



GLOBE QUARTOS

# THE WITCHES OF LANCASHIRE

RICHARD BROME and THOMAS HEYWOOD

*First printed: London, 1634*

*This edition prepared by Gabriel Egan*

GLOBE EDUCATION

*and*



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## PREFACE

Over 400 plays written between 1567 and 1642 have survived in print. Few are now read and even fewer are performed. In 1995 Globe Education initiated a 30-year project to stage readings with professional casts of all the surviving texts so that audiences may once again hear plays by Barnes, Haughton, Shirley, Wilkins *et al.*

In 1997 Mark Rylance, Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe, included full productions of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy* and Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* as part of the Globe Theatre's opening season. Over 30,000 people came to hear and see the two plays.

The popularity of the readings and the productions prompted Globe Education to approach Nick Hern to publish the texts being revived at the Globe to enable more people to read, study and, ideally, to produce them. Developments in computer typesetting have enabled editions to be published economically and quickly as *Globe Quartos*.

The first *Globe Quartos* were edited in 1998 by Nick de Somogyi. In 1999 an Editorial Board, composed of David Scott Kastan, Gordon McMullan and Richard Proudfoot, was established to oversee the series.

Globe Education is indebted to all those who have helped give new life to old plays: production teams, actors, audiences, directors, editors, publishers and readers.

*Patrick Spottiswoode*  
*Director, Globe Education*

## EDITORIAL BOARD'S PREFACE

The aim of the series is to make once more available English plays of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that have long been out of print in affordable form or have been available to readers only in scholarly editions in academic libraries. The *Globe Quartos* texts are based on the most reliable surviving forms of these plays (usually the first printed editions). These have been fully edited and modernized so as to make them easily usable by actors and readers today. Editorial correction and emendation are undertaken where required by the state of the original. Extra stage directions added by editors and needed to make the action clear are enclosed in square brackets. Apostrophes in verse speeches indicate elision of syllables and reflect the metrical pattern of the line. Prefatory matter includes notes from the director or co-ordinator of the production or reading of the play at the Globe and a brief factual introduction by the editor. Glossarial notes (keyed to the text by line numbers) explain difficult or obsolete usages and offer brief comment on other points of interest or obscurity. Departures from the wording of the original are recorded in textual notes that identify the source of corrections or editorial emendations. The opening page of the text in the original on which the edition is based is reproduced in reduced facsimile. Extra material relevant to the understanding of the play may occasionally be included in an Appendix.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editor wishes to thank his postgraduate students on the Globe Education/King's College London MA 'Shakespearean Studies: Text and Playhouse' for their seminar discussions of this play. The early modern performance expertise of the Globe Education practitioners led by James Wallace brought the play to life in a staged reading that illuminated hitherto murky parts of it. Editing those parts afresh after the performance, I was glad to include a number of Wallace's suggestions. I am grateful to the British Library for permission to reprint the first text page of one of their two copies of the 1634 quarto. The *Globe Quartos* general editors, past and present, each helped with one or more of the problems I encountered. Most especially, David Scott Kastan and Gordon McMullan comprehensively mixed their labour with mine not only by advising on points of interpretation and editorial procedure, but also by indicating every occasion upon which I had failed to turn this seventeenth-century play script into proper modern English. What they missed, my student Alexandra London-Thompson caught. Having promised to absorb their lessons, I am grateful to be allowed pass off these people's improvements as my own.

This edition is dedicated to my wife, Joan Fitzpatrick.

*Gabriel Egan*

## A NOTE ON THE STAGED READING

My first impression of this play was of an excuse for spectacle and amusement and little else. The witches are not particularly diabolical, as they are in *Macbeth*, nor is witchcraft placed in a social context of small-town poverty with its attendant prejudice and ignorance, as in *The Witch of Edmonton*. It neither frightened nor enlightened. That the real women involved were, at the time of writing, still suffering in jail for these supposed crimes seemed to add little urgency to the drama. Nathaniel Tomkyns's 'review' of an early performance at the Globe in 1634 appeared accurate enough: 'there be not in it . . . any poetical genius, or art, or language . . . or tenet of witches', but with its 'ribaldry', 'fopperies', and songs and dances, it is still a 'merry and excellent . . . play'.

The preparation for, and the experience of, rehearsal and performance of a staged reading revealed much more. The prologue's modest claim that a lack of foreign news was the occasion for a dramatization of domestic issues is disingenuous: Heywood was known for his domestic drama and, like his master Ben Jonson, Brome used realistic characters in contemporary local settings. Conscious art, not default, selected the dramatists' material. In all likelihood the labour was divided thus: Heywood wrote the spectacles of witch mischief and ancient village ritual, and Brome wrote about the inversion of social order in the Seely household, which is similar to the fun he had in *The Antipodes*. Brome's characteristic humour arising from character interplay is evident also in the subtly-executed scenes of the three young gallants. Whetstone is no caricature of a boasting fool but rather is fully developed, and the differing reactions to him from other characters and from the audience repay careful exploration. Master Generous too revealed more depth than expected. An audience is apt first to regard him as a pompous bore, but will become increasingly engaged with his struggle to think and act in accordance with God's law for the preservation of a Christian soul. The repentance of Mistress Generous is genuinely moving and her subsequent betrayal is all the more shocking for the effect she produced

by her plausible act of contrition. The play is full of ideas about belief and disbelief, lies and truth, appearance and reality, and honest speaking and flattery. Over-credulity can spring from vice (the foolish Whetstone) or virtue (the good-hearted Generous).

Not witchcraft but witch-hunting is the play's serious matter. Doughty moves from scepticism to determination (his name suits both conditions) when frustrated in his lust for Moll Spencer, whose quarto name 'Mal' I kept for its connotation of maleficence. The play darkens with this witch-finder's zeal to see all the witches 'handsomely hanged', and we should credit the dramatists' observation of the psychosexual impulses underlying the witch-hunting craze.

Witchcraft shares with dramatic performance a concern for fortuitous timing, and our staged reading gained knife-edge immediacy by the presence, hot-foot from the Globe stage, of the First Witch from the Globe Theatre's 2001 season production of *Macbeth*. This provided an appropriate analogue to the link between the two King's men's plays which was clearly in the dramatists' conception of their work. The long theatrical tradition of bad luck associated with uttering the 'Scottish play' appears to have begun with *The Witches of Lancashire*: merely mentioning 'the Scottish wayward sisters' (as the quarto spelling has it) gives Winny Seely impaired vision and a 'hiccup' of the heart. Since they are all from Lancashire, the characters should logically all have northern accents, and I instructed the actors accordingly. The dramatists, however, chose to give only Lawrence and Parnell the necessary and nearly incomprehensible accents. Those wishing to reconstruct the early performances are referred for this detail to the 1634 quarto's difficult but amusing representation of dialect.

In performance it becomes clear that this is not simply an anti-witch play, since their victims suffer little physical harm. Millers were notoriously corrupt and here one is tied naked to his sails (on a very cold night) and another is pinched and scratched; such indignities scarcely exceed the likely fantasies of their customers. For these misdemeanours the witches suffer a variety of excesses from beating and amputation to

arrest and threatened execution. In performance the final scene chilled those on stage and in the audience as the historical reality became immediate. Brome and Heywood explicitly name 'mercy' in their epilogue and throughout they present witchcraft unseriously while attending to the excessive response of state power. Perhaps this made a difference: unlike their unfortunate predecessors of 1612, there is no evidence that these Pendle witches were executed.

*James Wallace*

## THE WITCHES OF LANCASHIRE

Cast of the staged reading co-ordinated by James Wallace at the Globe  
Education Centre on 12 August 2001

*Prologue*

Liza Hayden

*Arthur, a young gentleman*

Nicholas Rowe

*Tom Shakestone, a young gentleman*

Tom Cornford

*Bantam, a young gentleman*

Dan Hawksford

*Whetstone, nephew to Generous*

Richard Lumsden

*Generous, a wealthy squire*

David Delve

*Mistress Generous, Generous's wife and a witch*

Beverley Klein

*Robert, Generous's groom*

Tony Bell

*Mal Spencer, Robert's sweetheart and a witch*

Lou Gish

*Meg Johnson, a witch*

Cherry Morris

*Mawd Hargreave, a witch*

Olivia MacDonald

*Gillian Dickinson, a witch*

Caroline Harris

*Doughty*

Michael Cronin

*Seely, a wealthy squire whose household is bewitched*

Robert Wilby

*Gregory Seely, his son*

James Wallace

*Lawrence, his servant*

Mike Rogers

*Joan Seely, his wife*

Virginia Denham

*Winny Seely, his daughter*

Karen Hayley

*Parnell, his serving-woman*

Sabina Netherclift

*Soldier*

Karl Stimpson

*Miller*

James Marsh

*Boy, the Miller's son*

Nicholas Kollgaard

*Epilogue*

Liza Hayden

*Spirits, Musicians, Country Rustics and Officers played by members of the  
company*

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

On 16 August 1634 Nathaniel Tomkyns wrote a business letter to his acquaintance Sir Robert Phelips, and to lighten the tone at the end Tomkyns turned to some 'merriment' which he thought might interest Phelips. In London, he wrote, 'hath been lately a new comedy at the Globe called *The Witches of Lancashire*, acted by reason of the great concourse of people three days together'. For a repertory company like the King's men to perform a play three times in succession indicates enormous popularity, and Tomkyns explained that the subject matter was sensational: 'the slights and passages done or supposed to be done by these witches sent from thence hither', and moreover the supposed witches were 'still visible and in prison here'. Unlike most drama of the period, the play was about contemporary, indeed ongoing, events: the apprehension, conviction, and summoning to London for sentencing of four women from Pendle Forest in Lancashire found guilty of witchcraft at the Lancaster assizes. Tomkyns's 400-word eyewitness account of the Globe performance is reproduced in Appendix 1.

While the Lancashire women languished in jail in London in the summer of 1634, two seasoned dramatists, Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, planned a play based on the case. Somehow they obtained transcripts of the witness's and defendants' depositions which were intended only for privy council use, and they drew upon these for journalistic details. One of these depositions, as published in 1677, is Appendix 2. When their play was nearly ready, the King's men successfully petitioned the lord chamberlain to prevent other companies performing witch plays, so preserving their 'scoop', and on 11, 12, or 13 August (we cannot be sure which), *The Witches of Lancashire* opened at the Globe.

In the autumn of 1634 a quarto of the play appeared under the title *The Late Lancashire Witches*, the word 'late' indicating that this was the recent story of Pendle witches, not a similar case originating from the

same place in 1612. One of the British Library copies of this 1634 quarto, whose running header 'The Witches of Lancashire' confirms the play's proper title, is the control text for this edition. Brome and Heywood's play effectively takes the prosecution's side in the case, showing the women to be guilty of witchcraft and showing those who doubt this or worse, doubt the existence of witchcraft altogether, to be naïve. The most sustained bewitching of which they are guilty is the inversion of social order within the Seely household so that son and daughter (Gregory and Winny) bully their parents but are in turn bullied by their servants (Lawrence and Parnell). Although all the characters are from Lancashire, the dramatists chose to give only Lawrence and Parnell distinctive northern, provincial accents, represented in the quarto by inconsistent use of almost indecipherably non-standard spelling. It seems that a London audience could be expected to delight in regional stereotyping, at least among low class characters.

*The Witches of Lancashire* is the only surviving collaboration by Brome. Heywood had been writing plays for more than thirty years but Brome's rise was relatively recent, having had two hits in his first year writing for the stage, 1629: *The Lovesick Maid* and *The Northern Lass*, both for the King's men. To the partnership Heywood brought not only his extensive dramatic experience (he claimed to already have written or contributed to some 220 plays) but also his knowledge of witch-lore. The topsy-turvydom of the Seely household is an exploration of the comedy of inversion which Brome was to develop fully in his *The Antipodes*.

The play is highly comic but for a modern spectator or reader, knowledge of the serious predicament of the real subjects – most of whom denied the charges – can darken the atmosphere of its reception. Such qualms seem not to have troubled Tomkyns, for whom it was merely 'full of ribaldry', 'fopperies to provoke laughter', and 'diverse songs and dances', making in all a 'merry and excellent new play'. The historical record of the accused women fades into obscurity; although their accuser confessed to inventing his story, no pardon is recorded and the women were still in jail when they disappear from our view in 1637.

Tomkyns's end is better recorded: on 5 July 1643 he was hanged for counter-parliamentary treason.

*Gabriel Egan*

THE  
WITCHES  
OF  
LANCASHIRE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The Persons in the Play

[PROLOGUE]

ARTHUR  
SHAKESTONE  
BANTAM

}

*three young gentlemen, and friends*

GENEROUS  
MISTRESS GENEROUS  
WHETSTONE

*a wealthy and generous squire  
Generous's wife, and a witch  
her dimwitted young nephew*

ROBERT  
MOLL *Spencer*

*Generous's groom*

GILLIAN *Dickinson*

*Robert's sweetheart, and a witch*

MAWD *Hargreave*

}

*three witches*

MEG *Johnson*

SEELY

*a wealthy squire whose household is bewitched  
his friend*

DOUGHTY

*Seely's wife*

JOAN

GREGORY

*Seely's son*

WINNY

*Seely's daughter*

LAWRENCE

*Gregory's servant*

PARNELL

*Winny's servant*

MILLER

BOY

*the Miller's son*

SOLDIER

RABBLE *of hoydens*

*Piper, Drummer, Demon-child, Constable, and Officers*

[*Enter*] the PROLOGUE

Corrantoes failing, and no foot-post late  
Possessing us with news of foreign state,  
No accidents abroad worthy relation  
Arriving here, we are forc'd from our own nation  
To ground the scene that's now in agitation.  
The project unto many here well known,  
Those witches the fat jailer brought to town,  
An argument so thin, persons so low,  
Can neither yield much matter, nor great show.  
Expect no more than can from such be rais'd,  
So may the scene pass pardon'd, though not prais'd .

10  
[*Exit*]



ACT 1, SCENE 1

*Enter ARTHUR, SHAKESTONE, and  
BANTAM, as from hunting*

*Arthur* Was ever sport of expectation  
Thus cross'd in th' height?

*Shakestone* Tush, these are accidents  
All game is subject to.

*Arthur* So you may call them  
Chances or crosses or what else you please,  
But for my part I'll hold them prodigies,  
As things transcending Nature.

*Bantam* Oh, you speak this  
Because a hare hath cross'd you.

*Arthur* A hare?  
A witch, or rather a devil, I think!  
For tell me, gentlemen, was't possible  
In such a fair course and no covert near, 10  
We in pursuit and she in constant view,  
Our eyes not wandering but all bent that way,  
The dogs in chase, she ready to be ceas'd,  
And at the instant, when I durst have laid  
My life to gage my dog had pinch'd her, then  
To vanish into nothing?

*Shakestone* Somewhat strange,  
But not as you enforce it.

*Arthur* Make it plain  
That I am in an error! Sure I am

That I about me have no borrow'd eyes;  
They are mine own and matches.

*Bantam* She might find 20  
Some muse as then not visible to us  
And escape that way.

*Shakestone* Perhaps some fox had  
Earth'd there, and though it be not common,  
For I seldom have known or heard the like,  
There squat herself, and so her 'scape appear  
But natural which you proclaim a wonder.

*Arthur* Well, well, gentlemen,  
Be you of your own faith, but what I see  
And is to me apparent, being in sense,  
My wits about me, no way toss'd or troubled, 30  
To that will I give credit.

*Bantam* Come, come, all men  
Were never of one mind, nor I of yours.

*Shakestone* To leave this argument, are you resolv'd  
Where we shall dine today?

*Arthur* Yes, where we purpos'd.

*Bantam* That was with Master Generous.

*Arthur* True, the same,  
And where a loving welcome is presum'd,  
Whose liberal table's never unprepar'd,  
Nor he of guests unfurnish'd. Of his means,  
There's none can bear it with a braver port  
And keep his state unshaken. One who sells not 40  
Nor covets he to purchase, holds his own  
Without oppressing others, always press'd  
To endear to him any known gentleman

In whom he finds good parts.

*Bantam*

A character

Not common in this age.

*Arthur*

I cannot wind him up

Unto the least part of his noble worth;

'Tis far above my strength.

*Enter WHETSTONE*

*Shakestone*

See who comes yonder:

A fourth to make us a full mess of guests

At Master Generous' table.

*Arthur*

Tush, let him pass.

He is not worth our luring – a mere coxcomb.

50

It is a way to call our wits in question

To have him seen amongst us.

*Bantam*

He hath spied us;

There is no way to evade him.

*Arthur*

That's my grief.

A most notorious liar: out upon him!

*Shakestone*

Let's set the best face on't.

*Whetstone*

What, gentlemen? All mine old acquaintance? A whole triplicity of friends together? Nay then, 'tis three to one we shall not soon part company.

*Shakestone*

Sweet Master Whetstone!

*Bantam*

Dainty Master Whetstone!

60

*Arthur*

Delicate Master Whetstone!

*Whetstone*

You say right! Master Whetstone I have been,

Master Whetstone I am, and Master Whetstone I shall be, and those that know me know withal that I have not my name for nothing. I am he whom all the brave blades of the country use to whet their wits upon. Sweet Master Shakestone, dainty Master Bantam, and dainty Master Arthur! And how? And how? What, all lustick? All froligozone? I know you are going to my uncle's to dinner, and so am I too. What, shall we all make one rendezvous there? You need not doubt of your welcome. 70

*Shakestone* No doubt at all, kind Master Whetstone, but we have not seen you of late – you are grown a great stranger amongst us. I desire sometimes to give you a visit. I pray, where do you lie?

*Whetstone* Where do I lie? Why, sometimes in one place and then again in another – I love to shift lodgings but most constantly. Wheresoever I dine or sup, there do I lie! 80

*Arthur* [*aside*] I never heard that word proceed from him I durst call truth till now.

*Whetstone* But wheresoever I lie, 'tis no matter for that – I pray you say, and say truth, are not you three now going to dinner to my uncle's?

*Bantam* I think you are a witch, Master Whetstone.

*Whetstone* How! A witch, gentlemen? I hope you do not mean to abuse me, though at this time (if report be true) there are too many of them here in our country. But I am sure I look like no such ugly creature. 90

- Shakestone* It seems, then, you are of opinion that there are witches. For mine own part, I can hardly be induced to think there is any such kind of people.
- Whetstone* No such kind of people? I pray you tell me gentlemen, did never any one of you know my mother?
- Arthur* Why, was your mother a witch?
- Whetstone* I do not say as witches go nowadays, for they for the most part are ugly old beldams, but she was a lusty young lass and, by her own report, by her beauty and fair looks bewitched my father. 100
- Bantam* It seems then your mother was rather a young wanton wench than an old withered witch.
- Whetstone* You say right, and know withal I come of two ancient families, for as I am a Whetstone by the mother side, so I am a By-blow by the father's.
- Arthur* It appears then, by your discourse, that you came in at the window. 110
- Whetstone* I would have you think I scorn, like my grandam's cat, to leap over the hatch.
- Shakestone* [*To ARTHUR*] He hath confess'd himself to be a bastard.
- Arthur* [*To SHAKESTONE*] And I believe't as a notorious truth.
- Whetstone* Howsoever I was begot, here you see I am. And if my parents went to it without fear or wit, what can I help it?
- Arthur* [*To SHAKESTONE*] Very probable, for as he was got without fear, so it is apparent he was born without wit. 120

- Whetstone* Gentlemen, it seems you have some private business amongst yourselves which I am not willing to interrupt. I know not how the day goes with you, but for mine own part my stomach is now much upon twelve. You know what hour my uncle keeps, and I love ever to be set before the first grace. I am going before. Speak, shall I acquaint him with your coming after?
- Shakestone* We mean this day to see what fare he keeps.
- Whetstone* And you know it is his custom to fare well, and in that respect I think I may be his kinsman. And so farewell gentlemen. I'll be your forerunner to give him notice of your visit. 130
- Bantam* And so entire us to you.
- Shakestone* Sweet Master Whetstone!
- Arthur* Kind Master By-blow!
- Whetstone* I see you are perfect both in my name and surname. I have been ever bound unto you, for which I will at this time be your *noverint* and give him notice that you *universi* will be with him *per præsentis*, and that I take to be presently. 140  
*Exit*
- Arthur* Farewell *As in præsentis*.
- Shakestone* It seems he's piece of a scholar.
- Arthur* What, because he hath read a little scrivener's Latin? He never proceeded farther in his Accidence than to *Mentiri non est meum* and that was such a hard lesson to learn that he stuck at *mentiri* and could never reach to *non est meum*. Since, a mere Ignaro and not worth

acknowledgement. 150

*Bantam* Are these then the best parts he can boast of?

*Arthur* As you see him now, so shall you find him ever –  
all in one strain. There is one only thing which I  
wonder he left out.

*Shakestone* And what might that be?

*Arthur* Of the same affinity with rest: at every second  
word he is commonly boasting either of his aunt  
or his uncle.

*Enter* GENEROUS

*Bantam* You name him in good time; see where he comes.

*Generous* Gentlemen, welcome! 'Tis a word I use; 160

From me expect no further compliment.

Nor do I name it often at one meeting;

Once spoke (to those that understand me best

And know I always purpose as I speak)

Hath ever yet sufficed, so let it you.

Nor do I love that common phrase of guests

As 'we make bold', or 'we are troublesome',

'We take you unprovided', and the like.

I know you understanding gentlemen

And, knowing me, cannot persuade yourselves 170

With me you shall be troublesome or bold,

But still provided for my worthy friends

Amongst whom you are listed.

*Arthur* Noble sir,

You generously instruct us and to express

We can be your apt scholars – in a word

We come to dine with you.

*Generous*

And, gentlemen,  
Such plainness doth best please me. I had notice  
Of so much by my kinsman, and, to show  
How lovingly I took it, instantly  
Rose from my chair to meet you at the gate 180  
And be myself your usher. Nor shall you find,  
Being set to meat, that I'll excuse your fare  
Or say 'I am sorry it falls out so poor'  
And 'had I known your coming we'd have had  
Such things and such', nor blame my cook, to say  
'This dish or that had not been sauc'd with care' –  
Words fitting best a common hostess' mouth  
When there's perhaps some just cause of dislike  
But not the table of a gentleman;  
Nor is it my wife's custom. In a word, 190  
Take what you find and so.

*Arthur*

Sir, without flattery  
You may be call'd the sole surviving son  
Of long since banish'd hospitality.

*Generous*

In that you please me not. But, gentlemen,  
I hope to be beholden unto you all,  
Which if I prove I'll be a grateful debtor.

*Bantam*

Wherein, good sir?

*Generous*

I ever studied plainness  
And truth withal.

*Shakestone*

I pray express yourself.

*Generous*

In few I shall.  
I know this youth to whom my wife is aunt 200  
Is, as you needs must find him, weak and shallow,

Dull as his name and what for kindred sake  
 We note not, or at least are loath to see,  
 Is unto such well-knowing gentlemen  
 Most grossly visible. If for my sake  
 You will but seem to wink at these his wants,  
 At least at table before us his friends.  
 I shall receive it as a courtesy  
 Not soon to be forgot.

*Arthur* Presume it, sir.

*Generous* Now when you please pray enter, gentlemen. 210

*Arthur* Would these my friends prepare the way before.  
 To be resolv'd of one thing before dinner  
 Would something add unto mine appetite.  
 [To BANTAM and SHAKESTONE] Shall I  
 entreat you so much?

*Bantam* Oh sir, you may command us.

*Exit BANTAM and SHAKESTONE*

*Generous* I'th' meantime  
 Prepare your stomachs with a bowl of sack;  
 My cellar can afford it. Now, Master Arthur,  
 Pray freely speak your thoughts.

*Arthur* I come not, sir  
 To press a promise from you – take't not so – 220  
 Rather to prompt your memory in a motion  
 Made to you not long since.

*Generous* Was't not about  
 A manor, the best part of your estate,  
 Mortgag'd to one slips no advantages

Which you would have redeem'd?

*Arthur* True sir, the same.

*Generous* And as I think, I promis'd at that time  
To become bound with you, or if the usurer  
(A base, yet the best, title I can give him)  
Perhaps should question that security  
To have the money ready. Was't not so? 230

*Arthur* It was to that purpose we discoursed.

*Generous* Provided – To have the writings in my custody.  
Else how should I secure mine own estate?

*Arthur* To deny that I should appear to th' world  
Stupid and of no brain.

*Generous* Your money's ready.

*Arthur* And I remain a man oblig'd to you  
Beyond all utterance.

*Generous* Make then your word good  
By speaking it no further, only this:  
It seems your uncle you trusted in so far  
Hath failed your expectation.

*Arthur* Sir, he hath. 240

Not that he is unwilling or unable  
But at this time unfit to be solicited;  
For, to the country's wonder and my sorrow,  
He is much to be pitied.

*Generous* Why, I entreat you?

*Arthur* Because he's late become the sole discourse  
Of all the country, for, of a man respected  
For his discretion and known gravity,

As master of a govern'd family,  
 The house – as if the ridge were fix'd below  
 And groundsills lifted up to make the roof – 250  
 All now turn'd topsy-turvy.

*Generous* Strange! But how?

*Arthur* In such a retrograde and preposterous way  
 As seldom hath been heard of – I think never.

*Generous* Can you discourse the manner?

