

**THE KNIGHT OF
THE BURNING PESTLE**

by

FRANCIS BEAUMONT

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(in order of their appearance)

THE PROLOGUE

CITIZEN, *a grocer*

WIFE, *the grocer's wife*

RAFE, *grocer's apprentice*

VENTUREWELL, *a merchant*

JASPER, *merchant's apprentice*

LUCY, *Venturewell's daughter*

BOY

HUMPHREY, *a friend to Venturewell*

TIM, *an apprentice*

GEORGE, *an apprentice*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, *Jasper's mother*

MICHAEL, *a second son of Mistress Merrythought*

OLD MASTER MERRYTHOUGHT

TAPSTER

HOST

BARBER

I KNIGHT

II KNIGHT

MAN

WOMAN

POMPONIA, *daughter to the King of Moldavia*

SERVANT

II BOY

SERGEANT

WILLIAM HAMMERTON, *a pewterer*

GEORGE GREENGOOSE, *a poulterer*

I SOLDIER

II SOLDIER

PART ONE

PROLOGUE

*Several GENTLEMEN sitting on stools upon the stage.
The CITIZEN, his WIFE, and RAFF sitting below among
the audience.*

Enter PROLOGUE.

PROLOGUE

From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city walls,
We now have brought our scene --

CITIZEN leaps on the stage.

CITIZEN

Hold your peace, goodman boy.

PROLOGUE

What do you mean, sir?

CITIZEN

That you have no good meaning. This seven years there hath
been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still
girds at citizens. And now you call your play *The London
Merchant*. Down with your title, boy; down with your title!

PROLOGUE

Are you a member of the noble city?

CITIZEN

I am.

PROLOGUE

And a freeman?

CITIZEN

Yea, and a grocer.

PROLOGUE

So, grocer, then by your sweet favor, we intend no abuse to
the city.

CITIZEN

No, sir? Yes, sir! If you were not resolved to play the jacks, what need you study for new subjects purposely to abuse your betters? Why could not you be contented, as well as others, with *The Legend of Whittington*, or *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham*, with the *Building of the Royal Exchange*, or *The Story of Queen Elenor*, with the *Rearing of London Bridge upon Wool-sacks*?

PROLOGUE

You seem to be an understanding man. What would you have us do, sir?

CITIZEN

Why, present something notably in honor of the commons of the city.

PROLOGUE

Why, what do you say to *The Life and Death of Fat Drake*, or *The Repairing of Fleet-privies*?

CITIZEN

I do not like that; but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.

PROLOGUE

O, you should have told us your mind a month since. Our play is ready to begin now.

CITIZEN

'Tis all one for that. I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.

PROLOGUE

What will you have him do?

CITIZEN

Marry, I will have him --

WIFE

(below)

Husband, husband!

RAFE

(below)

Peace, mistress.

WIFE

Hold thy peace, Rafe; I know what I do, I warrant'ee. --
Husband, husband!

CITIZEN

What say'st thou, cony?

WIFE

Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband; let him kill a
lion with a pestle.

CITIZEN

So he shall. I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.

WIFE

Husband, shall I come up, husband?

CITIZEN

Ay, cony. -- Rafe, help your mistress this way. -- Pray,
gentlemen, make her a little room. I pray you, sir, lend me
your hand to help up my Wife; I thank you, sir. -- So.

WIFE comes on the stage.

WIFE

By your leave, gentlemen all, I'm something troublesome. I'm
a stranger here. I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they
say, before; but I should have seen *Jane Shore* once; and my
husband hath promised me any time this twelve-month to carry
me to *The Bold Beauchamps*; but, in truth, he did not. I pray
you, bear with me.

CITIZEN

Boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools, and then
begin, and let the grocer do rare things.

PROLOGUE

But, sir, we have never a boy to play him. Everyone hath a
part already.

WIFE

Husband, husband, for God's sake, let Rafe play him. Beshrew
me if I do not think he will go beyond them all.

CITIZEN

Well remembered, Wife. -- Come up, Rafe. -- I'll tell you,
gentlemen, let them but lend him a suit of reparel and

(MORE)

CITIZEN (CONT'D)

necessaries, and, by Gad, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged.

RAFE comes on the stage.

WIFE

I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparel. -- I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true. He will act you sometimes at our house that all the neighbors cry out on him. He will fetch you up a couraging part so in the garret that we are all as feared, I warrant you, that we quake again. We'll fear our children with him if they be never so unruly. Do but cry, "Rafe comes, Rafe comes," to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs. -- Hold up thy head, Rafe; Show the gentlemen what thou canst do. Speak a huffing part. I warrant you, the gentlemen will accept of it.

CITIZEN

Do, Rafe, do.

RAFE

By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the sea,
Where never fathom line touched any ground,
And pluck up drowned honor from the lake of hell.

CITIZEN

How say you, gentlemen? Is it not as I told you?

WIFE

Nay, gentlemen; he hath played before, my husband says,
Mucedorus, before the wardens of our company.

CITIZEN

Ay, and he should have played Jeronimo with a shoemaker for a wager.

PROLOGUE

He shall have a suit of apparel if he will go in.

CITIZEN

In, Rafe; in, Rafe; and set out the grocery in their kind, if thou lov'st me.

Exit RAFE.

WIFE

I warrant our Rafe will look finely when he's dressed.

PROLOGUE

But what will you have it called?

CITIZEN

The Grocer's Honor.

PROLOGUE

Methinks *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* were better.

WIFE

I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

CITIZEN

Let it be so. Begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

PROLOGUE

I pray you, do.

CITIZEN

What stately music have you? You have shawms?

PROLOGUE

Shawms? No.

CITIZEN

No? I'm a thief if my mind did not give me so. Rafe plays a stately part and he must needs have shawms. I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without them.

PROLOGUE

So you are like to be.

CITIZEN

Why, and so I will be. There's two shillings. Let's have the waits of Southwark. They are as rare fellows as any are in England; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

PROLOGUE

You shall have them. Will you sit down then?

CITIZEN

Ay. -- Come, wife.

WIFE

Sit you merry all, gentlemen. I'm bold to sit amongst you for my ease.

PROLOGUE

From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city walls,
We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence
All private taxes, immodest phrases,
Whate'er may but show like vicious:
For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,
But honest minds are pleased with honest things.
-- Thus much for that we do, but for Rafe's part you must
answer for yourself.

Exit PROLOGUE.

CITIZEN

Take you no care for Rafe; He'll discharge himself, I warrant
you.

WIFE

I' faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Rafe.

END OF PROLOGUE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

A room in the house of the Merchant, Venturewell.

Enter VENTUREWELL and JASPER, his prentice.

VENTUREWELL

Sirrah, I'll make you know you are my prentice,
And whom my charitable love redeemed
Even from the fall of fortune; gave thee heat
And growth, to be what now thou art; new cast thee;
Adding the trust of all I have at home,
In foreign staples, or upon the sea,
To thy direction; tied the good opinions
Both of myself and friends to thy endeavors:
So fair were thy beginnings. But with these,
As I remember, you had never charge
To love your master's daughter, and even then
When I had found a wealthy husband for her.
I take it, sir, you had not; but, however,
I'll break the neck of that commission
And make you know you are but a merchant's factor.

JASPER

Sir, I do liberally confess I am yours,
Bound both by love and duty to your service,
In which my labor hath been all my profit.
I have not lost in bargain, nor delighted
To wear your honest gains upon my back,
Nor have I given a pension to my blood,
Or lavishly in play consumed your stock.
These, and the miseries that do attend them,
I dare with innocence proclaim are strangers
To all my temperate actions. For your daughter,
If there be any love to my deservings
Borne by her virtuous self I cannot stop it,
Nor am I able to refrain her wishes.
She's private to herself and best of knowledge
Whom she'll make so happy as to sigh for.
Besides, I cannot think you mean to match her
Unto a fellow of so lame a presence,
One that hath little left of nature in him.

VENTUREWELL

'Tis very well, sir. I can tell your wisdom
How all this shall be cured.

JASPER

Your care becomes you.

VENTUREWELL

And thus it must be, sir. I here discharge you
My house and service. Take your liberty,
And when I want a son I'll send for you.

(Exit)

JASPER

These be the fair rewards of them that love.
O you that live in freedom never prove
The travail of a mind led by desire.

Enter LUCY.

LUCY

Why, how now, friend? Struck with my father's thunder?

JASPER

Struck and struck dead unless the remedy
Be full of speed and virtue. I am now
What I expected long, no more your father's.

LUCY

But mine.

JASPER

But yours and only yours I am:
That's all I have to keep me from the statute.
You dare be constant still?

LUCY

O, fear me not.
In this I dare be better than a woman,
Nor shall his anger nor his offers move me,
Were they both equal to a prince's power.

JASPER

You know my rival?

LUCY

Yes, and love him dearly,
Even as I love an ague or foul weather.
I prithee, Jasper, fear him not.

JASPER

O, no,
I do not mean to do him so much kindness.
But to our own desires; you know the plot
We both agreed on.

LUCY

Yes, and will perform
My part exactly.

JASPER

I desire no more.
Farewell, and keep my heart; 'tis yours.

LUCY

I take it;
He must do miracles makes me forsake it.

Exeunt.

CITIZEN

Fie upon 'em, little infidels. What a matter's here now?
Well, I'll be hanged for a halfpenny if there be not some
abomination knavery in this play. Well, let 'em look to't.
Rafe must come, and if there be any tricks abrewing --

Enter BOY.

WIFE

Let 'em brew and bake too, husband, a God's name. Rafe will
find all out, I warrant you, and they were older than they
are. -- I pray, my pretty youth, is Rafe ready?

BOY

He will be presently.

WIFE

Now, I pray you, make my commendations unto him, and withal
carry him this stick of liquorice. Tell him his mistress sent
it him, and bid him bite a piece. 'Twill open his pipes the
better, say.

Exit BOY.

SCENE TWO

*Another room in the house of the Merchant,
Venturewell.*

Enter VENTUREWELL and MASTER HUMPHREY.

VENTUREWELL

Come, sir, she's yours. Upon my faith, she's yours;
You have my hand. For other idle lets
Between your hopes and her, thus with a wind
They are scattered and no more. My wanton prentice,
That like a bladder blew himself with love,
I have let out, and sent him to discover
New masters yet unknown.

HUMPHREY

I thank you, sir.
Indeed, I thank you, sir; and ere I stir
It shall be known, however you do deem,
I am of gentle blood and gentle seem.

VENTUREWELL

O, sir, I know it certain.

HUMPHREY

Sir, my friend,
Although, as writers say, all things have end,
And that we call a pudding hath his too,
O, let it not seem strange, I pray to you,
If in this bloody simile I put
My love, more endless than frail things or gut.

WIFE

Husband, I prithee, sweet lamb, tell me one thing, but tell
me truly. -- Stay, youths, I beseech you, till I question my
husband.

CITIZEN

What is it, mouse?

WIFE

Sirrah, didst thou ever see a prettier child? how it behaves
itself, I warrant ye, and speaks, and looks, and perts up the
head! -- I pray you, brother, with your favor, were you never
none of Master Monkester's scholars?

CITIZEN

Chicken, I prithee heartily, contain thyself. The childer are pretty childer, but when Rafe comes, lamb --

WIFE

Ay, when Rafe comes, cony. -- Well, my youth, you may proceed.

VENTUREWELL

Well, sir, you know my love, and rest, I hope, Assured of my consent. Get but my daughter's, And wed her when you please. You must be bold And clap in close unto her. Come, I know You have language good enough to win a wench.

WIFE

A whoreson tyrant, h'as been an old stringer in's days, I warrant him.

HUMPHREY

I take your gentle offer and withal Yield love again for love reciprocal.

VENTUREWELL

What, Lucy, within there?

Enter LUCY.

LUCY

Called you, sir?

VENTUREWELL

I did.
Give entertainment to this gentleman
And see you be not froward. -- To her, sir;
My presence will but be an eyesore to you.
(Exit)

HUMPHREY

Fair Mistress Lucy, how do you? Are you well?
Give me your hand, and then I pray you tell,
How doth your little sister and your brother,
And whether you love me or any other?

LUCY

Sir, these are quickly answered.

HUMPHREY

So they are,
Where women are not cruel. But how far
Is it now distant from this place we are in
Unto that blessed place, your father's warren?

LUCY

What makes you think of that, sir?

HUMPHREY

Even that face;
For, stealing rabbits whilom in that place,
God Cupid, or the keeper, I know not whether,
Unto my cost and charges brought you thither,
And there began --

LUCY

Your game, sir?

HUMPHREY

Let no game,
Or anything that tendeth to the same,
Be evermore remembered, thou fair killer,
For whom I sat me down and brake my tiller.

WIFE

There's a kind gentleman, I warrant you. When will you do as
much for me, George?

LUCY

Beshrew me, sir, I am sorry for your losses
But, as the proverb says, I cannot cry.
I would you had not seen me.

HUMPHREY

So would I,
Unless you had more maw to do me good.

LUCY

Why, cannot this strange passion be withstood?
Send for a constable and raise the town.

HUMPHREY

O, no, my valiant love will batter down
Millions of constables, and put to flight
Even that great watch of Midsummer Day at night.

LUCY

Beshrew me, sir, 'twere good I yielded then;
Weak women cannot hope, where valiant men
Have no resistance.

HUMPHREY

Yield, then. I am full
Of pity, though I say it, and can pull
Out of my pocket, thus, a pair of gloves.
Look, Lucy, look; the dog's tooth nor the dove's
Are not so white as these, and sweet they be,
And whipped about with silk, as you may see.
If you desire the price, shoot from your eye
A beam to this place, and you shall espy
F. S., which is to say, my sweetest honey,
They cost me three and twopence, or no money.

LUCY

Well, sir, I take them kindly, and I thank you.
What would you more?

HUMPHREY

Nothing.

LUCY

Why, then, farewell.

HUMPHREY

Nor so, nor so; for, lady, I must tell,
Before we part, for what we met together.
God grant me time, and patience, and fair weather.

LUCY

Speak, and declare your mind in terms so brief.

HUMPHREY

I shall. Then, first and foremost, for relief
I call to you, if that you can afford it,
I care not at what price; for, on my word, it
Shall be repaid again, although it cost me
More than I'll speak of now. For love hath tossed me
In furious blanket, like a tennis ball,
And now I rise aloft, and now I fall.

LUCY

Alas, good gentleman, alas the day.

HUMPHREY

I thank you heartily, and, as I say,
Thus do I still continue without rest,
I'th' morning like a man, at night a beast,
Roaring and bellowing mine own disquiet,
That much I fear, forsaking of my diet
Will bring me presently to that quandary,
I shall bid all adieu.

LUCY

Now, by Saint Mary,
That were great pity.

HUMPHREY

So it were, beshrew me.
Then ease me, lusty Lucy, and pity show me.

LUCY

Why, sir, you know my will is nothing worth
Without my father's grant. Get his consent,
And then you may with assurance try me.

HUMPHREY

The worshipful your sire will not deny me.
For I have asked him, and he hath replied,
"Sweet Master Humphrey, Lucy shall be thy bride."

