

*Enter DULL with a letter, and COSTARD*

**DULL**

Which is the duke's own person?

**BIRON**

This, fellow: what wouldst?

**DULL**

I myself reprehend his own person, for I am his grace's tharborough: but I would see his own person in flesh and blood.

**BIRON**

This is he.

**DULL**

Signior Arme--Arme--commends you. There's villany abroad: this letter will tell you more.

**COSTARD**

Sir, the contempts thereof are as touching me.

**FERDINAND**

A letter from the magnificent Armado.

**BIRON**

How low soever the matter, I hope in God for high words.

**LONGAVILLE**

A high hope for a low heaven: God grant us patience!

**BIRON**

To hear? or forbear laughing?

**LONGAVILLE**

To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately; or to forbear both.

**BIRON**

Well, sir, be it as the style shall give us cause to climb in the merriness.

**COSTARD**

The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

**BIRON**

In what manner?

**COSTARD**

In manner and form following, sir; all those three: I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park; which, put together, is in manner and form following. Now, sir, for the manner,--it is the manner of a man to speak to a woman: for the form,--in some form.

**BIRON**

For the following, sir?

**COSTARD**

As it shall follow in my correction: and God defend the right!

**FERDINAND**

Will you hear this letter with attention?

**BIRON**

As we would hear an oracle.

**COSTARD**

Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'Great deputy, the welkin's vicegerent and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god, and body's fostering patron.'

**COSTARD**

Not a word of Costard yet.

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'So it is,'--

**COSTARD**

It may be so: but if he say it is so, he is, in telling true, but so.

**FERDINAND**

Peace!

**COSTARD**

Be to me and every man that dares not fight!

**FERDINAND**

No words!

**COSTARD**

Of other men's secrets, I beseech you.

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'So it is, besieged with sable-coloured melancholy, I did commend the black-oppressing humour to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. I did encounter that obscene and preposterous

event, that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebon-coloured ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest; there did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth,'--

**COSTARD**

Me?

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'that unlettered small-knowing soul,'--

**COSTARD**

Me?

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'that shallow vassal,'--

**COSTARD**

Still me?

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'which, as I remember, hight Costard,'--

**COSTARD**

O, me!

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and continent canon, which with,--O, with--but with this I passion to say wherewith,--

**COSTARD**

With a wench.

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] 'with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment, by thy sweet grace's officer, Anthony Dull; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation.'

**DULL**

'Me, an't shall please you; I am Anthony Dull.

**FERDINAND**

[Reads] Thine, in all compliments of devoted and heart-burning heat of duty.  
DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'

**BIRON**

This is not so well as I looked for, but the best that ever I heard.

**FERDINAND**

Ay, the best for the worst. But, sirrah, what say you to this?

**COSTARD**

Sir, I confess the wench.

**FERDINAND**

Did you hear the proclamation?

**COSTARD**

I do confess much of the hearing it but little of the marking of it.

**FERDINAND**

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken with a wench.

**COSTARD**

I was taken with none, sir: I was taken with a damsel.

**FERDINAND**

Well, it was proclaimed 'damsel.'

**COSTARD**

This was no damsel, neither, sir; she was a virgin.

**FERDINAND**

It is so varied, too; for it was proclaimed 'virgin.'

**COSTARD**

If it were, I deny her virginity: I was taken with a maid.

**FERDINAND**

This maid will not serve your turn, sir.

**COSTARD**

This maid will serve my turn, sir.

**FERDINAND**

Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast a week with bran and water.

**COSTARD**

I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge.

**FERDINAND**

And Don Armado shall be your keeper.

My Lord Biron, see him deliver'd o'er:

And go we, lords, to put in practise that

Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

*Exeunt FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN*