have lost  
Best half of our affair.

**First Murderer**

Well, let's away, and say how much is done.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. Hall in the palace.

*A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, Lords, and Attendants*

### MACBETH

You know your own degrees; sit down: at first  
And last the hearty welcome.

### Lords

Thanks to your majesty.

### MACBETH

Ourself will mingle with society,  
And play the humble host.  
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time  
We will require her welcome.

### LADY MACBETH

Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends;  
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

*First Murderer appears at the door*

### MACBETH

See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.  
Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' the midst:  
Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure  
The table round.

*Approaching the door*



There's blood on thy face.

**First Murderer**

'Tis Banquo's then.

**MACBETH**

'Tis better thee without than he within.  
Is he dispatch'd?

**First Murderer**

My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

**MACBETH**

Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he's good  
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,  
Thou art the nonpareil.

**First Murderer**

Most royal sir,  
Fleance is 'scaped.

**MACBETH**

Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,  
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,  
As broad and general as the casing air:  
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in  
To saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?

**First Murderer**

Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,  
With twenty trenched gashes on his head;  
The least a death to nature.

**MACBETH**

Thanks for that:

There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled  
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,  
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow  
We'll hear, ourselves, again.

*Exit Murderer*

## **LADY MACBETH**

My royal lord,  
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold  
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,  
'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home;  
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;  
Meeting were bare without it.

## **MACBETH**

Sweet remembrancer!  
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,  
And health on both!

## **LENNOX**

May't please your highness sit.

*The GHOST OF BANQUO enters, and sits in MACBETH's place*

## **MACBETH**

Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,  
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;  
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness  
Than pity for mischance!

## **ROSS**

His absence, sir,  
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your highness  
To grace us with your royal company.

**MACBETH**

The table's full.

**LENNOX**

Here is a place reserved, sir.

**MACBETH**

Where?

**LENNOX**

Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your highness?

**MACBETH**

Which of you have done this?

**Lords**

What, my good lord?

**MACBETH**

Thou canst not say I did it: never shake  
Thy gory locks at me.

**ROSS**

Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well.

**LADY MACBETH**

Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,  
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;  
The fit is momentary; upon a thought  
He will again be well: if much you note him,  
You shall offend him and extend his passion:

Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man?

**MACBETH**

Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that  
Which might appal the devil.

**LADY MACBETH**

O proper stuff!  
This is the very painting of your fear:  
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,  
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,  
Impostors to true fear, would well become  
A woman's story at a winter's fire,  
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!  
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,  
You look but on a stool.

**MACBETH**

Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo!  
how say you?  
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.  
If charnel-houses and our graves must send  
Those that we bury back, our monuments  
Shall be the maws of kites.

*GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes*

**LADY MACBETH**

What, quite unmann'd in folly?

**MACBETH**

If I stand here, I saw him.

**LADY MACBETH**

Fie, for shame!

## MACBETH

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,  
Ere human statute purged the gentle weal;  
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd  
Too terrible for the ear: the times have been,  
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,  
And there an end; but now they rise again,  
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,  
And push us from our stools: this is more strange  
Than such a murder is.

## LADY MACBETH

My worthy lord,  
Your noble friends do lack you.

## MACBETH

I do forget.  
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends,  
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing  
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;  
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine; fill full.  
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,  
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;  
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,  
And all to all.

## Lords

Our duties, and the pledge.

*Re-enter GHOST OF BANQUO*

## MACBETH

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!  
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;  
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes  
Which thou dost glare with!

## LADY MACBETH

Think of this, good peers,  
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;  
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

## MACBETH

What man dare, I dare:  
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,  
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;  
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves  
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,  
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;  
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me  
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!  
Unreal mockery, hence!

*GHOST OF BANQUO vanishes*

Why, so: being gone,  
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

## LADY MACBETH

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,  
With most admired disorder.

## MACBETH

Can such things be,  
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,  
Without our special wonder? You make me strange  
Even to the disposition that I owe,  
When now I think you can behold such sights,  
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,  
When mine is blanched with fear.

## ROSS

What sights, my lord?

## **LADY MACBETH**

I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;  
Question enrages him. At once, good night:  
Stand not upon the order of your going,  
But go at once.

## **LENNOX**

Good night; and better health  
Attend his majesty!

## **LADY MACBETH**

A kind good night to all!

*Exeunt all but MACBETH and LADY MACBETH*

## **MACBETH**

It will have blood; they say, blood will have blood:  
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;  
Augurs and understood relations have  
By magot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth  
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?

## **LADY MACBETH**

Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

## **MACBETH**

How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person  
At our great bidding?

## **LADY MACBETH**

Did you send to him, sir?

## **MACBETH**

I hear it by the way; but I will send:  
There's not a one of them but in his house  
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,  
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:  
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,  
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good,  
All causes shall give way: I am in blood  
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,  
Returning were as tedious as go o'er:  
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand;  
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.

## **LADY MACBETH**

You lack the season of all natures, sleep.

## **MACBETH**

Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse  
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:  
We are yet but young in deed.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. A Heath.

*Thunder. Enter the three Witches meeting HECATE*

### First Witch

Why, how now, Hecate! you look angrily.

### HECATE

Have I not reason, beldams as you are,  
Saucy and overbold? How did you dare  
To trade and traffic with Macbeth  
In riddles and affairs of death;  
And I, the mistress of your charms,  
The close contriver of all harms,  
Was never call'd to bear my part,  
Or show the glory of our art?  
And, which is worse, all you have done  
Hath been but for a wayward son,  
Spiteful and wrathful, who, as others do,  
Loves for his own ends, not for you.  
But make amends now: get you gone,  
And at the pit of Acheron  
Meet me i' the morning: thither he  
Will come to know his destiny:  
Your vessels and your spells provide,  
Your charms and every thing beside.  
I am for the air; this night I'll spend  
Unto a dismal and a fatal end:  
Great business must be wrought ere noon:  
Upon the corner of the moon  
There hangs a vaporous drop profound;  
I'll catch it ere it come to ground:  
And that distill'd by magic sleights  
Shall raise such artificial sprites  
As by the strength of their illusion

Shall draw him on to his confusion:  
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear  
He hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:  
And you all know, security  
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

*Music and a song within: 'Come away, come away,' & c*

Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,  
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me.

*Exit*

### **First Witch**

Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Forres. The palace.

*Enter LENNOX and another Lord*

### LENNOX

My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,  
Which can interpret further: only, I say,  
Things have been strangely borne. The  
gracious Duncan  
Was pitied of Macbeth: marry, he was dead:  
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;  
Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance kill'd,  
For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.  
Who cannot want the thought how monstrous  
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain  
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!  
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight  
In pious rage the two delinquents tear,  
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?  
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;  
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive  
To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,  
He has borne all things well: and I do think  
That had he Duncan's sons under his key--  
As, an't please heaven, he shall not--they  
should find  
What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.  
But, peace! for from broad words and 'cause he fail'd  
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear  
Macduff lives in disgrace: sir, can you tell  
Where he bestows himself?

### Lord

The son of Duncan,  
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth

Lives in the English court, and is received  
Of the most pious Edward with such grace  
That the malevolence of fortune nothing  
Takes from his high respect: thither Macduff  
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid  
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward:  
That, by the help of these--with Him above  
To ratify the work--we may again  
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,  
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,  
Do faithful homage and receive free honours:  
All which we pine for now: and this report  
Hath so exasperate the king that he  
Prepares for some attempt of war.

## **LENNOX**

Sent he to Macduff?

## **Lord**

He did: and with an absolute 'Sir, not I,'  
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,  
And hums, as who should say 'You'll rue the time  
That clogs me with this answer.'

## **LENNOX**

And that well might  
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance  
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel  
Fly to the court of England and unfold  
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing  
May soon return to this our suffering country  
Under a hand accursed!

## **Lord**

I'll send my prayers with him.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 3, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron.

*Thunder. Enter the three Witches*

### First Witch

Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

### Second Witch

Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.

### Third Witch

Harpier cries 'Tis time, 'tis time.

### First Witch

Round about the cauldron go;  
In the poison'd entrails throw.  
Toad, that under cold stone  
Days and nights has thirty-one  
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,  
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

### ALL

Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

### Second Witch

Fillet of a fenny snake,  
In the cauldron boil and bake;  
Eye of newt and toe of frog,  
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,

Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,  
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,  
For a charm of powerful trouble,  
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

## **ALL**

Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

## **Third Witch**

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,  
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf  
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,  
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,  
Liver of blaspheming Jew,  
Gall of goat, and slips of yew  
Silver'd in the moon's eclipse,  
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,  
Finger of birth-strangled babe  
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,  
Make the gruel thick and slab:  
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,  
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

## **ALL**

Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

## **Second Witch**

Cool it with a baboon's blood,  
Then the charm is firm and good.

*Enter HECATE to the other three Witches*

## **HECATE**

O well done! I commend your pains;  
And every one shall share i' the gains;

And now about the cauldron sing,  
Live elves and fairies in a ring,  
Enchanting all that you put in.

*Music and a song: 'Black spirits,' & c*

*HECATE retires*

## **Second Witch**

By the pricking of my thumbs,  
Something wicked this way comes.  
Open, locks,  
Whoever knocks!

*Enter MACBETH*

## **MACBETH**

How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!  
What is't you do?

## **ALL**

A deed without a name.

## **MACBETH**

I conjure you, by that which you profess,  
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:  
Though you untie the winds and let them fight  
Against the churches; though the yesty waves  
Confound and swallow navigation up;  
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down;  
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;  
Though palaces and pyramids do slope  
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure  
Of nature's germens tumble all together,  
Even till destruction sicken; answer me  
To what I ask you.

## **First Witch**



Speak.

**Second Witch**

Demand.

**Third Witch**

We'll answer.

**First Witch**

Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,  
Or from our masters?

**MACBETH**

Call 'em; let me see 'em.

**First Witch**

Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten  
Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten  
From the murderer's gibbet throw  
Into the flame.

**ALL**

Come, high or low;  
Thyself and office deftly show!

*Thunder. First Apparition: an armed Head*

**MACBETH**

Tell me, thou unknown power,--

**First Witch**

He knows thy thought:

Hear his speech, but say thou nought.

### **First Apparition**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;  
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me. Enough.

*Descends*

### **MACBETH**

Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks;  
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one  
word more,--

### **First Witch**

He will not be commanded: here's another,  
More potent than the first.

*Thunder. Second Apparition: A bloody Child*

### **Second Apparition**

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

### **MACBETH**

Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.

### **Second Apparition**

Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn  
The power of man, for none of woman born  
Shall harm Macbeth.

*Descends*

### **MACBETH**

Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?

But yet I'll make assurance double sure,  
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;  
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,  
And sleep in spite of thunder.

*Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand*

What is this  
That rises like the issue of a king,  
And wears upon his baby-brow the round  
And top of sovereignty?

**ALL**

Listen, but speak not to't.

**Third Apparition**

Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care  
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:  
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until  
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill  
Shall come against him.

*Descends*

**MACBETH**

That will never be  
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree  
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!  
Rebellion's head, rise never till the wood  
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth  
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath  
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart  
Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art  
Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever  
Reign in this kingdom?

**ALL**

Seek to know no more.

## MACBETH

I will be satisfied: deny me this,  
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know.  
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?

*Hautboys*

### First Witch

Show!

### Second Witch

Show!

### Third Witch

Show!

## ALL

Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;  
Come like shadows, so depart!

*A show of Eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand; GHOST OF BANQUO following*

## MACBETH

Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down!  
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,  
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.  
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!  
Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!  
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?  
Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:  
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass  
Which shows me many more; and some I see  
That two-fold balls and treble scepters carry:  
Horrible sight! Now, I see, 'tis true;

For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,  
And points at them for his.

*Apparitions vanish*

What, is this so?

**First Witch**

Ay, sir, all this is so: but why  
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?  
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,  
And show the best of our delights:  
I'll charm the air to give a sound,  
While you perform your antic round:  
That this great king may kindly say,  
Our duties did his welcome pay.

*Music. The witches dance and then vanish, with HECATE*

**MACBETH**

Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour  
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!  
Come in, without there!

*Enter LENNOX*

**LENNOX**

What's your grace's will?

**MACBETH**

Saw you the weird sisters?

**LENNOX**

No, my lord.

**MACBETH**

Came they not by you?

**LENNOX**

No, indeed, my lord.

**MACBETH**

Infected be the air whereon they ride;  
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear  
The galloping of horse: who was't came by?

**LENNOX**

'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word  
Macduff is fled to England.

**MACBETH**

Fled to England!

**LENNOX**

Ay, my good lord.

**MACBETH**

Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:  
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook  
Unless the deed go with it; from this moment  
The very firstlings of my heart shall be  
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,  
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:  
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;  
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword  
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls  
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;  
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool.  
But no more sights!--Where are these gentlemen?  
Come, bring me where they are.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Fife. Macduff's castle.

*Enter LADY MACDUFF, her Son, and ROSS*

**LADY MACDUFF**

What had he done, to make him fly the land?

**ROSS**

You must have patience, madam.

**LADY MACDUFF**

He had none:  
His flight was madness: when our actions do not,  
Our fears do make us traitors.

**ROSS**

You know not  
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,  
His mansion and his titles in a place  
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;  
He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren,  
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,  
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.  
All is the fear and nothing is the love;  
As little is the wisdom, where the flight  
So runs against all reason.

**ROSS**



My dearest coz,  
I pray you, school yourself: but for your husband,  
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows  
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak  
much further;  
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors  
And do not know ourselves, when we hold rumour  
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,  
But float upon a wild and violent sea  
Each way and move. I take my leave of you:  
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:  
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward  
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,  
Blessing upon you!

**LADY MACDUFF**

Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

**ROSS**

I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,  
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort:  
I take my leave at once.

*Exit*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Sirrah, your father's dead;  
And what will you do now? How will you live?

**Son**

As birds do, mother.

**LADY MACDUFF**

What, with worms and flies?

**Son**

With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the net nor lime,  
The pitfall nor the gin.

**Son**

Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.  
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Yes, he is dead; how wilt thou do for a father?

**Son**

Nay, how will you do for a husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

**Son**

Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Thou speak'st with all thy wit: and yet, i' faith,  
With wit enough for thee.

**Son**

Was my father a traitor, mother?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Ay, that he was.

**Son**

What is a traitor?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, one that swears and lies.

**Son**

And be all traitors that do so?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

**Son**

And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Every one.

**Son**

Who must hang them?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, the honest men.

**Son**

Then the liars and swearers are fools,  
for there are liars and swearers enow to beat  
the honest men and hang up them.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Now, God help thee, poor monkey!  
But how wilt thou do for a father?

**Son**

If he were dead, you'd weep for  
him: if you would not, it were a good sign  
that I should quickly have a new father.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,  
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.  
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:  
If you will take a homely man's advice,  
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.  
To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage;  
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,  
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!  
I dare abide no longer.

*Exit*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Whither should I fly?  
I have done no harm. But I remember now  
I am in this earthly world; where to do harm  
Is often laudable, to do good sometime  
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,  
Do I put up that womanly defence,  
To say I have done no harm?

*Enter Murderers*

What are these faces?

**First Murderer**

Where is your husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

I hope, in no place so unsanctified  
Where such as thou mayst find him.

**First Murderer**

He's a traitor.

**Son**

Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!

**First Murderer**

What, you egg!

*Stabbing him*

Young fry of treachery!

**Son**

He has kill'd me, mother:  
Run away, I pray you!

*Dies*

*Exit LADY MACDUFF, crying 'Murder!' Exeunt Murderers, following her*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. England. Before the King's palace.

*Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF*

### MALCOLM

Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there  
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

### MACDUFF

Let us rather  
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men  
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom: each new morn  
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows  
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds  
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out  
Like syllable of dolour.

### MALCOLM

What I believe I'll wail,  
What know believe, and what I can redress,  
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.  
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.  
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,  
Was once thought honest: you have loved him well.  
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young;  
but something  
You may deserve of him through me, and wisdom  
To offer up a weak poor innocent lamb  
To appease an angry god.

### MACDUFF

I am not treacherous.

## **MALCOLM**

But Macbeth is.  
A good and virtuous nature may recoil  
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave  
your pardon;  
That which you are my thoughts cannot transpose:  
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell;  
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,  
Yet grace must still look so.

## **MACDUFF**

I have lost my hopes.

## **MALCOLM**

Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.  
Why in that rawness left you wife and child,  
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,  
Without leave-taking? I pray you,  
Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,  
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,  
Whatever I shall think.

## **MACDUFF**

Bleed, bleed, poor country!  
Great tyranny! lay thou thy basis sure,  
For goodness dare not cheque thee: wear thou  
thy wrongs;  
The title is affeer'd! Fare thee well, lord:  
I would not be the villain that thou think'st  
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,  
And the rich East to boot.

## **MALCOLM**

Be not offended:  
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.  
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;

It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash  
Is added to her wounds: I think withal  
There would be hands uplifted in my right;  
And here from gracious England have I offer  
Of goodly thousands: but, for all this,  
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,  
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country  
Shall have more vices than it had before,  
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,  
By him that shall succeed.

## **MACDUFF**

What should he be?

## **MALCOLM**

It is myself I mean: in whom I know  
All the particulars of vice so grafted  
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth  
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state  
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared  
With my confineless harms.

## **MACDUFF**

Not in the legions  
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd  
In evils to top Macbeth.

## **MALCOLM**

I grant him bloody,  
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,  
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin  
That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,  
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,  
Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up  
The cistern of my lust, and my desire  
All continent impediments would o'erbear  
That did oppose my will: better Macbeth  
Than such an one to reign.



## MACDUFF

Boundless intemperance  
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been  
The untimely emptying of the happy throne  
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet  
To take upon you what is yours: you may  
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,  
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.  
We have willing dames enough: there cannot be  
That vulture in you, to devour so many  
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,  
Finding it so inclined.

## MALCOLM

With this there grows  
In my most ill-composed affection such  
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,  
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,  
Desire his jewels and this other's house:  
And my more-having would be as a sauce  
To make me hunger more; that I should forge  
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,  
Destroying them for wealth.

## MACDUFF

This avarice  
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root  
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been  
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;  
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will.  
Of your mere own: all these are portable,  
With other graces weigh'd.

## MALCOLM

But I have none: the king-becoming graces,  
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,  
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,

Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,  
I have no relish of them, but abound  
In the division of each several crime,  
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should  
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,  
Uproar the universal peace, confound  
All unity on earth.

## **MACDUFF**

O Scotland, Scotland!

## **MALCOLM**

If such a one be fit to govern, speak:  
I am as I have spoken.

## **MACDUFF**

Fit to govern!  
No, not to live. O nation miserable,  
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,  
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,  
Since that the truest issue of thy throne  
By his own interdiction stands accursed,  
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father  
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,  
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,  
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!  
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself  
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,  
Thy hope ends here!

## **MALCOLM**

Macduff, this noble passion,  
Child of integrity, hath from my soul  
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts  
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth  
By many of these trains hath sought to win me  
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me  
From over-credulous haste: but God above

Deal between thee and me! for even now  
I put myself to thy direction, and  
Unspeak mine own detraction, here abjure  
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,  
For strangers to my nature. I am yet  
Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,  
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,  
At no time broke my faith, would not betray  
The devil to his fellow and delight  
No less in truth than life: my first false speaking  
Was this upon myself: what I am truly,  
Is thine and my poor country's to command:  
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,  
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,  
Already at a point, was setting forth.  
Now we'll together; and the chance of goodness  
Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

## **MACDUFF**

Such welcome and unwelcome things at once  
'Tis hard to reconcile.

*Enter a Doctor*

## **MALCOLM**

Well; more anon.--Comes the king forth, I pray you?

## **Doctor**

Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls  
That stay his cure: their malady convinces  
The great assay of art; but at his touch--  
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand--  
They presently amend.

## **MALCOLM**

I thank you, doctor.

*Exit Doctor*

**MACDUFF**

What's the disease he means?

**MALCOLM**

'Tis call'd the evil:  
A most miraculous work in this good king;  
Which often, since my here-remain in England,  
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,  
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,  
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,  
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,  
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,  
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,  
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,  
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,  
That speak him full of grace.

*Enter ROSS*

**MACDUFF**

See, who comes here?

**MALCOLM**

My countryman; but yet I know him not.

**MACDUFF**

My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

**MALCOLM**

I know him now. Good God, betimes remove  
The means that makes us strangers!

**ROSS**

Sir, amen.

**MACDUFF**

Stands Scotland where it did?

**ROSS**

Alas, poor country!  
Almost afraid to know itself. It cannot  
Be call'd our mother, but our grave; where nothing,  
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;  
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air  
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems  
A modern ecstasy; the dead man's knell  
Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives  
Expire before the flowers in their caps,  
Dying or ere they sicken.

**MACDUFF**

O, relation  
Too nice, and yet too true!

**MALCOLM**

What's the newest grief?

**ROSS**

That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker:  
Each minute teems a new one.

**MACDUFF**

How does my wife?

**ROSS**

Why, well.

**MACDUFF**

And all my children?

**ROSS**

Well too.

**MACDUFF**

The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?

**ROSS**

No; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

**MACDUFF**

But not a niggard of your speech: how goes't?

**ROSS**

When I came hither to transport the tidings,  
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour  
Of many worthy fellows that were out;  
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,  
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:  
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland  
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,  
To doff their dire distresses.

**MALCOLM**

Be't their comfort  
We are coming thither: gracious England hath  
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;  
An older and a better soldier none  
That Christendom gives out.

**ROSS**

Would I could answer  
This comfort with the like! But I have words  
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,  
Where hearing should not latch them.

**MACDUFF**

What concern they?  
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief  
Due to some single breast?

**ROSS**

No mind that's honest  
But in it shares some woe; though the main part  
Pertains to you alone.

**MACDUFF**

If it be mine,  
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

**ROSS**

Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,  
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound  
That ever yet they heard.

**MACDUFF**

Hum! I guess at it.

**ROSS**

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes  
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,  
Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,  
To add the death of you.

## **MALCOLM**

Merciful heaven!  
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;  
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak  
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.

## **MACDUFF**

My children too?

## **ROSS**

Wife, children, servants, all  
That could be found.

## **MACDUFF**

And I must be from thence!  
My wife kill'd too?

## **ROSS**

I have said.

## **MALCOLM**

Be comforted:  
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,  
To cure this deadly grief.

## **MACDUFF**

He has no children. All my pretty ones?  
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?  
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam  
At one fell swoop?

## **MALCOLM**

Dispute it like a man.



## MACDUFF

I shall do so;  
But I must also feel it as a man:  
I cannot but remember such things were,  
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,  
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,  
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,  
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,  
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!

## MALCOLM

Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief  
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

## MACDUFF

O, I could play the woman with mine eyes  
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,  
Cut short all intermission; front to front  
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;  
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,  
Heaven forgive him too!

## MALCOLM

This tune goes manly.  
Come, go we to the king; our power is ready;  
Our lack is nothing but our leave; Macbeth  
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above  
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may:  
The night is long that never finds the day.

*Exeunt*

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.

*Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman*

### Doctor

I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?

### Gentlewoman

Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

### Doctor

A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of watching! In this slumbry agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

### Gentlewoman

That, sir, which I will not report after her.

### Doctor

You may to me: and 'tis most meet you should.

### Gentlewoman

Neither to you nor any one; having no witness to

confirm my speech.

*Enter LADY MACBETH, with a taper*

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise;  
and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

**Doctor**

How came she by that light?

**Gentlewoman**

Why, it stood by her: she has light by her  
continually; 'tis her command.

**Doctor**

You see, her eyes are open.

**Gentlewoman**

Ay, but their sense is shut.

**Doctor**

What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

**Gentlewoman**

It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus  
washing her hands: I have known her continue in  
this a quarter of an hour.

**LADY MACBETH**

Yet here's a spot.

**Doctor**

Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from

her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

**LADY MACBETH**

Out, damned spot! out, I say!--One: two: why, then, 'tis time to do't.--Hell is murky!--Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?--Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.

**Doctor**

Do you mark that?

**LADY MACBETH**

The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?--What, will these hands ne'er be clean?--No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

**Doctor**

Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

**Gentlewoman**

She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

**LADY MACBETH**

Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

**Doctor**

What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

**Gentlewoman**

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the  
dignity of the whole body.

**Doctor**

Well, well, well,--

**Gentlewoman**

Pray God it be, sir.

**Doctor**

This disease is beyond my practise: yet I have known  
those which have walked in their sleep who have died  
holily in their beds.

**LADY MACBETH**

Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so  
pale.--I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he  
cannot come out on's grave.

**Doctor**

Even so?

**LADY MACBETH**

To bed, to bed! there's knocking at the gate:  
come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What's  
done cannot be undone.--To bed, to bed, to bed!

*Exit*

**Doctor**

Will she go now to bed?

## Gentlewoman

Directly.

## Doctor

Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds  
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds  
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:  
More needs she the divine than the physician.  
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;  
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,  
And still keep eyes upon her. So, good night:  
My mind she has mated, and amazed my sight.  
I think, but dare not speak.

## Gentlewoman

Good night, good doctor.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The country near Dunsinane.

*Drum and colours. Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, and Soldiers*

### MENTEITH

The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,  
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff:  
Revenge burn in them; for their dear causes  
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm  
Excite the mortified man.

### ANGUS

Near Birnam wood  
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

### CAITHNESS

Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

### LENNOX

For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file  
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,  
And many unrough youths that even now  
Protest their first of manhood.

### MENTEITH

What does the tyrant?

### CAITHNESS

Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:  
Some say he's mad; others that lesser hate him

Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,  
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause  
Within the belt of rule.

## ANGUS

Now does he feel  
His secret murders sticking on his hands;  
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;  
Those he commands move only in command,  
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title  
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe  
Upon a dwarfish thief.

## MENTEITH

Who then shall blame  
His pester'd senses to recoil and start,  
When all that is within him does condemn  
Itself for being there?

## CAITHNESS

Well, march we on,  
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed:  
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,  
And with him pour we in our country's purge  
Each drop of us.

## LENNOX

Or so much as it needs,  
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.  
Make we our march towards Birnam.

*Exeunt, marching*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Dunsinane. A room in the castle.

*Enter MACBETH, Doctor, and Attendants*

**MACBETH**

Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:  
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,  
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?  
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know  
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:  
'Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman  
Shall e'er have power upon thee.' Then fly,  
false thanes,  
And mingle with the English epicures:  
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear  
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

*Enter a Servant*

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon!  
Where got'st thou that goose look?

**Servant**

There is ten thousand--

**MACBETH**

Geese, villain!

**Servant**

Soldiers, sir.

**MACBETH**

Go prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,  
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?  
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine  
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

**Servant**

The English force, so please you.

**MACBETH**

Take thy face hence.

*Exit Servant*

Seyton!--I am sick at heart,  
When I behold--Seyton, I say!--This push  
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.  
I have lived long enough: my way of life  
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;  
And that which should accompany old age,  
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,  
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,  
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,  
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not. Seyton!

*Enter SEYTON*

**SEYTON**

What is your gracious pleasure?

**MACBETH**

What news more?

**SEYTON**

All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

## **MACBETH**

I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.  
Give me my armour.

## **SEYTON**

'Tis not needed yet.

## **MACBETH**

I'll put it on.  
Send out more horses; skirr the country round;  
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.  
How does your patient, doctor?

## **Doctor**

Not so sick, my lord,  
As she is troubled with thick coming fancies,  
That keep her from her rest.

## **MACBETH**

Cure her of that.  
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote  
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff  
Which weighs upon the heart?

## **Doctor**

Therein the patient  
Must minister to himself.

## **MACBETH**

Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it.  
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff.

Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.  
Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast  
The water of my land, find her disease,  
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,  
I would applaud thee to the very echo,  
That should applaud again.--Pull't off, I say.--  
What rhubarb, cyme, or what purgative drug,  
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

**Doctor**

Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation  
Makes us hear something.

**MACBETH**

Bring it after me.  
I will not be afraid of death and bane,  
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

**Doctor**

[Aside] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,  
Profit again should hardly draw me here.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Country near Birnam wood.

*Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, SIWARD and YOUNG SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, and Soldiers, marching*

**MALCOLM**

Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand  
That chambers will be safe.

**MENTEITH**

We doubt it nothing.

**SIWARD**

What wood is this before us?

**MENTEITH**

The wood of Birnam.

**MALCOLM**

Let every soldier hew him down a bough  
And bear't before him: thereby shall we shadow  
The numbers of our host and make discovery  
Err in report of us.

**Soldiers**

It shall be done.

**SIWARD**

We learn no other but the confident tyrant  
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure  
Our setting down before 't.

## **MALCOLM**

'Tis his main hope:  
For where there is advantage to be given,  
Both more and less have given him the revolt,  
And none serve with him but constrained things  
Whose hearts are absent too.

## **MACDUFF**

Let our just censures  
Attend the true event, and put we on  
Industrious soldiership.

## **SIWARD**

The time approaches  
That will with due decision make us know  
What we shall say we have and what we owe.  
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,  
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate:  
Towards which advance the war.

*Exeunt, marching*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Dunsinane. Within the castle.

*Enter MACBETH, SEYTON, and Soldiers, with drum and colours*

### MACBETH

Hang out our banners on the outward walls;  
The cry is still 'They come:' our castle's strength  
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie  
Till famine and the ague eat them up:  
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,  
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,  
And beat them backward home.

*A cry of women within*

What is that noise?

### SEYTON

It is the cry of women, my good lord.

*Exit*

### MACBETH

I have almost forgot the taste of fears;  
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd  
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair  
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir  
As life were in't: I have supp'd full with horrors;  
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts  
Cannot once start me.

*Re-enter SEYTON*

Wherefore was that cry?

**SEYTON**

The queen, my lord, is dead.

**MACBETH**

She should have died hereafter;  
There would have been a time for such a word.  
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
To the last syllable of recorded time,  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

*Enter a Messenger*

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

**Messenger**

Gracious my lord,  
I should report that which I say I saw,  
But know not how to do it.

**MACBETH**

Well, say, sir.

**Messenger**

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,  
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,  
The wood began to move.



## MACBETH

Liar and slave!

### Messenger

Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so:  
Within this three mile may you see it coming;  
I say, a moving grove.

## MACBETH

If thou speak'st false,  
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,  
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,  
I care not if thou dost for me as much.  
I pull in resolution, and begin  
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend  
That lies like truth: 'Fear not, till Birnam wood  
Do come to Dunsinane:' and now a wood  
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!  
If this which he avouches does appear,  
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.  
I gin to be aweary of the sun,  
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.  
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!  
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Dunsinane. Before the castle.

*Drum and colours. Enter MALCOLM, SIWARD, MACDUFF, and their Army, with boughs*

### MALCOLM

Now near enough: your leafy screens throw down.  
And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,  
Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son,  
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff and we  
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,  
According to our order.

### SIWARD

Fare you well.  
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,  
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

### MACDUFF

Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,  
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 7

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VII. Another part of the field.

*Alarums. Enter MACBETH*

**MACBETH**

They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,  
But, bear-like, I must fight the course. What's he  
That was not born of woman? Such a one  
Am I to fear, or none.

*Enter YOUNG SIWARD*

**YOUNG SIWARD**

What is thy name?

**MACBETH**

Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

**YOUNG SIWARD**

No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name  
Than any is in hell.

**MACBETH**

My name's Macbeth.

**YOUNG SIWARD**

The devil himself could not pronounce a title  
More hateful to mine ear.

## **MACBETH**

No, nor more fearful.

## **YOUNG SIWARD**

Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword  
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

*They fight and YOUNG SIWARD is slain*

## **MACBETH**

Thou wast born of woman  
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,  
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

*Exit*

*Alarums. Enter MACDUFF*

## **MACDUFF**

That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!  
If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,  
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.  
I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms  
Are hired to bear their staves: either thou, Macbeth,  
Or else my sword with an unbatter'd edge  
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;  
By this great clatter, one of greatest note  
Seems bruted. Let me find him, fortune!  
And more I beg not.

*Exit. Alarums*

*Enter MALCOLM and SIWARD*

## **SIWARD**

This way, my lord; the castle's gently render'd:

The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;  
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;  
The day almost itself professes yours,  
And little is to do.

## **MALCOLM**

We have met with foes  
That strike beside us.

## **SIWARD**

Enter, sir, the castle.

*Exeunt. Alarums*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 7  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# The Tragedy of Macbeth

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Macbeth](#) | Act 5, Scene 8

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE VIII. Another part of the field.

*Enter MACBETH*

**MACBETH**

Why should I play the Roman fool, and die  
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes  
Do better upon them.

*Enter MACDUFF*

**MACDUFF**

Turn, hell-hound, turn!

**MACBETH**

Of all men else I have avoided thee:  
But get thee back; my soul is too much charged  
With blood of thine already.

**MACDUFF**

I have no words:  
My voice is in my sword: thou bloodier villain  
Than terms can give thee out!

*They fight*

**MACBETH**

Thou lovest labour:  
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air  
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:  
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;

I bear a charmed life, which must not yield,  
To one of woman born.

## **MACDUFF**

Despair thy charm;  
And let the angel whom thou still hast served  
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb  
Untimely ripp'd.

## **MACBETH**

Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,  
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!  
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,  
That palter with us in a double sense;  
That keep the word of promise to our ear,  
And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

## **MACDUFF**

Then yield thee, coward,  
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:  
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,  
Painted on a pole, and underwrit,  
'Here may you see the tyrant.'

## **MACBETH**

I will not yield,  
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,  
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.  
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,  
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,  
Yet I will try the last. Before my body  
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,  
And damn'd be him that first cries, 'Hold, enough!'

*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums*

*Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, SIWARD, ROSS, the other  
Thanes, and Soldiers*

**MALCOLM**

I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.

**SIWARD**

Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,  
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

**MALCOLM**

Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

**ROSS**

Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:  
He only lived but till he was a man;  
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd  
In the unshrinking station where he fought,  
But like a man he died.

**SIWARD**

Then he is dead?

**ROSS**

Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow  
Must not be measured by his worth, for then  
It hath no end.

**SIWARD**

Had he his hurts before?

**ROSS**

Ay, on the front.

**SIWARD**



Why then, God's soldier be he!  
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,  
I would not wish them to a fairer death:  
And so, his knell is knoll'd.

## **MALCOLM**

He's worth more sorrow,  
And that I'll spend for him.

## **SIWARD**

He's worth no more  
They say he parted well, and paid his score:  
And so, God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

*Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH's head*

## **MACDUFF**

Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands  
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:  
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,  
That speak my salutation in their minds;  
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:  
Hail, King of Scotland!

## **ALL**

Hail, King of Scotland!

*Flourish*

## **MALCOLM**

We shall not spend a large expense of time  
Before we reckon with your several loves,  
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,  
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland  
In such an honour named. What's more to do,  
Which would be planted newly with the time,

As calling home our exiled friends abroad  
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny;  
Producing forth the cruel ministers  
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,  
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands  
Took off her life; this, and what needful else  
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,  
We will perform in measure, time and place:  
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,  
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Othello

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Venice. A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [Another street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [A council-chamber.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A Sea-port in Cyprus. An open place near the quay.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A hall in the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Before the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [A room in the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [The garden of the castle.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [Before the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Cyprus. Before the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [A room in the castle.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Another room In the castle.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Cyprus. A street.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [A bedchamber in the castle: DESDEMONA in bed asleep;](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Venice. A street.

*Enter RODERIGO and IAGO*

### RODERIGO

Tush! never tell me; I take it much unkindly  
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse  
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.

### IAGO

'Sblood, but you will not hear me:  
If ever I did dream of such a matter, Abhor me.

### RODERIGO

Thou told'st me thou didst hold him in thy hate.

### IAGO

Despise me, if I do not. Three great ones of the city,  
In personal suit to make me his lieutenant,  
Off-capp'd to him: and, by the faith of man,  
I know my price, I am worth no worse a place:  
But he; as loving his own pride and purposes,  
Evades them, with a bombast circumstance  
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war;  
And, in conclusion,  
Nonsuits my mediators; for, 'Certes,' says he,  
'I have already chose my officer.'  
And what was he?  
Forsooth, a great arithmetician,  
One Michael Cassio, a Florentine,  
A fellow almost damn'd in a fair wife;  
That never set a squadron in the field,

Nor the division of a battle knows  
More than a spinster; unless the bookish theoretic,  
Wherein the toged consuls can propose  
As masterly as he: mere prattle, without practise,  
Is all his soldiership. But he, sir, had the election:  
And I, of whom his eyes had seen the proof  
At Rhodes, at Cyprus and on other grounds  
Christian and heathen, must be be-lee'd and calm'd  
By debtor and creditor: this counter-caster,  
He, in good time, must his lieutenant be,  
And I--God bless the mark!--his Moorship's ancient.

## **RODERIGO**

By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

## **IAGO**

Why, there's no remedy; 'tis the curse of service,  
Preferment goes by letter and affection,  
And not by old gradation, where each second  
Stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself,  
Whether I in any just term am affined  
To love the Moor.

## **RODERIGO**

I would not follow him then.

## **IAGO**

O, sir, content you;  
I follow him to serve my turn upon him:  
We cannot all be masters, nor all masters  
Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark  
Many a duteous and knee-crooking knave,  
That, doting on his own obsequious bondage,  
Wears out his time, much like his master's ass,  
For nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd:  
Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are  
Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,  
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,

And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,  
Do well thrive by them and when they have lined  
their coats  
Do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul;  
And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir,  
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,  
Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:  
In following him, I follow but myself;  
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,  
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:  
For when my outward action doth demonstrate  
The native act and figure of my heart  
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after  
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve  
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

## **RODERIGO**

What a full fortune does the thicklips owe  
If he can carry't thus!

## **IAGO**

Call up her father,  
Rouse him: make after him, poison his delight,  
Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen,  
And, though he in a fertile climate dwell,  
Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,  
Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,  
As it may lose some colour.

## **RODERIGO**

Here is her father's house; I'll call aloud.

## **IAGO**

Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell  
As when, by night and negligence, the fire  
Is spied in populous cities.

## **RODERIGO**

What, ho, Brabantio! Signior Brabantio, ho!

**IAGO**

Awake! what, ho, Brabantio! thieves! thieves! thieves!  
Look to your house, your daughter and your bags!  
Thieves! thieves!

*BRABANTIO appears above, at a window*

**BRABANTIO**

What is the reason of this terrible summons?  
What is the matter there?

**RODERIGO**

Signior, is all your family within?

**IAGO**

Are your doors lock'd?

**BRABANTIO**

Why, wherefore ask you this?

**IAGO**

'Zounds, sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on  
your gown;  
Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;  
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram  
Is topping your white ewe. Arise, arise;  
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,  
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you:  
Arise, I say.

**BRABANTIO**

What, have you lost your wits?

**RODERIGO**

Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?

**BRABANTIO**

Not I what are you?

**RODERIGO**

My name is Roderigo.

**BRABANTIO**

The worser welcome:  
I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors:  
In honest plainness thou hast heard me say  
My daughter is not for thee; and now, in madness,  
Being full of supper and distempering draughts,  
Upon malicious bravery, dost thou come  
To start my quiet.

**RODERIGO**

Sir, sir, sir,--

**BRABANTIO**

But thou must needs be sure  
My spirit and my place have in them power  
To make this bitter to thee.

**RODERIGO**

Patience, good sir.

**BRABANTIO**

What tell'st thou me of robbing? this is Venice;



My house is not a grange.

**RODERIGO**

Most grave Brabantio,  
In simple and pure soul I come to you.

**IAGO**

'Zounds, sir, you are one of those that will not  
serve God, if the devil bid you. Because we come to  
do you service and you think we are ruffians, you'll  
have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse;  
you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have  
coursers for cousins and gennets for germans.

**BRABANTIO**

What profane wretch art thou?

**IAGO**

I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter  
and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.

**BRABANTIO**

Thou art a villain.

**IAGO**

You are--a senator.

**BRABANTIO**

This thou shalt answer; I know thee, Roderigo.

**RODERIGO**

Sir, I will answer any thing. But, I beseech you,  
If't be your pleasure and most wise consent,

As partly I find it is, that your fair daughter,  
At this odd-even and dull watch o' the night,  
Transported, with no worse nor better guard  
But with a knave of common hire, a gondolier,  
To the gross clasps of a lascivious Moor--  
If this be known to you and your allowance,  
We then have done you bold and saucy wrongs;  
But if you know not this, my manners tell me  
We have your wrong rebuke. Do not believe  
That, from the sense of all civility,  
I thus would play and trifle with your reverence:  
Your daughter, if you have not given her leave,  
I say again, hath made a gross revolt;  
Tying her duty, beauty, wit and fortunes  
In an extravagant and wheeling stranger  
Of here and every where. Straight satisfy yourself:  
If she be in her chamber or your house,  
Let loose on me the justice of the state  
For thus deluding you.

## **BRABANTIO**

Strike on the tinder, ho!  
Give me a taper! call up all my people!  
This accident is not unlike my dream:  
Belief of it oppresses me already.  
Light, I say! light!

*Exit above*

## **IAGO**

Farewell; for I must leave you:  
It seems not meet, nor wholesome to my place,  
To be produced--as, if I stay, I shall--  
Against the Moor: for, I do know, the state,  
However this may gall him with some cheque,  
Cannot with safety cast him, for he's embark'd  
With such loud reason to the Cyprus wars,  
Which even now stand in act, that, for their souls,  
Another of his fathom they have none,  
To lead their business: in which regard,

Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains.  
Yet, for necessity of present life,  
I must show out a flag and sign of love,  
Which is indeed but sign. That you shall surely find him,  
Lead to the Sagittary the raised search;  
And there will I be with him. So, farewell.

*Exit*

*Enter, below, BRABANTIO, and Servants with torches*

## **BRABANTIO**

It is too true an evil: gone she is;  
And what's to come of my despised time  
Is nought but bitterness. Now, Roderigo,  
Where didst thou see her? O unhappy girl!  
With the Moor, say'st thou? Who would be a father!  
How didst thou know 'twas she? O she deceives me  
Past thought! What said she to you? Get more tapers:  
Raise all my kindred. Are they married, think you?

## **RODERIGO**

Truly, I think they are.

## **BRABANTIO**

O heaven! How got she out? O treason of the blood!  
Fathers, from hence trust not your daughters' minds  
By what you see them act. Is there not charms  
By which the property of youth and maidhood  
May be abused? Have you not read, Roderigo,  
Of some such thing?

## **RODERIGO**

Yes, sir, I have indeed.

## **BRABANTIO**

Call up my brother. O, would you had had her!

Some one way, some another. Do you know  
Where we may apprehend her and the Moor?

**RODERIGO**

I think I can discover him, if you please,  
To get good guard and go along with me.

**BRABANTIO**

Pray you, lead on. At every house I'll call;  
I may command at most. Get weapons, ho!  
And raise some special officers of night.  
On, good Roderigo: I'll deserve your pains.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Another street.

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Attendants with torches*

**IAGO**

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,  
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience  
To do no contrived murder: I lack iniquity  
Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times  
I had thought to have yerk'd him here under the ribs.

**OTHELLO**

'Tis better as it is.

**IAGO**

Nay, but he prated,  
And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms  
Against your honour  
That, with the little godliness I have,  
I did full hard forbear him. But, I pray you, sir,  
Are you fast married? Be assured of this,  
That the magnifico is much beloved,  
And hath in his effect a voice potential  
As double as the duke's: he will divorce you;  
Or put upon you what restraint and grievance  
The law, with all his might to enforce it on,  
Will give him cable.

**OTHELLO**

Let him do his spite:  
My services which I have done the signiory  
Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know,--

Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,  
I shall promulgate--I fetch my life and being  
From men of royal siege, and my demerits  
May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune  
As this that I have reach'd: for know, Iago,  
But that I love the gentle Desdemona,  
I would not my unhoused free condition  
Put into circumscription and confine  
For the sea's worth. But, look! what lights come yond?

**IAGO**

Those are the raised father and his friends:  
You were best go in.

**OTHELLO**

Not I I must be found:  
My parts, my title and my perfect soul  
Shall manifest me rightly. Is it they?

**IAGO**

By Janus, I think no.

*Enter CASSIO, and certain Officers with torches*

**OTHELLO**

The servants of the duke, and my lieutenant.  
The goodness of the night upon you, friends!  
What is the news?

**CASSIO**

The duke does greet you, general,  
And he requires your haste-post-haste appearance,  
Even on the instant.

**OTHELLO**

What is the matter, think you?

**CASSIO**

Something from Cyprus as I may divine:  
It is a business of some heat: the galleys  
Have sent a dozen sequent messengers  
This very night at one another's heels,  
And many of the consuls, raised and met,  
Are at the duke's already: you have been  
hotly call'd for;  
When, being not at your lodging to be found,  
The senate hath sent about three several guests  
To search you out.

**OTHELLO**

'Tis well I am found by you.  
I will but spend a word here in the house,  
And go with you.

*Exit*

**CASSIO**

Ancient, what makes he here?

**IAGO**

'Faith, he to-night hath boarded a land carack:  
If it prove lawful prize, he's made for ever.

**CASSIO**

I do not understand.

**IAGO**

He's married.

**CASSIO**

To who?

*Re-enter OTHELLO*

**IAGO**

Marry, to--Come, captain, will you go?

**OTHELLO**

Have with you.

**CASSIO**

Here comes another troop to seek for you.

**IAGO**

It is Brabantio. General, be advised;  
He comes to bad intent.

*Enter BRABANTIO, RODERIGO, and Officers with torches and weapons*

**OTHELLO**

Holla! stand there!

**RODERIGO**

Signior, it is the Moor.

**BRABANTIO**

Down with him, thief!

*They draw on both sides*

**IAGO**

You, Roderigo! come, sir, I am for you.



## **OTHELLO**

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.  
Good signior, you shall more command with years  
Than with your weapons.

## **BRABANTIO**

O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter?  
Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her;  
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,  
If she in chains of magic were not bound,  
Whether a maid so tender, fair and happy,  
So opposite to marriage that she shunned  
The wealthy curled darlings of our nation,  
Would ever have, to incur a general mock,  
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom  
Of such a thing as thou, to fear, not to delight.  
Judge me the world, if 'tis not gross in sense  
That thou hast practised on her with foul charms,  
Abused her delicate youth with drugs or minerals  
That weaken motion: I'll have't disputed on;  
'Tis probable and palpable to thinking.  
I therefore apprehend and do attach thee  
For an abuser of the world, a practiser  
Of arts inhibited and out of warrant.  
Lay hold upon him: if he do resist,  
Subdue him at his peril.

## **OTHELLO**

Hold your hands,  
Both you of my inclining, and the rest:  
Were it my cue to fight, I should have known it  
Without a prompter. Where will you that I go  
To answer this your charge?

## **BRABANTIO**

To prison, till fit time  
Of law and course of direct session  
Call thee to answer.

## OTHELLO

What if I do obey?  
How may the duke be therewith satisfied,  
Whose messengers are here about my side,  
Upon some present business of the state  
To bring me to him?

### First Officer

'Tis true, most worthy signior;  
The duke's in council and your noble self,  
I am sure, is sent for.

## BRABANTIO

How! the duke in council!  
In this time of the night! Bring him away:  
Mine's not an idle cause: the duke himself,  
Or any of my brothers of the state,  
Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own;  
For if such actions may have passage free,  
Bond-slaves and pagans shall our statesmen be.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A council-chamber.

*The DUKE and Senators sitting at a table; Officers attending*

### DUKE OF VENICE

There is no composition in these news  
That gives them credit.

### First Senator

Indeed, they are disproportion'd;  
My letters say a hundred and seven galleys.

### DUKE OF VENICE

And mine, a hundred and forty.

### Second Senator

And mine, two hundred:  
But though they jump not on a just account,--  
As in these cases, where the aim reports,  
'Tis oft with difference--yet do they all confirm  
A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus.

### DUKE OF VENICE

Nay, it is possible enough to judgment:  
I do not so secure me in the error,  
But the main article I do approve  
In fearful sense.

### Sailor

[Within] What, ho! what, ho! what, ho!

**First Officer**

A messenger from the galleys.

*Enter a Sailor*

**DUKE OF VENICE**

Now, what's the business?

**Sailor**

The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes;  
So was I bid report here to the state  
By Signior Angelo.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

How say you by this change?

**First Senator**

This cannot be,  
By no assay of reason: 'tis a pageant,  
To keep us in false gaze. When we consider  
The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,  
And let ourselves again but understand,  
That as it more concerns the Turk than Rhodes,  
So may he with more facile question bear it,  
For that it stands not in such warlike brace,  
But altogether lacks the abilities  
That Rhodes is dress'd in: if we make thought of this,  
We must not think the Turk is so unskilful  
To leave that latest which concerns him first,  
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain,  
To wake and wage a danger profitless.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

**First Officer**

Here is more news.

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

The Ottomites, reverend and gracious,  
Steering with due course towards the isle of Rhodes,  
Have there injointed them with an after fleet.

**First Senator**

Ay, so I thought. How many, as you guess?

**Messenger**

Of thirty sail: and now they do restem  
Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance  
Their purposes toward Cyprus. Signior Montano,  
Your trusty and most valiant servitor,  
With his free duty recommends you thus,  
And prays you to believe him.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

'Tis certain, then, for Cyprus.  
Marcus Luccicos, is not he in town?

**First Senator**

He's now in Florence.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

Write from us to him; post-post-haste dispatch.

**First Senator**

Here comes Brabantio and the valiant Moor.

*Enter BRABANTIO, OTHELLO, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Officers*

**DUKE OF VENICE**

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you  
Against the general enemy Ottoman.

*To BRABANTIO*

I did not see you; welcome, gentle signior;  
We lack'd your counsel and your help tonight.

**BRABANTIO**

So did I yours. Good your grace, pardon me;  
Neither my place nor aught I heard of business  
Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general care  
Take hold on me, for my particular grief  
Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature  
That it engulfs and swallows other sorrows  
And it is still itself.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

Why, what's the matter?

**BRABANTIO**

My daughter! O, my daughter!

**DUKE OF VENICE Senator**

Dead?

**BRABANTIO**

Ay, to me;  
She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted  
By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks;  
For nature so preposterously to err,  
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense,

Sans witchcraft could not.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding  
Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself  
And you of her, the bloody book of law  
You shall yourself read in the bitter letter  
After your own sense, yea, though our proper son  
Stood in your action.

**BRABANTIO**

Humbly I thank your grace.  
Here is the man, this Moor, whom now, it seems,  
Your special mandate for the state-affairs  
Hath hither brought.

**DUKE OF VENICE Senator**

We are very sorry for't.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

[To OTHELLO] What, in your own part, can you say to this?

**BRABANTIO**

Nothing, but this is so.

**OTHELLO**

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,  
My very noble and approved good masters,  
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,  
It is most true; true, I have married her:  
The very head and front of my offending  
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,  
And little bless'd with the soft phrase of peace:  
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,  
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used

Their dearest action in the tented field,  
And little of this great world can I speak,  
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle,  
And therefore little shall I grace my cause  
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,  
I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver  
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,  
What conjuration and what mighty magic,  
For such proceeding I am charged withal,  
I won his daughter.

## **BRABANTIO**

A maiden never bold;  
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion  
Blush'd at herself; and she, in spite of nature,  
Of years, of country, credit, every thing,  
To fall in love with what she fear'd to look on!  
It is a judgment maim'd and most imperfect  
That will confess perfection so could err  
Against all rules of nature, and must be driven  
To find out practises of cunning hell,  
Why this should be. I therefore vouch again  
That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,  
Or with some dram conjured to this effect,  
He wrought upon her.

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

To vouch this, is no proof,  
Without more wider and more overt test  
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods  
Of modern seeming do prefer against him.

## **First Senator**

But, Othello, speak:  
Did you by indirect and forced courses  
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?  
Or came it by request and such fair question  
As soul to soul affordeth?



## **OTHELLO**

I do beseech you,  
Send for the lady to the Sagittary,  
And let her speak of me before her father:  
If you do find me foul in her report,  
The trust, the office I do hold of you,  
Not only take away, but let your sentence  
Even fall upon my life.

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

Fetch Desdemona hither.

## **OTHELLO**

Ancient, conduct them: you best know the place.

*Exeunt IAGO and Attendants*

And, till she come, as truly as to heaven  
I do confess the vices of my blood,  
So justly to your grave ears I'll present  
How I did thrive in this fair lady's love,  
And she in mine.

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

Say it, Othello.

## **OTHELLO**

Her father loved me; oft invited me;  
Still question'd me the story of my life,  
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,  
That I have passed.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it;  
Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
Of moving accidents by flood and field  
Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,  
Of being taken by the insolent foe

And sold to slavery, of my redemption thence  
And portance in my travels' history:  
Wherein of antres vast and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven  
It was my hint to speak,--such was the process;  
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders. This to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline:  
But still the house-affairs would draw her thence:  
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,  
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
Devour up my discourse: which I observing,  
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means  
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart  
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,  
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
But not intentively: I did consent,  
And often did beguile her of her tears,  
When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
That my youth suffer'd. My story being done,  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:  
She swore, in faith, twas strange, 'twas passing strange,  
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful:  
She wish'd she had not heard it, yet she wish'd  
That heaven had made her such a man: she thank'd me,  
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story.  
And that would woo her. Upon this hint I spake:  
She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,  
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, and Attendants*

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

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 show'd  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to the Moor my lord.

## **BRABANTIO**

God be wi' 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:  
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 OF VENICE**

Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence,  
Which, as a grise or step, may help these lovers  
Into your favour.  
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 mockery makes.  
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;  
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.

## **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 the affairs of state.

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

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.

## **OTHELLO**

The tyrant custom, most grave senators,  
Hath made the flinty and steel couch of war  
My thrice-driven bed of down: I do agnise  
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.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

If you please,  
Be't at her father's.

**BRABANTIO**

I'll 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;  
And let me find a charter in your voice,  
To assist my simpleness.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

What would You, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

That I did love the Moor to live with him,  
My downright violence and storm of fortunes  
May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued  
Even to the very quality of my lord:  
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,  
And to his honour and his valiant parts  
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.  
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,  
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,

The rites for which I love him are bereft me,  
And I a heavy interim shall support  
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

## **OTHELLO**

Let her have your voices.  
Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not,  
To please the palate of my appetite,  
Nor to comply with heat--the young affects  
In me defunct--and proper satisfaction.  
But to be free and bounteous to her mind:  
And heaven defend your good souls, that you think  
I will your serious and great business scant  
For she is with me: no, when light-wing'd toys  
Of feather'd Cupid seal with wanton dullness  
My speculative and officed instruments,  
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,  
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,  
And all indign and base adversities  
Make head against my estimation!

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

Be it as you shall privately determine,  
Either for her stay or going: the affair cries haste,  
And speed must answer it.

## **First Senator**

You must away to-night.

## **OTHELLO**

With all my heart.

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

At nine i' the morning here we'll meet again.  
Othello, leave some officer behind,  
And he shall our commission bring to you;  
With such things else of quality and respect

As doth import you.

## **OTHELLO**

So please your grace, my ancient;  
A man he is of honest and trust:  
To his conveyance I assign my wife,  
With what else needful your good grace shall think  
To be sent after me.

## **DUKE OF VENICE**

Let it be so.  
Good night to every one.

*To BRABANTIO*

And, noble signior,  
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

## **First Senator**

Adieu, brave Moor, use Desdemona well.

## **BRABANTIO**

Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:  
She has deceived her father, and may thee.

*Exeunt DUKE OF VENICE, Senators, Officers, & c*

## **OTHELLO**

My life upon her faith! Honest Iago,  
My Desdemona must I leave to thee:  
I prithee, let thy wife attend on her:  
And bring them after in the best advantage.  
Come, Desdemona: I have but an hour  
Of love, of worldly matters and direction,  
To spend with thee: we must obey the time.

*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA*

**RODERIGO**

Iago,--

**IAGO**

What say'st thou, noble heart?

**RODERIGO**

What will I do, thinkest thou?

**IAGO**

Why, go to bed, and sleep.

**RODERIGO**

I will incontinently drown myself.

**IAGO**

If thou dost, I shall never love thee after. Why,  
thou silly gentleman!

**RODERIGO**

It is silliness to live when to live is torment; and  
then have we a prescription to die when death is our physician.

**IAGO**

O villainous! I have looked upon the world for four  
times seven years; and since I could distinguish  
betwixt a benefit and an injury, I never found man  
that knew how to love himself. Ere I would say, I  
would drown myself for the love of a guinea-hen, I  
would change my humanity with a baboon.



## **RODERIGO**

What should I do? I confess it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it.

## **IAGO**

Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts, whereof I take this that you call love to be a sect or scion.

## **RODERIGO**

It cannot be.

## **IAGO**

It is merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will. Come, be a man. Drown thyself! drown cats and blind puppies. I have professed me thy friend and I confess me knit to thy deserving with cables of perdurable toughness; I could never better stead thee than now. Put money in thy purse; follow thou the wars; defeat thy favour with an usurped beard; I say, put money in thy purse. It cannot be that Desdemona should long continue her love to the Moor,-- put money in thy purse,--nor he his to her: it was a violent commencement, and thou shalt see an answerable sequestration:--put but money in thy purse. These Moors are changeable in

their wills: fill thy purse with money:--the food that to him now is as luscious as locusts, shall be to him shortly as bitter as coloquintida. She must change for youth: when she is sated with his body, she will find the error of her choice: she must have change, she must: therefore put money in thy purse. If thou wilt needs damn thyself, do it a more delicate way than drowning. Make all the money thou canst: if sanctimony and a frail vow betwixt an erring barbarian and a supersubtle Venetian not too hard for my wits and all the tribe of hell, thou shalt enjoy her; therefore make money. A pox of drowning thyself! it is clean out of the way: seek thou rather to be hanged in compassing thy joy than to be drowned and go without her.

## **RODERIGO**

Wilt thou be fast to my hopes, if I depend on the issue?

## **IAGO**

Thou art sure of me:--go, make money:--I have told thee often, and I re-tell thee again and again, I hate the Moor: my cause is hearted; thine hath no less reason. Let us be conjunctive in our revenge against him: if thou canst cuckold him, thou dost thyself a pleasure, me a sport. There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered. Traverse! go, provide thy money. We will have more of this to-morrow. Adieu.

## **RODERIGO**

Where shall we meet i' the morning?

## **IAGO**

At my lodging.

## **RODERIGO**

I'll be with thee betimes.

**IAGO**

Go to; farewell. Do you hear, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

What say you?

**IAGO**

No more of drowning, do you hear?

**RODERIGO**

I am changed: I'll go sell all my land.

*Exit*

**IAGO**

Thus do I ever make my fool my purse:  
For I mine own gain'd knowledge should profane,  
If I would time expend with such a snipe.  
But for my sport and profit. I hate the Moor:  
And it is thought abroad, that 'twixt my sheets  
He has done my office: I know not if't be true;  
But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,  
Will do as if for surety. He holds me well;  
The better shall my purpose work on him.  
Cassio's a proper man: let me see now:  
To get his place and to plume up my will  
In double knavery--How, how? Let's see:--  
After some time, to abuse Othello's ear  
That he is too familiar with his wife.  
He hath a person and a smooth dispose  
To be suspected, framed to make women false.  
The Moor is of a free and open nature,  
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,  
And will as tenderly be led by the nose

As asses are.  
I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night  
Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A Sea-port in Cyprus. An open place near the quay.

*Enter MONTANO and two Gentlemen*

**MONTANO**

What from the cape can you discern at sea?

**First Gentleman**

Nothing at all: it is a highwrought flood;  
I cannot, 'twixt the heaven and the main,  
Descry a sail.

**MONTANO**

Methinks the wind hath spoke aloud at land;  
A fuller blast ne'er shook our battlements:  
If it hath ruffian'd so upon the sea,  
What ribs of oak, when mountains melt on them,  
Can hold the mortise? What shall we hear of this?

**Second Gentleman**

A segregation of the Turkish fleet:  
For do but stand upon the foaming shore,  
The chidden billow seems to pelt the clouds;  
The wind-shaked surge, with high and monstrous mane,  
seems to cast water on the burning bear,  
And quench the guards of the ever-fixed pole:  
I never did like molestation view  
On the enchafed flood.

**MONTANO**

If that the Turkish fleet

Be not enshelter'd and embay'd, they are drown'd:  
It is impossible they bear it out.

*Enter a third Gentleman*

**Third Gentleman**

News, lads! our wars are done.  
The desperate tempest hath so bang'd the Turks,  
That their designment halts: a noble ship of Venice  
Hath seen a grievous wreck and sufferance  
On most part of their fleet.

**MONTANO**

How! is this true?

**Third Gentleman**

The ship is here put in,  
A Veronesa; Michael Cassio,  
Lieutenant to the warlike Moor Othello,  
Is come on shore: the Moor himself at sea,  
And is in full commission here for Cyprus.

**MONTANO**

I am glad on't; 'tis a worthy governor.

**Third Gentleman**

But this same Cassio, though he speak of comfort  
Touching the Turkish loss, yet he looks sadly,  
And prays the Moor be safe; for they were parted  
With foul and violent tempest.

**MONTANO**

Pray heavens he be;  
For I have served him, and the man commands  
Like a full soldier. Let's to the seaside, ho!

As well to see the vessel that's come in  
As to throw out our eyes for brave Othello,  
Even till we make the main and the aerial blue  
An indistinct regard.

### **Third Gentleman**

Come, let's do so:  
For every minute is expectancy  
Of more arrivance.

*Enter CASSIO*

### **CASSIO**

Thanks, you the valiant of this warlike isle,  
That so approve the Moor! O, let the heavens  
Give him defence against the elements,  
For I have lost us him on a dangerous sea.

### **MONTANO**

Is he well shipp'd?

### **CASSIO**

His bark is stoutly timber'd, his pilot  
Of very expert and approved allowance;  
Therefore my hopes, not surfeited to death,  
Stand in bold cure.

*A cry within 'A sail, a sail, a sail!'*

*Enter a fourth Gentleman*

### **CASSIO**

What noise?

### **Fourth Gentleman**

The town is empty; on the brow o' the sea  
Stand ranks of people, and they cry 'A sail!'

**CASSIO**

My hopes do shape him for the governor.

*Guns heard*

**Second Gentlemen**

They do discharge their shot of courtesy:  
Our friends at least.

**CASSIO**

I pray you, sir, go forth,  
And give us truth who 'tis that is arrived.

**Second Gentleman**

I shall.

*Exit*

**MONTANO**

But, good lieutenant, is your general wived?

**CASSIO**

Most fortunately: he hath achieved a maid  
That paragons description and wild fame;  
One that excels the quirks of blazoning pens,  
And in the essential vesture of creation  
Does tire the ingener.

*Re-enter second Gentleman*

How now! who has put in?



## **Second Gentleman**

'Tis one Iago, ancient to the general.

## **CASSIO**

Has had most favourable and happy speed:  
Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,  
The gutter'd rocks and congregated sands--  
Traitors ensteep'd to clog the guiltless keel,--  
As having sense of beauty, do omit  
Their mortal natures, letting go safely by  
The divine Desdemona.

## **MONTANO**

What is she?

## **CASSIO**

She that I spake of, our great captain's captain,  
Left in the conduct of the bold Iago,  
Whose footing here anticipates our thoughts  
A se'nnight's speed. Great Jove, Othello guard,  
And swell his sail with thine own powerful breath,  
That he may bless this bay with his tall ship,  
Make love's quick pants in Desdemona's arms,  
Give renew'd fire to our extincted spirits  
And bring all Cyprus comfort!

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, IAGO, RODERIGO, and Attendants*

O, behold,  
The riches of the ship is come on shore!  
Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees.  
Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,  
Before, behind thee, and on every hand,  
Enwheel thee round!

## **DESDEMONA**

I thank you, valiant Cassio.

What tidings can you tell me of my lord?

**CASSIO**

He is not yet arrived: nor know I aught  
But that he's well and will be shortly here.

**DESDEMONA**

O, but I fear--How lost you company?

**CASSIO**

The great contention of the sea and skies  
Parted our fellowship--But, hark! a sail.

*Within 'A sail, a sail!' Guns heard*

**Second Gentleman**

They give their greeting to the citadel;  
This likewise is a friend.

**CASSIO**

See for the news.

*Exit Gentleman*

Good ancient, you are welcome.

*To EMILIA*

Welcome, mistress.  
Let it not gall your patience, good Iago,  
That I extend my manners; 'tis my breeding  
That gives me this bold show of courtesy.