*Arthur* The good man  
 In all obedience kneels unto his son;  
 He, with an austere brow, commands his father.  
 The wife presumes not in the daughter's sight  
 Without a prepar'd curtsy. The girl she  
 Expects it as a duty, chides her mother,  
 Who quakes and trembles at each word she speaks. 260  
 And, what's as strange, the maid she domineers  
 O'er her young mistress who is aw'd by her.  
 The son to whom the father creeps and bends  
 Stands in as much fear of the groom his man.  
 All in such rare disorder that, in some  
 As it breeds pity and in others wonder,  
 So in the most part laughter.

*Generous* How think you might this come?

*Arthur* 'Tis thought by witchcraft.

*Generous* They that think so dream,  
 For my belief is no such thing can be; 270  
 A madness you may call it. Dinner stays;  
 That done the best part of the afternoon  
 We'll spend about your business. *Exeunt*

[1.2]

*Enter SEELY and DOUGHTY*

*Seely* Nay, but understand me, neighbour Doughty!

*Doughty* Good Master Seely, I do understand you, and over and over understand you so much that I could e'en blush at your fondness. And had I a son to serve me so, I would conjure a devil out of him.

*Seely* Alas, he is my child.

*Doughty* No, you are his child to live in fear of him. Indeed they say old men become children again, but before I would become my child's child, and make my foot my head, I would stand upon my head 10  
and kick my heels at the skies.

*Enter GREGORY*

*Seely* You do not know what an only son is. Oh see, he comes! Now if you can appease his anger toward me, you shall do an act of timely charity.

*Doughty* It is an office that I am but weakly versed in, to plead to a son in the father's behalf. [*aside*] Bless me what looks the devilish young rascal frights the poor man withal!

*Gregory* I wonder at your confidence and how you dare appear before me. 20

*Doughty* [*aside*] A brave beginning!

*Seely* Oh son, be patient.

*Gregory* It is right reverend counsel; I thank you for it. I shall study patience, shall I, while you practice

ways to beggar me, shall I?

*Doughty* [aside] Very handsome!

*Seely* If ever I transgress in the like again –

*Gregory* I have taken your word too often, sir, and neither can nor will forbear you longer.

*Doughty* What, not your father, Master Gregory?

*Gregory* What's that to you, sir? 30

*Doughty* Pray tell me then, sir, how many years has he to serve you?

*Gregory* What, do you bring your spokesman now, your advocate? What fee goes out of my estate now for his oratory?

*Doughty* Come, I must tell you, you forget yourself,  
And in this foul unnatural strife wherein  
You trample on your father, you are fall'n  
Below humanity. You're so beneath  
The title of a son you cannot claim 40  
To be a man, and let me tell you, were you mine,  
Thou shouldst not eat but on thy knees before me!

*Seely* Oh, this is not the way!  
This is to raise impatience into fury.  
I do not seek his quiet for my ease:  
I can bear all his chidings and his threats  
And take them well, very exceeding well,  
And find they do me good on my own part –  
Indeed they do reclaim me from those errors  
That might impeach his fortunes – but I fear 50  
Th'unquiet strife within him hurts himself  
And wastes or weakens nature by the breach



- Doughty* Is that the business? Why if he had done it, had he not been sufficiently secured in having the mortgage made over to himself?
- Gregory* He does nothing but practice ways to undo himself and me. A very spendthrift, a prodigal sire, he was at the ale but t'other day and spent a fourpenny club.
- Seely* 'Tis gone and past, son.
- Gregory* Can you hold your peace, sir? And not long ago at the wine he spent his tester and two pence to the piper. That was brave was it not? 90
- Seely* Truly, we were civilly merry, but I have left it.
- Gregory* Your civility, have you not? For no longer ago than last holiday evening he gamed away eight double-ringed tokens on a rubbers at bowls with the curate and some of his idle companions.
- Doughty* Fie! Master Gregory Seely, is this seemly in a son? You'll have a rod for the child your father shortly, I fear. 'Alas, did he make it cry?' 'Give me a stroke and I'll beat him!' Bless me, they make me almost as mad as themselves. 100
- Gregory* 'Twere good you would meddle with your own matters, sir.
- Seely* Son, son.
- Gregory* Sir, sir, as I am not beholden to you for house or land – for it has stood in the name of my ancestry the Seelys above two hundred years – so will I look you leave all as you found it.



*Lawrence* How trow you that? A fine world when a man cannot be quiet at home for busy-brained neighbours.

*Doughty* [*aside*] I know not what to say to anything here; this cannot be but witchcraft.

140

*Enter JOAN and WINNY*

*Winny* I cannot endure it nor I will not endure it!

*Doughty* [*aside*] Hey day! The daughter upon the mother, too!

*Winny* One of us two – choose you which – must leave the house. We are not to live together, I see that, but I will know, if there be law in Lancashire for't, which is fit first to depart the house or the world, the mother or the daughter.

*Joan* Daughter, I say –

*Winny* Do you say the 'daughter'? For that word I say the 'mother'! Unless you can prove me the eldest, as my discretion almost warrants it, I say the mother shall out of the house or take such courses in it as shall sort with such a house and such a daughter.

150

*Joan* Daughter, I say I will take any course so thou wilt leave thy passion; indeed it hurts thee, child. I'll sing and be merry, wear as fine clothes and as delicate dressings as thou wilt have me, so thou wilt pacify thyself and be at peace with me.

*Winny* Oh, will you so? In so doing I may chance to look upon you! Is this a fit habit for a handsome young gentlewoman's mother, as I hope to be a lady? You

160

look like one o' the Scottish weird sisters. Oh, my heart has got the hiccup and all looks green about me! A merry song now, mother, and thou shalt be my white girl.

*Joan* Ha, ha, ha! She's overcome with joy at my conversion.

*Doughty* [*aside*] She is most evidently bewitched.

*Joan* (*sings*) There was a deft lad and a lass fell in love, 170  
 With a fa la la, fa la la, langtidown dilly.  
 With kissing and toying this maiden did prove,  
 With a fa la la, fa la la, langtidown dilly,  
 So wide i' th' waist and her belly so high,  
 That unto her mother the maiden did cry.  
 Oh langtidown dilly, Oh langtidown dilly,  
 Fa la la langtidown, langtidown dilly.

*Enter* PARNELL

*Parnell* Thus would you do an I were dead. But while I live you fadge not on it. Is this all the work you can find? 180

*Doughty* [*aside*] Now comes the maid to set her mistresses to work!

*Winnie* Nay, prithee, sweet Parnell, I was but chiding the old wife for her unhandsomeness, and would have been at my work presently. She tells me now she will wear fine things, and I shall dress her head as I list.

*Doughty* [*aside*] Here's a house well governed!

*Parnell* Dress me no dressings, lessen I dress you both and

learn a new lesson with a wanion right now. Ha' 190  
I been a servant here this half dozen o' years, and  
can I see you idler than myself?

*Joan & Winny* Nay, prithee, sweet Parnell, content and hark thee –

[JOAN and WINNY talk to Parnell aside]

*Doughty* [aside] I have known this, and till very lately, as  
well governed a family as the country yields, and  
now what a nest of several humours it is grown,  
and all devilish ones! Sure, all the witches in the  
country have their hands in this homespun  
medley, and there be no few, 'tis thought.

*Parnell* Yea, yea, ye shall, ye shall, another time but not 200  
now, I thank you. You shall as soon piss and  
paddle in't as slap me in the mouth with an old  
petticoat or a new pair o' shoen to be quiet. I  
cannot be quiet, nor I will not be quiet to see sicky  
doings, I.

*Lawrence* Hold thy prattle, Parnell; all's come about as ween  
'a' had it. Wot'st thou what, Parnell? Wot'st thou  
what? Oh dear, wot'st thou what?

*Parnell* What's the fond waxen wild, trow I.

*Lawrence* We ha' been in love these three years, and ever 210  
we had not enough. Now is it come about that our  
love shall be at an end for ever and a day, for we  
mu' wed, my honey, we mu' wed.

*Parnell* What the devil ails thee, limmer loon? Been thy  
brains broke loose, trow I.

*Lawrence* Such a wedding was there never i' Lancashire as  
we'll couple at on Monday next.

- Parnell* Aw, aw, say you this sickerly or done you but jam me?
- Lawrence* I jam thee not nor flam thee not; 'tis all as true as book. [*Shows a paper*] Here's both our masters have consented and concluded, and our mistresses mu' yield to't, to put all house and land and all they have into our hands. 220
- Parnell* Aw, aw!
- Lawrence* And we mu' marry and be master and dame of all!
- Parnell* Aw, aw!
- Lawrence* And they be our sojourners, because they are weary of the world, to live in friendliness and see what will come on't 230
- Parnell* Aw, aw, go on!
- Seely & Gregory* Nay, 'tis true, Parnell; here's both our hands on't, and give you joy!
- Joan & Winny* And ours too, and 'twill be fine i'fackins.
- Parnell* Aw, aw, aw, aw!
- Doughty* [*aside*] Here's a mad business towards!
- Seely* I will bespeak the guests.
- Gregory* And I the meat.
- Joan* I'll dress the dinner, though I drip my sweat.
- Lawrence* My care shall sumptuous 'pparements provide. 240
- Winny* And my best art shall trickly trim the bride.
- Parnell* Aw, aw, aw, aw!

*Gregory*

I'll get choice music for the merriment.

*Doughty*

[*aside*] And I will wait with wonder the event!

*Parnell*

Aw, aw, aw, aw!

*Exeunt*

## ACT 2, SCENE 1

*Enter four witches severally*

*All* Ho! Well met, well met.

*Meg* What new device, what dainty strain,  
More for our mirth now than our gain,  
Shall we in practice put?

*Moll* Nay, dame,  
Before we play another game  
We must a little laugh and thank  
Our feat familiars for the prank  
They played us last.

*Mawd* Or they will miss  
Us in our next plot, if for this  
They find not their reward.

*Meg* 'Tis right.

*Gillian* Therefore sing, Mawd, and call each sprite.

10

*Enter four spirits*

*Mawd* [*Sings*] Come away, and take thy duggy.

*Meg* Come, my Mamilion, like a puggy.

*Mawd* And come, my Puckling, take thy teat,  
Your travails have deserv'd your meat.

*Meg* Now, upon the churl's ground  
On which we're met, let's dance a round,  
That cockle, darnell, poppia wild

May choke his grain and fill the field.

*Gillian*

Now spirits fly about the task  
That we projected in our masque.

20

*Exit spirits*

*Meg*

Now let us laugh to think upon  
The feat which we have so lately done,  
In the distraction we have set  
In Seely's house, which shall beget  
Wonder and sorrow 'mongst our foes,  
Whilst we make laughter of their woes.

*All*

Ha, ha, ha!

*Meg*

I can but laugh now to foresee  
The fruits of their perplexity.

30

*Gillian*

Of Seely's family?

*Meg*

Ay, ay, ay!

The father to the son doth cry,  
The son rebukes the father old,  
The daughter at the mother scold,  
The wife the husband check and chide.  
But that's no wonder, through the wide  
World 'tis common!

*Gillian*

But to be short,  
The wedding must bring on the sport  
Betwixt the hare-brain'd man and maid,  
Master and dame that oversway'd.

40

*All*

Ha, ha, ha!

*Meg*

Enough, enough!  
Our sides are charm'd or else this stuff  
Would laughter-crack them. Let's away  
About the jig: we dance today

To spoil the hunters' sport.

*Gillian* Ay, that  
Be now the subject of our chat.

*Meg* Then list ye well: the hunters are  
This day by vow to kill a hare,  
Or else the sport they will foreswear 50  
And hang their dogs up.

*Mawd* Stay, but where  
Must the long-threaten'd hare be found?

*Gillian* They'll search in yonder meadow ground.

*Meg* There will I be, and like a wily wat,  
Until they put me up, I'll squat.

*Gillian* I and my Puckling will a brace  
Of greyhounds be, fit for the race,  
And linger where we may be ta'en  
Up for the course in the by-lane.  
Then will we lead their dogs a-course, 60  
And every man and every horse,  
Until they break their necks, and say –

*All* 'The devil on Dun is rid this way!  
Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Meg* All the doubt can be but this,  
That if by chance of me they miss  
And start another hare.

*Gillian* Then we'll not run,  
But find some way how to be gone.  
I shall know thee, Peg, by thy grizzled gut.

*Meg* And I you, Gillian, by your gaunt thin gut. 70  
But where will Mawd bestow herself today?

*Mawd* O' th' steeple-top I'll sit and see you play. *Exeunt*

[2.2]

*Enter* GENEROUS, ARTHUR, BANTAM,  
SHAKESTONE, *and* WHETSTONE

*Generous* At meeting and at parting, gentlemen,  
I only make use of that general word  
So frequent at all feasts, and that but once:  
You're 'welcome!'  
You are so, all of you, and I entreat you  
Take notice of that special business  
Betwixt this gentleman (my friend) and I  
About the mortgage, to which writings drawn  
Your hands are witness.

*Bantam & Shakestone* We acknowledge it.

*Whetstone* My hand is there too, for a man cannot set to his 10  
mark but it may be call'd his hand. I am a  
gentleman both ways, and it hath been held that it  
is the part of a gentleman to write a scurvy hand.

*Bantam* You write, sir, like yourself.

*Generous* Pray take no notice of his ignorance;  
You know what I foretold you.

*Arthur* 'Tis confess'd.  
But for that word by you so seldom spoke,  
By us so freely on your part perform'd,  
We hold us much engag'd.

*Generous* I pray, no compliment;  
It is a thing I do not use myself 20  
Nor do I love't in others.

*Arthur*

For my part,  
 Could I at once dissolve myself to words  
 And after turn them into matter, such  
 And of that strength as to attract the attention  
 Of all the curious and most itching ears  
 Of this our critic age, it could not make  
 A theme amounting to your noble worth.  
 You seem to me to supererogate,  
 Supplying the defects of all your kindred,  
 To ennoble your own name. I now have done, sir. 30

*Whetstone*

Hey day! This gentleman speaks like a country  
 parson that had took his text out of Ovid's  
*Metamorphoses*.

*Generous*

[To ARTHUR] Sir, you hyperbolize.  
 And I could chide you for't, but whilst you connive  
 At this my kinsman I shall wink at you;  
 'Twill prove an equal match.

*Arthur*

Your name proclaims  
 To be such as it speaks you: generous.

*Generous*

Still in that strain!

*Arthur*

Sir, sir, whilst you persevere to be good 40  
 I must continue grateful.

*Generous*

Gentlemen,  
 The greatest part of this day you see is spent  
 In reading deeds, conveyances, and bonds,  
 With sealing and subscribing – will you now  
 Take part of a bad supper?

*Arthur*

We are like travellers,  
 And where such bait they do not use to inn.  
 Our love and service to you.



she had her hearing perfect.

*Robert* And so she may have at supper too for ought I know, but I can assure you she is not now within my call.

*Generous* Sirrah, you trifle. Give me the key o' th' stable, I will go see my gelding. I' th' meantime Go seek her out, say she shall find me there.

*Robert* To tell you true, sir, I shall neither find My mistress here, nor you your gelding there. 80

*Generous* Ha? How comes that to pass?

*Robert* Whilst you were busy about your writings, she came and commanded me to saddle your beast and said she would ride abroad to take the air.

*Generous* Which of your fellows did she take along to wait on her?

*Robert* None, sir.

*Generous* None? Hath she us'd it often?

*Robert* Oftener I am sure than she goes to church, and leave out Wednesdays and Fridays. 90

*Generous* And still alone?

*Robert* If you call that alone, when nobody rides in her company.

*Generous* But what times hath she sorted for these journeys?

*Robert* Commonly when you are abroad, and sometimes when you are full of business at home.

*Generous* To ride out often and alone! What saith she When she takes horse, and at her back return?

- Robert* Only conjures me that I shall keep it from you,  
then claps me in the fist with some small piece of  
silver, and then a fish cannot be more silent than I. 100
- Generous* I know her a good woman and well bred,  
Of an unquestion'd carriage, well reputed  
Amongst her neighbours, reckon'd with the best  
And o'er me most indulgent, though in many  
Such things might breed a doubt and jealousy,  
Yet I hatch no such frenzy. Yet to prevent  
The smallest jar that might betwixt us happen,  
Give her no notice that I know thus much.  
Besides, I charge thee, when she craves him next 110  
He be denied. If she be vex'd or mov'd,  
Do not thou feare: I'll interpose myself  
Betwixt thee and her anger. As you tender  
Your duty and my service, see this done.
- Robert* Now you have expressed your mind I know what  
I have to do: first, not to tell her what I have told  
you, and next to keep her side-saddle from  
coming upon your gelding's back. But, howsoever,  
it is like to hinder me of many a round tester.
- Generous* As oft as thou deny'st her, so oft claim 120  
That tester from me; 't shall be roundly paid.
- Robert* You say well in that, sir. I dare take your word –  
you are an honest gentleman and my master – and  
now take mine as I am your true servant: before  
she shall back your gelding again in your absence,  
while I have the charge of his keeping, she shall  
ride me or I'll ride her!
- Generous* So much for that. Sirrah, my butler tells me  
My cellar is drunk dry – I mean those bottles

Of sack and claret are all empty grown 130  
 And I have guests tomorrow, my choice friends.  
 Take the grey nag i' th' stable and those bottles  
 Fill at Lancaster, there where you use to fetch it.

*Robert* [aside] Good news for me! – I shall sir.

*Generous* Oh Robin, it comes short of that pure liquor  
 We drunk last term in London at the Mitre  
 In Fleet Street – thou rememberest it? Methought  
 It was the very spirit of the grape,  
 Mere quintessence of wine!

*Robert* Yes, sir, I so remember it that most certain it is I 140  
 never shall forget it; my mouth waters ever since  
 when I but think on't. Whilst you were at supper  
 above, the drawer had me down into the cellar  
 below – I know the way in again if I see't – but at  
 that time to find the way out again I had the help  
 of more eyes than mine own. Is the taste of that  
*Ipsitate* still in your palate, sir?

*Generous* What then? But vain are wishes. Take those bottles  
 And see them fill'd where I command you, sir.

*Robert* I shall. [aside] Never could I have met with such a 150  
 fair opportunity, for just in the mid way lies my  
 sweetheart, as lovely a lass as any is in Lancashire,  
 and kisses as sweetly. I'll see her going or coming;  
 I'll have one smooch at thy lips and be with thee  
 to bring, Moll Spencer. *Exit*

*Generous* Go, hasten your return. What he hath told me  
 Touching my wife is somewhat strange. No matter.  
 Be't as it will, it shall not trouble me.  
 She hath not lain so long so near my side

That now I should be jealous. 160

*Enter a SOLDIER*

*Soldier* You seem, sir, a gentlemen of quality and no doubt but in your youth have been acquainted with affairs military. In your very looks there appears bounty and in your person humanity. Please you to vouchsafe the tender of some small courtesy to help to bear a soldier into his country.

*Generous* Though I could tax you friend, and justly too, For begging 'gainst the statute in that name, Yet I have ever been of that compassion, Where I see want, rather to pity it Than to use power. Where hast thou served? 170

*Soldier* With the Russian against the Polack, a heavy war and hath brought me to this hard fate. I was took prisoner by the Pole and, after some few weeks of durance, got both my freedom and pass. I have it about me to show; please you to vouchsafe the perusal?

*Generous* It shall not need. What countryman?

*Soldier* Yorkshire, sir. Many a sharp battle by land, and many a sharp storm at sea, many a long mile, and many a short meal, I have travelled and suffered ere I could reach thus far. I beseech you, sir, take my poor and wretched case into your worship's noble consideration. 180

*Generous* Perhaps thou lov'st this wandering life, To be an idle loitering beggar, than

To eat of thine own labour.

*Soldier*

I, sir? Loitering I defy, sir! I hate laziness as I do leprosy; it is the next way to breed the scurvy. Put me to hedge, ditch, plough, thresh, dig, delve, anything: your worship shall find that I love nothing less than loitering.

190

*Generous*

Friend, thou speakest well.

*Enter MILLER, his hands and face scratched and bloody*

*Miller*

'Your mill', quoth he! If ever you take me in your mill again, I'll give you leave to cast my flesh to the dogs and grind my bones to powder betwixt the millstones. 'Cats' do you call them? For their hugeness they might be cat o' mountains, and for their claws I think I have it here in red and white to show. I pray look here, sir. A murrain take them. I'll be sworn they have scratched where I am sure it itched not.

200

*Generous*

How camest thou in this pickle?

*Miller*

You see, sir, and what you see I have felt, and am come to give you to understand I'll not endure such another night if you would give me your mill for nothing. They say we millers are thieves, but I could as soon be hanged as steal one piece of a nap all the night long. Good landlord, provide yourself of a new tenant. The noise of such caterwauling, and such scratching and clawing, before I would endure again, I'll be tied to the sail when the wind blows sharpest and they fly swiftest till I be torn torn into as many fitters as I have toes and fingers.

210

*Soldier* I was a miller myself before I was a soldier. What one of my own trade should be so poorly spirited, frightened with cats?  
 Sir, trust me with the mill that he forsakes.  
 Here is a blade that hangs upon this belt  
 That spite of all these rats, cats, weasels, witches, 220  
 Or dogs, or devils, shall so conjure them  
 I'll quiet my possession.

*Generous* Well spoke, soldier!  
 I like thy resolution. [*To MILLER*] Fellow, you then  
 Have given the mill quite over?

*Miller* Over and over. Here I utterly renounce it, nor would I stay in it longer if you would give me your whole estate. Nay, if I say it you may take my word, landlord.

*Soldier* I pray, sir, dare you trust your mill with me?

*Generous* I dare, but I am loath, my reasons these: 230  
 For many months scarce anyone hath lain there  
 But have been strangely frightened in his sleep,  
 Or from his warm bed drawn into the floor,  
 Or claw'd and scratch'd as thou see'st this poor man,  
 So much that it stood long untenanted,  
 Till he late undertook it. Now thine eyes  
 Witness how he hath sped.

*Soldier* Give me the keys; I'll stand it all danger.

*Generous* 'Tis a match. [*To MILLER*] Deliver them.

*Miller* Marry, with all my heart, and I am glad I am so rid 240  
 of 'em. *Exeunt*

[2.3]

*Enter BOY with a switch**Boy*

Now I have gathered bullace and filled my belly pretty well, I'll go see some sport. There are gentlemen coursing in the meadow hard by, and 'tis a game I love better than going to school, ten to one.

*Enter an invisible spirit (John Adson) with a brace of greyhounds*

What have we here – a brace of greyhounds broke loose from their masters? It must needs be so, for they have both their collars and slips about their necks. Now I look better upon them, methinks I should know them, and so I do: these are Master Robinson's dogs, that dwells some two miles off. I'll take them up and lead them home to their master; it may be something in my way for he is as liberal a gentlemen as any is in our country. [*To one of the dogs*] Come, Hector, come. Now if I could but start a hare by the way, kill her and carry her home to my supper, I should think I had made a better afternoon's work of it than gathering bullace. Come, poor curs, along with me.

10

*Exeunt*

[2.4]

*Enter* ARTHUR, BANTAM, SHAKESTONE,  
and WHETSTONE

*Arthur* My dog as yours.

*Shakestone* For what?

*Arthur* A piece.

*Shakestone* 'Tis done.

*Bantam* I say the pied dog shall outstrip the brown.

*Whetstone* And I'll take the brown dog's part against the pied.

*Bantam* Yes, when he's at his lap you'll take his part.

*Arthur* Bantam, forbear him prithee.

*Bantam* He talks so like an ass; I have not patience to endure his nonsense!

*Whetstone* The brown dog for two pieces.

*Bantam* Of what?

*Whetstone* Of what you dare! Name them from the last 10  
farthings, with the double rings, to the late-coined  
pieces which they say are all counterfeit.

*Bantam* Well, sir, I take on. [*Shows him coins*] Will you  
cover these? Give them into the hands of either  
of those two gentlemen.

*Whetstone* What needs that? Do you think my word and my  
money is not all one?

*Bantam* And weigh alike – both many grains too light.

*Shakestone* Enough of that. I presume, Master Whetstone,  
you are not ignorant what belongs to the sport of 20

hunting?

*Whetstone* I think I have reason, for I have been at the death  
of more hares –

*Bantam* More than you shed the last fall of the leaf.

*Whetstone* More than any man here I am sure. I should be  
loath at these years to be ignorant of haring or  
whoring. I knew a hare, close hunted, climb a tree.

*Bantam* To find out birds' nests!

*Whetstone* Another leap into a river, nothing appearing above  
water save only the tip of her nose to take breath. 30

*Shakestone* Nay that's very likely, for no man can fish with an  
angle but his line must be made of hair.

*Whetstone* You say right! I knew another who to escape the  
dogs hath taken a house and leapt in at a window.

*Bantam* It is thought you came into the world that way.

*Whetstone* How mean you that?

*Bantam* Because you are a bastard.

*Whetstone* Bastard? O, base!

*Bantam* And thou art base all over.

*Arthur* Needs must I now condemn your indiscretion, 40  
To set your wit against his!

*Whetstone* 'Bastard'? That shall be tried. Well, gentlemen,  
concerning hare hunting, you might have heard  
more if he had had the grace to have said less. But  
for the word 'bastard', if I do not tell my uncle, ay,  
and my aunt too, either when I would speak ought  
or go off the score for anything, let me never be

trusted. They are older than I, and what know I  
 but they might be by when I was begot. But if  
 thou, Bantam, dost not hear of this with both 50  
 thine ears, if thou hast them still, and not lost  
 them by scribbling, instead of Whetstone call me  
 Grindstone, and for By-blow, Bullfinch.

