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the Annotated Popular Edition of

A KING and NO KING

by Francis Beaumont

and John Fletcher

c. 1611

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A KING AND NO KING

by Francis Beaumont
and John Fletcher

c. 1611

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Iberians:

Arbaces, King of Iberia.
Arane, the Queen-Mother.
 Panthea, her daughter.
Gobrias, Lord-Protector.
Bacurius, a Lord.

Mardonius, a Captain.
Bessus, a Captain.

Two Sword-Men.
Three Shop-Men.
Citizens' Wives, &c.
 Philip, a servant.

The Armenians:

Tigranes, King of Armenia.
Lygones, a Lord
 Spaconia, daughter of Lygones.

Gentlemen, Attendants, &c.

SCENE:

During the First Act the Frontiers of Armenia;
Afterwards the Metropolis of Iberia.

AUTHORSHIP

E.H.C. Oliphant (*The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), in his study of the collaborations of Beaumont and Fletcher, assigns to our two authors the following scenes:

Beaumont: Acts I, II, III; Act IV, scene 4; Act V, scenes 2 and 4.

Fletcher: Act IV, scenes 1, 2 and 3; Act V, scenes 1 and 3.

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

A King and No King is a fine tragicomedy featuring one of Elizabethan literature's funniest characters, the cowardly and obsequious Captain Bessus. More notably, this play is one of several of the era to explore the controversial subject of incest. Our plot is driven primarily by the outrageous mood-swings of the King of Iberia, Arbaces.

OUR PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of the play is taken from *Beaumont and Fletcher*, a collection of plays presented as part of the *Mermaid* series, cited at #3 below, with some emendations made based on the original 1619 quarto.

NOTES on the ANNOTATIONS

Mentions made in the annotations of Dyce, Bond, and Weber refer to the commentary of these scholars in their editions of our play.

The most commonly cited sources are listed in the footnotes immediately below. The complete list of footnotes appears at the end of this play.

1. Oxford English Dictionary (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Strachey, J., ed. *Beaumont and Fletcher, Vol. II*. London: Vizetelley & Co., 1887.
6. Dyce, Alexander, ed. *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*. London: Edward Moxon, 1863.
7. Bond, R. Warwick., ed. *The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher*. London: George Bell & Sons, 1904.
8. Weber, Henry. *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*. Edinburgh: John Ballantyne & Co., 1812.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Camp of Arbaces, on the Frontiers of Armenia.

Enter Mardonius and Bessus.

1 **Mar.** Bessus, the king has made a fair hand on't; he
2 has ended the wars at a blow. Would my sword had
4 a close basket hilt, to hold wine, and the blade would
and drinking.

6 **Bes.** We that are commanders shall do well enough.

8 **Mar.** Faith, Bessus, such commanders as thou may:

10 I had as lieve set thee perdu for a pudding i' the dark
as Alexander the Great.

12 **Bes.** I love these jests exceedingly.

14 **Mar.** I think thou lovest 'em better than quarrelling,
16 Bessus; I'll say so much in thy behalf. And yet thou art
valiant enough upon a retreat: I think thou wouldst kill
18 any man that stopt thee, an thou couldst.

20 **Bes.** But was not this a brave combat, Mardonius?

22 **Mar.** Why, didst thou see 't?

24 **Bes.** You stood with me.

26 **Mar.** I did so; but methought thou winkedst every blow
they strake.

28 **Bes.** Well, I believe there are better soldiers than I, that
30 never saw two princes fight in lists.

Scene I: the long war - stretching for a full decade perhaps - between the Armenians and Iberians has finally ended; our play's opening Scene takes place in the camp of the victorious Iberians, who have been led by their king Arbaces. An important key to the plot is that the Iberian leaders have not been home since the war broke out all those years ago.

Iberia here refers to a small but distinct polity or nation-state lying directly to the east of the Black Sea; **Armenia**, historically, has comprised a much larger region east and south of the Black Sea, and often contained Iberia within its borders; none of this is important to our story, as Beaumont and Fletcher were simply using these names for their general exotic nature.

Entering Characters: **Mardonius** and **Bessus** are Iberian military commanders, or captains; looking forward to celebrating their kingdom's victory over Armenia, the pair also review the circumstances that led to the sudden end of the conflict.

= been successful.¹

= "I wish".

= the sense is "closed off", containing no open sides.¹

= both Mardonius and Bessus have men serving under them.

= truly. = ie. "may do well enough"; Mardonius, a man's man and real soldier, begins teasing Bessus over his pretensions to possessing military prowess.

10-11: perhaps "I would rather (*had as lieve*) put you into a concealed (*in the dark*) position to ambush (*set thee perdu*) a sausage (*pudding*) than Alexander the Great."^{1,7}

= fighting.

= if; Mardonius is pulling no punches in mocking Bessus.

= an excellent battle or duel.

= it is quickly becoming clear that the two men are not really equals: while Bessus addresses Mardonius with the respectful "you", Mardonius addresses Bessus with the familiar "thee".

= "closed your eyes at".

= common variation of *struck*.

= an enclosed space used for a combat.

32 34	Mar. <u>By my troth</u> , I think so too, Bessus, – many a thousand: but, certainly, all that are worse than thou have seen as much.	= truly, an oath. ¹
36	Bes. 'Twas bravely done <u>of</u> our king.	36: to his credit, Bessus takes his companion's relentless insults with decent good humour; <i>of</i> = by.
38 40	Mar. Yes, if he had not ended the wars. I'm glad thou darest talk of such dangerous businesses.	= king.
42	Bes. To take a <u>prince</u> prisoner in the heart of his own country, in <u>single combat</u> !	= to prevent the further slaughter of more soldiers by continuing their multi-year war, the kings of Armenia and Iberia agreed to settle the conflict with a one-on-one battle; Arbaces, the king of Iberia, defeated Tigranes, the king of Armenia, giving Iberia the victory. Note that the combat does not have to end with one party being killed; here, presumably, Tigranes was overcome by Arbaces, and submitted rather than be killed.
44 46	Mar. See how thy blood <u>cruddles</u> at this! I think thou couldst be contented to be beaten i' this <u>passion</u> .	44-45: "look at how your blood curdles (<i>cruddles</i>) in fear just in recounting this fight! I believe you would be satisfied with a beating while you are in this emotional state (<i>passion</i>)."
48	Bes. Shall I tell you truly?	A recurring motif in the play (unfortunately for Bessus) is Bessus' getting smacked around.
48	Mar. Ay.	
50	Bes. I could willingly <u>venture</u> for 't.	= take a chance. ²
52	Mar. Hum; no <u>venture</u> neither, good Bessus.	= risk. ²
54 56	Bes. Let me not live, if I do not think it is a braver piece of service than that I'm so famed for.	55-56: Bessus allows that the king's combat was even a greater martial act than his own famous feat!
58	Mar. Why, art thou famed for any valour?	
60	Bes. Famed! Ay, I <u>warrant</u> you.	= assure.
62 64	Mar. I'm e' <u>en</u> very heartily glad on't: I have been with thee ever since thou camest to the wars, and this is the first word that ever I heard <u>on't</u> . <u>Prithee</u> , who	= even.
66	<u>fames thee</u> ?	= of it. = "please (tell me)"; <i>prithee</i> is a common abbreviation for "I pray thee". = "exalts or spreads your fame or reputation?" ²
68	Bes. The Christian world.	
70	Mar. 'Tis <u>heathenishly</u> done of 'em; in my conscience, thou deservest it not.	= <i>heathenishly</i> humorously contrasts with <i>Christian</i> .
72	Bes. Yes, I ha' done good service.	
74 76	Mar. I do not know how thou may'st wait <u>of</u> a man in's chamber, or thy agility in <u>shifting a trencher</u> ; but otherwise no service, good Bessus.	74-76: whereas Bessus was referring in line 72, of course, to his military service, Mardonius, equivocating, takes <i>service</i> to mean "domestic service": "I don't know what kind of a job you would do serving another man in his rooms, or about your ability to clear a table (<i>shift a trencher</i>); but other than that, I cannot see you doing anyone

78 **Bes.** You saw me do the service yourself.

80 **Mar.** Not so hasty, sweet Bessus: where was it? is the
place vanished?

82 **Bes.** At Bessus' Desperate Redemption.

84 **Mar.** At Bessus' Desperate Redemption! where's that?

86 **Bes.** There, where I redeemed the day; the place
88 bears my name.

90 **Mar.** Prithee, who christened it?

92 **Bes.** The soldier.

94 **Mar.** If I were not a very merrily disposed man, what
would become of thee? One that had but a grain of
96 choler in the whole composition of his body would
send thee of an errand to the worms for putting thy
98 name upon that field: did not I beat thee there, i' th'
head o' the troops, with a truncheon, because thou
100 wouldst needs run away with thy company, when we
should charge the enemy?

102 **Bes.** True; but I did not run.

104 **Mar.** Right, Bessus: I beat thee out on't.

106 **Bes.** But came not I up when the day was gone, and
108 redeemed all?

110 **Mar.** Thou knowest, and so do I, thou meanedst to fly,
and thy fear making thee mistake, thou rannest upon the

112 enemy; and a hot charge thou gavest; as, I'll do thee
right, thou art furious in running away; and I think we
114 owe thy fear for our victory. If I were the king, and
were sure thou wouldst mistake always, and run away
116 upon the enemy, thou shouldst be general, by this light.

118 **Bes.** You'll never leave this till I fall foul.

120 **Mar.** No more such words, dear Bessus; for though I
have ever known thee a coward, and therefore durst
122 never strike thee, yet if thou proceedest, I will
allow thee valiant, and beat thee.

124 **Bes.** Come, come, our king's a brave fellow.

126 **Mar.** He is so, Bessus; I wonder how thou camest to

any good service of any kind, my dear Bessus."

of (line 74) = on.

trencher (line 75) = a wooden plate.

83: Bessus humorously gives the location of his great feat
a name; *redemption* = rescue.²

= "please tell me".

= soldiers.

= ie. "any man who had even just".

= bad temper.

= humorous for "kill thee"; *of* = on.

= military baton or club.

= wanted to or felt compelled to.

105: the beating Mardonius administered to Bessus kept
him from running away.

= run away.

= "caused you to make a mistake".

111-2: *thou rannest...gavest* = while thinking he was
running away from the battle, Bessus was so panicked
he ended up frenziedly charging the enemy!

112-3: *I'll do thee right* = "I'll give you credit".

= a common oath.

= let go of this topic. = "get into an argument with you."¹

= dared.

= "if you continue on like this".

= "grant you are"; in this speech, Mardonius has changed
tacks: he would never beat Bessus if he were a coward;
he would only thrash him if he were to be considered
brave.

= Bessus tries to change the subject!

128	know it. But, if thou wert a man of understanding, I would tell thee, he is vain-glorious and humble, and	129-131: <i>he is...in an hour</i> = the extreme mood swings of their king, Arbaces, are the primary moving force of the play.
130	angry and patient, and merry and dull, and joyful and sorrowful, in extremities, in an hour. Do not think me	131-3: <i>Do not...hear it</i> = "I would tell this to anyone, so don't think this sharing of my opinion of the king with you suggests I consider you a close friend or confidant; if I wanted to be discreet about who I told, I would never tell you."
132	thy friend for this; for if I cared who knew it, thou shouldst not hear it, Bessus. Here he is, with the	= a metaphor from falconry; ⁷ <i>prey</i> refers to the king's captive.
134	<u>prey in his foot.</u>	Entering Characters: <i>Arbaces</i> is the King of Iberia, and the victor of the war; <i>Tigranes</i> , the King of Armenia, is his prisoner.
136	<i>Enter Arbaces, Tigranes, two Gentlemen, and Attendants.</i>	<i>Arbaces</i> and <i>Tigranes</i> are both pronounced with three syllables, the stress on the second syllable: <i>ar-BA-ces, ti-GRa-nes</i> .
138	<i>Arb.</i> <u>Thy</u> sadness, brave Tigranes, takes away	= as the victor of their combat, Arbaces uses the informal, and perhaps slightly insulting, "thee" in addressing Tigranes; Tigranes, however, will appropriately employ the respectful and formal "you" in addressing his conqueror.
140	From my full victory: am I become	140-2: <i>am I...o'ercome him?</i> = "do you think me of so little reputation that any man should feel ashamed when I defeat him?"
142	Of so small fame, that any man should grieve	= bravest person alive.
144	When I o'ercome him? They that placed me here	146-8: <i>You are...formerly</i> = Arbaces actually is quite magnanimous toward his opponent in his victory over him; he would be well within his rights to treat Tigranes more harshly. But the Iberian monarch is so indecorously insistent in talking about his generosity that he subtracts greatly from its value.
146	Intended it an honour, large enough	= treated.
148	For the <u>most valiant living</u> , but to dare	= weighty ransom.
	Oppose me single, though he lost the day.	= kings.
	What should afflict you? You are free as I;	= blank checks, as it were, for Arbaces to fill in the amount as he sees fit, if only he would allow the neighbouring kings to marry his sister.
	To be my prisoner, is to be more free	= she was.
	Than you were formerly: and never think,	= ie. "when I left her to go to the wars".
	The man I held worthy to combat me	= ie. the king has received numerous reports of his sister's great beauty.
150	Shall be <u>used</u> servilely. Thy ransom is,	
152	To take my only sister to thy wife;	
154	A <u>heavy one</u> , Tigranes; for she is	
	A lady, that the neighbor-princes send	
	<u>Blanks</u> to fetch home. I have been too unkind	
	To her, Tigranes: <u>she's</u> but nine years old,	
156	<u>I left her</u> , and ne'er saw her since; your wars	
158	Have held me long, and taught me, though a youth,	
160	The way to victory. She was a pretty child;	
162	Then, I was little better; but now fame	
164	Cries loudly on her, and my messengers	
	Make me believe <u>she is a miracle</u> .	
	She'll make you shrink, as I did, with a stroke	
	But of her eye, Tigranes.	

	Tigr. Is't the course of	165-171: the exasperated Tigranes berates Arbaces for boasting of his defeating Tigranes in Tigranes' own country.
166	Iberia to <u>use</u> their prisoners thus?	= treat.
168	Had fortune thrown my name above Arbaces', I should not thus have talked; for in Armenia	167: ie. "had I been able to defeat you".
170	<u>We hold it base</u> . You should have kept your temper Till you saw home again, where 'tis the fashion, Perhaps, to brag.	169: ie. "we consider it bad form."
172		
174	Arb. Be you my witness, earth, Need I to brag? Doth not this captive prince	174-5: Need I...sufficiently = "why would I need to brag when the fact that the king I defeated is sitting here as my prisoner says it all?"
176	<u>Speak</u> me sufficiently, and all the acts That I have <u>wrought</u> upon his suffering land? Should I, then, boast? Where lies that foot of ground	= speak for. = worked, ie. brought.
178	Within his whole realm, that I have not passed Fighting and conquering? Far, then, from me	
180	Be ostentation. I could tell the world How I have laid his kingdom desolate,	
182	By this sole arm, <u>propt by divinity</u> ; Strip him out of his glories; and have sent	= supported by God or Providence.
184	The pride of all his youth to <u>people</u> graves; And made his virgins languish for their loves;	= populate, fill. 185: "and caused the maidens of Armenia to mourn for their slaughtered men."
186	<u>If I would brag</u> . Should I, that have the power	= this clause concludes the sentence begun in line 180; the sentence is a typically complex Elizabethan one, in which the premise appears at the end of the sentence, the conclusion at the beginning, and a list of various claims Arbaces asserts he could have made appear in between them (separated here by semi-colons, which actually makes this sentence easier to read: the clauses were all originally separated only by commas): "if I wanted to brag, I could tell all of these things to the world: how, etc..."
188	To teach the neighbor-world humility, Mix with vain-glory?	
190	Mar. [Aside] Indeed, this is <u>none</u> !	= ie. not bragging; Mardonius frequently provides humorous and ironic commentary for the audience.
192	Arb. Tigranes, no: <u>did I but take delight</u> To <u>stretch</u> my deeds as others do, on words,	= "if I did take delight". = exaggerate.
194	I could amaze my hearers.	
196	Mar. [Aside] So you do.	
198	Arb. But he shall wrong his and my <u>modesty</u> , That thinks me apt to boast: after an act	198-9: But he...boast = "any man who thinks I am apt to brag is unfair to or demonstrates injustice with respect to my, as well as his own, good or temperate character (<i>modesty</i>)."
200	Fit for a god to do upon his foe, A little glory in a soldier's mouth	
202	Is well-becoming; be it far from vain.	201-2: "it is acceptable, indeed proper, for a soldier to exult a bit when he can - it is not vain at all."
204	Mar. [Aside] 'Tis pity, that valour should be thus <u>drunk</u> .	= ie. inebriated, and therefore more prone to a loosening of the tongue.
206		

250	That she could wish it off, for damning souls;	she so perfect, that no woman could find in her a single defect (<i>want</i>); ¹ and (3) even if she had such great beauty (<i>fair</i>) ⁵ that she would wish she could get rid of it to prevent it from causing, due to its tempting quality, others' souls to be damned;" ⁷
252	I would pay any ransom, twenty lives, Rather than meet her married in my bed. Perhaps I have a love, where I have fixed	253-5: Tigranes finally notes that he may just have his own sweetheart elsewhere. = altered.
254	Mine eyes, not to be <u>moved</u> , and she on me; I am not fickle.	255: "I am not so inconstant", ie. "my heart is not so changeable."
256	Arb. Is that all the cause?	257: "is that the only reason you have to not marry my sister?" Arbaces is dismissive, and insultingly so, of Tigranes' loyalty to his own beloved. = tie or unite. = Arbaces' sister's. = piercing. ²
258	Think you, you can so <u>knit</u> yourself in love To any other, that <u>her searching</u> sight	260: <i>it</i> = ie. the bonds of love between Tigranes and his love. 260-1: <i>So...in fight</i> = Arbaces' point is that Tigranes' determination to not be overcome by Arbaces' sister when he meets her is similar to that determination he presumably had not to lose to Arbaces in their single-combat - and is further doomed to the same failure.
260	Cannot dissolve <u>it</u> ? <u>So</u> , before you tried, You thought yourself a match for me in fight.	
262	Trust me, Tigranes, she can do as much In peace as I in war; she'll conquer too:	
264	You shall see, if you have the power to <u>stand</u> The force of her <u>swift</u> looks. If you <u>dislike</u> ,	= withstand. = sharp. ² = ie. "still don't like her after you meet her".
266	I'll send you home with love, and name your ransom Some other way; but if she be your choice,	
268	She frees you. To Iberia you must.	
270	Tigr. Sir, I have learned a <u>prisoner's sufferance</u> ,	= to suffer as a prisoner should. = permission.
272	And will obey. But give me <u>leave</u> to talk In private with some friends before I go.	
274	Arb. Some two <u>await him forth</u> , and see him safe;	= "attend him".
276	But let him freely send for whom he please, And none dare to disturb his conference;	
278	I will not have him know what bondage is, Till he be free from me.	
280	[Exit Tigranes with Attendants.]	
282	This prince, Mardonius, Is full of wisdom, valour, all the graces	
284	Man can receive.	
286	Mar. And yet you conquered him.	
288	Arb. And yet I conquered him, and could have done't <u>Had'st thou</u> joined with him, though thy <u>name</u> in arms	= "even if you had". = reputation or fame. = valiant. ¹
290	Be great. Must all men that are <u>virtuous</u> Think suddenly to match themselves with me?	
292	I conquered him, and <u>bravely</u> ; did I not?	= excellently.

294	Bes. <u>An</u> please your majesty, I was afraid at first –	= if it; <i>an (it) please your majesty</i> (or <i>lordship</i> , etc.) is a common phrase of deference.
296	Mar. When wert thou <u>other</u> ?	= ie. anything but.
298	Arb. Of what?	
300	Bes. That you would not have spied your best	299ff: Bessus presumes to suggest Arbaces did not fight from the most advantageous tactical position, and advises him on what he should have done!
302	advantages; for your majesty, in my opinion, lay too high; methinks, <u>under favour</u> , you should have <u>lain thus</u> .	= with your permission. = Bessus accompanies his words with a demonstration.
304	Mar. Like a tailor at a <u>wake</u> .	303: Mardonius compares Bessus' posturing to a tailor defending himself with his yardstick from bullies at an English parish festival (<i>wake</i>); ^{1,7} tailors generally were held in low regard in Elizabethan society, and the target of many jokes.
306	Bes. And then, if't please your majesty to remember, at one time – by my <u>troth</u> , I wished <u>myself wi' you</u> .	= truth. = "I could have been out there with you."
308	Mar. By my troth, thou wouldst ha' stunk 'em both	
310	out o' th' <u>lists</u> .	= ie. field of battle.
312	Arb. What to do?	311: Arbaces is unusually permissive with Bessus, and curious as to what he will suggest.
314	Bes. To put your majesty in mind of <u>an occasion</u> : you	= "a situation that arose (during your fight)."
316	lay thus, and Tigranes <u>falsified</u> a blow at your leg,	= feigned, a term from fencing. ¹
318	which you, by doing thus, avoided; but, if you had whipped up your leg thus, and reached him on the ear, you <u>had</u> made the blood-royal run about his head.	= would have.
320	Mar. What <u>country fence-school</u> didst thou learn that at?	= rustic fencing-school; <i>country</i> suggests an absence of sophistication.
322	Arb. <u>Puff!</u> did not I take him nobly?	= pshaw!
324	Mar. Why, you did	324-5: Mardonius' daring words to the king reveal his role as mentor and close advisor to Arbaces.
326	And you have talked enough on't.	
328	Arb. Talked enough!	
330	Will you confine my words? By <u>Heaven</u> and earth,	= <i>Heaven</i> is almost always pronounced as a one-syllable word, with the medial 'v' omitted: <i>Hea'n</i> .
332	<u>I were much better be</u> a king of beasts	= "would be better off if I were".
334	Than such a people! If I had not patience	
336	Above a god, I should be called a tyrant	
338	Throughout the world: <u>they will offend</u> to death	= "my subjects dare to offend me".
340	Each minute. Let me hear thee speak again,	333-4: Let me...earth again = ie. "if you say another word, then you are dead."
342	And thou art earth again. Why, this is like	= "who felt obliged to", or "who had to".
344	Tigranes' speech, <u>that needs would</u> say I bragged.	
346	Bessus, he said I bragged.	
348	Bes. Ha, ha, ha!	
350	Arb. Why dost thou laugh?	
352	By all the world, I'm grown ridiculous	
354	To my own subjects. Tie me to a chair,	
356	And jest at me! But <u>I shall make a start</u> ,	= the sense is, "I am going to do something about this".

344	And punish some, that others may take heed How they are haughty. Who will answer me?	344-5: <i>take heed...haughty</i> = ie. "learn from them not to be so arrogant."
346	He said I boasted: speak, Mardonius, Did I? – He will not answer. Oh, my temper!	= ie. God, or the gods.
348	I give <u>you</u> thanks above, that taught my heart Patience; I can endure his silence. What, will <u>none</u>	= no one.
350	<u>Vouchsafe</u> to give me answer? Am I grown To such a poor respect? or do you mean	= deign, condescend.
352	<u>To break my wind</u> ? Speak, speak, some one of you Or else, by Heaven –	= perhaps meaning "to have me exhaust myself with talking"; a person with a disease of the lungs that caused difficulty in breathing was said to be <i>broken-winded</i> . ¹
354		
	<i>Ist Gent.</i> So please your –	
356		
	<i>Arb.</i> <u>Monstrous!</u>	356f: Arbaces has really worked himself up to a pitch of complete irrationality; <i>monstrous</i> is trisyllabic: <i>MON-stro-ous</i> . ⁷
358	I cannot be heard out; they cut me off, As if I were too saucy. I will live	
360	In woods, and talk to trees; they will allow me To end what I begin. The meanest subject	
362	Can find a freedom to <u>discharge his soul</u> , And not I. Now it is a time to speak;	= "say what's on his mind".
364	<u>I hearken</u> .	= "I'm listening."
366	<i>Ist Gent.</i> May it please –	
368	<i>Arb.</i> I mean not you; Did not I stop you once? But I am grown	369-370: <i>But I...idly</i> = "but I have apparently reached a point where I speak in vain (<i>idly</i>)", ie. "no one listens to anything I say."
370	To talk but <u>idly</u> : let another speak.	It is worth noting that the original quarto reads "But I am grown / To <i>balk</i> , but I <i>desire</i> , let another speak"; to <i>balk</i> means "to ignore", which here can be modified to mean "to be ignored", so that the line as it appeared originally does make sense (<i>desire</i> would have to be trisyllabic: <i>de-SI-er</i>); the passage has elicited a great deal of commentary by early editors, but I have adopted the reading accepted by Dyce.
372	<i>2nd Gent.</i> I hope your majesty –	372: Arbaces' response suggests the 2nd Gentleman speaks in an affected way, deliberately lengthening his words. ¹
374	<i>Arb.</i> Thou <u>drawl'st</u> thy words,	= several of the early editions, including the original, have <i>drawest</i> here, which has the same meaning as <i>drawl'st</i> of "prolonging". ¹
	That I must wait an hour, where other men Can hear in instants: throw your words away	375-6: <i>That I...instants</i> = "so that I have to wait an hour to hear what you have to say, whereas other men can tell me their thoughts in a brief moment."
376	Quick and to purpose; I have told you this.	
378		
	<i>Bes.</i> <u>An't</u> please your majesty –	= if it.
380		
	<i>Arb.</i> Wilt thou <u>devour</u> me? This is such a rudeness	= the sense is "engulf", suggesting a complete eclipsing.
382	As yet you never showed me: and I <u>want</u> Power to command too; else, Mardonius	= lack.
384	Would speak at my request. – Were you my king, I would have answered at your word, Mardonius:	
386	I pray you, speak, and truly; did I boast?	
388	<i>Mar.</i> <u>Truth</u> will offend you.	= read as "the truth".

390	<i>Arb.</i> You take all great care What will offend me, when you dare to utter	
392	Such things as these.	
394	<i>Mar.</i> You told Tigranes, you had won his land With that sole arm, propped by divinity:	
396	Was not that bragging, and a wrong to <u>us</u> , That daily <u>ventured lives</u> ?	= ie. the soldiers. = "risked our lives?"
398		
400	<i>Arb.</i> O, that thy name Were great as mine! 'would I had paid my wealth It were as great, as I might combat thee!	399-401: "oh, if only your fame and reputation were as great as mine! and if only I had disposed of my wealth, so that we were equal in our financial conditions, so that I could fight you!" Arbaces is touching on a convention of dueling, which is that no man should ever deign to challenge or fight with another who is not of equal status and rank to himself.
402	I would, through all the regions habitable, Search thee, and, having found thee, with my sword	
404	Drive thee about the world, till I had met Some place that yet man's curiosity	
406	Had missed of; there, there would I strike thee dead: Forgotten <u>of</u> mankind, such funeral rites	= by.
408	As beasts would give thee, thou shouldst have.	
410	<i>Bes.</i> The king Rages extremely: shall we slink away?	
412	He'll strike us.	
414	<i>2nd Gent.</i> <u>Content</u> .	= "sounds good to me"
416	<i>Arb.</i> There I would make you know, 'twas this sole arm. I grant, you were my <u>instruments</u> , and did	417-8: <i>I grant...commanded you</i> = "I'll allow that you (my soldiers) acted on my behalf, but you only performed what I commanded you to do." <i>instruments</i> = means, agents.
418	As I commanded you; but 'twas this arm <u>Moved you like wheels</u> ; it moved you as it pleased. –	= the image is of interlocking wheels, in which the turning of one (the king's sword-wielding arm) causes all the others to move. <i>Moved</i> = ie. "which moved".
420	<u>Whither slip you now</u> ? What, are you too good To wait on me? Puff! <u>I had need have temper</u> ,	= "and where are you going?" The others are sliding away from him! = "I must need a good temper", ie. it is necessary for the king to be able to keep his composure and equanimity, to rule such a people.
422	That rule such people; I have nothing left At my own choice: <u>I would I might be private!</u>	= "I wish I were a private citizen!"
424	<u>Mean men</u> enjoy themselves; but 'tis <u>our</u> curse To have a <u>tumult</u> , that, out of their <u>loves</u> ,	= men of lower status or rank. = "my" (the "royal we"). = commotion. ¹ = ie. "love for me".
426	Will wait on us, <u>whether we will or no</u> .	= "whether we want them to or not".
428	Go, get you gone! Why, here they stand like death; My words move nothing.	
430	<i>1st Gent.</i> Must we go?	
432	<i>Bes.</i> I know not.	432: the self-contradictory rantings of the king confuse the others.
434	<i>Arb.</i> I pray you, leave me, sirs. I'm proud of this,	434-5: the king is highly sarcastic.

436	That you will be entreated from my sight.	
438	[<i>Exeunt two Gentlemen, Bessus, and Attendants.</i> <i>Mardonius is going out.</i>]	438: ie. Mardonius will be called back before he exits the stage.
440	Why, now they leave me all! – Mardonius!	
442	Mar. Sir?	
444	Arb. Will you leave me quite alone? methinks, Civility should teach you more than this,	
446	If I were but your friend. Stay here, and wait.	
448	Mar. Sir, shall I speak?	
450	Arb. Why, you would now think much To be denied; but I can scarce entreat What I would have. Do, speak.	450-1: <i>but I...would have</i> = "I barely can get anyone to do what I ask them to."
452		
454	Mar. But will you hear me out?	
456	Arb. With me you <u>article</u> , to talk thus. Well, I will hear you out.	= negotiate, as if stipulating terms of a treaty. ^{2,16}
458		
460	Mar. [<i>Kneels.</i>] Sir, that I have ever loved you, <u>My sword hath spoken for me</u> ; that I do,	= Mardonius means that his lifetime of fighting in wars on Arbaces' behalf proves his loyalty to the king.
462	If it be doubted, I dare call an oath, A great one, to my witness; and were	462: Mardonius' verse lines contain a great number of irregularities, such as this line of only 9 syllables, and line 466 below with its superfluous syllable; for a brief discussion, see <i>Postscript 3</i> at the end of the play.
464	You not my king, from amongst men I should Have chose you out, to love above the rest: <u>Nor can this challenge thanks</u> ; for my own sake	= "but I wouldn't demand thanks for doing this." <i>challenge</i> = demand as a right.
466	I should have done it, because I would have loved The most deserving man, for so you are.	
468		
470	Arb. [<i>Raising him.</i>] Alas, Mardonius, rise! you shall not kneel: We all are soldiers, and all <u>venture</u> lives;	= "risk our".
472	And where there is no difference in men's worths, Titles are jests. Who can outvalue thee?	472-3: <i>And where...jest</i> = "amongst men of equal worthiness, it would be a joke to have their relationships to each other be defined by their titles;" Arbaces' point is that Mardonius should not need to treat him differently than other men do just because he is the king.
474	Mardonius, thou hast loved me, and <u>hast wrong</u> ; Thy love is not rewarded; but believe	= "you have been wronged."
476	It shall be <u>better</u> : <u>more than</u> friend in arms, <u>My father</u> and my tutor, good Mardonius!	= ie. better rewarded from now on. = ie. "you are more than my". = "you are (like) my father".
478		
480	Mar. Sir, you did promise you would hear me out.	
482	Arb. And so I will: speak freely, for from thee Nothing can come, but worthy things and true.	