*Kissing her*

**IAGO**

Sir, would she give you so much of her lips  
As of her tongue she oft bestows on me,  
You'll have enough.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, she has no speech.

**IAGO**

In faith, too much;  
I find it still, when I have list to sleep:  
Marry, before your ladyship, I grant,  
She puts her tongue a little in her heart,  
And chides with thinking.

**EMILIA**

You have little cause to say so.

**IAGO**

Come on, come on; you are pictures out of doors,  
Bells in your parlors, wild-cats in your kitchens,  
Saints in your injuries, devils being offended,  
Players in your housewifery, and housewives' in your beds.

**DESDEMONA**

O, fie upon thee, slanderer!

**IAGO**

Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk:  
You rise to play and go to bed to work.

**EMILIA**

You shall not write my praise.

**IAGO**

No, let me not.

**DESDEMONA**

What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst  
praise me?

**IAGO**

O gentle lady, do not put me to't;  
For I am nothing, if not critical.

**DESDEMONA**

Come on assay. There's one gone to the harbour?

**IAGO**

Ay, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

I am not merry; but I do beguile  
The thing I am, by seeming otherwise.  
Come, how wouldst thou praise me?

**IAGO**

I am about it; but indeed my invention  
Comes from my pate as birdlime does from frize;  
It plucks out brains and all: but my Muse labours,  
And thus she is deliver'd.  
If she be fair and wise, fairness and wit,  
The one's for use, the other useth it.

**DESDEMONA**

Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

**IAGO**

If she be black, and thereto have a wit,  
She'll find a white that shall her blackness fit.

**DESDEMONA**

Worse and worse.

**EMILIA**

How if fair and foolish?

**IAGO**

She never yet was foolish that was fair;  
For even her folly help'd her to an heir.

**DESDEMONA**

These are old fond paradoxes to make fools laugh i'  
the alehouse. What miserable praise hast thou for  
her that's foul and foolish?

**IAGO**

There's none so foul and foolish thereunto,  
But does foul pranks which fair and wise ones do.

**DESDEMONA**

O heavy ignorance! thou praisest the worst best.  
But what praise couldst thou bestow on a deserving  
woman indeed, one that, in the authority of her  
merit, did justly put on the vouch of very malice itself?

**IAGO**

She that was ever fair and never proud,  
Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,  
Never lack'd gold and yet went never gay,

Fled from her wish and yet said 'Now I may,'  
She that being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,  
Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly,  
She that in wisdom never was so frail  
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;  
She that could think and ne'er disclose her mind,  
See suitors following and not look behind,  
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,--

**DESDEMONA**

To do what?

**IAGO**

To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.

**DESDEMONA**

O most lame and impotent conclusion! Do not learn  
of him, Emilia, though he be thy husband. How say  
you, Cassio? is he not a most profane and liberal  
counsellor?

**CASSIO**

He speaks home, madam: You may relish him more in  
the soldier than in the scholar.

**IAGO**

[Aside] He takes her by the palm: ay, well said,  
whisper: with as little a web as this will I  
ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon  
her, do; I will gyve thee in thine own courtship.  
You say true; 'tis so, indeed: if such tricks as  
these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had  
been better you had not kissed your three fingers so  
oft, which now again you are most apt to play the  
sir in. Very good; well kissed! an excellent  
courtesy! 'tis so, indeed. Yet again your fingers  
to your lips? would they were clyster-pipes for your sake!

*Trumpet within*

The Moor! I know his trumpet.

**CASSIO**

'Tis truly so.

**DESDEMONA**

Let's meet him and receive him.

**CASSIO**

Lo, where he comes!

*Enter OTHELLO and Attendants*

**OTHELLO**

O my fair warrior!

**DESDEMONA**

My dear Othello!

**OTHELLO**

It gives me wonder great as my content  
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy!  
If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken'd death!  
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas  
Olympus-high and duck again as low  
As hell's from heaven! If it were now to die,  
'Twere now to be most happy; for, I fear,  
My soul hath her content so absolute  
That not another comfort like to this  
Succeeds in unknown fate.

## DESDEMONA

The heavens forbid  
But that our loves and comforts should increase,  
Even as our days do grow!

## OTHELLO

Amen to that, sweet powers!  
I cannot speak enough of this content;  
It stops me here; it is too much of joy:  
And this, and this, the greatest discords be

*Kissing her*

That e'er our hearts shall make!

## IAGO

[Aside] O, you are well tuned now!  
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,  
As honest as I am.

## OTHELLO

Come, let us to the castle.  
News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks  
are drown'd.  
How does my old acquaintance of this isle?  
Honey, you shall be well desired in Cyprus;  
I have found great love amongst them. O my sweet,  
I prattle out of fashion, and I dote  
In mine own comforts. I prithee, good Iago,  
Go to the bay and disembark my coffers:  
Bring thou the master to the citadel;  
He is a good one, and his worthiness  
Does challenge much respect. Come, Desdemona,  
Once more, well met at Cyprus.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants*

## IAGO



Do thou meet me presently at the harbour. Come hither. If thou be'st valiant,-- as, they say, base men being in love have then a nobility in their natures more than is native to them--list me. The lieutenant tonight watches on the court of guard:--first, I must tell thee this--Desdemona is directly in love with him.

## **RODERIGO**

With him! why, 'tis not possible.

## **IAGO**

Lay thy finger thus, and let thy soul be instructed. Mark me with what violence she first loved the Moor, but for bragging and telling her fantastical lies: and will she love him still for prating? let not thy discreet heart think it. Her eye must be fed; and what delight shall she have to look on the devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of sport, there should be, again to inflame it and to give satiety a fresh appetite, loveliness in favour, sympathy in years, manners and beauties; all which the Moor is defective in: now, for want of these required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, disrelish and abhor the Moor; very nature will instruct her in it and compel her to some second choice. Now, sir, this granted,--as it is a most pregnant and unforced position--who stands so eminent in the degree of this fortune as Cassio does? a knave very voluble; no further conscionable than in putting on the mere form of civil and humane seeming, for the better compassing of his salt and most hidden loose affection? why, none; why, none: a slipper and subtle knave, a finder of occasions, that has an eye can stamp and counterfeit advantages, though true advantage never present itself; a devilish knave. Besides, the knave is handsome, young, and hath all those

requisites in him that folly and green minds look after: a pestilent complete knave; and the woman hath found him already.

**RODERIGO**

I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blessed condition.

**IAGO**

Blessed fig's-end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes: if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor. Blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

**RODERIGO**

Yes, that I did; but that was but courtesy.

**IAGO**

Lechery, by this hand; an index and obscure prologue to the history of lust and foul thoughts. They met so near with their lips that their breaths embraced together. Villanous thoughts, Roderigo! when these mutualities so marshal the way, hard at hand comes the master and main exercise, the incorporate conclusion, Pish! But, sir, be you ruled by me: I have brought you from Venice. Watch you to-night; for the command, I'll lay't upon you. Cassio knows you not. I'll not be far from you: do you find some occasion to anger Cassio, either by speaking too loud, or tainting his discipline; or from what other course you please, which the time shall more favourably minister.

**RODERIGO**

Well.

## IAGO

Sir, he is rash and very sudden in choler, and haply may strike at you: provoke him, that he may; for even out of that will I cause these of Cyprus to mutiny; whose qualification shall come into no true taste again but by the displanting of Cassio. So shall you have a shorter journey to your desires by the means I shall then have to prefer them; and the impediment most profitably removed, without the which there were no expectation of our prosperity.

## RODERIGO

I will do this, if I can bring it to any opportunity.

## IAGO

I warrant thee. Meet me by and by at the citadel:  
I must fetch his necessaries ashore. Farewell.

## RODERIGO

Adieu.

*Exit*

## IAGO

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;  
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit:  
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,  
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,  
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona  
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;  
Not out of absolute lust, though peradventure  
I stand accountant for as great a sin,  
But partly led to diet my revenge,  
For that I do suspect the lusty Moor  
Hath leap'd into my seat; the thought whereof  
Doth, like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my inwards;

And nothing can or shall content my soul  
Till I am even'd with him, wife for wife,  
Or failing so, yet that I put the Moor  
At least into a jealousy so strong  
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,  
If this poor trash of Venice, whom I trash  
For his quick hunting, stand the putting on,  
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,  
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb--  
For I fear Cassio with my night-cap too--  
Make the Moor thank me, love me and reward me.  
For making him egregiously an ass  
And practising upon his peace and quiet  
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused:  
Knavery's plain face is never seen tin used.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A street.

*Enter a Herald with a proclamation; People following*

### Herald

It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A hall in the castle.

*Enter OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and Attendants*

### OTHELLO

Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night:  
Let's teach ourselves that honourable stop,  
Not to outspout discretion.

### CASSIO

Iago hath direction what to do;  
But, notwithstanding, with my personal eye  
Will I look to't.

### OTHELLO

Iago is most honest.  
Michael, good night: to-morrow with your earliest  
Let me have speech with you.

*To DESDEMONA*

Come, my dear love,  
The purchase made, the fruits are to ensue;  
That profit's yet to come 'tween me and you.  
Good night.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants*

*Enter IAGO*

### CASSIO

Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch.

**IAGO**

Not this hour, lieutenant; 'tis not yet ten o' the clock. Our general cast us thus early for the love of his Desdemona; who let us not therefore blame: he hath not yet made wanton the night with her; and she is sport for Jove.

**CASSIO**

She's a most exquisite lady.

**IAGO**

And, I'll warrant her, fun of game.

**CASSIO**

Indeed, she's a most fresh and delicate creature.

**IAGO**

What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley of provocation.

**CASSIO**

An inviting eye; and yet methinks right modest.

**IAGO**

And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

**CASSIO**

She is indeed perfection.

**IAGO**

Well, happiness to their sheets! Come, lieutenant, I have a stoup of wine; and here without are a brace

of Cyprus gallants that would fain have a measure to  
the health of black Othello.

**CASSIO**

Not to-night, good Iago: I have very poor and  
unhappy brains for drinking: I could well wish  
courtesy would invent some other custom of  
entertainment.

**IAGO**

O, they are our friends; but one cup: I'll drink for  
you.

**CASSIO**

I have drunk but one cup to-night, and that was  
craftily qualified too, and, behold, what innovation  
it makes here: I am unfortunate in the infirmity,  
and dare not task my weakness with any more.

**IAGO**

What, man! 'tis a night of revels: the gallants  
desire it.

**CASSIO**

Where are they?

**IAGO**

Here at the door; I pray you, call them in.

**CASSIO**

I'll do't; but it dislikes me.

*Exit*



## IAGO

If I can fasten but one cup upon him,  
With that which he hath drunk to-night already,  
He'll be as full of quarrel and offence  
As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool Roderigo,  
Whom love hath turn'd almost the wrong side out,  
To Desdemona hath to-night caroused  
Potations pottle-deep; and he's to watch:  
Three lads of Cyprus, noble swelling spirits,  
That hold their honours in a wary distance,  
The very elements of this warlike isle,  
Have I to-night fluster'd with flowing cups,  
And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,  
Am I to put our Cassio in some action  
That may offend the isle.--But here they come:  
If consequence do but approve my dream,  
My boat sails freely, both with wind and stream.

*Re-enter CASSIO; with him MONTANO and Gentlemen; servants following with wine*

## CASSIO

'Fore God, they have given me a rouse already.

## MONTANO

Good faith, a little one; not past a pint, as I am  
a soldier.

## IAGO

Some wine, ho!

*Sings*

And let me the canakin clink, clink;  
And let me the canakin clink  
A soldier's a man;  
A life's but a span;  
Why, then, let a soldier drink.  
Some wine, boys!

**CASSIO**

'Fore God, an excellent song.

**IAGO**

I learned it in England, where, indeed, they are most potent in potting: your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander--Drink, ho!--are nothing to your English.

**CASSIO**

Is your Englishman so expert in his drinking?

**IAGO**

Why, he drinks you, with facility, your Dane dead drunk; he sweats not to overthrow your Almain; he gives your Hollander a vomit, ere the next pottle can be filled.

**CASSIO**

To the health of our general!

**MONTANO**

I am for it, lieutenant; and I'll do you justice.

**IAGO**

O sweet England!  
King Stephen was a worthy peer,  
His breeches cost him but a crown;  
He held them sixpence all too dear,  
With that he call'd the tailor lown.  
He was a wight of high renown,  
And thou art but of low degree:  
'Tis pride that pulls the country down;

Then take thine auld cloak about thee.  
Some wine, ho!

**CASSIO**

Why, this is a more exquisite song than the other.

**IAGO**

Will you hear't again?

**CASSIO**

No; for I hold him to be unworthy of his place that does those things. Well, God's above all; and there be souls must be saved, and there be souls must not be saved.

**IAGO**

It's true, good lieutenant.

**CASSIO**

For mine own part,--no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,--I hope to be saved.

**IAGO**

And so do I too, lieutenant.

**CASSIO**

Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient. Let's have no more of this; let's to our affairs.--Forgive us our sins!--Gentlemen, let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen. I am drunk: this is my ancient; this is my right hand, and this is my left: I am not drunk now; I can stand well enough, and speak well enough.

**All**

Excellent well.

**CASSIO**

Why, very well then; you must not think then that I am drunk.

*Exit*

**MONTANO**

To the platform, masters; come, let's set the watch.

**IAGO**

You see this fellow that is gone before;  
He is a soldier fit to stand by Caesar  
And give direction: and do but see his vice;  
'Tis to his virtue a just equinox,  
The one as long as the other: 'tis pity of him.  
I fear the trust Othello puts him in.  
On some odd time of his infirmity,  
Will shake this island.

**MONTANO**

But is he often thus?

**IAGO**

'Tis evermore the prologue to his sleep:  
He'll watch the horologe a double set,  
If drink rock not his cradle.

**MONTANO**

It were well  
The general were put in mind of it.  
Perhaps he sees it not; or his good nature  
Prizes the virtue that appears in Cassio,

And looks not on his evils: is not this true?

*Enter RODERIGO*

**IAGO**

[Aside to him] How now, Roderigo!  
I pray you, after the lieutenant; go.

*Exit RODERIGO*

**MONTANO**

And 'tis great pity that the noble Moor  
Should hazard such a place as his own second  
With one of an ingraft infirmity:  
It were an honest action to say  
So to the Moor.

**IAGO**

Not I, for this fair island:  
I do love Cassio well; and would do much  
To cure him of this evil--But, hark! what noise?

*Cry within: 'Help! help!'*

*Re-enter CASSIO, driving in RODERIGO*

**CASSIO**

You rogue! you rascal!

**MONTANO**

What's the matter, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

A knave teach me my duty!  
I'll beat the knave into a twiggen bottle.

**RODERIGO**

Beat me!

**CASSIO**

Dost thou prate, rogue?

*Striking RODERIGO*

**MONTANO**

Nay, good lieutenant;

*Straying him*

I pray you, sir, hold your hand.

**CASSIO**

Let me go, sir,  
Or I'll knock you o'er the mazzard.

**MONTANO**

Come, come,  
you're drunk.

**CASSIO**

Drunk!

*They fight*

**IAGO**

[Aside to RODERIGO] Away, I say; go out, and cry a mutiny.

*Exit RODERIGO*

Nay, good lieutenant,--alas, gentlemen;--  
Help, ho!--Lieutenant,--sir,--Montano,--sir;  
Help, masters!--Here's a goodly watch indeed!

*Bell rings*

Who's that which rings the bell?--Diablo, ho!  
The town will rise: God's will, lieutenant, hold!  
You will be shamed for ever.

*Re-enter OTHELLO and Attendants*

**OTHELLO**

What is the matter here?

**MONTANO**

'Zounds, I bleed still; I am hurt to the death.

*Faints*

**OTHELLO**

Hold, for your lives!

**IAGO**

Hold, ho! Lieutenant,--sir--Montano,--gentlemen,--  
Have you forgot all sense of place and duty?  
Hold! the general speaks to you; hold, hold, for shame!

**OTHELLO**

Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?  
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that  
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?  
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:  
He that stirs next to carve for his own rage  
Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.  
Silence that dreadful bell: it frights the isle

From her propriety. What is the matter, masters?  
Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,  
Speak, who began this? on thy love, I charge thee.

## IAGO

I do not know: friends all but now, even now,  
In quarter, and in terms like bride and groom  
Devesting them for bed; and then, but now--  
As if some planet had unwitting men--  
Swords out, and tilting one at other's breast,  
In opposition bloody. I cannot speak  
Any beginning to this peevish odds;  
And would in action glorious I had lost  
Those legs that brought me to a part of it!

## OTHELLO

How comes it, Michael, you are thus forgot?

## CASSIO

I pray you, pardon me; I cannot speak.

## OTHELLO

Worthy Montano, you were wont be civil;  
The gravity and stillness of your youth  
The world hath noted, and your name is great  
In mouths of wisest censure: what's the matter,  
That you unlace your reputation thus  
And spend your rich opinion for the name  
Of a night-brawler? give me answer to it.

## MONTANO

Worthy Othello, I am hurt to danger:  
Your officer, Iago, can inform you,--  
While I spare speech, which something now  
offends me,--  
Of all that I do know: nor know I aught  
By me that's said or done amiss this night;



Unless self-charity be sometimes a vice,  
And to defend ourselves it be a sin  
When violence assails us.

## **OTHELLO**

Now, by heaven,  
My blood begins my safer guides to rule;  
And passion, having my best judgment collid,  
Assays to lead the way: if I once stir,  
Or do but lift this arm, the best of you  
Shall sink in my rebuke. Give me to know  
How this foul rout began, who set it on;  
And he that is approved in this offence,  
Though he had twinn'd with me, both at a birth,  
Shall lose me. What! in a town of war,  
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,  
To manage private and domestic quarrel,  
In night, and on the court and guard of safety!  
'Tis monstrous. Iago, who began't?

## **MONTANO**

If partially affined, or leagued in office,  
Thou dost deliver more or less than truth,  
Thou art no soldier.

## **IAGO**

Touch me not so near:  
I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth  
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;  
Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth  
Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general.  
Montano and myself being in speech,  
There comes a fellow crying out for help:  
And Cassio following him with determined sword,  
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman  
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause:  
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,  
Lest by his clamour--as it so fell out--  
The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot,

Outran my purpose; and I return'd the rather  
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,  
And Cassio high in oath; which till to-night  
I ne'er might say before. When I came back--  
For this was brief--I found them close together,  
At blow and thrust; even as again they were  
When you yourself did part them.  
More of this matter cannot I report:  
But men are men; the best sometimes forget:  
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,  
As men in rage strike those that wish them best,  
Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received  
From him that fled some strange indignity,  
Which patience could not pass.

## **OTHELLO**

I know, Iago,  
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,  
Making it light to Cassio. Cassio, I love thee  
But never more be officer of mine.

*Re-enter DESDEMONA, attended*

Look, if my gentle love be not raised up!  
I'll make thee an example.

## **DESDEMONA**

What's the matter?

## **OTHELLO**

All's well now, sweeting; come away to bed.  
Sir, for your hurts, myself will be your surgeon:  
Lead him off.

*To MONTANO, who is led off*

Iago, look with care about the town,  
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.  
Come, Desdemona: 'tis the soldiers' life

To have their balmy slumbers waked with strife.

*Exeunt all but IAGO and CASSIO*

**IAGO**

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

Ay, past all surgery.

**IAGO**

Marry, heaven forbid!

**CASSIO**

Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

**IAGO**

As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is an idle and most false imposition: oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again: you are but now cast in his mood, a punishment more in policy than in malice, even so as one would beat his offenceless dog to affright an imperious lion: sue to him again, and he's yours.

**CASSIO**

I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so

indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot?  
and squabble? swagger? swear? and discourse  
fustian with one's own shadow? O thou invisible  
spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by,  
let us call thee devil!

**IAGO**

What was he that you followed with your sword? What  
had he done to you?

**CASSIO**

I know not.

**IAGO**

Is't possible?

**CASSIO**

I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly;  
a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. O God, that men  
should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away  
their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance  
revel and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

**IAGO**

Why, but you are now well enough: how came you thus  
recovered?

**CASSIO**

It hath pleased the devil drunkenness to give place  
to the devil wrath; one unperfectness shows me  
another, to make me frankly despise myself.

**IAGO**

Come, you are too severe a moraler: as the time,

the place, and the condition of this country stands, I could heartily wish this had not befallen; but, since it is as it is, mend it for your own good.

**CASSIO**

I will ask him for my place again; he shall tell me I am a drunkard! Had I as many mouths as Hydra, such an answer would stop them all. To be now a sensible man, by and by a fool, and presently a beast! O strange! Every inordinate cup is unblessed and the ingredient is a devil.

**IAGO**

Come, come, good wine is a good familiar creature, if it be well used: exclaim no more against it. And, good lieutenant, I think you think I love you.

**CASSIO**

I have well approved it, sir. I drunk!

**IAGO**

You or any man living may be drunk! at a time, man. I'll tell you what you shall do. Our general's wife is now the general: may say so in this respect, for that he hath devoted and given up himself to the contemplation, mark, and denotement of her parts and graces: confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again: she is of so free, so kind, so apt, so blessed a disposition, she holds it a vice in her goodness not to do more than she is requested: this broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter; and, my fortunes against any lay worth naming, this crack of your love shall grow stronger than it was before.

**CASSIO**

You advise me well.

## IAGO

I protest, in the sincerity of love and honest kindness.

## CASSIO

I think it freely; and betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me: I am desperate of my fortunes if they cheque me here.

## IAGO

You are in the right. Good night, lieutenant; I must to the watch.

CASSIO: Good night, honest Iago.

*Exit*

## IAGO

And what's he then that says I play the villain?  
When this advice is free I give and honest,  
Probal to thinking and indeed the course  
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy  
The inclining Desdemona to subdue  
In any honest suit: she's framed as fruitful  
As the free elements. And then for her  
To win the Moor--were't to renounce his baptism,  
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,  
His soul is so enfetted to her love,  
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
Even as her appetite shall play the god  
With his weak function. How am I then a villain  
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!  
When devils will the blackest sins put on,  
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool  
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes  
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,  
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,

That she repeals him for her body's lust;  
And by how much she strives to do him good,  
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.  
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,  
And out of her own goodness make the net  
That shall enmesh them all.

*Re-enter RODERIGO*

How now, Roderigo!

## **RODERIGO**

I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound that  
hunts, but one that fills up the cry. My money is  
almost spent; I have been to-night exceedingly well  
cudgelled; and I think the issue will be, I shall  
have so much experience for my pains, and so, with  
no money at all and a little more wit, return again to Venice.

## **IAGO**

How poor are they that have not patience!  
What wound did ever heal but by degrees?  
Thou know'st we work by wit, and not by witchcraft;  
And wit depends on dilatory time.  
Does't not go well? Cassio hath beaten thee.  
And thou, by that small hurt, hast cashier'd Cassio:  
Though other things grow fair against the sun,  
Yet fruits that blossom first will first be ripe:  
Content thyself awhile. By the mass, 'tis morning;  
Pleasure and action make the hours seem short.  
Retire thee; go where thou art billeted:  
Away, I say; thou shalt know more hereafter:  
Nay, get thee gone.

*Exit RODERIGO*

Two things are to be done:  
My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress;  
I'll set her on;  
Myself the while to draw the Moor apart,

And bring him jump when he may Cassio find  
Soliciting his wife: ay, that's the way  
Dull not device by coldness and delay.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 2, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Before the castle.

*Enter CASSIO and some Musicians*

### CASSIO

Masters, play here; I will content your pains;  
Something that's brief; and bid 'Good morrow, general.'

*Music*

*Enter Clown*

### Clown

Why masters, have your instruments been in Naples,  
that they speak i' the nose thus?

### First Musician

How, sir, how!

### Clown

Are these, I pray you, wind-instruments?

### First Musician

Ay, marry, are they, sir.

### Clown

O, thereby hangs a tail.

### First Musician

Whereby hangs a tale, sir?

**Clown**

Marry. sir, by many a wind-instrument that I know.  
But, masters, here's money for you: and the general  
so likes your music, that he desires you, for love's  
sake, to make no more noise with it.

**First Musician**

Well, sir, we will not.

**Clown**

If you have any music that may not be heard, to't  
again: but, as they say to hear music the general  
does not greatly care.

**First Musician**

We have none such, sir.

**Clown**

Then put up your pipes in your bag, for I'll away:  
go; vanish into air; away!

*Exeunt Musicians*

**CASSIO**

Dost thou hear, my honest friend?

**Clown**

No, I hear not your honest friend; I hear you.

**CASSIO**

Prithee, keep up thy quillets. There's a poor piece of gold for thee: if the gentlewoman that attends the general's wife be stirring, tell her there's one Cassio entreats her a little favour of speech: wilt thou do this?

**Clown**

She is stirring, sir: if she will stir hither, I shall seem to notify unto her.

**CASSIO**

Do, good my friend.

*Exit Clown*

*Enter IAGO*

In happy time, Iago.

**IAGO**

You have not been a-bed, then?

**CASSIO**

Why, no; the day had broke  
Before we parted. I have made bold, Iago,  
To send in to your wife: my suit to her  
Is, that she will to virtuous Desdemona  
Procure me some access.

**IAGO**

I'll send her to you presently;  
And I'll devise a mean to draw the Moor  
Out of the way, that your converse and business  
May be more free.

**CASSIO**

I humbly thank you for't.

*Exit IAGO*

I never knew  
A Florentine more kind and honest.

*Enter EMILIA*

**EMILIA**

Good morrow, good Lieutenant: I am sorry  
For your displeasure; but all will sure be well.  
The general and his wife are talking of it;  
And she speaks for you stoutly: the Moor replies,  
That he you hurt is of great fame in Cyprus,  
And great affinity, and that in wholesome wisdom  
He might not but refuse you; but he protests he loves you  
And needs no other suitor but his likings  
To take the safest occasion by the front  
To bring you in again.

**CASSIO**

Yet, I beseech you,  
If you think fit, or that it may be done,  
Give me advantage of some brief discourse  
With Desdemona alone.

**EMILIA**

Pray you, come in;  
I will bestow you where you shall have time  
To speak your bosom freely.

**CASSIO**

I am much bound to you.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in the castle.

*Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and Gentlemen*

### OTHELLO

These letters give, Iago, to the pilot;  
And by him do my duties to the senate:  
That done, I will be walking on the works;  
Repair there to me.

### IAGO

Well, my good lord, I'll do't.

### OTHELLO

This fortification, gentlemen, shall we see't?

### Gentleman

We'll wait upon your lordship.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The garden of the castle.

*Enter DESDEMONA, CASSIO, and EMILIA*

### DESDEMONA

Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do  
All my abilities in thy behalf.

### EMILIA

Good madam, do: I warrant it grieves my husband,  
As if the case were his.

### DESDEMONA

O, that's an honest fellow. Do not doubt, Cassio,  
But I will have my lord and you again  
As friendly as you were.

### CASSIO

Bounteous madam,  
Whatever shall become of Michael Cassio,  
He's never any thing but your true servant.

### DESDEMONA

I know't; I thank you. You do love my lord:  
You have known him long; and be you well assured  
He shall in strangeness stand no further off  
Than in a polite distance.

### CASSIO

Ay, but, lady,

That policy may either last so long,  
Or feed upon such nice and waterish diet,  
Or breed itself so out of circumstance,  
That, I being absent and my place supplied,  
My general will forget my love and service.

**DESDEMONA**

Do not doubt that; before Emilia here  
I give thee warrant of thy place: assure thee,  
If I do vow a friendship, I'll perform it  
To the last article: my lord shall never rest;  
I'll watch him tame and talk him out of patience;  
His bed shall seem a school, his board a shrift;  
I'll intermingle every thing he does  
With Cassio's suit: therefore be merry, Cassio;  
For thy solicitor shall rather die  
Than give thy cause away.

**EMILIA**

Madam, here comes my lord.

**CASSIO**

Madam, I'll take my leave.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, stay, and hear me speak.

**CASSIO**

Madam, not now: I am very ill at ease,  
Unfit for mine own purposes.

**DESDEMONA**

Well, do your discretion.

*Exit CASSIO*



*Enter OTHELLO and IAGO*

**IAGO**

Ha! I like not that.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou say?

**IAGO**

Nothing, my lord: or if--I know not what.

**OTHELLO**

Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?

**IAGO**

Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,  
That he would steal away so guilty-like,  
Seeing you coming.

**OTHELLO**

I do believe 'twas he.

**DESDEMONA**

How now, my lord!  
I have been talking with a suitor here,  
A man that languishes in your displeasure.

**OTHELLO**

Who is't you mean?

**DESDEMONA**

Why, your lieutenant, Cassio. Good my lord,  
If I have any grace or power to move you,  
His present reconciliation take;  
For if he be not one that truly loves you,  
That errs in ignorance and not in cunning,  
I have no judgment in an honest face:  
I prithee, call him back.

**OTHELLO**

Went he hence now?

**DESDEMONA**

Ay, sooth; so humbled  
That he hath left part of his grief with me,  
To suffer with him. Good love, call him back.

**OTHELLO**

Not now, sweet Desdemona; some other time.

**DESDEMONA**

But shall't be shortly?

**OTHELLO**

The sooner, sweet, for you.

**DESDEMONA**

Shall't be to-night at supper?

**OTHELLO**

No, not to-night.

**DESDEMONA**

To-morrow dinner, then?

## **OTHELLO**

I shall not dine at home;  
I meet the captains at the citadel.

## **DESDEMONA**

Why, then, to-morrow night; or Tuesday morn;  
On Tuesday noon, or night; on Wednesday morn:  
I prithee, name the time, but let it not  
Exceed three days: in faith, he's penitent;  
And yet his trespass, in our common reason--  
Save that, they say, the wars must make examples  
Out of their best--is not almost a fault  
To incur a private cheque. When shall he come?  
Tell me, Othello: I wonder in my soul,  
What you would ask me, that I should deny,  
Or stand so mammering on. What! Michael Cassio,  
That came a-wooing with you, and so many a time,  
When I have spoke of you dispraisingly,  
Hath ta'en your part; to have so much to do  
To bring him in! Trust me, I could do much,--

## **OTHELLO**

Prithee, no more: let him come when he will;  
I will deny thee nothing.

## **DESDEMONA**

Why, this is not a boon;  
'Tis as I should entreat you wear your gloves,  
Or feed on nourishing dishes, or keep you warm,  
Or sue to you to do a peculiar profit  
To your own person: nay, when I have a suit  
Wherein I mean to touch your love indeed,  
It shall be full of poise and difficult weight  
And fearful to be granted.

## **OTHELLO**

I will deny thee nothing:  
Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this,  
To leave me but a little to myself.

**DESDEMONA**

Shall I deny you? no: farewell, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

Farewell, my Desdemona: I'll come to thee straight.

**DESDEMONA**

Emilia, come. Be as your fancies teach you;  
Whate'er you be, I am obedient.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

**OTHELLO**

Excellent wretch! Perdition catch my soul,  
But I do love thee! and when I love thee not,  
Chaos is come again.

**IAGO**

My noble lord--

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou say, Iago?

**IAGO**

Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady,  
Know of your love?

**OTHELLO**

He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?

**IAGO**

But for a satisfaction of my thought;  
No further harm.

**OTHELLO**

Why of thy thought, Iago?

**IAGO**

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

**OTHELLO**

O, yes; and went between us very oft.

**IAGO**

Indeed!

**OTHELLO**

Indeed! ay, indeed: discern'st thou aught in that?  
Is he not honest?

**IAGO**

Honest, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

Honest! ay, honest.

**IAGO**

My lord, for aught I know.

**OTHELLO**

What dost thou think?

**IAGO**

Think, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

Think, my lord!  
By heaven, he echoes me,  
As if there were some monster in his thought  
Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something:  
I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that,  
When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like?  
And when I told thee he was of my counsel  
In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst 'Indeed!'  
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,  
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain  
Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me,  
Show me thy thought.

**IAGO**

My lord, you know I love you.

**OTHELLO**

I think thou dost;  
And, for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty,  
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,  
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:  
For such things in a false disloyal knave  
Are tricks of custom, but in a man that's just  
They are close delations, working from the heart  
That passion cannot rule.

**IAGO**

For Michael Cassio,  
I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.

**OTHELLO**

I think so too.

**IAGO**

Men should be what they seem;  
Or those that be not, would they might seem none!

**OTHELLO**

Certain, men should be what they seem.

**IAGO**

Why, then, I think Cassio's an honest man.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, yet there's more in this:  
I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings,  
As thou dost ruminat, and give thy worst of thoughts  
The worst of words.

**IAGO**

Good my lord, pardon me:  
Though I am bound to every act of duty,  
I am not bound to that all slaves are free to.  
Utter my thoughts? Why, say they are vile and false;  
As where's that palace whereinto foul things  
Sometimes intrude not? who has a breast so pure,  
But some uncleanly apprehensions  
Keep leets and law-days and in session sit  
With meditations lawful?

**OTHELLO**

Thou dost conspire against thy friend, Iago,  
If thou but think'st him wrong'd and makest his ear  
A stranger to thy thoughts.

## **IAGO**

I do beseech you--  
Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,  
As, I confess, it is my nature's plague  
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy  
Shapes faults that are not--that your wisdom yet,  
From one that so imperfectly conceits,  
Would take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble  
Out of his scattering and unsure observance.  
It were not for your quiet nor your good,  
Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,  
To let you know my thoughts.

## **OTHELLO**

What dost thou mean?

## **IAGO**

Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls:  
Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;  
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands:  
But he that filches from me my good name  
Robs me of that which not enriches him  
And makes me poor indeed.

## **OTHELLO**

By heaven, I'll know thy thoughts.

## **IAGO**

You cannot, if my heart were in your hand;  
Nor shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

## **OTHELLO**

Ha!

## **IAGO**



O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;  
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on; that cuckold lives in bliss  
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;  
But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er  
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

## **OTHELLO**

O misery!

## **IAGO**

Poor and content is rich and rich enough,  
But riches fineless is as poor as winter  
To him that ever fears he shall be poor.  
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend  
From jealousy!

## **OTHELLO**

Why, why is this?  
Think'st thou I'd make a lie of jealousy,  
To follow still the changes of the moon  
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt  
Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,  
When I shall turn the business of my soul  
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,  
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous  
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,  
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;  
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:  
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw  
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;  
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;  
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;  
And on the proof, there is no more but this,--  
Away at once with love or jealousy!

## **IAGO**

I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason  
To show the love and duty that I bear you  
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,  
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.  
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;  
Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure:  
I would not have your free and noble nature,  
Out of self-bounty, be abused; look to't:  
I know our country disposition well;  
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks  
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience  
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

**OTHELLO**

Dost thou say so?

**IAGO**

She did deceive her father, marrying you;  
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,  
She loved them most.

**OTHELLO**

And so she did.

**IAGO**

Why, go to then;  
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,  
To seal her father's eyes up close as oak-  
He thought 'twas witchcraft--but I am much to blame;  
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon  
For too much loving you.

**OTHELLO**

I am bound to thee for ever.

**IAGO**

I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

**OTHELLO**

Not a jot, not a jot.

**IAGO**

I' faith, I fear it has.  
I hope you will consider what is spoke  
Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved:  
I am to pray you not to strain my speech  
To grosser issues nor to larger reach  
Than to suspicion.

**OTHELLO**

I will not.

**IAGO**

Should you do so, my lord,  
My speech should fall into such vile success  
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend--  
My lord, I see you're moved.

**OTHELLO**

No, not much moved:  
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.

**IAGO**

Long live she so! and long live you to think so!

**OTHELLO**

And yet, how nature erring from itself,--

**IAGO**

Ay, there's the point: as--to be bold with you--  
Not to affect many proposed matches  
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,  
Whereto we see in all things nature tends--  
Foh! one may smell in such a will most rank,  
Foul disproportion thoughts unnatural.  
But pardon me; I do not in position  
Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear  
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment,  
May fall to match you with her country forms  
And happily repent.

## **OTHELLO**

Farewell, farewell:  
If more thou dost perceive, let me know more;  
Set on thy wife to observe: leave me, Iago:

## **IAGO**

[Going] My lord, I take my leave.

## **OTHELLO**

Why did I marry? This honest creature doubtless  
Sees and knows more, much more, than he unfolds.

## **IAGO**

[Returning] My lord, I would I might entreat  
your honour  
To scan this thing no further; leave it to time:  
Though it be fit that Cassio have his place,  
For sure, he fills it up with great ability,  
Yet, if you please to hold him off awhile,  
You shall by that perceive him and his means:  
Note, if your lady strain his entertainment  
With any strong or vehement importunity;  
Much will be seen in that. In the mean time,  
Let me be thought too busy in my fears--  
As worthy cause I have to fear I am--  
And hold her free, I do beseech your honour.

## **OTHELLO**

Fear not my government.

## **IAGO**

I once more take my leave.

*Exit*

## **OTHELLO**

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,  
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,  
Of human dealings. If I do prove her haggard,  
Though that her jesses were my dear heartstrings,  
I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind,  
To pray at fortune. Haply, for I am black  
And have not those soft parts of conversation  
That chamberers have, or for I am declined  
Into the vale of years,--yet that's not much--  
She's gone. I am abused; and my relief  
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,  
That we can call these delicate creatures ours,  
And not their appetites! I had rather be a toad,  
And live upon the vapour of a dungeon,  
Than keep a corner in the thing I love  
For others' uses. Yet, 'tis the plague of great ones;  
Prerogated are they less than the base;  
'Tis destiny unshunnable, like death:  
Even then this forked plague is fated to us  
When we do quicken. Desdemona comes:

*Re-enter DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!  
I'll not believe't.

## **DESDEMONA**

How now, my dear Othello!

Your dinner, and the generous islanders  
By you invited, do attend your presence.

**OTHELLO**

I am to blame.

**DESDEMONA**

Why do you speak so faintly?  
Are you not well?

**OTHELLO**

I have a pain upon my forehead here.

**DESDEMONA**

'Faith, that's with watching; 'twill away again:  
Let me but bind it hard, within this hour  
It will be well.

**OTHELLO**

Your napkin is too little:

*He puts the handkerchief from him; and it drops*

Let it alone. Come, I'll go in with you.

**DESDEMONA**

I am very sorry that you are not well.

*Exeunt OTHELLO and DESDEMONA*

**EMILIA**

I am glad I have found this napkin:  
This was her first remembrance from the Moor:  
My wayward husband hath a hundred times

Woo'd me to steal it; but she so loves the token,  
For he conjured her she should ever keep it,  
That she reserves it evermore about her  
To kiss and talk to. I'll have the work ta'en out,  
And give't Iago: what he will do with it  
Heaven knows, not I;  
I nothing but to please his fantasy.

*Re-enter Iago*

**IAGO**

How now! what do you here alone?

**EMILIA**

Do not you chide; I have a thing for you.

**IAGO**

A thing for me? it is a common thing--

**EMILIA**

Ha!

**IAGO**

To have a foolish wife.

**EMILIA**

O, is that all? What will you give me now  
For the same handkerchief?

**IAGO**

What handkerchief?

**EMILIA**

What handkerchief?

Why, that the Moor first gave to Desdemona;  
That which so often you did bid me steal.

**IAGO**

Hast stol'n it from her?

**EMILIA**

No, 'faith; she let it drop by negligence.  
And, to the advantage, I, being here, took't up.  
Look, here it is.

**IAGO**

A good wench; give it me.

**EMILIA**

What will you do with 't, that you have been  
so earnest  
To have me filch it?

**IAGO**

[Snatching it] Why, what's that to you?

**EMILIA**

If it be not for some purpose of import,  
Give't me again: poor lady, she'll run mad  
When she shall lack it.

**IAGO**

Be not acknown on 't; I have use for it.  
Go, leave me.

*Exit EMILIA*



I will in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin,  
And let him find it. Trifles light as air  
Are to the jealous confirmations strong  
As proofs of holy writ: this may do something.  
The Moor already changes with my poison:  
Dangerous conceits are, in their natures, poisons.  
Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,  
But with a little act upon the blood.  
Burn like the mines of Sulphur. I did say so:  
Look, where he comes!

*Re-enter OTHELLO*

Not poppy, nor mandragora,  
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,  
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep  
Which thou owedst yesterday.

**OTHELLO**

Ha! ha! false to me?

**IAGO**

Why, how now, general! no more of that.

**OTHELLO**

Avaunt! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:  
I swear 'tis better to be much abused  
Than but to know't a little.

**IAGO**

How now, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

What sense had I of her stol'n hours of lust?  
I saw't not, thought it not, it harm'd not me:  
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;  
I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips:

He that is robb'd, not wanting what is stol'n,  
Let him not know't, and he's not robb'd at all.

**IAGO**

I am sorry to hear this.

**OTHELLO**

I had been happy, if the general camp,  
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,  
So I had nothing known. O, now, for ever  
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!  
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,  
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!  
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,  
The royal banner, and all quality,  
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!  
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats  
The immortal Jove's dead clamours counterfeit,  
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

**IAGO**

Is't possible, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,  
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof:  
Or by the worth of man's eternal soul,  
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog  
Than answer my waked wrath!

**IAGO**

Is't come to this?

**OTHELLO**

Make me to see't; or, at the least, so prove it,  
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop  
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!

**IAGO**

My noble lord,--

**OTHELLO**

If thou dost slander her and torture me,  
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;  
On horror's head horrors accumulate;  
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;  
For nothing canst thou to damnation add  
Greater than that.

**IAGO**

O grace! O heaven forgive me!  
Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?  
God be wi' you; take mine office. O wretched fool.  
That livest to make thine honesty a vice!  
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,  
To be direct and honest is not safe.  
I thank you for this profit; and from hence  
I'll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, stay: thou shouldst be honest.

**IAGO**

I should be wise, for honesty's a fool  
And loses that it works for.

**OTHELLO**

By the world,  
I think my wife be honest and think she is not;  
I think that thou art just and think thou art not.

I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh  
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black  
As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,  
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,  
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

**IAGO**

I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:  
I do repent me that I put it to you.  
You would be satisfied?

**OTHELLO**

Would! nay, I will.

**IAGO**

And may: but, how? how satisfied, my lord?  
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on--  
Behold her topp'd?

**OTHELLO**

Death and damnation! O!

**IAGO**

It were a tedious difficulty, I think,  
To bring them to that prospect: damn them then,  
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster  
More than their own! What then? how then?  
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?  
It is impossible you should see this,  
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,  
As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross  
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,  
If imputation and strong circumstances,  
Which lead directly to the door of truth,  
Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.

**OTHELLO**

Give me a living reason she's disloyal.

**IAGO**

I do not like the office:  
But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,  
Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love,  
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;  
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,  
I could not sleep.  
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,  
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:  
One of this kind is Cassio:  
In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,  
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves;'  
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,  
Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,  
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots  
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg  
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then  
Cried 'Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!'

**OTHELLO**

O monstrous! monstrous!

**IAGO**

Nay, this was but his dream.

**OTHELLO**

But this denoted a foregone conclusion:  
'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.

**IAGO**

And this may help to thicken other proofs  
That do demonstrate thinly.

## **OTHELLO**

I'll tear her all to pieces.

## **IAGO**

Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done;  
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,  
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief  
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

## **OTHELLO**

I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

## **IAGO**

I know not that; but such a handkerchief--  
I am sure it was your wife's--did I to-day  
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

## **OTHELLO**

If it be that--

## **IAGO**

If it be that, or any that was hers,  
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

## **OTHELLO**

O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!  
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.  
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;  
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.  
'Tis gone.  
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!  
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne  
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,  
For 'tis of aspics' tongues!

**IAGO**

Yet be content.

**OTHELLO**

O, blood, blood, blood!

**IAGO**

Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.

**OTHELLO**

Never, Iago: Like to the Pontic sea,  
Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,  
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,  
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,

*Kneels*

In the due reverence of a sacred vow  
I here engage my words.

**IAGO**

Do not rise yet.

*Kneels*

Witness, you ever-burning lights above,  
You elements that clip us round about,  
Witness that here Iago doth give up  
The execution of his wit, hands, heart,  
To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,  
And to obey shall be in me remorse,  
What bloody business ever.

*They rise*

**OTHELLO**

I greet thy love,  
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous,  
And will upon the instant put thee to't:  
Within these three days let me hear thee say  
That Cassio's not alive.

**IAGO**

My friend is dead; 'tis done at your request:  
But let her live.

**OTHELLO**

Damn her, lewd minx! O, damn her!  
Come, go with me apart; I will withdraw,  
To furnish me with some swift means of death  
For the fair devil. Now art thou my lieutenant.

**IAGO**

I am your own for ever.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Before the castle.

*Enter DESDEMONA, EMILIA, and Clown*

**DESDEMONA**

Do you know, sirrah, where Lieutenant Cassio lies?

**Clown**

I dare not say he lies any where.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, man?

**Clown**

He's a soldier, and for one to say a soldier lies,  
is stabbing.

**DESDEMONA**

Go to: where lodges he?

**Clown**

To tell you where he lodges, is to tell you where I lie.

**DESDEMONA**

Can any thing be made of this?

**Clown**

I know not where he lodges, and for me to devise a lodging and say he lies here or he lies there, were to lie in mine own throat.

**DESDEMONA**

Can you inquire him out, and be edified by report?

**Clown**

I will catechise the world for him; that is, make questions, and by them answer.

**DESDEMONA**

Seek him, bid him come hither: tell him I have moved my lord on his behalf, and hope all will be well.

**Clown**

To do this is within the compass of man's wit: and therefore I will attempt the doing it.

*Exit*

**DESDEMONA**

Where should I lose that handkerchief, Emilia?

**EMILIA**

I know not, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

Believe me, I had rather have lost my purse  
Full of crusadoes: and, but my noble Moor  
Is true of mind and made of no such baseness  
As jealous creatures are, it were enough  
To put him to ill thinking.

**EMILIA**

Is he not jealous?

**DESDEMONA**

Who, he? I think the sun where he was born  
Drew all such humours from him.

**EMILIA**

Look, where he comes.

**DESDEMONA**

I will not leave him now till Cassio  
Be call'd to him.

*Enter OTHELLO*

How is't with you, my lord

**OTHELLO**

Well, my good lady.

*Aside*

O, hardness to dissemble!--  
How do you, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

Well, my good lord.

**OTHELLO**

Give me your hand: this hand is moist, my lady.

**DESDEMONA**

It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.

**OTHELLO**

This argues fruitfulness and liberal heart:  
Hot, hot, and moist: this hand of yours requires  
A sequester from liberty, fasting and prayer,  
Much castigation, exercise devout;  
For here's a young and sweating devil here,  
That commonly rebels. 'Tis a good hand,  
A frank one.

**DESDEMONA**

You may, indeed, say so;  
For 'twas that hand that gave away my heart.

**OTHELLO**

A liberal hand: the hearts of old gave hands;  
But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.

**DESDEMONA**

I cannot speak of this. Come now, your promise.

**OTHELLO**

What promise, chuck?

**DESDEMONA**

I have sent to bid Cassio come speak with you.

**OTHELLO**

I have a salt and sorry rheum offends me;  
Lend me thy handkerchief.

**DESDEMONA**

Here, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That which I gave you.

**DESDEMONA**

I have it not about me.

**OTHELLO**

Not?

**DESDEMONA**

No, indeed, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That is a fault.  
That handkerchief  
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;  
She was a charmer, and could almost read  
The thoughts of people: she told her, while  
she kept it,  
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father  
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it  
Or made gift of it, my father's eye  
Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt  
After new fancies: she, dying, gave it me;  
And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,  
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;  
Make it a darling like your precious eye;  
To lose't or give't away were such perdition  
As nothing else could match.

**DESDEMONA**

Is't possible?

## **OTHELLO**

'Tis true: there's magic in the web of it:  
A sibyl, that had number'd in the world  
The sun to course two hundred compasses,  
In her prophetic fury sew'd the work;  
The worms were hallow'd that did breed the silk;  
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful  
Conserved of maidens' hearts.

## **DESDEMONA**

Indeed! is't true?

## **OTHELLO**

Most veritable; therefore look to't well.

## **DESDEMONA**

Then would to God that I had never seen't!

## **OTHELLO**

Ha! wherefore?

## **DESDEMONA**

Why do you speak so startingly and rash?

## **OTHELLO**

Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out  
o' the way?

## **DESDEMONA**

Heaven bless us!

## **OTHELLO**

Say you?

**DESDEMONA**

It is not lost; but what an if it were?

**OTHELLO**

How!

**DESDEMONA**

I say, it is not lost.

**OTHELLO**

Fetch't, let me see't.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.  
This is a trick to put me from my suit:  
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

**OTHELLO**

Fetch me the handkerchief: my mind misgives.

**DESDEMONA**

Come, come;  
You'll never meet a more sufficient man.

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

I pray, talk me of Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

A man that all his time  
Hath founded his good fortunes on your love,  
Shared dangers with you,--

**OTHELLO**

The handkerchief!

**DESDEMONA**

In sooth, you are to blame.

**OTHELLO**

Away!

*Exit*

**EMILIA**

Is not this man jealous?

**DESDEMONA**

I ne'er saw this before.  
Sure, there's some wonder in this handkerchief:  
I am most unhappy in the loss of it.

**EMILIA**

'Tis not a year or two shows us a man:  
They are all but stomachs, and we all but food;  
To eat us hungerly, and when they are full,  
They belch us. Look you, Cassio and my husband!



*Enter CASSIO and IAGO*

**IAGO**

There is no other way; 'tis she must do't:  
And, lo, the happiness! go, and importune her.

**DESDEMONA**

How now, good Cassio! what's the news with you?

**CASSIO**

Madam, my former suit: I do beseech you  
That by your virtuous means I may again  
Exist, and be a member of his love  
Whom I with all the office of my heart  
Entirely honour: I would not be delay'd.  
If my offence be of such mortal kind  
That nor my service past, nor present sorrows,  
Nor purposed merit in futurity,  
Can ransom me into his love again,  
But to know so must be my benefit;  
So shall I clothe me in a forced content,  
And shut myself up in some other course,  
To fortune's alms.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, thrice-gentle Cassio!  
My advocacy is not now in tune;  
My lord is not my lord; nor should I know him,  
Were he in favour as in humour alter'd.  
So help me every spirit sanctified,  
As I have spoken for you all my best  
And stood within the blank of his displeasure  
For my free speech! you must awhile be patient:  
What I can do I will; and more I will  
Than for myself I dare: let that suffice you.

**IAGO**

Is my lord angry?

**EMILIA**

He went hence but now,  
And certainly in strange unquietness.

**IAGO**

Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,  
When it hath blown his ranks into the air,  
And, like the devil, from his very arm  
Puff'd his own brother:--and can he be angry?  
Something of moment then: I will go meet him:  
There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.

**DESDEMONA**

I prithee, do so.

*Exit IAGO*

Something, sure, of state,  
Either from Venice, or some unhatch'd practise  
Made demonstrable here in Cyprus to him,  
Hath puddled his clear spirit: and in such cases  
Men's natures wrangle with inferior things,  
Though great ones are their object. 'Tis even so;  
For let our finger ache, and it indues  
Our other healthful members even to that sense  
Of pain: nay, we must think men are not gods,  
Nor of them look for such observances  
As fit the bridal. Beshrew me much, Emilia,  
I was, unhandsome warrior as I am,  
Arraigning his unkindness with my soul;  
But now I find I had suborn'd the witness,  
And he's indicted falsely.

**EMILIA**

Pray heaven it be state-matters, as you think,  
And no conception nor no jealous toy

Concerning you.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas the day! I never gave him cause.

**EMILIA**

But jealous souls will not be answer'd so;  
They are not ever jealous for the cause,  
But jealous for they are jealous: 'tis a monster  
Begot upon itself, born on itself.

**DESDEMONA**

Heaven keep that monster from Othello's mind!

**EMILIA**

Lady, amen.

**DESDEMONA**

I will go seek him. Cassio, walk hereabout:  
If I do find him fit, I'll move your suit  
And seek to effect it to my uttermost.

**CASSIO**

I humbly thank your ladyship.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

*Enter BIANCA*

**BIANCA**

Save you, friend Cassio!

**CASSIO**

What make you from home?  
How is it with you, my most fair Bianca?  
I' faith, sweet love, I was coming to your house.

**BIANCA**

And I was going to your lodging, Cassio.  
What, keep a week away? seven days and nights?  
Eight score eight hours? and lovers' absent hours,  
More tedious than the dial eight score times?  
O weary reckoning!

**CASSIO**

Pardon me, Bianca:  
I have this while with leaden thoughts been press'd:  
But I shall, in a more continue time,  
Strike off this score of absence. Sweet Bianca,

*Giving her DESDEMONA's handkerchief*

Take me this work out.

**BIANCA**

O Cassio, whence came this?  
This is some token from a newer friend:  
To the felt absence now I feel a cause:  
Is't come to this? Well, well.

**CASSIO**

Go to, woman!  
Throw your vile guesses in the devil's teeth,  
From whence you have them. You are jealous now  
That this is from some mistress, some remembrance:  
No, in good troth, Bianca.

**BIANCA**

Why, whose is it?

**CASSIO**

I know not, sweet: I found it in my chamber.  
I like the work well: ere it be demanded--  
As like enough it will--I'd have it copied:  
Take it, and do't; and leave me for this time.

**BIANCA**

Leave you! wherefore?

**CASSIO**

I do attend here on the general;  
And think it no addition, nor my wish,  
To have him see me woman'd.

**BIANCA**

Why, I pray you?

**CASSIO**

Not that I love you not.

**BIANCA**

But that you do not love me.  
I pray you, bring me on the way a little,  
And say if I shall see you soon at night.

**CASSIO**

'Tis but a little way that I can bring you;  
For I attend here: but I'll see you soon.

**BIANCA**

'Tis very good; I must be circumstanced.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Cyprus. Before the castle.

*Enter OTHELLO and IAGO*

**IAGO**

Will you think so?

**OTHELLO**

Think so, Iago!

**IAGO**

What,  
To kiss in private?

**OTHELLO**

An unauthorized kiss.

**IAGO**

Or to be naked with her friend in bed  
An hour or more, not meaning any harm?

**OTHELLO**

Naked in bed, Iago, and not mean harm!  
It is hypocrisy against the devil:  
They that mean virtuously, and yet do so,  
The devil their virtue tempts, and they tempt heaven.

**IAGO**

So they do nothing, 'tis a venial slip:  
But if I give my wife a handkerchief,--

**OTHELLO**

What then?

**IAGO**

Why, then, 'tis hers, my lord; and, being hers,  
She may, I think, bestow't on any man.

**OTHELLO**

She is protectress of her honour too:  
May she give that?

**IAGO**

Her honour is an essence that's not seen;  
They have it very oft that have it not:  
But, for the handkerchief,--

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, I would most gladly have forgot it.  
Thou said'st, it comes o'er my memory,  
As doth the raven o'er the infected house,  
Boding to all--he had my handkerchief.

**IAGO**

Ay, what of that?

**OTHELLO**

That's not so good now.

**IAGO**

What,



If I had said I had seen him do you wrong?  
Or heard him say,--as knaves be such abroad,  
Who having, by their own importunate suit,  
Or voluntary dotage of some mistress,  
Convinced or supplied them, cannot choose  
But they must blab--

**OTHELLO**

Hath he said any thing?

**IAGO**

He hath, my lord; but be you well assured,  
No more than he'll unswear.

**OTHELLO**

What hath he said?

**IAGO**

'Faith, that he did--I know not what he did.

**OTHELLO**

What? what?

**IAGO**

Lie--

**OTHELLO**

With her?

**IAGO**

With her, on her; what you will.

**OTHELLO**

Lie with her! lie on her! We say lie on her, when  
they belie her. Lie with her! that's fulsome.  
--Handkerchief--confessions--handkerchief!--To  
confess, and be hanged for his labour;--first, to be  
hanged, and then to confess.--I tremble at it.  
Nature would not invest herself in such shadowing  
passion without some instruction. It is not words  
that shake me thus. Pish! Noses, ears, and lips.  
--Is't possible?--Confess--handkerchief!--O devil!--

*Falls in a trance*

**IAGO**

Work on,  
My medicine, work! Thus credulous fools are caught;  
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,  
All guiltless, meet reproach. What, ho! my lord!  
My lord, I say! Othello!

*Enter CASSIO*

How now, Cassio!

**CASSIO**

What's the matter?

**IAGO**

My lord is fall'n into an epilepsy:  
This is his second fit; he had one yesterday.

**CASSIO**

Rub him about the temples.

**IAGO**

No, forbear;  
The lethargy must have his quiet course:

If not, he foams at mouth and by and by  
Breaks out to savage madness. Look he stirs:  
Do you withdraw yourself a little while,  
He will recover straight: when he is gone,  
I would on great occasion speak with you.

*Exit CASSIO*

How is it, general? have you not hurt your head?

**OTHELLO**

Dost thou mock me?

**IAGO**

I mock you! no, by heaven.  
Would you would bear your fortune like a man!

**OTHELLO**

A horned man's a monster and a beast.

**IAGO**

There's many a beast then in a populous city,  
And many a civil monster.

**OTHELLO**

Did he confess it?

**IAGO**

Good sir, be a man;  
Think every bearded fellow that's but yoked  
May draw with you: there's millions now alive  
That nightly lie in those improper beds  
Which they dare swear peculiar: your case is better.  
O, 'tis the spite of hell, the fiend's arch-mock,  
To lip a wanton in a secure couch,

And to suppose her chaste! No, let me know;  
And knowing what I am, I know what she shall be.

## **OTHELLO**

O, thou art wise; 'tis certain.

## **IAGO**

Stand you awhile apart;  
Confine yourself but in a patient list.  
Whilst you were here o'erwhelmed with your grief--  
A passion most unsuited such a man--  
Cassio came hither: I shifted him away,  
And laid good 'scuse upon your ecstasy,  
Bade him anon return and here speak with me;  
The which he promised. Do but encave yourself,  
And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns,  
That dwell in every region of his face;  
For I will make him tell the tale anew,  
Where, how, how oft, how long ago, and when  
He hath, and is again to cope your wife:  
I say, but mark his gesture. Marry, patience;  
Or I shall say you are all in all in spleen,  
And nothing of a man.

## **OTHELLO**

Dost thou hear, Iago?  
I will be found most cunning in my patience;  
But--dost thou hear?--most bloody.

## **IAGO**

That's not amiss;  
But yet keep time in all. Will you withdraw?

*OTHELLO retires*

Now will I question Cassio of Bianca,  
A housewife that by selling her desires  
Buys herself bread and clothes: it is a creature

That dotes on Cassio; as 'tis the strumpet's plague  
To beguile many and be beguiled by one:  
He, when he hears of her, cannot refrain  
From the excess of laughter. Here he comes:

*Re-enter CASSIO*

As he shall smile, Othello shall go mad;  
And his unbookish jealousy must construe  
Poor Cassio's smiles, gestures and light behavior,  
Quite in the wrong. How do you now, lieutenant?

**CASSIO**

The worser that you give me the addition  
Whose want even kills me.

**IAGO**

Ply Desdemona well, and you are sure on't.

*Speaking lower*

Now, if this suit lay in Bianco's power,  
How quickly should you speed!

**CASSIO**

Alas, poor caitiff!

**OTHELLO**

Look, how he laughs already!

**IAGO**

I never knew woman love man so.

**CASSIO**

Alas, poor rogue! I think, i' faith, she loves me.

**OTHELLO**

Now he denies it faintly, and laughs it out.

**IAGO**

Do you hear, Cassio?

**OTHELLO**

Now he importunes him  
To tell it o'er: go to; well said, well said.

**IAGO**

She gives it out that you shall marry hey:  
Do you intend it?

**CASSIO**

Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

Do you triumph, Roman? do you triumph?

**CASSIO**

I marry her! what? a customer! Prithee, bear some  
charity to my wit: do not think it so unwholesome.  
Ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

So, so, so, so: they laugh that win.

**IAGO**

'Faith, the cry goes that you shall marry her.

**CASSIO**

Prithee, say true.

**IAGO**

I am a very villain else.

**OTHELLO**

Have you scored me? Well.

**CASSIO**

This is the monkey's own giving out: she is persuaded I will marry her, out of her own love and flattery, not out of my promise.

**OTHELLO**

Iago beckons me; now he begins the story.

**CASSIO**

She was here even now; she haunts me in every place. I was the other day talking on the sea-bank with certain Venetians; and thither comes the bauble, and, by this hand, she falls me thus about my neck--

**OTHELLO**

Crying 'O dear Cassio!' as it were: his gesture imports it.

**CASSIO**

So hangs, and lolls, and weeps upon me; so hales, and pulls me: ha, ha, ha!

**OTHELLO**

Now he tells how she plucked him to my chamber. O,  
I see that nose of yours, but not that dog I shall  
throw it to.

**CASSIO**

Well, I must leave her company.

**IAGO**

Before me! look, where she comes.

**CASSIO**

'Tis such another fitchew! marry a perfumed one.

*Enter BIANCA*

What do you mean by this haunting of me?

**BIANCA**

Let the devil and his dam haunt you! What did you  
mean by that same handkerchief you gave me even now?  
I was a fine fool to take it. I must take out the  
work?--A likely piece of work, that you should find  
it in your chamber, and not know who left it there!  
This is some minx's token, and I must take out the  
work? There; give it your hobby-horse: wheresoever  
you had it, I'll take out no work on't.

**CASSIO**

How now, my sweet Bianca! how now! how now!

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, that should be my handkerchief!

**BIANCA**



An you'll come to supper to-night, you may; an you will not, come when you are next prepared for.

*Exit*

**IAGO**

After her, after her.

**CASSIO**

'Faith, I must; she'll rail in the street else.

**IAGO**

Will you sup there?

**CASSIO**

'Faith, I intend so.

**IAGO**

Well, I may chance to see you; for I would very fain speak with you.

**CASSIO**

Prithee, come; will you?

**IAGO**

Go to; say no more.

*Exit CASSIO*

**OTHELLO**

[Advancing] How shall I murder him, Iago?

**IAGO**

Did you perceive how he laughed at his vice?

**OTHELLO**

O Iago!

**IAGO**

And did you see the handkerchief?

**OTHELLO**

Was that mine?

**IAGO**

Yours by this hand: and to see how he prizes the foolish woman your wife! she gave it him, and he hath given it his whore.

**OTHELLO**

I would have him nine years a-killing.  
A fine woman! a fair woman! a sweet woman!

**IAGO**

Nay, you must forget that.

**OTHELLO**

Ay, let her rot, and perish, and be damned to-night; for she shall not live: no, my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature: she might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks.

**IAGO**

Nay, that's not your way.

**OTHELLO**

Hang her! I do but say what she is: so delicate  
with her needle: an admirable musician: O! she  
will sing the savageness out of a bear: of so high  
and plenteous wit and invention:--

**IAGO**

She's the worse for all this.

**OTHELLO**

O, a thousand thousand times: and then, of so  
gentle a condition!

**IAGO**

Ay, too gentle.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, that's certain: but yet the pity of it, Iago!  
O Iago, the pity of it, Iago!

**IAGO**

If you are so fond over her iniquity, give her  
patent to offend; for, if it touch not you, it comes  
near nobody.

**OTHELLO**

I will chop her into messes: cuckold me!

**IAGO**

O, 'tis foul in her.

**OTHELLO**

With mine officer!

**IAGO**

That's fouler.

**OTHELLO**

Get me some poison, Iago; this night: I'll not  
expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty  
unprovide my mind again: this night, Iago.

**IAGO**

Do it not with poison, strangle her in her bed, even  
the bed she hath contaminated.

**OTHELLO**

Good, good: the justice of it pleases: very good.

**IAGO**

And for Cassio, let me be his undertaker: you  
shall hear more by midnight.

**OTHELLO**

Excellent good.

*A trumpet within*

What trumpet is that same?

**IAGO**

Something from Venice, sure. 'Tis Lodovico  
Come from the duke: and, see, your wife is with him.

*Enter LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, and Attendants*

**LODOVICO**

Save you, worthy general!

**OTHELLO**

With all my heart, sir.

**LODOVICO**

The duke and senators of Venice greet you.

*Gives him a letter*

**OTHELLO**

I kiss the instrument of their pleasures.

*Opens the letter, and reads*

**DESDEMONA**

And what's the news, good cousin Lodovico?

