

Witches & Bitches

by Shakespeare and Friends
compiled and adapted by Patrick Young



FROM:

John Ford, Thomas Dekker, William Rowley: *The Witch of Edmonton*
Thomas Middleton: *The Witch, Women Beware Women*
Thomas Middleton, Thomas Dekker: *The Roaring Girl*
Thomas Middleton, William Rowley: *The Changeling*
William Shakespeare: *Macbeth, Titus Andronicus*
John Webster: *The White Devil*

POST-PRODUCTION DRAFT: 1/30/11

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The original Theatre Erindale production of *Witches & Bitches* opened at the Erindale Studio Theatre, Mississauga, on January 21st, 2011, directed by Kelly Straughan and choreographed by Melissa-Jane Shaw, with original music by Christopher Dawes and Fight Direction by Daniel Levinson. The set was by Patrick Young, costumes by Joanne Massingham, lighting by James W. Smagata, and stage management by Julia Gaunt Rannala. The cast included:

SHAITAN <i>and others</i>	Julian Munds
STADLIN / MOTHER SAWYER <i>and others</i>	Tiffany Feler
HOPPO / LADY MACBETH <i>and others</i>	Stacey Arseneau
TIFFIN / TAMORA <i>and others</i>	Hallie Seline
PUCKLE / LIVIA <i>and others</i>	Stacey Gawrylash
HELLWAIN / VITTORIA <i>and others</i>	Kathryn Alexandre
ROBIN / BEATRICE-JOANNA <i>and others</i>	Tasha Potter
FIRESTONE / MOLL CUTPURSE <i>and others</i>	Nora Williams
Fight Captain	Kathryn Alexandre
Dance & Movement Captain	Hallie Seline
Music Captains	Stacey Gawrylash, Tasha Potter
Assistant Director	Nora Williams
Assistant Stage Managers.....	Zenia Czobit, Michael Esposito II, Elizabeth Stuart-Morris

Act I runs approximately 70 minutes. Act II runs approximately 58 minutes.

PREFACE

Witches & Bitches grew out of the need to find challenging Elizabethan-Jacobean material for a group of talented actresses in the Sheridan-UTM Theatre and Drama Studies Program. As months of reading and searching turned up no suitable play or adaptation, I finally decided there was nothing for it but to create something myself. But what?

The breakthrough came when I found myself wrestling with Thomas Middleton's unwieldy play *The Witch*. Middleton himself had adapted and blended his witch songs and characters into *Macbeth* when given the opportunity to revise Shakespeare's play. What if I extracted this coven of witches and supposed that each of them was also one of the great female villains or criminals of the Tudor-Stuart drama? Could I possibly interweave the half dozen stories necessary into a meaningful whole? Could we invent a ritual game in which the witches play supporting roles in acting out each other's stories? If there were a single male character as the spoiler in the mix, what tensions might develop as this game progressed? The idea seemed just loony enough to work – and it came with a catchy title fresh out of the box!

Very few of the words in this play are mine, but I have adapted, edited, re-assigned, and re-purposed them whenever and however necessary to fit the needs of a new context. The changes become more extreme as the story progresses, and the identities – first of the players, and then of the plays themselves – begin to meld.

I am indebted to individual editions of the plays edited by Chris Cleary, Gustav Cross, Alfred Harbage, J. R. Mulryne, and Arthur H. Nethercott. I will also be eternally grateful to director Kelly Straughan for months of input, as well as to Ron Cameron-Lewis, Holger Syme, and the talented and hard-working original cast.

The Characters and Their Origins ...

Evil and mischief were seen to be the natural pursuits of witches in the Tudor-Stuart era. While many viewed them as a very real danger, and hundreds of women were hanged or burned in consequence, witches were often the subject of comedy and even farce. The members of the coven in *Witches & Bitches* are drawn from Middleton's comedy *The Witch* – which drew in turn on Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584). But in this play, each of the seven women in the coven boasts a dual identity, and a personal story – drawn from a drama of the period – which they are compelled to play out in a ritual theatrical game. Led by the male demon at the centre of the group, all eight characters also play supporting roles in each other's stories – as they each come face to face with the devil's eternal compulsion to seduce and betray.

While a framework that interweaves seven stories at first provides a steep learning curve, in the original production one could feel the members of the audience relax as they realized that each of the fleeting tales would return again and again to layer in another episode. Much depends on providing them with the ability to follow the progress of the eight key characters without needing to pinpoint exactly all of the supporting roles.

SHAITAN, the name of a demon in multiple cultures and languages, is the leader of the coven of witches. Much of his material is derived from that of Hecate in Middleton's *The Witch*.

STADLIN is Shaitan's senior lieutenant (in the Middle Ages the name belonged to a powerful European wizard). Her alternate identity is **MOTHER SAWYER**, the title role from *The Witch of Edmonton* by Ford, Dekker, and Rowley.

HOPPO – the name in the Middle Ages of Stadlin's principle disciple – is Shaitan's second lieutenant. Her alternate identity is **LADY MACBETH**, the driving force behind Shakespeare's dark tragedy.

TIFFIN is a name for a cat familiar, here awarded to the vengeful tigress **TAMORA** from Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* – captured Queen of the Goths, who soon becomes Empress of Rome.

PUCKLE is clearly related to the trickster Puck and the Irish Pooka, and thus the alternate identity for witty Aunt **LIVIA**, mistress of coupling bodies and betrayer of virtue from Middleton's *Women Beware Women*.

HELLWAIN is a name derived from "a kind of wandering spirits, the descendants of a champion named Hellequin". Here it belongs to the defiant courtesan **VITTORIA COROMBONA**, the title role from John Webster's *The White Devil*. And the most crucial of Hellwain's supporting characters is Macbeth.

ROBIN, the ingénue of the coven, is associated by her witch name with Robin Goodfellow, shape-changing page of the fairy court. She is also **BEATRICE-JOANNA** from Middleton's psychological tragedy *The Changeling*.

FIRESTONE – "a stone that resists the action of fire" – in Middleton's original is the rebellious boy acolyte, clown, potential heir, and main tender of the cauldron. Here it is the witch identity for **MOLL CUTPURSE** – the popular real-life cross-dressing underworld figure of Jacobean London, from Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*.

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

MAN.....	SHAITAN: Aaron, Deflores, Laxton, Dog, Flamineo, Duke, Cardinal Monticelso
WOMAN 1	STADLIN/MOTHER SAWYER: Camillo, Mother, Bassianus, Gentlewoman
WOMAN 2	HOPPO/LADY MACBETH: Titus Andronicus, Goshawk, Ratcliffe, Hippolito
WOMAN 3	TIFFIN/TAMORA: Guardiano, Cuddy Banks, Fellow, Doctor
WOMAN 4.....	PUCKLE/LIVIA: Demetrius, Justice, Saturninus
WOMAN 5	HELLWAIN/VITTORIA: Lucius, Macbeth, Alsemero, Isabella, Ann Ratcliffe, Leantio
WOMAN 6	ROBIN/BEATRICE-JOANNA: Lavinia, Mistress Gallipot, Zanche, Bianca
WOMAN 7	FIRESTONE/MOLL CUTPURSE: Old Banks, Chiron, Fabritio, Servant, Brachiano

NOTES:

Premise: Shaitan is the demon leader of a coven of witches that includes some of the great female villains and criminals of Tudor-Stuart drama. As they support each other in playing out their stories, his aim is to enlist, seduce, and then betray each one of them. But as the play progresses, the others become increasingly restive in this relationship and eventually rally around Firestone/Moll and Hellwain/Vittoria to rebel.

Scansion: In this text, when verbs end in -ed, the 'e' is pronounced. When they end in -'d, it is not.

ACT ONE
Introduction

*A cavern or overgrown ruin. In the middle, a boiling cauldron. Thunder and lightning.
Enter three WITCHES: PUCKLE, HELLWAIN, and ROBIN*

PUCKLE
When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

HELLWAIN
When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

ROBIN
That will be ere the set of sun.

PUCKLE
I come, Graymalkin!¹

ROBIN
Paddock² calls.

HELLWAIN
By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.

Enter SHAITAN in an elaborate robe and FIRESTONE

SHAITAN
Give it some lizard's brain, quickly, Firestone
Where's Grannam³ Stadlin and all the rest o' th' sisters?

FIRESTONE
All at hand, forsooth.

Enter STADLIN, HOPPO, and TIFFIN

¹ Name for a cat familiar

² Name for a toad familiar

³ Grandam, granny, grandmother

SHAITAN

Give it *marmaritin*,⁴ some bear-breech.⁵—When!⁶

FIRESTONE

Here's bear-breech, and lizard's brain, forsooth.

SHAITAN

Into the vessel;⁷

And fetch three ounces of the red-hair'd girl⁸

I kill'd last midnight.

FIRESTONE

Whereabouts, sweet brother?

SHAITAN

Hip; hip or flank. Where is the *acopus*?⁹

FIRESTONE

You shall have *acopus*, forsooth.

SHAITAN

Stir, stir about, whilst I begin the charm.

Music and a song:

SHAITAN

Black spirits and white, red spirits and grey,

Mingle, mingle, you that mingle may

Titty, Tiffin, keep it stiff in

Firedrake, Puckey, make it lucky

Hellwain, Robin, you must bob in

Round, around, about, about,

All ill come in, all good keep out.

STADLIN

Here's the blood of a bat.

SHAITAN

Put in that, oh, put in that.

⁴ Marmaritin—"whereby spirits might be raised"—grows in marble quarries and is used as a drug. (Cleary)

⁵ "Popular name for the herbaceous plant of the genus *Acanthus*, brank-ursine" (Cleary)

⁶ "An exclamation of impatience" (Cleary)

⁷ I.e., cauldron

⁸ Red hair was frequently associated with witchcraft and sorcery

⁹ A plant from which a soothing salve can be made (Bullen)

HOPPO

Here's leopard's bane.¹⁰

SHAITAN

Put in again.

TIFFIN

The juice of toad, the oil of adder.

STADLIN

Those will make the young ones madder.

SHAITAN

Put in; there's all, and rid the stench.

FIRESTONE

Nay, here's three ounces of the red-hair'd wench.

SHAITAN

So, so, enough: into the vessel with it
There, 't hath the true perfection! I am so light¹¹
At any mischief; there's no villainy
But is a tune, methinks.

FIRESTONE *aside*

A tune? 'Tis to the tune of damnation then, I warrant you, and that song hath a villainous burthen!¹²

SHAITAN

Come, you sweet sisters, let the air strike the tune¹³
Whilst you show reverence to yond peeping moon.

SHAITAN commands each WITCH to reveal her full identity as the chant continues

ALL

*Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.*

SHAITAN

Lady Macbeth!

¹⁰ A plant of the genus *Doronicum*, also mentioned in Jonson's *The Masque of Queens* (Cleary)

¹¹ Light-hearted or playful

¹² Term for the bass line or undersong of a tune, often used to make puns about weighty content

¹³ Airborne music is frequently associated with magic, eg. in *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*

HOPPO/LADY MACBETH *revealing herself*
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!

ALL
*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.*

SHAITAN
Mother Sawyer!

STADLIN/MOTHER SAWYER *revealing herself*
If every poor old woman be trod on thus by slaves,
Revil'd and kick'd, beaten as I am daily,
She to be reveng'd had need turn witch!

ALL
*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.*

SHAITAN
Tamora!

TIFFIN/TAMORA *revealing herself*
The self-same gods that arm'd the Queen of Troy
May favor Tamora, the Queen of Goths,
To 'quite her bloody wrongs upon her foes!

ALL
*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.*

SHAITAN
Livia!

PUCKLE/LIVIA *revealing herself*
Sir, I could give as shrewd a lift to Chastity
As any she that wears a tongue in Florence.
Sh'ad need be a good horse-woman, and sit fast,
Whom my strong argument could not fling at last!

SHAITAN
Vittoria!

HELLWAIN/VITTORIA *revealing herself*

Condemn you me for that the duke did love me?
So may you blame some fair and crystal river,
For that some melancholic man hath drown'd himself in 't!

SHAITAN

Beatrice-Joanna!

ROBIN/BEATRICE *revealing herself*

Why, 'tis impossible thou canst be so wicked,
Or shelter such a cunning cruelty,
To make his death the murderer of my honour!

SHAITAN

Moll Cutpurse!

FIRESTONE/MOLL *revealing herself*

I scorn to prostitute myself to a man—
I that can prostitute a man to me!
Make an ill name from what you think you know?
Good troth, my lords, I'm made 'Moll Cutpurse' so!

VARIOUS WITCHES

Fillet of a fenny¹⁴ 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.
Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.*

SHAITAN

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air!

They disappear

¹⁴ Of the fens, i.e., living in marshland

Scene 1: Incitements

As SHAITAN watches from above, enter first MOTHER SAWYER (STADLIN) gathering sticks, then OLD BANKS (FIRESTONE)

OLD BANKS
Mother Sawyer! Out, out upon thee, witch!

MOTHER SAWYER
Dost call me witch?

OLD BANKS
I do, witch, I do; and worse I would, knew I a name more hateful. What makest thou upon my ground?

MOTHER SAWYER
Gather a few rotten sticks to warm me.

OLD BANKS
Down with them when I bid thee quickly;
I'll make thy bones rattle in thy skin else.

MOTHER SAWYER
You won't, churl, cut-throat, miser!—there they be! [*throws them down*] Would they stuck cross thy throat, thy bowels, thy maw, thy midriff!

OLD BANKS
Sayest thou me so, hag? Out of my ground!

Beats her

MOTHER SAWYER
Dost strike me, slave, curmudgeon! Now, thy bones ache, thy joints cramp, and convulsions stretch and crack thy sinews!

OLD BANKS
Cursing, thou hag? take that and that!

Beats her and exit

MOTHER SAWYER
Strike, do!—and wither'd may that hand and arm

Whose blows have lam'd me drop from the rotten trunk.
And why on me? why should the envious world
Throw all their scandalous malice upon me?
'Cause I am poor, deform'd, and ignorant,
And like a bow buckl'd and bent together
By some more strong in mischiefs than myself,
Must I for that be made a common sink
For all the filth and rubbish of men's tongues
To fall and run into? Some call me witch,
And being ignorant of myself, they go
About to teach me how to be one; urging
That my bad tongue—by their bad usage made so —
Forspeaks¹⁵ their cattle, doth bewitch their corn,
Themselves, their servants, and their babes at nurse.
This they enforce upon me, and in part
Make me to credit it. Abuse me? 'Hag' and 'witch'?

In frustration she is flinging off her women's clothes

What is the name, where and by what art learn'd,
What spells, what charms, or invocations,
May the thing call'd Familiar¹⁶ be purchas'd?

STADLIN has become ALARBUS, eldest son of TAMORA. Enter TITUS ANDRONICUS (HOPPO) with LAVINIA (ROBIN)

TITUS ANDRONICUS
Alarbus!

ALARBUS
No! Titus, no!

TITUS seizes ALARBUS, and begins to take him away. Enter LUCIUS (HELLWAIN) guarding TAMORA, CHIRON and DEMETRIUS (TIFFIN, FIRESTONE and PUCKLE). TAMORA calls out and kneels to TITUS

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

¹⁵ Bewitches

¹⁶ A demon appointed to serve a particular witch, often in animal form

To beautify thy triumphs¹⁷ 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

Patient¹⁸ yourself, madam, and pardon me.
Those were their brethren¹⁹ 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 consum'd.

Exeunt LUCIUS and TITUS with ALARBUS, whose screams are heard offstage

TAMORA

O cruel, irreligious piety!

CHIRON

Was ever Scythia²⁰ half so barbarous?

DEMETRIUS

Oppose²¹ not Scythia to ambitious Rome.
Alarbus goes to rest; and we survive
To tremble under Titus' threatening looks.
Then, madam, stand resolv'd; but hope withal²²
The self-same gods that arm'd the Queen of Troy
With opportunity of sharp revenge

¹⁷ I.e., triumphal processions in which the vanquished were paraded in chains

¹⁸ Calm

¹⁹ In this context, he can refer to Lucius and Lavinia

²⁰ Ancient name for southern Russia, famed for the savagery of its inhabitants

²¹ Compare

²² With it, besides, as well

Upon the Thracian tyrant in his tent
May favor Tamora, the Queen of Goths—
When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen—
To 'quite²³ the bloody wrongs upon her foes.

Re-enter LUCIUS and TITUS with their swords bloody

LUCIUS

See, virgin sister, 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.

LAVINIA

Remaineth nought but to inter our brethren,
And with loud trumpets welcome them to Rome.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Let it be so; and let Andronicus
Make this his latest farewell to their souls.

LAVINIA

In peace and honour live Lord Titus long;
My noble lord and father, live in fame!

