



**The Complete
Apocryphal Plays of
William Shakespeare**

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**Arden Of Faversham + A Yorkshire Tragedy + The
Lamentable Tragedy Of Locrine + Mucedorus The
King's Son Of Valentia, And Amadine, The King's
Daughter Of Arragon + The London Prodigal + The
Puritaine Widdow + The Second Maiden's Tragedy +
Sir John Oldcastle + Lord Cromwell + King Edward
The Third + Edmund Ironside + Sir Thomas More +
Faire Em + A Fairy Tale In Two Acts + The Merry Devill
Of Edmonton + Thomas Of Woodstock**

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ARDEN OF FAVERSHAM

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FERRYMAN
PRENTICE, An Apprentice
DICK REEDE
A SAILOR

Enter Arden and Fraknlin

FRANKLIN

Arden, cheer up thy spirits, and droop no more
My gracious lord, the duke of somerset,
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,
by letters patent from his majesty,
All the lands of the abbey of feversham.

Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

ARDEN

Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life;
And but for thee how odious were this life,
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes,
Which makes me wish that for this vale of heaven
The earth hung over my head and covered me.
Love letters past twixt Mosbie and my wife,
And they have privy meetings in the town:
Nay, on his finger did I spy the ring
Which at our marriage-day the priest put on.
Can any grief be half so great as this?

FRANKLIN

Comfort thyself, sweet friend; it is not strange
That women will be false and wavering.

ARDEN

Ay, but to dote on such a one as he
Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable.

FRANKLIN

Why, what is he?

ARDEN

A botcher, and no better at the first;
Who, by base brokage getting some small stock,
Crept into service of a nobleman,
And by his servile flattery and fawning
Is now become the steward of his house,
And bravely jets it in his silken gown.

ARDEN

Yes, the lord Clifford, he that loves not me,
But through his favor let him not grow proud,
For were he by the lord protector backed,
He should not make me to be pointed at.
I am by birth a gentle s rival that attempts
To violate my dear wife's chastity
(for dear I hold her love, as dear as heaven)

Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile
See his dissevered joints and sinews torn,
Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,
Smeared in the channels of his lustful blood.

FRANKLIN

Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me
To ease thy grief and save her chastity:
Intreat her fair; sweet words are fittest engines
To race the flint walls of a woman's breast.
In any case be not too jealous.
Nor make no question of her love to thee;
But, as securely, presently take horse,
And lie with me at London all this term;
For women, when they may, will not,
But, being kept back, straight grow outrageous.

ARDEN

Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it
And call her forth and presently take leave.
How! Alice! (here enters ALICE
Summer nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.
Had I been wake, you had not risen so soon.

ARDEN

Sweet love, thou knowest that we two ovid-like,
Have often chid the morning when it 'gan to peep,
And often wished that dark night's purblind steeds,
Would pull her by the purple mantle back,
And cast her in the ocean to her love.
But this night, sweet Alice, thou hast killed my heart,
I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleep.

ALICE

'tis like I was asleep when I named him,
For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.

ALICE

And thereof came it, and therefore blame not me.

ARDEN

I know it did, and therefore let it pass.

I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.

ALICE

But tell me do you mean to stay there long?

ARDEN

No longer there till my affairs be done.

FRANKLIN

He will not stay above a month at Most.

ALICE

A month? Ay me! Sweet Arden, come again
Within a day or two, or else I die.

ARDEN

I cannot long be from thee gentle ALICE
Whilst Michael fetch our horses from the field,
Franklin and I will down unto the key;
For I have certain goods there to unload.
Meanwhile prepare our breakfast, gentle Alice;
For yet ere noon we'll take horse and away.

Exeunt Arden and FRANKLIN

ALICE

Ere noon he means to take horse and away!
Sweet news is this. O that some airy spirit
Would in the shape and likeness of a horse
Gallop with Arden 'cross the ocean,
And throw him from his back into the waves!
Sweet Mosbie is the man that hath my heart:
And he usurps it, having nought but this,
That I am tied to him by marriage.
Love is a god, and marriage is but words;
And therefore Mosbie's title is the best.
Tush! Whether it be or no, he shall be mine,
In spite of him, of hymen, and of rites.
(here enters Adam of the Flower-de-Luce
And here comes Adam of the Flower-de-Luce;
I hope he brings me tidings of my love.
-how now, Adam, what is the news with you?
Be not afraid; my husband is now from home.

