

*Enter the PRINCESS, and her train, a Forester, BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE*

**PRINCESS**

Was that the king, that spurred his horse so hard  
Against the steep uprising of the hill?

**BOYET**

I know not; but I think it was not he.

**PRINCESS**

Whoe'er a' was, a' show'd a mounting mind.  
Well, lords, to-day we shall have our dispatch:  
On Saturday we will return to France.  
Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush  
That we must stand and play the murderer in?

**Forester**

Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice;  
A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.

**PRINCESS**

I thank my beauty, I am fair that shoot,  
And thereupon thou speak'st the fairest shoot.

**Forester**

Pardon me, madam, for I meant not so.

**PRINCESS**

What, what? first praise me and again say no?  
O short-lived pride! Not fair? alack for woe!

**Forester**

Yes, madam, fair.

**PRINCESS**

Nay, never paint me now:  
Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.  
Here, good my glass, take this for telling true:  
Fair payment for foul words is more than due.

**Forester**

Nothing but fair is that which you inherit.

**PRINCESS**

See see, my beauty will be saved by merit!  
O heresy in fair, fit for these days!  
A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.

**BOYET**

Do not curst wives hold that self-sovereignty  
Only for praise sake, when they strive to be  
Lords o'er their lords?

**PRINCESS**

Only for praise: and praise we may afford  
To any lady that subdues a lord.

**BOYET**

Here comes a member of the commonwealth.

*Enter COSTARD*

**COSTARD**

God dig-you-den all! Pray you, which is the head lady?

**PRINCESS**

Thou shalt know her, fellow, by the rest that have no heads.

**COSTARD**

Which is the greatest lady, the highest?

**PRINCESS**

The thickest and the tallest.

**COSTARD**

The thickest and the tallest! it is so; truth is truth.  
An your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit,  
One o' these maids' girdles for your waist should be fit.  
Are not you the chief woman? you are the thickest here.

**PRINCESS**

What's your will, sir? what's your will?

**COSTARD**

I have a letter from Monsieur Biron to one Lady Rosaline.

**PRINCESS**

O, thy letter, thy letter! he's a good friend of mine:  
Stand aside, good bearer. Boyet, you can carve;  
Break up this capon.

**BOYET**

I am bound to serve.  
This letter is mistook, it importeth none here;  
It is writ to Jaquenetta.

**PRINCESS**

We will read it, I swear.  
Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.

*Reads*

**BOYET**

'By heaven, that thou art fair, is most infallible; true, that thou art beauteous; truth itself, that thou art lovely. More fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal! The magnanimous and most illustrious king Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar Zenelophon; and he it was that might rightly say, Veni, vidi, vici; which to annothimize in the vulgar,--O base and obscure vulgar!--videlicet, He came, saw, and overcame: he came, one; saw two; overcame, three. Who came? the king: why did he come? to see: why did he see? to overcome: to whom came he? to the beggar: what saw he? The beggar: who overcame he? the beggar. The conclusion is victory: on whose side? the king's. The captive is enriched: on whose side? The beggar's. The catastrophe is a nuptial: on whose side? the king's: no, on both in one, or one in both. I am the king; for so stands the comparison: thou the beggar; for so witnesseth thy lowliness. Shall I command thy love? I may: shall I enforce thy love? I could: shall I entreat thy love? I will. Thus, expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot, my eyes on thy picture. and my heart on thy every part. Thine, in the dearest design of industry,  
DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'

**PRINCESS**

What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?  
What vane? what weathercock? did you ever hear better?

**BOYET**

I am much deceived but I remember the style.

**PRINCESS**

Else your memory is bad, going o'er it erewhile.

**BOYET**

This Armado is a Spaniard, that keeps here in court;  
A phantasime, a Monarcho, and one that makes sport  
To the prince and his bookmates.

**PRINCESS**

Thou fellow, a word:  
Who gave thee this letter?

**COSTARD**

I told you; my lord.

**PRINCESS**

To whom shouldst thou give it?

**COSTARD**

From my lord to my lady.

**PRINCESS**

From which lord to which lady?

**COSTARD**

From my lord Biron, a good master of mine,  
To a lady of France that he call'd Rosaline.

**PRINCESS**

Thou hast mistaken his letter. Come, lords, away.

*To ROSALINE*

Here, sweet, put up this: 'twill be thine another day.

*Exeunt PRINCESS and train*

**BOYET**

Who is the suitor? who is the suitor?

**ROSALINE**

Shall I teach you to know?

**BOYET**

Ay, my continent of beauty.

**ROSALINE**

Why, she that bears the bow.  
Finely put off!

**BOYET**

My lady goes to kill horns; but, if thou marry,  
Hang me by the neck, if horns that year miscarry.  
Finely put on!

**ROSALINE**

Well, then, I am the shooter.

**BOYET**

And who is your deer?

**ROSALINE**

If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near.  
Finely put on, indeed!

**MARIA**

You still wrangle with her, Boyet, and she strikes  
at the brow.

**BOYET**

But she herself is hit lower: have I hit her now?

**ROSALINE**

Shall I come upon thee with an old saying, that was  
a man when King Pepin of France was a little boy, as  
touching the hit it?

**BOYET**

So I may answer thee with one as old, that was a  
woman when Queen Guinover of Britain was a little  
wench, as touching the hit it.

**ROSALINE**

Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it,  
Thou canst not hit it, my good man.

**BOYET**

An I cannot, cannot, cannot,  
An I cannot, another can.

*Exeunt ROSALINE and KATHARINE*

**COSTARD**

By my troth, most pleasant: how both did fit it!

**MARIA**

A mark marvellous well shot, for they both did hit it.

**BOYET**

A mark! O, mark but that mark! A mark, says my lady!  
Let the mark have a prick in't, to mete at, if it may be.

**MARIA**

Wide o' the bow hand! i' faith, your hand is out.

**COSTARD**

Indeed, a' must shoot nearer, or he'll ne'er hit the clout.

**BOYET**

An if my hand be out, then belike your hand is in.

**COSTARD**

Then will she get the upshoot by cleaving the pin.

**MARIA**

Come, come, you talk greasily; your lips grow foul.

**COSTARD**

She's too hard for you at pricks, sir: challenge her to bowl.

**BOYET**

I fear too much rubbing. Good night, my good owl.

*Exeunt BOYET and MARIA*