TITUS ANDRONICUS *to TAMORA*

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.
Now, madam, are you prisoner to an emperor—
To Saturninus, him that, for your honour,
Will use you nobly—and your followers.

*Exeunt TITUS ANDRONICUS, LAVINIA, and LUCIUS with CHIRON and DEMETRIUS.
SHAITAN, who has been watching from afar, has become AARON*

TAMORA

Aaron!

He joins her and they embrace

I'll find a day to massacre them all
And raze their faction and their family—

²³ Requite

The cruel Titus and his traitorous kind
To whom I pleaded 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!

Exit TAMORA, following the others

AARON

Then, Aaron, arm thy heart and fit thy thoughts
To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress—
To rise with her 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,²⁴
And wait upon this new-made emperess.
To wait, said I? to wanton with this queen,
This goddess, this Semiramis,²⁵ this nymph,
This siren, that will charm Rome's Saturnine—
And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's!

Exit. Enter HELLWAIN and HOPPO as ISABELLA and HIPPOLITO, giggling in an intimate tete-a-tete

FABRITIO

I say still she shall love him!

The lovers flee. Enter from the opposite direction FABRITIO, LIVIA, and GUARDIANO (FIRESTONE, PUCKLE, AND TIFFIN) in mid-argument

GUARDIANO

Yet again?
And shall she have no reason for this love?

FABRITIO

Why do you think that women love with reason?

GUARDIANO

I perceive fools are not at all hours foolish,
No more then wisemen wise.

FABRITIO

I had a wife,

²⁴ Prometheus, the god who first gave fire to mortals, was chained to a cliff-face in the Caucasus, where he was doomed to have his immortal liver torn out by an eagle in perpetuity.

²⁵ "Legendary Assyrian queen, renowned for her beauty and sexuality" (Cross)

She ran mad for me; she had no reason for't,
For ought I could perceive.

GUARDIANO *aside*

'Twas a fit match that, being both out of their wits!

FABRITIO

And if her daughter prove not mad for love too,
She takes not after her—nor after me,
If she prefer reason before my pleasure!
You're an experienc'd widow, Lady Sister;
I pray let your opinion come amongst us.

LIVIA

I must offend you then, if truth will do't,
And take my niece's part, and call't injustice
To force her love to one she never saw.
Maids should both see, and like—all little enough;
If they love truly after that, 'tis well.
Counting²⁶ the time she takes one man till death,
That's a hard task, I tell you; but one may
Enquire at three years' end amongst young wives,
And mark how the game goes.

FABRITIO

Why, is not man
Ti'd to the same observance, Lady Sister,
And in one woman?

LIVIA

'Tis enough for him;
Besides, he tastes of many sundry dishes
That we poor wretches never lay our lips to—
As obedience forsooth, subjection, duty—
All of our making, but serv'd in to them.
And if we lick a finger then sometimes,
We are not to blame: Your best cooks use it.²⁷

FABRITIO

Th'art a sweet lady, Sister, and a witty—

LIVIA

A witty! Oh the bud of commendation,

²⁶ Considering

²⁷ "Make a habit of it" (Mulryne)

Fit for a girl of sixteen! I am blown,²⁸ man—
I should be wise by this time! And for instance,
I have buri'd my two husbands in good fashion,
And never mean more to marry.

GUARDIANO

No? Why so, Lady?

LIVIA

Because the third shall never bury me!
I think I am more than witty; how think you, Sir?

FABRITIO

I have paid often fees to a counsellor
Has had a weaker brain.

LIVIA

Then I must tell you,
Your money was soon parted.²⁹
Where is my niece? let her be sent for straight.

FABRITIO

Look out her uncle, and y'are sure of her:
Those two are ne'er asunder—they've been heard
In argument at midnight. Moon-shine nights
Are noon days with them; they walk out their sleeps³⁰—
Or rather, at those hours, appear like those
That walk in 'em, for so they did to me.

Exeunt

Enter ROBIN as BEATRICE and HELLWAIN as ALSEMERO, who bows to BEATRICE and kisses her

ALSEMERO

Beatrice-Joanna.

BEATRICE

Alsemero.
You are a scholar, sir.

ALSEMERO

A weak one, lady.

²⁸ Full-blown, past blooming (contrasts with "bud")

²⁹ Proverb: "a fool and his money are soon parted"

³⁰ Walk and talk all night instead of sleeping

BEATRICE

Which of the sciences is this love you speak of?

ALSEMERO

From your tongue I take it to be music.

BEATRICE

You are skillful in't, can sing at first sight.³¹

ALSEMERO

And I have show'd you all my skill at once.

I want more words to express me further

And must be forc'd to repetition:

I love you dearly.

BEATRICE

Be better advis'd, sir:

Our eyes are sentinels unto our judgments,

And should give certain judgment what they see;

But they are rash sometimes, and tell us wonders

Of common things, which when our judgments find,

They can then check the eyes, and call them blind.

ALSEMERO

But I am further, lady; yesterday

Was mine eyes' employment, and hither now

They brought my judgment, where are both agreed.

Both houses then consenting,³² 'tis agreed;

Only there wants the confirmation

By the hand royal—that's your part, lady.

BEATRICE

Oh, there's one above me, sir.³³—[*Aside*] For five days past³⁴

To be recall'd! Sure, mine eyes were mistaken;

This was the man was meant me. That he should come

So near his time, and miss it! I shall change

My saint: I find a giddy turning in me.

Methinks I love now with the eyes of judgment

And see the way to merit, clearly see it

With intellectual eyesight. What's Piracquo

My father spends his breath for? And so forward—

³¹ Word-play: sight-read music = declare love at first sight

³² A reference to the Houses of Parliament, in this case Sight and Judgement (Cleary)

³³ i.e., her father, the "god" above royal assent

³⁴ The date of her engagement to Alonzo de Piracquo

Enter SHAITAN as DEFLORES

DEFLORES

Signior Alonzo de Piracquo, lady,
Sole brother to Tomazo de Piracquo—

BEATRICE

Is in health, I hope.

DEFLORES

Your eye shall instantly instruct you, lady;
He's coming hitherward.

BEATRICE

What needed then
Your duteous preface? I had rather
He had come unexpected; you must stall
A good presence³⁵ with unnecessary blabbing—
And how welcome for your part you are,
I'm sure you know.

DEFLORES *aside*

Will't never mend, this scorn,
One side nor other?³⁶ Must I be enjoin'd³⁷
To follow still whilst she flies from me? Well,
Fates do your worst, I'll please myself with sight
Of her, at all opportunities,
If but to spite her anger. I know she had
Rather see me dead than living, and yet
She knows no cause for't but a peevish will.

ALSEMERO

You seem displeas'd, lady, on the sudden.

BEATRICE

Your pardon, sir, 'tis my infirmity;
Nor can I other reason render you
Than his or hers, of some particular thing
They must abandon as a deadly poison,
Which to a thousand other tastes were wholesome.
I never see this fellow but I think
Of some harm towards me: danger's in my mind still;
I scarce leave trembling of an hour after.

³⁵ Delay an effective entrance

³⁶ One way or another

³⁷ Bound, normally by oath or contract

ALSEMERO

This is a frequent frailty in our nature.

BEATRICE *aside*

Not this serpent gone yet? [*She moves to escape him*]

ALSEMERO

Lady, thy glove's fall'n;
Stay, stay, Deflores, help a little.

DEFLORES

Here, lady.

He hands BEATRICE her glove

BEATRICE

Mischief on your officious forwardness;
Who bade you stoop? They touch my hand no more:
There, for t'other's sake I part with this;
Take 'em and draw thine own skin off with 'em!

Exeunt. DEFLORES remains

DEFLORES

Here's a favour³⁸ come with a mischief: now
I know she had rather wear my pelt tann'd
In a pair of dancing pumps than I should
Thrust my fingers into her sockets³⁹ here.
No matter: if but to vex her, I'll haunt her still;
Though I get nothing else, I'll have my will.

He becomes LAXTON

*Enter HOPPO and ROBIN as GOSHAWK and MISTRESS GALLIPOT on one side and
MOLL CUTPURSE (FIRESTONE) on the other*

GOSHAWK

Life, Laxton, yonder's Moll!

LAXTON

Moll? Which Moll?

GOSHAWK

Honest Moll.

³⁸ 1. Kindness; 2. Love-token

³⁹ The finger-holes of the glove, a deliberately sexual image

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Some will not stick to say she's a man,
And some both man and woman.

LAXTON

That were excellent: she might first cuckold the husband and then make him do as much
for the wife. Prithee, let's call her. Moll!

GOSHAWK and MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Moll, Moll, pist, Moll!

MOLL

How now, what's the matter?

GOSHAWK

A pipe of good tobacco, Moll?

MOLL

I cannot stay.

GOSHAWK

Nay, Moll, puh! Prithee hark, but one word, i'faith.

MOLL

Well, what is't?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Prithee come hither, sirrah.

They light a pipe for MOLL to sample

LAXTON *aside*

Heart, I would give but too much money to be nibbling with that wench! Life, sh'as the
spirit of four great parishes, and a voice that will drown all the city; methinks a brave
captain might get⁴⁰ all his soldiers upon her if he could come on and come off quick
enough. I'll lay hard siege to her; money is that acid that eats into many a maidenhead:
where the walls are flesh and blood, I'll ever pierce through with a golden auger!⁴¹

GOSHAWK

Now thy judgment, Moll: is't not good?

⁴⁰ I.e. beget

⁴¹ I.e., drill—a vividly phallic image

MOLL

Yes, faith, 'tis very good tobacco. How do you sell an ounce?⁴² Farewell. God b'i'you, Mistress Gallipot.

GOSHAWK

Why, Moll, Moll!

MOLL

I cannot stay now, i'faith. I am going to buy a shag⁴³ ruff; the shop will be shut in presently.

GOSHAWK

'Tis the maddest, fantastical'st girl, Laxton. I never knew so much flesh and so much nimbleness put together.

Exeunt all but LAXTON

LAXTON

She slips from one company to another, like a fat eel between a Dutchman's fingers.⁴⁴ I'll watch my time for her!

As he reverts to SHAITAN, enter LADY MACBETH (HOPPO). SHAITAN passes her a letter and stands aside

LADY MACBETH *reading*

'They met me in the day of success: and I have learn'd by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burn'd in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanish'd. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hail'd me 'Thane of Cawdor;' by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referr'd 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 promis'd thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.' ...

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promis'd: 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 illness⁴⁵ 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';

⁴² I.e., how can you bear to part with it?

⁴³ Shaggy – either in design or in fabric (such as a deep-napped velvet)

⁴⁴ The Dutch were supposedly fond of eels (Cleary)

⁴⁵ "Ruthlessness" (Harbage)

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 HELLWAIN as MACBETH

LADY MACBETH
Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant⁴⁶ 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 beguile⁴⁷ 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;⁴⁸
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

MACBETH
We'll speak further.

⁴⁶ Previously unaware

⁴⁷ Cheat, deceive

⁴⁸ "Swift management" (Harbage)

LADY MACBETH

Leave all the rest to me.

SHAITAN approves, as ...

Interlude 1

Thunder and lightning. Return to the cavern and the boiling cauldron, as SHAITAN congratulates the WITCHES

SHAITAN

O well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains.
So now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring.

ALL

*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.*

VARIOUS WITCHES

Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf⁴⁹
Of the ravin'd⁵⁰ 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-strangl'd babe
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,⁵¹
Make the gruel thick as slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,⁵²
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

SHAITAN

Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

ALL

*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.*

⁴⁹ cavernous mouth

⁵⁰ glutted

⁵¹ slang for prostitute

⁵² entrails

*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.*

SHAITAN

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air!

All except LADY MACBETH conceal themselves

Scene 2: Commitments

LADY MACBETH steps forward

LADY MACBETH

Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal⁵³ thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood;
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature⁵⁴
Shake my fell⁵⁵ purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,⁵⁶
Wherever in your sightless⁵⁷ substances
You wait on⁵⁸ nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,⁵⁹
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry 'Hold—hold!'

LADY MACBETH becomes RATCLIFFE, while TIFFIN and FIRESTONE reveal themselves as CUDDY and BANKS, all taunting MOTHER SAWYER

CUDDY

Away—

BANKS

With the witch!

ALL

Away with the Witch of Edmonton!

Exeunt

⁵³ Deadly

⁵⁴ "Natural feeling" (Harbage)

⁵⁵ Fierce, cruel, deadly

⁵⁶ "Agents" (Harbage)

⁵⁷ "Invisible" (Harbage)

⁵⁸ Serve, aid, support

⁵⁹ Shroud yourself in the dullest (i.e., thickest, darkest) smoke of hell

MOTHER SAWYER

Still vex'd? still tortur'd? That curmudgeon Banks
Is ground of all my scandal; I am shunn'd
And hated like a sickness; made a scorn
To all degrees and sexes. I have heard old beldams⁶⁰
Talk of familiars in the shape of mice,
Rats, ferrets, weasels, and I wot not what,
That have appear'd, and suck'd, some say, their blood;
But by what means they came acquainted with them
I am now ignorant. Would some power, good or bad,
Instruct me which way I might be reveng'd
Upon this churl, I'd go out of myself,
And give this fury leave to dwell within
This ruin'd cottage ready to fall with age,
Abjure all goodness, be at hate with prayer,
And study curses, imprecations,
Blasphemous speeches, oaths, detested oaths,
Or anything that's ill: so I might work
Revenge upon this miser, this black cur,
That barks and bites, and sucks the very blood
Of me and of my credit. 'Tis all one
To be a witch as to be counted one:
Vengeance, shame, ruin light upon that canker!

Enter a BLACK DOG (SHAITAN)

DOG

Ho! have I found thee cursing? Now thou art
Mine own.

MOTHER SAWYER

Thine! What art thou?

DOG

He thou hast so often
Importun'd to appear to thee: the Devil!

MOTHER SAWYER

Bless me! the Devil?

DOG

Come, do not fear; I love thee much too well
To hurt or fright thee; if I seem terrible,
It is to such as hate me. I have found
Thy love unfeign'd; have seen and pitied

⁶⁰ 1. grandmothers; 2. hags

Thy open wrongs; and come, out of my love,
To give thee just revenge against thy foes.

MOTHER SAWYER
May I believe thee?

DOG
To confirm't, command me
Do any mischief unto man or beast,
And I'll effect it—on condition
That, un-compell'd, thou make a deed of gift
Of soul and body to me.

MOTHER SAWYER
Out, alas!
My soul and body?

DOG
And that instantly,
And seal it with thy blood: if thou deniest,
I'll tear thy body in a thousand pieces.

MOTHER SAWYER
I know not where to seek relief: but shall I,
After such covenants seal'd, see full revenge
On all that wrong me?

DOG
Ha, ha! silly woman!
The devil is no liar to such as he loves:
Didst ever know or hear the devil a liar
To such as he affects?

MOTHER SAWYER
Then I am thine; at least so much of me
As I can call mine own—

DOG
Equivocations?
Art mine or no? speak, or I'll tear—

MOTHER SAWYER
All thine.

DOG
Seal't with thy blood.

She pricks her arm, which he sucks. Thunder and lightning

See? Now I dare call thee mine!
For proof, command me; instantly I'll run
To any mischief; goodness can I none.

MOTHER SAWYER

And I desire as little. There's an old churl,
One Banks—

DOG

That wrong'd thee, lam'd thee, call'd thee witch.

MOTHER SAWYER

The same; first upon him I'd be reveng'd.

DOG

Thou shalt; do but name how.

MOTHER SAWYER

Go, touch his life.

DOG

I cannot.

MOTHER SAWYER

Hast thou not vow'd? Go, kill the slave!

DOG

I wonnot.⁶¹

MOTHER SAWYER

I'll cancel, then, my gift.

DOG

Ha, ha!

MOTHER SAWYER

Dost laugh?!

Why wilt not kill him?

DOG

Fool, because I cannot.

Though we have power, know it is circumscrib'd

⁶¹ Will not, do not wish to

And tied in limits: though he be curst to thee,
Yet of himself he's loving to the world,
And charitable to the poor: now men that,
As he, love goodness, though in smallest measure,
Live without compass of our reach. His cattle
And corn I'll kill and mildew; but his life—
Until I take him, as I late found thee,
Cursing and swearing—I've no power to touch.

MOTHER SAWYER

Work on his corn and cattle, then.

DOG

I shall.

The Witch of Edmonton shall see his fall—
If she at least put credit in my power,
And in mine only. Make orisons⁶² to me,
And none but me.

MOTHER SAWYER

Say how and in what manner.