484	Mar. Though you have all this worth, you hold some qualities That do <u>eclipse</u> your virtues.	= conceal, prevent from being seen.
486		
488	Arb. Eclipse my virtues!	
488		
490	Mar. Yes, Your <u>passiöns</u> , which are so <u>manifold</u> , that they	= expressions of emotions. = variable or diverse. ¹
492	Appear even in this: when I commend you, You hug me for that truth; when I speak of your faults,	
494	You make a start, and <u>fly the hearing</u> . But –	= run from listening.
496	Arb. When you commend me! Oh, that I should live To need such commendations! If my deeds	496-7: <i>If my deeds...earth</i> = "if my deeds alone did not proclaim my praiseworthiness around the world".
498	Blew not my praise themselves about the earth, <u>I were</u> most wretched! Spare your idle praise:	= "I would be".
500	If thou didst mean to flatter, and shouldst utter Words in my praise, that thou thought'st impudence, <u>My deeds should make 'em modest</u> . When you praise,	= ie. "the praise my actions actually deserve are much greater in comparison (<i>should make'em modest</i>) than the accolades you are giving me." = "this is such a lie".
502	I hug you! <u>'tis so false</u> , that, wert thou worthy, Thou shouldst receive a death, a glorious death,	
504	From me. But thou shalt understand thy lies; For shouldst thou praise me into Heaven, and there	
506	Leave me enthroned, I would despise thee <u>though</u> As much as now, which is as much as dust,	= notwithstanding or then. ^{7,8}
508	Because I see thy <u>envy</u> .	= malice.
510	Mar. However you will <u>use</u> me after, yet, For your own promise sake, hear me the rest.	= treat.
512	Arb. I will, and after call unto the winds,	513-5: "the wind will hear what I have to say with as much patience as I will have to listen to you." = the phrase <i>lend an ear</i> dates back at least to 1480. ¹
514	For they shall <u>lend as large an ear</u> as I To what you utter. Speak.	
516		
518	Mar. Would you but <u>leave</u> These nasty tempers, which I do not say <u>Take</u> from you all your worth, but <u>darken 'em</u> ,	= cease. = subtract. = "conceal them"; Mardonius reprises his eclipsing imagery of line 485.
520	Then you would shine indeed.	
522	Arb. Well.	
524	Mar. Yet I would have You keep some passiöns, lest men should take you	524-6: "It is not that I want you to be perfect: rather, you should hang onto some of your imperfections (ie. your undesirable emotionalism), because people otherwise will mistake you for a god, as your virtues are so inhumanly great."
526	For a god, your virtues are such.	
528	Arb. Why, now you flatter.	
530	Mar. <u>I never understood the word</u> . Were you No king, and free from these wild moods, <u>should I</u>	= ie. "I only speak the absolute truth." = "if I had the opportunity to". = "intelligent conversation and my own pleasure".
532	Choose a companiön for <u>wit and pleasure</u> , It should be you; or for honesty to interchange	533-4: <i>interchange / my bosom with</i> = ie. "exchange my most intimate thoughts with".
534	My bosom with, it should be you; or wisdom	

536	To give me counsel, I would pick out you; Or valour to defend my reputation, <u>Still</u> I would find out you, for you are fit	= ever, always.
538	To fight for all the world, if it could come In questiōn. Now I have spoke: consider	
540	To yourself, find out <u>a use</u> ; if so, then what Shall fall to me is not material.	540: a use = ie. "a beneficial way to use what I have told you". 540-1: if so...material = "so long as you have learned a lesson from what I have just said, then it doesn't matter what happens to me", ie. "you can do whatever you want to me."
542		
544	Arb. Is not material? more than ten such lives As mine, Mardonius. It was nobly said; Thou hast spoke truth, and boldly such a truth	543f: the violence of Arbaces' mood suddenly disappears.
546	As might offend another. I have been Too passionate and <u>idle</u> ; thou shalt see	= foolish.
548	A swift amendment. But I <u>want</u> those <u>parts</u> You praise me for: I fight for all the world!	= lack. = qualities.
550	Give thee a sword, and thou wilt go as far Beyond me as thou art beyond in years;	551: Arbaces confirms for us that Mardonius is older and much more experienced than he is.
552	I know thou dar'st and wilt. It troubles me That I should <u>use so rough a phrase</u> to thee:	= ie. speak so brusquely.
554	Impute it to my folly, what thou wilt, So thou wilt pardon me. That thou and I	
556	Should differ thus!	
558	Mar. Why, 'tis no matter, sir.	
560	Arb. Faith, but it is: but <u>thou dost ever</u> take All things I do thus patiently; for which	= "you always".
562	I never can <u>requite</u> thee but with love, And that thou shalt be sure of. Thou and I	= "(sufficiently) repay".
564	Have not been merry lately: pray thee, tell me, <u>Where hadst thou</u> that same <u>jewèl in thine ear</u> ?	= "where did you get". = earrings were in fashion for men in this period. ⁷
566		
568	Mar. Why, at the taking of a town.	
570	Arb. A wench, Upon my life, a <u>wench</u> , Mardonius, Gave thee that jewel.	569ff: now the king banters playfully with Mardonius. = woman; Arbaces suggests Mardonius had or has a lover who gave him the earrings as a gift.
572		
574	Mar. Wench! They <u>respect</u> not me; I'm old and rough, and every limb about me, <u>But that which should</u> , grows stiffer. I' those businesses,	= pay attention to or notice. ¹
576	I may swear I am truly honest; for I pay	= "except for the one that should": Mardonius is self-deprecating and coarsely suggestive! 575-8: I' those...certainty = Mardonius suggests that when it comes to women, he properly pays for what he gets; the king continues to joke with the old soldier about the cost of prostitutes. Note that lines 575 and 576 appear to be what are called <i>alexandrines</i> , containing 6 instead of 5 iambs, and thus 12 syllables.
578	Justly for what I take, and would be glad To be at a <u>certainty</u> .	= fixed rate. ⁷

580	Arb. Why, do the wenches encroach upon thee?	580: "do the whores impose themselves on you?" or perhaps "try to raise their prices on you?"
582	Mar. Ay, <u>by this light</u> , do they.	= a vow of affirmation.
584	Arb. Didst thou <u>sit at an old rent</u> with 'em?	= hold out for the old rate or price. ⁷
586	Mar. Yes, faith.	
588	Arb. And do they <u>improve themselves</u> ?	= make a profit or increase their rates. ^{1,7}
590	Mar. Ay, ten shillings <u>to me, every</u> new young fellow they come acquainted with.	= ie. "charged to me, and to every".
592	Arb. How canst live on't?	593: "how can you live on what is left over when you have to pay so much for these women?"
594	Mar. Why, I think, I must petition to you.	
596	Arb. Thou shalt take 'em up at my price.	597: "you will pay them at my price;" but the line is ambiguous, as the king could mean "a price that I set", or "a price that I could pay."
598		
600	<i>Enter two Gentlemen and Bessus.</i>	599: the Gentlemen and Bessus return to the stage, no doubt approaching Arbaces very hesitantly, even as they are able to hear the banter between Mardonius and the king.
602	Mar. Your price!	
604	Arb. Ay, at the king's price.	
606	Mar. That may be more than I'm worth.	
608	1st Gent. Is he not merry now?	
610	2nd Gent. I think not.	
612	Bes. He is, he is: We'll show ourselves.	
614	Arb. Bessus! I thought you had been <u>in Iberia</u> by <u>this</u> ; I bade you haste; Gobrias will <u>want</u> entertainment for me.	613: in Iberia = Arbaces has apparently ordered Bessus to return to Iberia ahead of him to bring news and instructions back to Gobrias, the Lord Protector. this = this time. = lack; the sense is, if Bessus doesn't return early enough to inform Gobrias that the king is returning, he won't have time to prepare an appropriate reception for him.
616	Bes. An't please your majesty, I have a <u>suit</u> .	= request, petition.
618	Arb. Is't not <u>lousy</u> , Bessus? what is't?	= filled with lice; the king now is truly in a merry mood, taking Bessus' use of <i>suit</i> to mean a suit of clothing!
620	Bes. I am to <u>carry</u> a lady with me –	= bring along.
622	Arb. Then thou hast two suits.	622: one for the king - his current request, which he has yet to enunciate - and one for the lady, in the sense of wooing.
624	Bes. And if I can <u>prefer</u> her to the lady Panthea, your majesty's sister, to learn fashions, as her friends term it, it will be worth something to me.	= recommend; we remember that earlier in the scene, Tigranes had requested permission from Arbaces to confer with one or another individuals; one of them turns out to be Bessus, whom Tigranes has asked a favour: would he

628	Arb. So many nights' lodgings as 'tis thither; will't not?	petition the king for permission to place a lady-acquaintance of his with Arbaces' sister Panthea as a servant?
630	Bes. I know not that, sir; but gold I shall be sure of.	627: Arbaces suggests that Bessus will receive as many sexual favors from the lady as the number of days and nights it will take for them to return to Iberia.
632	Arb. Why, thou shalt <u>bid her entertain her from me</u> , so thou wilt resolve me one thing.	630: "I am only aware of the fact that I will be rewarded (by Tigranes) with some gold for doing him this favour." 632: "tell Panthea that I wish for her to take on this woman you speak of as a servant". 633: "if you will tell me just one thing."
634	Bes. If I can.	
636	Arb. 'Faith, 'tis a very <u>disputable question</u> ; and yet I	= matter open to debate.
638	think thou canst decide it.	
640	Bes. Your majesty has a good opinion of my	
642	<u>understanding</u> .	= intellect.
644	Arb. I have so good an opinion of it: 'tis whether thou be valiant.	= ie. "the question is".
646	Bes. Somebody has <u>traded</u> me to you: do you see this sword, sir?	= slandered.
648		
650		
652	Arb. Yes.	
654	Bes. If I do not make my <u>back-biters eat it to a knife</u> within this week, <u>say I am not valiant</u> .	653: back-biters = slanderers; this still-current term actually dates back to the early 13th century. ¹ eat it to a knife = literally to chew the sword down till it is the size of a knife. = "then you can say I am a coward."
656		
658	<i>Enter a Messenger.</i>	
660	Mess. Health to your majesty!	
662		
664	Arb. From <u>Gobrias</u> ?	= Gobrias is the Lord Protector, meaning that he has been running the state during the king's long absence.
666	Mess. Yes, Sir.	
668	Arb. How does he? is he well?	
670	Mess. In perfect health.	
672	Arb. Take that for thy good news. –	
674		
676	A trustier servant to his prince there lives not Than is good Gobrias.	
678		
	<i>[Reads.]</i>	677: there is a pause here as the king reads the message; he reacts in an obviously stunned manner.
	Ist Gent. The king starts back.	

680	Mar. His blood goes back as fast.	681: "he grows pale just as quickly."
682	2nd Gent. And now it comes again.	683: "now he is growing flushed."
684	Mar. He alters strangely.	
686	Arb. The hand of Heaven is on me: be it far	
688	From me to struggle! If my <u>secret</u> sins	= private or concealed, though the sense might be "unknown".
690	Have pulled this curse upon me, lend me tears	
	<u>Enow</u> to wash me <u>white</u> , that I may feel	= plural form of "enough". = the color of goodness or purity, ¹ used with <i>innocence</i> in line 691.
692	A child-like innocence within my breast:	= permission.
	Which once performed, oh, gives me <u>leave</u> to stand	= the quality of <i>constancy</i> is personified.
694	As fixed as <u>Constancy</u> herself: my eyes	
696	Set here unmoved, regardless of the world,	
	Though thousand miseries encompass me!	687-695: "Heaven is punishing me for any unknown or private sins I have committed, so I will not fight it! If I have sinned, let me cry enough tears to atone for such sins, and return to a state of innocence; which if I may do so, then let me stand here with a firmness that will allow me to bear all the misery the world can heap on me."
698	Mar. This is strange! – Sir, how do you?	
700	Arb. <u>Mardonius</u> , my mother –	= <i>Mardonius</i> , usually trisyllabic, has four syllables here.
702	Mar. Is she dead?	
704	Arb. Alas, she's not so <u>happy</u> ! Thou dost know	= fortunate.
706	How she hath laboured, since my father died,	705: Arane, the queen mother, seems to regularly conspire to kill Arbaces, her son the king!
	To take by treason hence this loathèd life,	
708	That would but be to serve her. I have pardoned,	= "and by doing so (repeatedly pardoning her) have only given her more opportunities".
710	And pardoned, <u>and by that have made her fit</u>	
712	To practise new sins, not repent the old.	= from there, ie. Iberia.
714	She now had hired a slave to come <u>from thence</u> ,	= ie. kill.
716	And <u>strike</u> me here; whom Gobrias, sifting out,	= ie. Gobrias.
718	Took, and condemned, and executed there,	= repay, reward.
720	<u>The carefull'st servant</u> ! Heaven, let me but live	
722	To <u>pay</u> that man! Nature is poor to me,	
724	That will not let me have as many deaths	
726	As are the times that he hath saved my life,	
	That I might die 'em over all for him.	
728	Mar. Sir, let her bear her sins on her own head;	= trouble.
730	<u>Vex</u> not yourself.	
732	Arb. What will the world	= think.
734	<u>Conceive</u> of me? with what unnatural sins	
736	Will they suppose me laden, when my life	
738	Is sought by her that gave it to the world?	
740	But yet he <u>writes me comfort here</u> : my sister,	= ie. "he also gives me some good news in this letter."
742	He says, is grown in beauty and in grace,	
744	In all the innocent virtues that become	

728 A tender spotless maid: she stains her cheeks
With mourning tears, to purge her mother's ill;

730 And 'mongst that sacred dew she mingles prayers,
Her pure oblations, for my safe return. –
732 If I have lost the duty of a son,
If any pomp or vanity of state

734 Made me forget my natural offices,
Nay, further, if I have not every night
736 Expostulated with my wand'ring thoughts,
If ought unto my parent they have erred,

738 And called 'em back; do you direct her arm
Unto this foul dissembling heart of mine:
740 But if I have been just to her, send out
Your power to compass me, and hold me safe
742 From searching treason! I will use no means
But prayer: for, rather suffer me to see
744 From mine own veins issue a deadly flood,

Than wash my danger off with mother's blood.

746 **Mar.** I ne'er saw such sudden extremities.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT I, SCENE II.

Another part of the Camp.

Enter Tigranes And Spaconia.

1 **Tigr.** Why, wilt thou have me fly, Spaconia?
2 What should I do?

4 **Spa.** Nay, let me stay alone;
And when you see Armenia again,
6 You shall behold a tomb more worth than I:
Some friend, that ever loves me or my cause,
8 Will build me something to distinguish me
From other women; many a weeping verse
10 He will lay on, and much lament those maids
That place their loves unfortunately high,
12 As I have done, where they can never reach.
But why should you go to Iberia?

14 **Tigr.** Alas, that thou wilt ask me! Ask the man
16 That rages in a fever, why he lies
Distempered there, when all the other youths
18 Are coursing o'er the meadows with their loves:

728: *spotless* = without sin, innocent.

728-9: *she stains...ill* = she weeps as if she were in mourning in order to remove the sinful nature of their mother; interestingly, Arbaces in lines 688-691 had just used the same imagery of shedding tears as a way to do penance for one's sins.

= a lovely metaphor for Panthea's tears.

= religious offerings.

732: "If I have forgotten how to behave like a good son".

733: "if my focus on the trappings of power and the trivial matters relating to my rule".

= duties as a son.

736: "demanded of my restless thoughts", ie. "asked myself".

736: "if in any way my thoughts were not those of a dutiful son".

ought = anything.

= Arbaces apostrophizes to the gods.⁶

= enclose within a protective circle.¹

= piercing or wounding.²

743-5: *for, rather...blood* = I would rather die than protect myself by having my mother done away with."

deadly flood = ie. blood.

744-5: dramatists of the era often signaled the end of a scene with a rhyming couplet.

= ie. violent outbursts.¹

Entering Characters: we have already met Armenia's King *Tigranes*; *Spaconia* is his sweetheart.

= run away; the original editions all say *die* here, but *fly* is accepted by the old editors as correct.

4f: Spaconia lays on a guilt trip: in love with Tigranes, she does not want him to go to Iberia without her; however, since he is a prisoner of Arbaces, it is not clear to him what exactly else he is supposed to do.

= expound.¹

= who; in 11-12, Spaconia bemoans the heart-ache expected for those women (such as herself) who fall in love with men of too high a rank to realistically expect to be able to marry them.

= deranged or diseased.²

= running swiftly.¹

20	Can I resist it? am I not a slave To him that conquered me?	
22	Spa. That conquered thee, Tigranes, he has won but half of thee –	
24	Thy body; but thy mind may be as free As his; his <u>will</u> did never combat thine,	= ie. free will, freedom to think as he wishes.
26	And take it prisoner.	
28	Tigr. But if he by force Convey my body hence, what helps it me,	
30	Or thee, to be unwilling?	
32	Spa. O, Tigranes! I know you are to see a lady there;	
34	To see, and like, I fear: perhaps the hope Of her makes you forget me <u>ere we part</u> .	33-35: Spaconia is really more worried that Tigranes will forget about her when he meets Arbaces' sister, as he will likely fall in love with her. = "before we have even parted".
36	Be happier than you know to wish! farewell.	
38	Tigr. Spaconia, stay, and hear me what I say. In short, <u>destruction meet me</u> , <u>that</u> I may	= "may ruin fall upon me". = so that. = ie. destruction. = cease.
40	See <u>it</u> , and not avoid it, when I <u>leave</u> To be thy faithful lover! Part with me	
42	Thou shalt not; there are none that know our love; And I have given gold unto a <u>captain</u> ,	42: there are...our love = the secrecy of their relationship is a key component to the plot. = military commander ¹ (he is referring to Bessus).
44	That goes unto Iberia from the king, That he would place a lady of our land	
46	With the king's sister that is offered me; <u>Thither shall you</u> , and, being once got in,	45-46: Bessus will place Spaconia with Arbaces' sister Panthea as a servant or lady-in-waiting; we have seen Bessus already get Arbaces' approval for this transaction. = "to there you shall go".
48	Persuade her, by what subtle means you can, To be as backward in her love as I.	48-49: Spaconia is to try to convince Panthea to refuse to take Tigranes as a husband. 49: "to be as unwilling or unfavourable in her love towards me as I shall be towards her."
50		
52	Spa. Can you imagine that a longing maid, When she beholds you, can be <u>pulled away</u> <u>With words</u> from loving you?	= drawn away, ie. dissuaded. = ie. with mere words.
54		
56	Tigr. <u>Dispraise</u> my health, My honesty, and tell her I am jealous.	= speak critically of.
58	Spa. Why, I had rather <u>loose you</u> . Can my heart Consent to let my tongue throw out such words?	= set you free.
60	And I, that ever yet <u>spoke what I thought</u> , Shall find it such a thing at first to lie!	= ie. have always spoken the truth.
62		
64	Tigr. Yet, do thy best. <i>Enter Bessus.</i>	
66		
68	Bes. What, is your majesty ready?	
70	Tigr. There is the lady, captain.	

72	Bes. Sweet lady, by your leave. I could wish myself more full of <u>courtship</u> for your fair sake.	= courtly behavior or breeding. ^{1,3}
74	Spa. Sir, I shall feel no <u>want</u> of that.	= lack.
76	Bes. Lady, you must haste; I have received new letters from the king, that require more speed than I expected:	
78	he will follow me <u>suddenly</u> himself; and begins to call for <u>your majesty</u> already.	= right away. = ie. Tigranes.
80	Tigr. He shall not do so long.	
82	Bes. Sweet lady, shall I call you my <u>charge</u> hereafter?	= official responsibility
84	Spa. I will not take upon me to govern your tongue, sir:	
86	you shall call me what you please.	
88	<i>[Exeunt.]</i>	

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Capital of Iberia.

An Apartment in the Palace.

*Enter Gobrias, Bacurius, Arane, Panthea,
Waiting-women and Attendants.*

1 **Gob.** My Lord Bacurius, you must have regard
2 Unto the queen; she is your prisoner;
3 'Tis at your peril, if she make escape.

4
5 **Bac.** My Lord, I know't; she is my prisoner,
6 From you committed: yet she is a woman;
7 And, so I keep her safe, you will not urge me
8 To keep her close. I shall not shame to say,
9 I sorrow for her.

10
11 **Gob.** So do I, my lord:
12 I sorrow for her, that so little grace
13 Doth govern her, that she should stretch her arm
14 Against her king; so little womanhood
15 And natural goodness, as to think the death
16 Of her own son.

17
18 **Arane.** Thou know'st the reason why,
19 Dissembling as thou art, and wilt not speak.

20
21 **Gob.** There is a lady takes not after you;
22 Her father is within her; that good man,
23 Whose tears paid down his sins. Mark how she weeps;

24 How well it does become her! And if you
25 Can find no disposition in yourself
26 To sorrow, yet by gracefulness in her
27 Find out the way, and by your reason weep:
28 All this she does for you, and more she needs,
29 When for yourself you will not lose a tear.
30 Think how this want of grief discredits you;
31 And you will weep, because you cannot weep.

32
33 **Arane.** You talk to me, as having got a time
34 Fit for your purpose; but you know, I know
35 You speak not what you think.

The Setting: the first act having taken place in Armenia,
the remainder of the play is set in Iberia.

Entering Characters: **Gobrias** has been Protector of the
realm during King Arbaces' long absence from Iberia during
the wars; **Panthea** is Arbaces' sister, **Arane** the queen-
mother, and **Bacurius** a lord.

= ie. Arane, the queen-mother. = Bacurius has been charged
with keeping Arane confined or under house arrest for
her plotting to kill the king.

7-8: **so I...close:** "so long as I keep her harmless (*safe*),
don't ask me to keep her confined."

12-13: **so little...govern her** = ie. Arane seems to have little
of the moral compass that God grants to humans.

15: **natural** = *natural* could carry a connotation describing
the type of feelings one would normally have for a close
relative.

think (line 15) = intend.⁷

18-19: "you know why I did this; you are pretending to be
ignorant of the real story here, and will say nothing of it."
Arane is addressing Gobrias; there is a back-story here, the
details of which we will not learn for a long while.

= "who is nothing at all like you;" Gobrias points to
Panthea, Arane's daughter, here.

22: Gobrias refers to Arane's deceased husband, the former
king, whom Panthea more takes after.

23: **paid down** = paid for in part, like a mortgage;¹ this is
now the third time the idea of redeeming one's sins with
tears of repentance has been used in our play.

she = ie. Panthea

25-27: "if your natural disposition doesn't lead you to cry,
then you should cry because logic (*reason*) says you
should, and learn from Panthea's virtue (*gracefulness*)¹
how to do so."

30-31: "think how disgraceful it is to you not to grieve, and
you will grieve that you cannot grieve" (Weber, quoting an
earlier editor).

want (line 30) = lack.

33-34: **You talk...purpose** = basically, Arane is reminding
Gobrias of his past claims that he knows when it will be
appropriate to reveal whatever it is Arane is accusing him of
hiding.

36	Pan.	I would my heart	37-39: <i>I would...mother</i> = "I wish my heart was made of
38	Were stone, before my <u>softness</u> should be urged	Against my mother! A more troubled thought	stone, so that it could resist any encouragement to show
			tender regard (<i>softness</i>) towards my mother!" Note how
			<i>softness</i> linguistically contrasts with her "hard" <i>heart of</i>
			<i>stone</i> .
40	No <u>virgin</u> bears about her: <u>should I</u> excuse	My mother's fault, I should <u>set light a life</u> ,	= a chaste and unmarried woman. = "if I were to".
42	In losing which a brother and a king	Were taken from me: if I seek to save	= ie. assign a low value to Arbaces' life. ¹
44	<u>That life</u> so loved, I lose <u>another life</u> ,	That gave me being, – I shall lose a mother,	
46	A word of such a sound in a child's ear,	That it strikes reverence through it. May the will	= ie. the king's life. = ie. Arane's life.
48	Of Heaven be done, and if one needs must fall,	Take a poor virgin's life to answer all!	
50			
	Arane. But, Gobrias, let us talk. You know, this fault	Is not in me <u>as in another woman</u> .	48-49: <i>if one...answer all</i> = "if one of them - either my
52			brother or my mother - must lose his or her life, let me be
			the one to die instead!"
			Note that lines 48-49 comprise a rhyming couplet, which
			was occasionally used to signal the end of a speech or a
			character's part (at least temporarily, as here) in a scene.
			= Arane suggests there is another who should shoulder
			the blame for this situation.
54		[<i>They walk apart.</i>]	54ff: Arane and Gobrias refer, in this intense discussion, to
			that something mysterious that happened in the past.
56	Gob. I know it is not.		
58	Arane.	Yet you make it so.	
60	Gob. Why, is not all that's past beyond your help?		
62	Arane. I know it is.		
64	Gob.	Nay, <u>should you publish</u> it	= "if you were to". = proclaim.
66	Before the world, think you 'twould be believed?		
68	Arane. I know, it would not.		
70	Gob.	Nay, should I join with you,	= ie. torn to death. ³
72	Should we not both be <u>torn</u> , and yet both die	<u>Uncredited</u> ?	= unbelieved; Gobrias' point is that it would be profitless to
			reveal their secret to the world, as they would be both
			killed <i>and</i> not believed.
74	Arane.	I think we should.	
76	Gob.	Why, then,	
78	Take you such violent courses? As for me,	I do but right in saving of the king	
80	Arane.	The king!	
82	Gob.	I bade you rest	82-84: Gobrias has been trying to convince Arane to bear
84	With patience, and a time would come for me	To reconcile all to your own content;	patiently with the situation, and that he will in time
86	But by this way you take away my power;	And what was done, unknown, was not by me,	resolve everything to her satisfaction.

88	But you; your urging being done, I must <u>preserve mine own</u> ; but time may bring All this to light, and happily for all.	= "save the life of one who is my own"; the exact meaning of this line is meant to be enigmatic for us yet.
90		
92	<i>Arane.</i> Accursèd be this <u>over-curious</u> brain, That gave that plot a birth! Accursed this womb, That after did conceive to my disgrace!	= too-clever. ¹ 93: this line is especially mysterious. Here ends the curious dialogue between the Lord Protector and queen-mother. Frankly, the reader need not worry about the puzzling back-story; it will all become clear later. Located at the end of the play, <i>Postscript 2</i> reviews several of these lines of dialogue. Readers may wish to consult the Postscript (after they have completed the play) to review what Arane and Gobrias meant when they spoke these particular lines.
94		
96	<i>Bac.</i> My Lord-protector, they say, there are <u>divers</u> letters come from Armenia, that Bessus has done good service, and <u>brought again a day</u> by his particular valour: received you any to that effect?	= various. = saved the day.
98		
100	<i>Gob.</i> Yes; 'tis most certain.	
102	<i>Bac.</i> I'm sorry for't; not that the day was won, but that 'twas won by him. We held him here a coward: he did me wrong once, at which I laughed, and so did all the world; for nor I, nor any other, held him worth my sword.	102 <i>f</i> : more back-story: Bacurius appears to regret that he and other nobles had mocked Bessus for his obvious cowardice before he went off to the wars and performed, as they have been informed, so well; in fact, if they had known he was a valiant and honourable man, they would have, when he had insulted them in the past, challenged him to a duel, rather than laugh at him as not worth their time, as they had done.
104		
106		
108	<i>Enter Bessus and Spaconia.</i>	
110	<i>Bes.</i> Health to my Lord-protector! From the king these letters, – and to your grace, madam, these.	110-1: Bessus, we remember, had been sent ahead of the royal party back to Iberia to deliver letters bearing news and instructions from Arbaces.
112	[<i>Gives letters to Gorbias and Panthea.</i>]	
114		
116	<i>Gob.</i> How does his majesty?	
118	<i>Bes.</i> As well as conquest, by his own means and his valiant commanders, can make him: your letters will tell you all.	
120		
122	<i>Pan.</i> I will not open mine, till I do know My brother's health: good captain, is he well?	
124	<i>Bes.</i> As the rest of us that fought are.	
126	<i>Pan.</i> But how's that? is he hurt?	126: Bessus' answer was not explicit enough in its assurance of Arbaces' well-being for Panthea.
128	<i>Bes.</i> He's a strange soldier that gets not a <u>knock</u> .	= blow, thump.
130	<i>Pan.</i> I do not ask how strange that soldier is That gets no hurt, but whether he have one.	
132		

<p>134 Bes. He had <u>divers</u>.</p> <p>136 Pan. And is he well again?</p> <p>138 Bes. <u>Well again</u>, an't please your grace! Why, I was run twice through the body, and shot i' the head with a <u>cross arrow</u>, and yet am well again.</p> <p>140 Pan. I do not care how thou dost: is he well?</p> <p>142 Bes. Not care how I do? Let a man, out of the mightiness of his spirit, <u>fructify</u> foreign countries with his blood, for the good of <u>his own</u>, and thus he shall be</p> <p>146 answered. Why, I may live to relieve, with spear and shield, such a lady [<u>as you</u>] distressed.</p> <p>148 Pan. Why, I will care: I'm glad that thou art well; I prithee, is he so?</p> <p>152 Gob. The king is well, and will be here to-morrow.</p> <p>154 Pan. My prayer is heard. Now will I open <u>mine</u>.</p> <p>156 [Reads.]</p> <p>158 Gob. Bacurius, I must ease you of <u>your charge</u>.— Madam, the <u>wonted</u> mercy of the king, 160 That <u>overtakes</u> your faults, has met with this, And <u>struck it out</u>; he has forgiven you freely: 162 Your own will is your law; be where you please.</p> <p>164 Arane. I thank him.</p> <p>166 Gob. You will be ready to <u>wait</u> Upon his majesty to-morrow?</p> <p>168 Arane. I will.</p> <p>170 Bac. Madam, be wise, hereafter. I am glad 172 I have lost this <u>office</u>.</p> <p>174 [Exit Arane.]</p> <p>176 Gob. Good captain Bessus, tell us the <u>discourse</u> Betwixt Tigranes and our king, and how 178 We got the victory.</p> <p>180 Pan. I prithee do; And if my brother were in any danger, 182 Let not thy tale make him abide there long Before thou <u>bring him off</u>, for all that while 184 My heart will <u>beat</u>.</p> <p>186 Bes. Madam, let what will beat, I must tell truth, and thus it was: they fought <u>single in lists</u>, but one to one.</p> <p>188 As for my own part, I was dangerously hurt but three</p>	<p>= various or several (injuries).</p> <p>= a frequent stylistic occurrence in this play is for characters to repeat words spoken by others to express disbelief. = an arrow shot from a cross-bow¹</p> <p>= make fruitful,¹ ie. fertilize. 145: his own = ie. his own country. 145-6: thus he...answered = "this is the answer he gets!"</p> <p>= the earliest edition omitted these words.</p> <p>= ie. her letter.</p> <p>= ie. Bacurius' responsibility for keeping Arane confined. = accustomed.² = literally "passes" or "catches up to", but the sense is "overrides" or "supersedes". = removed or expunged her crime.</p> <p>= ie. greet.</p> <p>= position, ie. job (of jailer).</p> <p>= combat (from <i>course</i> = charging together of opponents in combat);¹ Dyce, however, prefers "story", and Weber "transaction".</p> <p>= "save him". = ie. pound.</p> <p>= in single combat in an area enclosed for that purpose; <i>lists</i> was originally used in the Middle Ages to denote an arena in which jousting tournaments were held.¹</p>
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190	days before; <u>else perhaps we had been two to two</u> , – I cannot tell, some thought we had; and the occasion of my hurt was this: the enemy had made trenches –	= "otherwise, I might have fought alongside the king in a two-on-two battle."
192		
194	Gob. Captain, without the manner of your hurt Be much material to this <u>business</u> , We'll hear't some other time.	= <i>business</i> is trisyllabic here: <i>BU-si-ness</i> .
196		
198	Pan. I prithee, leave it, And go on with my brother.	
200	Bes. I will; but 'twould be worth your hearing. To the lists they came, and single sword and <u>gauntlet</u> was their	= armored glove which protected the wrist. ² = agreed-to mode of fighting, ie. equipment.
202	<u>fight</u> .	
204	Pan. Alas!	
206	Bes. <u>Without</u> the lists there stood some dozen <u>captains</u> of either side mingled, all which <u>were sworn</u> , and one of	= outside. = commanders, ranking officers. = ie. to abide by the result of the combat. = ie. next to.
208	those was I; and 'twas my chance to stand <u>next</u> a captain	
210	of the enemies' side, called Tiribasus; valiant, they said, he was. Whilst these two kings were <u>stretching</u>	= straining ¹ (in their combat).
212	themselves, this Tiribasus cast something a scornful look on me, and asked me, who I thought would	
214	<u>overcome</u> . I smiled, and told him, if he would fight with me, he should perceive by the <u>event</u> of that, whose king	= ie. overcome the other. 214-5: he should...would win = he would be able to predict which king would be victorious based on who would win a fight between the two of them (Tiribasus and Bessus). event = outcome.
	would win. Something he answered; and a scuffle was like to <u>grow</u> , when one Zipetus offered to help him: I –	= ie. "likely to have grown out of our argument."
216		
218	Pan. All this of is thyself: I prithee, Bessus, Tell something of my brother; did he nothing?	
220		
222	Bes. Why, yes; I'll tell <u>your grace</u> . They were not to fight till the word given; which for my own part, by my troth, [<u>I confess</u> ,] I was not to give.	= a title for the princess. 222-3: by my troth = in truth. = these perhaps unnecessary words were omitted in the first edition.
224		
226	Pan. See, for his own part!	225: "See! Again he is talking about himself!"
228	Bac. I fear, yet, this fellow's <u>abused</u> with a good report.	227: ie. "I'm afraid Bessus' fame as a hero in the war has gone to his head"; abused = misled.
230	Bes. Ay, but I –	
232	Pan. Still of himself!	
234	Bes. Cried, "Give the word!" when, as some of them say, Tigranes was <u>stooping</u> ; but the word was not given	= bowing or submitting; ¹ Bessus' account is humorously confused. = side.
236	then; yet one Cosroes, of the enemies' <u>part</u> , held up his finger to me, which is as much with us martialists, as, "I will fight with you:" I said not a word, nor made sign during the combat; but that once done –	
238		
240	Pan. He slips o'er all the fight!	241: "his account is all over the place!"

