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# THE GENTLEMAN USHER

## by George Chapman

1606

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# The Gentleman Usher

## By George Chapman

## 1606

*Dramatis Personae:*

***Duke Alphonso***.
***Prince Vincentio***, his son.
***Medice***, the duke's favourite.
A ***servant*** of Medice.

***Strozza***, a Lord.
***Cynanche***, wife of Strozza.
***Poggio***, his nephew.
***Ancilla***, a servant.

***Earl Lasso***, an old Lord.
***Bassiolo***, gentleman usher to Lasso.
***Fungus***, a servant of Lasso.
***Cortezza***, sister of Lasso.
***Margaret***, daughter of Lasso.

***Benevemus***, a doctor.
***Sarpego***, a pedant.
***Julio***, a courtier.

Attendants, servants, huntsmen,
guards, two pages, maids.

*Figures in the Masques*:
Enchanter, Spirits, Sylvanus,
A Nymph, Broom-man, Rush-man,
a man-bug, a woman-bug.

### INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

*The Gentleman Usher* is George Chapman's crowning comedy achievement. It features one very lusty duke, an alcoholic noblewoman, a most vain usher, and a lot of genuine laugh-out-loud dialogue. Though the play includes much of Chapman's tell-tale obscurity, the comedic scenes are as entertaining today on the page as they must have been on the stage four centuries ago.

### NOTE on the PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of the play is taken from Thomas Marc Parrott's 1913 collection *Chapman's Comedies*, fully cited below.

### NOTES on the ANNOTATIONS

Mention of Parrott and Smith in the annotations refers to the notes provided by each of these editors in their respective editions of this play, each cited fully below.

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. Parrott, Thomas Marc. *Chapman's Comedies*. London: George Routledge & Sons, 1914.
5. Smith, John Hazel. *The Gentleman Usher*. Lincoln, NE: U. of Nebraska Press, 1970.

# ACT I.

## SCENE I.

*Before the House of Strozza.*

*Enter Strozza, Cynanche, and Poggio.*

**The Scene of the Play:** an unspecified duchy in Italy.

**Entering characters:** ***Cynanche*** is the wife of ***Lord Strozza***, ***Poggio*** his nephew. Poggio is a well-meaning lad, but a mental feather-weight, who talks in excess, and much of what he says is nonsense and hilariously self-contradictory. His primary role is the bearer of bad news.

***Stroz.*** Haste, nephew; what, a sluggard? Fie, for shame!

= hurry up. = common expression of disdain.

Shall he that was our morning cock, turn owl,
And lock out daylight from his drowsy eyes?

2: Strozza suggests that Poggio is not so much like the bird of the morning (*cock*), which is associated with leadership or supremacy, as he is the bird of the night (*owl*), with its own connotations of drowsiness or stupidity.[1,5]

Actually, the association of Poggio with an owl is even more significant: since ancient times, the screech of an owl was believed to be an omen of death or disaster: in Richard III, the king cries out, "Out on you, owls! nothing but songs of death?" (Act IV.iv). This ties in nicely with Poggio's primarily role in this play as the bearer of bad news.

***Pog.*** Pray pardon me for once, lord uncle, for I'll be sworn I had such a dream this morning: methought one came with a commission to take a sorrel curtal that was stolen from him, wheresoever he could find him. And because I feared he would lay claim to my sorrel curtal in my stable, I ran to the smith to have him set on his mane again and his tail presently, that the commission-man might not think him a curtal. And when the smith would not do it, I fell a-beating of him, so that I could not wake for my life till I was revenged on him.

= someone.
= a warrant or order. = a horse with its tail cut short or off.
= (re)attach.
= right away. = ie. so that.

***Cyn.*** This is your old valour, nephew, that will fight sleeping as well as waking.

= courage.

***Pog.*** 'Slud, aunt, what if my dream had been true (as it might have been for anything I knew)! There's never a smith in Italy shall make an ass of me in my sleep, if I can choose.

= a variation on *'Sblood*; both are short for "God's blood", an oath or swear. Parliament around this time passed a statute banning the explicit blasphemous use of God's name on stage, so such implied blasphemies became the norm.

***Stroz.*** Well said, my furious nephew; but I see
You quite forget that we must rouse to-day
The sharp-tusked boar; and blaze our huntsmanship
Before the Duke.

24*ff*: note that Strozza, a lord, speaks largely in verse, while his foolish nephew Poggio speaks mainly in prose.
25-27: a hunt is planned on the estate of Earl Lasso; Duke Alphonso, the ruler of the duchy, will be the featured guest. Strozza will want his entire family to appear for the event.
= show off.[1]

***Pog.*** Forget, lord uncle? I hope not; you think belike my wits are as brittle as a beetle, or as skittish as your

= it appears.
= Poggio's prattle is difficult to make any sense of: he begins by misspeaking the common expression, "blind as a beetle"; *brittle* conveys the sense of "weak", or perhaps "unreliable",[1] as he is responding to Strozza's suggestion that he might

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | have forgotten the hunt.<br>The word *beetle* could refer to the insect, with its concomitant brittleness, or to an old name for what is essentially a sledgehammer, and which was used as a byword for stupidity.[1]<br>30-31: *skittish...Barbary mare* = *skittish* could mean "fickle" or "frivolous", but also could have its modern meaning as applied to a horse, hence Poggio's use of *Barbary mare*. The famous horses of Barbaria, or Northern Africa, were frequently mentioned in drama of the era. |
| 32 | Barbary mare; one cannot cry wehee, but straight she cries tehee. | 31-32: *one cannot…tehee* = *wehee* is the whinny of a horse, *tehee* the laugh of a person; Poggio has gotten the two terms reversed.[3] |
| 34 | ***Stroz.*** Well guessed, cousin Hysteron Proteron! | = this is the name for the rhetorical device of connecting two ideas in such a way that the one that occurs last in time is named first, to signify its greater importance. Strozza is of course teasing Poggio's confusing the order of his onomatopoeic words. |
| 36 | ***Pog.*** But which way will the Duke's Grace hunt to-day? | 36: *which way* = the sense seems to be "where", though Strozza responds to the directional sense of the phrase with *Toward* in line 38.<br>*the Duke's Grace* = ie. the duke; "His Grace" or "Your Grace" would be correct titles to use in discussing or addressing a duke.[1] |
| 38 | ***Stroz.*** Toward Count Lasso's house his Grace will hunt, Where he will visit his late honoured mistress. | = ie. Count Lasso's daughter Margaret, whom the duke is interested to marry; *late* = most lately or recent. |
| 40 | | |
| 42 | ***Pog.*** Who, Lady Margaret, that dear young dame? Will his antiquity never leave his iniquity? | 42: *his antiquity* may be a parody of *His Grace*, describing the duke as an old man; *iniquity* refers to sinful or injurious actions.[1] Poggio is thus expressing disapproval for the old duke's desire to match with the young Margaret. Note that *Iniquity* was also an alternative name for *Vice*, a buffoonish character from the old morality plays, who was frequently alluded to in Elizabethan drama. *Vice* played the role of the tempter of humanity. |
| 44 | ***Cyn.*** Why, how now, nephew? Turned Parnassus lately? | = ie. poet; *Parnassus* is a mountain in Greece, long considered a source of inspiration for literary and poetic accomplishment; hence, it stands for the world of poetry or literature in general.[1] |
| 46 | ***Pog.*** "Nassus"? I know not; but I would I had all the | 46: *Nassus* = *nassus*, or *nasus*, is "nose" in Latin; perhaps this is what Poggio thinks he heard Cynanche say; or he may have no idea what she is talking about.<br>*would* = wish. |
| 48 | Duke's living for her sake; I'd make him a poor duke, i'faith! | = wealth, income. = ie. by spending all his money on Margaret. |
| 50 | ***Stroz.*** No doubt of that, if thou hadst all his living. | |
| 52 | ***Pog.*** I would not stand dreaming of the matter as I do now. | |
| 54 | | |
| | ***Cyn.*** Why, how do you dream, nephew? | |
| 56 | | |
| 58 | ***Pog.*** Marry, all last night methought I was tying her shoe-string. | = a mild oath, derived from the Virgin Mary. |

***Stroz.*** What, all night tying her shoe-string?

***Pog.*** Ay, that I was, and yet I tied it not neither; for, as I was tying it, the string broke, methought, and then, methought, having but one point at my hose, methought, I gave her that to tie her shoe withal.

= a tagged cord or ribbon used to attach hose to a doublet; *hose* and *doublet* were the basic male garments of Elizabethan society: hose covered the bottom half of the body, including the legs, while a doublet was a close-fitting garment for the upper body.
*withal* (line 65) = with.

***Cyn.*** A point of much kindness, I assure you.

***Pog.*** Whereupon, in the very nick, methought, the Count came rushing in, and I ran rushing out, with my heels about my hose for haste.

= old form of "in the nick of time".[1]

71: having given up his point for Margaret, Poggio's dream hose have fallen down around his ankles; but, confused again, Poggio has *heels* and *hose* backwards in this line. Note also the alliteration in this last line.

***Stroz.*** So, will you leave your dreaming, and dispatch?

= cease. = hurry up,[1] ie. get ready.

***Pog.*** Mum, not a word more, I'll go before, and overtake you presently.

= "I'll leave first"; note the self-contradictory nature of the sentence. The reader should be prepared to pick up Poggio's absurd conflicting assertions throughout the play!

[*Exit*.]

***Cyn.*** My lord, I fancy not these hunting sports,
When the bold game you follow turns again
And stares you in the face. Let me behold
A cast of falcons on their merry wings

= Cynanche addresses Strozza, her husband.

83-84: a number of terms from falconry appear here: a *cast* = a pair; *daring* = frightening; *to stoop* = to swoop down on: hence, *the stooped prey* = the prey upon which the falcon is set to swoop down; *shifting* = ie. acting to avoid the hawk.[1,3]

Daring the stoopèd prey, that shifting flies;
Or let me view the fearful hare or hind,
Tossed like a music point with harmony

85-87: Cynanche compares the baying of the hunting *hounds* to musical *harmony*, in which the mixed barkings resemble the tossing around of a musical phrase or motif (*a music point*),[1] as in a fugue.[3] The baying accompanies the agitated (*tossed*)[1] fleeing rabbit or deer (*hind*). Note the two senses of *tossed* here.

Of well-mouthed hounds. This is a sport for princes.

= the sense is likely "strong-voiced": a 19th century poem tells us that "*well-mouthed* hound makes the music of the woods."

The other rude; boars yield fit game for boors.

88: *boars* would have been pronounced like *boors*.

***Stroz.*** Thy timorous spirit blinds thy judgment, wife;
Those are most royal sports, that most approve
The huntsman's prowess and his hardy mind.

= test or demonstrate.

***Cyn.*** My lord, I know too well your virtuous spirit;
Take heed, for God's love, if you rouse the boar,
You come not near him, but discharge aloof
Your wounding pistol, or well-aimèd dart.

= courageous.
= from a distance[1] (to remain safe).
= arrow.

***Stroz.*** Ay, marry, wife, this counsel rightly flows
Out of thy bosom; pray thee take less care;

= "please (*pray thee*), don't worry so much."

Let ladies at their tables judge of boars,
Lords in the field. And so farewell, sweet love;
Fail not to meet me at Earl Lasso's house.

***Cyn.*** Pray pardon me for that. You know I love not
These solemn meetings.

***Stroz.*** You must needs for once
Constrain your disposition; and indeed
I would acquaint you more with Lady Margaret
For special reason.

***Cyn.*** Very good, my lord.

Then I must needs go fit me for that presence.

***Stroz.*** I pray thee do, farewell!

[*Exit Cynanche*.]

*Enter Vincentio.*

Here comes my friend. −
Good day, my lord! Why does your Grace confront

So clear a morning with so cloudy looks?

***Vinc.*** Ask'st thou my griefs that know'st my desp'rate love
Curbed by my father's stern rivality?
Must not I mourn that know not whether yet
I shall enjoy a stepdame or a wife?

***Stroz.*** A wife, Prince, never doubt it; your deserts
And youthful graces have engaged so far
The beauteous Margaret that she is your own.

***Vinc.*** Oh, but the eye of watchful jealousy
Robs my desires of means t' enjoy her favour.

***Stroz.*** Despair not: there are means enow for you:
Suborn some servant of some good respect
That's near your choice, who, though she needs no wooing,
May yet imagine you are to begin
Your strange young love-suit, and so speak for you,
Bear your kind letters, and get safe accéss.

All which when he shall do, you need not fear

His trusty secrecy, because he dares not
Reveal escapes whereof himself is author;

Whom you may best attempt, she must reveal;

= ie. by judging their taste.