DOG

I'll tell thee: when thou wishest ill,
Corn, man, or beast wouldst spoil or kill,
Turn thy back against the sun,
And mumble this short orison:
"If thou to death or shame pursue 'em,
Sanctibicetur nomen tuum."⁶³

MOTHER SAWYER

"If thou to death or shame pursue 'em,
Sanctibicetur nomen tuum."

DOG

Perfect: farewell. Our first-made promises
We'll put in execution against Banks.

Exit

MOTHER SAWYER

*Contaminetur nomen tuum.*⁶⁴ I'm an expert scholar;

⁶² Prayers

⁶³ Hallowed be thy name

⁶⁴ Cursed be thy name

Speak Latin, or I know not well what language,
As well as the best of 'em—but who comes here?

Re-enter CUDDY BANKS and crosses the stage

The son of my worst foe.
To death pursue 'em,
Et sanctibicetur nomen tuum.

Exit

Enter HIPPOLITO (HOPPO) and Lady LIVIA the Widow (PUCKLE)

LIVIA
A strange affection, Brother, when I think on't!
I wonder how thou cam'st by't.

HIPPOLITO
E'en as easily
As man comes by destruction, which oft-times
He wears in his own bosom.

LIVIA
Is the world
So populous in women, and creation
So prodigal in beauty and so various,
Yet does love turn thy point⁶⁵ to thine own blood?⁶⁶
'Tis somewhat too unkindly!⁶⁷ Must thy eye
Dwell evilly on the fairness of thy kindred,
And seek not where it should? It is confin'd
Now in a narrower prison than was made for't!

HIPPOLITO
Never was man's misery so soon sow'd up,
Counting how truly.

LIVIA
Nay, I love you so,
That I shall venture much to keep a change from you
So fearful as this grief will bring upon you.

⁶⁵ 1. Compass-needle; 2. prick, penis

⁶⁶ Kin, kindred

⁶⁷ "Against kind, unnatural. With a punning glance at kind=family." (Mulryne)

HIPPOLITO

Oh, nothing that can make my wishes perfect!⁶⁸

LIVIA

Sir, I could give as shrewd a lift to chastity
As any she that wears a tongue in Florence;
Sh'ad need be a good horse-woman, and sit fast,
Whom my strong argument could not fling at last!
Prithee take courage, man! This is the comfort:
You are not the first, brother, has attempted
Things more forbidden than this seems to be.
I'll minister all cordials⁶⁹ now to you,
Because I'll cheer you up, sir.

HIPPOLITO

I am past hope.

LIVIA

Love, thou shalt see me do a strange cure then,
As e'er was wrought on a disease so mortal
And near akin to shame. When shall you see her?

HIPPOLITO

Will you believe—death!—sh'has forsworn my company,
And seal'd it with a blush.

LIVIA

So, I perceive
All lies upon my hands then; well, the more glory
When the work's finish'd.—How now, Sir, the news?

Enter SERVANT (FIRESTONE)

SERVANT

Madam, your niece, the virtuous Isabella,
Is lighted now to see you.

LIVIA

That's great fortune,
Sir, your stars bless.—You simple, lead her in!

Exit SERVANT

⁶⁸ O.E.D.: 1. thoroughly performed, carried out; 2. satisfied, contented

⁶⁹ "Medicines stimulating to the heart" (Mulryne)

HIPPOLITO

What's this to me?

LIVIA

Your absence, gentle Brother;
I must bestir my wits for you.

HIPPOLITO

Aye, to great purpose.

Exit HIPPOLITO

LIVIA

Beshrew you, would I lov'd you not so well.
I am the fondest where I once affect—
The carefull'st of their healths, and of their ease forsooth—
That I look still but slenderly to mine own.
I take a course to pity him so much now,
That I have none left for modesty and myself.
This 'tis to grow so liberal!

Enter apart ISABELLA (HELLWAIN) with SERVANT. Exit SERVANT

Y'have few sisters
That love their brother's ease 'bove their own honesties;
But if you question my affections,
That will be found my fault.

Exeunt LIVIA with ISABELLA

Enter SHAITAN as AARON, with a large pie

AARON

He that had wit would think that I had none,
To hide so great a pie under a tree.
Know that this pie must bake a stratagem,
Which, cunningly effected, will beget
A very excellent piece of villainy.
And so repose, sweet pie, for their unrest
That suckled mother's milk at the empress' breast.

Hides the pie. Enter TAMORA

TAMORA

My lovely Aaron, wherefore look'st thou sad,

When every thing doth make a gleeful boast?⁷⁰
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, after conflict such as was suppos'd
The wandering prince and Dido once enjoy'd,⁷¹
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.⁷²
What signifies my deadly-standing eye,
My silence and my cloudy melancholy?
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,⁷³
Thy sons make pillage of her chastity
And wash their hands in Bassianus' blood.
Now question me no more; we are espi'd;
Here comes a parcel of our hopeful booty,⁷⁴
Which dreads⁷⁵ not yet their lives' destruction.

Exeunt

However the new arrival is not BASSIANUS but LIVIA, who has almost completed the betrayal of her niece ISABELLA (HELLWAIN)

ISABELLA

Sweet Aunt, in goodness keep not hid from me
What may befriend my life!

⁷⁰ Display (Cross)

⁷¹ Trojan hero Aeneas and Dido of Carthage were lovers, and the 'conflict' referred to is sexual wrestling

⁷² The dominant force in my horoscope, leading to a cold and gloomy temperament (Cross)

⁷³ In Greek mythology, Philomela was raped and her tongue cut out by Tereus

⁷⁴ "Part of the prize we hope for" (Cross)

⁷⁵ Fears

LIVIA

Yes, yes, I must,
When I return to reputation,
And think upon the solemn vow I made
To your dead mother, my most loving sister—
No, 'twas a secret I have took special care of,
Deliver'd by your mother on her death bed;
That's nine years now, and I'll not part from't yet—
Though nev'r was fitter time, nor greater cause for't.

ISABELLA

As you desire the praises of a virgin—!

LIVIA

Say I should trust you now upon an oath,
And give you in a secret that⁷⁶ would start⁷⁷ you,
How am I sure of you, in faith and silence?

ISABELLA

Equal assurance may I find in mercy,⁷⁸
As you for that in me!

LIVIA

It shall suffice.
Then know, how ever custom has made good
For reputation's sake the names of Niece
And Aunt 'twixt you and I, w'are nothing less.

ISABELLA

How's that?

LIVIA

I told you I should start your blood!
You are no more alli'd to any of us,
Save what the courtesy of opinion casts
Upon your mother's memory and your name,
Than the mer'st stranger is, or one begot
At Naples when the husband lies at Rome.⁷⁹
Did never the report of that fam'd Spaniard,
Marquess of Coria, fill your ear with wonder?

⁷⁶ That which

⁷⁷ Startle

⁷⁸ "Divine mercy, specifically on the Day of Judgement" (Mulryne)

⁷⁹ Hinting that her (actual) father Fabricio was in Rome on business when she was conceived at Naples

ISABELLA

Yes, what of him? I have heard his deeds of honour
Often related when we liv'd in Naples.

LIVIA

You heard the praises of your father, then.

ISABELLA

My Father?!

LIVIA

That was he. But all the business
So carefully and so discreetly carri'd,
That fame receiv'd no spot by't, not a blemish.
Your mother was so wary to her end,
None knew it but her conscience and her 'friend',⁸⁰
Till penitent confession made it mine,
And now my pity, yours. It had been long else.
How weak his commands now, whom you call Father?
How vain all his inforcements, your obedience?
And what a largeness in your will and liberty,
To take, or to reject, or to do both?
For fools will serve to father wisemen's children.
All this y'have time to think on. O, my wench!—
Nothing o'erthrows our sex but indiscretion!
I pray forget not but to call me Aunt still;
Take heed of that, it may be mark'd in time else.
But keep your thoughts to yourself from all the world,
Kindred, or dearest friend—nay, I entreat you,
From him that all this while you have call'd Uncle;
Yet let not him know this, I prithee do not.
As ever thou hast hope of second pity,⁸¹
If thou shouldst stand in need on't, do not do't!

ISABELLA

Believe my oath, I will not.

LIVIA

Why, well said.—
[*Aside*] Who shows more craft t' undo a maidenhead,
I'll resign my part to her.

Enter HIPPOLITO

⁸⁰ i.e., lover

⁸¹ "Hope of my befriending you again" (Mulryne)

She's thine own; go.

Exeunt, HIPPOLITO after ISABELLA, and LIVIA separately

Enter TIFFIN as A FELLOW with a long rapier by his side. Enter severally MOLL and LAXTON, observing her

MOLL

You!—goodman swine's-face!

FELLOW

What, will you murder me?

MOLL

You remember, slave, how you abus'd me t'other night in a tavern?

FELLOW

Not I, by this light.

MOLL

No, but by candlelight you did. You have tricks to save your oaths, reservations have you, and I have reserv'd somewhat for you.

Strikes him

As you like that, call for more; you know the sign again.

FELLOW

Indeed a gentleman should have more manners!

Exit FELLOW

LAXTON

Gallantly perform'd, i'faith, Moll, and manfully! I love thee forever for't! Base rogue! Had he offer'd but the least counterbuff, by this hand I was prepar'd for him.

MOLL

You prepar'd for him?! Why should you be prepar'd for him? Was he any more than a man?

LAXTON

No, nor so much by a yard⁸² and a handful London measure.⁸³

⁸² Yard measure, yardstick; slang for penis

⁸³ "London drapers customarily gave a little more than the exact measure" (Cleary)

MOLL

Why do you speak this then? Do you think I cannot ride a stone horse unless one lead him by th' snaffle?⁸⁴

LAXTON

Yes, and sit him bravely; I know thou canst, Moll. 'Twas but an honest mistake, and I'll make amends for't. Prithee, sweet, plump Moll, when shall thou and I go out a' town together?

MOLL

Whither? To Tyburn⁸⁵ prithee?

LAXTON

Mass, that's out a' town indeed; thou hang'st so many jests upon thy friends still. I mean honestly to Brainford, Staines or Ware.⁸⁶

MOLL

What to do there?

LAXTON

Nothing but be merry and lie together. I'll hire a coach⁸⁷ with four horses.

MOLL

I thought 'twould be a beastly journey. You may leave out one well: three horses will serve if I play the jade⁸⁸ myself.

LAXTON

Nay, push, th' art such another kicking wench! Prithee be kind and let's meet.

MOLL

'Tis hard but we shall meet, sir.

LAXTON

Nay, but appoint the place then.

Giving her money

There's ten angels in fair gold, Moll; you see I do not trifle with you. Do but say thou wilt meet me, and I'll have a coach ready for thee.

⁸⁴ Simple type of bridle-bit

⁸⁵ The prison in London where public hangings took place

⁸⁶ The first two were resorts outside London noted for their numerous prostitutes, the last a trysting-place for lovers (Cleary)

⁸⁷ "Coaches were popular places for love-making" (Cleary)

⁸⁸ An old horse or nag; also slang for a whore

MOLL

Why, here's my hand I'll meet you, sir.

LAXTON *aside*

Oh, good gold!—The place, sweet Moll?

MOLL

It shall be your appointment.

LAXTON

Somewhat near Holborn,⁸⁹ Moll.

MOLL

In Gray's Inn Fields⁹⁰ then.

LAXTON

A match.

MOLL

I'll meet you there.

LAXTON

The hour?

MOLL

Three.

LAXTON

That will be time enough to sup at Brainford.

Exit LAXTON/SHAITAN. But MOLL/FIRESTONE is not so quick to join the other WITCHES

⁸⁹ "The area to the north of the Strand and northwest of the old walled city, a place with an unsavory reputation ... also the centre of the legal profession, and contained the Inns of Court" (Cleary)

⁹⁰ "Open fields to the north of Gray's Inn, used as grounds for recreation but eventually frequented by petty thieves" (Cleary)

Interlude 2

The cavern again. The WITCHES sing (repeating as necessary):

SHAITAN

Black spirits and white, red spirits and grey,

Mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.

Titty, Tiffin, keep it stiff in.

Firedrake, Puckey, make it lucky.

Hellwain, Robin, you must bob in.

Round, around, about, about,

All ill come in, all good keep out

Round, around, about, about,

All ill come in, all good keep out.

ALL

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Double, double, toil and trouble;

Fire burn, and cauldron bubble ...

The chant becomes the conclusion of a Renaissance court ball from which the guests are about to depart as we segue to the next scene ...

Scene 3: Transgressions

Midnight; torches. SHAITAN watches as the pander FLAMINEO, while FIRESTONE as Duke BRACHIANO dances with VITTORIA (HELLWAIN), and ZANCHE (ROBIN) with two other guests (HOPPO and TIFFIN). STADLIN as the elderly CAMILLO cuts in on the Duke and takes his wife aside

CAMILLO

Vittoria, I cannot be induc'd, or as a man would say incited—

VITTORIA

To do what, sir?

CAMILLO

To lie with you tonight. Your silkworm useth to fast every third day, and the next following spins the better. Tomorrow at night I am for you!

VITTORIA

You'll spin a fair thread, trust to't.

CAMILLO

Good night.

VITTORIA starts to exit, and is joined by ZANCHE

FLAMINEO

Good night, dear sister.

BRACHIANO *to VITTORIA*

Your best of rest.

VITTORIA

Unto my lord the duke,
The best of welcome.

Exeunt all but BRACHIANO and FLAMINEO

BRACHIANO

Flamineo.

FLAMINEO

My lord.

BRACHIANO

Quite lost, Flamineo.

FLAMINEO

Pursue your noble wishes, I am prompt
As lightning to your service. O my lord!
The fair Vittoria, my happy sister,
Shall give you audience.

BRACHIANO

Are we so happy?

FLAMINEO

Can it be otherwise?
Observ'd you not tonight, my honour'd lord,
Which way so'er you went, she threw her eyes?
I have dealt already with her chambermaid.

BRACHIANO

We are happy above thought, because 'bove merit.

FLAMINEO

'Bove merit! we may now talk freely: 'bove merit! What is 't you doubt? her coyness!
That 's but the superficies⁹¹ of lust most women have; yet why should ladies blush to hear
that nam'd which they do not fear to handle?⁹² Oh, they are politic; they know our desire
is increas'd by the difficulty of enjoying; whereas satiety is a blunt, weary, and drowsy
passion.

BRACHIANO

Oh, but her jealous husband—

FLAMINEO

Hang him; a gelding⁹³ that hath his brains perish'd with quicksilver⁹⁴ is not more cold in
the liver.⁹⁵

BRACHIANO

Oh, should she fail to come—

FLAMINEO

Away, away, my lord. See, she comes.

⁹¹ Superfluity, overabundance

⁹² A sexual joke

⁹³ Castrated stallion; originally "gilder", a craftsman who gilds carvings using gold leaf and mercury

⁹⁴ Mercury, both an industrial component and a treatment for syphilis; its use led to palsy and madness

⁹⁵ Supposed seat of love and violent passion

Re-enter VITTORIA

Come, sister, darkness hides your blush. [*Aside*] Women are like curs'd dogs: civility keeps them ti'd all daytime, but they are let loose at midnight; then they do most good, or most mischief.—My lord. [*moves apart*]

ZANCHE brings out a carpet, spreads it, and joins FLAMINEO apart

BRACHIANO

Give credit:⁹⁶ I could wish time would stand still,
And never end this interview, this hour;
But all delight doth itself soon'st devour.
Let me into your bosom, happy lady,
Pour out, instead of eloquence, my vows.
Loose me not, madam, for if you forgo me,
I am lost eternally.

VITTORIA

Sir, in the way of pity,
I wish you heart-whole.

BRACHIANO

You are a sweet physician.

VITTORIA

Sure, sir, a loathed cruelty in ladies
Is as to doctors many funerals:
It takes away their credit.

BRACHIANO

Excellent creature!
We call the cruel fair; what name for you
That are so merciful?

ZANCHE apart to FLAMINEO

See now they close.

FLAMINEO

Most happy union.

BRACHIANO

What value is this jewel?⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Believe me

⁹⁷ A jewel was often symbolic of good faith, especially married chastity or virginity (Mulryne)

VITTORIA

'Tis the ornament of a weak fortune.

BRACHIANO

In sooth, I 'll have it; nay, I will but change
My jewel for your jewel.

FLAMINEO *apart to ZANCHE*

Excellent;
His jewel for her jewel: well put in, duke!

BRACHIANO

Nay, let me see you wear it.

VITTORIA

Here, sir?

BRACHIANO

Nay, lower, you shall wear my jewel lower.

FLAMINEO *apart to ZANCHE*

That 's better: she must wear his jewel lower.

VITTORIA

To pass away the time, I 'll tell your grace
A dream I had last night.

BRACHIANO

Most wishedly.

