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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MUCEDORUS ***

A MOST PLEASANT COMEDY OF

MUCEDORUS

THE KING’S SON OF VALENCIA, AND
AMADINE, THE KING’S DAUGHTER OF ARAGON

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COMEDY
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THE PROLOGUE

Most sacred Majesty, whose great deserts
Thy subject England, nay, the world, admires:
Which heaven grant still increase! O, may your praise
Multiplying with your hours, your fame still raise!
Embrace your council: love with faith them guide,
That both, as one, bench by each other’s side.
So may your life pass on, and run so even,
That your firm zeal plant you a throne in heaven,
Where smiling angels shall your guardians be
From blemish’d traitors, stain’d with perjury.
And as the night’s inferior to the day,
So be all earthly regions to your sway!
Be as the sun to day, the day to night,
For from your beams Europe shall borrow light.
Mirth drown your bosom, fair delight your mind,
And may our pastime your contentment find.

[_Exit Prologue._]

INDUCTION

Enter Comedy, joyfully, with a Garland of Bays on her head.

COMEDY.
Why so; thus do I hope to please:
Music revives, and mirth is tolerable;
Comedy, play thy part and please;
Make merry them that comes to joy with thee.
Joy then, good gentles; I hope to make you laugh.
Sound forth Bellona’s silver-tuned strings;
Time fits us well, the day and place is ours.

Enter Envy, his arms naked, besmeared with blood.

ENVY.
Nay, stay, you minion, stay; there lies a block!
What, all on mirth? I’ll interrupt your tale,
And mix your music with a tragic end.

COMEDY.
What monstrous ugly hag is this,
That dares control the pleasures of our will?
Vaunt, churlish cur, besmear’d with gory blood,
That seemst to check the blossoms of delight,
And stifle the sound of sweet Bellona’s breath;
Blush, monster, blush, and post away with shame,
That seekest disturbance of a goddess’ deeds.

ENVY.
Post hence thyself, thou counterchecking trull;
I will possess this habit, spite of thee,
And gain the glory of thy wished sport.
I’ll thunder music shall appal the nymphs,
And make them shiver their clattering strings,
Flying for succour to their dankish caves.

[_Sound drums within, and cry, ‘Stab! Stab!’_]

Hark, hearken, thou shalt hear a noise
Shall fill the air with a shrilling sound,
And thunder music to the gods above:
Mars shall himself reach down
A peerless crown upon brave Envy’s head,
And raise his rival with a lasting fame.
In this brave music Envy takes delight,
Where I may see them wallow in their blood,
And spurn at arms and legs quite shivered off,
And hear the cries of many thousands slain.
How lik’st thou this, my trull? ’tis sport alone for me!

COMEDY.
Vaunt, bloody cur, nurs’d up with tiger’s sap,
That so dost seek to quail a woman’s mind!
Comedy’s mild, gentle, willing for to please,
And seeks to gain the love of all estates,
Delights in mirth, mix’d all with lovely tales,
And bringeth things with treble joy to pass.
Thou bloody, envious ’sdainer of men’s joys,
Whose name is fraught with bloody stratagems,
Delights in nothing but in spoil and death,
Where thou may’st trample in their lukewarm blood,
And grasp their hearts within thy cursed paws.

Yet veil thy mind; revenge thou not on me;
A silly woman begs it at thy hands.
Give me the leave to utter out my play;
Forbear this place; I humbly crave thee, hence!
And mix not death ’mongst pleasing comedies,
That treat nought else but pleasure and delight.
If any spark of human rests in thee,
Forbear; begone; tender the suit of me.

ENVY.
Why, so I will; forbearance shall be such,
As treble death shall cross thee with despite,
And make thee mourn, where most thou joy’st,
Turning thy mirth into a deadly dole,
Whirling thy measures with a peal of death,
And drench thy metres in a sea of blood.
This will I do; thus shall I bear with thee;
And more, to vex thee with a deeper spite,
I will with threats of blood begin thy play,
Favoring thee with envy and with hate.

COMEDY.
Then, ugly monster, do thy worst,
I will defend them in despite of thee:
And though thou think’st with tragic fumes
To brave my play unto my deep disgrace,
I force it not, I scorn what thou canst do;
I’ll grace it so, thyself shall it confess,
From tragic stuff to be a pleasant comedy.

ENVY.
Why then, Comedy, send thy actors forth,
And I will cross the first steps of their tread,
Making them fear the very dart of death.

COMEDY.
And I’ll defend them maugre all thy spite.
So, ugly fiend, farewell, till time shall serve,
That we may meet to parley for the best.

ENVY.
Content, Comedy, I’ll go spread my branch,
And scattered blossoms from mine envious tree
Shall prove to monsters, spoiling of their joys.

[_Exeunt._]

ACT I

SCENE I. Valencia. The Court

Sound. Enter Mucedorus and Anselmo his friend.

MUCEDORUS.
Anselmo!

ANSELMO.
My lord and friend.

MUCEDORUS.
True, my Anselmo, both thy lord and friend—

ANSELMO.
Whose dear affections bosom with my heart,
And keep their domination in one orb,
Whence ne’er disloyalty shall root it forth,
But faith plant firmer in your choice respect.

MUCEDORUS.
Much blame were mine, if I should other deem,
Nor can coy Fortune contrary allow.
But, my Anselmo, loth I am to say,
I must estrange that friendship;
Misconstrue not, ’tis from the realm, not thee:
Though lands part bodies, hearts keep company.
Thou knowst that I imparted often have
Private relations with my royal sire,
Had as concerning beautious Amadine,
Rich Aragon’s bright jewel, whose face (some say)
That blooming lilies never shone so gay,
Excelling, not excell’d; yet least report
Does mangle verity, boasting of what is not,
Wing’d with desire, thither I’ll straight repair,
And be my fortunes, as my thoughts are, fair!

ANSELMO.
Will you forsake Valencia, leave the court,
Absent you from the eye of sovereignty?
Do not, sweet prince, adventure on that task,
Since danger lurks each where; be won from it!

MUCEDORUS.
Desist dissuasion,

My resolution brooks no battery.
Therefore, if thou retain thy wonted form,
Assist what I intend.

ANSELMO.
Your miss will breed a blemish in the court,
And throw a frosty dew upon that beard,
Whose front Valencia stoops to.

MUCEDORUS.
If thou my welfare tender, then no more;
Let love’s strong magic charm thy trivial phrase,
Wasted as vainly as to gripe the sun.
Augment not then more answers; lock thy lips,
Unless thy wisdom suit me with disguise,
According to my purpose.

ANSELMO.
That action craves no counsel,
Since what you rightly are will more command,
Than best usurped shape.

MUCEDORUS.
Thou still art opposite in disposition;
A more obscure servile habiliment
Beseems this enterprise.

ANSELMO.
Then like a Florentine or mountebank!

MUCEDORUS.
’Tis much too tedious; I dislike thy judgement,
My mind is grafted on an humbler stock.

ANSELMO.
Within my closet there does hang a cassock,
Though base the weed is, ’twas a shepherd’s once,
Which I presented in Lord Julio’s masque.

MUCEDORUS.
That, my Anselmo, and none else but that,
Mask Mucedorus from the vulgar view.
That habit suits my mind; fetch me that weed.

[_Exit Anselmo._]

Better than kings have not disdain’d that state,
And much inferiour, to obtain their mate.

Enter Anselmo with a Shepherd’s coat, which he gives to Mucedorus.

MUCEDORUS.
So!
Let our respect command thy secrecy,
And let us take at once a brief farewell;
Delay to lovers is a second hell.

[_Exit Mucedorus._]

ANSELMO.
Prosperity forerun thee; awkward chance
Never be neighbour to thy wishes’ venture;
Content and Fame advance thee; ever thrive,
And glory thy mortality survive!

[_Exit._]

SCENE II. A Forest in Aragon

Enter Mouse with a bottle of hay.

MOUSE.
O horrible, terrible! Was ever poor gentleman so scar’d out of his seven senses? A bear? Nay, sure it cannot be a bear, but some devil in a bear’s doublet; for a bear could never have had that agility to have frighted me. Well, I’ll see my father hanged before I’ll serve his horse any more. Well, I’ll carry home my bottle of hay, and for once make my father’s horse turn Puritan, and observe fasting-days, for he gets not a bit. But soft! this way she followed me; therefore I’ll take the other path, and because I’ll be sure to have an eye on her, I will shake hands with some foolish creditor, and make every step backward.

[_As he goes backwards, the Bear comes in, and he tumbles over her, and runs away, and leaves his bottle of hay behind him_.]

SCENE III. The same

Enter Segasto running, and Amadine after him, being pursued with a bear.

SEGASTO.
Oh fly, madam, fly or else we are but dead!

AMADINE.
Help, sweet Segasto, help, or else I die!

SEGASTO.
Alas, madam! there is no way but flight;
Then haste and save yourself.

[_Segasto runs away._]

AMADINE.
Why then I die; ah! help me in distress!

Enter Mucedorus, like a Shepherd, with a sword drawn, and a Bear’s head in his hand.

MUCEDORUS.
Stay, lady, stay; and be no more dismay’d.
That cruel beast, most merciless and fell,
Which hath bereaved thousands of their lives,
Affrighted many with his hard pursuits,
Prying from place to place to find his prey,
Prolonging thus his life by others’ death,
His carcass now lies headless, void of breath.

AMADINE.
That foul, deformed monster, is he dead?

MUCEDORUS.
Assure yourself thereof—behold his head;
Which, if it please you, lady, to accept,
With willing heart I yield it to your majesty.

AMADINE.
Thanks, worthy shepherd, thanks a thousand times;
This gift, assure thyself, contents me more
Than greatest bounty of a mighty prince,
Although he were the monarch of the world.

MUCEDORUS.
Most gracious goddess, more than mortal wight—
Your heavenly hue of right imports no less—
Most glad am I, in that it was my chance
To undertake this enterprise in hand,
Which doth so greatly glad your princely mind.

AMADINE.
No goddess, shepherd, but a mortal wight,
A mortal wight distressed as thou seest:
My father here is King of Aragon,
I, Amadine, his only daughter am,
And after him sole heir unto the crown.

And now, whereas it is my father’s will,
To marry me unto Segasto, one,
Whose wealth through’s father’s former usury
Is known to be no less than wonderful,
We both of custom oftentimes did use,
Leaving the court, to walk within the fields
For recreation, specially in spring,
In that it yields great store of rare delights;
And passing farther than our wonted walks,
Scarce ent’red were within these luckless woods,
But right before us down a steep-fall hill
A monstrous ugly bear did hie him fast
To meet us both—I faint to tell the rest,
Good shepherd, but suppose the ghastly looks,
The hideous fears, the hundred thousand woes,
Which at this instant Amadine sustained.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet, worthy princess, let thy sorrow cease,
And let this sight your former joys revive.

AMADINE.
Believe me, shepherd, so it doth, no less.

MUCEDORUS.
Long may they last unto your heart’s content.
But tell me, lady, what is become of him,
Segasto call’d, what’s become of him?

AMADINE.
I know not, I; that know the powers divine;
But God grant this, that sweet Segasto live!

MUCEDORUS.
Yet was hard-hearted he, in such a case,
So cowardly to save himself by flight,
And leave so brave a princess to the spoil.

AMADINE.
Well, shepherd, for thy worthy valour tried,
Endangering thyself to set me free,
Unrecompensed, sure, thou shalt not be.
In court thy courage shall be plainly known;
Throughout the kingdom will I spread thy name,
To thy renown and never-dying fame;
And that thy courage may be better known,
Bear thou the head of this most monstrous beast
In open sight to every courtier’s view.

So will the king, my father, thee reward.
Come, let’s away and guard me to the court.

MUCEDORUS.
With all my heart.

[_Exeunt._]

SCENE IV. Outskirts of the Forest

Enter Segasto solus.

SEGASTO.
When heaps of harms do hover over head,
’Tis time as then, some say, to look about,
And of ensuing harms to choose the least.
But hard, yea hapless, is that wretch’s chance,
Luckless his lot, and caytiff-like accurst.
At whose proceedings fortune ever frowns.
Myself, I mean, most subject unto thrall;
For I, the more I seek to shun the worst,
The more by proof I find myself accurs’d.
Erewhiles assaulted with an ugly bear,
With Amadine in company all alone,
Forthwith by flight I thought to save myself,
Leaving my Amadine unto her shifts;
For death it was for to resist the bear,
And death no less of Amadine’s harms to hear.
Accursed I, in ling’ring life thus long!
In living thus, each minute of an hour
Doth pierce my heart with darts of thousand deaths.
If she by flight her fury do escape,
What will she think?
Will she not say, yea, flatly to my face,
Accusing me of mere disloyalty:
A trusty friend is tried in time of need.
But I, when she in danger was of death,
And needed me, and cried, Segasto, help!
I turn’d my back, and quickly ran away,
Unworthy I to bear this vital breath!
But what, what needs these plaints?
If Amadine do live, then happy I:
She will in time forgive and so forget.
Amadine is merciful, not Juno-like,
In harmful heart to harbour hatred long.

Enter Mouse the Clown, running, crying, Clubs!

MOUSE.
Clubs, prongs, pitchforks, bills! O help! A bear, a bear, a bear, a bear!

SEGASTO.
Still bears, and nothing else but bears? Tell me, sirrah, where she is.

MOUSE.
O sir, she is run down the woods, I see her white head and her white belly.

SEGASTO.
Thou talkest of wonders, to tell me of white bears; but, sirrah, didst thou ever see any such?

MOUSE.
No, faith, I never saw any such; but I remember my father’s words, he bade me take heed I was not caught with a white bear.

SEGASTO.
A lamentable tale, no doubt.

MOUSE.
I tell you what, sir; as I was going a-field to serve my father’s great horse, and carried a bottle of hay upon my head—now, do you see, sir, I, fast hoodwinked, that I could see nothing, perceiving the bear coming, I threw my hay into the hedge and ran away.

SEGASTO.
What, from nothing?

MOUSE.
I warrant you, yes, I saw something; for there was two load of thorns besides my bottle of hay, and that made three.

SEGASTO.
But tell me, sirrah, the bear that thou didst see,
Did she not bear a bucket on her arm?

MOUSE.
Ha, ha, ha! I never saw bear go a-milking in my life. But hark you, sir, I did not look so high as her arm, I saw nothing but her white head and her white belly.

SEGASTO.
But tell me, sirrah, where dost thou dwell?

MOUSE.

Why, do you not know me?

SEGASTO.
Why, no; how should I know thee?

MOUSE.
Why, then you know nobody, an you know not me. I tell you, sir, I am goodman Rat’s son, of the next parish over the hill.

SEGASTO.
Goodman Rat’s son; why, what’s thy name?

MOUSE.
Why, I am very near kin unto him.

SEGASTO.
I think so; but what’s thy name?

MOUSE.
My name? I have a very pretty name; I’ll tell you what my name is, my name is Mouse.

SEGASTO.
What, plain Mouse?

MOUSE.
Ay, plain Mouse without either welt or guard. But do you hear, sir, I am but a very young Mouse, for my tail is scarce grown out yet; look you here else.

SEGASTO.
But, I pray thee, who gave thee that name?

MOUSE.
Faith, sir, I know not that, but if you would fain know, ask my father’s great horse, for he hath been half a year longer with my father than I have.

SEGASTO.
[_Aside_.] This seems to be a merry fellow;
I care not if I take him home with me.
Mirth is a comfort to a troubled mind,
A merry man a merry master makes.
[_To Mouse_.] How say’st thou, sirrah, wilt thou dwell with me?

MOUSE.
Nay, soft, sir; two words to a bargain; pray you, what occupation are you?

SEGASTO.
No occupation, I live upon my lands.

MOUSE.
Your lands? Away, you are no master for me. Why, do you think that I am so mad to go seek my living in the lands amongst the stones, briars, and bushes, and tear my holiday-apparel? Not I, by your leave.

SEGASTO.
Why, I do not mean thou shalt.

MOUSE.
How then?

SEGASTO.
Why, thou shalt be my man, and wait upon me at the court.

MOUSE.
What’s that?

SEGASTO.
Where the king lies.

MOUSE.
What’s that same king, a man or woman?

SEGASTO.
A man as thou art.

MOUSE.
As I am? Hark you, sir, pray you, what kin is he to goodman King of our parish, the churchwarden?

SEGASTO.
No kin to him; he is the king of the whole land.

MOUSE.
King of the land? I never saw him.

SEGASTO.
If thou wilt dwell with me, thou shalt see him every day.

MOUSE.
Shall I go home again to be torn in pieces with bears? No, not I, I will go home and put on a clean shirt, and then go drown myself.

SEGASTO.

Thou shalt not need, if thou wilt dwell with me, thou shalt want nothing.

MOUSE.
Shall I not? Then here’s my hand, I’ll dwell with you. And hark you, sir! now you have entertained me, I will tell you what I can do. I can keep my tongue from picking and stealing, and my hands from lying and slandering, I warrant you, as well as ever you had man in all your life.

SEGASTO.
Now will I to court with sorrowful heart, rounded with doubts.
If Amadine do live, then happy I:
Yea happy I, if Amadine do live.

[_Exeunt._]

ACT II

SCENE I. The Camp of the King of Aragon

Enter the King with a young Prince prisoner, Amadine, Tremelio, with Collen and Councillors.

KING OF ARAGON.
Now, brave Lords, our wars are brought to end,
Our foes to foil, and we in safety rest,
It us behoves to use such clemency
In peace, as valour in the wars. It is
As great an honour to be bountiful
At home, as to be conquerors in the field.
Therefore, my lords, the more to my content,
Your liking, and your country’s safeguard,
We are dispos’d in marriage for to give
Our daughter to Lord Segasto here,
Who shall succeed the diadem after me,
And reign hereafter as tofore I’ve done,
Your sole and lawful King of Aragon.
What say you, lordings, like you of my advice?

COLLEN.
An’t please your majesty, we do not only allow of your highness’ pleasure, but also vow faithfully in what we may to further it.

KING OF ARAGON.

Thanks, good my lords, if long Adrostus live
He will at full requite your courtesies.
Tremelio,
In recompense of thy late valour done,
Take unto thee the Catalonian prince,
Our prisoner, lately taken in the wars.
Be thou his keeper, his ransom shall be thine;
We’ll think of it, when leisure shall afford.
Meanwhile, do use him well; his father is a king.

TREMELIO.
Thanks to your majesty, his usage shall be such,
As he thereat shall think no cause to grutch.

[_Exeunt Tremelio and Prince._]

KING OF ARAGON.
Then march we on to court, and rest our wearied limbs!
But, Collen, I’ve a tale in secret kept for thee:
When thou shalt hear a watchword from thy king,
Think then some weighty matter is at hand,
That highly shall concern our state,
Then, Collen, look thou be not far from me,
And for thy service thou tofore hast done,
Thy truth and valour prov’d in every point,
I shall with bounties thee enlarge therefore.
So guard us to the court.

COLLEN.
What so my sovereign doth command me do,
With willing mind I gladly yield consent.

[_Exeunt._]

SCENE II. The same

Enter Segasto and the Clown, with weapons about him.

SEGASTO.
Tell me, sirrah, how do you like your weapons?

MOUSE.
O, very well, very well, they keep my sides warm.