LUCY

Sweet Master Humphrey, then I am content.

HUMPHREY

And so am I, in truth.

LUCY

Yet take me with you,
There is another clause must be annexed,
And this it is (I swore and will perform it):
No man shall ever joy me as his wife
But he that stole me hence. If you dare venture,
I am yours (you need not fear; my father loves you);
If not, farewell forever.

HUMPHREY

Stay, nymph, stay;
I have a double gelding, colored bay,
Sprung by his father from Barbarian kind;
Another for myself, though somewhat blind,
Yet true as trusty tree.

LUCY

I am satisfied,
And so I give my hand. Our course must lie
Through Waltham Forest, where I have a friend
Will entertain us. So, farewell, Sir Humphrey,
And think upon your business.

Exit LUCY.

HUMPHREY

Though I die,
I am resolved to venture life and limb
For one so young, so fair, so kind, so trim.

Exit HUMPHREY.

WIFE

By my faith and troth, George, and, as I am virtuous, it is
e'en the kindest young man that ever trod on shoe leather. --
Well, go thy ways. If thou hast her not, 'tis not thy fault,
'faith.

CITIZEN

I prithee, mouse, be patient; 'a shall have her, or I'll make
some of 'em smoke for't.

WIFE

That's my good lamb, George. Fie, this stinking tobacco kills
men. Would there were none in England. -- Now, I pray,
gentlemen, what good does this stinking tobacco do you?
Nothing, I warrant you: make chimneys o' your faces. -- O,
husband, husband, now, now, there's Rafe; there's Rafe.

SCENE THREE

A Grocer's Shop.

*Enter RAFE, like a grocer in's shop, with two
prentices (TIM and GEORGE), reading Palmerin of
England.*

CITIZEN

Peace, fool. Let Rafe alone. -- Hark you, Rafe, do not strain
yourself too much at the first. -- Peace! -- Begin, Rafe.

RAFE

(reads)

"Then Palmerin and Trineus, snatching their lances from their dwarfs and clasping their helmets, galloped amain after the giant; and Palmerin, having gotten a sight of him, came posting amain, saying, 'Stay, traitorous thief, for thou may'st not so carry away her that is worth the greatest lord in the world,' and with these words gave him a blow on the shoulder, that he struck him besides his elephant; and Trineus, coming to the knight that had Agricola behind him, set him soon besides his horse, with his neck broken in the fall, so that the princess, getting out of the throng, between joy and grief, said, 'All happy knight, the mirror of all such as follow arms, now may I be well assured of the love thou bearest me.'" -- I wonder why the kings do not raise an army of fourteen or fifteen hundred thousand men, as big as the army that the Prince of Portigo brought against Rosicleer, and destroy these giants. They do much hurt to wand'ring damsels that go in quest of their knights.

WIFE

Faith, husband, and Rafe says true; for they say the King of Portugal cannot sit at his meat, but the giants and the ettins will come and snatch it from him.

CITIZEN

Hold thy tongue. -- On, Rafe.

RAFE

And certainly those knights are much to be commended, who, neglecting their possessions, wander with a squire and a dwarf through the deserts to relieve poor ladies.

WIFE

Ay, by my faith, are they, Rafe; let 'em say what they will, they are indeed. Our knights neglect their possessions well enough, but they do not the rest.

RAFE

There are no such courteous and fair well-spoken knights in this age. They will call one "the son of a whore" that Palmerin of England would have called "fair sir"; and one that Rosicleer would have called "right beauteous damsel," they will call "damned bitch."

WIFE

I'll be sworn will they, Rafe; they have called me so an hundred times about a scurvy pipe of tobacco.

RAFE

But what brave spirit could be content to sit in his shop, with a flappet of wood and a blue apron before him, selling mithridatum and dragon's water to visited houses, that might pursue feats of arms, and through his noble achievements procure such a famous history to be written of his heroic prowess?

CITIZEN

Well said, Rafe; some more of those words, Rafe.

WIFE

They go finely, by my troth.

RAFE

Why should not I then pursue this course, both for the credit of myself and our company? For amongst all the worthy books of achievements, I do not call to mind that I yet read of a grocer errant. I will be the said knight. Have you heard of any that hath wandered unfurnished of his squire and dwarf? My elder prentice, Tim, shall be my trusty squire, and little George my dwarf. Hence my blue apron. Yet in remembrance of my former trade, upon my shield shall be portrayed a burning pestle, and I will be called the Knight o'th' Burning Pestle.

WIFE

Nay, I dare swear thou wilt not forget thy old trade. Thou wert ever meek.

RAFE

Tim.

TIM

Anon.

RAFE

My beloved squire, and George, my dwarf, I charge you that from henceforth you never call me by any other name but the "Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle"; and that you never call any female by the name of a woman or wench, but "fair lady," if she have her desires, if not, "distressed damsel"; that you call all forests and heaths "deserts," and all horses "palfreys."

WIFE

This is very fine, faith. Do the gentlemen like Rafe, think you, husband?

CITIZEN

Ay, I warrant thee; the players would give all the shoes in their shop for him.

RAFE

My beloved squire Tim, stand out. Admit this were a desert, and over it a knight errant pricking, and I should bid you inquire of his intents, what would you say?

TIM

Sir, my master sent me to know whither you are riding?

RAFE

No, thus: "Fair sir, the Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle commanded me to inquire upon what adventure you are bound, whether to relieve some distressed damsels, or otherwise."

CITIZEN

Whoreson blockhead, cannot remember!

WIFE

I'faith, and Rafe told him on't before. All the gentlemen heard him. -- Did he not, gentlemen? Did not Rafe tell him on't?

GEORGE

Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, here is a distressed damsel to have a halfpenny-worth of pepper.

WIFE

That's a good boy. -- See, the little boy can hit it. By my troth, it's a fine child.

RAFE

Relieve her with all courteous language. Now shut up shop; no more my prentice, but my trusty squire and dwarf. I must bespeak my shield and arming pestle.

Exeunt TIM and GEORGE.

CITIZEN

Go thy ways, Rafe. As I'm a true man, thou art the best on 'em all.

WIFE

Rafe, Rafe.

RAFE

What say you, mistress?

WIFE

I prithee, come again quickly, sweet Rafe.

RAFE

By and by.

Exit RAFE.

SCENE FOUR

A room in Merrythought's house.

Enter JASPER and his mother, MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Give thee my blessing? No, I'll ne'er give thee my blessing. I'll see thee hanged first. It shall ne'er be said I gave thee my blessing. Th'art thy father's own son, of the right blood of the Merrythoughts. I may curse the time that e'er I knew thy father. He hath spent all his own, and mine too, and when I tell him of it, he laughs and dances, and sings, and cries, "A merry heart lives long-a." And thou art a wastethrift, and art run away from thy master, that loved thee well, and art come to me; and I have laid up a little for my younger son, Michael, and thou think'st to bezzle that; but thou shalt never be able to do it.

(Enter MICHAEL)

-- Come hither, Michael; come, Michael; down on thy knees. Thou shalt have my blessing.

MICHAEL

I pray you, mother, pray to God to bless me.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

God bless thee. But Jasper shall never have my blessing. He shall be hanged first; shall he not, Michael? How say'st thou?

MICHAEL

Yes, forsooth, mother, and grace of God.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

That's a good boy.

WIFE

I'faith, it's a fine spoken child.

JASPER

Mother, though you forget a parent's love,
I must preserve the duty of a child.
I ran not from my master, nor return
To have your stock maintain my idleness.

WIFE

Ungracious child, I warrant him. Hark how he chops logic with
his mother. -- Thou had'st best tell her she lies. Do, tell
her she lies.

CITIZEN

If he were my son, I would hang him up by the heels, and flay
him, and salt him, whoreson haltersack.

JASPER

My coming only is to beg your love,
Which I must ever, though I never gain it.
And howsoever you esteem of me,
There is no drop of blood hid in these veins
But I remember well belongs to you
That brought me forth, and would be glad for you
To rip them all again, and let it out.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

I'faith, I had sorrow enough for thee, God knows; but I'll
hamper thee well enough. Get thee in, thou vagabond; get thee
in, and learn of thy brother Michael.

Exeunt JASPER and MICHAEL.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings within)

Nose, nose, jolly red nose,
And who gave thee this jolly red nose?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Hark, my husband; he's singing and hoiting, and I'm fain to
cark and care, and all little enough. -- Husband, Charles,
Charles Merrythought.

Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves,
And they gave me this jolly red nose.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

If you would consider your state, you would have little list
to sing, iwis.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

It should never be considered while it were an estate, if I
thought it would spoil my singing.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

But how wilt thou do, Charles? Thou art an old man, and thou
canst not work, and thou hast not forty shillings left, and
thou eatest good meat, and drinkest good drink, and laughest?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

And will do.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

But how wilt thou come by it, Charles?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

How? Why, how have I done hitherto this forty years? I never
came into my dining room, but at eleven and six o'clock I
found excellent meat and drink o'th' table; my clothes were
never worn out, but next morning a tailor brought me a new
Suit; and without question it will be so ever; use makes
perfectness. If all should fail, it is but a little straining
myself extraordinary, and laugh myself to death.

WIFE

It's a foolish old man this: is not he, George?

CITIZEN

Yes, cony.

WIFE

Give me a penny i'th' purse while I live, George.

CITIZEN

Ay, by Lady, cony. Hold thee there.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Well, Charles, you promised to provide for Jasper, and I have
laid up for Michael. I pray you, pay Jasper his portion. He's
(MORE)

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (CONT'D)

come home, and he shall not consume Michael's stock. He says his master turned him away, but I promise you truly, I think he ran away.

WIFE

No, indeed, Mistress Merrythought, though he be a notable gallows, yet I'll assure you his master did turn him away; even in this place 'twas, i'faith, within this half hour, about his daughter; my husband was by.

CITIZEN

Hang him, rogue. He served him well enough. Love his master's daughter! By my troth, cony, if there were a thousand boys, thou would'st spoil them all with taking their parts. Let his mother alone with him.

WIFE

Ay, George, but yet truth is truth.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Where is Jasper? He's welcome however. Call him in. He shall have his portion. Is he merry?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Ay, foul chive him, he is too merry. -- Jasper! -- Michael!

Enter JASPER and MICHAEL.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Welcome Jasper, though thou run'st away, welcome; God bless thee. 'Tis thy mother's mind thou should'st receive thy portion. Thou hast been abroad, and I hope hast learned experience enough to govern it. Thou art of sufficient years. Hold thy hand: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, there's ten shillings for thee. Thrust thyself into the world with that, and take some settled course. If fortune cross thee, thou hast a retiring place. Come home to me; I have twenty shillings left. Be a good husband, that is, wear ordinary clothes, eat the best meat, and drink the best drink; be merry and give to the poor, and believe me, thou hast no end of thy goods.

JASPER

Long may you live free from all thought of ill,
And long have cause to be thus merry still.
But, father --

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

No more words, Jasper; Get thee gone; thou hast my blessing.
Thy father's spirit upon thee. Farewell, Jasper.

(Sings)

But yet, or ere you part, oh, cruel,
Kiss me, kiss me, sweeting, mine own dear jewel.
So, now begone; no words.

Exit JASPER.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

So, Michael, now get thee gone, too.

MICHAEL

Yes, forsooth, mother, but I'll have my father's blessing
first.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

No, Michael, 'tis no matter for his blessing; thou hast my
blessing; begone. I'll fetch my money and jewels, and follow
thee. I'll stay no longer with him, I warrant thee.

(Exit MICHAEL)

-- Truly, Charles, I'll be gone, too.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

What! You will not?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Yes, indeed will I.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

Hey-ho, farewell, Nan.
I'll never trust wench more again, if I can.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

You shall not think, when all your own is gone, to spend that
I have been scraping up for Michael.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Farewell, good wife; I expect it not. All I have to do in
this world is to be merry, which I shall if the ground be not
taken from me, and if it be,

(Sings)

When earth and seas from me are reft,
The skies aloft for me are left.

Exeunt. Music.

END OF ACT ONE

INTERLUDE ONE

WIFE

I'll be sworn he's a merry old gentleman for all that. Hark, hark, husband, hark, fiddles, fiddles; now, surely, they go finely. They say 'tis present death for these fiddlers to tune their rebecks before the great Turk's grace, is't not, George?

(Enter a BOY who dances)

But look, look, here's a youth dances. -- Now, good youth, do a turn o'th' toe. -- Sweetheart, i'faith, I'll have Rafe come and do some of his gambols. -- He'll ride the wild mare, gentlemen, 't would do your hearts good to see him. -- I thank you, kind youth. Pray, bid Rafe come.

CITIZEN

Peace, cony. -- Sirrah, you scurvy boy, bid the players send Rafe, or by God's and they do not, I'll tear some of their periwigs beside their heads. This is all riff-raff.

Exit BOY.

END OF INTERLUDE ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

A room in the house of the Merchant, Venturewell.

Enter VENTUREWELL and HUMPHREY.

VENTUREWELL

And how, faith, how goes it now, son Humphrey?

HUMPHREY

Right worshipful, and my beloved friend
And father dear, this matter's at an end.

VENTUREWELL

'Tis well; it should be so; I'm glad the girl
Is found so tractable.

HUMPHREY

Nay, she must whirl
From hence (and you must wink; for so, I say,
The story tells) tomorrow before day.

WIFE

George, dost thou think in thy conscience now 'twill be a
match? Tell me but what thou think'st, sweet rogue. Thou
see'st the poor gentleman, dear heart, how it labors and
throbs, I warrant you, to be at rest. I'll go move the father
for 't.

CITIZEN

No, no, I prithee, sit still, honeysuckle. Thou'lt spoil all.
If he deny him, I'll bring half a dozen good fellows myself,
and in the shutting of an evening knock't up, and there's an
end.

WIFE

I'll buss thee for that, i'faith, boy. Well, George, well,
you have been a wag in your days, I warrant you; but God
forgive you, and I do with all my heart.

VENTUREWELL

How was it, son? You told me that tomorrow
Before daybreak you must convey her hence.

HUMPHREY

I must, I must, and thus it is agreed:
Your daughter rides upon a brown-bay steed,
I on a sorrel, which I bought of Brian,
The honest host of the Red roaring Lion,
In Waltham situate. Then, if you may,
Consent in seemly sort, lest by delay
The fatal sisters come and do the office,
And then you'll sing another Song.

VENTUREWELL

Alas,
Why should you be thus full of grief to me,
That do as willing as yourself agree
To anything, so it be good and fair?
Then steal her when you will, if such a pleasure
Content you both. I'll sleep and never see it,
To make your joys more full. But tell me why
You may not here perform your marriage?

WIFE

God's blessing o' thy soul, old man. I'faith, thou art loath
to part true hearts, I see. -- A has her, George, and I'm as
glad on't -- Well, go thy ways, Humphrey, for a fair-spoken
man; I believe thou hast not thy fellow within the walls of
London; and I should say the suburbs too I should not lie. --
Why dost not rejoice with me, George?