= ie. "from having to attend the event at the earl's house."
= formal, ceremonial.[2]

= according to the OED, this is the earliest known written use of the phrase *very good* to indicate assent.
= "prepare myself".

**Entering Character: *Vincentio*** is the son and heir of Duke Alphonso, and a close friend of Strozza's.

= since Vincentio is royalty - his father the duke is the ruler of his land - he may properly be addressed as *your Grace*.
= Vincentio is obviously unhappy.

126-7: Vincentio, the duke's son, wants to marry Margaret, just as his father does!

129: if Margaret marries Vincentio's father, she will be his step-mother!

131-3: Strozza is confident Margaret will marry Vincentio.

135-6: Vincentio has no chance to meet with Margaret because the duke always seems to have his eye on her.

= plural form of "enough".
139-143: Strozza's idea is that Vincentio should convince one of Margaret's family-servants to act as a go-between for her and Vincentio; the servant would be led to believe that their relationship is only just beginning, though in reality, the young couple already have an understanding (hence, *she needs no wooing*).
*That's near your choice* (line 140) = "one (ie. a servant) who has access to your beloved".[5]

144-6: the servant, in helping Margaret and Vincentio, could not them give them away to the duke without implicating himself.

146: report any transgressions (*escapes*)[1] which he is responsible for having arranged.
147: "she will have to let you know which servant is the one you should work on."

For, if she loves you, she already knows,
And in an instant can resolve you that.
= "inform you of".

***Vinc.*** And so she will, I doubt not; would to Heaven
= "I wish".
I had fit time, even now, to know her mind!
= ie. which servant she will recommend.
This counsel feeds my heart with much sweet hope.
= ie. "this advice of yours, etc."

***Stroz.*** Pursue it then; 'twill not be hard t' effect:
The Duke has none for him, but Medice,
= assisting him; = *Medice* is a member of the duke's court, and his most trusted advisor; Strozza points out that unlike Vincentio, who has himself and Margaret on his side, Alphonso only has the lowly Medice to help him court Margaret.

*Medice* should be pronounced with the accent on the first syllable: *ME-di-ce*.

That fustian lord, who in his buckram face
157: *fustian* and *buckram* are types of coarse fabric, the latter stiffened with gum; the terms are figuratively applied to mean "ridiculous" or "pompous" and "stiff" or "stuck-up" respectively.[1]

Bewrays, in my conceit, a map of baseness.
= betrays, reveals. = the very image or representation.[1]

***Vinc.*** Ay, there's a parcel of unconstruèd stuff,
160: Medice is like a load of uninterpretable nonsense (*unconstrued stuff*);[1] Smith interprets otherwise, suggesting Medice is like a section of woven fabric (*stuff*) not yet turned into anything.

That unknown minion raised to honour's height,
= the favourite (*minion*) of the duke's is *unknown* in that no one knows where he came from,

Without the help of virtue, or of art
= ie. possessing any. = skill or learning.
Or (to say true) of any honest part.
= quality.

Oh, how he shames my father! He goes like
A prince's footman, in old-fashioned silks,
165: Medice's old-fashioned apparel makes him look like a *footman*, a servant who ran alongside a noble's carriage when it was in motion.

And most times in his hose and doubtlet only;
166: perhaps making fun of Medice for not wearing a fashionable cloak or gown.

So miseráble, that his own few men
Do beg by virtue of his livery;
167-8: Medice is so cheap (*miserable*) that his own servants must beg on the street to survive; English laws of the era banned vagrancy, but since Medice's servants are in fact employed, they would not be subject to arrest for violating the statutes; hence, their servants' uniforms (*livery*) could be said to protect them by acting as evidence of their employment.[3]
For he gives none, for any service done him,
Or any honour, any least reward.

***Stroz.*** 'Tis pity such should live about a prince:
I would have such a noble counterfeit nailed
173-4: *noble counterfeit* = ie. one impersonating an aristocrat.

*nailed…pillory* = while secured in a pillory (a kind of stocks), a prisoner might have his ears nailed onto it, with the expectation that the ears would be torn off as the prisoner moved.

Upon the pillory, and, after, whipped
For his adultery with nobility.
= metaphor for Medice's illegally or improperly consorting with the nobility.

***Vinc.*** Faith, I would fain disgrace him by all means,
= truly = "like to" or "prefer to".
As enemy to his base-bred ignorance,

That, being a great lord, cannot write nor read.

177-9: Vincentio would like to use Medice's illiteracy as a means to humiliate him.

***Stroz.*** For that, we'll follow the blind side of him,
And make it sometimes subject of our mirth.

= "seek out his vulnerable side".[1]

*Enter Poggio post-haste*.

= in a hurry.

***Vinc.*** See, what news with your nephew Poggio?

***Stroz.*** None good, I warrant you!

***Pog.*** Where should I find my lord uncle?

***Stroz.*** What's the huge haste with you?

***Pog.*** O ho, you will hunt to-day!

***Stroz.*** I hope I will.

***Pog.*** But you may hap to hop without your hope, for the truth is, Killbuck is run mad.

= happen; = leap about, as on a horse;[1] note Poggio's very silly wordplay with *hap*, *hop* and *hope*.

Smith cites a thesis by Akhiro Yamada[16] which suggests Poggio is parodying or misapplying a proverb of the time, one version of which was published in a book by J. Florio in 1591: "he that lives in hope, doth dance in narrow scope."

198*ff*: Poggio describes how Strozza's hunting dogs have become unemployable for the hunt; *Killbuck* was a common name for a hound or beagle.[13]

***Stroz.*** What's this?

***Pog.*** Nay, 'tis true, sir: and Killbuck being run mad, bit Ringwood so by the left buttock, you might have turned your nose in it.

= another common hunting dog name.[13]
205: "stuck your nose into it and rotated it."

***Vinc.*** Out, ass!

***Pog.*** By Heaven, you might, my lord! D'ye think I lie?

= ie. "you really could (turn your nose in it)".

***Vinc.*** Zounds, might I? Let's blanket him, my lord. A blanket here!

211: *Zounds* = a euphemism for the oath "God's wounds".

*blanket him* = ie. "toss Poggio in a blanket"; a person who deserved humiliation for some misbehavior might be subject to this treatment.

***Pog.*** Nay, good my lord Vincentio, by this rush I tell you for good will: and Venus, your brach there, runs so proud that your huntsman cannot take her down for his life.

= typical Elizabethan vow taken on an inanimate object; *rushes* were frequently strewn on the floor in this era.
= female hound.[1]
215-6: *runs so proud* = is in such heat.[1]
= as we can see from Strozza's response to this line, Poggio has used the wrong expression: to *take (her) down* is a term from falconry, meaning to recall a hawk from flight.

***Stroz.*** Take her up, fool, thou wouldst say.

= ie. handle or restrain her.

***Pog.*** Why, sir, he would soon take her down, and he could take her up, I warrant her!

= as soon. = "as" or "if".
= guarantee it.

***Vinc.*** Well said, hammer, hammer!

= a small bird, the yellowhammer, here meaning "fool".[1,3]

***Pog.*** Nay, good now, let's alone. And there's your horse, Gray Strozza, too, has the staggers, and has strook Bay Bettrice, your Barbary mare, so that she goes halting o' this fashion, most filthily.

= a disease of horses, which causes them to stagger.[2]

= struck, though Smith suggests Poggio means "mated with".

= "goes about limping (*halting*) like this": Poggio likely demonstrates how the horse limps.

***Stroz.*** What poison blisters thy unhappy tongue,
Evermore braying forth unhappy news? −
Our hunting sport is at the best, my lord:

= like the *ass* that Vincentio called him in line 207 above.

232: "well, our hunting plans are in great shape, my lord."

232*f*: having finished berating Poggio, Strozza turns to Vincentio; he worries about disappointing the duke, who would expect Strozza to be an excellent hunting companion.

How shall I satisfy the Duke your father,
Defrauding him of his expected sport?
See, see, he comes.

*Enter Alphonso, Medice, Sarpego, with attendants.*

**Entering Characters:** ***Alphonso*** is the duke, **Medice** his minion (favourite), and ***Sarpego*** a pedant, or scholar.

***Alph.*** Is this the copy of the speech you wrote, Signor Sarpego?

***Sarp.*** It is a blaze of wit poetical;

243*ff*: Sarpego, a scholar, speaks with humorous and ridiculous rhetorical flourishes, indicating his high self-regard.

Read it, brave Duke, with eyes pathetical.

= ie. that would be moved or emotionally stirred.[14] Note that Sarpego's opening lines comprise a rather awkward rhyming couplet.

***Alph.*** We will peruse it straight: − well met, Vincentio,
And good Lord Strozza; we commend you both
For your attendance; but you must conceive
'Tis no true hunting we intend to-day,

= immediately.

249-252: rather than go hunting, the duke decides to court Margaret instead, by means of taking part in the production of a small play (known as a *masque*); one of the endearing traits of Elizabethan drama is the willingness of the characters to put on plays and shows for each other.

But an inducement to a certain show,

= prologue;[5] the duke already has plans for an elaborate evening masque, and now intends to stage an additional earlier one as well.

Wherewith we will present our beauteous love,

251: "at which I will formally bring the lovely Margaret (*our beauteous love*) to public notice".

And therein we bespeak your company.

= "engage your help" or "request your attendance."[1]

***Vinc.*** We both are ready to attend your Highness.

**Alph.** See then, here is a poem that requires
Your worthy censures, offered, if it like,

= judgments. = "pleases you".

To furnish our intended amorous show:
Read it, Vincentio.

= use in.

***Vinc.*** Pardon me, my lord.
Lord Medice's reading will express it better.

262: Vincentio and Strozza now fulfill their earlier intention to tease Medice about his illiteracy.

***Med.*** My patience can digest your scoffs, my lord.
I care not to proclaim it to the world:

265: "I don't mind announcing it to the whole world".

I can nor write nor read; and what of that?
I can both see and hear as well as you.

***Alph.*** Still are your wits at war.

269: Alphonso's comment reveals that this is not the first

[*To Vincentio*] Here, read this poem.

time Medice and Vincentio have bared their fangs at each other.

***Vinc.*** [*Reads*]
"The red-faced sun hath firked the flundering shades,

= driven away.[1] = stumbling or struggling shadows (of the night).[1,5]

And cast bright ammel on Aurora's brow."

= enamel,[1] ie. colourful ornament. = goddess of the dawn.

***Alph.*** High words and strange! Read on, Vincentio.

275: the outrageously pretentious and absurd nature of Sarpego's poetry is not lost on his listeners.

***Vinc.*** "The busky groves that gag-toothed boars do shroud
With cringle-crangle horns do ring aloud."

= full of bushes.[1] = having prominently extending teeth.[1]
= twisting;[1] lines 278-9 offer another clunky rhyming couplet.

***Pog.*** My lord, my lord, I have a speech here worth ten of this, and yet I'll mend it too.

= improve or fix.[1]

***Alph.*** How likes Vincentio?

284: "How did you like it, Vincentio?"

***Vinc.*** It is strangely good,
No inkhorn ever did bring forth the like.

= ink container.

Could these brave prancing words with action's spur,

288-290 note Vincentio's extended metaphor (with *prancing*, *spur*, *ridden* and *managed*) comparing the reciting of Sarpego's poem for an audience to riding a horse.
The word *action* here, and in the next several lines, refers to the gestures an actor would make to accompany his speech.

Be ridden throughly, and managed right,

= used for "thoroughly", meaning "perfectly".[1]

'Twould fright the audience, and perhaps delight.

289-290: Vincentio mocks Sarpego's rhyming couplets by making up one of his own - actually, with *fright*, a rhyming triplet of sorts.

***Sarp.*** Doubt you of action, sir?

292: "do you doubt I can act, sir?"

***Vinc.*** Ay, for such stuff.

294: "yes, to such garbage as this."

***Sarp.*** Then know, my lord, I can both act and teach
To any words; when I in Padua schooled it,

= *Padua* was well-known in England for its university.

I played in one of Plautus' comedies,

= *Plautus*, who lived around the 2nd-century B.C., was the most famous of Roman comic playwrights; about 20 of his plays are extant.

Namely, *Curculio*, where his part I acted,
Projecting from the poor sum of four lines
Forty fair actions.

= *Curculio* is the shortest of Plautus' plays, about 700 lines; Sarpego played Curculio, a parasite or hanger-on.

***Alph.*** Let's see that, I pray.

303: Alphonso requests a demonstration of Sarpego's portrayal of Curculio.

***Sarp.*** Your Highness shall command.
But pardon me, if in my action's heat,

306-8: Sarpego intends to act the part as realistically as possible, which may entail him tripping over the others.

Entering in post post haste, I chance to take up
Some of your honoured heels.