SEGASTO.
They keep the dogs from your shins very well, do they not?

MOUSE.

How, keep the dogs from my shins? I would scorn but my shins could keep the dogs from them.

SEGASTO.
Well, sirrah, leaving idle talk, tell me, dost thou know Captain Tremelio’s chamber?

MOUSE.
Ay, very well, it hath a door.

SEGASTO.
I think so; for so hath every chamber. But dost thou know the man?

MOUSE.
Ay, forsooth, he hath a nose on his face.

SEGASTO.
Why, so hath every one.

MOUSE.
That’s more than I know.

SEGASTO.
But dost thou remember the captain that was here with the king even now, that brought the young prince prisoner?

MOUSE.
O, very well.

SEGASTO.
Go unto him, and bid him come to me. Tell him I have a matter in secret to impart to him.

MOUSE.
I will, master; master, what’s his name?

SEGASTO.
Why, Captain Tremelio, man

MOUSE.
O, the meal-man; I know him very well; he brings meal every Saturday; but hark you, master, must I bid him come to you, or must you come to him?

SEGASTO.
No, sirrah, he must come to me.

MOUSE.

Hark you, master; how, if he be not at home? What shall I do then?

SEGASTO.
Why, then leave word with some of his folks.

MOUSE.
O, master, if there be nobody within, I will leave word with his dog.

SEGASTO.
Why, can his dog speak?

MOUSE.
I cannot tell; wherefore doth he keep his chamber else?

SEGASTO.
To keep out such knaves as thou art.

MOUSE.
Nay, by’r Lady, then go yourself.

SEGASTO.
You will go, sir; will ye not?

MOUSE.
Yes, marry, will I. O, ’tis come to my head, an a be not within, I’ll bring his chamber to you.

SEGASTO.
What, wilt thou pluck down the king’s house?

MOUSE.
Nay, by’r Lady, I’ll know the price of it first. Master, it is such a hard name, I have forgotten it again. I pray you, tell me his name.

SEGASTO.
I tell thee, Captain Tremelio, knave.

MOUSE.
Oh, Captain Treble-knave, Captain Treble-knave.

[_Calling._]

Enter Tremelio.

TREMELIO.
How now, sirrah, dost thou call me?

MOUSE.

You must come to my master, Captain Treble-knave.

TREMELIO.
My lord Segasto, did you send for me?

SEGASTO.
I did, Tremelio. Sirrah, about your business!

MOUSE.
Ay, marry, what’s that, can you tell?

SEGASTO.
No, not well.

MOUSE.
Marry, then, I can; straight to the kitchen-dresser, to John the cook, and get me a good piece of beef and brewis; and then to the buttery-hatch, to Thomas the butler for a jack of beer, and there for an hour I’ll so belabour myself; and therefore, I pray you call me not till you think I have done, I pray you, good master.

SEGASTO.
Well, sir, away. Tremelio, this it is!

[_Exit Mouse._]

Thou know’st the valour of Segasto spread
Through all the kingdom of great Aragon,
Such as hath triumph found and favours, never
Daunted at any time, but now a shepherd
Admired is at in court for worthiness,
And lord Segasto’s honour laid aside;
My will therefore is this, that thou dost find
Some means to work the shepherd’s death: I know
Thy strength sufficient to perform my wish,
Thy love no other than to ’venge my injuries.

TREMELIO.
’Tis not the shepherd’s frowns Tremelio fears,
Therefore, ’count it accomplish’d what I take in hand.

SEGASTO.
Thanks, good Tremelio, and assure thyself,
What I promise, that will I perform.

TREMELIO.
Thanks, my good lord, and in good time see where
He cometh. Stand by awhile, and you shall see

Me put in practice your intended drifts.

Enter Mucedorus.

Have at thee, swain, if that I hit thee right!

MUCEDORUS.
Vile coward, so without cause to strike a man—
Turn, coward, turn; now strike, and do thy worst!

[_Mucedorus kills him._]

SEGASTO.
Hold, shepherd, hold! O spare him, kill him not!
Accursed villain, tell me, what thou’st done?
Tremelio, ah, trusty Tremelio!
I sorrow for thy death, and since that thou
Living didst faithful prove unto Segasto,
So now Segasto living with revenge
Will honour th’ dead corpse of Tremelio.
Bloodthirsty villain, born and bred to merciless murther,
Tell me, how durst thou be so bold, as once
To lay thy hands upon the least of mine?
Assure thee, thou’lt be used according to the law!

MUCEDORUS.
Segasto, cease! these threats are needless.
Accuse not me of murther, that have done
Nothing but in mine own defence.

SEGASTO.
Nay, shepherd, reason not with me;
I’ll manifest thy fact unto the King,
Whose doom will be thy death, as thou deserv’st.
What ho, Mouse, come away!

Enter Mouse.

MOUSE.
Why, how now, what’s the matter? I thought you would be calling before
I had done.

SEGASTO.
Come, help, away with my friend.

MOUSE.
Why, is he drunk? Cannot he stand on his feet?

SEGASTO.
No, he is not drunk, he is slain.

MOUSE.
Flain? No, by’r Lady, he is not flain.

SEGASTO.
He’s killed, I tell thee.

MOUSE.
What do you use to kill your friends? I will serve you no longer.

SEGASTO.
I tell thee, the shepherd killed him.

MOUSE.
O, did a so? But, master, I will have all his apparel, if I carry him away.

SEGASTO.
Why, so thou shalt.

MOUSE.
Come, then, I will help; mass, master, I think his mother song looby to him, he is so heavy.

[_Exeunt Segasto and Mouse._]

MUCEDORUS.
Behold the fickle state of man,
That’s always mutable, never at one!
Sometimes we feed on fancies with the sweet
Of our desires, sometimes again
We feel the heat of extreme miseries.
Now I’m in favour ’bout the court and country;
Tomorrow will those favours turn to frowns.
Today I live, revenged on my foe,
Tomorrow I die, my foe reveng’d on me.

[_Exit._]

SCENE III. The Forest

Enter Bremo, a wild man.

BREMO.
No passenger this morning? What, not one?
A chance that seldom doth befall.

What, not one? Then lie thou there,
And rest thyself till I have further need.

[_Lays down his club._]

Now, Bremo, sit, thy leisure so affords,
An needless thing. [_Sits down_.] Who knows not Bremo’s strength,
That like a king commands within these woods?
The bear, the boar dare not abide my sight,
But haste away to save themselves by flight.
The crystal waters in the bubbling brooks,
When I come by, doth swiftly slide away,
And clap themselves in closets under banks,
Afraid to look bold Bremo in the face.
The aged oaks at Bremo’s breath do bow,
And all things else are still at my command.
Else what would I?
Rend them in pieces, pluck them from the earth,
And each way else I would revenge myself.
Why, who comes here with whom I dare not fight?
Who fights with me and doth not die the death? Not one!
What favour shows this sturdy stick to those,
That here within these woods are combatants with me?
Why, death, and nothing else but present death.
With restless rage I wander through these woods,
No creature here, but feareth Bremo’s force:
Man, woman, child, and beast, and bird,
And everything that doth approach my sight,
Are forc’d to fall if Bremo once do frown.
Come, cudgel, come, my partner in my spoils,
For here I see this day it will not be;
But when it falls that I encounter any,
One pat sufficeth for to work my will.
What, comes not one? Then let’s be gone;
A time will serve, when we shall better speed.

[_Exit._]

SCENE IV. Aragon. a Room of State in the Court

Enter the King, Segasto, the Shepherd, and the Clown with others.

KING OF ARAGON.
Shepherd, thou hast heard thine accusers; murther
Is laid unto thy charge; what canst thou say?
Thou hast deserved death.

MUCEDORUS.

Dread sovereign, I must needs confess,
I slew this captain in mine own defence,
Not of any malice, but by chance;
But mine accuser hath a further meaning.

SEGASTO.
Words will not here prevail:
I seek for justice, and justice craves his death.

KING OF ARAGON.
Shepherd, thine own confession hath condemned thee.
Sirrah, take him away,
And do him straight to execution.

MOUSE.
So he shall, I warrant him. But do you hear, master king, he is kin to a monkey; his neck is bigger than his head.

SEGASTO.
Sirrah, away with him, and hang him ’bout the middle.

MOUSE.
Yes, forsooth, I warrant you. Come on, sir; ah, so like a sheepbiter a looks.

Enter Amadine and a boy with a Bear’s Head.

AMADINE.
Dread sovereign and well beloved sire,
On benden knees I crave the life of this
Condemned shepherd, which tofore preserved
The life of thy sometime distressed daughter.

KING OF ARAGON.
Preserved the life of my sometime distressed daughter?
How can that be? I never knew the time
Wherein thou wast distress’d: I never knew the day
But that I have maintained thy estate,
As best beseem’d the daughter of a king;
I never saw the shepherd until now.
How comes it then, that he preserv’d thy life?

AMADINE.
Once walking with Segasto in the woods,
Further than our accustom’d manner was,
Aright before us down a steep-fall hill,
A monstrous ugly bear did hie him fast,
To meet us both: now whether this be true,

I refer it to the credit of Segasto.

SEGASTO.
Most true, an’t like your majesty.

KING OF ARAGON.
How then?

AMADINE.
The bear being eager to obtain his prey,
Made forward to us with an open mouth,
As if he meant to swallow us both at once;
The sight whereof did make us both to dread,
But specially your daughter Amadine,
Who—for I saw no succour incident
But in Segasto’s valour—desperate grew,
And he most coward-like began to flie,
Left me distress’d to be devour’d of him—
Segasto, how say you? Is it not true?

KING OF ARAGON.
His silence verifies it to be true. What then?