**IAGO**

I am very glad to see you, signior  
Welcome to Cyprus.

**LODOVICO**

I thank you. How does Lieutenant Cassio?

**IAGO**

Lives, sir.

**DESDEMONA**

Cousin, there's fall'n between him and my lord

An unkind breach: but you shall make all well.

**OTHELLO**

Are you sure of that?

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

[Reads] 'This fail you not to do, as you will--'

**LODOVICO**

He did not call; he's busy in the paper.  
Is there division 'twixt my lord and Cassio?

**DESDEMONA**

A most unhappy one: I would do much  
To atone them, for the love I bear to Cassio.

**OTHELLO**

Fire and brimstone!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

Are you wise?

**DESDEMONA**

What, is he angry?

**LODOVICO**

May be the letter moved him;  
For, as I think, they do command him home,  
Deputing Cassio in his government.

**DESDEMONA**

Trust me, I am glad on't.

**OTHELLO**

Indeed!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

I am glad to see you mad.

**DESDEMONA**

Why, sweet Othello,--

**OTHELLO**

[Striking her] Devil!

**DESDEMONA**

I have not deserved this.

**LODOVICO**

My lord, this would not be believed in Venice,  
Though I should swear I saw't: 'tis very much:  
Make her amends; she weeps.

**OTHELLO**

O devil, devil!  
If that the earth could teem with woman's tears,  
Each drop she falls would prove a crocodile.  
Out of my sight!

**DESDEMONA**

I will not stay to offend you.

*Going*

**LODOVICO**

Truly, an obedient lady:  
I do beseech your lordship, call her back.

**OTHELLO**

Mistress!

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

What would you with her, sir?

**LODOVICO**

Who, I, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Ay; you did wish that I would make her turn:  
Sir, she can turn, and turn, and yet go on,  
And turn again; and she can weep, sir, weep;  
And she's obedient, as you say, obedient,  
Very obedient. Proceed you in your tears.  
Concerning this, sir,--O well-painted passion!--  
I am commanded home. Get you away;



I'll send for you anon. Sir, I obey the mandate,  
And will return to Venice. Hence, avaunt!

*Exit DESDEMONA*

Cassio shall have my place. And, sir, tonight,  
I do entreat that we may sup together:  
You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus.--Goats and monkeys!

*Exit*

## **LODOVICO**

Is this the noble Moor whom our full senate  
Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature  
Whom passion could not shake? whose solid virtue  
The shot of accident, nor dart of chance,  
Could neither graze nor pierce?

## **IAGO**

He is much changed.

## **LODOVICO**

Are his wits safe? is he not light of brain?

## **IAGO**

He's that he is: I may not breathe my censure  
What he might be: if what he might he is not,  
I would to heaven he were!

## **LODOVICO**

What, strike his wife!

## **IAGO**

'Faith, that was not so well; yet would I knew  
That stroke would prove the worst!

## **LODOVICO**

Is it his use?  
Or did the letters work upon his blood,  
And new-create this fault?

## **IAGO**

Alas, alas!  
It is not honesty in me to speak  
What I have seen and known. You shall observe him,  
And his own courses will denote him so  
That I may save my speech: do but go after,  
And mark how he continues.

## **LODOVICO**

I am sorry that I am deceived in him.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in the castle.

*Enter OTHELLO and EMILIA*

**OTHELLO**

You have seen nothing then?

**EMILIA**

Nor ever heard, nor ever did suspect.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, you have seen Cassio and she together.

**EMILIA**

But then I saw no harm, and then I heard  
Each syllable that breath made up between them.

**OTHELLO**

What, did they never whisper?

**EMILIA**

Never, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

Nor send you out o' the way?

**EMILIA**

Never.

**OTHELLO**

To fetch her fan, her gloves, her mask, nor nothing?

**EMILIA**

Never, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

That's strange.

**EMILIA**

I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,  
Lay down my soul at stake: if you think other,  
Remove your thought; it doth abuse your bosom.  
If any wretch have put this in your head,  
Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!  
For, if she be not honest, chaste, and true,  
There's no man happy; the purest of their wives  
Is foul as slander.

**OTHELLO**

Bid her come hither: go.

*Exit EMILIA*

She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd  
That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,  
A closet lock and key of villanous secrets  
And yet she'll kneel and pray; I have seen her do't.

*Enter DESDEMONA with EMILIA*

**DESDEMONA**

My lord, what is your will?

**OTHELLO**

Pray, chuck, come hither.

**DESDEMONA**

What is your pleasure?

**OTHELLO**

Let me see your eyes;  
Look in my face.

**DESDEMONA**

What horrible fancy's this?

**OTHELLO**

[To EMILIA] Some of your function, mistress;  
Leave procreants alone and shut the door;  
Cough, or cry 'hem,' if any body come:  
Your mystery, your mystery: nay, dispatch.

*Exit EMILIA*

**DESDEMONA**

Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?  
I understand a fury in your words.  
But not the words.

**OTHELLO**

Why, what art thou?

**DESDEMONA**

Your wife, my lord; your true  
And loyal wife.

## **OTHELLO**

Come, swear it, damn thyself  
Lest, being like one of heaven, the devils themselves  
Should fear to seize thee: therefore be double damn'd:  
Swear thou art honest.

## **DESDEMONA**

Heaven doth truly know it.

## **OTHELLO**

Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.

## **DESDEMONA**

To whom, my lord? with whom? how am I false?

## **OTHELLO**

O Desdemona! away! away! away!

## **DESDEMONA**

Alas the heavy day! Why do you weep?  
Am I the motive of these tears, my lord?  
If haply you my father do suspect  
An instrument of this your calling back,  
Lay not your blame on me: If you have lost him,  
Why, I have lost him too.

## **OTHELLO**

Had it pleased heaven  
To try me with affliction; had they rain'd  
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head.  
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips,  
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,  
I should have found in some place of my soul  
A drop of patience: but, alas, to make me

A fixed figure for the time of scorn  
To point his slow unmoving finger at!  
Yet could I bear that too; well, very well:  
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,  
Where either I must live, or bear no life;  
The fountain from the which my current runs,  
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence!  
Or keep it as a cistern for foul toads  
To knot and gender in! Turn thy complexion there,  
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,--  
Ay, there, look grim as hell!

## **DESDEMONA**

I hope my noble lord esteems me honest.

## **OTHELLO**

O, ay; as summer flies are in the shambles,  
That quicken even with blowing. O thou weed,  
Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet  
That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst  
ne'er been born!

## **DESDEMONA**

Alas, what ignorant sin have I committed?

## **OTHELLO**

Was this fair paper, this most goodly book,  
Made to write 'whore' upon? What committed!  
Committed! O thou public commoner!  
I should make very forges of my cheeks,  
That would to cinders burn up modesty,  
Did I but speak thy deeds. What committed!  
Heaven stops the nose at it and the moon winks,  
The bawdy wind that kisses all it meets  
Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth,  
And will not hear it. What committed!  
Impudent strumpet!

**DESDEMONA**

By heaven, you do me wrong.

**OTHELLO**

Are you not a strumpet?

**DESDEMONA**

No, as I am a Christian:  
If to preserve this vessel for my lord  
From any other foul unlawful touch  
Be not to be a strumpet, I am none.

**OTHELLO**

What, not a whore?

**DESDEMONA**

No, as I shall be saved.

**OTHELLO**

Is't possible?

**DESDEMONA**

O, heaven forgive us!

**OTHELLO**

I cry you mercy, then:  
I took you for that cunning whore of Venice  
That married with Othello.

*Raising his voice*

You, mistress,  
That have the office opposite to Saint Peter,



And keep the gate of hell!

*Re-enter EMILIA*

You, you, ay, you!

We have done our course; there's money for your pains:

I pray you, turn the key and keep our counsel.

*Exit*

**EMILIA**

Alas, what does this gentleman conceive?

How do you, madam? how do you, my good lady?

**DESDEMONA**

'Faith, half asleep.

**EMILIA**

Good madam, what's the matter with my lord?

**DESDEMONA**

With who?

**EMILIA**

Why, with my lord, madam.

**DESDEMONA**

Who is thy lord?

**EMILIA**

He that is yours, sweet lady.

**DESDEMONA**

I have none: do not talk to me, Emilia;  
I cannot weep; nor answer have I none,  
But what should go by water. Prithee, tonight  
Lay on my bed my wedding sheets: remember;  
And call thy husband hither.

**EMILIA**

Here's a change indeed!

*Exit*

**DESDEMONA**

'Tis meet I should be used so, very meet.  
How have I been behaved, that he might stick  
The small'st opinion on my least misuse?

*Re-enter EMILIA with IAGO*

**IAGO**

What is your pleasure, madam?  
How is't with you?

**DESDEMONA**

I cannot tell. Those that do teach young babes  
Do it with gentle means and easy tasks:  
He might have chid me so; for, in good faith,  
I am a child to chiding.

**IAGO**

What's the matter, lady?

**EMILIA**

Alas, Iago, my lord hath so bewhored her.  
Thrown such despite and heavy terms upon her,  
As true hearts cannot bear.

**DESDEMONA**

Am I that name, Iago?

**IAGO**

What name, fair lady?

**DESDEMONA**

Such as she says my lord did say I was.

**EMILIA**

He call'd her whore: a beggar in his drink  
Could not have laid such terms upon his callat.

**IAGO**

Why did he so?

**DESDEMONA**

I do not know; I am sure I am none such.

**IAGO**

Do not weep, do not weep. Alas the day!

**EMILIA**

Hath she forsook so many noble matches,  
Her father and her country and her friends,  
To be call'd whore? would it not make one weep?

**DESDEMONA**

It is my wretched fortune.

**IAGO**

Beshrew him for't!  
How comes this trick upon him?

**DESDEMONA**

Nay, heaven doth know.

**EMILIA**

I will be hang'd, if some eternal villain,  
Some busy and insinuating rogue,  
Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,  
Have not devised this slander; I'll be hang'd else.

**IAGO**

Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.

**DESDEMONA**

If any such there be, heaven pardon him!

**EMILIA**

A halter pardon him! and hell gnaw his bones!  
Why should he call her whore? who keeps her company?  
What place? what time? what form? what likelihood?  
The Moor's abused by some most villanous knave,  
Some base notorious knave, some scurvy fellow.  
O heaven, that such companions thou'ldst unfold,  
And put in every honest hand a whip  
To lash the rascals naked through the world  
Even from the east to the west!

**IAGO**

Speak within door.

**EMILIA**

O, fie upon them! Some such squire he was

That turn'd your wit the seamy side without,  
And made you to suspect me with the Moor.

**IAGO**

You are a fool; go to.

**DESDEMONA**

O good Iago,  
What shall I do to win my lord again?  
Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,  
I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:  
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,  
Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,  
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,  
Delighted them in any other form;  
Or that I do not yet, and ever did.  
And ever will--though he do shake me off  
To beggarly divorcement--love him dearly,  
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;  
And his unkindness may defeat my life,  
But never taint my love. I cannot say 'whore:'  
It does abhor me now I speak the word;  
To do the act that might the addition earn  
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

**IAGO**

I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humour:  
The business of the state does him offence,  
And he does chide with you.

**DESDEMONA**

If 'twere no other--

**IAGO**

'Tis but so, I warrant.

*Trumpets within*

Hark, how these instruments summon to supper!  
The messengers of Venice stay the meat;  
Go in, and weep not; all things shall be well.

*Exeunt DESDEMONA and EMILIA*

*Enter RODERIGO*

How now, Roderigo!

**RODERIGO**

I do not find that thou dealest justly with me.

**IAGO**

What in the contrary?

**RODERIGO**

Every day thou daffest me with some device, Iago;  
and rather, as it seems to me now, keepest from me  
all conveniency than suppliest me with the least  
advantage of hope. I will indeed no longer endure  
it, nor am I yet persuaded to put up in peace what  
already I have foolishly suffered.

**IAGO**

Will you hear me, Roderigo?

**RODERIGO**

'Faith, I have heard too much, for your words and  
performances are no kin together.

**IAGO**

You charge me most unjustly.

**RODERIGO**

With nought but truth. I have wasted myself out of my means. The jewels you have had from me to deliver to Desdemona would half have corrupted a votarist: you have told me she hath received them and returned me expectations and comforts of sudden respect and acquaintance, but I find none.

**IAGO**

Well; go to; very well.

**RODERIGO**

Very well! go to! I cannot go to, man; nor 'tis not very well: nay, I think it is scurvy, and begin to find myself fobbed in it.

**IAGO**

Very well.

**RODERIGO**

I tell you 'tis not very well. I will make myself known to Desdemona: if she will return me my jewels, I will give over my suit and repent my unlawful solicitation; if not, assure yourself I will seek satisfaction of you.

**IAGO**

You have said now.

**RODERIGO**

Ay, and said nothing but what I protest intendment of doing.

**IAGO**

Why, now I see there's mettle in thee, and even from this instant to build on thee a better opinion than ever before. Give me thy hand, Roderigo: thou hast taken against me a most just exception; but yet, I protest, I have dealt most directly in thy affair.

## **RODERIGO**

It hath not appeared.

## **IAGO**

I grant indeed it hath not appeared, and your suspicion is not without wit and judgment. But, Roderigo, if thou hast that in thee indeed, which I have greater reason to believe now than ever, I mean purpose, courage and valour, this night show it: if thou the next night following enjoy not Desdemona, take me from this world with treachery and devise engines for my life.

## **RODERIGO**

Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass?

## **IAGO**

Sir, there is especial commission come from Venice to depute Cassio in Othello's place.

## **RODERIGO**

Is that true? why, then Othello and Desdemona return again to Venice.

## **IAGO**

O, no; he goes into Mauritania and takes away with him the fair Desdemona, unless his abode be lingered here by some accident: wherein none can be so determinate as the removing of Cassio.



**RODERIGO**

How do you mean, removing of him?

**IAGO**

Why, by making him uncapable of Othello's place; knocking out his brains.

**RODERIGO**

And that you would have me to do?

**IAGO**

Ay, if you dare do yourself a profit and a right. He sups to-night with a harlotry, and thither will I go to him: he knows not yet of his horrible fortune. If you will watch his going thence, which I will fashion to fall out between twelve and one, you may take him at your pleasure: I will be near to second your attempt, and he shall fall between us. Come, stand not amazed at it, but go along with me; I will show you such a necessity in his death that you shall think yourself bound to put it on him. It is now high suppertime, and the night grows to waste: about it.

**RODERIGO**

I will hear further reason for this.

**IAGO**

And you shall be satisfied.

*Exeunt*

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Another room In the castle.

*Enter OTHELLO, LODOVICO, DESDEMONA, EMILIA and Attendants*

**LODOVICO**

I do beseech you, sir, trouble yourself no further.

**OTHELLO**

O, pardon me: 'twill do me good to walk.

**LODOVICO**

Madam, good night; I humbly thank your ladyship.

**DESDEMONA**

Your honour is most welcome.

**OTHELLO**

Will you walk, sir?

O,--Desdemona,--

**DESDEMONA**

My lord?

**OTHELLO**

Get you to bed on the instant; I will be returned  
forthwith: dismiss your attendant there: look it be done.

**DESDEMONA**

I will, my lord.

*Exeunt OTHELLO, LODOVICO, and Attendants*

**EMILIA**

How goes it now? he looks gentler than he did.

**DESDEMONA**

He says he will return incontinent:  
He hath commanded me to go to bed,  
And bade me to dismiss you.

**EMILIA**

Dismiss me!

**DESDEMONA**

It was his bidding: therefore, good Emilia,.  
Give me my nightly wearing, and adieu:  
We must not now displease him.

**EMILIA**

I would you had never seen him!

**DESDEMONA**

So would not I my love doth so approve him,  
That even his stubbornness, his cheques, his frowns--  
Prithee, unpin me,--have grace and favour in them.

**EMILIA**

I have laid those sheets you bade me on the bed.

**DESDEMONA**

All's one. Good faith, how foolish are our minds!  
If I do die before thee prithee, shroud me  
In one of those same sheets.

**EMILIA**

Come, come you talk.

**DESDEMONA**

My mother had a maid call'd Barbara:  
She was in love, and he she loved proved mad  
And did forsake her: she had a song of 'willow;'  
An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,  
And she died singing it: that song to-night  
Will not go from my mind; I have much to do,  
But to go hang my head all at one side,  
And sing it like poor Barbara. Prithee, dispatch.

**EMILIA**

Shall I go fetch your night-gown?

**DESDEMONA**

No, unpin me here.  
This Lodovico is a proper man.

**EMILIA**

A very handsome man.

**DESDEMONA**

He speaks well.

**EMILIA**

I know a lady in Venice would have walked barefoot  
to Palestine for a touch of his nether lip.

## DESDEMONA

[Singing] The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,  
Sing all a green willow:  
Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,  
Sing willow, willow, willow:  
The fresh streams ran by her, and murmur'd her moans;  
Sing willow, willow, willow;  
Her salt tears fell from her, and soften'd the stones;  
Lay by these:--

*Singing*

Sing willow, willow, willow;  
Prithee, hie thee; he'll come anon:--

*Singing*

Sing all a green willow must be my garland.  
Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve,-  
Nay, that's not next.--Hark! who is't that knocks?

## EMILIA

It's the wind.

## DESDEMONA

[Singing] I call'd my love false love; but what  
said he then?  
Sing willow, willow, willow:  
If I court moe women, you'll couch with moe men!  
So, get thee gone; good night Ate eyes do itch;  
Doth that bode weeping?

## EMILIA

'Tis neither here nor there.

## DESDEMONA

I have heard it said so. O, these men, these men!  
Dost thou in conscience think,--tell me, Emilia,--  
That there be women do abuse their husbands  
In such gross kind?

**EMILIA**

There be some such, no question.

**DESDEMONA**

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

**EMILIA**

Why, would not you?

**DESDEMONA**

No, by this heavenly light!

**EMILIA**

Nor I neither by this heavenly light;  
I might do't as well i' the dark.

**DESDEMONA**

Wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world?

**EMILIA**

The world's a huge thing: it is a great price.  
For a small vice.

**DESDEMONA**

In troth, I think thou wouldst not.

**EMILIA**

In troth, I think I should; and undo't when I had done. Marry, I would not do such a thing for a joint-ring, nor for measures of lawn, nor for gowns, petticoats, nor caps, nor any petty exhibition; but for the whole world,--why, who would not make her husband a cuckold to make him a monarch? I should venture purgatory for't.

## **DESDEMONA**

Beshrew me, if I would do such a wrong  
For the whole world.

## **EMILIA**

Why the wrong is but a wrong i' the world: and having the world for your labour, tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.

## **DESDEMONA**

I do not think there is any such woman.

## **EMILIA**

Yes, a dozen; and as many to the vantage as would store the world they played for.  
But I do think it is their husbands' faults  
If wives do fall: say that they slack their duties,  
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,  
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,  
Throwing restraint upon us; or say they strike us,  
Or scant our former having in despite;  
Why, we have galls, and though we have some grace,  
Yet have we some revenge. Let husbands know  
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell  
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,  
As husbands have. What is it that they do  
When they change us for others? Is it sport?  
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?  
I think it doth: is't frailty that thus errs?  
It is so too: and have not we affections,

Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?  
Then let them use us well: else let them know,  
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

**DESDEMONA**

Good night, good night: heaven me such uses send,  
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Cyprus. A street.

*Enter IAGO and RODERIGO*

**IAGO**

Here, stand behind this bulk; straight will he come:  
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home:  
Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow:  
It makes us, or it mars us; think on that,  
And fix most firm thy resolution.

**RODERIGO**

Be near at hand; I may miscarry in't.

**IAGO**

Here, at thy hand: be bold, and take thy stand.

*Retires*

**RODERIGO**

I have no great devotion to the deed;  
And yet he hath given me satisfying reasons:  
'Tis but a man gone. Forth, my sword: he dies.

**IAGO**

I have rubb'd this young quat almost to the sense,  
And he grows angry. Now, whether he kill Cassio,  
Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,  
Every way makes my gain: live Roderigo,  
He calls me to a restitution large  
Of gold and jewels that I bobb'd from him,

As gifts to Desdemona;  
It must not be: if Cassio do remain,  
He hath a daily beauty in his life  
That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor  
May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril:  
No, he must die. But so: I hear him coming.

*Enter CASSIO*

## **RODERIGO**

I know his gait, 'tis he.--Villain, thou diest!

*Makes a pass at CASSIO*

## **CASSIO**

That thrust had been mine enemy indeed,  
But that my coat is better than thou know'st  
I will make proof of thine.

*Draws, and wounds RODERIGO*

## **RODERIGO**

O, I am slain!

*IAGO from behind wounds CASSIO in the leg, and exit*

## **CASSIO**

I am maim'd for ever. Help, ho! murder! murder!

*Falls*

*Enter OTHELLO*

## **OTHELLO**

The voice of Cassio: Iago keeps his word.

**RODERIGO**

O, villain that I am!

**OTHELLO**

It is even so.

**CASSIO**

O, help, ho! light! a surgeon!

**OTHELLO**

'Tis he!--O brave Iago, honest and just,  
That hast such noble sense of thy friend's wrong!  
Thou teachest me. Minion, your dear lies dead,  
And your unblest fate hies: strumpet, I come.  
Forth of my heart those charms, thine eyes, are blotted;  
Thy bed, lust-stain'd, shall with lust's blood be spotted.

*Exit*

*Enter LODOVICO and GRATIANO*

**CASSIO**

What, ho! no watch? no passage? murder! murder!

**GRATIANO**

'Tis some mischance; the cry is very direful.

**CASSIO**

O, help!

**LODOVICO**

Hark!

**RODERIGO**

O wretched villain!

**LODOVICO**

Two or three groan: it is a heavy night:  
These may be counterfeits: let's think't unsafe  
To come in to the cry without more help.

**RODERIGO**

Nobody come? then shall I bleed to death.

**LODOVICO**

Hark!

*Re-enter IAGO, with a light*

**GRATIANO**

Here's one comes in his shirt, with light and weapons.

**IAGO**

Who's there? whose noise is this that ones on murder?

**LODOVICO**

We do not know.

**IAGO**

Did not you hear a cry?

**CASSIO**

Here, here! for heaven's sake, help me!

**IAGO**

What's the matter?

**GRATIANO**

This is Othello's ancient, as I take it.

**LODOVICO**

The same indeed; a very valiant fellow.

**IAGO**

What are you here that cry so grievously?

**CASSIO**

Iago? O, I am spoil'd, undone by villains!  
Give me some help.

**IAGO**

O me, lieutenant! what villains have done this?

**CASSIO**

I think that one of them is hereabout,  
And cannot make away.

**IAGO**

O treacherous villains!  
What are you there? come in, and give some help.

*To LODOVICO and GRATIANO*

**RODERIGO**

O, help me here!

**CASSIO**

That's one of them.

**IAGO**

O murderous slave! O villain!

*Stabs RODERIGO*

**RODERIGO**

O damn'd Iago! O inhuman dog!

**IAGO**

Kill men i' the dark!--Where be these bloody thieves?--  
How silent is this town!--Ho! murder! murder!--  
What may you be? are you of good or evil?

**LODOVICO**

As you shall prove us, praise us.

**IAGO**

Signior Lodovico?

**LODOVICO**

He, sir.

**IAGO**

I cry you mercy. Here's Cassio hurt by villains.

**GRATIANO**

Cassio!

**IAGO**

How is't, brother!

**CASSIO**

My leg is cut in two.

**IAGO**

Marry, heaven forbid!  
Light, gentlemen; I'll bind it with my shirt.

*Enter BIANCA*

**BIANCA**

What is the matter, ho? who is't that cried?

**IAGO**

Who is't that cried!

**BIANCA**

O my dear Cassio! my sweet Cassio! O Cassio,  
Cassio, Cassio!

**IAGO**

O notable strumpet! Cassio, may you suspect  
Who they should be that have thus many led you?

**CASSIO**

No.

**GRATIANO**

I am to find you thus: I have been to seek you.

**IAGO**

Lend me a garter. So. O, for a chair,  
To bear him easily hence!

**BIANCA**

Alas, he faints! O Cassio, Cassio, Cassio!

**IAGO**

Gentlemen all, I do suspect this trash  
To be a party in this injury.  
Patience awhile, good Cassio. Come, come;  
Lend me a light. Know we this face or no?  
Alas my friend and my dear countryman  
Roderigo! no:--yes, sure: O heaven! Roderigo.

**GRATIANO**

What, of Venice?

**IAGO**

Even he, sir; did you know him?

**GRATIANO**

Know him! ay.

**IAGO**

Signior Gratiano? I cry you gentle pardon;  
These bloody accidents must excuse my manners,  
That so neglected you.

**GRATIANO**

I am glad to see you.

**IAGO**

How do you, Cassio? O, a chair, a chair!



## GRATIANO

Roderigo!

## IAGO

He, he 'tis he.

*A chair brought in*

O, that's well said; the chair!

## GRATIANO

Some good man bear him carefully from hence;  
I'll fetch the general's surgeon.

*To BIANCA*

For you, mistress,  
Save you your labour. He that lies slain  
here, Cassio,  
Was my dear friend: what malice was between you?

## CASSIO

None in the world; nor do I know the man.

## IAGO

[To BIANCA] What, look you pale? O, bear him out  
o' the air.

*CASSIO and RODERIGO are borne off*

Stay you, good gentlemen. Look you pale, mistress?  
Do you perceive the gastness of her eye?  
Nay, if you stare, we shall hear more anon.  
Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her:  
Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,

Though tongues were out of use.

*Enter EMILIA*

**EMILIA**

'Las, what's the matter? what's the matter, husband?

**IAGO**

Cassio hath here been set on in the dark  
By Roderigo and fellows that are scaped:  
He's almost slain, and Roderigo dead.

**EMILIA**

Alas, good gentleman! alas, good Cassio!

**IAGO**

This is the fruit of whoring. Prithee, Emilia,  
Go know of Cassio where he supp'd to-night.

*To BIANCA*

What, do you shake at that?

**BIANCA**

He supp'd at my house; but I therefore shake not.

**IAGO**

O, did he so? I charge you, go with me.

**EMILIA**

Fie, fie upon thee, strumpet!

**BIANCA**

I am no strumpet; but of life as honest  
As you that thus abuse me.

**EMILIA**

As I! foh! fie upon thee!

**IAGO**

Kind gentlemen, let's go see poor Cassio dress'd.  
Come, mistress, you must tell's another tale.  
Emilia run you to the citadel,  
And tell my lord and lady what hath happ'd.  
Will you go on? I pray.

*Aside*

This is the night  
That either makes me or fordoes me quite.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Othello, the Moore of Venice

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Othello](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE II. A bedchamber in the castle: DESDEMONA in bed asleep;

a light burning.

*Enter OTHELLO*

### OTHELLO

It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul,--  
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!--  
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood;  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,  
And smooth as monumental alabaster.  
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.  
Put out the light, and then put out the light:  
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,  
I can again thy former light restore,  
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,  
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,  
I know not where is that Promethean heat  
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,  
I cannot give it vital growth again.  
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree.

*Kissing her*

Ah balmy breath, that dost almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more.  
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,  
And love thee after. One more, and this the last:  
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,  
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;  
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.

### DESDEMONA

Who's there? Othello?

**OTHELLO**

Ay. Desdemona.

**DESDEMONA**

Will you come to bed, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?

**DESDEMONA**

Ay, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

If you bethink yourself of any crime  
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,  
Solicit for it straight.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas, my lord, what do you mean by that?

**OTHELLO**

Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:  
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;  
No; heaven forfend! I would not kill thy soul.

**DESDEMONA**

Talk you of killing?

**OTHELLO**

Ay, I do.

**DESDEMONA**

Then heaven  
Have mercy on me!

**OTHELLO**

Amen, with all my heart!

**DESDEMONA**

If you say so, I hope you will not kill me.

**OTHELLO**

Hum!

**DESDEMONA**

And yet I fear you; for you are fatal then  
When your eyes roll so: why I should fear I know not,  
Since guiltiness I know not; but yet I feel I fear.

**OTHELLO**

Think on thy sins.

**DESDEMONA**

They are loves I bear to you.

**OTHELLO**

Ay, and for that thou diest.

**DESDEMONA**

That death's unnatural that kills for loving.  
Alas, why gnaw you so your nether lip?  
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame:

These are portents; but yet I hope, I hope,  
They do not point on me.

**OTHELLO**

Peace, and be still!

**DESDEMONA**

I will so. What's the matter?

**OTHELLO**

That handkerchief which I so loved and gave thee  
Thou gavest to Cassio.

**DESDEMONA**

No, by my life and soul!  
Send for the man, and ask him.

**OTHELLO**

Sweet soul, take heed,  
Take heed of perjury; thou art on thy deathbed.

**DESDEMONA**

Ay, but not yet to die.

**OTHELLO**

Yes, presently:  
Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin;  
For to deny each article with oath  
Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception  
That I do groan withal. Thou art to die.

**DESDEMONA**

Then Lord have mercy on me!

**OTHELLO**

I say, amen.

**DESDEMONA**

And have you mercy too! I never did  
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio  
But with such general warranty of heaven  
As I might love: I never gave him token.

**OTHELLO**

By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.  
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,  
And makest me call what I intend to do  
A murder, which I thought a sacrifice:  
I saw the handkerchief.

**DESDEMONA**

He found it then;  
I never gave it him: send for him hither;  
Let him confess a truth.

**OTHELLO**

He hath confess'd.

**DESDEMONA**

What, my lord?

**OTHELLO**

That he hath used thee.

**DESDEMONA**

How? unlawfully?



**OTHELLO**

Ay.

**DESDEMONA**

He will not say so.

**OTHELLO**

No, his mouth is stopp'd;  
Honest Iago hath ta'en order for't.

**DESDEMONA**

O! my fear interprets: what, is he dead?

**OTHELLO**

Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge  
Had stomach for them all.

**DESDEMONA**

Alas! he is betray'd and I undone.

**OTHELLO**

Out, strumpet! weep'st thou for him to my face?

**DESDEMONA**

O, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

**OTHELLO**

Down, strumpet!

**DESDEMONA**

Kill me to-morrow: let me live to-night!

**OTHELLO**

Nay, if you strive--

**DESDEMONA**

But half an hour!

**OTHELLO**

Being done, there is no pause.

**DESDEMONA**

But while I say one prayer!

**OTHELLO**

It is too late.

*He stifles her*

**EMILIA**

[Within] My lord , my lord! what, ho! my lord, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

What noise is this? Not dead? not yet quite dead?  
I that am cruel am yet merciful;  
I would not have thee linger in thy pain: So, so.

**EMILIA**

[Within] What, ho! my lord, my lord!

**OTHELLO**

Who's there?

**EMILIA**

[Within] O, good my lord, I would speak a word with you!

**OTHELLO**

Yes: 'tis Emilia. By and by. She's dead.  
'Tis like she comes to speak of Cassio's death.--  
The noise was here. Ha! no more moving?  
Still as the grave. Shall she come in? were't good?--  
I think she stirs again:--no. What's best to do?  
If she come in, she'll sure speak to my wife:  
My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.  
O insupportable! O heavy hour!  
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse  
Of sun and moon, and that the affrighted globe  
Should yawn at alteration.

**EMILIA**

[Within] I do beseech you  
That I may speak with you, O, good my lord!

**OTHELLO**

I had forgot thee: O, come in, Emilia;  
Soft; by and by. Let me the curtains draw.  
Where art thou?

*Unlocks the door*

*Enter EMILIA*

What's the matter with thee now?

**EMILIA**

O, my good lord, yonder's foul murders done!

**OTHELLO**

What, now?

**EMILIA**

But now, my lord.

**OTHELLO**

It is the very error of the moon;  
She comes more nearer earth than she was wont,  
And makes men mad.

**EMILIA**

Cassio, my lord, hath kill'd a young Venetian  
Call'd Roderigo.

**OTHELLO**

Roderigo kill'd!  
And Cassio kill'd!

**EMILIA**

No, Cassio is not kill'd.

**OTHELLO**

Not Cassio kill'd! then murder's out of tune,  
And sweet revenge grows harsh.

**DESDEMONA**

O, falsely, falsely murder'd!

**EMILIA**

Alas, what cry is that?

**OTHELLO**

That! what?

**EMILIA**

Out, and alas! that was my lady's voice.  
Help! help, ho! help! O lady, speak again!  
Sweet Desdemona! O sweet mistress, speak!

**DESDEMONA**

A guiltless death I die.

**EMILIA**

O, who hath done this deed?

**DESDEMONA**

Nobody; I myself. Farewell  
Commend me to my kind lord: O, farewell!

*Dies*

**OTHELLO**

Why, how should she be murder'd?

**EMILIA**

Alas, who knows?

**OTHELLO**

You heard her say herself, it was not I.

**EMILIA**

She said so: I must needs report the truth.

**OTHELLO**

She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell:  
'Twas I that kill'd her.

**EMILIA**

O, the more angel she,  
And you the blacker devil!

**OTHELLO**

She turn'd to folly, and she was a whore.

**EMILIA**

Thou dost belie her, and thou art a devil.

**OTHELLO**

She was false as water.

**EMILIA**

Thou art rash as fire, to say  
That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!

**OTHELLO**

Cassio did top her; ask thy husband else.  
O, I were damn'd beneath all depth in hell,  
But that I did proceed upon just grounds  
To this extremity. Thy husband knew it all.

**EMILIA**

My husband!

**OTHELLO**

Thy husband.

**EMILIA**

That she was false to wedlock?

**OTHELLO**

Ay, with Cassio. Nay, had she been true,  
If heaven would make me such another world  
Of one entire and Perfect chrysolite,  
I'd not have sold her for it.

**EMILIA**

My husband!

**OTHELLO**

Ay, 'twas he that told me first:  
An honest man he is, and hates the slime  
That sticks on filthy deeds.

**EMILIA**

My husband!

**OTHELLO**

What needs this iteration, woman? I say thy husband.

**EMILIA**

O mistress, villany hath made mocks with love,  
My husband say that she was false!

**OTHELLO**

He, woman;  
I say thy husband: dost understand the word?  
My friend, thy husband, honest, honest Iago.

**EMILIA**

If he say so, may his pernicious soul  
Rot half a grain a day! he lies to the heart:  
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

**OTHELLO**

Ha!

**EMILIA**

Do thy worst:  
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven  
Than thou wast worthy her.

**OTHELLO**

Peace, you were best.

**EMILIA**

Thou hast not half that power to do me harm  
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!  
As ignorant as dirt! thou hast done a deed--  
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,  
Though I lost twenty lives.--Help! help, ho! help!  
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murder! murder!

*Enter MONTANO, GRATIANO, IAGO, and others*

**MONTANO**

What is the matter? How now, general!

**EMILIA**

O, are you come, Iago? you have done well,  
That men must lay their murders on your neck.

**GRATIANO**



What is the matter?

**EMILIA**

Disprove this villain, if thou be'st a man:  
He says thou told'st him that his wife was false:  
I know thou didst not, thou'rt not such a villain:  
Speak, for my heart is full.

**IAGO**

I told him what I thought, and told no more  
Than what he found himself was apt and true.

**EMILIA**

But did you ever tell him she was false?

**IAGO**

I did.

**EMILIA**

You told a lie, an odious, damned lie;  
Upon my soul, a lie, a wicked lie.  
She false with Cassio!--did you say with Cassio?

**IAGO**

With Cassio, mistress. Go to, charm your tongue.

**EMILIA**

I will not charm my tongue; I am bound to speak:  
My mistress here lies murder'd in her bed,--

**All**

O heavens forbend!

**EMILIA**

And your reports have set the murder on.

**OTHELLO**

Nay, stare not, masters: it is true, indeed.

**GRATIANO**

'Tis a strange truth.

**MONTANO**

O monstrous act!

**EMILIA**

Villany, villany, villany!  
I think upon't, I think: I smell't: O villany!--  
I thought so then:--I'll kill myself for grief:--  
O villany, villany!

**IAGO**

What, are you mad? I charge you, get you home.

**EMILIA**

Good gentlemen, let me have leave to speak:  
'Tis proper I obey him, but not now.  
Perchance, Iago, I will ne'er go home.

**OTHELLO**

O! O! O!

*He falls on the bed*

**EMILIA**

Nay, lay thee down and roar;  
For thou hast kill'd the sweetest innocent  
That e'er did lift up eye.

## **OTHELLO**

[Rising] O, she was foul!  
I scarce did know you, uncle: there lies your niece,  
Whose breath, indeed, these hands have newly stopp'd:  
I know this act shows horrible and grim.

## **GRATIANO**

Poor Desdemona! I am glad thy father's dead:  
Thy match was mortal to him, and pure grief  
Shore his old thread in twain: did he live now,  
This sight would make him do a desperate turn,  
Yea, curse his better angel from his side,  
And fall to reprobation.

## **OTHELLO**

'Tis pitiful; but yet Iago knows  
That she with Cassio hath the act of shame  
A thousand times committed; Cassio confess'd it:  
And she did gratify his amorous works  
With that recognizance and pledge of love  
Which I first gave her; I saw it in his hand:  
It was a handkerchief, an antique token  
My father gave my mother.

## **EMILIA**

O heaven! O heavenly powers!

## **IAGO**

Come, hold your peace.

## **EMILIA**

'Twill out, 'twill out: I peace!

No, I will speak as liberal as the north:  
Let heaven and men and devils, let them all,  
All, all, cry shame against me, yet I'll speak.

**IAGO**

Be wise, and get you home.

**EMILIA**

I will not.

*IAGO offers to stab EMILIA*

**GRATIANO**

Fie!  
Your sword upon a woman?

**EMILIA**

O thou dull Moor! that handkerchief thou speak'st of  
I found by fortune and did give my husband;  
For often, with a solemn earnestness,  
More than indeed belong'd to such a trifle,  
He begg'd of me to steal it.

**IAGO**

Villanous whore!

**EMILIA**

She give it Cassio! no, alas! I found it,  
And I did give't my husband.

**IAGO**

Filth, thou liest!

**EMILIA**

By heaven, I do not, I do not, gentlemen.  
O murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool  
Do with so good a woman?

## **OTHELLO**

Are there no stones in heaven  
But what serve for the thunder?--Precious villain!

*He runs at IAGO IAGO, from behind, stabs EMILIA, and exit*

## **GRATIANO**

The woman falls; sure, he hath kill'd his wife.

## **EMILIA**

Ay, ay: O, lay me by my mistress' side.

## **GRATIANO**

He's gone, but his wife's kill'd.

## **MONTANO**

'Tis a notorious villain. Take you this weapon,  
Which I have here recover'd from the Moor:  
Come, guard the door without; let him not pass,  
But kill him rather. I'll after that same villain,  
For 'tis a damned slave.

*Exeunt MONTANO and GRATIANO*

## **OTHELLO**

I am not valiant neither,  
But ever puny whipster gets my sword:  
But why should honour outlive honesty?  
Let it go all.

## **EMILIA**

What did thy song bode, lady?  
Hark, canst thou hear me? I will play the swan.  
And die in music.

*Singing*

Willow, willow, willow,--  
Moor, she was chaste; she loved thee, cruel Moor;  
So come my soul to bliss, as I speak true;  
So speaking as I think, I die, I die.

*Dies*

## **OTHELLO**

I have another weapon in this chamber;  
It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook's temper:--  
O, here it is. Uncle, I must come forth.

## **GRATIANO**

[Within] If thou attempt it, it will cost thee dear:  
Thou hast no weapon, and perforce must suffer.

## **OTHELLO**

Look in upon me then and speak with me,  
Or, naked as I am, I will assault thee.

*Re-enter GRATIANO*

## **GRATIANO**

What is the matter?

## **OTHELLO**

Behold, I have a weapon;  
A better never did itself sustain

Upon a soldier's thigh: I have seen the day,  
That, with this little arm and this good sword,  
I have made my way through more impediments  
Than twenty times your stop: but, O vain boast!  
Who can control his fate? 'tis not so now.  
Be not afraid, though you do see me weapon'd;  
Here is my journey's end, here is my butt,  
And very sea-mark of my utmost sail.  
Do you go back dismay'd? 'tis a lost fear;  
Man but a rush against Othello's breast,  
And he retires. Where should Othello go?  
Now, how dost thou look now? O ill-starr'd wench!  
Pale as thy smock! when we shall meet at compt,  
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven,  
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl!  
Even like thy chastity. O cursed slave!  
Whip me, ye devils,  
From the possession of this heavenly sight!  
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!  
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire!  
O Desdemona! Desdemona! dead!  
Oh! Oh! Oh!

*Enter LODOVICO. MONTANO, CASSIO carried in a chair, and Officers with IAGO, prisoner*

**LODOVICO**

Where is this rash and most unfortunate man?

**OTHELLO**

That's he that was Othello: here I am.

**LODOVICO**

Where is that viper? bring the villain forth.

**OTHELLO**

I look down towards his feet; but that's a fable.  
If that thou best a devil, I cannot kill thee.

*Wounds IAGO*

**LODOVICO**

Wrench his sword from him.

**IAGO**

I bleed, sir; but not kill'd.

**OTHELLO**

I am not sorry neither: I'd have thee live;  
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

**LODOVICO**

O thou Othello, thou wert once so good,  
Fall'n in the practise of a damned slave,  
What shall be said to thee?

**OTHELLO**

Why, any thing:  
An honourable murderer, if you will;  
For nought I did in hate, but all in honour.

**LODOVICO**

This wretch hath part confess'd his villany:  
Did you and he consent in Cassio's death?

**OTHELLO**

Ay.

**CASSIO**

Dear general, I never gave you cause.



**OTHELLO**

I do believe it, and I ask your pardon.  
Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil  
Why he hath thus ensnared my soul and body?

**IAGO**

Demand me nothing: what you know, you know:  
From this time forth I never will speak word.

**LODOVICO**

What, not to pray?

**GRATIANO**

Torments will ope your lips.

**OTHELLO**

Well, thou dost best.

**LODOVICO**

Sir, you shall understand what hath befall'n,  
Which, as I think, you know not. Here is a letter  
Found in the pocket of the slain Roderigo;  
And here another: the one of them imports  
The death of Cassio to be undertook  
By Roderigo.

**OTHELLO**

O villain!

**CASSIO**

Most heathenish and most gross!

**LODOVICO**

Now here's another discontented paper,  
Found in his pocket too; and this, it seems,  
Roderigo meant to have sent this damned villain;  
But that belike Iago in the interim  
Came in and satisfied him.

## **OTHELLO**

O the pernicious caitiff!  
How came you, Cassio, by that handkerchief  
That was my wife's?

## **CASSIO**

I found it in my chamber:  
And he himself confess'd but even now  
That there he dropp'd it for a special purpose  
Which wrought to his desire.

## **OTHELLO**

O fool! fool! fool!

## **CASSIO**

There is besides in Roderigo's letter,  
How he upbraids Iago, that he made him  
Brave me upon the watch; whereon it came  
That I was cast: and even but now he spake,  
After long seeming dead, Iago hurt him,  
Iago set him on.

## **LODOVICO**

You must forsake this room, and go with us:  
Your power and your command is taken off,  
And Cassio rules in Cyprus. For this slave,  
If there be any cunning cruelty  
That can torment him much and hold him long,  
It shall be his. You shall close prisoner rest,  
Till that the nature of your fault be known

To the Venetian state. Come, bring him away.

## **OTHELLO**

Soft you; a word or two before you go.  
I have done the state some service, and they know't.  
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak  
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;  
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought  
Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,  
Albeit unused to the melting mood,  
Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;  
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,  
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk  
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,  
I took by the throat the circumcised dog,  
And smote him, thus.

*Stabs himself*

## **LODOVICO**

O bloody period!

## **GRATIANO**

All that's spoke is marr'd.

## **OTHELLO**

I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee: no way but this;  
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

*Falls on the bed, and dies*

## **CASSIO**

This did I fear, but thought he had no weapon;  
For he was great of heart.

## **LODOVICO**

[To IAGO] O Spartan dog,  
More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!  
Look on the tragic loading of this bed;  
This is thy work: the object poisons sight;  
Let it be hid. Gratiano, keep the house,  
And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,  
For they succeed on you. To you, lord governor,  
Remains the censure of this hellish villain;  
The time, the place, the torture: O, enforce it!  
Myself will straight aboard: and to the state  
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.

*Exeunt*

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Romeo and Juliet

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 1, Scene 1: [Verona. A public place.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 3: [A room in Capulet's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 4: [A street.](#)

Act 1, Scene 5: [A hall in Capulet's house.](#)

Act 2, Prologue: [PROLOGUE](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [Capulet's orchard.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [Friar Laurence's cell.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [A street.](#)

Act 2, Scene 5: [Capulet's orchard.](#)

Act 2, Scene 6: [Friar Laurence's cell.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A public place.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [Capulet's orchard.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [Friar Laurence's cell.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [A room in Capulet's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [Capulet's orchard.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Friar Laurence's cell.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Hall in Capulet's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Juliet's chamber.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [Hall in Capulet's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 5: [Juliet's chamber.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Mantua. A street.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Friar Laurence's cell.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [A churchyard; in it a tomb belonging to the Capulets.](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Prologue

[Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,  
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.  
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;  
Whole misadventured piteous overthrows  
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.  
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,  
And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,  
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;  
The which if you with patient ears attend,  
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Prologue

[Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Verona. A public place.

*Enter SAMPSON and GREGORY, of the house of Capulet, armed with swords and bucklers*

**SAMPSON**

Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.

**GREGORY**

No, for then we should be colliers.

**SAMPSON**

I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.

**GREGORY**

Ay, while you live, draw your neck out o' the collar.

**SAMPSON**

I strike quickly, being moved.

**GREGORY**

But thou art not quickly moved to strike.

**SAMPSON**

A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

**GREGORY**

To move is to stir; and to be valiant is to stand:  
therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away.

**SAMPSON**

A dog of that house shall move me to stand: I will  
take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.

**GREGORY**

That shows thee a weak slave; for the weakest goes  
to the wall.

**SAMPSON**

True; and therefore women, being the weaker vessels,  
are ever thrust to the wall: therefore I will push  
Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids  
to the wall.

**GREGORY**

The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.

**SAMPSON**

'Tis all one, I will show myself a tyrant: when I  
have fought with the men, I will be cruel with the  
maids, and cut off their heads.

**GREGORY**

The heads of the maids?

**SAMPSON**

Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads;  
take it in what sense thou wilt.

**GREGORY**



They must take it in sense that feel it.

**SAMPSON**

Me they shall feel while I am able to stand: and  
'tis known I am a pretty piece of flesh.

**GREGORY**

'Tis well thou art not fish; if thou hadst, thou  
hadst been poor John. Draw thy tool! here comes  
two of the house of the Montagues.

**SAMPSON**

My naked weapon is out: quarrel, I will back thee.

**GREGORY**

How! turn thy back and run?

**SAMPSON**

Fear me not.

**GREGORY**

No, marry; I fear thee!

**SAMPSON**

Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

**GREGORY**

I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as  
they list.

**SAMPSON**

Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them;

which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it.

*Enter ABRAHAM and BALTHASAR*

**ABRAHAM**

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

**SAMPSON**

I do bite my thumb, sir.

**ABRAHAM**

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

**SAMPSON**

[Aside to GREGORY] Is the law of our side, if I say  
ay?

**GREGORY**

No.

**SAMPSON**

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I  
bite my thumb, sir.

**GREGORY**

Do you quarrel, sir?

**ABRAHAM**

Quarrel sir! no, sir.

**SAMPSON**

If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you.

**ABRAHAM**

No better.

**SAMPSON**

Well, sir.

**GREGORY**

Say 'better:' here comes one of my master's kinsmen.

**SAMPSON**

Yes, better, sir.

**ABRAHAM**

You lie.

**SAMPSON**

Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.

*They fight*

*Enter BENVOLIO*

**BENVOLIO**

Part, fools!

Put up your swords; you know not what you do.

*Beats down their swords*

*Enter TYBALT*

**TYBALT**

What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds?  
Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death.

## **BENVOLIO**

I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword,  
Or manage it to part these men with me.

## **TYBALT**

What, drawn, and talk of peace! I hate the word,  
As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee:  
Have at thee, coward!

*They fight*

*Enter, several of both houses, who join the fray; then enter Citizens, with clubs*

## **First Citizen**

Clubs, bills, and partisans! strike! beat them down!  
Down with the Capulets! down with the Montagues!

*Enter CAPULET in his gown, and LADY CAPULET*

## **CAPULET**

What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!

## **LADY CAPULET**

A crutch, a crutch! why call you for a sword?

## **CAPULET**

My sword, I say! Old Montague is come,  
And flourishes his blade in spite of me.

*Enter MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE*

## **MONTAGUE**

Thou villain Capulet,--Hold me not, let me go.

## **LADY MONTAGUE**

Thou shalt not stir a foot to seek a foe.

*Enter PRINCE, with Attendants*

## **PRINCE**

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,  
Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,--  
Will they not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts,  
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage  
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,  
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands  
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,  
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.  
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,  
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets,  
And made Verona's ancient citizens  
Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments,  
To wield old partisans, in hands as old,  
Canker'd with peace, to part your canker'd hate:  
If ever you disturb our streets again,  
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.  
For this time, all the rest depart away:  
You Capulet; shall go along with me:  
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,  
To know our further pleasure in this case,  
To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.  
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

*Exeunt all but MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE, and BENVOLIO*

## **MONTAGUE**

Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad?  
Speak, nephew, were you by when it began?

## **BENVOLIO**

Here were the servants of your adversary,  
And yours, close fighting ere I did approach:  
I drew to part them: in the instant came  
The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared,  
Which, as he breathed defiance to my ears,  
He swung about his head and cut the winds,  
Who nothing hurt withal hiss'd him in scorn:  
While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,  
Came more and more and fought on part and part,  
Till the prince came, who parted either part.

## **LADY MONTAGUE**

O, where is Romeo? saw you him to-day?  
Right glad I am he was not at this fray.

## **BENVOLIO**

Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun  
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,  
A troubled mind drave me to walk abroad;  
Where, underneath the grove of sycamore  
That westward rooteth from the city's side,  
So early walking did I see your son:  
Towards him I made, but he was ware of me  
And stole into the covert of the wood:  
I, measuring his affections by my own,  
That most are busied when they're most alone,  
Pursued my humour not pursuing his,  
And gladly shunn'd who gladly fled from me.

## **MONTAGUE**

Many a morning hath he there been seen,  
With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew.  
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs;  
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun  
Should in the furthest east begin to draw  
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,  
Away from the light steals home my heavy son,

And private in his chamber pens himself,  
Shuts up his windows, locks far daylight out  
And makes himself an artificial night:  
Black and portentous must this humour prove,  
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

**BENVOLIO**

My noble uncle, do you know the cause?

**MONTAGUE**

I neither know it nor can learn of him.

**BENVOLIO**

Have you importuned him by any means?

**MONTAGUE**

Both by myself and many other friends:  
But he, his own affections' counsellor,  
Is to himself--I will not say how true--  
But to himself so secret and so close,  
So far from sounding and discovery,  
As is the bud bit with an envious worm,  
Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air,  
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.  
Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow.  
We would as willingly give cure as know.

*Enter ROMEO*

**BENVOLIO**

See, where he comes: so please you, step aside;  
I'll know his grievance, or be much denied.

**MONTAGUE**

I would thou wert so happy by thy stay,

To hear true shrift. Come, madam, let's away.

*Exeunt MONTAGUE and LADY MONTAGUE*

**BENVOLIO**

Good-morrow, cousin.

**ROMEO**

Is the day so young?

**BENVOLIO**

But new struck nine.

**ROMEO**

Ay me! sad hours seem long.  
Was that my father that went hence so fast?

**BENVOLIO**

It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

**ROMEO**

Not having that, which, having, makes them short.

**BENVOLIO**

In love?

**ROMEO**

Out--

**BENVOLIO**

Of love?



**ROMEO**

Out of her favour, where I am in love.

**BENVOLIO**

Alas, that love, so gentle in his view,  
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!

**ROMEO**

Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still,  
Should, without eyes, see pathways to his will!  
Where shall we dine? O me! What fray was here?  
Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.  
Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.  
Why, then, O brawling love! O loving hate!  
O any thing, of nothing first create!  
O heavy lightness! serious vanity!  
Mis-shapen chaos of well-seeming forms!  
Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire,  
sick health!  
Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!  
This love feel I, that feel no love in this.  
Dost thou not laugh?

**BENVOLIO**

No, coz, I rather weep.

**ROMEO**

Good heart, at what?

**BENVOLIO**

At thy good heart's oppression.

**ROMEO**

Why, such is love's transgression.

Griefs of mine own lie heavy in my breast,  
Which thou wilt propagate, to have it prest  
With more of thine: this love that thou hast shown  
Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.  
Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs;  
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;  
Being vex'd a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears:  
What is it else? a madness most discreet,  
A choking gall and a preserving sweet.  
Farewell, my coz.

**BENVOLIO**

Soft! I will go along;  
An if you leave me so, you do me wrong.

**ROMEO**

Tut, I have lost myself; I am not here;  
This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

**BENVOLIO**

Tell me in sadness, who is that you love.

**ROMEO**

What, shall I groan and tell thee?

**BENVOLIO**

Groan! why, no.  
But sadly tell me who.

**ROMEO**

Bid a sick man in sadness make his will:  
Ah, word ill urged to one that is so ill!  
In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

**BENVOLIO**

I aim'd so near, when I supposed you loved.

**ROMEO**

A right good mark-man! And she's fair I love.

**BENVOLIO**

A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit.

**ROMEO**

Well, in that hit you miss: she'll not be hit  
With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's wit;  
And, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,  
From love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd.  
She will not stay the siege of loving terms,  
Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,  
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold:  
O, she is rich in beauty, only poor,  
That when she dies with beauty dies her store.

**BENVOLIO**

Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

**ROMEO**

She hath, and in that sparing makes huge waste,  
For beauty starved with her severity  
Cuts beauty off from all posterity.  
She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,  
To merit bliss by making me despair:  
She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow  
Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

**BENVOLIO**

Be ruled by me, forget to think of her.

**ROMEO**

O, teach me how I should forget to think.

**BENVOLIO**

By giving liberty unto thine eyes;  
Examine other beauties.

**ROMEO**

'Tis the way  
To call hers exquisite, in question more:  
These happy masks that kiss fair ladies' brows  
Being black put us in mind they hide the fair;  
He that is stricken blind cannot forget  
The precious treasure of his eyesight lost:  
Show me a mistress that is passing fair,  
What doth her beauty serve, but as a note  
Where I may read who pass'd that passing fair?  
Farewell: thou canst not teach me to forget.

**BENVOLIO**

I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A street.

*Enter CAPULET, PARIS, and Servant*

### CAPULET

But Montague is bound as well as I,  
In penalty alike; and 'tis not hard, I think,  
For men so old as we to keep the peace.

### PARIS

Of honourable reckoning are you both;  
And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.  
But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?

### CAPULET

But saying o'er what I have said before:  
My child is yet a stranger in the world;  
She hath not seen the change of fourteen years,  
Let two more summers wither in their pride,  
Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

### PARIS

Younger than she are happy mothers made.

### CAPULET

And too soon marr'd are those so early made.  
The earth hath swallow'd all my hopes but she,  
She is the hopeful lady of my earth:  
But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart,  
My will to her consent is but a part;  
An she agree, within her scope of choice

Lies my consent and fair according voice.  
This night I hold an old accustom'd feast,  
Whereto I have invited many a guest,  
Such as I love; and you, among the store,  
One more, most welcome, makes my number more.  
At my poor house look to behold this night  
Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light:  
Such comfort as do lusty young men feel  
When well-apparell'd April on the heel  
Of limping winter treads, even such delight  
Among fresh female buds shall you this night  
Inherit at my house; hear all, all see,  
And like her most whose merit most shall be:  
Which on more view, of many mine being one  
May stand in number, though in reckoning none,  
Come, go with me.

*To Servant, giving a paper*

Go, sirrah, trudge about  
Through fair Verona; find those persons out  
Whose names are written there, and to them say,  
My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.

*Exeunt CAPULET and PARIS*

## **Servant**

Find them out whose names are written here! It is written, that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard, and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil, and the painter with his nets; but I am sent to find those persons whose names are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person hath here writ. I must to the learned.--In good time.

*Enter BENVOLIO and ROMEO*

## **BENVOLIO**

Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning,  
One pain is lessen'd by another's anguish;

Turn giddy, and be holp by backward turning;  
One desperate grief cures with another's languish:  
Take thou some new infection to thy eye,  
And the rank poison of the old will die.

**ROMEO**

Your plaintain-leaf is excellent for that.

**BENVOLIO**

For what, I pray thee?

**ROMEO**

For your broken shin.

**BENVOLIO**

Why, Romeo, art thou mad?

**ROMEO**

Not mad, but bound more than a mad-man is;  
Shut up in prison, kept without my food,  
Whipp'd and tormented and--God-den, good fellow.

**Servant**

God gi' god-den. I pray, sir, can you read?

**ROMEO**

Ay, mine own fortune in my misery.

**Servant**

Perhaps you have learned it without book: but, I  
pray, can you read any thing you see?

**ROMEO**

Ay, if I know the letters and the language.

**Servant**

Ye say honestly: rest you merry!

**ROMEO**

Stay, fellow; I can read.

*Reads*

'Signior Martino and his wife and daughters;  
County Anselme and his beauteous sisters; the lady  
widow of Vitravio; Signior Placentio and his lovely  
nieces; Mercutio and his brother Valentine; mine  
uncle Capulet, his wife and daughters; my fair niece  
Rosaline; Livia; Signior Valentio and his cousin  
Tybalt, Lucio and the lively Helena.' A fair  
assembly: whither should they come?

**Servant**

Up.

**ROMEO**

Whither?

**Servant**

To supper; to our house.

**ROMEO**

Whose house?

**Servant**

My master's.



## **ROMEO**

Indeed, I should have ask'd you that before.

## **Servant**

Now I'll tell you without asking: my master is the great rich Capulet; and if you be not of the house of Montagues, I pray, come and crush a cup of wine. Rest you merry!

*Exit*

## **BENVOLIO**

At this same ancient feast of Capulet's  
Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou so lovest,  
With all the admired beauties of Verona:  
Go thither; and, with unattainted eye,  
Compare her face with some that I shall show,  
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.

## **ROMEO**

When the devout religion of mine eye  
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;  
And these, who often drown'd could never die,  
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!  
One fairer than my love! the all-seeing sun  
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

## **BENVOLIO**

Tut, you saw her fair, none else being by,  
Herself poised with herself in either eye:  
But in that crystal scales let there be weigh'd  
Your lady's love against some other maid  
That I will show you shining at this feast,  
And she shall scant show well that now shows best.

## **ROMEO**

I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,  
But to rejoice in splendor of mine own.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in Capulet's house.

*Enter LADY CAPULET and Nurse*

**LADY CAPULET**

Nurse, where's my daughter? call her forth to me.

**Nurse**

Now, by my maidenhead, at twelve year old,  
I bade her come. What, lamb! what, ladybird!  
God forbid! Where's this girl? What, Juliet!

*Enter JULIET*

**JULIET**

How now! who calls?

**Nurse**

Your mother.

**JULIET**

Madam, I am here.  
What is your will?

**LADY CAPULET**

This is the matter:--Nurse, give leave awhile,  
We must talk in secret:--nurse, come back again;  
I have remember'd me, thou's hear our counsel.  
Thou know'st my daughter's of a pretty age.

**Nurse**

Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

**LADY CAPULET**

She's not fourteen.

**Nurse**

I'll lay fourteen of my teeth,--  
And yet, to my teeth be it spoken, I have but four--  
She is not fourteen. How long is it now  
To Lammas-tide?

**LADY CAPULET**

A fortnight and odd days.

**Nurse**

Even or odd, of all days in the year,  
Come Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen.  
Susan and she--God rest all Christian souls!--  
Were of an age: well, Susan is with God;  
She was too good for me: but, as I said,  
On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen;  
That shall she, marry; I remember it well.  
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;  
And she was wean'd,--I never shall forget it,--  
Of all the days of the year, upon that day:  
For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,  
Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall;  
My lord and you were then at Mantua:--  
Nay, I do bear a brain:--but, as I said,  
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple  
Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,  
To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug!  
Shake quoth the dove-house: 'twas no need, I trow,  
To bid me trudge:  
And since that time it is eleven years;  
For then she could stand alone; nay, by the rood,

She could have run and waddled all about;  
For even the day before, she broke her brow:  
And then my husband--God be with his soul!  
A' was a merry man--took up the child:  
'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy face?  
Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit;  
Wilt thou not, Jule?' and, by my holidame,  
The pretty wretch left crying and said 'Ay.'  
To see, now, how a jest shall come about!  
I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,  
I never should forget it: 'Wilt thou not, Jule?' quoth he;  
And, pretty fool, it stinted and said 'Ay.'

## **LADY CAPULET**

Enough of this; I pray thee, hold thy peace.

## **Nurse**

Yes, madam: yet I cannot choose but laugh,  
To think it should leave crying and say 'Ay.'  
And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow  
A bump as big as a young cockerel's stone;  
A parlous knock; and it cried bitterly:  
'Yea,' quoth my husband, 'fall'st upon thy face?  
Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age;  
Wilt thou not, Jule?' it stinted and said 'Ay.'

## **JULIET**

And stint thou too, I pray thee, nurse, say I.

## **Nurse**

Peace, I have done. God mark thee to his grace!  
Thou wast the prettiest babe that e'er I nursed:  
An I might live to see thee married once,  
I have my wish.

## **LADY CAPULET**

Marry, that 'marry' is the very theme

I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,  
How stands your disposition to be married?

**JULIET**

It is an honour that I dream not of.

**Nurse**

An honour! were not I thine only nurse,  
I would say thou hadst suck'd wisdom from thy teat.

**LADY CAPULET**

Well, think of marriage now; younger than you,  
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,  
Are made already mothers: by my count,  
I was your mother much upon these years  
That you are now a maid. Thus then in brief:  
The valiant Paris seeks you for his love.

**Nurse**

A man, young lady! lady, such a man  
As all the world--why, he's a man of wax.

**LADY CAPULET**

Verona's summer hath not such a flower.

**Nurse**

Nay, he's a flower; in faith, a very flower.

**LADY CAPULET**

What say you? can you love the gentleman?  
This night you shall behold him at our feast;  
Read o'er the volume of young Paris' face,  
And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;  
Examine every married lineament,

And see how one another lends content  
And what obscured in this fair volume lies  
Find written in the margent of his eyes.  
This precious book of love, this unbound lover,  
To beautify him, only lacks a cover:  
The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride  
For fair without the fair within to hide:  
That book in many's eyes doth share the glory,  
That in gold clasps locks in the golden story;  
So shall you share all that he doth possess,  
By having him, making yourself no less.

**Nurse**

No less! nay, bigger; women grow by men.

**LADY CAPULET**

Speak briefly, can you like of Paris' love?

**JULIET**

I'll look to like, if looking liking move:  
But no more deep will I endart mine eye  
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

*Enter a Servant*

**Servant**

Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, you  
called, my young lady asked for, the nurse cursed in  
the pantry, and every thing in extremity. I must  
hence to wait; I beseech you, follow straight.

**LADY CAPULET**

We follow thee.

*Exit Servant*

Juliet, the county stays.

**Nurse**

Go, girl, seek happy nights to happy days.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A street.

*Enter ROMEO, MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, with five or six Maskers, Torch-bearers, and others*

### ROMEO

What, shall this speech be spoke for our excuse?  
Or shall we on without a apology?

### BENVOLIO

The date is out of such prolixity:  
We'll have no Cupid hoodwink'd with a scarf,  
Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,  
Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper;  
Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke  
After the prompter, for our entrance:  
But let them measure us by what they will;  
We'll measure them a measure, and be gone.

### ROMEO

Give me a torch: I am not for this ambling;  
Being but heavy, I will bear the light.

### MERCUTIO

Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

### ROMEO

Not I, believe me: you have dancing shoes  
With nimble soles: I have a soul of lead  
So stakes me to the ground I cannot move.

## MERCUTIO

You are a lover; borrow Cupid's wings,  
And soar with them above a common bound.

## ROMEO

I am too sore enpierced with his shaft  
To soar with his light feathers, and so bound,  
I cannot bound a pitch above dull woe:  
Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

## MERCUTIO

And, to sink in it, should you burden love;  
Too great oppression for a tender thing.