Gentlemen, for two of you, your company is fair  
 and honest, but for you, Bantam, remember and  
 take notice also that I am a bastard, and so much  
 I'll testify to my aunt and uncle. *Exit*

*Arthur* What have you done? 'Twill grieve the good old  
 gentleman to hear him baffled thus.

*Bantam* I was in a cold sweat ready to faint 60  
 The time he stayed amongst us.

*Shakestone* But come; now the hare is found and started!  
 She shall have law. So to our sport! *Exeunt*

[2.5]

*Enter BOY with the greyhounds*

*Boy* A hare, a hare! Halloo, halloo! The devil take these  
 curs; will they not stir? Halloo, halloo! There,  
 there, there! What, are they grown so lither and so  
 lazy? Are Master Robinson's dogs turned tykes  
 with a wanion? The hare is yet in sight, halloo,  
 halloo! Marry, hang you for a couple of mongrels  
 (if you were worth hanging), and have you served  
 me thus? Nay, then, I'll serve you with the like  
 sauce: you shall to the next bush, there will I tie  
 you, and use you like a couple of curs as you are, 10  
 and, though not lash you, yet lash you whilst my  
 switch will hold. Nay, since you have left your

speed, I'll see if I can put spirit into you and put you in remembrance what 'halloo, halloo!' means.

*As he beats them, there appears before him [GILLIAN]  
Dickinson and [a small demon-child in place of the  
greyhounds]*

Now, bless me heaven! One of the greyhounds turned into a woman, the other into a boy! The lad I never saw before, but her I know well: it is my gammer Dickinson.

*Gillian* Sirrah, you have serv'd me well to swinge me thus! 20  
You young rogue, you have us'd me like a dog!

*Boy* When you had put yourself into a dog's skin, I pray how could I help it? But gammer, are not you a witch? [*He kneels*] If you be, I beg upon my knees you will not hurt me.

*Gillian* Stand up, my boy, for thou shalt have no harm.  
Be silent, speak of nothing thou hast seen,  
And here's a shilling for thee.

*Boy* I'll have none of your money, gammer, because you are a witch! [*aside*] And now she is out of her 30  
four-legged shape, I'll see if with my two legs I can outrun her! [*He runs away*]

*Gillian* Nay, sirrah, though you be young, and I old,  
You are not so nimble, nor I so lame,  
But I can overtake you. [*She seizes him*]

*Boy* But gammer, what do you mean to do with me now you have me?

- Gillian* To hug thee, stroke thee, and embrace thee thus,  
And teach thee twenty thousand pretty things,  
So thou tell no tales. And, boy, this night 40  
Thou must along with me to a brave feast.
- Boy* Not I, gammer, indeed, la. I dare not stay out late.  
My father is a fell man, and, if I be out long, will  
both chide and beat me.
- Gillian* 'Not', sirrah? Then perforce thou shalt along.  
This bridle helps me still at need,  
And shall provide us of a steed.  
[*To the demon-child*] Now, sirrah, take your shape and be  
Prepar'd to hurry him and me. –  
Now look and tell me what's the lad become? 50  
*[The demon-child] exit[s and BOY peers through the  
stage door after him]*
- Boy* The boy is vanished, and I can see nothing in his  
stead but a white horse, ready saddled and bridled.
- Gillian* And that's the horse we must bestride,  
On which both thou and I must ride,  
Thou, boy, before and I behind,  
The earth we tread not, but the wind.  
For we must progress through the air,  
And I will bring thee to such fare  
As thou ne'er sawst, up and away,  
For now no longer we can stay. 60
- Boy* Help! Help!  
*She catches him up, and turning round, [they] exit*

[2.6]

*Enter ROBERT and MOLL*

*Robert* Thanks, my sweet Moll, for thy courteous entertainment: thy cream, thy cheese-cakes, and every good thing. (*[He] kiss[es her]*) This, this, and this for all!

*Moll* But why in such haste, good Robin?

*Robert* I confess my stay with thee is sweet to me, but I must spur Cut the faster for't to be at home in the morning. I have yet to Lancaster to ride tonight, and this my bandolier of bottles to fill tonight, and then half a score mile to ride by curry-comb time 10  
in the morning, or the old man chides, Moll.

*Moll* He shall not chide thee; fear it not.

*Robert* Pray Bacchus I may please him with his wine, which will be the hardest thing to do, for, since he was last at London and tasted the divinity of the Mitre, scarce any liquor in Lancashire will go down with him. Sure, sure, he will never be a puritan, he holds so well with the Mitre.

*Moll* Well, Robert, I find your love by your haste from me. I'll undertake you shall be at Lancaster, and twice as far, and yet at home time enough, an be ruled by me. 20

*Robert* Thou art a witty rogue, and think'st to make me believe anything because I saw thee make thy broom sweep the house without hands t'other day!

*Moll* You shall see more than that presently, because

you shall believe me. You know the house is all a-bed here, and I dare not be missed in the morning. Besides, I must be at the wedding of Lawrence and Parnell tomorrow. 30

*Robert* Ay, your old sweetheart Lawrence! Old love will not be forgotten.

*Moll* I care not for the loss of him, but if I fit him not, hang me. But to the point: if I go with you tonight and help you to as good wine as your master desires, and you keep your time with him, you will give me a pint for my company?

*Robert* Thy belly-ful, wench!

*Moll* I'll but take up my milk-pail and leave it in the field till our coming back in the morning, and we'll away. 40

*Robert* Go fetch it quickly, then.

*Moll* No, Robert, rather than leave your company so long, it shall come to me.

*Robert* I would but see that! (*The pail goes [towards MOLL]*)

*Moll* Look yonder, what do you think on't?

*Robert* Light, it comes! And I do think there is so much of the devil in't as will turn all the milk shall come in't these seven years, and make it burn too till it stink worse than the proverb of the bishop's foot! 50

*Moll* Look you, sir! [*She grasps the pail*] Here, I have it. Will you get up and away?

*Robert* [*Looking through doorway*] My horse is gone! Nay, prithee, Moll, thou has set him away; leave thy

roguery!

*Moll* Look again.

*Robert* There stands a black long-sided jade; mine was a trussed grey!

*Moll* Yours was too short to carry double such a journey. Get up, I say, you shall have your own again i' th' morning. 60

*Robert* Nay but, nay but –

*Moll* Nay, an you stand butting now, I'll leave you to look your horse. Pail, on afore to the field and stay till I come. [*She puts down the pail and it goes out the door*]

*Robert* Come away, then. Hey for Lancaster. Stand up! *Exeunt*

## ACT 3, SCENE 1

*Enter SEELY and JOAN, his wife*

- Seely*            Come away, wife, come away, and let us be ready to break the cake over the bride's head at her entrance. We will have the honour of it, we that have played the steward and cook at home, though we lost church by't and saw not Parson Knit-Knot do his office. But we shall see all the house-rites performed and – oh what a day of jollity and tranquility is here towards!
- Joan*            You are so frolic and so crank now, upon the truce is taken amongst us because our wrangling shall not wrong the wedding. But take heed, you were best, how ye behave yourself, lest a day to come may pay for all!            10
- Seely*            I fear nothing, and I hope to die in this humour.
- Joan*            Oh, how hot am I! I'd rather than I would dress such another dinner this twelve month, I would wish 'wedding' quite out of this year's almanac.
- Seely*            I'll fetch a cup of sack, wife.            *[Exit]*
- Joan*            How brag he is of his liberty, but the holiday carries it.            20
- [Enter SEELY with a cup]*
- Seely*            *[Hands her the cup]* Here, here, sweetheart. They are long, methinks, a-coming. The bells have rung

out this half hour; hark now the wind brings the sound of them sweetly again!

*Joan* They ring backwards, methinks.

*Seely* I'fack they do! Sure the greatest fire in the parish is in our kitchen and there's no harm done yet – no 'tis some merry conceit of the stretch-ropes, the ringers. Now they have done, and now the wedding comes – hark, the fiddlers and all! Now 30  
have I lived to see a day! Come, take our stand and be ready for the bride-cake, which we will so crack and crumble upon her crown. Oh, they come, they come!

*Enter [fiddlers, leading the married couple]*  
LAWRENCE [*and*] PARNELL, [*attended by*]  
WINNY, MOLL, [*and*] *two country lasses*, [*then*]  
DOUGHTY, GREGORY, ARTHUR,  
SHAKESTONE, BANTAM, *and* WHETSTONE

*All* Joy, health, and children to the married pair!

*Lawrence & Parnell* We thank you all.

*Lawrence* So pray come in and fare.

*Parnell* As well as we, and taste of every cate.

*Lawrence* With bonny bridegroom and his lovely mate!

*Arthur* This begins bravely.

*Doughty* They agree better than the bells e'en now. 'Slid 40  
they rung tunably well till we were all out of the church, and then they clattered as the devil had been in the belfry. On, in the name of wedlock,

fiddlers, on!

*Lawrence*

On with your melody!

*The fiddlers pass through, and play the battle [as they exit]*

*Bantam*

Enter the gates with joy,

And as you enter play 'The Sack of Troy'.

*[Enter a] spirit [above]*

*Joan*

Welcome, bride Parnell.

*Seely*

Bridegroom Lawrence eke.

*[To LAWRENCE]*

In you before, for we this cake must break

Over the bride –

*[Exit LAWRENCE]*

*As they lift up the cake, the spirit snatches it and  
pours down bran*

Forgi' me! What's become o' th' cake, wife?

50

*Joan*

It slipped out of my hand and is fallen into  
crumbs, I think.

*Doughty*

*[aside]* 'Crumbs?' The devil of crumb is here – but  
bran, nothing but bran? What prodigy is this?

*Parnell*

Is my best bride's cake come to this? Oh, woe  
worth it!

*Exit PARNELL, SEELY, JOAN, and maids*

*Whetstone*

How daintily the bride's hair is powder'd with it!

*Arthur*

My hair stands on end to see it!

*Bantam*

And mine!

- Shakestone* I was never so amaz'd!
- Doughty* What can it mean?
- Gregory* Pax, I think not on't! 'Tis but some of my father and mother's roguery. This is a law-day with 'em, to do what they list. 60
- Whetstone* I never fear anything so long as my aunt has but bidden me think of her, and she'll warrant me.
- Doughty* Well, gentlemen, let's follow the rest in and fear Nothing yet. The house smells well of good cheer!

*Enter SEELY*

- Seely* Gentlemen, will it please you draw near? The guests are now all come and the house almost full, meat's taken up –
- Doughty* We were now coming. 70
- Seely* But son Gregory, nephew Arthur, and the rest of the young gentlemen, I shall take it for a favour if you will – it is an office which very good gentlemen do in this country – accompany the bridegroom in serving the meat.
- All* With all our hearts!
- Seely* Nay, neighbour Doughty, your years shall excuse you.
- Doughty* Pah! I am not so old but I can carry more meat than I can eat. If the young rascals could carry their drink as well, the country would be quieter. 80

*Knocking within, as [upon a] dresser*

Seely

Well, fare your hearts. The dresser calls in,  
gentlemen. *Exeunt [all but SEELY]*

'Tis a busy time, yet will I review the bill of fare  
for this day's dinner.

*[Taking a paper from his pocket, he] reads*

'For forty people of the best quality, four messes  
of meat, *viz*: a leg of mutton in plum broth, a dish  
of marrowbones, a capon in white broth, a sirloin  
of beef, a pig, a goose, a turkey, and two pies. For  
the second course: to every mess four chickens in 90  
a dish, a couple of rabbits, custard, flan,  
Florentines, and stewed prunes.'

All very good country fare, and for my credit –

*Enter [fiddlers] playing [followed by] LAWRENCE,  
DOUGHTY, ARTHUR, SHAKESTONE,  
BANTAM, WHETSTONE, AND GREGORY,  
[all carrying covered] dishes. [The] spirit [above casts a  
spell on] the dishes as they enter.*

The service enters – Oh, well said music!  
Play up the meat to' th' table till all be serv'd in;  
I'll see it pass in answer to my bill.

Doughty

Hold up you head, Master Bridegroom!

Lawrence

On afore, fiddlers, my doubler cools in my hands.

Seely

*[Reading his bill]* 'Imprimis: A leg of mutton in  
plum broth' – How now, Master Bridegroom, 100  
what carry you?

Lawrence

'Twere hot e'en now, but now it's cold as a stone!

[SEELY *uncovers* LAWRENCE's *dish to reveal a ram's horn*]

*Seely* A stone? 'Tis horn, man!

*Lawrence* Aw! *Exit Fiddlers*

*Seely* It was mutton, but now 'tis the horns on't.

*Lawrence* Aw, where's my bride? *Exit*

[DOUGHTY, ARTHUR, SHAKESTONE,  
BANTAM, AND WHETSTONE *uncover their dishes*]

*Doughty* 'Zooks, I brought as good a sirloin of beef from the dresser as knife could be put to, and see! – I'll stay i' this house no longer!

*Arthur* And if this were not a capon in white broth, I am one i' the coop! 110

*Shakestone* All, all's transform'd! Look you what I have!

*Bantam* And I!

*Whetstone* And I! Yet I fear nothing, thank my aunt.

*Gregory* I had a pie that is not open'd yet.  
I'll see what's in that –

[*He lifts the pie-crust and birds fly out*]

Live birds, as true as I live – look where they fly! *Exit spirit*

*Doughty* Witches, live witches! The house is full of witches!  
If we love our lives, let's out on't.

*Enter* JOAN *and* WINNY

- Joan* O husband! O guests! O son! O gentlemen! 120  
Such a chance in a kitchen was never heard of. All the meat is flown out o' the chimney top, I think, and nothing instead of it but snakes, bats, frogs, beetles, hornets, and humble-bees. All the salads are turned to Jew's-ears, mushrooms, and puckfists, and all the custards into cow-shards!
- Doughty* What shall we do? Dare we stay any longer?
- Arthur* 'Dare we'? Why not? I defy all witches,  
And all their works; their power on our meat  
Cannot reach our persons.
- Whetstone* I say so too, 130  
And so my aunt ever told me, so long  
I will fear nothing. Be not afraid, Master Doughty.
- Doughty* 'Zooks! I fear nothing living that I can  
See more than you, and that's nothing at all.  
But to think of these invisible mischiefs  
Troubles me, I confess.
- Arthur* Sir, I will not go about to over-rule your reason,  
but for my part I will not out of a house on a  
bridal day, till I see the last man borne.
- Doughty* 'Zooks! Thou art so brave a fellow that I will stick 140  
to thee, and if we come off handsomely – I am an  
old bachelor, thou knowst, and must have an  
heir – I like thy spirit! Where's the bride? Where's  
the bridegroom? Where's the music? Where be the  
lasses? Ha' you any wine i' the house? Though we  
make no dinner, let's try if we can make an  
afternoon.

- Joan* Nay, sir, if you please to stay – now that the many are frightened away – I have some good cold meats and half a dozen bottles of wine. 150
- Seely* And I will bid you welcome.
- Doughty* Say you me so, but will not your son be angry and your daughter chide you?
- Gregory* Fear not you that, sir, for look you I obey my father.
- Winny* And I my mother.
- Joan* And we are all at this instant as well and as sensible of our former errors as you can wish us to be.
- Doughty* Nay, if the witches have but robbed of your meat, and restored your reason, here has been no hurt done today. But this is strange, and as great a wonder as the rest to me. 160
- Arthur* It seems though these hags had power to make the wedding cheer a *deceptio visus*, the former store has 'scaped 'em.
- Doughty* I am glad on't, but the devil good 'em with my sirloin. [*aside*] I thought to have set that by mine own trencher – But you have cold meat, you say?
- Joan* Yes, sir! 170
- Doughty* And wine, you say?
- Joan* Yes, sir!
- Doughty* I hope the country wenches and the fiddlers are not gone?
- Winny* They are all here, and one the merriest wench that

makes all the rest so laugh and tickle.

*Seely* Gentlemen, will you in?

*All* Agreed on all parts!

*Doughty* If not a wedding, we will make a wake on't, and  
away with the witch. I fear nothing now you have 180  
your wits again. But look you hold 'em while you  
have 'em! *Exeunt*

[3.2]

*Enter* GENEROUS, and ROBERT *with a paper*

*Generous* I confess thou hast done a wonder in fetching me  
so good wine, but, my good servant Robert, go not  
about to put a miracle upon me. I will rather  
believe that Lancaster affords this wine – which I  
thought impossible till I tasted it – than that thou  
couldst in one night fetch it from London.

*Robert* I have known when you have held me for an  
honest fellow, and would have believed me.

*Generous* Th'art a knave to wish me to believe this. Forgi'  
me. I would have sworn, if thou hadst stayed but 10  
time answerable for the journey (to his that flew  
to Paris and back to London in a day), it had been  
the same wine. But it can never fall within the  
compass of a Christian's belief that thou couldst  
ride above three hundred miles in eight hours:  
you were no longer out, and upon one horse too,  
and in the night too!

*Robert* [*aside*] And carry a wench behind me too, and did  
something else too, but I must not speak of her

lest I be devil-torn. 20

*Generous* And fill thy bottles too, and come home half drunk too, for so thou art, thou wouldst never 'a' had such a fancy else!

*Robert* I am sorry I have said so much, and not let Lancaster have the credit o' the wine.

*Generous* Oh, are you so? And why have you abused me and yourself, then, all this while to glorify The Mitre in Fleet Street?

*Robert* I could say, sir, that you might have the better opinion of the wine, for there are a great many palates in the kingdom that can relish no wine unless it be of such a tavern, and drawn by such a drawer – 30

*Generous* I said, and I say again: if I were within ten mile of London, I durst swear that this was Mitre wine, and drawn by honest Jack Paine.

*Robert* Nay then, sir, I swore, and I swear again: honest Jack Paine drew it.

*Generous* Ha, ha, ha! If I could believe there were such a thing as witchcraft, I should think this slave were bewitched now with an opinion. 40

*Robert* Much good do you, sir, your wine and your mirth, and my place for your next groom; I desire not to stay to be laughed out of my opinion.

*Generous* Nay, be not angry Robin, we must not part so. And how does my honest drawer? Ha, ha, ha! And what news at London, Robin? Ha, ha, ha! But your stay was so short I think you could hear

none, and such your haste home that you could  
 make none; is't not so, Robin? Ha, ha, ha! 50  
 [*aside*] What a strange fancy has good wine begot  
 in his head?

*Robert* [*aside*] Now will I push him over and over with a  
 piece of paper. – Yes, sir, I have brought you  
 something from London.

*Generous* Come on, now, let me hear.

*Robert* Your honest drawer, sir, considering that you  
 considered him well for his good wine –

*Generous* [*aside*] What shall we hear now?

*Robert* Was very careful to keep or convey this paper to 60  
 you, which it seems you dropped in the room  
 there.

*Generous* [*aside*] Bless me! This paper belongs to me indeed,  
 'tis an acquittance, and all I have to show for the  
 payment of one hundred pound. I took great care  
 for 't, and could not imagine where or how I  
 might lose it. But why may not this be a trick?  
 This knave may find it when I lost it, and conceal  
 it till now to come over me withal. I will not  
 trouble my thoughts with it further at this time. – 70  
 Well, Robin, look to your business, and have a  
 care of my gelding. *Exit*

*Robert* Yes, sir. I think I have nettled him now, but not as  
 I was nettled last night: three hundred miles a  
 night upon a raw-boned devil (as, in my heart, it  
 was a devil), and then a wench that shared more o'  
 my back than the said devil did o' my bum. This is  
 rank riding, my masters. But why had I such an

itch to tell my master of it, and that he should believe it? I do now wish that I had not told, and that he will not believe it, for I dare not tell him the means. 'Sfoot, my wench and her friends the fiends will tear me to pieces if I discover her. A notable rogue, she's at the wedding now, for as good a maid as the best o' em – 80

*Enter MISTRESS GENEROUS with a bridle*

Oh, my mistress!

*Mrs Generous* Robin?

*Robert* Ay, mistress?

*Mrs Generous* Quickly, good Robin, the grey gelding.

*Robert* What other horse you please, mistress. 90

*Mrs Generous* And why not that?

*Robert* Truly, mistress, pray pardon me, I must be plain with you: I dare not deliver him you. My master has ta'en notice of the ill case you have brought him home in diverse times.

*Mrs Generous* Oh, is it so? And must he be made acquainted with my actions by you, and must I then be controlled by him, and now by you? You are a saucy groom!

*Robert* You may say your pleasure. (*He turns from her*) 100

*Mrs Generous* No, sir, I'll do my pleasure. (*She bridles him*)

*Robert* Aw!

*Mrs Generous* 'Horse, horse, see thou be,

And where I point thee carry me.'

*Exeunt, [he] neighing*

[3.3]

*Enter* ARTHUR, SHAKESTONE, AND  
BANTAM

- Arthur* Was there ever such a medley of mirth, madness,  
and drunkenness shuffled together?
- Shakestone* Thy uncle and aunt, old Master Seely and his  
wife, do nothing but kiss and play together like  
monkeys.
- Arthur* Yes, they do over-love one another now.
- Bantam* And young Gregory and his sister do as much  
overdo their obedience now to their parents.
- Arthur* And their parents as much over-dote upon them.  
They are all as far beyond their wits now in loving 10  
one another as they were wide of them before in  
crossing.
- Shakestone* Yet this is the better madness.
- Bantam* But the married couple that are both so daintily  
whittled, that now they are both mad to be a-bed  
before supper-time – And by and by he will, and  
she won't, straight she will and he won't; the next  
minute they both forget they are married and defy  
one another.
- Arthur* My sides e'en ache with laughter! 20
- Shakestone* But the best sport of all is, the old bachelor Master  
Doughty, that was so cautious and feared every

thing to be witchcraft, is now wound up to such a confidence that there is no such thing that he dares the devil do his worst, and will not out o' the house by all persuasion, and all for the love of the husbandman's daughter within, Moll Spencer.

*Arthur* [aside] There I am in some danger. He put me into half a belief I shall be his heir; pray love she be not a witch to charm his love from me. – Of what condition is that wench? Dost thou know her? 30

*Shakestone* A little, but Whetstone knows her better.

*Arthur* Hang him rogue! He'll belie her and speak better than she deserves, for he's in love with her too. I saw old Doughty give him a box o' the ear for kissing her, and he turned about, as he did by thee yesterday, and swore his aunt should know it.

*Bantam* Who would ha' thought that impudent rogue would have come among us after such a baffle?

*Shakestone* He told me he had complained to his aunt on us, and that she would speak with us. 40

*Arthur* We will all to her to patch up the business, for the respect I bear her husband, noble Generous.

*Bantam* Here he comes.

*Enter WHETSTONE*

*Arthur* Hark you, Master By-blow, do you know the lass within? What do you call her, Moll Spencer?

*Whetstone* Sir, what I know I'll keep to myself. A good, civil, merry, harmless rogue she is, and comes to my

aunt often, and that's all I know by her.

*Arthur* You do well to keep it to yourself, sir! 50

*Whetstone* And you may do well to question her, if you dare, for the testy old coxcomb that will not let her go out of his hand.

*Shakestone* Take heed, he's at your heels.

*Enter DOUGHTY, MOLL, and two country lasses*

*Doughty* Come away, wenches – where are you, gentlemen? Play, fiddlers, [*To MOLL*] let's have a dance, ha, my little rogue! (*Kisses MOLL*) 'Zooks, what ails thy nose?

*Moll* My nose? Nothing sir. (*Turns about*) Yet me thought a fly touched it. Did you see anything? 60

*Doughty* No, no, yet I would almost ha' sworn – I would not have sprite or goblin blast thy face, for all their kingdom. But hang't there is no such thing. Fiddlers, will you play?

*[Fiddlers above begin] 'Sellenger's Round'*

Gentlemen, will you dance?

*All* With all our hearts.

*Arthur* But stay, where's this household, This family of love? Let's have them into the revels.

*Doughty* [*To the fiddlers*] Hold a little, then.

*Shakestone* Here they come all

In a true-love knot.

*Enter SEELY, JOAN, GREGORY, [and] WINNY*

- Gregory* O father, twenty times a day is too little to ask you blessing.
- Seely* Go to, you are a rascal! (*To JOAN*) And you, housewife, teach your daughter better manners. – I'll ship you all for New England else.
- Bantam* The knot's untied, and this is another change.
- Joan* Yes, I will teach her manners, or put her out to spin two-penny tow, so you, dear husband, will but take me into favour. (*To WINNY*) I'll talk with you, dame, when the strangers are gone. 80
- Gregory* Dear father.
- Winny* Dear mother.
- Gregory & Winny* Dear father and mother, pardon us but This time.
- Seely & Joan* Never, and therefore hold your peace!
- Doughty* Nay, that's unreasonable.
- Gregory & Winny* Oh! (*[They] weep*)
- Seely* But for your sake I'll forbear them, and bear with anything this day.
- Arthur* [*To DOUGHTY*] Do you note this? Now they are all worse than ever they were, in a contrary vein. What think you of witchcraft now? 90
- Doughty* They are all natural fools, man, I find it now. Art thou mad, to dream of witchcraft?
- Arthur* [*aside*] He's as much changed and bewitched as

they, I fear.

*Doughty* Hey day! Here comes the pair of boiled lovers in sorrel sops.