= presumably meaning "super-hurriedly". = ie. trip.[3]

***Pog.*** Y' ad best leave out
That action for a thing that I know, sir.

310-1: Poggio suggest Sarpego leave out the part where he bumps into the others; line 311's exact meaning is unclear, but perhaps Poggio is vaguely hinting at a retaliatory beating, should Sarpego knock him down.

***Sarp.*** Then shall you see what I can do without it.

313: Sarpego agrees to leave out the collisions.

[*Sarpego puts on his parasite's costume*.]

= the *parasite*, a stock character of ancient comedies, was a person who ingratiated himself through flattery to a wealthy patron, who in return would feed and support him; we may also note here how absurd is Sarpego's desire to demonstrate his acting ability to the others, complete with a costume that he just happens to have with him!

***Alph.*** See, see! He hath his furniture and all.

= costume.[2]

***Sarp.*** You must imagine, lords, I bring good news,
Whereof being princely proud I scour the street,
And over-tumble every man I meet.

[*Exit Sarpego*.]

***Pog.*** Beshrew my heart if he take up my heels!

325: "damn him if he knocks me over!"

*Enter Sarpego, running about the stage*.

***Sarp.*** *Date viam mihi, noti atque ignoti, dum ego hic officium meum.*
*Facio: fugite omnes, abite, et de via secedite,*
*Ne quern in cursu capite aut cubito aut pectore offendam aut genu*.

**Translation:** "Known or unknown, make way for me, while here I execute my commission; fly all of you, be off, and get out of the way, lest I should hurt any person in my speed with my head, or elbow, or breast, or with my knee."[15]

***Alph.*** Thanks, good Signor Sarpego.
How like you, lords, this stirring action?

***Stroz.*** In a cold morning it were good, my lord,
But something harsh upon repletiön.

= after a full meal.[3]

***Sarp.*** Sir, I have ventured, being enjoined, to eat
Three scholars' commons, and yet drew it neat.

= ie. asked (to perform).
342: *commons* = the share of food a college student was entitled to.[1]
*drew it neat* = the sense seems to be "performed it skillfully."

***Pog.*** Come, sir, you meddle in too many matters; let us, I pray, tend on our own show at my lord Lasso's.

***Sarp.*** Doing obeisance then to every lord,
I now consort you, sir, even *toto corde*.

= bowing
= attend.[2] = with all my heart (Latin); Sarpego's inclination to speak in Latin would have been viewed as pretentious.

[*Exit Sarpego and Poggio*.]

***Med.*** My lord, away with these scholastic wits,
Lay the invention of your speech on me,

353: Medice asks the duke to let him write his speech for him.

And the performance too; I'll play my part
That you shall say, Nature yields more than Art.

= in such a way that. = ie. "natural talent is superior to learned skills."

***Alph.*** Be't so resolved; unartificial truth
And unfeigned passion can decipher best.

= decided. = natural.[1]
= genuine. = allow one to interpret (*decipher*)[1] a role in the best way.

***Vinc.*** But 'twill be hard, my lord, for one unlearn'd.

360: Vincentio again cruelly points out Medice's lack of education and literacy.

***Med.*** Unlearn'd? I cry you mercy, sir; unlearn'd?

362: Medice takes Vincentio's comment badly, perhaps interpreting *unlearned* in its harsher sense of ignorant or unsophisticated, as opposed to one simply lacking formal education.

***Vinc.*** I mean untaught, my lord, to make a speech
As a pretended actor, without clothes
More gracious than your doublet and your hose.

364: Vincentio dissembles, pretending he only meant that Medice is untrained as an actor.
= ie. a costume.
366: now Vincentio makes fun of Medice's unstylish clothes.

***Alph.*** What, think you, son, we mean t' express a speech
Of special weight without a like attire?

= important or exceptional.[1] = a costume of similar distinction, ie. an appropriate outfit.

[*Alphonso puts rich robes on Medice*.]

***Vinc.*** Excuse me then, my lord; so stands it well.

***Stroz.*** Has brought them rarely in to pageant him.

375: the duke brought regal clothing for Medice's use to honor him, as with a triumph,[3] or to exhibit him.[1]

***Med.*** What, think you, lord, we think not of attire?
Can we not make us ready at this age?

378: "are we not old enough to dress ourselves?"

***Stroz.*** Alas, my lord, your wit must pardon his.

380: Strozza addresses Vincentio.

***Vinc.*** I hope it will; his wit is pitiful.

= pitiable.[5]

***Stroz.*** [*To Medice*]
I pray stand by, my lord; y' are troublesome.

***Med.*** To none but you; − am I to you, my lord?

***Vinc.*** Not unto me.

***Med.*** Why, then, you wrong me, Strozza.

***Vinc.*** Nay, fall not out, my lords.

= "don't argue".

***Stroz.*** May I not know
What your speech is, my Liege?

***Alph.*** None but myself, and the Lord Medice.

***Med.*** No, pray, my lord,
Let none partake with us.

401: ie. "don't tell anyone what we are planning."

***Alph.*** No, be assured.
But for another cause:
[*Aside to Strozza*] a word, Lord Strozza;
I tell you true I fear Lord Medice
Will scarce discharge the speech effectually;
As we go, therefore, I'll explain to you
My whole intent, that you may second him
If need and his debility require.

404: "but I have another matter (*cause*) I need to take care of."
= support him, ie. take Medice's place.
= ie. an inability to perform his role.

***Stroz.*** Thanks for this grace, my Liege.

[*Vincentio overhears*.]

***Med.*** My lord, your son!

***Alph.*** Why, how now, son? Forbear. − Yet 'tis no matter,
We talk of other business, Medice;
And come, we will prepare us to our show.

[*Exeunt Alphonso, Medice, and attendants*.]

***Stroz. and Vinc.*** Which, as we can, we'll cast to overthrow.

[*Exeunt*.]

420, 424: the final two lines of the scene form, typically, a rhyming couplet.

= contrive, cause.[1] = subvert or ruin.[1]

## ACT I, SCENE II.

*A Room in the House of Lasso.*

*Enter Lasso, Bassiolo, Sarpego, two Pages; Bassiolo bare before*.

**Entering Characters:** ***Bassiolo*** is a **gentleman usher**, and as such he holds the second highest position in the household of ***Earl Lasso***, after the steward, and is responsible for managing many of the important activities of the home, including overseeing the hiring, firing and work of all the household's servants, supervising the preparation of meals, announcing callers, and preceding his master or mistress as he or she moves formally about.[5]

***Earl Lasso*** is the father of Margaret, the young lady both the duke and his son Vincentio want to marry; ***Sarpego*** is our scholar, whom we met in the play's first scene.

Bassiolo enters the room without a servant's hat (*bare*), and preceding the others (*before*). A fascinating handbook of instructions, written by the Viscount Montague in the late 16th century, details the duties of the household servants; it specifically outlines when his gentleman usher shall wear his hat: for example, he writes, *"I will that my Gentleman Usher shall use me or my wife in all places convenient through cities, towns, &c* ***bare-headed*** *as well on horseback as on foot, saving that in the presence of an Earl or upwards he shall forebear to do so."*[18]

***Bass.*** Stand by there, make place!

= "make room!"

***Lasso.*** Say, now, Bassiolo, you on whom relies
The general disposition of my house
In this our preparation for the Duke,
Are all our officers at large instructed
For fit discharge of their peculiar places?

= servants.[2] = altogether.[1]
= particular jobs.

***Bass.*** At large, my lord, instructed.

***Lasso.*** Are all our chambers hung? Think you our house
Amply capacious to lodge all the train?

= ie. with tapestries, etc.
= ie. all those expected to be present.[1]

***Bass.*** Amply capacious, I am passing glad.
And now, then, to our mirth and musical show,
Which, after supper, we intend t' endure,
Welcome's chief dainties; for choice cates at home
Ever attend on princes, mirth abroad.
Are all parts perfect?

= exceedingly.

17: *dainties* and *cates* both refer to delicacies

***Sarp.*** One I know there is.

***Lasso.*** And that is yours.

***Sarp.*** Well guessed, in earnest, lord!
I need not *erubescere* to take
So much upon me; that my back will bear.

= blush (Latin).

***Bass.*** Nay, he will be perfectiön itself
For wording well and dextrous action, too.

30: ie. in reciting his lines well and gesturing appropriately.

***Lasso.*** And will these waggish pages hit their songs?

= mischievous young servants. = succeed (in singing).[5]

***Both Pages.*** Re, mi, fa, sol, la.

34: the boys sing or warm up.

***Lasso.*** Oh they are practising; good boys, well done!
But where is Poggio? There y' are overshot,

37-38: *y' are…his brain* = Lasso suggests Bassiolo has made a mistake in giving an important part to Poggio.
*y' are overshot* = "you have overshot the target" (from archery).

To lay a capital part upon his brain,
Whose absence tells me plainly he'll neglect him.

= it (ie. his part).

***Bass.*** Oh no, my lord, he dreams of nothing else,
And gives it out in wagers he'll excel;
And see (I told your lordship) he is come.

41-42: Bassiolo assures Lasso that Poggio is actually waiting to perform his part with great anticipation, so much so that he is taking bets on his success; Parrott notes that it was common for people to act parts in a play on a bet.

*Enter Poggio.*

***Pog.*** How now, my lord, have you borrowed a suit for
me? Signor Bassiolo, can all say, are all things ready?
The Duke is hard by, and little thinks that I'll be an
actor, i'faith; I keep all close, my lord.

= costume.
= ie. recite their parts properly.
= close by, ie. almost arrived.
= secret.

***Lasso.*** Oh, 'tis well done, call all the ladies in; −
Sister and daughter, come, for God's sake, come,
Prepare your courtliest carriage for the Duke.

= bearing.

*Enter Cortezza, Margaret, and Maids.*

**Entering Characters:** ***Cortezza*** is Lasso's sottish sister, ***Margaret*** his daughter.

***Cort.*** And, niece, in any case remember this:

58-65: Cortezza gives her niece advice on how to flirt with the duke.

Praise the old man, and when you see him first,
Look me on none but him, smiling and lovingly;

= ie. "look on": this is an example of the now lost grammatical form known as the *ethical dative*; the extra pronoun *me* after *Look* suggests extra interest on the part of the speaker to have the action completed.

And then, when he comes near, make beisance low,
With both your hands thus moving, which not only
Is, as 'twere, courtly, and most comely too,
But speaks (as who should say "Come hither, Duke.")
And yet says nothing, but you may deny.

= curtsy.
= attractive, pleasing.[1]

62-65: the gestures Cortezza demonstrates for Margaret are intended to be seductive, but subtle enough that if anyone should accuse Margaret of coming on to the duke, she can credibly deny it.

***Lasso.*** Well taught, sister!

***Marg.*** Ay, and to much end;
I am exceeding fond to humour him.

69: "and for a great purpose"; Margaret is ironic.
70: ie. "I would be very foolish (*fond*) to indulge the duke."

*Enter Enchanter, with spirits singing;*

72-74: the show begins, as the performers enter the stage;

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 74 | *after them Medice like Sylvanus, next the Duke bound, Vincentio, Strozza, with others*. | Medice is dressed as *Sylvanus*, a god of the woods and fields. The duke, unusually, appears himself in the show, apparently tied up. |
| 76 | ***Lasso.*** Hark! Does he come with music? What, and bound? An amorous device; daughter, observe! | = ie. the duke.<br>= dramatic presentation or idea with a love-related theme. |
| 78 | ***Vinc.*** [*Aside to Strozza*] | |
| 80 | Now let's gull Medice; I do not doubt | = play a trick on. |
| | But this attire put on, will put him out. | = "put him out of sorts", ie. cause him to be unable to recite his lines properly. |
| 82 | ***Stroz.*** [*Aside to Vincentio*] | |
| 84 | We'll do our best to that end, therefore mark. | = to achieve that goal. = "let's be attentive" |
| 86 | ***Enchanter.*** Lady or Princess, both your choice commands, | 86: spoken to Margaret: "it is your choice as to whether you you remain a simple member of the nobility (*Lady*) or a duchess (*Princess*).[3] |
| | These spirits and I, all servants of your beauty, | |
| 88 | Present this royal captive to your mercy. | |
| 90 | ***Marg.*** Captive to me, a subject? | 90: ie. a citizen of the duchy over which the duke rules. |
| 92 | ***Vinc.*** Ay, fair nymph! | |
| | And how the worthy mystery befell, | |
| 94 | Sylvanus here, this wooden god, can tell. | = god of the woods, played by Medice; Smith notes Vincentio is also referring to Medice's stiff acting style.[5] Note how the members of the show's "audience" continuously interrupt and converse during the performance. |
| 96 | ***Alph.*** Now, my lord! | |
| 98 | ***Vinc.*** Now is the time, man, speak! | |
| 100 | ***Med.*** Peace! | = "be quiet!" |
| 102 | ***Alph.*** Peace, Vincentio! | |
| 104 | ***Vinc.*** 'Swounds, my lord, | = God's wounds (alternative form of *zounds*) |
| | Shall I stand by and suffer him to shame you? − | = ie. "let him argue your cause so poorly (with his rotten acting)?"[5] |
| 106 | My lord Medice! | |
| 108 | ***Stroz.*** Will you not speak, my lord? | 108: Strozza, following Vincentio's lead, heckles Medice, without giving him a chance to speak; one can imagine Medice appearing to suffer from stage-fright here. |
| 110 | ***Med.*** How can I? | |
| 112 | ***Vinc.*** But you must speak, in earnest. − | |
| | Would not your Highness have him speak, my lord? | |
| 114 | ***Med.*** Yes, and I will speak, and perhaps speak so | |
| 116 | As you shall never mend: I can, I know. | = improve upon;[1] but Parrott also sees an implied threat here.[3] |
| 118 | ***Vinc.*** Do then, my good lord. | |
| 120 | ***Alph.*** Medice, forth! | |
| 122 | ***Med.*** Goddess, fair goddess, for no less − no less – | |
| 124 | [*Medice hesitates.*] | |
| 126 | ***Alph.*** No less, no less? No more, no more! | |

[*To Strozza*] Speak you.