## ROMEO

Is love a tender thing? it is too rough,  
Too rude, too boisterous, and it pricks like thorn.

## MERCUTIO

If love be rough with you, be rough with love;  
Prick love for pricking, and you beat love down.  
Give me a case to put my visage in:  
A visor for a visor! what care I  
What curious eye doth quote deformities?  
Here are the beetle brows shall blush for me.

## BENVOLIO

Come, knock and enter; and no sooner in,  
But every man betake him to his legs.

## ROMEO

A torch for me: let wantons light of heart  
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels,  
For I am proverb'd with a grandsire phrase;

I'll be a candle-holder, and look on.  
The game was ne'er so fair, and I am done.

**MERCUTIO**

Tut, dun's the mouse, the constable's own word:  
If thou art dun, we'll draw thee from the mire  
Of this sir-reverence love, wherein thou stick'st  
Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight, ho!

**ROMEO**

Nay, that's not so.

**MERCUTIO**

I mean, sir, in delay  
We waste our lights in vain, like lamps by day.  
Take our good meaning, for our judgment sits  
Five times in that ere once in our five wits.

**ROMEO**

And we mean well in going to this mask;  
But 'tis no wit to go.

**MERCUTIO**

Why, may one ask?

**ROMEO**

I dream'd a dream to-night.

**MERCUTIO**

And so did I.

**ROMEO**

Well, what was yours?

## MERCUTIO

That dreamers often lie.

## ROMEO

In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.

## MERCUTIO

O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.  
She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes  
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone  
On the fore-finger of an alderman,  
Drawn with a team of little atomies  
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep;  
Her wagon-spokes made of long spiders' legs,  
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,  
The traces of the smallest spider's web,  
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams,  
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash of film,  
Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat,  
Not so big as a round little worm  
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;  
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut  
Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,  
Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.  
And in this state she gallops night by night  
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;  
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight,  
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees,  
O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,  
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are:  
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;  
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail  
Tickling a parson's nose as a' lies asleep,  
Then dreams, he of another benefice:  
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,  
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,

Of healths five-fathom deep; and then anon  
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,  
And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two  
And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
That plats the manes of horses in the night,  
And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hairs,  
Which once untangled, much misfortune bodes:  
This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,  
That presses them and learns them first to bear,  
Making them women of good carriage:  
This is she--

## **ROMEO**

Peace, peace, Mercutio, peace!  
Thou talk'st of nothing.

## **MERCUTIO**

True, I talk of dreams,  
Which are the children of an idle brain,  
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,  
Which is as thin of substance as the air  
And more inconstant than the wind, who woos  
Even now the frozen bosom of the north,  
And, being anger'd, puffs away from thence,  
Turning his face to the dew-dropping south.

## **BENVOLIO**

This wind, you talk of, blows us from ourselves;  
Supper is done, and we shall come too late.

## **ROMEO**

I fear, too early: for my mind misgives  
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars  
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date  
With this night's revels and expire the term  
Of a despised life closed in my breast  
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.  
But He, that hath the steerage of my course,

Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen.

**BENVOLIO**

Strike, drum.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. A hall in Capulet's house.

*Musicians waiting. Enter Servingmen with napkins*

### First Servant

Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift a trencher? he scrape a trencher!

### Second Servant

When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

### First Servant

Away with the joint-stools, remove the court-cupboard, look to the plate. Good thou, save me a piece of marchpane; and, as thou lovest me, let the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell. Antony, and Potpan!

### Second Servant

Ay, boy, ready.

### First Servant

You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought for, in the great chamber.

### Second Servant

We cannot be here and there too. Cheerly, boys; be brisk awhile, and the longer liver take all.

*Enter CAPULET, with JULIET and others of his house, meeting the Guests and Maskers*

## **CAPULET**

Welcome, gentlemen! ladies that have their toes  
Unplagued with corns will have a bout with you.  
Ah ha, my mistresses! which of you all  
Will now deny to dance? she that makes dainty,  
She, I'll swear, hath corns; am I come near ye now?  
Welcome, gentlemen! I have seen the day  
That I have worn a visor and could tell  
A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,  
Such as would please: 'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone:  
You are welcome, gentlemen! come, musicians, play.  
A hall, a hall! give room! and foot it, girls.

*Music plays, and they dance*

More light, you knaves; and turn the tables up,  
And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.  
Ah, sirrah, this unlook'd-for sport comes well.  
Nay, sit, nay, sit, good cousin Capulet;  
For you and I are past our dancing days:  
How long is't now since last yourself and I  
Were in a mask?

## **Second Capulet**

By'r lady, thirty years.

## **CAPULET**

What, man! 'tis not so much, 'tis not so much:  
'Tis since the nuptials of Lucentio,  
Come pentecost as quickly as it will,  
Some five and twenty years; and then we mask'd.

## **Second Capulet**

'Tis more, 'tis more, his son is elder, sir;  
His son is thirty.



## **CAPULET**

Will you tell me that?  
His son was but a ward two years ago.

## **ROMEO**

[To a Servingman] What lady is that, which doth  
enrich the hand  
Of yonder knight?

## **Servant**

I know not, sir.

## **ROMEO**

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!  
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night  
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;  
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!  
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,  
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.  
The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,  
And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.  
Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!  
For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

## **TYBALT**

This, by his voice, should be a Montague.  
Fetch me my rapier, boy. What dares the slave  
Come hither, cover'd with an antic face,  
To fleer and scorn at our solemnity?  
Now, by the stock and honour of my kin,  
To strike him dead, I hold it not a sin.

## **CAPULET**

Why, how now, kinsman! wherefore storm you so?

**TYBALT**

Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,  
A villain that is hither come in spite,  
To scorn at our solemnity this night.

**CAPULET**

Young Romeo is it?

**TYBALT**

'Tis he, that villain Romeo.

**CAPULET**

Content thee, gentle coz, let him alone;  
He bears him like a portly gentleman;  
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him  
To be a virtuous and well-govern'd youth:  
I would not for the wealth of all the town  
Here in my house do him disparagement:  
Therefore be patient, take no note of him:  
It is my will, the which if thou respect,  
Show a fair presence and put off these frowns,  
And ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

**TYBALT**

It fits, when such a villain is a guest:  
I'll not endure him.

**CAPULET**

He shall be endured:  
What, goodman boy! I say, he shall: go to;  
Am I the master here, or you? go to.  
You'll not endure him! God shall mend my soul!  
You'll make a mutiny among my guests!  
You will set cock-a-hoop! you'll be the man!

**TYBALT**

Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.

## **CAPULET**

Go to, go to;  
You are a saucy boy: is't so, indeed?  
This trick may chance to scathe you, I know what:  
You must contrary me! marry, 'tis time.  
Well said, my hearts! You are a princox; go:  
Be quiet, or--More light, more light! For shame!  
I'll make you quiet. What, cheerly, my hearts!

## **TYBALT**

Patience perforce with wilful choler meeting  
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.  
I will withdraw: but this intrusion shall  
Now seeming sweet convert to bitter gall.

*Exit*

## **ROMEO**

[To JULIET] If I profane with my unworthiest hand  
This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this:  
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand  
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

## **JULIET**

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,  
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;  
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

## **ROMEO**

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

## **JULIET**

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

**ROMEO**

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;  
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

**JULIET**

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

**ROMEO**

Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.  
Thus from my lips, by yours, my sin is purged.

**JULIET**

Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

**ROMEO**

Sin from thy lips? O trespass sweetly urged!  
Give me my sin again.

**JULIET**

You kiss by the book.

**Nurse**

Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

**ROMEO**

What is her mother?

**Nurse**

Marry, bachelor,

Her mother is the lady of the house,  
And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous  
I nursed her daughter, that you talk'd withal;  
I tell you, he that can lay hold of her  
Shall have the chinks.

**ROMEO**

Is she a Capulet?  
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.

**BENVOLIO**

Away, begone; the sport is at the best.

**ROMEO**

Ay, so I fear; the more is my unrest.

**CAPULET**

Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone;  
We have a trifling foolish banquet towards.  
Is it e'en so? why, then, I thank you all  
I thank you, honest gentlemen; good night.  
More torches here! Come on then, let's to bed.  
Ah, sirrah, by my fay, it waxes late:  
I'll to my rest.

*Exeunt all but JULIET and Nurse*

**JULIET**

Come hither, nurse. What is yond gentleman?

**Nurse**

The son and heir of old Tiberio.

**JULIET**

What's he that now is going out of door?

**Nurse**

Marry, that, I think, be young Petrucio.

**JULIET**

What's he that follows there, that would not dance?

**Nurse**

I know not.

**JULIET**

Go ask his name: if he be married.  
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.

**Nurse**

His name is Romeo, and a Montague;  
The only son of your great enemy.

**JULIET**

My only love sprung from my only hate!  
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!  
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,  
That I must love a loathed enemy.

**Nurse**

What's this? what's this?

**JULIET**

A rhyme I learn'd even now  
Of one I danced withal.

*One calls within 'Juliet.'*

## Nurse

Anon, anon!  
Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 1, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Prologue

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## PROLOGUE

*Enter Chorus*

### Chorus

Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,  
And young affection gapes to be his heir;  
That fair for which love groan'd for and would die,  
With tender Juliet match'd, is now not fair.  
Now Romeo is beloved and loves again,  
Alike betwitched by the charm of looks,  
But to his foe supposed he must complain,  
And she steal love's sweet bait from fearful hooks:  
Being held a foe, he may not have access  
To breathe such vows as lovers use to swear;  
And she as much in love, her means much less  
To meet her new-beloved any where:  
But passion lends them power, time means, to meet  
Tempering extremities with extreme sweet.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Prologue

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A lane by the wall of Capulet's orchard.

*Enter ROMEO*

**ROMEO**

Can I go forward when my heart is here?  
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.

*He climbs the wall, and leaps down within it*

*Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO*

**BENVOLIO**

Romeo! my cousin Romeo!

**MERCUTIO**

He is wise;  
And, on my lie, hath stol'n him home to bed.

**BENVOLIO**

He ran this way, and leap'd this orchard wall:  
Call, good Mercutio.

**MERCUTIO**

Nay, I'll conjure too.  
Romeo! humours! madman! passion! lover!  
Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh:  
Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied;  
Cry but 'Ay me!' pronounce but 'love' and 'dove;'  
Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,  
One nick-name for her purblind son and heir,

Young Adam Cupid, he that shot so trim,  
When King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid!  
He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not;  
The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.  
I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,  
By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,  
By her fine foot, straight leg and quivering thigh  
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,  
That in thy likeness thou appear to us!

## **BENVOLIO**

And if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.

## **MERCUTIO**

This cannot anger him: 'twould anger him  
To raise a spirit in his mistress' circle  
Of some strange nature, letting it there stand  
Till she had laid it and conjured it down;  
That were some spite: my invocation  
Is fair and honest, and in his mistress' name  
I conjure only but to raise up him.

## **BENVOLIO**

Come, he hath hid himself among these trees,  
To be consorted with the humorous night:  
Blind is his love and best befits the dark.

## **MERCUTIO**

If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.  
Now will he sit under a medlar tree,  
And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit  
As maids call medlars, when they laugh alone.  
Romeo, that she were, O, that she were  
An open et caetera, thou a poperin pear!  
Romeo, good night: I'll to my truckle-bed;  
This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep:  
Come, shall we go?

## BENVOLIO

Go, then; for 'tis in vain  
To seek him here that means not to be found.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Capulet's orchard.

*Enter ROMEO*

**ROMEO**

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

*JULIET appears above at a window*

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.  
It is my lady, O, it is my love!  
O, that she knew she were!  
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?  
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:  
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,  
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not night.  
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!

**JULIET**

Ay me!

**ROMEO**

She speaks:

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art  
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head  
As is a winged messenger of heaven  
Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes  
Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him  
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds  
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

**JULIET**

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

**ROMEO**

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

**JULIET**

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;  
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.  
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!  
What's in a name? that which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for that name which is no part of thee  
Take all myself.

**ROMEO**

I take thee at thy word:

Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

**JULIET**

What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night  
So stumblest on my counsel?

**ROMEO**

By a name  
I know not how to tell thee who I am:  
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
Because it is an enemy to thee;  
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

**JULIET**

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words  
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:  
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

**ROMEO**

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

**JULIET**

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?  
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,  
And the place death, considering who thou art,  
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

**ROMEO**

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do that dares love attempt;  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

**JULIET**

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

**ROMEO**

Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye  
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,  
And I am proof against their enmity.

**JULIET**

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

**ROMEO**

I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;  
And but thou love me, let them find me here:  
My life were better ended by their hate,  
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

**JULIET**

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

**ROMEO**

By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;  
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.  
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far  
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,  
I would adventure for such merchandise.

**JULIET**

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!  
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'  
And I will take thy word: yet if thou swear'st,  
Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries

Then say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:  
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light:  
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,  
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me,  
And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

## **ROMEO**

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear  
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops--

## **JULIET**

O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,  
That monthly changes in her circled orb,  
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

## **ROMEO**

What shall I swear by?

## **JULIET**

Do not swear at all;  
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,  
Which is the god of my idolatry,  
And I'll believe thee.

## **ROMEO**

If my heart's dear love--

## **JULIET**



Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,  
I have no joy of this contract to-night:  
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;  
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be  
Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night!  
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,  
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.  
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest  
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

**ROMEO**

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

**JULIET**

What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

**ROMEO**

The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

**JULIET**

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:  
And yet I would it were to give again.

**ROMEO**

Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

**JULIET**

But to be frank, and give it thee again.  
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:  
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,  
The more I have, for both are infinite.

*Nurse calls within*

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!  
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.  
Stay but a little, I will come again.

*Exit, above*

## **ROMEO**

O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard.  
Being in night, all this is but a dream,  
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

*Re-enter JULIET, above*

## **JULIET**

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.  
If that thy bent of love be honourable,  
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,  
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,  
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;  
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay  
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

## **Nurse**

[Within] Madam!

## **JULIET**

I come, anon.--But if thou mean'st not well,  
I do beseech thee--

## **Nurse**

[Within] Madam!

## **JULIET**

By and by, I come:--  
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:

To-morrow will I send.

**ROMEO**

So thrive my soul--

**JULIET**

A thousand times good night!

*Exit, above*

**ROMEO**

A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.  
Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from  
their books,  
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

*Retiring*

*Re-enter JULIET, above*

**JULIET**

Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,  
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!  
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;  
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,  
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,  
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

**ROMEO**

It is my soul that calls upon my name:  
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,  
Like softest music to attending ears!

**JULIET**

Romeo!

**ROMEO**

My dear?

**JULIET**

At what o'clock to-morrow  
Shall I send to thee?

**ROMEO**

At the hour of nine.

**JULIET**

I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.  
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

**ROMEO**

Let me stand here till thou remember it.

**JULIET**

I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,  
Remembering how I love thy company.

**ROMEO**

And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,  
Forgetting any other home but this.

**JULIET**

'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone:  
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;  
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,  
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,  
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,  
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

## ROMEO

I would I were thy bird.

## JULIET

Sweet, so would I:  
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.  
Good night, good night! parting is such  
sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

*Exit above*

## ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!  
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!  
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,  
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Friar Laurence's cell.

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE, with a basket*

### FRIAR LAURENCE

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,  
Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light,  
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels  
From forth day's path and Titan's fiery wheels:  
Now, ere the sun advance his burning eye,  
The day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry,  
I must up-fill this osier cage of ours  
With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.  
The earth that's nature's mother is her tomb;  
What is her burying grave that is her womb,  
And from her womb children of divers kind  
We sucking on her natural bosom find,  
Many for many virtues excellent,  
None but for some and yet all different.  
O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies  
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities:  
For nought so vile that on the earth doth live  
But to the earth some special good doth give,  
Nor aught so good but strain'd from that fair use  
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse:  
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied;  
And vice sometimes by action dignified.  
Within the infant rind of this small flower  
Poison hath residence and medicine power:  
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part;  
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.  
Two such opposed kings encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will;  
And where the worser is predominant,  
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant.

*Enter ROMEO*

**ROMEO**

Good morrow, father.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Benedicite!  
What early tongue so sweet saluteth me?  
Young son, it argues a distemper'd head  
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed:  
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,  
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;  
But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain  
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign:  
Therefore thy earliness doth me assure  
Thou art up-roused by some distemperature;  
Or if not so, then here I hit it right,  
Our Romeo hath not been in bed to-night.

**ROMEO**

That last is true; the sweeter rest was mine.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

God pardon sin! wast thou with Rosaline?

**ROMEO**

With Rosaline, my ghostly father? no;  
I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

That's my good son: but where hast thou been, then?

**ROMEO**

I'll tell thee, ere thou ask it me again.

I have been feasting with mine enemy,  
Where on a sudden one hath wounded me,  
That's by me wounded: both our remedies  
Within thy help and holy physic lies:  
I bear no hatred, blessed man, for, lo,  
My intercession likewise steads my foe.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift;  
Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift.

## **ROMEO**

Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set  
On the fair daughter of rich Capulet:  
As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine;  
And all combined, save what thou must combine  
By holy marriage: when and where and how  
We met, we woo'd and made exchange of vow,  
I'll tell thee as we pass; but this I pray,  
That thou consent to marry us to-day.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!  
Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,  
So soon forsaken? young men's love then lies  
Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.  
Jesu Maria, what a deal of brine  
Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!  
How much salt water thrown away in waste,  
To season love, that of it doth not taste!  
The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,  
Thy old groans ring yet in my ancient ears;  
Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit  
Of an old tear that is not wash'd off yet:  
If e'er thou wast thyself and these woes thine,  
Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline:  
And art thou changed? pronounce this sentence then,  
Women may fall, when there's no strength in men.



**ROMEO**

Thou chid'st me oft for loving Rosaline.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

For doting, not for loving, pupil mine.

**ROMEO**

And bad'st me bury love.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Not in a grave,  
To lay one in, another out to have.

**ROMEO**

I pray thee, chide not; she whom I love now  
Doth grace for grace and love for love allow;  
The other did not so.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

O, she knew well  
Thy love did read by rote and could not spell.  
But come, young waverer, come, go with me,  
In one respect I'll thy assistant be;  
For this alliance may so happy prove,  
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

**ROMEO**

O, let us hence; I stand on sudden haste.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A street.

*Enter BENVOLIO and MERCUTIO*

### MERCUTIO

Where the devil should this Romeo be?  
Came he not home to-night?

### BENVOLIO

Not to his father's; I spoke with his man.

### MERCUTIO

Ah, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline.  
Torments him so, that he will sure run mad.

### BENVOLIO

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

### MERCUTIO

A challenge, on my life.

### BENVOLIO

Romeo will answer it.

### MERCUTIO

Any man that can write may answer a letter.

## **BENVOLIO**

Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how he dares, being dared.

## **MERCUTIO**

Alas poor Romeo! he is already dead; stabbed with a white wench's black eye; shot through the ear with a love-song; the very pin of his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft: and is he a man to encounter Tybalt?

## **BENVOLIO**

Why, what is Tybalt?

## **MERCUTIO**

More than prince of cats, I can tell you. O, he is the courageous captain of compliments. He fights as you sing prick-song, keeps time, distance, and proportion; rests me his minim rest, one, two, and the third in your bosom: the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist; a gentleman of the very first house, of the first and second cause: ah, the immortal passado! the punto reverso! the hai!

## **BENVOLIO**

The what?

## **MERCUTIO**

The pox of such antic, lispings, affecting fantasticoes; these new tuners of accents! 'By Jesu, a very good blade! a very tall man! a very good whore!' Why, is not this a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with these strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these perdonami's, who stand so much on the new form,

that they cannot at ease on the old bench? O, their bones, their bones!

*Enter ROMEO*

**BENVOLIO**

Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.

**MERCUTIO**

Without his roe, like a dried herring: flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in: Laura to his lady was but a kitchen-wench; marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her; Dido a dowdy; Cleopatra a gipsy; Helen and Hero hildings and harlots; Thisbe a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, bon jour! there's a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.

**ROMEO**

Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?

**MERCUTIO**

The ship, sir, the slip; can you not conceive?

**ROMEO**

Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.

**MERCUTIO**

That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.

**ROMEO**

Meaning, to court'sy.

**MERCUTIO**

Thou hast most kindly hit it.

**ROMEO**

A most courteous exposition.

**MERCUTIO**

Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.

**ROMEO**

Pink for flower.

**MERCUTIO**

Right.

**ROMEO**

Why, then is my pump well flowered.

**MERCUTIO**

Well said: follow me this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump, that when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain after the wearing sole singular.

**ROMEO**

O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness.

**MERCUTIO**

Come between us, good Benvolio; my wits faint.

**ROMEO**

Switch and spurs, switch and spurs; or I'll cry a match.

**MERCUTIO**

Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase, I have done, for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits than, I am sure, I have in my whole five: was I with you there for the goose?

**ROMEO**

Thou wast never with me for any thing when thou wast not there for the goose.

**MERCUTIO**

I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.

**ROMEO**

Nay, good goose, bite not.

**MERCUTIO**

Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp sauce.

**ROMEO**

And is it not well served in to a sweet goose?

**MERCUTIO**

O here's a wit of cheveril, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!

**ROMEO**

I stretch it out for that word 'broad;' which added  
to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.

**MERCUTIO**

Why, is not this better now than groaning for love?  
now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art  
thou what thou art, by art as well as by nature:  
for this drivelling love is like a great natural,  
that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.

**BENVOLIO**

Stop there, stop there.

**MERCUTIO**

Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.

**BENVOLIO**

Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.

**MERCUTIO**

O, thou art deceived; I would have made it short:  
for I was come to the whole depth of my tale; and  
meant, indeed, to occupy the argument no longer.

**ROMEO**

Here's goodly gear!

*Enter Nurse and PETER*

**MERCUTIO**

A sail, a sail!

**BENVOLIO**



Two, two; a shirt and a smock.

**Nurse**

Peter!

**PETER**

Anon!

**Nurse**

My fan, Peter.

**MERCUTIO**

Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer face.

**Nurse**

God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

**MERCUTIO**

God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.

**Nurse**

Is it good den?

**MERCUTIO**

'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.

**Nurse**

Out upon you! what a man are you!

**ROMEO**

One, gentlewoman, that God hath made for himself to mar.

**Nurse**

By my troth, it is well said; 'for himself to mar,'  
quoth a'? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I  
may find the young Romeo?

**ROMEO**

I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when  
you have found him than he was when you sought him:  
I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse.

**Nurse**

You say well.

**MERCUTIO**

Yea, is the worst well? very well took, i' faith;  
wisely, wisely.

**Nurse**

if you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with  
you.

**BENVOLIO**

She will indite him to some supper.

**MERCUTIO**

A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! so ho!

**ROMEO**

What hast thou found?

## MERCUTIO

No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie,  
that is something stale and hoar ere it be spent.

*Sings*

An old hare hoar,  
And an old hare hoar,  
Is very good meat in lent  
But a hare that is hoar  
Is too much for a score,  
When it hoars ere it be spent.  
Romeo, will you come to your father's? we'll  
to dinner, thither.

## ROMEO

I will follow you.

## MERCUTIO

Farewell, ancient lady; farewell,

*Singing*

'lady, lady, lady.'

*Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO*

## Nurse

Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy  
merchant was this, that was so full of his ropery?

## ROMEO

A gentleman, nurse, that loves to hear himself talk,  
and will speak more in a minute than he will stand  
to in a month.

**Nurse**

An a' speak any thing against me, I'll take him down, an a' were lustier than he is, and twenty such Jacks; and if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave! I am none of his flirt-gills; I am none of his skains-mates. And thou must stand by too, and suffer every knave to use me at his pleasure?

**PETER**

I saw no man use you a pleasure; if I had, my weapon should quickly have been out, I warrant you: I dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion in a good quarrel, and the law on my side.

**Nurse**

Now, afore God, I am so vexed, that every part about me quivers. Scurvy knave! Pray you, sir, a word: and as I told you, my young lady bade me inquire you out; what she bade me say, I will keep to myself: but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behavior, as they say: for the gentlewoman is young; and, therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.

**ROMEO**

Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee--

**Nurse**

Good heart, and, i' faith, I will tell her as much: Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman.

**ROMEO**

What wilt thou tell her, nurse? thou dost not mark me.

**Nurse**

I will tell her, sir, that you do protest; which, as  
I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.

**ROMEO**

Bid her devise  
Some means to come to shrift this afternoon;  
And there she shall at Friar Laurence' cell  
Be shrived and married. Here is for thy pains.

**Nurse**

No truly sir; not a penny.

**ROMEO**

Go to; I say you shall.

**Nurse**

This afternoon, sir? well, she shall be there.

**ROMEO**

And stay, good nurse, behind the abbey wall:  
Within this hour my man shall be with thee  
And bring thee cords made like a tackled stair;  
Which to the high top-gallant of my joy  
Must be my convoy in the secret night.  
Farewell; be trusty, and I'll quit thy pains:  
Farewell; commend me to thy mistress.

**Nurse**

Now God in heaven bless thee! Hark you, sir.

**ROMEO**

What say'st thou, my dear nurse?

**Nurse**

Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,  
Two may keep counsel, putting one away?

**ROMEO**

I warrant thee, my man's as true as steel.

**NURSE**

Well, sir; my mistress is the sweetest lady--Lord,  
Lord! when 'twas a little prating thing:--O, there  
is a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain  
lay knife aboard; but she, good soul, had as lief  
see a toad, a very toad, as see him. I anger her  
sometimes and tell her that Paris is the properer  
man; but, I'll warrant you, when I say so, she looks  
as pale as any clout in the versal world. Doth not  
rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?

**ROMEO**

Ay, nurse; what of that? both with an R.

**Nurse**

Ah, mocker! that's the dog's name; R is for  
the--No; I know it begins with some other  
letter:--and she hath the prettiest sententious of  
it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good  
to hear it.

**ROMEO**

Commend me to thy lady.

**Nurse**

Ay, a thousand times.

*Exit Romeo*

Peter!

**PETER**

Anon!

**Nurse**

Peter, take my fan, and go before and apace.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Capulet's orchard.

*Enter JULIET*

**JULIET**

The clock struck nine when I did send the nurse;  
In half an hour she promised to return.  
Perchance she cannot meet him: that's not so.  
O, she is lame! love's heralds should be thoughts,  
Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams,  
Driving back shadows over louring hills:  
Therefore do nimble-pinion'd doves draw love,  
And therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings.  
Now is the sun upon the highmost hill  
Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve  
Is three long hours, yet she is not come.  
Had she affections and warm youthful blood,  
She would be as swift in motion as a ball;  
My words would bandy her to my sweet love,  
And his to me:  
But old folks, many feign as they were dead;  
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.  
O God, she comes!

*Enter Nurse and PETER*

O honey nurse, what news?  
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

**Nurse**

Peter, stay at the gate.

*Exit PETER*



## **JULIET**

Now, good sweet nurse,--O Lord, why look'st thou sad?  
Though news be sad, yet tell them merrily;  
If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news  
By playing it to me with so sour a face.

## **Nurse**

I am a-weary, give me leave awhile:  
Fie, how my bones ache! what a jaunt have I had!

## **JULIET**

I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news:  
Nay, come, I pray thee, speak; good, good nurse, speak.

## **Nurse**

Jesu, what haste? can you not stay awhile?  
Do you not see that I am out of breath?

## **JULIET**

How art thou out of breath, when thou hast breath  
To say to me that thou art out of breath?  
The excuse that thou dost make in this delay  
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.  
Is thy news good, or bad? answer to that;  
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance:  
Let me be satisfied, is't good or bad?

## **Nurse**

Well, you have made a simple choice; you know not  
how to choose a man: Romeo! no, not he; though his  
face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels  
all men's; and for a hand, and a foot, and a body,  
though they be not to be talked on, yet they are  
past compare: he is not the flower of courtesy,  
but, I'll warrant him, as gentle as a lamb. Go thy  
ways, wench; serve God. What, have you dined at home?

## **JULIET**

No, no: but all this did I know before.  
What says he of our marriage? what of that?

## **Nurse**

Lord, how my head aches! what a head have I!  
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.  
My back o' t' other side,--O, my back, my back!  
Beshrew your heart for sending me about,  
To catch my death with jaunting up and down!

## **JULIET**

I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.  
Sweet, sweet, sweet nurse, tell me, what says my love?

## **Nurse**

Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a  
courteous, and a kind, and a handsome, and, I  
warrant, a virtuous,--Where is your mother?

## **JULIET**

Where is my mother! why, she is within;  
Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!  
'Your love says, like an honest gentleman,  
Where is your mother?'

## **Nurse**

O God's lady dear!  
Are you so hot? marry, come up, I trow;  
Is this the poultice for my aching bones?  
Henceforward do your messages yourself.

## **JULIET**

Here's such a coil! come, what says Romeo?

**Nurse**

Have you got leave to go to shrift to-day?

**JULIET**

I have.

**Nurse**

Then hie you hence to Friar Laurence' cell;  
There stays a husband to make you a wife:  
Now comes the wanton blood up in your cheeks,  
They'll be in scarlet straight at any news.  
Hie you to church; I must another way,  
To fetch a ladder, by the which your love  
Must climb a bird's nest soon when it is dark:  
I am the drudge and toil in your delight,  
But you shall bear the burden soon at night.  
Go; I'll to dinner: hie you to the cell.

**JULIET**

Hie to high fortune! Honest nurse, farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. Friar Laurence's cell.

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE and ROMEO*

### FRIAR LAURENCE

So smile the heavens upon this holy act,  
That after hours with sorrow chide us not!

### ROMEO

Amen, amen! but come what sorrow can,  
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy  
That one short minute gives me in her sight:  
Do thou but close our hands with holy words,  
Then love-devouring death do what he dare;  
It is enough I may but call her mine.

### FRIAR LAURENCE

These violent delights have violent ends  
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,  
Which as they kiss consume: the sweetest honey  
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness  
And in the taste confounds the appetite:  
Therefore love moderately; long love doth so;  
Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

*Enter JULIET*

Here comes the lady: O, so light a foot  
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint:  
A lover may bestride the gossamer  
That idles in the wanton summer air,  
And yet not fall; so light is vanity.

**JULIET**

Good even to my ghostly confessor.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Romeo shall thank thee, daughter, for us both.

**JULIET**

As much to him, else is his thanks too much.

**ROMEO**

Ah, Juliet, if the measure of thy joy  
Be heap'd like mine and that thy skill be more  
To blazon it, then sweeten with thy breath  
This neighbour air, and let rich music's tongue  
Unfold the imagined happiness that both  
Receive in either by this dear encounter.

**JULIET**

Conceit, more rich in matter than in words,  
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament:  
They are but beggars that can count their worth;  
But my true love is grown to such excess  
I cannot sum up sum of half my wealth.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Come, come with me, and we will make short work;  
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
Till holy church incorporate two in one.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 2, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A public place.

*Enter MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, Page, and Servants*

### BENVOLIO

I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire:  
The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,  
And, if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl;  
For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring.

### MERCUTIO

Thou art like one of those fellows that when he enters the confines of a tavern claps me his sword upon the table and says 'God send me no need of thee!' and by the operation of the second cup draws it on the drawer, when indeed there is no need.

### BENVOLIO

Am I like such a fellow?

### MERCUTIO

Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy, and as soon moved to be moody, and as soon moody to be moved.

### BENVOLIO

And what to?

### MERCUTIO

Nay, an there were two such, we should have none

shortly, for one would kill the other. Thou! why, thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more, or a hair less, in his beard, than thou hast: thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes: what eye but such an eye would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat, and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle as an egg for quarrelling: thou hast quarrelled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that hath lain asleep in the sun: didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet before Easter? with another, for tying his new shoes with old riband? and yet thou wilt tutor me from quarrelling!

### **BENVOLIO**

An I were so apt to quarrel as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter.

### **MERCUTIO**

The fee-simple! O simple!

### **BENVOLIO**

By my head, here come the Capulets.

### **MERCUTIO**

By my heel, I care not.

*Enter TYBALT and others*

### **TYBALT**

Follow me close, for I will speak to them.  
Gentlemen, good den: a word with one of you.

### **MERCUTIO**

And but one word with one of us? couple it with something; make it a word and a blow.

**TYBALT**

You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, an you will give me occasion.

**MERCUTIO**

Could you not take some occasion without giving?

**TYBALT**

Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo,--

**MERCUTIO**

Consort! what, dost thou make us minstrels? an thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords: here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance. 'Zounds, consort!

**BENVOLIO**

We talk here in the public haunt of men:  
Either withdraw unto some private place,  
And reason coldly of your grievances,  
Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us.

**MERCUTIO**

Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze;  
I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I.

*Enter ROMEO*

**TYBALT**

Well, peace be with you, sir: here comes my man.



## MERCUTIO

But I'll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery:  
Marry, go before to field, he'll be your follower;  
Your worship in that sense may call him 'man.'

## TYBALT

Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford  
No better term than this,--thou art a villain.

## ROMEO

Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee  
Doth much excuse the appertaining rage  
To such a greeting: villain am I none;  
Therefore farewell; I see thou know'st me not.

## TYBALT

Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries  
That thou hast done me; therefore turn and draw.

## ROMEO

I do protest, I never injured thee,  
But love thee better than thou canst devise,  
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love:  
And so, good Capulet,--which name I tender  
As dearly as my own,--be satisfied.

## MERCUTIO

O calm, dishonourable, vile submission!  
Alla stoccata carries it away.

*Draws*

Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

## TYBALT

What wouldst thou have with me?

**MERCUTIO**

Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives; that I mean to make bold withal, and as you shall use me hereafter, drybeat the rest of the eight. Will you pluck your sword out of his pitcher by the ears? make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

**TYBALT**

I am for you.

*Drawing*

**ROMEO**

Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

**MERCUTIO**

Come, sir, your passado.

*They fight*

**ROMEO**

Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons.  
Gentlemen, for shame, forbear this outrage!  
Tybalt, Mercutio, the prince expressly hath  
Forbidden bandying in Verona streets:  
Hold, Tybalt! good Mercutio!

*TYBALT under ROMEO's arm stabs MERCUTIO, and flies with his followers*

**MERCUTIO**

I am hurt.  
A plague o' both your houses! I am sped.

Is he gone, and hath nothing?

**BENVOLIO**

What, art thou hurt?

**MERCUTIO**

Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; marry, 'tis enough.  
Where is my page? Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.

*Exit Page*

**ROMEO**

Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much.

**MERCUTIO**

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a  
church-door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for  
me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. I  
am peppered, I warrant, for this world. A plague o'  
both your houses! 'Zounds, a dog, a rat, a mouse, a  
cat, to scratch a man to death! a braggart, a  
rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of  
arithmetic! Why the devil came you between us? I  
was hurt under your arm.

**ROMEO**

I thought all for the best.

**MERCUTIO**

Help me into some house, Benvolio,  
Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses!  
They have made worms' meat of me: I have it,  
And soundly too: your houses!

*Exeunt MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO*

## **ROMEO**

This gentleman, the prince's near ally,  
My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt  
In my behalf; my reputation stain'd  
With Tybalt's slander,--Tybalt, that an hour  
Hath been my kinsman! O sweet Juliet,  
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate  
And in my temper soften'd valour's steel!

*Re-enter BENVOLIO*

## **BENVOLIO**

O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead!  
That gallant spirit hath aspired the clouds,  
Which too untimely here did scorn the earth.

## **ROMEO**

This day's black fate on more days doth depend;  
This but begins the woe, others must end.

## **BENVOLIO**

Here comes the furious Tybalt back again.

## **ROMEO**

Alive, in triumph! and Mercutio slain!  
Away to heaven, respective lenity,  
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!

*Re-enter TYBALT*

Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again,  
That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul  
Is but a little way above our heads,  
Staying for thine to keep him company:  
Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.

**TYBALT**

Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,  
Shalt with him hence.

**ROMEO**

This shall determine that.

*They fight; TYBALT falls*

**BENVOLIO**

Romeo, away, be gone!  
The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.  
Stand not amazed: the prince will doom thee death,  
If thou art taken: hence, be gone, away!

**ROMEO**

O, I am fortune's fool!

**BENVOLIO**

Why dost thou stay?

*Exit ROMEO*

*Enter Citizens, & c*

**First Citizen**

Which way ran he that kill'd Mercutio?  
Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

**BENVOLIO**

There lies that Tybalt.

**First Citizen**

Up, sir, go with me;  
I charge thee in the prince's name, obey.

*Enter Prince, attended; MONTAGUE, CAPULET, their Wives, and others*

**PRINCE**

Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

**BENVOLIO**

O noble prince, I can discover all  
The unlucky manage of this fatal brawl:  
There lies the man, slain by young Romeo,  
That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

**LADY CAPULET**

Tybalt, my cousin! O my brother's child!  
O prince! O cousin! husband! O, the blood is spilt  
O my dear kinsman! Prince, as thou art true,  
For blood of ours, shed blood of Montague.  
O cousin, cousin!

**PRINCE**

Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

**BENVOLIO**

Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay;  
Romeo that spoke him fair, bade him bethink  
How nice the quarrel was, and urged withal  
Your high displeasure: all this uttered  
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow'd,  
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen  
Of Tybalt deaf to peace, but that he tilts  
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,  
Who all as hot, turns deadly point to point,  
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats  
Cold death aside, and with the other sends  
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity,

Retorts it: Romeo he cries aloud,  
'Hold, friends! friends, part!' and, swifter than  
his tongue,  
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,  
And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm  
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life  
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled;  
But by and by comes back to Romeo,  
Who had but newly entertain'd revenge,  
And to 't they go like lightning, for, ere I  
Could draw to part them, was stout Tybalt slain.  
And, as he fell, did Romeo turn and fly.  
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

### **LADY CAPULET**

He is a kinsman to the Montague;  
Affection makes him false; he speaks not true:  
Some twenty of them fought in this black strife,  
And all those twenty could but kill one life.  
I beg for justice, which thou, prince, must give;  
Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.

### **PRINCE**

Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio;  
Who now the price of his dear blood doth owe?

### **MONTAGUE**

Not Romeo, prince, he was Mercutio's friend;  
His fault concludes but what the law should end,  
The life of Tybalt.

### **PRINCE**

And for that offence  
Immediately we do exile him hence:  
I have an interest in your hate's proceeding,  
My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;  
But I'll amerce you with so strong a fine  
That you shall all repent the loss of mine:

I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;  
Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses:  
Therefore use none: let Romeo hence in haste,  
Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.  
Bear hence this body and attend our will:  
Mercy but murders, pardoning those that kill.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Capulet's orchard.

*Enter JULIET*

**JULIET**

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,  
Towards Phoebus' lodging: such a wagoner  
As Phaethon would whip you to the west,  
And bring in cloudy night immediately.  
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,  
That runaway's eyes may wink and Romeo  
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen.  
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites  
By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,  
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,  
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,  
And learn me how to lose a winning match,  
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:  
Hood my unmann'd blood, bating in my cheeks,  
With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,  
Think true love acted simple modesty.  
Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night;  
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.  
Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,  
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,  
Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
That all the world will be in love with night  
And pay no worship to the garish sun.  
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,  
But not possess'd it, and, though I am sold,  
Not yet enjoy'd: so tedious is this day  
As is the night before some festival  
To an impatient child that hath new robes  
And may not wear them. O, here comes my nurse,

And she brings news; and every tongue that speaks  
But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.

*Enter Nurse, with cords*

Now, nurse, what news? What hast thou there? the cords  
That Romeo bid thee fetch?

**Nurse**

Ay, ay, the cords.

*Throws them down*

**JULIET**

Ay me! what news? why dost thou wring thy hands?

**Nurse**

Ah, well-a-day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead!  
We are undone, lady, we are undone!  
Alack the day! he's gone, he's kill'd, he's dead!

**JULIET**

Can heaven be so envious?

**Nurse**

Romeo can,  
Though heaven cannot: O Romeo, Romeo!  
Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!

**JULIET**

What devil art thou, that dost torment me thus?  
This torture should be roar'd in dismal hell.  
Hath Romeo slain himself? say thou but 'I,'  
And that bare vowel 'I' shall poison more  
Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice:

I am not I, if there be such an I;  
Or those eyes shut, that make thee answer 'I.'  
If he be slain, say 'I'; or if not, no:  
Brief sounds determine of my weal or woe.

**Nurse**

I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,--  
God save the mark!--here on his manly breast:  
A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse;  
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaub'd in blood,  
All in gore-blood; I swounded at the sight.

**JULIET**

O, break, my heart! poor bankrupt, break at once!  
To prison, eyes, ne'er look on liberty!  
Vile earth, to earth resign; end motion here;  
And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier!

**Nurse**

O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had!  
O courteous Tybalt! honest gentleman!  
That ever I should live to see thee dead!

**JULIET**

What storm is this that blows so contrary?  
Is Romeo slaughter'd, and is Tybalt dead?  
My dear-loved cousin, and my dearer lord?  
Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom!  
For who is living, if those two are gone?

**Nurse**

Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banished;  
Romeo that kill'd him, he is banished.

**JULIET**

O God! did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?

**Nurse**

It did, it did; alas the day, it did!

**JULIET**

O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!  
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?  
Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!  
Dove-feather'd raven! wolvish-ravening lamb!  
Despised substance of divinest show!  
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st,  
A damned saint, an honourable villain!  
O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell,  
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend  
In moral paradise of such sweet flesh?  
Was ever book containing such vile matter  
So fairly bound? O that deceit should dwell  
In such a gorgeous palace!

**Nurse**

There's no trust,  
No faith, no honesty in men; all perjured,  
All forsworn, all naught, all dissemblers.  
Ah, where's my man? give me some aqua vitae:  
These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.  
Shame come to Romeo!

**JULIET**

Blister'd be thy tongue  
For such a wish! he was not born to shame:  
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit;  
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd  
Sole monarch of the universal earth.  
O, what a beast was I to chide at him!

**Nurse**

Will you speak well of him that kill'd your cousin?

## **JULIET**

Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?  
Ah, poor my lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,  
When I, thy three-hours wife, have mangled it?  
But, wherefore, villain, didst thou kill my cousin?  
That villain cousin would have kill'd my husband:  
Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring;  
Your tributary drops belong to woe,  
Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.  
My husband lives, that Tybalt would have slain;  
And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband:  
All this is comfort; wherefore weep I then?  
Some word there was, worsers than Tybalt's death,  
That murder'd me: I would forget it fain;  
But, O, it presses to my memory,  
Like damned guilty deeds to sinners' minds:  
'Tybalt is dead, and Romeo--banished;'  
That 'banished,' that one word 'banished,'  
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death  
Was woe enough, if it had ended there:  
Or, if sour woe delights in fellowship  
And needly will be rank'd with other griefs,  
Why follow'd not, when she said 'Tybalt's dead,'  
Thy father, or thy mother, nay, or both,  
Which modern lamentations might have moved?  
But with a rear-ward following Tybalt's death,  
'Romeo is banished,' to speak that word,  
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,  
All slain, all dead. 'Romeo is banished!'  
There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,  
In that word's death; no words can that woe sound.  
Where is my father, and my mother, nurse?

## **Nurse**

Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse:  
Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.

## **JULIET**

Wash they his wounds with tears: mine shall be spent,  
When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.  
Take up those cords: poor ropes, you are beguiled,  
Both you and I; for Romeo is exiled:  
He made you for a highway to my bed;  
But I, a maid, die maiden-widowed.  
Come, cords, come, nurse; I'll to my wedding-bed;  
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

### **Nurse**

Hie to your chamber: I'll find Romeo  
To comfort you: I wot well where he is.  
Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night:  
I'll to him; he is hid at Laurence' cell.

### **JULIET**

O, find him! give this ring to my true knight,  
And bid him come to take his last farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Friar Laurence's cell.

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE*

### FRIAR LAURENCE

Romeo, come forth; come forth, thou fearful man:  
Affliction is enamour'd of thy parts,  
And thou art wedded to calamity.

*Enter ROMEO*

### ROMEO

Father, what news? what is the prince's doom?  
What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand,  
That I yet know not?

### FRIAR LAURENCE

Too familiar  
Is my dear son with such sour company:  
I bring thee tidings of the prince's doom.

### ROMEO

What less than dooms-day is the prince's doom?

### FRIAR LAURENCE

A gentler judgment vanish'd from his lips,  
Not body's death, but body's banishment.

### ROMEO

Ha, banishment! be merciful, say 'death;'

For exile hath more terror in his look,  
Much more than death: do not say 'banishment.'

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Hence from Verona art thou banished:  
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

## **ROMEO**

There is no world without Verona walls,  
But purgatory, torture, hell itself.  
Hence-banished is banish'd from the world,  
And world's exile is death: then banished,  
Is death mis-term'd: calling death banishment,  
Thou cutt'st my head off with a golden axe,  
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

O deadly sin! O rude unthankfulness!  
Thy fault our law calls death; but the kind prince,  
Taking thy part, hath rush'd aside the law,  
And turn'd that black word death to banishment:  
This is dear mercy, and thou seest it not.

## **ROMEO**

'Tis torture, and not mercy: heaven is here,  
Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog  
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,  
Live here in heaven and may look on her;  
But Romeo may not: more validity,  
More honourable state, more courtship lives  
In carrion-flies than Romeo: they my seize  
On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand  
And steal immortal blessing from her lips,  
Who even in pure and vestal modesty,  
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin;  
But Romeo may not; he is banished:  
Flies may do this, but I from this must fly:  
They are free men, but I am banished.



And say'st thou yet that exile is not death?  
Hadst thou no poison mix'd, no sharp-ground knife,  
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,  
But 'banished' to kill me?--'banished'?  
O friar, the damned use that word in hell;  
Howlings attend it: how hast thou the heart,  
Being a divine, a ghostly confessor,  
A sin-absolver, and my friend profess'd,  
To mangle me with that word 'banished'?

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.

**ROMEO**

O, thou wilt speak again of banishment.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

I'll give thee armour to keep off that word:  
Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy,  
To comfort thee, though thou art banished.

**ROMEO**

Yet 'banished'? Hang up philosophy!  
Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,  
Displant a town, reverse a prince's doom,  
It helps not, it prevails not: talk no more.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

O, then I see that madmen have no ears.

**ROMEO**

How should they, when that wise men have no eyes?

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Let me dispute with thee of thy estate.

**ROMEO**

Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel:  
Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,  
An hour but married, Tybalt murdered,  
Doting like me and like me banished,  
Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,  
And fall upon the ground, as I do now,  
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

*Knocking within*

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Arise; one knocks; good Romeo, hide thyself.

**ROMEO**

Not I; unless the breath of heartsick groans,  
Mist-like, infold me from the search of eyes.

*Knocking*

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Hark, how they knock! Who's there? Romeo, arise;  
Thou wilt be taken. Stay awhile! Stand up;

*Knocking*

Run to my study. By and by! God's will,  
What simpleness is this! I come, I come!

*Knocking*

Who knocks so hard? whence come you? what's your will?

**Nurse**

[Within] Let me come in, and you shall know  
my errand;  
I come from Lady Juliet.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Welcome, then.

*Enter Nurse*

**Nurse**

O holy friar, O, tell me, holy friar,  
Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo?

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

**Nurse**

O, he is even in my mistress' case,  
Just in her case! O woful sympathy!  
Piteous predicament! Even so lies she,  
Blubbering and weeping, weeping and blubbering.  
Stand up, stand up; stand, and you be a man:  
For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand;  
Why should you fall into so deep an O?

**ROMEO**

Nurse!

**Nurse**

Ah sir! ah sir! Well, death's the end of all.

**ROMEO**

Spakest thou of Juliet? how is it with her?  
Doth she not think me an old murderer,

Now I have stain'd the childhood of our joy  
With blood removed but little from her own?  
Where is she? and how doth she? and what says  
My conceal'd lady to our cancell'd love?

## **Nurse**

O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps;  
And now falls on her bed; and then starts up,  
And Tybalt calls; and then on Romeo cries,  
And then down falls again.

## **ROMEO**

As if that name,  
Shot from the deadly level of a gun,  
Did murder her; as that name's cursed hand  
Murder'd her kinsman. O, tell me, friar, tell me,  
In what vile part of this anatomy  
Doth my name lodge? tell me, that I may sack  
The hateful mansion.

*Drawing his sword*

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Hold thy desperate hand:  
Art thou a man? thy form cries out thou art:  
Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote  
The unreasonable fury of a beast:  
Unseemly woman in a seeming man!  
Or ill-beseeming beast in seeming both!  
Thou hast amazed me: by my holy order,  
I thought thy disposition better temper'd.  
Hast thou slain Tybalt? wilt thou slay thyself?  
And stay thy lady too that lives in thee,  
By doing damned hate upon thyself?  
Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?  
Since birth, and heaven, and earth, all three do meet  
In thee at once; which thou at once wouldst lose.  
Fie, fie, thou shamest thy shape, thy love, thy wit;  
Which, like a usurer, abound'st in all,

And usest none in that true use indeed  
Which should bedeck thy shape, thy love, thy wit:  
Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,  
Digressing from the valour of a man;  
Thy dear love sworn but hollow perjury,  
Killing that love which thou hast vow'd to cherish;  
Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,  
Misshapen in the conduct of them both,  
Like powder in a skitless soldier's flask,  
Is set afire by thine own ignorance,  
And thou dismember'd with thine own defence.  
What, rouse thee, man! thy Juliet is alive,  
For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead;  
There art thou happy: Tybalt would kill thee,  
But thou slew'st Tybalt; there are thou happy too:  
The law that threaten'd death becomes thy friend  
And turns it to exile; there art thou happy:  
A pack of blessings lights up upon thy back;  
Happiness courts thee in her best array;  
But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,  
Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love:  
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.  
Go, get thee to thy love, as was decreed,  
Ascend her chamber, hence and comfort her:  
But look thou stay not till the watch be set,  
For then thou canst not pass to Mantua;  
Where thou shalt live, till we can find a time  
To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,  
Beg pardon of the prince, and call thee back  
With twenty hundred thousand times more joy  
Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.  
Go before, nurse: commend me to thy lady;  
And bid her hasten all the house to bed,  
Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto:  
Romeo is coming.

**Nurse**

O Lord, I could have stay'd here all the night  
To hear good counsel: O, what learning is!  
My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.

**ROMEO**

Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

**Nurse**

Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir:  
Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

*Exit*

**ROMEO**

How well my comfort is revived by this!

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Go hence; good night; and here stands all your state:  
Either be gone before the watch be set,  
Or by the break of day disguised from hence:  
Sojourn in Mantua; I'll find out your man,  
And he shall signify from time to time  
Every good hap to you that chances here:  
Give me thy hand; 'tis late: farewell; good night.

**ROMEO**

But that a joy past joy calls out on me,  
It were a grief, so brief to part with thee: Farewell.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. A room in Capulet's house.

*Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, and PARIS*

### CAPULET

Things have fall'n out, sir, so unluckily,  
That we have had no time to move our daughter:  
Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,  
And so did I:--Well, we were born to die.  
'Tis very late, she'll not come down to-night:  
I promise you, but for your company,  
I would have been a-bed an hour ago.

### PARIS

These times of woe afford no time to woo.  
Madam, good night: commend me to your daughter.

### LADY CAPULET

I will, and know her mind early to-morrow;  
To-night she is mew'd up to her heaviness.

### CAPULET

Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender  
Of my child's love: I think she will be ruled  
In all respects by me; nay, more, I doubt it not.  
Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed;  
Acquaint her here of my son Paris' love;  
And bid her, mark you me, on Wednesday next--  
But, soft! what day is this?

### PARIS

Monday, my lord,

## **CAPULET**

Monday! ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon,  
O' Thursday let it be: o' Thursday, tell her,  
She shall be married to this noble earl.  
Will you be ready? do you like this haste?  
We'll keep no great ado,--a friend or two;  
For, hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,  
It may be thought we held him carelessly,  
Being our kinsman, if we revel much:  
Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,  
And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

## **PARIS**

My lord, I would that Thursday were to-morrow.

## **CAPULET**

Well get you gone: o' Thursday be it, then.  
Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed,  
Prepare her, wife, against this wedding-day.  
Farewell, my lord. Light to my chamber, ho!  
Afore me! it is so very very late,  
That we may call it early by and by.  
Good night.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Capulet's orchard.

*Enter ROMEO and JULIET above, at the window*

### JULIET

Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:  
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;  
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree:  
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

### ROMEO

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:  
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.  
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

### JULIET

Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:  
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,  
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,  
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:  
Therefore stay yet; thou need'st not to be gone.

### ROMEO

Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;  
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.  
I'll say yon grey is not the morning's eye,  
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;  
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat

The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:  
I have more care to stay than will to go:  
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.  
How is't, my soul? let's talk; it is not day.

## **JULIET**

It is, it is: hie hence, be gone, away!  
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,  
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.  
Some say the lark makes sweet division;  
This doth not so, for she divideth us:  
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes,  
O, now I would they had changed voices too!  
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day,  
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

## **ROMEO**

More light and light; more dark and dark our woes!

*Enter Nurse, to the chamber*

## **Nurse**

Madam!

## **JULIET**

Nurse?

## **Nurse**

Your lady mother is coming to your chamber:  
The day is broke; be wary, look about.

*Exit*

## **JULIET**

Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

**ROMEO**

Farewell, farewell! one kiss, and I'll descend.

*He goeth down*

**JULIET**

Art thou gone so? love, lord, ay, husband, friend!  
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
For in a minute there are many days:  
O, by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I again behold my Romeo!

**ROMEO**

Farewell!  
I will omit no opportunity  
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

**JULIET**

O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

**ROMEO**

I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve  
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

**JULIET**

O God, I have an ill-divining soul!  
Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,  
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb:  
Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

**ROMEO**

And trust me, love, in my eye so do you:

Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu!

*Exit*

**JULIET**

O fortune, fortune! all men call thee fickle:  
If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him.  
That is renown'd for faith? Be fickle, fortune;  
For then, I hope, thou wilt not keep him long,  
But send him back.

**LADY CAPULET**

[Within] Ho, daughter! are you up?

**JULIET**

Who is't that calls? is it my lady mother?  
Is she not down so late, or up so early?  
What unaccustom'd cause procures her hither?

*Enter LADY CAPULET*

**LADY CAPULET**

Why, how now, Juliet!

**JULIET**

Madam, I am not well.

**LADY CAPULET**

Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?  
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?  
An if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live;  
Therefore, have done: some grief shows much of love;  
But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

**JULIET**

Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

**LADY CAPULET**

So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend  
Which you weep for.

**JULIET**

Feeling so the loss,  
Cannot choose but ever weep the friend.

**LADY CAPULET**

Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death,  
As that the villain lives which slaughter'd him.

**JULIET**

What villain madam?

**LADY CAPULET**

That same villain, Romeo.

**JULIET**

[Aside] Villain and he be many miles asunder.--  
God Pardon him! I do, with all my heart;  
And yet no man like he doth grieve my heart.

**LADY CAPULET**

That is, because the traitor murderer lives.

**JULIET**

Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands:  
Would none but I might venge my cousin's death!

## **LADY CAPULET**

We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not:  
Then weep no more. I'll send to one in Mantua,  
Where that same banish'd runagate doth live,  
Shall give him such an unaccustom'd dram,  
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company:  
And then, I hope, thou wilt be satisfied.

## **JULIET**

Indeed, I never shall be satisfied  
With Romeo, till I behold him--dead--  
Is my poor heart for a kinsman vex'd.  
Madam, if you could find out but a man  
To bear a poison, I would temper it;  
That Romeo should, upon receipt thereof,  
Soon sleep in quiet. O, how my heart abhors  
To hear him named, and cannot come to him.  
To wreak the love I bore my cousin  
Upon his body that slaughter'd him!

## **LADY CAPULET**

Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.  
But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

## **JULIET**

And joy comes well in such a needy time:  
What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

## **LADY CAPULET**

Well, well, thou hast a careful father, child;  
One who, to put thee from thy heaviness,  
Hath sorted out a sudden day of joy,  
That thou expect'st not nor I look'd not for.

## **JULIET**

Madam, in happy time, what day is that?

## LADY CAPULET

Marry, my child, early next Thursday morn,  
The gallant, young and noble gentleman,  
The County Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,  
Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride.

## JULIET

Now, by Saint Peter's Church and Peter too,  
He shall not make me there a joyful bride.  
I wonder at this haste; that I must wed  
Ere he, that should be husband, comes to woo.  
I pray you, tell my lord and father, madam,  
I will not marry yet; and, when I do, I swear,  
It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,  
Rather than Paris. These are news indeed!

## LADY CAPULET

Here comes your father; tell him so yourself,  
And see how he will take it at your hands.

*Enter CAPULET and Nurse*

## CAPULET

When the sun sets, the air doth drizzle dew;  
But for the sunset of my brother's son  
It rains downright.  
How now! a conduit, girl? what, still in tears?  
Evermore showering? In one little body  
Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind;  
For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,  
Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,  
Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs;  
Who, raging with thy tears, and they with them,  
Without a sudden calm, will overset  
Thy tempest-tossed body. How now, wife!  
Have you deliver'd to her our decree?

## **LADY CAPULET**

Ay, sir; but she will none, she gives you thanks.  
I would the fool were married to her grave!

## **CAPULET**

Soft! take me with you, take me with you, wife.  
How! will she none? doth she not give us thanks?  
Is she not proud? doth she not count her blest,  
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought  
So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

## **JULIET**

Not proud, you have; but thankful, that you have:  
Proud can I never be of what I hate;  
But thankful even for hate, that is meant love.

## **CAPULET**

How now, how now, chop-logic! What is this?  
'Proud,' and 'I thank you,' and 'I thank you not;'  
And yet 'not proud,' mistress minion, you,  
Thank me no thankings, nor, proud me no prouds,  
But fettle your fine joints 'gainst Thursday next,  
To go with Paris to Saint Peter's Church,  
Or I will drag thee on a hurdle thither.  
Out, you green-sickness carrion! out, you baggage!  
You tallow-face!

## **LADY CAPULET**

Fie, fie! what, are you mad?

## **JULIET**

Good father, I beseech you on my knees,  
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

## **CAPULET**



Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch!  
I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,  
Or never after look me in the face:  
Speak not, reply not, do not answer me;  
My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce thought us blest  
That God had lent us but this only child;  
But now I see this one is one too much,  
And that we have a curse in having her:  
Out on her, hilding!

**Nurse**

God in heaven bless her!  
You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so.

**CAPULET**

And why, my lady wisdom? hold your tongue,  
Good prudence; smatter with your gossips, go.

**Nurse**

I speak no treason.

**CAPULET**

O, God ye god-den.

**Nurse**

May not one speak?

**CAPULET**

Peace, you mumbling fool!  
Utter your gravity o'er a gossip's bowl;  
For here we need it not.

**LADY CAPULET**

You are too hot.

## **CAPULET**

God's bread! it makes me mad:  
Day, night, hour, tide, time, work, play,  
Alone, in company, still my care hath been  
To have her match'd: and having now provided  
A gentleman of noble parentage,  
Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly train'd,  
Stuff'd, as they say, with honourable parts,  
Proportion'd as one's thought would wish a man;  
And then to have a wretched puling fool,  
A whining mammet, in her fortune's tender,  
To answer 'I'll not wed; I cannot love,  
I am too young; I pray you, pardon me.'  
But, as you will not wed, I'll pardon you:  
Graze where you will you shall not house with me:  
Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.  
Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise:  
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;  
And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in  
the streets,  
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,  
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good:  
Trust to't, bethink you; I'll not be forsworn.

*Exit*

## **JULIET**

Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,  
That sees into the bottom of my grief?  
O, sweet my mother, cast me not away!  
Delay this marriage for a month, a week;  
Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed  
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

## **LADY CAPULET**

Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word:  
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.

*Exit*

**JULIET**

O God!--O nurse, how shall this be prevented?  
My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven;  
How shall that faith return again to earth,  
Unless that husband send it me from heaven  
By leaving earth? comfort me, counsel me.  
Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems  
Upon so soft a subject as myself!  
What say'st thou? hast thou not a word of joy?  
Some comfort, nurse.

**Nurse**

Faith, here it is.  
Romeo is banish'd; and all the world to nothing,  
That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;  
Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.  
Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,  
I think it best you married with the county.  
O, he's a lovely gentleman!  
Romeo's a dishclout to him: an eagle, madam,  
Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye  
As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,  
I think you are happy in this second match,  
For it excels your first: or if it did not,  
Your first is dead; or 'twere as good he were,  
As living here and you no use of him.

**JULIET**

Speakest thou from thy heart?

**Nurse**

And from my soul too;  
Or else beshrew them both.

**JULIET**

Amen!

**Nurse**

What?

**JULIET**

Well, thou hast comforted me marvellous much.  
Go in: and tell my lady I am gone,  
Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,  
To make confession and to be absolved.

**Nurse**

Marry, I will; and this is wisely done.

*Exit*

**JULIET**

Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!  
Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,  
Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue  
Which she hath praised him with above compare  
So many thousand times? Go, counsellor;  
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.  
I'll to the friar, to know his remedy:  
If all else fail, myself have power to die.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 3, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Friar Laurence's cell.

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE and PARIS*

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

On Thursday, sir? the time is very short.

**PARIS**

My father Capulet will have it so;  
And I am nothing slow to slack his haste.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

You say you do not know the lady's mind:  
Uneven is the course, I like it not.

**PARIS**

Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,  
And therefore have I little talk'd of love;  
For Venus smiles not in a house of tears.  
Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous  
That she doth give her sorrow so much sway,  
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage,  
To stop the inundation of her tears;  
Which, too much minded by herself alone,  
May be put from her by society:  
Now do you know the reason of this haste.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

[Aside] I would I knew not why it should be slow'd.  
Look, sir, here comes the lady towards my cell.

*Enter JULIET*

**PARIS**

Happily met, my lady and my wife!

**JULIET**

That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

**PARIS**

That may be must be, love, on Thursday next.

**JULIET**

What must be shall be.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

That's a certain text.

**PARIS**

Come you to make confession to this father?

**JULIET**

To answer that, I should confess to you.

**PARIS**

Do not deny to him that you love me.

**JULIET**

I will confess to you that I love him.

**PARIS**

So will ye, I am sure, that you love me.

**JULIET**

If I do so, it will be of more price,  
Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

**PARIS**

Poor soul, thy face is much abused with tears.

**JULIET**

The tears have got small victory by that;  
For it was bad enough before their spite.

**PARIS**

Thou wrong'st it, more than tears, with that report.

**JULIET**

That is no slander, sir, which is a truth;  
And what I spake, I spake it to my face.

**PARIS**

Thy face is mine, and thou hast slander'd it.

**JULIET**

It may be so, for it is not mine own.  
Are you at leisure, holy father, now;  
Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

My leisure serves me, pensive daughter, now.  
My lord, we must entreat the time alone.

**PARIS**

God shield I should disturb devotion!  
Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye:  
Till then, adieu; and keep this holy kiss.

*Exit*

## **JULIET**

O shut the door! and when thou hast done so,  
Come weep with me; past hope, past cure, past help!

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief;  
It strains me past the compass of my wits:  
I hear thou must, and nothing may prorogue it,  
On Thursday next be married to this county.

## **JULIET**

Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,  
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it:  
If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,  
Do thou but call my resolution wise,  
And with this knife I'll help it presently.  
God join'd my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands;  
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo seal'd,  
Shall be the label to another deed,  
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt  
Turn to another, this shall slay them both:  
Therefore, out of thy long-experienced time,  
Give me some present counsel, or, behold,  
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife  
Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that  
Which the commission of thy years and art  
Could to no issue of true honour bring.  
Be not so long to speak; I long to die,  
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Hold, daughter: I do spy a kind of hope,



Which craves as desperate an execution.  
As that is desperate which we would prevent.  
If, rather than to marry County Paris,  
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,  
Then is it likely thou wilt undertake  
A thing like death to chide away this shame,  
That copest with death himself to scape from it:  
And, if thou darest, I'll give thee remedy.