VITTORIA

A foolish idle dream:
Methought I walk'd about the mid of night
Into a churchyard, where a goodly yew-tree
Spread her large root in ground: under that yew,⁹⁸
As I sat sadly leaning on a grave,
Chequer'd with cross-sticks,⁹⁹ there came stealing in
Your duchess and my husband; one of them
A pickaxe bore, th' other a rusty spade,
And in rough terms they 'gan to challenge me
About this yew.

BRACHIANO

That tree?

⁹⁸ "Punning on 'you'" (Mulryne)

⁹⁹ The criss-cross patterns cast by moonlight

VITTORIA

This harmless yew;
They told me my intent was to root up
That well-grown yew, and plant i' the stead of it
A wither'd blackthorn; and for that they vow'd
To bury me alive. My husband straight
With pickaxe 'gan to dig, and your fell¹⁰⁰ duchess
With shovel, like a fury,¹⁰¹ voided out
The earth and scatter'd bones: Lord, how methought
I trembled, and yet for all this terror
I could not pray.

FLAMINEO *apart to ZANCHE*

No; the devil was in your dream.

VITTORIA

When to my rescue there arose, methought,
A whirlwind, which let fall a massy arm
From that strong plant;
And both were struck dead by that sacred yew,
In that base shallow grave that was their due.

FLAMINEO *apart to ZANCHE*

Excellent devil!
She hath taught him in a dream
To make away his duchess and her husband.

BRACHIANO

Sweetly shall I interpret this your dream.
You are lodg'd within his arms who shall protect you
From all the fevers of a jealous husband,
From the poor envy of our¹⁰² phlegmatic¹⁰³ duchess.
I'll seat you above law, and above scandal;
Give to your thoughts the invention of delight,
And the fruition; nor shall government
Divide me from you longer than a care
To keep you great: you shall to me at once
Be dukedom, health, wife, children, friends, and all.

Exeunt BRACHIANO with VITTORIA

¹⁰⁰ 1. Fierce, cruel; 2. hot, angry; 3. deadly

¹⁰¹ Female spirit of vengeance in classical mythology

¹⁰² Brachiano, being a duke, uses the royal 'we'

¹⁰³ Unemotional; having a calm, cold, or sluggish temperament

*ZANCHE becomes BIANCA, chatting above with the WIDOW (STADLIN), while
FLAMINEO/SHAITAN becomes another DUKE, and stares at BIANCA from a distance*

Enter from a third direction GUARDIANO and LIVIA

LIVIA

How, sir? A gentlewoman—so young, so fair
As you set forth—spi'd from the Widow's window?

GUARDIANO

She!

LIVIA

Our Sunday-dinner woman?

GUARDIANO

And Thursday supper-woman, the same still.
I know not how she came by her, but I'll swear
She's the prime gallant for a face in Florence;
And no doubt other parts follow their leader.
The Duke himself first spi'd her; I ne'er knew him
So infinitely taken with a woman—

Exeunt the WIDOW and BIANCA

Nor can I blame his appetite, or tax
His raptures of slight folly. She's a creature
Able to draw a State from serious business,
And make it their best piece to do her service!
What course shall we devise? H'as spoke twice now.

LIVIA

Twice?!

GUARDIANO

'Tis beyond your apprehension
How strangely that one look has catch'd his heart!
'Twould prove but too much worth in wealth and favor
To those should work his peace.

LIVIA

And if I do't not,
Or at least come as near it—if your art
Will take a little pains, and second me—
As any wench in Florence of my standing,
I'll quite give oe'r, and shut up shop in cunning.

GUARDIANO

'Tis for the Duke; and if I fail your purpose,
All means to come by riches or advancement
Miss me, and skip me over.

LIVIA

Let the old woman then
Be sent for with all speed; then I'll begin.

Exeunt GUARDIANO and LIVIA, as the DUKE—having expressed his satisfaction with the foregoing—becomes DEFLORES

Enter apart BEATRICE courting with ALSEMERO

DEFLORES *aside*

I have watch'd their meetings, and do wonder much
What shall become of Piracqo; I'm sure both
Cannot be serv'd¹⁰⁴ unless she transgress. Happily
Then I'll put in for one: for if a woman
Fly from one point¹⁰⁵—from him she makes a husband—
She spreads and mounts then like arithmetic:
One, ten, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand—
Proves in time sutler¹⁰⁶ to an army royal.

Exit ALSEMERO

Now do I look to be most richly rail'd at,
Yet I must see her.

BEATRICE *aside*

Why, put case¹⁰⁷ I loath'd him
As much as youth and beauty hates a sepulcher,
Must I needs show it? Cannot I keep that secret,
And serve my turn upon him?¹⁰⁸ See, he's here.—
Deflores.

DEFLORES *aside*

Ha, I shall run mad with joy!
She call'd me fairly by my name, Deflores,
And neither rogue nor rascal!

¹⁰⁴ Sexual innuendo

¹⁰⁵ Location, compass-point, penis

¹⁰⁶ Supplier to an army; also camp-follower and therefore whore

¹⁰⁷ Suppose

¹⁰⁸ Get what I want out of him, use him

BEATRICE

What ha' you done
To your face alate? Y'ave met with some good physician;
Y'ave prun'd yourself,¹⁰⁹ methinks: you were not wont
To look so amorously.¹¹⁰

DEFLORES

Ha! Not I.—
[*Aside*] 'Tis the same physnomy¹¹¹ to a hair and pimple
Which she call'd scurvy scarce an hour ago:
How is this?

BEATRICE

Come hither, nearer, man.

DEFLORES *aside*

I'm up to the chin in heaven!

BEATRICE

Turn, let me see
Fah! 'Tis but the heat of the liver,¹¹² I perceive 't
I thought it had been worse.

DEFLORES *aside*

Her fingers touch'd me;
She smells all amber.¹¹³

BEATRICE

I'll make a water for you shall cleanse this
Within a fortnight.

DEFLORES

With your own hands, lady?

BEATRICE

Yes, mine own, sir; in a work of cure,
I'll trust no other.

¹⁰⁹ As the rotten or excess branches are pruned from a tree or bush, so Deflores (she suggests) has cut the worst boils from his face

¹¹⁰ Sexy, lover-like

¹¹¹ Physiognomy

¹¹² The traditional seat of violent passion

¹¹³ Ambergris, a key component of perfume (extracted from whales)

DEFLORES *aside*

'Tis half an act of pleasure
To hear her talk thus to me.

BEATRICE

When w'are us'd
To a hard face, 'tis not so unpleasing;
It mends still in opinion, hourly mends:
I see it by experience.

DEFLORES *aside*

I was blest
To light upon this minute; I'll make use on't.

BEATRICE

Hardness becomes the visage of a man well;
It argues service, resolution, manhood,
If cause were of employment.¹¹⁴

DEFLORES

'Twould be soon seen,
If e'er your ladyship had cause to use it,
I would but wish the honour of a service
So happy as that mounts to.¹¹⁵

BEATRICE *aside*

We shall try you.—
Oh, my Deflores!

DEFLORES *aside*

How's that?
She calls me hers already, 'my Deflores!'—
You were about to sigh out somewhat, madam?

BEATRICE

No, was I? I forgot. Oh!

DEFLORES

There 'tis again,
The very fellow on't!

¹¹⁴ "Hardness ... service ... manhood ... employment" all have sexual meanings which Beatrice is using to flatter but Deflores takes as an understood commitment

¹¹⁵ Deflores again employs the sexual meanings of "service" and "mounts", though Beatrice misses it

BEATRICE

You are too quick,¹¹⁶ sir.

DEFLORES

There's no excuse for't, now I heard it twice, madam:
That sigh would fain have utterance. Take pity on't
And lend it a free word; 'las, how it labours
For liberty! I hear the murmur yet
Beat at your bosom.

BEATRICE

Would creation—

DEFLORES

Ay, well said, that's it.

BEATRICE

—Had form'd me man.

DEFLORES

Nay, that's not it.

BEATRICE

Oh, 'tis the soul of freedom!
I should not then be forc'd to marry one
I hate beyond all depths; I should have power
Then to oppose my loathings, nay, remove 'em
Forever from my sight.

DEFLORES

Oh, blest occasion!
[*Kneeling*] Without change to your sex, you have your wishes!
Claim so much man in me.

BEATRICE

In thee, Deflores?
There's small cause for that.

DEFLORES

Put it not from me;
It's a service that I kneel for to you.

BEATRICE

You are too violent to mean faithfully;¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Perceptive (Cleary)

¹¹⁷ To be trusted, or "to intend honest service" (Cleary)

There's horror in my service, blood and danger:
Can those be things to sue for?

DEFLORES

If you knew
How sweet it were to me to be employ'd
In any act of yours,¹¹⁸ you would say then
I fail'd and us'd not reverence enough
When I receive the charge on't.

BEATRICE *aside*

This is much,
Methinks; belike his wants are greedy, and
To such gold tastes like angels' food.—Rise.

DEFLORES

I'll have the work first.

BEATRICE *aside*

Possible his need
Is strong upon him. [*Offering him money*] There's to encourage thee;
As thou art forward¹¹⁹ and thy service dangerous,
Thy reward shall be precious.

DEFLORES

That I have thought on;
I have assur'd myself of that beforehand,
And know it will be precious: the thought ravishes!

BEATRICE

Then take him to thy fury.

DEFLORES

I thirst for him.

BEATRICE

Alonzo de Piracquo.

DEFLORES *rising*

His end's upon him; he shall be seen no more.

BEATRICE

How lovely now dost thou appear to me!
Never was man dearlier rewarded.

¹¹⁸ I.e., sexual act

¹¹⁹ Enterprising, pro-active

DEFLORES

I do think of that.

BEATRICE

Be wondrous careful in the execution.

DEFLORES

Why, are not both our lives upon the cast?¹²⁰

BEATRICE

Then I throw all my fears upon thy service.

DEFLORES

They ne'er shall rise to hurt you.

BEATRICE

When the deed's done,
I'll furnish thee with all things for thy flight;
Thou may'st live bravely¹²¹ in another country.

DEFLORES

Ay, ay, we'll talk of that hereafter.

BEATRICE *aside*

I shall rid myself of two inveterate loathings
At one time: Piracquo and his dog-face.

Exit

DEFLORES

Oh, my blood!¹²² Methinks I feel her in mine arms already,
Her wanton fingers combing out this beard,
And being pleased, praising this bad face!
Hunger and pleasure, they'll commend sometimes
Slovenly¹²³ dishes and feed heartily on 'em;
Nay, which is stranger, refuse daintier for 'em!
Some women are odd feeders. I'm too loud.
Here comes the man goes supperless to bed,
Yet shall not rise tomorrow to his dinner.

Exit

¹²⁰ Throw of the dice, i.e., at risk

¹²¹ Sumptuously, splendidly

¹²² Lust

¹²³ Foul, nasty

But it is the COUNTRYMEN (OLD BANKS, RATCLIFFE, and CUDDY) who enter

COUNTRYMEN

Burn the witch, the witch, the witch, the witch!

OLD BANKS

My horse this morning runs most piteously of the glanders,¹²⁴ whose nose yesternight was as clean as any man's here now coming from the barber's; and this, I'll take my death upon't, is long of¹²⁵ this jadish¹²⁶ witch Mother Sawyer.

RATCLIFFE

I took my wife and a serving-man in our town of Edmonton thrashing in my barn together such corn as country wenches carry to market;¹²⁷ and examining my polecat¹²⁸ why she did so, she swore in her conscience she was bewitch'd. And what witch have we about us but Mother Sawyer?

CUDDY

Rid the town of her, else all our wives will do nothing else but dance about other country maypoles.¹²⁹

RATCLIFFE

Our cattle fall, our wives fall, our daughters fall, and maidservants fall; and we ourselves shall not be able to stand,¹³⁰ if this beast be suffer'd to graze amongst us.

CUDDY produces a handful of thatch and a lighted torch.

CUDDY

Burn the witch, the witch, the witch, the witch!

COUNTRYMEN

What hast got there?

CUDDY

A handful of thatch pluck'd off a hovel of hers! And they say, when 'tis burning, if she be a witch, she'll come running in.

OLD BANKS

Fire it, fire it! I'll stand between thee and home for any danger.

¹²⁴ Contagious disease causing swellings beneath the jaw in horses

¹²⁵ Because of

¹²⁶ Slutty (as 'jade' means both old horse and old whore)

¹²⁷ As 'country wenches' were traditionally typed as tarts, and as 'thrashing' can describe any violent movement, the meaning here is clearly sexual

¹²⁸ 1. Small European mammal with a very disagreeable odour; 2. term of contempt for a prostitute, harlot

¹²⁹ More sexual double meanings

¹³⁰ Another *double entendre*

CUDDY sets fire to the thatch. Enter MOTHER SAWYER running

COUNTRYMEN

Burn the witch, the witch, the witch, the witch!

MOTHER SAWYER

Diseases, plagues, the curse of an old woman

Follow and fall upon you!

CUDDY

Are you come, you old trot?

OLD BANKS

You hot whore, must we fetch you with fire in your tail?

RATCLIFFE

This thatch is as good as a jury to prove she is a witch.

COUNTRYMEN

Out, witch! beat her, kick her, set fire on her!

MOTHER SAWYER

Shall I be murder'd by a bed of serpents? Help, help!

Enter a JUSTICE (PUCKLE)

COUNTRYMEN

Hang her, beat her, kill her!

JUSTICE

How now! forbear this violence.

MOTHER SAWYER

A crew of villains, a knot of bloody hangmen,

Set to torment me, I know not why.

JUSTICE

Alas, neighbour Banks, are you a ringleader in mischief? Fie! To abuse an aged woman.

OLD BANKS

Woman? a she hell-cat, a witch! To prove her one, we no sooner set fire on the thatch of her house, but in she came running as if the devil had sent her in a barrel of gunpowder—which trick as surely proves her a witch as the pox in a snuffling nose is a sign a man is a whore-master.

JUSTICE

Come, come: firing her thatch? Ridiculous!
Take heed, sirs, what you do; unless your proofs
Come better arm'd, instead of turning her
Into a witch, you'll prove yourselves stark fools.

COUNTRYMEN

Fools?

JUSTICE

Arrant fools.

OLD BANKS

Pray, Master Justice What-do-you-call-'em, hear me but in one thing: this grumbling
devil owes me I know no good-will ever since I fell out with her.

MOTHER SAWYER

And break'dst my back with beating me.

OLD BANKS

I'll break it worse.

MOTHER SAWYER

Wilt thou?

JUSTICE

You must not threaten her: 'tis against law. Go on.

OLD BANKS

So, sir, ever since, having a dun cow ti'd up in my back yard, let me go thither, or but cast
mine eye at her, and if I should be hang'd I cannot choose—though it be ten times in an
hour—but run to the cow, and taking up her tail, kiss—saving your worship's
reverence—my cow behind, that the whole town of Edmonton has been ready to bepiss
themselves with laughing me to scorn!

Which THE COUNTRYMEN are indeed doing

JUSTICE

And this is long of her?

OLD BANKS

Who the devil else? for is any man such an ass to be such a baby, if he were not
bewitch'd?

CUDDY *in stitches*

Nay, if she be a witch, and the harms she does end in such sports, she may scape burning!

JUSTICE

Go, go: pray, vex her not; she is a subject,
And you must not be judges of the law
To strike her as you please.

COUNTRYMEN

No, no, we'll find cudgel¹³¹ enough to strike her.

OLD BANKS

Ay; no lips to kiss but my cow's—! [*he cannot bring himself to say it*]

MOTHER SAWYER

Rots and foul maladies eat up thee and thine!

JUSTICE

Let's, then, away.—
Old woman, mend thy life; get home and pray.

Exeunt all but MOTHER SAWYER

MOTHER SAWYER

For his confusion!

Enter the DOG

My dear Tom-boy, welcome!
I'm torn in pieces by a pack of curs
Clapt all upon me, and for want of thee:
Comfort me; thou shalt have the teat¹³² anon.

DOG

Bow, wow! I'll have it now.

MOTHER SAWYER

I am dri'd up
With cursing and with madness, and have yet
No blood to moisten these sweet lips of thine.
Stand on thy hind-legs up—kiss me, my Tommy,
And rub away some wrinkles on my brow
By making my old ribs to shrug for joy
Of thy fine tricks. What hast thou done? Let's tickle!
Hast thou struck the horse lame as I bid thee?

¹³¹ Club

¹³² A witch was held to have a nipple at some unusual place on her body from which the familiar could suck blood; Dog previously sucked from Sawyer's arm

DOG

Yes;
And nipp'd the sucking child.

MOTHER SAWYER

Ho, ho, my dainty,
My little pearl! no lady loves her hound,
Monkey, or parakeet, as I do thee.

