

# LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

By William Shakespeare

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## Characters

Ferdinand, *King of Navarre*

Berowne, Longaville, Dumaine, *three Lords attending upon the King*

Boyet, *Lord attending upon the Princess of France*

Don Adriano de Armado, *a fantastical Spaniard*

Sir Nathaniel, *a curate*

Dull, *a constable*

Costard, *a clown*

Mercade, *a messenger*

Princess of France

Rosaline, Maria, Katharine, *ladies attending upon the Princess*

Jaquenetta, *a country wench*

**SCENE I. The king of Navarre's park.**

*Enter FERDINAND king of Navarre, BEROWNE, LONGAVILLE and DUMAIN.*

**FERDINAND**

You three, Berowne, 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:  
Now subscribe your names.

**LONGAVILLE**

I am resolved; 'tis but a three years' fast:  
The mind shall banquet, though the body pine.

**DUMAIN**

The grosser manner of these world's delights  
I throw upon the gross world's baser slaves.

**BEROWNE**

There are other strict observances;  
As, not to see a woman in that term,  
And one day in a week to touch no food  
And then, to sleep but three hours in the night.  
O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,  
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep!  
There, my good lord; I have sworn to stay with you:  
And confident I'll keep what I have swore  
And bide the penance of each three years' day.

*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.

**FERDINAND**

What say you, lords? Why, this was quite forgot.  
We must of force dispense with this decree;  
She must lie here on mere necessity.

**BEROWNE**

Is there no quick recreation granted?

**FERDINAND**

Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is haunted  
With a refined traveller of Spain: Don Armado.  
I love to hear him lie and I will use him for my minstrelsy.

**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?

**BEROWNE**

This is he.

**DULL**

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

**FERDINAND**

A letter from the magnificent Armado.

**COSTARD**

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

**BEROWNE**

In what manner?

**COSTARD**

I was seen with her in the manor-house, in the  
manner of a man to speak to a woman.

**FERDINAND**

Will you hear this letter with attention?  
[Reads] 'Great deputy, the sole dominator of Navarre,  
my soul's earth's god, and body's fostering patron.'

**COSTARD**

Not a word of Costard yet.

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'As I am a gentleman, betook myself to  
walk. I did encounter that obscene and preposterous

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'—

**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.

For Jaquenetta,--so is the weaker vessel called--I keep her as a vessel of the law's fury; and shall bring her to trial.

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'

Sirrah, what say you to this?

**COSTARD**

Sir, I confess the wench.

**FERDINAND**

Did you hear the proclamation?

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken with a wench.  
Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast  
a week with bran and water.  
And Don Armado shall be your keeper.  
My Lord Berowne, see him deliver'd o'er:  
And go we, lords, to put in practice that  
Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

*Exeunt FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN.*

**BEROWNE**

Sirrah, come on.

**COSTARD**

I suffer for Jaquenetta, sir!

*Exeunt.*

**SCENE II. The same.**

*Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.*

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I have promised to study three years with the duke  
Yet I confess I am in love: and as it is base for a soldier to love,  
so am I in love with a base wench.  
I do love that country girl that I took in the  
park with the rational hind Costard: my spirit grows heavy in love.

*Enter DULL, COSTARD, and JAQUENETTA.*

**DULL**

Sir, the duke's pleasure is, that you keep Costard.  
For this damsel, I must keep her at the park. Fare you well.

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!  
I will visit thee at the lodge. Farewell.

**DULL**

Come, Jaquenetta, away!

*Exeunt DULL and JAQUENETTA.*

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences ere thou  
be pardoned.

**COSTARD**

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

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Thou shalt be heavily punished.

*Exeunt.*

**SCENE III. The same.**

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

**PRINCESS**

Good Lord Boyet, you are not ignorant  
Navarre hath made a vow,  
Till painful study shall outwear three years,  
No woman may approach his silent court:  
Therefore we single you as our fair solicitor.  
Tell him, the daughter of the King of France,  
Importunes personal conference with his grace.

**BOYET**

Willingly I go.