ADAM

He whom you wot of, Mosbie, mistress Alice,
Is come to town, and sends you word by me
In any case you may not visit him.

ALICE

Not visit him?

ADAM

No, nor take no knowledge of his being here.

ALICE

But tell me, is he angry or displeased?

ADAM

Should seem so, for he is wondrous sad.

ALICE

Were he as mad as raving hercules,
I'll see him, ay, and were thy house of force,
These hands of mine should raze it to the ground,
Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love.

ADAM

Nay, and you be so impatient, I'll be gone.
Ask Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath;
Bear him from me these pair of silver dice,
With which we played for kisses many a time,
And when I lost, I won, and so did he; -
Such winning and such losing jove send me,
And bid him, if his love do not decline,
Come this morning but along my door,
And as a stranger but salute me there:
This may he do without suspect or fear.

ADAM

I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell. Exit ADAM

ALICE

Do, and one day I'll make amends for all.
I know he loves me well, but dares not come,
Because my husband is so jealous,
And these my marrow prying neighbors blab,
Hinder our meetings when we would confer.

But, if I live, that block shall be removed,
And, Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stealth
Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men
Nor Arden's looks; as surely shall he die
As I abhor him and love only thee.

(here enters MICHAEL

How, now Michael, whither are you going?

MICHAEL

To fetch my master's nag.

I hope you'll think on me.

ALICE

Ay; but, Michael, see you keep your oath,
And be secret as you are resolute.

MICHAEL

I'll see he shall not live above a week.

ALICE

On that condition, Michael, here is my hand
None shall have Mosbie's sister but thyself.

MICHAEL

I understand the painter here hard by
Hath made report that he and sue is sure.

ALICE

There's no such matter, Michael; believe it not.

MICHAEL

But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a heart,
With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth:
The which I hear the wench keeps in her chest.

MICHAEL

Why, say I should be took, I'll ne'er confess,
That you know anything; and Susan, being a maid,
May beg me from the gallows of the sheriff.

ALICE

Trust not to that, MICHAEL

MICHAEL

You cannot tell me, I have seen it, ay,
I'll make her more worth than twenty painters can;

For I will rid mine elder brother away,
And then the farm of bolton is mine own.
Who would not venture upon house and land,
When he may have it for a right down blow? (here enters

MOSBIE

ALICE

Yonder comes MOSBIE

Michael, get thee gone,
And let not him nor any know thy drifts. (Exit MICHAEL
Mosbie, my love!

MOSBIE

Away, I say, and talk not to me now.

ALICE

A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.
'tis yet but early days, thou needst not fear.

MOSBIE

Where is your husband?

ALICE

'tis now high water, and he is at the key.

MOSBIE

There let him be; hence forward know me not.

ALICE

Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?
Is this the fruit thy reconciliation buds?
Have I for this given thee so many favors,
Incur'd my husband's hate, and, out alas,
Made shipwreck of mine honor for thy sake?
And dost thou say 'hence forward know me not'?
Remember, when I lock'd thee in my closet,
What were thy words and mine; did we not both
Decree to murder Arden in the night?
The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,
Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,
'fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,
Arden to me was dearer than my soul,
And shall be still: base peasant, get thee gone,

And boast not of thy conquest over me,
Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery!
For what hast thou to countenance my love,
Being descended of a noble house,
And matched already with a gentleman
Whose servant thou may'st be! - and so farewell.

MOSBIE

Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see
That which I ever feared, and find too true:
A woman's love is as the lightning flame,
Which even in bursting forth consumes itself.
To try thy constancy have I been strange;
Would I had never tried, but lived in hope!

MOSBIE

Yet pardon me, for love is jealous.

ALICE

So lists the sailor to the mermaid's song,
So looks the traveller to the basilisk.
I am content for to be reconciled,
And that I know, will be mine overthrow.

MOSBIE

Thine overthrow? First let the world dissolve.