*Enter LAWRENCE and PARNELL*

*Lawrence* Nay, dear honey, nay honey, but once, once.

*Parnell* No, no, I ha' sworn, I ha' sworn: not a bit afore bed. And look you, it's but now dancing time.

*Doughty* Come away, bridegroom, we'll stay your stomach with a dance. [*To the fiddlers above*] Now, masters, play a-good. [*To MOLL*] Come, my lass, we'll shown them how 'tis. 100

[*Fiddlers above begin*] 'Sellenger's Round' [*again*]. As [*the guests*] begin to dance, they play another tune, then [*each plays a different tune*]

*Arthur, Bantam,*  
*& Shakestone* Whither now, ho!

*Doughty* Hey day! Why, you rogues.

*Whetstone* What, does the devil ride o' your fiddlesticks?

*Doughty* You drunken rogues, hold, hold I say, and begin again soberly 'The Beginning of the World'.

[*The fiddlers start again, each playing a different tune*]

*Arthur, Bantam,*  
*& Shakestone* Ha, ha, ha, how's this?

*Bantam* Every one a several tune! 110

*Doughty* This is something towards it. I bade them play 'The Beginning of the World', and they play I

know not what.

*Arthur* No, 'tis 'The Running o' the Country' several ways.  
But what do you think on't? (*Music cease[s]*)

*Doughty* 'Think'? I think they are drunk. Prithee do not  
thou think of witchcraft. For my part, I shall as  
soon think this maid one, as that there's any in  
Lancashire.

*Moll* Ha, ha, ha! 120

*Doughty* Why dost thou laugh?

*Moll* To think this bridegroom should once ha' been  
mine, but he shall rue it. [*She produces a point*]  
I'll hold him this point on't, and that's all I care for  
him.

*Doughty* A witty rogue.

*Whetstone* I tell you sir, they say she made a pail follow her  
t'other day up two pair of stairs.

*Doughty* You lying rascal!

*Arthur* O sir, forget your anger. 130

*Moll* Look you, Master Bridegroom, what my care  
provides for you.

*Lawrence* What, a point?

*Moll* Yes, put it in your pocket. It may stand you in  
stead anon, when all your points are ta'en away, to  
truss up your trinkets, I mean your slops, withal.

*Lawrence* Moll, for old acquaintance I will ma' thy point a  
point of preferment. [*He attaches it to his cod-piece*]  
It sha' be the foreman of a whole jury o' points,

and right here will I wear it. 140

*Parnell* Wi' ya? Wi' ya? Old love wi' no be forgotten, but  
I's never be jealous the more for that!

*Arthur* Play, fiddlers, anything!

*Doughty* Ay, and let's see your faces, that you play fairly  
with us.

*Musicians show themselves above*

*Fiddler* We do, sir, as loud as we can possibly.

*Shakestone* Play out, that we may hear you.

*Fiddler* So we do sir, as loud as we can possibly.

*Doughty* Do you hear anything?

*All* Nothing, not we, sir. 150

*Doughty* 'Tis so, the rogues are bribed to cross me, and  
their fiddles shall suffer: I will break 'em as small  
as the bride-cake was today.

*[The fiddlers begin to smash their instruments]*

*Arthur* Look you, sir, they'll save you a labour: they are  
doing it themselves.

*Whetstone* Oh, brave fiddlers! There was never better  
scuffling for the Tutbury bull.

*Moll* [*aside*] This is Mother Johnson and Goody  
Dickinson's roguery. I find it but I cannot help it,  
yet I will have music. – Sir, there's a piper 160  
without, would be glad to earn money.

*Whetstone* She has spoke to purpose, and whether this were  
witchcraft or not, I have heard my aunt say twenty  
times that no witchcraft can take hold of a

Lancashire bagpipe, for itself is able to charm the devil. I'll fetch him.

[Exit]

*Doughty*

Well said; a good boy now. Come bride and bridegroom, leave your kissing and fooling, and prepare to come into the dance. We'll have a hornpipe, and then a posset and to bed when you please.

170

[Enter WHETSTONE with a piper]

Welcome, piper. Blow till thy bag crack again, a lusty hornpipe, and all into the dance – nay, young and old.

[Piper plays and all join in the] dance [in which] LAWRENCE and PARNELL reel. At the end, MOLL and the piper [vanish]

*All*

Bravely performed.

*Doughty*

Stay, where's my lass?

*Arthur, Bantam,  
& Shakestone*

Vanished! She and the piper both vanished, nobody knows how.

*Doughty*

Now do I plainly perceive again: here has been nothing but witchery all this day. Therefore, in to your posset and agree among yourselves as you can. I'll out o' the house, and gentlemen, if you love me or yourselves, follow me.

180

*Arthur, Bantam,*

*Shakestone, & Whetstone* Ay, ay, away, away!

*Exeunt*

*Seely*

Now, good son, wife, and daughter, let me entreat

you be not angry.

*Winnie* Oh, you are a trim mother, are you not?

*Joan* Indeed, child; I'll do so no more.

*Gregory* [To LAWRENCE] Now, sir, I'll talk with you,  
your champions are all gone. 190

*Lawrence* Well, sir, and what wi' you do then?

*Parnell* Why, why, what's here to do? Come away, and  
quickly, and see us into our bride-chamber, and  
delicately lodged together, or we'll whip you out  
o' doors i'th' morn to sojourn in the common!  
Come away.

*All* We follow ye. *Exeunt*

## ACT 4, SCENE 1

*Enter* MISTRESS GENEROUS [*carrying a bridle*]  
and ROBERT

- Mrs Generous* Know you this jingling bridle, if you see't again? I wanted but a pair of jingling spurs to make you mend your pace and put you into a sweat.
- Robert* Yes, I have reason to know it after my hard journey. They say there be light women, but for your own part, though you be merry, yet I may be sorry for your heaviness.
- Mrs Generous* I see thou art not quite tired by shaking of thyself. 'Tis a sign that as thou hast brought me hither, so thou art able to bear me back, and so you are like good Robert. You will not let me have your master's gelding, you will not? Well, sir, as you like this journey, so deny him to me hereafter. 10
- Robert* You say well; mistress, you have jaded me. A pox take you for a jade, now I bethink myself how damnably did I ride last night, and how devilishly have I been rid now.
- Mrs Generous* Do you grumble, you groom? Now the bridle's off, I turn thee to grazing. Gramercy, my good horse. I have no better provender for thee at this time; thou hadst best like Aesop's ass to feed upon thistles, of which this place will afford thee plenty. I am bid to a better banquet, which done, I'll take thee up from grass, spur Cut, and make a short- 20

cut home. Farewell.

*Robert* A pox upon your tail!

*Enter all the witches and MOLL, at several doors*

*Witches* The lady of the feast is come. Welcome, welcome.

*Mrs Generous* Is all the cheer that was prepar'd to grace  
The wedding feast yet come?

*Gillian* Part of it's here.  
The other we must pull for.

[*Observing Robert*] But what's he? 30

*Mrs Generous* My horse, my horse, ha, ha, ha!

*Witches* Ha, ha, ha! *Exeunt*

*Robert* 'My horse, my horse'! I would I were now some country major and in authority, to see if I would not venture to rouse your satanical sisterhood. [*He walks around the stage*] 'Horse, horse, see thou be, and where I point thee, carry me': is that the trick on't? The devil himself shall be her carrier next if I can shun her, and yet my master will not believe there's any witches. There's no running away, for I neither know how nor whither. Besides, to my thinking there's a deep ditch and a high quick-set about me. 40

[*Enter MISTRESS GENEROUS, MOLL, GILLIAN, MEG, MAWD, and BOY. A table holding the remains of a feast is brought in, and ropes hang from above*]

How shall I pass the time? [*He peers around a stage-post*] What place is this? It looks like an old barn. I'll peep in at some cranny or other, and try if I can see what they are doing. Such a bevy of beldams did I never behold, and cramming like so many cormorants. Marry, choke you with a mischief!

50

*Gillian* Whoop! Whurr! Here's a stir,  
Never a cat, never a cur,  
But that we must have this demur.

*Moll* A second course!

*Mrs Generous* Pull, and pull hard,  
For all that hath lately been prepar'd  
*[The witches pull on the ropes]*  
For the great wedding feast.

*Moll* As chief,  
Of Doughty's sirloin of roast beef.

*All the witches* Ha, ha, ha!  
*[A joint of meat from above lands in a dish on the table]*

*Meg* 'Tis come, 'tis come!  
*Mawd* Where hath it all this while been?

60

*Meg* Some  
Delay hath kept it, now 'tis here,  
For bottles next of wine and beer,  
The merchants' cellars they shall pay for't.

*[Bottles from above land on the table]*

*Mrs Generous* Well,  
What sod or roast meat more, pray tell?

- Gillian* Pull for the poultry, fowl, and fish,  
For empty shall not be a dish.
- [More meats come from above]*
- Robert* *[aside]* A pox take them; must only they feed upon  
hot meat, and I upon nothing but cold salads?
- Mrs Generous* This meat is tedious; now some fairy 70  
Fetch what belongs unto the dairy.
- [Plates and vessels come from above]*
- Moll* That's butter, milk, whey, curds, and cheese;  
We nothing by the bargain lease.
- All the witches* Ha, ha, ha!
- Gillian* Boy, there's meat for you.
- Boy* Thank you.
- Gillian* And drink, too.
- Meg* What beast was by thee hither rid?
- Mawd* A badger nab.
- Meg* And I bestrid  
A porcupine that never prick'd. 80
- Moll* The dull sides of a bear I kick'd.  
I know how you rid, Lady Nan.
- Mrs Generous* Ha, ha, ha! Upon the knave my man.
- Robert* *[aside]* A murrain take you; I am sure my hooves  
paid for't.
- Boy* *[Putting down the food and drink given him]* Meat,  
lie there, for thou hast no taste, and drink there,  
for thou hast no relish, for in neither of them is

there either salt or savour.

*All the witches* Pull for the posset, pull! 90

*Robert* The bride's posset, on my life. Nay, if they come to their spoon meat once, I hope they'll break up their feast presently.

*Mrs Generous* So those that are our waiters near,  
Take hence this wedding cheer.  
We will be lively all, and make this barn our hall.

[*Enter several spirits who clear away the banquet*]

*Gillian* You, our familiars, come.  
In speech let all be dumb,  
And to close up our feast,  
To welcome every guest, 100  
A merry round let's dance.

*Meg* Some music, then, i'th' air,  
Whilst thus by pair and pair  
We nimbly foot it. Strike! (*Music [plays from above]*)

*Moll* We are obey'd.

*A spirit* And we hell's ministers shall lend our aid.

[*Each witch dances with her familiar spirit, singing a song*]

*Mawd* Come Mawsy, come Puckling,

*Moll* And come, my sweet suckling,

*Meg* My pretty Mamilion, my joy.

*All the witches* Fall each to his duggy, 110  
While kindly we huggy

As tender as nurse over boy.  
 Then suck our bloods freely  
 And with it be jolly,  
 While merrily we sing, hey trolly lolly.

*Mawd*

We'll dandle and clip ye,

*Moll*

We'll stroke ye, and leap ye,

*Meg*

And all that we have is your due.

*All the witches*

The feats you do for us,  
 And those which you store us  
 Withal, ties us only to you.  
 Then suck our bloods freely  
 And with it be jolly,  
 While merrily we sing, hey trolly lolly.

120

[*While they sing, the BOY speaks*]

*Boy*

[*aside*] Now, whilst they are in their jollity and do not mind me, I'll steal away and shift for myself, though I lose my life for't.

*Exit*

*Meg*

Enough, enough. Now part  
 To see the bride's vex'd heart,  
 The bridegroom's too and all,  
 That vomit up their gall  
 For lack o'th' wedding cheer.

130

*Gillian*

But stay, where's the boy? Look out, if he escape us we are all betrayed.

[*The witches chase after the BOY, as far as the door*]

*Meg*

No following further; yonder horsemen come. In vain is our pursuit. Let's break up court.



[4.2]

*Enter* GENEROUS, *making himself ready*  
[*for a journey*]

*Generous*

I see what man is loath to entertain  
 Offers itself to him most frequently,  
 And that which we most covet to embrace  
 Doth seldom court us and proves most averse.  
 For I, that never could conceive a thought  
 Of this my woman worthy a rebuke  
 (As one that in her youth bore her so fairly  
 That she was taken for a seeming saint),  
 To render me such just occasion  
 That I should now distrust her in her age – 10  
 ‘Distrust’? I cannot: that would bring me in  
 The poor aspersion of fond jealousy,  
 Which even from our first meeting I abhorr’d.  
 The genteel fashion sometimes we observe  
 To sunder beds, but most in these hot months,  
 June, July, August; so we did last night.  
 Now I, as ever tender of her health  
 And therefore rising early as I use,  
 Ent’ring her chamber to bestow on her  
 A custom’d visit, find the pillow swelled, 20  
 Unbruis’d with any weight, the sheets unruffled,  
 The curtains neither drawn nor bed laid down,  
 Which shows she slept not in my house tonight.  
 Should there be any contract betwixt her  
 And this my groom to abuse my honest trust,  
 I should not take it well. But for all this,  
 Yet cannot I be jealous. [*He calls*] Robin!

*Enter* ROBERT

- Generous* Is my horse safe, lusty, and in good plight?  
What, feeds he well?
- Robert* Yes, sir, he's broad buttock'd  
And full flank'd; he doth not bate an ace of his flesh. 30
- Generous* When was he rid last?
- Robert* Not, sir, since you back'd him.
- Generous* Sirrah, take heed I find you not a knave!  
Have you not lent him to your mistress late?  
So late as this last night?
- Robert* Who, I, sir?  
May I die, sir, if you find me in a lie, sir!
- Generous* Then I shall find him where I left him last?
- Robert* No doubt, sir.
- Generous* Give me the key o'th' stable.
- Robert* [*He hands over the key*] There, sir.
- Generous* Sirrah, your mistress was abroad all night,  
Nor is she yet come home. If there I find him not, 40  
I shall find thee what to this present hour  
I never did suspect, and, I must tell thee,  
Will not be to thy profit. *Exit*
- Robert* Well, sir, find what you can, him you shall find.  
And what you find else, it may be for that, instead  
of 'gramercy horse' you may say 'gramercy  
Robin'. You will believe there are no witches! Had  
I not been late bridled I could have said more, but  
I hope she is tied to the rack that will confess  
something, and though not so much as I know, 50

yet no more than I dare justify –

*Enter* GENEROUS

Have you found your gelding, sir?

*Generous* Yes, I have.

*Robert* I hope not spurred, nor put into a sweat. You may see by his plump belly and sleek legs, he hath not been sore travailed.

*Generous* You're a saucy groom to receive horses  
Into my stable and not ask me leave.  
Is't for my profit to buy hay and oats  
For every stranger's jades?

*Robert* I hope, sir, you find none feeding there but your own. If there be any you suspect, they have nothing to champ on but the bridle. 60

*Generous* Sirrah, whose jade is that tied to the rack?

*Robert* The mare you mean, sir?

*Generous* Yes, that old mare.

*Robert* Old, do you call her? You shall find the mark  
Still in her mouth when the bridle is out of it!  
I can assure you 'tis your own beast.

*Generous* A beast thou art to tell me so. Hath the wine  
Not yet left working, not the Mitre wine,  
That made thee to believe witchcraft? Prithee, 70  
Persuade me to be a drunken sot  
Like to thyself, and not to know mine own.

*Robert* I'll not persuade you to anything. You will believe nothing but what you see. I say the beast is your

own, and you have most right to keep her. She hath cost you more the currying than all the combs in your stable are worth. You have paid for her provender this twenty years and upwards, and furnished her with all the caparisons that she hath worn, of my knowledge. And because she hath been ridden hard the last night, do you now renounce her? 80

*Generous* Sirrah, I fear some stolen jade of your own That you would have me keep.

*Robert* I am sure I found her no jade the last time I rid her. She carried me the best part of a hundred miles in less than a quarter of an hour.

*Generous* The devil she did!

*Robert* Yes, so I say, either the devil or she did. An't please you walk in and take off her bridle, and then tell me who hath more right to her, you or I. 90

*Generous* Well, Robert, for this once I'll play the groom And do your office for you. *Exit*

*Robert* I pray do, sir, but take heed lest when the bridle is out of her mouth, she put it not into yours. If she do, you are a gone man if she but say once 'Horse, horse, see thou be'. Be you rid, if you please, for me.

*Enter GENEROUS and MISTRESS  
 GENEROUS, he with a bridle*

*Generous* My blood is turn'd to ice, and all my vitals Have ceas'd their working! Dull stupidity 100

Surpriseth me at once and hath arrested  
 That vigorous agitation which till now  
 Express'd a life within me. I, methinks,  
 Am a mere marble statue and no man.  
 Unweave my age, O Time, to my first thread;  
 Let me lose fifty years in ignorance spent,  
 That being made an infant once again  
 I may begin to know what, or where, am I  
 To be thus lost in wonder.

*Mrs Generous* Sir – 110

*Generous* Amazement still pursues me: how am I chang'd,  
 Or brought ere I can understand myself  
 Into this new world?

*Robert* You will believe no witches?

*Generous* This makes me believe all, ay anything,  
 And that myself am nothing. Prithee, Robin,  
 Lay me to myself open: what art thou,  
 Or this new transform'd creature?

*Robert* I am Robin, and this your wife, my mistress.

*Generous* Tell me the Earth 120  
 Shall leave its seat and mount to kiss the moon,  
 Or that the moon, enamour'd of the Earth,  
 Shall leave her sphere to stoop to us thus low.  
 What? What's this in my hand, that at an instant  
 Can from a four-legged creature make a thing  
 So like a wife?

*Robert* A bridle, a jingling bridle, sir.

*Generous* A bridle? Hence enchantment!

[*He*] casts it away. ROBERT takes it up

A viper were more safe within my hand  
 Than this charm'd engine. 130

*Robert* Take heed, sir, what you do. If you cast it hence  
 and she catch it up, we that are here now may be  
 rid as far as the Indies within these few hours.  
 [*To MISTRESS GENEROUS*] Mistress, down  
 on your mare's bones, or your marrowbones,  
 whether you please, and confess yourself to be  
 what you are: and that's, in plain English, a witch,  
 a grand, notorious, witch!

*Generous* A witch? My wife a witch?

*Robert* So it appears by the story. 140

*Generous* The more I strive to unwind  
 Myself from this meander, I the more  
 Therein am intricatèd. Prithee, woman,  
 Art thou a witch?

*Mrs Generous* It cannot be denied,  
 I am such a curs'd creature.

*Generous* Keep aloof,  
 And do not come too near me! Oh my trust,  
 Have I, since first I understood myself,  
 Been of my soul so chary (still to study  
 What best was for its health, to renounce all  
 The works of that black fiend with my best force) 150  
 And hath that serpent twin'd me so about  
 That I must lie so often and so long  
 With a devil in my bosom?

*Mrs Generous* Pardon, sir –

*Generous* 'Pardon'? Can such a thing as that be hop'd?  
 Lift up thine eyes, lost woman, to yon hills;

It must be thence expected. Look not down  
 Unto that horrid dwelling which thou hast sought  
 At such dear rate to purchase. Prithee, tell me,  
 For now I can believe, art thou a witch? 160

*Mrs Generous* I am.

*Generous* With that word I am thunderstuck  
 And know not what to answer. Yet resolve me,  
 Hast thou made any contract with that fiend,  
 The enemy of mankind?

*Mrs Generous* Oh, I have.

*Generous* What, and how far?

*Mrs Generous* I have promis'd him my soul.

*Generous* Ten thousand times better thy body had  
 Been promis'd to the stake, ay and mine too,  
 To have suffer'd with thee in a hedge of flames,  
 Than such a compact ever had been made. Oh –

*Robert* What cheer, sir? Show yourself a man, though 170  
 she appeared so late a beast. Mistress, confess all:  
 better here than in a worse place. Out with it!

*Generous* Resolve me, how far doth that contract stretch?

*Mrs Generous* What interest in this soul myself could claim,  
 I freely gave him, but his part that made it,  
 I still reserve, not being mine to give.

*Generous* Oh, cunning devil! Foolish woman, know  
 Where he can claim but the least little part  
 He will usurp the whole. Thou'rt a lost woman.

*Mrs Generous* I hope not so.

*Generous* Why, hast thou any hope? 180

*Mrs Generous* Yes, sir, I have.

*Generous* Make it appear to me.

*Mrs Generous* I hope I never bargain'd for that fire  
Further than penitent tears have power to quench.

*Generous* I would see some of them!

*Mrs Generous* You behold them now,  
If you look on me with charitable eyes,  
Tinctur'd in blood, blood issuing from the heart.  
Sir, I am sorry. When I look towards heaven  
I beg a gracious pardon; when on you,  
Methinks your native goodness should not be  
Less pitiful than they. 'Gainst both I have err'd; 190  
From both I beg atonement.

*Generous* May I presume't?

*Mrs Generous* I kneel to both your mercies. [*She kneels, crying*]

*Generous* Know'st thou what a witch is?

*Mrs Generous* Alas, none better,  
Or after mature recollection can be  
More sad to think on't.

*Generous* Tell me, are those tears  
As full of true-hearted penitence  
As mine of sorrow, to behold what state,  
What desperate state, thou'rt fall'n in?

*Mrs Generous* Sir, they are.

*Generous* Rise, and as I do, so heaven pardon me.  
We all offend, but from such falling off 200  
Defend us. [*She rises*] Well, I do remember wife,  
When I first took thee 'twas for good and bad.

Oh, change thy bad to good that I may keep thee,  
 As then we passed our faiths, till death us sever.  
 I will not aggravate thy grief too much  
 By needless iteration. Robin, hereafter  
 Forget thou hast a tongue: if the least syllable  
 Of what hath pass'd be rumour'd, you lose me,  
 But if I find you faithful, you gain me ever.

*Robert* A match, sir: you shall find me as mute as 210  
 If I had the bridle still in my mouth.

*Generous* Oh, woman, thou hadst need to weep thyself  
 Into a fountain, such a penitent spring  
 As may have power to quench invisible flames  
 In which my eyes shall aid. Too little, all;  
 If not too little, all's forgiven, forgot.  
 Only thus much remember: thou hadst extermin'd  
 Thyself out of the bless'd society  
 Of saints and angels, but on thy repentance  
 I take thee to my bosom, once again 220  
 My wife, sister, and daughter.

[*To ROBERT*] Saddle my gelding;  
 Some business that may hold me for two days  
 Calls me aside.

[*Exeunt GENEROUS and MISTRESS GENEROUS*]

*Robert* I shall, sir! Well, now my mistress hath promised  
 to give over her witchery, I hope, though I still  
 continue her man, yet she will make me no more  
 her journey-man. To prevent which, the first  
 thing I do shall be to burn the bridle, and then  
 away with the witch.

*Exit*

[4.3]

*Enter ARTHUR and DOUGHTY*

*Arthur* Sir, you have done a right noble courtesy, which deserves a memory as long as the name of friendship can bear mention.

*Doughty* What I have done, I ha' done. If it be well, 'tis well. I do not like the bouncing of good offices. If the little care I have taken shall do these poor people good, I have my end in't, and so my reward.

*Enter BANTAM*

*Bantam* Now, gentlemen, you seem very serious.

*Arthur* 'Tis true we are so, but you are welcome to the knowledge of our affairs. 10

*Bantam* How does thine uncle and aunt, Gregory and his sister, the families of Seelys, agree yet? Can you tell?

*Arthur* That is the business: the Seely household is divided now.

*Bantam* How so, I pray?

*Arthur* You know, and cannot but with pity know,  
 Their miserable condition: how  
 The good old couple were abus'd, and how 20  
 The young abus'd themselves. If we may say  
 That any of 'em are their selves at all,  
 Which sure we cannot, nor approve them fit  
 To be their own disposers, that would give

The governance of such a house and living  
 Into their vassals' hands, to thrust them out on't  
 Without or law or order. This consider'd,  
 This gentleman and myself have taken home,  
 By fair entreaty, the old folks to his house,  
 The young to mine, until some wholesome order 30  
 By the judicious of the commonwealth  
 Shall for their persons and estate be taken.

*Bantam* But what becomes of Lawrence and his Parnell,  
 The lusty couple? What do they now?

*Doughty* Alas, poor folks, they are as far to seek of how they  
 do, or what they do, or what they should do, as  
 any of the rest. They are all grown idiots, and till  
 some of these damnable jades with their devilish  
 devices be found out to discharm them, no  
 remedy can be found. I mean to lay the country 40  
 for their hagships, and, if I can anticipate the  
 purpose of their grand Master Devil, to confound  
 'em before their lease be out. Be sure I'll do't.

*(Cry within)* 'A skimmington, a skimmington, a skimmington!'

*Doughty* What's the matter now! Is hell broke loose?

*Enter* SHAKESTONE

*Arthur* Tom Shakestone! How now, canst tell the news?

*Shakestone* The news? Ye hear it up i'th'air, do you not?

*(Cry within)* 'A skimmington, a skimmington, a skimmington!'

*Shakestone* Hark ye, do you not hear it? There's a  
 skimmington towards, gentlemen. 50



make his moan to you about it, and she, too. Since  
you have taken their masters and mistresses to  
your care, you must do them right too. 80

*Doughty* Marry, but I'll not undertake her at these years, if  
lusty Lawrence cannot do't!

*Bantam* But has she beaten him?