*Exit BOYET.*

**PRINCESS**

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

**MARIA**

Lord Longaville is one.

**PRINCESS**

Know you the man?

**MARIA**

I know him, madam:  
A man of sovereign parts he is esteem'd;  
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms.

**PRINCESS**

Who are the rest?

**KATHARINE**

The young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth.  
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.  
Berowne they call him; but a merrier man,  
I never spent an hour's talk withal:  
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

**PRINCESS**

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

*Re-enter BOYET.*

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,  
Than let you enter his unpeopled house.  
Here comes Navarre.

*Enter FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, DUMAIN and BEROWNE.*

**FERDINAND**

Fair princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.  
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**

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.

**BEROWNE**

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?  
I know I did.

**ROSALINE**

How needless was it then to ask the question!

**FERDINAND**

Madam, if the king your father will restore a hundred thousand crowns,  
We will give up our right in Aquitaine,  
And hold fair friendship with his majesty.

**PRINCESS**

You do the king my father too much wrong,  
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 yield up Aquitaine.

**PRINCESS**

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

**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.

*Exit.*

**BEROWNE**

Lady, I will commend you to mine own heart.  
I would you heard it groan.

**ROSALINE**

Is the fool sick?

**BEROWNE**

Sick at the heart.

*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**

She is an heir of Falconbridge.

**LONGAVILLE**

She is a most sweet lady.

*Exit LONGAVILLE.*

**BEROWNE**

What's her name?

**BOYET**

Rosaline.

**BEROWNE**

Is she wedded or no?

**BOYET**

To her will, sir.

*Exeunt.*

**SCENE IV. The same.**

*Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.*

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

I must employ the swain to carry me a letter to my love.

*Enter COSTARD.*

Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee.  
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.

*Exit.*

**COSTARD**

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration!  
O, that's the Latin word for three farthings:  
Remuneration! why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will  
never buy and sell out of this word.

*Enter BEROWNE.*

**BEROWNE**

O, my good knave Costard! exceedingly well met.  
I must employ thee:  
Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.

**COSTARD**

When would you have it done, sir?

**BEROWNE**

This afternoon.

**COSTARD**

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

**BEROWNE**

Thou knowest not what it is.  
The princess comes to hunt here in the park,  
And in her train there is a gentle lady;  
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. Gardon! Remuneration!

*Exit.*

**BEROWNE**

And I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been love's whip;  
What, I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!  
I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan:  
Some men must love my lady and some Joan.

*Exit.*

**SCENE V. The same.**

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

**PRINCESS**

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?

**BOYET**

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

**PRINCESS**

But come, the bow.

*Enter COSTARD.*

**COSTARD**

Pray you, which is the head lady?

**PRINCESS**

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

**COSTARD**

I have a letter from Monsieur Berowne 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, thou art fairer than fair, beautiful  
than beauteous, truer than truth itself!  
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.'

**PRINCESS**

What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?  
Did you ever hear better?

**BOYET**

This Armado is a Spaniard, that keeps here in court.

**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 Berowne, 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.

*Exit PRINCESS, KATHARINE and MARIA.*

**BOYET**

Who is the suitor? who is the suitor?

*Exit ROSALINE with BOYET chasing after. Exit COSTARD.*

**SCENE VI. The same.**

*Enter SIR NATHANIEL. Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD.*

**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.

**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!  
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.'  
Was this directed to you?

**JAQUENETTA**

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

**SIR NATHANIEL**

'To the snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady Rosaline.' This Berowne 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. Adieu.

**JAQUENETTA**

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

*Exeunt.*

**SCENE VII. The same.**

*Enter BEROWNE, with a paper.*

**BEROWNE**

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. Here comes one with a paper.

*Stands aside. Enter FERDINAND, with a loveletter.*

**FERDINAND**

[Reads]

'So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not  
To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,  
As thy eye-beams: O queen of queens!

**BEROWNE**

[Aside] Shot, by sweet Cupid in faith!

**FERDINAND**

Who is he comes here?

*Steps aside.*

What, Longaville! and reading! listen, ear.

**BEROWNE**

Now, in thy likeness, one more fool appear!

