

MAQ. [*Aside.*] That's his Emilia.

MEN. "Nature's triumph, best on earth—"

MAQ. [*Aside.*] Meaning Emilia.

MEN. "Thou only wonder that the world hath seen—"

MAQ. [*Aside.*] That's Emilia.

AUR. [*Aside.*] Must I then hear her praised?—Mendoza!

MEN. Madam, your excellency is [90] graciously encountered; I have been writing passionate flashes in honor of—

Exit Fer[neze].

AUR. Out, villain, villain! O judgment, where have been my eyes? What bewitched election made me dote on thee? What sorcery made me love thee? But be gone; bury thy head. O, that I could do more than loathe thee! Hence, worst of ill! No reason ask; our reason is our will.

Exit with Maquerelle.

MEN. Women! Nay, furies; nay, [100] worse, for they torment only the bad, but some good and bad. Damnation of mankind! Breath, hast thou praised them for this? And is't you, Ferneze, are wriggled into smock-grace? Sit sure. O, that I could rail against these monsters in nature, models of hell, curse of the earth, women that dare attempt anything, and what they attempt they care not how they accomplish; without all premeditation or prevention; [110] rash in asking, desperate in working, impatient in suffering, extreme in desiring, slaves unto appetite, mistresses in dissembling, only constant in unconstancy, only perfect in counterfeiting. Their words are feigned, their eyes forged, their sights¹ dissembled, their looks counterfeit, their hair false, their given hopes deceitful, their very breath artificial. *Their blood is their only god; bad clothes and old age are* [120] *only the devils they tremble at.* That I could rail now!

SCENA SEPTA.

[*The same.*]

Enter Pietro, his sword drawn.

PIET. A mischief fill thy throat, thou foul-jawed slave!

Say thy prayers.

MEN. I ha' forgot um.

¹ Sighs.

PIET. Thou shalt die!

MEN. So shalt thou. I am heart-mad.

PIET. I am horn-mad.²

MEN. Extreme mad.

PIET. Monstrously mad.

MEN. Why?

PIET. Why? Thou, thou hast dishonoréd my bed.

MEN. I? Come, come, sit; here's my bare heart to thee,

As steady as is this center to the glorious world.

And yet, hark, thou art a cornuto—but by me?

PIET. Yes, slave, by thee.

MEN. Do not, do not with tart and spleenful breath

Lose him can lose thee. I offend my duke?

Bear record, O ye dumb and raw-aired nights,

How vigilant my sleepless eyes have been To watch the traitor! Record, thou spirit of truth,

With what debasement I ha' thrown myself

To under offices, only to learn

The truth, the party, time, the means, the place,

By whom, and when, and where thou wert disgraced!

And am I paid with "slave"? Hath my intrusion

To places private and prohibited,

Only to observe the closer passages

(Heaven knows with vows of revelation), Made me suspected, made me deemed a villain?

What rogue hath wronged us?

PIET. Mendoza, I may err.

MEN. Err? 'Tis too mild a name; but err and err,

Run giddy with suspect fore through me thou know

That which most creatures, save thyself, do know.

Nay, since my service hath so loathed reject,³

Fore I'll reveal, shalt find them clipped together.

PIET. Mendoza, thou know'st I am [30] a most plain-breasted⁴ man.

² Intensive, with a double meaning.

³ Rejection. ⁴ Plain-spoken.

MEN. The fitter to make a cuckold!
Would your brows were most plain too!

PIET. Tell me; indeed, I heard thee rail.

MEN. At women, true. Why, what cold
fleam¹ could choose,

Knowing a lord so honest, virtuous,
So boundless-loving, bounteous, fair-
shaped, sweet,

To be contemned, abused, defamed,
made cuckold?

Heart! I hate all women for 't—sweet
sheets, wax lights, antique bedposts, [40
cambric smocks, villainous curtains, arras
pictures, oiled hinges, and all the tongue-
tied lascivious witnesses of great creatures'
wantonness! What salvation can you
expect?

PIET. Wilt thou tell me?

MEN. Why, you may find it yourself;
observe, observe.

PIET. I ha' not the patience. Wilt thou
deserve² me? Tell, give it. 50

MEN. Take 't! Why, Ferneze is the
man, Ferneze. I'll prove 't; this night you
shall take him in your sheets. Will 't serve?

PIET. It will; my bosom's in some peace.
Till night!

MEN. What?

PIET. Farewell.

MEN. God! How weak a lord are you!
Why, do you think there is no more but
so?

PIET. Why?

MEN. Nay, then will I presume to
counsel you.

It should be thus. You with some guard
upon the sudden

Break into the princess' chamber; I stay
behind,

Without the door through which he needs
must pass. 60

Ferneze flies—let him. To me he comes.
He's killed

By me—observe—by me. You follow;³
I rail,

And seem to save the body. Duchess
comes,

On whom (respecting her advanced birth
And your fair nature) I know, nay, I do
know,

No violence must be used. She comes; I
storm;

¹ Phlegm.

³ Original reads *fellow*.

² Be serviceable to.

I praise, excuse Ferneze, and still main-
tain

The duchess' honor; she for this loves me.
I honor you, shall know her soul, you
mine.

Then naught shall she contrive in
vengeance 70

(As women are most thoughtful in re-
venge)

Of her Ferneze, but you shall sooner
know' t

Than she can think 't. Thus shall his
death come sure;

Your duchess brain-caught, so your life
secure.

PIET. It is too well, my bosom and my
heart!

"When nothing helps, cut off the rotten
part." *Exit.*

MEN. "Who cannot feign friendship can
ne'er produce the effects of hatred." Hon-
est fool duke, subtle lascivious duchess, silly
novice Ferneze, I do laugh at ye. My [80
brain is in labor till it produce mischief,
and I feel sudden throes, proofs sensible the
issue is at hand.

"As bears shape young, so I'll form my
device,

Which grown proves horrid. Vengeance
makes men wise." *[Exit.]*⁴

Enter Malevole and Passarello.

MAL. Fool, most happily encountered!
Canst sing, fool?

PASS. Yes, I can sing, fool, if you'll bear
the burden;⁵ and I can play upon instru-
ments, scurvily, as gentlemen do. O, [90
that I had been gelded! I should then have
been a fat fool for a chamber, a squeaking
fool for a tavern, and a private fool for
the ladies.

MAL. You are in good case since you
came to court, fool. What, guarded
guarded!

PASS. Yes, faith, even as footmen
bawds wear velvet, not for an ornament
of honor, but for a badge of drudgery; [100
for, now the duke is discontented, I
fain to fool him asleep every night.

MAL. What are his griefs?

PASS. He hath sore eyes.

MAL. I never observed so much.

⁴ The remainder of the scene is an addition.

⁵ Sing the bass.

⁶ Trimmed