127: Alphonso wastes no time in having Strozza take over the part from the faltering Medice.

***Med.*** 'Swounds, they have put me out!

***Vinc.*** Laugh you, fair goddess?
This nobleman disdains to be your fool.

131-2: Vincentio addresses Margaret, who seems to have to be laughing at the goings-on; note that Vincentio has mockingly repeated Medice's use of the phrase *fair goddess*.

***Alph.*** Vincentio, peace!

***Vinc.*** 'Swounds, my lord, it is as good a show! − Pray speak, Lord Strozza.

136: Medice's failure is as entertaining to watch as if he had carried off his speech successfully.

***Stroz.*** Honourable dame –

***Vinc.*** Take heed you be not out, I pray, my lord.

141: Now Vincentio harasses his friend!

***Stroz.*** I pray forbear, my lord Vincentio. −
How this distressèd Prince came thus enthralled,

144*f*: Strozza recites his lines. The *Prince* is the duke. *enthralled* = bound, tied-up.

I must relate with words of height and wonder:
His Grace this morning, visiting the woods,
And straying far to find game for the chase,
At last out of a myrtle grove he roused

= ie. high style.

148-9: the *myrtle* was sacred to Venus, and thus became a symbol of love; more apropos, as Smith notes, is that Venus' beloved, Adonis, hunted the boar that killed him in a myrtle grove, as described by Shakespeare in his long poem, *Venus and Adonis* (1593).

A vast and dreadful boar, so stern and fierce.
As if the fiend, fell Cruèlty herself,
Had come to fright the woods in that strange shape.

150: "as if Satan, in the personified guise of malevolent (*fell*) *Cruelty*, etc."

***Alph.*** Excellent good!

***Vinc.*** Too good, a plague on him!

155: Vincentio does not want Strozza, nor anyone else for that matter, to perform well, because he knows the show is intended to be a cute and clever romantic device for the duke to court Margaret.

***Stroz.*** The princely savage being thus on foot,
Tearing the earth up with his thundering hoof,
And with th' enragèd Ætna of his breath
Firing the air, and scorching all the woods,
Horror held all us huntsmen from pursuit;
Only the Duke, incensed with our cold fear,
Encouraged like a second Hercules –

= ie. the boar. = on the move.[1]

= reference to Mt. Etna, Italy's famous volcano.

161: notice the nice alliteration in this line.
= furious at or incited by[1] the cowardice of those attending him in the hunt.
= inspired with courage.[1]

***Vinc.*** Zounds, too good, man!

***Stroz.*** Pray thee let me alone!
And like the English sign of great Saint George –

168: the reference is to the red cross on the banner or flag (*sign*) long associated with England, known as the Saint George's cross.

***Vinc.*** Plague of that simile!

170: perhaps Vincentio is displeased because the image of the duke as St. George is too flattering to his father; George

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | had saved a princess's life when he captured, and then slew, the dragon.[11] |
| 172 | ***Stroz.*** Gave valorous example, and, like fire, | = moving as fiercely as fire. |
| | Hunted the monster close, and charged so fierce | = ie. the boar. |
| 174 | That he enforced him (as our sense conceived) | = forced it. |
| | To leap for soil into a crystal spring; | = take to the water; to *take soil* is a hunting term, used to describe game taking refuge in a water source (*soil*).[3] |
| 176 | Where on the sudden strangely vanishing, | |
| | Nymph-like, for him, out of the waves arose | = in his place. |
| 178 | Your sacred figure, like Diana armed, | = ie. meaning Margaret. = Roman goddess of the hunt. |
| | And (as in purpose of the beast's revenge) | 179-180: a spirit in the figure of Margaret wounded Alphonso with an arrow, as if to retaliate against the duke on behalf of the boar; the arrow may perhaps be considered to have caused the duke to fall in love with Margaret, as if it had been shot by Cupid. |
| 180 | Discharged an arrow through his Highness' breast, | |
| | Whence yet no wound or any blood appeared; | |
| 182 | With which the angry shadow left the light; | 182: then the spirit of Margaret disappeared. |
| | And this enchanter, with his power of spirits, | = Strozza indicates the character of the Enchanter. |
| 184 | Brake from a cave, scattering enchanted sounds, | |
| | That strook us senseless, while in these strange bands | = common variation of *struck*, commonly used in the 17th century.<br>*bands* = chains.[2] |
| 186 | These cruèl spirits thus enchained his arms, | = ie. the duke's. |
| | And led him captive to your heavenly eyes, | 187-8: the Enchanter will next explain (*report*) why the bound duke has been brought before Margaret. |
| 188 | Th' intent whereof on their report relies. | |
| 190 | ***Enchanter.*** Bright nymph, that boar figured your cruèlty, | = ie. Margaret. = represented.[2] |
| | Chargèd by love, defended by your beauty. | |
| 192 | This amorous huntsman here we thus enthralled | = placed in bondage.[1] |
| | As the attendants on your Grace's charms, | |
| 194 | And brought him hither, by your bounteous hands | 194-5: only Margaret can release the duke from his literal chains, which also act as a metaphor for the as-yet unreciprocated love he has for her. |
| | To be released, or live in endless bands. | |
| 196 | | |
| | ***Lasso.*** Daughter, release the Duke! − Alas, my Liege, | |
| 198 | What meant your Highness to endure this wrong? | 198: Lasso is stunned that the duke has so lowered himself as to take such a demeaning role in the play. |
| 200 | ***Cort.*** Enlarge him, niece; come, dame, it must be so. | = free. |
| 202 | ***Marg.*** What, madam, shall I arrogate so much? | = assume a responsibility or right to which one is not entitled.[1] |
| 204 | ***Lasso.*** His Highness' pleasure is to grace you so. | |
| 206 | ***Alph.*** Perform it then, sweet love, it is a deed | |
| | Worthy the office of your honoured hand. | |
| 208 | | |
| | ***Marg.*** Too worthy, I confess, my lord, for me, | |
| 210 | If it were serious; but it is in sport, | |
| | And women are fit actors for such pageants. | |
| 212 | | |
| | [*She unbinds Alphonso*.] | |
| 214 | | |
| | ***Alph.*** Thanks, gracious love; why made you strange of this? | = "why were you so incompliant (*strange*)",[1] ie. "hesitant to release me?" |
| 216 | I rest no less your captive than before; | |
| | For me untying, you have tied me more. − | 216-7: note the rhyming couplet. |
| 218 | Thanks, Strozza, for your speech. − | |

[*To Medice*] No thanks to you!

***Med.*** No, thank your son, my lord!

***Lasso.*** 'Twas very well,
Exceeding well performed on every part;
How say you, Bassiolo?

***Bass.*** Rare, I protest, my lord! = excellent. = swear.

***Cort.*** Oh, my lord Medice became it rarely; = fit or played the part admirably; Smith suggests Cortezza's speech here (lines 229-231) is ironic, as she actually considers Medice's failure *unmanly*.[5] As we will see later, though, Cortezza is actually attracted to the duke's minion.

Methought I liked his manly being out; = being put off (from his speech), though Smith notes that Cortezza is likely being bawdy as well in referring to Medice's *manly being out*.
It becomes noblemen to do nothing well.

***Lasso.*** Now then, will't please your Grace to grace our house,
And still vouchsafe our service further honour?

***Alph.*** Lead us, my lord; we will your daughter lead.

[*Exeunt all but Vincentio and Strozza*.]

***Vinc.*** You do not lead, but drag her leaden steps. 240: Vincentio's comment is directed to the duke, who is out of hearing range; his use of *leaden*, referring to Margaret's unwilling and heavy steps, is intended to emphasize her unhappiness at being the target of Alphonso's attention.
Smith notes that the sound of *ea* in both *lead* and *leaden* would have been the same in those days, sounding like *a* in "hate", thus intensifying the wordplay.

***Stroz.*** How did you like my speech?

***Vinc.*** Oh, fie upon't! = a phrase of reproach.
Your rhetoric was too fine.

***Stroz.*** Nothing at all;
I hope Saint George's sign was gross enough: = obvious.[2]
But (to be serious) as these warnings pass,
Watch you your father, I'll watch Medice,
That in your love-suit we may shun suspect; = avoid suspicion.
To which end, with your next occasion urge = opportunity.
Your love to name the person she will choose,
By whose means you may safely write or meet.

***Vinc.*** That's our chief business; and see, here she comes.

*Enter Margaret in haste*. 258*ff*: Margaret's quick visit to Vincentio confirms that they actually have an understanding.

***Marg.*** My lord, I only come to say, y' are welcome,
And so must say farewell.

***Vinc.*** One word, I pray.

***Marg.*** What's that?

***Vinc.*** You needs must presently devise

What person trusted chiefly with your guard
You think is aptest for me to corrupt

= cause to act immorally, ie. suborn so that he will act on the young couple's behalf.

In making him a mean for our safe meeting.

= means.

***Marg.*** My father's usher, none so fit.
If you can work him well; − and so farewell,
With thanks, my good lord Strozza, for your speech.

= ie. Bassiolo, Lasso's gentleman usher, and the play's title character.

[*Exit*.]

***Stroz.*** I thank you for your patience, mocking lady.

= Strozza assumes that Margaret (like Vincentio) is not actually happy his recitation went so well.

***Vinc.*** Oh, what a fellow has she picked us out!
One that I would have choosed past all the rest
For his close stockings only.

= ie. close-fitting hose; Vincentio seems to be making fun of Bassiolo's old-fashioned attire (at this time, padded hose were growing more in style).

***Stroz.*** And why not
For the most constant fashion of his hat?

= perhaps meaning "most current".[5]

***Vinc.*** Nay, then, if nothing must be left unspoke,

287: "well then, if we are to omit no issue from this conversation".

For his strict form thus still to wear his cloak.

= cloaks were worn over the doublet; Bassiolo may be wedded to wearing an old-fashioned long cloak.

***Stroz.*** Well, sir, he is your own, I make no doubt;
For to these outward figures of his mind
He hath two inward swallowing properties

= "he's your man!"[5]
291: "for matching these external properties of his, etc."[5]
292-4: Bassiolo has two personal qualities that they should take advantage of: greed (*avarice*) and high self-regard; if Vincentio gives him gifts and flatters him, he will surely help Vincentio out.

Of any gudgeons, servile avarice
And overweening thought of his own worth,

= a small fish used for bait,[3] hence a credulous fool. With *swallowing*, the phrase "swallows the bait" comes to mind.

Ready to snatch at every shade of glory:
And, therefore, till you can directly board him,
Waft him aloof with hats and other favours
Still as you meet him.

= address or approach.[2]
= "wave at him with your hat from far away (*aloof*)".[3]
Strozza is explaining how Vincentio should butter up the usher with favorable attention, in preparation for asking him directly to act as an intermediary for him and Margaret.

Strozza's language in 296-7 is maritime in its metaphor: to *board* is to enter a ship; to *waft* is to either convoy a group of ships or guide a ship; and *aloof* describes a ship travelling into or on course with the wind to avoid being driven into shore.[1]

*Still as* in line 298 means "whenever".

***Vinc.*** Well, let me alone:
He that is one man's slave is free from none.

[*Exeunt*.]

END OF ACT I.

# ACT II.

## SCENE I.

*A Room in the House of Lasso*.

*Enter Medice, Cortezza, a Page with a cup of sack.*

= a white wine, and favorite drink of Shakespeare's Falstaff.