*Enter LONGAVILLE, with a loveletter.*

**LONGAVILLE**

[Reads]

'A woman I forswore; but I will prove,  
Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee:  
My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love;  
What fool is not so wise  
To lose an oath to win a paradise?'  
By whom shall I send this?--Company! stay.

*Steps aside.*

*Enter DUMAIN, with a loveletter.*

**DUMAIN**

O most divine Kate! As fair as day.  
Once more I'll read the ode that I have writ.

[Reads]

'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.'

**LONGAVILLE**

[Advancing] Dumain, I should blush  
To be o'erheard and taken napping so!

**FERDINAND**

[Advancing] Come, sir,  
I have been closely shrouded in this bush  
And mark'd you both. I heard your guilty rhymes.  
What will Berowne say? How will he scorn!  
I would not have him know so much by me.

**BEROWNE**

[Advancing] Good heart, what grace hast thou, thus to reprove  
These worms for loving, that art most in love?  
But are you not ashamed?



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? When shall you hear that I  
Will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye?

*Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD.*

**JAQUENETTA**  
God bless the king!

**FERDINAND**  
What present hast thou there?

**JAQUENETTA**  
I beseech your grace, let this letter be read.

**FERDINAND**  
Berowne, read it over.

*Giving FERDINAND the letter.*

Where hadst thou it?

**JAQUENETTA**  
Of Costard.

**FERDINAND**  
Where hadst thou it?

**COSTARD**  
Of Dun Adramadio, Dun Adramadio.

*BEROWNE tears the letter.*

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

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

**DUMAIN**  
It is Berowne's writing, and here is his name.

*Gathering up the pieces.*

**BEROWNE**

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

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

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

Are pick-purses in love.

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

**FERDINAND**

Hence, sirs; away!

*Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA.*

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

**BEROWNE**

Who sees the heavenly Rosaline,

That is not blinded by her majesty?

**FERDINAND**

My love, her mistress, is a gracious moon.

**DUMAIN**

O, but for my love, day would turn to night!

**LONGAVILLE**

Consider what we first did swear unto,

To fast, to study, and to see no woman;

Shall we now resolve to woo these girls of France?

**FERDINAND**

And win them too: therefore let us devise

Some entertainment for them in their tents.

*Exeunt.*

**SCENE VIII. The same.**

*Enter SIR NATHANIEL and DULL. Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO and COSTARD.*

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Sir, it is the king's most sweet pleasure and affection to congratulate the princess at her pavilion with some show, or pageant.

I crave your assistance.

**SIR NATHANIEL**

Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies.  
As concerning some entertainment of time, to be rendered by  
ourselves, at the king's command, I say none so fit as to present the  
Nine Worthies.

*Exeunt.*

*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.  
But Rosaline, you have a favour too:  
Who sent it? and what is it?

**ROSALINE**

I have verses too, I thank Berowne:  
O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter!

**PRINCESS**

Katharine, what was sent to you from fair Dumain?

**KATHARINE**

Madam, this glove and moreover  
Some thousand verses of a faithful lover.

**MARIA**

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

**ROSALINE**

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

**PRINCESS**

We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.  
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!  
Love doth approach disguised,  
I thought to close mine eyes some half an hour;  
When, lo! to interrupt my purposed rest,  
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.

**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;  
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 Berowne 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.  
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.

*Trumpets sound.*

**BOYET**

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

*The Ladies mask.*

*Enter FERDINAND, BEROWNE, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN, in Russian habits, and masked.*

**BOYET**

What would you with the princess?

**BEROWNE**

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**

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**

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**

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

**ROSALINE**

In private, then.

**FERDINAND**

I am best pleased with that.

*They converse apart.*

**BEROWNE**

White-handed mistress, one sweet word with thee.

**PRINCESS**

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

**BEROWNE**

One word in secret.

*They converse apart.*

**DUMAIN**

Vouchsafe with me to change a word  
As much in private, and I'll bid adieu.

*They converse apart.*

**LONGAVILLE**

One word in private with you, ere I die.

**KATHARINE**

Bleat softly then.