242 **Bes.** I called him to me; "Cosroes," said I –
 244
 246 **Pan.** I will hear no more.
 248 **Bes.** No, no, I lie.
 250 **Bac.** I dare be sworn thou dost.
 252 **Bes.** "Captain," said I; so 'twas.
 254
 256 **Pan.** I tell thee, I will hear no further.
 258 **Bes.** No? Your grace will wish you had.
 260 **Pan.** I will not wish it. What, is this the lady
 My brother writes to me to take?
 262 **Bes.** An't please your grace this is she. – Charge, will
 you come nearer the princess?
 264 **Pan.** You are welcome from your country; and this land
 Shall show unto you all the kindnesses
 That I can make it. What's your name?
 266
 268 **Spa.** Thalestris.
 270 **Pan.** You're very welcome: you have got a letter
 To put you to me, that has power enough
 To place mine enemy here; then much more you,
 272 That are so far from being so to me,
 That you ne'er saw me.
 274
 276 **Bes.** Madam, I dare pass my word for her truth.
 278
 280 **Spa.** My truth?
 282 **Pan.** Why, captain, do you think I am afraid she'll steal?
 284 **Bes.** I cannot tell; servants are slippery; but I dare give
 my word for her, and for her honesty: she came along
 with me, and many fayours she did me by the way; but,
 286 by this light, none but what she might do with modesty,
 to a man of my rank.
 288 **Pan.** Why, captain, here's nobody thinks otherwise.
 290 **Bes.** Nay, if you should, your grace may think your
 pleasure; but I am sure I brought her from Armenia, and
 292 in all that way, if ever I touched any bare of her above
 her knee, I pray God I may sink where I stand.

251: Bessus clarifies: in line 247, he meant that he had lied about how he addressed his counterpart in the other army.

257-8: Arbaces, we remember, has requested Panthea to take on Spaconia as an attending servant.

= Bessus chivalrously addresses Spaconia as "my dear responsibility."

269-273: "you are very welcome here: the letter from the king is of such strong influence with me (ie. she would do anything the king asks of her) that even if he wanted me to take on a personal enemy of mine as a servant, I would gladly do so; but you are far from being such a one - especially because you have never seen me before - so it is easy for me to submit to the king's request."

274: Bessus, without being asked, vouches for Spaconia's character; but the ladies wonder why Bessus feels the need to raise the issue at all.

= *honesty*, in addition to its usual meaning, also could mean "chastity"; Bessus' succeeding statements suggest he inappropriately has this second meaning in mind as well.

289-290: *if you...pleasure* = "well, if you were thinking she did other 'services' for me on the way here, it's alright by me."

= ie. bare skin.

294	<i>Spa.</i> Above my knee?	
296	<i>Bes.</i> No, you know I did not; and if any man will say I	
298	did, this sword shall answer. Nay, I'll defend the	= ie. Spaconia.
300	reputation of <u>my charge</u> whilst I live. Your grace shall	= discreet. ¹
302	understand I am <u>secret</u> in these businesses, and know	
304	how to defend a lady's honour.	
306	<i>Spa.</i> I hope your grace knows him so well already,	
308	I shall not need to tell you he's vain and foolish.	
310	<i>Bes.</i> Ay, you may call me what you please, but I'll	
312	defend your good name against the world. – And so I	
314	take my leave of your grace, – and of you, my Lord-	= ie. Bacurius.
316	protector. – I am likewise glad to see <u>your lordship</u> well.	
318	<i>Bac.</i> Oh, captain Bessus, I thank you. I would speak	
320	with you <u>anon</u> .	= soon. ²
322	<i>Bes.</i> When you please, I will attend your lordship.	
324		
326		
328		
330		
332		
334		
336		
338		
340		
342		
344		
346		
348		
350		

352	He will but offer, and give me the power To take or leave.	
354	Gob. Trust me, were I a lady, I could not like that man were bargained with	355-6: Gobrias suggests Panthea should be instinctively wary of any man selected by another for her to marry.
356	Before I choose him.	
358	Pan. But I am not built On such wild <u>humours</u> ; if I find him worthy,	= fancies, whims.
360	He is not less because he's offerèd.	
362	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] 'Tis true he is not: would he would seem less!	363: "it's true, Tigranes is not worth less just because Arbaces offers him to Panthea; indeed, I wish he were of lesser worth!" Spaconia's asides let the audience know she is very worried Panthea and Tigranes will fall in love despite their contrary intents.
364		
366	Gob. I think there is no lady can <u>affect</u> Another prince, your brother standing by: He doth eclipse men's virtues so with his.	= love; 365-7: we may get the sense Gobrias does not want Panthea to marry the king of Armenia; it is rather odd for him to suggest to her that no man can compare to her brother.
368	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] I know a lady may, and more, I fear, Another lady will.	
372	Pan. <u>Would</u> I might see him!	= "I wish".
374	Gob. Why so you shall. My businesses are great: I will attend you when it is his pleasure	
376	To see you, madam.	
378	Pan. I thank you, good my lord.	
380	Gob. You will be ready, madam?	
382	Pan. Yes.	
384	[<i>Exit Gobrias with Attendants.</i>]	
386	Spa. I do beseech you, madam, send away Your other women, and receive from me	
388	A few sad words, which, <u>set against</u> your joys, May make 'em shine the more.	= compared with.
390		
392	Pan. <u>Sirs</u> , leave me all.	= occasionally, as here, <i>sir</i> was applied to women. ¹
394	[<i>Exeunt Waiting-women.</i>]	
396	Spa. [<i>Kneels</i>] I <u>kneel</u> , a <u>stranger</u> here, to beg a thing Unfit for me to ask, and you to grant: 'Tis such another strange ill-laid request,	395: I kneel = Spaconia assumes the traditional and ancient posture of supplication. stranger = foreigner.
398	As if a beggar should entreat a king To leave his sceptre and his throne to him,	
400	And <u>take his rags</u> to wander o'er the world, Hungry and cold.	= ie. for the king to take the beggar's rags.
402		
404	Pan. That <u>were</u> a strange request.	= would be.
406	Spa. As <u>ill</u> is mine.	= inappropriate. ¹

408	Pan. Then do not utter it.	
410	Spa. Alas, 'tis of that nature, that it must Be uttered, ay, and granted, or I die!	
412	I am ashamed to speak it; but where life Lies at the stake, I cannot think her woman,	411-4: but where...saving of it = "but where a life is at stake, I would not consider any woman to be a true woman if she did not plead or utter something, even if it were unreasonable-sounding, in order to possibly save it."
414	That will not talk something unreasonably To <u>hazard</u> saving of it. I shall seem	414: hazard = risk.
416	A strange petitioner, that wish all <u>ill</u> To them I beg of, ere they give me <u>ought</u> ;	414-6: I shall...ought = "I will surely appear strange in asking for a favour from a person who would bring harm (<i>ill</i>) to that person, when she has not yet had a chance to do anything (<i>ought</i>) for me."
418	Yet so I must. I <u>would</u> you were not <u>fair</u> Nor wise, for in your ill consists my good:	= wish. = beautiful.
420	If you were foolish, you would <u>hear my prayer</u> ;	419-421: ie. "if you were foolish, you would give me what I ask for (<i>hear my prayer</i>); if you were ugly (<i>foul</i>), ⁷ then you would not have the power to stop me from getting what I want - for he (meaning Tigranes) would not fall in love with you, and my desire would be fulfilled without any trouble."
422	If <u>foul</u> , you had not power to hinder me, - He would not love you.	
424	Pan. What's the meaning of it?	
426	Spa. Nay, my request is more <u>without</u> the bounds Of reason yet: for 'tis not in the power Of you to do what I would have you grant.	= outside.
428	Pan. Why, then, 'tis <u>idle</u> . Prithee, speak it out.	= in vain, pointless.
430	Spa. Your brother brings a prince into this land	
432	Of such a noble <u>shape</u> , so sweet a grace, So full of worth <u>withal</u> , that every maid	= form, appearance. = in addition.
434	That looks upon him gives away herself To him for ever; and for you to have,	
436	<u>He brings him</u> : and so mad is my demand,	= "Arbaces brings Tigranes (for you to have);" the frequent use of pronouns makes interpretation sometimes tricky; one wonders how easily a 17th century audience could follow some of the more complex and pronoun-heavy sentences.
438	That I desire you not to have this man, This excellent man; for whom you <u>needs must die</u> ,	= ie. will necessarily die for.
440	If you should miss him. I do now expect You should laugh at me.	
442	Pan. Trust me, I could weep	
444	Rather; for I have found in all thy words A strange <u>disjointed</u> sorrow.	= perhaps "disconnected" or "incoherent". ¹
446	Spa. 'Tis by me	
448	His own desire too, that you would not love him.	447: "Tigranes also does not want you to fall in love with him."
450	Pan. His own desire! Why, credit me, Thalestris, I am no <u>common</u> wooer: if he shall woo me,	449f: Panthea is rather taken aback by the presumption implied by Spaconia that she (Panthea) will necessarily fall in love with Armenian king. = vulgar.

452 His worth may be such, that I dare not swear
I will not love him: but if he will stay
To have me woo him, I will promise thee
454 He may keep all his graces to himself,
And fear no ravishing from me.

456 *Spa.* "Tis yet
458 His own desire; but when he sees your face,
I fear it will not be. Therefore I charge you,
460 As you have pity, stop those tender ears

From his enchanting voice; close up those eyes
462 That you may neither catch a dart from him,
Nor he from you: I charge you, as you hope
464 To live in quiet; for when I am dead,
For certain I shall walk to visit him,
466 If he break promise with me: for as fast
As oaths, without a formal ceremony,
468 Can make me, I am to him.

470 *Pan.* Then be fearless;
For if he were a thing 'twixt god and man,
472 I could gaze on him, – if I knew it sin
To love him, – without passion. Dry your eyes:

474 I swear you shall enjoy him still for me;
I will not hinder you. But I perceive
476 You are not what you seem: rise, rise, Thalestris,
If your right name be so.

478 *Spa.* [*Rising*] Indeed, it is not:
480 Spaconia is my name; but I desire
Not to be known to others.

482 *Pan.* Why, by me
484 You shall not; I will never do you wrong;
What good I can, I will: think not my birth
486 Or education such, that I should injure
A stranger-virgin. You are welcome hither.
488 In company you wish to be commanded;
But when we are alone, I shall be ready
490 To be your servant.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II, SCENE II.

Fields in the Neighborhood of the City.
A great Crowd.

= ie. so great.

= not deign.

= *charge* normally suggests a command, but here the sense may be more like "beg".

460-1: *stop those...voice* = an allusion to the *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus ordered his sailors to *stop up* their ears, to prevent them from hearing the *enchanting* song of the sea-creatures known as the Sirens, which would otherwise lure them to their deaths.

= ie. a glance, one of Cupid's arrows.

= entreat.²

= peace.

= the sense is "haunt him", as a ghost.

466-8: *for as...to him* = Spaconia suggests that she and Tigranes have made vows to marry each other; such vows, though made in the absence of a priest, were considered to be practically as binding as if the two had been "formally" married.

fast (line 466) = bound, tied.

471-3: *For if he...passion* = ie. "no matter how beautiful he might be, if I knew it would be a sin to fall in love with him, I could look on him without doing so."⁶ Note how this rather awkward sentence contains two conditional elements.

= forever in place of.

476-7: Panthea recognizes that Spaconia is really of a higher rank than a mere domestic.

= ie. "can do for you".

= a maiden from a foreign land.

488: ie. "when others are around we will play the parts of a servant and her mistress."

Scene ii: although the scene takes place in exotic Iberia, the commoners portrayed here are very English!

	<i>Enter three <u>Shop-Men</u> and a Woman.</i>	= apprentices. ¹
1	1st Shop-M. Come, come, run, run, run.	1: the woman is lagging behind.
2		
4	2nd Shop-M. We shall outgo her.	
6	3rd Shop-M. One were better be hanged than carry women out <u>fiddling</u> to these shows.	= behaving idly or frivolously, ¹ suggesting women slow everyone down.
8	Wom. Is the king <u>hard by</u> ?	= nearby.
10	1st Shop-M. You heard, <u>he with the bottles</u> said he thought we <u>should</u> come too late. What abundance of people here is!	= ie. a vendor selling bottles of something or another. = have.
12		
14	Wom. But what had he in those bottles?	
16	3rd Shop-M. I know not.	
18	2nd Shop-M. Why, ink, <u>goodman</u> fool.	= normally a title of respect used for members of the middle level of society, but often used, as here, mockingly.
20	3rd Shop-M. Ink, what to do?	
22	1st Shop-M. Why the king, look you, will many times call for those bottles, and <u>break his mind</u> to his friends.	= disclose his thoughts. ¹
24		
26	Wom. Let's take our places quickly; we shall have no room else.	
28	2nd Shop-M. The man told us, <u>he</u> would walk o'foot through the people.	= ie. the king.
30		
32	3rd Shop-M. Ay, <u>marry</u> , <u>did he</u> .	= an oath, derived from the Virgin Mary. = "he did indeed say that."
34	1st Shop-M. Our shops are well looked to now.	
36	2nd Shop-M. ' <u>Slife</u> , yonder's my master, I think.	= God's life (an oath); in 1605, Parliament passed a statute banning the blasphemous use of God's name on stage; consequently, implied blasphemies such as this became the norm in drama. Our Shop-Men are apprentices; the 2nd Shop-Man thinks he recognizes his employer in the crowd.
38	1st Shop-M. No, 'tis not he.	
40	<i>Enter two Citizens' Wives, and <u>Philip</u>.</i>	Entering Characters: <i>Philip</i> is a servant of the <i>1st Citizen's Wife</i> ; a <i>citizen</i> was a freeman of the city. ¹⁶
42	1st Cit. W. Lord, how fine the fields be! What sweet living 'tis in the country!	
44	2nd Cit. W. Ay, poor souls, God help 'em, they live as contentedly as one of us.	44ff: the citizens engage in some sympathetic stereotyping of the simple, unsophisticated lives of country-folk, but of course they are primarily showing off their own ignorance.
46		
48	1st Cit. W. My husband's cousin would have had me gone into the country last year. Wert thou ever there?	
50	2nd Cit. W. Ay, poor souls, I was amongst 'em once.	
52	1st Cit. W. And what kind of creatures are they, for	

54	love of God?	
56	2nd Cit.W. Very good people, God help 'em.	
58	1st Cit.W. Wilt thou go with me down this summer, when I am <u>brought to bed</u> ?	= ie. to give birth; the 1st Citizen's Wife is pregnant.
60	2nd Cit.W. Alas, tis no place for us!	
62	1st Cit.W. Why, prithee?	
64	2nd Cit.W. Why, you can have nothing there; there's nobody <u>cries brooms</u> .	= a street vendor <i>cries</i> his or her product to alert others to what he or she is selling; the wives believe the country-folk are so poor that hardly any goods are available for them to purchase.
66		
68	1st Cit.W. No!	
70	2nd Cit.W. No, truly, nor milk.	
72	1st Cit.W. Nor milk! how do they?	
74	2nd Cit.W. They are <u>fain</u> to milk themselves i' the country.	= compelled. ²
76	1st Cit.W. Good lord! But the people there, I think, will be very dutiful to one of us.	77: ie. "will treat us well or properly."
78		
80	2nd Cit.W. Ay, God knows, will they; and yet they do not greatly care for our husbands.	
82	1st Cit.W. Do they not? alas! i' good faith, I cannot blame them, for we do not greatly care for them ourselves. – Philip, I pray, <u>choose us a place</u> .	= ie. to sit.
84		
86	Phil. There's the best, forsooth.	
88	1st Cit.W. By your leave, good people, a little.	= the 1st Citizen's Wife asks for some room to sit by the Shop-Men.
90	1st Shop-M. What's the matter?	
92	Phil. I pray you, my friend, do not thrust my mistress so; she's with child.	
94		
96	2nd Shop-M. Let her look to herself, then; has she not had <u>thrusting enough</u> yet? If she stay shouldering here, she may hap to go home with a <u>cake in her belly</u> .	= rather dirty, referring to her impregnation. = 96-97: If she...belly = the 2nd Shop-Man believes Philip is falsely claiming his mistress is pregnant in order to finagle a seat from the crowd; thus, the Shop-Man asserts, if she sticks around, she may end up truly with child (Williams, p. 173). ¹⁷ cake in her belly = slang for pregnancy, similar to the modern "bun in the oven".
98		
100	3rd Shop-M. How now, goodman <u>squitter-breech</u> ! why do you lean so on me?	= <i>squitter</i> as a noun refers to diarrhea, and as a verb means "to squirt"; <i>breech</i> was the old singular form of <i>breeches</i> , which were the first layer of covering for the loins and upper legs; so the insulting compound <i>squitter-breech</i> suggests Philip is suffering from diarrhea! ¹

<p>102</p> <p>104</p> <p>106</p> <p>108</p> <p>110</p> <p>112</p> <p>114</p> <p>116</p> <p>118</p> <p>120</p> <p>122</p> <p>124</p> <p>126</p> <p>128</p> <p>130</p> <p>132</p> <p>134</p> <p>136</p> <p>138</p> <p>140</p>	<p>Phil. Because I will.</p> <p>3rd Shop-M. Will you, Sir <u>Sauce-box</u>?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[<i>Strikes him.</i>]</p> <p>1st Cit.W. Look, if one ha' not struck Philip! – Come <u>hither</u>, Philip; why did he strike thee?</p> <p>Phil. For leaning on him.</p> <p>1st Cit.W. Why didst thou lean on him?</p> <p>Phil. I did not think he would have struck me.</p> <p>1st Cit.W. As God save me, <u>la</u>, thou'rt as wild as a buck; there's no quarrel, but thou art at one end or other on't.</p> <p>3rd Shop-M. It's at the first end, then, for he'll ne'er stay the last.</p> <p>1st Cit.W. Well, <u>slip-string</u>, I shall <u>meet with you</u>.</p> <p>3rd Shop-M. When you will.</p> <p>1st Cit.W. I'll give a crown to meet with you.</p> <p>3rd Shop-M. At a <u>bawdy-house</u>.</p> <p>1st Cit.W. Ay, you're full of your roguery; but if I do meet you, it shall cost me a fall.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Flourish.</i> <i>Enter a Man running.</i></p> <p>Man. The king, the king, the king, the king! Now, now, now, now!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Enter Arbaces, Tigranes, Mardonius, and Soldiers.</i></p>	<p>Note the use of mock titles, <i>goodman</i> in this line, <i>Sir</i> in line 104 below.</p> <p>= one who makes fresh remarks.¹</p> <p>= to here; English has sadly long since lost its directional adverbs, which had been carried over from the proto-German from which English descended; <i>hither</i> means "in this direction" or "towards here", as opposed to <i>hence</i> ("from here"), and <i>here</i>, which was used only to indicate a static location.</p> <p>The same goes for the triplets <i>thither</i>, <i>thence</i> and <i>there</i>, and <i>whither</i>, <i>whence</i> and <i>where</i>.</p> <p>= an exclamation meant to call attention to a statement;¹ the 1st Citizen's Wife berates Philip for his penchant for getting involved in squabbles.</p> <p>122: ie. "make it to the other (end);" the 3rd Shop-Man suggests Philip is either a weakling or coward.</p> <p>= rogue¹ = "get even with you." The 1st Citizen's Wife, despite her criticism of Philip in her last speech, does not shrink from a good verbal row herself!</p> <p>= brothel; the 3rd Shop-Man takes <i>meet with you</i> in its more literal sense.</p> <p>132-3: <i>but if I...fall</i> = "but if I do meet up with you (ie. get revenge on you), I will be hung for my actions."</p> <p>The phrase <i>it shall cost me a fall</i> was a common one, and seems to refer to the expected punishment one might get for committing a particular action, as here, or "I'll fail trying"; the term <i>fall</i> may have derived from wrestling, where it was (and still is) used to refer to the throwing down of one's opponent, but <i>fall</i> also was used punningly in this phrase to refer to the fall experienced while being hanged.</p> <p>The Wife's point is that if she does manage to pay the Shop-Man back, it will be done most effectively, and the Shop-Man will greatly regret it.</p> <p>= a fanfare from a horn plays, to announce the entrance of the king.</p>
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142 *All.* God preserve your majesty!

144

146 *Arb.* I thank you all. Now are my joys at full,
 146 When I behold you safe, my loving subjects.
 148 By you I grow; 'tis your united love
 148 That lifts me to this height.
 150 All the account that I can render you
 150 For all the love you have bestowed on me,

All your expenses to maintain my war,
 152 Is but a little word: you will imagine
 152 'Tis slender payment; yet 'tis such a word
 154 As is not to be bought without our bloods:
 154 'Tis peace!

156 *All.* God preserve your majesty!

158

160 *Arb.* Now you may live securely in your towns,
 160 Your children round about you; you may sit
 162 Under your vines, and make the miseries
 162 Of other kingdoms a discourse for you,
 164 And lend them sorrows. For yourselves, you may
 164 Safely forget there are such things as tears;
 166 And may you all, whose good thoughts I have gained,
 166 Hold me unworthy, when I think my life
 168 A sacrifice too great to keep you thus
 168 In such a calm estate!

170 *All.* God bless your majesty!

172 *Arb.* See, all good people, I have brought the man,
 172 Whose very name you feared, a captive home:
 174 Behold him; 'tis Tigranes! In your hearts
 174 Sing songs of gladness and deliverance.

176 *Ist Cit.W.* Out upon him!

178 *2nd Cit.W.* How he looks!

180 *Wom.* Hang him, hang him!

182 *Mar.* These are sweet people.

184 *Tigr.* Sir, you do me wrong,
 186 To render me a scornèd spectacle
 186 To common people.

188 *Arb.* It was far from me
 190 To mean it so. – If I have ought deserved,
 190 My loving subjects, let me beg of you
 192 Not to revile this prince, in whom there dwells
 192 All worth, of which the nature of a man
 194 Is capable; valour beyond compare;
 194 The terror of his name has stretched itself

149-152: *All the...little word* = "the only way I can pay you all back, in return for all the love you shower on me, and the taxes you have paid to maintain this long war, is with one *little word*."

152-3: *you will...payment* = "you may think it is an insufficient payment."

= topic of discussion.

166-8: *my life...estate* = "my life is too valuable to sacrifice to keep you in such peaceful circumstances."

177: an expression of scorn.

= anything.

196	Wherever there is sun: and yet for you I fought with him <u>single</u> , and won him too;	= ie. in single combat; the line's meter is off: Dyce wonders if "I" should be placed before <i>won</i> .
198	I made his valour <u>stoop</u> , and brought <u>that name</u> ,	= bow down. = ie. the name of Tigranes.
200	<u>Beneath mine</u> : this inspired with all your loves,	= Arbaces' boastfulness is highly unattractive.
202	I did perform; and will, for your content, Be ever ready for a greater work.	
204	<i>All.</i> The Lord bless your majesty!	
206	<i>Tigr.</i> [<i>Aside</i>] So, he has made me Amends now with a speech in commendation	
208	Of himself; I would not be so vain-glorious.	
210	<i>Arb.</i> If there be anything in which I may Do good <u>to</u> any <u>creature</u> here, speak out;	= for. = person.
212	For I must leave you: and it troubles me, That my <u>occasions</u> , for the good of you,	=circumstances; ² what specific <i>occasions</i> he is referring to remain unexplained.
214	Are such as call me from you: else my joy Would be to spend my days amongst you all.	
216	You show your loves in these large multitudes That come to meet me. I will pray for you:	
218	Heaven prosper you, that you may know old years, And live to see your children's children	
220	Sit at your <u>boards</u> with plenty! When there is	= dinner tables.
222	A <u>want</u> of anything, let it be known	= lack.
224	To me, and I will be a father to you: God keep you all!	
226	<i>All.</i> God bless your majesty, God bless your majesty!	
228	<i>[Flourish. Exeunt Arbaces, Tigranes, Mardonius, and Soldiers.]</i>	
230	<i>1st Shop-M.</i> Come, shall we go? all's done.	
232	<i>Wom.</i> Ay, for God's sake: I have not made a fire yet.	
234	<i>2nd Shop-M.</i> Away, away! all's done.	
236	<i>3rd Shop-M.</i> <u>Content</u> . – <u>Farewell, Philip</u> .	= "good enough". = the Shop-Man is highly sarcastic.
238	<i>1st Cit.W.</i> Away, you <u>halter-sack</u> , you!	= a sack with strings which allow it to be hung up; ⁷ thus, one fit for the gallows. ¹
240	<i>2nd Shop-M.</i> Philip will not fight; <u>he's afraid on's face</u> .	= "fear is written on his face."
242	<i>Phil.</i> Ay, marry; am I afraid of my face?	
244	<i>3rd Shop-M.</i> Thou wouldst be Philip, if thou sawest it in a <u>glass</u> : it looks so like a <u>visor</u> .	= mirror. = grotesque mask.
246	<i>1st Cit.W.</i> You'll be hanged, sirrah.	
248	<i>[Exeunt the three Shop-Men and Woman.]</i>	
250	Come Philip, <u>walk afore us homewards</u> . – Did not his	= a servant usually preceded his or her master or mistress as they moved about in the public eye.
252	majesty say he had brought us home peas for all our money?	

254 **2nd Cit.W.** Yes marry, did he.

256 **1st Cit.W.** They're the first I heard on this year, by my
258 troth. I longed for some of 'em. Did he not say, we
should have some?

260 **2nd Cit.W.** Yes, and so we shall anon, I warrant you,
262 have every one a peck brought home to our houses.

[*Exeunt.*]

= ie. of them.

= shortly. = assure.

= one *peck* equals a quarter of a bushel.¹

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter Arbaces And Gobrias.

1	Arb. My sister <u>take it ill!</u>	= ie. did not take the news well.
2		
4	Gob. Not very ill; Something unkindly she does take it, sir, To have her husband chosen <u>to her hands</u> .	= the phrase means, "already prepared for her"; ¹ the sense is "on her behalf" or "for her".
6		
8	Arb. Why, Gobrias, let her: I must have her know, My will, and not her own, must govern her. What, will she marry with some slave at home?	
10		
12	Gob. Oh, she is far from any stubbornness! You much mistake her: and no doubt will like <u>Where you will have her</u> : but, when you behold her,	= ie. "whoever you decide she should marry."
14	You will be loth to part with such a jewel.	
16	Arb. To part with her! why, Gobrias, art thou mad? She is my sister.	16-17: Arbaces senses the strange underlying suggestion of Gobrias' assertion.
18		
20	Gob. Sir, I know she is: But it were a pity to make poor our land, With such a beauty to enrich another.	19-21: Gobrias clarifies: if Arbaces' sister were to marry a foreign king, she would have to leave Iberia to live with him.
22		
24	Arb. Pish! Will she have him?	
26	Gob. [<i>Aside</i>] I do hope she will not. – I think she will, sir.	25-26: the dash at the end of an aside signals the speaker returning to address another character on the stage.
28	Arb. Were she my father and my mother too, And all the names for which we think folks friends, She should be forced to have him, when I know 'Tis fit. I will not hear her say she's loth.	
30		
32	Gob. [<i>Aside</i>] Heaven, bring my purpose luckily to pass! <u>You know 'tis just</u> . – She will not need <u>constraint</u> , She loves you so.	34: You know 'tis just = Gobrias apostrophizes to Providence: "you know my goal here is appropriate or lawful." constraint (line 34) = ie. "to be coerced".
34		
36	Arb. How does she love me? Speak.	
38		
40	Gob. She loves you more than people love their health, That live by labour; more than I could love A man that died for me, if he could live Again.	
42		
44	Arb. She is not like her mother, then.	
46	Gob. Oh, no! When you were in Armenia, I durst not let her know when you were hurt; For <u>at</u> the first, <u>on</u> every little scratch, She kept <u>her chamber</u> , wept, and could not eat	= from. = ie. on hearing the news about. = to her room.
48		

50	Till you were well; and many times the news	
	Was so long coming, that, before we heard,	
52	She was as near her death as you your health.	
54	Arb. Alas, poor soul! But yet she must be <u>ruled</u> :	= "governed (by me)".
	I know not how I shall <u>requite</u> her well.	= repay.
56	I long to see her: have you sent for her,	
	To tell her I am ready?	
58		
	Gob. Sir, I have.	
60		
	<i>Enter a Gentleman and Tigranes.</i>	
62		
	Gent. Sir, here is the Armenian king.	
64		
	Arb. He's welcome.	
66		
	Gent. And the queen-mother and the princess wait	
68	Without.	
70	Arb. Good Gobrias, bring 'em in.—	
72		
	[<i>Exit Gobrias.</i>]	
74	Tigranes, you will think you are arrived	
	In a strange land, where mothers <u>cast</u> to poison	= plan or conspire. ¹
76	Their only sons: think you, you shall be safe?	
78	Tigr. <u>Too</u> safe I am, sir.	= very. ²
80		
	<i>Re-enter Gobrias, with Aranes, Panthea, Spaconia,</i>	
	<i>Bacurius, Mardonius, Bessus, and two Gentlemen.</i>	
82		
	Arane. [<i>Kneels</i>] As low as this I bow to you; and would	
84	As low as is my grave, to show a mind	
	Thankful for all your mercies.	
86		
	Arb. Oh, stand up,	87ff: with his generous mercy and tolerance towards Arane,
		Arbaces shows the most appealing side of his personality.
88	And let me kneel! the light will be ashamed	
	To see <u>observance</u> done to me by you.	= obeisance. ²
90		
	Arane. You are my king.	
92		
	Arb. You are my mother: rise.	
94		
	[<i>Raises her.</i>]	
96		
	As far be all your faults from your own soul	
98	As from my memory! then you shall be	
	As <u>white as Innocence</u> herself.	= the color <i>white</i> was a symbol of purity; <i>Innocence</i> is personified.
100		
	Arane. I came	
102	Only to show my duty, and acknowledge	
	My sorrows for my sins: <u>longer to stay</u> ,	= ie. "for me to stay any longer"; Arane recognizes that
104	Were but to draw eyes more attentively	her embarrassing presence will draw attention away
	Upon my shame. That power, that kept you safe	from the king.
106	From me, preserve you still!	

108	Arb. Your own desires Shall be your guide.	
110		
		[Exit Arane.]
112	Pan. Now let me die!	113-119: Panthea's speech seems likely an aside.
114	Since I have seen my lord the king return	
	In safety, I have seen all good that life	
116	Can show me: I have ne'er another wish	
	For Heaven to grant; nor were it fit I should;	
118	For I am bound to spend my age to come	
	In giving thanks that this was granted me.	119: at the conclusion of Panthea's speech, a long and uncomfortable silence likely ensues.
120	Gob. Why does not your majesty speak?	
122		
124	Arb. To whom?	
126	Gob. To the princess.	
128	Pan. Alas, sir, I am fearful you do look On me as if I were some loathèd thing, That you were finding out a way to shun!	
130	Gob. Sir, you should speak to her.	
132	Arb. Ha!	
134	Pan. I know I am unworthy, yet not ill- Armed with which innocence, here I will kneel Till I am one with earth, but I will gain Some words and kindness from you.	135-6: <i>yet not...kneel</i> = "yet I am not lacking innocence, with which I will kneel".
140		[Kneels.]
142	Gob. Will you speak, sir?	
144	Arb. [Aside] Speak! am I what I was?	144f: Arbaces is emotionally shaken up on seeing his beautiful sister for the first time since she has grown up; yet, because of the uncomfortable feelings her appearance is causing him, he will pretend not to understand who she is. = Arbaces apostrophizes to Love; see the note at line 149 below. = "to here from there" (ie. "from there to here"). = ie. Cupid; lines 149-156 contain a number of allusions to <i>Love</i> as Cupid, with his wings and arrows (<i>darts</i>), to whom Arbaces is apostrophizing. = feathery material (of Cupid's wings). ¹ = the hollow shaft of a feather. ¹ 152: "which I have pulled with my right hand from your lewd or wicked wing". = ie. Cupid's mother was Venus; she was called the "laughter-loving queen" in <i>Orphic Hymn LV</i> to Aphrodite (Venus). ¹⁸ = ie. "your supposed powers to cause a person to fall in
146	<u>What art thou</u> , that dost creep into my breast, And dar'st not see my face? Show forth thyself. I feel a pair of fiery wings displayed	
148	<u>Hither, from thence</u> . You shall not tarry there; Up, and begone; if you be'st <u>Love</u> , begone!	
150	Or I will tear thee from my wounded flesh, Pull thy loved <u>down</u> away, and with a <u>quill</u> ,	
152	By this right arm drawn from thy wanton wing, Write to <u>thy laughing mother</u> in thy blood,	
154	That you are powers <u>belied</u> , and all your darts	

214	Gob.	No, sir.	
216	Arb.	No, sir! Why, do you mock me? I can see	
218		No other here but that <u>petitioning lady</u> .	= Arbaces now indicates Panthea, who as a supplicant (one who is <i>petitioning</i>) had been on her knees to him.
220	Gob.	That's she.	
222	Arb.	Away!	
224	Gob.	Sir, it is she.	
226	Arb.	'Tis false.	
228	Gob.	Is it?	
230	Arb.	As hell! By Heaven, as false as hell! My sister! – <u>Is she dead?</u> If it be so,	231f: <i>Is she dead...</i> = Arbaces takes a new but still odd tack: he pretends that his sister must actually be dead, but no one has the courage to tell him.
232		Speak boldly to me, for I am a man, And dare not <u>quarrel with divinity</u> ;	= argue with God's will.
234		And do not think to <u>cozen</u> me with this. I see you all are mute, and stand <u>amazed</u> ,	= deceive.
236		Fearful to answer me: it is too true; A decreed instant cuts off every life,	= stunned, in wonder.
238		For which to mourn is <u>to repine</u> : she died A virgin though, more innocent than sleep,	237: ie. every person will die when Providence decides it is time.
240		As clear as her own eyes; and blessedness Eternal waits upon her where she is:	= to complain; the sense is that it is pointless to mourn the dead.
242		I know she could not make a wish to change Her state for new; and you shall see me bear	
244		My crosses like a man. We all must die; And she has taught us how.	
246	Gob.	Do not mistake,	
248		And <u>vex</u> yourself for nothing; for her death Is a long life off yet, I hope. 'Tis she;	= trouble.
250		And if my speech deserve not <u>faith</u> , lay death Upon me, and my <u>latest</u> words shall force	= credit, belief. ²
252		<u>A credit from you</u> .	= last.
254	Arb.	Which, good Gobrias? That lady dost thou mean?	= "you to believe me."
256	Gob.	That lady, sir:	
258		She is your sister; and she is your sister That loves you so; 'tis she for whom I weep,	
260		To see you <u>use</u> her thus.	= treat.
262	Arb.	It cannot be.	
264	Tigr.	[<i>Aside</i>] Pish! this is tedious: I cannot hold; I must present myself:	
266		And yet <u>the sight of my Spaconia</u> <u>Touches</u> me as a sudden thunder-clap	= Spaconia, we remember, though silent, is present.
268		Does one that is about to sin.	= affects.