***Med.*** Come, lady, sit you here. Page, fill some sack.
[*Aside*] I am to work upon this agèd dame,

= Medice explains that he is trying to find out from Cortezza if she knows why her niece Margaret is resisting the duke's courting; Medice will do this by getting her drunk!

To glean from her if there be any cause
(In loving others) of her niece's coyness

= ie. perhaps she is in love with someone else.

To the most gracious love-suit of the Duke. –
Here, noble lady, this is healthful drink
After our supper.

***Cort.*** Oh, 'tis that, my lord,
That of all drinks keeps life and soul in me.

***Med.*** Here, fill it, page, for this my worthy love.
Oh, how I could embrace this good old widow!

***Cort.*** Now, lord, when you do thus you make me think

= ie. act or speak this way.

Of my sweet husband, for he was as like you;
E'en the same words and fashion, the same eyes,
Manly, and choleric, e'en as you are, just;

= hot-tempered.[2] = exactly (like you).[5]

And e'en as kind as you for all the world.

***Med.*** Oh, my sweet widow, thou dost make me proud!

21: Medice's comment is innocuous enough, but Cortezza thinks he is using *proud* in its sense of "lustful".[1,5]

***Cort.*** Nay, I am too old for you.

***Med.*** Too old! That's nothing;
Come, pledge me, wench, for I am dry again,

= "drink to my health". = a term of affection in those days.

And straight will charge your widowhood fresh, i'faith:

[*She drinks*.]

Why, that's well done!

***Cort.*** Now fie on't, here's a draught!

***Med.*** Oh, it will warm your blood; if you should sip,
'Twould make you heartburned.

35-36: Medice encourages Cortezza to drink heartily, which will warm her blood; if she only sips her booze, it will give her painful *heartburn*: *warm* and *burn* are thus paired, or opposed.

***Cort.*** 'Faith, and so they say;
Yet I must tell you, since I plied this gear,

= took up this business (*gear*),[3] ie. of drinking.

I have been haunted with a whoreson pain here,
And every moon, almost, with a shrewd fever,

= once a month. = harsh, bad, undesirable.[1]

And yet I cannot leave it; for, thank God!

= ie. stop drinking.

I never was more sound of wind and limb.

43: "I have never been healthier." Cortezza, typically, is contradicting herself.
*wind and limb* = common phrase for the body in general.

[*Enter Strozza behind.*]

45: Strozza is spying on the two.

Look you, I warrant you I have a leg,

[*Cortezza shows a great <u>bumbasted</u> leg.*]

= stuffed with cotton wool, so as to appear to be grossly swollen.[1] This is one of the odder stage directions we have come across.

Holds out as handsomely –

***Med.*** Beshrew my life,
But 'tis a leg indeed, a goodly limb!

***Stroz.*** [*Aside*] This is most excellent!

***Med.*** Oh, <u>that</u> your niece
Were of as <u>mild</u> a spirit as yourself!

= "if only".
= tender or indulgent, though Smith suggests "yielding".

***Cort.*** Alas, Lord Medice, would you have a girl
As <u>well seen in behaviour</u> as I?
Ah, she's a <u>fond</u> young thing, and grown so proud,
The wind must blow at west still or she'll be angry.

62: "as accomplished in courtly behavior as I am?[3]
= foolish.
64: the notion that a *west wind* brings good weather was proverbial.[17]
*still* = ever.

***Med.*** <u>Mass</u>, so methinks; how coy she's to the Duke!
I lay my life she has some younger love.

= an oath.

***Cort.*** 'Faith, like enough!

***Med.*** <u>Gods me</u>, who should it be?

= short for "God save me".

***Cort.*** If it be any − Page, a little sack −
If it be any, hark now, if it be –
I know not, by this sack − but if it be,
<u>Mark</u> what I say, my lord − I drink t'ye first.

note.

***Med.*** Well said, good widow; <u>much good do't thy heart</u>!
So, now what if it be?

= a toast; Smith adds the stage direction, "she drinks".

***Cort.*** Well, if it be −
To come to that, I said, for so I said –
If it be any, 'tis the shrewd young Prince;
For eyes can speak, and eyes can understand,
And I have marked her eyes; yet <u>by this cup</u>,
Which I will only kiss –

= it was common to swear on an inanimate object.

[*She drinks.*]

***Stroz.*** [*Aside*] Oh, noble crone!
Now such a <u>huddle and kettle</u> never was.

= *huddle* and *kettle* are synonyms, both meaning "mess" or "confusion"; the latter survives in the phrase "a kettle of fish". Such pairing of redundant words was known as a *pleonasm*, and occurs frequently in drama.

***Cort.*** <u>I never yet have seen</u> − not yet, I say –
But I will <u>mark</u> her after for your sake.

= Cortezza contradicts herself again.
= pay (closer) attention to.

***Med.*** And do, I pray, for it is <u>passing like</u>;
And <u>there is Strozza</u>, a sly counsellór

= exceedingly likely.
= Medice does not yet know Strozza is eavesdropping.

To the young boy: Oh, I would give a limb
To have their knavery limned and painted out.

= portrayed (as in a picture),[2] so as to be made clearer to see.

They stand upon their wits and paper-learning;

100: "Strozza and Vincentio think they are so smart, just because they are educated;" Medice reveals his bitterness at their mocking his illiteracy.

Give me a fellow with a natural wit
That can make wit of no wit; and wade through
Great things with nothing, when their wits stick fast.
Oh, they be scurvy lords!

101-3: Medice, perhaps protesting too much, suggests an innate ability to make one's way through the world - as he possesses - is preferable to any such skill gained through education.

***Cort.*** Faith, so they be!
Your lordship still is of my mind in all,

107: "we think alike".

And e'en so was my husband.

108: "just as my husband and I thought alike."

***Med.*** [*Spying Strozza*.] Gods my life!
Strozza hath eavesdropped here, and overheard us.

111: characters in Elizabethan drama are able to spy on each other at will without being discovered, at least until it serves the author's plot for discovery to be made.

***Stroz.*** They have descried me.

= discovered; now that Strozza has overheard Cortezza tell Medice that Vincentio is Margaret's lover; he will have to urge Vincentio to move quickly with his courtship.

[*Advancing*.] What, Lord Medice,
Courting the lusty widow?

***Med.*** Ay, and why not?
Perhaps one does as much for you at home.

118: snarky: "perhaps someone is courting *your* wife while you are out."

***Stroz.*** What, choleric, man? And toward wedlock too?

= hot-tempered. = heading toward.

***Cort.*** And if he be, my lord, he may do worse.

122: "and if he *is* courting me, he could do worse than to take me for his wife."

***Stroz.*** If he be not, madam, he may do better.

124: Smith points out that Strozza responds to Cortezza as if she had been answering his first question in line 120: "and if he were not hot-tempered, then he might do better!"

*Enter Bassiolo with Servants, with rushes and a carpet.*

= *rushes* (the marsh plant) were frequently strewn on the floors of Elizabethan homes, especially when guests were expected.

***Bass.*** My lords, and madam, the Duke's Grace entreats you

= ie. the duke.

T'attend his new-made Duchess for this night
Into his presence.

= ie. Margaret, who will be more explicitly treated as if she were duchess during the evening's masque.

***Stroz.*** We are ready, sir.

[*Exeunt Cortezza, Medice, Strozza and Page*.]

135: only the servants remain on the stage.

***Bass.*** Come, strew this room afresh; spread here this carpet;
Nay, quickly, man, I pray thee; this way, fool;
Lay me it smooth, and even; look if he will!

= another example of the ethical dative: "lay it smoothly".

This way a little more; a little there.
Hast thou no forecast? 'Sblood, methinks a man

141: *Hast thou no forecast? = forecast* can mean prudence or plan, hence "don't just throw them down any which

way."[2]
*'Sblood* = God's blood, an oath.

142 Should not of mere necessity be an ass.
Look, how he strows here, too: come, Sir Giles Goosecap,
=complete.
= strews. = a reference to the title of one of Chapman's other plays, also performed in 1606, and meaning "fool".
*goosecap* = goose's head.[3]

144 I must do all myself; lay me 'em thus,
In fine smooth threaves; look you, sir, thus, in threaves.
= small bundles (of rushes).[1]

146 Perhaps some tender lady will squat here,
And if some standing rush should chance to prick her,
= sting; but this word has been used in its vulgar sense since the mid-16th century,[1] and thus was frequently used suggestively, as here, by the old dramatists.

148 She'd squeak, and spoil the songs that must be sung.

150 *Enter Vincentio and Strozza*.

152 ***Stroz.*** See, where he is; now to him, and prepare
Your familiarity.
152-3: Strozza encourages Vincentio to begin cozying up to Bassiolo; needless to say, for a royal personage to behave so informally with a servant was highly unorthodox!
*familiarity* = intimacy.[1]

154 ***Vinc.*** Save you, master Bassiolo!
= common greeting, short for "God save you".

156 I pray a word, sir; but I fear I let you.
= hinder, ie. "get in your way (from doing your work)."

158 ***Bass.*** No, my good lord, no let.

160 ***Vinc.*** I thank you, sir.
Nay, pray be covered; oh, I cry you mercy,
= upon being addressed by a superior, Bassiolo would have taken off his hat as a token of respect; Vincentio urges him to put it back on.
*I cry you mercy* = pardon me.

162 You must be bare.
162: "I see you *should* be without your hat on"; Vincentio understands that by virtue of his position as gentleman usher, Bassiolo is required to have his hat off.[5]

164 ***Bass.*** Ever to you, my lord.

166 ***Vinc.*** Nay, not to me, sir.
But to the fair right of your worshipful place.
166-7: Vincentio wants Bassiolo to understand that he (the usher) should not feel obliged to keep his hat off for his (the prince's) sake, but only because his job demands it.

168 [*Vincentio uncovers*.]
= Vincentio removes his hat to level out their statuses.

170 ***Stroz.*** [*Aside*] A shame of both your worships.
= on.

172 ***Bass.*** What means your lordship?
173: Bassiolo is unclear as to the significance of Vincentio's removing his hat.

174 [*Exit Strozza*.]

176 ***Vinc.*** Only to do you right, sir, and myself ease.
= ie. Vincentio is more comfortable de-hatted, or so he says.

178 And what, sir, will there be some show to-night?

180 ***Bass.*** A slender presentation of some music,
And something else, my lord.

182 ***Vinc.*** 'Tis passing good, sir;
= extremely.

184 I'll not be overbold t' ask the particulars.

186 ***Bass.*** Yes, if your lordship please.

188 ***Vinc.*** Oh, no, good sir;

But I did wonder much, for, as me thought,
I saw your hands at work.

***Bass.*** Or else, my lord,
Our busïness would be but badly done.

= ie. "if I were not directing the work".
= *business* is trisyllabic.

***Vinc.*** How virtuous is a worthy man's example!
Who is this throne for, pray?

= a chair of state has been set out for Margaret to sit on.

***Bass.*** For my lord's daughter.
Whom the Duke makes to represent his Duchess.

***Vinc.*** 'Twill be exceeding fit; and all this room
Is passing well prepared; a man would swear
That all presentments in it would be rare.

= exceedingly.
= theatrical works, play-like performances.[1] = superb.

***Bass.*** Nay, see if thou canst lay 'em thus, in threaves.

***Vinc.*** In threaves, d'ye call it?

***Bass.*** Ay, my lord, in threaves.

***Vinc.*** A pretty term!
Well, sir, I thank you highly for this kindness,
And pray you always make as bold with me
For kindness more than this, if more may be.

213-4: Vincentio invites Bassiolo to be more familiar with him in the future.

***Bass.*** Oh, my lord, this is nothing.

***Vinc.*** Sir, 'tis much!
And now I'll leave you, sir; I know y' are busy.

***Bass.*** Faith, sir, a little!

***Vinc.*** I commend me t' ye, sir.

[*Exit Vincentio.*]

***Bass.*** A courteous prince, believe it; I am sorry
I was no bolder with him; what a phrase
He used at parting, "I commend me t' ye."

229: Bassiolo is enchanted by Vincentio's parting phrase, and will use it repeatedly throughout the play!

I'll ha't, i'faith!

230: "I'll have it, in faith!"

[*Enter Sarpego, half dressed.*]

***Sarp.*** Good Master Usher, will you dictate to me
Which is the part precédent of this night-cap,

= instruct, declare authoritatively.[1]
235-6: *Which is…posterior* = "which side of my hat is the front, and which is the back?"

And which posterior? I do *ignorare*
How I should wear it.

= "do not know", "am ignorant of".

***Bass.*** Why, sir, this, I take it,
Is the precédent part; ay, so it is.

***Sarp.*** And is all well, sir, think you?

***Bass.*** Passing well.

*Enter Poggio and Fungus.*

= this servant's humorous name needs no comment.