CITIZEN

If I could but see Rafe again, I were as merry as mine host,
i'faith.

HUMPHREY

The cause you seem to ask, I thus declare
(Help me, O Muses Nine): your daughter sware
A foolish oath, the more it was the pity;
Yet none but myself within this city
Shall dare to say so, but a bold defiance
Shall meet him, were he of the noble science.
And yet she sware, and yet why did she swear?
Truly, I cannot tell, unless it were
For her own ease; for sure sometimes an oath,
Being sworn, thereafter is like cordial broth.
And this it was she swore: never to marry
But such a one whose mighty arm could carry
(As meaning me, for I am such a one)
Her bodily away through stick and stone,

(MORE)

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Till both of us arrive, at her request,
Some ten miles off in the wild Waltham Forest.

VENTUREWELL

If this be all, you shall not need to fear
Any denial in your love. Proceed;
I'll neither follow nor repent the deed.

HUMPHREY

Good night, twenty good nights, and twenty more,
And twenty more good nights. That makes threescore.

Exeunt.

SCENE TWO

Waltham Forest.

*Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (with jewel casket and
purse), and her son MICHAEL.*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Come, Michael, art thou not weary, boy?

MICHAEL

No, forsooth, mother, not I.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Where be we now, child?

MICHAEL

Indeed, forsooth, mother, I cannot tell, unless we be at Mile-
End. Is not all the world Mile-End, mother?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

No, Michael, not all the world, boy; but I can assure thee,
Michael, Mile-End is a goodly matter. There has been a
pitchfield, my child, between the naughty Spaniels and the
Englishmen, and the Spaniels ran away, Michael, and the
Englishmen followed. My neighbor Coxstone was there, boy, and
killed them all with a birding piece.

MICHAEL

Mother, forsooth --

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

What says my white boy?

MICHAEL

Shall not my father go with us too?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

No, Michael, let thy father go snick-up. He shall never come between a pair of sheets with me again while he lives. Let him stay at home and sing for his supper, boy. Come, child, sit down, and I'll show my boy fine knacks indeed. Look here, Michael, here's a ring, and here's a brooch, and here's a bracelet, and here's two rings more, and here's money and gold by th' eye, my boy.

MICHAEL

Shall I have all this, Mother?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Ay, Michael, thou shalt have all, Michael.

CITIZEN

How lik'st thou this, wench?

WIFE

I cannot tell. I would have Rafe, George. I'll see no more else, indeed, la, and I pray you let the youths understand so much by word of mouth; for I tell you truly, I'm afraid o' my boy. Come, come, George, let's be merry and wise. The child's a fatherless child; and say they should put him into a straight pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass: he would never grow after it.

Enter RAFE, TIM, and GEORGE.

CITIZEN

Here's Rafe; here's Rafe.

WIFE

How do you, Rafe? You are welcome, Rafe, as I may say. It's a good boy. Hold up thy head, and be not afraid. We are thy friends, Rafe. The gentlemen will praise thee, Rafe, if thou play'st thy part with audacity. Begin, Rafe, o' God's name.

RAFE

My trusty squire, unlace my helm. Give me my hat. Where are we, or what desert may this be?

GEORGE

Mirror of knighthood, this is, as I take it, the perilous Waltham Down, in whose bottom stands the enchanted valley.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

O, Michael, we are betrayed; we are betrayed. Here be giants.
Fly, boy; fly, boy; fly!

*Exeunt MOTHER and MICHAEL, dropping purse and
casket.*

RAFE

Lace on my helm again. What noise is this?
A gentle lady flying the embrace
Of some uncourteous knight? I will relieve her.
Go, squire, and say, the knight that wears this pestle
In honor of all ladies, swears revenge
Upon that recreant coward that pursues her.
Go comfort her, and that same gentle squire
That bears her company.

TIM

I go, brave knight.
(Exit)

RAFE

My trusty dwarf and friend, reach me my shield,
And hold it while I swear. First by my knighthood;
Then by the soul of Amadis de Gaul,
My famous ancestor; then by my sword
The beauteous Brionella girt about me;
By this bright burning pestle, of mine honor
The living trophy; and by all respect
Due to distressed damsels: here I vow
Never to end the quest of this fair lady
And that forsaken squire till by my valor
I gain their liberty.

Exeunt.

GEORGE

Heaven bless the knight
That thus relieves poor errant gentlewomen.

WIFE

Ay, marry, Rafe, this has some savor in't. -- I would see the
proudest of them all offer to carry his books after him. But,
George, I will not have him go away so soon. I shall be sick
if he go away, that I shall. Call Rafe again, George, call
Rafe again. I prithee, sweetheart, let him come fight before
me, and let's ha' some drums and some trumpets, and let him
kill all that comes near him, and thou lov'st me, George.

CITIZEN

Peace a little, bird; he shall kill them all, and they were twenty more on 'em than there are.

Enter JASPER.

JASPER

Now, Fortune, if thou be'st not only ill,
Show me thy better face, and bring about
Thy desperate wheel, that I may climb at length
And stand. This is our place of meeting,
If love have any constancy. O age,
Where only wealthy men are counted happy.
How shall I please thee, how deserve thy smiles,
When I am only rich in misery?
My father's blessing, and this little coin
Is my inheritance, a strong revenue.
From earth thou art, and to the earth I give thee.

(Throws away the money)

There grow and multiply whilst fresher air
Breeds me a fresher fortune. -- How, illusion!

(Spies the casket)

What, hath the devil coined himself before me?
'Tis metal good; it rings well. I am waking,
And taking too, I hope. Now God's dear blessing
Upon his heart that left it here. 'us mine.
These pearls, I take it, were not left for swine.

(Exit)

WIFE

I do not like that this unthrifty youth should embezzle away
the money. The poor gentlewoman, his mother, will have a
heavy heart for it, God knows.

CITIZEN

And reason good, sweetheart.

WIFE

But let him go. I'll tell Rafe a tale in's ear shall fetch
him again with a wanion, I warrant him, if he be above
ground; and besides, George, here are a number of sufficient
gentlemen can witness, and myself, and yourself, and the
musicians, if we be called in question. But here comes Rafe,
George. Thou shalt hear him speak an he were an emperall.

SCENE THREE

Another part of the forest.

Enter RAFE and GEORGE.

RAFE

Comes not sir squire again?

GEORGE

Right courteous knight,
Your squire doth come and with him comes the lady,
(Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, and MICHAEL, and TIM)
For and the Squire of Damsels, as I take it.

RAFE

Madam, if any service or devoir
Of a poor errant knight may right your wrongs,
Command it. I am pressed to give you succor,
For to that holy end I bear my armor.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Alas, sir, I am a poor gentlewoman, and I have lost my money
in this forest.

RAFE

Desert, you would say, lady, and not lost
Whilst I have sword and lance. Dry up your tears,
Which ill befits the beauty of that face,
And tell the story, if I may request it,
Of your disastrous fortune.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Out, alas! I left a thousand pound, a thousand pound, e'en
all the money I had laid up for this youth, upon the sight of
your mastership, you looked so grim, and, as I may say it,
Saving your presence, more like a giant than a mortal man.

RAFE

I am as you are, lady; so are they,
All mortal. But why weeps this gentle squire?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Has he not cause to weep, do you think, when he hath lost his
inheritance?

RAFE

Young hope of valor, weep not. I am here
That will confound thy foe and pay it dear
Upon his coward head, that dares deny
Distressed squires and ladies equity.
I have but one horse, on which shall ride
This lady fair behind me, and before
This courteous squire. Fortune will give us more
Upon our next adventure. Fairly speed
Beside us, squire and dwarf, to do us need.

Exeunt.

CITIZEN

Did not I tell you, Nell, what your man would do? By the
faith of my body, wench, for clean action and good delivery,
they may all cast their caps at him.

WIFE

And so they may, i'faith, for I dare speak it boldly, the
twelve companies of London cannot match him, timber for
timber. Well, George, and he be not inveigled by some of
these paltry players, I ha' much marvel; but, George, we ha'
done our parts, if the boy have any grace to be thankful.

CITIZEN

Yes, I warrant thee, duckling.

SCENE FOUR

Another part of the forest.

Enter HUMPHREY and LUCY.

HUMPHREY

Good Mistress Lucy, however I in fault am
For your lame horse, you're welcome unto Waltham.
But which way now to go or what to say
I know not truly, till it be broad day.

LUCY

O, fear not, Master Humphrey, I am guide
For this place good enough.

HUMPHREY

Then up and ride,
Or, if it please you, walk for your repose,
(MORE)

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Or sit, or, if you will, go pluck a rose;
Either of which shall be indifferent
To your good friend and Humphrey, whose consent
Is so entangled ever to your will
As the poor harmless horse is to the mill.

LUCY

Faith, and you say the word, we'll e'en sit down
And take a nap.

HUMPHREY

'Tis better in the town,
Where we may nap together; for, believe me,
To sleep without a snatch would mickle grieve me.

LUCY

You're merry, Master Humphrey.

HUMPHREY

So I am,
And have been ever merry from my dam.

LUCY

Your nurse had the less labor.

HUMPHREY

Faith, it may be,
Unless it were by chance I did beray me.

Enter JASPER.

JASPER

Lucy, dear friend, Lucy.

LUCY

Here, Jasper.

JASPER

You are mine.

HUMPHREY

If it be so, my friend, you use me fine.
What do you think I am?

JASPER

An arrant noddy.

HUMPHREY

A word of obloquy! Now, by God's body,
I'll tell thy master, for I know thee well.

JASPER

Nay, and you be so forward for to tell,
Take that, and that, and tell him, sir, I gave it,
(*Beats him*)
And say I paid you well.

HUMPHREY

O, sir, I have it,
And do confess the payment. Pray be quiet.

JASPER

Go, get to your nightcap and the diet
To cure your beaten bones.

LUCY

Alas, poor Humphrey,
Get thee some wholesome broth with sage and comfrey;
A little oil of roses and a feather
To 'noint thy back withall.

HUMPHREY

When I came hither,
Would I had gone to Paris with John Dory.

LUCY

Farewell, my pretty nump. I am very sorry
I cannot bear thee company.

HUMPHREY

Farewell,
The devil's dam was ne'er so banged in hell.

Exeunt LUCY and JASPER.

WIFE

This young Jasper will prove me another things, o' my
conscience, and he may be suffered. George, dost not see,
George, how 'a swaggers and flies at the very heads o' folks
as he were a dragon? Well, if I do not do his lesson for
wronging the poor gentleman, I am no true woman. His friends
that brought him up might have been better occupied, i-wis,
than ha' taught him these fegaries. He's e en in the highway
to the gallows, God bless him.

CITIZEN

You're too bitter, cony; the young man may do well enough for all this.

WIFE

Come hither, Master Humphrey. Has he hurt you? Now beshrew his fingers for't. Here, sweetheart, here's some green ginger for thee. -- Now beshrew my heart, but 'a has peppernel in's head, as big as a pullet's egg. -- Alas, sweet lamb, how thy temples beat. Take the peace on him, sweetheart; take the peace on him.

Enter a BOY.

CITIZEN

No, no, you talk like a foolish woman. I'll ha' Rafe fight with him, and swinge him up well-favoredly. -- Sirrah boy, come hither. Let Rafe come in and fight with Jasper.

WIFE

Ay, and beat him well; he's an unhappy boy.

BOY

Sir, you must pardon us. The plot of our play lies contrary, and 'twill hazard the spoiling of our play.

CITIZEN

Plot me no plots. I'll ha' Rafe come out. I'll make your house too hot for you else.

BOY

Why, sir, he shall; but if anything fall out of order, the gentlemen must pardon us.

CITIZEN

Go your ways, goodman boy.

(Exit BOY)

-- I'll hold him a penny he shall have his bellyful of fighting now. Ho, here comes Rafe; no more.

SCENE FIVE

Another part of the forest.

Enter RAFE, MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, MICHAEL, and TIM.

RAFE

What knight is that, squire? Ask him if he keep
The passage, bound by love of lady fair,
Or else but prickant.

HUMPHREY

Sir, I am no knight,
But a poor gentleman, that this same night
Had stol'n from me on yonder green
My lovely wife, and suffered (to be seen
Yet extant on my shoulders) such a greeting
That whilst I live I shall think of that meeting.

WIFE

Ay, Rafe, he beat him unmercifully, Rafe; and thou spar'st
him, Rafe, I would thou wert hanged.

CITIZEN

No more, wife, no more.

RAFE

Where is the caitiff wretch hath done this deed?
Lady, your pardon, that I may proceed
Upon the quest of this injurious knight.
And thou, fair squire, repute me not the worse,
In leaving the great venture of the purse
And the rich casket till some better leisure.

Enter JASPER and LUCY.

HUMPHREY

Here comes the broker hath purloined my treasure.

RAFE

Go, squire, and tell him I am here,
An errant knight-at-arms, to crave delivery
Of that fair lady to her own knight's arms.
If he deny, bid him take choice of ground,
And so defy him.

TIM

From the knight that bears
The golden pestle, I defy thee, knight,
Unless thou make fair restitution
Of that bright lady.

JASPER

Tell the knight that sent thee
He is an ass, and I will keep the wench
And knock his head-piece.

RAFE

Knight, thou art but dead,
If thou recall not thy uncourteous terms.

WIFE

Break's pate, Rafe; break's pate, Rafe, soundly.

JASPER

Come, knight, I am ready for you. Now your pestle
(*Snatches away his pestle*)
Shall try what temper, sir, your mortar's of.
"With that he stood upright in his stirrups,
And gave the Knight of the Calfskin such a knock
(*Knocks RAFE down*)
That he forsook his horse and down he fell,
And then he leaped upon him, and plucking off his helmet -- "

HUMPHREY

Nay, and my noble knight be down so soon,
Though I can scarcely go, I needs must run.

Exit HUMPHREY and RAFE.

WIFE

Run, Rafe; run, Rafe; run for thy life, BOY
Jasper comes, Jasper comes.

JASPER

Come, Lucy, we must have other arms for you.
Humphrey and Golden Pestle, both adieu.

Exeunt.

WIFE

Sure the devil, God bless us, is in this springald. Why,
George, didst ever see such a fire-drake? I am afraid my
boy's miscarried. If he be, though he were Master
Merrythought's son a thousand times, if there be any law in
England, I'll make some of them smart for't.

CITIZEN

No, no, I have found out the matter, sweetheart. Jasper is
enchanted. As sure as we are here, he is enchanted. He could
(MORE)

CITIZEN (CONT'D)

no more have stood in Rafe's hands than I can stand in my Lord Mayor's. I'll have a ring to discover all enchantments, and Rafe shall beat him yet. Be no more vex' d, for it shall be so.

SCENE SIX

Before the Bell Inn, Waltham.

Enter RAFE, TIM, GEORGE, MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, and MICHAEL.

WIFE

O, husband, here's Rafe again. -- Stay, Rafe, let me speak with thee. How dost thou, Rafe? Art thou not shroddly hurt? The foul great lungies laid unmercifully on thee. There's some sugar candy for thee. Proceed. Thou shalt have another bout with him.