*They converse apart.*

**BOYET**

The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen  
As is the razor's edge invisible.

**ROSALINE**

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

**BEROWNE**

By heaven, all dry-beaten with pure scoff!

**FERDINAND**

Farewell, mad wenches; you have simple wits.

**PRINCESS**

Twenty adieus, my frozen Muscovits.

*Exeunt FERDINAND and Lords.*

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

**BOYET**

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

**PRINCESS**

Will they not, think you, hang themselves tonight?  
Or ever, but in vizards, show their faces?

**ROSALINE**

O, they were all in lamentable cases!

**MARIA**

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

**ROSALINE**

Will you hear? the king is my love sworn.

**PRINCESS**

And quick Berowne 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**

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

**ROSALINE**

Let us complain to them what fools were here,  
Disguised like Muscovites, in shapeless gear;  
And wonder what they were and to what end  
Should be presented at our tent to us.

**BOYET**

Ladies: the gallants are at hand.

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

**FERDINAND**

All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!  
We came to visit you, and purpose now  
To lead you to our court.

**PRINCESS**

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!

**ROSALINE**

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.

**PRINCESS**

Why looks your highness sad?

**ROSALINE**

Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy.

**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**

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**

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.

**BEROWNE**

I see the trick on't: some carry-tale,  
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.

*Enter COSTARD.*

**COSTARD**

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

**BEROWNE**

Art thou one of the Worthies?

**COSTARD**

It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompion the  
Great: I am to stand for him.

**BEROWNE**

Go, bid them prepare.

*Exit.*

**FERDINAND**

Here is like to be a good presence of Worthies. They  
present Hector of Troy; Pompey the Great; Alexander;  
Hercules; Judas Maccabaeus—  
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, Pompey surnamed the Big'--

**DUMAIN**

The Great.

**COSTARD**

'Pompey surnamed the Great;  
That oft in field 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.'

**BEROWNE**

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.

**PRINCESS**

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.

**BEROWNE**

Pompey the Great,--

**COSTARD**

Your servant, and Costard.

**BEROWNE**

Take away the conqueror, take away Alisander.

*SIR NATHANIEL and COSTARD change costumes: SIR NATHANIEL for Judas and COSTARD for Hercules.*

**SIR NATHANIEL**

'Great Hercules is presented by this imp,  
Whose club kill'd Cerberus.  
Keep some state in thy exit, and vanish.

*COSTARD retires.*

Judas I am,'--

**DUMAIN**

A Judas!

**SIR NATHANIEL**

'Judas I am,'--

**BOYET**

Let him go.  
And so adieu, sweet Jude!

**SIR NATHANIEL**

This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

*He retires.*

**PRINCESS**

Alas, poor Sir Nathaniel, how hath he been baited!

*Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, for Hector.*

**BEROWNE**

Hide thy head: here comes Hector in arms.

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

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

**BEROWNE**

A lemon.

**ADRIANO DE ARMADO**

Peace!--  
'The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty  
Gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion;  
This Hector far surmounted Hannibal,'--

*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.

**BEROWNE**

Worthies, away! the scene begins to cloud.

*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 you  
Excuse the liberal opposition of our spirits,  
If over-boldly we have borne ourselves.  
Farewell worthy lord!  
A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue:  
Excuse me so, coming too short of thanks.

**FERDINAND**

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:  
Therefore, ladies, our love 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.

**FERDINAND**

Grant us your loves.

**PRINCESS**

No, no, my lord, at the expiration of one year,  
Come challenge me, and, by this virgin palm  
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**

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.

**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.

**BEROWNE**

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**

You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day  
With all the fierce endeavor of your wit  
To enforce the pained to smile.

**BEROWNE**

A twelvemonth! well; befall what will befall,  
I'll jest a twelvemonth in an hospital.  
[To FERDINAND] Our wooing doth not end like an old play;  
Jack hath not Jill.

**FERDINAND**

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

**BEROWNE**

That's too long for a play.

**PRINCESS**

Sweet my lord, I take my leave.

**FERDINAND**

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

*Exeunt.*