DOG

The maid has been churning butter nine hours; but it shall not come.

MOTHER SAWYER

Let 'em eat cheese and choke.

DOG

I had rare sport
Tripping the clowns i' th' Morris dance.¹³³

MOTHER SAWYER

I could dance
Out of my skin to hear thee. But, my curl-pate,¹³⁴
That jade, that foul-tongued whore, Nan Ratcliffe—
Who, for a little soap lick'd by my sow,
Struck and almost had lam'd it—did not I charge thee
To pinch that quean¹³⁵ to th' heart?

DOG

Bow, wow, wow! Look here else.

Enter HELLWAIN as ANN RATCLIFFE, mad

ANN

See, see, see! The man i' th' moon has built a new windmill; and what running there's
from all quarters of the city to learn the art of grinding!

MOTHER SAWYER

Nan Ratcliffe, mad! Ho, ho, ho! I thank thee, my sweet mongrel!

¹³³ "Ritual folk dance mainly danced in rural England from about the 15th century. The name, a variant of 'Moorish,' possibly arose in reference to the dancers' blacking their faces as part of the ritual disguise. It is principally a fertility dance, performed especially in the spring. Danced by groups of men often dressed in white and wearing bells on their legs, the steps are varied and intricate and are maintained in a jog-trot while handkerchiefs are waved in both hands. It calls for individual characters such as a hobbyhorse and a fool." (*Concise Encyclopedia Britannica*) A variant of the Morris is still danced in Newfoundland at Christmas.

¹³⁴ Curly-head (used to chide affectionately, as with a foolish child or youth)

¹³⁵ Harlot

ANN

Hoyday! A pox of the devil's false hopper!¹³⁶ All the golden meal runs into the rich knaves' purses, and the poor have nothing but bran. Hey derry down! Are not you Mother Sawyer?

MOTHER SAWYER

No, I am a lawyer.

ANN

Art thou? I prithee let me scratch thy face; for thy pen has flay'd off a great many men's skins. You'll have brave doings in the vacation, for knaves and fools are at variance in every village. I'll sue Mother Sawyer, and her own sow shall give in evidence against her.

MOTHER SAWYER

Touch her.

To the DOG, who rubs against ANN. Thunder

ANN

O, my ribs are made of a pan'd hose,¹³⁷ and they break! There's a Lancashire hornpipe in my throat; hark, how it tickles it, with doodle, doodle, doodle, doodle! Welcome, sergeants! Welcome, devil!—Hands, hands! Hold hands, and dance around, around, around.

Dancing, as the DOG slips aside. Re-enter OLD BANKS, with CUDDY and RATCLIFFE

RATCLIFFE

She's here; alas, my poor wife is here!

OLD BANKS

Catch her fast, and have her into some close chamber, do; for she's stark mad.

CUDDY BANKS

The witch! Mother Sawyer, the witch, the devil!

ANN repeating

The devil, the witch, the witch, the devil!

RATCLIFFE

O, my dear wife! help, sirs!

ANN is carried off by RATCLIFFE and CUDDY

¹³⁶ A large container into which substances are put before being transferred to something else

¹³⁷ Hose made of strips sewn together (Baskervill)

OLD BANKS

You see your work, Mother Bumby!¹³⁸

MOTHER SAWYER

My work? Should she and all you here run mad, is the work mine?

OLD BANKS

No, on my conscience, she would not hurt a devil of two years old.

A scream offstage. Re-enter RATCLIFFE and CUDDY slowly

How now! What's become of her?

RATCLIFFE

Nothing. She's become nothing but the miserable trunk of a wretched woman. We were in her hands as reeds in a mighty tempest: spite of our strengths away she brake; and nothing in her mouth being heard but "the devil, the witch, the witch, the devil!" she ... beat out her own brains, and so died.

CUDDY BANKS

It's any man's case, be he never so wise, to die when his brains go a wool-gathering.¹³⁹

OLD BANKS

Masters, be rul'd by me; let's all to a justice.—Hag, thou hast done this, and thou shalt answer it.

MOTHER SAWYER

Banks, I defy thee.

OLD BANKS

Get a warrant first to examine her, then ship her to Newgate;¹⁴⁰ here's enough, if all her other villainies were pardon'd, to burn her for a witch.—You have a spirit, they say, comes to you in the likeness of a dog; we shall see your cur at one time or other. If we do, unless it be the devil himself, he shall go howling to the jail in one chain, and thou in another.

MOTHER SAWYER

Be hang'd thou in a third,¹⁴¹ and do thy worst!

Thunder and lightning as the WITCHES gather again ...

¹³⁸ A reference to Lyly's comedy *Mother Bombie*, 1594

¹³⁹ An expression that normally means wandering or distracted thoughts, here applied literally

¹⁴⁰ A prison dating from the 12th century, originally in the principal west gate of London

¹⁴¹ I.e., in a third chain

Act I Finale

DOG

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

PUCKLE

All goes still to our delight!

FIRESTONE

'Tis a base life you lead, Dog: to serve witches, to destroy corn and fruit, to kill harmless cattle and innocent children—

SHAITAN

Why these are all my delights, my pleasures, fool!

PUCKLE

If you had a mind to the game either at bull or bear, Shaitan, I think I could prefer you to Moll Cutpurse.

SHAITAN

Ha, ha! If I were Moll Cutpurse, I should kill all the game—bulls, bears, dogs and all; not a cub to be left!

All but FIRESTONE laugh

FIRESTONE

Ha.

Goes to help the shaken HELLWAIN back to the group. SHAITAN confronts the two of them

SHAITAN

Let not the world witches or devils condemn;
They follow us, and then we follow them.
[to ALL] So prove thy love and service unto me,
And brides of Shaitan every one shalt be!

FIRESTONE *aside to HELLWAIN*

"And brides of Shaitan—?"

HELLWAIN *aside to FIRESTONE*

Every one shalt be—!"

Music

STADLIN

Will you come aloft tonight?

SHAITAN

I must be furnish'd for the flight.
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.

ROBIN, TIFFIN, STADLINE, HOPPO, PUCKLE

*Come away, come away,
Shaitan, Shaitan, come away.
Come away, come away,
Shaitan, Shaitan, come away.*

SHAITAN

Help, help me, Firestone: I'm too late else.

*During the following, FIRESTONE begins to the ritual anointing of SHAITAN with the
potion from the cauldron*

THE WITCHES *repeating*

*Come away, come away,
Shaitan, Shaitan, come away ...*

FIRESTONE

We weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters¹⁴² of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine and thrice to mine
And thrice again, to make up nine.

THE WITCHES

*Come away, come away,
Shaitan, Shaitan, come away.*

SHAITAN

*I come, I come, I come, I come,
With all the speed I may,
With all the speed I may.*

WITCHES

Come away; come Firestone too,

¹⁴² Swift travellers

*And Hellwain too, we lack but you.
Come away, make up the count.*

SHAITAN

I but anoint, and then I mount!

The moon's a gallant,¹⁴³ see how brisk¹⁴⁴ she rides.

STADLIN

Here's a rich evening, Shaitan.

SHAITAN

Ay, is't not, wenches—
To take a journey of five thousand mile?

FIRESTONE

Ours will be more tonight.

SHAITAN

Oh, 'twill be precious!

The ritual anointing is complete

FIRESTONE

Peace! the charm's wound up.

Thunder

SHAITAN

*Now I go, now I fly,
All of my sweet sisters and I
Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by!
Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by!*

THE WITCHES *overlapping*

*Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by!*

¹⁴³ 1. man of fashion and pleasure; 2. ladies' man or lover

¹⁴⁴ 1. lively and active; 2. spruce and well-dressed

*Over mountains, turrets, towers,
We fly for hours and hours!
No ring of bell nor yelp of hound—
We soar too high to hear the sound,
Restoring all our powers,
Restoring all our powers.*

ALL

*Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by!*

*Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by—!*

They fly away

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO
Entr'Acte

THE WITCHES descend from above, still singing

WITCHES

*Here we go, here we fly,
All of my sweet sisters and I.
Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by!*

*Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by!*

FIRESTONE

Come, let's make haste; he'll soon be back again.

They rush to their stations and stir the cauldron. Enter SHAITAN

SHAITAN

Titty and Tiffin, Suckin and Pidgen, Firestone and Robin,
White spirits, black spirits, grey spirits, red spirits,
Devil-toad, devil-ram, devil-cat, and devil-dam!
Why, Hoppo and Stadlin, Hellwain and Puckle!

STADLIN

Here, sweating at the vessel until we buckle.

SHAITAN

Do not neglect to heat it well!

ROBIN

It gallops¹⁴⁵ now—by the rancid smell.

SHAITAN

Where's Firestone got to? What herbs hast thou?

¹⁴⁵ I.e., boils

FIRESTONE *showing him*
Marmaritin, mandrake, and cud of cow.

SHAITAN
Here's *panax*,¹⁴⁶ too: I thank thee well.

FIRESTONE
My pan aches from kneeling to cut them—hell!

SHAITAN
Were all of 'em cropp'd by the moon's fair light?

FIRESTONE
I am no mooncalf! Each blade aright!

SHAITAN
Then stir that dear syrup that steeps in the pan
With this privy gristle of a hanged man.¹⁴⁷

FIRESTONE *taking it gingerly*
Marry, here's stuff indeed! Dear syrup you say?

SHAITAN
Now, Firestone!

FIRESTONE
Going!

SHAITAN
We've no time to play!
Are needles stuck in the heart of wax?

PUCKLE
'Tis done, 'tis done; the spell attacks.

SHAITAN
Then all is set to show my power
And we are ready for the second hour!

*Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.*

¹⁴⁶ Any of several plants of the genus *Panax*, especially pseudo-ginseng, the forked roots of which are believed to have medicinal properties.

¹⁴⁷ Hanging is known to cause erection, and even ejaculation

WITCHES

*Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble ...*

SHAITAN

Puckle! Stadlin!

He directs the set-up of the next scene ...

Scene 4: More Transgressions

LIVIA at a chess table; MOTHER (STADLIN) rejoins her

LIVIA
So, have you sent, Widow?

MOTHER
Yes, Madam.

LIVIA
Then 'faith, let me entreat you that henceforward
All such unkind faults may be swept from friendship.
It is a wrong to me, that have ability
To bid friends welcome, when you keep 'em from me.

MOTHER
Here she's, Madam.

Enter ROBIN as BIANCA with GUARDIANO

BIANCA *aside*
I wonder how she comes to send for me now?

LIVIA *going to greet her*
Gentlewoman, y'are most welcome, trust me y'are,
As courtesy can make one, or respect
Due to the presence of you.

BIANCA
I give you thanks, Lady.

LIVIA
I heard you were alone, and 't had appear'd
An ill condition in me to have kept your company
Here from you, and left you all solitary!
I rather ventur'd upon boldness then
As the least fault, and wish'd your presence here—
A thing most happily motion'd of¹⁴⁸ that gentleman:

¹⁴⁸ Moved or suggested by

A gentleman that ladies' rights stands for.
That's his profession!¹⁴⁹

BIANCA

'Tis a noble one, and honours my acquaintance.

GUARDIANO

All my intentions¹⁵⁰ are servants to such mistresses.

BIANCA

'Tis your modesty,
It seems, that makes your deserts speak so low, Sir.

LIVIA *moving to the chess table*

Come, Widow; look you, Lady, here's our business:
Are we not well employ'd, think you?—an old quarrel
Between us that will never be at an end.

BIANCA

No, and methinks there's men enough to part you, Lady.

LIVIA

I pray sit down, forsooth, if you have the patience
To look upon two weak and tedious gamesters.

GUARDIANO

Faith, Madam, set these by. The gentlewoman,
Being a stranger, would take more delight
To see your rooms and pictures.

LIVIA

Marry, good sir,
And well remember'd! I beseech you show 'em her!
That will beguile¹⁵¹ time well. Here, take these keys.
Show her the Monument too, and that's a thing
Everyone sees not; you can witness that, Widow.

MOTHER

And that's worth sight indeed, Madam.

BIANCA

Kind Lady,
I fear I came to be a trouble to you.

¹⁴⁹ "Perhaps double-edged: (1) occupation (2) assertion, pose" (Mulryne)

¹⁵⁰ Endeavours (Mulryne); Guardiano slips a second meaning under 'mistresses'.

¹⁵¹ 1. Deceive, cheat; 2. entertain, amuse

LIVIA

Oh nothing less, forsooth.

BIANCA

And to this courteous gentleman,
That wears a kindness in his breast so noble
And bounteous to the welcome of a stranger.

GUARDIANO

If you but give acceptance to my service,
You do the greatest grace and honour to me
That courtesy can merit.

BIANCA

I were to blame else,
And out of fashion much. I pray you lead, Sir.

LIVIA

After a game or two, we'll join you gentlefolks.

Exeunt GUARDIANO and BIANCA

LIVIA

Alas, poor Widow, I shall be too hard for thee.

MOTHER

Y'are cunning at the game, I'll be sworn, Madam.

LIVIA

It will be found so, ere I give you over:
She that can place her man well—

MOTHER

As you do, Madam.

LIVIA

As I shall, Wench—can never lose her game.
Nay, nay, the black king's mine.

MOTHER

Cry you mercy, Madam.

LIVIA

And this my queen.

MOTHER

I see't now.

LIVIA

Here's a duke

Will strike a sure stroke for the game anon.

Your pawn cannot come back to relieve itself!¹⁵²

MOTHER

I know that, Madam.

LIVIA

You play well the whilst;

How she belies her skill. I hold¹⁵³ two ducats¹⁵⁴

I give you check and mate to your white king:

Simplicity itself, your saintish king there.

MOTHER

Well, ere now, Lady,

I have seen the fall of subtlety. Jest on.

Enter above GUARDIANO and BIANCA

BIANCA

Trust me Sir,

Mine eye ne'er met with fairer ornaments.

GUARDIANO

Nay, livelier, I'm persuaded, neither Florence

Nor Venice can produce.¹⁵⁵

BIANCA

Sir, my opinion

Takes your part highly.

GUARDIANO

There's a better piece

Yet than all these.

Enter SHAITAN as the DUKE, behind them above

¹⁵² The chess piece now called the castle was previously called either the 'rook' or the 'duke'. And Bianca as 'pawn' can only move forward, never back. (Mulryne)

¹⁵³ Bet, wager

¹⁵⁴ 1. A gold coin of varying value used in most European countries; 2. a silver coin in Italy.

¹⁵⁵ Guardiano has been showing her 'naked pictures'—as we later learn.

BIANCA
Not possible, Sir!

GUARDIANO
Believe it!
You'll say so when you see't. Turn but your eye now;
Y'are upon't presently.¹⁵⁶

Exit

BIANCA
Oh, Sir!

DUKE
He's gone, Beauty!
Pish, look not after him: He's but a vapor,
That when the sun appears, is seen no more.

He takes hold of her

BIANCA
Oh, treachery to honour!

DUKE
Prithee tremble not;
I feel thy breast shake like a turtle¹⁵⁷ panting
Under a loving hand that makes much on't;
Why art so fearful? As I'm friend to brightness,¹⁵⁸
There's nothing but respect and honour near thee:
You know me, you have seen me; here's a heart
Can witness I have seen thee.

BIANCA
The more's my danger! [*She starts to struggle*]

DUKE
The more's thy happiness! Pish! strive not, Sweet;
This strength were excellent employ'd in love now,
But here 'tis spent amiss; strive not to seek
Thy liberty, and keep me still in prison.¹⁵⁹
I'faith you shall not out till I'm releas'd now;

¹⁵⁶ I.e., at once. (And 'upon it' has a graphic sexual implication)

¹⁵⁷ Turtledove

¹⁵⁸ I.e., beauty (Mulryne)

¹⁵⁹ Barred from you, unsatisfied

We'll be both freed together, or stay still¹⁶⁰ by't;
So¹⁶¹ is captivity pleasant.

BIANCA
Oh, my Lord!

DUKE
I am not here in vain; have but the leisure
To think on that, and thou'lt be soon resolv'd.
Take warning, I beseech thee.

BIANCA
Oh, my extremity!
My Lord, what seek you?

DUKE
Love.

BIANCA
'Tis gone already:
I have a husband.

DUKE
That's a single comfort,
Take a friend¹⁶² to him.

BIANCA
That's a double mischief,
Or else there's no religion.

DUKE
I can command,
Think upon that; yet if thou truly knewest
The infinite pleasure my affection gives,
You'd make more haste to please me.

BIANCA
Why should you seek, Sir,
To take away that you can never give?