*Shakestone* Grievously broke his head in I know not how  
many places, of which the hoydens have taken  
notice and will have a skimmington on horse-  
back presently. Look ye, here comes both plaintiff  
and defendant.

*Enter* LAWRENCE AND PARNELL

*Doughty* How now, Lawrence. What, hast thy wedlock 90  
brought thee already to thy night-cap?

*Lawrence* Yea, God wot, sir. I were wedded but all too soon.

*Parnell* Ha' you reason to complain or I, trow you, Gaffer  
Do-Nought? Woe worth the day that ever I  
wedded a Do-Nought!

*Arthur, Bantam,  
& Shakestone* Nay, hold, Parnell, hold!

*Doughty* We have heard enough of your valour already. We  
know you have beaten him; let that suffice.

*Parnell* Were ever poor maiden betrayed as I were unto a  
swag-bellied churl, that cannot, aw, aw, that  
cannot – 100

*Lawrence* What says she?

*Doughty* I know not. She caterwauls, I think. Parnell, be

patient, good Parnell, and a little modest too; 'tis not amiss. We know not the relish of every ear that hears us; let's talk within ourselves. What's the defect? What's the impediment? Lawrence has had a lusty name among the bachelors.

*Parnell* What he were when he were a bachelor, I know better than the best maid i'th' town. I would I had not. 110

*Arthur, Bantam,  
& Shakestone* Peace, Parnell!

*Parnell* 'Twere that that cozened me. He has not now as he had then!

*Arthur, Bantam,  
& Shakestone* Peace, good Parnell!

*Parnell* For then he could, but now he cannot, he cannot.

*Arthur, Bantam,  
& Shakestone* Fie, Parnell, fie!

*Parnell* I say again and again, he cannot, he cannot.

*Arthur, Bantam,  
& Shakestone* Alas, poor Parnell!

*Parnell* I am not a bit the better for him sin' we were wed. (*[She] cries*) 120

*Doughty* Here's good stuff for a jury of women to pass upon.

*Arthur* But Parnell, why have you beaten him so grievously? What would you have him do in this case?

*Doughty* [*aside*] He's out of a doing case, it seems!

- Parnell* Marry, sir, and beat him will I into his grave, or back to the priest, and be unwedded again, for I wi' not be bound to lie with him, and live with him the life of an honest woman, for all the life's good in Lancashire. 130
- Doughty* 'An honest woman', that's a good mind, Parnell. What say you to this, Lawrence?
- Lawrence* Keep her off o' me, and I sha' tell you. An she be by I am nobody. But keep her off and search me, let me be searched as never witch was searched, and find anything more or less upo' me than a sufficient man should have, and let me be hanged by't. 140
- Arthur* Do you hear this, Parnell?
- Parnell* Ah, liar, liar, de'il take the liar. Truss ye and hang ye!
- Doughty* Alas, it is too plain: the poor fellow is bewitched. Here's a plain *maleficium versus hanc* now.
- Arthur* And so is she bewitched too into this immodesty.
- Bantam* She would never talk so else.
- Lawrence* I pray you, gi' me the lere o' that Latin, sir.
- Doughty* The meaning is, you must get half a dozen bastards within this twelvemonth, and that will mend your next marriage. 150
- Lawrence* An I thought it would ma' Parnell love me, I'd be sure on't and go about it now right.
- Shakestone* You're soon provided, it seems, for such a journey.
- Doughty* Best tarry till thy head be whole, Lawrence.

- Parnell* Nay, nay, nay, I's quite casten away an't I be unwedded again, and then I undertake to find three better husbands in a bean-cod.
- Shakestone* Hark, gentlemen, the show is coming.
- Arthur* What, shall we stay and see't? 160
- Bantam* Oh, by all means, gentlemen.
- Doughty* 'Tis best to have these away first.
- Parnell* Nay, marry, sha' you not sir! I hear you well enough, and I con the meaning o' the show well enough. An I stay not the show and see not the show and ma' one i' the show, let me be hanged up for a show. I'll ware them to mell or ma' with a woman that mells or ma's with a testril, a longie, a do-little losel that cannot, and if I skim not their skimmington's coxcomb for't, ma' that warplin boggle me a week longer, and that's a curse eno' for any wife, I trow. 170
- Doughty* Agreed. Perhaps 'twill mend the sport.

*Enter [a] drum[mer] beating before a skimmington and his wife on a horse [followed by] diverse country rustics. As they pass, PARNELL pulls [the] skimmington off the horse and LAWRENCE [likewise the] skimmington's wife, [and] they beat them. [The] drum[mer] beats [an] alarm [and the] horse comes away. The hoydens at first oppose the gentlemen, who draw [their swords, at which] the clowns vail bonnet. [They all] make a ring [while] PARNELL and [the] skim[mington] fight.*

- Doughty* Beat, drum, alarum! Enough, enough, here my

masters! [PARNELL *drops the skimmington*]  
 [To the RABBLE of hoydens] Now patch up your  
 show if you can, and catch your horse again. And  
 when you have done, drink that. [*He gives them  
 money*]

- Rabble* Thank your worship. *Exeunt [with a] shout*
- Parnell* Let them, as they like this, gang a procession with 180  
 their idol skimmington again.
- Arthur* Parnell, thou didst bravely.
- Parnell* I am sure I ha' drawn blood o' their idol.
- Lawrence* And I think I tickled his wife.
- Parnell* Yea, to be sure, you be one of the old ticklers!  
 But with what, can you tell?
- Lawrence* Yea, with her own ladle.
- Parnell* Yea, marry, a ladle is something!
- Doughty* Come, you have both done well. Go into my  
 house, see your old master and mistress, while I 190  
 travel a course to make ye all well again. I will now  
 a-witch-hunting.
- Parnell* No course for us but to be unwedded again.
- Arthur, Bantam,  
 & Shakestone* We are for Whetstone and his aunt, you know.
- Doughty* Farewell, farewell.

*Exeunt [DOUGHTY, PARNELL, and  
 LAWRENCE through one door, and ARTHUR,  
 BANTAM, and SHAKESTONE through the other]*

[4.4]

*Enter* MISTRESS GENEROUS *and* MOLL

*Mrs Generous* Welcome, welcome, my girl. What, hath thy puggy  
Yet suck'd upon thy pretty duggy?

*Moll* All's well at home and abroad too.  
What e'er I bid my pug, he'll do.  
You sent for me?

*Mrs Generous* I did.

*Moll* And why?

*Mrs Generous* Wench, I'll tell thee, thou and I  
Will walk a little. How doth Meg,  
And her Mamilion?

*Moll* Of one leg  
She's grown lame.

*Mrs Generous* Because the beast  
Did miss us last Good Friday feast,  
I guessed as much.

10

*Moll* But All Saints' night  
She met, though she did halt downright.

*Mrs Generous* Dickinson and Hargreave, prithee tell,  
How do they?

*Moll* All about us well.  
But puggy whisper'd in mine ear  
That you of late were put in fear.

*Mrs Generous* The slave, my man.

- Moll* Who, Robin?
- Mrs Generous* He,
- Moll* My sweetheart?
- Mrs Generous* Such a trick serv'd me.
- Moll* About the bridle, now alack!
- Mrs Generous* The villain brought me to the rack. 20  
Tied was I both to rack and manger.
- Moll* But thence how 'scap'd you?
- Mrs Generous* Without danger,  
I thank my spirit.
- Moll* Ay, but then  
How pacified was your good man?
- Mrs Generous* Some passionate words mix'd with forc'd tears  
Did so enchant his eyes and ears,  
I made my peace, with promise never  
To do the like. But once and ever  
A witch, thou knowst. Now, understand,  
New business we took in hand. 30  
My husband pack'd out of the town,  
Know that the house and all's our own.

*Enter WHETSTONE*

- Whetstone* Naunt, is this your promise, Naunt? What, Moll!  
How dost thou, Moll? [*To MISTRESS  
GENEROUS*] You told me you would put a trick  
upon these gentlemen, whom you made me invite  
to supper, who abused and called me bastard.  
[*aside to MOLL*] And when shall I get one upon



*Mrs Generous*

Withdraw then quick,  
Now, gallants, there's for you a trick.

*Exeunt*

[4.5]

*Enter* WHETSTONE, ARTHUR,  
SHAKESTONE [*and*] BANTAM

*Whetstone*

Here's a more private room, gentlemen, free from  
the noise of the hall. Here we may talk, and throw  
the chamber out the casements. [*He calls to servants  
within*] Some wine and a short banquet!

*Enter [servants] with a banquet, wine, and two tapers*

*Whetstone*

So now leave us.

*[Exit servants]**Arthur*

We are much bound to you, Master Whetstone,  
For this great entertainment. I see you command  
The house in the absence of your uncle.

*Whetstone*

Yes, I thank my aunt, for though I be but a daily  
guest, yet I can be welcome to her at midnight.

10

*Shakestone*

How shall we pass the time?

*Bantam*

In some discourse.

*Whetstone*

But no such discourse as we had last, I beseech  
you.

*Bantam*

Now, Master Whetstone, you reflect on me.  
'Tis true, at our last meeting some few words  
Then passed my lips which I could wish forgot.  
I think I call'd you 'bastard'.

*Whetstone*

I think so too.  
But what's that amongst friends? For I would fain

know which amongst you all knows his own  
father. 20

*Bantam* You are merry with your friends, Master By-blow,  
and we are guests here in your uncle's house and  
therefore privileged.

*Enter [unseen] MISTRESS GENEROUS, MOLL,  
and spirits*

*Whetstone* I presume you had no more privilege in your  
getting than I. But tell me, gentlemen, is there any  
man here amongst you that hath a mind to see his  
father?

*Bantam* Why? Who shall show him?

*Whetstone* That's all one. If any man here desire it, let him  
but speak the word and 'tis sufficient. 30

*Bantam* Why, I would see my father.

*Mrs Generous* Strike! *(Music [plays])*

*Enter [a spirit like] a pedant dancing to the music. The  
strain done, he points at BANTAM and looks full in his  
face.*

*Whetstone* Do you know him that looks so full in your face?

*Bantam* Yes, well: a pedant in my father's house,  
Who, being young, taught me my A, B, C.

*Whetstone* In his house that goes for your father, you would  
say. For, know, one morning when your mother's  
husband rid early to have a *Nisi prius* tried at  
Lancaster 'sizes, he crept into his warm place, lay

close by her side, and then were you got. Then, 40  
 come, your heels and tail together, and kneel unto  
 your own dear father.

*Arthur, Shakestone*

*& Whetstone* Ha, ha, ha!

*Bantam* I am abused!

*Whetstone* Why laugh you, gentlemen? It may be more men's  
 cases than his or mine.

*Bantam* To be thus jeer'd!

*Arthur* Come, take it as a jest,  
 For I presume 'twas meant no otherwise.

*Whetstone* Would either of you two now see his father in  
 earnest? 50

*Shakestone* Yes, canst thou show me mine?

*Mrs Generous* Strike! [Music plays]

*Enter [a spirit like] a nimble tailor, dancing. [The strain  
 done, he points at SHAKESTONE and looks full in  
 his face.]*

*Whetstone* He looks on you! Speak, do you know him?

*Shakestone* Yes, he was my mother's tailor. I remember him  
 ever since I was a child.

*Whetstone* Who, when he came to take measure of her upper  
 parts, had more mind to the lower. Whilst the  
 good man was in the fields hunting, he was at  
 home whoring.  
 Then, since no better comfort can be had. 60

Come down, come down, ask blessing of your dad.

*Arthur &  
Whetstone*

Ha, ha, ha!

*Bantam*

This cannot be endur'd!

*Arthur*

It is plain witchcraft.

Nay, since we all are bid unto one feast,  
Let's fare alike: come, show me mine too.

*Mrs Generous*

Strike!

[*Music plays*]

*Enter ROBERT with a switch and a curry-comb,  
[dancing. The strain done,] he points at ARTHUR  
[and looks full in his face].*

*Whetstone*

He points at you.

*Arthur*

What then?

*Whetstone*

You know him?

*Arthur*

Yes,

Robin, the groom belonging to this house.

*Whetstone*

And never served your father?

*Arthur*

In's youth I think he did.

70

*Whetstone*

Who, when your supposed father had business at  
the Lord President's court in York, stood for his  
attorney at home, and so it seems you were got by  
deputy. What, all amort? If you will have but a  
little patience, stay and you shall see mine, too.  
And know I show you him the rather,  
To find who hath the best man to his father.

*Mrs Generous*

Strike!

[*Music plays*]

*Enter [a spirit like] a gallant, [dancing. The strain done, he points at WHETSTONE and looks full in his face.]*

*Whetstone* Now, gentlemen, make me your precedent.  
Learn your duties and do as I do. [*He kneels to the* 80  
*spirit-as-gallant*] A blessing, Dad.

*Arthur* Come, come, let's home. We'll find some other time  
When to dispute of these things –

*Whetstone* Nay, gentlemen, no parting in spleen. Since we  
have begun in mirth, let's not end in melancholy.  
You see there are more By-blows than bear the  
name. It is grown a great kindred in the kingdom.  
Come, come, all friends! Let's into the cellar and  
conclude our revels in a lusty health.

*Shakestone* [*Struggling to raise his arms*] I fain would strike, 90  
but cannot.

*Bantam* Some strange fate holds me.

*Arthur* Here then all anger end.  
Let none be mad at what they cannot mend.

[*Exit ARTHUR, SHAKESTONE, BANTAM,  
and WHETSTONE*]

*Moll* Now say, what's next?

*Mrs Generous* I'th' mill there lies  
A soldier yet with unscratch'd eyes.  
Summon the sisterhood together,  
For we with all our spirits will thither.  
And such a caterwauling keep,  
That he in vain shall think to sleep.

Call Meg and Doll, Tib, Nab, and Jug, 100  
Let none appear without her pug.  
We'll try our utmost art and skill,  
To fright the stout knave in the mill. *Exeunt*

## ACT 5, SCENE 1

*Enter DOUGHTY, MILLER, and BOY [wearing]  
a cap*

- Doughty*            Thou art a brave boy, the honour of thy country.  
Thy statue shall be set up in brass upon the market  
cross in Lancaster. I bless the time that I answered  
at the font for thee. 'Zooks, did I ever think that a  
godson of mine should have fought hand to fist  
with the Devil!
- Miller*            He was ever an unhappy boy, sir, and like enough  
to grow acquainted with him; and friends may fall  
out sometimes.
- Doughty*            Thou art a dogged sire, and dost not know the            10  
virtue of my godson – my son now; he shall be thy  
son no longer. He and I will worry all the witches  
in Lancashire.
- Miller*            You were best take heed, though.
- Doughty*            I care not. Though we leave not above three  
untainted women in the parish, we'll do it.
- Miller*            Do what you please, sir, there's the boy stout  
enough to justify anything he has said. Now 'tis  
out, he should be my son still by that: though he  
was at death's door before he would reveal            20  
anything, the damnable jades had so threatened  
him. And as soon as ever he had told, he mended.
- Doughty*            'Tis well he did so. We will so swing them in two-

penny halters, boy!

*Miller*

For my part, I have no reason to hinder anything that may root them all out. I have tasted enough of their mischief: witness my usage i'th' mill, which could be nothing but their roguery. One night in my sleep they set me astride, stark naked, atop of my mill, a bitter cold night too. 'Twas daylight 30  
before I was waked, and I durst never speak of it to this hour, because I thought it impossible to be believed.

*Doughty*

Villainous hags!

*Miller*

And all last summer, my wife could not make a bit of butter.

*Doughty*

It would not come, would it?

*Miller*

No, sir, we could not make it come, though she and I both together churned almost our hearts out, and nothing would come but all ran into thin 40  
waterish gear; the pigs would not drink it.

*Doughty*

Is't possible?

*Miller*

None but one, and he ran out of his wits upon't, till we bound his head and laid him asleep, but he has had a wry mouth ever since.

*Doughty*

That the Devil should put in their hearts to delight in such villainies! I have sought about these two days, and heard of a hundred such mischievous tricks, though none mortal, but could not find whom to mistrust for a witch till now this 50  
boy, this happy boy, informs me.

*Miller*

And they should ne'er have been sought for me if

their affrightments and devilish devices had not brought my boy into such a sickness. Whereupon indeed I thought good to acquaint your worship, and bring the boy unto you, being his godfather, and as you now stick not to say, his father.

*Doughty* After you; I thank you, gossip. But my boy, thou hast satisfied me in their names, and thy knowledge of the women, their turning into shapes, their dog-tricks and their horse-tricks, and their great feast in the barn (a pox take them with my sirloin, I say still). But a little more of thy combat with the Devil, I prithee. He came to thee like a boy, thou sayest, about thine own bigness? 60

*Boy* Yes, sir, and he asked me where I dwelt, and what my name was.

*Doughty* Ah, rogue!

*Boy* But it was in a quarrelsome way, whereupon I was as stout, and asked him who made him an examiner. 70

*Doughty* Ah, good boy.

*Miller* In that he was my son.

*Boy* He told me he would know or beat it out of me, and I told him he should not, and bid him do his worst, and to't we went.

*Doughty* In that he was my son again, ha boy? I see him at it now.

*Boy* We fought a quarter of an hour, till his sharp nails made my ears bleed. 80

- Doughty* Oh, the grand Devil pare 'em!
- Boy* I wondered to find him so strong in my hands, seeming but of mine own age and bigness, till I, looking down, perceived he had clubbed cloven feet, like ox feet, but his face was as young as mine.
- Doughty* A pox, but by his feet he may be the club-footed horse-courser's father, for all his young looks.
- Boy* But I was afraid of his feet, and ran from him towards a light that I saw, and when I came to it, it was one of the witches in white upon a bridge. 90  
That scared me back again, and then met me the boy again, and he struck me and laid me for dead.
- Miller* Till I, wondering at his stay, went out and found him in the trance. Since which time he has been haunted and frighted with goblins forty times, and never durst tell anything, as I said, because the hags had so threatened him, till in his sickness he revealed it to his mother.
- Doughty* And she told nobody but folks on't. Well, gossip Gritty, as thou art a miller and a close thief, now let us keep it as close as we may till we take 'em and see them handsomely hanged o' the way. Ha, my little cuff-devil, thou art a made man. Come, away with me. 100

[*Exit MILLER by one door and DOUGHTY and BOY by the other*]

[5.2]

*Enter SOLDIER**Soldier*

These two nights I have slept well and heard no noise  
 Of cats or rats. Most sure the fellow dreamt,  
 And scratch'd himself in's sleep. I have travelled deserts,  
 Beheld wolves, bears, and lions – indeed what not? –  
 Of horrid shape, and shall I be afraid  
 Of cats in mine own country? I can never  
 Grow so mouse-hearted. It is now a calm  
 And no wind stirring. I can bear no sail;  
 Then best lie down to sleep. Nay, rest by me  
 Good Morglay, my comrogue and bedfellow 10  
 That never fail'd me yet; I know thou didst not.  
 If I be wak'd, see thou be stirring too,  
 Then come a Gib as big as Askapart  
 We'll make him play at leap-frog.  
 A brave soldier's lodging:  
 The floor my bed, a millstone for my pillow,  
 The sails for curtains. So, good night. (*Lies down*)

*Enter MISTRESS GENEROUS, MOLL,  
 GILLIAN, MEG, and MAWD, and their spirits, at  
 several doors*

*Mrs Generous* Is Nab come?

*Moll* Yes

*Mrs Generous* Where's Jug?

*Moll* On horseback yet.  
 Now lighting from her broomstaff.

*Mrs Generous* But where's Peg?

*Moll* Enter'd the mill already.

*Mrs Generous* Is he fast? 20

*Moll* As senseless as a dormouse.

*Mrs* Then to work,  
To work, my pretty Laplands: pinch, here scratch,  
Do that within, without we'll keep the watch.

*The witches [exeunt]. The spirits come about [the SOLDIER] with a dreadful noise. He starts.*

*Soldier* Am I in hell? Then have amongst you, devils!  
[*He swings his sword at spirits surrounding him*]  
This side and that side! What, behind? Before?  
I'll keep my face unscratch'd despite you all.

[*The spirits scratch and pinch him*]  
What, do you pinch in private? Claws I feel,  
But can see nothing, nothing. Pinch me thus?  
Have at you then, ay, and have at you still!  
And still have at you!

[*He*] *beats them off [and the spirits exeunt. He] follows them in [to the tiring house] and enters again [with his sword bloodied]*

One of them I have paid. 30  
In leaping out o'th' hole, a foot, or ear,  
Or something I have light on. What, all gone?  
All quiet? Not a cat that's heard to mew?  
Nay then, I'll try to take another nap,  
Though I sleep with mine eyes open. *Exit*

[5.3]

*Enter GENEROUS and ROBERT*

*Generous* Robin, the last night that I lodg'd at home,  
My wife, if thou remember'st, lay abroad,  
But no words of that.

*Robert* You have taught me silence.

*Generous* I rose thus early, much before my hour,  
To take her in her bed. 'Tis yet not five;  
The sun scarce up. Those horses take and lead 'em  
Into the stable, see them rubb'd and dress'd;  
We have rid hard. Now, in the interim I  
Will step and see how my new miller fares,  
Or whether he slept better in his charge 10  
Than those which did precede him.

*Robert* Sir, I shall.

*Generous* But one thing more – (*[He takes*  
ROBERT *aside and] whispers [to him]*)

*Enter ARTHUR*

*Arthur* Now from the last night's witchcraft we are freed,  
And I, that had not power to clear myself  
From base aspersion, am at liberty  
For vow'd revenge. I cannot be at peace,  
The night-spell being took off, till I have met  
With noble Master Generous, in whose search  
The best part of this morning I have spent.  
His wife now I suspect.

*Robert* By your leave, sir. 20

*Arthur* Oh, you're well met! Pray tell me, how long is't

Since you were first my father?

*Robert* Be patient, I beseech you! [*ARTHUR menaces him*] What do you mean, sir?

*Arthur* But that I honour  
Thy master, to whose goodness I am bound,  
And still must remain thankful, I should prove  
Worse than a murderer, a mere parricide,  
By killing thee my father!

*Robert* I, your father? He was a man I always loved and  
honoured. He bred me. 30

*Arthur* And you begot me! Oh, you us'd me  
Finely last night!

*Generous* Pray, what's the matter, sir?

*Arthur* My worthy friend, but that I honour you  
As one to whom I am so much oblig'd,  
This villain could not stir a foot from hence  
Till perish'd by my sword.

*Generous* How hath he wrong'd you?

Be of a milder temper, I entreat.  
Relate what, and when done.

*Arthur* You may command me.  
If ask me what wrongs, know this groom pretends  
He hath strumpeted my mother; if when: blaz'd 40  
Last night at midnight. If you ask me further,  
Where: in your own house, when he pointed to me  
As had I been his bastard.

*Robert* I, do this?  
I am a horse again, if I got you.

Master, why, master –

*Generous*

I know you, Master Arthur, for a gentleman  
Of fair endowments, a most solid brain,  
And settled understanding. Why, this fellow  
These two day was scarce sunder'd from my side,  
And for the last night, I am most assur'd  
He slept within my chamber, twelve miles off.  
We have ne'er parted since.

50

*Arthur*

You tell me wonders,  
Since all your words to me are oracles,  
And such as I most constantly believe.  
But, sir, shall I be bold and plain withal?  
I am suspicious all's not well at home.  
I dare proceed no farther without leave,  
Yet there is something lodg'd within my breast  
Which I am loath to utter.

*Generous*

Keep it there,  
I pray do, a season. [*aside*] Oh, my fears! –  
No doubt ere long my tongue may be the key  
To open that your secret.

60

[*To ROBERT*] Get you gone sir,  
And do as I commanded.

*Robert*

I shall, sir.  
[*aside*] 'Father', quoth he?  
I should be proud indeed of such a son.

*Exit*

*Generous*

Please you now walk with me to my mill. I fain  
would see how my bold soldier speeds. It is a place  
hath been much troubled. [*They cross the stage*]

*Enter SOLDIER*

- Arthur* I shall wait on you. See, he appears.
- Generous* Good morrow, soldier.
- Soldier* A bad night I have had. 70  
A murrain take your mill-sprites!
- Generous* Prithee, tell me,  
Hast thou been frightened, then?
- Soldier* How, frightened, sir!  
A dung-cart full of devils could not do't,  
But I have been so nipp'd, and pull'd, and pinch'd  
By a company of hell-cats.
- Arthur* Fairies, sure.
- Soldier* Rather foul fiends; fairies have no such claws.  
Yet I have kept my face whole thanks my scimitar,  
My trusty bilbo, but for which I vow,  
I had been torn to pieces. But I think  
I met with some of them. One, I am sure, 80  
I have sent limping hence.
- Generous* Didst thou fasten upon any?
- Soldier* Fast or loose, most sure I made them fly  
And skip out of the port-holes. But the last  
I made her squeak; she had forgot to mew;  
I spoil'd her caterwauling.
- Arthur* Let's see thy sword.
- Soldier* To look on, not to part with from my hand;  
'Tis not the soldiers' custom.
- Arthur* Sir, I observe 'tis bloody towards the point.
- Soldier* If all the rest 'scape scot-free, yet I am sure 90  
There's one hath paid the reckoning.