***Pog.*** Why, sir, come on; the usher shall be judge. –
See, Master Usher, this same Fungus here,
Your lord's retainer, whom I hope you rule,

= Bassiolo will arbitrate their dispute.

250: *Your lord's retainer* = Fungus, like Bassiolo, is a servant of Count Lasso's.
*rule* = "are in charge of".

Would wear this better jerkin for the Rush-man,
When I do play the Broom-man, and speak first.

= close-fitting jacket; the two are arguing over who should get to wear the jerkin in the masque.

***Fung.*** Why, sir, I borrowed it, and I will wear it.

***Pog.*** What, sir; in spite of your lord's gentleman usher?

***Fung.*** No spite, sir, but you have changed twice already,
And now would ha't again.

= ie. "changed your costume".

***Pog.*** Why, that's all one, sir,
Gentility must be fantastical.

= it's all the same.

262: as a member of the gentry (*gentility*), Poggio claims the right to be capricious![1]

***Bass.*** I pray thee, Fungus, let Master Poggio wear it.

***Fung.*** And what shall I wear then?

***Pog.*** Why, here is one
That was a rush-man's jerkin, and I pray,
Were't not absurd then, a broom-man should wear it?

= Poggio may be holding his own, undesirable jacket.

= would it not be.

***Fung.*** Foh, there's a reason! I will keep it, sir.

= Fungus is sarcastic.

***Pog.*** Will, sir? Then do your office, Master Usher,
Make him put off his jerkin; you may pluck
His coat over his ears, much more his jerkin.

275-6: *pluck…ears* = fire him.[3]

***Bass.*** Fungus, y' ad best be ruled.

= "you better do as I say".

***Fung.*** Best, sir! I care not.

***Pog.*** No, sir? I hope you are my lord's retainer.
I need not care a pudding for your lord:
But spare not, keep it, for perhaps I'll play
My part as well in this as you in that.

282-3: Poggio suggests that Fungus, as a servant, owes his master obedience, while he himself, unrelated to Strozza and honourably born, does not.

***Bass.*** Well said. Master Poggio!
[*To Fungus.*] My lord shall know it.

288: "I'm going to tell on you"

*Enter Cortezza, with the Broom-wench and Rush-wench in their petticoats, cloaks over them, with hats over their head-tires.*

290*ff*: *Broom-wench...* = various actors in costumes enter and exit the scene, as they prepare for the evening's show.

= either tight-fitting undergarments or skirts.[1]

= ie. technically any adornment worn on the head, here perhaps referring to wigs.[1]

***Cort.*** Look, Master Usher, are these wags well dressed?
I have been so in labour with 'em truly.

= fellows.[1]

***Bass.*** Y' ave had a very good deliverance, lady.
[*Aside*] How I did take her at her labour there;
I use to gird these ladies so sometimes.

298: Bassiolo is pleased with his punning on Cortezza's use of the word *labour* with *deliverance*.

= ie. like to gibe.[1]

*Enter Lasso, with Sylvanus and a Nymph, a man Bug, and a woman Bug.*

= bugbear, ie. bogeyman.[1]

***1st Bug.*** I pray, my lord, must not I wear this hair?

= wig.

***Lasso.*** I pray thee, ask my usher; come, dispatch,
The Duke is ready; are you ready there?

***2nd Bug.*** See, Master Usher, must he wear this hair?

***1st Bug.*** Pray, Master Usher, where must I come in?

***2nd Bug.*** Am not I well for a Bug, Master Usher?

***Bass.*** What stir is with these boys here! God forgive me,

= ie. "a commotion there is".

If 'twere not for the credit on't, I'd see
Your apish trash afire, ere I'd endure this.

= "reputation I will gain", or "credit I will receive," for it.
= foolish.[1] = before.

***1st Bug.*** But pray, good Master Usher –

***Bass.*** Hence, ye brats!

= get out of here!

You stand upon your tire; but for your action

322: *stand upon your tire* = "make a great fuss over your costumes" (*tire* = attire).[3]
*action* = accompanying gestures or movements.[1]

Which you must use in singing of your songs
Exceeding dextrously and full of life,
I hope you'll then stand like a sort of blocks,

= expect.[3] = afterwards. = collection, group.[1]

Without due motion of your hands and heads,
And wresting your whole bodies to your words;
Look to't, y' are best, and in; go, all go in!

325-7: the boys must stand still after they have performed their song.

***Pog.*** Come in, my masters; let's be out anon.

= immediately.

[*Exeunt all but Lasso and Bassiolo*.]

***Lasso.*** What, are all furnished well?

= costumed.

***Bass.*** All well, my lord.

***Lasso.*** More lights then here, and let loud music sound.

***Bass.*** Sound music!

[*Exeunt*.]

*Enter Vincentio, Strozza, bare, Margaret, Cortezza and Cynanche bearing her train. After her the Duke whispering with Medice, Lasso with Bassiolo, etc.*

= bareheaded.

***Alph.*** Advance yourself, fair Duchess, to this throne,
As we have long since raised you to our heart;
Better decorum never was beheld,
Than twixt this state and you: and as all eyes

= "between this throne and you." The duke invites Margaret to sit on the chair of honour.

Now fixed on your bright graces think it fit,
So frame your favour to continue it.

= attractive or graceful qualities.[1]
= ie. permanently take this throne, ie. become his duchess.

***Marg.*** My lord, but to obey your earnest will,

356-7: "my lord, it is only to fulfill your wish, and not to

And not make serious scruple of a toy,

raise a serious objection of conscience over something so frivolous as this (will I take this throne)".

I scarce durst have presumed this minute's height.

358: Margaret is trying to resist the duke by ignoring the underlying meaning of his gesture; "I otherwise would dare not presume to raise myself to your status by sitting on this throne."

***Lasso.*** Usher, cause other music; begin your show.

***Bass.*** Sound, consort! Warn the Pedant to be ready.

362: *Sound* = an imperative: "play!"
*consort* = band of musicians.
*the Pedant* = ie. Sarpego.

***Cort.*** Madam, I think you'll see a pretty show.

***Cyn.*** I can expect no less in such a presence.

***Alph.*** Lo! what attention and state beauty breeds,
Whose moving silence no shrill herald needs.

369: *whose* refers to beauty; the sense is that *beauty*, which is quietly effective or powerful, requires no *herald* to announce its arrival or presence.[3]

*Enter Sarpego.*

***Sarp.*** Lords of high degree,

373*ff*: the speeches of Sarpego, Poggio and Fungus will all consist of rhyming couplets.

And ladies of low courtesy,

= ie. respectful behaviour.

I the Pedant here,
Whom some call schoolmaster,
Because I can speak best,
Approach before the rest.

***Vinc.*** A very good reason.

***Sarp.*** But there are others coming,
Without mask or mumming;

= disguises.[2]

For they are not ashamed,
If need be, to be named;
Nor will they hide their faces,
In any place or places;
For though they seem to come,
Loaded with rush and broom,

388-9: *come* would sound more like *broom* than the other way around.

The Broom-man, you must know,

= seller of brooms

Is Signor Poggio,
Nephew, as shall appear,
To my Lord Strozza here –

***Stroz.*** Oh, Lord! I thank you, sir; you grace me much.

395: Smith suggests Strozza is mock-unhappy that Sarpego has publically identified Poggio as a member of Strozza's family.

***Sarp.*** And to this noble dame,
Whom I with finger name.

[*Pointing to Cynanche.*]

***Vinc.*** A plague of that fool's finger!

= on; the reason for Vincentio's sharp reaction is unclear; Smith wonders if Poggio has unwittingly made an obscene gesture, or maybe he is simply supporting Strozza in his last remark.

***Sarp.*** And women will ensue,
Which, I must tell you true,
No women are indeed,

406-9: normally on the Elizabethan stage, young men or

But pages made, for need,
To fill up women's places,
By virtue of their faces,
And other hidden graces.
A hall, a hall! Whist, still, be mum!
For now with silver song they come.

*Enter Poggio, Fungus, with the song, Broom-maid and Rush-maid. Sylvanus, a Nymph, and two Bugs. After which Poggio.*

***Pog.*** Heroes and heroines of gallant strain,
Let not these brooms' motes in your eyes remain,
For in the moon there's one bears withered bushes;
But we (dear wights) do bear green brooms, green rushes,
Whereof these verdant herbals, clepèd broom,
Do pierce and enter every lady's room;
And to prove them high-born, and no base trash,
Water, with which your physnomies you wash,
Is but a broom. And, more truth to deliver,
Grim Hercules swept a stable with a river.

The wind, that sweeps foul clouds out of the air,
And for you ladies makes the welkin fair,
Is but a broom: and oh, Dan Titan bright,
Most clerkly called the scavenger of night,
What art thou, but a very broom of gold
For all this world not to be cried nor sold?
Philosophy, that passion sweeps from thought,
Is the soul's broom, and by all brave wits sought:
Now if philosophers but broom-men are,
Each broom-man then is a philosopher.
And so we come (gracing your gracious Graces)
To sweep Care's cobwebs from your cleanly faces.

***Alph.*** Thanks, good Master Broom-man!

***Fung.*** For me Rush-man, then,
To make rush ruffle in a verse of ten.
A rush, which now your heels do lie on here –

[*Pointing to Vincentio*.]

***Vinc.*** Cry mercy, sir!

boys would play the roles of girls, presumably because their faces were more effeminate, their voices unchanged by puberty, and their facial hair still dormant.

= make room! = quiet![1]

= Medice had played Sylvanus in the afternoon masque, but unsurprisingly not for the evening performance; he instead sits in the audience.

= specks of dust.

421: superstitious observers of the man on the moon saw him as carrying a bundle of sticks or brush.

= an obsolete word for "people"; Poggio's speech has a number of such deliberate archaisms.

= used in a vague botanical sense.[1] = another archaic word, meaning "called".

425*f*: in this very cute speech, Poggio identifies a number of common objects of the world at large that behave in their own ways as *brooms*; *them* refers to brooms.

= faces.[1]

= Hercules' 5th labor was to clean the unimaginably large stables of King Augeas in a single day; Hercules managed this task by diverting a local river through the stables.

= sky.

= *Titan* was the Roman sun god; *Dan* is a title of honor.

= "by scholars called".[5]

= *to cry* an object was to publically hawk or announce its sale.

435: ie. philosophy (which requires reason) sweeps emotion (*passion*) out of the thinker's mind; *passion* is thus the object, not the subject, of the phrase.

= worthy.

439: the wordplay within the parentheses is pleasing.

= *Care*, meaning "anxiety", is personified.

= seller of rushes.

= bluster.[12] = *verse of ten* refers to the 10-syllable nature of most Elizabethan verse, including that of its drama, which almost always consists of five pairs of two-syllable iambs, hence *iambic pentameter*.

448: Fungus is identifying Vincentio as one who is resting his feet on the rushes![5]

450: "I beg your pardon!", no doubt ironic.

***Fung.*** Was whilome usèd for a pungent spear,
In that odd battle never fought but twice
(As Homer sings) betwixt the frogs and mice.

= once upon a time.[1] = sharp.[1]

454: an ancient mock war epic, known as the *Battle of Frogs and Mice* (*Batrachomyomachia*), was attributed to Homer; in their brief fight, the frogs used sharp rushes as spears.[3] Chapman, who had already translated the *Iliad* in the 1590's, would have been very familiar with this work, and in fact he went on to translate it too in the 1620's.

Rushes make true-love knots; rushes make rings;

= ornamental knots consisting of intertwined loops, representing true love.[1]

Your rush maugre the beard of Winter springs.

456: the rush grows (*springs*) in spite of (*maugre*) the snow of winter.[1] The seasonal pun of *springs* with *winter* adds charm as well to the line.

And when with gentle, amorous, lazy limbs,
Each lord with his fair lady sweetly swims
On these cool rushes, they may with these bables,

= floats,[1] used here as a euphemism for "fooling around".
= an obsolete form of *baubles*,[7] meaning "things of no value."[1]

Cradles for children make, children for cradles.

460: a pleasantly suggestive line: out of the rushes, cradles can be weaved; and while "floating" on the rushes, the couple can procreate (*make children for cradles*).

And lest some Momus here might now cry "Push!"

461: *Momus* = the Greek god of ridicule, hence any grumbler or complainer.[1]
*Push!* = an interjection demonstrating scorn, like *pshaw!*

Saying our pageant is not worth a rush,
Bundles of rushes, lo, we bring along,
To pick his teeth that bites them with his tongue.

= ie. mocks them.[3]

***Stroz.*** See, see, that's Lord Medice!

466: Strozza points to Medice, who is picking his teeth with a rush.

***Vinc.*** Gods me, my lord!
Has he picked you out, picking of your teeth?

= "caught you", punning.