CITIZEN

If Rafe had him at the fencing school, if he did not make a puppy of him and drive him up and down the school, he should ne'er come in my shop more.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Truly, Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, I am weary.

MICHAEL

Indeed, la, mother, and I am very hungry.

RAFE

Take comfort, gentle dame, and you, fair squire,
For in this desert there must needs be placed
Many strong castles held by courteous knights;
And till I bring you safe to one of those,
I swear by this my order ne'er to leave you.

WIFE

Well said, Rafe. -- George, Rafe was ever comfortable, was he not?

CITIZEN

Yes, duck.

WIFE

I shall ne'er forget him, when we had lost our child (you know it was strayed almost, alone, to Puddlewharf, and the criers were abroad for it, and there it had drowned itself

(MORE)

WIFE (CONT'D)

but for a sculler); Rafe was the most comfortablest to me.
"Peace, mistress," says he, "let it go; I'll get you another
as good." Did he not, George; did he not say so?

CITIZEN

Yes, indeed, did he, mouse.

GEORGE

I would we had a mess of pottage and a pot of drink, squire,
and were going to bed.

TIM

Why, we are at Waltham town's end, and that's the Bell Inn.

GEORGE

Take courage, valiant knight, damsel, and squire.
I have discovered, not a stone's cast off,
An ancient castle, held by the old knight
Of the most holy order of the Bell,
Who gives to all knights errant entertain.
There plenty is of food, and all prepared
By the white hands of his own lady dear.
He bath three squires that welcome all his guests.
The first bight Chamberlino, who will see
Our beds prepared, and bring us snowy sheets,
Where never footman stretched his buttered hams.
The second bight Tapstero, who will see
Our pots full filled and no froth therein.
The third, a gentle squire, Ostlero bight,
Who will our palfreys slick with wisps of straw,
And in the manger put them oats enough,
And never grease their teeth with candle snuff.

WIFE

That same dwarf's a pretty boy, but the squire's a groutnol.

RAFE

Knock at the gates, my squire, with stately lance.

Enter TAPSTER.

TAPSTER

Who's there? -- You're welcome, gentlemen. Will you see a
room?

GEORGE

Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle,
this is the squire Tapstero.

RAFE

Fair squire Tapstero, I a wand'ring knight,
Hight of the Burning Pestle, in the quest
Of this fair lady's casket and wrought purse,
Losing myself in this vast wilderness
Am to this castle well by fortune brought,
Where, hearing of the goodly entertain
Your knight of holy order of the Bell
Gives to all damsels and all errant knights,
I thought to knock, and now am bold to enter.

TAPSTER

An't please you see a chamber, you are very welcome.

Exeunt.

WIFE

George, I would have something done, and I cannot tell what it is.

CITIZEN

What is it, Nell?

WIFE

Why, George, shall Rafe beat nobody again? Prithee, sweetheart, let him.

CITIZEN

So he shall, Nell, and if I join with him, we'll knock them all.

SCENE SEVEN

A room in the house of the Merchant Venturewell.

Enter HUMPHREY and VENTUREWELL.

WIFE

O, George, here's Master Humphrey again now, that lost Mistress Lucy, and Mistress Lucy's father. Master Humphrey will do somebody's errand, I warrant him.

HUMPHREY

Father, it's true in arms I ne'er shall clasp her,
For she is stol'n away by your man Jasper.

WIFE

I thought he would tell him.

VENTUREWELL

Unhappy that I am to lose my child!
Now I begin to think on Jasper's words,
Who oft hath urged to me thy foolishness.
Why didst thou let her go? Thou lov'st her not,
That wouldst bring home thy life, and not bring her.

HUMPHREY

Father, forgive me. Shall I tell you true?
Look on my shoulders. They are black and blue.
Whilst to and fro fair Lucy and I were winding,
He came and basted me with a hedge-binding.

VENTUREWELL

Get men and horses straight. We will be there
Within this hour. You know the place again?

HUMPHREY

I know the place where he my loins did swaddle.
I'll get six horses, and to each a saddle.

VENTUREWELL

Meantime I'll go talk with Jasper's father.

Exeunt.

WIFE

George, what wilt thou lay with me now that Master Humphrey
has not Mistress Lucy yet? Speak, George, what wilt thou lay
with me?

CITIZEN

No, Nell, I warrant thee Jasper is at Puckeridge with her by
this.

WIFE

Nay, George, you must consider Mistress Lucy's feet are
tender, and besides 'tis dark; and I promise you truly, I do
not see how he should get out of Waltham Forest with her yet.

CITIZEN

Nay, cony, what wilt thou lay with me that Rafe has her not
yet?

WIFE

I will not lay against Rafe, honey, because I have not spoken with him. But look, George, peace; here comes the merry old gentleman again.

SCENE EIGHT

A room in Merrythought's house.

Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

When it was grown to dark midnight,
And all were fast asleep,
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet.

I have money and meat and drink beforehand till tomorrow at noon. Why should I be sad? Methinks I have half a dozen jovial spirits within me.

(Sings)

I am three merry men, and three merry men.
To what end should any man be sad in this world? Give me a man that when he goes to hanging cries:

(Sings)

Troll the black bowl to me!
and a woman that will sing a catch in her travail. I have seen a man come by my door with a serious face, in a black cloak, without a hatband, carrying his head as if he looked for pins in the street. I have looked out of my window half a year after, and have spied that man's head upon London Bridge. 'Tis vile. Never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work; his mind is of nothing but filching.

WIFE

Mark this, George; 'tis worth noting. Godfrey, my tailor, you know, never sings, and he had fourteen yards to make this gown; and I'll be sworn, Mistress Pennystone, the draper's wife, had one made with twelve.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

'Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood,
More than wine, or sleep, or food,
Let each man keep his heart at ease:
No man dies of that disease.
He that would his body keep

(MORE)

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (CONT'D)

From diseases must not weep,
But whoever laughs and sings
Never he his body brings
Into fevers, gout, or rheums,
Or ling'ringly his lungs consumes,
Or meets with aches in the bone,
Or catarrhs or griping stone,
But contented lives for ay;
The more he laughs, the more he may.

WIFE

Look, George; how say'st thou by this, George? Is't not a fine old man? -- Now God's blessing o' thy sweet lips. -- When wilt thou be so merry, George? Faith, thou art the frowning'st little thing, when thou art angry, in a country.

Enter VENTUREWELL.

CITIZEN

Peace, cony; thou shalt see him taken down too, I warrant thee. Here's Lucy's father come now.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

As you came from Walsingham,
From that holy land,
There met you not with my true love
By the way as you came?

VENTUREWELL

O, Master Merrythought, my daughter's gone.
This mirth becomes you not; my daughter's gone.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

Why, an if she be, what care I?
Or let her come, or go, or tarry.

VENTUREWELL

Mock not my misery. It is your son,
Whom I have made my own, when all forsook him,
Has stol'n my only joy, my child, away.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

He set her on a milk-white steed,
And himself upon a gray.
He never turned his face again,
But he bore her quite away.

VENTUREWELL

Unworthy of the kindness I have shown
To thee and thine! Too late I well perceive
Thou art consenting to my daughter's loss.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Your daughter! what a stir's here wi' yer daughter. Let her
go. Think no more on her, but sing loud. If both my sons were
on the gallows, I would sing,
 Down, down, down, they fall
 Down; and arise they never shall.

VENTUREWELL

O, might I behold her once again,
And she once more embrace her aged sire.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Fie, how scurvily this goes! "And she once more embrace her
aged sire?" You'll make a dog on her, will ye? She cares
much for her aged sire, I warrant you.

(Sings)

 She cares not for her daddy, nor
 She cares not for her mommy;
 For she is, she is, she is, she is
 My Lord of Lowgave's lassy.

VENTUREWELL

For this thy scorn, I will pursue that son
Of thine to death.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Do, and when you ha' killed him.

(Sings)

 Give him flowers enow, palmer; give him flowers enow.
 Give him red, and white, and blue, green, and yellow.

VENTUREWELL

I'll fetch my daughter.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

I'll hear no more o' your daughter. It spoils my mirth.

VENTUREWELL

I say, I'll fetch my daughter.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

 Was never man for lady's sake,
 (MORE)

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (CONT'D)

Down, down,
Tormented as I poor Sir Guy,
De derry down,
For Lucy's sake, that lady bright,
Down, down,
As ever men beheld with eye,
De derry down.

VENTUREWELL

I'll be revenged, by Heaven.

Exeunt. Music.

END OF ACT TWO

INTERLUDE TWO

WIFE

How dost thou like this, George?

CITIZEN

Why, this is well, cony. But if Rafe were hot once, thou shouldst see more.

WIFE

The fiddlers go again, husband.

CITIZEN

Ay, Nell, but this is scurvy music. I gave the whoreson gallows money, and I think he has not got me the waits of Southwark. If I hear him not anon, I'll twinge him by the ears. -- You musicians, play Baloo.

WIFE

No, good George, let's ha' Lachrymae.

CITIZEN

Why, this is it, cony.

WIFE

It's all the better, George. Now, sweet lamb, what story is that painted upon the cloth? The Confutation of Saint Paul?

CITIZEN

No, lamb, that's Rafe and Lucrece.

WIFE

Rafe and Lucrece? Which Rafe? Our Rafe?

CITIZEN

No, mouse, that was a Tartarian.

WIFE

A Tartarian? Well, I would the fiddlers had done, that we might see our Rafe again.

END OF INTERLUDE TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

Waltham Forest.

Enter JASPER and LUCY.

JASPER

Come, my dear dear; though we have lost our way,
We have not lost ourselves. Are you not weary
With this night's wand'ring, broken from your rest,
And frightened with the terror that attends
The darkness of this wild, unpeopled place?

LUCY

No, my best friend, I cannot either fear
Or entertain a weary thought, whilst you
(The end of all my full desires) stand by me.
Let them that lose their hopes, and live to languish
Amongst the number of forsaken lovers,
Tell the long weary steps, and number time,
Start at a shadow, and shrink up their blood,
Whilst I (possessed with all content and quiet)
Thus take my pretty love, and thus embrace him.

JASPER

You have caught me, Lucy, so fast, that whilst I live
I shall become your faithful prisoner,
And wear these chains forever! Come, sit down,
And rest your body, too, too delicate
For these disturbances. So, will you sleep?
Come, do not be more able than you are.
I know you are not skillful in these watches,
For women are no soldiers. Be not nice,
But take it. Sleep, I say.

LUCY

I cannot sleep.
Indeed, I cannot, friend.

JASPER

Why, then, we'll sing,
And try how that will work upon our senses.

LUCY

I'll sing, or say, or anything but sleep.

JASPER

Come, little mermaid, rob me of my heart
With that enchanting voice.

LUCY

You mock me, Jasper.

JASPER

Tell me, dearest, what is love?

LUCY

'Tis a lightning from above,
'Tis on arrow, 'tis afire,
'Tis a boy they call Desire,
'Tis a smile
Doth beguile

JASPER

The poor hearts of men that prove.
Tell me more: are women true?

LUCY

Some love change, and so do you.

JASPER

Are they fair, and never kind?

LUCY

Yes, when men turn with the wind.

JASPER

Are they froward?

LUCY

Ever toward
Those that love, to love anew.

JASPER

Dissemble it no more. I see the god
Of heavy sleep lay on his heavy mace
Upon your eyelids.

LUCY

I am very heavy.

JASPER

Sleep, sleep, and quiet rest crown thy sweet thoughts.
Keep from her fair blood distempers, startings,
Horrors, and fearful shapes. Let all her dreams
Be joys and chaste delights, embraces, wishes,
And such new pleasures as the ravished soul
Gives to the senses. So, my charms have took.
Keep her, you powers divine, whilst I contemplate
Upon the wealth and beauty of her mind.
She is only fair and constant, only kind,
And only to thee, Jasper. O my joys,
Whither will you transport me? Let not fulness
Of my poor buried hopes come up together
And overcharge my spirits. I am weak.
Some say (however ill) the sea and women
Are governed by the moon: both ebb and flow,
Both full of changes. Yet to them that know
And truly judge, these but opinions are,
And heresies to bring on pleasing war
Between our tempers, that without these were
Both void of after-love and present fear,
Which are the best of Cupid. O thou child
Bred. from despair, I dare not entertain thee,
Having a love without the faults of women,
And greater in her perfect goods than men;
Which to make good, and please myself the stronger,
Though certainly I am certain of her love,
I'll try her, that the world and memory
May sing to aftertimes her constancy.
-- Lucy, Lucy, awake.

LUCY

Why do you fright me, friend,
With those distempered looks? What makes your sword
Drawn in your hand? Who hath offended you?
I prithee, Jasper, sleep; thou art wild with watching.

JASPER

Come, make your way to heaven, and bid the world
With all the villainies that stick upon it
Farewell. You're for another life.

LUCY

O, Jasper,
How have my tender years committed evil
(Especially against the man I love),
Thus to be cropped untimely?

JASPER

Foolish girl,
Canst thou imagine I could love his daughter
That flung me from my fortune into nothing,
Discharged me his service, shut the doors
Upon my poverty, and scorned my prayers,
Sending me, like a boat without a mast,
To sink or swim? Come, by this hand you die.
I must have life and blood to satisfy
Your father's wrongs.

WIFE

Away, George, away, raise the watch at Ludgate, and bring a
mittimus from the justice for this desperate villain. -- Now,
I charge you, gentlemen, see the king's peace kept! -- O, my
heart, what a varlet's this to offer manslaughter upon the
harmless gentlewoman!

CITIZEN

I warrant thee, sweetheart, we'll have him hampered.

LUCY

O, Jasper, be not cruel.
If thou wilt kill me, smile and do it quickly,
And let not many deaths appear before me.
I am a woman, made of fear and love,
A weak, weak woman. Kill not with thy eyes.
They shoot me through and through. Strike; I am ready,
And, dying, still I love thee.

Enter VENTUREWELL, HUMPHREY, and his men.

VENTUREWELL

Whereabouts?

JASPER

(aside)

No more of this; now to myself again.

HUMPHREY

There, there he stands, with sword, like martial knight,
Drawn in his hand; therefore, beware the fight,
You that be wise. For were I good Sir Bevis
I would not stay his coming, by your leaves.

VENTUREWELL

Sirrah, restore my daughter.

JASPER

Sirrah, no.

VENTUREWELL

Upon him, then.

WIFE

So, down with him; down with him; down with him. Cut him
i'th' leg, boys; cut him i'th' leg!

VENTUREWELL

Come your ways, minion. I'll provide a cage
For you, you're grown so tame. -- Horse her away.

HUMPHREY

Truly I'm glad your forces have the day.

Exeunt. JASPER remains.

JASPER

They are gone, and I am hurt; my love is lost,
Never to get again. O, me unhappy!
Bleed, bleed, and die, I cannot. O my folly,
Thou hast betrayed me. Hope, where art thou fled?
Tell me if thou be'st anywhere remaining.
Shall I but see my love again? O, no!
She will not deign to look upon her butcher,
Nor is it fit she should; yet I must venture.
O, Chance, or Fortune, or whate'er thou art
That men adore for powerful, hear my cry,
And let me loving, live; or losing, die.