ALICE

Nay, Mosbie, let me still enjoy thy love,
And happen what will, I am resolute.
My saving husband hoards up bags of gold
To make our children rich, and now is he
Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,
And he and Franklin will to London straight.

MOSBIE

To London, Alice? It thou'lt be rul'd by me
We'll make him sure enough for coming there.

ALICE

Ah, would we could!

MOSBIE

I happened on a painter yesternight,

The only cunning man of Christendom;
For he can temper poison with his oil,
That whoso looks upon the work he draws
Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,
Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.
Sweet Alice he shall draw thy counterfeit,
That Arden may by gazing on it perish.

ALICE

Ay, but Mosbie that is dangerous,
For thou or i, or any other else,
Coming into the chamber where it hangs may die.

MOSBIE

Ay, but we'll have it covered with a cloth,
And hung up in the study for himself.

ALICE

It may not be, for when the picture's drawn,
Arden, I know, will come and show it me.

MOSBIE

Fear not; we'll have that shall serve the turn.
This is the painter's house; I'll call him forth.

ALICE

But Mosbie, I'll have no such picture, I.
Use humble promise to their sacred muse,
So we that are the poets' favorites
Must have a love: ay, love is the painter's muse,
That makes him frame a speaking countenance,
A weeping eye that witnesses heart's grief.
Then tell me, master Mosbie, shall I have her?

ALICE

'tis pity but he should; he'll use her well.

CLARKE

Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,
You shall command my life, my skill, and all.

ALICE

Ah, that thou couldst be secret.

MOSBIE

Fear him not; leave; I have talked sufficient.

CLARKE

You know not me that ask such questions.

Let it suffice I know you love him well,

And fain would have your husband made away;

Wherein, trust me, you show a noble mind,

That rather than you'll live with him you hate,

You'll venture life, and die with him you love.

The like will I do for my Susan's sake.

ALICE

Yet nothing could inforce me to the deed

But Mosbie's love. Might I without control,

Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die:

But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

MOSBIE

Enough, sweet Alice; thy kind words make me melt.

Your trick of poisoned pictures we dislike;

Some other poison would do better far.

ALICE

Ay, such as might be put into his broth,

And yet in taste not to be found at all.

CLARKE

I know your mind, and here I have it for you.

Put but a dram of this into his drink,

Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,

And he shall die within an hour after.

ALICE

As I am a gentlewoman, clarke, next day

Thou and Susan shall be married.

MOSBIE

And I'll make her dowry more than I'll talk of, CLARKE

CLARKE

Yonder's your husband. Mosbie, I'll be gone.

(here enters Arden and FRANKLIN

ALICE

In good time; see where my huskand comes,

master Mosbie, ask him the question yourself. Exit clarke
MOSBIE

Master Arden, being at London yesternight,
The abbey lands, whereof you are now possessed,
Were offered me on some occasion
by Greene, one of sir antony ager's men:
I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours?
Hath any other interest herein?

ARDEN

Mosbie, that question we'll decide anon.
As for the lands, Mosbie, they are mine
by letters patent from his majesty.
But I must have a mandate for my wife;
They say you seek to rob me of her love:
Villain, what makes thou in her company?
She's no companion for so base a groom.

MOSBIE

Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee,
But rather than I pocket up this wrong.

FRANKLIN

What will you do, sir?

MOSBIE

Revenge it on the proudest of you both.
(then Arden draws forth Mosbie's sword.

ARDEN

So, sirrah, you may not wear a sword,
The statute makes against artificers.
I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,
Your spanish needle, and your pressing iron,
For this shall go with me; and mark my words,
You goodman butcher, 'tis to you I speak:
The next time that I take thee near my house,
Instead of legs I'll make thee crawl on stumps.

MOSBIE

Ah, master Arden, you have injured me:
I do appeal to God and to the world.

FRANKLIN

Why, canst thou deny thou wert a butcher once?

MOSBIE

Measure me what I am, not what I was.

ARDEN

Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,
A cheating steward, and base minded peasant.