***Med.*** What pick you out of that?

***Stroz.*** Not such stale stuff
As you pick from your teeth.

***Alph.*** Leave this war with rushes.
Good Master Pedant, pray forth with your show.

***Sarp.*** Lo, thus far then (brave Duke) you see
Mere entertainment. Now our glee
Shall march forth in morality:
And this quaint Duchess here shall see
The fault of virgin nicety,

479-484: the first six lines of Strozza's speech rhyme.
= pure.[1] = entertainment, ie. the masque.
481: shall identify the lesson of the show.

483: ie. "how wrong it is to be too coy (*nice*) when one is courting her", an obvious allusion to the duke's growing frustration with Margaret.

First wooed with rural courtesy.
Disburthen them, prance on this ground,
And make your *Exit* with your round.

= "relieve the dancers of their brooms and rushes".[5]
= circle dance.[2]

[*Poggio and Fungus dance with the Broom-maid and Rush-maid, and exeunt*.]

488-9: a frequent occurrence in Elizabethan drama: all the action stops as the performers dance for both the stage and real audiences.

Well have they danced, as it is meet,

= appropriate.

Both with their nimble heads and feet.
Now, as our country girls held off,
And rudely did their lovers scoff,
Our Nymph, likewise, shall only glance
By your fair eyes, and look askance
Upon her feral friend that woos her, = wild.[1] = ie. lover, ie. Sylvanus.
Who is in plain field forced to loose her. = free.
And after them, to conclude all
The purlieu of our pastoral, 500: *purlieu* = originally the outskirts or margin of the woods,[1] but as Smith indicates, here simply meaning "conclusion".
*pastoral* = any literary work in a rural setting, especially one involving shepherds or other similar "country" characters.
A female bug, and eke her friend, = yet another archaic word, meaning "also".
Shall only come and sing, and end.

***Bugs' Song:*** 504: as indicated earlier, the Bugs were bugbears, or hobglobins.[1] Their song is directed to Margaret.
Thus, Lady and Duchess, we conclude:
Fair virgins must not be too rude;
For though the rural wild and antic
Abused their loves as they were frantic,
Yet take you in your ivory clutches = white hands. 509-510: the entire masque has been an exercise in wooing Margaret by the duke.
This noble Duke, and be his Duchess.
Thus thanking all for their *tacete*, = silence (Latin).
I void the room, and cry *valete*. = leave, exit. = good-bye (Latin).

[*Exit Sarpego with Nymph, Sylvanus, and the two Bugs*.]

***Alph.*** Generally well and pleasingly performed.

***Marg.*** Now I resign this borrowed majesty, 519-521: Margaret loses no time in removing the crownlet that may have been placed on her head earlier, and may even step quickly from her throne.
Which sate unseemly on my worthless head, = was set.[7]
With humble service to your Highness' hands.

***Alph.*** Well you became it, lady, and I know 523-4: notice how Alphonso almost, but never quite, brings himself to directly and explicitly ask Margaret to marry him.
All here could wish it might be ever so.

***Stroz.*** [*Aside*] Here's one says nay to that.

***Vinc.*** [*Aside to Strozza*] Plague on you, peace! 528: "damn you, keep quiet!"

***Lasso.*** Now let it please your Highness to accept
A homely banquet to close these rude sports. = dessert.

***Alph.*** I thank your Lordship much.

***Bass.*** Bring lights, make place!

*Enter Poggio in his cloak and broom-man's attire*.

***Pog.*** How d'ye, my lord? = old form of "how do you do", and direct precursor to "howdy".[1]

***Alph.*** Oh, Master Broom-man, you did passing well.

= very; Poggio, we may remember, had at Act I.ii.49-50 made a point of saying he wanted to impress the duke with his acting.

***Vinc.*** Ah, you mad slave, you! You are a tickling actor.

= pleasing or amusing.[1]

***Pog.*** I was not out, like my Lord Medice. −
How did you like me, aunt?

= not put out or put off his speech.

***Cyn.*** Oh, rarely, rarely!

= very well.

***Stroz.*** Oh, thou hast done a work of memory,
And raised our house up higher by a story.

551: a cute punning metaphor, in which Strozza describes his family (*house*) being raised in status (and by a *story*) thanks to Poggio's fine acting.

***Vinc.*** Friend, how conceit you my young mother here?

553: Vincentio asks Cynanche what she thinks (*how conceit you*) of Margaret, whom he refers to as his *mother*; he is being careful to leave a paper-trail of comments demonstrating his acceptance of the duke's marrying her.

***Cyn.*** Fitter for you, my lord, than for your father.

555: Cynanche is not buying it: "she would be a better match for you than for your father."

***Vinc.*** No more of that, sweet friend; those are bugs' words.

= words that scare - because, as Smith notes, the duke might overhear them[5] - but also punning on the song of the Bugs. Vincentio doesn't want anyone to even suggest Margaret should be marrying him!

[*Exeunt*.]

END OF ACT II.

# ACT III.

## SCENE I.

*A Room in the House of Lasso*.

*Medice after the song whispers alone with his servant*.

= the theatre's orchestra usually played music between acts.[3]

***Med.*** Thou art my trusty servant, and thou know'st
I have been ever bountiful lord to thee,

2: this assertion contradicts what Strozza said about him at Act I.i.167-170.

As still I will be; be thou thankful then,

= ever, always.

And do me now a service of import.

***Serv.*** Any, my lord, in compass of my life.

= roughly, "within the limits (*compass)* of my ability."

***Med.*** To-morrow, then, the Duke intends to hunt,
Where Strozza, my despiteful enemy,
Will give attendance busy in the chase;
Wherein (as if by chance, when others shoot
At the wild boar) do thou discharge at him,
And with an arrow cleave his cankered heart.

= malignant.[2]

***Serv.*** I will not fail, my lord.

***Med.*** Be secret, then,
And thou to me shalt be the dear'st of men.

[*Exeunt*.]

## ACT III, SCENE II.

*Another Room in the House of Lasso*.

*Enter Vincentio and Bassiolo severally*.

= from different doors or directions

***Vinc.*** [*Aside*] Now Vanity and Policy enrich me

1-2: Vincentio apostrophizes to *Vanity* (either foolishness or high self-regard,[1] referring to Bassiolo) and *Policy* (cunning) to bring him good luck (*fortune*) in convincing the usher to help him communicate with Margaret; note also the slight pun of *enrich* with *fortune*.

With some ridiculous fortune on this usher. −
Where's Master Usher?

***Bass.*** Now I come, my lord.

***Vinc.*** Besides, good sir, your show did show so well.

7: Vincentio begins again to praise Bassiolo; this flattery will quickly reach absurd levels. Note also that the Prince uses the formal and respectful "you" in addressing the usher, when he would be well within his right to use "thee" when speaking to a servant.

***Bass.*** Did it, indeed, my lord?

***Vinc.*** Oh, sir, believe it!
'Twas the best-fashioned and well-ordered thing
That ever eye beheld; and, therewithal,

= in addition.[1]

The fit attendance by the servants used,

14-24: Vincentio compliments Bassiolo for the superior operation of his servants over the course of the evening.

The gentle guise in serving every guest

= manner.[1]

In other entertainments; everything

About your house so sortfully disposed,
That even as in a turn-spit called a jack

= appropriately.[1]

18-24: Vincentio compares the smooth functioning of the interlocking wheels of a *turnspit* (a machine that can be wound up to rotate meat over a fire on its own, also called a *jack*),[1] which spin so quietly, yet work together to achieve the desired end, to the successful coming off of the evening's entertainment.

*even* = pronounced here as a one-syllable word (*e'en*), with the *v* essentially omitted.

One vice assists another, the great wheels,
Turning but softly, make the less to whirr
About their business, every different part
Concurring to one cómmendable end, −
So, and in such conformance, with rare grace,
Were all things ordered in your good lord's house.

*vice* (line 19) = screw or similar mechanical device.[1]

***Bass.*** The most fit simile that ever was.

26: Bassiolo, with unbounded self-regard, swallows the flattery.

***Vinc.*** But shall I tell you plainly my conceit,
Touching the man that I think caused this order?

= (further) thoughts.[2]

29: ie. Bassiolo, of course.

***Bass.*** Ay, good my lord!

***Vinc.*** You note my simile?

***Bass.*** Drawn from the turn-spit.

***Vinc.*** I see you have me.

= "you understand me".[3]

Even as in that quaint engine you have seen
A little man in shreds stand at the winder,

= machine.

39-46: a mechanical device like a turnspit might have a small figure of a man (*little man*) built onto it, which gives the appearance of being the agent that turns the spit; Vincentio's point is that Lasso, like the little man, seemed to be the man responsible for everything going smoothly in his household that evening, but in reality he did nothing - Bassiolo was the one whose capable hands managed the whole affair.

*in shreds* = dressed in rags; since turning a spit was about the meanest possible job a servant could have in a home, it would be appropriate for him to be dressed poorly.

And seems to put all things in act about him,
Lifting and pulling with a mighty stir,
Yet adds no force to it, nor nothing does:
So (though your lord be a brave gentleman
And seems to do this business) he does nothing;
Some man about him was the festival robe
That made him show so glorious and divine.

= movement or to-do.[1]

= double negatives were perfectly acceptable in English in those days.

= finely dressed, contrasting with the *little man in shreds*.

45-46: Bassiolo is like a splendid *robe* suitable to be worn at a feast, which makes its owner appear so richly and brightly.

***Bass.*** I cannot tell, my lord, yet I should know
If any such there were.

***Vinc.*** Should know, quoth you;
I warrant you know! Well, some there be

51: Vincentio dismisses Bassiolo's modesty.

52: warrant = ie. "am sure".

52-54: *some there….state* = some nobles are fortunate

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | enough to have excellent servants (*rare men*) working on their behalves". |
| | Shall have the fortune to have such rare men | |
| 54 | (Like brave beasts to their arms) support their state, | = allusion to the many great animals that adorn coat-of-arms.[3] |
| | When others of as high a worth and breed | 55-56: Vincentio's point generally in this rhyming couplet |
| 56 | Are made the wasteful food of them they feed. | is that some nobles are illy served by their dependents; he also may be indirectly referring to Medice (whom, we may note, he stingingly mentions several times in this conversation) as taking advantage of the credulous duke to raise his own station. |
| | What state hath your lord made you for your service? | 57: "what gift or property (*state*)[1] has your master given you for your services?" |
| 58 | | |
| | ***Bass.*** He has been my good lord, for I can spend | 59-61: Bassiolo is paid enough to allow him to buy property, |
| 60 | Some fifteen hundred crowns in lands a year, | which pays a nice income in rent; the *crown* was an |
| | Which I have gotten since I served him first. | English coin worth five shillings, or a quarter of pound, |
| 62 | | and was used through 1971. |
| | ***Vinc.*** No more than fifteen hundred crowns a year? | |
| 64 | | |
| | ***Bass.*** It is so much as makes me live, my lord, | 65-66: Bassiolo receives enough income to live like a |
| 66 | Like a poor gentleman. | modest member of the gentry; in such a class-conscious society as was England, the goal of those not born into the aristocracy was to achieve the status of *gentleman*, which basically meant that they made enough money to not have to depend on their own manual labour to get along. |
| | | Our usher is not complaining at all! |
| 68 | ***Vinc.*** Nay, 'tis pretty well; | |
| | But certainly my nature does esteem | = regard or estimate.[1] |
| 70 | Nothing enough for virtue; and had I | = ie. indirectly, "that it is not enough compensation for your true worth." |
| | The Duke my father's means, all should be spent | |
| 72 | To keep brave men about me; but, good sir, | = worthy.[2] |
| | Accept this simple jewèl at my hands, | |
| 74 | Till I can work persuasion of my friendship | 74-75: "till I can give evidence (*persuasion*)[2] of my |
| | With worthier arguments. | friendship with tokens (*arguments*)[1] of greater value than this simple jewel." |
| 76 | | |
| | ***Bass.*** No, good my lord! | |
| 78 | I can by no means merit the free bounties | = generous gifts. |
| | You have bestowed besides. | |
| 80 | | |
| | ***Vinc.*** Nay, be not strange, | = unfamiliar, distant.[2] |
| 82 | But do yourself right, and be all one man | |
| | In all your actions; do not think but some | 83-86: *do not…virtue* = "you should believe that there |
| 84 | Have extraordinary spirits like yourself, | are indeed some people who, having the same great |
| | And will not stand in their society | personal qualities as yourself, will not choose who to associate with based on others' rank or wealth, but on their character." |
| 86 | On birth and riches, but on worth and virtue; | |
| | With whom there is no niceness, nor respect | 87-88: *With whom…friendship* = "(and also) with whom |
| 88 | Of others' common friendship; be he poor | there is no finickiness or choosiness (*niceness*) nor |
| | Or basely born, so he be rich in soul | prejudiced regard (*respect*) against the lower statuses |
| 90 | And noble in degrees of qualities, | of those who want to be one's friend. |
| | He shall be my friend sooner than a king. | |
| 92 | | |
| | ***Bass.*** 'Tis a most kingly judgment in your lordship. | |

***Vinc.*** Faith, sir, I know not, but 'tis my vain humour.

95: "truthfully, sir, I don't know about that; rather, I think of it as just my foolish or idle inclination (*vain humour*)", ie. "it's just the way I am."