(Exit)

WIFE

Is 'a gone, George?

CITIZEN

Ay, cony.

WIFE

Marry, and let him go, sweetheart. By the faith o' my body,
'a has put me into such a fright that I tremble, as they say,
as 'twere an aspen leaf. Look o' my little finger, George,
how it shakes. Now, i'truth, every member of my body is the
worse for't.

CITIZEN

Come, hug in mine arms, sweet mouse. He shall not fright thee any more. Alas, mine own dear heart, how it quivers.

SCENE TWO

A room in the Bell Inn, Waltham.

Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, RAFE, MICHAEL, TIM, GEORGE, HOST, and a TAPSTER.

WIFE

O, Rafe, how dost thou, Rafe? How hast thou slept tonight? Has the knight used thee well?

CITIZEN

Peace, Nell; let Rafe alone.

TAPSTER

Master, the reckoning is not paid.

RAFE

Right courteous knight, who, for the order's sake
Which thou hast ta'en hang'st out the holy bell,
As I this flaming pestle bear about,
We render thanks to your puissant self,
Your beauteous lady, and your gentle squires,
For thus refreshing of our wearied limbs,
Stiffened with hard achievements in wild desert.

TAPSTER

Sir, there is twelve shillings to pay.

RAFE

Thou merry squire, Tapstero, thanks to thee
For comforting our souls with double jug;
And if advent'rous fortune prick thee forth,
Thou jovial squire, to follow feats of arms,
Take heed thou tender every lady's cause,
Every true knight and every damsel fair;
But spill the blood of treacherous Sarazens
And false enchanters, that with magic spells
Have done to death full many a noble knight.

HOST

Thou valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, give ear to me;
there is twelve shillings to pay, and, as I am a true knight,
I will not bate a penny.

WIFE

George, I pray thee, tell me, must Rafe pay twelve shillings
now?

CITIZEN

No, Nell, no; nothing but the old knight is merry with Rafe.

WIFE

O, is't nothing else? Rafe will be as merry as he.

RAFE

Sir knight, this mirth of yours becomes you well;
But, to requite this liberal courtesy,
If any of your squires will follow arms,
He shall receive from my heroic hand
A knighthood, by the virtue of this pestle.

HOST

Fair knight, I thank you for your noble offer.
Therefore, gentle knight,
Twelve shillings you must pay, or I must cap you.

WIFE

Look, George, did not I tell thee as much; the Knight of the
Bell is in earnest. Rafe shall not be beholding to him. Give
him his money, George, and let him go snick-up.

CITIZEN

Cap Rafe? No. -- Hold your hand, Sir Knight of the Bell;
there's your money. Have you anything to say to Rafe now? Cap
Rafe!

WIFE

I would you should know it, Rafe has friends that will not
suffer him to be capped for ten times so much, and ten times
to the end of that. -- Now take thy course, Rafe.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Come, Michael, thou and I will go home to thy father. He hath
enough left to keep us a day or two, and we'll set fellows
abroad to cry our purse and our casket. Shall we, Michael?

MICHAEL

Ay, I pray, mother. In truth my feet are full of chilblains with traveling.

WIFE

Faith, and those chilblains are a foul trouble. Mistress Merrythought, when your youth comes home, let him rub all the soles of his feet and the heels and his ankles with a mouse skin, or if none of your people can catch a mouse, when he goes to bed let him roll his feet in the warm embers, and I warrant you he shall be well; and you may make him put his fingers between his toes and smell to them. It's very sovereign for his head if he be costive.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, my son Michael and I bid you farewell. I thank your worship heartily for your kindness.

RAFE

Farewell, fair lady, and your tender squire.
If pricking through these deserts I do hear
Of any traitorous knight who through his guile
Hath light upon your casket and your purse,
I will despoil him of them and restore them.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

I thank your worship.
(Exit with MICHAEL)

RAFE

Dwarf, bear my shield; squire, elevate my lance.
And now farewell, you Knight of holy Bell.

CITIZEN

Ay, ay, Rafe, all is paid.

RAFE

But yet before I go, speak, worthy knight,
If aught you do of sad adventures know,
Where errant knight may through his prowess win
Eternal fame and free some gentle souls
From endless bonds of steel and ling'ring pain.

HOST

Sirrah, go to Nick the Barber and bid him prepare himself, as I told you before, quickly.

TAPSTER

I am gone, sir.

Exit TAPSTER.

HOST

Sir knight, this wilderness affordeth none
But the great venture, where full many a knight
Hath tried his prowess and come off with shame,
And where I would not have you lose your life
Against no man but furious fiend of hell.

RAFE

Speak on, sir knight; tell what he is and where;
For here I vow, upon my blazing badge,
Never to blaze a day in quietness;
But bread and water will I only eat,
And the green herb and rock shall be my couch,
Till I have quelled that man or beast or fiend
That works such damage to all errant knights.

HOST

Not far from hence, near to a craggy cliff,
At the north end of this distressed town,
There doth stand a lowly house
Ruggedly builded, and in it a cave
In which an ugly giant now doth won,
Ycleped Barbaroso. In his hand
He shakes a naked lance of purest steel,
With sleeves turned up, and him before he wears
A motley garment to preserve his clothes
From blood of those knights which he massacres,
And ladies gent. Without his door doth hang
A copper basin on a prickant spear,
At which no sooner gentle knights can knock
But the shrill sound fierce Barbaroso hears,
And rushing forth, brings in the errant knight
And sets him down in an enchanted chair.
Then with an engine which he hath prepared
With forty teeth, he claws his courtly crown;
Next makes him wink, and underneath his chin
He plants a brazen piece of mighty bord,
And knocks his bullets round about his cheeks,
Whilst with his fingers and an instrument
With which he snaps his hair off he doth fill
The wretch's ears with a most hideous noise.
Thus every knight adventurer he doth trim,
And now no creature dares encounter him.

RAFE

In God's name, I will fight him, kind sir.
Go but before me to this dismal cave
Where this huge giant, Barbaroso, dwells,
And, by that virtue that brave Rosicleer
That damned brood of ugly giants slew,
And Palmerin Frannarco overthrew,
I doubt not but to curb this traitor foul,
And to the devil send his guilty soul.

HOST

Brave sprighted knight, thus far I will perform
This your request: I'll bring you within sight
Of this most loathsome place, inhabited
By a more loathsome man; but dare not stay,
For his main force swoops all he sees away.

RAFE

Saint George, set on before! March, squire and page.

Exeunt.

WIFE

George, dost think Rafe will confound the giant?

CITIZEN

I hold my cap to a farthing he does. Why, Nell, I saw him
wrestle with the great Dutchman and hurl him.

WIFE

Faith, and that Dutchman was a goodly man, if all things were
answerable to his bigness; and yet they say there was a
Scotchman higher than he, and that they two and a knight met
and saw one another for nothing; but of all the sights that
ever were in London since I was married, methinks the little
child that was so fair grown about the members was the
prettiest, that and the hermaphrodite.

CITIZEN

Nay, by your leave, Nell, Ninivie was better.

WIFE

Ninivie? O, that was the story of Joan and the wall, was it
not, George?

CITIZEN

Yes, lamb.

SCENE THREE

The street before Merrythought's house.

Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT.

WIFE

Look, George, here comes Mistress Merrythought again, and I would have Rafe come and fight with the giant. I tell you true, I long to see't.

CITIZEN

Good Mistress Merrythought, be gone, I pray you, for my sake. I pray you, forbear a little. You shall have audience presently. I have a little business.

WIFE

Mistress Merrythought, if it please you to refrain your passion a little, till Rafe have dispatched the giant out of the way, we shall think ourselves much bound to you. I thank you, good Mistress Merrythought.

Exit MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT.

Enter a BOY.

CITIZEN

Boy, come hither. Send away Rafe and this whoreson giant quickly.

BOY

In good faith, sir, we cannot. You'll utterly spoil our play and make it to be hissed, and it cost money. You will not suffer us to go on with our plot. -- I pray, gentlemen, rule him.

CITIZEN

Let him come now and dispatch this, and I'll trouble you no more.

BOY

Will you give me your hand of that?

WIFE

Give him thy hand, George, do, and I'll kiss him. I warrant thee, the youth means plainly.

BOY

I'll send him to you presently.

WIFE

I thank you, little youth.

(Exit BOY)

-- Faith, the child hath a Sweet breath, George, but I think it be troubled with the worms. Carduus benedictus and mare's milk were the only thing in the world for't. O, Rafe's here, George. -- God send thee good luck, Rafe.

SCENE FOUR

Before a Barber's Shop, Waltham

Enter RAFE, HOST, TIM, and GEORGE.

HOST

Puissant knight, yonder his mansion is.
Lo, where the spear and copper basin are.
Behold that string on which hangs many a tooth
Drawn from the gentle jaw of wand'ring knights.
I dare not stay to sound; he will appear.

Exit HOST.

RAFE

O, faint not, heart. Susan, my lady dear,
The cobbler's maid in Milk Street, for whose sake
I take these arms, O let the thought of thee
Carry thy knight through all adventurous deeds;
And in the honor of thy beauteous self
May I destroy this monster, Barbaroso.
Knock, squire, upon the basin, till it break
With the shrill strokes, or till the giant speak.

Enter BARBER.

WIFE

O, George, the giant, the giant! -- Now, Rafe, for thy life.

BARBER

What fond unknowing wight is this, that dares
So rudely knock at Barbaroso's cell,
Where no man comes but leaves his fleece behind?

RAFE

I, traitorous caitiff, who am sent by fate
To punish all the sad enormities
Thou hast committed against ladies gent
And errant knights. Traitor to God and men,
Prepare thyself! This is the dismal hour
Appointed for thee to give strict account
Of all thy beastly treacherous villainies.

BARBER

Foolhardy knight, full soon thou shalt aby
This fond reproach. Thy body will I bang,
(He takes down his pole)
And, lo, upon that string thy teeth shall hang.
Prepare thyself, for dead soon shalt thou be.

RAFE

Saint George for me!

They fight.

BARBER

Gargantua for me!

WIFE

To him, Rafe; to him. Hold up the giant. Set out thy leg
before, Rafe.

CITIZEN

Falsify a blow, Rafe; falsify a blow. The giant lies open on
the left side.

WIFE

Bear't off; bear't off still. There, boy. -- O, Rafe's almost
down; Rafe's almost down.

RAFE

Susan, inspire me. -- Now have up again.

WIFE

Up, up, up, up, up! So, Rafe, down with him; down with him,
Rafe.

CITIZEN

Fetch him o'er the hip, boy.

WIFE

There, boy. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Rafe.

CITIZEN

No, Rafe, get all out of him first.

RAFE

Presumptuous man, see to what desperate end
Thy treachery hath brought thee. The just gods,
Who never prosper those that do despise them,
For all the villainies which thou hast done
To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home
By my stiff arm, a knight adventurous.
But say, vile wretch, before I send thy soul
To sad Avernus, whither it must go,
What captives holdst thou in thy sable cave.

BARBER

Go in and free them all; thou hast the day.

RAFE

Go, squire and dwarf, search in this dreadful cave
And free the wretched prisoners from their bonds.

Exit TIM and GEORGE.

BARBER

I crave for mercy, as thou art a knight,
And scorn'st to spill the blood of those that beg.

RAFE

Thou showed'st no mercy, nor shalt thou have any.
Prepare thyself, for thou shalt surely die.

*Enter TIM, leading one winking, with a basin under
his chin.*

TIM

Behold, brave knight, here is one prisoner,
Whom this wild man hath used as you see.

WIFE

This is the first wise word I heard the squire speak.

RAFE

Speak what thou art and how thou hast been used,
That I may give condign punishment.

I KNIGHT

I am a knight that took my journey post
Northward from London, and in courteous wise
(MORE)

I KNIGHT (CONT'D)

This giant trained me to his loathsome den
Under pretense of killing of the itch,
And all my body with a powder strewed,
That smarts and stings, and cut away my beard
And my curled locks wherein were ribands tied,
And with a water washed my tender eyes
(Whilst up and down about me still he skipped),
Whose virtue is that till mine eyes be wiped
With a dry cloth, for this my foul disgrace
I shall not dare to look a dog i'th' face.

WIFE

Alas, poor knight. -- Relieve him, Rafe; relieve poor knights
whilst you live.

RAFE

My trusty squire, convey him to the town,
Where he may find relief. Adieu, fair knight.

Exit KNIGHT.

*Enter GEORGE, leading one with a patch o'er his
nose.*

GEORGE

Puissant knight of the Burning Pestle hight,
See here another wretch whom this foul beast
Hath scorched and scored in this inhuman wise.

RAFE

Speak me thy name and eke thy place of birth,
And what hath been thy usage in this cave.

II KNIGHT

I am a knight, Sir Pockhole is my name,
And by my birth I am a Londoner,
Free by my copy; but my ancestors
Were Frenchmen all; and riding hard this way
Upon a trotting horse, my bones did ache;
And I, faint knight, to ease my weary limbs,
Light at this cave, when straight this furious fiend,
With sharpest instrument of purest steel,
Did cut the gristle of my nose away,
And in the place this velvet plaster stands.
Relieve me, gentle knight, out of his hands.

WIFE

Good Rafe, relieve Sir Pockhole and send him away, for in
truth, his breath stinks.

RAFE

Convey him straight after the other knight.
Sir Pockhole, fare you well.

II KNIGHT

Kind sir, good night.
(Exit)

Cries within.

MAN

(within)
Deliver us.

WOMAN

(within)
Deliver us.

WIFE

Hark, George, what a woeful cry there is. I think some woman
lies in there.

MAN

(within)
Deliver us.

WOMAN

(within)
Deliver us.

RAFE

What ghastly noise is this? Speak, Barbaroso,
Or by this blazing steel thy head goes off.

BARBER

Prisoners of mine, whom I in diet keep.
Send lower down into the cave,
And in a tub that's heated smoking hot,
There may they find them and deliver them.

RAFE

Run, squire and dwarf; deliver them with speed.

Exeunt TIM and GEORGE.

WIFE

But will not Rafe kill this giant? Surely, I am afeared if he
let him go he will do as much hurt as ever he did.

CITIZEN

Not so, mouse, neither, if he could convert him.

WIFE

Ay, George, if he could convert him; but a giant is not so soon converted as one of us ordinary people. There's a pretty tale of a witch that had the devil's mark about her, God bless us, that had a giant to her son, that was called Lob-lie-by-the-fire. Didst never hear it, George?

Enter TIM, leading a MAN with a glass of lotion in his hand, and the GEORGE, leading a WOMAN with diet-bread and drink.

CITIZEN

Peace, Nell, here comes the prisoners.

GEORGE

Here be these pined wretches, manful knight,
That for these six weeks have not seen a wight.

RAFE

Deliver what you are, and how you came
To this sad cave, and what your usage was.