AMADINE.
Then I amaz’d, distressed, all alone,
Did hie me fast to ’scape that ugly bear,
But all in vain; for why, he reached after me,
And oft I hardly did escape his paws,
Till at the length this shepherd came and brought
To me his head. Come hither, boy; lo, here it is,
Which I present unto your majesty.

[_The bear’s head presented to the king._]

KING OF ARAGON.
The slaughter of this bear deserves great fame.

SEGASTO.
The slaughter of a man deserves great blame.

KING OF ARAGON.
Indeed, occasion ofttimes so falls out.

SEGASTO.
Tremelio in the wars, O King, preserved thee.

AMADINE.
The shepherd in the woods, O King, preserved me.

SEGASTO.
Tremelio fought, when many men did yield.

AMADINE.
So would the shepherd, had he been in field.

MOUSE.
[_Aside_.] So would my master, had he not run away.

SEGASTO.
Tremelio’s force sav’d thousands from the foe.

AMADINE.
The shepherd’s force hath saved thousands more.

MOUSE.
[_Aside_.] Ay, shipsticks, nothing else.

KING OF ARAGON.
Segasto, cease the shepherd to accuse,
His worthiness deserves a recompense,
All we are bound to do the shepherd good.
Shepherd,
Whereas it was my sentence thou shouldst die,
So shall my sentence stand, for thou shalt die.

SEGASTO.
Thanks to your majesty.

KING OF ARAGON.
[_To Segasto_.] But soft, Segasto, not for this offence.
[_To Mucedorus_.] Long may’st thou live; [_to Segasto_.] and when the
Sisters shall decree
To cut in twain the twisted thread of life,
Then let him die: for this I set thee free;
[_To Mucedorus_.] And for thy valour I will honour thee.

AMADINE.
Thanks to your majesty.

KING OF ARAGON.
Come, daughter, let us now depart to honour
The worthy valour of the shepherd with rewards.

[_Exeunt._]

MOUSE.

O master, hear you, you have made a fresh hand now, I thought you would, beshrew you! Why, what will you do now? You have lost me a good occupation by the means. Faith, master, now I cannot hang the shepherd, I pray you, let me take the pains to hang you, it is but half an hour’s exercise.

SEGASTO.
You are still in your knavery, but sith
I cannot have his life, I will procure
His banishment for ever. Come one, sirrah.

MOUSE.
Yes, forsooth, I come. [_Aside_.] Laugh at him, I pray you.

[_Exeunt._]

ACT III

SCENE I. Grove near the Court

Enter Mucedorus solus.

MUCEDORUS.
From Amadine, and from her father’s court,
With gold and silver, and with rich rewards,
Flowing from the banks of golden treasuries.
More may I boast, and say, but I,
Was never shepherd in such dignity.

Enter the Messenger and Mouse, the Clown.

MESSENGER.
All hail, worthy shepherd!

MOUSE.
All rain, lousy shepherd!

MUCEDORUS.
Welcome, my friends, from whence come you?

MESSENGER.
The King and Amadine do greet thee well.
And after greeting done, bid thee depart the court.
Shepherd, begone!

MOUSE.
Shepherd, take law-legs; fly away, shepherd.

MUCEDORUS.
Whose words are these? Come these from Amadine?

MESSENGER.
Ay, from Amadine.

MOUSE.
Ay, from Amadine.

MUCEDORUS.
Ah! luckless fortune, worse than Phaeton’s tale,
My former bliss is now become my bale.

MOUSE.
What, wilt thou poison thyself?

MUCEDORUS.
My former heaven is now become my hell.

MOUSE.
The worst alehouse that I ever came in, in all my life.

MUCEDORUS.
What shall I do?

MOUSE.
Even go hang thyself half an hour.

MUCEDORUS.
Can Amadine so churlishly command,
To banish th’ shepherd from her father’s court?

MESSENGER.
What should shepherds do in the court?

MOUSE.
What should shepherds do amongst us? Have we not lords enough o’er us in the court?

MUCEDORUS.
Why, shepherds are men, and kings are no more.

MESSENGER.
Shepherds are men, and masters o’er their flock.

MOUSE.
That’s a lie; who pays them their wages, then?

MESSENGER.
Well, you are always interrupting of me, but you are best look to him, lest you hang for him, when he is gone.

[_Exit._]

MOUSE.
[_Sings._] _And you shall hang for company,
For leaving me alone._
Shepherd, stand forth, and hear thy sentence! Shepherd, begone within three days, on pain of my displeasure; shepherd, begone; shepherd, begone, begone, begone, begone; shepherd, shepherd, shepherd.

[_Exit._]

MUCEDORUS.
And must I go? and must I needs depart?
Ye goodly groves, partakers of my songs,
In time tofore, when fortune did not frown,
Pour forth your plaints, and wail a while with me.
And thou bright sun, my comfort in the cold,
Hide, hide thy face, and leave me comfortless;
Ye wholesome herbs, and sweet-smelling savours,
Yea, each thing else prolonging life of man,
Change, change your wonted course that I,
Wanting your aid, in woful sort may die.

Enter Amadine and Ariena, her maid.

AMADINE.
Ariena,
If any body ask for me, make some excuse,
Till I return.

ARIENA.
What, an Segasto call?

AMADINE.
Do thou the like to him, I mean not to stay long.

[_Exit Ariena._]

MUCEDORUS.
This voice so sweet my pining spirits revives.

AMADINE.
Shepherd, well met, pray, tell me how thou dost?

MUCEDORUS.
I linger life, yet wish for speedy death.

AMADINE.
Shepherd!
Although thy banishment already be decreed,
And all against my will, yet Amadine—

MUCEDORUS.
Ah, Amadine, to hear of banishment is death,
Ay, double death to me, but since I must depart,
One thing I crave—

AMADINE.
Say on, with all my heart.

MUCEDORUS.
That in my absence, either far or near,
You honour me as servant to your name.

AMADINE.
Not so.

MUCEDORUS.
And why?

AMADINE.
I honour thee as sovereign of my heart.

MUCEDORUS.
A shepherd and a sovereign nothing like.

AMADINE.
Yet like enough, where there is no dislike.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet great dislike, or else no banishment.

AMADINE.
Shepherd, it only is
Segasto that procures thy banishment.

MUCEDORUS.
Unworthy wights are most in jealousy.

AMADINE.
Would God, they would free thee from banishment,
Or likewise banish me.

MUCEDORUS.
Amen, I say, to have your company.

AMADINE.
Well, shepherd, sith thou sufferest this for my sake,
With thee in exile also let me live,
On this condition, shepherd, thou canst love.

MUCEDORUS.
No longer love, no longer let me live.

AMADINE.
Of late I loved one indeed, now love I none but only thee.

MUCEDORUS.
Thanks, worthy princess,
I burn likewise, yet smother up the blast,
I dare not promise what I mayn’t perform.

AMADINE.
Well, shepherd, hark what I shall say,
I will return unto my father’s court,
For to provide me of such necessaries
As for my journey I shall think most fit.
This being done, I will return to thee;
Do thou therefore appoint the place, where we may meet.

MUCEDORUS.
Down in the valley, where I slew the bear,
And there doth grow a fair broad-branched beech,
That overshades a well: so who comes first,
Let them abide the happy meeting of us both.
How like you this?

AMADINE.
I like it very well.

MUCEDORUS.
Now, if you please, you may appoint the time.

AMADINE.
Full three hours hence, God willing, I’ll return.

MUCEDORUS.

The thanks that Paris gave the Grecian queen,
The like doth Mucedorus yield.

AMADINE.
Then, Mucedorus, for three hours farewell.

[_Exit._]

MUCEDORUS.
Your ’parture, lady, breeds a privy pain.

[_Exit._]

SCENE II. The Court

Enter Segasto solus.

SEGASTO.
’Tis well, Segasto, that thou hast thy will:
Should such a shepherd, such a simple swain,
Eclipse thy credit famous through the court?
No, ply, Segasto, ply!
And let it not be said in Aragon,
A shepherd hath Segasto’s honour won.

Enter Mouse, the Clown, calling his master.

MOUSE.
What ho! master, will you come away?

SEGASTO.
Will you come hither, I pray you, what is the matter?

MOUSE.
Why, is it not past eleven o’clock?

SEGASTO.
How then, sir?

MOUSE.
I pray you, come away to dinner.

SEGASTO.
I pray you, come hither.

MOUSE.
Here’s such a-do with you, will you never come?

SEGASTO.
I pray you, sir, what news of the message I sent you about?

MOUSE.
I tell you, all the messes be on the table already. There wants not so much as a mess of mustard half an hour ago.

SEGASTO.
Come, sir, your mind is all upon your belly,
You have forgotten what I did bid you do.

MOUSE.
Faith, I know nothing, but you bade me go to breakfast.

SEGASTO.
Was that all?

MOUSE.
Faith, I have forgotten it, the very scent of the meat hath made me forget it quite.

SEGASTO.
You have forgotten the errand I bid you do?

MOUSE.
What arrant? an arrant knave, or an arrant whore?

SEGASTO.
Why, thou knave, did I not bid thee banish the shepherd, buzzard?

MOUSE.
O, the shepherd’s bastard.

SEGASTO.
I tell thee, the shepherd’s banishment.

MOUSE.
I tell you, the shepherd’s bastard shall be well kept; I’ll look to it myself. But I pray you, come away to dinner.

SEGASTO.
Then you will not tell me whether you have banished him, or no?

MOUSE.
Why, I cannot say _banishment_, an you would give me a thousand pounds to say so.

SEGASTO.

Why, you whoreson slave, have you forgotten that I sent you and another to drive away the shepherd?

MOUSE.
What an ass are you; here’s a stir indeed, here’s message, arrant, banishment, and I cannot tell what.

SEGASTO.
I pray you, sir, shall I know whether you have drove him away?