<p>270 Arb. Away! 272 No more of this. Here I pronounce him traitor, The direct plotter of my death, that names Or thinks her for my sister: 'tis a lie, 274 The most malicious of the world, invented To <u>mad</u> your king. He that will say so next, 276 Let him draw out his sword, and sheathe it <u>here</u>; It is a sin fully as pardonable. 278 She is no kin to me, nor shall she be: If she were ever, I <u>create</u> her none: 280 And which of you can question this? My power Is like the sea, that is to be obeyed, 282 And not disputed with: I have decreed her As far from having part of blood with me 284 As the <u>naked Indians</u>. Come and answer me, He that is boldest now: is that my sister? 286</p> <p>Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] Oh, this is fine!</p> <p>288</p> <p>Bes. No, marry, she is not, an't please your majesty; 290 I never thought she was; she's nothing like you.</p> <p>292 Arb. No; 'tis true, she is not.</p> <p>294 Mar. [<i>To Bessus</i>] Thou shouldst be hang'd.</p> <p>296 Pan. Sir, I will speak but once. By the same power You make my blood a stranger unto yours, 298 You may command me dead; and so much love A stranger may <u>impórtune</u>; <u>pray you, do</u>. 300 If this request appear too much to grant, Adopt me <u>of</u> some other family 302 By your unquestioned word; else I shall live Like <u>sinful issues</u>, that are left in streets 304 By their <u>regardless</u> mothers, and no name Will be found for me.</p> <p>306</p> <p>Arb. I will hear no more. – 308 Why should there be such music in a voice,</p> <p><u>And sin for me to hear it?</u> All the world</p> <p>310 May take delight in this; <u>and</u> 'tis damnation For me to do so. – You are fair and wise, 312 And virtuous, I think; and he is blessed That is so near you as your brother is: 314 But you are <u>naught</u> to me but a disease, Continual torment without hope of ease. 316 Such an ungodly sickness I have got, That he that <u>undertakes my cure</u> must first 318 O'erthrow divinity, all moral laws, And leave mankind as unconfined as beasts,</p>	<p>= drive to madness. = Arbaces points to his own breast.</p> <p>= to <i>create</i> meant to invest or ordain with a title, like a knight or a priest.</p> <p>= the English were familiar with American Indians, since the founding of Jamestown in 1607; Captain John Smith, a leader of the colony, had returned to England in 1608 and quickly published <i>A True Relation</i>, a narrative of his experiences, which included extensive descriptions of the American natives.</p> <p>= plead for. = ie. "please, command me to be killed." = to. = ie. bastards. = indifferent (literally, the mothers are <i>without regard</i> for their offspring).¹</p> <p>308-311: the lines between the dashes are likely an aside; parts or all of lines 311-324 between the dashes may also be spoken as asides. = ie. because of the improper feelings her voice raises in him. = ie. "and yet".⁶</p> <p>= nothing. 314-5: note the rhyming couplet here.</p> <p>= ie. by helping him satisfy his sinful desire.</p> <p>319-321: Arbaces suggests men may as well be animals,</p>
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320	Allowing them to do all actiöns As freely as they drink when they desire.	fulfilling all their most instinctive base desires without conscience, if they are permitted to do what he is thinking of doing; the imagery is agonizingly powerful.
322	Let me not hear you speak again; yet so I shall but <u>languish</u> for the <u>want of that</u> ,	323-4: <i>I shall...kill me</i> = either option - having or not having Panthea - will destroy him.
324	The having which would kill me. – No man here	<i>languish</i> = waste away or weaken. <i>want of that</i> = ie. non-fulfillment of his sinful desire.
326	Offer to speak for her; for I consider As much as you can say. I will not <u>toil</u>	326-8: <i>I will not...you both</i> = likely an aside. <i>toil</i> = entrap. ¹
328	My body and my mind too; <u>rest thou there</u> ; Here's one within will labour for you both.	= Bond suggests that Arbaces here is addressing his own body; he may collapse onto his chair of state from exhaustion. ⁷
330	Pan. I would I were past speaking!	
332	Gob. Fear not, madam; The king will alter: 'tis some sudden rage,	
334	And you shall see it end some other way.	
336	Pan. Pray Heaven it do!	
338	Tigr. [<i>Aside</i>] Though <u>she</u> to whom I <u>swore</u> be here, I cannot	= ie. Spaconia. = ie. took a vow to be faithful to or marry.
340	Stifle my passion longer; if my father	= ie. out of his grave.
342	Should <u>rise again</u> , disquieted with this,	= "command me to desist". = come out.
344	And <u>charge me to forbear</u> , yet it would <u>out</u> – Madam, a <u>stranger</u> and a prisoner begs	= foreigner.
346	To be bid welcome.	
348	Pan. You are welcome, sir, I think; but if you be not, 'tis past me	347-8: <i>but if...you so</i> = "but if you are not welcome here, then it is not in my ability to make you so."
350	To make you so; for I am here a stranger Greater than you: we know <u>from whence</u> you come; But I appear a lost thing, and by whom	= from where; though technically redundant, since <i>whence</i> alone means "from where"; poets, however, frequently added <i>from</i> to <i>whence</i> , <i>hence</i> and <i>thence</i> for the sake of filling the meter.
352	Is yet uncertain; found here in the court, And only <u>suffered</u> to walk up and down, As one not worth the owning.	= tolerated, barely permitted.
354	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] Oh, I fear	
356	Tigranes will be caught! he looks, methinks, As he would <u>change his eyes</u> with her. Some help	= "exchange amorous glances" (OED).
358	There is above for me, I hope!	
360	Tigr. Why do you turn away, and weep so fast, And utter things that <u>misbecome</u> your looks?	= are unsuitable for. ¹
362	Can you <u>want</u> owning?	= lack.
364	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] Oh, 'tis certain so.	
366	Tigr. Acknowledge yourself mine.	366: Tigranes is moving very fast on Panthea! He may also at this point be talking to her partially out of the hearing of the other characters on the stage.
368	Arb. How now?	
370	Tigr. And then	

372	See if you <u>want</u> an owner.	= lack.
374	Arb. They are talking!	
376	Tigr. Nations shall own you for their queen.	
378	Arb. Tigranes, art not thou my prisoner?	
380	Tigr. I am.	
382	Arb. And who is this?	
384	Tigr. She is your sister.	
386	Arb. She is so.	
388	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] Is she so again? that's well.	387: Mardonius sardonically cheers the fact that Arbaces is acknowledging Panthea as his sister.
390	Arb. And how, then, dare you offer to <u>change</u> words with her?	= exchange; this line is another example of an <i>alexandrine</i> , a line with 12 syllables in iambic meter.
392	Tigr. Dare do it! Why, you brought me hither, sir, To that intent.	391-2: Tigranes reminds Arbaces that it was his idea to have Tigranes meet and marry Panthea.
394	Arb. Perhaps I told you so: If I had sworn it, had you so much folly	= believe.
396	To <u>credit</u> it? The least word that she speaks	= ie. control, restrain. = ie. disorderly, unruly. ¹
398	Is worth a life. <u>Rule</u> your <u>disordered</u> tongue, Or I will temper it.	
400	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] Blest be that breath!	400: Spaconia is overjoyed that Arbaces appears unwilling to let Tigranes converse with, never mind marry, Panthea.
402	Tigr. Temper my tongue! Such incivilities As these no barbarous people ever knew:	
404	<u>You break the laws of nature</u> , and of nations; You talk to me as if I were a prisoner	= Tigranes has no idea how near he has come to the truth!
406	For theft. My tongue be tempered! I must speak, If thunder check me, and I will.	
408		
410	Arb. You will!	
412	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] Alas, my fortune!	
414	Tigr. Do not fear his frown. Dear madam, hear me.	
416	Arb. Fear not my frown? <u>But that 'twere base in me</u> To fight with one I know I can o'ercome,	= "except that it would be ignoble or dishonourable of me".
418	Again <u>thou shouldst be</u> conquerèd by me.	= "you, Tigranes, would be".
420	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] He has one ransom with him already; methinks, 'twere good to fight double or quit.	420-1: "Arbaces is already up one ransom; I believe he should go for double or nothing!"
422		
424	Arb. Away with him to prison! – Now, sir, see If my frown <u>be regardless</u> . – Why delay you? Seize him, Bacurius! – You shall know my word	= is not worthy of being regarded or heeded. ¹

426	Sweeps like a wind, and all it grapples with Are as the chaff before it.	
428	Tigr. Touch me not.	
430	Arb. Help there!	
432	Tigr. Away!	
434	1st Gent. It is in vain to struggle.	
436	2nd Gent. You must be forced.	
438	Bac. Sir, you must pardon us;	
440	We must obey.	
442	Arb. Why do you dally there? Drag him away by any <u>thing</u> .	= ie. means.
444	Bac. Come, sir.	
446	Tigr. <u>Justice</u> , thou ought'st to give me strength enough	= Tigranes briefly apostrophizes to personified Justice.
448	To shake all these off. – This is tyranny, Arbaces, subtler than the <u>burning bull's</u> ,	= an allusion to the 7th century B.C. Sicilian ruler Phalaris: he is most remembered for a brass bull that he ordered to be constructed to be used as an instrument of torture: a victim would be placed inside the bull, which would be roasted over a fire; the screams of the occupant would sound like the roar of the bull. ⁴
450	Or that <u>famed tyrant's bed</u> . Thou might'st as well	= an allusion to a mythological Greek robber known as Polypemon or Procrustes; this gentleman placed his victims into a bed that was either too large or too small, forcing them to fit it by either stretching or cutting down their legs, killing them. He himself was eventually killed by the great hero Theseus. ⁴
452	Search i' the deep of winter through the snow For half-starved people, to bring home with thee To show 'em fire and send 'em back again, As <u>use</u> me thus.	= treat.
454	Arb. Let him be <u>close</u> , Bacurius.	= confined; Bacurius, who we remember was Arane's jailer, will be responsible for keeping Tigranes prisoner as well; it is unclear (but not really important) whether Arbaces' prisoners are kept in Bacurius' home or in an actual prison.
456		
458	[<i>Exit Tigranes, led off by Bacurius and two Gentlemen.</i>]	
460	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] I ne'er rejoiced at any ill to him But this imprisonment: what shall become Of me forsaken?	
462	Gob. You will not let your sister Depart thus discontented from you, sir?	
464	Arb. By no means, Gobrias: I have done her wrong, And made myself believe much of myself	
466	That is not in me. – <u>You</u> did kneel to me,	= Arbaces now addresses Panthea.
470		

472	Whilst I stood stubborn and regardless by, And, like a <u>god incensèd</u> , gave no ear To all your prayers.	= an angry god.
474		
	[<i>Kneels.</i>]	
476		
478	Behold, I kneel to you: Show a contempt as large as was my own, And I will <u>suffer</u> it; yet, at the last,	= endure.
480	Forgive me.	
482	Pan. Oh, you wrong me more in this Than in your rage you did! you mock me now.	
484		
	[<i>Kneels.</i>]	
486		
488	Arb. Never forgive me, then; which is the worst Can happen to me.	
490	Pan. If you be in earnest, Stand up, and give me but a gentle look	
492	And two kind words, and I shall be in Heaven.	
494	Arb. Rise you, then, too. Here I acknowledge thee,	
496	[<i>Rising, and raising Panthea.</i>]	
498	My hope, the only jewèl of my life, The best of sisters, dearer than my breath,	
500	A happiness as high as I could think: And when my actions call thee otherwise,	
502	<u>Perdition</u> light upon me!	= ruin.
504	Pan. This is better Than if you had not frowned; it comes to me	
506	Like mercy at <u>the block</u> ; and <u>when I leave</u> To serve you with my life, your curse be with me!	506: the block = ie. the execution block, where beheadings . take place. when I leave = "if I ever cease".
508		
510	Arb. Then, thus I do <u>salute</u> thee; and again,	509: Arbaces kisses (<i>salutes</i>) Panthea on the lips.
512	[<i>Kisses her.</i>]	
514	To make this knot the stronger. – [<i>Aside</i>] Paradise Is there! – It may be you are yet in doubt; This third kiss blots it out. – [<i>Aside</i>] I wade in sin,	515-6: Arbaces' aside : the king's resolve to resist his feelings for his sister has collapsed.
516	And foolishly entice myself along! – Take her away; see her a prisoner	
518	In her own chamber, <u>closely</u> , Gobrias.	= ie. confined.
520	Pan. Alas, sir, why?	
522	Arb. I must not <u>stay the answer</u> . – Do it.	= stop to give an answer.
524		
526	Gob. Good sir!	
528	Arb. No more: do it, I say.	

530	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] This is better and better.	
532	Pan. Yet, hear me speak.	
534	Arb. I will not hear you speak. – Away with her! Let no man think to speak	
536	<u>For</u> such a creature; for she is a <u>witch</u> , A poisoner, and a traitor!	= on behalf of. = a frequent Elizabethan motif was to accuse a woman of witchcraft for causing another to (undesirably) fall in love with her.
538	Gob. Madam, this <u>office</u> grieves me.	= duty or assigned job.
540	Pan. Nay, 'tis well; The king is pleased with it.	
542	Arb. Bessus, go you along too with her. I will prove	543: another alexandrine; though Dyce suggests <i>along</i> is superfluous.
544	All this that I have said, if I may live	
546	So long: but I am desperately sick; For she has <u>given</u> me poison in a kiss, –	= <i>given</i> , like most normally two-syllable words with a medial 'v', is pronounced as a monosyllable, with the 'v' omitted: <i>gi'n</i> .
548	She had it 'twixt her lips, – and with her eyes She <u>witches</u> people. Go, without a word!	= bewitches, enchants.
550	[<i>Exeunt Gobrias, Panthea, Bessus, and Spaconia.</i>]	
552	Why should you, that have made me stand in war	553-565: this entire speech, an apostrophe to the gods, is likely an aside, except for the last few words spoken to Mardonius.
554	Like Fate itself, cutting what threads I pleased, Decree such an unworthy end of me	554: Arbaces compares his skill in war to that of the three <i>Fates</i> of Greek mythology, who measured out the length of each person's life with a thread; when the third Fate, Atropos, cut the thread, its assignee died.
556	And all my glories? What am I, alas, That you oppose me? If my secret thoughts Have ever harboured <u>swellings</u> against you,	= arrogant or rebellious thoughts; <i>swellings</i> alludes to the notion of one being <i>swollen</i> with pride.
558	They could not hurt you; and it is in you To give me sorrow, that will render me	560-1: <i>that will...mercy</i> = "which will qualify me then to receive thy mercy." = "let this be", ie. "please have mercy on me, by taking away these unnatural feelings in me".
560	Apt to receive your mercy: <u>rather so</u> ,	
562	Let it be rather so, than punish me With such unmanly sins. Incest is in me	
564	Dwelling already; and it must be holy, That pulls it thence. – Where art, Mardonius?	564-5: <i>and it...thence</i> = "that power (<i>it</i>) would have to be a holy one that could remove my desire or sin." ⁷
566		
568	Mar. Here, sir.	
570	Arb. I prithee, bear me, if thou canst. Am I not grown a strange weight?	569-570: Arbaces leans on Mardonius, asking him if he feels unusually heavy.
572	Mar. As you were.	572: "the same as you were before."
574	Arb. No heavier?	
576	Mar. No, sir.	
578	Arb. Why, my legs	

580 Refuse to bear my body! Oh, Mardonius,
Thou hast in field beheld me, when thou know'st
I could have gone, though I could never run!

582
584 **Mar.** And so I shall again.

586 **Arb.** Oh, no, 'tis past.

588 **Mar.** Pray you, go rest yourself.

590 **Arb.** Wilt thou hereafter, when they talk of me,
As thou shalt hear, nothing but infamy,
Remember some of those things?

592 **Mar.** Yes, I will.

594 **Arb.** I prithee, do; for thou shalt never see
596 Me so again.

598 **Mar.** I warrant ye.

600 [Exeunt.]

ACT III, SCENE II.

A Room in the House of Bessus.

Enter Bessus.

1 **Bes.** They talk of fame; I have gotten it in the wars,
2 and will afford any man a reasonable pennyworth.

4 Some will say, they could be content to have it, but
that it is to be achieved with danger: but my opinion is
6 otherwise: for if I might stand still in cannon-proof,
and have fame fall upon me, I would refuse it. My
8 reputation came principally by thinking to run away;
which nobody knows but Mardonius, and I think he
conceals it to anger me. Before I went to the wars, I

10 came to the town a young fellow, without means or
parts to deserve friends; and my empty guts persuaded
12 me to lie, and abuse people, for my meat; which I did,
and they beat me: then would I fast two days, till my
14 hunger cried out on me, "Rail still!" Then, methought,
I had a monstrous stomach to abuse 'em again; and
16 did it. In this state I continued, till they hung me up by
the heels, and beat me with hazel-sticks, as if they
18 would have baked me, and have cozened somebody

20 with me for venison. After this I railed, and eat quietly;
for the whole kingdom took notice of me for a baffled
whipped fellow, and what I said was remembered in

= "seen me in the battlefield".
= ie. run away.

598: "I assure you, you will."

Arbaces' Prisoners: the current scorecard shows Bacurius acting as Tigranes' jailer, and Gobrias keeping Panthea confined in his own home.

= reputation (for valour).

2: "and would gladly sell any amount of my reputation that I can for a reasonable price."¹

= ie. glad to have a reputation for bravery.

= ie. even if. = always. = ie. armour that is cannon-proof.

= Mardonius knows Bessus is unhappy to be thought of as a hero.

= qualities.

= vilify or slander; Bessus is explaining the round-about way he used to be able to procure food.

= inclination,¹ with obvious pun.

16-17: **they hung ...hazel-sticks** = a punishment "inflicted on recreant knights" (Dyce).

18-19: **cozened...venison** = tricked (*cozened*) someone into thinking he was venison.

= ate unmolested.⁷

= disgraced¹ or treated humiliatingly.⁶

21-22: **what I said...in mirth** = once people realized what a joke Bessus was, they would feed him, as if they were rewarding him for entertaining them.

22 mirth, but never in anger; of which I was glad. – I would
 it were at that pass again! After this, Heaven called an
 24 aunt of mine, that left two hundred pounds in a
 cousin's hand for me; who, taking me to be a gallant
 26 young spirit, raised a company for me with the money,
 and sent me into Armenia with 'em. Away I would
 28 have run from them, but that I could get no company;
 and alone I durst not run. I was never at battle but
 30 once, and there I was running, but Mardonius cudgelled
 me: yet I got loose at last, but was so afraid that
 32 I saw no more than my shoulders do, but fled with
 my whole company amongst my enemies, and
 34 overthrew 'em: now the report of my valour is come
 over before me, and they say I was a raw young
 36 fellow, but now I am improved: – a plague on their
 eloquence! 'twill cost me many a beating: and
 38 Mardonius might help this too, if he would; for now
 they think to get honour on me, and all the men I
 40 have abused call me freshly to account, (worthily,
 as they call it) by the way of challenge.
 42

Enter a Gentleman.

44 **Gent.** Good-morrow, Captain Bessus.

46 **Bes.** Good-morrow, sir.

48 **Gent.** I come to speak with you –

50 **Bes.** You're very welcome.
 52

22-23: ***I would...again*** = "I wish my situation was as it
 used to be!"

at that pass = at that state of affairs.¹

23-25: ***Heaven...for me*** = an aunt of Bessus' died, and she
 left him a nice sum of money, which was held in trust
 for Bessus by a cousin of his.

25-27: ***who...with 'em*** = assuming Bessus to be a typically
 ambitious young man, the cousin used Bessus' inheritance
 to *raise a company* of soldiers for Bessus to lead in the war
 with Armenia; Elizabethan drama is filled with men of
 means who use their wealth to raise a private regiment to
 earn a reputation and serve their country or city-state.

= ie. no one to run away with him, punning on *company*.

= beat.

31-32: ***was so...do*** = Bessus was so blinded by his own
 fear, etc.

34: ***overthrew*** = defeated.

34-35: ***come over*** = ie. reached home.

35-36: ***was a raw young fellow***: ie. before he went to fight
 in the wars.

37-41: ***'twill...challenge*** = now that Bessus turns out to have
 been, as far as anyone knows, a valiant soldier, those he had
 vilified to procure food will reconsider their previous
 tolerance of his behavior, and will challenge him to a duel!

Bessus' conundrum is as follows: the code of dueling
 demanded that only men of equal status could honourably be
 seen to challenge and accept combat. Before the wars,
 Bessus was considered to be of rank and character well
 below that of the men he insulted, and so could not be fought
 with any honour.

But now that Bessus, thanks to his alleged heroics on the
 battlefield, is recognized to be actually a man of valour and
 distinction, those he abused feel that their honour now
 demands satisfaction from Bessus - and there is no statute of
 limitations to save our hero!

The code of honour that men followed in dueling was a
 subtle and complex one which will be a target of much satire
 in this play; see the note at the end of this scene for a quick
 review of the primary points regarding the issuing of
 challenges.

54 **Gent.** From one that holds himself wronged by you
 56 some three years since. Your worth, he says, is famed,
 58 and he doth nothing doubt but you will do him right, as
 60 **Bes.** [*Aside*] A pox on 'em, so they cry all!
 62 **Gent.** And a slight note I have about me for you, for
 64 the delivery of which you must excuse me: it is an office
 that friendship calls upon me to do, and no way
 offensive to you, since I desire but right on both sides.

[*Gives him a letter.*]

66 **Bes.** 'Tis a challenge, sir, is it not?
 68 **Gent.** 'Tis an inviting to the field.
 70

Bes. [*Aside*] An inviting? Oh, cry you mercy! – What a
 72 compliment he delivers it with! he might as agreeably to
 74 my nature present me poison with such a speech.

[*Reads.*]

76 Um, um, um – *reputation* – um, um, um – *call*
 78 *you to account* – um um, um – *forced to this* – um, um,
 80 um – *with my sword* – um, um, um – *like a gentleman*
 82 – um, um, um – *dear to me* – um, um, um –
satisfaction. – 'Tis very well, sir; I do accept it; but he
 must wait an answer this thirteen weeks.

84 **Gent.** Why, sir, he would be glad to wipe off his
 86 stain as soon as he could.

88 **Bes.** Sir, upon my credit, I am already engaged to two
 90 hundred and twelve; all which must have their stains
 wiped off, if that be the word, before him.

92 **Gent.** Sir, if you be truly engaged but to one, he shall
 stay a competent time.

94 **Bes.** Upon my faith, sir, to two hundred and twelve:
 96 and I have a spent body too, much bruised in battle; so
 that I cannot fight, I must be plain with you, above
 98 three combats a-day. All the kindness I can show him,
 is to set him resolvedly in my roll the two hundred and

= the Gentleman is delivering a challenge on behalf of another.
 = ago.
 = typical euphemism for accepting a challenge to a duel; the sense is to "give him a chance to defend his honour."
 = "they all say the same thing!"

= the Gentleman is behaving in the proper manner of what is known as the *second*, a person appointed by each party to represent them in negotiating the exact terms of the duel, e.g. location, weapons to be used, etc. The code technically required the duel to be fought for the sake of determining the truth of any indecorous comments that passed between the parties, so as to preserve their honours, and not for any purposes of revenge; hence the Gentleman's desire to do *right* on both sides.¹⁴

69: again, the Gentleman prefers to use a euphemism; as sovereigns generally frowned upon dueling (in England, James I had favoured prosecuting participants), a language of euphemisms was developed so that those who chose to continue the practice could avoid using any explicit and incriminating phrases.

72-73: **he might...speech** = the Gentleman's language is so complimentary that he could persuade Bessus to take poison with such a speech.

= ie. to his honour.
 = "on my honour", ie. "you may believe me".
 = ie. correct phrase.
 = even.
 = wait for an appropriate (*competent*)¹ period of time.
 = definitely.¹ = list or register of his opponents.

100	thirteenth man, which is something; for, I tell you, I think there will be more after him than before him; I think so. Pray you <u>commend me to him</u> , and tell him this.	= typical polite Elizabethan phrase: "give him my regards."
102		
104	Gent. I will, sir. Good-morrow to you.	
106	[Exit Gentleman.]	
108	Bes. Good-morrow, good sir. – Certainly, <u>my safest way</u> were to <u>print</u> myself a coward, with a <u>discovery</u> how I came by my <u>credit</u> , and <u>clap</u> it upon every post. I have received above thirty challenges within this two hours: Marry, all but the first I put off <u>with engagement</u> ; and, by good fortune, the <u>first is no madder of fighting than I</u> ;	= ie. "the surest way I can get out of this". = ie. proclaim on a poster. ¹ = disclosure, ¹ ie. explanation. = reputation. = attach, slap.
110		
112		= ie. "by telling them I already had other challenges to be met first." = the first man to challenge Bessus turned out to be as undesirous to fight a duel as Bessus was; Bessus' following description of the dance he and his opponent have gone through to both avoid combat, while hanging on to a thread of honour, is quite funny.
114	so that that's <u>referred</u> : the place where it must be ended	114: <i>referred</i> = deferred, postponed. ¹ 114-5: <i>the place...journey off</i> = the field of combat was a four-days' journey away; a duel would normally be held in an out-of-the-way location so as to avoid detection by the authorities. ¹⁵
116	is four days' journey off, and our <u>arbitrators</u> are <u>these</u> ; he has chosen a gentleman <u>in travel</u> , and I have a special friend with a <u>quartan ague</u> , like to <u>hold him this</u> five	= seconds. = ie. "as follows:" = ie. who is presently traveling. 116: <i>quartan ague</i> = old name for malaria, suggesting a fever that recurs every fourth day. <i>hold him this</i> = keep him unavailable for.
118	years, for mine; and when his man comes home, we are to <u>expect my friend's health</u> . If they would send me challenges thus thick, as long as I lived, I would have no	= ie. wait until his friend's health improves.
120	other living: <u>I can make seven shillings a-day o' th' paper</u>	120-1: <i>I would...living</i> = ie. "I would need no other income." = ie. by selling the sheets of paper; paper was an expensive commodity in those days; note that Bessus talks of <i>shillings</i> , which were certainly not legal tender in Iberia.
122	to the grocers. Yet I learn nothing by all these, but a little skill in comparing of <u>styles</u> : I do find evidently that there is some one <u>scrivener</u> in this town, that has a great <u>hand</u> in writing of challenges, for they are all <u>of a cut</u> , and six of 'em <u>in a hand</u> ; and they all end, "My reputation is dear to me, and I must require satisfaction." – <u>Who's there?</u> more paper, I hope. No; 'tis my lord Bacurius: I fear all is not well betwixt us.	= ie. handwriting styles. = one authorized to draw up legal documents. ¹ = skill. ² = similar in wording or form. = ie. in the same handwriting.
124		
126		
128		= Bessus' soliloquy is coming to an end; someone has entered his home.
130		
132	<i>Enter Bacurius.</i>	
134	Bac. Now, Captain Bessus! I come about a frivolous matter, caused by <u>as idle</u> a report: you know, you were a coward.	= ie. a foolish.
136		
138	Bes. Very right.	
140	Bac. And <u>wronged</u> me.	= insulted or slandered.
140	Bes. True, my lord.	

142	Bac. But now, people will call you valiant; –	143-4: although Bacurius knows Bessus to be a coward,
144	desertlessly, I think; yet, for their satisfaction, I will	and therefore unworthy of dueling with, other people
146	have you fight with me.	do not, so to preserve his honour in the eyes of the other
148	Bes. Oh, my good lord, my deep engagements –	citizens of Iberia he must challenge Bessus.
150	Bac. Tell not me of your engagements, Captain Bessus!	
152	It is not to be put off with an excuse. For my own part, I	
154	am none of the multitude that believe your conversion	
156	from coward.	
158	Bes. My lord, I seek not quarrels, and <u>this</u> belongs not	= ie. "this challenge".
160	to me; I am not <u>to maintain it</u> .	= "the one to <i>maintain</i> this <i>quarrel</i> with you"
162	Bac. Who, then, pray?	
164	Bes. Bessus the coward wronged you.	
166	Bac. Right.	
168	Bes. And shall Bessus the valiant maintain what	
170	Bessus the coward did?	
172	Bac. I prithee, leave <u>these cheating tricks!</u> I swear	= ie. "this chopping logic or sophistry."
174	thou shalt fight with me, or thou shalt be beaten	167-8: leaving all pretense of politeness behind, Bacurius
176	extremely and kicked.	switches pronouns, addressing Bessus with the
178	Bes. Since you provoke me thus far, my lord, I will	contemptuous "thee".
180	fight with you; and, <u>by my sword</u> , it shall cost me	171: <i>by my sword</i> = an oath.
182	twenty pounds but I will have my leg well a week	171-3: <i>it shall...purposely</i> = "since you are eager
184	sooner purposely.	to fight, I will speed up the healing of my leg, even if I
186	Bac. Your leg! why, what ail's your leg? I'll do a cure	have to pay a doctor 20 pounds to have it done so, so
188	on you. Stand up!	that we can hurry forward the date of our appointment."
190		
192		
194		
	[Kicks him.]	
	Bes. My lord, this is not noble in you.	182: Bessus has no business uttering the word "noble".
	Bac. What dost thou with such a phrase in thy mouth?	
	I will kick thee out of all good words before I leave thee.	
	[Kicks him.]	
	Bes. My lord, I take this as a punishment for the	
	offence I did when I was a coward.	
	Bac. When thou wert! confess thyself a coward still,	
	or, <u>by this light</u> , I'll beat thee into <u>sponge</u> .	= common Elizabethan oath; = in addition to its everyday
		meaning, <i>sponge</i> also refers to one who lives off the
		generosity of others, ¹ which is how Bessus kept body
		and soul together before the war, as Bessus notes.
	Bes. Why, I am one.	
	Bac. Are you so, sir? and why do you wear a sword,	

196 then? Come, unbuckle; quick!
 198 **Bes.** My lord!
 200 **Bac.** Unbuckle, I say, and give it me; or, as I live, thy
 head will ache extremely.
 202 **Bes.** It is a pretty hilt; and if your lordship take an
 204 affection to it, with all my heart I present it to you, for a
 new-year's gift.
 206 [Gives him his sword, with a knife in the scabbard.]
 208 **Bac.** I thank you very heartily. Sweet captain, farewell.
 210 **Bes.** One word more: I beseech your lordship to render
 212 me my knife again.
 214 **Bac.** Marry, by all means, captain. [Gives him back
 216 the knife.] Cherish yourself with it, and eat hard,
 good captain; we cannot tell whether we shall have
 any more such. Adieu, dear captain.
 218 [Exit.]
 220 **Bes.** I will make better use of this than of my sword.
 222 A base spirit has this vantage of a brave one; it keeps
always at a stay, nothing brings it down, not beating. I
 224 remember I promised the king, in a great audience, that I
 would make my backbiters eat my sword to a knife:
 226 How to get another sword I know not; nor know any
 means left for me to maintain my credit but impudence:
 228 Therefore I will outswear him and all his followers, that
 this is all that's left uneaten of my sword.
 230 [Exit.]

= there existed a custom of wearing a sheathed dagger attached to the scabbard of one's sword.³ This stage direction was added by Weber.

209: Bacurius returns to his mock formality.

= ie. return to.

= at this time knives were the primary utensil used to bring solid food to the mouth.¹¹

222: **base spirit** = cowardly man.

vantage of = advantage over.

222-3: **it keeps always at a stay** = a base spirit remains unbroken (*keeps*)² despite (*always*)¹ any setback (*stay*)².

= honour, credibility.

= ie. convince by outdoing everyone else in vowing this is true.

The Dueling Code and Challenges, Part 1: the most detailed English exposition of the rules of dueling extant in the time of Beaumont and Fletcher may have been a 1594 publication, *Of Honor and Honorable Quarrels*, written by Vincentio Saviolo. Saviolo lays out a very specific formula for the exchange of words that lead to a duel.

The conflict opens with an accusation; for example, person *A* may accuse *B* of behaving treacherously; *B* then must accuse *A* of being a liar. According to Saviolo, it is incumbent on *A*, the one being accused of lying, to back up, or maintain, his words, which he may do by issuing a challenge to *B*. *B* in turn, if he is to preserve his honour, is obliged to accept the challenge, and he gets to choose the weapons.

We may remember the scrupulously polite manner in which the Gentleman at the beginning of this scene spoke to Bessus. This too was part of the code, which specifically admonishes adversaries to speak respectfully to each other;

for one to address the other in an insulting fashion would bring dishonour on himself only, and "showeth himself rather to have mind to fight with the pen than with the sword."

Saviolo's dueling code is so absurdly detailed as to almost appear to be a parody rather than a guidebook in earnest. He categorizes and discusses at great length, for example, the different types of slanders, or lies, a man may tell another (conditional lies, the lie in general - of which there are two kinds, "the one having respect to the person, and the other to the injury" - the lie in particular, and foolish lies), and he further hopes to instruct his audience with such hoary sentences as this:

"This man whosoever he be saith, that with reason they may be refuseth, doth charge him that brought them, and he who saith that they may not be refused in reason, chargeth him that refuseth to fight with them, and therefore the task being given as well on the affirmative as negative, the lie may accordingly be given, and no more the affirmative than the negative may it be wrested or sent back, being both in the one and in the other manner given for repulse, and not of any injury."

ACT III, SCENE III.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter Mardonius.

1 **Mar.** I'll move the king; he is most strangely altered:
2 I guess the cause, I fear, too right; Heaven has
3 Some secret end in't, and 'tis a scourge, no question,
4 Justly laid upon him. He has followed me
5 Through twenty rooms; and ever, when I stay
6 To wait his command, he blushes like a girl,
7 And looks upon me as if modesty
8 Kept in his business; so turns away from me;
9 But, if I go on, he follows me again.

= speak or appeal to.¹

= purpose in this. = punishment.

= each time, always. = pause.

= *business* is trisyllabic here.

Enter Arbaces.

12 See, here he is. I do not use this, yet,
13 I know not how, I cannot choose but weep
14 To see him: his very enemies, I think,
15 Whose wounds have bred his fame, if they should see
16 Him now, would find tears in their eyes.

= ie. make use of or deal with this.¹

= ie. out of pity.

18 **Arb.** I cannot utter it! Why should I keep
19 A breast to harbour thoughts I dare not speak?
20 Darkness is in my bosom; and there lie
21 A thousand thoughts that cannot brook the light. —

= tolerate being in the light, so as to be plainly visible; note how *light* contrasts with *darkness*.

24 How wilt thou vex me, when this deed is done,
25 Conscience, that art afraid to let me name it!

23-24: Arbaces apostrophizes to personified *Conscience*; what will his conscience do to him if he actually *does* the deed, if he cannot even *name* it?

26 **Mar.** How do you, sir?

28 **Arb.** Why very well, Mardonius.
How dost thou do?

30	Mar. Better than you, I fear.	
32		
34	Arb. I hope thou art; for, to be plain with thee, Thou art in hell else. <u>Secret</u> scorching flames,	= "you would be in hell otherwise." = hidden. ²
36	That far transcend earthly material fires, Are crept into me, and there is no cure: Is it not strange, Mardonius, there's no cure?	
38		
40	Mar. Sir, either I mistake, or there is something hid, That you would utter to me.	39: another alexandrine; see <i>Postscript 3</i> at the end of the play for a discussion of the problems of Mardonius' verse lines.
42	Arb. So there is: But yet I cannot do it.	
44		
46	Mar. Out with it, sir. If it be dangerous, I will not shrink To do you service. I shall not <u>esteem</u>	= value.
48	My life a weightier matter than indeed It is. I know <u>'tis</u> subject to more <u>chances</u>	= "it is", ie. "my life is". = accidents. ¹
50	Than it has hours; and I were better lose it In my king's cause than with an ague or	
52	A fall, or, sleeping, to a <u>thief</u> ; as all these Are probable enough. Let me but know	= ie. who would kill him while he slept.
54	What I shall do for you.	
56	Arb. It will not <u>out</u> . Were you with Gobrias, And <u>bade him</u> give my sister all content	= come out. = "did you ask him to".
58	The place affords, and give her leave to send And speak to whom she please?	
60		
62	Mar. Yes, sir, I was.	
64	Arb. And did you to Bacurius say as much About Tigranes?	
66	Mar. Yes.	
68	Arb. That's all my business.	
70	Mar. Oh, say not so! You had an answer of all this before:	71: ie. "you asked me all this before."
72	Besides, I think this business might be uttered More carelessly.	72-73: "if this is all you had to say, it could have been said with less anxiety" (<i>carelessly</i> = with less care, ie. less worry or anxiety).
74		
76	Arb. Come, thou shalt have it out. I do beseech thee, By all the love thou hast professed to me, To see my sister <u>from me</u> .	= "for me", "on my behalf".
78		
80	Mar. Well; and what?	
82	Arb. That's all.	
84	Mar. That's strange: Shall I say nothing to her?	
86	Arb. Not a word: But, if thou lov'st me, find some subtle way	

88 To make her understand by signs.
 89 **Mar.** But what shall I make her understand?
 90 **Arb.** Oh, Mardonius, for that I must be pardoned.
 91 **Mar.** You may; but I can only see her then.
 92
 93
 94
 95
 96 **Arb.** 'Tis true.
 97
 98 [Gives him a ring.]
 99
 100 Bear her this ring, then; and, on more advice,
 101 Thou shalt speak to her: tell her I do love
 102 My kindred all; wilt thou?
 103
 104 **Mar.** Is there no more?
 105
 106 **Arb.** Oh, yes! And her the best;
 107 Better than any brother loves his sister:
 108 That's all.
 109
 110 **Mar.** Methinks, this need not have been
 111 Delivered with such caution. I'll do it.
 112
 113 **Arb.** There is more yet: wilt thou be faithful to me?
 114
 115 **Mar.** Sir, if I take upon me to deliver it,
 116 After I hear it, I'll pass through fire to do it.
 117
 118 **Arb.** I love her better than a brother ought.
 119 Dost thou conceive me?
 120
 121 **Mar.** I hope I do not, sir.
 122
 123 **Arb.** No! thou art dull. Kneel down before her,
 124 And never rise again, till she will love me.
 125
 126 **Mar.** Why, I think she does.
 127
 128 **Arb.** But, better than she does
 129 Another way; as wives love husbands.
 130
 131 **Mar.** Why,
 132 I think there are few wives that love their husbands
 133 Better than she does you.
 134
 135 **Arb.** Thou wilt not understand me. Is it fit
 136 This should be uttered plainly? Take it, then,
 137 Naked as it is; I would desire her love
 138 Lasciviously, lewdly, incestuously,
 139 To do a sin that needs must damn us both,
 140 And thee too. Dost thou understand me now?
 141
 142 **Mar.** Yes; there's your ring again.

= ie. if Arbaces can't even explain to Mardonius what message he should impart to Panthea, then he is not going to be able to accomplish anything other than to look at her.

= understand.

120: Mardonius starts to sense - uncomfortably - what Arbaces is getting at; he will equivocate until Arbaces finally is forced to spell it out for him.

= appropriate.

= explicitly.

142	[Gives back the ring.] What have I done	
	Dishonestly in my whole life, name it,	
144	That you should put so base a business to me?	
146	Arb. Didst thou not tell me thou wouldst do it?	
148	Mar. Yes, if I undertook it: but if all	
	My hairs were lives, I would not be engaged	
150	In such a cause to save my last life.	
152	Arb. Oh, Guilt, how poor and weak a thing art thou!	152-6: Arbaces apostrophizes to personified <i>Guilt</i> .
	This man that is my servant, whom my breath	
154	Might blow about the world, might beat me here,	= reason (to do so).
	Having his <u>cause</u> ; whilst I, pressed down with sin,	
156	Could not resist him. – Dear, Mardonius,	= impulse. = inappropriate or unfitting for.
	It was a <u>motion misbeseeming</u> man,	
158	And I am sorry for it.	
160	Mar. Pray God you may be so! You must	
	understand, nothing that you can utter can remove	
162	my love and service from my <u>prince</u> ; but otherwise,	= king.
	I think I shall not love you more, for you are sinful;	
164	and, if you do this crime, you ought to have no laws,	
	for, after this, it will be great injustice in you to	
166	punish any offender for any crime. For myself, I	
	find my heart too big; I feel I have not patience to	
168	look on, whilst you run these forbidden courses.	
	<u>Means</u> I have none but your favour; and I am rather	= ie. of survival.
170	glad that I shall lose 'em both together than keep	
	'em with such conditions. I shall find a dwelling	
172	amongst some people, where, though our garments	
	perhaps be coarser, we shall be richer far <u>within</u> ,	= ie. "in our spiritual welfare or souls".
174	and harbour no such vices in 'em. God preserve	
	you, and mend you!	
176		175: Mardonius starts to exit the stage as he concludes his
	Arb. Mardonius! Stay, Mardonius! for, though	speech.
178	My present <u>state</u> requires nothing but knaves	178-182: "my current condition (<i>state</i>) requires me to use
	To be about me, such as are prepared	the basest of men - those without qualms or compunction -
180	For every wicked act, yet who does know	to help me out right now (ie. to assist me in pursuing my
	But that my loathèd fate may turn about,	sinful desires); but who knows when I will need virtuous
182	And I have use for honest men again?	men to serve me again?"
	I hope I may: I prithee, leave me not.	
184		
	<i>Enter Bessus.</i>	
186		
	Bes. Where is the king?	
188		
	Mar. There.	
190		
	Bes. <u>An't</u> please your majesty, there's the knife.	= if it.
192		
	Arb. What knife?	
194		
	Bes. The sword is eaten.	
196		
	Mar. Away, you fool! the king is serious,	
198	And cannot now <u>admit</u> your <u>vanities</u> .	= ie. deal with. = foolishness, inanities ²

200	Bes. Vanities! I'm no honest man, if my enemies have not <u>brought it to this</u> . What, do you think I lie?	= ie. eaten his sword till it was reduced to a knife.
202		
204	Arb. No, no; 'tis well, Bessus; tis very well: I'm glad on't.	
206	Mar. If your enemies brought it to this, your enemies are <u>cutlers</u> . Come, leave the king.	= those who repair and deal in cutting utensils.
208		
	Bes. Why, may not <u>valour</u> approach him?	= ie. a courageous man; <i>valour</i> is an appellation, meaning himself.
210		
212	Mar. Yes; but he <u>has affairs</u> . Depart, or I shall be something unmannerly with you.	= no doubt meaning "the king (<i>he</i>) has other business right now"; but <i>he</i> could refer to <i>valour</i> , in which case the meaning of the line is a little more insulting, and interesting: "but valour has other business to attend to than to interact with you."
214		
216	Arb. No; let him stay, Mardonius, let him stay; I have <u>occasions</u> with him very <u>weighty</u> , And I can spare you now.	= business. = important.
218	Mar. Sir?	
220	Arb. Why, I can spare you now.	
222	Bes. Mardonius, give way to the state affairs.	
224	Mar. Indeed, you are fitter for his present purpose.	
226	[Exit.]	
228	Arb. Bessus, I should employ thee: wilt thou do't?	228ff: Beaumont's comic genius is apparent in the ensuing dialogue; the juxtaposition of the king's hopelessly tragic situation with the inane responses of the clueless Bessus results in one of the classic conversations of the entire Elizabethan canon.
230	Bes. Do't for you? <u>By this air</u> , I will do anything, without exception, be it a good, bad, or indifferent thing.	= an oath: "I swear".
232		
234	Arb. Do not swear.	
236	Bes. <u>By this light</u> , but I will; anything whatsoever.	= Bessus swears again anyway!
238	Arb. But I shall name a thing Thy conscience will not <u>suffer</u> thee to do.	= allow, permit.
240	Bes. I would <u>fain</u> hear that thing.	= like to
242	Arb. Why, I would have thee get my sister for me, – Thou understand'st me, – in a wicked manner.	
244		
246	Bes. Oh, you would <u>have a bout</u> with her? I'll do't, I'll do't, i'faith.	= literally "have a round with", as in a fencing match; but also, as here, a common euphemism for "sleep with".
248	Arb. Wilt thou? dost thou make no more on't?	
250	Bes. More? No. Why, is there anything else? If there be, tell me; it shall be done too.	250-1: Bessus doesn't even blink at the proposal!
252		

254 **Arb.** Hast thou no greater sense of such a sin?
 Thou art too wicked for my company,
 Though I have hell within me, and may'st yet
 256 Corrupt me further. Pray thee, answer me,
 How do I show to thee after this motion?
 258

260 **Bes.** Why, your majesty looks as well, in my opinion,
 as ever you did since you were born.

262 **Arb.** But thou appear'st to me, after thy grant,
 The ugliest, loathèd, détestable thing,
 264 That I have ever met with. Thou hast eyes
 Like flames of sulphur, which, methinks, do dart
 266 Infection on me; and thou hast a mouth
 Enough to take me in, where there do stand
 268 Four rows of iron teeth.

270 **Bes.** I feel no such thing: but 'tis no matter how I look;
 I'll do your business as well as they that look better:
 272 and when this is dispatched, if you have a mind to
 your mother, tell me, and you shall see I'll set it hard.
 274

276 **Arb.** My mother? – Heaven forgive me, to hear this!
 I am inspired with horror. – Now I hate thee
 Worse than my sin; which, if I could come by,
 278 Should suffer death eternal, ne'er to rise
 In any breast again. Know, I will die
 280 Languishing mad, as I resolve I shall,
Ere I will deal by such an instrument.
 282 Thou art too sinful to employ in this:
 Out of the world, away!
 284

[Beats him.]

286

288 **Bes.** What do you mean, sir?

290 **Arb.** Hung round with curses, take thy fearful flight
 Into the deserts; where, 'mongst all the monsters,
 If thou find'st one so beastly as thyself,
 292 Thou shalt be held as innocent!

294 **Bes.** Good sir –

296 **Arb.** If there were no such instruments as thou,
 We kings could never act such wicked deeds.
 298 Seek out a man that mocks divinity,
 That breaks each precept both of God and man,
 300 And nature's too, and does it without lust,
 Merely because it is a law and good,
 302 And live with him; for him thou can'st not spoil;
 Away, I say! –
 304

[Exit Bessus.]

306

= appear.

= "granting (ie. of my request)".

263: *détestable* is stressed on its first syllable.

= lightning bolts. = shoot.

= corruption, moral contamination.¹

= ie. "consume me".

267: possible allusion to the ancient mythical monster known as the *manticore*, a red-shaded quadruped with the face of man and a mouth containing three rows of iron teeth.¹²

= "appear better than I do (if I look like a monster to you)".

272-3: **if you...it hard** = a good candidate for the most outrageous line in all of Elizabethan literature!

= the sense is, "if I could get a hold of it".¹

= am determined.

= before. = with. = agent, ie. Bessus.

= "considered in comparison to be".

296-7: while Bessus' complete lack of comprehension regarding the immorality of what he has been asked to do is worthy of a bit of head-shaking (though really too funny to condemn), it is hardly fair for Arbaces to blame Bessus for his own depravity.

I will not do this sin:
308 I'll press it here, till it do break my breast.
It heaves to get out; but thou art a sin,
310 And, spite of torture, I will keep thee in.
312

[*Exit.*]

= "despite the resulting feeling of torture", or "even if I were tortured".

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Room in the House of Gobrias.

Enter Gobrias, Panthea, and Spaconia.

1 **Gob.** Have you written, madam?

2

3 **Pan.** Yes, good Gobrias.

4

5 **Gob.** And with a kindness and such winning words
6 As may provoke him, at one instant, feel
7 His double fault; your wrong, and his own rashness?

8

9 **Pan.** I have sent words enough, if words may win him
10 From his displeasure; and such words, I hope,
11 As shall gain much upon his goodness, Gobrias.
12 Yet fearing, since they are many, and a woman's,
13 A poor belief may follow, I have woven
14 As many truths within 'em to speak for me,

15 That, if he be but gracious and receive 'em –

16

17 **Gob.** Good lady, be not fearful: though he should not
18 Give you your present end in this, believe it,
19 You shall feel, if your virtue can induce you
20 To labour out this tempest (which, I know,
21 Is but a poor proof 'gainst your patience),

22 All those conténts your spirit will arrive at,

23 Newer and sweeter to you. Your royal brother,
24 When he shall once collect himself, and see

25 How far he has been asunder from himself,
26 What a mere stranger to his golden temper,
27 Must, from those roots of virtue, never dying,
28 Though somewhat stopt with humour, shoot again

29 Into a thousand glories, bearing his fair branches
30 High as our hopes can look at, straight as justice,
31 Loaden with ripe conténts. He loves you dearly:
32 I know it, and I hope I need not further
33 Win you to understand it.

34

35 **Pan.** I believe it:
36 Howsoever, I am sure I love him dearly;
So dearly, that if anything I write

= Panthea, we remember, is being held in confinement in Gobrias' home.

Entering Characters: Spaconia is visiting with Panthea.

= ie. to Arbaces.

= immediately.

= ie. "the injury he has done to you".

= prevail.¹

12-14: "yet I worry that, because I have written so much, and because the words are those of a mere woman, my letter will not be credited, so I have incorporated as many maxims of eternal truths that are innately wise as I could"; **they** (line 12) refers to her "words".

= immediate goal (ie. release from confinement).

20: **labour out** = ride out, survive.⁷

20-21: (**which...patience**) = the sense is that this troubling period (ie. *this tempest*) cannot defeat Panthea's patience.

proof against = armor or protection against.¹

= joys, pleasures; the stress in *conduct* is on the second syllable.

= come to his senses, gather himself together; the OED's earliest recorded published entry for the still-common phrase *to collect oneself* is from Shakespeare's *The Winter Tale*, believed to be performed in 1610 or so.

= separated (contrasted with *collect*).

= complete, absolute.

27-31: note the extended botanical metaphor.

28: **stopt** = plugged up, blocked or prevented from appearing.

humour = eccentric fancies.

= satisfactions, pleasures; *content* was sometimes used in the plural form like this, even into the early 18th century.

= ie. "have to persuade you".

38	For my <u>enlarging</u> should beget his anger,	= "which serves the purpose of freeing me from confinement".
40	Heaven be a witness with me, and my faith, I had rather live entombèd here.	
42	Gob. You shall not feel a worse stroke than your grief;	
44	I am sorry 'tis so sharp. I kiss your hand, And this night will deliver this <u>true story</u>	= ie. Panthea's letter to Arbaces.
46	With <u>this hand</u> to your brother.	= Gobrias raises or indicates his own hand here.
48	Pan. Peace go with you! You are a good man. –	
50	[Exit Gobrias.]	
52	My Spaconia,	
54	Why are you ever sad thus?	
56	Spa. Oh, dear lady!	
58	Pan. Prithee, <u>discover not</u> a way to sadness,	= "don't show me" (<i>discover</i> = reveal, ie. un-cover).
60	<u>Nearer than I have</u> in me. Our two sorrows	= ie. "more than I already have".
62	Work, like two eager hawks, <u>who shall get highest.</u>	= "which one shall reach the greatest height."
64	How shall I lessen thine? for mine, I fear, Is easier known than cured.	
66	Spa. Heaven comfort both, And give <u>yours happy ends</u> , however I	= ie. "your sorrow a happy conclusion".
68	<u>Fall</u> in my stubborn fortunes.	= ie. from the <i>height</i> of line 59.
70	Pan. <u>This</u> but teaches	= Bond suggests <i>This</i> refers to Panthea's "mood of resignation".
72	How to be more familiar with our sorrows, That are too much our masters. Good Spaconia,	
74	How shall I do you service?	
76	Spa. Noblest lady, You make me more a slave still to your goodness,	
78	And <u>only</u> live to purchase thanks to pay you;	= "I only".
80	For that is all the business of my life now. I will be bold, since you will have it so, To ask a noble favour of you.	
82	Pan. Speak it; 'tis yours; for from so sweet a virtue	
84	No <u>ill</u> demand has issue.	= base.
86	Spa. Then, ever-virtuous, let me beg your will In helping me to see the prince Tigranes, With whom I am equal prisoner, if not more.	
88	Pan. Reserve me to a greater end, Spaconia;	86: ie. "this is an easy thing to grant you; you could have asked for a more difficult favour than this."
90	Bacurius cannot <u>want</u> so much good manners	= lack.
92	As to deny your gentle visitation, Though you came only <u>with your own command.</u>	= "armed with no authority or permission to see him other than your own desire."
94	Spa. I know they will deny me, gracious madam, Being a <u>stranger</u> , and <u>so little famed</u> ,	= foreigner. = with so little renown or reputation.
96	So utter empty of those excellencies	93-94: So utter...authority = the idea is that the greater a reputation or status one who asks for a favour has, the

94 That tame authority: but in you, sweet lady,
All these are natural; beside, a power
96 Derived immediate from your royal brother,
Whose least word in you may command the kingdom.

98 **Pan.** More than my word, Spaconia, you shall carry,
100 For fear it fail you.

102 **Spa.** Dare you trust a token?
104 Madam, I fear I am grown too bold a beggar.

Pan. You are a pretty one; and, trust me, lady,
106 It joys me I shall do a good to you,
Though to myself I never shall be happy.
108 Here, take this ring, and from me as a token

110 [Gives ring.]

112 Deliver it: I think they will not stay you.
So, all your own desires go with you, lady!

114 **Spa.** And sweet peace to your grace!

116 **Pan.** Pray Heaven, I find it!

118 [Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE II.

A Prison.

Tigranes is discovered.

1 **Tigr.** Fool that I am! I have undone myself,
2 And with my own hand turned my fortune round,

That was a fair one: I have childishly
4 Played with my hope so long, till I have broke it,
And now too late I mourn for't. Oh, Spaconia,
6 Thou hast found an even way to thy revenge now!
Why didst thou follow me, like a faint shadow,
8 To wither my desires? But, wretched fool,
Why did I plant thee 'twixt the sun and me,

10 To make me freeze thus? why did I prefer her

more likely it is to be granted; and Spaconia is without any such quality in Iberia.

= "who have any control over those in office or power" (Dyce, quoting another earlier editor).

95-97: **a power...kingdom** = Spaconia understands that as Panthea is the sister of the king, any request she makes would be particularly difficult to refuse.

= an Elizabethan convention was for a person of authority or power to give a personal item, such as a piece of jewelry, to a messenger, who would then in delivering the message to a third party present the "token" as visual evidence of the authenticity of the message, thus granting authority to the third party to do whatever is requested.

110: when Spaconia presents Panthea's ring to Bacurius, her request to visit with Tigranes will more likely be granted.

= "prevent you (from seeing Tigranes)".

The Setting: Dyce notes the setting actually likely takes place in a room in Bacurius' house, where Tigranes is confined.

= a curtain at the back of the stage is drawn open to reveal (*discover*) Tigranes.

= ruined.

= the allusion is to personified *Fortune's* wheel, which she spins around, arbitrarily raising and lowering people's circumstances and states.

= ie. his fortune, *that was* already agreeable.

= "toyed with my expectations (*hope*)".

= ie. "wretched fool that I am".

9: the image is that of an eclipse; Spaconia (*thee*) stands between Tigranes and Panthea (*the sun*), the woman he loves.

= recommend Spaconia⁷ (for employment in Panthea's household).

<p>12 To the fair princess? Oh, <u>thou fool</u>, thou fool, Thou family of fools, live like a slave still, And in thee bear thine own hell and thy torment! 14 Thou hast deserved it. Couldst thou find no lady, But she that has thy hopes, to <u>put her to</u>, 16 And <u>hazard</u> all thy peace? none to abuse, But she that loved thee ever, poor Spaconia? 18 And so much loved thee, that in honesty And honour thou art bound to meet her virtues!</p>	<p>11: meaning himself again.</p> <p>= place Spaconia in a difficult or awkward situation.¹ = risk.</p> <p>18-19: Tigranes recognizes that in order to preserve his own honour, he must remain loyal to Spaconia - it would be shameful if he were to allow her to behave in a more worthy manner than he does.</p>
<p>20 She, that forgot the greatness of her griefs, And miseries that must follow such mad passions, 22 Endless and wild as woman's! she, that for thee, And with thee, left her liberty, her name, 24 And country! You have <u>paid</u> me, <u>equal</u> Heavens, And sent my own <u>rod to correct</u> me with, 26 A woman! For <u>inconstancy</u> I'll suffer; Lay it on, justice, till my soul melt in me, 28 For my unmanly, beastly, sudden doting Upon a new face, after all my oaths, 30 Many, and <u>strange</u> ones. I feel my old fire flame again, and burn 32 So strong and violent, that, should I see <u>her</u> Again, the grief and that would kill me.</p>	<p>20-22: <i>She...woman's</i> = a much argued-about passage: perhaps, "she, who has forgotten her griefs and miseries which must necessarily follow on the heels of such intense or crazy emotions, which are as endless and wild as they are in women."⁷</p> <p>= repaid. = just.¹ = literature of the period makes frequent reference to the metaphorical <i>rod</i> of punishment (<i>correction</i>). = disloyalty or unfaithfulness (to Spaconia).</p> <p>= strong.²</p> <p>= ie. Spaconia.</p>
<p>34 <i>Enter Bacurius and Spaconia.</i></p>	
<p>36 Bac. Lady, 38 Your token I acknowledge; you may pass: There is the king.</p>	<p>38: Bacurius recognizes, and defers to, the permission granted by Panthea to Spaconia to see the prisoner Tigranes, as evidenced by Panthea's ring.</p>
<p>40 Spa. I thank your lordship for it. 42 [Exit Bacurius.]</p>	
<p>44 Tigr. She comes, she comes! Shame hide me ever from her! 46 <u>Would I</u> were buried, or so far removed, Light might not find me out! I dare not see her.</p>	<p>= "I wish I".</p>
<p>48 Spa. Nay, never hide yourself! For, were you hid 50 Where earth hides <u>all her riches</u>, near her centre, My wrongs, <u>without more day</u>, would <u>light me</u> to you:</p>	<p>ie. "all its gold, silver, and other precious metals". 51: <i>without more day</i> = "without even needing the light of the sun (to show me where you are)". <i>light me</i> = "show me the way".</p>
<p>52 I must speak ere I die. Were all your greatness Doubled upon you, you're a perjured man,</p>	<p>52-53: <i>Were all...perjured man</i> = "even if you were twice as great a man as you are, you are still a perjurer (for having broken your vow to me)".</p>
<p>54 And only mighty in your wickedness Of wronging women. <u>Thou</u> art false, false prince!</p>	<p>= Spaconia dramatically changes pronouns: with "thee", she signals her contempt for Tigranes.</p>
<p>56 I live to see him: poor Spaconia lives</p>	

<p>To tell thee thou art false, and <u>then no more</u>: 58 She lives to tell thee, thou art more <u>inconstant</u> Than all ill women ever were together;</p>	<p>= ie. "then I live no more"⁷ (in line 52 she said "<i>I must speak ere I die</i>"). = disloyal.</p>
<p>60 Thy faith as <u>firm</u> as raging overflows, That no bank can <u>command</u>; <u>and</u> as lasting</p>	<p>59: "than were all the evil women who ever lived combined." 60: that is, an overflowing stream is anything but stable or constant (<i>firm</i>).²</p>
<p>62 As boys' gay bubbles, blown i' the air and broken:</p>	<p>= contain. = the meter of the line is off; some early editions omit <i>and</i>, fixing the meter, but leaving the line short.</p>
<p>The wind is fixed <u>to</u> thee; and sooner shall 64 The <u>beaten</u> mariner with his shrill whistle Calm the loud murmurs of the troubled <u>main</u>, 66 And strike it smooth again, than thy soul fall To have peace in love with any: thou art all 68 That all good men must hate; and if thy story Shall tell succeeding ages what thou wert, 70 Oh, let it spare me in it, lest true lovers, In pity of my wrongs, burn thy black legend, 72 And with their curses shake thy sleeping ashes!</p>	<p>62: note the interesting and rare (for this play) alliteration in this line. = compared to. = driven (by a rough sea).¹ = sea.</p>
<p>74 Tigr. Oh! oh! 76 Spa. <u>The Destinies</u>, I hope, have pointed out Our ends alike, that thou may'st die for love, 78 Though not for me; for, this assure thyself, The princess hates thee deadly, and will sooner 80 Be won to <u>marry with a bull</u>, and <u>safer</u>,</p>	<p>68-72: and if...ashes: a common dramatic convention was for a character to imagine that his or her love story will be passed on as a moral lesson or example to succeeding ages. = ie. the Fates of Greek mythology, who determine the course of one's life.¹</p>
<p>Than such a beast as thou art. – I have struck,</p>	<p>80: marry with a bull = perhaps a glancing reference to Pasiphae (or Pasiphae), who in Greek mythology was married to King Minos of Crete; cursed by Poseidon with lust for Minos' prize bull, she copulated with the bull by concealing herself in a life-size model of a cow; the resulting offspring was the Minotaur.⁴ safer = more assuredly.¹</p>
<p>82 I fear too deep; <u>beshrew</u> me for it! – Sir, This sorrow works me, like a cunning friendship,</p>	<p>81-82: between the dashes, a likely aside: Spaconia worries she is over-doing her chastising, as she does not really want to hurt Tigranes. = curse.</p>
<p>84 Into the same piece with it. – He's ashamed: Alas, I have been too rugged! – Dear my lord, 86 I am sorry I have spoken anything, Indeed I am, that may add more restraint 88 To that too much <u>you</u> have. Good sir, be pleased To think it was a fault of love, not malice; 90 And do as I will do, – forgive it, prince: I do, and can, forgive the greatest sins 92 To me you can repent of. Pray believe me.</p>	<p>83-84: This sorrow...with it: the sense is that the feeling of affliction or sadness is visited upon her as much as it was intended to affect Tigranes, just as friends tend to become more alike over time. 84-85: another aside between the dashes; Spaconia regrets berating Tigranes too harshly.</p>
<p>94 Tigr. Oh, my Spaconia! oh, thou virtuous woman! 96 Spa. No more; the king, sir.</p>	<p>= now penitent and calm again, Spaconia again switches pronouns, returning to the more respectful "you".</p>

98	<i>Enter Arbaces, Bacurius, and Mardonius.</i>	
100	Arb. Have you been careful of our noble prisoner, That he <u>want</u> nothing fitting for his greatness?	= lacks.
102		
104	Bac. I hope <u>his grace</u> will <u>quit</u> me for my care, sir.	103: his grace = ie. Tigranes; though more properly used for dukes and duchesses (especially after the reign of Henry VIII), <i>grace</i> is often used by Elizabethan stage characters in addressing or referring to monarchs. ¹ quit = reward. ¹
106	Arb. 'Tis well. – Royal Tigranes, health!	
108	Tigr. More than the strictness of this place can give, sir, I offer back again to great Arbaces.	
110	Arb. We thank you, worthy prince; and pray excuse us; We have not seen you since your being here.	
112	I hope your noble <u>usage</u> has been equal	= treatment.
114	<u>With your own person</u> : your imprisonment, If it be any, I dare say, is easy; And shall not out-last two days.	= "with what a person of your rank is due."
116		
118	Tigr. I thank you. My usage here has been the same it was, Worthy a royal conqueror. For my restraint, It came unkindly, because much unlooked-for; But I must bear it.	
122		
124	Arb. What lady's that, Bacurius?	
126	Bac. One of the princess' women, sir.	
128	Arb. I feared it. Why comes she hither?	
130	Bac. To speak with the prince Tigranes.	
132	Arb. From whom, Bacurius ?	
134	Bac. From the princess, sir.	
136	Arb. I knew I had seen her.	136: Arbaces is likely becoming visibly agitated, based on Mardonius' next line; the king suspects that Panthea has sent Spaconia to woo or communicate with Tigranes on her (Panthea's) own behalf, and he is jealous.
138	Mar. [Aside] His fit begins to take him now again: 'tis a strange fever, and 'twill shake us all <u>anon</u> , I fear.	= shortly.
140	Would he were well cured of this raging folly! Give me the wars, where men are mad, and may talk what	
142	they <u>list</u> , and <u>held</u> the bravest fellows; this <u>pelting</u> ,	= wish. = are revered as. = worthless or contemptible; ⁶ Mardonius expresses a typical Elizabethan stage soldier's sentiment, that peace leads to societal weakness and softness.
144	prattling peace is good for nothing; drinking's a virtue <u>to't</u> .	= compared to it.
146	Arb. I see there's <u>truth</u> in no man, nor obedience, But for his own ends. Why did you let her in?	= honesty, reliability.
148		