MAN

I am an errant knight that followed arms
With spear and shield, and in my tender years
I stricken was with Cupid's fiery shaft
And fell in love with this my lady dear
And stole her from her friends in Turnbull Street
And bore her up and down from town to town,
Where we did eat and drink and music hear,
Till at the length, at this unhappy town
We did arrive, and coming to this cave
This beast us caught and put us in a tub,
Where we this two months sweat, and should have done
Another month if you had not relieved us.

WOMAN

This bread and water hath our diet been,
Together with a rib cut from a neck
Of burned mutton. Hard hath been our fare.
Release us from this ugly giant's snare.

MAN

This hath been all the food we have received.
But only twice a day, for novelty,
(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

He gave a spoonful of this hearty broth
To each of us, through this same slender quill.
Pulls out a syringe.

RAFE

From this infernal monster you shall go,
That useth knights and gentle ladies so.
Convey them hence.

Exeunt MAN and WOMAN.

CITIZEN

Cony, I can tell thee the gentlemen like Rafe.

WIFE

Ay, George, I see it well enough. -- Gentlemen, I thank you
all heartily for gracing my man Rafe, and I promise you you
shall see him oft'ner.

BARBER

Mercy, great knight, I do recant my ill,
And henceforth never gentle blood will spill.

RAFE

I give thee mercy, but yet shalt thou swear
Upon my burning pestle to perform
Thy promise uttered.

BARBER

I swear and kiss.

RAFE

Depart, then, and amend. --
Come, squire and dwarf, the sun grows towards his set,
And we have many more adventures yet.

Exeunt.

CITIZEN

Now Rafe is in this humor, I know he would ha' beaten all the
boys in the house if they had been set on him.

WIFE

Ay, George, but it is well as it is. I warrant you the
gentlemen do consider what it is to overthrow a giant. But
look, George, here comes Mistress Merrythought and her son
Michael. -- Now you are welcome, Mistress Merrythought. Now
Rafe has done, you may go on.

SCENE FIVE

The street before Merrythought's house.

Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Mick, my boy.

MICHAEL

Ay, forsooth, mother?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Be merry, Mick; we are at home now, where, I warrant you, you shall find the house flung out at the windows.

(Music within)

Hark, hey, dogs, hey, this is the old world, i'faith, with my husband. If I get in among 'em, I'll play 'em such a lesson that they shall have little list to come scraping hither again. -- Why, Master Merrythought, husband, Charles Merrythought.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings within)

If you will sing and dance and laugh
And hollo and laugh again,
And then cry, "There, boys, there," why, then,
One, two, three, and four,
We shall be merry within this hour.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Why, Charles, do you not know your own natural wife? I say, open the door and turn me out those mangy companions. 'Tis more than time that they were fellow and fellow-like with you. You are a gentleman, Charles, and an old man, and father of two children; and I myself (though I say it) by my mother's side niece to a worshipful gentleman, and a conductor. He has been three times in his majesty's service at Chester, and is now the fourth time, God bless him and his charge, upon his journey.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings at the window)

Go from my window, love, go;
Go from my window, my dear.
The wind and the rain
Will drive you back again.

(MORE)

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (CONT'D)

rou cannot be lodged here.

Hark you, Mistress Merrythought, you that walk upon adventures and forsake your husband because he sings with never a penny in his purse. What, shall I think myself the worse? Faith, no, I'll be merry. You come not here. Here's none but lads of mettle, lives of a hundred years andupwards. Care never drunk their bloods, nor want made 'em warble,

(sings)

Heigh-ho, my heart is heavy.

(Exit from the window)

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Why, Master Merrythought, what am I that you should laugh me to scorn thus abruptly? Am I not your fellow-feeler, as we may say, in all our miseries, your comforter in health and sickness? Have I not brought you children? Are they not like you, Charles? Look upon thine own image, hard-hearted man. And yet for all this --

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings within)

Begone, begone, my Juggy, my puggy,

Begone, my love, my dear.

The weather is warm;

'Twill do thee no harm.

Thou canst not be lodged here.

Be merry, boys; some light music and more wine.

WIFE

He's not in earnest, I hope, George, is he?

CITIZEN

What if he be, sweetheart?

WIFE

Marry, if he be, George, I'll make bold to tell him he's an ingrant old man to use his bedfellow so scurvily.

CITIZEN

What, how does he use her, honey?

WIFE

Marry, come up, Sir Saucebox, I think you'll take his part, will you not? Lord, how hot you are grown. You are a fine man, an' you had a fine dog. It becomes you sweetly.

CITIZEN

Nay, prithee, Nell, chide not; for, as I am an honest man and a true Christian grocer, I do not like his doings.

WIFE

I cry you mercy, then, George. You know we are all frail and full of infirmities. -- D'ee hear, Master Merrythought; may I crave a word with you?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(within)

Strike up lively, lads.

WIFE

I had not thought, in truth, Master Merrythought, that a man of your age and discretion, as I may say, being a gentleman, and therefore known by your gentle conditions, could have used so little respect to the weakness of his wife. For your wife is your own flesh, the staff of your age, your yoke-fellow, with whose help you draw through the mire of this transitory world. Nay, she's your own rib. And again --

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings at the window)

I come not hither for thee to teach;
I have no pulpit for thee to preach;
I would thou hadst kissed me under the breech,
As thou art a lady gay.

WIFE

Marry, with a vengeance! I am heartily sorry for the poor gentlewoman, but if I were thy wife, i'faith, graybeard, i'faith --

CITIZEN

I prithee, sweet honeysuckle, be content.

WIFE

Give me such words that am a gentlewoman born! Hang him, hoary rascal! Get me some drink, George. I am almost molten with fretting: now beshrew his knave's heart for it!

Exit CITIZEN.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Play me a light lavolta. Come, be frolic. Fill the good fellows wine.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Why, Master Merrythought, are you disposed to make me wait here? You'll open, I hope. I'll fetch them that shall open else.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Good woman, if you will sing I'll give you something: if not,
(sings)

You are no love for me, Marg'ret.

I am no love for you.

-- Come aloft, boys, aloft.

(Exit from the window)

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Now a churl's fart in your teeth, sir. -- Come, Mick, we'll not trouble him. 'A shall not ding us i'th' teeth with his bread and his broth, that he shall not. Come, boy, I'll provide for thee, I warrant thee. We'll go to Master Venturewell's, the merchant. I'll get his letter to mine host of the Bell in Waltham. There I'll place thee with the tapster. Will not that do well for thee, Mick? And let me alone for that old cuckoldly knave, your father. I'll use him in his kind, I warrant ye.

Exeunt. Music.

END OF ACT THREE

INTERVAL

PART TWO

INTERLUDE THREE

Enter CITIZEN.

WIFE

Come, George, where's the beer?

CITIZEN

Here, love.

WIFE

This old fornicating fellow will not out of my mind yet. --
Gentlemen, I'll begin to you all, and I desire more of your
acquaintance, with all my heart.

(Drinks)

-- Fill the gentlemen some beer, George.

(BOY danceth)

Look, George, the little boy's come again. Methinks he looks
something like the Prince of Orange in his long stocking, if
he had a little harness about his neck. George, I will have
him dance fading. -- Fading is a fine jig, I'll assure you,
gentlemen. -- Begin, brother. -- Now 'a capers, sweetheart.
-- Now a turn o' th' toe, and then tumble. Cannot you tumble,
youth?

BOY

No, indeed, forsooth.

WIFE

Nor eat fire?

BOY

Neither.

WIFE

Why then, I thank you heartily. There's twopence to buy you
points withal.

END OF INTERLUDE THREE

ACT FOUR

SCENE ONE

A Street

Enter JASPER and BOY.

JASPER

There, boy, deliver this, but do it well.
(*Gives a letter*)
Hast thou provided me four lusty fellows
Able to carry me? And art thou perfect
In all thy business?

BOY

Sir, you need not fear.
I have my lesson here and cannot miss it.
The men are ready for you, and what else
Pertains to this employment.

JASPER

There, my boy,
(*Gives money*)
Take it, but buy no land.

BOY

Faith, sir, 'twere rare
To see so young a purchaser. I fly,
And on my wings carry your destiny.
(*Exit*)

JASPER

Go, and be happy. -- Now, my latest hope,
Forsake me not, but fling thy anchor out
And let it hold. Stand fixed, thou rolling stone,
Till I enjoy my dearest. Hear me all,
You powers that rule in men celestial.
(*Exit*)

WIFE

Go thy ways; thou art as crooked a sprig as ever grew in
London. I warrant him he'll come to some naughty end or
other, for his looks say no less. Besides, his father (you
know, George) is none of the best. You heard him take me up
(MORE)

WIFE (CONT'D)

like a flirt-gill, and sing bawdy songs upon me; but, i'faith, if I live, George --

CITIZEN

Let me alone, sweetheart. I have a trick in my head shall lodge him in the Arches for one year, and make him sing peccavi ere I leave him, and yet he shall never know who hurt him neither.

WIFE

Do, my good George, do.

Enter BOY.

CITIZEN

What shall we have Rafe do now, boy?

BOY

You shall have what you will, sir.

CITIZEN

Why, so, sir, go and fetch me him then, and let the Sophy of Persia come and christen him a child.

BOY

Believe me, sir, that will not do so well. 'us stale. It has been had before at the Red Bull.

WIFE

George, let Rafe travel over great hills, and let him be very weary, and come to the King of Cracovia's house, covered with velvet, and there let the king's daughter stand in her window, all in beaten gold, combing her golden locks with a comb of ivory, and let her spy Rafe and fall in love with him, and come down to him and carry him into her father's house, and then let Rafe talk with her.

CITIZEN

Well said, Nell; it shall be so. -- Boy, let's ha't done quickly.

BOY

Sir, if you will imagine all this to be done already, you shall hear them talk together. But we cannot present a house covered with black velvet, and a lady in beaten gold.

CITIZEN

Sir boy, let's ha't as you can, then.

BOY

Besides, it will show ill-favoredly to have a grocer's prentice to court a king's daughter.

CITIZEN

Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories! I pray you, what was Sir Dragonet? Was not he prentice to a grocer in London? Read the play of The Four Prentices of London, where they toss their pikes so. I pray you, fetch him in, sir; fetch him in.

BOY

It shall be done. -- It is not our fault, gentlemen.
(Exit)

SCENE TWO

A hall in the King of Moldavia's court

WIFE

Now we shall see fine doings, I warrant'ee, George.

(Enter RAFE and POMPIONA, TIM, and GEORGE)

O, here they come. How prettily the King of Cracovia's daughter is dressed.

CITIZEN

Ay, Nell, it is the fashion of that country, I warrant'ee.

POMPIONA

Welcome, sir knight, unto my father's court,
King of Moldavia; unto me, Pompiona,
His daughter dear. But sure you do not like
Your entertainment, that will stay with us
No longer but a night.

RAFE

Damsel right fair,
I am on many sad adventures bound,
That call me forth into the wilderness.
Besides, my horse's back is something galled,
Which will enforce me ride a sober pace.
But many thanks, fair lady, be to you,
For using errant knight with courtesy.

POMPIONA

But say, brave knight, what is your name and birth?

RAFE

My name is Rafe.
I am an Englishman,
As true as steel, a hearty Englishman,
And prentice to a grocer in the Strand
By deed indent, of which I have one part.
But Fortune calling me to follow arms,
On me this holy order I did take
Of Burning Pestle, which in all men's eyes
I bear, confounding ladies' enemies.

POMPIONA

Oft have I heard of your brave countrymen
And fertile soil and store of wholesome food.
My father oft will tell me of a drink
In England found, and nipitato called,
Which driveth all the sorrow from your hearts.

RAFE

Lady, 'tis true; you need not lay your lips
To better nipitato than there is.

POMPIONA

And of a wild fowl he will often speak,
Which powdered beef and mustard called is;
For there have been great wars 'twixt us and you,
But truly, Rafe, it was not 'long of me.
Tell me then, Rafe, could you contented be
To wear a lady's favor in your shield?

RAFE

I am a knight of religious order
And will not wear a favor of a lady's
That trusts in Antichrist and false traditions.

CITIZEN

Well said, Rafe; convert her if thou canst.

RAFE

Besides, I have a lady of my own
In merry England, for whose virtuous sake
I took these arms; and Susan is her name,
A cobbler's maid in Milk Street, whom I vow
Ne'er to forsake whilst life and pestle last.

POMPIONA

Happy that cobbling dame, whoe'er she be,
That for her own, dear Rafe, hath gotten thee;

(MORE)

POMPIONA (CONT'D)

Unhappy I, that ne'er shall see the day
To see thee more, that bear'st my heart away.

RAFE

Lady, farewell, I needs must take my leave.

POMPIONA

Hard-hearted Rafe, that ladies dost deceive.

CITIZEN

Hark thee, Rafe, there's money for thee. Give something in
the King of Cracovia's house. Be not beholding to him.

RAFE

Lady, before I go, I must remember
Your father's officers, who, truth to tell,
Have been about me very diligent.
Hold up thy snowy hand, thou princely maid.
There's twelve pence for your father's chamberlain;
And another shilling for his cook,
For, by my troth, the goose was roasted well;
And twelve pence for your father's horsekeeper,
For 'nointing my horse back; and for his butter,
There is another shilling. To the maid
That washed my boot-hose, there's an English groat;
And twopence to the boy that wiped my boots;
And last, fair lady, there is for yourself
Threepence to buy you pins at Bumbo Fair.

POMPIONA

Full many thanks, and I will keep them safe
Till all the heads be off, for thy sake, Rafe.

RAFE

Advance, my squire and dwarf; I cannot stay.

POMPIONA

Thou kill'st my heart in parting thus away.

Exeunt.

WIFE

I commend Rafe yet that he will not stoop to a Cracovian.
There's properer women in London than any are there, iwis.
But here comes Master Humphrey and his love again now,
George.

CITIZEN

Ay, cony, peace.

SCENE THREE

A room in Venturewell's house.

Enter VENTUREWELL, HUMPHREY, LUCY, and a BOY.

VENTUREWELL

Go, get you up. I will not be entreated.
And, gossip mine, I'll keep you sure hereafter
From gadding out again with boys and unthrifths.
Come, they are women's tears. I know your fashion. --
Go, sirrah, lock her in and keep the key
Safe as you love your life.

(Exeunt LUCY and BOY)

Now, my son Humphrey,
You may both rest assured of my love
In this, and reap your own desire.

HUMPHREY

I see this love you speak of, through your daughter,
Although the hole be little; and hereafter
Will yield the like in all I may or can,
Fitting a Christian and a gentleman.

VENTUREWELL

I do believe you, my good son, and thank you;
For 'twere an impudence to think you flattered.

HUMPHREY

It were indeed, but shall I tell you why?
I have been beaten twice about the lie.

VENTUREWELL

Well, son, no more of compliment; my daughter
Is yours again. Appoint the time and take her.
We'll have no stealing for it. I myself
And some few of our friends will see you married.

HUMPHREY

I would you would, i'faith, for be it known,
I ever was afraid to lie alone.

VENTUREWELL

Some three days hence, then.