## **JULIET**

O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,  
From off the battlements of yonder tower;  
Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk  
Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears;  
Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house,  
O'er-cover'd quite with dead men's rattling bones,  
With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;  
Or bid me go into a new-made grave  
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud;  
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble;  
And I will do it without fear or doubt,  
To live an unstain'd wife to my sweet love.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Hold, then; go home, be merry, give consent  
To marry Paris: Wednesday is to-morrow:  
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone;  
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber:  
Take thou this vial, being then in bed,  
And this distilled liquor drink thou off;  
When presently through all thy veins shall run  
A cold and drowsy humour, for no pulse  
Shall keep his native progress, but surcease:  
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest;  
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade  
To paly ashes, thy eyes' windows fall,  
Like death, when he shuts up the day of life;  
Each part, deprived of supple government,  
Shall, stiff and stark and cold, appear like death:  
And in this borrow'd likeness of shrunk death  
Thou shalt continue two and forty hours,

And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.  
Now, when the bridegroom in the morning comes  
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead:  
Then, as the manner of our country is,  
In thy best robes uncover'd on the bier  
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault  
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.  
In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,  
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift,  
And hither shall he come: and he and I  
Will watch thy waking, and that very night  
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.  
And this shall free thee from this present shame;  
If no inconstant toy, nor womanish fear,  
Abate thy valour in the acting it.

## **JULIET**

Give me, give me! O, tell not me of fear!

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Hold; get you gone, be strong and prosperous  
In this resolve: I'll send a friar with speed  
To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

## **JULIET**

Love give me strength! and strength shall help afford.  
Farewell, dear father!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Hall in Capulet's house.

*Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, Nurse, and two Servingmen*

**CAPULET**

So many guests invite as here are writ.

*Exit First Servant*

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning cooks.

**Second Servant**

You shall have none ill, sir; for I'll try if they can lick their fingers.

**CAPULET**

How canst thou try them so?

**Second Servant**

Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own fingers: therefore he that cannot lick his fingers goes not with me.

**CAPULET**

Go, be gone.

*Exit Second Servant*

We shall be much unfurnished for this time.  
What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

**Nurse**

Ay, forsooth.

**CAPULET**

Well, he may chance to do some good on her:  
A peevish self-will'd harlotry it is.

**Nurse**

See where she comes from shrift with merry look.

*Enter JULIET*

**CAPULET**

How now, my headstrong! where have you been gadding?

**JULIET**

Where I have learn'd me to repent the sin  
Of disobedient opposition  
To you and your behests, and am enjoin'd  
By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here,  
And beg your pardon: pardon, I beseech you!  
Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

**CAPULET**

Send for the county; go tell him of this:  
I'll have this knot knit up to-morrow morning.

**JULIET**

I met the youthful lord at Laurence' cell;  
And gave him what becomed love I might,  
Not step o'er the bounds of modesty.

**CAPULET**

Why, I am glad on't; this is well: stand up:  
This is as't should be. Let me see the county;  
Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.  
Now, afore God! this reverend holy friar,  
Our whole city is much bound to him.

## **JULIET**

Nurse, will you go with me into my closet,  
To help me sort such needful ornaments  
As you think fit to furnish me to-morrow?

## **LADY CAPULET**

No, not till Thursday; there is time enough.

## **CAPULET**

Go, nurse, go with her: we'll to church to-morrow.

*Exeunt JULIET and Nurse*

## **LADY CAPULET**

We shall be short in our provision:  
'Tis now near night.

## **CAPULET**

Tush, I will stir about,  
And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife:  
Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up her;  
I'll not to bed to-night; let me alone;  
I'll play the housewife for this once. What, ho!  
They are all forth. Well, I will walk myself  
To County Paris, to prepare him up  
Against to-morrow: my heart is wondrous light,  
Since this same wayward girl is so reclaim'd.

*Exeunt*



# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Juliet's chamber.

*Enter JULIET and Nurse*

**JULIET**

Ay, those attires are best: but, gentle nurse,  
I pray thee, leave me to my self to-night,  
For I have need of many orisons  
To move the heavens to smile upon my state,  
Which, well thou know'st, is cross, and full of sin.

*Enter LADY CAPULET*

**LADY CAPULET**

What, are you busy, ho? need you my help?

**JULIET**

No, madam; we have cull'd such necessaries  
As are behoveful for our state to-morrow:  
So please you, let me now be left alone,  
And let the nurse this night sit up with you;  
For, I am sure, you have your hands full all,  
In this so sudden business.

**LADY CAPULET**

Good night:  
Get thee to bed, and rest; for thou hast need.

*Exeunt LADY CAPULET and Nurse*

**JULIET**

Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.  
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins,  
That almost freezes up the heat of life:  
I'll call them back again to comfort me:  
Nurse! What should she do here?  
My dismal scene I needs must act alone.  
Come, vial.  
What if this mixture do not work at all?  
Shall I be married then to-morrow morning?  
No, no: this shall forbid it: lie thou there.

*Laying down her dagger*

What if it be a poison, which the friar  
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,  
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonour'd,  
Because he married me before to Romeo?  
I fear it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,  
For he hath still been tried a holy man.  
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
I wake before the time that Romeo  
Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!  
Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,  
To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?  
Or, if I live, is it not very like,  
The horrible conceit of death and night,  
Together with the terror of the place,--  
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,  
Where, for these many hundred years, the bones  
Of all my buried ancestors are packed:  
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,  
Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,  
At some hours in the night spirits resort;--  
Alack, alack, is it not like that I,  
So early waking, what with loathsome smells,  
And shrieks like mandrakes' torn out of the earth,  
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad:--  
O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,  
Environed with all these hideous fears?  
And madly play with my forefather's joints?  
And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?  
And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone,



As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?  
O, look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost  
Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body  
Upon a rapier's point: stay, Tybalt, stay!  
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee.

*She falls upon her bed, within the curtains*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Hall in Capulet's house.

*Enter LADY CAPULET and Nurse*

**LADY CAPULET**

Hold, take these keys, and fetch more spices, nurse.

**Nurse**

They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.

*Enter CAPULET*

**CAPULET**

Come, stir, stir, stir! the second cock hath crow'd,  
The curfew-bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock:  
Look to the baked meats, good Angelica:  
Spare not for the cost.

**Nurse**

Go, you cot-quean, go,  
Get you to bed; faith, You'll be sick to-morrow  
For this night's watching.

**CAPULET**

No, not a whit: what! I have watch'd ere now  
All night for lesser cause, and ne'er been sick.

**LADY CAPULET**

Ay, you have been a mouse-hunt in your time;  
But I will watch you from such watching now.

*Exeunt LADY CAPULET and Nurse*

**CAPULET**

A jealous hood, a jealous hood!

*Enter three or four Servingmen, with spits, logs, and baskets*

Now, fellow,  
What's there?

**First Servant**

Things for the cook, sir; but I know not what.

**CAPULET**

Make haste, make haste.

*Exit First Servant*

Sirrah, fetch drier logs:  
Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

**Second Servant**

I have a head, sir, that will find out logs,  
And never trouble Peter for the matter.

*Exit*

**CAPULET**

Mass, and well said; a merry whoreson, ha!  
Thou shalt be logger-head. Good faith, 'tis day:  
The county will be here with music straight,  
For so he said he would: I hear him near.

*Music within*

Nurse! Wife! What, ho! What, nurse, I say!

*Re-enter Nurse*

Go waken Juliet, go and trim her up;  
I'll go and chat with Paris: hie, make haste,  
Make haste; the bridegroom he is come already:  
Make haste, I say.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. Juliet's chamber.

*Enter Nurse*

**Nurse**

Mistress! what, mistress! Juliet! fast, I warrant her, she:  
Why, lamb! why, lady! fie, you slug-a-bed!  
Why, love, I say! madam! sweet-heart! why, bride!  
What, not a word? you take your pennyworths now;  
Sleep for a week; for the next night, I warrant,  
The County Paris hath set up his rest,  
That you shall rest but little. God forgive me,  
Marry, and amen, how sound is she asleep!  
I must needs wake her. Madam, madam, madam!  
Ay, let the county take you in your bed;  
He'll fright you up, i' faith. Will it not be?

*Undraws the curtains*

What, dress'd! and in your clothes! and down again!  
I must needs wake you; Lady! lady! lady!  
Alas, alas! Help, help! my lady's dead!  
O, well-a-day, that ever I was born!  
Some aqua vitae, ho! My lord! my lady!

*Enter LADY CAPULET*

**LADY CAPULET**

What noise is here?

**Nurse**

O lamentable day!

**LADY CAPULET**

What is the matter?

**Nurse**

Look, look! O heavy day!

**LADY CAPULET**

O me, O me! My child, my only life,  
Revive, look up, or I will die with thee!  
Help, help! Call help.

*Enter CAPULET*

**CAPULET**

For shame, bring Juliet forth; her lord is come.

**Nurse**

She's dead, deceased, she's dead; alack the day!

**LADY CAPULET**

Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

**CAPULET**

Ha! let me see her: out, alas! she's cold:  
Her blood is settled, and her joints are stiff;  
Life and these lips have long been separated:  
Death lies on her like an untimely frost  
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

**Nurse**

O lamentable day!

**LADY CAPULET**

O woful time!

**CAPULET**

Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,  
Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak.

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE and PARIS, with Musicians*

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Come, is the bride ready to go to church?

**CAPULET**

Ready to go, but never to return.  
O son! the night before thy wedding-day  
Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies,  
Flower as she was, deflowered by him.  
Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir;  
My daughter he hath wedded: I will die,  
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.

**PARIS**

Have I thought long to see this morning's face,  
And doth it give me such a sight as this?

**LADY CAPULET**

Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!  
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw  
In lasting labour of his pilgrimage!  
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,  
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,  
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight!

**Nurse**

O woe! O woful, woful, woful day!  
Most lamentable day, most woful day,

That ever, ever, I did yet behold!  
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!  
Never was seen so black a day as this:  
O woful day, O woful day!

## **PARIS**

Beguiled, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!  
Most detestable death, by thee beguil'd,  
By cruel cruel thee quite overthrown!  
O love! O life! not life, but love in death!

## **CAPULET**

Despised, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd!  
Uncomfortable time, why camest thou now  
To murder, murder our solemnity?  
O child! O child! my soul, and not my child!  
Dead art thou! Alack! my child is dead;  
And with my child my joys are buried.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Peace, ho, for shame! confusion's cure lives not  
In these confusions. Heaven and yourself  
Had part in this fair maid; now heaven hath all,  
And all the better is it for the maid:  
Your part in her you could not keep from death,  
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.  
The most you sought was her promotion;  
For 'twas your heaven she should be advanced:  
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced  
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?  
O, in this love, you love your child so ill,  
That you run mad, seeing that she is well:  
She's not well married that lives married long;  
But she's best married that dies married young.  
Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary  
On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,  
In all her best array bear her to church:  
For though fond nature bids us an lament,  
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment.



## **CAPULET**

All things that we ordained festival,  
Turn from their office to black funeral;  
Our instruments to melancholy bells,  
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast,  
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change,  
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,  
And all things change them to the contrary.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Sir, go you in; and, madam, go with him;  
And go, Sir Paris; every one prepare  
To follow this fair corse unto her grave:  
The heavens do lour upon you for some ill;  
Move them no more by crossing their high will.

*Exeunt CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, PARIS, and FRIAR LAURENCE*

## **First Musician**

Faith, we may put up our pipes, and be gone.

## **Nurse**

Honest goodfellows, ah, put up, put up;  
For, well you know, this is a pitiful case.

*Exit*

## **First Musician**

Ay, by my troth, the case may be amended.

*Enter PETER*

## **PETER**

Musicians, O, musicians, 'Heart's ease, Heart's  
ease:' O, an you will have me live, play 'Heart's ease.'

**First Musician**

Why 'Heart's ease?'

**PETER**

O, musicians, because my heart itself plays 'My heart is full of woe:' O, play me some merry dump, to comfort me.

**First Musician**

Not a dump we; 'tis no time to play now.

**PETER**

You will not, then?

**First Musician**

No.

**PETER**

I will then give it you soundly.

**First Musician**

What will you give us?

**PETER**

No money, on my faith, but the glee;  
I will give you the minstrel.

**First Musician**

Then I will give you the serving-creature.

**PETER**

Then will I lay the serving-creature's dagger on  
your pate. I will carry no crotchets: I'll re you,  
I'll fa you; do you note me?

**First Musician**

An you re us and fa us, you note us.

**Second Musician**

Pray you, put up your dagger, and put out your wit.

**PETER**

Then have at you with my wit! I will dry-beat you  
with an iron wit, and put up my iron dagger. Answer  
me like men:

'When griping grief the heart doth wound,  
And doleful dumps the mind oppress,  
Then music with her silver sound'--  
why 'silver sound'? why 'music with her silver  
sound'? What say you, Simon Catling?

**Musician**

Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

**PETER**

Pretty! What say you, Hugh Rebeck?

**Second Musician**

I say 'silver sound,' because musicians sound for silver.

**PETER**

Pretty too! What say you, James Soundpost?

**Third Musician**

Faith, I know not what to say.

**PETER**

O, I cry you mercy; you are the singer: I will say  
for you. It is 'music with her silver sound,'  
because musicians have no gold for sounding:  
'Then music with her silver sound  
With speedy help doth lend redress.'

*Exit*

**First Musician**

What a pestilent knave is this same!

**Second Musician**

Hang him, Jack! Come, we'll in here; tarry for the  
mourners, and stay dinner.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 4, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Mantua. A street.

*Enter ROMEO*

### ROMEO

If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,  
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand:  
My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne;  
And all this day an unaccustom'd spirit  
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.  
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead--  
Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave  
to think!--  
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips,  
That I revived, and was an emperor.  
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,  
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!

*Enter BALTHASAR, booted*

News from Verona!--How now, Balthasar!  
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?  
How doth my lady? Is my father well?  
How fares my Juliet? that I ask again;  
For nothing can be ill, if she be well.

### BALTHASAR

Then she is well, and nothing can be ill:  
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,  
And her immortal part with angels lives.  
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,  
And presently took post to tell it you:  
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,  
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

**ROMEO**

Is it even so? then I defy you, stars!  
Thou know'st my lodging: get me ink and paper,  
And hire post-horses; I will hence to-night.

**BALTHASAR**

I do beseech you, sir, have patience:  
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import  
Some misadventure.

**ROMEO**

Tush, thou art deceived:  
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.  
Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

**BALTHASAR**

No, my good lord.

**ROMEO**

No matter: get thee gone,  
And hire those horses; I'll be with thee straight.

*Exit BALTHASAR*

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night.  
Let's see for means: O mischief, thou art swift  
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!  
I do remember an apothecary,--  
And hereabouts he dwells,--which late I noted  
In tatter'd weeds, with overwhelming brows,  
Culling of simples; meagre were his looks,  
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones:  
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuff'd, and other skins  
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves  
A beggarly account of empty boxes,

Green earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds,  
Remnants of packthread and old cakes of roses,  
Were thinly scatter'd, to make up a show.  
Noting this penury, to myself I said  
'An if a man did need a poison now,  
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,  
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.'  
O, this same thought did but forerun my need;  
And this same needy man must sell it me.  
As I remember, this should be the house.  
Being holiday, the beggar's shop is shut.  
What, ho! apothecary!

*Enter Apothecary*

### **Apothecary**

Who calls so loud?

### **ROMEO**

Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor:  
Hold, there is forty ducats: let me have  
A dram of poison, such soon-speeding gear  
As will disperse itself through all the veins  
That the life-weary taker may fall dead  
And that the trunk may be discharged of breath  
As violently as hasty powder fired  
Doth hurry from the fatal cannon's womb.

### **Apothecary**

Such mortal drugs I have; but Mantua's law  
Is death to any he that utters them.

### **ROMEO**

Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,  
And fear'st to die? famine is in thy cheeks,  
Need and oppression starveth in thine eyes,  
Contempt and beggary hangs upon thy back;  
The world is not thy friend nor the world's law;

The world affords no law to make thee rich;  
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.

**Apothecary**

My poverty, but not my will, consents.

**ROMEO**

I pay thy poverty, and not thy will.

**Apothecary**

Put this in any liquid thing you will,  
And drink it off; and, if you had the strength  
Of twenty men, it would dispatch you straight.

**ROMEO**

There is thy gold, worse poison to men's souls,  
Doing more murders in this loathsome world,  
Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.  
I sell thee poison; thou hast sold me none.  
Farewell: buy food, and get thyself in flesh.  
Come, cordial and not poison, go with me  
To Juliet's grave; for there must I use thee.

*Exeunt*



# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Friar Laurence's cell.

*Enter FRIAR JOHN*

**FRIAR JOHN**

Holy Franciscan friar! brother, ho!

*Enter FRIAR LAURENCE*

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

This same should be the voice of Friar John.  
Welcome from Mantua: what says Romeo?  
Or, if his mind be writ, give me his letter.

**FRIAR JOHN**

Going to find a bare-foot brother out  
One of our order, to associate me,  
Here in this city visiting the sick,  
And finding him, the searchers of the town,  
Suspecting that we both were in a house  
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,  
Seal'd up the doors, and would not let us forth;  
So that my speed to Mantua there was stay'd.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Who bare my letter, then, to Romeo?

**FRIAR JOHN**

I could not send it,--here it is again,--  
Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,  
So fearful were they of infection.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Unhappy fortune! by my brotherhood,  
The letter was not nice but full of charge  
Of dear import, and the neglecting it  
May do much danger. Friar John, go hence;  
Get me an iron crow, and bring it straight  
Unto my cell.

## **FRIAR JOHN**

Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

*Exit*

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

Now must I to the monument alone;  
Within three hours will fair Juliet wake:  
She will beshrew me much that Romeo  
Hath had no notice of these accidents;  
But I will write again to Mantua,  
And keep her at my cell till Romeo come;  
Poor living corse, closed in a dead man's tomb!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Romeo and Juliet

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Romeo and Juliet](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE III. A churchyard; in it a tomb belonging to the Capulets.

*Enter PARIS, and his Page bearing flowers and a torch*

### PARIS

Give me thy torch, boy: hence, and stand aloof:  
Yet put it out, for I would not be seen.  
Under yond yew-trees lay thee all along,  
Holding thine ear close to the hollow ground;  
So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,  
Being loose, unfirm, with digging up of graves,  
But thou shalt hear it: whistle then to me,  
As signal that thou hear'st something approach.  
Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

### PAGE

[Aside] I am almost afraid to stand alone  
Here in the churchyard; yet I will adventure.

*Retires*

### PARIS

Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew,--  
O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones;--  
Which with sweet water nightly I will dew,  
Or, wanting that, with tears distill'd by moans:  
The obsequies that I for thee will keep  
Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

*The Page whistles*

The boy gives warning something doth approach.  
What cursed foot wanders this way to-night,

To cross my obsequies and true love's rite?  
What with a torch! muffle me, night, awhile.

*Retires*

*Enter ROMEO and BALTHASAR, with a torch, mattock, & c*

## **ROMEO**

Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.  
Hold, take this letter; early in the morning  
See thou deliver it to my lord and father.  
Give me the light: upon thy life, I charge thee,  
Whate'er thou hear'st or seest, stand all aloof,  
And do not interrupt me in my course.  
Why I descend into this bed of death,  
Is partly to behold my lady's face;  
But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger  
A precious ring, a ring that I must use  
In dear employment: therefore hence, be gone:  
But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry  
In what I further shall intend to do,  
By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint  
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs:  
The time and my intents are savage-wild,  
More fierce and more inexorable far  
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea.

## **BALTHASAR**

I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

## **ROMEO**

So shalt thou show me friendship. Take thou that:  
Live, and be prosperous: and farewell, good fellow.

## **BALTHASAR**

[Aside] For all this same, I'll hide me hereabout:  
His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.

*Retires*

**ROMEO**

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,  
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth,  
Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open,  
And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!

*Opens the tomb*

**PARIS**

This is that banish'd haughty Montague,  
That murder'd my love's cousin, with which grief,  
It is supposed, the fair creature died;  
And here is come to do some villanous shame  
To the dead bodies: I will apprehend him.

*Comes forward*

Stop thy unhallow'd toil, vile Montague!  
Can vengeance be pursued further than death?  
Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee:  
Obey, and go with me; for thou must die.

**ROMEO**

I must indeed; and therefore came I hither.  
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man;  
Fly hence, and leave me: think upon these gone;  
Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,  
Put not another sin upon my head,  
By urging me to fury: O, be gone!  
By heaven, I love thee better than myself;  
For I come hither arm'd against myself:  
Stay not, be gone; live, and hereafter say,  
A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

**PARIS**

I do defy thy conjurations,

And apprehend thee for a felon here.

## **ROMEO**

Wilt thou provoke me? then have at thee, boy!

*They fight*

## **PAGE**

O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.

*Exit*

## **PARIS**

O, I am slain!

*Falls*

If thou be merciful,  
Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.

*Dies*

## **ROMEO**

In faith, I will. Let me peruse this face.  
Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!  
What said my man, when my betossed soul  
Did not attend him as we rode? I think  
He told me Paris should have married Juliet:  
Said he not so? or did I dream it so?  
Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,  
To think it was so? O, give me thy hand,  
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!  
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave;  
A grave? O no! a lantern, slaughter'd youth,  
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes  
This vault a feasting presence full of light.  
Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interr'd.

*Laying PARIS in the tomb*

How oft when men are at the point of death  
Have they been merry! which their keepers call  
A lightning before death: O, how may I  
Call this a lightning? O my love! my wife!  
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:  
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.  
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?  
O, what more favour can I do to thee,  
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain  
To sunder his that was thine enemy?  
Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,  
Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe  
That unsubstantial death is amorous,  
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;  
And never from this palace of dim night  
Depart again: here, here will I remain  
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; O, here  
Will I set up my everlasting rest,  
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars  
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!  
Arms, take your last embrace! and, lips, O you  
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!  
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide!  
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!  
Here's to my love!

*Drinks*

O true apothecary!  
Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

*Dies*

*Enter, at the other end of the churchyard, FRIAR LAURENCE, with a lantern, crow, and spade*

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Saint Francis be my speed! how oft to-night  
Have my old feet stumbled at graves! Who's there?

**BALTHASAR**

Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Bliss be upon you! Tell me, good my friend,  
What torch is yond, that vainly lends his light  
To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern,  
It burneth in the Capel's monument.

**BALTHASAR**

It doth so, holy sir; and there's my master,  
One that you love.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Who is it?

**BALTHASAR**

Romeo.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

How long hath he been there?

**BALTHASAR**

Full half an hour.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**



Go with me to the vault.

**BALTHASAR**

I dare not, sir  
My master knows not but I am gone hence;  
And fearfully did menace me with death,  
If I did stay to look on his intents.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Stay, then; I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me:  
O, much I fear some ill unlucky thing.

**BALTHASAR**

As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,  
I dreamt my master and another fought,  
And that my master slew him.

**FRIAR LAURENCE**

Romeo!

*Advances*

Alack, alack, what blood is this, which stains  
The stony entrance of this sepulchre?  
What mean these masterless and gory swords  
To lie discolour'd by this place of peace?

*Enters the tomb*

Romeo! O, pale! Who else? what, Paris too?  
And steep'd in blood? Ah, what an unkind hour  
Is guilty of this lamentable chance!  
The lady stirs.

*JULIET wakes*

## **JULIET**

O comfortable friar! where is my lord?  
I do remember well where I should be,  
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?

*Noise within*

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest  
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep:  
A greater power than we can contradict  
Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.  
Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;  
And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee  
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns:  
Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;  
Come, go, good Juliet,

*Noise again*

I dare no longer stay.

## **JULIET**

Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.

*Exit FRIAR LAURENCE*

What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's hand?  
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end:  
O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
To help me after? I will kiss thy lips;  
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,  
To make die with a restorative.

*Kisses him*

Thy lips are warm.

## **First Watchman**

[Within] Lead, boy: which way?

## **JULIET**

Yea, noise? then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!

*Snatching ROMEO's dagger*

This is thy sheath;

*Stabs herself*

there rust, and let me die.

*Falls on ROMEO's body, and dies*

*Enter Watch, with the Page of PARIS*

## **PAGE**

This is the place; there, where the torch doth burn.

## **First Watchman**

The ground is bloody; search about the churchyard:

Go, some of you, whoe'er you find attach.

Pitiful sight! here lies the county slain,

And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,

Who here hath lain these two days buried.

Go, tell the prince: run to the Capulets:

Raise up the Montagues: some others search:

We see the ground whereon these woes do lie;

But the true ground of all these piteous woes

We cannot without circumstance descry.

*Re-enter some of the Watch, with BALTHASAR*

## **Second Watchman**

Here's Romeo's man; we found him in the churchyard.

**First Watchman**

Hold him in safety, till the prince come hither.

*Re-enter others of the Watch, with FRIAR LAURENCE*

**Third Watchman**

Here is a friar, that trembles, sighs and weeps:  
We took this mattock and this spade from him,  
As he was coming from this churchyard side.

**First Watchman**

A great suspicion: stay the friar too.

*Enter the PRINCE and Attendants*

**PRINCE**

What misadventure is so early up,  
That calls our person from our morning's rest?

*Enter CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, and others*

**CAPULET**

What should it be, that they so shriek abroad?

**LADY CAPULET**

The people in the street cry Romeo,  
Some Juliet, and some Paris; and all run,  
With open outcry toward our monument.

**PRINCE**

What fear is this which startles in our ears?

## **First Watchman**

Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain;  
And Romeo dead; and Juliet, dead before,  
Warm and new kill'd.

## **PRINCE**

Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes.

## **First Watchman**

Here is a friar, and slaughter'd Romeo's man;  
With instruments upon them, fit to open  
These dead men's tombs.

## **CAPULET**

O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter bleeds!  
This dagger hath mista'en--for, lo, his house  
Is empty on the back of Montague,--  
And it mis-sheathed in my daughter's bosom!

## **LADY CAPULET**

O me! this sight of death is as a bell,  
That warns my old age to a sepulchre.

*Enter MONTAGUE and others*

## **PRINCE**

Come, Montague; for thou art early up,  
To see thy son and heir more early down.

## **MONTAGUE**

Alas, my liege, my wife is dead to-night;  
Grief of my son's exile hath stopp'd her breath:  
What further woe conspires against mine age?

## **PRINCE**

Look, and thou shalt see.

## **MONTAGUE**

O thou untaught! what manners is in this?  
To press before thy father to a grave?

## **PRINCE**

Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while,  
Till we can clear these ambiguities,  
And know their spring, their head, their  
true descent;  
And then will I be general of your woes,  
And lead you even to death: meantime forbear,  
And let mischance be slave to patience.  
Bring forth the parties of suspicion.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

I am the greatest, able to do least,  
Yet most suspected, as the time and place  
Doth make against me of this direful murder;  
And here I stand, both to impeach and purge  
Myself condemned and myself excused.

## **PRINCE**

Then say at once what thou dost know in this.

## **FRIAR LAURENCE**

I will be brief, for my short date of breath  
Is not so long as is a tedious tale.  
Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet;  
And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife:  
I married them; and their stol'n marriage-day  
Was Tybalt's dooms-day, whose untimely death  
Banish'd the new-made bridegroom from the city,  
For whom, and not for Tybalt, Juliet pined.

You, to remove that siege of grief from her,  
Betroth'd and would have married her perforce  
To County Paris: then comes she to me,  
And, with wild looks, bid me devise some mean  
To rid her from this second marriage,  
Or in my cell there would she kill herself.  
Then gave I her, so tutor'd by my art,  
A sleeping potion; which so took effect  
As I intended, for it wrought on her  
The form of death: meantime I writ to Romeo,  
That he should hither come as this dire night,  
To help to take her from her borrow'd grave,  
Being the time the potion's force should cease.  
But he which bore my letter, Friar John,  
Was stay'd by accident, and yesternight  
Return'd my letter back. Then all alone  
At the prefixed hour of her waking,  
Came I to take her from her kindred's vault;  
Meaning to keep her closely at my cell,  
Till I conveniently could send to Romeo:  
But when I came, some minute ere the time  
Of her awaking, here untimely lay  
The noble Paris and true Romeo dead.  
She wakes; and I entreated her come forth,  
And bear this work of heaven with patience:  
But then a noise did scare me from the tomb;  
And she, too desperate, would not go with me,  
But, as it seems, did violence on herself.  
All this I know; and to the marriage  
Her nurse is privy: and, if aught in this  
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life  
Be sacrificed, some hour before his time,  
Unto the rigour of severest law.

## **PRINCE**

We still have known thee for a holy man.  
Where's Romeo's man? what can he say in this?

## **BALTHASAR**

I brought my master news of Juliet's death;  
And then in post he came from Mantua

To this same place, to this same monument.  
This letter he early bid me give his father,  
And threatened me with death, going in the vault,  
I departed not and left him there.

**PRINCE**

Give me the letter; I will look on it.  
Where is the county's page, that raised the watch?  
Sirrah, what made your master in this place?

**PAGE**

He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave;  
And bid me stand aloof, and so I did:  
Anon comes one with light to ope the tomb;  
And by and by my master drew on him;  
And then I ran away to call the watch.

**PRINCE**

This letter doth make good the friar's words,  
Their course of love, the tidings of her death:  
And here he writes that he did buy a poison  
Of a poor 'pothecary, and therewithal  
Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.  
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!  
See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,  
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.  
And I for winking at your discords too  
Have lost a brace of kinsmen: all are punish'd.

**CAPULET**

O brother Montague, give me thy hand:  
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more  
Can I demand.

**MONTAGUE**

But I can give thee more:  
For I will raise her statue in pure gold;



That while Verona by that name is known,  
There shall no figure at such rate be set  
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

**CAPULET**

As rich shall Romeo's by his lady's lie;  
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

**PRINCE**

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;  
The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head:  
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardon'd, and some punished:  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

*Exeunt*

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Timon of Athens

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Athens. A hall in Timon's house.](#)

Act 1, Scene 2: [A banqueting-room in Timon's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [A Senator's house.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [The same. A hall in Timon's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [A room in Lucullus' house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [A public place.](#)

Act 3, Scene 3: [A room in Sempronius' house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 4: [The same. A hall in Timon's house.](#)

Act 3, Scene 5: [The same. The senate-house. The Senate sitting.](#)

Act 3, Scene 6: [The same. A banqueting-room in Timon's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Without the walls of Athens.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [Athens. A room in Timon's house.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [Woods and cave, near the seashore.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [The woods. Before Timon's cave.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Before the walls of Athens.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [The woods. Timon's cave, and a rude tomb seen.](#)

Act 5, Scene 4: [Before the walls of Athens.](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Athens. A hall in Timon's house.

*Enter Poet, Painter, Jeweller, Merchant, and others, at several doors*

**Poet**

Good day, sir.

**Painter**

I am glad you're well.

**Poet**

I have not seen you long: how goes the world?

**Painter**

It wears, sir, as it grows.

**Poet**

Ay, that's well known:  
But what particular rarity? what strange,  
Which manifold record not matches? See,  
Magic of bounty! all these spirits thy power  
Hath conjured to attend. I know the merchant.

**Painter**

I know them both; th' other's a jeweller.

**Merchant**

O, 'tis a worthy lord.

**Jeweller**

Nay, that's most fix'd.

**Merchant**

A most incomparable man, breathed, as it were,  
To an untirable and continue goodness:  
He passes.  
Jeweller: I have a jewel here--

**Merchant**

O, pray, let's see't: for the Lord Timon, sir?  
Jeweller: If he will touch the estimate: but, for that--

**Poet**

[Reciting to himself] 'When we for recompense have  
praised the vile,  
It stains the glory in that happy verse  
Which aptly sings the good.'

**Merchant**

'Tis a good form.

*Looking at the jewel*

**Jeweller**

And rich: here is a water, look ye.

**Painter**

You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedication  
To the great lord.

**Poet**

A thing slipp'd idly from me.

Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes  
From whence 'tis nourish'd: the fire i' the flint  
Shows not till it be struck; our gentle flame  
Provokes itself and like the current flies  
Each bound it chafes. What have you there?

**Painter**

A picture, sir. When comes your book forth?

**Poet**

Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.  
Let's see your piece.

**Painter**

'Tis a good piece.

**Poet**

So 'tis: this comes off well and excellent.

**Painter**

Indifferent.

**Poet**

Admirable: how this grace  
Speaks his own standing! what a mental power  
This eye shoots forth! how big imagination  
Moves in this lip! to the dumbness of the gesture  
One might interpret.

**Painter**

It is a pretty mocking of the life.  
Here is a touch; is't good?

**Poet**

I will say of it,  
It tutors nature: artificial strife  
Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

*Enter certain Senators, and pass over*

**Painter**

How this lord is follow'd!

**Poet**

The senators of Athens: happy man!

**Painter**

Look, more!

**Poet**

You see this confluence, this great flood  
of visitors.  
I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man,  
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug  
With amplest entertainment: my free drift  
Halts not particularly, but moves itself  
In a wide sea of wax: no levell'd malice  
Infects one comma in the course I hold;  
But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,  
Leaving no tract behind.

**Painter**

How shall I understand you?

**Poet**

I will unbolt to you.  
You see how all conditions, how all minds,  
As well of glib and slippery creatures as  
Of grave and austere quality, tender down

Their services to Lord Timon: his large fortune  
Upon his good and gracious nature hanging  
Subdues and properties to his love and tendance  
All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-faced flatterer  
To Apemantus, that few things loves better  
Than to abhor himself: even he drops down  
The knee before him, and returns in peace  
Most rich in Timon's nod.

### **Painter**

I saw them speak together.

### **Poet**

Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill  
Feign'd Fortune to be throned: the base o' the mount  
Is rank'd with all deserts, all kind of natures,  
That labour on the bosom of this sphere  
To propagate their states: amongst them all,  
Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fix'd,  
One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,  
Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her;  
Whose present grace to present slaves and servants  
Translates his rivals.

### **Painter**

'Tis conceived to scope.  
This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,  
With one man beckon'd from the rest below,  
Bowing his head against the sleepy mount  
To climb his happiness, would be well express'd  
In our condition.

### **Poet**

Nay, sir, but hear me on.  
All those which were his fellows but of late,  
Some better than his value, on the moment  
Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,  
Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,

Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him  
Drink the free air.

**Painter**

Ay, marry, what of these?

**Poet**

When Fortune in her shift and change of mood  
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants  
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top  
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,  
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

**Painter**

'Tis common:  
A thousand moral paintings I can show  
That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's  
More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well  
To show Lord Timon that mean eyes have seen  
The foot above the head.

*Trumpets sound. Enter TIMON, addressing himself courteously to every suitor; a Messenger from VENTIDIUS talking with him; LUCILIUS and other servants following*

**TIMON**

Imprison'd is he, say you?

**Messenger**

Ay, my good lord: five talents is his debt,  
His means most short, his creditors most strait:  
Your honourable letter he desires  
To those have shut him up; which failing,  
Periods his comfort.

**TIMON**



Noble Ventidius! Well;  
I am not of that feather to shake off  
My friend when he must need me. I do know him  
A gentleman that well deserves a help:  
Which he shall have: I'll pay the debt,  
and free him.

**Messenger**

Your lordship ever binds him.

**TIMON**

Commend me to him: I will send his ransom;  
And being enfranchised, bid him come to me.  
'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,  
But to support him after. Fare you well.

**Messenger**

All happiness to your honour!

*Exit*

*Enter an old Athenian*

**Old Athenian**

Lord Timon, hear me speak.

**TIMON**

Freely, good father.

**Old Athenian**

Thou hast a servant named Lucilius.

**TIMON**

I have so: what of him?

**Old Athenian**

Most noble Timon, call the man before thee.

**TIMON**

Attends he here, or no? Lucilius!

**LUCILIUS**

Here, at your lordship's service.

**Old Athenian**

This fellow here, Lord Timon, this thy creature,  
By night frequents my house. I am a man  
That from my first have been inclined to thrift;  
And my estate deserves an heir more raised  
Than one which holds a trencher.

**TIMON**

Well; what further?

**Old Athenian**

One only daughter have I, no kin else,  
On whom I may confer what I have got:  
The maid is fair, o' the youngest for a bride,  
And I have bred her at my dearest cost  
In qualities of the best. This man of thine  
Attempts her love: I prithee, noble lord,  
Join with me to forbid him her resort;  
Myself have spoke in vain.

**TIMON**

The man is honest.

**Old Athenian**

Therefore he will be, Timon:  
His honesty rewards him in itself;  
It must not bear my daughter.

**TIMON**

Does she love him?

**Old Athenian**

She is young and apt:  
Our own precedent passions do instruct us  
What levity's in youth.

**TIMON**

[To LUCILIUS] Love you the maid?

**LUCILIUS**

Ay, my good lord, and she accepts of it.

**Old Athenian**

If in her marriage my consent be missing,  
I call the gods to witness, I will choose  
Mine heir from forth the beggars of the world,  
And dispossess her all.

**TIMON**

How shall she be endow'd,  
if she be mated with an equal husband?

**Old Athenian**

Three talents on the present; in future, all.

**TIMON**

This gentleman of mine hath served me long:

To build his fortune I will strain a little,  
For 'tis a bond in men. Give him thy daughter:  
What you bestow, in him I'll counterpoise,  
And make him weigh with her.

**Old Athenian**

Most noble lord,  
Pawn me to this your honour, she is his.

**TIMON**

My hand to thee; mine honour on my promise.

**LUCILIUS**

Humbly I thank your lordship: never may  
The state or fortune fall into my keeping,  
Which is not owed to you!

*Exeunt LUCILIUS and Old Athenian*

**Poet**

Vouchsafe my labour, and long live your lordship!

**TIMON**

I thank you; you shall hear from me anon:  
Go not away. What have you there, my friend?

**Painter**

A piece of painting, which I do beseech  
Your lordship to accept.

**TIMON**

Painting is welcome.  
The painting is almost the natural man;  
or since dishonour traffics with man's nature,

He is but outside: these pencill'd figures are  
Even such as they give out. I like your work;  
And you shall find I like it: wait attendance  
Till you hear further from me.

**Painter**

The gods preserve ye!

**TIMON**

Well fare you, gentleman: give me your hand;  
We must needs dine together. Sir, your jewel  
Hath suffer'd under praise.

**Jeweller**

What, my lord! dispraise?

**TIMON**

A more satiety of commendations.  
If I should pay you for't as 'tis extoll'd,  
It would unclaw me quite.

**Jeweller**

My lord, 'tis rated  
As those which sell would give: but you well know,  
Things of like value differing in the owners  
Are prized by their masters: believe't, dear lord,  
You mend the jewel by the wearing it.

**TIMON**

Well mock'd.

**Merchant**

No, my good lord; he speaks the common tongue,  
Which all men speak with him.

**TIMON**

Look, who comes here: will you be chid?

*Enter APEMANTUS*

Jeweller: We'll bear, with your lordship.

**Merchant**

He'll spare none.

**TIMON**

Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus!

**APEMANTUS**

Till I be gentle, stay thou for thy good morrow;  
When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest.

**TIMON**

Why dost thou call them knaves? thou know'st them not.

**APEMANTUS**

Are they not Athenians?

**TIMON**

Yes.

**APEMANTUS**

Then I repent not.  
Jeweller: You know me, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**

Thou know'st I do: I call'd thee by thy name.

**TIMON**

Thou art proud, Apemantus.

**APEMANTUS**

Of nothing so much as that I am not like Timon.

**TIMON**

Whither art going?

**APEMANTUS**

To knock out an honest Athenian's brains.

**TIMON**

That's a deed thou'lt die for.

**APEMANTUS**

Right, if doing nothing be death by the law.

**TIMON**

How likest thou this picture, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**

The best, for the innocence.

**TIMON**

Wrought he not well that painted it?

**APEMANTUS**

He wrought better that made the painter; and yet

he's but a filthy piece of work.

**Painter**

You're a dog.

**APEMANTUS**

Thy mother's of my generation: what's she, if I be a dog?

**TIMON**

Wilt dine with me, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**

No; I eat not lords.

**TIMON**

An thou shouldst, thou 'ldst anger ladies.

**APEMANTUS**

O, they eat lords; so they come by great bellies.

**TIMON**

That's a lascivious apprehension.

**APEMANTUS**

So thou apprehendest it: take it for thy labour.

**TIMON**

How dost thou like this jewel, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**



Not so well as plain-dealing, which will not cost a man a doit.

**TIMON**

What dost thou think 'tis worth?

**APEMANTUS**

Not worth my thinking. How now, poet!

**Poet**

How now, philosopher!

**APEMANTUS**

Thou liest.

**Poet**

Art not one?

**APEMANTUS**

Yes.

**Poet**

Then I lie not.

**APEMANTUS**

Art not a poet?

**Poet**

Yes.

**APEMANTUS**

Then thou liest: look in thy last work, where thou  
hast feigned him a worthy fellow.

**Poet**

That's not feigned; he is so.

**APEMANTUS**

Yes, he is worthy of thee, and to pay thee for thy  
labour: he that loves to be flattered is worthy o'  
the flatterer. Heavens, that I were a lord!

**TIMON**

What wouldst do then, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**

E'en as Apemantus does now; hate a lord with my heart.

**TIMON**

What, thyself?

**APEMANTUS**

Ay.

**TIMON**

Wherefore?

**APEMANTUS**

That I had no angry wit to be a lord.  
Art not thou a merchant?

**Merchant**

Ay, Apemantus.

**APEMANTUS**

Traffic confound thee, if the gods will not!

**Merchant**

If traffic do it, the gods do it.

**APEMANTUS**

Traffic's thy god; and thy god confound thee!

*Trumpet sounds. Enter a Messenger*

**TIMON**

What trumpet's that?

**Messenger**

'Tis Alcibiades, and some twenty horse,  
All of companionship.

**TIMON**

Pray, entertain them; give them guide to us.

*Exeunt some Attendants*

You must needs dine with me: go not you hence  
Till I have thank'd you: when dinner's done,  
Show me this piece. I am joyful of your sights.

*Enter ALCIBIADES, with the rest*

Most welcome, sir!

**APEMANTUS**

So, so, there!

Aches contract and starve your supple joints!  
That there should be small love 'mongst these  
sweet knaves,  
And all this courtesy! The strain of man's bred out  
Into baboon and monkey.

## **ALCIBIADES**

Sir, you have saved my longing, and I feed  
Most hungerly on your sight.

## **TIMON**

Right welcome, sir!  
Ere we depart, we'll share a bounteous time  
In different pleasures. Pray you, let us in.

*Exeunt all except APEMANTUS*

*Enter two Lords*

## **First Lord**

What time o' day is't, Apemantus?

## **APEMANTUS**

Time to be honest.

## **First Lord**

That time serves still.

## **APEMANTUS**

The more accursed thou, that still omitt'st it.

## **Second Lord**

Thou art going to Lord Timon's feast?

**APEMANTUS**

Ay, to see meat fill knaves and wine heat fools.

**Second Lord**

Fare thee well, fare thee well.

**APEMANTUS**

Thou art a fool to bid me farewell twice.

**Second Lord**

Why, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**

Shouldst have kept one to thyself, for I mean to give thee none.

**First Lord**

Hang thyself!

**APEMANTUS**

No, I will do nothing at thy bidding: make thy requests to thy friend.

**Second Lord**

Away, unpeaceable dog, or I'll spurn thee hence!

**APEMANTUS**

I will fly, like a dog, the heels o' the ass.

*Exit*

**First Lord**

He's opposite to humanity. Come, shall we in,  
And taste Lord Timon's bounty? he outgoes  
The very heart of kindness.

### **Second Lord**

He pours it out; Plutus, the god of gold,  
Is but his steward: no meed, but he repays  
Sevenfold above itself; no gift to him,  
But breeds the giver a return exceeding  
All use of quittance.

### **First Lord**

The noblest mind he carries  
That ever govern'd man.

### **Second Lord**

Long may he live in fortunes! Shall we in?

### **First Lord**

I'll keep you company.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 1, Scene 1

[Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 1, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A banqueting-room in Timon's house.

*Hautboys playing loud music. A great banquet served in; FLAVIUS and others attending; then enter TIMON, ALCIBIADES, Lords, Senators, and VENTIDIUS. Then comes, dropping, after all, APEMANTUS, discontentedly, like himself*

### VENTIDIUS

Most honour'd Timon,  
It hath pleased the gods to remember my father's age,  
And call him to long peace.  
He is gone happy, and has left me rich:  
Then, as in grateful virtue I am bound  
To your free heart, I do return those talents,  
Doubled with thanks and service, from whose help  
I derived liberty.

### TIMON

O, by no means,  
Honest Ventidius; you mistake my love:  
I gave it freely ever; and there's none  
Can truly say he gives, if he receives:  
If our betters play at that game, we must not dare  
To imitate them; faults that are rich are fair.

### VENTIDIUS

A noble spirit!

### TIMON

Nay, my lords,

*They all stand ceremoniously looking on TIMON*

Ceremony was but devised at first  
To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,  
Recanting goodness, sorry ere 'tis shown;  
But where there is true friendship, there needs none.  
Pray, sit; more welcome are ye to my fortunes  
Than my fortunes to me.

*They sit*

**First Lord**

My lord, we always have confess'd it.

**APEMANTUS**

Ho, ho, confess'd it! hang'd it, have you not?

**TIMON**

O, Apemantus, you are welcome.

**APEMANTUS**

No;  
You shall not make me welcome:  
I come to have thee thrust me out of doors.

**TIMON**

Fie, thou'rt a churl; ye've got a humour there  
Does not become a man: 'tis much to blame.  
They say, my lords, 'ira furor brevis est;' but yond  
man is ever angry. Go, let him have a table by  
himself, for he does neither affect company, nor is  
he fit for't, indeed.

**APEMANTUS**

Let me stay at thine apperil, Timon: I come to  
observe; I give thee warning on't.



## TIMON

I take no heed of thee; thou'rt an Athenian,  
therefore welcome: I myself would have no power;  
prithee, let my meat make thee silent.

## APEMANTUS

I scorn thy meat; 'twould choke me, for I should  
ne'er flatter thee. O you gods, what a number of  
men eat Timon, and he sees 'em not! It grieves me  
to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood;  
and all the madness is, he cheers them up too.  
I wonder men dare trust themselves with men:  
Methinks they should invite them without knives;  
Good for their meat, and safer for their lives.  
There's much example for't; the fellow that sits  
next him now, parts bread with him, pledges the  
breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest  
man to kill him: 't has been proved. If I were a  
huge man, I should fear to drink at meals;  
Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes:  
Great men should drink with harness on their throats.

## TIMON

My lord, in heart; and let the health go round.

## Second Lord

Let it flow this way, my good lord.

## APEMANTUS

Flow this way! A brave fellow! he keeps his tides  
well. Those healths will make thee and thy state  
look ill, Timon. Here's that which is too weak to  
be a sinner, honest water, which ne'er left man i' the mire:  
This and my food are equals; there's no odds:  
Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods.  
Apemantus' grace.  
Immortal gods, I crave no pelf;

I pray for no man but myself:  
Grant I may never prove so fond,  
To trust man on his oath or bond;  
Or a harlot, for her weeping;  
Or a dog, that seems a-sleeping:  
Or a keeper with my freedom;  
Or my friends, if I should need 'em.  
Amen. So fall to't:  
Rich men sin, and I eat root.

*Eats and drinks*

Much good dich thy good heart, Apemantus!

**TIMON**

Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now.

**ALCIBIADES**

My heart is ever at your service, my lord.

**TIMON**

You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than a  
dinner of friends.

**ALCIBIADES**

So the were bleeding-new, my lord, there's no meat  
like 'em: I could wish my best friend at such a feast.

**APEMANTUS**

Would all those fatterers were thine enemies then,  
that then thou mightst kill 'em and bid me to 'em!

**First Lord**

Might we but have that happiness, my lord, that you  
would once use our hearts, whereby we might express

some part of our zeals, we should think ourselves  
for ever perfect.

## **TIMON**

O, no doubt, my good friends, but the gods  
themselves have provided that I shall have much help  
from you: how had you been my friends else? why  
have you that charitable title from thousands, did  
not you chiefly belong to my heart? I have told  
more of you to myself than you can with modesty  
speak in your own behalf; and thus far I confirm  
you. O you gods, think I, what need we have any  
friends, if we should ne'er have need of 'em? they  
were the most needless creatures living, should we  
ne'er have use for 'em, and would most resemble  
sweet instruments hung up in cases that keep their  
sounds to themselves. Why, I have often wished  
myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you. We  
are born to do benefits: and what better or  
properer can we can our own than the riches of our  
friends? O, what a precious comfort 'tis, to have  
so many, like brothers, commanding one another's  
fortunes! O joy, e'en made away ere 't can be born!  
Mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks: to  
forget their faults, I drink to you.

## **APEMANTUS**

Thou weepest to make them drink, Timon.

## **Second Lord**

Joy had the like conception in our eyes  
And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

## **APEMANTUS**

Ho, ho! I laugh to think that babe a bastard.

## **Third Lord**

I promise you, my lord, you moved me much.

**APEMANTUS**

Much!

*Tucket, within*

**TIMON**

What means that trump?

*Enter a Servant*

How now?

**Servant**

Please you, my lord, there are certain ladies most desirous of admittance.

**TIMON**

Ladies! what are their wills?

**Servant**

There comes with them a forerunner, my lord, which bears that office, to signify their pleasures.

**TIMON**

I pray, let them be admitted.

*Enter Cupid*

**Cupid**

Hail to thee, worthy Timon, and to all  
That of his bounties taste! The five best senses  
Acknowledge thee their patron; and come freely

To gratulate thy plenteous bosom: th' ear,  
Taste, touch and smell, pleased from thy tale rise;  
They only now come but to feast thine eyes.

## TIMON

They're welcome all; let 'em have kind admittance:  
Music, make their welcome!

*Exit Cupid*

## First Lord

You see, my lord, how ample you're beloved.

*Music. Re-enter Cupid with a mask of Ladies as Amazons, with lutes in their hands, dancing and playing*

## APEMANTUS

Hoy-day, what a sweep of vanity comes this way!  
They dance! they are mad women.  
Like madness is the glory of this life.  
As this pomp shows to a little oil and root.  
We make ourselves fools, to disport ourselves;  
And spend our flatteries, to drink those men  
Upon whose age we void it up again,  
With poisonous spite and envy.  
Who lives that's not depraved or depraves?  
Who dies, that bears not one spurn to their graves  
Of their friends' gift?  
I should fear those that dance before me now  
Would one day stamp upon me: 't has been done;  
Men shut their doors against a setting sun.

*The Lords rise from table, with much adoring of TIMON; and to show their loves, each singles out an Amazon, and all dance, men with women, a lofty strain or two to the hautboys, and cease*

## TIMON

You have done our pleasures much grace, fair ladies,

Set a fair fashion on our entertainment,  
Which was not half so beautiful and kind;  
You have added worth unto 't and lustre,  
And entertain'd me with mine own device;  
I am to thank you for 't.

**First Lady**

My lord, you take us even at the best.

**APEMANTUS**

'Faith, for the worst is filthy; and would not hold  
taking, I doubt me.

**TIMON**

Ladies, there is an idle banquet attends you:  
Please you to dispose yourselves.

**All Ladies**

Most thankfully, my lord.

*Exeunt Cupid and Ladies*

**TIMON**

Flavius.

**FLAVIUS**

My lord?

**TIMON**

The little casket bring me hither.

**FLAVIUS**

Yes, my lord. More jewels yet!

There is no crossing him in 's humour;

*Aside*

Else I should tell him,--well, i' faith I should,  
When all's spent, he 'ld be cross'd then, an he could.  
'Tis pity bounty had not eyes behind,  
That man might ne'er be wretched for his mind.

*Exit*

**First Lord**

Where be our men?

**Servant**

Here, my lord, in readiness.

**Second Lord**

Our horses!

*Re-enter FLAVIUS, with the casket*

**TIMON**

O my friends,  
I have one word to say to you: look you, my good lord,  
I must entreat you, honour me so much  
As to advance this jewel; accept it and wear it,  
Kind my lord.

**First Lord**

I am so far already in your gifts,--

**All**

So are we all.

*Enter a Servant*

**Servant**

My lord, there are certain nobles of the senate  
Newly alighted, and come to visit you.

**TIMON**

They are fairly welcome.

**FLAVIUS**

I beseech your honour,  
Vouchsafe me a word; it does concern you near.

**TIMON**

Near! why then, another time I'll hear thee:  
I prithee, let's be provided to show them  
entertainment.

**FLAVIUS**

[Aside] I scarce know how.

*Enter a Second Servant*

**Second Servant**

May it please your honour, Lord Lucius,  
Out of his free love, hath presented to you  
Four milk-white horses, trapp'd in silver.

**TIMON**

I shall accept them fairly; let the presents  
Be worthily entertain'd.

*Enter a third Servant*



How now! what news?

**Third Servant**

Please you, my lord, that honourable  
gentleman, Lord Lucullus, entreats your company  
to-morrow to hunt with him, and has sent your honour  
two brace of greyhounds.

**TIMON**

I'll hunt with him; and let them be received,  
Not without fair reward.

**FLAVIUS**

[Aside] What will this come to?  
He commands us to provide, and give great gifts,  
And all out of an empty coffer:  
Nor will he know his purse, or yield me this,  
To show him what a beggar his heart is,  
Being of no power to make his wishes good:  
His promises fly so beyond his state  
That what he speaks is all in debt; he owes  
For every word: he is so kind that he now  
Pays interest for 't; his land's put to their books.  
Well, would I were gently put out of office  
Before I were forced out!  
Happier is he that has no friend to feed  
Than such that do e'en enemies exceed.  
I bleed inwardly for my lord.

*Exit*

**TIMON**

You do yourselves  
Much wrong, you bate too much of your own merits:  
Here, my lord, a trifle of our love.

**Second Lord**

With more than common thanks I will receive it.

### **Third Lord**

O, he's the very soul of bounty!

### **TIMON**

And now I remember, my lord, you gave  
Good words the other day of a bay courser  
I rode on: it is yours, because you liked it.

### **Second Lord**

O, I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, in that.

### **TIMON**

You may take my word, my lord; I know, no man  
Can justly praise but what he does affect:  
I weigh my friend's affection with mine own;  
I'll tell you true. I'll call to you.

### **All Lords**

O, none so welcome.

### **TIMON**

I take all and your several visitations  
So kind to heart, 'tis not enough to give;  
Methinks, I could deal kingdoms to my friends,  
And ne'er be weary. Alcibiades,  
Thou art a soldier, therefore seldom rich;  
It comes in charity to thee: for all thy living  
Is 'mongst the dead, and all the lands thou hast  
Lie in a pitch'd field.

### **ALCIBIADES**

Ay, defiled land, my lord.

**First Lord**

We are so virtuously bound--

**TIMON**

And so  
Am I to you.

**Second Lord**

So infinitely endear'd--

**TIMON**

All to you. Lights, more lights!

**First Lord**

The best of happiness,  
Honour and fortunes, keep with you, Lord Timon!

**TIMON**

Ready for his friends.

*Exeunt all but APEMANTUS and TIMON*

**APEMANTUS**

What a coil's here!  
Serving of becks and jutting-out of bums!  
I doubt whether their legs be worth the sums  
That are given for 'em. Friendship's full of dregs:  
Methinks, false hearts should never have sound legs,  
Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on court'sies.

**TIMON**

Now, Apemantus, if thou wert not sullen, I would be  
good to thee.

## APEMANTUS

No, I'll nothing: for if I should be bribed too,  
there would be none left to rail upon thee, and then  
thou wouldst sin the faster. Thou givest so long,  
Timon, I fear me thou wilt give away thyself in  
paper shortly: what need these feasts, poms and  
vain-glories?

## TIMON

Nay, an you begin to rail on society once, I am  
sworn not to give regard to you. Farewell; and come  
with better music.

*Exit*

## APEMANTUS

So:  
Thou wilt not hear me now; thou shalt not then:  
I'll lock thy heaven from thee.  
O, that men's ears should be  
To counsel deaf, but not to flattery!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 1, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A Senator's house.

*Enter Senator, with papers in his hand*

### Senator

And late, five thousand: to Varro and to Isidore  
He owes nine thousand; besides my former sum,  
Which makes it five and twenty. Still in motion  
Of raging waste? It cannot hold; it will not.  
If I want gold, steal but a beggar's dog,  
And give it Timon, why, the dog coins gold.  
If I would sell my horse, and buy twenty more  
Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon,  
Ask nothing, give it him, it foals me, straight,  
And able horses. No porter at his gate,  
But rather one that smiles and still invites  
All that pass by. It cannot hold: no reason  
Can found his state in safety. Caphis, ho!  
Caphis, I say!

*Enter CAPHIS*

### CAPHIS

Here, sir; what is your pleasure?

### Senator

Get on your cloak, and haste you to Lord Timon;  
Importune him for my moneys; be not ceased  
With slight denial, nor then silenced when--  
'Commend me to your master'--and the cap  
Plays in the right hand, thus: but tell him,  
My uses cry to me, I must serve my turn  
Out of mine own; his days and times are past

And my reliances on his fracted dates  
Have smit my credit: I love and honour him,  
But must not break my back to heal his finger;  
Immediate are my needs, and my relief  
Must not be toss'd and turn'd to me in words,  
But find supply immediate. Get you gone:  
Put on a most importunate aspect,  
A visage of demand; for, I do fear,  
When every feather sticks in his own wing,  
Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,  
Which flashes now a phoenix. Get you gone.

**CAPHIS**

I go, sir.

**Senator**

'I go, sir!'--Take the bonds along with you,  
And have the dates in contempt.

**CAPHIS**

I will, sir.

**Senator**

Go.

*Exeunt*

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. A hall in Timon's house.

*Enter FLAVIUS, with many bills in his hand*

**FLAVIUS**

No care, no stop! so senseless of expense,  
That he will neither know how to maintain it,  
Nor cease his flow of riot: takes no account  
How things go from him, nor resumes no care  
Of what is to continue: never mind  
Was to be so unwise, to be so kind.  
What shall be done? he will not hear, till feel:  
I must be round with him, now he comes from hunting.  
Fie, fie, fie, fie!

*Enter CAPHIS, and the Servants of Isidore and Varro*

**CAPHIS**

Good even, Varro: what,  
You come for money?  
Varro's Servant Is't not your business too?

**CAPHIS**

It is: and yours too, Isidore?  
Isidore's Servant It is so.

**CAPHIS**

Would we were all discharged!  
Varro's Servant I fear it.

**CAPHIS**

Here comes the lord.

*Enter TIMON, ALCIBIADES, and Lords, & c*

**TIMON**

So soon as dinner's done, we'll forth again,  
My Alcibiades. With me? what is your will?

**CAPHIS**

My lord, here is a note of certain dues.

**TIMON**

Dues! Whence are you?

**CAPHIS**

Of Athens here, my lord.

**TIMON**

Go to my steward.

**CAPHIS**

Please it your lordship, he hath put me off  
To the succession of new days this month:  
My master is awaked by great occasion  
To call upon his own, and humbly prays you  
That with your other noble parts you'll suit  
In giving him his right.

**TIMON**

Mine honest friend,  
I prithee, but repair to me next morning.

**CAPHIS**



Nay, good my lord,--

**TIMON**

Contain thyself, good friend.  
Varro's Servant One Varro's servant, my good lord,--  
Isidore's Servant From Isidore;  
He humbly prays your speedy payment.

**CAPHIS**

If you did know, my lord, my master's wants--  
Varro's Servant 'Twas due on forfeiture, my lord, six weeks And past.  
Isidore's Servant Your steward puts me off, my lord;  
And I am sent expressly to your lordship.

**TIMON**

Give me breath.  
I do beseech you, good my lords, keep on;  
I'll wait upon you instantly.

*Exeunt ALCIBIADES and Lords*

*To FLAVIUS*

Come hither: pray you,  
How goes the world, that I am thus encounter'd  
With clamorous demands of date-broke bonds,  
And the detention of long-since-due debts,  
Against my honour?

**FLAVIUS**

Please you, gentlemen,  
The time is unagreeable to this business:  
Your importunacy cease till after dinner,  
That I may make his lordship understand  
Wherefore you are not paid.

**TIMON**

Do so, my friends. See them well entertain'd.

*Exit*

**FLAVIUS**

Pray, draw near.

*Exit*

*Enter APEMANTUS and Fool*

**CAPHIS**

Stay, stay, here comes the fool with Apemantus:  
let's ha' some sport with 'em.  
Varro's Servant Hang him, he'll abuse us.  
Isidore's Servant A plague upon him, dog!  
Varro's Servant How dost, fool?

**APEMANTUS**

Dost dialogue with thy shadow?  
Varro's Servant I speak not to thee.

**APEMANTUS**

No,'tis to thyself.

*To the Fool*

Come away.  
Isidore's Servant There's the fool hangs on your back already.

**APEMANTUS**

No, thou stand'st single, thou'rt not on him yet.

**CAPHIS**

Where's the fool now?

## **APEMANTUS**

He last asked the question. Poor rogues, and  
usurers' men! bawds between gold and want!

### **All Servants**

What are we, Apemantus?

## **APEMANTUS**

Asses.

### **All Servants**

Why?

## **APEMANTUS**

That you ask me what you are, and do not know  
yourselves. Speak to 'em, fool.

### **Fool**

How do you, gentlemen?

### **All Servants**

Gramercies, good fool: how does your mistress?

### **Fool**

She's e'en setting on water to scald such chickens  
as you are. Would we could see you at Corinth!

## **APEMANTUS**

Good! gramercy.

*Enter Page*

**Fool**

Look you, here comes my mistress' page.

**Page**

[To the Fool] Why, how now, captain! what do you in this wise company? How dost thou, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**

Would I had a rod in my mouth, that I might answer thee profitably.

**Page**

Prithee, Apemantus, read me the superscription of these letters: I know not which is which.

**APEMANTUS**

Canst not read?

**Page**

No.

**APEMANTUS**

There will little learning die then, that day thou art hanged. This is to Lord Timon; this to Alcibiades. Go; thou wast born a bastard, and thou't die a bawd.

**Page**

Thou wast whelped a dog, and thou shalt famish a dog's death. Answer not; I am gone.

*Exit*

## **APEMANTUS**

E'en so thou outrunnest grace. Fool, I will go with you to Lord Timon's.

## **Fool**

Will you leave me there?

## **APEMANTUS**

If Timon stay at home. You three serve three usurers?

## **All Servants**

Ay; would they served us!

## **APEMANTUS**

So would I,--as good a trick as ever hangman served thief.

## **Fool**

Are you three usurers' men?

## **All Servants**

Ay, fool.

## **Fool**

I think no usurer but has a fool to his servant: my mistress is one, and I am her fool. When men come to borrow of your masters, they approach sadly, and go away merry; but they enter my mistress' house merrily, and go away sadly: the reason of this? Varro's Servant I could render one.

## **APEMANTUS**

Do it then, that we may account thee a whoremaster  
and a knave; which not-withstanding, thou shalt be  
no less esteemed.

Varro's Servant What is a whoremaster, fool?

## **Fool**

A fool in good clothes, and something like thee.  
'Tis a spirit: sometime't appears like a lord;  
sometime like a lawyer; sometime like a philosopher,  
with two stones moe than's artificial one: he is  
very often like a knight; and, generally, in all  
shapes that man goes up and down in from fourscore  
to thirteen, this spirit walks in.

Varro's Servant Thou art not altogether a fool.

## **Fool**

Nor thou altogether a wise man: as much foolery as  
I have, so much wit thou lackest.

## **APEMANTUS**

That answer might have become Apemantus.

## **All Servants**

Aside, aside; here comes Lord Timon.

*Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS*

## **APEMANTUS**

Come with me, fool, come.

## **Fool**

I do not always follow lover, elder brother and  
woman; sometime the philosopher.

*Exeunt APEMANTUS and Fool*

**FLAVIUS**

Pray you, walk near: I'll speak with you anon.

*Exeunt Servants*

**TIMON**

You make me marvel: wherefore ere this time  
Had you not fully laid my state before me,  
That I might so have rated my expense,  
As I had leave of means?

**FLAVIUS**

You would not hear me,  
At many leisures I proposed.

**TIMON**

Go to:  
Perchance some single vantages you took.  
When my indispos ition put you back:  
And that unaptness made your minister,  
Thus to excuse yourself.

**FLAVIUS**

O my good lord,  
At many times I brought in my accounts,  
Laid them before you; you would throw them off,  
And say, you found them in mine honesty.  
When, for some trifling present, you have bid me  
Return so much, I have shook my head and wept;  
Yea, 'gainst the authority of manners, pray'd you  
To hold your hand more close: I did endure  
Not seldom, nor no slight cheques, when I have  
Prompted you in the ebb of your estate  
And your great flow of debts. My loved lord,  
Though you hear now, too late--yet now's a time--  
The greatest of your having lacks a half

To pay your present debts.

**TIMON**

Let all my land be sold.