150	Bac. It was your own command to bar none from him: Besides, the princess sent her ring, sir, <u>for my warrant</u> .	= as an authorization or sanction for Bacurius' admitting Spaconia.
152	Arb. A token to Tigranes, did she not?	152: Arbaces believes that Panthea had given Spaconia the ring to give to Tigranes as a token of Panthea's admiration for him, and not just as a sign of her grant for Spaconia to visit him.
154	<u>Sirrah</u> , tell truth.	= this form of address, usually reserved for servants, can also be used, as it is here, to express authority, and signals Arbaces' annoyance at Bacurius.
156	Bac. I do not use to lie, sir; 'Tis no way I eat or live by; and I think This is no <u>token</u> , sir.	= keepsake, ie. symbol of love.
158	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] This <u>combat</u> has undone him: if he had	= Mardonius refers not to the war with Armenia, but rather Arbaces single combat with Tigranes; he believes the king's victory there led him, perhaps out of some misplaced hubris, to lose all his sense of proportion.
160	been well beaten, he had been temperate. I shall never see him <u>handsome</u> again, till he have a horseman's <u>staff</u>	= gracious in behavior. ¹ = spear or lance. ²
162	poked through his shoulders, or an arm broke with a bullet.	
164	Arb. I am <u>trifled with</u> .	= being toyed with.
166	Bac. Sir?	
168	Arb. I know it, as I know thee to be false.	
170	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] Now the <u>clap</u> comes.	= explosion or sudden blow; ¹ Mardonius is reacting to the king's calling Bacurius a liar.
172	Bac. You never knew me so, sir, I dare speak it; And <u>durst</u> a worse man tell me, though my better –	174: Bacurius' blood is up: "if a man who was less than a king, but still of higher rank than me, had talked this way to me..."; the remaining thought, that he would ask such a person to let him defend his honour in a duel, is implied. durst = dared.
174		
176	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] 'Tis well said, by my soul.	176: Mardonius greatly admires Bacurius' refusing to back down in the face of the king's wrath.
178	Arb. Sirrah, you answer as you had no life.	178: in so brazenly risking execution, Bacurius speaks as if he places no value on his own life.
180	Bac. That I fear, sir, to lose nobly.	180: Bacurius finishes the king's sentence: ie. "(I have no life) that I fear to lose in a noble cause."
182	Arb. I say, sir, once again –	
184	Bac. You may say what you please, sir:	
186	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] Would I might do so!	186: Mardonius wishes he had the courage to say what he was thinking; his asides here are delightful.
188	Arb. I will, sir; and say openly, <u>This woman carries letters: by my life,</u>	189: This woman carries letters = Arbaces asserts Spaconia is carrying love-letters between Panthea and Tigranes. by my life = an oath, "I swear".
190	I know she carries letters; this woman does it.	
192	Mar. 'Would Bessus were here, to take her aside and search her! he would quickly tell you what she	192-4: Mardonius appears to be trying to defuse the rising tension with his rough soldier's humor; ⁷ but what

194	carried, sir.	Spaconia might be <i>carrying</i> - perhaps either venereal disease or a baby (either derived from Bessus) - is unclear.
196	Arb. I have found it out, this woman carries letters.	
198	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] If this hold, 'twill be an ill world for bawds, chambermaids, and post-boys. I thank Heaven,	198-9: <i>If this...boys</i> = "if this is going to be the way things are from now on, then there will be bad endings for those who act as traditional go-betweens for secret lovers (a class which includes providers of prostitutes [ie. procuresses, or bawds], ladies' maids, and boys who carry messages or mail." ¹
200	I have none but his <u>letters-patents</u> , things of his own <u>inditing</u> .	= documents granting him various privileges. ¹ = composition.
202	Arb. Prince, this cunning cannot do't.	
204	Tigr. Do what, sir? I <u>reach you not</u> .	= "don't understand you".
206	Arb. It shall not serve your <u>turn</u> , prince.	= purpose.
208	Tigr. Serve my turn, sir?	
210	Arb. Ay, sir, it shall not serve your turn.	
212	Tigr. Be plainer, good sir.	
214	Arb. This woman shall carry no more letters back to your love, Panthea; by Heaven she shall not; I say she shall not.	
216	Mar. [<i>Aside</i>] <u>This</u> would make a saint swear like a soldier, and a soldier like <u>Termagant</u> .	= ie. this treatment. = the name of a violent but imaginary Islamic god who appeared in the old morality plays. ⁷ <i>Tergamant</i> was considered the ultimate ranter. ¹⁹
218	Tigr. This <u>beats</u> me more, king, than the blows you gave me.	= injures, hurts.
220	Arb. Take 'em away <u>both</u> , and together let 'em be	= ie. both Tigranes and Spaconia; again the king addresses Bacurius, who seems to serve as the jailer of all of Arbaces' imagined enemies.
222	prisoners, strictly and closely kept; or, sirrah, your life shall answer <u>it</u> ; and let nobody speak with 'em hereafter.	= for it.
224	Tigr. Well, I am <u>subject to you</u> , And must endure these <u>passions</u> .	= ie. "subject to your control". = wild emotional outbursts.
226	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>] This is th' imprisonment I have looked for always, And the dear place I would choose.	
228	[<i>Exeunt Bacurius, Tigranes, and Spaconia.</i>]	
230	Mar. Sir, have you done well now?	
232	Arb. Dare <u>you</u> reprove it?	= with "you", Arbaces signals formal distancing of himself

242	Mar. No.	from Mardonius.
244	Arb. You must be crossing me.	245: "you must always be thwarting my will."
246	Mar. I have no letters, sir, to anger you,	247-9: Mardonius is highly sarcastic: he refers to an
248	But a dry sonnet of my corporal's, To an old <u>sutler</u> 's wife; and that I'll burn, sir.	imaginary secret love-letter between one of his officers and the wife of one of the army's <i>sutlers</i> (line 249, one who sells the army provisions), which, given the king's apparent hostility towards such missives, would subject the officer and wife to punishment, and thus which Mardonius must now destroy to protect those involved; the subtext of Mardonius' comment is that kings have no business involving themselves in such trivial and private matters.
250	<u>'Tis like</u> to prove a fine age for the ignorant.	= "this is likely".
252	Arb. How darest thou so often forfeit thy life? Thou knowest it is in my power to take it.	
254	Mar. Yes, and I know you <u>wo' not</u> ; or, <u>if you do</u> ,	= would not. = ie. "if you were to take my life".
256	You'll miss it quickly.	
258	Arb. Why?	
260	Mar. Who shall then tell you of these childish follies, When I am dead? who shall <u>put to his power</u>	= set his power to work. ⁷
262	To draw those virtues out of a flood of <u>humours</u> , Where they are drowned, and make 'em shine again?	262: <i>humours</i> = whims, fancies. 262-3: a neat image of the king's virtues drowned out by his ghastly and violent emotions;
264	No, cut my head off: Then you may talk, <u>and be believed</u> and grow worse,	= ie. as no one will be around to contradict or censure whatever Arbaces says.
266	And have your too <u>self-glorious</u> temper <u>rocked</u>	= ie. self-glorifying. ¹ = the original editions have <i>rot</i> here; but the emendation to <i>rocked</i> has been accepted by all editors.
268	Into a dead sleep, and the kingdom with you, Till foreign swords be in your throats and slaughter	
270	Be everywhere about you, like your flatterers. Do, kill me.	
272	Arb. Prithee, be tamer, good Mardonius. <u>Thou</u> know'st I love thee; nay, I honour thee;	= his emotions once again swinging back to mildness, Arbaces returns to using the intimate and affectionate "thee" with Mardonius.
274	Believe it, good old soldier, I am thine; But I am <u>racked</u> clean from myself; bear with me;	= driven or stretched, ² as on the instrument of torture.
276	<u>Wo't</u> thou bear with me, good Mardonius?	= will or would.
278	<i>Enter Gobrias.</i>	
280	Mar. There comes a good man; love him too; he's temperate;	
282	You may live to have need of such a virtue; Rage is not still in fashion.	
284	Arb. Welcome, good Gobrias.	
286	Gob. My service and this letter to your grace.	
288	[Gives letter.]	

290	<i>Arb.</i> From whom?	
292	<i>Gob.</i> From the rich mine of virtue and all beauty, Your mournful sister.	
294	<i>Arb.</i> She is <u>in prison</u> , Gobrias, is she not?	= ie. confined in Gobrias' house.
296	<i>Gob.</i> [<i>Kneels</i>]	
298	She is, sir, till your pleasure do <u>enlarge</u> her,	= free.
300	Which on my knees I beg. Oh, 'tis not fit That all the sweetness of the world <u>in one</u> ,	= ie. contained in a single person.
302	The youth and virtue that would tame wild tigers, And wilder people that have known no manners, Should live thus cloistered up! For your love's sake,	302: ie. barbarians, or any uncivilized peoples.
304	If there be <u>any</u> in that noble heart To her, a wretched lady, and forlorn,	= ie. any love.
306	Or for her love to you, which is as much As nature and obedience ever gave,	
308	Have pity on her beauties!	
310	<i>Arb.</i> Prithee, stand up. 'Tis true, she is too <u>fair</u> ,	= beautiful.
312	[<i>Gobrias rises.</i>]	
314	And all these commendations but her own: Would thou hadst never so commended her,	315-6: Arbaces blames Gobrias' letters praising Panthea's beauty and virtue, which he had sent to the king while he was away at war, for his predicament.
316	Or I ne'er lived to have heard it, Gobrias!	
318	If thou but knew'st the wrong her beauty does her, Thou wouldst, in pity of her, <u>be a liar</u> .	= ie. dispraise rather than praise Panthea's obvious good looks.
320	Thy ignorance has drawn me, wretched man, <u>Whither</u> myself, nor thou, canst well tell. Oh my fate!	= in which direction, to where.
322	I think she loves me, but I fear <u>another</u> Is deeper in her heart: how think'st thou, Gobrias?	= ie. another love or person.
324	<i>Gob.</i> I do beseech your grace, believe it not; For, let me perish, if it be not false.	
326	Good sir, read her letter.	
328	[<i>Arbaces reads.</i>]	
330	<i>Mar.</i> [<i>Aside</i>] This love, or what a devil it is, I know not, begets more mischief than a <u>wake</u> . I had rather	= an English parish festival, ¹ which presumably included lots of drinking and rowdiness.
332	be well beaten, starved, or <u>lousy</u> , than live within the air on't. <u>He</u> , that had seen <u>this brave fellow</u> charge	= infested with lice, or just plain filthy.
334	through a grove of pikes but t'other day, and look upon him now, will ne'er believe his eyes again. If	= ie. any man. = ie. Arbaces.
336	he continue thus but two days more, a <u>tailor</u> may beat him with one hand tied behind him.	= tailors were considered cowardly and effeminate, and were thus frequently made the butt of such jokes.
338	<i>Arb.</i> Alas, she would be at liberty;	
340	And there be thousand reasons, Gobrias, Thousands, that will deny it;	
342	Which if she knew, she would contentedly Be where she is, and bless her virtue for it,	
344	And me, <u>though she were closer</u> : she would, Gobrias;	= "even if she were confined more closely than she is". ⁷

346 Good man, indeed she would.
 348 **Gob.** Then, good sir, for her satisfiön,
 350 Send for her, and with reason let her know
 352 Why she must live thus from you.
Arb. I will. Go, bring her to me.
 [Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

A Room in the House of Bessus.

Enter Bessus, two Sword-Men, and a Boy.

1 **Bes.** You're very welcome, both! – Some stools there,
 2 boy; and reach a table. – Gentlemen o' th' sword, pray
 4 sit, without more compliment. – Begone, child.
 [Exit Boy.]

6 I have been curious in the searching of you, because I
 8 understand you wise and valiant persons.

10 **1st Sw.M.** We understand ourselves, sir.

12 **Bes.** Nay, gentlemen, and my dear friends o' the sword,

No compliment, I pray; but to the case

14 I hang upon, which, in few, is my honour.

16 **2nd Sw.M.** You cannot hang too much, sir, for your
 honour.
 But to your case: be wise, and speak [the] truth.

18 **Bes.** My first doubt is, my beating by my prince.

20 **1st Sw.M.** Stay there a little, sir; Do you doubt a beating?
 22 Or have you had a beating by your prince?

Entering Characters: the *two Sword-Men* are professional instructors whom Bessus has hired to advise him regarding how to handle his disputes with those who would challenge him to a duel.³ The **Boy** is Bessus' servant.

= chairs were rarely used in Elizabethan times; most every person sat on a stool.

= "no need for formalities here."

= fastidious or careful.¹

12ff: though this farcical scene between the foolish Sword-Men and Bessus could appropriately enough be presented in prose, it has been suggested that it was instead deliberately, and humorously, written in verse as to suggest a "mock-heroic" dialogue.⁷ The verse, however, has a fair amount of irregularity to it; see *Postscript 3* at the end of the play on the problems of the verse lines of Bessus and the Sword-Men.

= in this conversation, *case* (or *cause*) refers to the grounds of a quarrel between gentlemen; the complex code of dueling is satirized wonderfully in this scene.

= ie. in few words.

= the 2nd Sword-Man humorously uses *hang* in its "gallows" sense.

= dread.³ = "my being beat up by my king."

21: **Stay there a little** = "stop there a moment".

21-22: **Do you...prince** = The Sword-Man asks for a clarification: does Bessus worry about a future beating, or has he already been beaten?

doubt = dread.⁶

The humour of the entire scene will be based on the absurd parsing, by the Sword-Men, of the exact conditions which must be present which would require a beating victim to challenge his tormenter. As a point of comparison, and for

24	Bes. Gentlemen o' th' sword, my prince has beaten me.	a little context regarding physical assaults and duels, see the note at the end of this scene.
26	2nd Sw.M. <u>Brother</u> , what think you of this case?	= they are not necessarily siblings; <i>brother</i> could mean simply "fellow sword-man" or "brother in arms".
28	1st Sw.M. If he have beaten him, <u>the case is clear</u> .	= ie. there are clear grounds for a challenge.
30	2nd Sw.M. If he have beaten him, I grant the case. –	
32	But <u>how?</u> – we cannot be too <u>subtle</u> in this business. –	= "how did he beat you?" = careful, particular. ¹
34	I say, but how?	
34	Bes. Even with his royal hand.	
36	1st Sw.M. Was it a blow of love or indignation?	
38	Bes. 'Twas twenty blows of indignation, gentlemen,	
40	Besides two blows o' th' face.	
42	2nd Sw.M. Those two blows o' th' face have made a new case on't;	41-42: the absurd argument here is that the <i>twenty blows</i> did not impinge on Bessus' honour, and therefore need not require him to challenge the king to preserve that honour; but the two blows to the face did.
44	The rest were but an honourable rudeness.	
44	1st Sw.M. Two blows o' th' face, and given by a worse man,	44f: the 1st Sword-Man disagrees with the 2nd; the king has every right to beat his subjects; only if the two blows had come from anyone <i>other</i> than the king would they be grounds for a challenge.
46	I must confess, as we sword-men say, had turned	
48	The business: mark me, brother, by a worse man;	
50	But, being by his prince, had they been ten,	
52	And those ten drawn ten teeth, besides the hazard	
54	Of his nose for ever, all these had been but <u>favours</u> .	= expressions of goodwill. ¹
56	This is my <u>flat</u> opinion, which I'll die <u>in</u> .	= unqualified. = ie. in defending or sticking to this opinion.
58	2nd Sw.M. The king may do much, captain, believe it;	52: the 2nd Sword-Man agrees with his buddy.
60	For had he cracked your skull through, like a bottle,	
62	Or broke a rib or two with tossing of you,	
64	Yet you had lost no honour. This is strange,	
66	You may imagine, but this is truth now, captain.	
68	Bes. I will be glad to embrace it, gentlemen.	58: Bessus is of course relieved that, his honour not being impinged upon by Arbaces' beating, he does not to have to challenge the king.
70	But how far may he strike me?	
72	1st Sw.M. There's another,	
74	A new cause rising from the time and distance,	
76	In which I will deliver my opinion.	
78	He may strike, beat, or cause to be beaten;	
80	For these are natural to man:	
82	Your prince, I say, may beat you so far forth	
84	As his dominion reacheth; <u>that's for</u> the distance;	= "so much for".
86	The time, ten miles a-day, I take it.	
88	2nd Sw.M. Brother, you err, 'tis fifteen miles a-day;	
90	His <u>stage</u> is ten, his beatings are fifteen.	= ie. distance.
92	Bes. 'Tis of the longest, but we subjects must –	
94	1st Sw.M. Be subject to it: you are wise and virtuous.	

78 **Bes.** Obedience ever makes that noble use on't,
To which I dedicate my beaten body.
I must trouble you a little further, gentlemen o' th' sword.

80

2nd Sw.M. No trouble at all to us, sir, if we may
Profit your understanding: we are bound,
By virtue of our calling, to utter our opinions
Shortly and discretely.

86 **Bes.** My sorest business is, I have been kicked.

88 **2nd Sw.M.** How far, sir ?

90 **Bes.** Not to flatter myself in it, all over:
My sword lost, but not forcèd; for discretely
I rendered it, to save that imputation.

92

94 **1st Sw.M.** It showed discretion, the best part of valour.

96 **2nd Sw.M.** Brother, this is a pretty case; pray, ponder on't:
Our friend here has been kicked.

98

1st Sw.M. He has so, brother.

100

2nd Sw.M. Sorely, he says. Now, had he sit down here
Upon the mere kick, 't had been cowardly.

102

104 **1st Sw.M.** I think, it had been cowardly indeed.

106 **2nd Sw.M.** But our friend has redeemed it, in delivering
His sword without compulsion; and that man
That took it of him, I pronounce a weak one,
And his kicks nullities.

108

110 He should have kicked him after the delivery,
Which is the confirmation of a coward.

112

114 **1st Sw.M.** Brother, I take it you mistake the question;
For say, that I were kicked.

116 **2nd Sw.M.** I must not say so;
Nor I must not hear it spoke by th' tongue of man:
You kicked, dear brother! you are merry.

118

120 **1st Sw.M.** But put the case, I were kicked.

122 **2nd Sw.M.** Let them put it,
That are things weary of their lives, and know
Not honour! Put the case, you were kicked!

124

126 **1st Sw.M.** I do not say I was kicked.

128 **2nd Sw.M.** Nor no silly creature that wears his head
Without a case, his soul in a skin-coat:
You kicked, dear brother!

130

91: **not forced** = Bessus' sword was not forced from him - he had, at least in outward show, voluntarily handed his sword over to Bacurius (even though he was really under duress).

discretely (line 91) = separately, ie. not connected in any way to his kicking.¹

94: this proverbial sentiment originated in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*: "The better part of valour is discretion."

= worthy.¹

= acquiesced, backed down.¹

= ie. his honour.

= from.

= of no importance, ie. nothing to quarrel over.

116f: the 2nd Sword-Man's equivocation leads to an absurd argument between the two advisors.

= kidding.

= suppose.

= ie. "those who would kick you are people who are".

= simple or weak.¹

= unprotected;⁷ the sense of this speech is to suggest that no one who was vulnerable to a severe beating would dare kick his companion.⁷

132	Bes. Nay, gentlemen, let us do what we shall do, Truly and honestly! Good sirs, to the question.	
134	1st Sw.M. Why, then, I say, suppose your boy <u>kicked</u> , captain.	= was kicked; in order to appease his fellow, the 1st Sword-Man changes the hypothetical scenario: but now the 2nd Sword-Man misunderstands his colleague to mean he was kicked <i>by</i> the Boy.
136	2nd Sw.M. The boy may be supposed, he's <u>liable</u> :	= likely to do so.
138	But, kick my brother!	
140	1st Sw.M. A foolish, forward zeal, sir, in my friend, But to the boy: suppose the boy were kicked.	140: the 1st Sword-Man apologizes to Bessus (<i>Sir</i>) for his friend's hypersensitivity and aggressive misunderstanding.
142	Bes. I do suppose it.	
144	1st Sw.M. Has your boy a sword?	
146	Bes. Surely, no; I pray, <u>suppose</u> a sword too.	= "let's suppose he had".
148	1st Sw.M. I do suppose it. You grant, your boy was kicked then.	
150	2nd Sw.M. By no means, captain; let it be supposed still;	
152	The word "grant" makes not for us.	152: the brothers are chopping logic; "I'm not <i>granting</i> that he was <i>actually</i> kicked, only <i>supposing</i> he was."
154	1st Sw.M. I say, this must be granted.	
156	2nd Sw.M. This <i>must</i> be granted, brother!	156: the 2nd Sword-Man repeats his colleague's words out of disbelief; now he objects to his using the word <i>must</i> .
158	1st Sw.M. Ay, this <i>must</i> be granted.	
160	2nd Sw.M. Still the <i>must</i> !	
162	1st Sw.M. I say, this <i>must</i> be granted.	
164	2nd Sw.M. Give me the <i>must</i> again! brother, you <u>palter</u> .	= equivocate. ¹
166	1st Sw.M. I will not hear you, <u>wasp</u> .	= the 1st Sword-Man implies his companion is acting like a persistent, petty jerk. ¹
168	2nd Sw.M. Brother, I say, you palter: the <i>must</i> three times together!	
170	I wear as sharp steel as another man, And my <u>fox</u> bites as deep: <i>musted</i> , my dear brother!	= common term for the ancient English broadsword. ³
172	But to the case again.	
174	Bes. Nay, look you, gentlemen –	
176	2nd Sw.M. In a word, <u>I ha' done</u> .	= "I am done arguing".
178	1st Sw.M. A <u>tall man</u> , but intemperate; 'tis great pity. Once more, suppose the boy kicked.	= brave man, ie. referring to his associate.
180	2nd Sw.M. Forward.	181: "fine, continue."
182	1st Sw.M. And, being <u>thoroughly</u> kicked, laughs at the kicker.	= common alternative for <i>thoroughly</i> .
184	2nd Sw.M. So much for us. Proceed.	

186	<i>1st Sw.M.</i> And in this beaten scorn, as I may call it,	187-8: the 1st Sword-Man has presented, in the hypothetical
188	Delivers up his weapon; where lies the error?	case of the Boy being beaten and then turning over his
		sword, exactly what happened between Bessus and
		Bacurius.
190	<i>Bes.</i> It lies i' the beating, sir: I found it four days <u>since</u> .	= ago.
192	<i>2nd Sw.M.</i> The error, and a <u>sore</u> one, as I take it,	= severe. ²
194	Lies in the thing kicking.	
196	<i>Bes.</i> I understand that well; 'tis <u>sore</u> indeed, sir.	= Bessus puns on <i>sore</i> .
198	<i>1st Sw.M.</i> That is, according to the man that did it.	
200	<i>2nd Sw.M.</i> There springs a new <u>branch</u> : whose was the	= ie. line of argument.
202	foot?	
204	<i>Bes.</i> A lord's.	
206	<i>1st Sw.M.</i> The case is mighty; but, had it been two lords,	
208	And both had kicked you, if you laughed, 'tis clear.	= ie. then the case is clear.
210	<i>Bes.</i> I did laugh; but how will that help me, gentlemen?	
212	<i>2nd Sw.M.</i> Yes, it shall help you, if you laughed aloud.	
214	<i>Bes.</i> As loud as a kicked man could laugh, I laughed, sir.	
216	<i>1st Sw.M.</i> My reason now: the valiant man is known	213: <i>contemning</i> = scorning.
218	By suffering and <u>contemning</u> ; you have [had]	213-4: <i>you have...valiant</i> = ie. "by suffering the
220	Enough of both, and you are valiant.	kicking, and then showing scorn by laughing at it, you
222		have proved you are valiant, ie. your honour has been
224		preserved."
226	<i>2nd Sw.M.</i> If he be sure he has been kicked enough;	= suffering.
228	For that brave <u>sufferance</u> you speak of, brother,	219-220: <i>from eighteen...thirty</i> = the ages when such a
230	Consists not in a beating and away,	beating would be most resented by the recipient. ⁷
232	But in a cudgelled body, from eighteen	= ie. struck.
234	To eight and thirty; in a head <u>rebuked</u>	= "wooden pins in the side of the bedstead for holding the
236	With pots of all size, daggers, stools, and <u>bed-staves</u> ;	bed-clothes in position" (Bond).
238	This shows a valiant man.	
240	<i>Bes.</i> Then I am valiant, as valiant as the proudest;	
242	For these are all familiar things to me;	= lack.
244	Familiar as my sleep or <u>want</u> of money;	
246	All my whole body's but one bruise with beating:	= beaten.
248	I think I have been <u>cudgelled</u> with all nations,	
250	And almost all religions.	
252	<i>2nd Sw.M.</i> Embrace him, brother! this man is valiant;	
254	I know it by myself, he's valiant.	
256	<i>1st Sw.M.</i> Captain, thou art a valiant gentleman;	
258	<u>Abide</u> upon't, a very valiant man.	= depend. ³
260	<i>Bes.</i> My equal friends o' th' sword, I must request	237-8: <i>I must...to this</i> = "let's shake on this".
262	Your hands to this.	

240 **2nd Sw.M.** 'Tis fit it should be.
 242 **Bes.** [To boy within.] Boy,
 Get me some wine, and pen and ink, within. –
 244 Am I clear, gentlemen?
 246 **1st Sw.M.** Sir, when the world has taken notice what
 We have done, make much of your body; for I'll pawn
 248 My steel, men will be cover of their legs
 Hereafter.
 250 **Bes.** I must request you go along,
 252 and testify to the lord Bacurius,
 Whose foot has struck me, how you find my case.
 254 **2nd Sw.M.** We will; and tell that lord he must be ruled,
 256 Or there be those abroad will rule his lordship.
 258 [Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

An Apartment in the Palace.

*Enter on one side Arbaces,
 on the other Gobrias and Panthea.*

1 **Gob.** Sir, here's the princess.
 2
 3 **Arb.** Leave us, then, alone;
 4 For the main cause of her imprisonment
 Must not be heard by any but herself. –
 6
 7 [Exit Gobrias.]
 8
 9 You're welcome, sister; – and I would to Heaven
 10 I could so bid you by another name! –
 11 If you above love not such sins as these,
 12 Circle my heart with thoughts as cold as snow,
 To quench these rising flames that harbour here.
 14

= the sense is "in the clear", or "free of any further obligation in this matter."

= more reserved, ie. people will be more careful about who they go around kicking from now on!

251-3: Bessus requests the Sword-Men go with him to Bacurius and explain what they have discussed; Bessus is relieved that he is not required to challenge or fight with him.

= ie. governed by this decision.

256: a threat to Bacurius is implied.

The Dueling Code and Challenges, Part 2: in addition to articulating rules for dealing with slanders, Vincentio Saviolo, in his 1594 treatise *Honor and Honorable Quarrels*, also explains how potential duelists should develop their cause in the case of a battery.

If person *A* strikes *B*, *B* must accuse *A* of injuring him; *A* must respond that *B* is lying, and *B*, to back up his accusation, is the one who must issue the challenge. However, if *B* does not deny beating *A*, then there is no cause for a challenge (because a duel should never be offered for purposes of revenge) and *B* should seek damages in law.

We can compare this to the situation described in the note at the end of Act II.ii, in which *A*, having made a charge against *B* (which *B* calls a lie), must be the one to challenge; in other words, one must be accused of lying in order to challenge his adversary.

Entering Characters: Gobrias has convinced Arbaces to meet Panthea to explain the reason for her imprisonment.

9f: **and I would...**: the rest of the speech may be an aside.

= Arbaces asks God, or the gods, for help, sort of: "if you disapprove of incest, then remove the love I have for my sister from my heart."

16	Pan. Sir, does it please you I shall speak?	
18	Arb. Please me!	
20	Ay, more than all the art of music can, Thy speech doth please me; for it <u>ever</u> sounds	= always.
22	As thou brought'st joyful, unexpected news: And yet it is not <u>fit</u> thou shouldst be heard; I prithee, think so.	= appropriate. 22: "please, believe me."
24	Pan. Be it so; I will.	
26	I am the first that ever had a wrong So far from being <u>fit</u> to have redress,	= appropriate, qualified; note how in this speech Panthea has picked up on Arbaces' use of the word <i>fit</i> , and uses <i>fit</i> repeatedly, providing a sense of sarcasm; the repeated rhyming of <i>it</i> with <i>fit</i> also gives the lines a Dr. Seuss-ish quality.
28	That 'twas unfit to hear it: I will back To prison, rather than <u>disquiet</u> you, And wait till it be fit.	= trouble, upset.
30	Arb. No, do not go;	
32	For I will hear thee with a serious thought: I have collected <u>all that's man</u> about me	= ie. all the qualities desirable in a true man.
34	Together strongly, and I am <u>resolved</u>	= determined.
36	To hear thee <u>largely</u> : but I do beseech thee, Do not come nearer to me, for there is	= freely.
38	Something in that, that will <u>undo</u> us both.	= ruin.
40	Pan. Alas, sir, am I venom?	
42	Arb. Yes, to me; Though, of thyself, I think thee to be in	42-44: <i>I think...can make</i> = Arbaces means that he believes Panthea to be of a perfect or an ideal temperament.
	As equal a degree of heat or cold	43: the specific reference here is to the four humours, or fluids, - phlegm, blood, yellow bile and black bile - which were believed to be contained within the human body; if these humours were present in their correct proportions, then the possessor was in good health; but if there was too much or too little of any humour, sickness, or an exaggerated temperament of one type or another, would manifest itself: for example, if a person suffered from an excess of yellow bile, he or she would tend towards cholera, or anger. The humours could further be classified by their "temperature": black bile and phlegm were <i>cold</i> , blood and yellow bile <i>hot</i> ; Panthea, says Arbaces, is in possession of a good balance of these humours.
44	As nature can make; yet, as <u>unsound</u> men	= unhealthy, sick.
46	Convert the sweetness and the nourishing'st <u>meats</u> Into diseases, so shall I, <u>distempered</u> ,	= food. = "in my disordered state".
48	Do thee: I prithee, draw no nearer to me.	
50	Pan. Sir, this is <u>that I would</u> : I am of late Shut from the world; and why it should be thus	= "what I wanted to see you about".
52	Is all I wish to know.	