MOUSE.
Faith, I think I have; an you will not believe me, ask my staff.

SEGASTO.
Why, can thy staff tell?

MOUSE.
Why, he was with me too.

SEGASTO.
Then happy I, that have obtain’d my will.

MOUSE.
And happier I, if you would go to dinner.

SEGASTO.
Come, sirrah, follow me.

MOUSE.
I warrant you, I will not loose an inch of you, now you are going to dinner. [_Aside_.] I promise you, I thought it seven year, before I could get him away.

[_Exeunt._]

SCENE III. The Forest

Enter Amadine sola.

AMADINE.
God grant my long delay procures no harm,
Nor this my tarrying frustrate my pretence.
My Mucedorus surely stays for me,
And thinks me over-long. At length I come,
My present promise to perform.
Ah, what a thing is firm, unfeigned love!
What is it which true love dares not attempt?
My father, he may make, but I must match;

Segasto loves, but Amadine must like,
Where likes her best: compulsion is a thrall:
No, no, the hearty choice is all in all,
The shepherd’s virtue Amadine esteems.
But what, methinks my shepherd is not come;
I muse at that, the hour is sure at hand.
Well, here I’ll rest, till Mucedorus come.

[_She sits down._]

Enter Bremo, looking about; hastily taketh hold of her.

BREMO.
A happy prey! now, Bremo, feed on flesh:
Dainties, Bremo, dainties, thy hungry paunch to fill:
Now glut thy greedy guts with lukewarm blood.
Come, fight with me, I long to see thee dead.

AMADINE.
How can she fight, that weapons cannot wield?

BREMO.
What, canst not fight? Then lie thou down and die.

AMADINE.
What, must I die?

BREMO.
What needs these words? I thirst to suck thy blood.

AMADINE.
Yet pity me, and let me live a while!

BREMO.
No pity, I will feed upon thy flesh,
And tear thy body piecemeal joint from joint.

AMADINE.
Ah, how I want my shepherd’s company!

BREMO.
I’ll crush thy bones betwixt two oaken trees.

AMADINE.
Haste, shepherd, haste, or else thou com’st too late.

BREMO.
I’ll suck the sweetness from thy marrow-bones.

AMADINE.
Ah spare, ah spare to shed my guiltless blood!

BREMO.
With this my bat will I beat out thy brains;
Down, down, I say, prostrate thyself upon the ground.

AMADINE.
Then, Mucedorus, farewell, my hoped joys, farewell!
Yea, farewell life, and welcome present death!

[_She kneels._]

To thee, O God, I yield my dying ghost.

BREMO.
Now, Bremo, play thy part.
How now, what sudden change is this?
My limbs do tremble, and my sinews shake,
My weak’ned arms have lost their former force.
Ah, Bremo, Bremo, what a foil hast thou,
That yet at no time ever wast afraid
To dare the greatest gods to fight with thee,

[_He strikes._]

And now wants strength for one down-driving blow?
Ah, how my courage fails, when I should strike!
Some new-come spirit abiding in my breast,
Saith, _Spare her, Bremo, spare her, do not kill._
Shall I spare her, which never spared any?
To it, Bremo, to it; essay again.
I cannot wield my weapon in my hand,
Methinks I should not strike so fair a one,
I think her beauty hath bewitch’d my force,
Or else within me alter’d nature’s course.
Ay, woman, wilt thou live i’ th’ woods with me?

AMADINE.
Fain would I live, yet loth to live in woods.

BREMO.
Thou shalt not choose, it shall be as I say,
And therefore, follow me!

[_Exeunt._]

SCENE IV. The same

Enter Mucedorus solus.

MUCEDORUS.
It was my will an hour ago and more,
As was my promise for to make return;
But other business hind’red my pretence:
It is a world to see, when man appoints,
And purposely one certain thing decrees,
How many things may hinder his intent.
What one would wish, the same is farthest off.
But yet th’ appointed time cannot be past,
Nor hath her presence yet prevented me.
Well, here I will stay, and expect her coming.

[_They cry within, ‘Hold him, stay him, hold!’_]

Some one or other is pursued, no doubt,
Perhaps some search for me; ’tis good
To doubt the worst, therefore I’ll be gone.

[_Exit._]

SCENE V. The same

Cry within ‘Hold him, hold him!’ Enter Mouse, the Clown, with a pot.

MOUSE.
Hold him, hold him, hold him! Here’s a stir indeed; here came hue after the crier, and I was set close at mother Nip’s house, and there I called for three pots of ale, as ’tis the manner of us courtiers. Now, sirrah, I had taken the maidenhead of two of them—now as I was lifting up the third to my mouth, there came: Hold him, hold him! Now I could not tell whom to catch hold on, but I am sure I caught one, perchance a may be in this pot. Well, I’ll see. Mass, I cannot see him yet; well, I’ll look a little further. Mass, he is a little slave, if a be here; why, here’s nobody. All this goes well yet; but if the old trot should come for her pot?—ay, marry, there’s the matter, but I care not, I’ll face her out, and call her old rusty, dusty, musty, fusty, crusty firebrand, and worse than all that, and so face her out of her pot. But soft! here she comes.

Enter the Old Woman.

OLD WOMAN.
Come on, you knave; where’s my pot, you knave?

MOUSE.
Go look for your pot; come not to me for your pot, ’twere good for you.

OLD WOMAN.
Thou liest, thou knave, thou hast my pot.

MOUSE.
You lie, an you say it. I—your pot? I know what I’ll say.

OLD WOMAN.
Why, what wilt thou say?

MOUSE.
But say I have him, an thou dar’st.

OLD WOMAN.
Why, thou knave, thou hast not only my pot, but my drink unpaid for.

MOUSE.
You lie like an old—I will not say whore.

OLD WOMAN.
Dost thou call me whore? I’ll cap thee for my pot.

MOUSE.
Cap me, an thou dar’st; search me, whether I have it or no.

[_She searcheth him, and he drinketh over her head, and casts down the pot; she stumbleth at it, then they fall together by the ears; she takes her pot and goes out._]

Enter Segasto.

SEGASTO.
How now, sirrah, what’s the matter?

MOUSE.
Oh, flies, master, flies.

SEGASTO.
Flies? Where are they?

MOUSE.
Oh here, master, all about your face.

SEGASTO.
Why, thou liest; I think thou art mad.

MOUSE.
Why, master, I have kill’d a dungcartful at the least.

SEGASTO.
Go to, sirrah; leaving this idle talk, give ear to me.

MOUSE.
How, give you one of my ears? not, an you were ten masters.

SEGASTO.
Why, sir, I bade you give ear to my words.

MOUSE.
I tell you, I will not be made a curtal for no man’s pleasure.

SEGASTO.
I tell thee, attend what I say. Go thy ways straight, and rear the whole town.

MOUSE.
How, rear the town? Even go yourself; it is more than I can do. Why, do you think I can rear a town that can scarce rear a pot of ale to my head? I should rear a town, should I not?

SEGASTO.
Go to the constable, and make a privy search; for the shepherd is run away with the King’s daughter.

MOUSE.
How? is the shepherd run away with the King’s daughter, or is the King’s daughter run away with the shepherd?

SEGASTO.
I cannot tell, but they are both gone together.

MOUSE.
What a fool is she to run away with the shepherd! Why, I think I am a little handsomer man than the shepherd, myself; but tell me, master, must I make a privy search, or search in the privy?

SEGASTO.
Why, dost thou think they will be there?

MOUSE.
I cannot tell.

SEGASTO.
Well, then search everywhere; leave no place unsearched for them.

[_Exit._]

MOUSE.
Oh, now am I in office, now will I to that old firebrand’s house, and will not leave one place unsearched. Nay, I’ll to her ale-stand and drink as long as I can stand; and when I have done, I’ll let out all the rest, to see if he be not hid in the barrel; an I find him not there, I’ll to the cupboard; I’ll not leave one corner of her house unsearched. I’ faith, ye old crust, I will be with you now.

[_Exit._]

ACT IV

SCENE I. Valencia. The Court

Sound Music. Enter the King of Valencia, Anselmo, Roderigo, Lord Borachius, with others.

KING OF VALENCIA.
Enough of music, it but adds to torment,
Delights to vexed spirits are as dates
Set to a sickly man, which rather cloy than comfort;
Let me entreat you to repeat no more.

RODERIGO.
Let your strings sleep, have done there.

[_Music ceases._]

KING OF VALENCIA.
Mirth to a soul disturb’d are embers turn’d
Which sudden gleam with molestation,
But sooner lose their light for it.
’Tis gold bestow’d upon a rioter,
Which not relieves but murders him; a drug
Given to the healthful, which infects, not cures.
How can a father that hath lost his son,
A prince both virtuous, wise, and valiant,
Take pleasure in the idle acts of time?
No, no; till Mucedorus I shall see again,
All joy is comfortless, all pleasure pain.

ANSELMO.

Your son, my lord, is well.

KING OF VALENCIA.
I prythee, speak that twice.

ANSELMO.
The prince, your son, is safe.

KING OF VALENCIA.
O where, Anselmo? Surfeit me with that!

ANSELMO.
In Aragon, my liege;
And at his ’parture bound my secrecy,
By his affection’s loss, not to disclose it.
But care of him, and pity of your age,
Makes my tongue blab what my breast vow’d—concealment.

KING OF VALENCIA.
Thou not deceivest me.
I ever thought thee what I find thee now,
An upright, loyal man.
But what desire, or young-fed humour, nurs’d
Within the brain, drew him so privately
To Aragon?

ANSELMO.
A forcing adamant:
Love, mix’d with fear and doubtful jealousy,
Whether report gilded a worthless trunk,
Or Amadine deserved her high extolment.