**FLAVIUS**

'Tis all engaged, some forfeited and gone;  
And what remains will hardly stop the mouth  
Of present dues: the future comes apace:  
What shall defend the interim? and at length  
How goes our reckoning?

**TIMON**

To Lacedaemon did my land extend.

**FLAVIUS**

O my good lord, the world is but a word:  
Were it all yours to give it in a breath,  
How quickly were it gone!

**TIMON**

You tell me true.

**FLAVIUS**

If you suspect my husbandry or falsehood,  
Call me before the exactest auditors  
And set me on the proof. So the gods bless me,  
When all our offices have been oppress'd  
With riotous feeders, when our vaults have wept  
With drunken spilth of wine, when every room  
Hath blazed with lights and bray'd with minstrelsy,  
I have retired me to a wasteful cock,  
And set mine eyes at flow.

**TIMON**



Prithee, no more.

**FLAVIUS**

Heavens, have I said, the bounty of this lord!  
How many prodigal bits have slaves and peasants  
This night englutted! Who is not Timon's?  
What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is  
Lord Timon's?  
Great Timon, noble, worthy, royal Timon!  
Ah, when the means are gone that buy this praise,  
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made:  
Feast-won, fast-lost; one cloud of winter showers,  
These flies are couch'd.

**TIMON**

Come, sermon me no further:  
No villanous bounty yet hath pass'd my heart;  
Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.  
Why dost thou weep? Canst thou the conscience lack,  
To think I shall lack friends? Secure thy heart;  
If I would broach the vessels of my love,  
And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,  
Men and men's fortunes could I frankly use  
As I can bid thee speak.

**FLAVIUS**

Assurance bless your thoughts!

**TIMON**

And, in some sort, these wants of mine are crown'd,  
That I account them blessings; for by these  
Shall I try friends: you shall perceive how you  
Mistake my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends.  
Within there! Flaminius! Servilius!

*Enter FLAMINIUS, SERVILIUS, and other Servants*

## **Servants**

My lord? my lord?

## **TIMON**

I will dispatch you severally; you to Lord Lucius;  
to Lord Lucullus you: I hunted with his honour  
to-day: you, to Sempronius: commend me to their  
loves, and, I am proud, say, that my occasions have  
found time to use 'em toward a supply of money: let  
the request be fifty talents.

## **FLAMINIUS**

As you have said, my lord.

## **FLAVIUS**

[Aside] Lord Lucius and Lucullus? hum!

## **TIMON**

Go you, sir, to the senators--  
Of whom, even to the state's best health, I have  
Deserved this hearing--bid 'em send o' the instant  
A thousand talents to me.

## **FLAVIUS**

I have been bold--  
For that I knew it the most general way--  
To them to use your signet and your name;  
But they do shake their heads, and I am here  
No richer in return.

## **TIMON**

Is't true? can't be?

## **FLAVIUS**

They answer, in a joint and corporate voice,  
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot  
Do what they would; are sorry--you are honourable,--  
But yet they could have wish'd--they know not--  
Something hath been amiss--a noble nature  
May catch a wretch--would all were well--'tis pity;--  
And so, intending other serious matters,  
After distasteful looks and these hard fractions,  
With certain half-caps and cold-moving nods  
They froze me into silence.

## TIMON

You gods, reward them!  
Prithee, man, look cheerly. These old fellows  
Have their ingratitude in them hereditary:  
Their blood is caked, 'tis cold, it seldom flows;  
'Tis lack of kindly warmth they are not kind;  
And nature, as it grows again toward earth,  
Is fashion'd for the journey, dull and heavy.

*To a Servant*

Go to Ventidius.

*To FLAVIUS*

Prithee, be not sad,  
Thou art true and honest; ingeniously I speak.  
No blame belongs to thee.

*To Servant*

Ventidius lately  
Buried his father; by whose death he's stepp'd  
Into a great estate: when he was poor,  
Imprison'd and in scarcity of friends,  
I clear'd him with five talents: greet him from me;  
Bid him suppose some good necessity  
Touches his friend, which craves to be remember'd  
With those five talents.

*Exit Servant*

*To FLAVIUS*

That had, give't these fellows  
To whom 'tis instant due. Ne'er speak, or think,  
That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can sink.

**FLAVIUS**

I would I could not think it: that thought is  
bounty's foe;  
Being free itself, it thinks all others so.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 2, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. A room in Lucullus' house.

*FLAMINIUS waiting. Enter a Servant to him*

**Servant**

I have told my lord of you; he is coming down to you.

**FLAMINIUS**

I thank you, sir.

*Enter LUCULLUS*

**Servant**

Here's my lord.

**LUCULLUS**

[Aside] One of Lord Timon's men? a gift, I warrant. Why, this hits right; I dreamt of a silver basin and ewer to-night. Flaminius, honest Flaminius; you are very respectfully welcome, sir. Fill me some wine.

*Exit Servants*

And how does that honourable, complete, free-hearted gentleman of Athens, thy very bountiful good lord and master?

**FLAMINIUS**

His health is well sir.

## LUCULLUS

I am right glad that his health is well, sir: and what hast thou there under thy cloak, pretty Flaminius?

## FLAMINIUS

'Faith, nothing but an empty box, sir; which, in my lord's behalf, I come to entreat your honour to supply; who, having great and instant occasion to use fifty talents, hath sent to your lordship to furnish him, nothing doubting your present assistance therein.

## LUCULLUS

La, la, la, la! 'nothing doubting,' says he? Alas, good lord! a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I ha' dined with him, and told him on't, and come again to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less, and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his: I ha' told him on't, but I could ne'er get him from't.

*Re-enter Servant, with wine*

## Servant

Please your lordship, here is the wine.

## LUCULLUS

Flaminius, I have noted thee always wise. Here's to thee.

## FLAMINIUS

Your lordship speaks your pleasure.

## LUCULLUS

I have observed thee always for a towardly prompt spirit--give thee thy due--and one that knows what belongs to reason; and canst use the time well, if the time use thee well: good parts in thee.

*To Servant*

Get you gone, sirrah.

*Exit Servant*

Draw nearer, honest Flaminius. Thy lord's a bountiful gentleman: but thou art wise; and thou knowest well enough, although thou comest to me, that this is no time to lend money, especially upon bare friendship, without security. Here's three solidares for thee: good boy, wink at me, and say thou sawest me not. Fare thee well.

**FLAMINIUS**

Is't possible the world should so much differ,  
And we alive that lived? Fly, damned baseness,  
To him that worships thee!

*Throwing the money back*

**LUCULLUS**

Ha! now I see thou art a fool, and fit for thy master.

*Exit*

**FLAMINIUS**

May these add to the number that may scald thee!  
Let moulten coin be thy damnation,  
Thou disease of a friend, and not himself!  
Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,  
It turns in less than two nights? O you gods,  
I feel master's passion! this slave,

Unto his honour, has my lord's meat in him:  
Why should it thrive and turn to nutriment,  
When he is turn'd to poison?  
O, may diseases only work upon't!  
And, when he's sick to death, let not that part of nature  
Which my lord paid for, be of any power  
To expel sickness, but prolong his hour!

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A public place.

*Enter LUCILIUS, with three Strangers*

**LUCILIUS**

Who, the Lord Timon? he is my very good friend, and an honourable gentleman.

**First Stranger**

We know him for no less, though we are but strangers to him. But I can tell you one thing, my lord, and which I hear from common rumours: now Lord Timon's happy hours are done and past, and his estate shrinks from him.

**LUCILIUS**

Fie, no, do not believe it; he cannot want for money.

**Second Stranger**

But believe you this, my lord, that, not long ago, one of his men was with the Lord Lucullus to borrow so many talents, nay, urged extremely for't and showed what necessity belonged to't, and yet was denied.

**LUCILIUS**

How!

**Second Stranger**

I tell you, denied, my lord.

## **LUCILIUS**

What a strange case was that! now, before the gods,  
I am ashamed on't. Denied that honourable man!  
there was very little honour showed in't. For my own  
part, I must needs confess, I have received some  
small kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels  
and such-like trifles, nothing comparing to his;  
yet, had he mistook him and sent to me, I should  
ne'er have denied his occasion so many talents.

*Enter SERVILIUS*

## **SERVILIUS**

See, by good hap, yonder's my lord;  
I have sweat to see his honour. My honoured lord,--

*To LUCIUS*

## **LUCILIUS**

Servilius! you are kindly met, sir. Fare thee well:  
commend me to thy honourable virtuous lord, my very  
exquisite friend.

## **SERVILIUS**

May it please your honour, my lord hath sent--

## **LUCILIUS**

Ha! what has he sent? I am so much endeared to  
that lord; he's ever sending: how shall I thank  
him, thinkest thou? And what has he sent now?

## **SERVILIUS**

Has only sent his present occasion now, my lord;  
requesting your lordship to supply his instant use  
with so many talents.

**LUCILIUS**

I know his lordship is but merry with me;  
He cannot want fifty five hundred talents.

**SERVILIUS**

But in the mean time he wants less, my lord.  
If his occasion were not virtuous,  
I should not urge it half so faithfully.

**LUCILIUS**

Dost thou speak seriously, Servilius?

**SERVILIUS**

Upon my soul, 'tis true, sir.

**LUCILIUS**

What a wicked beast was I to disfurnish myself  
against such a good time, when I might ha' shown  
myself honourable! how unluckily it happened, that I  
should purchase the day before for a little part,  
and undo a great deal of honoured! Servilius, now,  
before the gods, I am not able to do,--the more  
beast, I say:--I was sending to use Lord Timon  
myself, these gentlemen can witness! but I would  
not, for the wealth of Athens, I had done't now.  
Commend me bountifully to his good lordship; and I  
hope his honour will conceive the fairest of me,  
because I have no power to be kind: and tell him  
this from me, I count it one of my greatest  
afflictions, say, that I cannot pleasure such an  
honourable gentleman. Good Servilius, will you  
befriend me so far, as to use mine own words to him?

**SERVILIUS**

Yes, sir, I shall.

## **LUCILIUS**

I'll look you out a good turn, Servilius.

*Exit SERVILIUS*

True as you said, Timon is shrunk indeed;  
And he that's once denied will hardly speed.

*Exit*

## **First Stranger**

Do you observe this, Hostilius?

## **Second Stranger**

Ay, too well.

## **First Stranger**

Why, this is the world's soul; and just of the  
same piece  
Is every flatterer's spirit. Who can call him  
His friend that dips in the same dish? for, in  
My knowing, Timon has been this lord's father,  
And kept his credit with his purse,  
Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money  
Has paid his men their wages: he ne'er drinks,  
But Timon's silver treads upon his lip;  
And yet--O, see the monstrousness of man  
When he looks out in an ungrateful shape!--  
He does deny him, in respect of his,  
What charitable men afford to beggars.

## **Third Stranger**

Religion groans at it.

## **First Stranger**

For mine own part,  
I never tasted Timon in my life,  
Nor came any of his bounties over me,  
To mark me for his friend; yet, I protest,  
For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue  
And honourable carriage,  
Had his necessity made use of me,  
I would have put my wealth into donation,  
And the best half should have return'd to him,  
So much I love his heart: but, I perceive,  
Men must learn now with pity to dispense;  
For policy sits above conscience.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A room in Sempronius' house.

*Enter SEMPRONIUS, and a Servant of TIMON's*

### SEMPRONIUS

Must he needs trouble me in 't,--hum!--'bove  
all others?  
He might have tried Lord Lucius or Lucullus;  
And now Ventidius is wealthy too,  
Whom he redeem'd from prison: all these  
Owe their estates unto him.

### Servant

My lord,  
They have all been touch'd and found base metal, for  
They have au denied him.

### SEMPRONIUS

How! have they denied him?  
Has Ventidius and Lucullus denied him?  
And does he send to me? Three? hum!  
It shows but little love or judgment in him:  
Must I be his last refuge! His friends, like  
physicians,  
Thrive, give him over: must I take the cure upon me?  
Has much disgraced me in't; I'm angry at him,  
That might have known my place: I see no sense for't,  
But his occasion might have woo'd me first;  
For, in my conscience, I was the first man  
That e'er received gift from him:  
And does he think so backwardly of me now,  
That I'll requite its last? No:  
So it may prove an argument of laughter

To the rest, and 'mongst lords I be thought a fool.  
I'd rather than the worth of thrice the sum,  
Had sent to me first, but for my mind's sake;  
I'd such a courage to do him good. But now return,  
And with their faint reply this answer join;  
Who bates mine honour shall not know my coin.

*Exit*

## **Servant**

Excellent! Your lordship's a goodly villain. The devil knew not what he did when he made man politic; he crossed himself by 't: and I cannot think but, in the end, the villainies of man will set him clear. How fairly this lord strives to appear foul! takes virtuous copies to be wicked, like those that under hot ardent zeal would set whole realms on fire: Of such a nature is his politic love.

This was my lord's best hope; now all are fled,  
Save only the gods: now his friends are dead,  
Doors, that were ne'er acquainted with their wards  
Many a bounteous year must be employ'd  
Now to guard sure their master.  
And this is all a liberal course allows;  
Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. A hall in Timon's house.

*Enter two Servants of Varro, and the Servant of LUCIUS, meeting TITUS, HORTENSIUS, and other Servants of TIMON's creditors, waiting his coming out*

Varro's

### First Servant

Well met; good morrow, Titus and Hortensius.

### TITUS

The like to you kind Varro.

### HORTENSIUS

Lucius!

What, do we meet together?

Lucilius' Servant Ay, and I think

One business does command us all; for mine Is money.

### TITUS

So is theirs and ours.

*Enter PHILOTUS*

Lucilius' Servant And Sir Philotus too!

### PHILOTUS

Good day at once.

Lucilius' Servant Welcome, good brother.

What do you think the hour?



## **PHILOTUS**

Labouring for nine.  
Lucilius' Servant So much?

## **PHILOTUS**

Is not my lord seen yet?  
Lucilius' Servant Not yet.

## **PHILOTUS**

I wonder on't; he was wont to shine at seven.  
Lucilius' Servant Ay, but the days are wax'd shorter with him:  
You must consider that a prodigal course  
Is like the sun's; but not, like his, recoverable.  
I fear 'tis deepest winter in Lord Timon's purse;  
That is one may reach deep enough, and yet  
Find little.

## **PHILOTUS**

I am of your fear for that.

## **TITUS**

I'll show you how to observe a strange event.  
Your lord sends now for money.

## **HORTENSIUS**

Most true, he does.

## **TITUS**

And he wears jewels now of Timon's gift,  
For which I wait for money.

## **HORTENSIUS**

It is against my heart.

Lucilius' Servant Mark, how strange it shows,  
Timon in this should pay more than he owes:  
And e'en as if your lord should wear rich jewels,  
And send for money for 'em.

## **HORTENSIUS**

I'm weary of this charge, the gods can witness:  
I know my lord hath spent of Timon's wealth,  
And now ingratitude makes it worse than stealth.  
Varro's

## **First Servant**

Yes, mine's three thousand crowns: what's yours?  
Lucilius' Servant Five thousand mine.  
Varro's

## **First Servant**

'Tis much deep: and it should seem by the sun,  
Your master's confidence was above mine;  
Else, surely, his had equall'd.  
Enter FLAMINIUS.

## **TITUS**

One of Lord Timon's men.  
Lucilius' Servant Flaminius! Sir, a word: pray, is my lord ready to  
come forth?

## **FLAMINIUS**

No, indeed, he is not.

## **TITUS**

We attend his lordship; pray, signify so much.

## **FLAMINIUS**

I need not tell him that; he knows you are too diligent.

*Exit*

*Enter FLAVIUS in a cloak, muffled*

Lucilius' Servant Ha! is not that his steward muffled so?  
He goes away in a cloud: call him, call him.

**TITUS**

Do you hear, sir?  
Varro's

**Second Servant**

By your leave, sir,--

**FLAVIUS**

What do ye ask of me, my friend?

**TITUS**

We wait for certain money here, sir.

**FLAVIUS**

Ay,  
If money were as certain as your waiting,  
'Twere sure enough.  
Why then preferr'd you not your sums and bills,  
When your false masters eat of my lord's meat?  
Then they could smile and fawn upon his debts  
And take down the interest into their  
gluttonous maws.  
You do yourselves but wrong to stir me up;  
Let me pass quietly:  
Believe 't, my lord and I have made an end;  
I have no more to reckon, he to spend.  
Lucilius' Servant Ay, but this answer will not serve.

## **FLAVIUS**

If 'twill not serve, 'tis not so base as you;  
For you serve knaves.

*Exit*

Varro's

## **First Servant**

How! what does his cashiered worship mutter?  
Varro's

## **Second Servant**

No matter what; he's poor, and that's revenge  
enough. Who can speak broader than he that has no  
house to put his head in? such may rail against  
great buildings.

*Enter SERVILIUS*

## **TITUS**

O, here's Servilius; now we shall know some answer.

## **SERVILIUS**

If I might beseech you, gentlemen, to repair some  
other hour, I should derive much from't; for,  
take't of my soul, my lord leans wondrously to  
discontent: his comfortable temper has forsook him;  
he's much out of health, and keeps his chamber.  
Lucilius' Servant: Many do keep their chambers are not sick:  
And, if it be so far beyond his health,  
Methinks he should the sooner pay his debts,  
And make a clear way to the gods.

## **SERVILIUS**

Good gods!

**TITUS**

We cannot take this for answer, sir.

**FLAMINIUS**

[Within] Servilius, help! My lord! my lord!

*Enter TIMON, in a rage, FLAMINIUS following*

**TIMON**

What, are my doors opposed against my passage?  
Have I been ever free, and must my house  
Be my retentive enemy, my gaol?  
The place which I have feasted, does it now,  
Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?  
Lucilius' Servant Put in now, Titus.

**TITUS**

My lord, here is my bill.  
Lucilius' Servant Here's mine.

**HORTENSIUS**

And mine, my lord.  
Both  
Varro's Servants And ours, my lord.

**PHILOTUS**

All our bills.

**TIMON**

Knock me down with 'em: cleave me to the girdle.  
Lucilius' Servant Alas, my lord,-

**TIMON**

Cut my heart in sums.

**TITUS**

Mine, fifty talents.

**TIMON**

Tell out my blood.  
Lucilius' Servant Five thousand crowns, my lord.

**TIMON**

Five thousand drops pays that.  
What yours?--and yours?  
Varro's

**First Servant**

My lord,--  
Varro's

**Second Servant**

My lord,--

**TIMON**

Tear me, take me, and the gods fall upon you!

*Exit*

**HORTENSIUS**

'Faith, I perceive our masters may throw their caps  
at their money: these debts may well be called  
desperate ones, for a madman owes 'em.

*Exeunt*

*Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS*

**TIMON**

They have e'en put my breath from me, the slaves.  
Creditors? devils!

**FLAVIUS**

My dear lord,--

**TIMON**

What if it should be so?

**FLAVIUS**

My lord,--

**TIMON**

I'll have it so. My steward!

**FLAVIUS**

Here, my lord.

**TIMON**

So fitly? Go, bid all my friends again,  
Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius:  
All, sirrah, all:  
I'll once more feast the rascals.

**FLAVIUS**

O my lord,  
You only speak from your distracted soul;  
There is not so much left, to furnish out  
A moderate table.

## TIMON

Be't not in thy care; go,  
I charge thee, invite them all: let in the tide  
Of knaves once more; my cook and I'll provide.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 5

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE V. The same. The senate-house. The Senate sitting.

### First Senator

My lord, you have my voice to it; the fault's  
Bloody; 'tis necessary he should die:  
Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy.

### Second Senator

Most true; the law shall bruise him.

*Enter ALCIBIADES, with Attendants*

### ALCIBIADES

Honour, health, and compassion to the senate!

### First Senator

Now, captain?

### ALCIBIADES

I am an humble suitor to your virtues;  
For pity is the virtue of the law,  
And none but tyrants use it cruelly.  
It pleases time and fortune to lie heavy  
Upon a friend of mine, who, in hot blood,  
Hath stepp'd into the law, which is past depth  
To those that, without heed, do plunge into 't.  
He is a man, setting his fate aside,  
Of comely virtues:  
Nor did he soil the fact with cowardice--  
An honour in him which buys out his fault--  
But with a noble fury and fair spirit,

Seeing his reputation touch'd to death,  
He did oppose his foe:  
And with such sober and unnoted passion  
He did behave his anger, ere 'twas spent,  
As if he had but proved an argument.

### **First Senator**

You undergo too strict a paradox,  
Striving to make an ugly deed look fair:  
Your words have took such pains as if they labour'd  
To bring manslaughter into form and set quarrelling  
Upon the head of valour; which indeed  
Is valour misbegot and came into the world  
When sects and factions were newly born:  
He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer  
The worst that man can breathe, and make his wrongs  
His outsides, to wear them like his raiment,  
carelessly,  
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,  
To bring it into danger.  
If wrongs be evils and enforce us kill,  
What folly 'tis to hazard life for ill!

### **ALCIBIADES**

My lord,--

### **First Senator**

You cannot make gross sins look clear:  
To revenge is no valour, but to bear.

### **ALCIBIADES**

My lords, then, under favour, pardon me,  
If I speak like a captain.  
Why do fond men expose themselves to battle,  
And not endure all threats? sleep upon't,  
And let the foes quietly cut their throats,  
Without repugnancy? If there be  
Such valour in the bearing, what make we

Abroad? why then, women are more valiant  
That stay at home, if bearing carry it,  
And the ass more captain than the lion, the felon  
Loaden with irons wiser than the judge,  
If wisdom be in suffering. O my lords,  
As you are great, be pitifully good:  
Who cannot condemn rashness in cold blood?  
To kill, I grant, is sin's extremest gust;  
But, in defence, by mercy, 'tis most just.  
To be in anger is impiety;  
But who is man that is not angry?  
Weigh but the crime with this.

### **Second Senator**

You breathe in vain.

### **ALCIBIADES**

In vain! his service done  
At Lacedaemon and Byzantium  
Were a sufficient briber for his life.

### **First Senator**

What's that?

### **ALCIBIADES**

I say, my lords, he has done fair service,  
And slain in fight many of your enemies:  
How full of valour did he bear himself  
In the last conflict, and made plenteous wounds!

### **Second Senator**

He has made too much plenty with 'em;  
He's a sworn rioter: he has a sin that often  
Drowns him, and takes his valour prisoner:  
If there were no foes, that were enough  
To overcome him: in that beastly fury  
He has been known to commit outrages,

And cherish factions: 'tis inferr'd to us,  
His days are foul and his drink dangerous.

**First Senator**

He dies.

**ALCIBIADES**

Hard fate! he might have died in war.  
My lords, if not for any parts in him--  
Though his right arm might purchase his own time  
And be in debt to none--yet, more to move you,  
Take my deserts to his, and join 'em both:  
And, for I know your reverend ages love  
Security, I'll pawn my victories, all  
My honours to you, upon his good returns.  
If by this crime he owes the law his life,  
Why, let the war receive 't in valiant gore  
For law is strict, and war is nothing more.

**First Senator**

We are for law: he dies; urge it no more,  
On height of our displeasure: friend or brother,  
He forfeits his own blood that spills another.

**ALCIBIADES**

Must it be so? it must not be. My lords,  
I do beseech you, know me.

**Second Senator**

How!

**ALCIBIADES**

Call me to your remembrances.

**Third Senator**

What!

**ALCIBIADES**

I cannot think but your age has forgot me;  
It could not else be, I should prove so base,  
To sue, and be denied such common grace:  
My wounds ache at you.

**First Senator**

Do you dare our anger?  
'Tis in few words, but spacious in effect;  
We banish thee for ever.

**ALCIBIADES**

Banish me!  
Banish your dotage; banish usury,  
That makes the senate ugly.

**First Senator**

If, after two days' shine, Athens contain thee,  
Attend our weightier judgment. And, not to swell  
our spirit,  
He shall be executed presently.

*Exeunt Senators*

**ALCIBIADES**

Now the gods keep you old enough; that you may live  
Only in bone, that none may look on you!  
I'm worse than mad: I have kept back their foes,  
While they have told their money and let out  
Their coin upon large interest, I myself  
Rich only in large hurts. All those for this?  
Is this the balsam that the usuring senate  
Pours into captains' wounds? Banishment!  
It comes not ill; I hate not to be banish'd;

It is a cause worthy my spleen and fury,  
That I may strike at Athens. I'll cheer up  
My discontented troops, and lay for hearts.  
'Tis honour with most lands to be at odds;  
Soldiers should brook as little wrongs as gods.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 5  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 6

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE VI. The same. A banqueting-room in Timon's house.

*Music. Tables set out: Servants attending. Enter divers Lords, Senators and others, at several doors*

### First Lord

The good time of day to you, sir.

### Second Lord

I also wish it to you. I think this honourable lord did but try us this other day.

### First Lord

Upon that were my thoughts tiring, when we encountered: I hope it is not so low with him as he made it seem in the trial of his several friends.

### Second Lord

It should not be, by the persuasion of his new feasting.

### First Lord

I should think so: he hath sent me an earnest inviting, which many my near occasions did urge me to put off; but he hath conjured me beyond them, and I must needs appear.

### Second Lord

In like manner was I in debt to my importunate business, but he would not hear my excuse. I am sorry, when he sent to borrow of me, that my

provision was out.

**First Lord**

I am sick of that grief too, as I understand how all things go.

**Second Lord**

Every man here's so. What would he have borrowed of you?

**First Lord**

A thousand pieces.

**Second Lord**

A thousand pieces!

**First Lord**

What of you?

**Second Lord**

He sent to me, sir,--Here he comes.

*Enter TIMON and Attendants*

**TIMON**

With all my heart, gentlemen both; and how fare you?

**First Lord**

Ever at the best, hearing well of your lordship.

**Second Lord**

The swallow follows not summer more willing than we



your lordship.

**TIMON**

[Aside] Nor more willingly leaves winter; such summer-birds are men. Gentlemen, our dinner will not recompense this long stay: feast your ears with the music awhile, if they will fare so harshly o' the trumpet's sound; we shall to 't presently.

**First Lord**

I hope it remains not unkindly with your lordship that I returned you an empty messenger.

**TIMON**

O, sir, let it not trouble you.

**Second Lord**

My noble lord,--

**TIMON**

Ah, my good friend, what cheer?

**Second Lord**

My most honourable lord, I am e'en sick of shame, that, when your lordship this other day sent to me, I was so unfortunate a beggar.

**TIMON**

Think not on 't, sir.

**Second Lord**

If you had sent but two hours before,--

**TIMON**

Let it not cumber your better remembrance.

*The banquet brought in*

Come, bring in all together.

**Second Lord**

All covered dishes!

**First Lord**

Royal cheer, I warrant you.

**Third Lord**

Doubt not that, if money and the season can yield  
it.

**First Lord**

How do you? What's the news?

**Third Lord**

Alcibiades is banished: hear you of it?

**First Lord Second Lord**

Alcibiades banished!

**Third Lord**

'Tis so, be sure of it.

**First Lord**

How! how!

**Second Lord**

I pray you, upon what?

**TIMON**

My worthy friends, will you draw near?

**Third Lord**

I'll tell you more anon. Here's a noble feast toward.

**Second Lord**

This is the old man still.

**Third Lord**

Will 't hold? will 't hold?

**Second Lord**

It does: but time will--and so--

**Third Lord**

I do conceive.

**TIMON**

Each man to his stool, with that spur as he would to the lip of his mistress: your diet shall be in all places alike. Make not a city feast of it, to let the meat cool ere we can agree upon the first place: sit, sit. The gods require our thanks.

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. For your own gifts, make yourselves praised: but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for, were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the

gods. Make the meat be beloved more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains: if there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be--as they are. The rest of your fees, O gods--the senators of Athens, together with the common lag of people--what is amiss in them, you gods, make suitable for destruction. For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome.  
Uncover, dogs, and lap.

*The dishes are uncovered and seen to be full of warm water*

### **Some Speak**

What does his lordship mean?

### **Some Others**

I know not.

### **TIMON**

May you a better feast never behold,  
You knot of mouth-friends I smoke and lukewarm water  
Is your perfection. This is Timon's last;  
Who, stuck and spangled with your flatteries,  
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces  
Your reeking villany.

*Throwing the water in their faces*

Live loathed and long,  
Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,  
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,  
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,  
Cap and knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks!  
Of man and beast the infinite malady  
Crust you quite o'er! What, dost thou go?  
Soft! take thy physic first--thou too--and thou;--  
Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none.

*Throws the dishes at them, and drives them out*

What, all in motion? Henceforth be no feast,  
Whereat a villain's not a welcome guest.  
Burn, house! sink, Athens! henceforth hated be  
Of Timon man and all humanity!

*Exit*

*Re-enter the Lords, Senators, & c*

**First Lord**

How now, my lords!

**Second Lord**

Know you the quality of Lord Timon's fury?

**Third Lord**

Push! did you see my cap?

**Fourth Lord**

I have lost my gown.

**First Lord**

He's but a mad lord, and nought but humour sways him.  
He gave me a jewel th' other day, and now he has  
beat it out of my hat: did you see my jewel?

**Third Lord**

Did you see my cap?

**Second Lord**

Here 'tis.

**Fourth Lord**

Here lies my gown.

**First Lord**

Let's make no stay.

**Second Lord**

Lord Timon's mad.

**Third Lord**

I feel 't upon my bones.

**Fourth Lord**

One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 3, Scene 6  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Without the walls of Athens.

*Enter TIMON*

**TIMON**

Let me look back upon thee. O thou wall,  
That girdlest in those wolves, dive in the earth,  
And fence not Athens! Matrons, turn incontinent!  
Obedience fail in children! slaves and fools,  
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,  
And minister in their steads! to general filths  
Convert o' the instant, green virginity,  
Do 't in your parents' eyes! bankrupts, hold fast;  
Rather than render back, out with your knives,  
And cut your trusters' throats! bound servants, steal!  
Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,  
And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed;  
Thy mistress is o' the brothel! Son of sixteen,  
pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire,  
With it beat out his brains! Piety, and fear,  
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,  
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,  
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,  
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,  
Decline to your confounding contraries,  
And let confusion live! Plagues, incident to men,  
Your potent and infectious fevers heap  
On Athens, ripe for stroke! Thou cold sciatica,  
Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt  
As lamely as their manners. Lust and liberty  
Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,  
That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,  
And drown themselves in riot! Itches, blains,  
Sow all the Athenian bosoms; and their crop  
Be general leprosy! Breath infect breath,  
at their society, as their friendship, may

merely poison! Nothing I'll bear from thee,  
But nakedness, thou detestable town!  
Take thou that too, with multiplying bans!  
Timon will to the woods; where he shall find  
The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.  
The gods confound--hear me, you good gods all--  
The Athenians both within and out that wall!  
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow  
To the whole race of mankind, high and low! Amen.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 4, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)



# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Athens. A room in Timon's house.

*Enter FLAVIUS, with two or three Servants*

### First Servant

Hear you, master steward, where's our master?  
Are we undone? cast off? nothing remaining?

### FLAVIUS

Alack, my fellows, what should I say to you?  
Let me be recorded by the righteous gods,  
I am as poor as you.

### First Servant

Such a house broke!  
So noble a master fall'n! All gone! and not  
One friend to take his fortune by the arm,  
And go along with him!

### Second Servant

As we do turn our backs  
From our companion thrown into his grave,  
So his familiars to his buried fortunes  
Slink all away, leave their false vows with him,  
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,  
A dedicated beggar to the air,  
With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,  
Walks, like contempt, alone. More of our fellows.

*Enter other Servants*

### FLAVIUS

All broken implements of a ruin'd house.

### **Third Servant**

Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery;  
That see I by our faces; we are fellows still,  
Serving alike in sorrow: leak'd is our bark,  
And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,  
Hearing the surges threat: we must all part  
Into this sea of air.

### **FLAVIUS**

Good fellows all,  
The latest of my wealth I'll share amongst you.  
Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake,  
Let's yet be fellows; let's shake our heads, and say,  
As 'twere a knell unto our master's fortunes,  
'We have seen better days.' Let each take some;  
Nay, put out all your hands. Not one word more:  
Thus part we rich in sorrow, parting poor.

*Servants embrace, and part several ways*

O, the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us!  
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,  
Since riches point to misery and contempt?  
Who would be so mock'd with glory? or to live  
But in a dream of friendship?  
To have his pomp and all what state compounds  
But only painted, like his varnish'd friends?  
Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,  
Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,  
When man's worst sin is, he does too much good!  
Who, then, dares to be half so kind again?  
For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.  
My dearest lord, bless'd, to be most accursed,  
Rich, only to be wretched, thy great fortunes  
Are made thy chief afflictions. Alas, kind lord!  
He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat  
Of monstrous friends, nor has he with him to

Supply his life, or that which can command it.  
I'll follow and inquire him out:  
I'll ever serve his mind with my best will;  
Whilst I have gold, I'll be his steward still.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 4, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. Woods and cave, near the seashore.

*Enter TIMON, from the cave*

O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth  
Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb  
Infect the air! Twinn'd brothers of one womb,  
Whose procreation, residence, and birth,  
Scarce is dividant, touch them with several fortunes;  
The greater scorns the lesser: not nature,  
To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune,  
But by contempt of nature.  
Raise me this beggar, and deny 't that lord;  
The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,  
The beggar native honour.  
It is the pasture lards the rother's sides,  
The want that makes him lean. Who dares, who dares,  
In purity of manhood stand upright,  
And say 'This man's a flatterer?' if one be,  
So are they all; for every guise of fortune  
Is smooth'd by that below: the learned pate  
Ducks to the golden fool: all is oblique;  
There's nothing level in our cursed natures,  
But direct villany. Therefore, be abhorr'd  
All feasts, societies, and throngs of men!  
His semblable, yea, himself, Timon disdains:  
Destruction fang mankind! Earth, yield me roots!

*Digging*

Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate  
With thy most operant poison! What is here?  
Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold? No, gods,  
I am no idle votarist: roots, you clear heavens!  
Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,  
Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.  
Ha, you gods! why this? what this, you gods? Why, this

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,  
Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:  
This yellow slave  
Will knit and break religions, bless the accursed,  
Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves  
And give them title, knee and approbation  
With senators on the bench: this is it  
That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;  
She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores  
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices  
To the April day again. Come, damned earth,  
Thou common whore of mankind, that put'st odds  
Among the route of nations, I will make thee  
Do thy right nature.

*March afar off*

Ha! a drum ? Thou'rt quick,  
But yet I'll bury thee: thou'lt go, strong thief,  
When gouty keepers of thee cannot stand.  
Nay, stay thou out for earnest.

*Keeping some gold*

*Enter ALCIBIADES, with drum and fife, in warlike manner; PHRYNIA and TIMANDRA*

**ALCIBIADES**

What art thou there? speak.

**TIMON**

A beast, as thou art. The canker gnaw thy heart,  
For showing me again the eyes of man!

**ALCIBIADES**

What is thy name? Is man so hateful to thee,  
That art thyself a man?

**TIMON**

I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind.  
For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,  
That I might love thee something.

**ALCIBIADES**

I know thee well;  
But in thy fortunes am unlearn'd and strange.

**TIMON**

I know thee too; and more than that I know thee,  
I not desire to know. Follow thy drum;  
With man's blood paint the ground, gules, gules:  
Religious canons, civil laws are cruel;  
Then what should war be? This fell whore of thine  
Hath in her more destruction than thy sword,  
For all her cherubim look.

**PHRYNIA**

Thy lips rot off!

**TIMON**

I will not kiss thee; then the rot returns  
To thine own lips again.

**ALCIBIADES**

How came the noble Timon to this change?

**TIMON**

As the moon does, by wanting light to give:  
But then renew I could not, like the moon;  
There were no suns to borrow of.

**ALCIBIADES**

Noble Timon,

What friendship may I do thee?

**TIMON**

None, but to  
Maintain my opinion.

**ALCIBIADES**

What is it, Timon?

**TIMON**

Promise me friendship, but perform none: if thou wilt not promise, the gods plague thee, for thou art a man! if thou dost perform, confound thee, for thou art a man!

**ALCIBIADES**

I have heard in some sort of thy miseries.

**TIMON**

Thou saw'st them, when I had prosperity.

**ALCIBIADES**

I see them now; then was a blessed time.

**TIMON**

As thine is now, held with a brace of harlots.

**TIMANDRA**

Is this the Athenian minion, whom the world  
Voiced so regardfully?

**TIMON**

Art thou Timandra?

**TIMANDRA**

Yes.

**TIMON**

Be a whore still: they love thee not that use thee;  
Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.  
Make use of thy salt hours: season the slaves  
For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheeked youth  
To the tub-fast and the diet.

**TIMANDRA**

Hang thee, monster!

**ALCIBIADES**

Pardon him, sweet Timandra; for his wits  
Are drown'd and lost in his calamities.  
I have but little gold of late, brave Timon,  
The want whereof doth daily make revolt  
In my penurious band: I have heard, and grieved,  
How cursed Athens, mindless of thy worth,  
Forgetting thy great deeds, when neighbour states,  
But for thy sword and fortune, trod upon them,--

**TIMON**

I prithee, beat thy drum, and get thee gone.

**ALCIBIADES**

I am thy friend, and pity thee, dear Timon.

**TIMON**

How dost thou pity him whom thou dost trouble?  
I had rather be alone.



**ALCIBIADES**

Why, fare thee well:  
Here is some gold for thee.

**TIMON**

Keep it, I cannot eat it.

**ALCIBIADES**

When I have laid proud Athens on a heap,--

**TIMON**

Warr'st thou 'gainst Athens?

**ALCIBIADES**

Ay, Timon, and have cause.

**TIMON**

The gods confound them all in thy conquest;  
And thee after, when thou hast conquer'd!

**ALCIBIADES**

Why me, Timon?

**TIMON**

That, by killing of villains,  
Thou wast born to conquer my country.  
Put up thy gold: go on,--here's gold,--go on;  
Be as a planetary plague, when Jove  
Will o'er some high-iced city hang his poison  
In the sick air: let not thy sword skip one:  
Pity not honour'd age for his white beard;  
He is an usurer: strike me the counterfeit matron;  
It is her habit only that is honest,

Herself's a bawd: let not the virgin's cheek  
Make soft thy trenchant sword; for those milk-paps,  
That through the window-bars bore at men's eyes,  
Are not within the leaf of pity writ,  
But set them down horrible traitors: spare not the babe,  
Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy;  
Think it a bastard, whom the oracle  
Hath doubtfully pronounced thy throat shall cut,  
And mince it sans remorse: swear against objects;  
Put armour on thine ears and on thine eyes;  
Whose proof, nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes,  
Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding,  
Shall pierce a jot. There's gold to pay soldiers:  
Make large confusion; and, thy fury spent,  
Confounded be thyself! Speak not, be gone.

## **ALCIBIADES**

Hast thou gold yet? I'll take the gold thou  
givest me,  
Not all thy counsel.

## **TIMON**

Dost thou, or dost thou not, heaven's curse  
upon thee!

## **PHRYNIA TIMANDRA**

Give us some gold, good Timon: hast thou more?

## **TIMON**

Enough to make a whore forswear her trade,  
And to make whores, a bawd. Hold up, you sluts,  
Your aprons mountant: you are not oathable,  
Although, I know, you 'll swear, terribly swear  
Into strong shudders and to heavenly agues  
The immortal gods that hear you,--spare your oaths,  
I'll trust to your conditions: be whores still;  
And he whose pious breath seeks to convert you,  
Be strong in whore, allure him, burn him up;

Let your close fire predominate his smoke,  
And be no turncoats: yet may your pains, six months,  
Be quite contrary: and thatch your poor thin roofs  
With burthens of the dead;--some that were hang'd,  
No matter:--wear them, betray with them: whore still;  
Paint till a horse may mire upon your face,  
A pox of wrinkles!

## **PHRYNIA TIMANDRA**

Well, more gold: what then?  
Believe't, that we'll do any thing for gold.

## **TIMON**

Consumptions sow  
In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,  
And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,  
That he may never more false title plead,  
Nor sound his quillets shrilly: hoar the flamen,  
That scolds against the quality of flesh,  
And not believes himself: down with the nose,  
Down with it flat; take the bridge quite away  
Of him that, his particular to foresee,  
Smells from the general weal: make curl'd-pate  
ruffians bald;  
And let the unscarr'd braggarts of the war  
Derive some pain from you: plague all;  
That your activity may defeat and quell  
The source of all erection. There's more gold:  
Do you damn others, and let this damn you,  
And ditches grave you all!

## **PHRYNIA TIMANDRA**

More counsel with more money, bounteous Timon.

## **TIMON**

More whore, more mischief first; I have given you earnest.

## **ALCIBIADES**

Strike up the drum towards Athens! Farewell, Timon:  
If I thrive well, I'll visit thee again.

**TIMON**

If I hope well, I'll never see thee more.

**ALCIBIADES**

I never did thee harm.

**TIMON**

Yes, thou spokest well of me.

**ALCIBIADES**

Call'st thou that harm?

**TIMON**

Men daily find it. Get thee away, and take  
Thy beagles with thee.

**ALCIBIADES**

We but offend him. Strike!

*Drum beats. Exeunt ALCIBIADES, PHRYNIA, and TIMANDRA*

**TIMON**

That nature, being sick of man's unkindness,  
Should yet be hungry! Common mother, thou,

*Digging*

Whose womb unmeasurable, and infinite breast,  
Teems, and feeds all; whose self-same mettle,  
Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puff'd,

Engenders the black toad and adder blue,  
The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm,  
With all the abhorred births below crisp heaven  
Whereon Hyperion's quickening fire doth shine;  
Yield him, who all thy human sons doth hate,  
From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root!  
Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb,  
Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!  
Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears;  
Teem with new monsters, whom thy upward face  
Hath to the marbled mansion all above  
Never presented!--O, a root,--dear thanks!--  
Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough-torn leas;  
Whereof ungrateful man, with liquorish draughts  
And morsels unctuous, greases his pure mind,  
That from it all consideration slips!

*Enter APEMANTUS*

More man? plague, plague!

**APEMANTUS**

I was directed hither: men report  
Thou dost affect my manners, and dost use them.

**TIMON**

'Tis, then, because thou dost not keep a dog,  
Whom I would imitate: consumption catch thee!

**APEMANTUS**

This is in thee a nature but infected;  
A poor unmanly melancholy sprung  
From change of fortune. Why this spade? this place?  
This slave-like habit? and these looks of care?  
Thy flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft;  
Hug their diseased perfumes, and have forgot  
That ever Timon was. Shame not these woods,  
By putting on the cunning of a carper.  
Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive

By that which has undone thee: hinge thy knee,  
And let his very breath, whom thou'lt observe,  
Blow off thy cap; praise his most vicious strain,  
And call it excellent: thou wast told thus;  
Thou gavest thine ears like tapsters that bid welcome  
To knaves and all approachers: 'tis most just  
That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again,  
Rascals should have 't. Do not assume my likeness.

**TIMON**

Were I like thee, I'd throw away myself.

**APEMANTUS**

Thou hast cast away thyself, being like thyself;  
A madman so long, now a fool. What, think'st  
That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,  
Will put thy shirt on warm? will these moss'd trees,  
That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels,  
And skip where thou point'st out? will the  
cold brook,  
Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste,  
To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit? Call the creatures  
Whose naked natures live in an the spite  
Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhoused trunks,  
To the conflicting elements exposed,  
Answer mere nature; bid them flatter thee;  
O, thou shalt find--

**TIMON**

A fool of thee: depart.

**APEMANTUS**

I love thee better now than e'er I did.

**TIMON**

I hate thee worse.

**APEMANTUS**

Why?

**TIMON**

Thou flatter'st misery.

**APEMANTUS**

I flatter not; but say thou art a caitiff.

**TIMON**

Why dost thou seek me out?

**APEMANTUS**

To vex thee.

**TIMON**

Always a villain's office or a fool's.  
Dost please thyself in't?

**APEMANTUS**

Ay.

**TIMON**

What! a knave too?

**APEMANTUS**

If thou didst put this sour-cold habit on  
To castigate thy pride, 'twere well: but thou  
Dost it enforcedly; thou'ldst courtier be again,  
Wert thou not beggar. Willing misery  
Outlives encertain pomp, is crown'd before:  
The one is filling still, never complete;

The other, at high wish: best state, contentless,  
Hath a distracted and most wretched being,  
Worse than the worst, content.  
Thou shouldst desire to die, being miserable.

## TIMON

Not by his breath that is more miserable.  
Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm  
With favour never clasp'd; but bred a dog.  
Hadst thou, like us from our first swath, proceeded  
The sweet degrees that this brief world affords  
To such as may the passive drugs of it  
Freely command, thou wouldst have plunged thyself  
In general riot; melted down thy youth  
In different beds of lust; and never learn'd  
The icy precepts of respect, but follow'd  
The sugar'd game before thee. But myself,  
Who had the world as my confectionary,  
The mouths, the tongues, the eyes and hearts of men  
At duty, more than I could frame employment,  
That numberless upon me stuck as leaves  
Do on the oak, hive with one winter's brush  
Fell from their boughs and left me open, bare  
For every storm that blows: I, to bear this,  
That never knew but better, is some burden:  
Thy nature did commence in sufferance, time  
Hath made thee hard in't. Why shouldst thou hate men?  
They never flatter'd thee: what hast thou given?  
If thou wilt curse, thy father, that poor rag,  
Must be thy subject, who in spite put stuff  
To some she beggar and compounded thee  
Poor rogue hereditary. Hence, be gone!  
If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,  
Thou hadst been a knave and flatterer.

## APEMANTUS

Art thou proud yet?

## TIMON



Ay, that I am not thee.

**APEMANTUS**

I, that I was  
No prodigal.

**TIMON**

I, that I am one now:  
Were all the wealth I have shut up in thee,  
I'd give thee leave to hang it. Get thee gone.  
That the whole life of Athens were in this!  
Thus would I eat it.

*Eating a root*

**APEMANTUS**

Here; I will mend thy feast.

*Offering him a root*

**TIMON**

First mend my company, take away thyself.

**APEMANTUS**

So I shall mend mine own, by the lack of thine.

**TIMON**

'Tis not well mended so, it is but botch'd;  
if not, I would it were.

**APEMANTUS**

What wouldst thou have to Athens?

**TIMON**

Thee thither in a whirlwind. If thou wilt,  
Tell them there I have gold; look, so I have.

**APEMANTUS**

Here is no use for gold.

**TIMON**

The best and truest;  
For here it sleeps, and does no hired harm.

**APEMANTUS**

Where liest o' nights, Timon?

**TIMON**

Under that's above me.  
Where feed'st thou o' days, Apemantus?

**APEMANTUS**

Where my stomach finds meat; or, rather, where I eat  
it.

**TIMON**

Would poison were obedient and knew my mind!

**APEMANTUS**

Where wouldst thou send it?

**TIMON**

To sauce thy dishes.

**APEMANTUS**

The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends: when thou wast in thy guilt and thy perfume, they mocked thee for too much curiosity; in thy rags thou knowest none, but art despised for the contrary. There's a medlar for thee, eat it.

**TIMON**

On what I hate I feed not.

**APEMANTUS**

Dost hate a medlar?

**TIMON**

Ay, though it look like thee.

**APEMANTUS**

An thou hadst hated meddlers sooner, thou shouldst have loved thyself better now. What man didst thou ever know unthrift that was beloved after his means?

**TIMON**

Who, without those means thou talkest of, didst thou ever know beloved?

**APEMANTUS**

Myself.

**TIMON**

I understand thee; thou hadst some means to keep a dog.

**APEMANTUS**

What things in the world canst thou nearest compare to thy flatterers?

**TIMON**

Women nearest; but men, men are the things themselves. What wouldst thou do with the world, Apemantus, if it lay in thy power?

**APEMANTUS**

Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men.

**TIMON**

Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?

**APEMANTUS**

Ay, Timon.

**TIMON**

A beastly ambition, which the gods grant thee t' attain to! If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee; if thou wert the lamb, the fox would eat thee: if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee, when peradventure thou wert accused by the ass: if thou wert the ass, thy dulness would torment thee, and still thou livedst but as a breakfast to the wolf: if thou wert the wolf, thy greediness would afflict thee, and oft thou shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner: wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound thee and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury: wert thou a bear, thou wouldst be killed by the horse: wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leopard: wert thou a leopard, thou wert german to the lion and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life: all thy safety were remotion and thy defence absence. What beast couldst thou be, that

were not subject to a beast? and what a beast art  
thou already, that seest not thy loss in  
transformation!

**APEMANTUS**

If thou couldst please me with speaking to me, thou  
mightst have hit upon it here: the commonwealth of  
Athens is become a forest of beasts.

**TIMON**

How has the ass broke the wall, that thou art out of the city?

**APEMANTUS**

Yonder comes a poet and a painter: the plague of  
company light upon thee! I will fear to catch it  
and give way: when I know not what else to do, I'll  
see thee again.

**TIMON**

When there is nothing living but thee, thou shalt be  
welcome. I had rather be a beggar's dog than Apemantus.

**APEMANTUS**

Thou art the cap of all the fools alive.

**TIMON**

Would thou wert clean enough to spit upon!

**APEMANTUS**

A plague on thee! thou art too bad to curse.

**TIMON**

All villains that do stand by thee are pure.

**APEMANTUS**

There is no leprosy but what thou speak'st.

**TIMON**

If I name thee.  
I'll beat thee, but I should infect my hands.

**APEMANTUS**

I would my tongue could rot them off!

**TIMON**

Away, thou issue of a mangy dog!  
Choler does kill me that thou art alive;  
I swound to see thee.

**APEMANTUS**

Would thou wouldst burst!

**TIMON**

Away,  
Thou tedious rogue! I am sorry I shall lose  
A stone by thee.

*Throws a stone at him*

**APEMANTUS**

Beast!

**TIMON**

Slave!

**APEMANTUS**

Toad!

**TIMON**

Rogue, rogue, rogue!  
I am sick of this false world, and will love nought  
But even the mere necessities upon 't.  
Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave;  
Lie where the light foam the sea may beat  
Thy grave-stone daily: make thine epitaph,  
That death in me at others' lives may laugh.

*To the gold*

O thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce  
'Twixt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler  
Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!  
Thou ever young, fresh, loved and delicate wooer,  
Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow  
That lies on Dian's lap! thou visible god,  
That solder'st close impossibilities,  
And makest them kiss! that speak'st with  
every tongue,  
To every purpose! O thou touch of hearts!  
Think, thy slave man rebels, and by thy virtue  
Set them into confounding odds, that beasts  
May have the world in empire!

**APEMANTUS**

Would 'twere so!  
But not till I am dead. I'll say thou'st gold:  
Thou wilt be throng'd to shortly.

**TIMON**

Throng'd to!

**APEMANTUS**

Ay.

**TIMON**

Thy back, I prithee.

**APEMANTUS**

Live, and love thy misery.

**TIMON**

Long live so, and so die.

*Exit APEMANTUS*

I am quit.

Moe things like men! Eat, Timon, and abhor them.

*Enter Banditti*

**First Bandit**

Where should he have this gold? It is some poor fragment, some slender sort of his remainder: the mere want of gold, and the falling-from of his friends, drove him into this melancholy.

**Second Bandit**

It is noised he hath a mass of treasure.

**Third Bandit**

Let us make the assay upon him: if he care not for't, he will supply us easily; if he covetously reserve it, how shall's get it?

**Second Bandit**

True; for he bears it not about him, 'tis hid.



**First Bandit**

Is not this he?

**Banditti**

Where?

**Second Bandit**

'Tis his description.

**Third Bandit**

He; I know him.

**Banditti**

Save thee, Timon.

**TIMON**

Now, thieves?

**Banditti**

Soldiers, not thieves.

**TIMON**

Both too; and women's sons.

**Banditti**

We are not thieves, but men that much do want.

**TIMON**

Your greatest want is, you want much of meat.  
Why should you want? Behold, the earth hath roots;  
Within this mile break forth a hundred springs;

The oaks bear mast, the briers scarlet hips;  
The bounteous housewife, nature, on each bush  
Lays her full mess before you. Want! why want?

### **First Bandit**

We cannot live on grass, on berries, water,  
As beasts and birds and fishes.

### **TIMON**

Nor on the beasts themselves, the birds, and fishes;  
You must eat men. Yet thanks I must you con  
That you are thieves profess'd, that you work not  
In holier shapes: for there is boundless theft  
In limited professions. Rascal thieves,  
Here's gold. Go, suck the subtle blood o' the grape,  
Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth,  
And so 'scape hanging: trust not the physician;  
His antidotes are poison, and he slays  
More than you rob: take wealth and lives together;  
Do villany, do, since you protest to do't,  
Like workmen. I'll example you with thievery.  
The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction  
Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,  
And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:  
The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves  
The moon into salt tears: the earth's a thief,  
That feeds and breeds by a composture stolen  
From general excrement: each thing's a thief:  
The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power  
Have uncheque'd theft. Love not yourselves: away,  
Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats:  
All that you meet are thieves: to Athens go,  
Break open shops; nothing can you steal,  
But thieves do lose it: steal no less for this  
I give you; and gold confound you howsoe'er! Amen.

### **Third Bandit**

Has almost charmed me from my profession, by  
persuading me to it.

## **First Bandit**

'Tis in the malice of mankind that he thus advises  
us; not to have us thrive in our mystery.

## **Second Bandit**

I'll believe him as an enemy, and give over my trade.

## **First Bandit**

Let us first see peace in Athens: there is no time  
so miserable but a man may be true.

*Exeunt Banditti*

*Enter FLAVIUS*

## **FLAVIUS**

O you gods!  
Is yond despised and ruinous man my lord?  
Full of decay and failing? O monument  
And wonder of good deeds evilly bestow'd!  
What an alteration of honour  
Has desperate want made!  
What viler thing upon the earth than friends  
Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!  
How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,  
When man was wish'd to love his enemies!  
Grant I may ever love, and rather woo  
Those that would mischief me than those that do!  
Has caught me in his eye: I will present  
My honest grief unto him; and, as my lord,  
Still serve him with my life. My dearest master!

## **TIMON**

Away! what art thou?

## **FLAVIUS**

Have you forgot me, sir?

**TIMON**

Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men;  
Then, if thou grant'st thou'rt a man, I have forgot thee.

**FLAVIUS**

An honest poor servant of yours.

**TIMON**

Then I know thee not:  
I never had honest man about me, I; all  
I kept were knaves, to serve in meat to villains.

**FLAVIUS**

The gods are witness,  
Ne'er did poor steward wear a truer grief  
For his undone lord than mine eyes for you.

**TIMON**

What, dost thou weep? Come nearer. Then I  
love thee,  
Because thou art a woman, and disclaim'st  
Flinty mankind; whose eyes do never give  
But thorough lust and laughter. Pity's sleeping:  
Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with weeping!

**FLAVIUS**

I beg of you to know me, good my lord,  
To accept my grief and whilst this poor wealth lasts  
To entertain me as your steward still.

**TIMON**

Had I a steward

So true, so just, and now so comfortable?  
It almost turns my dangerous nature mild.  
Let me behold thy face. Surely, this man  
Was born of woman.  
Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,  
You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim  
One honest man--mistake me not--but one;  
No more, I pray,--and he's a steward.  
How fain would I have hated all mankind!  
And thou redeem'st thyself: but all, save thee,  
I fell with curses.  
Methinks thou art more honest now than wise;  
For, by oppressing and betraying me,  
Thou mightst have sooner got another service:  
For many so arrive at second masters,  
Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true--  
For I must ever doubt, though ne'er so sure--  
Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous,  
If not a usuring kindness, and, as rich men deal gifts,  
Expecting in return twenty for one?

## FLAVIUS

No, my most worthy master; in whose breast  
Doubt and suspect, alas, are placed too late:  
You should have fear'd false times when you did feast:  
Suspect still comes where an estate is least.  
That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,  
Duty and zeal to your unmatched mind,  
Care of your food and living; and, believe it,  
My most honour'd lord,  
For any benefit that points to me,  
Either in hope or present, I'd exchange  
For this one wish, that you had power and wealth  
To requite me, by making rich yourself.

## TIMON

Look thee, 'tis so! Thou singly honest man,  
Here, take: the gods out of my misery  
Have sent thee treasure. Go, live rich and happy;  
But thus condition'd: thou shalt build from men;

Hate all, curse all, show charity to none,  
But let the famish'd flesh slide from the bone,  
Ere thou relieve the beggar; give to dogs  
What thou deny'st to men; let prisons swallow 'em,  
Debts wither 'em to nothing; be men like  
blasted woods,  
And may diseases lick up their false bloods!  
And so farewell and thrive.

## **FLAVIUS**

O, let me stay,  
And comfort you, my master.

## **TIMON**

If thou hatest curses,  
Stay not; fly, whilst thou art blest and free:  
Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.

*Exit FLAVIUS. TIMON retires to his cave*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. The woods. Before Timon's cave.

*Enter Poet and Painter; TIMON watching them from his cave*

**Painter**

As I took note of the place, it cannot be far where  
he abides.

**Poet**

What's to be thought of him? does the rumour hold  
for true, that he's so full of gold?

**Painter**

Certain: Alcibiades reports it; Phrynia and  
Timandra had gold of him: he likewise enriched poor  
stragglers with great quantity: 'tis said  
he gave unto his steward a mighty sum.

**Poet**

Then this breaking of his has been but a try for his friends.

**Painter**

Nothing else: you shall see him a palm in Athens  
again, and flourish with the highest. Therefore  
'tis not amiss we tender our loves to him, in this  
supposed distress of his: it will show honestly in  
us; and is very likely to load our purposes with  
what they travail for, if it be a just true report  
that goes of his having.

**Poet**

What have you now to present unto him?

**Painter**

Nothing at this time but my visitation: only I will promise him an excellent piece.

**Poet**

I must serve him so too, tell him of an intent that's coming toward him.

**Painter**

Good as the best. Promising is the very air o' the time: it opens the eyes of expectation: performance is ever the duller for his act; and, but in the plainer and simpler kind of people, the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise is most courtly and fashionable: performance is a kind of will or testament which argues a great sickness in his judgment that makes it.

*TIMON comes from his cave, behind*

**TIMON**

[Aside] Excellent workman! thou canst not paint a man so bad as is thyself.

**Poet**

I am thinking what I shall say I have provided for him: it must be a personating of himself; a satire against the softness of prosperity, with a discovery of the infinite flatteries that follow youth and opulency.

**TIMON**

[Aside] Must thou needs stand for a villain in



thine own work? wilt thou whip thine own faults in  
other men? Do so, I have gold for thee.

**Poet**

Nay, let's seek him:  
Then do we sin against our own estate,  
When we may profit meet, and come too late.

**Painter**

True;  
When the day serves, before black-corner'd night,  
Find what thou want'st by free and offer'd light. Come.

**TIMON**

[Aside] I'll meet you at the turn. What a  
god's gold,  
That he is worshipp'd in a baser temple  
Than where swine feed!  
'Tis thou that rigg'st the bark and plough'st the foam,  
Settlest admired reverence in a slave:  
To thee be worship! and thy saints for aye  
Be crown'd with plagues that thee alone obey!  
Fit I meet them.

*Coming forward*

**Poet**

Hail, worthy Timon!

**Painter**

Our late noble master!

**TIMON**

Have I once lived to see two honest men?

**Poet**

Sir,  
Having often of your open bounty tasted,  
Hearing you were retired, your friends fall'n off,  
Whose thankless natures--O abhorred spirits!--  
Not all the whips of heaven are large enough:  
What! to you,  
Whose star-like nobleness gave life and influence  
To their whole being! I am rapt and cannot cover  
The monstrous bulk of this ingratitude  
With any size of words.

**TIMON**

Let it go naked, men may see't the better:  
You that are honest, by being what you are,  
Make them best seen and known.

**Painter**

He and myself  
Have travail'd in the great shower of your gifts,  
And sweetly felt it.

**TIMON**

Ay, you are honest men.

**Painter**

We are hither come to offer you our service.

**TIMON**

Most honest men! Why, how shall I requite you?  
Can you eat roots, and drink cold water? no.

**Both**

What we can do, we'll do, to do you service.

**TIMON**

Ye're honest men: ye've heard that I have gold;  
I am sure you have: speak truth; ye're honest men.

**Painter**

So it is said, my noble lord; but therefore  
Came not my friend nor I.

**TIMON**

Good honest men! Thou draw'st a counterfeit  
Best in all Athens: thou'rt, indeed, the best;  
Thou counterfeit'st most lively.

**Painter**

So, so, my lord.

**TIMON**

E'en so, sir, as I say. And, for thy fiction,  
Why, thy verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth  
That thou art even natural in thine art.  
But, for all this, my honest-natured friends,  
I must needs say you have a little fault:  
Marry, 'tis not monstrous in you, neither wish I  
You take much pains to mend.

**Both**

Beseech your honour  
To make it known to us.

**TIMON**

You'll take it ill.

**Both**

Most thankfully, my lord.

**TIMON**

Will you, indeed?

**Both**

Doubt it not, worthy lord.

**TIMON**

There's never a one of you but trusts a knave,  
That mightily deceives you.

**Both**

Do we, my lord?

**TIMON**

Ay, and you hear him cog, see him dissemble,  
Know his gross patchery, love him, feed him,  
Keep in your bosom: yet remain assured  
That he's a made-up villain.

**Painter**

I know none such, my lord.

**Poet**

Nor I.

**TIMON**

Look you, I love you well; I'll give you gold,  
Rid me these villains from your companies:  
Hang them or stab them, drown them in a draught,  
Confound them by some course, and come to me,  
I'll give you gold enough.

## **Both**

Name them, my lord, let's know them.

## **TIMON**

You that way and you this, but two in company;  
Each man apart, all single and alone,  
Yet an arch-villain keeps him company.  
If where thou art two villains shall not be,  
Come not near him. If thou wouldst not reside  
But where one villain is, then him abandon.  
Hence, pack! there's gold; you came for gold, ye slaves:

*To Painter*

You have work'd for me; there's payment for you: hence!

*To Poet*

You are an alchemist; make gold of that.  
Out, rascal dogs!

*Beats them out, and then retires to his cave*

*Enter FLAVIUS and two Senators*

## **FLAVIUS**

It is in vain that you would speak with Timon;  
For he is set so only to himself  
That nothing but himself which looks like man  
Is friendly with him.

## **First Senator**

Bring us to his cave:  
It is our part and promise to the Athenians  
To speak with Timon.

## **Second Senator**

At all times alike  
Men are not still the same: 'twas time and griefs  
That framed him thus: time, with his fairer hand,  
Offering the fortunes of his former days,  
The former man may make him. Bring us to him,  
And chance it as it may.

## **FLAVIUS**

Here is his cave.  
Peace and content be here! Lord Timon! Timon!  
Look out, and speak to friends: the Athenians,  
By two of their most reverend senate, greet thee:  
Speak to them, noble Timon.

*TIMON comes from his cave*

## **TIMON**

Thou sun, that comfort'st, burn! Speak, and  
be hang'd:  
For each true word, a blister! and each false  
Be as cauterizing to the root o' the tongue,  
Consuming it with speaking!

## **First Senator**

Worthy Timon,--

## **TIMON**

Of none but such as you, and you of Timon.

## **First Senator**

The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.

## **TIMON**

I thank them; and would send them back the plague,

Could I but catch it for them.

### **First Senator**

O, forget  
What we are sorry for ourselves in thee.  
The senators with one consent of love  
Entreat thee back to Athens; who have thought  
On special dignities, which vacant lie  
For thy best use and wearing.

### **Second Senator**

They confess  
Toward thee forgetfulness too general, gross:  
Which now the public body, which doth seldom  
Play the recanter, feeling in itself  
A lack of Timon's aid, hath sense withal  
Of its own fail, restraining aid to Timon;  
And send forth us, to make their sorrow'd render,  
Together with a recompense more fruitful  
Than their offence can weigh down by the dram;  
Ay, even such heaps and sums of love and wealth  
As shall to thee blot out what wrongs were theirs  
And write in thee the figures of their love,  
Ever to read them thine.

### **TIMON**

You witch me in it;  
Surprise me to the very brink of tears:  
Lend me a fool's heart and a woman's eyes,  
And I'll bewEEP these comforts, worthy senators.

### **First Senator**

Therefore, so please thee to return with us  
And of our Athens, thine and ours, to take  
The captainship, thou shalt be met with thanks,  
Allow'd with absolute power and thy good name  
Live with authority: so soon we shall drive back  
Of Alcibiades the approaches wild,

Who, like a boar too savage, doth root up  
His country's peace.