54	Arb. Why, <u>credit</u> me, Panthea, credit me, that am thy brother, Thy loving brother, that there is a cause	= believe.
56	Sufficient, yet unfit for thee to know, That might <u>undo</u> thee everlastingly,	= ruin.
58	<u>Only to hear</u> . Wilt thou but credit this? By Heaven, tis true; believe it, if thou canst.	= "even just to hear it."
60		
62	Pan. Children and fools are ever credulous, And I am both I think, for I believe. If you <u>dissemble</u> , be it on your head!	= "are deceiving me".
64	I'll back unto my prison. Yet, methinks, I might be kept in some place where you are;	
66	For in myself I find, I know not what To call it, but it is a great desire	66-68: this must be torture for Arbaces to have to hear this.
68	To see you often.	
70	Arb. <u>Fie, you come in a step</u> ; what do you mean? Dear sister, do not so! Alas, Panthea;	= an expression of reproach. ¹ = Panthea likely moves closer to Arbaces.
72	Where I am <u>would you be</u> ? why, that's the cause You are imprisoned, that you may not be	= "is where you would like to be?"
74	Where I am.	
76	Pan. Then I must endure it, sir. Heaven keep you!	
78		
80	Arb. Nay, you shall hear the cause <u>in short</u> , Panthea; And, when thou hear'st it, thou wilt blush for me, And hang thy head down, like a violet	= briefly.
82	Full of the morning's dew. There is a way To gain thy freedom; but 'tis such a one	
84	As puts thee in worse <u>bondage</u> , and I know Thou wouldst encounter fire, and <u>make a proof</u>	84: bondage = slavery. 84-87: I know...follow it = "I know you would gladly walk through fire to test (<i>make a proof</i>) whether the gods will protect those who are free from sin, or they will accompany or practice (<i>follow</i>) it."
86	Whether the gods have care of innocence, Rather than <u>follow</u> it. Know, I have lost,	
88	The only difference <u>betwixt</u> man and beast, My <u>reason</u> .	= between. = ability to reason, perhaps suggesting "sanity".
90		
92	Pan. Heaven forbid!	
94	Arb. Nay, it is gone; And I am left as far without <u>a bound</u> As the wild ocean, that obeys the winds;	= limits.
96	Each sudden passion throws me where it <u>lists</u> , And overwhelms all <u>that</u> oppose my will.	= wants to. = who.
98	I have beheld thee with a lustful eye; My heart is set on wickedness, to act	
100	Such sins with thee, as I have been afraid To think of. If thou dar'st consent to this,	
102	(Which, I beseech thee, do not,) thou mayst gain Thy liberty, and yield me <u>a content</u> :	= satisfaction. ¹
104	If not, thy dwelling must be dark and <u>close</u> , Where I may never see thee: for Heaven knows,	= confined and concealed. ¹
106	That laid this punishment upon my pride,	

<p>108 Thy <u>sight</u> at some time will <u>enforce</u> my madness To make a start e'en to <u>thy ravishing</u>. Now spit upon me, and call all reproaches 110 Thou canst devise together, and at once Hurl 'em against me; for I am a sickness, 112 As killing as the plague, ready to seize thee.</p> <p>114 Pan. Far be it from me to revile the king! But it is true that I shall rather choose 116 To search out death, that <u>else</u> would search out me, And in a grave sleep with my innocence, 118 Than welcome such a sin. It is my fate; To these <u>cross accidents</u> I was ordained, 120 And must have patience; and, <u>but that</u> my eyes <u>Have more of woman in 'em</u> than my heart, 122 I would not weep. Peace enter you again!</p> <p>124 Arb. Farewell; and, good Panthea, pray for me, (Thy prayers are pure,) that I may find a death, 126 However soon, before my passions grow, <u>That</u> they forget what I desire is sin; 128 For <u>thither</u> they are tending. If that happen, Then I shall <u>force thee</u>, though thou wert a virgin</p> <p>130 By vow to <u>Heaven</u>, and shall pull a heap Of strange yet <u>un-invented</u> sin upon me. 132</p> <p>134 Pan. Sir, I will pray for you; yet you shall know It is a sullen fate that governs us: For I could wish, as heartily as you, 136 I were no sister to you; I should then Embrace our lawful love, sooner than health. 138</p> <p>140 Arb. Couldst thou <u>affect me</u>, then?</p> <p>142 Pan. So perfectly, That, as it is, I ne'er shall sway my heart To <u>like</u> another.</p> <p>144 Arb. Then, I curse my birth. 146 Must this be added to my miseries, That thou art willing too? Is there no <u>stop</u> 148 To our full happiness but these <u>mere sounds</u>, Brother and sister?</p> <p>150 Pan. There is nothing else: 152 But these, alas! will separate us more Than twenty worlds betwixt us!</p> <p>154 Arb. I have lived 156 To conquer men, and now am <u>overthrown</u> Only by words, brother and sister. Where 158 Have those words dwelling? I will find 'em out, And utterly destroy 'em; but they are</p>	<p>= "seeing you". = reinforce, ie. magnify or intensify.¹ = ie. "my sexually assaulting or raping you."</p> <p>= otherwise.</p> <p>= adverse fortunes.¹ = except for the fact that. = typical Elizabethan expression for crying.</p> <p>= read as "so that". = in that direction. 129: force thee = "take you (sexually) by force". 129-130 : though thou...Heaven = "even if you had taken a vow to Heaven to remain celibate", as if she had entered a convent. = <i>Heaven</i>, unusually, is disyllabic here. = never before thought of or seen.</p> <p>= "love me (in that way)".</p> <p>= ie. love.</p> <p>= obstacle. = ie. words alone.</p> <p>= defeated.</p>
---	--

160	Not to be grasped: <u>let 'em be men or beasts,</u> And I will cut 'em from the earth; or towns,	= ie. "let words be but".
162	And I will raze 'em, and then blow 'em up: Let 'em be seas, and I will drink 'em off,	
164	And yet have unquenched fire left in my breast; Let 'em be anything but merely voice.	
166		
168	Pan. But 'tis not in the power of any force Or <u>policy</u> to conquer them.	= expedience or cunning. ^{1,2}
170	Arb. Panthea, What shall we do? shall we stand firmly here,	
172	And gaze our eyes out?	
174	Pan. Would I could do so! But I shall weep out mine.	
176		
178	Arb. Accursèd man, Thou bought'st thy reason at too dear a rate;	178: "you have obtained your ability to reason at too high a price;" Arbaces apostrophizes to humanity. = limited.
180	For thou hast all thy actions <u>bounded in</u> With <u>curious</u> rules, when every beast is free:	= scrupulously careful or strict. ^{3,7}
182	<u>What</u> is there that acknowledges a kindred But wretched man? Who ever saw the bull	= ie. "what animal".
184	Fearfully leave the heifer that he liked, Because they had <u>one dam</u> ?	= ie. the same mother.
186	Pan. Sir, I disturb you And myself too; 'twere better I were gone.	
188		
190	Arb. I will not be so foolish as I was; Stay, we will love just as becomes our births,	
192	No otherwise: brothers and sisters may Walk hand in hand together; so will we.	
194	Come nearer: Is there any hurt in this?	193: the couple hold hands here.
196	Pan. I hope not.	
198	Arb. Faith, there is none at all: And tell me truly now, is there not <u>one</u>	= anyone.
200	You love <u>above</u> me?	= more than.
202	Pan. No, by Heaven.	
204	Arb. Why, yet You sent unto Tigranes, sister.	
206	Pan. True, But for another: for the truth –	
208		
210	Arb. No more: I'll <u>credit</u> thee; I know thou canst not lie,	= believe.
212	Thou art all truth.	
214	Pan. But is there nothing else That we may do, but only walk? Methinks Brothers and sisters lawfully may kiss.	

216 *Arb.* And so they may, Panthea; so will we;
218 And kiss again too: we were scrupulous
And foolish, but we will be so no more.

220
222 *Pan.* If you have any mercy, let me go
To prison, to my death, to anything:
I feel a sin growing upon my blood,
224 Worse than all these, hotter, I fear, than yours.

226 *Arb.* That is impossible: what should we do?

228 *Pan.* Fly, sir, for Heaven's sake.

230 *Arb.* So we must: away!
Sin grows upon us more by this delay.

232
[*Exeunt severally.*]

= the sense is "overly-scrupulous".

223-4: like Panthea, the reader, too, may find him- or herself breathing a little heavier here!

= in separate directions: Panthea returns to Gobrias' house.

Incest and the Law in England: Historically, the ecclesiastical courts handled cases involving sex between blood relatives. A 1650 law passed by Parliament made incest a capital offense, but the law appears to have been enforced rarely, if at all. The crime of incest was not again addressed by any modern statute in England until 1908.²⁰

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Before the Palace.

Enter Mardonius and Lygones.

1 **Mar.** Sir, the king has seen your commission, and
believes it;
2 And freely, by this warrant, gives you power
To visit prince Tigranes, your noble master.
4
6 **Lyg.** I thank his grace, and kiss his hand.
8 **Mar.** But is the main of all your business
Ended in this?
10 **Lyg.** I have another, but a worse:
I am ashamed: it is a business –
12
14 **Mar.** You seem a worthy person; and a stranger
I am sure you are: you may employ me,
If you please, without your purse; such offices
Should ever be their own rewards.
16
18 **Lyg.** I am bound to your nobleness.
20 **Mar.** I may have need of you, and then this courtesy,
If it be any, is not ill bestowed.
22
24 But may I civilly desire the rest?
I shall not be a hurter, if no helper.
26
28 **Lyg.** Sir, you shall know I have lost a foolish daughter,
And with her all my patiënce: pilfered away
By a mean captain of your king's.
30
32 **Mar.** Stay there, sir:
If he have reached the noble worth of captain,
He may well claim a worthy gentlewoman,
Though she were yours and noble.
34
36 **Lyg.** I grant all that too. But this wretched fellow
Reaches no further than the empty name
That serves to feed him: were he valiant,
Or had but in him any noble nature,
38 That might hereafter promise him a good man,
My cares were so much lighter, and my grave
40 A span yet from me.
42
44 **Mar.** I confess, such fellows
Be in all royal camps, and have and must be,

= in front of.

Entering Characters: *Lygones* is an Armenian Lord, and thus a subject of Tigranes'.

= document delegating authority to Lygones to act on behalf of the government of Armenia.

= ie. official permission from Arbaces to Lygones.

= business is trisyllabic here, and in line 11 below:
BUS-i-ness.

= foreigner.

= Mardonius is happy to help out Lygones without requiring a bribe or payment.

20-21: ie. "after all, I may need a favour from you one day, in which case this help I give you will have been worth bestowing."

22: "may I, without offending you, inquire about your other mission?"

= stolen away, though Lygones does not necessarily think she was kidnapped; rather, he is bitter she has run away.
= base commander.

= stop.

30-32: "if the man you describe has reached the level of commander in the king's army, than it is surely appropriate for him to have taken a woman who is not just of gentle birth, but one who is even noble - even if she is your daughter - for a wife.

39: *My cares were* = "my worries would be".

39-40: *and my grave...from me* = the sense is, "and my death not yet near."

span = a small distance, literally the width of a stretched-out hand.¹

42-43: "I admit, every army contains a few of such worthless soldiers".

44	To make the sin of coward more detested In the mean soldier, that with such a <u>foil</u>	45-46: with such...valour = common Elizabethan metaphor from jewelry, of a setting made of a lesser metal used to enhance (<i>set off</i>) the splendor of a jewel; the idea is that the cowardice of a base (<i>mean</i>) soldier makes the valour of the better men more conspicuous. = ie. "by your description".
46	Sets off much valour. <u>By description</u> ,	
48	I should now guess him to you; it was Bessus, I dare almost with confidence pronounce it.	
50	Lyg. 'Tis such a scurvy name as Bessus; And, now I think, 'tis he.	50f: when Bessus, in the play's first scene, left Armenia with Spaconia to place her in Panthea's household, Lygones had assumed Bessus was actually taking Spaconia - his daughter - for himself.
52		
54	Mar. Captain do you call him? Believe me, sir, you have a misery Too mighty for your age: a pox upon him! For that must be the end of all his service. Your daughter was not mad, sir?	54-55: you have...your age = you are too old to have to endure a grief such as this."
56		57: Mardonius assumes that, if she was not taken by force, that Lygones' daughter must have been insane if she voluntarily eloped with Bessus.
58		
60	Lyg. No; <u>would she had been!</u> The fault had had more credit. I would do something.	= "it would have been better if she were (mad)!" 60: "this error in judgment would be more understandable. I wish there was something I could do."
62	Mar. I would <u>fain</u> counsel you, but to what I know not. He's so <u>below</u> a beating, that the women Find him not worthy of their <u>distaves</u> ; and	= like to. = unworthy of. = distaffs - instruments for weaving - which Mardonius imagines could be used as weapons, if it were worth it, to beat Bessus off with. = throw away, ie. waste.
64		
66	To hang him were to <u>cast away</u> a rope. He's such an airy, thin, unbodied coward, That no revenge can catch him.	
68	I'll tell you, sir, and tell you truth: this rascal Fears neither God nor man; has been <u>so beaten</u> ,	= ie. beaten so often.
70	<u>Sufferance</u> has made him <u>wainscot</u> ; he has had, Since he was first a slave.	= suffering. = oak, ie. tough or hard as oak. ¹
72	At least three hundred daggers set in's head, As little boys do new knives in hot meat;	
74	There's not a rib in's body, <u>o' my conscience</u> , That has not been thrice broken with <u>dry</u> beating;	= honestly, truly. = ie. severe. ⁷
76	And now his sides look like <u>two wicker targets</u> ,	76: two wicker targets = two small round shields made of wicker. 76-78: Bond interprets: Bessus' sides are so battered with beatings that they have taken on the uneven surface of wicker or a roughly-built <i>wall</i> . ⁷
78	Every way bended: Children will <u>shortly take him</u> for a wall, And set their <u>stone-bows</u> in his forehead. He Is of so base a sense, I cannot in A week imagine what should be done to him.	= "soon mistake him". 79: ie. use his head like a <i>wall</i> on which to rest their cross-bows as they prepare to shoot them. ⁷ stone-bows (line 79) = cross-bows used to shoot stones. ³
80		
82		
84	Lyg. <u>Sure, I have</u> committed some great sin, That this strange fellow should be made my <u>rod</u> : <u>I would see him</u> ; but I shall have no patience.	= "certainly, I must have". = instrument of punishment. ¹ = "I would like to meet him."

86 **Mar.** 'Tis no great matter, if you have not. If a laming

88 of him, or such a toy, may do you pleasure, sir, he has

90 it for you; and I'll help you to him: 'tis no news to him

to have a leg broken, or a shoulder out, with being

turn'd o' the stones like a tansy. Draw not your sword,

92 if you love it; for, on my conscience, his head will

break it; we use him i' the wars like a ram, to shake a

94 wall withal. Here comes the very person of him; do as

96 you shall find your temper; I must leave you: but if

you do not break him like a biscuit, you're much to

blame, sir.

98

[Exit.]

100

Enter Bessus and the two Sword-Men.

102

Lyg. Is your name Bessus?

104

Bes. Men call me Captain Bessus.

106

Lyg. Then, Captain Bessus, you are a rank rascal,

108 without more exordiums, a dirty frozen slave! And

with the favour of your friends here, I will beat you.

110

2nd Sw.M. Pray, use your pleasure, sir; you seem to

112 be a gentleman.

114 **Lyg.** [*Beats Bessus.*] Thus, Captain Bessus, thus!

116

[Kicks him, &c.]

118 Thus twinge your nose, thus kick you, and thus tread

you.

120 **Bes.** I do beseech you, yield your cause, sir, quickly.

122 **Lyg.** Indeed, I should have told you that first.

124 **Bes.** I take it so.

126 **1st Sw.M.** Captain, he should, indeed; he is mistaken.

128 **Lyg.** Sir, you shall have it quickly, and more beating:
You have stolen away a lady, Captain Coward,

87f: Mardonius gives his guest permission to beat up Bessus!

laming = probably should be *lamming*, a word which appears in the third scene of this Act, and means "beating".
= trifle.

= Mardonius seems to be indicating an injury of some kind to Bessus' testicles - *stones* was a common vulgarism for these organs.

A *tansy* was an early version of an omelet, a cake of eggs mixed with a number of ingredients, including cream, sugar, rose-water, spinach and various herbs, including tansy; the phrase *like a tansy* is indicated by both the OED and *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia* of 1914 to mean "completely" or "properly".

Putting it all together, we get something like, perhaps, "tossed around completely on his testicles."

= ie. a battering-ram.

= "by that means", or "in this way."¹

= further introductory words or preamble.¹

= "tell me the reason for this" (*cause* also means "grounds for a quarrel").

130	And such a one –	
132		[Beats him.]
134	Bes. Hold, I beseech you, hold, sir! I never yet stole any living thing	
136	That had a tooth <u>about</u> it.	= ie. in.
138	Lyg. Sir, I know you dare <u>lie</u> .	= Bessus will take <i>lie</i> to mean <i>lay with</i> , as in <i>sleep with</i> .
140	Bes. With none but summer-whores, upon my life, sir:	
142	My means and <u>manners</u> never could attempt Above a hedge or <u>haycock</u> .	141-2: generally, "because of my general lack of financial means, as well as my habit (<i>manners</i>) ¹ , I never take for myself any woman other than the absolute basest of prostitutes." More specifically, Bessus is referring to those whores who service clients outside of the brothels they are normally attached to, thus cheating their employers of income; such prostitutes were known as <i>hedge whores</i> , ²¹ a term suggesting they transacted business under hedges, or as Bessus adds, conical haystacks (<i>haycocks</i>). ¹
144	Lyg. Sirrah, that <u>quits</u> not me. Where is this lady? Do that you do not use to do, tell truth,	= answers. ²
146	Or, by my hand, I'll beat your captain's brains out, Wash 'em and put 'em in again, that will I.	
148	Bes. There was a lady, sir, I must confess, Once in my charge; the prince Tigranes gave her To my guard, for her safety. How I <u>used</u> her	= treated.
152	She may herself report; she's with the prince now. I did but wait upon her like a <u>groom</u> ,	= servant.
154	Which she will testify, I am sure; if not, My brains are at your service, when you please, sir,	
156	And glad I have 'em for you.	
158	Lyg. This is <u>most</u> likely. Sir, I ask your pardon And am sorry I was so intemperate.	= more (apparently not sarcastic); the scenario Bessus just described is more likely to have occurred than the thought that Lygones' daughter voluntarily hooked up with Bessus.
160		
162	Bes. Well, I can ask no more. You would think it strange now, to have me beat you at first sight.	
164	Lyg. Indeed I would; but I know your goodness can forget twenty beatings: you must forgive me.	
166	Bes. Yes; there's my hand. Go where you will, I shall think you a valiant fellow, for all this.	
168		
170	Lyg. [Aside] My daughter is a whore; I feel it now too <u>sensible</u> ; yet I will see her;	169: Lygones still blames Spaconia, but now for running away with Tigranes rather than with Bessus. = ie. with the senses.
172	Discharge myself of being father to her, And then back to my country, and there die. –	171: he will disown her.
174	Farewell, captain.	
176	Bes. Farewell, sir, farewell; commend me to the gentlewoman, I pray.	
178		

[Exit Lygones.]

180

1st Sw.M. How now, captain? bear up, man.

182

Bes. Gentlemen o' the sword, your hands once more;
I have been kicked again; but the foolish fellow is
penitent, he asked me mercy, and my honour's safe.

186

2nd Sw.M. We knew that, or the foolish fellow
had better have kicked his grandsire.

= "would have been better off had he".

190

Bes. Confirm, confirm, I pray.

192

1st Sw.M. There be our hands again.

194

2nd Sw.M. Now let him come, and say he was not
sorry, and he sleeps for it.

= lies in death,¹ ie. dies.

196

Bes. Alas, good, ignorant old man! let him go, let him
go: these courses will undo him.

= ruin.

198

[Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE II.

A Prison.

The Setting: As did Scene iv of Act IV, this scene likely actually takes place in a room in Bacurius' house.

Enter Lygones and Bacurius.

1

Bac. My lord, your authority is good, and I am glad it is
so; for my consent would never hinder you from seeing
your own king: I am a minister, but not a governor of
this state. Yonder is your king; I'll leave you.

= ie. a servant of the state.¹

2

4

6

[Exit.]

8

Enter Tigranes and Spaconia.

10

Lyg. There he is,
Indeed, and with him my disloyal child.

12

Tigr. I do perceive my fault so much, that yet,
Methinks, thou shouldst not have forgiven me.

13-14: Tigranes is addressing Spaconia; Arbaces, we remember, had imprisoned the two together in Act IV.ii.

14

16

Lyg. Health to your majesty!

18

Tigr. What, good Lygones!
Welcome: what business brought thee hither?

20

22

Lyg. Several
Businesses: my public business will appear
By this;

24

[Gives a paper.]

26

28

I have a message to deliver,
Which, if it please you so to authorize,
Is an embassy from the Armenian state
Unto Arbaces for your liberty:

30

The offer's there set down; please you to read it.

= proposed ransom.

32	Tigr. There is no alteration happened since	
34	I came thence?	
36	Lyg. None, sir; all is as it was.	
38	Tigr. And all our friends are well?	
40	Lyg. All very well.	
42	[<i>Tigranes reads.</i>]	
44	Spa. [<i>Aside</i>]	
46	Though I have done nothing but what was good,	45-47: Spaconia reveals in this aside that she never told her
48	I dare not see my father: it was fault	father of her affair with Tigranes, or the purpose that
	Enough not to acquaint him with that good.	brought her to Iberia.
50	Lyg. Madam, I should have seen you.	
52	Spa. Oh, good sir, forgive me!	
54	Lyg. Forgive you! why, I am no kin to you, am I?	53: Lygones is sarcastic.
56	Spa. Should it be measured by <u>my mean deserts</u> ,	= "what I deserve for my base or undignified behavior".
	Indeed you are not.	
58	Lyg. Thou couldst prate <u>unhappily</u>	= mischievously or wantonly. ^{3,6}
60	<u>Ere thou couldst go</u> ; would thou couldst <u>do</u> as well!	= "before you could walk." = act, behave.
62	And how does your custom hold out here?	
64	Spa. Sir?	
66	Lyg. Are you in <u>private</u> still, or how?	= <i>private</i> , among other things, can refer to engaging in
		sexual intimacy; ¹ Lygones is vaguely and sarcastically
		asking if Spaconia is continuing to prostitute herself.
68	Spa. What do you mean?	
70	Lyg. Do you take money? Are you come to sell sin	= generous.
72	yet? perhaps I can help you to <u>liberal</u> clients: or has	= common variation for "vile".
74	not the king cast you off yet? Oh, thou <u>vild</u> creature,	
76	whose best commendation is, that thou art a young	= "why did you not".
78	whore! I would thy mother had lived to see this; or,	
80	rather, that I had died ere I had seen it! <u>Why didst not</u>	= company. ³
82	make me acquainted when thou wert first resolved	= obvious and vaguely suggestive pun.
84	to be a whore? I would have seen thy hot lust satisfied	
86	more privately: I would have kept a dancier, and a	
88	whole <u>consort</u> of musicians, in my own house, only	
90	to <u>fiddle</u> thee.	
	Spa. Sir, I was never whore.	
	Lyg. If thou couldst not	
	Say so much for thyself, thou shouldst be <u>carted</u> .	= in Elizabethan England, prostitutes were punished by
		being paraded around publicly in carts.
	Tigr. Lygones, I have read it, and I like it;	
	You shall deliver it.	
	Lyg. Well, sir, I will:	
	But I have <u>private business</u> with you.	= ie. of a personal, rather than public, matter.

92	Tigr. Speak; what is't?	
94	Lyg. How has my age deserved so ill of you, That you can pick no strumpets i' the land, But out of my <u>breed</u> ?	= ie. "own family?"
96	Tigr. Strumpets, good Lygones!	
98	Lyg. Yes; and I wish to have you know, I scorn To <u>get</u> a whore for any <u>prince</u> alive; And yet scorn will not help: methinks, my daughter Might have been spared; there were <u>enow</u> besides.	= beget. = ie. king. = ie. "enough other women for you to choose from". enow = plural form of "enough".
100	Tigr. May I not prosper but she's innocent As morning light, for me! and, I dare swear, For all the world.	
102	Lyg. Why is she with you, then? Can she wait on you better than your man? Has she a gift in plucking off your stockings? Can she make <u>caudles</u> well, or cut your corns? Why do you keep her with you? For a queen,	108f: Lygones, sarcastic, asks "if Spaconia is not your whore, then what is she, your domestic help?" = a type of warm, medicinal gruel. ² 112-3: For a queen...her = "I know you do not think her good enough to be your queen"; however, the homonym for queen, "quean", means "whore", so that Lygones' meaning is double.
104	I know, you do <u>contemn</u> her; so should I; And every subject else think much at it.	= scorn.
106	Tigr. Let 'em think much; but 'tis more firm than earth. Thou seest thy queen there.	
108	Lyg. Then have I made a fair hand: I called her whore. If I shall speak now as her father, I cannot choose but greatly rejoice that she shall be a queen; but if I shall speak to you as a statesman, she were more fit to be your whore.	119f: Lygones' unenthusiastic speech seems to suggest he is unsure himself what to make out of what he has heard. 121-3: but if...whore = a monarch's advisor always prefers for the monarch to marry from only the highest ranks of society, such as a princess from another country.
110	Tigr. Get you about your business to Arbaces; Now you talk idly.	125-6: Tigranes recognizes the lack of purpose in Lygones' speech.
112	Lyg. Yes, sir, I will go. And shall she be a queen? She had more <u>wit</u> Than her old father, when she ran away: Shall she be queen? now, by my troth, 'tis fine. I'll dance out of all <u>measure</u> at her wedding; Shall I not, sir?	= cleverness. = moderation; but <i>measure</i> also refers to a stately dance.
114	Tigr. Yes, <u>marry</u> , shalt thou.	= a mild oath, derived from the Virgin Mary, but he is also obviously punning on <i>wedding</i> .
116	Lyg. I'll make these withered <u>kexes</u> bear my body Two hours together above ground.	= dry stalks, ³ ie. his legs
118	Tigr. Nay, go; My business requires haste.	
120	Lyg. Good Heaven preserve you!	

144 You are an excellent king.
146 *Spa.* Farewell, good father.
148 *Lyg.* Farewell, sweet virtuous daughter.
I never was so joyful in my life,
150 That I remember: shall she be a queen?
Now I perceive a man may weep for joy;
152 I had thought they had lied that said so.
154 [Exit.]

156 *Tigr.* Come, my dear love.
158 *Spa.* But you may see another,
May alter that again.
160 *Tigr.* Urge it no more:
162 I have made up a new strong constancy,
Not to be shook with eyes. I know I have
164 The passions of a man; but if I meet
With any subject that should hold my eyes
166 More firmly than is fit, I'll think of thee,
And run away from it: let that suffice.
[Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE III.

A Room in the house of Bacurius.

Enter Bacurius and Servant.

1 *Bac.* Three gentlemen without, to speak with me?
2
3 *Serv.* Yes, sir.
4
5 *Bac.* Let them come in.
6
7 *Enter Bessus and the two Sword-Men.*
8
9 *Serv.* They are entered, sir, already.
10
11 *Bac.* Now, fellows, your business? – Are these the
gentlemen?
12
13 *Bes.* My lord, I have made bold to bring these gentlemen,
14 My friends o' the sword, along with me.
15
16 *Bac.* I am
Afraid you'll fight, then.
17
18 *Bes.* My good lord, I will not;
19 Your lordship is mistaken; fear not, lord.
20
21 *Bac.* Sir, I am sorry for't.
22
23 *Bes.* I ask no more in honour. – Gentlemen,
24 You hear my lord is sorry.

148f: at a superficial level, Lygones finally appears to believe and accept his good fortune, but his words come across, at least to this editor, as oddly unconvincing.

158-9: Spaconia is worried that if Tigranes sees Panthea again (she refers to her rival indirectly as *another*), he will change his mind about her once again.

= outside.

24: Bessus takes Bacurius' ironic apology as a general one for his beating Bessus; his honour satisfied, he no longer

26		has to meet him in a duel! Bacurius, however, hurries to correct Bessus' misimpression: his apology was not for having beaten Bessus, but rather for the fact that Bessus has challenged him, and he is sorry he must beat him yet again.
28	Bac. Not that I have Beaten you, but beaten one that will be beaten;	= beating. ³
30	One whose dull body will require a <u>lamming</u> , As <u>surfeits</u> do the diet, spring and fall.	= just as occasional overindulgence in food (<i>surfeit</i>) requires a succeeding period of scaling back. ¹
32	Now, to your sword-men: What come they for, good captain <u>Stockfish</u> ?	= a dried cod, often beaten before cooking; ¹ hence its use to refer to Bessus.
34	Bes. It seems your lordship has forgot my name.	= Bessus is ever willing to give others the benefit of the doubt!
36	Bac. No, nor your nature neither; though they are Things fitter, I must confess, for any thing	36-38: <i>though they...man's</i> = Bessus' name and nature are not worth recollecting for Bacurius, nor for any honest man for that matter.
38	Than my remembrance, or any honest man's: What shall these <u>billets</u> do? be piled up in my	= thick pieces of wood, as used for fire-wood; ¹ Bacurius is referring to the Sword-Men.
40	woodyard?	
42	Bes. Your lordship holds your mirth still, Heaven continue it!	
44	But, for these gentlemen, they come –	
46	Bac. To swear You are a coward? <u>Spare your book</u> ; I do believe it.	= "no need to get your Bible (to swear on)".
48	Bes. Your lordship still <u>draws wide</u> ; they come to vouch, under their valiant hands, I am no coward.	= is off the mark; a metaphor from archery.
50	Bac. That would be a show, indeed, worth seeing.	51f: Bacurius praises the entertainment value of the two Sword-Men avowing that Bessus is not a coward, and he recommends that they take their show on the road and make money off of it.
52	<u>Sirrah</u> , be wise and <u>take</u> money for this <u>motion</u> ; travel	52: <i>Sirrah</i> = a form of address used to express an assumption of authority, and with it a bit of contempt. <i>take</i> = charge. <i>motion</i> = puppet show.
54	with it; and where the name of Bessus has been known, or a good coward stirring, 'twill <u>yield more</u>	= "make you more money".
56	than a <u>tilting</u> : this will prove more beneficial to you, if you be thrifty, than your captainship, and more	= jousting tournament.
58	<u>natural</u> . – Men of most valiant hands, is this true?	= realistic, ie. conforming with Bessus' nature. ¹
60	2nd Sw.M. It is so, most renowned.	
62	Bac. 'Tis somewhat strange.	
64	1st Sw.M. Lord, it is strange, yet true. We have examined, from your lordship's foot there	
66	To this man's head, the nature of the beatings; And we do find his honour is come off	
68	Clean and sufficient: this, as our swords shall help us!	

<p>Bac. You are much bound to your <u>bilbo-men</u>;</p> <p>70 I am glad you're straight again, captain. 'Twere good You would think on some way to gratify them:</p>	<p>= sword-men; the term, which Fletcher coined, comes from <i>Bilboa</i>, a Spanish city known for the manufacture there of the high-quality Spanish sword called a "bilbo".³ 70-71: '<i>Twere good...them</i>' = "you should reward them for their good service to you"; note that Bacurius, with his use of the pronoun "you", covers his irony with only the thinnest veneer of formality.</p>
<p>72 They have undergone a labour for you, Bessus, <u>Would</u> have puzzled Hercules with all his valour.</p>	<p>= which would. 72-73: note the allusion to the 12 labours of Hercules.</p>
<p>74 2nd Sw.M. Your lordship must understand we are no men 76 Of the law, that take pay for our opinions; 78 It is sufficient we have cleared our friend.</p>	
<p>80 Bac. Yet there is something due, which I, as touched In conscience, will discharge. – Captain, I'll pay This <u>rent</u> for you.</p>	<p>= fee or charge;¹ Bacurius would like to give the Sword-Men their due compensation.</p>
<p>82 Bes. Spare yourself, my good lord; 84 My brave friends aim at nothing but the virtue.</p>	
<p>86 Bac. That's but a cold discharge, sir, for their pains.</p>	<p>86: the sense of the line is, "that is not much for all their efforts."</p>
<p>88 2nd Sw.M. Oh, lord! my good lord!</p>	
<p>90 Bac. Be not so modest; I will give you something.</p>	
<p>92 Bes. They shall dine with your lordship; that's sufficient.</p>	
<p>94 Bac. Something in hand the while. You rogues, you <u>apple-squires</u>, Do you come hither, with your bottled valour, 96 Your windy <u>froth</u>, to limit out my beatings? 98 [Kicks them.]</p>	<p>94f: Bacurius finally takes off the gloves. <i>apple-squires</i> = kept men.³ = used to describe something of little or no value.¹</p>
<p>100 Ist Sw.M. I do beseech your lordship!</p>	
<p>102 2nd Sw.M. Oh, good lord!</p>	
<p>104 Bac. 'Sfoot, what a <u>bevy</u> of beaten slaves are here! – Get me a <u>cudgel</u>, sirrah, and a tough one. 106 [Exit Servant.]</p>	<p>= by God's foot. = company (a collective term, like "flock", used often for a group of women).¹ = club or stick; Bacurius is addressing his own servant.</p>
<p>108 2nd Sw.M. More of your foot, I do beseech your lordship!</p>	<p>109ff: perhaps because they know that receiving a good beating proves one is honourable, the Sword-Men encourage Bacurius to further thrash them.</p>
<p>112 Bac. You shall, you shall, dog, and your fellow beagle.</p>	
<p>114 Ist Sw.M. O' this side, good my lord.</p>	
<p>116 Bac. Off with your swords; for if you hurt my foot, I'll have you <u>flead</u>, you rascals.</p>	<p>= flayed.¹</p>
<p>118 Ist Sw.M. Mine's off, my lord.</p>	
<p>120 2nd Sw.M. I beseech your lordship, <u>stay a little</u>; my strap's</p>	<p>= wait a moment.</p>

<p>122 Tied to my <u>cod-piece point</u>: now, when you please.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[<i>They take off their swords.</i>]</p>	<p>= <i>points</i> were tagged laces used to tie pieces of clothing to each other; the <i>cod-piece</i>, of course, is the well-known bit of stuffing used to enhance a man's, er, appearance.</p>
<p>124 Bac. Captain, these are your valiant friends; you long</p> <p>126 For a little too?</p>	
<p>128 Bes. I am very well, I humbly thank your lordship.</p>	
<p>130 Bac. What's that in your pocket hurts my toe, you mongrel?</p> <p>Thy buttocks cannot be so hard; out with't quickly.</p>	
<p>132 2nd Sw.M. [<i>Takes out a pistol.</i>] Here 'tis, sir;</p> <p>134 A small piece of artillery, that a gentleman,</p> <p>136 A dear friend of your lordship's, sent me with,</p> <p>To get it mended, sir; for, if you <u>mark</u>,</p> <p>The <u>nose</u> is somewhat loose.</p>	<p>133: this stage direction was added by Weber.</p> <p>= will notice.</p> <p>= muzzle.¹</p>
<p>138 Bac. A friend of mine, you rascal! –</p> <p>140 I was never wearier of doing nothing,</p> <p>142 Than kicking these two <u>foot-balls</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Enter Servant.</i></p>	<p>= the word <i>football</i> has been used to describe a kicking sport since at least 1409, and the ball itself since 1425; in those early days, a football was usually made of an inflated pig's bladder encased in leather; by the 16th century, <i>football</i> was also used to refer to a person who was easily kicked around.¹</p>
<p>144 Serv. Here's a good cudgel, sir.</p>	
<p>146 Bac. It comes too late; I am weary; prithee, do thou beat them.</p>	
<p>150 2nd Sw.M. My lord, this is foul play, i'faith, to put a fresh man upon us: men are but men, sir.</p>	
<p>152 Bac. That jest shall save your bones. – Captain, rally up your rotten regiment, and begone. – I had rather</p> <p>156 thresh than be bound to kick these rascals till they cried, "<u>ho!</u>" – Bessus, you may put your hand to them now, and then you are <u>quit</u>. – Farewell: as you like</p> <p>158 this, pray visit me again; 'twill keep me in <u>good breath</u>.</p>	<p>153: Bacurius is amused enough by the 2nd Sword-Man's last comment that he decides to call off any further pummeling!</p> <p>= stop, hold.</p> <p>= paid, ie. Bessus and Bacurius are all even again.</p> <p>= the sense is "good shape".</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">160 [<i>Exit.</i>]</p>	
<p>162 2nd Sw.M. <u>H'</u>as a devilish hard foot; I never felt the like.</p>	<p>= he has.</p>
<p>164 1st Sw.M. Nor I; and yet, I am sure, I ha' felt a hundred.</p>	
<p>166 2nd Sw.M. If he kick thus i' the <u>dog-days</u>, he will be <u>dry-founded</u>. –</p> <p>What cure now, captain, besides <u>oil of bays</u>?</p>	<p>166: <i>dog-days</i> = literally referring to the height of summer, and figuratively to Bacurius' youth when his strength would have been greatest.</p> <p><i>dry-founded</i> = made lame, usually applied to a horse with an inflamed hoof.¹</p> <p>= oil from the bay, or laurel, tree has been used as a salve since ancient times;¹³ interestingly, laurel oil is also</p>

168	Bes. Why, <u>well enough</u> , I warrant you; you can <u>go</u> ?	used to treat the hooves of horses, tying in with <i>dry-founded</i> in line 163. ⁹
170	2nd Sw.M. Yes, Heaven be thanked! but I feel a <u>shrewd</u> ache;	= that will work well enough. = ie. walk. ⁷
172	Sure, h'as sprung my <u>huckle-bone</u> .	= severe.
174	1st Sw.M. I ha' lost a haunch.	= hip.
176	Bes. A little butter, friend, a little butter;	
178	Butter and parsley is a <u>sovereign matter</u> : <i>Probatum est.</i>	= effective as a cure. ¹ = substance. = "it has been proved", a phrase usually used to describe formulas. ¹⁰
180	2nd Sw.M. Captain, we must request Your hand now to our honours.	
182	Bes. Yes, marry, shall ye;	
184	And then let all the world come; we are valiant To ourselves, and there's an end.	
186	1st Sw.M. Nay, then, we must	
188	Be valiant. Oh, my ribs!	
190	2nd Sw.M. Oh, my <u>small guts</u> !	= intestines. ¹
192	A plague upon these <u>sharp-toed shoes</u> ! they are murderers.	= long shoes with pointed toes (called Krakows, after the city from which they were believed to have originated) were popular with the upper classes of England in the late 14th and 15th centuries. ²²
	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	<u>ACT V, SCENE IV.</u> <i>An Apartment in the Palace.</i>	
	<i>Enter Arbaces, with his sword drawn.</i>	
1	Arb. It is <u>resolved</u> : I bore it whilst I could;	= decided.
2	I can no more. Hell, open all thy gates,	
4	And I will <u>thorough</u> them: if they be shut,	= (go) through; <i>thorough</i> was commonly used for <i>through</i> .
6	I'll batter 'em, but I will find the place Where the most damned have dwelling! <u>Ere I end</u> ,	= "before I am through".
8	Amongst them all they shall not have a sin, But I may call it mine: I must begin With murder of <u>my friend</u> , and so go on	6-7: yikes! Arbaces is prepared to commit all the worst sins - murder, incest and suicide. = Arbaces means Gobrias, whom he blames for bringing him to this pass.
10	To that incestuous ravishing, and end My life and sins with a <u>forbidden blow</u> Upon myself!	10-11: <i>with a...myself</i> = "by committing suicide"; Christianity, of course, has always frowned on suicide.
12	<i>Enter Mardonius.</i>	
14	Mar. What tragedy is near?	
16	That hand was never <u>wont</u> to draw a sword,	15-17: Mardonius reacts to seeing Arbaces with his sword in his hand. = accustomed.
18	But it cried "dead" to something.	17: ie. without killing someone (this is meant to be a compliment to the king's martial skills).