KING OF VALENCIA.
See, our provision be in readiness,
Collect us followers of the comeliest hue
For our chief guardians; we will thither wend.
The crystal eye of heaven shall not thrice wink,
Nor the green flood six times his shoulders turn,
Till we salute the Aragonian king.
Music, speak loudly now, the season’s apt,
For former dolours are in pleasure wrapt.

[_Music. Exeunt omnes._]

SCENE II. The Forest

Enter Mucedorus, to disguise himself.

MUCEDORUS.
Now, Mucedorus, whither wilt thou go?
Home to thy father, to thy native soil,
Or try some long abode within these woods?
Well, I will hence depart, and hie me home.
What, hie me home, said I? That may not be;
In Amadine rests my felicity.
Then, Mucedorus, do as thou didst decree,
Attire thee hermit-like within these groves;
Walk often to the beech and view the well;
Make settles there, and seat thyself thereon,
And when thou feel’st thyself to be athirst,
Then drink a hearty draught to Amadine.
No doubt, she thinks on thee,
And will one day come pledge thee at this well.
Come, habit, thou art fit for me.

[_He disguiseth himself._]

No shepherd now, a hermit I must be.
Methinks this fits me very well;
Now must I learn to bear a walking staff,
And exercise some gravity withal.

Enter the Clown.

MOUSE.
Here’s through the woods, and through the woods, to look out a shepherd and a stray king’s-daughter. But soft! Who have we here? What art thou?

MUCEDORUS.
I am a hermit.

MOUSE.
An emmet, I never saw such a big emmet in all my life before.

MUCEDORUS.
I tell you, sir, I am a hermit: one
That leads a solitary life within these woods.

MOUSE.
Oh, I know thee now, thou art he that eats up all the hips and haws; we could not have one piece of fat bacon for thee all this year.

MUCEDORUS.
Thou dost mistake me, but I pray thee, tell me
What dost thou seek for in these woods?

MOUSE.
What do I seek for? A stray king’s-daughter run away with a shepherd.

MUCEDORUS.
A stray king’s-daughter run away with a shepherd?
Wherefore? Canst thou tell?

MOUSE.
Yes, that I can; ’tis this. My master and Amadine walking one day abroad, nearer to these woods than they were used, about what I can not tell; but toward them comes running a great bear. Now, my master, he played the man and ran away, and Amadine crying after him: now, sir, comes me a shepherd, and strikes off the bear’s head. Now, whether the bear were dead before or no, I cannot tell; for bring twenty bears before me, and bind their hands and feet, and I’ll kill them all. Now, ever since, Amadine hath been in love with the shepherd, and for goodwill, she’s even run away with the shepherd.

MUCEDORUS.
What manner of man was he? Canst thou describe him unto me?

MOUSE.
Scribe him? Ay, I warrant you, that I can; a was a little, low, broad, tall, narrow, big, well-favoured fellow, a jerkin of white cloth, and buttons of the same cloth.

MUCEDORUS.
Thou describest him well; but if I chance to see any such, pray you, where shall I find you, or what’s your name?

MOUSE.
My name is called Master Mouse.

MUCEDORUS.
O Master Mouse, I pray you what office might you bear in the court?

MOUSE.
Marry, sir, I am a rusher of the stable.

MUCEDORUS.
Oh, usher of the table.

MOUSE.
Nay, I say rusher, and I’ll prove my office good; for look, sir, when any comes from under the sea or so, and a dog chance to blow his nose backward, then with a whip I give him the good time of the day, and strow rushes presently. Therefore, I am a rusher, a high office, I promise ye.

MUCEDORUS.
But where shall I find you in the court?

MOUSE.
Why, where it is best being, either in the kitchen eating, or in the buttery drinking. But if you come, I will provide for thee a piece of beef and brewis knuckle-deep in fat; pray you, take pains, remember Master Mouse.

[_Exit._]

MUCEDORUS.
Ay, sir, I warrant I will not forget you.
Ah, Amadine! What should become of thee?
Whither shouldst thou go so long unknown?
With watch and ward each passage is beset,
So that she cannot long escape unknown.
Doubtless she’s lost herself within these woods,
And wand’ring to and fro she seeks the well,
Which yet she cannot find; therefore I’ll seek her out.

[_Exit._]

SCENE III. The same

Enter Bremo and Amadine.

BREMO.
Amadine, how like you Bremo and his woods?

AMADINE.
As like the woods of Bremo’s cruelty.
Though I were dumb, and could not answer him,
The beasts themselves would with relenting tears
Bewail thy savage and unhumane deeds.

BREMO.
My love, why dost thou murmur to thyself?
Speak louder, for thy Bremo hears thee not.

AMADINE.
My Bremo? No, the shepherd is my love.

BREMO.
Have I not saved thee from sudden death,
Giving thee leave to live, that thou mightst love,
And dost thou whet me on to cruelty?

Come, kiss me, sweet, for all my favours past.

AMADINE.
I may not, Bremo, and therefore pardon me.

BREMO.
See, how she flies away from me! I’ll follow
And give attent to her. Deny my love!
[_Aside_.] Ah, worm of beauty, I will chastice thee!
Come, come, prepare thy head upon the block.

AMADINE.
Oh, spare me, Bremo, love should limit life,
Not to be made a murderer of himself.
If thou wilt glut thy loving heart with blood,
Encounter with the lion or the bear,
And like a wolf, prey not upon a lamb.

BREMO.
Why, then, dost thou repine at me?
If thou wilt love me, thou shalt be my queen,
I will crown thee with a chaplet made of ivy,
And make the rose and lily wait on thee.
I’ll rend the burly branches from the oak,
To shadow thee from burning sun.
The trees shall spread themselves where thou dost go,
And as they spread, I’ll trace along with thee.

AMADINE.
[_Aside_.] You may, for who but you?

BREMO.
Thou shalt be fed with quails and partridges,
With blackbirds, thrushes, larks and nightingales.
Thy drink shall be goats’ milk and crystal water,
Distill’d from th’ fountains and the clearest springs,
And all the dainties that the woods afford.
I’ll freely give thee to obtain thy love.

AMADINE.
[_Aside_.] You may, for who but you?

BREMO.
The day I’ll spend to recreate my love
With all the pleasures that I can devise,
And in the night I’ll be thy bed-fellow,
And lovingly embrace thee in mine arms.

AMADINE.
[_Aside_.] One may, so may not you.

BREMO.
The satyrs and the wood-nymphs shall attend
On thee and lull thee ’sleep with music’s sound,
And in the morning, when thou dost awake,
The lark shall sing good morrow to my queen,
And whilst he sings, I’ll kiss my Amadine.

AMADINE.
[_Aside_.] You may, for who but you?

BREMO.
When thou art up, the wood-lanes shall be strew’d
With violets, cowslips, and sweet marigolds,
For thee to trample and to tread upon;
And I will teach thee how to kill the deer,
To chase the hart, and how to rouse the roe,
If thou wilt live to love and honour me.

AMADINE.
[_Aside_.] You may, for who but you?

Enter Mucedorus.

BREMO.
Welcome, sir!
An hour ago I look’d for such a guest.
Be merry, wench, we’ll have a frolic feast,
Here’s flesh enough for to suffice us both,
Stay, sirrah, wilt thou fight, or dost thou yield to die?

MUCEDORUS.
I want a weapon, how can I fight?

BREMO.
Thou want’st a weapon, then thou yield’st to die.

MUCEDORUS.
I say not so, I do not yield to die.

BREMO.
Thou shalt not choose. I long to see thee dead.

AMADINE.
Yet spare him, Bremo, spare him.

BREMO.
Away, I say, I will not spare him.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet give me leave to speak.

BREMO.
Thou shalt not speak.

AMADINE.
Yet give him leave to speak for my sake.

BREMO.
Speak on, but be not over-long.

MUCEDORUS.
In time of yore, when men like brutish beasts
Did lead their lives in loathsome cells and woods,
And wholly gave themselves to witless will,
A rude unruly rout, then man to man
Became a present prey, then might prevailed,
The weakest went to wall.
Right was unknown, for wrong was all in all.
As men thus lived in this great outrage,
Behold, one Orpheus came, as poets tell,
And them from rudeness unto reason brought,
Who led by reason, soon forsook the woods;
Instead of caves, they built them castles strong;
Cities and towns were founded by them then.
Glad were they, that they found such ease,
And in the end they grew to perfect amity.
Weighing their former wickedness,
They term’d the time wherein they lived then
A golden age, a goodly golden age.
Now, Bremo, for so I hear thee called,
If men which lived tofore, as thou dost now,
Wild in the woods, addicted all to spoil,
Returned were by worthy Orpheus’ means,
Let me, like Orpheus, cause thee to return
From murder, bloodshed, and like cruelty.
What, should we fight before we have a cause?
No, let us live and love together faithfully.
I’ll fight for thee—

BREMO.
Or fight for me, or die: or fight or else thou diest!

AMADINE.

Hold, Bremo, hold!

BREMO.
Away, I say, thou troublest me.

AMADINE.
You promised me to make me your queen.

BREMO.
I did, I mean no less.

AMADINE.
You promised that I should have my will.

BREMO.
I did, I mean no less.

AMADINE.
Then save this hermit’s life, for he may save us both.

BREMO.
At thy request I’ll spare him,
But never any after him. Say, hermit,
What canst thou do?

MUCEDORUS.
I’ll wait on thee, sometime upon the queen.
[_Aside_.] Such service shalt thou shortly have; as Bremo never had.

[_Exeunt._]

SCENE IV. The Court

Enter Segasto, the Clown and Rumbelo.

SEGASTO.
Come, sirs; what, shall I never have you find out Amadine and the shepherd?

MOUSE.
I have been through the woods and through the woods, and could see nothing but an emet.

RUMBELO.
Why, I see a thousand emets. Thou meanest a little one?