DUKE
But I give better in exchange: wealth, honour.
She that is fortunate in a duke's favor

¹⁶⁰ Stay where we are

¹⁶¹ Thus, in that manner

¹⁶² I.e., lover

Lights on¹⁶³ a tree that bears all women's wishes.
If your own mother saw you pluck fruit there,
She would commend your wit. Take hold of glory!
Let storms come when they list,¹⁶⁴ they find thee shelter'd:
Should any doubt arise, let nothing trouble thee;
Put trust in our love for the managing
Of all to thy heart's peace. We'll walk together,
And show a thankful joy for both our fortunes.

Exeunt above

LIVIA
Did not I say my duke would fetch you over,¹⁶⁵ Widow?

MOTHER
I think you spoke in earnest when you said it, Madam.

LIVIA
And my black king makes all the haste he can, too.

MOTHER
Well, Madam, we may meet with him in time yet.

LIVIA
I have given thee blind mate twice.¹⁶⁶

MOTHER
You may see, Madam,
My eyes begin to fail.

LIVIA
I'll swear they do, Wench.

Enter apart GUARDIANO

GUARDIANO
I can but smile as often as I think on't,
How prettily the poor fool was beguil'd,
How unexpectedly. It's a witty age:
Yet to prepare her stomach by degrees

¹⁶³ Discovers, lands upon (alights like a bird). The allusion also casts Bianca as Eve, with the Duke as the Serpent.

¹⁶⁴ Wish, want

¹⁶⁵ "Get the better of you" (Mulryne)

¹⁶⁶ A checkmate that is not perceived as such by the opponent.

To Cupid's feast, because I saw 'twas queazy,
I show'd her naked pictures by the way.

LIVIA

The game's e'en at the best now; you may see, Widow,
How all things draw to an end.¹⁶⁷

MOTHER

E'en so do I, Madam.

LIVIA

Has not my duke bestir'd himself?

MOTHER

Yes, faith, Madam; h'as done me all the mischief in this game.

LIVIA

H'as show'd himself in's kind.¹⁶⁸

MOTHER

In's kind, call you it?
I may swear that.

LIVIA

Yes faith, and keep your oath.

GUARDIANO

Hark, list, there's somebody coming down; 'tis she.

Enter BIANCA

BIANCA *aside*

Now bless me from a blasting;¹⁶⁹ I saw that now
Fearful for any woman's eye to look on
Yet since mine honour's leprous, why should I
Preserve that fair that caus'd the leprosy?
Come poison all at once!—[*Apart to GUARDIANO*] Thou in whose baseness
The bane of virtue broods, I'm bound in soul
Eternally to curse thy smooth brow'd treachery,
That wore the fair veil of a friendly welcome,
And I a stranger. Now I am made bold,
I thank thy treachery; sin and I'm acquainted,
No couple greater; and I'm like that great one,

¹⁶⁷ A double meaning.

¹⁶⁸ Behaved himself according to his true nature.

¹⁶⁹ The exclamation means 'preserve me from a pestilence' or possible even 'hellfire'.

Who "likes the treason well, but hates the traitor";
So I hate thee, slave.

GUARDIANO *apart to BIANCA*
Well, so the Duke love me,
I fare not much amiss then.

BIANCA *moving to the gamesters*
At it still, Mother?

MOTHER
You see we sit by't. Are you so soon return'd?

LIVIA *aside*
So lively, and so cheerful, a good sign that.

MOTHER
You have not seen all since, sure?

BIANCA
That have I, Mother,
The Monument and all.¹⁷⁰ I'm so beholding¹⁷¹
To this kind, honest, courteous gentleman—
You'd little think it, Mother, show'd me all,
Had me¹⁷² from place to place so fashionably!
The kindness of some people, how't exceeds!
'Faith, I have seen that I little thought to see
I'th' morning when I rose.

MOTHER
Nay, so I told you
Before you saw't, it would prove worth your sight
I give you great thanks for my daughter, Sir,
And all your kindness towards her.

GUARDIANO
O good Widow!
Much good may't do her—[*Aside*] forty weeks hence, i'faith.

Enter SERVANT (FIRESTONE)

¹⁷⁰ Bianca is now in on the use of 'The Monument' to refer to the Duke's apparently impressive sexual equipment

¹⁷¹ Indebted

¹⁷² Who took or guided me (with a hidden sexual implication in 'had')

LIVIA
Now, Sir.

SERVANT
May't please you, Madam, to walk in?
Supper's upon the table.

LIVIA
Yes, we come;
Will't please you, Gentlewoman?

BIANCA
Thanks, virtuous Lady.—
[*Aside to LIVIA*] Y'are a damn'd bawd!—[*Aloud*] I'll follow you, forsooth;
Pray take my mother in.—[*Again aside to LIVIA*] An old ass go with you!—
[*Aloud*] This gentleman and I vow not to part.

LIVIA
Then get you both before.

BIANCA
There lies his art!¹⁷³

Exeunt

LIVIA
Widow, I'll follow you. [*Aside*] Is't so—'damn'd bawd'?
Are you so bitter? 'Tis but want of use;
Her tender modesty is sea-sick a little,
Being not accustom'd to the breaking billow
Of woman's wavering faith, blown with temptations.
'Tis but a qualm of honour, 'twill away—
A little bitter for the time, but lasts not.
Sin tastes at the first draught like wormwood water,¹⁷⁴
But drunk again, 'tis nectar ever after!

Exit

Enter LADY MACBETH to MACBETH

MACBETH
How now! what news?

¹⁷³ He's good at that (i.e., clearing the way for the Duke).

¹⁷⁴ A drink prepared from wormwood, proverbial for its bitterness. (Mulryne)

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 bought¹⁷⁵
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?¹⁷⁶

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

¹⁷⁵ Earned

¹⁷⁶ Proverb, saying.—about the cat "who wants the fish but doesn't want to get its paws wet." (Harbage)

Does unmake you.¹⁷⁷ 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,¹⁷⁸
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 convince¹⁷⁹
That memory, the warder¹⁸⁰ of the brain,
Shall be a fume;¹⁸¹ and 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?¹⁸²

MACBETH

Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle¹⁸³ should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be receiv'd,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber and us'd their very daggers,
That they have done't?

LADY MACBETH

Who dares receive it other,¹⁸⁴
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

¹⁷⁷ Neither time nor place were then felicitous, and yet you wanted to force them both; now that they have created themselves, their very fitness has unnerved you.

¹⁷⁸ Notch on a cross-bow that holds the taut string ready to shoot. (Harbage)

¹⁷⁹ With wine and spiced ale so overcome them ...

¹⁸⁰ Guardian

¹⁸¹ A confusing vapour

¹⁸² Kill, murder, termination, victory

¹⁸³ 1. Dispositon, temperament; 2. spirit, courage

¹⁸⁴ Interpret it otherwise

MACBETH

I am settl'd, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock¹⁸⁵ the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.

Exeunt. From the other WITCHES, a sound like the hissing and rattling of a nest of snakes has begun to rise

Enter AARON and TAMORA, fresh from another bout of love-making

TAMORA

Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!

Enter BASSIANUS (STADLIN) and LAVINIA, and fall back when they spy the lovers

AARON

No more, great empress; Bassianus comes.
Be cross with him; and I'll go fetch thy sons
To back thy quarrels, whatsoever they be.

Exit AARON, as sound intensifies

BASSIANUS *coming forward*

Who have we here? Rome's royal emperess?
Why have you wander'd to an obscure plot,
Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor,
If foul desire had not conducted you?

LAVINIA

Jove shield your husband from his hounds today—
'Tis pity they should take him for a stag!¹⁸⁶

BASSIANUS

The king my brother shall have note of this!

LAVINIA

Good king, to be so mightily abus'd!

TAMORA

Why have I patience to endure all this?!

The sound from the rest of the ensemble has grown into ...

¹⁸⁵ Deceive

¹⁸⁶ A taunting reference to the horns of a cuckold

Interlude 3

A more insistent chant than ever before, with a dangerous undercurrent

THE WITCHES

*Round, around, about, about,
All ill come in, all good keep out!
Round, around, about, about,
All ill come in, all good keep out!*

*Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.
Double, double, toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble ...*

Abruptly, SHAITAN/AARON sends CHIRON and DEMETRIUS into the scene

SHAITAN

Chiron! Demetrius!

Scene 5: Bloodshed

Enter CHIRON and DEMETRIUS

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 'ticed¹⁸⁷ me hither to this place,
And straight they told me they would bind me here
Unto the body of a dismal yew,
And leave me to this miserable death—

CHIRON and DEMETRIUS are speechless with surprise

—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 called 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, Medusa, come!¹⁸⁸—nay, barbarous Tamora,
For no name fits thy nature but thy own!

¹⁸⁷ Enticed

¹⁸⁸ Medusa was the serpent-haired monster of Greek myth whose glance turned men to stone.

TAMORA

Give me thy poniard;¹⁸⁹ you shall know, my boys,
Your mother's hand shall right your mother's wrong.

DEMETRIUS

Stay, madam; here is more belongs to her.
This minion¹⁹⁰ stood upon¹⁹¹ her chastity,
Upon her nuptial vow, her loyalty,
And with that painted¹⁹² 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 will make that sure.
Come, mistress, now perforce we will enjoy
That nice-preserved honesty¹⁹³ 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

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!—
Some say that ravens foster forlorn children,

¹⁸⁹ Dagger

¹⁹⁰ 1. Servile or obsequious follower; 2. darling, favourite; 3. mistress, paramour

¹⁹¹ Made much of (Cross)

¹⁹² Imagined, unrealistic

¹⁹³ "Carefully guarded chastity" (Cross)

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!¹⁹⁴

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 lov'd 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? Fond¹⁹⁵ woman, let me go!

LAVINIA

'Tis present death I beg; and one thing more—
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.

¹⁹⁴ Not as kind as the raven, yet a little capable of pity

¹⁹⁵ Foolish

LAVINIA

No grace? no womanhood? Ah, beastly creature!
The blot and enemy to our general name!¹⁹⁶
Confusion fall—

CHIRON

Nay, then I'll stop your mouth.

He does so by cutting out her tongue

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!¹⁹⁷
Now will I hence to seek my lovely Moor,
And let my spleenful sons this trull¹⁹⁸ deflow'r.

AARON/SHAITAN meets her, exulting, and they watch as ...

Enter MACBETH to LADY MACBETH, with two bloody daggers beneath his cloak

LADY 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.

¹⁹⁶ I.e., the name of womankind

¹⁹⁷ Killed

¹⁹⁸ Whore, strumpet

MACBETH
As I descended?

LADY MACBETH
Ay.

MACBETH
Hark!

Hears nothing. Looking on his hands

This is a sorry sight.

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 lodg'd together?

MACBETH
One cried 'God bless us!' and 'Amen' the other;
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
List'ning 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 sleeve¹⁹⁹ 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 witness²⁰⁰ from your hand.

As he moves to do so, she spies the daggers

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 gild²⁰¹ the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

Exit. Knocking within (coming from SHAITAN)

MACBETH

Whence is that knocking?

¹⁹⁹ The image of re-knitting an unraveled sleeve is clear today, but the original spelling 'sleave' referred to straightening out a tangled skein of floss-silk

²⁰⁰ Evidence

²⁰¹ Apply gold leaf (i.e., paint with the blood of a king)

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 incarnadine,²⁰²
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!

Knocking within

Hark! more knocking.
Get on your nightgown lest occasion call us;
Be not lost so poorly in your thoughts!

Exit

MACBETH
To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.

Knocking within—SHAITAN is mocking HELLWAIN/MACBETH

Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!

Exit

Enter BEATRICE to admit SHAITAN—who has become DEFLORES, fresh from killing Piracquo

BEATRICE
Deflores.

²⁰² Turn red

DEFLORES

Lady.

BEATRICE

Thy looks promise cheerfully.

DEFLORES

All things are answerable:²⁰³ time, circumstance,
Your wishes and my service.

BEATRICE

Is it done then?

DEFLORES

Piracquo is no more.

BEATRICE

My joys start at mine eyes; our sweet'st delights
Are evermore born weeping.

DEFLORES

I've a token for you.

He gives her a small object wrapped in a handkerchief

BEATRICE *unwrapping it*

For me?

DEFLORES

But it was sent somewhat unwillingly:
I could not get the ring without the finger.

BEATRICE *dropping it*

Bless me! What hast thou done?

DEFLORES

Why, is that more
Than killing the whole man? I cut his heart strings
A greedy hand thrust in a dish at court
In a mistake hath had as much as this. [*picking it up again*]

BEATRICE

'Tis the first token my father made me send him.

²⁰³ "In agreement" (Cleary)

DEFLORES

And I made him send it back again
For his last token. I was loathe to leave it,
And I'm sure dead men have no use of jewels.

BEATRICE

'Tis soon apply'd: all dead men's fees are yours, sir.

DEFLORES

Well, being my fees I'll take it;
Great men have taught me that, or else my merit
Would scorn the way on't.

BEATRICE

It might justly, sir.
Then look you, here's three thousand golden florins;²⁰⁴
I have not meanly thought upon thy merit.

DEFLORES

What, salary? Now you move me!

BEATRICE

How, Deflores?

DEFLORES

Do you place me in the rank of verminous fellows
To destroy things for wages? Offer gold?
The lifeblood of man! Is anything
Valued too precious for my recompense?

BEATRICE

I understand thee not.

DEFLORES

I could ha' hir'd
A journeyman²⁰⁵ in murder at this rate,
And mine own conscience might have slept at ease
And had the work brought home!

BEATRICE *aside*

I'm in a labyrinth;
What will content him? I would fain be rid of him.—
I'll double the sum, sir.

²⁰⁴ A gold coin first issued at Florence, Italy, in 1252

²⁰⁵ One step above an apprentice (i.e., not yet a master of the craft)

DEFLORES

You take a course
To double my vexation, that's the good you do.

BEATRICE *aside*

Bless me! I am now in worse plight than I was;
I know not what will please him.—For my fear's sake,
I prithee make away with all speed possible
Send thy demand in writing, it shall follow thee;
But prithee take thy flight.

DEFLORES

You must fly too then.

BEATRICE

I?

DEFLORES

I'll not stir a foot else.

BEATRICE

What's your meaning?

DEFLORES

Why, are not you as guilty—in, I'm sure,
As deep as I? And we should stick together.
Come, your fears counsel you but ill: my absence
Would draw suspect upon you instantly;
There were no rescue for you.

BEATRICE *aside*

He speaks home.

DEFLORES

Nor is it fit we two engag'd so jointly
Should part and live asunder.

He tries to kiss her

BEATRICE

How now, sir?
This shows not well!

DEFLORES

What makes your lip so strange?
This must not be 'twixt us.

BEATRICE *aside*
The man talks wildly.

DEFLORES
Come, kiss me with a zeal now!

BEATRICE *aside*
Heaven, I doubt²⁰⁶ him!

DEFLORES
I have eas'd
You of your trouble; think on't: I'm in pain
And must be eas'd of you; 'tis a charity.
Justice invites your blood to understand me.

BEATRICE
I dare not.

DEFLORES
Quickly!

BEATRICE
Oh, I never shall!
Speak it yet further off that I may lose
What has been spoken, and no sound remain on't!
I would not hear so much offence again
For such another deed.

DEFLORES
Soft, lady, soft;
The last is not yet paid for. Oh, this act
Has put me into spirit;²⁰⁷ I was as greedy on't
As the parch'd earth of moisture when the clouds weep.
Did you not mark I wrought myself into't?²⁰⁸
Nay, su'd and kneel'd for't? Why was all that pains took?
You see I have thrown contempt upon your gold;
And were I not resolv'd in my belief
That thy virginity were perfect in thee,
I should but take my recompense with grudging,
As if I had but half my hopes I agreed for.

BEATRICE
Why, 'tis impossible thou canst be so wicked,

²⁰⁶ Fear, distrust

²⁰⁷ 1. Courage; 2. sexual desire (Cleary)

²⁰⁸ "Worked to be given the task" (Cleary)

Or shelter such a cunning cruelty,
To make his death the murderer of my honour!
Thy language is so bold and vicious,
I cannot see which way I can forgive it
With any modesty.

DEFLORES

Push, you forget yourself:
A woman dipp'd in blood and talk of modesty?!

BEATRICE

Oh, misery of sin! Would I had been bound
Perpetually unto my living hate
In that Piracquo than to hear these words!
Think but upon the distance that creation
Set 'twixt thy blood and mine,²⁰⁹ and keep thee there!

DEFLORES

Look but into your conscience, read me there:
'Tis a true book; you'll find me there your equal!
Push, fly not to your birth, but settle you
In what the act has made you; y'are no more now.²¹⁰
You must forget your parentage to me;
Y'are the deed's creature: by that name
You lost your first condition,²¹¹ and I challenge²¹² you,
As peace and innocency has turn'd you out
And made you one with me.