20 **Arb.** Mardonius,
Have you bid Gobrias come?

22 **Mar.** How do you, sir?

24 **Arb.** Well. Is he coming?

26 **Mar.** Why, sir, are you thus?
Why does your hand proclaim a lawless war
28 Against yourself ?

30 **Arb.** Thou answer'st me one question with another:
Is Gobrias coming?

32

34 **Mar.** Sir, he is.

36 **Arb.** 'Tis well:
I can forbear your questions, then. Begone.

38 **Mar.** Sir, I have marked –

40 **Arb.** Mark less; it troubles you and me.

42 **Mar.** You are
More variable than you were.

44

46 **Arb.** It may be so.

48 **Mar.** To-day no hermit could be humbler
Than you were to us all.

50 **Arb.** And what of this?

52 **Mar.** And now you take new rage into your eyes,
As you would look us all out of the land.

54

56 **Arb.** I do confess it; will that satisfy?
I prithee, get thee gone.

58 **Mar.** Sir, I will speak.

60 **Arb.** Will ye?

62 **Mar.** It is my duty.
I fear you'll kill yourself: I am a subject,
64 And you shall do me wrong in't; 'tis my cause,
And I may speak.

66

68 **Arb.** Thou art not trained in sin,
It seems, Mardonius: kill myself! by Heaven,
I will not do it yet; and, when I will,
70 I'll tell thee; then I shall be such a creature,

That thou wilt give me leave without a word.
72 There is a method in man's wickedness;

27-28: Mardonius believes Arbaces is intent on killing himself.

= dispense with.¹

= noticed.

47-48: Mardonius reminds Arbaces of how mildly he had behaved when they were together earlier; *humbler* is trisyllabic: *HUM-bul-er*.⁷

63-65: *I am...speak* = since he is one of the king's subjects, Mardonius, who has an interest in his sovereign's health, would be harmed if the king were to kill himself; thus, he has standing to say his peace.

cause (line 64) = grounds for speaking.

70-71: *then I...a word* = "when I have done the unnamable thing I have set out to do, you will gladly give me permission to kill myself."

= perhaps a variation on there being a *method to one's madness*, a phrase which originated in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (c.1600); but an early editor saw an allusion to a line from the *Satires* of the Roman poet Juvenal.

<p>74 It grows <u>up</u> by degrees: I am not come So high as killing of myself; there are A hundred thousand sins 'twixt me and it, 76 Which I must do; I shall come to't at last, But, take my oath, <u>not now</u>. Be satisfied, 78 And get thee <u>hence</u>.</p> <p>80 Mar. I am sorry 'tis so ill.</p> <p>82 Arb. Be sorry, then: <u>True sorrow is alone</u>; grieve by thyself.</p> <p>84</p> <p>86 Mar. I pray you let me see your sword <u>put up</u> Before I go: I'll leave you then.</p> <p>88 Arb. [<i>Sheathing his sword</i>] Why, so. What folly is this in thee? is it not 90 <u>As apt to mischief</u> as it was before? Can I not reach it, think'st thou? These are toys</p> <p>92 For children to be pleased with, and not men. Now I am safe, you think: I would the book 94 Of Fate were here: my sword is not so sure But I would get it out, and mangle that, 96 That all the Destinies should quite forget Their fixed decrees, and haste to make us <u>new</u>, 98 For other fortunes; mine could not be worse. Wilt thou now leave me?</p> <p>100 Mar. Heaven put into your bosom <u>temperate</u> thoughts! 102 I'll leave you, though I fear.</p> <p>104 [<i>Exit Mardonius.</i>]</p> <p>106 Arb. Go; thou art honest. Why should the hasty errors of my youth 108 Be so unpardonable to draw a sin, <u>Helpless</u>, upon me?</p> <p>110 <i>Enter Gobrias.</i></p> <p>112 Gob. [<i>Aside</i>] There is the king; 114 Now <u>it is ripe</u>.</p> <p>116 Arb. Draw near, thou guilty man, That art the author of the loathed'st crime 118 <u>Five ages</u> have brought forth, and hear me speak: Curses incurable, and all the evils 120 Man's body or his spirit can receive, Be with thee!</p> <p>122 Gob. Why, sir, do you curse me thus?</p> <p>124 Arb. Why do I curse thee? If there be a man</p>	<p>= greater.</p> <p>= ie. "I won't kill myself right now" = ie. "away from here."</p> <p>= Bond notes this phrase was proverbial; the idea of acting or being alone in one's sorrow was common in early English literature.</p> <p>= replaced in its sheathe.</p> <p>= as able to do harm. 91-92: Arbaces suggests that Mardonius' belief, that simply putting the sword away will stop Arbaces from using it if he wants to, is childish.</p> <p>93-98: <i>I would...fortunes</i> = briefly, Arbaces wishes he could carve up the book of Fate, so that it could be rewritten, changing his destiny.</p> <p>= ie. new decrees.⁶</p> <p>= moderate.</p> <p>= that cannot be helped.</p> <p>= ie. the time is ripe for Gobrias to finally reveal to the king the secret he has been hinting at having throughout the play.</p> <p>= allusion to the ancient Greek idea, as described by the 8th century B.C. poet Hesiod, that humanity has passed through five ages: the golden age first, then silver, bronze, heroic, and iron; the ages describe a long-term and continuous decline in the condition of mankind.</p>
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126	Subtle in curses, that exceeds the rest, His worst wish on thee! thou hast broke my heart.	
128		
130	Gob. How, sir! Have I preserved you, from a child, From all the arrows <u>malice or ambition</u> Could shoot at you, and <u>have I this for pay?</u>	= Malice and Ambition are personified. = "this is how you repay me?"
132		
134	Arb. 'Tis true, thou didst preserve me, and in that, Wert cruèller than hardened murderers Of infants and their mothers: thou didst save me, Only till thou hadst <u>studied out</u> a way How to destroy me cunningly thyself; This was a <u>curious</u> way of torturing.	= worked out or thought out. = ingenious, skillful or elaborate. ¹
140	Gob. What do you mean?	
142	Arb. Thou know'st the evils thou hast done to me: Dost thou remember all those <u>witching</u> letters	= bewitching.
144	Thou sent'st unto me to Armenia, Filled with the praise of my belovèd sister, Where thou extol'dst her beauty? – what had I To do with that? what could her beauty be To me? – and thou didst write how well she loved me! – Dost thou remember this? – so that I <u>doted</u> Something before I saw her.	146-8: what had...To me = "why did you keep telling me how beautiful she was - what does a brother care about that?" = became infatuated. ¹
150		
152	Gob. This is true.	
154	Arb. Is it? and, when I was returned, thou know'st, Thou didst pursue it, till thou wound'st me in To such a strange and unbeliev'd <u>affection</u> , As good men cannot think on.	= love.
156		
158	Gob. This I grant; I think I was the cause.	
160		
162	Arb. Wert thou? Nay, more. I think thou <u>meant'st</u> it.	= ie. intended.
164		
166	Gob. Sir, I hate a lie: As I love Heaven and honesty, I did; It was my <u>meaning</u> .	= intention.
168		
170	Arb. Be thine own sad judge: A further condemnation will not need: Prepare thyself to die.	
172		
174	Gob. Why, sir, to die?	
176	Arb. Why shouldst thou live? <u>was ever yet offender</u> So impudent, that had a thought of mercy After confession of a crime like this? <u>Get out I cannot where</u> thou hurl'st me in; But I can take revenge; that's all the sweetness Left for me.	= "was there ever before such a convicted criminal". = "I cannot escape from where".
178		
180		
182	Gob. [<i>Aside</i>] Now is the time. – Hear me but speak.	

<p>184 Arb. No. Yet I will be far more merciful Than thou wert to me: thou didst steal into me 186 And never gav'st me warning: so much time As I give thee now, <u>had prevented me</u> 188 For ever. Notwithstanding all thy sins,</p> <p>If thou hast hope that there is yet a prayer 190 To save thee, turn and speak it to thyself.</p> <p>192 Gob. Sir, you shall know your sins, before you do 'em: If you kill me –</p> <p>194 Arb. I will not <u>stay</u> then.</p> <p>196 Gob. Know 198 You kill your father.</p> <p>200 Arb. How?</p> <p>202 Gob. You kill your father.</p> <p>204 Arb. My father! Though I know it for a lie, Made out of fear, to save thy <u>stainèd</u> life, 206 The very reverence of the word comes 'cross me, And ties mine arm down.</p> <p>208 Gob. I will tell you that 210 Shall heighten you again; I am thy father; I <u>charge</u> thee hear me.</p> <p>212 Arb. If it should be so, 214 As 'tis most false, and that I should be found <u>A bastard issue</u>, the despisèd fruit</p> <p>216 Of lawless lust, I should no more <u>admire</u> All my wild passions! But <u>another truth</u> 218 Shall be wrung from thee: if I could come by The spirit of pain, it should be poured on thee, 220 'Till thou allow'st thyself more full of lies Than he that teaches thee.</p> <p>222</p> <p style="text-align: right;">224 <i>Enter Arane.</i></p> <p>224 Arane. <u>Turn thee about</u>; 226 I come to speak to thee, thou wicked man! Hear me, thou tyrant!</p> <p>228 Arb. I will turn to thee: 230 Hear me, thou <u>strumpet</u>! I have blotted out The name of mother, as thou hast thy shame.</p> <p>232 Arane. My shame! Thou hast less shame than any thing:</p>	<p>186-8: <i>so much...ever</i> = "if I had given as much time to listen to you in the past as I give you now to speak - which is to say, none at all - I would not be in the situation I am in now." <i>had prevented me</i> = "would have anticipated me", ie. "kept me out of this predicament."</p> <p>189-190: a conscientious murderer would let his victim make a confession of his sins to save his soul before killing him.</p> <p>= hold off.</p> <p>= disgraced, guilty.¹</p> <p>= entreat, order.</p> <p>= Arbaces has a new worry now: if Gobrias is his father, and Arane his mother, and since Gobrias and Arane were never married, then he, Arbaces, would be illegitimate. = wonder or be surprised at.³ = ie. a different truth altogether;⁶ Arbaces assumes Gobrias is lying.⁸</p> <p>= "turn around."</p> <p>= harlot, since (as Arbaces believes) she had been impregnated by Gobrias.</p>
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234	Why dost thou keep my daughter in a prison? Why dost thou call her sister, and do this?	
236		
238	Arb. Cease, thou <u>strange impudence</u> , and answer quickly!	= extreme. = unusual use of <i>impudence</i> as a noun describing a person.
240	[<i>Draws his sword.</i>]	
242	If thou <u>contemn'st</u> me, this will ask an answer, And have it.	= scorns.
244	Arane. Help me, gentle Gobrias!	
246	Arb. Guilt dare not help guilt: though they grow together In doing ill, yet at the punishment	246-8: the image is of two conspirators, worrying about trying to save their own skins, abandoning each other to their individual fates.
248	They sever, and each flies the noise of other. Think not of help; answer!	247-8: at the...sever = at the moment of retribution, the conspirators separate.
250		
252	Arane. I will; to what?	
254	Arb. To such a thing, as, if it be a truth, Think what a creature thou hast made thyself, That didst not shame to do what I must blush Only to ask thee. Tell me who I am, <u>Whose son I am, without all circumstance</u> ;	
258	Be thou as hasty as my sword will be, If thou refusest.	= "who is my father". = "without drawing out your explanation with too much detail."
260		
262	Arane. Why, you are his son.	
264	Arb. His son? Swear, swear, thou worse than woman damned!	
266	Arane. By all that's good, you are.	
268	Arb. Then art thou all That ever was known bad. Now is the cause Of all my strange misfortunes come to light. What reverence expect'st thou from a child, To bring forth which thou hast offended Heaven, Thy husband, and the land? Adulterous witch, I know now why thou wouldst have poisoned me: I was thy lust, which thou wouldst have forgot! Then, wicked mother of my sins and me, Show me the way to the inheritance I have by thee, which is a spacious world Of impious acts, that I may soon possess it. Plagues rot thee as thou liv'st, and such diseases As use to pay lust <u>recompense</u> thy deed!	
270		
272		
274		
276		
278		
280		= repay.
282	Gob. You do not know why you curse thus.	
284	Arb. Too well. You are a pair of vipers; and behold	
286	The serpent you have <u>got</u> ! There is no beast, But, if he knew it, has a pedigree	= begotten (ie. himself).
288	As <u>brave</u> as mine, <u>for</u> they have more <u>descents</u> ; And I am every way as beastly got,	= excellent. = even if. = descendants or offspring. ¹

290	As far <u>without the compass</u> of a law, As they.	= beyond the permitted limits.
292		
294	Arane. You spend your rage and words in vain, And rail upon a <u>guess</u> ; hear us a little.	= ie. pure speculation.
296	Arb. No, I will never hear, but talk away My breath, and die.	
298		
300	Gob. Why, but you are no bastard.	
302		
304	Arb. How's that?	
306	Arane. Nor child of mine.	
308	Arb. Still you go on In wonders to me.	
310		
312	Gob. Pray you, be more patient: I may bring comfort to you.	
314	Arb. I will kneel, [<i>Kneels.</i>]	311f: the wind has quite suddenly gone out of Arbaces' sails.
316	And hear with the obedience of a child. Good father, speak! I do acknowledge you, <u>So</u> you bring comfort.	= so long as.
318		
320	Gob. First know, our last king, your supposed father, Was old and feeble when he married <u>her</u> ,	= ie. Arane.
322	And almost all the land as she, past hope Of issue from him.	321-2: "everyone in our country (<i>all the land</i>) was, like Arane herself, past hope of her producing an heir from him"; such a concern was always a great one in a monarchy: much angst in particular was spent in England over the fact that Queen Elizabeth I had never married or had any children. A civil war for possession of the throne was always a possibility when there was no accepted heir to the kingdom.
324	Arb. Therefore she took leave To <u>play the whore</u> , because the king was old: Is this the comfort?	= sleep with Gobrias.
326		
328	Arane. What will you <u>find out</u> To give me satisfaction, when you find How you have injured me? Let fire consume me, If ever I were whore!	328-330: What will..injured me = "how will you devise (<i>find out</i>) a way to recompense me when you realize how you have wronged me (with these undeserved insults)?"
330		
332		
334	Gob. Forbear these <u>starts</u> , Or I will leave you wedded to despair, As you are now. if you can find a temper, My breath shall be a pleasant western wind, That cools and blasts not.	= outbursts. ¹
336		
338	Arb. Bring it out, good father.	

340	I'll <u>lie</u> , and listen here as reverently	= lie down.
342	[<u>Lies down.</u>]	= perhaps on a couch or even on the floor; an odd stage direction, but one matching the fantastic behaviour of the king.
344	As to an angel: if I breathe too loud, Tell me; for I would be as still as night.	
346	Gob. Our king, I say, was old, and this our queen	
348	Desired to bring an heir, but her yet husband, She thought was past it; and to be <u>dishonest</u> ,	= unchaste.
350	I think she would not: <u>if she would have been</u> ,	= "even if she wanted to be unchaste".
352	The truth is, she was watched so <u>narrowly</u> ,	= closely.
354	And had so <u>slender</u> opportunities, She hardly could have been. But yet her cunning	= few.
356	Found out this way; she feigned herself with child, And <u>posts</u> were sent in haste throughout the land,	= messengers.
358	And God was humbly thanked in every church, That so had blessed the queen, and prayers were made For her safe going and delivery.	
360	She feigned now to grow bigger; and perceived <u>This hope of issue</u> made her feared, and brought	= "that this expectation (<i>hope</i>) that she would have a child".
362	A far more large respect from every man, And saw her power increase, and was resolved,	
364	Since she believed she could not <u>have't indeed</u> ,	= ie. "have a child in fact".
366	At least she would be thought to have a child.	
368	Arb. <u>Do I not hear it well?</u> nay, I will make No noise at all; but, pray you, to the point, Quick as you can!	= "am I not doing a good job listening quietly?"
370	Gob. Now when the time was full She should be brought to bed, I had a son	
372	Born, which was you. This, the queen hearing of, <u>Moved me</u> to let her have you: and such reasons	= "proposed to me".
374	She showed me, as she knew would tie My secrecy: she swore you should be king;	373-5: such reasons...king = Arane persuaded Gobrias to hand his son over to her as her own, and got him to swear to never reveal this, by promising to make Arbaces the King of Iberia.
376	And, to be short, I did deliver you Unto her, and <u>pretended you were dead</u> ,	= Gobrias pretended that Arbaces, his own baby son, had died, when in reality he had secretly turned him over to Arane, who acted as if he were her own.
378	And in mine own house kept a funeral, And had an empty coffin put in earth.	
380	That night this queen feigned hastily to labour, And by a pair of women of her own,	
382	Which she had <u>charmed</u> , she made the world believe She was delivered of you. You grew up	= persuaded (to play along in the conspiracy). ¹
384	As the king's son, till you were six years old: Then did the king die, and did leave to me	
386	Protection of the realm; and, contrary To his own expectation, left this queen	
388	Truly with child, indeed, of the fair princess Panthea. Then she could have torn her hair,	
390	And did alone to me, yet durst not speak In public, for she knew she should be found	390-2: yet durst...traitor = at this point, the consequences of revealing that Arbaces was not really Arane's son

392 A traitor; and her tale would have been thought
Madness, or any thing rather than truth.

394 This was the only cause why she did seek
To poison you, and I to keep you safe;

396 And this the reason why I sought to kindle
Some sparks of love in you to fair Panthea,
398 That she might get part of her right again.

400 *Arb.* And have you made an end now? Is this all?
If not, I will be still till I be aged,
402 Till all my hairs be silver.

404 *Gob.* This is all.

406 *Arb.* [*Rising*] And is it true, say you too, madam?

408 *Arane.* Yes;
Heaven knows, it is most true.

410 *Arb.* Panthea, then, is not my sister?

412 *Gob.* No.

414 *Arb.* But can you prove this?

416 *Gob.* If you will give consent,
418 Else who dares go about it?

420 *Arb.* Give consent?
Why, I will have 'em all that know it racked
422 To get this from 'em. – All that wait without,
Come in; whate'er you be, come in, and be
424 Partakers of my joy! –

426 *Re-enter Mardonius, with Bessus, two Gentlemen,
and Attendants.*

428 Oh, you are welcome!
430 Mardonius, the best news! – Nay, draw no nearer;
They all shall hear it: – I am found no king.

432 *Mar.* Is that so good news?

434 *Arb.* Yes, the happiest news
436 That e'er was heard.

438 *Mar.* Indeed, 'twere well for you
If you might be a little less obeyed.
440

would have been disastrous.

394-5: Arane wanted to kill Arbaces, to bring the crown back to the legitimate sovereign, Panthea, her real offspring; Gobrias of course did what was necessary to save his son's life.

= that is, if Arbaces were to marry Panthea, the legitimate heir to the throne, then Panthea, in becoming queen, would return the throne into Arane's lineage where it belongs.

417-8: based on Arbaces' response to these lines, Gobrias' meaning is likely, "if you assure those who know the truth (ie. the midwives and attendants who were present at Arane's fake birthing and sworn forever to secrecy - see lines 381-2 above) that they will not suffer any repercussions for spilling what they know about the matter, then you will get your evidence; otherwise, who would dare say anything?"

421-2: *I will...from 'em* = "I would have anyone who can prove this tortured (*racked*), if that is what is necessary to get them to bring to light what they know."

= Mardonius manages to get in one more little gibe at the king - though this might be delivered as an aside.

442	Arb. One call the queen.	
444	Mar. Why, she is there.	
446	Arb. The queen, Mardonius! <u>Panthea is the queen</u> ,	= Panthea, as the sole heir of Arane and her husband, the former and now-deceased king, is the legitimate sovereign.
448	And I am plain Arbaces. – Go, some one; She is in Gobrias' house.	
450	[Exit 1st Gentleman.]	
452	Since I saw you, There are a thousand things delivered to me	
454	You little dream of.	
456	Mar. So it should seem. – My lord, What <u>fury</u> 's this?	= madness or frenzy. ¹
458	Gob. Believe me, 'tis no fury;	
460	All that he says is truth.	
462	Mar. 'Tis very strange.	
464	Arb. Why do you keep your hats off, gentlemen? Is it to me? I swear, it must not be;	464-6: generally men took their hats off in the presence of their superiors; but Arbaces, as the son of Gobrias, is actually no better than any of the other members of the court, so they need not keep their hats off for him.
466	Nay, trust me, in good faith, it must not be: I cannot now command you; but I pray you,	
468	For the respect you bare me when you took Me for your king, each man clap on his hat	
470	At my desire.	
472	Mar. We will: <u>but</u> you are not found So mean a man but that <u>you may be covered</u>	= <i>but</i> is omitted by some editors for the sake of the meter. = ie. the king should equally keep his hat on.
474	As well as we; may you not?	
476	Arb. Oh, not here! You may, but not I, for here is my father	476-8: Arbaces distinguishes himself from the other courtiers: he feels obliged to keep his hat off as a sign of respect in the presence of his father.
478	In presence.	
480	Mar. Where?	
482	Arb. Why, there. Oh, the whole story Would be a wilderness, to <u>lose thyself</u>	= ie. "lose thyself in".
484	For ever. – Oh, pardon me, dear father, For all the <u>idle</u> and unreverent words	= foolish.
486	That I have spoke in idle moods to you! – I am Arbaces; we all fellow-subjects;	
488	Nor is the queen Panthea now my sister.	
490	Bes. Why, if you remember, fellow-subject Arbaces, I told you once she was not your sister; ay, and she	
492	looked nothing like you.	
494	Arb. I think you did, good captain Bessus.	
496	Bes. [Aside] Here will arise another question now amongst the sword-men, whether I be to call him	
498	to account for beating me, now he is proved no king.	
500	<i>Enter Lygones.</i>	

502	Mar. Sir, here's Lygones, the agent for the Armenian state.	
504	Arb. Where is he? – I know your business, good Lygones.	
506	Lyg. We must have our king again, and will.	
508	Arb. I knew that was your business. You shall have	
510	Your king again; and have him so again	
512	As never king was had. – Go, one of you,	
514	And bid Bacurius bring Tigranes hither;	
516	And bring <u>the lady</u> with him, that Panthea,	= ie. Spaconia.
518	The queen Panthea, sent me word this morning	
520	Was brave Tigranes' mistress.	
522	[Exit 2nd Gentleman.]	
524	Lyg. 'Tis Spaconia.	
526	Arb. Ay, ay, Spaconia.	
528	Lyg. She is my daughter.	
530	Arb. She is so. I could now tell any thing	
532	I never heard. Your king shall go so home	
534	As never man went.	
536	Mar. Shall he go <u>on's head</u> ?	= on his own account, ie. hitchhiking.
538	Arb. He shall have chariots easier than air,	
540	That I will have invented; and ne'er think	
542	He shall pay any ransom: and thyself,	
544	That art the messenger, shall ride before him	
546	On a horse cut out of an entire diamond,	
548	That shall be made to go with golden wheels,	
550	I know not how yet.	
552	Lyg. [Aside] Why, <u>I shall be made</u>	= "my success in life is assured".
554	For ever! They <u>belied this king</u> with us	= told untruths about Arbaces.
556	And said he was unkind.	
558	Arb. And then thy daughter;	
560	She shall have some strange thing: we'll have the kingdom	
562	Sold utterly and put into a <u>toy</u> ,	= trinket.
564	Which she shall wear about her carelessly,	
566	Somewhere or other. –	
568	<i>Enter Panthea with 1st Gentleman.</i>	
570	See the virtuous queen! –	
572	Behold the humblest subject that you have,	
574	Kneel here before you.	
576	[Kneels.]	

558 **Pan.** Why kneel you to me,
That am your vassal?

560 **Arb.** Grant me one request.

562 **Pan.** Alas; what can I grant you? what I can I will.

564 **Arb.** That you will please to marry me,
If I can prove it lawful.

566 **Pan.** Is that all?
568 More willingly than I would draw this air.

570 **Arb.** [*Rising*] I'll kiss this hand in earnest.

572 *Re-enter 2nd Gentleman.*

574 **2nd Gent.** Sir, Tigranes
Is coming, though he made it strange at first
576 To see the princess any more.

578 **Arb.** The queen,
Thou mean'st. –

580 *Enter Tigranes and Spaconia.*

582 Oh, my Tigranes, pardon me!
584 Tread on my neck: I freely offer it;
And, if thou be'st so given, take revenge,
586 For I have injured thee.

588 **Tigr.** No; I forgive,
And rejoice more that you have found repentance,
590 Than I my liberty.

592 **Arb.** May'st thou be happy
In thy fair choice, for thou art temperate!
594 You owe no ransom to the state! Know that
I have a thousand joys to tell you of,
596 Which yet I dare not utter, till I pay
My thanks to Heaven for 'em. Will you go
598 With me, and help me? pray you, do.

600 **Tigr.** I will.

602 **Arb.** Take, then, your fair one with you: – and you, queen
Of goodness and of us, oh, give me leave
604 To take your arm in mine! – Come, every one
That takes delight in goodness, help to sing
606 Loud thanks for me, that I am proved no king.

608 *[Exeunt.]*

FINIS

= a matter of scruple.³

574-6: Dyce notes that in line 511 above, Arbaces had asked the 2nd Gentleman to find Bacurius, and have *him* return with Tigranes, but Bacurius does not appear here.

Postscript 1. Bessus: Bessus is one of the most appealing comic characters in all of Elizabethan drama; he is completely aware of his own cowardice, is glad to let everyone know it, and never shows any bitterness towards those who mistreat him, or to life or fate in general. He is most willing to do

favours for others, and his willingness to go to any length to appease and excuse the most outrageous behavior directed at him is ingeniously funny.

Postscript 2. The Mysterious Conversation of Act II: in lines 56-93 of the opening scene of Act II, Gobrias and Arane engage in a conversation in which they refer repeatedly to the secrets they were carrying, the contents of which were not revealed until the play's closing scene. Such dialogue must be, I expect, frustrating to many readers, because, frankly, it is aggravating to try to follow conversations when we don't understand what they are talking about.

It may be of interest, then, to return to what were at the time a few of the more enigmatic lines of the discussion between the Lord Protector and Queen Mother, now that the play has concluded:

(1) Line 80: **Arane:** "the king!" Arane is stunned that Gobrias would refer to Arbaces as king, when he really is no such thing, not being related to the previous king (Arane's husband), and thus having no claim to legitimacy.

(2) Line 88: **Gobrias:** "I must preserve mine own. " Gobrias means he must do whatever it takes to save the life of his own son, Arbaces, even if it means crossing Arane, who has been trying to kill him.

(3) Lines 91-92: **Arane:** "Accursed be this over-curious brain, / That gave birth to this plot!" When Arane's husband the king died, and Arane had been pretending to be pregnant with the heir to the throne, it was she who, learning of the birth of Gobrias' son, came up with the idea of convincing Gobrias to give Arbaces to her to pretend it was her own baby.

(4) Lines 92-93: **Arane:** "Accursed this womb, / That did ever conceive to my disgrace!" Arane, surprisingly, actually did become pregnant by the king, this time with Panthea.

We may also note that it is now clear why Gobrias put so much effort into sending letters to Arbaces while he was in Armenia telling him how beautiful Panthea had become, and why he further spent so much capital discouraging Arbaces from forcing Panthea to marry Tigranes, and describing to the king how much Panthea loved him!

Postscript 3. The Problem of Prose vs. Verse: the various old published editions of this play neatly demonstrate the difficulty that editors can have in determining whether certain speeches should be printed in verse or prose. Specifically, the issue in *A King and No King* revolves around how to present the speeches of Mardonius, and many of the speeches of Lygones, Bessus and the Sword-Men. The alert reader will notice, in reading the play, that those lines of these characters that are presented as verse are of noticeably lesser "quality" than those lines of verse spoken by the other, more elevated (ie. higher ranking) characters; that is, they are clearly less regular, which is generally to say they contain many more extra syllables that make the iambic rhythm somewhat herky-jerky.

So, were these lines intended to be verse or prose? The old editors come to different conclusions.

The topic is discussed, and a satisfying solution to the quandary is presented, in the *Variorum Edition* of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, published in 1904 (cited in footnote #7 at the top of this play). The editor suggests that the lines in

question of these characters are actually too suggestive of having meter, imperfect as it often is, to have been intended as prose. To put it another way, prose has no or little meter; perfect iambic pentameter has perfect rhythm; the lines in question have a good deal of meter, so they were likely intended to be printed in verse. However, they were written as less regular verse to match the "rougher", or less exalted, qualities of their speakers. The authors, in other words, deliberately wanted to give their lines a certain increased degree of "fluidity" than would be contained in pure prose, but not so much as would be contained in the speeches of the more elevated characters.

In light of this discussion, I generally have presented the lines at issue of Mardonius *et al.* as verse.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER'S INVENTED WORDS

Like all of the writers of the era, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher made up words when they felt like it, usually by adding prefixes and suffixes to known words, combining words, or using a word in a way not yet used before. The following is a list of words from *A King and No King* that are indicated by the OED as being either the first or only use of a given word, or, as noted, the first use with a given meaning:

bilbo-man

bottled (as an adjective, describing something kept in a bottle)

cross-arrow

curdle / cruddle (used to describe blood)

desertlessly

dry-foundered

gracefulness (meaning virtuousness)

kex (applied figuratively to a person / legs))

lay it on (phrase referring to inflicting blows)

like a tansy (phrase)

over-grace

rebuke (meaning to beat)

squitter-breach

summer-whore

uninvented

utter (meaning altogether, or to the highest degree)

where (indicating who one should marry)

woman (meaning the qualities of a woman)

FOOTNOTES.

The footnotes in the annotations correspond as follows:

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