MOUSE.
Nay, that emet that I saw was bigger than thou art.

RUMBELO.
Bigger than I? [_To Segasto_.] What a fool have you to your man! I pray you, master, turn him away.

SEGASTO.
But dost thou hear, was he not a man?

MOUSE.
I think he was, for he said he did lead a saltseller’s life about the woods.

SEGASTO.
Thou wouldst say, a solitary life about the woods?

MOUSE.
I think it was so, indeed.

RUMBELO.
I thought what a fool thou art.

MOUSE.
Thou art a wise man! [_To Segasto_.] Why, he did nothing but sleep since he went.

SEGASTO.
But tell me, Mouse, how did he go?

MOUSE.
In a white gown, and a white hat on his head, and a staff in his hand.

SEGASTO.
I thought so; it was a hermit that walked a solitary life in the woods. Well, get you to dinner; and after never leave seeking, till you bring some news of them, or I’ll hang you both.

[_Exit._]

MOUSE.
How now, Rumbelo, what shall we do now?

RUMBELO.
Faith, I’ll home to dinner, and afterward to sleep.

MOUSE.
Why, then, thou wilt be hanged.

RUMBELO.

Faith, I care not, for I know I shall never find them. Well, I’ll once more abroad, and if I cannot find them, I’ll never come home again.

MOUSE.
I tell thee what, Rumbelo; thou shalt go in at one end of the wood, and I at the other, and we will meet both together in the midst.

RUMBELO.
Content, let’s away to dinner.

[_Exeunt._]

ACT V

SCENE I. The Forest

Enter Mucedorus solus.

MUCEDORUS.
Unknown to any here within these woods,
With bloody Bremo do I lead my life.
The monster! he doth murther all he meets;
He spareth none, and none doth him escape.
Who would continue—who, but only I—
In such a cruel cut-throat’s company?
Yet Amadine is there, how can I choose?
Ah, silly soul! how oftentimes she sits
And sighs, and calls: _Come, shepherd, come,
Sweet Mucedorus, come and set me free,_
When Mucedorus present stands her by!
But here she comes.

Enter Amadine.

What news, fair lady, as you walk these woods?

AMADINE.
Ah, hermit! none but bad and such as thou know’st.

MUCEDORUS.
How do you like your Bremo and his woods?

AMADINE.
Oh, not my Bremo, nor my Bremo’s woods.

MUCEDORUS.
And why not yours? Methinks he loves you well.

AMADINE.
I like him not, his love to me is nothing worth.

MUCEDORUS.
Lady, in this, methinks, you offer wrong,
To hate the man that ever loves you best.

AMADINE.
Hermit, I take no pleasure in his love,
Neither doth Bremo like me best.

MUCEDORUS.
Pardon my boldness, fair lady, sith we both
May safely talk now out of Bremo’s sight,
Unfold to me, if so you please, the full discourse
How, when, and why you came into these woods,
And fell into this bloody butcher’s hands.

AMADINE.
Hermit, I will;
Of late a worthy shepherd I did love—

MUCEDORUS.
A shepherd, lady? Sure, a man unfit
To match with you!

AMADINE.
Ay, hermit, this is true,
And when we had—

MUCEDORUS.
Stay there, the wild man comes;
Defer the rest until another time.

Enter Bremo.

BREMO.
What secret tale is this? What whispering have we here?
Villain, I charge thee tell thy tale again.

MUCEDORUS.
If needs I must, lo! here it is again:
Whenas we both had lost the sight of thee,
It griev’d us both, but specially thy queen,
Who in thy absence ever fears the worst,

Lest some mischance befall your royal grace.
Shall my sweet Bremo wander through the woods,
Toil to and fro for to redress my wants,
Hazard his life and all to cherish me?
I like not this, quoth she,
And thereupon crav’d to know of me,
If I could teach her handle weapons well.
My answer was, I had small skill therein,
But glad, most mighty king, to learn of thee.
And this was all.

BREMO.
Was ’t so? None can dislike of this. I’ll teach
You both to fight; but first, my queen, begin:
Here, take this weapon; see how thou canst use it.

AMADINE.
This is too big, I cannot wield it in my arm.

BREMO.
Is’t so? We’ll have a knotty crabtree-staff
For thee. [_To Mucedorus_.] But, sirrah, tell me, what say’st thou?

MUCEDORUS.
With all my heart I willing am to learn.

BREMO.
Then take my staff, and see how canst wield it.

MUCEDORUS.
First teach me how to hold it in my hand.

[_Taking the staff._]

BREMO.
Thou holdst it well.
[_To Amadine_.] Look how he doth, thou mayst the sooner learn.

MUCEDORUS.
Next tell me how and when ’tis best to strike.

BREMO.
[_Aside_.] ’Tis best to strike when time doth serve,
’Tis best to lose no time.

MUCEDORUS.
[_Aside_.] Then now or never is my time to strike.

BREMO.
And when thou strikest, be sure thou hit the head.

MUCEDORUS.
The head?

BREMO.
The very head.

MUCEDORUS.
Then have at thine.

[_He strikes him down dead._]

So! lie there and die;
A death, no doubt, according to desert,
Or else a worse, as thou deservest a worse.

AMADINE.
It glads my heart, this tyrant’s death to see.

MUCEDORUS.
Now, lady, it remains in you
To end the tale you lately had begun,
Being interrupted by this wicked wight—
You said you loved a shepherd?

AMADINE.
Ay, so I do, and none but only him;
And will do still, as long as life shall last.

MUCEDORUS.
But tell me, lady, sith I set you free,
What course of life do you intend to take?

AMADINE.
I will disguised wander through the world,
Till I have found him out.

MUCEDORUS.
How, if you find your shepherd in these woods?

AMADINE.
Ah, none so happy then as Amadine.

MUCEDORUS.
In tract of time a man may alter much:
Say, lady, do you know your shepherd well?

[_He discloseth himself._]

AMADINE.
My Mucedorus, hath he set me free?

MUCEDORUS.
He hath set thee free.

AMADINE.
And lived so long unknown to Amadine?

MUCEDORUS.
Ay, that’s a question whereof you mayn’t be resolved.
You know that I am banish’d from the court,
I know likewise each passage is beset,
So that we cannot long escape unknown,
Therefore my will is this, that we return,
Right through the thickets, to the wild man’s cave,
And there a while live on’s provision,
Until the search and narrow watch be past.
This is my counsel, and I think it best.

AMADINE.
I think the very same.

MUCEDORUS.
Come, let’s be gone.

Enter the Clown, who searches, and falls over the wild Man, and so carries him away.

MOUSE.
Nay, soft, sir, are you here? A bots on you! I was like to be hanged for not finding you; we would borrow a certain stray king’s-daughter of you; a wench, a wench, sir, we would have.

MUCEDORUS.
A wench of me? I’ll make thee eat my sword.

MOUSE.
Oh Lord, nay, an you are so lusty, I’ll call a cooling card for you.
Ho, master, master, come away quickly!

Enter Segasto.

SEGASTO.
What’s the matter?

MOUSE.
Look, master, Amadine and the shepherd! O brave!

SEGASTO.
What, minion, have I found you out?

MOUSE.
Nay, that’s a lie, I found her out myself.

SEGASTO.
Thou gadding huswife,
What cause hadst thou to gad abroad,
Whenas thou knowest our wedding-day so nigh?

AMADINE.
Not so, Segasto; no such thing in hand.
Show your assurance, then I’ll answer you.

SEGASTO.
Thy father’s promise my assurance is.

AMADINE.
But what he promised, he hath not perform’d.

SEGASTO.
It rests in thee for to perform the same.

AMADINE.
Not I.

SEGASTO.
And why?

AMADINE.
So is my will, and therefore even so.

MOUSE.
Master, with a nonny, nonny, no!

SEGASTO.
Ah, wicked villain! art thou here?

MUCEDORUS.
What needs these words? We weigh them not.

SEGASTO.
We weigh them not! proud shepherd, I scorn thy company.

MOUSE.
We’ll not have a corner of thy company.

MUCEDORUS.
I scorn not thee, nor yet the least of thine.

MOUSE.
That’s a lie, a would have killed me with his pugsnando.

SEGASTO.
This stoutness, Amadine, contents me not.

AMADINE.
Then seek another, that may you better please.

MUCEDORUS.
Well, Amadine, it only rests in thee
Without delay to make thy choice of three:
There stands Segasto, here a shepherd stands,
There stands the third: now make thy choice.

MOUSE.
A lord at the least I am.

AMADINE.
My choice is made, for I will none but thee.

SEGASTO.
A worthy mate, no doubt, for such a wife.

MUCEDORUS.
And, Amadine, why wilt thou none but me?
I cannot keep thee as thy father did;
I have no lands for to maintain thy state,
Moreover if thou mean to be my wife,
Commonly this must be thy use:
To bed at midnight, up at four,
Drudge all the day, and trudge from place to place,
Whereby our daily victuals for to win:
And last of all, which is the worst of all,
No princess then, but plain a shepherd’s wife.

MOUSE.
[_Aside_.] Then God gi’ you good morrow, goody shepherd!

AMADINE.
It shall not need; if Amadine do live,

Thou shalt be crowned king of Aragon.

MOUSE.
O master, laugh; when he’s king, then I’ll be a queen.

MUCEDORUS.
Then know that which never tofore was known,
I am no shepherd, no Aragonian I,
But born of royal blood:
My father’s of Valencia king, my mother queen;
Who for thy sacred sake took this hard task in hand.

AMADINE.
Ah, how I joy my fortune is so good!

SEGASTO.
Well, now I see Segasto shall not speed.
But, Mucedorus, I as much do joy
To see thee here within our court of Aragon,
As if a kingdom had befallen me this time.
I with my heart surrender it to thee.