BEATRICE

With thee, foul villain?

DEFLORES

Yes, my fair murderess! Do you urge²¹³ me?
Though thou writ'st maid, thou whore in thy affection:
'Twas chang'd from thy first love, and that's a kind
Of whoredom in thy heart; and he's chang'd²¹⁴ now
To bring thy second on, thy Alsemero,
Whom, by all sweets that ever darkness tasted,
If I enjoy thee not, thou ne'er enjoy'st.

²⁰⁹ The distinction in their family bloodlines or class

²¹⁰ The old you no longer exists.

²¹¹ By the name of murderess you lost your original innocence ...

²¹² Claim (Cleary)

²¹³ Challenge, provoke

²¹⁴ Exchanged

I'll blast the hopes and joys of marriage;
I'll confess all, my life I rate at nothing.

BEATRICE
Deflores!

DEFLORES
I shall rest from all lovers' plagues then;
I live in pain now: that shooting eye
Will burn my heart to cinders.

BEATRICE
Oh, sir, hear me!

DEFLORES
She that in life and love refuses me,
In death and shame my partner she shall be.

BEATRICE *on her knees*
Stay, hear me once for all: I make thee master
Of all the wealth I have in gold and jewels;
Let me go poor unto my bed with honour
And I am rich in all things.

DEFLORES
Let this silence thee:
The wealth of all Valencia shall not buy
My pleasure from me.
Can you weep fate from its determin'd purpose?
So soon may you weep me.

BEATRICE
Vengeance begins;
Murder, I see, is follow'd by more sins.
Was my creation in the womb so curs'd
It must engender with a viper first?²¹⁵

DEFLORES *raising her*
Come, rise and shroud your blushes in my bosom.—

He embraces her

²¹⁵ Was such a curse laid on me before birth that I am doomed to surrender my maidenhead to a poisonous serpent?

Silence is one of pleasure's best receipts:²¹⁶
Thy peace is wrought forever in this yielding.
'Las, how the turtle²¹⁷ pants! Thou'lt love anon
What thou so fear'st and faint'st to venture on.

Exeunt, entwined. The other WITCHES, who have gathered to watch as the scene progressed, are uneasy with what is happening to ROBIN. But then ...

A tall figure—heavily veiled and in a wedding dress under SHAITAN'S robe—bounces onto the stage and skips about flouncing skirts and flirting with each of them in an energetic send-up. Is this SHAITAN in drag, mocking what has just happened? The others quickly recover from their confusion, improvise the complementary roles of horny old men, and start to enjoy themselves.

TIFFIN

See where she comes!

PUCKLE

A proper lusty presence!

STADLIN

A goodly, personable creature—Just of her pitch was my first wife!

HOPPO

Hide not our happiness too long. Let's salute her, gentlemen!²¹⁸

OTHERS

Yes! Salute her! [*et cetera ad lib*]

They pursue her. Suddenly she un.masks herself; they find that it is not SHAITAN but MOLL CUTPURSE

PUCKLE & TIFFIN

Heart! Who's this? Moll?

HOPPO

Hell, darkness and death!

STADLIN

A devil rampant!

MOLL

Not I, not I! Why, what's the matter with you?

²¹⁶ Recipes; i.e., prescriptions

²¹⁷ Turtledove

²¹⁸ The Elizabethan way to salute a lady on first meeting is to kiss her

Now are you gull'd as you deserve! Thank me for't;
Methinks you should be proud of such a sister,
As good a man as any.

STADLIN
Monstrous impudence!

MOLL
You do not know the benefits I bring with me:
Now all the town will take regard on you,
And all your enemies fear you for my sake
No Dog dares work on you to make you wife
While y'ave a Roaring Girl as friend for life!

STADLIN *with sarcasm*
Forgive me, worthy gentlewoman; now so clear
I see the brightness of thy worth appear!

PUCKLE
Thou art a mad girl, and yet I cannot now
Condemn thee.

MOLL
Condemn me? Troth, and²¹⁹ you should, madam,
I'd give you the slip at gallows and cozen²²⁰ the court!
Heard you this jest, my ladies?

TIFFIN
What is it, Moll?

MOLL
There's one who says he wants to mate with me,
But never dreams that I will ne'er agree!

OTHERS
Who?

HOPPO *echoed by others*
Laxton!

STADLIN *overriding them*
Shaitan!

²¹⁹ If

²²⁰ Trick, deceive

OTHERS

Shaitan? Oh—!

MOLL

Perhaps for my mad going some reprove me:
I please myself and care not else who loves me.

HELLWAIN

In troth, a brave mind, Moll!

TIFFIN

So when wilt marry?

MOLL

Who, I, madam? I'll tell you when, i'faith:
I shall marry when you shall hear
Gallants void from sergeants' fear,
Honesty and truth unslander'd,
Woman mann'd but never pander'd,
Cheaters booted but not coach'd,²²¹
Vessels²²² older ere they're broach'd
If my mind be then not varied,
Next day following, I'll be married!

STADLIN

This sounds like Doomsday!

MOLL

Then were marriage best—
For if I should repent, I were soon at rest!

THE OTHERS applaud and begin to celebrate, when ...

²²¹ "Rich or respectable enough to be well-shod but not enough to ride in coaches" (Cleary)

²²² Maidenheads

Interlude 4

Thunder and lightning. Enter a furious SHAITAN, who bears a wriggling sack

HOPPO

Why, how now, Shaitan? You look angerly.

SHAITAN

Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and overbold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with mortal folk
In riddles and disguises' smoke—
And I, the master of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?

The WITCHES cower

Sister Firestone, thou'rt still about some villainy?

FIRESTONE

Not I, forsooth.

She surrenders SHAITAN's robe

SHAITAN

Send Stadlin to me, and a brazen²²³ dish, that I may set one to squeezing these serpents.

STADLIN comes forward, and HELLWAIN brings a dish.

FIRESTONE

Here's Stadlin, and Hellwain with the dish.

SHAITAN gives STADLIN a dead child's body

Here, take this unbaptised brat.²²⁴

Boil it well, preserve the fat:

²²³ Brass

²²⁴ Not only were unbaptised infants believed to be unprotected against witchcraft, but they might be rendered into magical potions to enable such things as flying.

You know 'tis precious²²⁵ to transfer
Our 'nointed flesh into the air.

STADLIN

Where be the magic herbs?

SHAITAN

Down his throat:

He's stuff'd like a capon fit to bloat.

Aconitum, *frondes*, and flitter-mouse²²⁶—

Take care not to spill lest the fire douse.

STADLIN moves away

SHAITAN *turning to HELLWAIN*

What young folk now can pleasure us,

Deflower'd through an incubus?²²⁷

Know'st that, Hellwain?

HELLWAIN

Done and done.

SHAITAN *seizing her*

Last night thou got'st the Widow's son;

I knew by his black cloak, lin'd with yallow.

I think thou'st spoil'd him: he is but callow.

I'll have him next mounting,²²⁸ his soul devour.

HELLWAIN

But—

SHAITAN *dumping the serpents into her dish*

Go feed the vessel for the rest o' the hour!

HELLWAIN moves off

All make amends now: get you gone,

And at the pit of Acheron²²⁹

Meet me ere morning. Thither we

²²⁵ I.e., essential

²²⁶ *Aconitum*: one of the most poisonous of British plants, also called monk's hood and wolf's bane. *Frondes populeas*: poplar leaves. Flitter-mouse: bat.

²²⁷ Lascivious demon said to possess mortals as they sleep—and often to be responsible for the birth of demons, witches, and deformed children.

²²⁸ Next flight, but with a sexual implication

²²⁹ In Greek myth, one of the rivers of the Underworld (Hades). In Hellenistic and Latin poetry the name denoted the Underworld itself.

Fulfil our characters' destiny,
As by the strength of their illusion
We draw all on to their confusion!
Now for the air; this night we spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end—
Great business must be wrought ere noon
Before the setting of the moon!

SHAITAN, becoming the DUKE, singles ROBIN out as BIANCA, as they dissolve into the next scene ...

Scene 6: Turning the Tables

The DUKE shields BIANCA from the approach of her husband LEANTIO (HELLWAIN), then summons LIVIA and MOTHER. LIVIA is struck dumb at the sight of LEANTIO

SHAITAN settles above to bill and coo with his new mistress, while gloating over LIVIA's humiliation

LIVIA

Is that your son, Widow?

MOTHER

Yes, did your Ladyship never know that till now?

LIVIA

No, trust me, did I—

[*Aside*] Nor ever truly felt the power of love

And pity to a man till now I knew him!

I have enough to buy me my desires

And yet to spare; that's one good comfort.—Hark you?

Pray let me speak with you, Sir, before you go?

LEANTIO

With me, Lady? You shall, I am at your service.

LIVIA *unable to find words; aside*

I am as dumb to any language now

But love's as one that never learn'd to speak!

I am not yet so old, but he may think of me.

My own fault, I have been idle a long time;

But I'll begin the week, and paint tomorrow!

I never thriv'd so well, as when I us'd it.—

Sweet Sir!

LEANTIO *to the distant BIANCA*

As long as mine eye saw thee,

I half enjoy'd thee.

LIVIA *aside*

This makes me madder to enjoy him now.

LEANTIO

Canst thou forget
The dear pains my love took, when we embrac'd
As if we had been statues only made for't,
And kiss'd as if our lips had grown together?

LIVIA *aside*

I shall grow madder yet!—Sir?

LEANTIO

Cry mercy, Lady. What would you say to me?
My sorrow makes me so unmannerly,
So comfort bless me, I had quite forgot you.

LIVIA *aside*

He's vex'd in mind; I came too soon to him.
Where's my discretion now, my skill, my judgment?
I'm cunning in all arts but my own love!—
Sir? ... Sweet Sir?

Exit following LEANTIO, as SHAITAN roars with laughter

Now, summoned by SHAITAN, enter on one side LADY MACBETH in nightgown with a taper, and on the other a DOCTOR (TIFFIN) to join MOTHER—who has become the GENTLEWOMAN

GENTLEWOMAN

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise; and, upon my life, fast asleep! Observe her; stand close.²³⁰

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.

²³⁰ I.e., concealed

GENTLEWOMAN

It is an accustom'd 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.

LADY MACBETH

Out, damn'd spot! out, I say!—One ... two ...²³¹ 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.²³²

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 charg'd.²³³

GENTLEWOMAN

I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

DOCTOR

This disease is beyond my practice.

²³¹ She hears an internal clock strike the hour

²³² Alarmed or fearful movements

²³³ Burdened

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

*SHAITAN, again roaring with laughter, becomes CARDINAL MONTICELSO.
BRACHIANO and the remaining WITCHES assemble for the arraignment of VITTORIA,
who enters guarded to the prisoner's dock*

CARDINAL MONTICELSO *to VITTORIA*

Stand to the table, gentlewoman.—
Observe this creature here, my honour'd lords:
A woman of most prodigious spirit,
In her effected.²³⁴

VITTORIA

My honourable lord,
It doth not suit a reverend cardinal
To play the lawyer thus.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Oh, your trade instructs your language!
You see, my lords, what goodly fruit she seems;
Yet like those apples travellers report
To grow where Sodom and Gomorrah²³⁵ stood,
I will but touch her, and you straight shall see
She'll fall to soot and ashes.
Were there a second paradise to lose,²³⁶
This devil would betray it.

VITTORIA

O poor Charity!
Thou art seldom found in scarlet.²³⁷

²³⁴ Realized, made actual

²³⁵ The doomed Old Testament cities of excess and sexual iniquity

²³⁶ I.e., another expulsion from the Garden of Eden

²³⁷ The colour of a cardinal's robes

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Who knows not how, when several night by night²³⁸
Her gates were chok'd with coaches, and her rooms
Outbrav'd the stars with several kind of lights—
When she did counterfeit a prince's court
In music, banquets, and most riotous surfeits—
This whore forsooth was holy.

VITTORIA

Ha! whore! what 's that?

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Shall I expound whore to you? Sure I shall;
I 'll give their perfect character. They are first,
Sweetmeats which rot the eater; in man's nostrils
Poison'd perfumes. They are cozening alchemy—²³⁹

VITTORIA

This character 'scapes me.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

You, gentlewoman?
Take from all beasts and from all minerals
Their deadly poison——

VITTORIA

Well, what then?

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

I 'll tell thee;
I 'll find in thee a 'pothecary's shop,
To sample them all!

STADLIN

She hath liv'd ill.

TIFFIN

True, but the cardinal 's too bitter.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

You know what 'whore' is! Next²⁴⁰ the devil adultery,
Enters the devil murder—your unhappy husband!

²³⁸ Night after night, one after another

²³⁹ The misleading (and ultimately fruitless) 'science' that promised to turn base metals to gold

²⁴⁰ I.e., next to

And look upon this creature was²⁴¹ his wife!
She comes not like a widow; she comes arm'd
With scorn and impudence! Is this a mourning-habit?²⁴²

VITTORIA

Had I foreknown his death, as you suggest,
I would have bespoke my mourning.²⁴³

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Oh, you are cunning!

VITTORIA

You shame your wit and judgment,
To call it so. What! is my just defence
From him that is my judge call'd impudence?
Let me appeal then from this Christian court
To the uncivil Tartar!²⁴⁴

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

See, my lords,
She scandals²⁴⁵ our proceedings.

VITTORIA

Find me but guilty, sever head from body,
We'll part good friends: I scorn to hold my life
At yours, or any man's entreaty, sir.²⁴⁶

ROBIN

She hath a brave spirit!

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Well, well, such counterfeit jewels
Make true ones oft suspected.

VITTORIA

You are deceiv'd:
For know, that all your strict-combined heads,
Which strike against this mine of diamonds,
Shall prove but glassen²⁴⁷ hammers: they shall break.

²⁴¹ I.e., who was

²⁴² Mourning dress, outfit

²⁴³ I.e., ordered mourning-clothes for myself

²⁴⁴ 1. A member of any of the pagan Turkic and Mongolian peoples of central Asia who invaded western Asia and eastern Europe in the Middle Ages; 2. any person regarded as ferocious or violent.

²⁴⁵ I.e., scandalizes

²⁴⁶ I scorn to attempt to keep my life by begging you or any other man

²⁴⁷ Made of glass

These are but feigned shadows of my evils.
Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils;
I am past such needless palsy. For your names
Of 'whore' and 'murderess', they proceed from you
As if a man should spit against the wind:
The filth returns in 's face.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Pray you, mistress, satisfy me one question:
Who lodg'd beneath your roof that fatal night
Your husband broke his neck?

BRACHIANO

That question
Enforceth me break silence: I was there.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Your business, my lord the duke?

BRACHIANO

Why, I came to comfort her,
And take some course for settling her estate.
'Twas strangely fear'd—

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Who made you overseer?

BRACHIANO

Why, my charity, my charity, which should flow
From every generous and noble spirit,
To orphans and to widows.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

'Twas your lust!

BRACHIANO

Cowardly dogs bark loudest. Sirrah priest,
I'll talk with you hereafter. Do you hear?
The sword you frame of such an excellent temper,
I'll sheath in your own bowels, Monticelso!
No one injures me with impunity!

Exit

CARDINAL MONTICELSO *to VITTORIA*

Your champion's gone.

VITTORIA

The wolf may pray²⁴⁸ the better.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Now the duke's left, I will produce a letter
Wherein 'twas plotted, he and you should meet
Down by the River Tiber;—view 't, my lords—
Where after wanton bathing and the heat
Of a lascivious banquet—I pray read it,
I shame to speak the rest.

He hands a letter to one of the LORDS/WITCHES

VITTORIA

Grant I was tempted;
Temptation to lust proves not the act!
Condemn you me for that the duke did love me?
So may you blame some fair and crystal river
For that some melancholic man hath drown'd himself in 't!
Sum up my faults, I pray, and you shall find
That beauty and gay clothes, a merry heart,
And a good stomach²⁴⁹ to feast, are all—
All the poor crimes that you can charge me with.
In faith, my lord, you might go pistol flies,
The sport would be more noble!

Some of the other WITCHES/LORDS agree

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

If the devil
Did ever take good shape, behold his picture.

VITTORIA

You have one virtue left: you will not flatter me.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

My lord duke sent to you a thousand ducats
The twelfth of August.

VITTORIA

'Twas to keep my husband
From prison; I paid use²⁵⁰ for 't.

²⁴⁸ With a pun on 'prey'—or *vice versa*

²⁴⁹ I.e., appetite

²⁵⁰ Interest; i.e., it was a loan rather than a gift or a fee.

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

I rather think,
'Twas interest for his lust!

VITTORIA

Who says so but
Yourself?—! If you be my accuser,
Pray cease to be my judge; come from the bench,
Give in your evidence 'gainst me, and let these²⁵¹
Be moderators.