MOSBIE

Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited
The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll'n heart,
Hear me but speak: as I intend to live
With god and his elected saints in heaven,
I never meant more to solicit her;
And that she knows, and all the world shall see,
I loved her once; - sweet Arden, pardon me,
I could not choose, her beauty fired my heart!
Forget them, Mosbie: I had cause to speak,
When all the knights and gentlemen of kent
Make common table-talk of her and thee.

MOSBIE

Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues.

FRANKLIN

Then, Mosbie, to eschew the speech of men,
Upon whose general bruit all honor hangs,
Forbear his house.

ARDEN

Forbear it! Nay, rather frequent it more.
To warn him on the sudden from my house
Were to confirm the rumor that is grown.

MOSBIE

by my faith, sir, you say true,
And therefore will I sojourn here a while,
Until our enemies have talked their fill.
And then, I hope, they'll cease, and at last confess
How causeless they have injured her and me.

ARDEN

And I will lie at London all this term
To let them see how light I weigh their words. (here
enters ALICE

ALICE

Husband sit down, your breakfast will be cold.

ARDEN

Come, master Mosbie, will you sit with us?

MOSBIE

I can not eat, but I'll sit for company.

ARDEN

Sirrah Michael, see our horse be ready.

ALICE

Husband, why pause ye? Why eat you not?

ARDEN

I am not well; there's something in the broth
That is not wholesome: didst thou make it, Alice?

ALICE

I did, and that's the cause it likes not you.
(then she throws down the broth on the ground.
There's nothing that I do can please your taste;
You were best to say I would have poisoned you.
I cannot speak or cast aside my eye,
But he imagines I have stepped awry.
Here's he that you cast in my teeth so oft:
Now will I be convinced or purge myself.
I charge thee speak to this mistrustful man,
Thou that wouldst see me hang, thou, Mosbie, thou,
What favor hast thou had more than a kiss
At coming or departing from the town?
Mosb. You wrong yourself and me to cast these doubts,
Your loving husband is not jealous.

ARDEN

Why, gentle mistress Alice, can not I be ill,
But you'll accuse yourself?

Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate.

I'll take a little to prevent the worst.

FRANKLIN

Do so, and let us presently take horse;
My life for yours, ye shall do well enough.

ALICE

Give me a spoon, I'll eat of it myself;
Would it were full of poison to the brim,
Then should my cares and troubles have an end.

ARDEN

Be patient, sweet love; I mistrust not thee.

ALICE

God will revenge it, Arden, if thou dost;
For never woman loved her husband better than I do
thee.

ARDEN

I know it, sweet Alice; cease to complain,
Lest that in tears I answer thee again.

FRANKLIN

Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.

ALICE

Forbear to wound me with that bitter word,
Arden shall go to London in my arms.

ARDEN

Loath am I to depart, yet I must go.

ALICE

Wilt thou to London, then, and leave me here?
Ah, if you love me, gentle Arden, stay.
Yet, if thy business be of great import
Go, if thou silt, I'll bear it as I may;
But write from London to me every week,
Nay, every day, and stay no longer there
Than thou must needs, lest that I die for sorrow.

ARDEN

I'll write unto thee every other tide,
And so, farewell, sweet Alice, till we meet next.

ALICE

Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so.

And, master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,
In hope you'll hasten him home, I'll give you this.
(and then she kisseth him.

FRANKLIN

And if he stay, the fault shall not be mine.
Mosbie, farewell, and see you keep your oath.

MOSBIE

I hope he is not jealous of me now.

ARDEN

No, Mosbie, no; hereafter think of me
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.
Exeunt Arden, Franklin, and MICHAEL

ALICE

I am glad he is gone; he was about to stay,
But did you mark me then how I brake off?

MOSBIE

Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed.
Never hereafter to solicit thee,
Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

ALICE

Thou shalt not need, I will importune thee.
What? Shall an oath make thee forsake my love?
As if I have not sworn as much myself
And given my hand unto him in the church!
Tush, Mosbie; oaths are words, and words is wind,
'tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

MOSBIE

Well proved, mistress Alice; yet by your leave,
I'll keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

ALICE

Ay, do, and spare not, his time is but short,
For if thou be'st as resolute as I,
We'll have him murdered as he walks the streets.
In London many alehouse ruffians keep,
Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.

They shall be soundly fee'd to pay him home. (here enters GREENE

MOSBIE

Alice, what's he that comes yonder?

Knowest thou him?

ALICE

Mosbie, be gone: I hope 'tis one that comes
To put in practice our intended drifts. (Exit MOSBIE
GREENE

Mistress Arden, you are well met.

I am sorry that your husband is from home,

When as my purposed journey was to him:

Yet all my labor is not spent in vain,

For I suppose that you can full discourse

And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

ALICE

What is it, master Greene? If that I may

Or can with safety, I will answer you.

GREENE

I heard your husband had the grant of late,

Confirmed by letters patent from the king.

Of all the lands of the abbey of feversham,

Generally intituled, so that all former grants

Are cut off; whereof I myself had one;

But now my interest by that is void.

This is all, mistress Arden; is it true or no?

ALICE

True, master Greene; the lands are his in state,

And whatsoever leases were before

Are void for term of master Arden's life;

He hath the grant under the chancery seal.

GREENE

Pardon me, mistress Arden, I must speak

For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong

To wring me from the little land I have.

My living is my life, only that

Resteth remainder of my portion.
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,
And he is greedy gaping still for gain;
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,
And so, as he shall wish the abbey lands
Had rested still, within their former state.
But seeing he hath taken my lands, I'll value life
As careless, as he is careful for to get,
And tell him this from me, I'll be revenged,
And so, as he shall wish the abbey lands
Had rested still, within their former state.

ALICE

Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,
And woe is me that any man should want,
God knows 'tis not my fault, but wonder not
Though he be hard to others, when to me,
Ah master Greene, god knows how I am used.

GREENE

Why, mistress Arden, can the crabbed churl
Use you unkindly, respects he not your birth,
Your honorable friends, nor what you brought?
Why, all kent knows your parentage, and what you are.

ALICE

Ah, master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,
I never live good day with him alone:
When he is at home, then have I forward looks,
Hard words and blows, to mend the match withal;
And though I might content as good a man,
Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls,
And weary with his trugs at home,
Then rides he straight to London, there forsooth
He revels it among such filthy ones,
As counsel him to make away his wife;
Thus live I daily in continual fear,
In sorrow, so despairing of redress
As every day I wish with hearty prayer,

That he or I were taken forth the world.

GREENE

Now trust me mistress Alice, it grieveth me,

GREENE

Ay, god's my witness, I mean plain dealing,

For I had rather die then lose my land.

ALICE

Then master Greene be counselled by me:

Endanger not your self for such a churl,

But hire some cutter for to cut him short,

And here's ten pound, to wager them with all,

When he is dead you shall have twenty more.

And the lands whereof my husband is possess'd,

Shall be intituled as they were before.

GREENE

Will you keep promise with me?

GREENE

Then here's my hand I'll have him so dispatch'd,

I'll up to London straight, I'll thither post,

And never rest, till I have compass'd it,

Till then farewell.

And whosoever doth attempt the deed,

A happy hand I wish, and so farewell. -

All this goes well: Mosbie, I long for thee

To let thee know all that I have contrived.

(here enters Mosbie and CLARKE

MOSBIE

How now, Alice, what's the news?

ALICE

Such as will content thee well, sweet heart.

MOSBIE

Well, let them pass a while, and tell me Alice,

How have you dealt and tempered with my sister,

What, will she have my neighbor, clarke, or no?

ALICE

What, master Mosbie! Let him woo him self.

Think you that maids look not for fair words?
Go to her, clarke; she's all alone within;
Michael my man is clean out of her books.

CLARKE

I thank you, mistress Arden, I will in;
And if fair Susan and I can make agree,
You shall command me to the utterMost,
As far as either goods or life may stretch. (Exit CLARKE

MOSBIE

Now, Alice, let's hear thy news.

ALICE

They be so good that I must laugh for joy,
Before I can begin to tell my tale.

MOSBIE

Let's hear them, that I may laugh for company.

ALICE

This morning, master Greene, Dick Greene I mean,
From whom my husband had the abbey land,
Came hither, railing, for to know the truth
Whether my husband had the lands by grant.
I told him all, whereat he stormed amain
And swore he would cry quittance with the churl,
And, if he did deny his interest,
Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.
When as I saw his choler thus to rise,
I whetted on the gentleman with words;
And, to conclude, Mosbie, at last we grew
To composition for my husband's death.
I gave him ten pound to hire knaves,
by some device to make away the churl;
When he is dead, he should have twenty more
On this we 'greed, and he is ridden straight
To London, for to bring his death about.

MOSBIE

But call you this good news?

ALICE

Ay, sweetheart, be they not?

MOSBIE

'twere cheerful news to hear the churl were dead;

But trust me, Alice, I take it passing ill

You would be so forgetful of our state

To make recount of it to every groom.

What, to acquaint each stranger with our drifts,

Chiefly in case of murder, why, 'tis the way

To make it open unto Arden's self

And bring thyself and me to ruin both.

Forewarned, forearmed; who threatens his enemy,

Lends him a sword to guard himself with all.

ALICE

I did it for the best.

MOSBIE

Well, seeing 'tis done, cheerly let it pass.

You know this Greene; is he not religious?

A man, I guess, of great devotion?

ALICE

He is.

MOSBIE

Then, sweet Alice, let it pass: I have a drift

Will quiet all, whatever is amiss.

(here enters clarke and SUSAN

ALICE

How now, clarke? Have you found me false?

Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

CLARKE

You did.

MOSBIE

And what, wilt be a match?

CLARKE

A match, i' faith, sir: ay, the day is mine.

But, so you'll grant me one thing I shall ask,

I am content my sister shall be yours.

CLARKE

What is it, master Mosbie?

MOSBIE

I do remember once in secret talk

You told me how you could compound by art

A crucifix impoisoned,

That whoso look upon it should wax blind,

And with the scent be stifled, that ere long

He should die poisoned that did view it well.

I would have you make me such a crucifix,

And then I'll grant my sister shall be yours.

CLARKE

Though I am loth, because it toucheth life,

Yet, rather or I'll leave sweet Susan's love,

I'll do it, and with all the haste I may.

But for whom is it?

ALICE

Leave that to us. Why, clarke, is it possible

The colors being baleful and impoisoned,

And no ways prejudice yourself with all?

MOSBIE

Well questioned, ALICE

Clarke, how answer you that?

CLARKE

Very easily: I'll tell you straight

How I do work of these impoisoned drugs.

I fasten on my spectacles so close

As nothing can any way offend my sight;

Then, as I put a leaf within my nose,

So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell,

As softly as another work I paint.

MOSBIE

'tis very well; but against when shall I have it?

CLARKE

Within this ten days.

MOSBIE

'twill serve the turn.

Now, Alice, let's in and see what cheer you keep.
I hope, now master Arden is from home,
You'll give me leave to play your husband's part.

ALICE

Mosbie, you know, who's master of my heart,
He well may be the master of the house. (Exeunt.
(here Enter Greene and BRADSHAW

BRADSHAW

See you them that come yonder, master Greene?

GREENE

Ay, very well: do you know them?

(here Enter Black Will and SHAKEBAG

BRADSHAW

The one I know not, but he seems a knave
Chiefly for bearing the other company;
For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,
Lives not again upon the earth.

Black Will is his name. I tell you, master Greene,
At boulogne he and I were fellow soldiers,
Where he played such pranks
As all the camp feared him for his villainy;
I warrant you he bears so bad a mind
That for a crown he'll murder any man.

GREENE

The fitter is he for my purpose, marry!

WILL

How now, fellow Bradshaw?

Whither away so early?

BRADSHAW

O Will, times are changed: no fellows now,
Though we were once together in the field;
Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can.

WILL

Why, Bradshaw, was not thou and I
Fellow-soldiers at boulogne,
Where I was a corporal, and thou but a base mercenary

And have a little plate in your shop;
You were glad to call me fellow Will,
And with a curtsey to the earth,
One snatch, good corporal,
When I stole the half ox from John the victualer.
And domineer'd with it amongst good fellows,
In one night.

BRADSHAW

Ay, Will, those days are past with me.