[_He giveth her to him._]

And loose what right to Amadine I have.

MOUSE.
[_Aside_.] What, a barn’s door, and born where my father was constable?
A bots on thee, how dost thou?

MUCEDORUS.
Thanks, good Segasto; but yet you levell’d at the crown.

MOUSE.
Master, bear this, and bear all.

SEGASTO.
Why so, sir?

MOUSE.
He says you take a goose by the crown.

SEGASTO.
Away, go to, sir; post you to the king,
Whose heart is fraught with careful doubts,
Gladden him up, and tell him these good news,
And we will follow, as fast as we may.

MOUSE.
I go, master; I run, master.

[_Exeunt severally._]

SCENE II. Open Place near the Court of the King of Aragon

Enter the King of Aragon and Collen.

KING OF ARAGON.
Break, heart, and end my pallid woes!
My Amadine, the comfort of my life,
How can I joy, except she were in sight?
Her absence breeds sorrow to my soul
And with a thunder breaks my heart in twain.

COLLEN.
Forbear those passions, gentle king,
And you shall see ’twill turn unto the best,
And bring your soul to quiet and to joy.

KING OF ARAGON.
Such joy as death, I do assure me that,
And nought but death, unless of her I hear,
And that with speed; I cannot sigh thus long—
But what a tumult do I hear within?

[_They cry within, ‘Joy and happiness.’_]

COLLEN.
I hear a noise of overpassing joy
Within the court. My lord, be of good comfort,
And here comes one in haste.

Enter the Clown running.

MOUSE.
A king, a king, a king!

COLLEN.
Why, how now, sirrah? What’s the matter?

MOUSE.
Oh, ’tis news for a king, ’tis worth money.

COLLEN.
Why, sirrah, thou shalt have silver and gold, if it be good.

MOUSE.
O, ’tis good, ’tis good. Amadine—

KING OF ARAGON.
Oh, what of her? Tell me, and I will make thee a knight.

MOUSE.
How a sprite? No, by’r Lady, I will not be a sprite, masters. Get ye away, if I be a sprite, I shall be so lean, I shall make you all afraid.

COLLEN.
Thou sot, the King means to make thee a gentleman.

MOUSE.
Why, I shall want ’parel.

KING OF ARAGON.
Thou shalt want for nothing.

MOUSE.
Then stand away, trick up thyself, here they come.

Enter Segasto, Mucedorus, and Amadine.

AMADINE.
My gratious father, pardon thy disloyal daughter.

KING OF ARAGON.
What, do mine eyes behold my daughter Amadine?
Rise up, dear daughter, and let these my embracing arms
Show thee some token of thy father’s joy,
Which e’er since thy departure, hath languished in sorrow.

AMADINE.
Dear father,
Ne’er were your sorrows greater than my griefs,
Ne’er you so desolate, as I comfortless:
Yet, ne’ertheless, acknowledging myself
To be the cause of both, on bended knees,
I humbly crave your pardon.

[_Kneeling._]

KING OF ARAGON.
I’ll pardon thee, dear daughter;
But as for him—

AMADINE.
Ah, father! what of him?

KING OF ARAGON.
As sure as I am a king, and wear the crown,
I will revenge on that accursed wretch.

MUCEDORUS.
Yet, worthy prince, work not thy will in wrath,
Show favour—

KING OF ARAGON.
Ay, such favour thou deserv’st.

MUCEDORUS.
I do deserve the daughter of a king.

KING OF ARAGON.
Oh, impudent! A shepherd and so insolent!

MUCEDORUS.
No shepherd am I, but a worthy prince.

KING OF ARAGON.
In fair conceit, not princely born.

MUCEDORUS.
Yes, princely born, my father is a king,
My mother queen, and of Valencia both.

[_Throwing off his disguise._]

KING OF ARAGON.
What, Mucedorus? Welcome to our court!
What cause hadst thou to come to me disguis’d?

MUCEDORUS.
No cause to fear, I caused no offence, but this—
Desiring thy daughter’s virtues for to see,
Disguis’d myself from out my father’s court,
Unknown to any, in secret I did rest,
And passed many troubles near to death;
So hath your daughter my partaker been,
As you shall know hereafter more at large,
Desiring you, you will give her to me,
E’en as mine own, and sovereign of my life,
Then shall I think my travels are well spent.

KING OF ARAGON.
With all my heart, but this—
Segasto claims my promise made tofore,
That he should have her as his only wife,
Before my council, when we came from war.
Segasto, may I crave thee, let it pass,
And give Amadine as wife to Mucedorus.

SEGASTO.
With all my heart, were ’t far a greater thing;
And what I may to furnish up their rites
With pleasing sports and pastimes, you shall see.

KING OF ARAGON.
Thanks, good Segasto; I will think of this.

MUCEDORUS.
Thanks, good my lord; and while I live,
Account of me in what I can or may.

AMADINE.
And, good Segasto, these great courtesies
Shan’t be forgot.

MOUSE.
Why, hark you, master! bones, what have you done? What, given away the wench you made me take such pains for? You are wise indeed; mass, an I had known of that, I would have had her myself. Faith, master, now we may go to breakfast with a woodcock-pie.

SEGASTO.
Go, sir, you were best leave this knavery.

KING OF ARAGON.
Come on, my lords, let’s now to court,
Where we may finish up the joyfullest day
That ever happ’d to a distressed king.
Were but thy father, the Valencia lord,
Present in view of this combining knot.

A shout within; enter a Messenger.

What shout was that?

MESSENGER.
My lord, the great Valencia king,
Newly arrived, entreats your presence.

MUCEDORUS.
My father?

KING OF ARAGON.
Prepared a welcome; give him entertainment;
A happier planet never reign’d than that
Which governs at this hour.

Sound. Enter the King of Valencia, Anselmo, Rodrigo, Borachius, with others; the King runs and embraces his son.

KING OF VALENCIA.
Rise honour of my age, food to my rest:
Condemn not, mighty King of Aragon,
My rude behaviour, so compell’d by nature,
That manners stood unacknowledged.

KING OF ARAGON.
What we have to recite would tedious prove
By declaration; therefore in and feast.
Tomorrow the performance shall explain
What words conceal: till then, drums speak, bells ring,
Give plausive welcomes to our brother king.

[_Sound drums and trumpets. Exeunt omnes._]

EPILOGUE

Enter Comedy and Envy.

COMEDY.
How now, Envy? What, blushest thou already?
Peep forth, hide not thy head with shame,
But with a courage praise a woman’s deeds.
Thy threats were vain, thou couldst do me no hurt,
Although thou seem’dst to cross me with despite,
I overwhelm’d and turned upside down thy block
And made thyself to stumble at the same.

ENVY.
Though stumbled, yet not overthrown,
Thou canst not draw my heart to mildness,
Yet must I needs confess, thou hast done well,
And play’d thy part with mirth and pleasant glee.
Say all this, yet canst thou not conquer me,

Although this time thou’st got—yet not the conquest neither,
A double revenge another time I’ll have.

COMEDY.
Envy, spit thy gall;
Plot, work, contrive, create new fallacies,
Teem from thy womb each minute a black traitor,
Whose blood and thoughts have twins conception;
Study to act deeds yet unchronicled,
Cast native monsters in the moulds of men;
Case vicious devils under sainted rochets;
Unhasp the wicked where all perjuries roost,
And swarm this ball with treasons, do thy worst,
Thou canst not, hell-hound, cross my star tonight,
Nor blind that glory, where I wish delight.

ENVY.
I can, I will.

COMEDY.
Nefarious hag, begin;
And let us tug, till one the mastery win.

ENVY.
Comedy, thou art a shallow goose,
I’ll overthrow thee in thine own intent,
And make thy fall my comic merriment.

COMEDY.
Thy policy wants gravity, thou art
Too weak. Speak, fiend, as how?

ENVY.
Why, thus.
From my foul study will I hoist a wretch,
A lean and hungry meager cannibal,
Whose jaws swell to his eyes with chawing malice;
And him I’ll make a poet.

COMEDY.
What’s that to the purpose?

ENVY.
This scrambling raven with his needy beard,
Will I whet on to write a comedy;
Wherein shall be compos’d dark sentences,
Pleasing to factious brains:
And every otherwhere place me a jest,

Whose high abuse shall more torment than blows.
Then I myself, quicker than lightning,
Will fly me to a puissant magistrate,
And waiting with a trencher at his back,
In midst of jollity rehearse those galls,
With some additions, so lately vented in your theatre:
He upon this cannot but make complaint,
To your great danger, or at least restraint.

COMEDY.
Ha, ha, ha! I laugh to hear thy folly;
This is a trap for boys, not men, nor such,
Especially desertful in their doings,
Whose staid discretion rules their purposes.
I and my faction do eschew those vices.
But see, O see, the weary sun for rest
Hath lain his golden compass to the west,
Where he perpetual bide and ever shine,
As David’s offspring in his happy clime.
Stoop, Envy, stoop, bow to the earth with me,
Let’s beg our pardon on our bended knee.

[_They kneel._]

ENVY.
My power has lost her might, and Envy’s date’s expired,
Yon splendant majesty hath ’fell’d my sting,
And I amazed am.

[_Fall down and quake._]

COMEDY.
Glorious and wise Arch-Cæsar on this earth,
At whose appearance, Envy’s stricken dumb,
And all bad things cease operation,
Vouchsafe to pardon our unwilling error,
So late presented to your gracious view,
And we’ll endeavour with excess of pain,
To please your senses in a choicer strain.
Thus we commit you to the arms of night,
Whose spangled darkness would, for your delight,
Strive to excell the day: be blessed then,
Who other wishes, let him never speak—

ENVY.
Amen!
To Fame and Honour we commend your rest,
Live still more happy, every hour more blest.

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