## **Second Senator**

And shakes his threatening sword  
Against the walls of Athens.

## **First Senator**

Therefore, Timon,--

## **TIMON**

Well, sir, I will; therefore, I will, sir; thus:  
If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,  
Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,  
That Timon cares not. But if be sack fair Athens,  
And take our goodly aged men by the beards,  
Giving our holy virgins to the stain  
Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war,  
Then let him know, and tell him Timon speaks it,  
In pity of our aged and our youth,  
I cannot choose but tell him, that I care not,  
And let him take't at worst; for their knives care not,  
While you have throats to answer: for myself,  
There's not a whittle in the unruly camp  
But I do prize it at my love before  
The reverend'st throat in Athens. So I leave you  
To the protection of the prosperous gods,  
As thieves to keepers.

## **FLAVIUS**

Stay not, all's in vain.

## **TIMON**

Why, I was writing of my epitaph;  
it will be seen to-morrow: my long sickness  
Of health and living now begins to mend,  
And nothing brings me all things. Go, live still;



Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,  
And last so long enough!

**First Senator**

We speak in vain.

**TIMON**

But yet I love my country, and am not  
One that rejoices in the common wreck,  
As common bruit doth put it.

**First Senator**

That's well spoke.

**TIMON**

Commend me to my loving countrymen,--

**First Senator**

These words become your lips as they pass  
thorough them.

**Second Senator**

And enter in our ears like great triumphers  
In their applauding gates.

**TIMON**

Commend me to them,  
And tell them that, to ease them of their griefs,  
Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,  
Their pangs of love, with other incident throes  
That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain  
In life's uncertain voyage, I will some kindness do them:  
I'll teach them to prevent wild Alcibiades' wrath.

**First Senator**

I like this well; he will return again.

**TIMON**

I have a tree, which grows here in my close,  
That mine own use invites me to cut down,  
And shortly must I fell it: tell my friends,  
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree  
From high to low throughout, that whoso please  
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,  
Come hither, ere my tree hath felt the axe,  
And hang himself. I pray you, do my greeting.

**FLAVIUS**

Trouble him no further; thus you still shall find him.

**TIMON**

Come not to me again: but say to Athens,  
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion  
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;  
Who once a day with his embossed froth  
The turbulent surge shall cover: thither come,  
And let my grave-stone be your oracle.  
Lips, let sour words go by and language end:  
What is amiss plague and infection mend!  
Graves only be men's works and death their gain!  
Sun, hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign.

*Retires to his cave*

**First Senator**

His discontents are unremoveably  
Coupled to nature.

**Second Senator**

Our hope in him is dead: let us return,

And strain what other means is left unto us  
In our dear peril.

**First Senator**

It requires swift foot.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 5, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Before the walls of Athens.

*Enter two Senators and a Messenger*

### First Senator

Thou hast painfully discover'd: are his files  
As full as thy report?

### Messenger

have spoke the least:  
Besides, his expedition promises  
Present approach.

### Second Senator

We stand much hazard, if they bring not Timon.

### Messenger

I met a courier, one mine ancient friend;  
Whom, though in general part we were opposed,  
Yet our old love made a particular force,  
And made us speak like friends: this man was riding  
From Alcibiades to Timon's cave,  
With letters of entreaty, which imported  
His fellowship i' the cause against your city,  
In part for his sake moved.

### First Senator

Here come our brothers.

*Enter the Senators from TIMON*

## Third Senator

No talk of Timon, nothing of him expect.  
The enemies' drum is heard, and fearful scouring  
Doth choke the air with dust: in, and prepare:  
Ours is the fall, I fear; our foes the snare.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 5, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The woods. Timon's cave, and a rude tomb seen.

*Enter a Soldier, seeking TIMON*

### Soldier

By all description this should be the place.  
Who's here? speak, ho! No answer! What is this?  
Timon is dead, who hath outstretch'd his span:  
Some beast rear'd this; there does not live a man.  
Dead, sure; and this his grave. What's on this tomb  
I cannot read; the character I'll take with wax:  
Our captain hath in every figure skill,  
An aged interpreter, though young in days:  
Before proud Athens he's set down by this,  
Whose fall the mark of his ambition is.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 5, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Timon of Athens

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Timon of Athens](#) | Act 5, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Before the walls of Athens.

*Trumpets sound. Enter ALCIBIADES with his powers*

### ALCIBIADES

Sound to this coward and lascivious town  
Our terrible approach.

*A parley sounded*

*Enter Senators on the walls*

Till now you have gone on and fill'd the time  
With all licentious measure, making your wills  
The scope of justice; till now myself and such  
As slept within the shadow of your power  
Have wander'd with our traversed arms and breathed  
Our sufferance vainly: now the time is flush,  
When crouching marrow in the bearer strong  
Cries of itself 'No more:' now breathless wrong  
Shall sit and pant in your great chairs of ease,  
And pury insolence shall break his wind  
With fear and horrid flight.

### First Senator

Noble and young,  
When thy first griefs were but a mere conceit,  
Ere thou hadst power or we had cause of fear,  
We sent to thee, to give thy rages balm,  
To wipe out our ingratitude with loves  
Above their quantity.

### Second Senator

So did we woo  
Transformed Timon to our city's love  
By humble message and by promised means:  
We were not all unkind, nor all deserve  
The common stroke of war.

### **First Senator**

These walls of ours  
Were not erected by their hands from whom  
You have received your griefs; nor are they such  
That these great towers, trophies and schools  
should fall  
For private faults in them.

### **Second Senator**

Nor are they living  
Who were the motives that you first went out;  
Shame that they wanted cunning, in excess  
Hath broke their hearts. March, noble lord,  
Into our city with thy banners spread:  
By decimation, and a tithed death--  
If thy revenges hunger for that food  
Which nature loathes--take thou the destined tenth,  
And by the hazard of the spotted die  
Let die the spotted.

### **First Senator**

All have not offended;  
For those that were, it is not square to take  
On those that are, revenges: crimes, like lands,  
Are not inherited. Then, dear countryman,  
Bring in thy ranks, but leave without thy rage:  
Spare thy Athenian cradle and those kin  
Which in the bluster of thy wrath must fall  
With those that have offended: like a shepherd,  
Approach the fold and cull the infected forth,  
But kill not all together.

### **Second Senator**



What thou wilt,  
Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile  
Than hew to't with thy sword.

### **First Senator**

Set but thy foot  
Against our rampired gates, and they shall ope;  
So thou wilt send thy gentle heart before,  
To say thou'lt enter friendly.

### **Second Senator**

Throw thy glove,  
Or any token of thine honour else,  
That thou wilt use the wars as thy redress  
And not as our confusion, all thy powers  
Shall make their harbour in our town, till we  
Have seal'd thy full desire.

### **ALCIBIADES**

Then there's my glove;  
Descend, and open your uncharged ports:  
Those enemies of Timon's and mine own  
Whom you yourselves shall set out for reproof  
Fall and no more: and, to atone your fears  
With my more noble meaning, not a man  
Shall pass his quarter, or offend the stream  
Of regular justice in your city's bounds,  
But shall be render'd to your public laws  
At heaviest answer.

### **Both**

'Tis most nobly spoken.

### **ALCIBIADES**

Descend, and keep your words.

*The Senators descend, and open the gates*

*Enter Soldier*

## **Soldier**

My noble general, Timon is dead;  
Entomb'd upon the very hem o' the sea;  
And on his grave-stone this insculpture, which  
With wax I brought away, whose soft impression  
Interprets for my poor ignorance.

## **ALCIBIADES**

[Reads the epitaph] 'Here lies a  
wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft:  
Seek not my name: a plague consume you wicked  
caitiffs left!  
Here lie I, Timon; who, alive, all living men did hate:  
Pass by and curse thy fill, but pass and stay  
not here thy gait.'  
These well express in thee thy latter spirits:  
Though thou abhorr'dst in us our human griefs,  
Scorn'dst our brain's flow and those our  
droplets which  
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit  
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye  
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven. Dead  
Is noble Timon: of whose memory  
Hereafter more. Bring me into your city,  
And I will use the olive with my sword,  
Make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each  
Prescribe to other as each other's leech.  
Let our drums strike.

*Exeunt*

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | Titus Andronicus

[Entire play](#) in one page

Act 1, Scene 1: [Rome. Before the Capitol.](#)

Act 2, Scene 1: [Rome. Before the Palace.](#)

Act 2, Scene 2: [A forest near Rome. Horns and cry of hounds heard.](#)

Act 2, Scene 3: [A lonely part of the forest.](#)

Act 2, Scene 4: [Another part of the forest.](#)

Act 3, Scene 1: [Rome. A street.](#)

Act 3, Scene 2: [A room in Titus's house. A banquet set out.](#)

Act 4, Scene 1: [Rome. Titus's garden.](#)

Act 4, Scene 2: [The same. A room in the palace.](#)

Act 4, Scene 3: [The same. A public place.](#)

Act 4, Scene 4: [The same. Before the palace.](#)

Act 5, Scene 1: [Plains near Rome.](#)

Act 5, Scene 2: [Rome. Before TITUS's house.](#)

Act 5, Scene 3: [Court of TITUS's house. A banquet set out.](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. Before the Capitol.

*The Tomb of the ANDRONICI appearing; the Tribunes and Senators aloft. Enter, below, from one side, SATURNINUS and his Followers; and, from the other side, BASSIANUS and his Followers; with drum and colours*

### SATURNINUS

Noble patricians, patrons of my right,  
Defend the justice of my cause with arms,  
And, countrymen, my loving followers,  
Plead my successive title with your swords:  
I am his first-born son, that was the last  
That wore the imperial diadem of Rome;  
Then let my father's honours live in me,  
Nor wrong mine age with this indignity.

### BASSIANUS

Romans, friends, followers, favorers of my right,  
If ever Bassianus, Caesar's son,  
Were gracious in the eyes of royal Rome,  
Keep then this passage to the Capitol  
And suffer not dishonour to approach  
The imperial seat, to virtue consecrate,  
To justice, continence and nobility;  
But let desert in pure election shine,  
And, Romans, fight for freedom in your choice.

*Enter MARCUS ANDRONICUS, aloft, with the crown*

### MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Princes, that strive by factions and by friends  
Ambitiously for rule and empery,  
Know that the people of Rome, for whom we stand

A special party, have, by common voice,  
In election for the Roman empery,  
Chosen Andronicus, surnamed Pius  
For many good and great deserts to Rome:  
A nobler man, a braver warrior,  
Lives not this day within the city walls:  
He by the senate is accit'd home  
From weary wars against the barbarous Goths;  
That, with his sons, a terror to our foes,  
Hath yoked a nation strong, train'd up in arms.  
Ten years are spent since first he undertook  
This cause of Rome and chastised with arms  
Our enemies' pride: five times he hath return'd  
Bleeding to Rome, bearing his valiant sons  
In coffins from the field;  
And now at last, laden with horror's spoils,  
Returns the good Andronicus to Rome,  
Renowned Titus, flourishing in arms.  
Let us entreat, by honour of his name,  
Whom worthily you would have now succeed.  
And in the Capitol and senate's right,  
Whom you pretend to honour and adore,  
That you withdraw you and abate your strength;  
Dismiss your followers and, as suitors should,  
Plead your deserts in peace and humbleness.

## **SATURNINUS**

How fair the tribune speaks to calm my thoughts!

## **BASSIANUS**

Marcus Andronicus, so I do ally  
In thy uprightness and integrity,  
And so I love and honour thee and thine,  
Thy noble brother Titus and his sons,  
And her to whom my thoughts are humbled all,  
Gracious Lavinia, Rome's rich ornament,  
That I will here dismiss my loving friends,  
And to my fortunes and the people's favor  
Commit my cause in balance to be weigh'd.

*Exeunt the followers of BASSIANUS*

## **SATURNINUS**

Friends, that have been thus forward in my right,  
I thank you all and here dismiss you all,  
And to the love and favor of my country  
Commit myself, my person and the cause.

*Exeunt the followers of SATURNINUS*

Rome, be as just and gracious unto me  
As I am confident and kind to thee.  
Open the gates, and let me in.

## **BASSIANUS**

Tribunes, and me, a poor competitor.

*Flourish. SATURNINUS and BASSIANUS go up into the Capitol*

*Enter a Captain*

## **Captain**

Romans, make way: the good Andronicus.  
Patron of virtue, Rome's best champion,  
Successful in the battles that he fights,  
With honour and with fortune is return'd  
From where he circumscribed with his sword,  
And brought to yoke, the enemies of Rome.

*Drums and trumpets sounded. Enter MARTIUS and MUTIUS; After them, two Men bearing a coffin covered with black; then LUCIUS and QUINTUS. After them, TITUS ANDRONICUS; and then TAMORA, with ALARBUS, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, AARON, and other Goths, prisoners; Soldiers and people following. The Bearers set down the coffin, and TITUS speaks*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Hail, Rome, victorious in thy mourning weeds!

Lo, as the bark, that hath discharged her fraught,  
Returns with precious jading to the bay  
From whence at first she weigh'd her anchorage,  
Cometh Andronicus, bound with laurel boughs,  
To re-salute his country with his tears,  
Tears of true joy for his return to Rome.  
Thou great defender of this Capitol,  
Stand gracious to the rites that we intend!  
Romans, of five and twenty valiant sons,  
Half of the number that King Priam had,  
Behold the poor remains, alive and dead!  
These that survive let Rome reward with love;  
These that I bring unto their latest home,  
With burial amongst their ancestors:  
Here Goths have given me leave to sheathe my sword.  
Titus, unkind and careless of thine own,  
Why suffer'st thou thy sons, unburied yet,  
To hover on the dreadful shore of Styx?  
Make way to lay them by their brethren.

*The tomb is opened*

There greet in silence, as the dead are wont,  
And sleep in peace, slain in your country's wars!  
O sacred receptacle of my joys,  
Sweet cell of virtue and nobility,  
How many sons of mine hast thou in store,  
That thou wilt never render to me more!

**LUCIUS**

Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,  
That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile  
Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh,  
Before this earthy prison of their bones;  
That so the shadows be not unappeased,  
Nor we disturb'd with prodigies on earth.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I give him you, the noblest that survives,  
The eldest son of this distressed queen.

## TAMORA

Stay, Roman brethren! Gracious conqueror,  
Victorious Titus, rue the tears I shed,  
A mother's tears in passion for her son:  
And if thy sons were ever dear to thee,  
O, think my son to be as dear to me!  
Sufficeth not that we are brought to Rome,  
To beautify thy triumphs and return,  
Captive to thee and to thy Roman yoke,  
But must my sons be slaughter'd in the streets,  
For valiant doings in their country's cause?  
O, if to fight for king and commonweal  
Were piety in thine, it is in these.  
Andronicus, stain not thy tomb with blood:  
Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?  
Draw near them then in being merciful:  
Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge:  
Thrice noble Titus, spare my first-born son.

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

Patient yourself, madam, and pardon me.  
These are their brethren, whom you Goths beheld  
Alive and dead, and for their brethren slain  
Religiously they ask a sacrifice:  
To this your son is mark'd, and die he must,  
To appease their groaning shadows that are gone.

## LUCIUS

Away with him! and make a fire straight;  
And with our swords, upon a pile of wood,  
Let's hew his limbs till they be clean consumed.

*Exeunt LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS, and MUTIUS, with ALARBUS*

## TAMORA

O cruel, irreligious piety!



## CHIRON

Was ever Scythia half so barbarous?

## DEMETRIUS

Oppose not Scythia to ambitious Rome.  
Alarbus goes to rest; and we survive  
To tremble under Titus' threatening looks.  
Then, madam, stand resolved, but hope withal  
The self-same gods that arm'd the Queen of Troy  
With opportunity of sharp revenge  
Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent,  
May favor Tamora, the Queen of Goths--  
When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen--  
To quit the bloody wrongs upon her foes.

*Re-enter LUCIUS, QUINTUS, MARTIUS and MUTIUS, with their swords bloody*

## LUCIUS

See, lord and father, how we have perform'd  
Our Roman rites: Alarbus' limbs are lopp'd,  
And entrails feed the sacrificing fire,  
Whose smoke, like incense, doth perfume the sky.  
Remaineth nought, but to inter our brethren,  
And with loud 'larums welcome them to Rome.

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

Let it be so; and let Andronicus  
Make this his latest farewell to their souls.

*Trumpets sounded, and the coffin laid in the tomb*

In peace and honour rest you here, my sons;  
Rome's readiest champions, repose you here in rest,  
Secure from worldly chances and mishaps!  
Here lurks no treason, here no envy swells,  
Here grow no damned grudges; here are no storms,  
No noise, but silence and eternal sleep:  
In peace and honour rest you here, my sons!

*Enter LAVINIA*

**LAVINIA**

In peace and honour live Lord Titus long;  
My noble lord and father, live in fame!  
Lo, at this tomb my tributary tears  
I render, for my brethren's obsequies;  
And at thy feet I kneel, with tears of joy,  
Shed on the earth, for thy return to Rome:  
O, bless me here with thy victorious hand,  
Whose fortunes Rome's best citizens applaud!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Kind Rome, that hast thus lovingly reserved  
The cordial of mine age to glad my heart!  
Lavinia, live; outlive thy father's days,  
And fame's eternal date, for virtue's praise!

*Enter, below, MARCUS ANDRONICUS and Tribunes; re-enter SATURNINUS and BASSIANUS, attended*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Long live Lord Titus, my beloved brother,  
Gracious triumpher in the eyes of Rome!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Thanks, gentle tribune, noble brother Marcus.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

And welcome, nephews, from successful wars,  
You that survive, and you that sleep in fame!  
Fair lords, your fortunes are alike in all,  
That in your country's service drew your swords:  
But safer triumph is this funeral pomp,  
That hath aspired to Solon's happiness  
And triumphs over chance in honour's bed.

Titus Andronicus, the people of Rome,  
Whose friend in justice thou hast ever been,  
Send thee by me, their tribune and their trust,  
This palliament of white and spotless hue;  
And name thee in election for the empire,  
With these our late-deceased emperor's sons:  
Be candidatus then, and put it on,  
And help to set a head on headless Rome.

### **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

A better head her glorious body fits  
Than his that shakes for age and feebleness:  
What should I don this robe, and trouble you?  
Be chosen with proclamations to-day,  
To-morrow yield up rule, resign my life,  
And set abroad new business for you all?  
Rome, I have been thy soldier forty years,  
And led my country's strength successfully,  
And buried one and twenty valiant sons,  
Knighted in field, slain manfully in arms,  
In right and service of their noble country  
Give me a staff of honour for mine age,  
But not a sceptre to control the world:  
Upright he held it, lords, that held it last.

### **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Titus, thou shalt obtain and ask the empery.

### **SATURNINUS**

Proud and ambitious tribune, canst thou tell?

### **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Patience, Prince Saturninus.

### **SATURNINUS**

Romans, do me right:  
Patricians, draw your swords: and sheathe them not

Till Saturninus be Rome's emperor.  
Andronicus, would thou wert shipp'd to hell,  
Rather than rob me of the people's hearts!

## **LUCIUS**

Proud Saturnine, interrupter of the good  
That noble-minded Titus means to thee!

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Content thee, prince; I will restore to thee  
The people's hearts, and wean them from themselves.

## **BASSIANUS**

Andronicus, I do not flatter thee,  
But honour thee, and will do till I die:  
My faction if thou strengthen with thy friends,  
I will most thankful be; and thanks to men  
Of noble minds is honourable meed.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

People of Rome, and people's tribunes here,  
I ask your voices and your suffrages:  
Will you bestow them friendly on Andronicus?

## **Tribunes**

To gratify the good Andronicus,  
And gratulate his safe return to Rome,  
The people will accept whom he admits.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Tribunes, I thank you: and this suit I make,  
That you create your emperor's eldest son,  
Lord Saturnine; whose virtues will, I hope,  
Reflect on Rome as Titan's rays on earth,  
And ripen justice in this commonweal:  
Then, if you will elect by my advice,

Crown him and say 'Long live our emperor!'

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

With voices and applause of every sort,  
Patricians and plebeians, we create  
Lord Saturninus Rome's great emperor,  
And say 'Long live our Emperor Saturnine!'

*A long flourish till they come down*

## **SATURNINUS**

Titus Andronicus, for thy favors done  
To us in our election this day,  
I give thee thanks in part of thy deserts,  
And will with deeds requite thy gentleness:  
And, for an onset, Titus, to advance  
Thy name and honourable family,  
Lavinia will I make my empress,  
Rome's royal mistress, mistress of my heart,  
And in the sacred Pantheon her espouse:  
Tell me, Andronicus, doth this motion please thee?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It doth, my worthy lord; and in this match  
I hold me highly honour'd of your grace:  
And here in sight of Rome to Saturnine,  
King and commander of our commonweal,  
The wide world's emperor, do I consecrate  
My sword, my chariot and my prisoners;  
Presents well worthy Rome's imperial lord:  
Receive them then, the tribute that I owe,  
Mine honour's ensigns humbled at thy feet.

## **SATURNINUS**

Thanks, noble Titus, father of my life!  
How proud I am of thee and of thy gifts  
Rome shall record, and when I do forget  
The least of these unspeakable deserts,

Romans, forget your fealty to me.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

[To TAMORA] Now, madam, are you prisoner to  
an emperor;  
To him that, for your honour and your state,  
Will use you nobly and your followers.

## **SATURNINUS**

A goodly lady, trust me; of the hue  
That I would choose, were I to choose anew.  
Clear up, fair queen, that cloudy countenance:  
Though chance of war hath wrought this change of cheer,  
Thou comest not to be made a scorn in Rome:  
Princely shall be thy usage every way.  
Rest on my word, and let not discontent  
Daunt all your hopes: madam, he comforts you  
Can make you greater than the Queen of Goths.  
Lavinia, you are not displeased with this?

## **LAVINIA**

Not I, my lord; sith true nobility  
Warrants these words in princely courtesy.

## **SATURNINUS**

Thanks, sweet Lavinia. Romans, let us go;  
Ransomless here we set our prisoners free:  
Proclaim our honours, lords, with trump and drum.

*Flourish. SATURNINUS courts TAMORA in dumb show*

## **BASSIANUS**

Lord Titus, by your leave, this maid is mine.

*Seizing LAVINIA*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

How, sir! are you in earnest then, my lord?

## **BASSIANUS**

Ay, noble Titus; and resolved withal  
To do myself this reason and this right.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

'Suum cuique' is our Roman justice:  
This prince in justice seizeth but his own.

## **LUCIUS**

And that he will, and shall, if Lucius live.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Traitors, avaunt! Where is the emperor's guard?  
Treason, my lord! Lavinia is surprised!

## **SATURNINUS**

Surprised! by whom?

## **BASSIANUS**

By him that justly may  
Bear his betroth'd from all the world away.

*Exeunt BASSIANUS and MARCUS with LAVINIA*

## **MUTIUS**

Brothers, help to convey her hence away,  
And with my sword I'll keep this door safe.

*Exeunt LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Follow, my lord, and I'll soon bring her back.

## **MUTIUS**

My lord, you pass not here.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What, villain boy!  
Barr'st me my way in Rome?

*Stabbing MUTIUS*

## **MUTIUS**

Help, Lucius, help!

*Dies*

*During the fray, SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON and AARON go out and re-enter, above*

*Re-enter LUCIUS*

## **LUCIUS**

My lord, you are unjust, and, more than so,  
In wrongful quarrel you have slain your son.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Nor thou, nor he, are any sons of mine;  
My sons would never so dishonour me:  
Traitor, restore Lavinia to the emperor.

## **LUCIUS**

Dead, if you will; but not to be his wife,  
That is another's lawful promised love.



*Exit*

**SATURNINUS**

No, Titus, no; the emperor needs her not,  
Nor her, nor thee, nor any of thy stock:  
I'll trust, by leisure, him that mocks me once;  
Thee never, nor thy traitorous haughty sons,  
Confederates all thus to dishonour me.  
Was there none else in Rome to make a stale,  
But Saturnine? Full well, Andronicus,  
Agree these deeds with that proud brag of thine,  
That said'st I begg'd the empire at thy hands.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O monstrous! what reproachful words are these?

**SATURNINUS**

But go thy ways; go, give that changing piece  
To him that flourish'd for her with his sword  
A valiant son-in-law thou shalt enjoy;  
One fit to bandy with thy lawless sons,  
To ruffle in the commonwealth of Rome.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

These words are razors to my wounded heart.

**SATURNINUS**

And therefore, lovely Tamora, queen of Goths,  
That like the stately Phoebe 'mongst her nymphs  
Dost overshadow the gallant'st dames of Rome,  
If thou be pleased with this my sudden choice,  
Behold, I choose thee, Tamora, for my bride,  
And will create thee empress of Rome,  
Speak, Queen of Goths, dost thou applaud my choice?  
And here I swear by all the Roman gods,  
Sith priest and holy water are so near

And tapers burn so bright and every thing  
In readiness for Hymenaeus stand,  
I will not re-salute the streets of Rome,  
Or climb my palace, till from forth this place  
I lead espoused my bride along with me.

## **TAMORA**

And here, in sight of heaven, to Rome I swear,  
If Saturnine advance the Queen of Goths,  
She will a handmaid be to his desires,  
A loving nurse, a mother to his youth.

## **SATURNINUS**

Ascend, fair queen, Pantheon. Lords, accompany  
Your noble emperor and his lovely bride,  
Sent by the heavens for Prince Saturnine,  
Whose wisdom hath her fortune conquered:  
There shall we consummate our spousal rites.

*Exeunt all but TITUS*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I am not bid to wait upon this bride.  
Titus, when wert thou wont to walk alone,  
Dishonour'd thus, and challenged of wrongs?

*Re-enter MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS*

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O Titus, see, O, see what thou hast done!  
In a bad quarrel slain a virtuous son.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

No, foolish tribune, no; no son of mine,  
Nor thou, nor these, confederates in the deed  
That hath dishonour'd all our family;  
Unworthy brother, and unworthy sons!

## **LUCIUS**

But let us give him burial, as becomes;  
Give Mutius burial with our brethren.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Traitors, away! he rests not in this tomb:  
This monument five hundred years hath stood,  
Which I have sumptuously re-edified:  
Here none but soldiers and Rome's servitors  
Repose in fame; none basely slain in brawls:  
Bury him where you can; he comes not here.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, this is impiety in you:  
My nephew Mutius' deeds do plead for him  
He must be buried with his brethren.

## **QUINTUS MARTIUS**

And shall, or him we will accompany.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

'And shall!' what villain was it that spake  
that word?

## **QUINTUS**

He that would vouch it in any place but here.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

What, would you bury him in my despite?

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

No, noble Titus, but entreat of thee

To pardon Mutius and to bury him.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Marcus, even thou hast struck upon my crest,  
And, with these boys, mine honour thou hast wounded:  
My foes I do repute you every one;  
So, trouble me no more, but get you gone.

**MARTIUS**

He is not with himself; let us withdraw.

**QUINTUS**

Not I, till Mutius' bones be buried.

*MARCUS and the Sons of TITUS kneel*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Brother, for in that name doth nature plead,--

**QUINTUS**

Father, and in that name doth nature speak,--

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Speak thou no more, if all the rest will speed.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Renowned Titus, more than half my soul,--

**LUCIUS**

Dear father, soul and substance of us all,--

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Suffer thy brother Marcus to inter  
His noble nephew here in virtue's nest,  
That died in honour and Lavinia's cause.  
Thou art a Roman; be not barbarous:  
The Greeks upon advice did bury Ajax  
That slew himself; and wise Laertes' son  
Did graciously plead for his funerals:  
Let not young Mutius, then, that was thy joy  
Be barr'd his entrance here.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Rise, Marcus, rise.  
The dismall'st day is this that e'er I saw,  
To be dishonour'd by my sons in Rome!  
Well, bury him, and bury me the next.

*MUTIUS is put into the tomb*

## **LUCIUS**

There lie thy bones, sweet Mutius, with thy friends,  
Till we with trophies do adorn thy tomb.

## **All**

[Kneeling] No man shed tears for noble Mutius;  
He lives in fame that died in virtue's cause.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, to step out of these dreary dumps,  
How comes it that the subtle Queen of Goths  
Is of a sudden thus advanced in Rome?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I know not, Marcus; but I know it is,  
Whether by device or no, the heavens can tell:  
Is she not then beholding to the man  
That brought her for this high good turn so far?  
Yes, and will nobly him remunerate.

*Flourish. Re-enter, from one side, SATURNINUS attended, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON and AARON; from the other, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA, and others*

**SATURNINUS**

So, Bassianus, you have play'd your prize:  
God give you joy, sir, of your gallant bride!

**BASSIANUS**

And you of yours, my lord! I say no more,  
Nor wish no less; and so, I take my leave.

**SATURNINUS**

Traitor, if Rome have law or we have power,  
Thou and thy faction shall repent this rape.

**BASSIANUS**

Rape, call you it, my lord, to seize my own,  
My truth-betrothed love and now my wife?  
But let the laws of Rome determine all;  
Meanwhile I am possess'd of that is mine.

**SATURNINUS**

'Tis good, sir: you are very short with us;  
But, if we live, we'll be as sharp with you.

**BASSIANUS**

My lord, what I have done, as best I may,  
Answer I must and shall do with my life.  
Only thus much I give your grace to know:  
By all the duties that I owe to Rome,  
This noble gentleman, Lord Titus here,  
Is in opinion and in honour wrong'd;  
That in the rescue of Lavinia  
With his own hand did slay his youngest son,

In zeal to you and highly moved to wrath  
To be controll'd in that he frankly gave:  
Receive him, then, to favor, Saturnine,  
That hath express'd himself in all his deeds  
A father and a friend to thee and Rome.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Prince Bassianus, leave to plead my deeds:  
'Tis thou and those that have dishonour'd me.  
Rome and the righteous heavens be my judge,  
How I have loved and honour'd Saturnine!

## **TAMORA**

My worthy lord, if ever Tamora  
Were gracious in those princely eyes of thine,  
Then hear me speak in indifferently for all;  
And at my suit, sweet, pardon what is past.

## **SATURNINUS**

What, madam! be dishonour'd openly,  
And basely put it up without revenge?

## **TAMORA**

Not so, my lord; the gods of Rome forbend  
I should be author to dishonour you!  
But on mine honour dare I undertake  
For good Lord Titus' innocence in all;  
Whose fury not dissembled speaks his griefs:  
Then, at my suit, look graciously on him;  
Lose not so noble a friend on vain suppose,  
Nor with sour looks afflict his gentle heart.

*Aside to SATURNINUS*

be won at last;  
Dissemble all your griefs and discontents:  
You are but newly planted in your throne;  
Lest, then, the people, and patricians too,

Upon a just survey, take Titus' part,  
And so supplant you for ingratitude,  
Which Rome reposes to be a heinous sin,  
Yield at entreats; and then let me alone:  
I'll find a day to massacre them all  
And raze their faction and their family,  
The cruel father and his traitorous sons,  
To whom I sued for my dear son's life,  
And make them know what 'tis to let a queen  
Kneel in the streets and beg for grace in vain.

*Aloud*

Come, come, sweet emperor; come, Andronicus;  
Take up this good old man, and cheer the heart  
That dies in tempest of thy angry frown.

## **SATURNINUS**

Rise, Titus, rise; my empress hath prevail'd.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I thank your majesty, and her, my lord:  
These words, these looks, infuse new life in me.

## **TAMORA**

Titus, I am incorporate in Rome,  
A Roman now adopted happily,  
And must advise the emperor for his good.  
This day all quarrels die, Andronicus;  
And let it be mine honour, good my lord,  
That I have reconciled your friends and you.  
For you, Prince Bassianus, I have pass'd  
My word and promise to the emperor,  
That you will be more mild and tractable.  
And fear not lords, and you, Lavinia;  
By my advice, all humbled on your knees,  
You shall ask pardon of his majesty.

## **LUCIUS**



We do, and vow to heaven and to his highness,  
That what we did was mildly as we might,  
Tendering our sister's honour and our own.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

That, on mine honour, here I do protest.

## **SATURNINUS**

Away, and talk not; trouble us no more.

## **TAMORA**

Nay, nay, sweet emperor, we must all be friends:  
The tribune and his nephews kneel for grace;  
I will not be denied: sweet heart, look back.

## **SATURNINUS**

Marcus, for thy sake and thy brother's here,  
And at my lovely Tamora's entreats,  
I do remit these young men's heinous faults: Stand up.  
Lavinia, though you left me like a churl,  
I found a friend, and sure as death I swore  
I would not part a bachelor from the priest.  
Come, if the emperor's court can feast two brides,  
You are my guest, Lavinia, and your friends.  
This day shall be a love-day, Tamora.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

To-morrow, an it please your majesty  
To hunt the panther and the hart with me,  
With horn and hound we'll give your grace bonjour.

## **SATURNINUS**

Be it so, Titus, and gramercy too.

*Flourish. Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 1, Scene 1  
[Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 2, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. Before the Palace.

*Enter AARON*

**AARON**

Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,  
Safe out of fortune's shot; and sits aloft,  
Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash;  
Advanced above pale envy's threatening reach.  
As when the golden sun salutes the morn,  
And, having gilt the ocean with his beams,  
Gallops the zodiac in his glistening coach,  
And overlooks the highest-peering hills;  
So Tamora:  
Upon her wit doth earthly honour wait,  
And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.  
Then, Aaron, arm thy heart, and fit thy thoughts,  
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,  
And mount her pitch, whom thou in triumph long  
Hast prisoner held, fetter'd in amorous chains  
And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes  
Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus.  
Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!  
I will be bright, and shine in pearl and gold,  
To wait upon this new-made empress.  
To wait, said I? to wanton with this queen,  
This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,  
This siren, that will charm Rome's Saturnine,  
And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's.  
Holloa! what storm is this?

*Enter DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, braving*

**DEMETRIUS**

Chiron, thy years want wit, thy wit wants edge,

And manners, to intrude where I am graced;  
And may, for aught thou know'st, affected be.

## **CHIRON**

Demetrius, thou dost over-ween in all;  
And so in this, to bear me down with braves.  
'Tis not the difference of a year or two  
Makes me less gracious or thee more fortunate:  
I am as able and as fit as thou  
To serve, and to deserve my mistress' grace;  
And that my sword upon thee shall approve,  
And plead my passions for Lavinia's love.

## **AARON**

[Aside] Clubs, clubs! these lovers will not keep  
the peace.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Why, boy, although our mother, unadvised,  
Gave you a dancing-rapier by your side,  
Are you so desperate grown, to threat your friends?  
Go to; have your lath glued within your sheath  
Till you know better how to handle it.

## **CHIRON**

Meanwhile, sir, with the little skill I have,  
Full well shalt thou perceive how much I dare.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Ay, boy, grow ye so brave?

*They draw*

## **AARON**

[Coming forward] Why, how now, lords!

So near the emperor's palace dare you draw,  
And maintain such a quarrel openly?  
Full well I wot the ground of all this grudge:  
I would not for a million of gold  
The cause were known to them it most concerns;  
Nor would your noble mother for much more  
Be so dishonour'd in the court of Rome.  
For shame, put up.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Not I, till I have sheathed  
My rapier in his bosom and withal  
Thrust these reproachful speeches down his throat  
That he hath breathed in my dishonour here.

## **CHIRON**

For that I am prepared and full resolved.  
Foul-spoken coward, that thunder'st with thy tongue,  
And with thy weapon nothing darest perform!

## **AARON**

Away, I say!  
Now, by the gods that warlike Goths adore,  
This petty brabble will undo us all.  
Why, lords, and think you not how dangerous  
It is to jet upon a prince's right?  
What, is Lavinia then become so loose,  
Or Bassianus so degenerate,  
That for her love such quarrels may be broach'd  
Without controlment, justice, or revenge?  
Young lords, beware! and should the empress know  
This discord's ground, the music would not please.

## **CHIRON**

I care not, I, knew she and all the world:  
I love Lavinia more than all the world.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Youngling, learn thou to make some meaner choice:  
Lavinia is thine elder brother's hope.

**AARON**

Why, are ye mad? or know ye not, in Rome  
How furious and impatient they be,  
And cannot brook competitors in love?  
I tell you, lords, you do but plot your deaths  
By this device.

**CHIRON**

Aaron, a thousand deaths  
Would I propose to achieve her whom I love.

**AARON**

To achieve her! how?

**DEMETRIUS**

Why makest thou it so strange?  
She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;  
She is a woman, therefore may be won;  
She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved.  
What, man! more water glideth by the mill  
Than wots the miller of; and easy it is  
Of a cut loaf to steal a shive, we know:  
Though Bassianus be the emperor's brother.  
Better than he have worn Vulcan's badge.

**AARON**

[Aside] Ay, and as good as Saturninus may.

**DEMETRIUS**

Then why should he despair that knows to court it  
With words, fair looks and liberality?  
What, hast not thou full often struck a doe,

And borne her cleanly by the keeper's nose?

**AARON**

Why, then, it seems, some certain snatch or so  
Would serve your turns.

**CHIRON**

Ay, so the turn were served.

**DEMETRIUS**

Aaron, thou hast hit it.

**AARON**

Would you had hit it too!  
Then should not we be tired with this ado.  
Why, hark ye, hark ye! and are you such fools  
To square for this? would it offend you, then  
That both should speed?

**CHIRON**

Faith, not me.

**DEMETRIUS**

Nor me, so I were one.

**AARON**

For shame, be friends, and join for that you jar:  
'Tis policy and stratagem must do  
That you affect; and so must you resolve,  
That what you cannot as you would achieve,  
You must perforce accomplish as you may.  
Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste  
Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love.  
A speedier course than lingering languishment

Must we pursue, and I have found the path.  
My lords, a solemn hunting is in hand;  
There will the lovely Roman ladies troop:  
The forest walks are wide and spacious;  
And many unfrequented plots there are  
Fitted by kind for rape and villany:  
Single you thither then this dainty doe,  
And strike her home by force, if not by words:  
This way, or not at all, stand you in hope.  
Come, come, our empress, with her sacred wit  
To villany and vengeance consecrate,  
Will we acquaint with all that we intend;  
And she shall file our engines with advice,  
That will not suffer you to square yourselves,  
But to your wishes' height advance you both.  
The emperor's court is like the house of Fame,  
The palace full of tongues, of eyes, and ears:  
The woods are ruthless, dreadful, deaf, and dull;  
There speak, and strike, brave boys, and take  
your turns;  
There serve your lusts, shadow'd from heaven's eye,  
And revel in Lavinia's treasury.

## **CHIRON**

Thy counsel, lad, smells of no cowardice,

## **DEMETRIUS**

Sit fas aut nefas, till I find the stream  
To cool this heat, a charm to calm these fits.  
Per Styga, per manes vehor.

*Exeunt*



# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A forest near Rome. Horns and cry of hounds heard.

*Enter TITUS ANDRONICUS, with Hunters, & c., MARCUS, LUCIUS, QUINTUS, and MARTIUS*

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

The hunt is up, the morn is bright and grey,  
The fields are fragrant and the woods are green:  
Uncouple here and let us make a bay  
And wake the emperor and his lovely bride  
And rouse the prince and ring a hunter's peal,  
That all the court may echo with the noise.  
Sons, let it be your charge, as it is ours,  
To attend the emperor's person carefully:  
I have been troubled in my sleep this night,  
But dawning day new comfort hath inspired.

*A cry of hounds and horns, winded in a peal. Enter SATURNINUS, TAMORA, BASSIANUS, LAVINIA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, and Attendants*

Many good morrows to your majesty;  
Madam, to you as many and as good:  
I promised your grace a hunter's peal.

### SATURNINUS

And you have rung it lustily, my lord;  
Somewhat too early for new-married ladies.

### BASSIANUS

Lavinia, how say you?

### LAVINIA

I say, no;  
I have been broad awake two hours and more.

## **SATURNINUS**

Come on, then; horse and chariots let us have,  
And to our sport.

*To TAMORA*

Madam, now shall ye see  
Our Roman hunting.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

I have dogs, my lord,  
Will rouse the proudest panther in the chase,  
And climb the highest promontory top.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

And I have horse will follow where the game  
Makes way, and run like swallows o'er the plain.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Chiron, we hunt not, we, with horse nor hound,  
But hope to pluck a dainty doe to ground.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 2, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. A lonely part of the forest.

*Enter AARON, with a bag of gold*

**AARON**

He that had wit would think that I had none,  
To bury so much gold under a tree,  
And never after to inherit it.  
Let him that thinks of me so abjectly  
Know that this gold must coin a stratagem,  
Which, cunningly effected, will beget  
A very excellent piece of villany:  
And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest

*Hides the gold*

That have their alms out of the empress' chest.

*Enter TAMORA*

**TAMORA**

My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad,  
When every thing doth make a gleeful boast?  
The birds chant melody on every bush,  
The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun,  
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind  
And make a chequer'd shadow on the ground:  
Under their sweet shade, Aaron, let us sit,  
And, whilst the babbling echo mocks the hounds,  
Replying shrilly to the well-tuned horns,  
As if a double hunt were heard at once,  
Let us sit down and mark their yelping noise;  
And, after conflict such as was supposed  
The wandering prince and Dido once enjoy'd,

When with a happy storm they were surprised  
And curtain'd with a counsel-keeping cave,  
We may, each wreathed in the other's arms,  
Our pastimes done, possess a golden slumber;  
Whiles hounds and horns and sweet melodious birds  
Be unto us as is a nurse's song  
Of lullaby to bring her babe asleep.

## AARON

Madam, though Venus govern your desires,  
Saturn is dominator over mine:  
What signifies my deadly-standing eye,  
My silence and my cloudy melancholy,  
My fleece of woolly hair that now uncurls  
Even as an adder when she doth unroll  
To do some fatal execution?  
No, madam, these are no venereal signs:  
Vengeance is in my heart, death in my hand,  
Blood and revenge are hammering in my head.  
Hark Tamora, the empress of my soul,  
Which never hopes more heaven than rests in thee,  
This is the day of doom for Bassianus:  
His Philomel must lose her tongue to-day,  
Thy sons make pillage of her chastity  
And wash their hands in Bassianus' blood.  
Seest thou this letter? take it up, I pray thee,  
And give the king this fatal plotted scroll.  
Now question me no more; we are espied;  
Here comes a parcel of our hopeful booty,  
Which dreads not yet their lives' destruction.

## TAMORA

Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!

## AARON

No more, great empress; Bassianus comes:  
Be cross with him; and I'll go fetch thy sons  
To back thy quarrels, whatsoe'er they be.

*Exit*

*Enter BASSIANUS and LAVINIA*

**BASSIANUS**

Who have we here? Rome's royal empress,  
Unfurnish'd of her well-beseeming troop?  
Or is it Dian, habited like her,  
Who hath abandoned her holy groves  
To see the general hunting in this forest?

**TAMORA**

Saucy controller of our private steps!  
Had I the power that some say Dian had,  
Thy temples should be planted presently  
With horns, as was Actaeon's; and the hounds  
Should drive upon thy new-transformed limbs,  
Unmannerly intruder as thou art!

**LAVINIA**

Under your patience, gentle empress,  
'Tis thought you have a goodly gift in horning;  
And to be doubted that your Moor and you  
Are singled forth to try experiments:  
Jove shield your husband from his hounds to-day!  
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag.

**BASSIANUS**

Believe me, queen, your swarth Cimmerian  
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,  
Spotted, detested, and abominable.  
Why are you sequester'd from all your train,  
Dismounted from your snow-white goodly steed.  
And wander'd hither to an obscure plot,  
Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor,  
If foul desire had not conducted you?

**LAVINIA**

And, being intercepted in your sport,  
Great reason that my noble lord be rated  
For sauciness. I pray you, let us hence,  
And let her joy her raven-colour'd love;  
This valley fits the purpose passing well.

## **BASSIANUS**

The king my brother shall have note of this.

## **LAVINIA**

Ay, for these slips have made him noted long:  
Good king, to be so mightily abused!

## **TAMORA**

Why have I patience to endure all this?

*Enter DEMETRIUS and CHIRON*

## **DEMETRIUS**

How now, dear sovereign, and our gracious mother!  
Why doth your highness look so pale and wan?

## **TAMORA**

Have I not reason, think you, to look pale?  
These two have 'ticed me hither to this place:  
A barren detested vale, you see it is;  
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,  
O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe:  
Here never shines the sun; here nothing breeds,  
Unless the nightly owl or fatal raven:  
And when they show'd me this abhorred pit,  
They told me, here, at dead time of the night,  
A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,  
Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins,  
Would make such fearful and confused cries  
As any mortal body hearing it

Should straight fall mad, or else die suddenly.  
No sooner had they told this hellish tale,  
But straight they told me they would bind me here  
Unto the body of a dismal yew,  
And leave me to this miserable death:  
And then they call'd me foul adulteress,  
Lascivious Goth, and all the bitterest terms  
That ever ear did hear to such effect:  
And, had you not by wondrous fortune come,  
This vengeance on me had they executed.  
Revenge it, as you love your mother's life,  
Or be ye not henceforth call'd my children.

## **DEMETRIUS**

This is a witness that I am thy son.

*Stabs BASSIANUS*

## **CHIRON**

And this for me, struck home to show my strength.

*Also stabs BASSIANUS, who dies*

## **LAVINIA**

Ay, come, Semiramis, nay, barbarous Tamora,  
For no name fits thy nature but thy own!

## **TAMORA**

Give me thy poniard; you shall know, my boys  
Your mother's hand shall right your mother's wrong.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Stay, madam; here is more belongs to her;  
First thrash the corn, then after burn the straw:  
This minion stood upon her chastity,  
Upon her nuptial vow, her loyalty,  
And with that painted hope braves your mightiness:

And shall she carry this unto her grave?

**CHIRON**

An if she do, I would I were an eunuch.  
Drag hence her husband to some secret hole,  
And make his dead trunk pillow to our lust.

**TAMORA**

But when ye have the honey ye desire,  
Let not this wasp outlive, us both to sting.

**CHIRON**

I warrant you, madam, we wil I make that sure.  
Come, mistress, now perforce we will enjoy  
That nice-preserved honesty of yours.

**LAVINIA**

O Tamora! thou bear'st a woman's face,--

**TAMORA**

I will not hear her speak; away with her!

**LAVINIA**

Sweet lords, entreat her hear me but a word.

**DEMETRIUS**

Listen, fair madam: let it be your glory  
To see her tears; but be your heart to them  
As unrelenting flint to drops of rain.

**LAVINIA**

When did the tiger's young ones teach the dam?  
O, do not learn her wrath; she taught it thee;



The milk thou suck'dst from her did turn to marble;  
Even at thy teat thou hadst thy tyranny.  
Yet every mother breeds not sons alike:

*To CHIRON*

Do thou entreat her show a woman pity.

**CHIRON**

What, wouldst thou have me prove myself a bastard?

**LAVINIA**

'Tis true; the raven doth not hatch a lark:  
Yet have I heard,--O, could I find it now!--  
The lion moved with pity did endure  
To have his princely paws pared all away:  
Some say that ravens foster forlorn children,  
The whilst their own birds famish in their nests:  
O, be to me, though thy hard heart say no,  
Nothing so kind, but something pitiful!

**TAMORA**

I know not what it means; away with her!

**LAVINIA**

O, let me teach thee! for my father's sake,  
That gave thee life, when well he might have  
slain thee,  
Be not obdurate, open thy deaf ears.

**TAMORA**

Hadst thou in person ne'er offended me,  
Even for his sake am I pitiless.  
Remember, boys, I pour'd forth tears in vain,  
To save your brother from the sacrifice;  
But fierce Andronicus would not relent;  
Therefore, away with her, and use her as you will,

The worse to her, the better loved of me.

## LAVINIA

O Tamora, be call'd a gentle queen,  
And with thine own hands kill me in this place!  
For 'tis not life that I have begg'd so long;  
Poor I was slain when Bassianus died.

## TAMORA

What begg'st thou, then? fond woman, let me go.

## LAVINIA

'Tis present death I beg; and one thing more  
That womanhood denies my tongue to tell:  
O, keep me from their worse than killing lust,  
And tumble me into some loathsome pit,  
Where never man's eye may behold my body:  
Do this, and be a charitable murderer.

## TAMORA

So should I rob my sweet sons of their fee:  
No, let them satisfy their lust on thee.

## DEMETRIUS

Away! for thou hast stay'd us here too long.

## LAVINIA

No grace? no womanhood? Ah, beastly creature!  
The blot and enemy to our general name!  
Confusion fall--

## CHIRON

Nay, then I'll stop your mouth. Bring thou her husband:  
This is the hole where Aaron bid us hide him.

*DEMETRIUS throws the body of BASSIANUS into the pit; then exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON, dragging off LAVINIA*

## **TAMORA**

Farewell, my sons: see that you make her sure.  
Ne'er let my heart know merry cheer indeed,  
Till all the Andronici be made away.  
Now will I hence to seek my lovely Moor,  
And let my spleenful sons this trull deflow'r.

*Exit*

*Re-enter AARON, with QUINTUS and MARTIUS*

## **AARON**

Come on, my lords, the better foot before:  
Straight will I bring you to the loathsome pit  
Where I espied the panther fast asleep.

## **QUINTUS**

My sight is very dull, whate'er it bodes.

## **MARTIUS**

And mine, I promise you; were't not for shame,  
Well could I leave our sport to sleep awhile.

*Falls into the pit*

## **QUINTUS**

What art thou fall'n? What subtle hole is this,  
Whose mouth is cover'd with rude-growing briars,  
Upon whose leaves are drops of new-shed blood  
As fresh as morning dew distill'd on flowers?  
A very fatal place it seems to me.  
Speak, brother, hast thou hurt thee with the fall?

## MARTIUS

O brother, with the dismall'st object hurt  
That ever eye with sight made heart lament!

## AARON

[Aside] Now will I fetch the king to find them here,  
That he thereby may give a likely guess  
How these were they that made away his brother.

*Exit*

## MARTIUS

Why dost not comfort me, and help me out  
From this unhallowed and blood-stained hole?

## QUINTUS

I am surprised with an uncouth fear;  
A chilling sweat o'er-runs my trembling joints:  
My heart suspects more than mine eye can see.

## MARTIUS

To prove thou hast a true-divining heart,  
Aaron and thou look down into this den,  
And see a fearful sight of blood and death.

## QUINTUS

Aaron is gone; and my compassionate heart  
Will not permit mine eyes once to behold  
The thing whereat it trembles by surmise;  
O, tell me how it is; for ne'er till now  
Was I a child to fear I know not what.

## MARTIUS

Lord Bassianus lies embrewed here,

All on a heap, like to a slaughter'd lamb,  
In this detested, dark, blood-drinking pit.

## QUINTUS

If it be dark, how dost thou know 'tis he?

## MARTIUS

Upon his bloody finger he doth wear  
A precious ring, that lightens all the hole,  
Which, like a taper in some monument,  
Doth shine upon the dead man's earthy cheeks,  
And shows the ragged entrails of the pit:  
So pale did shine the moon on Pyramus  
When he by night lay bathed in maiden blood.  
O brother, help me with thy fainting hand--  
If fear hath made thee faint, as me it hath--  
Out of this fell devouring receptacle,  
As hateful as Cocytus' misty mouth.

## QUINTUS

Reach me thy hand, that I may help thee out;  
Or, wanting strength to do thee so much good,  
I may be pluck'd into the swallowing womb  
Of this deep pit, poor Bassianus' grave.  
I have no strength to pluck thee to the brink.

## MARTIUS

Nor I no strength to climb without thy help.

## QUINTUS

Thy hand once more; I will not loose again,  
Till thou art here aloft, or I below:  
Thou canst not come to me: I come to thee.

*Falls in*

*Enter SATURNINUS with AARON*

## **SATURNINUS**

Along with me: I'll see what hole is here,  
And what he is that now is leap'd into it.  
Say who art thou that lately didst descend  
Into this gaping hollow of the earth?

## **MARTIUS**

The unhappy son of old Andronicus:  
Brought hither in a most unlucky hour,  
To find thy brother Bassianus dead.

## **SATURNINUS**

My brother dead! I know thou dost but jest:  
He and his lady both are at the lodge  
Upon the north side of this pleasant chase;  
'Tis not an hour since I left him there.

## **MARTIUS**

We know not where you left him all alive;  
But, out, alas! here have we found him dead.

*Re-enter TAMORA, with Attendants; TITUS ANDRONICUS, and Lucius*

## **TAMORA**

Where is my lord the king?

## **SATURNINUS**

Here, Tamora, though grieved with killing grief.

## **TAMORA**

Where is thy brother Bassianus?

## **SATURNINUS**

Now to the bottom dost thou search my wound:  
Poor Bassianus here lies murdered.

## **TAMORA**

Then all too late I bring this fatal writ,  
The complot of this timeless tragedy;  
And wonder greatly that man's face can fold  
In pleasing smiles such murderous tyranny.

*She giveth SATURNINUS a letter*

## **SATURNINUS**

[Reads] 'An if we miss to meet him handsomely--  
Sweet huntsman, Bassianus 'tis we mean--  
Do thou so much as dig the grave for him:  
Thou know'st our meaning. Look for thy reward  
Among the nettles at the elder-tree  
Which overshades the mouth of that same pit  
Where we decreed to bury Bassianus.  
Do this, and purchase us thy lasting friends.'  
O Tamora! was ever heard the like?  
This is the pit, and this the elder-tree.  
Look, sirs, if you can find the huntsman out  
That should have murdered Bassianus here.

## **AARON**

My gracious lord, here is the bag of gold.

## **SATURNINUS**

[To TITUS] Two of thy whelps, fell curs of  
bloody kind,  
Have here bereft my brother of his life.  
Sirs, drag them from the pit unto the prison:  
There let them bide until we have devised  
Some never-heard-of torturing pain for them.

## **TAMORA**

What, are they in this pit? O wondrous thing!  
How easily murder is discovered!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

High emperor, upon my feeble knee  
I beg this boon, with tears not lightly shed,  
That this fell fault of my accursed sons,  
Accursed if the fault be proved in them,--

**SATURNINUS**

If it be proved! you see it is apparent.  
Who found this letter? Tamora, was it you?

**TAMORA**

Andronicus himself did take it up.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I did, my lord: yet let me be their bail;  
For, by my father's reverend tomb, I vow  
They shall be ready at your highness' will  
To answer their suspicion with their lives.

**SATURNINUS**

Thou shalt not bail them: see thou follow me.  
Some bring the murder'd body, some the murderers:  
Let them not speak a word; the guilt is plain;  
For, by my soul, were there worse end than death,  
That end upon them should be executed.

**TAMORA**

Andronicus, I will entreat the king;  
Fear not thy sons; they shall do well enough.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**



Come, Lucius, come; stay not to talk with them.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 2, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 2, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. Another part of the forest.

*Enter DEMETRIUS and CHIRON with LAVINIA, ravished; her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out*

### DEMETRIUS

So, now go tell, an if thy tongue can speak,  
Who 'twas that cut thy tongue and ravish'd thee.

### CHIRON

Write down thy mind, bewray thy meaning so,  
An if thy stumps will let thee play the scribe.

### DEMETRIUS

See, how with signs and tokens she can scowl.

### CHIRON

Go home, call for sweet water, wash thy hands.

### DEMETRIUS

She hath no tongue to call, nor hands to wash;  
And so let's leave her to her silent walks.

### CHIRON

An 'twere my case, I should go hang myself.

### DEMETRIUS

If thou hadst hands to help thee knit the cord.

*Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON*

*Enter MARCUS*

**MARCUS**

Who is this? my niece, that flies away so fast!  
Cousin, a word; where is your husband?  
If I do dream, would all my wealth would wake me!  
If I do wake, some planet strike me down,  
That I may slumber in eternal sleep!  
Speak, gentle niece, what stern ungentle hands  
Have lopp'd and hew'd and made thy body bare  
Of her two branches, those sweet ornaments,  
Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,  
And might not gain so great a happiness  
As have thy love? Why dost not speak to me?  
Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,  
Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,  
Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips,  
Coming and going with thy honey breath.  
But, sure, some Tereus hath deflowered thee,  
And, lest thou shouldst detect him, cut thy tongue.  
Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame!  
And, notwithstanding all this loss of blood,  
As from a conduit with three issuing spouts,  
Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face  
Blushing to be encountered with a cloud.  
Shall I speak for thee? shall I say 'tis so?  
O, that I knew thy heart; and knew the beast,  
That I might rail at him, to ease my mind!  
Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopp'd,  
Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.  
Fair Philomela, she but lost her tongue,  
And in a tedious sampler sew'd her mind:  
But, lovely niece, that mean is cut from thee;  
A craftier Tereus, cousin, hast thou met,  
And he hath cut those pretty fingers off,  
That could have better sew'd than Philomel.  
O, had the monster seen those lily hands  
Tremble, like aspen-leaves, upon a lute,  
And make the silken strings delight to kiss them,

He would not then have touch'd them for his life!  
Or, had he heard the heavenly harmony  
Which that sweet tongue hath made,  
He would have dropp'd his knife, and fell asleep  
As Cerberus at the Thracian poet's feet.  
Come, let us go, and make thy father blind;  
For such a sight will blind a father's eye:  
One hour's storm will drown the fragrant meads;  
What will whole months of tears thy father's eyes?  
Do not draw back, for we will mourn with thee  
O, could our mourning ease thy misery!

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 2, Scene 4  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 3, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. A street.

*Enter Judges, Senators and Tribunes, with MARTIUS and QUINTUS, bound, passing on to the place of execution; TITUS going before, pleading*

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

Hear me, grave fathers! noble tribunes, stay!  
For pity of mine age, whose youth was spent  
In dangerous wars, whilst you securely slept;  
For all my blood in Rome's great quarrel shed;  
For all the frosty nights that I have watch'd;  
And for these bitter tears, which now you see  
Filling the aged wrinkles in my cheeks;  
Be pitiful to my condemned sons,  
Whose souls are not corrupted as 'tis thought.  
For two and twenty sons I never wept,  
Because they died in honour's lofty bed.

*Lieth down; the Judges, & c., pass by him, and Exeunt*

For these, these, tribunes, in the dust I write  
My heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears:  
Let my tears stanch the earth's dry appetite;  
My sons' sweet blood will make it shame and blush.  
O earth, I will befriend thee more with rain,  
That shall distil from these two ancient urns,  
Than youthful April shall with all his showers:  
In summer's drought I'll drop upon thee still;  
In winter with warm tears I'll melt the snow  
And keep eternal spring-time on thy face,  
So thou refuse to drink my dear sons' blood.

*Enter LUCIUS, with his sword drawn*

O reverend tribunes! O gentle, aged men!

Unbind my sons, reverse the doom of death;  
And let me say, that never wept before,  
My tears are now prevailing orators.

**LUCIUS**

O noble father, you lament in vain:  
The tribunes hear you not; no man is by;  
And you recount your sorrows to a stone.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ah, Lucius, for thy brothers let me plead.  
Grave tribunes, once more I entreat of you,--

**LUCIUS**

My gracious lord, no tribune hears you speak.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, tis no matter, man; if they did hear,  
They would not mark me, or if they did mark,  
They would not pity me, yet plead I must;  
Therefore I tell my sorrows to the stones;  
Who, though they cannot answer my distress,  
Yet in some sort they are better than the tribunes,  
For that they will not intercept my tale:  
When I do weep, they humbly at my feet  
Receive my tears and seem to weep with me;  
And, were they but attired in grave weeds,  
Rome could afford no tribune like to these.  
A stone is soft as wax,--tribunes more hard than stones;  
A stone is silent, and offendeth not,  
And tribunes with their tongues doom men to death.

*Rises*

But wherefore stand'st thou with thy weapon drawn?

**LUCIUS**

To rescue my two brothers from their death:  
For which attempt the judges have pronounced  
My everlasting doom of banishment.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O happy man! they have befriended thee.  
Why, foolish Lucius, dost thou not perceive  
That Rome is but a wilderness of tigers?  
Tigers must prey, and Rome affords no prey  
But me and mine: how happy art thou, then,  
From these devourers to be banished!  
But who comes with our brother Marcus here?

*Enter MARCUS and LAVINIA*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Titus, prepare thy aged eyes to weep;  
Or, if not so, thy noble heart to break:  
I bring consuming sorrow to thine age.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Will it consume me? let me see it, then.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This was thy daughter.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, Marcus, so she is.

**LUCIUS**

Ay me, this object kills me!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Faint-hearted boy, arise, and look upon her.

Speak, Lavinia, what accursed hand  
Hath made thee handless in thy father's sight?  
What fool hath added water to the sea,  
Or brought a faggot to bright-burning Troy?  
My grief was at the height before thou camest,  
And now like Nilus, it disdaineth bounds.  
Give me a sword, I'll chop off my hands too;  
For they have fought for Rome, and all in vain;  
And they have nursed this woe, in feeding life;  
In bootless prayer have they been held up,  
And they have served me to effectless use:  
Now all the service I require of them  
Is that the one will help to cut the other.  
'Tis well, Lavinia, that thou hast no hands;  
For hands, to do Rome service, are but vain.

## **LUCIUS**

Speak, gentle sister, who hath martyr'd thee?

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O, that delightful engine of her thoughts  
That blabb'd them with such pleasing eloquence,  
Is torn from forth that pretty hollow cage,  
Where, like a sweet melodious bird, it sung  
Sweet varied notes, enchanting every ear!

## **LUCIUS**

O, say thou for her, who hath done this deed?

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O, thus I found her, straying in the park,  
Seeking to hide herself, as doth the deer  
That hath received some unrecurring wound.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

It was my deer; and he that wounded her  
Hath hurt me more than had he killed me dead:



For now I stand as one upon a rock  
Environed with a wilderness of sea,  
Who marks the waxing tide grow wave by wave,  
Expecting ever when some envious surge  
Will in his brinish bowels swallow him.  
This way to death my wretched sons are gone;  
Here stands my other son, a banished man,  
And here my brother, weeping at my woes.  
But that which gives my soul the greatest spurn,  
Is dear Lavinia, dearer than my soul.  
Had I but seen thy picture in this plight,  
It would have maddened me: what shall I do  
Now I behold thy lively body so?  
Thou hast no hands, to wipe away thy tears:  
Nor tongue, to tell me who hath martyr'd thee:  
Thy husband he is dead: and for his death  
Thy brothers are condemn'd, and dead by this.  
Look, Marcus! ah, son Lucius, look on her!  
When I did name her brothers, then fresh tears  
Stood on her cheeks, as doth the honey-dew  
Upon a gather'd lily almost wither'd.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Perchance she weeps because they kill'd her husband;  
Perchance because she knows them innocent.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

If they did kill thy husband, then be joyful  
Because the law hath ta'en revenge on them.  
No, no, they would not do so foul a deed;  
Witness the sorrow that their sister makes.  
Gentle Lavinia, let me kiss thy lips.  
Or make some sign how I may do thee ease:  
Shall thy good uncle, and thy brother Lucius,  
And thou, and I, sit round about some fountain,  
Looking all downwards to behold our cheeks  
How they are stain'd, as meadows, yet not dry,  
With miry slime left on them by a flood?  
And in the fountain shall we gaze so long  
Till the fresh taste be taken from that clearness,  
And made a brine-pit with our bitter tears?

Or shall we cut away our hands, like thine?  
Or shall we bite our tongues, and in dumb shows  
Pass the remainder of our hateful days?  
What shall we do? let us, that have our tongues,  
Plot some deuce of further misery,  
To make us wonder'd at in time to come.

**LUCIUS**

Sweet father, cease your tears; for, at your grief,  
See how my wretched sister sobs and weeps.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Patience, dear niece. Good Titus, dry thine eyes.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ah, Marcus, Marcus! brother, well I wot  
Thy napkin cannot drink a tear of mine,  
For thou, poor man, hast drown'd it with thine own.

**LUCIUS**

Ah, my Lavinia, I will wipe thy cheeks.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Mark, Marcus, mark! I understand her signs:  
Had she a tongue to speak, now would she say  
That to her brother which I said to thee:  
His napkin, with his true tears all bewet,  
Can do no service on her sorrowful cheeks.  
O, what a sympathy of woe is this,  
As far from help as Limbo is from bliss!