HUMPHREY

Three days, let me see,
'Tis somewhat of the most; yet I agree,
Because I mean against the appointed day
To visit all my friends in new array.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT

Sir, there's a gentlewoman without would speak with your
worship.

VENTUREWELL

What is she?

SERVANT

Sir, I asked her not.

VENTUREWELL

Bid her come in.

Exit SERVANT.

Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Peace be to your worship. I come as a poor suitor to you,
sir, in the behalf of this child.

VENTUREWELL

Are you not wife to Merrythought?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Yes, truly, would I had ne'er seen his eyes. He has undone me
and himself and his children, and there he lives at home and
sings, and hoits, and revels among his drunken companions;
but, I warrant you, where to get a penny to put bread in his
mouth, he knows not; and therefore if it like your worship, I
would entreat your letter to the honest host of the Bell in
Waltham, that I may place my child under the protection of
his tapster in some settled course of life.

VENTUREWELL

I'm glad the heavens have heard my prayers. Thy husband,
When I was ripe in sorrows, laughed at me.
Thy son, like an unthankful wretch, I having
Redeemed him from his fall and made him mine,
To show his love again, first stole my daughter,

(MORE)

VENTUREWELL (CONT'D)

Then wronged this gentleman, and last of all,
Gave me that grief had almost brought me down
Unto my grave, had not a stronger hand
Relieved my sorrows. Go and weep, as I did,
And be unpitied; for I here profess
An everlasting hate to all thy name.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

Will you so, sir? How say you by that? -- Come, Mick, let him
keep his wind to cool his porridge. We'll go to thy nurse's,
Mick. She knits silk stockings, boy, and we'll knit too, boy,
and be beholding to none of them all.

Exeunt MICHAEL and MOTHER.

Enter a BOY with a letter.

BOY

Sir, I take it you are the master of this house.

VENTUREWELL

How then, boy?

BOY

Then to yourself, sir, comes this letter.

VENTUREWELL

From whom, my pretty boy?

BOY

From him that was your servant, but no more
Shall that name ever be, for he is dead.
Grief of your purchased anger broke his heart.
I saw him die, and from his hand received
This paper, with a charge to bring it hither;
Read it, and satisfy yourself in all.

VENTUREWELL

(reads)

"Sir, That I have wronged your love, I must confess, in which
I have purchased to myself, besides mine own undoing, the ill
opinion of my friends. Let not your anger, good sir, outlive
me, but suffer me to rest in peace with your forgiveness. Let
my body (if a dying man may so much prevail with you) be
brought to your daughter, that she may truly know my hot
flames are now buried, and, withal, receive a testimony of
the zeal I bore her virtue. Farewell forever, and be ever
happy. Jasper" -- God's hand is great in this. I do forgive
him;

(MORE)

VENTUREWELL (CONT'D)

*Yet I am glad he's quiet, where I hope
He will not bite again. -- Boy, bring the body
And let him have his will, if that be all.*

BOY

'Tis here without, sir.

VENTUREWELL

*So, sir, if you please,
You may conduct it in; I do not fear it.*

HUMPHREY

*I'll be your usher, boy; for, though I say it,
He owed me something once and well did pay it.*

Exeunt.

SCENE FOUR

Another room in Venturewell's house.

Enter LUCY, alone.

LUCY

*If there be any punishment inflicted
Upon the miserable, more than yet I feel,
Let it together seize me, and at once
Press down my soul. I cannot bear the pain
Of these delaying tortures. Thou that art
The end of all and the sweet rest of all,
Come, come, O Death; bring me to thy peace
And blot out all the memory I nourish,
Both of my father and my cruel friend.
O wretched maid, still living to be wretched,
To be a say to Fortune in her changes
And grow to number times and woes together!
How happy had I been, if being born
My grave had been my cradle.*

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT

*By your leave,
Young mistress, here's a boy hath brought a coffin.
What 'a would say, I know not, but your father
Charged me to give you notice. Here they come.*

Enter TWO bearing a coffin, JASPER in it.

LUCY

For me I hope 'tis come, and 'tis most welcome.

BOY

Fair mistress, let me not add greater grief
To that great store you have already. Jasper,
That whilst he lived was yours, now dead
And here enclosed, commanded me to bring
His body hither, and to crave a tear
From those fair eyes, though he deserved not pity,
To deck his funeral, for so he bid me
Tell her for whom he died.

LUCY

He shall have many.
Good friends, depart a little, whilst I take
My leave of this dead man, that once I loved.
(*Exeunt COFFIN-CARRIERS and BOY*)
Hold yet a little, life, and then I give thee
To thy first heavenly being. O, my friend,
Hast thou deceived me thus, and got before me?
I shall not long be after, but, believe me,
Thou wert too cruel, Jasper, 'gainst thyself
In punishing the fault I could have pardoned
With so untimely death. Thou didst not wrong me
But ever wert most kind, most true, most loving;
And I the most unkind, most false, most cruel.
Didst thou but ask a tear? I'll give thee all,
Even all my eyes can pour down, all my sighs,
And all myself, before thou goest from me.
These are but sparing rites. But if thy soul
Be yet about this place and can behold
And see what I prepare to deck thee with,
It shall go up, borne on the wings of peace,
And satisfied. First will I sing thy dirge,
Then kiss thy pale lips, and then die myself,
And fill one coffin and one grave together.

LUCY

Come, you whose loves are dead,
And, whiles I sing,
Weep, and wring
Every hand, and every head
Bind with cypress and sad yew;
Ribands black and candles blue
For him that was of men most true.
Come with heavy moaning,
And on his grave

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

Let him have
Sacrifice of sighs and groaning.
Let him have fair flowers enow,
White and purple, green and yellow,
For him that was of men most true.
Thou sable cloth, sad cover of my joys,
I lift thee up, and thus I meet with death.

JASPER

(rising out of the coffin)
And thus you meet the living.

LUCY

Save me, heaven!

JASPER

Nay, do not fly me, fair. I am no spirit;
Look better on me. Do you know me yet?

LUCY

O thou dear shadow of my friend.

JASPER

Dear substance;
I swear I am no shadow. Feel my hand;
It is the same it was. I am your Jasper,
Your Jasper, that's yet living and yet loving.
Pardon my rash attempt, my foolish proof
I put in practice of your constancy.
For Sooner should my sword have drunk my blood
And set my soul at liberty, than drawn
The least drop from that body; for which boldness
Doom me to anything. If death, I take it,
And willingly.

LUCY

This death I'll give you for it.
(Kisses him)
So, now I am satisfied. You are no spirit,
But my own truest, truest, truest friend.
Why do you come thus to me?

JASPER

First to see you,
Then to convey you hence.

LUCY

It cannot be,
For I am locked up here and watched at all hours,
That 'tis impossible for me to 'scape.

JASPER

Nothing more possible. Within this coffin
Do you convey yourself. Let me alone;
I have the wits of twenty men about me.
Only I crave the shelter of your closet
A little, and then fear me not. Creep in
That they may presently convey you hence.
Fear nothing, dearest love; I'll be your second.

*(LUCY lies down in the coffin and JASPER covers her
with the cloth)*

Lie close. So. All goes well yet. -- Boy!

Enter COFFIN-CARRIERS and BOY.

BOY

At hand, Sir.

JASPER

Convey away the coffin and be wary.

BOY

'Tis done already.

JASPER

Now must I go conjure.
(Exit)

Enter VENTUREWELL.

VENTUREWELL

Boy, boy.

BOY

Your servant, sir.

VENTUREWELL

Do me this kindness, boy (hold, here's a crown): before thou
bury the body of this fellow, carry it to his old merry
father and salute him from me, and bid him sing. He hath
cause.

BOY

I will, sir.

VENTUREWELL

And then bring me word what tune he is in, and have another crown; but do it truly. I have fitted him a bargain now will vex him.

BOY

God bless your worship's health, sir.

VENTUREWELL

Farewell, boy.

Exeunt.

SCENE FIVE

A street before Merrythought's house.

Enter MASTER MERRYTHOUGHT.

WIFE

Ah, old Merrythought, art thou there again? Let's hear some of thy songs.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

Who can sing a merrier note
Than he that cannot change a groat?

Not a denier left, and yet my heart leaps. I do wonder yet, as old as I am, that any man will follow a trade, or serve, that may sing, and laugh, and walk the streets. My wife and both my sons are I know not where. I have nothing left, nor know I how to come by meat to supper, yet am I merry still; for I know I shall find it upon the table at six o'clock. Therefore, hang thought.

(Sings)

I would not be a serving man
To carry the cloak bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer
The greedy hawks to fill.
But I would be in a good house,
And have a good master too.
But I would eat and drink of the best,
And no work would I do.

This is it that keeps life and soul together: mirth. This is the philosopher's stone that they write so much on, that keeps a man ever young.

Enter a BOY.

BOY

Sir, they say they know all your money is gone, and they will trust you for no more drink.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Will they not? Let 'em choose. The best is, I have mirth at home, and need not send abroad for that. Let them keep their drink to themselves.

(Sings)

For Jillian of Berry, she dwells on a hill,
And she hath good beer and ale to sell,
And of good fellows she thinks no ill;
And thither will we go now, now, now, now,
And thither will we go now.
And when you have made a little stay,
You need not ask what is to pay,
But kiss your hostess and go your way,
And thither etc.

Enter another BOY.

II BOY

Sir, I can get no bread for supper.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Hang bread and supper! Let's preserve our mirth, and we shall never feel hunger, I'll warrant you. Let's have a catch; boy, follow me; come sing this catch.

Ho, ho, nobody at home!
Meat, nor drink, nor money ha' we none.
Fill the pot, Eedy,
Never more need I.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

So, boys, enough. Follow me. Let's change our place and we shall laugh afresh.

Exeunt.

END OF ACT FOUR

INTERLUDE FOUR

WIFE

Let him go, George. 'A shall not have any countenance from us, nor a good word from any i'th' company, if I may strike stroke in't.

CITIZEN

No more 'a sha'not, love; but, Nell, I will have Rafe do a very notable matter now, to the eternal honor and glory of all grocers. -- Sirrah, you there, boy. Can none of you hear?

Enter BOY.

BOY

Sir, your pleasure.

CITIZEN

Let Rafe come out on May Day in the morning and speak upon a conduit, with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers and his rings and his knacks.

BOY

Why, sir, you do not think of our plot; what will become of that, then?

CITIZEN

Why, sir, I care not what become on't. I'll have him come out, or I'll fetch him out myself. I'll have something done in honor of the city. Besides, he hath been long enough upon adventures. Bring him out quickly, or if I come in amongst you --

BOY

Well, sir, he shall come out. But if our play miscarry, sir, you are like to pay for't.

Exit BOY.

CITIZEN

Bring him away, then.

WIFE

This will be brave, i'faith; George, shall not he dance the morris too, for the credit of the Strand?

CITIZEN

No, sweetheart, it will be too much for the boy.

(Enter RAFE)

O, there he is, Nell. He's reasonable well in reparel, but he has not rings enough.

RAFE

London, to thee I do present the merry month of May.
Let each true subject be content to hear me what I say:
For from the top of conduit head, as plainly may appear,
I will both tell my name to you and wherefore I came here.
My name is Rafe, by due descent though not ignoble I,
Yet far inferior to the flock of gracious grocery.
And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,
With guilded staff and crossed scarf, the May Lord here I
stand.

Rejoice, O English hearts, rejoice; rejoice, O lovers dear;
Rejoice, O city, town, and country; rejoice, eke every shire.
For now the fragrant flowers do spring and sprout in seemly
sort;

The little birds do sit and sing, the lambs do make fine
sport.

And now the birchen tree doth bud, that makes the schoolboy
cry.

The morris rings while hobbyhorse doth foot it feateously.
The lords and ladies now abroad for their disport and play,
Do kiss sometimes upon the grass, and sometimes in the hay.
Now butter with a leaf of sage is good to purge the blood.
Fly Venus and phlebotomy, for they are neither good.
Now little fish on tender stone begin to cast their bellies,
And sluggish snails, that erst were mute, do creep out of
their shellies.

The rumbling rivers now do warm, for little boys to paddle;
The sturdy steed now goes to grass, and up they hang his
saddle.

The heavy hart, the bellowing buck, the rascal, and the
pricket,

Are now among the yeoman's peas, and leave the fearful
thicket.

And be like them, O you, I say, of this same noble town,
And lift aloft your velvet heads, and slipping off your gown,
With bells on legs and napkins clean unto your shoulders
tied,

With scarfs and garters as you please, and "Hey for our town"
cried,

March out and show your willing minds, by twenty and by
twenty,

To Hogsdon or to Newington, where ale and cakes are plenty.

(MORE)

RAFE (CONT'D)

And let it ne'er be said for shame, that we the youths of
London
Lay thrumming of our caps at home, and left our custom
undone.
Up then, I say, both young and old, both man and maid a-
maying,
With drums and guns that bounce aloud, and merry tabor
playing!
Which to prolong, God save our king, and send his country
peace,
And root our treason from the land, and so, my friends, I
cease.
(Exit)

END OF INTERLUDE FOUR

ACT FIVE

SCENE ONE

A room in Venturewell's house.

Enter VENTUREWELL, solus.

VENTUREWELL

I will have no great store of company at the wedding, a couple of neighbors and their wives, and we will have a capon in stewed broth, with marrow, and a good piece of beef, stuck with rosemary.

Enter JASPER, his face mealed.

JASPER

Forbear thy pains, fond man; it is too late.

VENTUREWELL

Heaven bless me! Jasper?

JASPER

Ay, I am his ghost,
Whom thou hast injured for his constant love.
Fond worldly wretch, who dost not understand
In death that true hearts cannot parted be.
First, know thy daughter is quite borne away
On wings of angels, through the liquid air,
To far out of thy reach, and nevermore
Shalt thou behold her face. But she and I
Will in another world enjoy our loves,
Where neither father's anger, poverty,
Nor any cross that troubles earthly men
Shall make us sever our united hearts.
And never shalt thou sit or be alone
In any place, but I will visit thee
With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind
The great offences which thou didst to me.
When thou art at thy table with thy friends,
Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,
I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear

(MORE)

JASPER (CONT'D)

Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as Death itself.

VENTUREWELL

Forgive me, Jasper.
O, what might I do,
Tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost?

JASPER

There is no means. Too late thou thinkst of this.

VENTUREWELL

But tell me what were best for me to do?

JASPER

Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father,
And beat fond Humphrey out of thy doors.

Exit JASPER.

Enter HUMPHREY.

WIFE

Look, George, his very ghost would have folks beaten.

HUMPHREY

Father, my bride is gone, fair Mistress Lucy.
My soul's the fount of vengeance, mischief's sluice.

VENTUREWELL

Hence, fool, out of my sight with thy fond passion!
Thou hast undone me.

(Beats him)

HUMPHREY

Hold, my father dear,
For Lucy thy daughter's sake, that had no peer.

VENTUREWELL

Thy father, fool? There's some blows more. Begone.
Jasper, I hope thy ghost be well appeased,
To see thy will performed. Now will I go
To satisfy thy father for thy wrongs.