WILL

Ay, but they be not past with me.
For I keep that same honorable mind still.
Good neighbor Bradshaw, you are too proud to be my
fellow,
But were it not that I see more company coming down
I would be fellows with you once more.
And share crowns with you too.
But let that pass, and tell me whither you go.

BRADSHAW

To London, Will, about a piece of service,
Wherein happily thou mayst pleasure me.

WILL

What is it?

BRADSHAW

Of late Lord Cheney lost some plate,

BRADSHAW

A lean faced writhen knave,
Hawk nosed and very hollow eyed,
With mighty furrows in his stormy brows,
Long hair down his shoulders curled;
His chin was bare, but on his upper lip
A mutchado, which he wound about his ear.

WILL

What apparel had he?

BRADSHAW

A watchet satin doublet all too torn,

The inner side did bear the greater show;
A pair of threadbare velvet hose, seam rent,
A worsted stocking rent above the shoe,
A livery cloak, but all the lace was off;
'twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate.

WILL

Sirrah Shakebag, canst thou remember
Since we trolled the bowl at sittingburgh
Where I broke the tapster's head of the lion
With a cudgel-stick?

SHAKEBAG

Ay, very well, WILL

WILL

Why, it was with the money that the plate was sold for.
Sirrah Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him
That can tell thee who sold thy plate?

BRADSHAW

Who, I pray thee, good Will?

WILL

Why, 'twas one jack fitten.
He's now in newgate for stealing a horse,
And shall be arraigned the next 'size.
For I'll back and tell him who robbed him of his plate.
This cheers my heart; master Greene, I'll leave you,
For I must to the isle of sheppy with speed.

GREENE

Before you go, let me intreat you
To carry this letter to mistress Arden of feversham,
And humbly recommend me to her self.

BRADSHAW

That will i, master Greene, and so farewell.
Here, Will, there's a crown for thy good news. (Exit

BRADSHAW

WILL

Farewell, Bradshaw,
I'll drink no water for thy sake whilst this lasts.

Now gentlemen, shall we have your company to London?

GREENE

Nay, stay, sirs: a little more I needs must use your help,
And in a matter of great consequence,
Wherein if you'll be secret and profound,
I'll give you twenty angels for your pains.

WILL

How? Twenty angels? Give my fellow
George Shakebag and me twenty angels?
And if thou'lt have thy own father slain,
That thou may'st inherit his land, we'll kill him.

SHAKEBAG

Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy
With mighty furrows in his stormy brows;

GREENE

Well, this it is: Arden of feversham
Hath highly wronged me about the abbey land,
That no revenge but death will serve the turn.
Will you two kill him? Here's the angels down,
And I will lay the platform of his death.

WILL

Plat me no platforms; give me the money
And I'll stab him as he stands pissing against a wall,
But I'll kill him.

SHAKEBAG

Where is he?

GREENE

He is now at London, in aldersgate street.

SHAKEBAG

He's dead as if he had been condemned
by an act of parliament, if once Black Will and I
Swear his death.

GREENE

Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,
Ye shall have twenty more.

WILL

My fingers itch to be at the peasant.
Ah, that I might be set a work thus through the year
And that murder would grow to an occupation,
That a man might, without danger of law,
Come, let us be going, and we'll bate at rochester,
Where I'll give thee a gallon of sack,
To handsel the match with all. (Exeunt. Here enters

MICHAEL

MICHAEL

I have gotten such a letter,
As will touch the painter: and thus it is...
(here Enter Arden and Franklin and hear Michael read this letter.

'my duty remembered, mistress Susan, hoping in god
you be in

Good health, as i, Michael was at the making hereof. This
is to

Certify you that as the turtle true, when she hath lost her
mate,

Sitteth alone so i, mourning for your absence, do walk up
and down

Paul's till one day I fell asleep and lost my master's
pantofles.

Ah, mistress Susan, abolish that paltry painter, cut him
off by the

Shins with a frowning look of your crabbed countenance,
and think

And do ye slack his business for your own?

ARDEN

Where is the letter, sirrah? Let me see it.

(then he gives him the letter.

See, master Franklin, here's proper stuff:

Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,

A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth;

Sirrah, let me hear no more of this,

Nor for thy life once write to her a word.