- Generous* Look well about.  
Perhaps there may be seen some tract of blood.  
[*They search and the SOLDIER finds the hand*]
- Soldier* What's here? Is't possible cats should have hands  
And rings upon their fingers?
- Arthur* Most prodigious!
- Generous* Reach me that hand.
- Soldier* There's that of the three I can best spare. [*He gives the hand to GENEROUS*]
- Generous* [*aside*] Amazement upon wonder, can this be?  
I needs must know't by most infallible marks.  
Is this the hand once plighted holy vows?  
And this the ring that bound them? Doth this last age 100  
Afford what former never durst believe?  
Oh, how have I offended those high powers  
That my great incredulity should merit  
A punishment so grievous, and to happen  
Under mine own roof, mine own bed, my bosom?
- Arthur* Know you the hand sir?
- Generous* Yes, and too well can read it.  
Good Master Arthur, bear me company  
Unto my house; in the society  
Of good men there's great solace.
- Arthur* Sir, I'll wait on you.
- Generous* And soldier, do not leave me. Lock thy mill: 110  
I have employment for thee.
- Soldier* I shall, sir.  
I think I have tickled some of your tenants

At will, that thought to revel here rent-free.  
 The best is, if one of the parties shall  
 Deny the deed, we have their hand to show. *Exeunt*

[5.4]

*A bed thrust out [with] MISTRESS GENEROUS in  
 it. [Enter] WHETSTONE [and] MOLL [to stand]  
 by her*

*Whetstone* Why aunt, dear aunt, honey aunt, how do you?  
 How fare you, cheer you, how is't with you? You  
 Have been been a lusty woman in your time,  
 But now you look as if you could not do  
 Withal.

*Mrs Generous* Good Moll, let him not trouble me.

*Moll* Fie, Master Whetstone, you keep such a noise  
 In the chamber that your aunt is desirous  
 To take a little rest and cannot.

*Whetstone* In my uncle's absence, who but I should  
 Comfort my aunt. Am I not of the blood? 10  
 Am not I next of kin? Why, aunt!

*Mrs Generous* Good nephew, leave me.

*Whetstone* The devil shall leave you ere I'll forsake you, aunt.  
 You know, *sic* is 'so', and being so sick do you  
 think I'll leave you? [*aside*] What know I but this  
 bed may prove your death-bed, and then I hope  
 you will remember me, that is, remember me in  
 your will. – (*Knock within*) Who's that knocks with  
 such authority? Ten to one my uncle's come to  
 town. 20

*Mrs Generous* If it be so, excuse my weakness to him; say I can speak with none.

*Moll* I will, [*aside*] and 'scape him if I can. By this accident all must come out, and here's no stay for me. – (*Knock again*) Again! [*To WHETSTONE*] Stay you here with your aunt, and I'll go let in your uncle. [*Exit*]

*Whetstone* Do, good Moll. And how, and how, sweet aunt?

*Enter* GENEROUS, MOLL, ARTHUR,  
SOLDIER, *and* ROBERT

*Generous* [*To MOLL*]  
You're well met here! I am told you oft frequent  
This house as my wife's choice companion. 30  
Yet have I seldom seen you.

*Moll* Pray, by your leave, sir,  
Your wife is taken with a sudden qualm;  
She hath sent me for a doctor.

*Generous* But that labour  
I'll save you. Soldier, take her to your charge.

[*SOLDIER seizes MOLL*]

And now where's this sick woman?

*Whetstone* Oh, uncle, you come in good time! My aunt is so suddenly taken as if she were ready to give up the spirit.

*Generous* 'Tis almost time she did! Speak, how is't wife?  
My nephew tells me you were took last night  
With a shrewd sickness, which this maid confirms. 40

*Mrs Generous* Yes sir, but now desire no company.

Noise troubles me, and I would gladly sleep.

*Generous* In company there's comfort. Prithee, wife,  
Lend me thy hand, and let me feel thy pulse.  
Perhaps some fever – by their beating I  
May guess at thy disease.

*Mrs Generous* My hand, 'tis there.

[*GENEROUS feels her pulse*]

*Generous* A dangerous sickness and, I fear't, death.  
'Tis odds you will not 'scape it. Take that back  
And let me prove the t'other if perhaps  
I there can find more comfort.

*Mrs Generous* I pray excuse me. 50

*Generous* I must not be denied. Sick folks are peevish  
And must be o'errul'd, and so shall you.

*Mrs Generous* Alas, I have not strength to lift it up.

*Generous* If not thy hand, wife, show me but thy wrist,  
[*He shows her the hand found at the mill*]

And see how this will match it. Here's a testate  
That cannot be outfac'd.

*Mrs Generous* I am undone.

*Whetstone* Hath my aunt been playing at handy-dandy?  
Nay, then, if the game go this way I fear  
She'll have the worst hand on't.

*Arthur* 'Tis now apparent  
How all the last night's business came about. 60  
In this my late suspicion is confirm'd.

*Generous* My heart hath bled more for thy curs'd relapse

Than drops hath issued from thy wounded arm.  
 But wherefore should I preach to one past hope,  
 Or, where the devil himself claims right in all,  
 Seek the least part or interest? Leave your bed!  
 Up, make you ready! I must deliver you  
 Into the hand of justice. [*To ARTHUR*] Oh, dear friend,  
 It is in vain to guess at this my grief,  
 'Tis so inundant. Soldier, take away that young – 70  
 But old in mischief!  
 And, being of these apostates rid so well,  
 I'll see my house no more be made a hell.  
 Away with them! *Exeunt*

[5.5]

*Enter BANTAM and SHAKESTONE*

*Bantam* I'll out o' the country, and as soon live  
 In Lapland as Lancashire hereafter.

*Shakestone* What, for a false illusive apparition?  
 I hope the devil is not able to  
 Persuade thee thou art a bastard?

*Bantam* No, but  
 I am afflicted to think that the devil  
 Should have power to put such a trick upon  
 Us, to countenance a rascal that is one.

*Shakestone* I hope Arthur has taken a course with  
 His uncle about him by this time. 10  
 Who would have thought such a fool as he could  
 Have been a witch?

*Bantam* Why, do you think there's any  
 Wise folks of the quality? Can any but fools

Be drawn into a covenant with the  
 Greatest enemy of mankind? Yet I  
 Cannot think that Whetstone is the witch! The  
 Young quean that was at the wedding was i'th'  
 House, ye know.

*Enter LAWRENCE and PARNELL in their [proper]  
 habits*

- Shakestone* See Lawrence and Parnell civilly accorded  
 Again, it seems, and accoutred as they 20  
 Were wont to be when they had their wits.
- Lawrence* Blessed be the hour, I say my honey, my sweet  
 Poll, that's I become thine again, and thou's  
 become mine again. And may this one kiss ma'  
 us two become both one for ever and a day.
- Parnell* Yea, marry, Loll, and thus should it be. There is  
 nought gotten by falling out; we mu' fall in or we  
 get nought.
- Bantam* The world's well mended here; we cannot but  
 rejoice to see this, Lawrence. 30
- Lawrence* And you been welcome to it, gentlemen.
- Parnell* And we been glad we ha' it for you.
- Shakestone* And I protest I am glad to see it.
- Parnell* And thus sha' you see't till our dying hour. We've  
 one love now for a lifetime. The devil sha' not ha'  
 the power to put us to pieces again.
- Bantam* Why, now all's right, and straight, and as it should be.
- Lawrence* Yea, marry, that is it. The good hour be blessed for

it, that put the wit into my head to have a mistrust  
of that pestilent cod-piece point that the wicked 40  
witch Moll Spencer ga' me, ah woe worth her,  
that were it that made all so nought

*Bantam & Shakestone* Is't possible?

*Parnell* Yea, marry, it were an enchantment, and about an  
hour since it come into our hearts to do, what you  
think, and we did it!

*Bantam* What, Parnell?

*Parnell* Marry, we take the point and we casten the point  
into the fire, and the point spittered and spattered  
in the fire, like an it were (love bless us) a live 50  
thing in the fire, and it hopped and skipped and  
wriggled and frisked in the fire, and crept about  
like a worm in the fire, that it were work enough  
for us both with all the chimney tools to keep it  
into the fire, and it stinked in the fire, worsen than  
any brimstone in the fire.

*Bantam* This is wonderful as all the rest!

*Lawrence* It would ha' scared any that had their wits to ha'  
seen't, and we were mad only it were done.

*Parnell* And this were not above an hour since, and you 60  
cannot devise how we ha' loved t'one t'other by  
now. You would e'en bless yourselves to see't.

*Lawrence* Yea, and ha' put on our working gear, to swink  
and serve our master and mistress like unto  
painful servants again, as we should.

*Bantam* 'Tis wondrous well.

*Shakestone*

And are they well again?

*Parnell*

Yea, and well as like hea'en bless them, they are  
a-was well becomed as none ill had ever been  
anenst 'em. Lo ye, lo ye, as they come.

*Enter SEELY, JOAN, GREGORY, and WINNY*

*Gregory*

Sir, if a contrite heart struck through with sense      70  
Of its sharp errors, bleeding with remorse,  
The black polluted stain it had conceived  
Of foul unnatural disobedience,  
May yet by your fair mercy find remission,  
You shall upraise a son out o' the gulf  
Of horror and despair unto a bliss  
That shall forever crown your goodness, and  
Instructive in my after life to serve you  
In all the duties that befit a son.

*Seely*

Enough, enough, good boy! 'Tis most apparent      80  
We all have had our errors, and as plainly  
It now appears our judgements, yea our reason,  
Was poison'd by some violent infection,  
Quite contrary to nature.

*Bantam*

This sounds well.

*Seely*

I fear it was by witchcraft, for I now –  
Bless'd be the power that wrought the happy means  
Of my delivery – remember that  
Some three months since I cross'd a weird woman  
(One that I now suspect) for bearing with  
A most unseemly disobedience      90  
In an untoward, ill-bred son of hers.  
When, with an ill look and an hollow voice,

She mutter'd out these words: 'Perhaps ere long  
Thyself shalt be obedient to thy son.'  
She has play'd her prank, it seems.

*Gregory*

Sir, I have heard

That witches apprehended under hands  
Of lawful authority do lose their power,  
And all their spells are instantly dissolv'd.

*Seely*

If it be so then at this happy hour  
The witch is ta'en that over us had power.

100

[WINNY *makes obeisance to* JOAN]

*Joan*

Enough, child; thou art mine and all is well.

*Winny*

Long may you live the well-spring of my bliss,  
And may my duty and my fruitful prayers  
Draw a perpetual stream of blessings from you.

*Seely*

Gentlemen, welcome to my best friend's house.  
You know the unhappy cause that drew me hither.

*Bantam*

And cannot but rejoice to see the remedy  
So near at hand.

*Enter* DOUGHTY, MILLER, *and* BOY

*Doughty*

Come, gossip; come, boy. Gentlemen, you are  
come to the bravest discovery. Master Seely and  
the rest, how is't with you? You look reasonable  
well, methinks.

110

*Seely*

Sir, we do find that we have reason enough to  
thank you for your neighbourly and pious care of  
us.

*Doughty*

Is all so well with you already? Go to, will you

know a reason for't, gentlemen? I have caught a whole kennel of witches! [*He indicates the Seelys*] It seems their witch is one of 'em, and so they are discharmed; they are all in officers' hands and they will touch here with two or three of them for a little private parley before they go to the Justices. Master Generous is coming hither too, with a supply that you dream not of, and [*to SEELY*] your nephew Arthur. 120

*Bantam* You are beholden, sir, to Master Generous in behalf of your nephew for saving his land from forfeiture in time of your distraction.

*Seely* I will acknowledge it most thankfully.

*Shakestone* See, he comes. 130

*Enter* GENEROUS, MISTRESS GENEROUS,  
ARTHUR, WHETSTONE, MOLL, SOLDIER,  
*and* ROBERT

*Seely* Oh, Master Generous, the noble favour you have showed my nephew forever binds me to you.

*Generous* I pitied then your misery, and now  
Have nothing left but to bewail mine own  
In this unhappy woman.

*Seely* Good Mistress Generous –

*Arthur* Make a full stop there, sir! Sides, sides, make sides. You know her not as I do. Stand aloof there, mistress, with your darling witch; your nephew, too if you please, because though he be no witch, he is a well-willer to the infernal science. 140

*Generous* I utterly discard him in her blood,  
And all the good that I intended him  
I will confer on this [*indicates Arthur*] virtuous gentleman.

*Whetstone* Well, sir, though you be no uncle, yet mine  
Aunt's mine aunt, and shall be to her dying day.

*Doughty* And that will be about a day after next 'sizes, I take  
it.

*Enter [GILLIAN, MAWD, MEG], Constable, and  
Officers*

Oh, here comes more o' your naunts: naunt  
Dickinson and naunt Hargreave, 'od's fish, and 150  
your granny Johnson too! We want but a good fire  
to entertain 'em.

*Witches charm together*

*Arthur* See how they lay their heads together?

*Gillian* No succour!

*Mawd* No relief!

*Meg* No comfort!

*Mrs Generous, Moll,  
Gillian, Mawd, & Meg* Mawsy, my Mawsy, gentle Mawsy, come!

*Mawd* Come my sweet Puckling!

*Meg* My Mamilion!

*Arthur* What do they say?

*Bantam* They call their spirits, I think.

*Doughty* Now, a shame take you for a fardel of fools. Have  
you known so many of the devil's tricks and can

be ignorant of that common feat of the old juggler, 160  
 that is, to leave you all to the law when you are  
 once seized on by the talons of authority? I'll  
 undertake this little demigorgon constable, with  
 these commonwealth characters upon his staff  
 here, is able in spite of all your bugs-words to  
 stave off the grand devil for doing any of you good  
 till you come to his kingdom to him, and there  
 take what you can find.

*Arthur* But gentlemen, shall we try if we can by  
 examination get from them something that may 170  
 abbreviate the cause unto the wiser in commission  
 for the peace before we carry them before 'em?

*Generous & Seely* Let it be so.

*Doughty* Well, say: stand out boy, stand out miller, stand  
 out Robin, stand out soldier, and lay your  
 accusation upon 'em.

*Bantam* Speak, boy, do you know these creatures, women I  
 dare not call 'em?

*Boy* Yes, sir, and saw them all in the barn together, and  
 many more, at their feast and witchery 180

*Robert* And so did I, by a devilish token. I was rid thither,  
 though I rid home again as fast without switch or  
 spur.

*Miller* I was ill-handled by them in the mill.

*Soldier* And I sliced off a cat's foot there, that is since a  
 hand, whoever wants it. [*Shows the hand*]

*Seely* How I and all my family have suffered, you all  
 know.

- Lawrence* And how I were bewitched my Poll here knows.
- Parnell* Yea, Loll, and [*indicates MOLL*] the witch I know, 190  
and I prayen you gi' me but leave to scratch her  
well-favourly.
- Bantam* Hold, Parnell.
- Parnell* You can blame no honest woman, I trow,  
To scratch for the thing she loves.
- Moll* Ha, ha, ha!
- Doughty* Do you laugh, gentlewoman? [*To MISTRESS  
GENEROUS*] What say you to all these matters?
- Mrs Generous* I will say nothing, but what you know, you know,  
And as the law shall find me let it take me.
- Gillian* And so say I!
- Mawd* And I!
- Moll* And I! 200  
Other confession you get none from us.
- Arthur* [*To MEG*] What say you, granny?
- Meg* Mamilion, ho!  
Mamilion, Mamilion!
- Arthur* Who's that you call?
- Meg* My friend, my sweetheart, my Mamilion.
- Mrs Generous,  
Moll, Gillian, & Mawd* You are not mad?
- Doughty* Ah, ha! That's her devil, her incubus, I warrant.  
Take her off from the rest; they'll hurt her. Come  
hither, poor old woman. [*aside*] I'll dandle a witch  
a little. – Thou wilt speak, and tell the truth, and

shalt have favour, doubt not. Say, art not thou a witch? 210

[MISTRESS GENEROUS, MOLL, GILLIAN,  
and MAWD] *storm*

*Meg* 'Tis folly to dissemble. Yea, sir, I am one.

*Doughty* And that Mamilion which thou call'st upon  
Is thy familiar devil, is't not? Nay, prithee speak.

*Meg* Yes, sir.

*Doughty* That's a good woman. How long hast  
Had's acquaintance, ha?

*Meg* A matter of six years, sir.

*Doughty* A pretty matter. What, was he like a man?

*Meg* Yes, when I pleas'd.

*Doughty* And then he lay with thee,  
Did he not sometimes?

*Meg* 'Tis folly to dissemble:  
Twice a week he never fail'd me.

*Doughty* Hmm, and how, 220  
And how a little? Was he a good bedfellow?

*Meg* 'Tis folly to speak worse of him than he is.

*Doughty* Ay, trust me is't. Give the devil his due.

*Meg* He pleas'd me well, sir, like a proper man.

*Doughty* There was sweet coupling?

*Meg* Only his flesh felt cold.

*Arthur* He wanted his great fires about him that

He has at home.

- Doughty* Peace! And did he wear good clothes?
- Meg* Gentleman like, but black, black points and all.
- Doughty* Ay, very like his points were black enough. But  
come, we'll trifle wi' ye no longer. Now shall you 230  
all to the Justices, and let them take order with  
you till the 'sizes, and then let law take his course,  
and *Vivat Rex!* Master Generous, I am sorry for  
your cause of sorrow; we shall not have your  
company?
- Generous* No, sir, my prayers for her soul's recovery  
Shall not be wanting to her, but mine eyes  
Must never see her more.
- Robert* Moll, adieu sweet Moll! Ride your next journey  
with the company you have there. 240
- Moll* Well, rogue, I may live to ride in a coach before I  
come to the gallows yet.
- Robert* [*To MISTRESS GENEROUS*] And mistress, the  
horse that stays for you rides better with a halter  
than your jingling bridle. *Exit with GENEROUS*
- Doughty* Master Seely, I rejoice for your family's atonement.
- Seely* And I praise heaven for you that were the means  
to it.
- Doughty* [*To the Constable and Officers*] On afore, drovers,  
with your untoward cattle. 250

*Exit* [*Constable, Officers, MISTRESS  
GENEROUS, MOLL, GILLIAN, MAWD, and  
MEG*] *severally*

*Bantam* [To WHETSTONE] Why do not you follow,  
Master By-blow? I thank your aunt for the trick  
she would have fathered us withal.

*Whetstone* Well, sir, mine aunt's mine aunt, and for that trick  
I will not leave her till I see her do a worse. *Exit*

*Bantam* You're a kind kinsman!

*Exeunt. Flourish*

FINIS

## [Enter EPILOGUE]

Now, while the witches must expect their due  
By lawful justice, we appeal to you  
For favourable censure. What their crime  
May bring upon 'em, ripeness yet of time  
Has not reveal'd. Perhaps great mercy may  
After just condemnation give them day  
Of longer life. We represent as much  
As they have done before law's hand did touch  
Upon their guilt, but dare not hold it fit  
That we for justices and judges sit, 10  
And personate their grave wisdoms on the stage  
Whom we are bound to honour. No, the age  
Allows it not. Therefore unto the laws  
We can but bring the witches and their cause,  
And there we leave 'em, as their devils did.  
Should we go further with 'em? Wit forbid!  
What of their story further shall ensue,  
We must refer to Time, ourselves to you. [Exit]



## GLOSSARIAL NOTES

In these notes the label 'Barber' indicates that a gloss derives from Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, *The Late Lancashire Witches* edited by Laird H. Barber (New York: Garland, 1979).

### *Dramatis Personae*

- 3-4 *SHAKESTONE & BANTAM* The names of Arthur's two friends indicate their youthful vigour. To 'shake' an animal is to worry it (OED *shake* *v.* 8c) and Shakestone's prey is Whetstone. Shakestone's name also suggests genital waving ('a testicle' OED *stone* *n.* 11a). A bantam is a small aggressive cock.
- 8 *ROBERT* also called Robin, a diminutive or familiar version of the same name.

### *Prologue*

- 1 *Corrantoes* early newspapers, prohibited 1632-38, hence 'failing'
- 1 *no foot-post late* no recent news
- 5 *ground the scene* set this play
- agitation* preparation for performance
- 7 *fat jailor* apparently a topical reference, now unknown

### 1.1

- 1-2 *Was ever crossed . . . in th' height?* Was ever exciting sport so deprived of its climax?
- 20 *matches* of equal acuity
- 21 *muse* a gap in a fence or hedge
- 23 *earth'd* hidden in a hole
- 39 *braver* more impressive
- port* manner of behaving
- 40 *state* financial prosperity

- unshaken* steadfast
- 45 *wind* talk (to rhyme with 'sinned' not 'bind')
- 48 *mess* group
- 50 *coxcomb* fool (from the name of a professional fool's cap)
- 54 *out upon him* an expression of disgust
- 69 *lustick* merry
- 70 *froligozone* frolicsome
- 82-83 *I never heard . . . truth till now.* Although Whetstone's name evokes the punishment of liars (who had whetstones placed around their necks), and despite's Arthur's accusation here, Whetstone's character develops as a simpleton, not a liar. Possibly Heywood and Brome had not settled this.
- 87 *I think you are a witch* conventional response to someone who has guessed one's intentions
- 101 *beldams* mannish hags
- 108 *By-blow* a bastard ('one who comes into the world by a side-stroke' OED *by-blow* *n.* 3), hence in claiming this as his father's family name Whetstone impugns his mother's virtue
- 109-12 *you came in at the window . . . like my grandam's cat, to leap over the hatch* stealthy methods of entry implying an illegitimate start in life (as the Bastard in Shakespeare's *King John* puts it, 'In at the window, or else o'er the hatch' 1.1.171)
- 134 *entire* affectionately attach
- 138 *surname* By-blow is Whetstone's *sire*-name from his father
- 139-41 *noverint universi per praesentes* the formulaic first words of a writ ('let all men know by these presents'), from which *noverint* had come to mean a scrivener
- 142 *As in praesenti* 'As in the present tense', the beginning of a well-known Latin verse used as a mnemonic for verse forms, and here with a possible pun on asinine
- 146 *Accidence* the first part of a Latin grammar book, dealing with inflections ('accidents') of word  
*Mentiri non est meum* 'it is not for me to lie' (Latin)

- 149 *Ignaro* ignorant  
 153 *strain* characteristic way of behaving  
 224 *one slips no advantages* one who misses no opportunities for gain

## [1.2]

- 59 *look off on't* look away from it  
 87 *at the ale* at the alchouse  
 87-88 *a fourpenny club* Seely's portion of a shared bill  
 91 *tester* a teston, worth sixpence  
 96 *double ringed tokens* privately issued tokens worth a farthing, hence Seely's loss was just two pence (Barber)  
*rubbers* best of three sets (or five, seven, etc.)  
 113-14 *what the foul evil* equivalent to 'what the devil?'  
 119 *wearry o' the womb of him* tired of being inside him  
 124-25 *telling him his own* telling him some home truths  
 127 *carl* a base fellow, a churl  
 128-29 *He served you but well to baste ye for't* You deserve to be beaten for it  
 130-31 *but an I fall foul with ye, and I swaddle ye not savourly* but if you incur my displeasure and I do not beat you soundly  
 131 *brast* burst  
 136 *trou* suppose/think  
 146 *law in Lancashire* Lancashire kept its own legal system until the middle of the nineteenth century  
 149 *Daughter, I say* – Joan is interrupted by Winny, who then misinterprets these first three words as an answer.  
 153 *take such courses* behave in such a way  
 163 *the Scottish weird sisters* the three witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (so named at 1.3.30, 2.1.19, 3.4.132, and 4.1.152)  
 164 *hiccup* 'A spasmodic affection of some other organ [than the diaphragm]' (OED hiccup *n.* b, citing this usage). Her allusion to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* seems to increase the intensity of the spell working upon Winny: her vision is disturbed and she explicitly swaps roles with her mother. The greening of Winny's vision might

- be an allusion to green-sickness, an adolescent anaemia thought to be caused by sexual longing, hence Joan's song on the theme of unwanted pregnancy.
- 166 *white girl* darling daughter (apparently invented here by analogy with OED white boy 1)
- 170 *deft* handsome
- 171 *langtidown dilly* a meaningless refrain
- 179 *fadge* proceed
- 187 *list* like
- 189 *lessen* unless
- 190 *with a wanion* with a vengeance (OED wanion)
- 201-202 *You shall as soon . . . in the mouth with* There's nothing you can do to shut me up with
- 203 *shoen* shoes
- 204 *sicky* suchlike (OED sic-like)
- 206-207 *ween 'a'* we would have
- 207 *Wot'st thou what?* what do you know?
- 209 *the fond waxen wild, trow I* the affectionate turned aggressive, I suppose (referring to Lawrence's harsh words to her)
- 211-12 *our love shall be at an end* our courtship must end (because we shall marry), with unintentional comic suggest of loveless marriage
- 213 *mu'* must (Q's 'mun' carries overtones of may)
- 214 *limmer loon* mad rogue
- 215 *trow* think
- 218 *sickerly* with certainty  
*jam* abuse
- 220 *flam* mock
- 235 *i'fackins* i' faith (a mild oath)
- 238 *bespeak* arrange for
- 240 *'pparelements* equipment and fittings (OED apparelment) and not confined to apparel
- 241 *trickly* Neatly, smartly