(Exit)

HUMPHREY

What shall I do? I have been beaten twice,
And Mistress Lucy is gone. Help me, device!
Since my true love is gone, I nevermore,

(MORE)

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Whilst I do live, upon the sky will pore,
But in the dark will wear out my shoe-soles
In passion in Saint Faith's Church under Paul's.
(Exit)

WIFE

George, call Rafe hither; if you love me, call Rafe hither. I have the bravest thing for him to do, George. Prithee, call him quickly.

CITIZEN

Rafe, why Rafe, boy!

Enter RAFE.

RAFE

Here, sir.

CITIZEN

Come hither, Rafe; come to thy mistress, boy.

WIFE

Rafe, I would have thee call all the youths together in battle-ray, with drums, and guns, and flags, and march to Mile-End in pompous fashion, and there exhort your soldiers to be merry and wise, and to keep their beards from burning, Rafe; and then skirmish, and let your flags fly, and cry, "Kill, kill, kill!" My husband shall lend you his jerkin, Rafe, and there's a scarf for the rest, the house shall furnish you, and we'll pay for't. Do it bravely, Rafe, and think before whom you perform, and what person you represent.

RAFE

I warrant you, mistress, if I do it not for the honor of the city and the credit of my master, let me never hope for freedom.

WIFE

'Tis well spoken, i'faith. Go thy ways. Thou art a spark, indeed.

CITIZEN

Rafe, Rafe, double your files bravely, Rafe.

RAFE

I warrant you, sir.

Exit RAFE.

CITIZEN

Let him look narrowly to his service. I shall take him else. I was there myself a pikeman once, in the hottest of the day, wench; had my feather shot sheer away, the fringe of my pike burnt off with powder, my pate broken with a scouring-stick, and yet I thank God I am here.

Drum within.

WIFE

Hark, George, the drums.

CITIZEN

Ran, tan, tan, tan; ran, tan. O, wench, an' thou hadst but seen little Ned of Aldgate, Drum Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant, and then struck softly till the ward came up, and then thundered again, and together we go. "Sa, sa, sa, bounce," quoth the guns. "Courage, my hearts," quoth the captains. "Saint George," quoth the pikemen; and withal here they lay, and there they lay; and yet for all this, I am here, wench.

WIFE

Be thankful for it, George, for indeed 'tis wonderful.

SCENE TWO

A street (and afterwards Mile End).

Enter RAFE and his company, with drums and colors.

RAFE

March fair, my hearts. Lieutenant, beat the rear up. Ancient, let your colors fly; but have a great care of the butchers' hooks at Whitechapel; they have been the death of many a fair ancient. -- Open your files that I may take a view both of your persons and munition. -- Sergeant, call a muster.

SERGEANT

A stand! -- William Hammerton, pewterer!

HAMMERTON

Here, Captain.

RAFE

A corslet and a Spanish pike. 'us well. Can you shake it with a terror?

HAMMERTON

I hope so, Captain.

RAFE

Charge upon me!

(He charges on RAFE)

'Tis with the weakest. Put more strength, William Hammerton, more strength! As you were again. -- Proceed, Sergeant.

SERGEANT

George Greengoose, poulterer!

GREENGOOSE

Here.

RAFE

Let me see your piece, neighbor Greengoose; *When was she shot in?*

GREENGOOSE

And like you, Master Captain, I made a shot even now, partly to scour her, and partly for audacity.

RAFE

It should seem so certainly, for her breath is yet inflamed. Besides, there is a main fault in the touch-hole. It runs and stinketh; and I tell you moreover, and believe it, ten such touch-holes would breed the pox in the army. Get you a feather, neighbor, get you a feather, sweet oil, and paper, and your piece may do well enough yet. Where's your powder?

GREENGOOSE

Here.

RAFE

What, in a paper? As I am a soldier and a gentleman, it craves a martial court. You ought to die for't. Where's your horn? Answer me to that.

GREENGOOSE

An't like you, sir, I was oblivious.

RAFE

It likes me not you should be so. 'us a shame for you, and a scandal to all our neighbors, being a man of worth and estimation, to leave your horn behind you. I am afraid 'twill breed example. But let me tell you no more on't. -- Stand, till I view you all. What's become o'th' nose of your flask?

I SOLDIER

Indeed la, Captain, 'twas blown away with powder.

RAFE

Put on a new one at the city's charge. -- Where's the stone of this piece?

II SOLDIER

The drummer took it out to light tobacco.

RAFE

'Tis a fault, my friend; put it in again. -- You want a nose -- and you a stone. -- Sergeant, take a note on't, for I mean to stop it in the pay. -- Remove and march. Soft and fair, gentlemen, soft and fair! Double your files! As you were! Faces about. Now, you with the sodden face, keep in there. Look to your match, sirrah, it will be in your fellow's flask anon. So, make a crescent now; advance your pikes; stand, and give ear! Gentlemen, countrymen, friends, and my fellow soldiers, I have brought you this day from the shops of security and the counters of content, to measure out in these furious fields honor by the eli, and prowess by the pound. Let it not, O, let it not, I say, be told hereafter the noble issue of this city fainted, but bear yourselves in this fair action like men, valiant men and freemen. Fear not the face of the enemy, nor the noise of the guns, for believe me, brethren, the rude rumbling of a brewer's car is far more terrible, of which you have a daily experience; neither let the stink of powder offend you, since a more valiant stink is nightly with you. To a resolved mind, his home is everywhere. I speak not this to take away the hope of your return; for you shall see, I do not doubt it, and that very shortly, your loving wives again, and your sweet children, whose care doth bear you company in baskets. Remember, then, whose cause you have in hand, and like a sort of true-born scavengers, scour me this famous realm of enemies. I have no more to say but this: stand to your tacklings, lads, and show to the world you can as well brandish a sword as shake an apron. Saint George, and on, my hearts!

OMNES

Saint George, Saint George!

Exeunt.

WIFE

'Twas well done, Rafe. I'll send thee a cold capon a-field,
and a bottle of March beer; and it may be, come myself to see
thee.

CITIZEN

Nell, the boy has deceived me much. I did not think it had
been in him. He has performed such a matter, wench, that if I
live, next year I'll have him captain of the galley-foist, or
I'll want my will.

SCENE THREE

A room in Merrythought's house.

Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Yet, I thank God, I break not a wrinkle more than I had. Not
a stoup, boys? Care, live with cats; I defy thee. My heart is
as sound as an oak; and though I want drink to wet my
whistle, I can sing:

 Come no more there, boys, come no more there;
 For we shall never whilst we live come any more
 there.

Enter a BOY (and COFFIN-CARRIERS) with a coffin.

BOY

God save you, sir.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

It's a brave boy. Canst thou sing?

BOY

Yes, sir, I can sing, but 'tis not so necessary at this time.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

 Sing we and chant it,
 Whilst love doth grant it.

BOY

Sir, sir, if you knew what I have brought you, you would have
little list to sing.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

O, the minion round,
Full long I have thee sought,
And now I have thee found,
And what hast thou here brought?

BOY

A coffin, Sir, and your dead son Jasper in it.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Dead?

(Sings)

Why, farewell he.
Thou wast a bonny boy,
And I did love thee.

Enter JASPER.

JASPER

Then, I pray you, sir, do so still.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Jasper's ghost?

(Sings)

Thou art welcome from Stygian lake so soon;
Declare to me what wond'rous things in Pluto's court
are done.

JASPER

By my troth, sir, I ne'er came there. 'us too hot for me,
sir.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

A merry ghost, a very merry ghost.

(Sings)

And where is your true love? O, where is yours?

JASPER

Marry, look you, sir.

(Heaves up the coffin)

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Ah, ha! Art thou good at that, i'faith?

(Sings)

With hey, trixy, terlery-whiskin,
The world it runs on wheels.

(MORE)

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (CONT'D)

When the young man's -- -- ,
Up goes the maiden's heels.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL within.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

(within)

What, Master Merrythought, will you not let's in? What do you think shall become of us?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

What voice is that that calleth at our door?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

(within)

You know me well enough. I am sure I have not been such a stranger to you.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

And some they whistled, and some they sung,
Hey, down, down!
And some did loudly say,
Ever as the Lord Barnet's horn blew,
Away, Musgrave, away!

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

(within)

You will not have us starve here, will you, Master Merrythought?

JASPER

Nay, good sir, be persuaded; she is my mother.
If her offences have been great against you,
Let your own love remember she is yours,
And so forgive her.

LUCY

Good Master Merrythought,
Let me entreat you. I will not be denied.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

(within)

Why, Master Merrythought, will you be a vexed thing still?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Woman, I take you to my love again, but you shall sing before you enter; therefore, dispatch your song and so come in.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

(within)

Well, you must have your will, when all's done. -- Mick, what song canst thou sing, boy?

MICHAEL

(within)

I can sing none, forsooth, but "A Lady's Daughter, of Paris" properly.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT AND MICHAEL

(sing within)

It was a lady's daughter, etc.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT admits MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Come, you're welcome home again.

(Sings)

If such danger be in playing,
And jest must to earnest turn,
You shall go no more a-maying.

VENTUREWELL

(within)

Are you within, sir? Master Merrythought!

JASPER

It is my master's voice. Good sir, go hold him in talk, whilst we convey ourselves into some inward room.

(Exit with LUCY)

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

What are you? Are you merry? You must be very merry if you enter.

VENTUREWELL

(within)

I am, sir.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Sing, then.

VENTUREWELL

(within)

Nay, good sir, open to me.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Sing, I say, or, by the merry heart, you come not in.

VENTUREWELL

(within)

Well, sir, I'll sing:

(sings)

Fortune my foe, etc.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT admits VENTUREWELL.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

You are welcome, sir, you are welcome. You see your entertainment. Pray you, be merry.

VENTUREWELL

O Master Merrythought, I am come to ask you
Forgiveness for the wrongs I offered you
And your most virtuous son. They're infinite.
Yet my contrition shall be more than they.
I do confess my hardness broke his heart,
For which just heaven hath given me punishment
More than my age can carry. His wand'ring spirit,
Not yet at rest, pursues me everywhere,
Crying, "I'll haunt thee for thy cruelty."
My daughter, she is gone, I know not how,
Taken invisible, and whether living
Or in grave, 'tis yet uncertain to me.
O Master Merrythought, these are the weights
Will sink me to my grave. Forgive me, sir.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Why, sir, I do forgive you, and be merry.
And if the wag in's lifetime played the knave
Can you forgive him too?

VENTUREWELL

With all my heart, sir.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Speak it again, and heartily.

VENTUREWELL

I do, sir.

Now, by my soul, I do.

Enter LUCY and JASPER.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(sings)

With that came out his paramour.
She was as white as the lily flower.
Hey troll, trollie, lollie.
With that came out her own dear knight.
He was as true as ever did fight. &c.
Sir, if you will forgive 'em, clap their hands together.
There's no more to be said i'th' matter.

VENTUREWELL

I do, I do.

CITIZEN

I do not like this. Peace, boys! Hear me, one of you.
Everybody's part is come to an end but Rafe's, and he's left
out.

BOY

'Tis 'long of yourself, sir. We have nothing to do with his
part.

CITIZEN

Rafe, come away. -- Make on him, as you have done of the
rest, boys; come.

WIFE

Now, good husband, let him come out and die.

CITIZEN

He shall, Nell. -- Rafe, come away quickly and die, boy.

BOY

'Twill be very unfit he should die, sir, upon no occasion,
and in a comedy too.

CITIZEN

Take you no care of that, sir boy. Is not his part at an end,
think you, when he's dead? -- Come away, Rafe.

Enter RAFE, with a forked arrow through his head.

RAFE

When I was mortal, this my costive corpse
Did lap up figs and raisins in the Strand,
Where sitting, I espied a lovely dame,
Whose master wrought with lingel and with awl,

(MORE)

RAFE (CONT'D)

And under ground he vampied many a boot.
Straight did her love prick forth me, tender sprig,
To follow feats of arms in warlike wise,
Through Waltham Desert, where I did perform
Many achievements, and did lay on ground
Huge Barbaroso, that insulting giant,
And all his captives soon set at liberty.
Then honor pricked me from my native soil
Into Moldavia, where I gained the love
Of Pompiona, his beloved daughter,
But yet proved constant to the black-thumbed maid,
Susan, and scorned Pompiona's love.
Yet liberal I was, and gave her pins,
And money for her father's officers.
I then returned home, and thrust myself
In action, and by all men chosen was
Lord of the May, where I did flourish it,
With scarfs and rings, and posy in my hand.
After this action, I preferred was
And chosen city captain at Mile-End,
With hat and feather, and with leading staff,
And trained my men, and brought them all off clear,
Save one man that berayed him with the noise.
But all these things I, Rafe, did undertake
Only for my beloved Susan's sake.
Then coming home, and sitting in my shop
With apron blue, Death came unto my stall
To cheapen aqua vitae; but ere I
Could take the bottle down and fill a taste,
Death caught a pound of pepper in his hand
And sprinkled all my face and body o'er,
And in an instant vanished away.

CITIZEN

'Tis a pretty fiction, i'faith.

RAFE

Then took I up my bow and shaft in hand,
And walked into Moorfields to cool myself;
But there grim cruel Death met me again,
And shot this forked arrow through my head,
And now I faint. Therefore be warned by me,
My fellows every one, of forked heads.
Farewell, all you good boys in merry London.
Ne'er shall we more upon Shrove Tuesday meet
And pluck down houses of iniquity.
My pain increaseth. -- I shall never more
Hold open, whilst another pumps both legs,
Nor daub a satin gown with rotten eggs;

(MORE)

RAFE (CONT'D)

Set up a stake, O, never more I shall.
I die; fly, fly, my soul, to Grocers' Hall.
O, O, O, etc.

WIFE

Well said, Rafe. Do your obeisance to the gentlemen and go
your ways. Well said, Rafe.

Exit RAFE.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Methinks all we, thus kindly and unexpectedly reconciled,
should not depart without a song.

VENTUREWELL

A good motion.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

Strike up, then.

OMNES

Better music ne'er was known
Than a choir of hearts in one.
Let each other that hath been
Troubled with the gall or spleen,
Learn of us to keep his brow
Smooth and plain as ours are now.
Sing, though before the hour of dying;
He shall rise, and then be crying,
"Hey, ho, 'tis nought but mirth
That keeps the body from the earth."

Exeunt OMNES.

END OF ACT FIVE

EPILOGUE

CITIZEN

Come, Nell, shall we go? The play's done.

WIFE

Nay, by my faith, George, I have more manners than so. I'll speak to these gentlemen first. -- I thank you all, gentlemen, for your patience and countenance to Rafe, a poor fatherless child; and if I might see you at my house, it should go hard but I would have a pottle of wine and a pipe of tobacco for you; for truly I hope you do like the youth, but I would be glad to know the truth. I refer it to your own discretions whether you will applaud him or no; for I will wink, and whilst you shall do what you will. I thank you with all my heart. God give you good night. -- Come, George.

Exeunt.

CURTAIN