*Enter AARON*

**AARON**

Titus Andronicus, my lord the emperor

Sends thee this word,--that, if thou love thy sons,  
Let Marcus, Lucius, or thyself, old Titus,  
Or any one of you, chop off your hand,  
And send it to the king: he for the same  
Will send thee hither both thy sons alive;  
And that shall be the ransom for their fault.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O gracious emperor! O gentle Aaron!  
Did ever raven sing so like a lark,  
That gives sweet tidings of the sun's uprise?  
With all my heart, I'll send the emperor My hand:  
Good Aaron, wilt thou help to chop it off?

## **LUCIUS**

Stay, father! for that noble hand of thine,  
That hath thrown down so many enemies,  
Shall not be sent: my hand will serve the turn:  
My youth can better spare my blood than you;  
And therefore mine shall save my brothers' lives.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Which of your hands hath not defended Rome,  
And rear'd aloft the bloody battle-axe,  
Writing destruction on the enemy's castle?  
O, none of both but are of high desert:  
My hand hath been but idle; let it serve  
To ransom my two nephews from their death;  
Then have I kept it to a worthy end.

## **AARON**

Nay, come, agree whose hand shall go along,  
For fear they die before their pardon come.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My hand shall go.

**LUCIUS**

By heaven, it shall not go!

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Sirs, strive no more: such wither'd herbs as these  
Are meet for plucking up, and therefore mine.

**LUCIUS**

Sweet father, if I shall be thought thy son,  
Let me redeem my brothers both from death.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

And, for our father's sake and mother's care,  
Now let me show a brother's love to thee.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Agree between you; I will spare my hand.

**LUCIUS**

Then I'll go fetch an axe.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

But I will use the axe.

*Exeunt LUCIUS and MARCUS*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come hither, Aaron; I'll deceive them both:  
Lend me thy hand, and I will give thee mine.

**AARON**

[Aside] If that be call'd deceit, I will be honest,

And never, whilst I live, deceive men so:  
But I'll deceive you in another sort,  
And that you'll say, ere half an hour pass.

*Cuts off TITUS's hand*

*Re-enter LUCIUS and MARCUS*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Now stay your strife: what shall be is dispatch'd.  
Good Aaron, give his majesty my hand:  
Tell him it was a hand that warded him  
From thousand dangers; bid him bury it  
More hath it merited; that let it have.  
As for my sons, say I account of them  
As jewels purchased at an easy price;  
And yet dear too, because I bought mine own.

## **AARON**

I go, Andronicus: and for thy hand  
Look by and by to have thy sons with thee.

*Aside*

Their heads, I mean. O, how this villany  
Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it!  
Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace.  
Aaron will have his soul black like his face.

*Exit*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O, here I lift this one hand up to heaven,  
And bow this feeble ruin to the earth:  
If any power pities wretched tears,  
To that I call!

*To LAVINIA*

What, wilt thou kneel with me?  
Do, then, dear heart; for heaven shall hear our prayers;  
Or with our sighs we'll breathe the welkin dim,  
And stain the sun with fog, as sometime clouds  
When they do hug him in their melting bosoms.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O brother, speak with possibilities,  
And do not break into these deep extremes.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Is not my sorrow deep, having no bottom?  
Then be my passions bottomless with them.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

But yet let reason govern thy lament.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

If there were reason for these miseries,  
Then into limits could I bind my woes:  
When heaven doth weep, doth not the earth o'erflow?  
If the winds rage, doth not the sea wax mad,  
Threatening the welkin with his big-swoln face?  
And wilt thou have a reason for this coil?  
I am the sea; hark, how her sighs do blow!  
She is the weeping welkin, I the earth:  
Then must my sea be moved with her sighs;  
Then must my earth with her continual tears  
Become a deluge, overflow'd and drown'd;  
For why my bowels cannot hide her woes,  
But like a drunkard must I vomit them.  
Then give me leave, for losers will have leave  
To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues.

*Enter a Messenger, with two heads and a hand*

**Messenger**

Worthy Andronicus, ill art thou repaid  
For that good hand thou sent'st the emperor.  
Here are the heads of thy two noble sons;  
And here's thy hand, in scorn to thee sent back;  
Thy griefs their sports, thy resolution mock'd;  
That woe is me to think upon thy woes  
More than remembrance of my father's death.

*Exit*

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Now let hot AETna cool in Sicily,  
And be my heart an ever-burning hell!  
These miseries are more than may be borne.  
To weep with them that weep doth ease some deal;  
But sorrow flouted at is double death.

## **LUCIUS**

Ah, that this sight should make so deep a wound,  
And yet detested life not shrink thereat!  
That ever death should let life bear his name,  
Where life hath no more interest but to breathe!

*LAVINIA kisses TITUS*

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Alas, poor heart, that kiss is comfortless  
As frozen water to a starved snake.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

When will this fearful slumber have an end?

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Now, farewell, flattery: die, Andronicus;  
Thou dost not slumber: see, thy two sons' heads,  
Thy warlike hand, thy mangled daughter here:

Thy other banish'd son, with this dear sight  
Struck pale and bloodless; and thy brother, I,  
Even like a stony image, cold and numb.  
Ah, now no more will I control thy griefs:  
Rend off thy silver hair, thy other hand  
Gnawing with thy teeth; and be this dismal sight  
The closing up of our most wretched eyes;  
Now is a time to storm; why art thou still?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ha, ha, ha!

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Why dost thou laugh? it fits not with this hour.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, I have not another tear to shed:  
Besides, this sorrow is an enemy,  
And would usurp upon my watery eyes  
And make them blind with tributary tears:  
Then which way shall I find Revenge's cave?  
For these two heads do seem to speak to me,  
And threat me I shall never come to bliss  
Till all these mischiefs be return'd again  
Even in their throats that have committed them.  
Come, let me see what task I have to do.  
You heavy people, circle me about,  
That I may turn me to each one of you,  
And swear unto my soul to right your wrongs.  
The vow is made. Come, brother, take a head;  
And in this hand the other I will bear.  
Lavinia, thou shalt be employ'd: these arms!  
Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy teeth.  
As for thee, boy, go get thee from my sight;  
Thou art an exile, and thou must not stay:  
Hie to the Goths, and raise an army there:  
And, if you love me, as I think you do,  
Let's kiss and part, for we have much to do.



*Exeunt TITUS, MARCUS, and LAVINIA*

## **LUCIUS**

Farewell Andronicus, my noble father,  
The wofull'st man that ever lived in Rome:  
Farewell, proud Rome; till Lucius come again,  
He leaves his pledges dearer than his life:  
Farewell, Lavinia, my noble sister;  
O, would thou wert as thou tofore hast been!  
But now nor Lucius nor Lavinia lives  
But in oblivion and hateful griefs.  
If Lucius live, he will requite your wrongs;  
And make proud Saturnine and his empress  
Beg at the gates, like Tarquin and his queen.  
Now will I to the Goths, and raise a power,  
To be revenged on Rome and Saturnine.

*Exit*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 3, Scene 1  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 3, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. A room in Titus's house. A banquet set out.

*Enter TITUS, MARCUS, LAVINIA and Young LUCIUS, a boy*

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

So, so; now sit: and look you eat no more  
Than will preserve just so much strength in us  
As will revenge these bitter woes of ours.  
Marcus, unknit that sorrow-wreathen knot:  
Thy niece and I, poor creatures, want our hands,  
And cannot passionate our tenfold grief  
With folded arms. This poor right hand of mine  
Is left to tyrannize upon my breast;  
Who, when my heart, all mad with misery,  
Beats in this hollow prison of my flesh,  
Then thus I thump it down.

*To LAVINIA*

Thou map of woe, that thus dost talk in signs!  
When thy poor heart beats with outrageous beating,  
Thou canst not strike it thus to make it still.  
Wound it with sighing, girl, kill it with groans;  
Or get some little knife between thy teeth,  
And just against thy heart make thou a hole;  
That all the tears that thy poor eyes let fall  
May run into that sink, and soaking in  
Drown the lamenting fool in sea-salt tears.

### MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Fie, brother, fie! teach her not thus to lay  
Such violent hands upon her tender life.

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

How now! has sorrow made thee dote already?  
Why, Marcus, no man should be mad but I.  
What violent hands can she lay on her life?  
Ah, wherefore dost thou urge the name of hands;  
To bid Aeneas tell the tale twice o'er,  
How Troy was burnt and he made miserable?  
O, handle not the theme, to talk of hands,  
Lest we remember still that we have none.  
Fie, fie, how frantically I square my talk,  
As if we should forget we had no hands,  
If Marcus did not name the word of hands!  
Come, let's fall to; and, gentle girl, eat this:  
Here is no drink! Hark, Marcus, what she says;  
I can interpret all her martyr'd signs;  
She says she drinks no other drink but tears,  
Brew'd with her sorrow, mesh'd upon her cheeks:  
Speechless complainer, I will learn thy thought;  
In thy dumb action will I be as perfect  
As begging hermits in their holy prayers:  
Thou shalt not sigh, nor hold thy stumps to heaven,  
Nor wink, nor nod, nor kneel, nor make a sign,  
But I of these will wrest an alphabet  
And by still practise learn to know thy meaning.

### **Young LUCIUS**

Good grandsire, leave these bitter deep laments:  
Make my aunt merry with some pleasing tale.

### **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Alas, the tender boy, in passion moved,  
Doth weep to see his grandsire's heaviness.

### **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Peace, tender sapling; thou art made of tears,  
And tears will quickly melt thy life away.

*MARCUS strikes the dish with a knife*

What dost thou strike at, Marcus, with thy knife?

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

At that that I have kill'd, my lord; a fly.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Out on thee, murderer! thou kill'st my heart;  
Mine eyes are cloy'd with view of tyranny:  
A deed of death done on the innocent  
Becomes not Titus' brother: get thee gone:  
I see thou art not for my company.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Alas, my lord, I have but kill'd a fly.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But how, if that fly had a father and mother?  
How would he hang his slender gilded wings,  
And buzz lamenting doings in the air!  
Poor harmless fly,  
That, with his pretty buzzing melody,  
Came here to make us merry! and thou hast  
kill'd him.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Pardon me, sir; it was a black ill-favor'd fly,  
Like to the empress' Moor; therefore I kill'd him.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O, O, O,  
Then pardon me for reprehending thee,  
For thou hast done a charitable deed.  
Give me thy knife, I will insult on him;  
Flattering myself, as if it were the Moor  
Come hither purposely to poison me.--  
There's for thyself, and that's for Tamora.

Ah, sirrah!  
Yet, I think, we are not brought so low,  
But that between us we can kill a fly  
That comes in likeness of a coal-black Moor.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Alas, poor man! grief has so wrought on him,  
He takes false shadows for true substances.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, take away. Lavinia, go with me:  
I'll to thy closet; and go read with thee  
Sad stories chanced in the times of old.  
Come, boy, and go with me: thy sight is young,  
And thou shalt read when mine begin to dazzle.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 3, Scene 2  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 4, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Rome. Titus's garden.

*Enter young LUCIUS, and LAVINIA running after him, and the boy flies from her, with books under his arm. Then enter TITUS and MARCUS*

### Young LUCIUS

Help, grandsire, help! my aunt Lavinia  
Follows me every where, I know not why:  
Good uncle Marcus, see how swift she comes.  
Alas, sweet aunt, I know not what you mean.

### MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Stand by me, Lucius; do not fear thine aunt.

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

She loves thee, boy, too well to do thee harm.

### Young LUCIUS

Ay, when my father was in Rome she did.

### MARCUS ANDRONICUS

What means my niece Lavinia by these signs?

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

Fear her not, Lucius: somewhat doth she mean:  
See, Lucius, see how much she makes of thee:  
Somewhither would she have thee go with her.  
Ah, boy, Cornelia never with more care  
Read to her sons than she hath read to thee  
Sweet poetry and Tully's Orator.

## MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Canst thou not guess wherefore she plies thee thus?

## Young LUCIUS

My lord, I know not, I, nor can I guess,  
Unless some fit or frenzy do possess her:  
For I have heard my grandsire say full oft,  
Extremity of griefs would make men mad;  
And I have read that Hecuba of Troy  
Ran mad through sorrow: that made me to fear;  
Although, my lord, I know my noble aunt  
Loves me as dear as e'er my mother did,  
And would not, but in fury, fright my youth:  
Which made me down to throw my books, and fly--  
Causeless, perhaps. But pardon me, sweet aunt:  
And, madam, if my uncle Marcus go,  
I will most willingly attend your ladyship.

## MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Lucius, I will.

*LAVINIA turns over with her stumps the books which LUCIUS has let fall*

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

How now, Lavinia! Marcus, what means this?  
Some book there is that she desires to see.  
Which is it, girl, of these? Open them, boy.  
But thou art deeper read, and better skill'd  
Come, and take choice of all my library,  
And so beguile thy sorrow, till the heavens  
Reveal the damn'd contriver of this deed.  
Why lifts she up her arms in sequence thus?

## MARCUS ANDRONICUS

I think she means that there was more than one  
Confederate in the fact: ay, more there was;  
Or else to heaven she heaves them for revenge.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Lucius, what book is that she tosseth so?

## **Young LUCIUS**

Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses;  
My mother gave it me.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

For love of her that's gone,  
Perhaps she cull'd it from among the rest.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Soft! see how busily she turns the leaves!

*Helping her*

What would she find? Lavinia, shall I read?  
This is the tragic tale of Philomel,  
And treats of Tereus' treason and his rape:  
And rape, I fear, was root of thine annoy.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

See, brother, see; note how she quotes the leaves.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Lavinia, wert thou thus surprised, sweet girl,  
Ravish'd and wrong'd, as Philomela was,  
Forced in the ruthless, vast, and gloomy woods? See, see!  
Ay, such a place there is, where we did hunt--  
O, had we never, never hunted there!--  
Pattern'd by that the poet here describes,  
By nature made for murders and for rapes.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**



O, why should nature build so foul a den,  
Unless the gods delight in tragedies?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Give signs, sweet girl, for here are none  
but friends,  
What Roman lord it was durst do the deed:  
Or slunk not Saturnine, as Tarquin erst,  
That left the camp to sin in Lucrece' bed?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Sit down, sweet niece: brother, sit down by me.  
Apollo, Pallas, Jove, or Mercury,  
Inspire me, that I may this treason find!  
My lord, look here: look here, Lavinia:  
This sandy plot is plain; guide, if thou canst  
This after me, when I have writ my name  
Without the help of any hand at all.

*He writes his name with his staff, and guides it with feet and mouth*

Cursed be that heart that forced us to this shift!  
Write thou good niece; and here display, at last,  
What God will have discover'd for revenge;  
Heaven guide thy pen to print thy sorrows plain,  
That we may know the traitors and the truth!

*She takes the staff in her mouth, and guides it with her stumps, and writes*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

O, do ye read, my lord, what she hath writ?  
'Stuprum. Chiron. Demetrius.'

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

What, what! the lustful sons of Tamora  
Performers of this heinous, bloody deed?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Magni Dominator poli,  
Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O, calm thee, gentle lord; although I know  
There is enough written upon this earth  
To stir a mutiny in the mildest thoughts  
And arm the minds of infants to exclams.  
My lord, kneel down with me; Lavinia, kneel;  
And kneel, sweet boy, the Roman Hector's hope;  
And swear with me, as, with the woful fere  
And father of that chaste dishonour'd dame,  
Lord Junius Brutus sware for Lucrece' rape,  
That we will prosecute by good advice  
Mortal revenge upon these traitorous Goths,  
And see their blood, or die with this reproach.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

'Tis sure enough, an you knew how.  
But if you hunt these bear-whelps, then beware:  
The dam will wake; and, if she wind you once,  
She's with the lion deeply still in league,  
And lulls him whilst she playeth on her back,  
And when he sleeps will she do what she list.  
You are a young huntsman, Marcus; let it alone;  
And, come, I will go get a leaf of brass,  
And with a gad of steel will write these words,  
And lay it by: the angry northern wind  
Will blow these sands, like Sibyl's leaves, abroad,  
And where's your lesson, then? Boy, what say you?

## **Young LUCIUS**

I say, my lord, that if I were a man,  
Their mother's bed-chamber should not be safe  
For these bad bondmen to the yoke of Rome.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Ay, that's my boy! thy father hath full oft  
For his ungrateful country done the like.

**Young LUCIUS**

And, uncle, so will I, an if I live.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, go with me into mine armoury;  
Lucius, I'll fit thee; and withal, my boy,  
Shalt carry from me to the empress' sons  
Presents that I intend to send them both:  
Come, come; thou'lt do thy message, wilt thou not?

**Young LUCIUS**

Ay, with my dagger in their bosoms, grandsire.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

No, boy, not so; I'll teach thee another course.  
Lavinia, come. Marcus, look to my house:  
Lucius and I'll go brave it at the court:  
Ay, marry, will we, sir; and we'll be waited on.

*Exeunt TITUS, LAVINIA, and Young LUCIUS*

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

O heavens, can you hear a good man groan,  
And not relent, or not compassion him?  
Marcus, attend him in his ecstasy,  
That hath more scars of sorrow in his heart  
Than foemen's marks upon his batter'd shield;  
But yet so just that he will not revenge.  
Revenge, ye heavens, for old Andronicus!

*Exit*



# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 4, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. The same. A room in the palace.

*Enter, from one side, AARON, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON; from the other side, Young LUCIUS, and an Attendant, with a bundle of weapons, and verses writ upon them*

### CHIRON

Demetrius, here's the son of Lucius;  
He hath some message to deliver us.

### AARON

Ay, some mad message from his mad grandfather.

### Young LUCIUS

My lords, with all the humbleness I may,  
I greet your honours from Andronicus.

*Aside*

And pray the Roman gods confound you both!

### DEMETRIUS

Gramercy, lovely Lucius: what's the news?

### Young LUCIUS

[Aside] That you are both decipher'd, that's the news,  
For villains mark'd with rape.--May it please you,  
My grandsire, well advised, hath sent by me  
The goodliest weapons of his armoury  
To gratify your honourable youth,  
The hope of Rome; for so he bade me say;  
And so I do, and with his gifts present

Your lordships, that, whenever you have need,  
You may be armed and appointed well:  
And so I leave you both:

*Aside*

like bloody villains.

*Exeunt Young LUCIUS, and Attendant*

## **DEMETRIUS**

What's here? A scroll; and written round about?  
Let's see;

*Reads*

'Integer vitae, scelerisque purus,  
Non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu.'

## **CHIRON**

O, 'tis a verse in Horace; I know it well:  
I read it in the grammar long ago.

## **AARON**

Ay, just; a verse in Horace; right, you have it.

*Aside*

Now, what a thing it is to be an ass!  
Here's no sound jest! the old man hath found their guilt;  
And sends them weapons wrapped about with lines,  
That wound, beyond their feeling, to the quick.  
But were our witty empress well afoot,  
She would applaud Andronicus' conceit:  
But let her rest in her unrest awhile.  
And now, young lords, was't not a happy star  
Led us to Rome, strangers, and more than so,  
Captives, to be advanced to this height?

It did me good, before the palace gate  
To brave the tribune in his brother's hearing.

**DEMETRIUS**

But me more good, to see so great a lord  
Basely insinuate and send us gifts.

**AARON**

Had he not reason, Lord Demetrius?  
Did you not use his daughter very friendly?

**DEMETRIUS**

I would we had a thousand Roman dames  
At such a bay, by turn to serve our lust.

**CHIRON**

A charitable wish and full of love.

**AARON**

Here lacks but your mother for to say amen.

**CHIRON**

And that would she for twenty thousand more.

**DEMETRIUS**

Come, let us go; and pray to all the gods  
For our beloved mother in her pains.

**AARON**

[Aside] Pray to the devils; the gods have given us over.

*Trumpets sound within*

**DEMETRIUS**

Why do the emperor's trumpets flourish thus?

**CHIRON**

Belike, for joy the emperor hath a son.

**DEMETRIUS**

Soft! who comes here?

*Enter a Nurse, with a blackamoor Child in her arms*

**Nurse**

Good morn ow, lords:  
O, tell me, did you see Aaron the Moor?

**AARON**

Well, more or less, or ne'er a whit at all,  
Here Aaron is; and what with Aaron now?

**Nurse**

O gentle Aaron, we are all undone!  
Now help, or woe betide thee evermore!

**AARON**

Why, what a caterwauling dost thou keep!  
What dost thou wrap and fumble in thine arms?

**Nurse**

O, that which I would hide from heaven's eye,  
Our empress' shame, and stately Rome's disgrace!  
She is deliver'd, lords; she is deliver'd.

**AARON**



To whom?

**Nurse**

I mean, she is brought a-bed.

**AARON**

Well, God give her good rest! What hath he sent her?

**Nurse**

A devil.

**AARON**

Why, then she is the devil's dam; a joyful issue.

**Nurse**

A joyless, dismal, black, and sorrowful issue:  
Here is the babe, as loathsome as a toad  
Amongst the fairest breeders of our clime:  
The empress sends it thee, thy stamp, thy seal,  
And bids thee christen it with thy dagger's point.

**AARON**

'Zounds, ye whore! is black so base a hue?  
Sweet blowse, you are a beauteous blossom, sure.

**DEMETRIUS**

Villain, what hast thou done?

**AARON**

That which thou canst not undo.

**CHIRON**

Thou hast undone our mother.

**AARON**

Villain, I have done thy mother.

**DEMETRIUS**

And therein, hellish dog, thou hast undone.  
Woe to her chance, and damn'd her loathed choice!  
Accursed the offspring of so foul a fiend!

**CHIRON**

It shall not live.

**AARON**

It shall not die.

**Nurse**

Aaron, it must; the mother wills it so.

**AARON**

What, must it, nurse? then let no man but I  
Do execution on my flesh and blood.

**DEMETRIUS**

I'll broach the tadpole on my rapier's point:  
Nurse, give it me; my sword shall soon dispatch it.

**AARON**

Sooner this sword shall plough thy bowels up.

*Takes the Child from the Nurse, and draws*

Stay, murderous villains! will you kill your brother?  
Now, by the burning tapers of the sky,  
That shone so brightly when this boy was got,  
He dies upon my scimitar's sharp point  
That touches this my first-born son and heir!  
I tell you, younglings, not Enceladus,  
With all his threatening band of Typhon's brood,  
Nor great Alcides, nor the god of war,  
Shall seize this prey out of his father's hands.  
What, what, ye sanguine, shallow-hearted boys!  
Ye white-limed walls! ye alehouse painted signs!  
Coal-black is better than another hue,  
In that it scorns to bear another hue;  
For all the water in the ocean  
Can never turn the swan's black legs to white,  
Although she lave them hourly in the flood.  
Tell the empress from me, I am of age  
To keep mine own, excuse it how she can.

## **DEMETRIUS**

Wilt thou betray thy noble mistress thus?

## **AARON**

My mistress is my mistress; this myself,  
The vigour and the picture of my youth:  
This before all the world do I prefer;  
This maugre all the world will I keep safe,  
Or some of you shall smoke for it in Rome.

## **DEMETRIUS**

By this our mother is forever shamed.

## **CHIRON**

Rome will despise her for this foul escape.

## **Nurse**

The emperor, in his rage, will doom her death.

## **CHIRON**

I blush to think upon this ignomy.

## **AARON**

Why, there's the privilege your beauty bears:  
Fie, treacherous hue, that will betray with blushing  
The close enacts and counsels of the heart!  
Here's a young lad framed of another leer:  
Look, how the black slave smiles upon the father,  
As who should say 'Old lad, I am thine own.'  
He is your brother, lords, sensibly fed  
Of that self-blood that first gave life to you,  
And from that womb where you imprison'd were  
He is enfranchised and come to light:  
Nay, he is your brother by the surer side,  
Although my seal be stamped in his face.

## **Nurse**

Aaron, what shall I say unto the empress?

## **DEMETRIUS**

Advise thee, Aaron, what is to be done,  
And we will all subscribe to thy advice:  
Save thou the child, so we may all be safe.

## **AARON**

Then sit we down, and let us all consult.  
My son and I will have the wind of you:  
Keep there: now talk at pleasure of your safety.

*They sit*

## **DEMETRIUS**

How many women saw this child of his?

## AARON

Why, so, brave lords! when we join in league,  
I am a lamb: but if you brave the Moor,  
The chafed boar, the mountain lioness,  
The ocean swells not so as Aaron storms.  
But say, again; how many saw the child?

## Nurse

Cornelia the midwife and myself;  
And no one else but the deliver'd empress.

## AARON

The empress, the midwife, and yourself:  
Two may keep counsel when the third's away:  
Go to the empress, tell her this I said.

*He kills the nurse*

Weke, weke! so cries a pig prepared to the spit.

## DEMETRIUS

What mean'st thou, Aaron? wherefore didst thou this?

## AARON

O Lord, sir, 'tis a deed of policy:  
Shall she live to betray this guilt of ours,  
A long-tongued babbling gossip? no, lords, no:  
And now be it known to you my full intent.  
Not far, one Muli lives, my countryman;  
His wife but yesternight was brought to bed;  
His child is like to her, fair as you are:  
Go pack with him, and give the mother gold,  
And tell them both the circumstance of all;  
And how by this their child shall be advanced,  
And be received for the emperor's heir,  
And substituted in the place of mine,

To calm this tempest whirling in the court;  
And let the emperor dandle him for his own.  
Hark ye, lords; ye see I have given her physic,

*Pointing to the nurse*

And you must needs bestow her funeral;  
The fields are near, and you are gallant grooms:  
This done, see that you take no longer days,  
But send the midwife presently to me.  
The midwife and the nurse well made away,  
Then let the ladies tattle what they please.

## **CHIRON**

Aaron, I see thou wilt not trust the air  
With secrets.

## **DEMETRIUS**

For this care of Tamora,  
Herself and hers are highly bound to thee.

*Exeunt DEMETRIUS and CHIRON bearing off the Nurse's body*

## **AARON**

Now to the Goths, as swift as swallow flies;  
There to dispose this treasure in mine arms,  
And secretly to greet the empress' friends.  
Come on, you thick lipp'd slave, I'll bear you hence;  
For it is you that puts us to our shifts:  
I'll make you feed on berries and on roots,  
And feed on curds and whey, and suck the goat,  
And cabin in a cave, and bring you up  
To be a warrior, and command a camp.

*Exit*

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 4, Scene 3

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE III. The same. A public place.

*Enter TITUS, bearing arrows with letters at the ends of them; with him, MARCUS, Young LUCIUS, PUBLIUS, SEMPRONIUS, CAIUS, and other Gentlemen, with bows*

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

Come, Marcus; come, kinsmen; this is the way.  
Sir boy, now let me see your archery;  
Look ye draw home enough, and 'tis there straight.  
Terras Astraea reliquit:  
Be you remember'd, Marcus, she's gone, she's fled.  
Sirs, take you to your tools. You, cousins, shall  
Go sound the ocean, and cast your nets;  
Happily you may catch her in the sea;  
Yet there's as little justice as at land:  
No; Publius and Sempronius, you must do it;  
'Tis you must dig with mattock and with spade,  
And pierce the inmost centre of the earth:  
Then, when you come to Pluto's region,  
I pray you, deliver him this petition;  
Tell him, it is for justice and for aid,  
And that it comes from old Andronicus,  
Shaken with sorrows in ungrateful Rome.  
Ah, Rome! Well, well; I made thee miserable  
What time I threw the people's suffrages  
On him that thus doth tyrannize o'er me.  
Go, get you gone; and pray be careful all,  
And leave you not a man-of-war unsearch'd:  
This wicked emperor may have shipp'd her hence;  
And, kinsmen, then we may go pipe for justice.

### MARCUS ANDRONICUS

O Publius, is not this a heavy case,  
To see thy noble uncle thus distract?

## **PUBLIUS**

Therefore, my lord, it highly us concerns  
By day and night to attend him carefully,  
And feed his humour kindly as we may,  
Till time beget some careful remedy.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Kinsmen, his sorrows are past remedy.  
Join with the Goths; and with revengeful war  
Take wreak on Rome for this ingratitude,  
And vengeance on the traitor Saturnine.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Publius, how now! how now, my masters!  
What, have you met with her?

## **PUBLIUS**

No, my good lord; but Pluto sends you word,  
If you will have Revenge from hell, you shall:  
Marry, for Justice, she is so employ'd,  
He thinks, with Jove in heaven, or somewhere else,  
So that perforce you must needs stay a time.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

He doth me wrong to feed me with delays.  
I'll dive into the burning lake below,  
And pull her out of Acheron by the heels.  
Marcus, we are but shrubs, no cedars we  
No big-boned men framed of the Cyclops' size;  
But metal, Marcus, steel to the very back,  
Yet wrung with wrongs more than our backs can bear:  
And, sith there's no justice in earth nor hell,  
We will solicit heaven and move the gods  
To send down Justice for to wreak our wrongs.  
Come, to this gear. You are a good archer, Marcus;

*He gives them the arrows*



'Ad Jovem,' that's for you: here, 'Ad Apollinem:'  
'Ad Martem,' that's for myself:  
Here, boy, to Pallas: here, to Mercury:  
To Saturn, Caius, not to Saturnine;  
You were as good to shoot against the wind.  
To it, boy! Marcus, loose when I bid.  
Of my word, I have written to effect;  
There's not a god left unsolicited.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Kinsmen, shoot all your shafts into the court:  
We will afflict the emperor in his pride.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Now, masters, draw.

*They shoot*

O, well said, Lucius!  
Good boy, in Virgo's lap; give it Pallas.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

My lord, I aim a mile beyond the moon;  
Your letter is with Jupiter by this.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Ha, ha!  
Publius, Publius, what hast thou done?  
See, see, thou hast shot off one of Taurus' horns.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This was the sport, my lord: when Publius shot,  
The Bull, being gall'd, gave Aries such a knock  
That down fell both the Ram's horns in the court;  
And who should find them but the empress' villain?

She laugh'd, and told the Moor he should not choose  
But give them to his master for a present.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, there it goes: God give his lordship joy!

*Enter a Clown, with a basket, and two pigeons in it*

News, news from heaven! Marcus, the post is come.  
Sirrah, what tidings? have you any letters?  
Shall I have justice? what says Jupiter?

**Clown**

O, the gibbet-maker! he says that he hath taken  
them down again, for the man must not be hanged till  
the next week.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

But what says Jupiter, I ask thee?

**Clown**

Alas, sir, I know not Jupiter; I never drank with him  
in all my life.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, villain, art not thou the carrier?

**Clown**

Ay, of my pigeons, sir; nothing else.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, didst thou not come from heaven?

**Clown**

From heaven! alas, sir, I never came there God  
forbid I should be so bold to press to heaven in my  
young days. Why, I am going with my pigeons to the  
tribunal plebs, to take up a matter of brawl  
betwixt my uncle and one of the emperial's men.

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, sir, that is as fit as can be to serve for  
your oration; and let him deliver the pigeons to  
the emperor from you.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Tell me, can you deliver an oration to the emperor  
with a grace?

**Clown**

Nay, truly, sir, I could never say grace in all my life.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Sirrah, come hither: make no more ado,  
But give your pigeons to the emperor:  
By me thou shalt have justice at his hands.  
Hold, hold; meanwhile here's money for thy charges.  
Give me pen and ink. Sirrah, can you with a grace  
deliver a supplication?

**Clown**

Ay, sir.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Then here is a supplication for you. And when you  
come to him, at the first approach you must kneel,  
then kiss his foot, then deliver up your pigeons, and  
then look for your reward. I'll be at hand, sir; see  
you do it bravely.

**Clown**

I warrant you, sir, let me alone.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Sirrah, hast thou a knife? come, let me see it.  
Here, Marcus, fold it in the oration;  
For thou hast made it like an humble suppliant.  
And when thou hast given it the emperor,  
Knock at my door, and tell me what he says.

**Clown**

God be with you, sir; I will.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, Marcus, let us go. Publius, follow me.

*Exeunt*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 4, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 4, Scene 4

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE IV. The same. Before the palace.

*Enter SATURNINUS, TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, Lords, and others;  
SATURNINUS with the arrows in his hand that TITUS shot*

### SATURNINUS

Why, lords, what wrongs are these! was ever seen  
An emperor in Rome thus overborne,  
Troubled, confronted thus; and, for the extent  
Of equal justice, used in such contempt?  
My lords, you know, as know the mightful gods,  
However these disturbers of our peace  
Buz in the people's ears, there nought hath pass'd,  
But even with law, against the willful sons  
Of old Andronicus. And what an if  
His sorrows have so overwhelm'd his wits,  
Shall we be thus afflicted in his wrecks,  
His fits, his frenzy, and his bitterness?  
And now he writes to heaven for his redress:  
See, here's to Jove, and this to Mercury;  
This to Apollo; this to the god of war;  
Sweet scrolls to fly about the streets of Rome!  
What's this but libelling against the senate,  
And blazoning our injustice every where?  
A goodly humour, is it not, my lords?  
As who would say, in Rome no justice were.  
But if I live, his feigned ecstasies  
Shall be no shelter to these outrages:  
But he and his shall know that justice lives  
In Saturninus' health, whom, if she sleep,  
He'll so awake as she in fury shall  
Cut off the proud'st conspirator that lives.

### TAMORA

My gracious lord, my lovely Saturnine,

Lord of my life, commander of my thoughts,  
Calm thee, and bear the faults of Titus' age,  
The effects of sorrow for his valiant sons,  
Whose loss hath pierced him deep and scarr'd his heart;  
And rather comfort his distressed plight  
Than prosecute the meanest or the best  
For these contempts.

*Aside*

Why, thus it shall become  
High-witted Tamora to gloze with all:  
But, Titus, I have touched thee to the quick,  
Thy life-blood out: if Aaron now be wise,  
Then is all safe, the anchor's in the port.

*Enter Clown*

How now, good fellow! wouldst thou speak with us?

**Clown**

Yea, forsooth, an your mistership be emperial.

**TAMORA**

Empress I am, but yonder sits the emperor.

**Clown**

'Tis he. God and Saint Stephen give you good den:  
I have brought you a letter and a couple of pigeons here.

*SATURNINUS reads the letter*

**SATURNINUS**

Go, take him away, and hang him presently.

**Clown**

How much money must I have?

## **TAMORA**

Come, sirrah, you must be hanged.

## **Clown**

Hanged! by'r lady, then I have brought up a neck to a fair end.

*Exit, guarded*

## **SATURNINUS**

Despiteful and intolerable wrongs!  
Shall I endure this monstrous villany?  
I know from whence this same device proceeds:  
May this be borne?--as if his traitorous sons,  
That died by law for murder of our brother,  
Have by my means been butcher'd wrongfully!  
Go, drag the villain hither by the hair;  
Nor age nor honour shall shape privilege:  
For this proud mock I'll be thy slaughterman;  
Sly frantic wretch, that holp'st to make me great,  
In hope thyself should govern Rome and me.

*Enter AEMILIUS*

What news with thee, AEmilius?

## **AEMILIUS**

Arm, arm, my lord;--Rome never had more cause.  
The Goths have gather'd head; and with a power  
high-resolved men, bent to the spoil,  
They hither march amain, under conduct  
Of Lucius, son to old Andronicus;  
Who threats, in course of this revenge, to do  
As much as ever Coriolanus did.

## **SATURNINUS**

Is warlike Lucius general of the Goths?  
These tidings nip me, and I hang the head  
As flowers with frost or grass beat down with storms:  
Ay, now begin our sorrows to approach:  
'Tis he the common people love so much;  
Myself hath often over-heard them say,  
When I have walked like a private man,  
That Lucius' banishment was wrongfully,  
And they have wish'd that Lucius were their emperor.

**TAMORA**

Why should you fear? is not your city strong?

**SATURNINUS**

Ay, but the citizens favor Lucius,  
And will revolt from me to succor him.

**TAMORA**

King, be thy thoughts imperious, like thy name.  
Is the sun dimm'd, that gnats do fly in it?  
The eagle suffers little birds to sing,  
And is not careful what they mean thereby,  
Knowing that with the shadow of his wings  
He can at pleasure stint their melody:  
Even so mayst thou the giddy men of Rome.  
Then cheer thy spirit : for know, thou emperor,  
I will enchant the old Andronicus  
With words more sweet, and yet more dangerous,  
Than baits to fish, or honey-stalks to sheep,  
When as the one is wounded with the bait,  
The other rotted with delicious feed.

**SATURNINUS**

But he will not entreat his son for us.

**TAMORA**



If Tamora entreat him, then he will:  
For I can smooth and fill his aged ear  
With golden promises; that, were his heart  
Almost impregnable, his old ears deaf,  
Yet should both ear and heart obey my tongue.

*To AEmilius*

Go thou before, be our ambassador:  
Say that the emperor requests a parley  
Of warlike Lucius, and appoint the meeting  
Even at his father's house, the old Andronicus.

## **SATURNINUS**

AEmilius, do this message honourably:  
And if he stand on hostage for his safety,  
Bid him demand what pledge will please him best.

## **AEMILIUS**

Your bidding shall I do effectually.

*Exit*

## **TAMORA**

Now will I to that old Andronicus;  
And temper him with all the art I have,  
To pluck proud Lucius from the warlike Goths.  
And now, sweet emperor, be blithe again,  
And bury all thy fear in my devices.

## **SATURNINUS**

Then go successantly, and plead to him.

*Exeunt*

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 5, Scene 1

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE I. Plains near Rome.

*Enter LUCIUS with an army of Goths, with drum and colours*

**LUCIUS**

Approved warriors, and my faithful friends,  
I have received letters from great Rome,  
Which signify what hate they bear their emperor  
And how desirous of our sight they are.  
Therefore, great lords, be, as your titles witness,  
Imperious and impatient of your wrongs,  
And wherein Rome hath done you any scath,  
Let him make treble satisfaction.

**First Goth**

Brave slip, sprung from the great Andronicus,  
Whose name was once our terror, now our comfort;  
Whose high exploits and honourable deeds  
Ingrateful Rome requites with foul contempt,  
Be bold in us: we'll follow where thou lead'st,  
Like stinging bees in hottest summer's day  
Led by their master to the flowered fields,  
And be avenged on cursed Tamora.

**All the Goths**

And as he saith, so say we all with him.

**LUCIUS**

I humbly thank him, and I thank you all.  
But who comes here, led by a lusty Goth?

*Enter a Goth, leading AARON with his Child in his arms*

## Second Goth

Renowned Lucius, from our troops I stray'd  
To gaze upon a ruinous monastery;  
And, as I earnestly did fix mine eye  
Upon the wasted building, suddenly  
I heard a child cry underneath a wall.  
I made unto the noise; when soon I heard  
The crying babe controll'd with this discourse:  
'Peace, tawny slave, half me and half thy dam!  
Did not thy hue bewray whose brat thou art,  
Had nature lent thee but thy mother's look,  
Villain, thou mightst have been an emperor:  
But where the bull and cow are both milk-white,  
They never do beget a coal-black calf.  
Peace, villain, peace!'--even thus he rates  
the babe,--  
'For I must bear thee to a trusty Goth;  
Who, when he knows thou art the empress' babe,  
Will hold thee dearly for thy mother's sake.'  
With this, my weapon drawn, I rush'd upon him,  
Surprised him suddenly, and brought him hither,  
To use as you think needful of the man.

## LUCIUS

O worthy Goth, this is the incarnate devil  
That robb'd Andronicus of his good hand;  
This is the pearl that pleased your empress' eye,  
And here's the base fruit of his burning lust.  
Say, wall-eyed slave, whither wouldst thou convey  
This growing image of thy fiend-like face?  
Why dost not speak? what, deaf? not a word?  
A halter, soldiers! hang him on this tree.  
And by his side his fruit of bastardy.

## AARON

Touch not the boy; he is of royal blood.

## LUCIUS

Too like the sire for ever being good.  
First hang the child, that he may see it sprawl;  
A sight to vex the father's soul withal.  
Get me a ladder.

*A ladder brought, which AARON is made to ascend*

**AARON**

Lucius, save the child,  
And bear it from me to the empress.  
If thou do this, I'll show thee wondrous things,  
That highly may advantage thee to hear:  
If thou wilt not, befall what may befall,  
I'll speak no more but 'Vengeance rot you all!'

**LUCIUS**

Say on: an if it please me which thou speak'st  
Thy child shall live, and I will see it nourish'd.

**AARON**

An if it please thee! why, assure thee, Lucius,  
'Twill vex thy soul to hear what I shall speak;  
For I must talk of murders, rapes and massacres,  
Acts of black night, abominable deeds,  
Complots of mischief, treason, villanies  
Ruthful to hear, yet piteously perform'd:  
And this shall all be buried by my death,  
Unless thou swear to me my child shall live.

**LUCIUS**

Tell on thy mind; I say thy child shall live.

**AARON**

Swear that he shall, and then I will begin.

**LUCIUS**

Who should I swear by? thou believest no god:  
That granted, how canst thou believe an oath?

**AARON**

What if I do not? as, indeed, I do not;  
Yet, for I know thou art religious  
And hast a thing within thee called conscience,  
With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies,  
Which I have seen thee careful to observe,  
Therefore I urge thy oath; for that I know  
An idiot holds his bauble for a god  
And keeps the oath which by that god he swears,  
To that I'll urge him: therefore thou shalt vow  
By that same god, what god soe'er it be,  
That thou adorest and hast in reverence,  
To save my boy, to nourish and bring him up;  
Or else I will discover nought to thee.

**LUCIUS**

Even by my god I swear to thee I will.

**AARON**

First know thou, I begot him on the empress.

**LUCIUS**

O most insatiate and luxurious woman!

**AARON**

Tut, Lucius, this was but a deed of charity  
To that which thou shalt hear of me anon.  
'Twas her two sons that murder'd Bassianus;  
They cut thy sister's tongue and ravish'd her  
And cut her hands and trimm'd her as thou saw'st.

**LUCIUS**

O detestable villain! call'st thou that trimming?

**AARON**

Why, she was wash'd and cut and trimm'd, and 'twas  
Trim sport for them that had the doing of it.

**LUCIUS**

O barbarous, beastly villains, like thyself!

**AARON**

Indeed, I was their tutor to instruct them:  
That coddling spirit had they from their mother,  
As sure a card as ever won the set;  
That bloody mind, I think, they learn'd of me,  
As true a dog as ever fought at head.  
Well, let my deeds be witness of my worth.  
I train'd thy brethren to that guileful hole  
Where the dead corpse of Bassianus lay:  
I wrote the letter that thy father found  
And hid the gold within the letter mention'd,  
Confederate with the queen and her two sons:  
And what not done, that thou hast cause to rue,  
Wherein I had no stroke of mischief in it?  
I play'd the cheater for thy father's hand,  
And, when I had it, drew myself apart  
And almost broke my heart with extreme laughter:  
I pry'd me through the crevice of a wall  
When, for his hand, he had his two sons' heads;  
Beheld his tears, and laugh'd so heartily,  
That both mine eyes were rainy like to his :  
And when I told the empress of this sport,  
She swooned almost at my pleasing tale,  
And for my tidings gave me twenty kisses.

**First Goth**

What, canst thou say all this, and never blush?

**AARON**

Ay, like a black dog, as the saying is.

**LUCIUS**

Art thou not sorry for these heinous deeds?

**AARON**

Ay, that I had not done a thousand more.  
Even now I curse the day--and yet, I think,  
Few come within the compass of my curse,--  
Wherein I did not some notorious ill,  
As kill a man, or else devise his death,  
Ravish a maid, or plot the way to do it,  
Accuse some innocent and forswear myself,  
Set deadly enmity between two friends,  
Make poor men's cattle break their necks;  
Set fire on barns and hay-stacks in the night,  
And bid the owners quench them with their tears.  
Oft have I digg'd up dead men from their graves,  
And set them upright at their dear friends' doors,  
Even when their sorrows almost were forgot;  
And on their skins, as on the bark of trees,  
Have with my knife carved in Roman letters,  
'Let not your sorrow die, though I am dead.'  
Tut, I have done a thousand dreadful things  
As willingly as one would kill a fly,  
And nothing grieves me heartily indeed  
But that I cannot do ten thousand more.

**LUCIUS**

Bring down the devil; for he must not die  
So sweet a death as hanging presently.

**AARON**

If there be devils, would I were a devil,  
To live and burn in everlasting fire,  
So I might have your company in hell,  
But to torment you with my bitter tongue!

**LUCIUS**

Sirs, stop his mouth, and let him speak no more.

*Enter a Goth*

**Third Goth**

My lord, there is a messenger from Rome  
Desires to be admitted to your presence.

**LUCIUS**

Let him come near.

*Enter AEMILIUS*

Welcome, AEmilius what's the news from Rome?

**AEMILIUS**

Lord Lucius, and you princes of the Goths,  
The Roman emperor greets you all by me;  
And, for he understands you are in arms,  
He craves a parley at your father's house,  
Willing you to demand your hostages,  
And they shall be immediately deliver'd.

**First Goth**

What says our general?

**LUCIUS**

AEmilius, let the emperor give his pledges  
Unto my father and my uncle Marcus,  
And we will come. March away.

*Exeunt*





# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

## SCENE II. Rome. Before TITUS's house.

*Enter TAMORA, DEMETRIUS, and CHIRON, disguised*

### TAMORA

Thus, in this strange and sad habiliment,  
I will encounter with Andronicus,  
And say I am Revenge, sent from below  
To join with him and right his heinous wrongs.  
Knock at his study, where, they say, he keeps,  
To ruminat strange plots of dire revenge;  
Tell him Revenge is come to join with him,  
And work confusion on his enemies.

*They knock*

*Enter TITUS, above*

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

Who doth molest my contemplation?  
Is it your trick to make me ope the door,  
That so my sad decrees may fly away,  
And all my study be to no effect?  
You are deceived: for what I mean to do  
See here in bloody lines I have set down;  
And what is written shall be executed.

### TAMORA

Titus, I am come to talk with thee.

### TITUS ANDRONICUS

No, not a word; how can I grace my talk,

Wanting a hand to give it action?  
Thou hast the odds of me; therefore no more.

## **TAMORA**

If thou didst know me, thou wouldest talk with me.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I am not mad; I know thee well enough:  
Witness this wretched stump, witness these crimson lines;  
Witness these trenches made by grief and care,  
Witness the tiring day and heavy night;  
Witness all sorrow, that I know thee well  
For our proud empress, mighty Tamora:  
Is not thy coming for my other hand?

## **TAMORA**

Know, thou sad man, I am not Tamora;  
She is thy enemy, and I thy friend:  
I am Revenge: sent from the infernal kingdom,  
To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind,  
By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes.  
Come down, and welcome me to this world's light;  
Confer with me of murder and of death:  
There's not a hollow cave or lurking-place,  
No vast obscurity or misty vale,  
Where bloody murder or detested rape  
Can couch for fear, but I will find them out;  
And in their ears tell them my dreadful name,  
Revenge, which makes the foul offender quake.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Art thou Revenge? and art thou sent to me,  
To be a torment to mine enemies?

## **TAMORA**

I am; therefore come down, and welcome me.

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

Do me some service, ere I come to thee.  
Lo, by thy side where Rape and Murder stands;  
Now give me some surance that thou art Revenge,  
Stab them, or tear them on thy chariot-wheels;  
And then I'll come and be thy waggoner,  
And whirl along with thee about the globe.  
Provide thee two proper palfreys, black as jet,  
To hale thy vengeful waggon swift away,  
And find out murderers in their guilty caves:  
And when thy car is loaden with their heads,  
I will dismount, and by the waggon-wheel  
Trot, like a servile footman, all day long,  
Even from Hyperion's rising in the east  
Until his very downfall in the sea:  
And day by day I'll do this heavy task,  
So thou destroy Rapine and Murder there.

## TAMORA

These are my ministers, and come with me.

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

Are these thy ministers? what are they call'd?

## TAMORA

Rapine and Murder; therefore called so,  
Cause they take vengeance of such kind of men.

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

Good Lord, how like the empress' sons they are!  
And you, the empress! but we worldly men  
Have miserable, mad, mistaking eyes.  
O sweet Revenge, now do I come to thee;  
And, if one arm's embracement will content thee,  
I will embrace thee in it by and by.

*Exit above*

## **TAMORA**

This closing with him fits his lunacy  
Whate'er I forge to feed his brain-sick fits,  
Do you uphold and maintain in your speeches,  
For now he firmly takes me for Revenge;  
And, being credulous in this mad thought,  
I'll make him send for Lucius his son;  
And, whilst I at a banquet hold him sure,  
I'll find some cunning practise out of hand,  
To scatter and disperse the giddy Goths,  
Or, at the least, make them his enemies.  
See, here he comes, and I must ply my theme.

*Enter TITUS below*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Long have I been forlorn, and all for thee:  
Welcome, dread Fury, to my woful house:  
Rapine and Murder, you are welcome too.  
How like the empress and her sons you are!  
Well are you fitted, had you but a Moor:  
Could not all hell afford you such a devil?  
For well I wot the empress never wags  
But in her company there is a Moor;  
And, would you represent our queen aright,  
It were convenient you had such a devil:  
But welcome, as you are. What shall we do?

## **TAMORA**

What wouldst thou have us do, Andronicus?

## **DEMETRIUS**

Show me a murderer, I'll deal with him.

## **CHIRON**

Show me a villain that hath done a rape,

And I am sent to be revenged on him.

## **TAMORA**

Show me a thousand that have done thee wrong,  
And I will be revenged on them all.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Look round about the wicked streets of Rome;  
And when thou find'st a man that's like thyself.  
Good Murder, stab him; he's a murderer.  
Go thou with him; and when it is thy hap  
To find another that is like to thee,  
Good Rapine, stab him; he's a ravisher.  
Go thou with them; and in the emperor's court  
There is a queen, attended by a Moor;  
Well mayst thou know her by thy own proportion,  
for up and down she doth resemble thee:  
I pray thee, do on them some violent death;  
They have been violent to me and mine.

## **TAMORA**

Well hast thou lesson'd us; this shall we do.  
But would it please thee, good Andronicus,  
To send for Lucius, thy thrice-valiant son,  
Who leads towards Rome a band of warlike Goths,  
And bid him come and banquet at thy house;  
When he is here, even at thy solemn feast,  
I will bring in the empress and her sons,  
The emperor himself and all thy foes;  
And at thy mercy shalt they stoop and kneel,  
And on them shalt thou ease thy angry heart.  
What says Andronicus to this device?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Marcus, my brother! 'tis sad Titus calls.

*Enter MARCUS*

Go, gentle Marcus, to thy nephew Lucius;  
Thou shalt inquire him out among the Goths:  
Bid him repair to me, and bring with him  
Some of the chiefest princes of the Goths;  
Bid him encamp his soldiers where they are:  
Tell him the emperor and the empress too  
Feast at my house, and he shall feast with them.  
This do thou for my love; and so let him,  
As he regards his aged father's life.

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

This will I do, and soon return again.

*Exit*

## **TAMORA**

Now will I hence about thy business,  
And take my ministers along with me.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Nay, nay, let Rape and Murder stay with me;  
Or else I'll call my brother back again,  
And cleave to no revenge but Lucius.

## **TAMORA**

[Aside to her sons] What say you, boys? will you  
bide with him,  
Whiles I go tell my lord the emperor  
How I have govern'd our determined jest?  
Yield to his humour, smooth and speak him fair,  
And tarry with him till I turn again.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

[Aside] I know them all, though they suppose me mad,  
And will o'erreach them in their own devices:  
A pair of cursed hell-hounds and their dam!

**DEMETRIUS**

Madam, depart at pleasure; leave us here.

**TAMORA**

Farewell, Andronicus: Revenge now goes  
To lay a complot to betray thy foes.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

I know thou dost; and, sweet Revenge, farewell.

*Exit TAMORA*

**CHIRON**

Tell us, old man, how shall we be employ'd?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Tut, I have work enough for you to do.  
Publius, come hither, Caius, and Valentine!

*Enter PUBLIUS and others*

**PUBLIUS**

What is your will?

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Know you these two?

**PUBLIUS**

The empress' sons, I take them, Chiron and Demetrius.

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Fie, Publius, fie! thou art too much deceived;



The one is Murder, Rape is the other's name;  
And therefore bind them, gentle Publius.  
Caius and Valentine, lay hands on them.  
Oft have you heard me wish for such an hour,  
And now I find it; therefore bind them sure,  
And stop their mouths, if they begin to cry.

*Exit*

*PUBLIUS, & c. lay hold on CHIRON and DEMETRIUS*

## **CHIRON**

Villains, forbear! we are the empress' sons.

## **PUBLIUS**

And therefore do we what we are commanded.  
Stop close their mouths, let them not speak a word.  
Is he sure bound? look that you bind them fast.

*Re-enter TITUS, with LAVINIA; he bearing a knife, and she a basin*

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Come, come, Lavinia; look, thy foes are bound.  
Sirs, stop their mouths, let them not speak to me;  
But let them hear what fearful words I utter.  
O villains, Chiron and Demetrius!  
Here stands the spring whom you have stain'd with mud,  
This goodly summer with your winter mix'd.  
You kill'd her husband, and for that vile fault  
Two of her brothers were condemn'd to death,  
My hand cut off and made a merry jest;  
Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear  
Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity,  
Inhuman traitors, you constrain'd and forced.  
What would you say, if I should let you speak?  
Villains, for shame you could not beg for grace.  
Hark, wretches! how I mean to martyr you.  
This one hand yet is left to cut your throats,  
Whilst that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold

The basin that receives your guilty blood.  
You know your mother means to feast with me,  
And calls herself Revenge, and thinks me mad:  
Hark, villains! I will grind your bones to dust  
And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,  
And of the paste a coffin I will rear  
And make two pasties of your shameful heads,  
And bid that strumpet, your unhallow'd dam,  
Like to the earth swallow her own increase.  
This is the feast that I have bid her to,  
And this the banquet she shall surfeit on;  
For worse than Philomel you used my daughter,  
And worse than Progne I will be revenged:  
And now prepare your throats. Lavinia, come,

*He cuts their throats*

Receive the blood: and when that they are dead,  
Let me go grind their bones to powder small  
And with this hateful liquor temper it;  
And in that paste let their vile heads be baked.  
Come, come, be every one officious  
To make this banquet; which I wish may prove  
More stern and bloody than the Centaurs' feast.  
So, now bring them in, for I'll play the cook,  
And see them ready 'gainst their mother comes.

*Exeunt, bearing the dead bodies*

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 5, Scene 2

[Previous scene](#) | [Next scene](#)

# Titus Andronicus

[Shakespeare homepage](#) | [Titus Andronicus](#) | Act 5, Scene 3  
[Previous scene](#)

## SCENE III. Court of TITUS's house. A banquet set out.

*Enter LUCIUS, MARCUS, and Goths, with AARON prisoner*

**LUCIUS**

Uncle Marcus, since it is my father's mind  
That I repair to Rome, I am content.

**First Goth**

And ours with thine, befall what fortune will.

**LUCIUS**

Good uncle, take you in this barbarous Moor,  
This ravenous tiger, this accursed devil;  
Let him receive no sustenance, fetter him  
Till he be brought unto the empress' face,  
For testimony of her foul proceedings:  
And see the ambush of our friends be strong;  
I fear the emperor means no good to us.

**AARON**

Some devil whisper curses in mine ear,  
And prompt me, that my tongue may utter forth  
The venomous malice of my swelling heart!

**LUCIUS**

Away, inhuman dog! unhallow'd slave!  
Sirs, help our uncle to convey him in.

*Exeunt Goths, with AARON. Flourish within*

The trumpets show the emperor is at hand.

*Enter SATURNINUS and TAMORA, with AEMILIUS, Tribunes, Senators, and others*

**SATURNINUS**

What, hath the firmament more suns than one?

**LUCIUS**

What boots it thee to call thyself a sun?

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Rome's emperor, and nephew, break the parle;  
These quarrels must be quietly debated.  
The feast is ready, which the careful Titus  
Hath ordain'd to an honourable end,  
For peace, for love, for league, and good to Rome:  
Please you, therefore, draw nigh, and take your places.

**SATURNINUS**

Marcus, we will.

*Hautboys sound. The Company sit down at table*

*Enter TITUS dressed like a Cook, LAVINIA veiled, Young LUCIUS, and others. TITUS places the dishes on the table*

**TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Welcome, my gracious lord; welcome, dread queen;  
Welcome, ye warlike Goths; welcome, Lucius;  
And welcome, all: although the cheer be poor,  
'Twill fill your stomachs; please you eat of it.

**SATURNINUS**

Why art thou thus attired, Andronicus?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Because I would be sure to have all well,  
To entertain your highness and your empress.

## **TAMORA**

We are beholding to you, good Andronicus.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

An if your highness knew my heart, you were.  
My lord the emperor, resolve me this:  
Was it well done of rash Virginius  
To slay his daughter with his own right hand,  
Because she was enforced, stain'd, and deflower'd?

## **SATURNINUS**

It was, Andronicus.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Your reason, mighty lord?

## **SATURNINUS**

Because the girl should not survive her shame,  
And by her presence still renew his sorrows.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

A reason mighty, strong, and effectual;  
A pattern, precedent, and lively warrant,  
For me, most wretched, to perform the like.  
Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee;

*Kills LAVINIA*

And, with thy shame, thy father's sorrow die!

## **SATURNINUS**

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Kill'd her, for whom my tears have made me blind.  
I am as woful as Virginius was,  
And have a thousand times more cause than he  
To do this outrage: and it now is done.

## **SATURNINUS**

What, was she ravish'd? tell who did the deed.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Will't please you eat? will't please your  
highness feed?

## **TAMORA**

Why hast thou slain thine only daughter thus?

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Not I; 'twas Chiron and Demetrius:  
They ravish'd her, and cut away her tongue;  
And they, 'twas they, that did her all this wrong.

## **SATURNINUS**

Go fetch them hither to us presently.

## **TITUS ANDRONICUS**

Why, there they are both, baked in that pie;  
Whereof their mother daintily hath fed,  
Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.  
'Tis true, 'tis true; witness my knife's sharp point.

*Kills TAMORA*

## **SATURNINUS**

Die, frantic wretch, for this accursed deed!

*Kills TITUS*

## **LUCIUS**

Can the son's eye behold his father bleed?  
There's meed for meed, death for a deadly deed!

*Kills SATURNINUS. A great tumult. LUCIUS, MARCUS, and others go up into the balcony*

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

You sad-faced men, people and sons of Rome,  
By uproar sever'd, like a flight of fowl  
Scatter'd by winds and high tempestuous gusts,  
O, let me teach you how to knit again  
This scatter'd corn into one mutual sheaf,  
These broken limbs again into one body;  
Lest Rome herself be bane unto herself,  
And she whom mighty kingdoms court'sy to,  
Like a forlorn and desperate castaway,  
Do shameful execution on herself.  
But if my frosty signs and chaps of age,  
Grave witnesses of true experience,  
Cannot induce you to attend my words,

*To LUCIUS*

Speak, Rome's dear friend, as erst our ancestor,  
When with his solemn tongue he did discourse  
To love-sick Dido's sad attending ear  
The story of that baleful burning night  
When subtle Greeks surprised King Priam's Troy,  
Tell us what Sinon hath bewitch'd our ears,  
Or who hath brought the fatal engine in  
That gives our Troy, our Rome, the civil wound.

My heart is not compact of flint nor steel;  
Nor can I utter all our bitter grief,  
But floods of tears will drown my oratory,  
And break my utterance, even in the time  
When it should move you to attend me most,  
Lending your kind commiseration.  
Here is a captain, let him tell the tale;  
Your hearts will throb and weep to hear him speak.

## LUCIUS

Then, noble auditory, be it known to you,  
That cursed Chiron and Demetrius  
Were they that murdered our emperor's brother;  
And they it were that ravished our sister:  
For their fell faults our brothers were beheaded;  
Our father's tears despised, and basely cozen'd  
Of that true hand that fought Rome's quarrel out,  
And sent her enemies unto the grave.  
Lastly, myself unkindly banished,  
The gates shut on me, and turn'd weeping out,  
To beg relief among Rome's enemies:  
Who drown'd their enmity in my true tears.  
And oped their arms to embrace me as a friend.  
I am the turned forth, be it known to you,  
That have preserved her welfare in my blood;  
And from her bosom took the enemy's point,  
Sheathing the steel in my adventurous body.  
Alas, you know I am no vaunter, I;  
My scars can witness, dumb although they are,  
That my report is just and full of truth.  
But, soft! methinks I do digress too much,  
Citing my worthless praise: O, pardon me;  
For when no friends are by, men praise themselves.

## MARCUS ANDRONICUS

Now is my turn to speak. Behold this child:

*Pointing to the Child in the arms of an Attendant*

Of this was Tamora delivered;



The issue of an irreligious Moor,  
Chief architect and plotter of these woes:  
The villain is alive in Titus' house,  
And as he is, to witness this is true.  
Now judge what cause had Titus to revenge  
These wrongs, unspeakable, past patience,  
Or more than any living man could bear.  
Now you have heard the truth, what say you, Romans?  
Have we done aught amiss,--show us wherein,  
And, from the place where you behold us now,  
The poor remainder of Andronici  
Will, hand in hand, all headlong cast us down.  
And on the ragged stones beat forth our brains,  
And make a mutual closure of our house.  
Speak, Romans, speak; and if you say we shall,  
Lo, hand in hand, Lucius and I will fall.

## **AEMILIUS**

Come, come, thou reverend man of Rome,  
And bring our emperor gently in thy hand,  
Lucius our emperor; for well I know  
The common voice do cry it shall be so.

## **All**

Lucius, all hail, Rome's royal emperor!

## **MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Go, go into old Titus' sorrowful house,

*To Attendants*

And hither hale that misbelieving Moor,  
To be adjudged some direful slaughtering death,  
As punishment for his most wicked life.

*Exeunt Attendants*

*LUCIUS, MARCUS, and the others descend*

**All**

Lucius, all hail, Rome's gracious governor!

**LUCIUS**

Thanks, gentle Romans: may I govern so,  
To heal Rome's harms, and wipe away her woe!  
But, gentle people, give me aim awhile,  
For nature puts me to a heavy task:  
Stand all aloof: but, uncle, draw you near,  
To shed obsequious tears upon this trunk.  
O, take this warm kiss on thy pale cold lips,

*Kissing TITUS*

These sorrowful drops upon thy blood-stain'd face,  
The last true duties of thy noble son!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS**

Tear for tear, and loving kiss for kiss,  
Thy brother Marcus tenders on thy lips:  
O were the sum of these that I should pay  
Countless and infinite, yet would I pay them!

**LUCIUS**

Come hither, boy; come, come, and learn of us  
To melt in showers: thy grandsire loved thee well:  
Many a time he danced thee on his knee,  
Sung thee asleep, his loving breast thy pillow:  
Many a matter hath he told to thee,  
Meet and agreeing with thine infancy;  
In that respect, then, like a loving child,  
Shed yet some small drops from thy tender spring,  
Because kind nature doth require it so:  
Friends should associate friends in grief and woe:  
Bid him farewell; commit him to the grave;  
Do him that kindness, and take leave of him.

**Young LUCIUS**

O grandsire, grandsire! even with all my heart  
Would I were dead, so you did live again!  
O Lord, I cannot speak to him for weeping;  
My tears will choke me, if I ope my mouth.

*Re-enter Attendants with AARON*

## **AEMILIUS**

You sad Andronici, have done with woes:  
Give sentence on this execrable wretch,  
That hath been breeder of these dire events.

## **LUCIUS**

Set him breast-deep in earth, and famish him;  
There let him stand, and rave, and cry for food;  
If any one relieves or pities him,  
For the offence he dies. This is our doom:  
Some stay to see him fasten'd in the earth.

## **AARON**

O, why should wrath be mute, and fury dumb?  
I am no baby, I, that with base prayers  
I should repent the evils I have done:  
Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did  
Would I perform, if I might have my will;  
If one good deed in all my life I did,  
I do repent it from my very soul.

## **LUCIUS**

Some loving friends convey the emperor hence,  
And give him burial in his father's grave:  
My father and Lavinia shall forthwith  
Be closed in our household's monument.  
As for that heinous tiger, Tamora,  
No funeral rite, nor man in mourning weeds,  
No mournful bell shall ring her burial;  
But throw her forth to beasts and birds of prey:

Her life was beast-like, and devoid of pity;  
And, being so, shall have like want of pity.  
See justice done on Aaron, that damn'd Moor,  
By whom our heavy haps had their beginning:  
Then, afterwards, to order well the state,  
That like events may ne'er it ruinate.

*Exeunt*