## 2.1

- 0 SD *severally* one by one but not necessarily from different directions
- 4 SP *Meg*. Four witches are called for in the opening stage direction but only three are named in the scene (*Meg*, *Mawd*, and *Gillian*). The fourth (whom the audience would not have seen before in any case) may be *Mistress Generous* or *Moll*; possibly this matter was not settled in the manuscript. *Q*'s repeated speech prefix for *Meg* is clearly wrong, and it is easier to imagine this as a compositorial misreading of 'Moll' than of 'Mrs Generous' or 'Goody Dickinson'.
- 11 It is possible that 'Mawd' was a speech prefix which the printer, mistaking its terminal period for a comma, misread as part of *Gillian*'s line. Weighing against this interpretation, however, is the printed line's consistency with the iambic tetrameters that surround it.
- 13 *puggy* an affectionate form of *pug* meaning a small demon (also spelt *puck*)
- 15 *meat* nourishment, not confined to animal flesh
- 17 *a round* 'a dance in which the performers move in a circle or ring' (OED round n<sup>1</sup> 11a)
- 18 *cockle* a weed with black seeds which thrives in wheat fields (OED cockle n<sup>1</sup>) or a similar looking disease of wheat caused by worms (OED cockle n<sup>7</sup>), or possibly, by confusion, both
- darnel* another weed common in corn fields
- poppia* a dialect name for the cockle weed (OED poppy n. 2)
- 21 *our masque* the dance the witches have just completed
- 54 *wat* hare (OED wat<sup>2</sup>)
- 63 *The devil on Dun* the devil on horseback, from 'Dun', a quasi-proper name for any horse
- 69 *Peg* a pet form of *Margaret*, as is *Meg*
- grizzled* grey coloured (the hare will have fur the colour of *Meg*'s hair)
- 70 *gaunt thin gut* as befits a greyhound

## [2.2]

- 47 *bait* 'To set on dogs to bite and worry' (OED *baite* v<sup>2</sup> 2)
- 51 *relieve* feed (Barber)
- 52 *course* 'a race of dogs (after a hare, etc.)' (OED *course* n. 7a)
- 54-59 *'Tis said hares . . . Pliny lies too* In *Naturalis Historia* Book 8 Pliny attributes this idea to Archelaus (Barber)
- 56-57 *that which begets this year brings young ones the next* the male begetter becomes female
- 66 *Robin* a familiar form of his proper name, Robert
- 119 *tester* a teston, worth sixpence
- 147 *Ipsitate* Barber suggests 'perhaps a superlative of Latin *ipse* meaning "the very thing," "Mere quintessence of wine."' (as Generous called it at line 139)
- 154-55 *be with thee to bring* be with you to achieve a determined result. Here the sense is sexual but other outcomes may be implied by 'to bring'.
- 166 *country* native region (OED *country* 4), here Yorkshire (see line 179)
- 168 *in that name* pretending to be a soldier
- 172 *Polack* a native of Poland, used (like 'Russian') to mean the nation
- 178 *What countryman?* Of where are you a countryman (native)?
- 196 Q's reading of grinding 'flesh' to powder is absurd, and the obvious intended opposition is 'flesh' and 'bones'.
- 198 *cat o' mountains* a large feline animal such as leopard, panther, or tiger
- 199 *in red-and-white* a variation on the figurative 'in black-and-white' (writing) also meaning 'attested by indisputable evidence', his bloodied flesh
- 214 *fitters* fragments
- 238 *stand it all danger* withstand it whatever the dangers

## [2.3]

- 0 SD *switch* 'a thin flexible shoot cut from a tree' (OED *switch* n. 2a)

- 1 *bullace* wild plums
- 3 *coursing* chasing hares with dogs
- 5.1 SD *invisible* how this was indicated to the audience (costume?, demeanour?) is uncertain  
*John Adson* musician and composer (1587-1640), a specialist in wind instruments and masque music. Adson's 'new airs' are mentioned in 4.1 of Cavendish's *The Country Captain*, another King's men play.
- 5.1-2 SD *a brace of greyhounds* Gillian and her Puckling in the guise of dogs, as promised at 2.1.56-7
- 8 *slips* quick-release leashes arranged to free two dogs at once when coursing (OED slip *n*<sup>3</sup> 3a)

## [2.4]

- 1 *piece* a gold sovereign coin, worth 11 shillings (OED piece *n* 13b). This sense Whetstone seems not to know (see lines 9-10) and is teased for it.
- 2 *pied* of more than one colour
- 11 *double rings* see note to 1.2.96
- 13 *take on* accept the bet
- 14 *cover these* match these coins with your own
- 24 *More than . . . fall of leaf* suggesting that Whetstone is losing hair, a sign of venereal disease. There follows a series of sexual puns on hare and pubic hair.
- 28 *birds' nests* women's pubic hair. The Nurse makes the same joke in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* 2.4.74.
- 32 *angle* fishing hook, and by extension the line and rod also  
*angle...line...hare* possibly sexual puns on female pubic delta (*angle*), penis (*line*), and pubic hair (*hare*)
- 47 *off the score* 'break out suddenly into impetuous speech or action' (OED score 3b)
- 50-52 *thine ears . . . lost them by scribbling* the punishment for seditious writing was the cropping of an ear, as happened to William Prynne

- for his *Histriomastix* (1633)
- 53 *Bullfinch* an attractive bird easily trained for singing (hence Whetstone will ‘sing’, complain, to his aunt and uncle)
- 56 *I am a bastard* Like Shakespeare’s Dogberry, Whetstone makes the comic error of repeating an insult (‘I am an ass’, *Much Ado About Nothing* 4.2.74 and 5.1.248)
- 58-59 *good old gentleman* that is, Generous
- 59 *baffled* disgraced
- 63 *law* ‘An allowance in time or distance made to an animal that is to be hunted’ (OED *law n*<sup>1</sup> 20a)

## [2.5]

- 1 *Halloo* a cry to excite dogs
- 3 *lither* ‘lazy, sluggish, spiritless’ (OED *lither a.*)
- 4 *tykes* low-bred, coarse, dogs
- 5 *with a wanion* with a vengeance (OED *wanion*)
- 11-12 *not lash . . . switch will hold* a moderate, not a thorough, lashing with merely a switch (see 2.3.0n). The first ‘lash’ might also carry the punning senses of ‘rebuke’ (OED *lash v.*<sup>1</sup> 6c) or ‘comb’ (OED *lash v.*<sup>3</sup>).
- 15 SD Gillian was the witch who said she would become a greyhound (2.1.56-57), and appears to be the character Q hereafter identifies as Goody Dickinson. Q’s direction indicates the ‘disappearing’ part of the magical transformation (the dogs exit) but leaves no clue how the ‘appearing’ was managed.
- 19 *gammer* ‘A rustic title for an old woman’ (OED). The Boy says ‘my gammer’ (a corruption of ‘grandmother’) because small communities use kin terms even where no biological connection is implied.
- 42 *la* ‘An exclamation formerly used to introduce or accompany a conventional phrase or an address, or to call attention to an emphatic statement’ (OED *la int.*). In Shakespeare *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Slender uses a similar construction: ‘You do yourself

wrong, indeed, la' (1.1.292-3).

50 SD The simplest staging of the transformation of the demon-child into a white horse is a mere report of it happening off stage.

[2.6]

- 7 Cut 'A familiar expression for a common or labouring horse'  
(OED cut *n*<sup>2</sup> 29)
- 10 *curry-comb time* ] the early morning rubbing down (currying) of a horse with a comb
- 15-16 *the divinity of the Mitre* the fine wine of The Mitre tavern in London
- 18 *a puritan . . . the Mitre* the tavern's name comes from the headgear of a bishop, reviled by puritans for its sumptuousness
- 19 *Robert Moll* uses the proper name to sound formal and reproving
- 21-22 *an be ruled* if you'll be ruled
- 27 *because* so that
- 34 *fit* punish (OED *fit v*<sup>1</sup> 12)
- 48 *Light* like 'Slight, an abbreviation of *God's light*, a mild oath
- 49 *all the milk shall* all the milk which shall
- 51 *the proverb of the bishop's foot* a pot of burnt food was said to have had the bishop's foot in it (Barber)
- 59 *trussed* 'Knit together, compactly framed or formed' (OED *trussed ppl.* 1b)
- 65 *look your horse* look for your horse
- 67 *Stand up!* a cry to urge on a horse (OED *stand v.* 103h)

3.1

- 2 *break the cake over the bride's head* a Northern wedding tradition (Barber)
- 5 *lost the church* missed the church ceremony
- 9 *frollic* frolicsome
- crank* high-spirited
- 19 *brag* cheerful

- carries it* promotes it  
 25 *ring backwards* from bass to treble, usually reserved for an emergency warning (Barber)  
 26 *I'fack* I'faith, a mild oath  
 28 *merry conceit of the stretch-ropes* Seely interprets the emergency signal as the bell-ringers' joke about the enormous fire in his kitchen (which is cooking the feast)  
 36 *fare* be entertained with food (OED fare v<sup>1</sup> 8)  
 37 *cate* delicacy  
 40 *'Slid* abbreviation of *God's lid*, a mild oath  
 45 SD *the battle* apparently a musical style used to represent or accompany fighting. That the instruments need not be noisy is indicated by the opening direction of Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* '*The cornets sound a battle within*'  
 46 SD The spirit cannot be seen by the guests, hence their amazement  
 55-56 *woe worth it* a curse on it (OED woe int. 4a)  
 60 *Pax* Latin for *peace*, hence 'be quiet'  
 61 *law-day* day of meeting of court of law, used by vaguely-aggrieved Gregory to mean 'day for settling scores'  
 64 *warrant* protect  
 74 *country* native region, here Lancashire  
 82 *The dresser calls in* A servant signals that the food is ready by knocking upon the table (the 'dresser') from which it is served.  
*fare* be entertained with food (OED fare v<sup>1</sup> 8)  
 86 *messes* groups of persons sitting together and served from the same dishes. Here each mess is ten persons, hence the large quantities.  
 92 *Florentines* a kind of pie or tart, possibly of meat  
 98 *doubler* a large plate or dish  
 107 *'Zooks* short for gadzooks, a mild oath  
 124 *humble-bees* bumble-bees (an alternative name)  
 125 *Jew's-ears* An edible fungus growing on the roots and trunks of trees  
 126 *puckfists* puff-balls, a fungus with ball-shaped spore cases

- cow-shards* cow-pats (solidified puddles of dung)  
 139 *borne* carried (that is, out of the house because drunk)  
 165 *cheer* provisions (OED *cheer* *n*1 6a)  
*deceptio visus* deceptive spectacle  
 165-66 *the former store has 'scaped 'em* the food set aside earlier is unaffected  
 167 *good 'em* do good to them

## [3.2]

- 9 *forgi'* forgive  
 11-12 *to his . . . in a day* apparently a topical allusion, now lost  
 22 'a' ha' (meaning, 'have')  
 29 *that you might* so that you might  
 58 *considered* paid (OED *consider* *v.* 8)  
 64 *acquittance* receipt for the repayment of a debt  
 67-69 *lose it . . . find it . . . conceal it* an archaic form of the subjunctive mood equivalent to 'have lost it . . . have found it . . . concealed it'  
 73-74 *nettled . . . nettled* irritated . . . aroused (OED *nettle* *v.* 2 and 3)  
 75 *raw-boned* having projecting bones  
 78 *rank riding* reckless fast riding of a horse (OED *rank* *a.* 3b), with connotation of sexual 'riding' via 'ramp rider' (OED *ramp* *a.*) and 'lustful, licentious; in heat' (OED *rank* *a.* 13)  
 82 'Sfoot shortened form of *God's foot*, a mild oath  
 94 *case* physical condition (OED *case* *n*1 5b)

## [3.3]

- 27 *husbandman* farmer  
 39 *baffle* disgrace  
 57 'Zooks short for gadzooks, a mild oath  
 60 *a fly touched it* if Moll's intention was to trivialize what he saw, the association of flies with the devil ironically heightens Doughty's suspicion  
 62 *blast* blight (OED *blast* *v.* 8a)  
 64 SD *Sellenger's Round* music to a popular country dance, also known as

- 'The Beginning of the World'. The music is reproduced in William Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (New York: Dover, 1965) 1:69-71.
- 67 *family of love* alluding to a reactionary Dutch religious sect of that name, popular in England, which advocated absolute obedience to established authorities
- 78 *spin two-penny tow* the kind of processing of flax which might be done in a workhouse, hence a strong threat (Barber)
- 96 *sorrel sops* pieces of bread soaked in a sauce made from sorrel, a sour herb
- 100 *stomach* lustful desire (OED stomach *n.* 1g, 5b)
- 102 *a-good* heartily
- 108 '*The Beginning of the World*' another name for 'Sellenger's Round'; see 3.3.64 SDn above.
- 114 '*The Running o' the Country*' 'presumably one of the old dance tunes' (Barber)
- 123 *point* a lace for the tying together parts of clothing (such as a doublet and breeches) where buttons would now be used (OED point *n*<sup>1</sup> B5). Like a button, a point could stand for something of little value, hence Lawrence and Doughty think Moll is making a joke, lines 126 and 133.
- 135 *when all your points are ta'en away* 'At the end of a wedding day the bridegroom's friends undressed him and took away his points by way of preparing him for the bride' (Barber)
- 136 *slops* wide loose trousers (OED slop *n*<sup>1</sup> 4)
- 142 *I's never be jealous the more for that* I shall never be more jealous for that reason
- 157 *scuffling for the Tutbury bull* alluding to a minstrels' sport in Tutbury on the Staffordshire/Derbyshire border in which one team tried to drive a bull across the river Dove and the other team tried to prevent it (Barber)
- 170 *hornpipe* a vigorous dance to the accompaniment of a wind instrument

*posset* a hot drink of milk, liquor and spice, often drunk before retiring

187 *trim* elegantly dressed

192 *what's here to do?* what's the matter here? (OED *do v.* 33)

## 4.1

15-17 *how damnably . . . rid now* last night's 'riding' was with Moll, and now the sexual connotation is less pleasing to Robert

19 *Gramercy* thanks

21 *Aesop's ass* allusion to the story of an ass who, although carrying food, eat whatever grew along his way

24 *Cut* 'A familiar expression for a common or labouring horse' (OED *cut n*<sup>2</sup> 29)

26 *tail* vagina

28 *cheer* provisions (OED *cheer n*1 6a)

35-36 '*Horse, horse . . . carry me*' the spell Mistress Generous used when first bridling him at 3.2.103-104

42-43 *deep ditch . . . quick-set* the edge of the stage treated as a ditch, and the standing audience as a hedge made from plant cuttings (OED *quickset n.*1)

48 *beldams* mannish hags

*cramming* eating greedily (OED *cram v.* 2b)

53 *demur* delay (between courses)

57 *As chief* most important of all (chiefly)

65 *sod* boiled (OED *sod ppl.*)

73 *leese* lose

78 *nab* not in OED; apparently a familiar spirit (Barber)

82 *Nan* grandmother, a familiar form of address of an older women by an unrelated younger women. Both women have 'ridden' Robert.

91-93 *if they . . . presently* if they are about to have liquid food (spoon-meat) they probably are nearly finished their feast

95 *cheer* provisions (OED *cheer n*1 6a)

- 107-24 In Q this song is printed at the end of the play (on L4r) under the label 'Song. II. Act.', although this location in Act Four seems to need it more. Lines have been assigned to particular witches according to the names of the familiar spirits where mentioned.
- 111 *huggy* hug ye
- 120 *store* provide for
- 126 *shift for myself* look out for my own interests (OED *shift* *v.* 7a)
- 138 SP *Where's my Mamillion* assigned to '2.' in Q, but Meg called her familiar this name at 2.1.13
- 139 SP *And my incubus* assigned to '1.' in Q  
*My tiger to be bestrid* assigned to '3.' in Q
- 145 *try conclusions* see which of us is the stronger (OED *conclusion* *n.* 8b)

## [4.2]

- 15 *sunder beds* sleep separately
- 28 *plight* condition (OED *plight* *n.*<sup>2</sup> 5)
- 30 *bate an ace* lose a jot (OED *ace* *n.* 3b)
- 33 *late* lately
- 46 *gramercy* thanks
- 49-50 *tied to . . . confess something* Robert, having overpowered her since the end of 4.1, has bridled Mistress Generous (which turned her into a horse) and tied her in the stables. Here he likens her state to one tied to the rack of torture, as witches Q might be.
- 53 *spurred* pricked by spurs
- 55 *sore travailed* worked hard
- 76 *currying* the grooming of a horse with a comb
- 79 *caparisons* ornamented cloths worn by a horse
- 114 *believe no witches* believe there are no witches
- 127 Although Q's reading *juggling* (meaning 'that which is part of a deception') would be an appropriate adjective here, Mrs Generous makes clear that the bridle jingles at 4.1.1.
- 130 *engine* device, with strong connotations of 'snare' (OED *engine* *n.*

- 3 and 5c)
- 134 If not a misprint, Q's reading 'of' is an archaism (OED of *prep.* 55a)
- 142 *meander* bewilderingly complicated situation (OED *meander n.* 2c)
- 143 *intricated* entangled
- 148 *chary* careful
- 156 *Lift up . . . yon hills* 'a reference to Psalm 121:1 "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help"' (Barber)
- 158 *horrid dwelling* whatever earthly benefit she got by her dealing with the devil
- 167 *promis'd to the stake* burning at the stake was a continental punishment for witchcraft, while in England hanging was used. Generous is not quite making sense, since the punishment follows discovery of the compact and cannot be a substitute for it
- 173 *how far doth that contract stretch?* what have you signed away?
- 175 *his part that made it* God's part
- 183 *penitent tears have power to quench* the power of sincere repentance was denied by extreme Protestantism. Lancashire, however, was still a centre of Catholic dissent
- 191 *presume't* take upon myself the authority to forgive her
- 199 *as I do . . . pardon me* as I pardon you, so heaven pardon me for presuming to do this (see line 191)
- 204 *passed* mutually interchanged (OED *pass v.* 9)
- 215 *Too little all* our combined tears are insufficient
- 221 *My wife, sister, and daughter* as all things to me
- 227 *journey-man* means of travel, with a pun on journeyman meaning a qualified tradesman working for daily pay (as opposed to being a master)

## [4.3]

- 5 *bouncing* bragging (OED *bouncing vbl. n.* 3, with this example)
- 24 *disposers* managers of their own affairs
- 26 *to thrust them out on't* to throw them (the Seelys) out of the house

- 30-31 *some wholesome . . . the commonwealth* legal proceedings to take protective control of the Seelys' property during their temporary insanity
- 35 *as far to seek of* no nearer knowing
- 40 *lay* search (OED *lay v.*<sup>1</sup> 18c)
- 41-43 *the purpose . . . lease be out* ' . . . in some cases, the devil set a definite time when he would come and fetch the witch who had dedicated herself to him' (Barber)
- 44 *skimmington* a parodic procession led by impersonators or mannequins of a married couple intended to mock their domestic strife
- 51 *Ware wedlock, ho!* look out, here comes wedlock! (OED *ware v.* 3). Shakespeare's Thersites uses the same construction: 'The bull has the game. Ware horns, ho!' (*Troilus and Cressida* 5.8.3-4)
- 62 *want of bedstaves?* because broken by the couple's vigorous lovemaking, a typical crudity concerning newlyweds
- 63 *better implement* an erect penis to consummate the marriage
- 64 *a homely tale* plain truth
- 66 *greedy worm* passionate desire (OED *worm n.* 11c)
- 68 *mickle* great
- 76 *ligatory* binding. 'Impotence was often blamed on witches, and "ligation" (binding) was the technical term for this activity' (Barber)
- 82 *undertake* deal with (with connotation of 'have sex with')
- 86 *hoydens* ill-mannered, low-class boors
- 92 *wot* knows
- 93 *trou* think
- 93-94 *Gaffer Do-Nought* Mister Do-Nothing. Gaffer was usually a title respectful of age and/or seniority
- 94 *woe worth* a curse on (OED *woe int.* 4a)
- 100 *swag-bellied* paunchy
- 102 SP The answer to this question is provided in language that suits Doughty, so (contrary to Q's reading) the questioner should be someone else. Lawrence perhaps stands apart from the trio Arthur,

- Bantam, and Shakestone comforting Parnell.
- 113 *cozened* deceived
- 122 *jury of women* such juries examine the bodies of women claiming non-consummation of marriage and women accused of witchcraft (See Diane Purkiss *The Witch in History*, London 1996, pp. 231-49)
- 125-26 *in this case* under these circumstances, but also punning on 'case' as vagina. Although unrecorded by OED, Shakespeare commonly used this slang, eg Mistress Quickly's 'Vengeance of Jenny's case! Fir on her!' *Merry Wives of Windsor* 4.1.56
- 127 *out of a doing case* unfit for sexual 'doing'
- 133 *mind* intention (OED *mind* *n.*<sup>1</sup> 10)
- 145 *maleficium versus hanc* 'A curse upon . . .', the legal term for magic causing impotence
- 148 *lere* knowledge
- 153 *now right* right now
- 156 *casten* cast  
*an't* if not
- 158 *bean-cod* bean-pod
- 164 *con* understand
- 165 *stay* remain during
- 167 *ware* teach them to beware (OED *ware* *v.*<sup>1</sup> 5, with this example)  
*mell or ma'* meddle (OED *mell* *v.*<sup>2</sup> 8b)
- 168 *testril* a teston, worth sixpence  
*longie* 'a lout . . . see the OED entry under "lungis" whose variant "longis" is suggested here as the basis of Parnell's word *longie*' (Barber)
- 169 *losel* good-for-nothing
- 170 *ma'* may or make, either fits the sense  
*warplin* 'new-born thing . . . ie Lawrence impotent as a baby' (Barber)
- 171 *boggle* fumble with
- 172 *trou* think
- 173.1-2 SD *skimmington and his wife* these appear to be mannequins; see

note to line 44 above

- 173.2 SD *country rustics* peasants  
 173.6 SD *alarm* a sound made to call men to arms  
 173.7 SD *hoydens* ill-mannered, low-class boors  
 173.8 SD *vail bonnet* take of their head-wear to show submission and  
 deference (OED *bonnet n.* 1a)
- 180 *this* the beating  
*gang* walk
- 185 *you . . . ticklers!* alluding again to Lawrence's impotence: he can  
 only tickle a woman
- 187 *ladle* the OED etymology suggests that *skimmington* might derive  
 from a wife's beating of her husband with her skimming ladle

## [4.4]

- 12 *halt* hobble  
*downright* entirely
- 21 *rack and manger* 'a play on the phrase "to lie at rack and manger"  
 which meant "to live in luxury"' (Barber)
- 33 *Naunt* my aunt (shortened from 'mine aunt')
- 43 *table* table guests

## [4.5]

- 3 *chamber* chamber-pot, or more precisely the urine in it
- 4 *short banquet* dessert of sweets and fruit (OED *banquet n.*<sup>1</sup> 3)
- 18 *fain* gladly
- 29 *all one* originally 'not a matter of choice', but here in the derived  
 sense of 'does not matter' (OED all C *adv.* 5)
- 32.1 SD *pedant* child's tutor
- 32.2 SD *strain* melody (OED *strain n.*<sup>2</sup> 13)
- 36 *In his . . . your father* In the house of him (your mother's husband)  
 who is thought to be your father. The pedant was 'in his house' in  
 several senses: taking his place, intruding into his bloodline (the  
 house of Bantam), and, possibly, occupying his wife's vagina (OED

- house *n.*<sup>1</sup> 7c)
- 38 *Nise prius* Latin for 'Unless previously', the first words of a writ served on a sheriff to further a legal case at the county assizes.
- 39 *'sizes* assizes, county courts of civil and criminal justice
- 41 *tail* bottom
- 48 *otherwise* other way
- 66.1 SD *switch* 'a thin flexible shoot cut from a tree' (OED *switch n.* 2a)
- curry-comb* instrument for rubbing down a horse
- 72 *Lord President's court in York* The king's deputy ruling the six northern counties (Barber)
- 72-73 *stood for his attorney* took his place as though his agent
- 74 *amort* still, as though dead
- 86 *By-blows* bastards
- 89 *health* a drink in honour of good health (OED *health n.* 6)
- 90 *fain* gladly
- 101 *pug* puck, a small demon

## 5.1

- 1 *country* native region (OED *country* 4), here Lancashire
- 4 *'Zooks* short for gadzooks, a mild oath
- 10 *dogged* having the bad qualities of a dog
- 12 *worry* seize by the throat
- 17 *stout* brave and resolute
- 35-36 *could not make a bit of butter* witches were commonly blamed when cream could not be churned into butter. Shakespeare's Robin Goodfellow (a puck) is said to 'bootless make the breathless housewife churn' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2.1.37)
- 41 *gear* foul stuff (OED *gear n.* 10)
- 45 *ivry* twisted
- 52 *for me* on my behalf
- 58 *After you* Doughty accepts being a kind of second father to the boy
- Gossip* godparent
- 61 *dog-tricks* treacherous, spiteful acts

- horse-tricks* using people and animals like horses  
 86 *but by* except that he is distinguishable by  
 87 *horse-corser* dealer in horses. Like modern used-car sellers, these  
 were proverbial deceitful.  
 99 *folks* relatives  
 100 *Gritty* millers were often suspected of adulterating flour with  
 cheap materials, which would make the end products taste gritty  
*close* secret (OED *close* adj. A7)  
 103 *cuff-devil* devil thumper

## [5.2]

- 10 *Morglay* name of the sword owned by mythical hero Sir Bevis of  
 Hampton  
*comrogue* fellow rogue  
 13 *Gib* familiar name for a male cat  
*Askapart* name of the giant killed by Sir Bevis (see note to line 10)  
 15 *brave* fine, describing the lodging, not the soldier  
 17.3 SD *several* separate, not necessarily more than two  
 22 *Laplands* Lapland was the fabled home of witches  
 23.2 SD *starts* leaps up suddenly  
 30 *have at you* cry to accompany a strike (as with 'take that!')  
 32 *light on* landed a blow on (OED *light* *v.*<sup>1</sup> 10a)

## [5.3]

- 27 *mere* complete and unaided (OED *mere* *adj.* A 2, 4)  
 40 *blaz'd* proclaimed (OED *blaze* *v.*<sup>2</sup> 2)  
 49 *sunder'd* parted  
 66 *fain* gladly  
 71 *murrain* pestilence  
 78 *bilbo* a high quality sword, named after Bilbao, Spain, where they  
 were made  
 83 *Fast or loose* an old confidence trick game in which a seemingly  
 knotted cord is freed from a stick. The Soldier claims a small

- success against the equally 'slippery' spirits.  
 90 *scot-free* without paying a 'reckoning' (scot)  
 92 *tract* trace (OED *tract n.*<sup>3</sup> 11)  
 100 *last age* period before the end of time, which Christian mythology  
 predicted would be a time of miracles (benign and evil)  
 103 *my great incredulity* refusal to believe in witchcraft  
 106 *Know you . . . read it* hand could also mean handwriting, and  
 since the amputated hand informs Generous about its owner, he  
 takes the enquiry thus.  
 112-13 *tenants at will* tenants without security of tenure, liable to be  
 evicted anytime at the owner's will  
 113 *rent-free* without paying rent, but also possibly punning on 'rent'  
 meaning 'gash' or 'cut'  
 115 *hand* as in line 106, this puns on the meaning 'handwriting'

## [5.4]

- 14 *sic* is 'so' As in 1.1, Whetstone shows basic Latin knowledge  
 24 *stay* support (OED *stay n.*<sup>2</sup>), with pun on 'place of sojourn'  
 (OED *stay n.*<sup>3</sup> 6b)  
 32 *qualm* sickness  
 40 *shrewd* severe  
 45 *their beating* ' . . . pulse was formerly sometimes misconstrued as a  
 plural' (Barber)  
 49 *prove* test (OED *prove v.* 1a)  
 55 *testate* witness (OED *testate n.* B1)  
 57 *handy-dandy* children's game of guessing which of two closed fists  
 contains a small object  
 70 *inundant* overflowing

## [5.5]

- 1 *country* native region (OED *country* 4), here Lancashire  
 2 *Lapland* the fabled home of witches (as at 5.2.22)  
 9 *taken a course* instigated a pursuit (OED *course n.* 7a)

- 17 *quean* whore
- 18 SD This and Shakestone's ensuing comment indicate that, no longer bewitched, the servants are again appropriately dressed. Q's 'first habits' is misleading since at their first entrance Lawrence and Parnell were already bewitched.
- 40-41 Q's reading of 'witched worch' might mean 'bewitched pain' (OED *wark n.*<sup>1</sup>), but the context seems to demand something more simple.
- 41 *woe worth* a curse on (OED *woe int.* 4a)
- 42 *made all so nought* made everything (his penis) so useless
- 45 *to do* what to do
- 59 *only* only until
- 63 *svink* toil
- 65 *painful* painstaking (OED *painful a.* 5)
- 67 *hea'en* heaven
- 67-68 *are a-was* have become (Barber)
- 69 *anest* among/against (OED *anent prep.* 8)
- 78 *instructive* (a son) apt to be instructed
- 91 *untoward* unruly
- 110 *bravest* finest (OED *brave a.* 3)
- 119 *their witch* the one that bewitched them
- 127-28 *saving his land . . . your distraction* Seely was too busy with his own problems to help Arthur about this mortgage, as described at 1.1.242-69
- 137 *make sides* divide yourselves into two parties: the witches and their enemies
- 147 *'sizes* assizes, county courts of civil and criminal justice
- 149 *Naunt* my aunt (shortened from 'mine aunt')
- 150 *'od's fish* God's fish, a rare oath
- 158 *fardel* pack
- 165 *bugs-words* frightening speeches
- 166 *for* from (OED *for prep.* 23d)
- 171-72 *wiser in commission for the peace* the Justices of the Peace (inferior magistrates) who are 'in commission' in the sense of appointed for

- the purpose
- 182 *switch* 'a thin flexible shoot cut from a tree' (OED *switch* n. 2a),  
which could be used as a horsewhip
- 198 *what you know, you know* Shakespeare's Iago says the same thing in  
almost identical circumstances (*Othello* 5.2.309)
- 205 *You are not mad?* Are you mad? (for confessing)
- 208 *dandle* play with like a baby
- 211.2 SD *storm* struggle violently against their restraint
- 216 *Had's* Had his
- 229 *like* likely (OED *like* adj. 8)
- 232 *'sizes* assizes, county courts of civil and criminal justice
- 232 *Vivat Rex!* long live the king!
- 246 *atonement* mutual reconciliation (OED *atonement* n. 1, 2)
- 249 *on afore* go ahead  
*drovers* drivers of cattle to market
- 250 *untoward* unruly
- 250.3 SD *severally* one by one but not necessarily from different directions



## SYNOPSIS

The action of the play takes place in Lancashire, mostly at the homes of two squires, Seely and Generous. The first scene has three young 'blades', Arthur, Bantam, and Shakestone, debating the mysterious, perhaps supernatural, disappearance of a hare they were hunting. They are joined by Whetstone, a fool whom 'all the brave blades of the country use to whet their wits upon'. The young men are heading to sample the renowned hospitality of Master Generous, Whetstone's uncle, who has agreed to save Arthur from losing his lands to a usurious mortgagor. Ordinarily Arthur's uncle, Seely, might be expected to help, but Seely's household is in turmoil because all respect and deference has broken down. Seely's son Gregory and daughter Winny insult and bully their parents, and are in turn insulted and bullied by their respective servants Lawrence and Parnell. Thus newly raised in status, Lawrence and Parnell are able to marry at their former masters' expense, and the first act ends with the planning of celebrations for this event.

The second act begins with the villains of the piece, four witches, exulting at their success in bewitching the Seelys and planning further mischief. By changing themselves into greyhounds and leading the other dogs astray they plan to ruin the young men's hare-hunting. Generous bids farewell to his young guests, risen early for another day's recreation, and finds that his wife too has left the house on horseback. After instructing this groom Robert to deny her the horse next time, and to fetch wine from Lancaster, Generous is visited by a soldier who begs to be given work. His timing is perfect, for the man Generous has hired to run his mill resigns complaining of attacks at night by fierce cats. The soldier gladly takes the miller's place.

A truant schoolboy, bored of gorging on fruit, finds two greyhounds and leads them off in hope of a reward from their owner, while Bantam and Shakestone mock Whetstone's irritating stupidity despite their promise to tolerate him for the sake of Arthur's new

relationship with Whetstone's uncle, Generous. The boy re-enters with the two greyhounds and begins to beat them for failing to chase a hare, when the dogs are suddenly transformed into a witch and her demon-child. The boy is bridled and kidnapped, to be taken to the witches' feast.

On his way to Lancaster, Generous's groom Robert stops off at the home of his sweetheart Moll, who offers to fly him to London and back overnight to fetch the wine his master prefers. Having seen her make her broom and pail move unaided, Robert agrees.

Act three begins with Seely and his wife Joan preparing the feast on the day of Lawrence and Parnell's marriage, which descends into farce as an unseen spirit transforms the food into stones, cowpats, and live animals. Unexpectedly Gregory and Winny are restored to their former obedience to their parents, so the remaining guests decide to stay and enjoy what food is left. At the Generous home, Robert has returned from London with the wine his master wanted, and proof that he has made the 300 mile journey overnight. Puzzled, Generous exits and Robert worries he will be punished for revealing what must be witchcraft. Mistress Generous asks Robert for her horse and, as instructed, Robert denies her. Infuriated, she bridles him and leads him off like a horse. Back at the wedding feast all seems well, although Seely and Joan fall out while their children display proper obedience. The spell on the Seely household has changed, not ended, and the musicians at the wedding find their instruments will yield no sound. Even sceptical Doughty concludes that witches are at work.

The reason the food disappeared from the wedding feast is apparent at the start of act four: it was needed for a secret witch-feast at a barn. One witch arrives there by badger, another arrives by bear, and Mistress Generous arrives on back of the groom Robert, who is tied up outside but peeps in to see the witches cavort with their familiar spirits. Spotting his chance, the boy the witches kidnapped escapes and the witches break up their celebrations to pursue him. Generous's suspicions are by now highly aroused, and on her return home Mistress Generous is forced to admit her pact with the devil, for which he forgives her upon a

solemn promise to reform. With chaos still reigning in the Seely household, Doughty takes in the parents while Arthur takes in the children. Their servants are no better off. Parnell wants to annul the marriage because formerly lusty Lawrence is impotent since tying his codpiece with a charm given him by Moll, and the villagers are quick to perform a ritual mockery of the unhappy couple. Still galled by the insults of the young blades, Whetstone is assisted by his aunt, Mistress Generous, in achieving revenge by showing them their 'true' fathers, in each case a family servant.

At the mill the soldier is kept from sleeping by cat-like spirits, one of whom, Mistress Generous, loses a hand to the soldier's trusty Spanish sword. Thus forced to take to her bed, Mistress Generous cannot conceal her stump from her husband, who also has the cut-off member recovered from the mill. It is obvious that her repentance and reformation were feigned. Once convinced that witchcraft is about, Doughty acts quickly to capture the women responsible, at which point their charms fail. Lawrence is restored to vigour, he and Parnell to amity, and Mistress Generous is given over to the constable leading the other witches to the Lancaster assizes. In a final desperate effort the witches call unavailingly on their familiar spirits, and one breaks down and confesses her crime. Whetstone decides to stay with his aunt despite her crimes and is disinherited by Generous in favour of Arthur. The play ends with the witches led away to the indeterminate fate that was, at the time the play was first performed, the sensational news of London.



## TEXTUAL NOTES

The play was first printed in a quarto of 1634 and the control text for the present edition is one of the two British Library copies of this quarto (shelfmark C.34.c.54). In keeping with *Globe Quartos* editorial criteria, no attempt was made to collate variation between early copies. James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps published an edition of the play in 1853 and R. H. Shepherd included it in his dramatic works of Heywood in 1874, but neither provided notes or a modernized text. Laird H. Barber's edition of 1979 (New York, Garland) provided a facsimile and a transcription of the 1634 quarto with extensive notes, but the present edition is the first in modern spelling.

The necessary modernization of the barely-comprehensible dialect of Parnell and Lawrence has greatly reduced their regional distinctiveness. The effort to retain something of their difference, and the treatment of terminal *n* in their speeches require special comment. Their dialect puts an *n* sound at the end of verbs, so that *must* or *may* becomes *mun*, *shall* becomes *shan*, and *have* becomes *han*. In this edition these have been elided to *ma'*, *sha'*, and *ha'*. Other verbs they end with *-en* on the Old English model, so *casten* is their past tense of *cast*. Where misunderstanding is likely these have been modernized. Thus *shoulde*n and *woulde*n have been changed to *should* and *would* to avoid confusion with *shouldn't* and *wouldn't*.

The following abbreviations are used in the collation:

<i>Halliwell-Phillipps</i>	a reading from James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps's 1853 edition
<i>Shepherd</i>	a reading from R. H. Shepherd's 1874 edition
<i>(Barber)</i>	a suggestion made in Laird H. Barber's 1979 edition
<i>this edn</i>	a reading originating in this edition

## 1.1

- 226 think ] *Halliwell-Phillipps*; *rhinke* Q  
 253 been ] *Shepherd*; *hin* Q  
 271 you ] *Halliwell-Phillipps*; *yon* Q

## [1.2]

- 5 conjure ] *Shepherd*; *conure* Q  
 26 transgress ] *Shepherd*; *trangress* Q  
 152 warrants ] *Halliwell-Phillipps*; *warrant* Q  
 215 brains ] *Halliwell-Phillipps*; *braincs* Q

## 2.1

- 4 SP *Moll* ] *this edn*; *Meg.* Q  
 12 SP *Mawd* ] *this edn*; not in Q

## [2.2]

- 31 like ] *Shepherd*; *likes* Q  
 37 SP *Arthur* ] *Halliwell-Phillipps*; *Gener.* Q.  
 196 bones ] *Halliwell-Phillipps*; *flesh* Q

## [2.3]

- 5.1 SD *John* ] *this edn*; *J.* Q  
 19 SD *Exeunt* ] *this edn*; *Exit.* Q

## [2.4]

- 63 SD *Exeunt* ] *this edn*; *Exit.* Q

## [2.5]

- 15.1 SD GILLIAN ] *this edn*; *Goody* Q.  
 15.2-3 SD *a small . . . greyhounds* ] *this edn*; *the Boy upon the dogs, going in.* Q  
 50 *what's* ] *this edn*; *wher's* Q

## 3.1

- 34 SD *Enter . . . WHETSTONE*] *this edn*; *Enter Musicians, Lawrence, Parnell, Win. Mal. Spencer, two Country Lasses, Doughty, Greg. Arthur, Shakton, Bantam, and Whetstone.* Q
- 46 SD *Enter a spirit above* ] *this edn*; *The Spirit appears.* Q
- 81 SD *Knocking . . . dresser* ] *this edn*; *Knock within, as at dresser.* Q
- 93 SD *Enter fiddlers . . . they enter* ] *this edn*; *Enter Musicians playing before, Lawrence, Doughty, Arthur, Shakton, Bantam, Whetstone, and Gregory, with dishes: A Spirit (over the doore) does some action to the dishes as they enter.* Q

## [3.3]

- 34 in ] *Shepherd*; *is* Q
- 103 SD *Fiddlers . . . tune* ] *this edn*; *Musicke. Selengers round. As they beginne to daunce, they play another tune, then fall into many.* Q
- 108 SD *The . . . tune* ] *this edn*; *Musicke. Every one a severall tune.* Q

## 4.1

- 106 SD *Each . . . song* ] *this edn*; *Dance and Song together. In the time of which the Boy speaks.* Q
- 141 SD ROBERT . . . *spirit* ] *this edn*; *Robin stands amaz'd at this* Q

## [4.2]

- 99 all my ] *this edn*; *my all* Q
- 127 jingling ] *this edn*; *jugling* Q
- 134 on ] *this edn*; *of* Q
- 199 me ] Q; *thee (Barber)*

## [4.3]

- 102 SP Lawrence ] *this edn*; *Dou.* Q

## [4.5]

- 43 SP *Arthur, Shakestone, and Whetstone* ] *this edn; All.* Q  
 52 SD *Enter . . . face.* ] *this edn; Enter a nimble Taylor dauncing, using the same posture to Shakstone.* Q  
 62 SP *Arthur and Whetstone* ] *this edn; All* Q  
 66 SD *Enter . . . face.* ] *this edn; Enter Robin with a switch and a Currycomb, he points at Arthur.* Q  
 78 SD *Enter . . . face.* ] *this edn; Enter a Gallant, as before to him.* Q  
 82 SP *Arthur* ] *this edn; Whet.* Q

## 5.1

- 52 SP *Miller* ] *Halliwell-Phillipps; not in* Q  
 58 *you* ] *Shepherd; yon* Q

## [5.2]

- 17 SD *Enter . . . doors* ] *this edn; Enter Mrs. Generous, Mall, all the Witches and their spirits (at severall dores.)* Q  
 23 SD *The . . . starts* ] *this edn; The Witches retire: the Spirits come about him with a dreadfull noise: he starts.* Q  
 30 SD *He . . . bloodied* ] *this edn; Beates them off, followes them in, and Enters againe.* Q

## [5.3]

- 92 SD *They . . . hand* ] *this edn; Lookes about and findes the hand.* Q

## [5.5]

- 18 SD *proper* ] *this edn; first* Q  
 40-41 *wicked witch* ] *this edn; witched worch* Q  
 148 *Enter GILLIAN, MAWD, MEG, Constable, and Officers* ] *this edn; Enter Witches, Constable, and Officers.* Q  
 211 SD *MISTRESS GENEROUS, MOLL, GILLIAN, and MAWD storm* ] *this edn; They storme.* Q

250 SD *Exit Constable, Officers, MISTRESS GENEROUS,  
MOLL, GILLIAN, MAWD, and MEG severally ]  
this edn; Exeunt severally Q*



## APPENDIX 1

The following is an extract from a letter from Nathaniel Tomkyns to Sir Robert Phelips of 16 August 1634. It was published by Herbert Berry in *Shakespeare's Playhouses* (New York: AMS Press, 1987) pp. 123-4, and is presented here in modernized spelling.

Here hath been lately a new comedy at the Globe called *The Witches of Lancashire*, acted by reason of the great concourse of people three days together. The third day I went with a friend to see it, and found a greater appearance of fine folk, gentlemen and gentlewomen, than I thought had been in town in the vacation. The subject was of the slights and passages done or supposed to be done by these witches sent from thence hither, and other witches and other witches and their familiars. Of their nightly meetings in several places, their banqueting with all sorts of meat and drink conveyed unto them by their familiars upon the pulling of a cord, the walking of pails of milk by themselves and (as they say of children) alone, the transforming of men and women into the shapes of several creatures and especially of horses by putting an enchanted bridle into their mouths, their posting to and from places far distant in an incredible short time, the cutting off a witch (= gentlewoman's) hand in the form of a cat by a soldier turned miller, known to her husband by a ring thereon (the only tragical part of the story), the representing of wrong and putative fathers in the shape of mean persons to gentlemen by way of derision, the tying of a knot at a marriage (after the French manner) to cease masculine ability, and the conveying away of the good cheer and bringing in a mock feast of bones and stones instead thereof and the filling of pies with living birds and young cats etcetera. And though there be not in it, to my understanding, any poetical genius, or art, or language, or judgement to state or tenet of witches (which I expected) or application to virtue, but full of ribaldry and of things improbable and impossible, yet in respect of the newness and the subject (the witches being still visible

and in prison here) and in regard it consisteth from the beginning to the end of odd passages and fopperies to provoke laughter, and is mixed with diverse songs and dances, it passeth for a merry and excellent new play.

## APPENDIX 2

The dramatists appear to have had access to witness statements taken in connection with the case of the Pendle witches. The most illuminating statement is that of Edmund Robinson which was published in John Webster, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (London, 1677). This material is clearly the source for 2.3, 2.5, 4.1, and 5.1 and the miller's boy in the play corresponds to the real Edmund Robinson. In the following extract from Webster's book (sigs. Yy2r-Yy3r) the spelling and dating have been modernized.

The examination of Edmund Robinson, son of Edmund Robinson of Pendle Forest, eleven years of age, taken at Padham before Richard Shuttleworth and John Starkey Esquires, two of his majesty's justices of the peace within the county of Lancaster, the 10th day of February 1634.

Who upon oath informeth, being examined concerning the great meeting of the witches of Pendle, saith that upon All Saint's day last past he, this informer, being with one Henry Parker, a near-door neighbour to him in Wheatley Lane, desired the said Parker to give him leave to gather some bullace, which he did. In gathering whereof he saw two greyhounds, *viz* a black and a brown. One came running over the next field towards him; he verily thinking the one of them to be Master Nutter's, and the other to be Master Robinson's, the said gentlemen then having such like. And saith, the said greyhounds came to him and fawned on him, they having about their necks either of them a collar unto each of which was tied a string, which collars (as this informer affirmeth) did shine like gold. And he thinking that some either of Master Nutter's or Master Robinson's family should have followed them, yet seeing nobody

to follow them, he took the same greyhounds thinking to course with them.

And presently a hare did rise very near before him, at the sight whereof he cried 'Loo, loo, loo' but the dogs would not run. Whereupon he, being very angry, took them and with the strings that were about their collars tied them to a little bush at the next hedge, and with a switch that he had in his hand he beat them. And instead of the black greyhound one Dickinson's wife stood up, a neighbour whom this informer knoweth, and instead of the brown one, a little boy, whom this informer knoweth not. At which sight this informer, being afraid, endeavoured to run away. But being stayed by the woman (*viz.* by Dickinson's wife), she put her hand into her pocket and pulled forth a piece of silver much like to a fair shilling and offered to give him it to hold his tongue and not to tell, which he refused saying 'Nay, thou art a witch!' Whereupon, she put her hand into her pocket again and pulled out a thing like unto a bridle that jingled, which she put on the little boy's head; which said boy stood up in the likeness of a white horse and in the brown greyhound's stead.

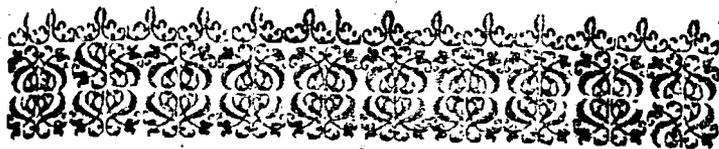
Then immediately Dickinson's wife took this informer before her upon the said horse and carried him to a new house called Hoarstones being about a quarter of a mile off. Whither, when they were come, there were diverse persons about the door, and he saw diverse others riding on horses of several colours towards the said house, who tied their horses to a hedge near to the said house. Which persons went into the said house, to the number of three-score or thereabouts, as this informer thinketh, where they had a fire and meat roasting in the said house. Whereof a young woman, whom this informer knoweth not, gave him flesh and bread upon a trencher and drink in a glass, which after the first taste he refused and would have no more but said it was naught.

And presently after, seeing diverse of the said company going into a barn near adjoining, he followed after them and there he saw six of them kneeling and pulling, all six of them, six several ropes which were fastened or tied to the top of the barn. Presently after which pulling there came into this informer's sight flesh smoking, butter in lumps, and milk,

as it were flying from the said ropes. All which fell into basins which were placed under the said ropes. And after that these six had done, there came other six which did so likewise. And during all the time of their several pulling they made such ugly faces as scared this informer, so that he was glad to run out and steal homewards. Who, immediately finding they wanted one that was in their company, some of them ran after him near to a place in a highway called Boggard Hole, where he (this informer) meet two horsemen, at the sight whereof the said persons left off following him. But the foremost of those persons that followed him he knew to be one Loind's wife, which said wife together with one Dickinson's wife and one Janet Davies he hath seen since at several times times in a croft or close adjoining to his father's house, which put him in great fear.

And further, this informer saith, upon Thursday after New Year's Day last past, he saw the said Loind's wife sitting upon a cross-piece of wood being within the chimney of his father's dwelling house and he, calling to her, said 'Come down thou, Loind's wife!' And immediately the said Loind's wife went up out of his sight. And further this informer saith that after he was come from the company aforesaid to his father's house, being towards evening, his father bade him go and fetch home two cows to seal ['fasten in their stalls' OED seal *v.*<sup>2</sup>]. And in the way, in a field called the Ellers, he chanced to hap upon a boy who began to quarrel with him, and they fought together till the informer had his ears and face made up very bloody by fighting, and looking down he saw the boy had a cloven foot. At which sight he, being greatly affrighted, came away from him to seek the cows. And in the way he saw a light, like to a lantern, towards which he made haste, supposing it to be carried by some of Master Robinson's people. But when he came to the place he only found a woman standing on a bridge, whom when he saw he knew her to be Loind's wife. And, knowing her, he turned back again and immediately he met with the aforesaid boy from whom he offered to run, which boy gave him a blow on the back that made him to cry.

And further this informer saith that when he was in the barn he saw three women take six pictures from off the beam, in which pictures were many thorns or such-like things sticked in them. And that Loind's wife took one of the pictures down, but the other two women that took down the rest he knoweth not. And being further asked what persons were at the aforesaid meeting, he nominated these persons following, *viz.* Dickinson's wife, Henry Priestley's wife and his lad, Alice Hargreave (widow), Janet Davies, William Davies, and the wife of Henry Facks and her sons John and Miles, the wife of Dennery's, James Hargreave of Marstead, Loind's wife, one James's wife, Saunders's wife and Saunders himself *sicut credit*, one Lawrence's wife, one Saunder Pinn's wife of Barraford, one Holgate and his wife of Leonards of the West Close.



## ACTVS, I. SCENA, I.

*Enter Master Arthur, Mr. Shakstone, Mr. Bantam :*  
(*as from hunting.*)

*Arthur.*



As ever sport of expectation,  
Thus crost in th' height.

*Shak.* Tush these are accidents, all game is

*Arth.* So you may call them <sup>fit</sup> (subject to)

Chances, or crosses, or what else you please,

But for my part, Ile hold them prodigies,

As things transcending Nature.

*Bantam.* O you speake this,

Because a Hare hath crost you.

*Arth.* A Hare? a Witch, or rather a Divell I think.

For tell me Gentlemen, was't possible

In such a faire course, and no covert neere,

We in pursuit, and she in constant view,

Our eyes not wandring but all bent that way,

The Dogs in chase, she ready to be ceas'd,

And at the instant, when I durst have layd

My life to gage, my Dog had pinch't her, then

To vanish into nothing!

*Shak.* Somewhat strange, but not as you inforce it,

*Arth.* Make it plaine

That I am in an error, sure I am

That I about me have no borrow'd eyes.

They are mine owne, and Matches.

*Bant.* She might find some Muse as then not visible to us,

And escape that way.

*Shak.* Perhaps some Foxe had earth'd there,

B

And