Increasingly the other WITCHES/LORDS are taking VITTORIA's side. Exit STADLIN in disgust

My lord cardinal—

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

You were born in Venice, honourably descended
From the Vittelli. 'Twas my cousin's fate,
Ill may I name the hour, to marry you;
He bought you of your father.

VITTORIA

Ha!

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

I yet but draw the curtain; now to your picture:
You came from thence a most notorious strumpet,²⁵²
And so you have continu'd!

VITTORIA

My lord!

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Nay, hear me,
You shall have time to prate. Your public fault,
Join'd to th' condition of the present time,
Takes from you all the fruits of noble pity—
Such a corrupted trial have you made
Both of your life and beauty, and been styl'd
No less an ominous fate than blazing stars

²⁵¹ I.e., the ambassadors and, in this case, the audience

²⁵² Slut, harlot, tart

To princes.²⁵³ Hear your sentence: you are confin'd
Unto a house of convertites, and your bawd——

VITTORIA

A house of convertites? And what is that?

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

A house of penitent whores! Away with her,
Take her hence!

VITTORIA

A rape! a rape!

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

How?

VITTORIA

Yes: you have ravish'd justice—
Forc'd her to do your pleasure!

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Fie, she's mad—

VITTORIA

Die with those pills in your most cursed maw
Should bring you health! or while you sit o' th' bench,
Let your own spittle choke you—

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

She's turn'd Fury!

VITTORIA

—That the last day of judgment may so find you,
And leave you the same devil you were before!
For since you cannot take my life for deeds,
Take it for words. O woman's poor revenge,
Which dwells but in the tongue! I will not weep;
No, I do scorn to call up one poor tear
To fawn on your injustice: bear me hence
Unto this house of—what's your title?

CARDINAL MONTICELSO

Convertites.

²⁵³ "Been ... princes": Earned the reputation of being every bit as deadly an omen to princes as a blazing comet.

VITTORIA

It shall not be a house of convertites!
My mind shall make it honester to me
Than the Pope's palace, and more peaceable
Than thy soul, though thou art a cardinal.
Know this, and let it somewhat raise your spite:
Through darkness diamonds spread their richest light!

Exit SHAITAN, furious, with the remaining WITCHES clamouring against him

Enter MOTHER SAWYER; the OTHERS draw back to watch

MOTHER SAWYER

Still wrong'd by every slave, and not a dog
Bark in his dame's defence? I am call'd witch,
Yet am myself bewitch'd from doing harm.
Have I giv'n up myself to thy black lust
Thus to be scorn'd? Not see me in three days!
I'm lost without my Tomalin; prithee come—
Revenge to me is sweeter far than life—
And break from hell, I care not! Could I run
Like a swift powder-mine beneath the world,
Up would I blow it all to find out thee,
Though I lay ruin'd in it. Not yet come?
I must, then, fall to my old prayer:
Sanctibicetur nomen tuum.—

THE WITCHES *echoing*

Sanctibicetur nomen tuum.
Sanctibicetur nomen tuum.
Sanctibicetur nomen tuum.—

MOTHER SAWYER

Not yet come! The worrying of wolves, biting of mad dogs, the manges, and the—

Enter the DOG, still in a foul temper

DOG

How now! Whom art thou cursing?

MOTHER SAWYER

Thee!
For not attending on me!

DOG

Ha! Bow, wow!

MOTHER SAWYER

If thou my old dog art, go and bite such
As I shall set thee on.

DOG

I will not.

MOTHER SAWYER

I'll sell myself to twenty thousand fiends
To have thee torn in pieces, then!

DOG

Thou canst not; thou art so ripe to fall into hell, that no more of my kennel will so much
as bark at him that hangs thee.

MOTHER SAWYER

I shall run mad!

DOG

Do so! Thy time is come to curse, and rave, and die. The glass of thy sins is full, and it
must run out at gallows. And ere the executioner catch thee full in's claws, thou'lt confess
all.

MOTHER SAWYER

Out, ugly cur!

DOG

Out, witch! Thy trial's at hand:
Our prey being had, the devil does laughing stand!

MOTHER SAWYER

Forsake me? O, thou viper! All take heed
How they believe the devil: at last he'll cheat you!—

DOG

Away with her! Away!

MOTHER SAWYER

—There is no damned conjuror like the devil!

DOG lunges at her with a roar, but the WITCHES block his path

HELLWAIN

'Tis thou hast brought her to the gallows, Shaitan!

OTHERS

'Tis thou! 'Tis thou!

SHAITAN

Right! I served her to that purpose—'twas my wages!

He removes his Dog mask

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!

In a fury, SHAITAN retrieves the large pie from hiding and forces that and a cook's hat on HOPPO, who must against her will revert to TITUS ANDRONICUS

Enter hastily SATURNINUS (PUCKLE), TAMORA, and LAVINIA veiled. HELLWAIN reluctantly returns to LUCIUS. The Company sit down, and TITUS attempts to serve them

SHAITAN *overlapping*

Eat! ... Eat! ...

TITUS ANDRONICUS *agitated*

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.

SHAITAN *overlapping*

Eat! ... Eat! ... Eat!

SATURNINUS

Why art thou thus attir'd, 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.

SHAITAN forces HOPPO roughly aside, taking over the role of TITUS himself and furiously doling out the contents of the pie

TITUS ANDRONICUS

An if your highness knew my heart, you were!
My lord the emperor, resolve me this:
Was it well done of rash Virginius²⁵⁴
To slay his daughter with his own right hand,
Because she was enforc'd,²⁵⁵ stain'd, and deflower'd?

SATURNINUS

It was, Shait—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

SATURNINUS

What hast thou done, unnatural and unkind?

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Kill'd her for whom my tears have made me blind.
I am as woeful 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?

²⁵⁴ In 451BC, Lucius Virginius, a respected centurion, was forced to stab his daughter Virginia in the Forum to protect her from further abduction and rape by a leading decemvir—an abuse that so outraged the populace that it precipitated the fall of the decemviri and the return of the Republic.

²⁵⁵ Raped

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!

The table erupts in retching and horrified reactions

'Tis true, 'tis true; witness my knife's sharp point!

Kills TAMORA

SATURNINUS

Die, frantic wretch, for this accursed deed!

HOPPO

Here's death for death, and meed for deadly meed!²⁵⁶

As both attack TITUS/SHAITAN, he turns their blades on each other and down they go

When the tumult subsides, only HELLWAIN is left standing. SHAITAN crosses to gloat over LAVINIA, from beneath whose veil come BEATRICE'S cries

BEATRICE

Oh, oh, oh!

HELLWAIN *who has become ALSEMERO*

Deflores?

DEFLORES

Noble Alsemero.

ALSEMERO

What price goes murder?

DEFLORES

How, sir?

²⁵⁶ Wages, reward, just deserts

ALSEMERO

I ask you, sir:
My wife's behindhand with you,²⁵⁷ she tells me,
For a brave, bloody blow you gave for her sake
Upon Piracquo.

DEFLORES

Upon? 'Twas quite through him, sure.
Her love I earn'd out of Piracquo's murder—
Yes, and her honour's prize
Was my reward; it was so sweet to me
That I have drunk up all, left none behind
Save one thing only: that she is a whore.

ALSEMERO to BEATRICE

Oh, thou art all deform'd!

BEATRICE

Oh, come not near me, sir; I shall defile you.
I am that of your blood was taken from you
For your better health;²⁵⁸ look no more upon't,
But cast it to the ground regardlessly:
Let the common sewer take it from distinction.²⁵⁹
Beneath the stars, upon yon meteor [*meaning DEFLORES*]
Ever hung my fate 'mongst things corruptible;²⁶⁰
I ne'er could pluck it from him.
Mine honour fell with him, and now my life.
Alsemero, I am a stranger to your bed.
Your bed was cozen'd²⁶¹ on the nuptial night,
For which your false bride died.

ALSEMERO

Your serving girl?

²⁵⁷ Owes you

²⁵⁸ Blood-letting was still then—and for two centuries after—the principal means of treatment for almost all diseases.

²⁵⁹ "Let it become mixed with the sewage" (Cleary)

²⁶⁰ "The meteor she refers to is Deflores. According to medieval astrology, the stars that controlled men's fate ... were fixed and incorruptible; on the other hand, meteors ... were corruptible and subject to change, and heralded ... evil events on earth." (Cleary)

²⁶¹ Cozened: deceived, cheated, duped

DEFLORES

Yes, and the while I coupl'd with your mate
At barley-break;²⁶² now we are left in hell.

HOPPO

We are all there ...

PUCKLE

We are all there ...

TIFFIN

We are all there ...

STADLIN

We are all there ...

HELLWAIN

We are all there ...

BEATRICE

Forgive me, Alsemero, all forgive;
'Tis time to die when 'tis a shame to live.

Dies

The clock strikes three. The triumphant SHAITAN becomes the cocky LAXTON at Gray's Inn Fields, looking for MOLL

LAXTON

One, two, three—three by the clock at Savoy:²⁶³ this is the hour, and Gray's Inn Fields the place. She swore she'd meet me, yet I see her not. Why, Moll, prithee make haste or the coachman will curse us anon.

Enter MOLL

MOLL

Come, are you ready, sir?

LAXTON

Ready for what, sir?

²⁶² Barley-break: a popular chasing game of the 16th to 18th centuries, which involved three mixed-sex pairs of players. One couple stood in the middle of the playing area—called 'hell'—holding hands throughout, and the other pairs at opposite ends. The two end pairs had to change partners without being caught by the still-linked middle couple. An alternative name was 'Last Couple in Hell'.

²⁶³ "The 13th-century palace reconstructed as a hospital for the poor in 1505" (Cleary)

MOLL

Do you ask that now, sir? Why was this meeting 'pointed'?

LAXTON

Who's this? Moll? Honest Moll?

MOLL

So young and purblind?²⁶⁴

LAXTON

I'll swear I knew thee not.

MOLL

I'll swear you did not—but you shall know me now.

LAXTON

No, not here, we shall be spied, i'faith;²⁶⁵ the coach is better, come.

MOLL

Stay.

LAXTON

What, wilt thou untruss a point,²⁶⁶ Moll?

She puts off her cloak and draws

MOLL

Yes, here's the point that I untruss! 'T has but one tag;²⁶⁷ 'twill serve tho' to tie up a rogue's tongue.

LAXTON

How!

MOLL

There's the gold²⁶⁸ with which you hir'd your jade.²⁶⁹

Flings his purse back to him and attacks

Here's her pace;²⁷⁰

She racks hard,²⁷¹ and perhaps your bones will feel it!

²⁶⁴ Partially blind

²⁶⁵ Laxton understands Moll's "know" in the biblical (carnal) sense—the opposite of Moll's meaning.

²⁶⁶ Do you want me to undo one of the laces that joins your doublet to your breeches for you?

²⁶⁷ The little grip normally at each end of the lace; in this case, the point of her sword.

²⁶⁸ The ten angels he gave her in their previous encounter.

²⁶⁹ Originally hackney—the most available type of lowbrow taxi

Ten angels of mine own I've put to thine;
Win 'em and wear 'em!²⁷²

LAXTON

Hold, Moll! Mistress Mary!

MOLL

Draw or I'll serve an execution on thee²⁷³
Shall lay thee up till doomsday!

LAXTON

Draw upon a woman?! Why, what dost mean, Moll?

MOLL

To teach thy base thoughts manners: th' art one of those
That thinks each woman thy fond, flexible whore
If she but cast a liberal eye upon thee
Turn back her head, she's thine, or amongst company,
By chance drink first to thee, then she's quite gone,
There's no means to help her; nay, for a need,
Wilt swear unto thy credulous fellow lechers
That th' art more in favour with a lady
At first sight than her monkey²⁷⁴ all her lifetime!

*HELLWAIN first, then the other WITCHES are gathering to watch and listen tensely,
bringing ROBIN with them*

How many of our sex by such as thou
Have their good thoughts paid with a blasted name
That never deserved loosely, or did trip
In path of whoredom beyond cup and lip?²⁷⁵
There's no mercy in't. What durst move you, sir,
To think me whorish—

HELLWAIN *echoing*

What durst move you, sir, to think me whorish?

PUCKLE *echoing*

What durst move you, sir, to think me whorish?

²⁷⁰ "speed of the horse" (Cleary)

²⁷¹ "Moves with the gait called a rack, in which the horse raises both hooves on the same side at the same time" (Cleary)—notoriously taxing for the rider.

²⁷² "A popular expression, a variation of which is 'Win her and wear her,' referring to a bride" (Cleary)

²⁷³ "1) formally deliver a legal writ, 2) inflict corporal punishment" (Cleary)

²⁷⁴ An exotic and proverbially lascivious pet for decadent ladies, monkeys appear often in period portraits

²⁷⁵ I.e., sharing a drink and a kiss. Proverb: "There's many a slip between the cup and the lip"

MOLL

—a name which I'd tear out
From the high German's throat if it lay ledger²⁷⁶ there—
To dispatch privy slanders against me?
In thee I defy all men—

THE WITCHES murmur agreement

—their worst hates
And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts
With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools.
Such hungry things as these may soon be took
With a worm fasten'd on a golden hook:²⁷⁷
Those are the lecher's food. But why, good fisherman,
Am *I* thought meat for you?—

OTHER WITCHES *echoing*
Why am *I* thought meat for you?

MOLL

—Because, you'll say,
I'm given to sport, I'm often merry, jest!
[*to the WITCHES*] Has mirth no kindred in the world but lust?

The other WITCHES react with indignation

Oh, shame take all her friends then! But howe'er
Thou and the baser world censure my life,
I'll send 'em word by thee, and write so much
Upon thy breast (so thou shalt bear 't in mind):
Tell them 'twere base to yield where I have conquer'd!
I scorn to prostitute myself to a man,
I that can prostitute a man to me!

ALL THE WITCHES *echoing*
I scorn to prostitute myself to a man,
I that can prostitute a man to me!

MOLL

And so I greet thee!

LAXTON

Hear me!

²⁷⁶ Ledger line: a line for a note above or below the regular musical staff

²⁷⁷ I.e., tempted by financial reward

MOLL

Would the spirits
Of all our devils' spawn²⁷⁸ were clasp'd in thine—
That I might vex an army at one time!

They fight, the other WITCHES applauding and sometimes aiding her against SHAITAN. They also encourage ROBIN forward until suddenly MOLL—having got SHAITAN on the run—hands ROBIN the blade. Though startled, ROBIN rises to the occasion with a furious attack, disarms their opponent and pins him to the wall

LAXTON

I do repent me! Hold!

The WITCHES applaud as ROBIN returns the blade to MOLL

I do confess I have wrong'd you all.

MOLL

Confession is but poor amends for wrong,
Unless a rope would follow.

LAXTON

I ask thee pardon.

MOLL

I'm your hir'd whore, sir?

ROBIN

I'm your whore, sir?

HELLWAIN

And I a whore, sir?

LAXTON

I yield both purse and body!

MOLL

Both are ours and now at our disposing!²⁷⁹

LAXTON

Spare my life!

MOLL gets silent consent from ROBIN and HELLWAIN

²⁷⁸ Originally "my slanderers"

²⁷⁹ In other words, his 'yielding' is redundant and meaningless

MOLL *lowering the point*
We scorn to strike thee basely.

LAXTON
Spoke like noble girls, i'faith!—*[Aside]* Heart, I think I fought with a familiar!

The WITCHES appreciate the irony

They've wounded me gallantly. Call you this a lecherous voyage?²⁸⁰ Here's blood would have serv'd me this seven year, and it now runs all out together.—I would the coach were here now! A surgeon! A surgeon!

THE WITCHES *mocking*
A surgeon! A surgeon!

Exit LAXTON, aided none-too-gently on his way

MOLL
If I could meet my enemies one by one thus,
I might make pretty shift with 'em in time
And make 'em know she that has wit and spirit
May scorn to live beholding to her body for meat.
My spirit shall be mistress of this house
As long as I have time in't!

HELLWAIN and ROBIN *echoing*
My spirit shall be mistress of this house
As long as I have time in't!

HOPPO
And mine!

PUCKLE
And mine!

TIFFIN
And mine!

STADLIN
... And mine!

Music. They celebrate, as FIRESTONE dons SHAITAN'S robe

²⁸⁰ Booty call

THE WITCHES

*Here we go, here we fly,
All of my sweet sisters and I
Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by!*

*Oh, what a pleasure to dance a measure
Upon the air when the moon shines fair
And see the countries sliding by—!*

And their celebration becomes a musical Curtain Call ...

in which the WITCHES are eventually rejoined by SHAITAN

FINIS