***Bass.*** Oh, 'tis an honour in a nobleman.

= honourable.

***Vinc.*** Y' ave some lords, now, so politic and proud,
They scorn to give good looks to worthy men.

= self-serving.[2]

***Bass.*** Oh, fie upon 'em! By that light, my lord,
I am but servant to a nobleman,
But if I would not scorn such puppet lords,
Would I were breathless!

= shame. = it was common to swear on a candle or torch.

= did. = imitation.[1]

105: the sense is, "I would rather be dead", ie. literally without breath.

***Vinc.*** You, sir? So you may;
For they will cog so when they wish to use men,
With, "Pray be covered, sir", "I beseech you sit",
"Who's there? Wait of Master Usher to the door".
Oh, these be godly gudgeons: where's the deeds?
The perfect nobleman?

108*f*: Vincentio is scorning those who would deceive with flattery (*cog*) those they wish to *use* for their own advantage; Vincentio, of course, is doing exactly this!
= "please put your hat back on".
= "accompany the".
= fish used as bait, hence meaning "gullible people".

***Bass.*** Oh, good my lord −

***Vinc.*** Away, away, ere I would flatter so,
I would eat rushes like Lord Medice!

= before.
= humorous phrase referring to Medice's using a rush to pick his teeth, as he had been caught doing back at Act II.i.466-9.[5]

***Bass.*** Well, well, my lord, would there were more such princes!

119: *Well, well* = Smith suggests that Bassiolo himself may have been about to use a rush as a toothpick, and his "Well, well" is a hurried response covering his embarrassment.
*would there were* = "if only there were".

***Vinc.*** Alas, 'twere pity, sir! They would be gulled
Out of their very skins.

= deceived.

***Bass.*** Why, how are you, my lord?

= "how are you being gulled?"[3]

***Vinc.*** Who, I? I care not:
If I be gulled where I profess plain love,
Twill be their faults, you know.

= defects, ie. "it's their problem, not mine."

***Bass.*** Oh, 'twere their shames.

***Vinc.*** Well, take my jewèl, you shall not be strange;
I love not many words.

= ie. "so unfriendly with me."
132: Bassiolo fails of course to note the irony of this assertion.

***Bass.*** My Lord, I thank you;
I am of few words too.

***Vinc.*** 'Tis friendly said;
You prove yourself a friend, and I would have you
Advance your thoughts, and lay about for state
Worthy your virtues; be the miniön
Of some great king or duke; there's Medice
The minion of my father − Oh, the Father!

140: "raise your expectations, and seek a position, etc".
= favourite.
= "Oh God!" Vincentio feigns rapture at the thought of Bassiolo occupying a position worthy of himself.

What difference is there? But I cannot flatter;
A word to wise men!

***Bass.*** I perceive your lordship,

***Vinc.*** Your lordship? Talk you now like a friend?
Is this plain kindness?

***Bass.*** Is it not, my lord?

***Vinc.*** A palpable flatt'ring figure for men common:

O my word, I should think, if 'twere another,
He meant to gull me.

***Bass.*** Why, 'tis but your due.

***Vinc.*** 'Tis but my due if you be still a stranger;
But as I wish to choose you for my friend,
As I intend, when God shall call my father,

To do I can tell what − but let that pass −
Thus 'tis not fit; let my friend be familiar,
Use not "my lordship", nor yet call me lord,
Nor my whole name, Vincentio, but Vince,
As they call Jack or Will; 'tis now in use
Twixt men of no equality or kindness.

***Bass.*** I shall be quickly bold enough, my lord.

***Vinc.*** Nay, see how still you use that coy term, "lord."
What argues this but that you shun my friendship?

***Bass.*** Nay, pray, say not so.

***Vinc.*** Who should not say so?
Will you afford me now no name at all?

***Bass.*** What should I call you?

***Vinc.*** Nay, then 'tis no matter.
But I told you, "Vince".

***Bass.*** Why, then, my sweet Vince.

***Vinc.*** Why, so, then; and yet still there is a fault
In using these kind words without kind deeds;
Pray thee embrace me too.

***Bass.*** Why then, sweet Vince.

= ie. between Bassiolo and Medice; Vincentio's point is that Bassiolo is good enough to fill Medice's position.

145: variation on the proverbial notion that "few words to the wise are enough", ie. a smart person doesn't need anything over-explained.

= understand.

154: "it is an obviously flattering phrase (*figure* = figure of speech) fit to be used only by ordinary men", referring to the phrase *your lordship*.

= "if anyone other than you had called me that".

162-4: *when God…not fit* = ie. "after my father dies (leaving me the new duke), I could tell you what I will do for you - but let's leave that unspoken - it is not appropriate to speak of the death of the duke."

= "you should".

= "don't address me as".

166-8: a reference to the common fashion for people to address each other with shortened first names, or nicknames.[3] Vincentio notes that nicknames are now used even between people of different classes and those who are not related to each other;
*kindness* = relation by blood.

= "is this not evidence"; Vincentio feigns having his feelings hurt.

[*He embraces Vincentio*.]

***Vinc.*** Why, now I thank you; 'sblood, shall friends be strange?

= God's blood.

Where there is plainness, there is ever truth;
And I will still be plain since I am true.

= honest plain-speaking.

Come, let us lie a little; I am weary.

= lie down, ie. rest. Smith notes that Vincentio, with *lie*, is punning with his argument that friends like they two should always speak *true* to each other.

***Bass.*** And so am I, I swear, since yesterday.

[*They lie down together*.]

202: while it was normal for friends in Elizabethan times to share a bed, Vincentio and Bassiolo could of course here be lying down on separate couches or even the floor; but perhaps they simply sit down to rest.

***Vinc.*** You may, sir, by my faith; and, sirrah, hark thee,

204: *sirrah* = a common form of address to a servant; but if Vincentio is trying to push the idea of equality on the usher, was this a mistake for him to use this term? Bassiolo, however, takes no notice.

*hark thee* = listen now; note that Vincentio has switched to using the pronoun *thee* in addressing Bassiolo, not as a signal of superiority, but to indicate intimacy and close friendship.

What lordship wouldst thou wish to have, i'faith,
When my old father dies?

205-6: contradicting his earlier stated uneasiness in discussing what will happen when the old duke is dead, Vincentio asks Bassiolo to speculate as to what title he would like bestowed on him when Vincentio is duke.

***Bass.*** Who, I? Alas!

***Vinc.*** Oh, not you! Well, sir, you shall have none;

= Vincentio's returning to "you" suggests a subtle break from the intimacy of his last line; Vincentio speaks with mock indignation.

You are as coy a piece as your lord's daughter.

= specimen or person.[2] = finally, Vincentio brings the conversation around to Margaret.

***Bass.*** Who, my mistress?

***Vinc.*** Indeed! Is she your mistress?

215: Bassiolo has used the word *mistress* to mean nothing more than his female boss, the female equivalent of *master*; but Vincentio equivocates, suggesting that Bassiolo is using *mistress* to mean "lover". Bassiolo doesn't catch on to this right away, though.

***Bass.*** I'faith, sweet Vince, since she was three year old.

***Vinc.*** And are not we two friends?

***Bass.*** Who doubts of that?

***Vinc.*** And are not two friends one?

***Bass.*** Even man and wife.

***Vinc.*** Then what to you she is, to me she should be.

227: Vincentio uses tortured logic here: "if Margaret is your *mistress* (ambiguous sense), and you and I are equal, then she should be my mistress too."

***Bass.*** Why, Vince, thou wouldst not have her?

229: Bassiolo is uncertain as to what Vincentio is getting at.

***Vinc.*** Oh, not I!
I do not fancy anything like you.

231*ff*: note how in this part of the dialogue, Vincentio has returned to addressing Bassiolo with "you", signaling respect and formality, while Bassiolo assumes to stick with the informal "thee". Needless to say, this reversal of normal social norms would horrify any of their contemporaries who should chance to overhear them!

***Bass.*** Nay, but I pray thee tell me.

***Vinc.*** You do not mean to marry her yourself?

***Bass.*** Not I, by Heaven!

***Vinc.*** Take heed now; do not gull me.

= deceive.

***Bass.*** No, by that candle!

= another oath taken on an inanimate object.

***Vinc.*** Then will I be plain.
Think you she dotes not too much on my father?

***Bass.*** Oh yes, no doubt on't!

***Vinc.*** Nay, I pray you speak!

= "please speak on!"

***Bass.*** You seely man, you! She cannot abide him.

= innocent, simple (precursor to *silly*).[1]

***Vinc.*** Why, sweet friend, pardon me; alas, I knew not!

***Bass.*** But I do note you are in some things simple,
And wrong yourself too much.

***Vinc.*** Thank you, good friend.
For your plain dealing, I do mean, so well.

***Bass.*** But who saw ever summer mixed with winter?
There must be equal years where firm love is.
Could we two love so well so suddenly,
Were we not something equaller in years
Than he and she are?

= Margaret, young, is *summer*; the duke, old, is *winter*.

= meaning he and Vincentio.

***Vinc.*** I cry ye mercy, sir,
I know we could not; but yet be not too bitter,
Considering love is fearful. And, sweet friend,
I have a letter t' entreat her kindness,
Which, if you would convey −

= "I beg your pardon".

= timid.[2]

***Bass.*** Ay, if I would, sir!

= Bassiolo perhaps emphasizes an incredulous *if*.

***Vinc.*** Why, faith, dear friend, I would not die requiteless.

= "without rewarding you".

***Bass.*** Would you not so, sir?
By Heaven a little thing would make me box you!
"Which if you would convey?" Why not, I pray,
“Which, friend, thou shalt convey?”

277-280: Bassiolo chides Vincentio for (1) framing his appeal to the usher to deliver a letter to Margaret as a formal request (by using *if...would* instead of *shalt*); and (2) continuing to use *you* instead of the intimate *thee*.

***Vinc.*** Which, friend, you shall then.

***Bass.*** Well, friend, and I will then.

***Vinc.*** And use some kind persuasive words for me?

286: we remember that for Vincentio's scheme to work,

Bassiolo must believe that Vincentio is only just beginning to woo Margaret.

***Bass.*** The best, I swear, that my poor tongue can forge.

***Vinc.*** Ay, well said, "poor tongue!" Oh, 'tis rich in meekness;
You are not known to speak well? You have won
Direction of the Earl and all his house,

290: Vincentio compliment's both Bassiolo's turn of a phrase and his modesty.
= earned.
292: management of Lasso's household; notice Chapman sometimes refers to Lasso as *Earl*, sometimes *Count*; the two titles, outside of England, were interchangeable.[1]

The favour of his daughter, and all dames
That ever I saw come within your sight,
With a poor tongue? A plague o' your sweet lips!

293-4: Vincentio compliments the usher on his abilities with the ladies.

***Bass.*** Well, we will do our best; and faith, my Vince,
She shall have an unwieldy and dull soul
If she be nothing moved with my poor tongue −
Call it no better, be it what it will.

298-300: Bassiolo is highly confident in his ability to persuade Margaret to accept Vincentio's suit.

***Vinc.*** Well said, i'faith! Now if I do not think
'Tis possible, besides her bare receipt
Of that my letter, with thy friendly tongue
To get an answer of it, never trust me.

302-5: "If I didn't believe you could do more than just deliver the letter, such as get her to write me an answer, never believe me again!" Vincentio's manipulation is hardly subtle!

***Bass.*** An answer, man? 'Sblood, make no doubt of that!

***Vinc.*** By Heaven, I think so; now a plague of Nature,
That she gives all to some, and none to others!

309-310: *a plague…others* = "it is a vexatious characteristic of Nature that she grants to some people many skills and none to others." Vincentio is clearly identifying the usher with the former.

***Bass.*** [*rising, aside*]
How I endear him to me! − Come, Vince, rise;

= Bassiolo believes that his charms are solely responsible for Vincentio's growing affection for him.

Next time I see her I will give her this;
Which when she sees, she'll think it wondrous strange
Love should go by descent and make the son
Follow the father in his amorous steps.

= ie. Vincentio's letter.
= ie. from father to son.

***Vinc.*** She needs must think it strange, that ne'er yet saw
I durst speak to her, or had scarce her sight.

319-320: Vincentio expresses "worry" over how Margaret will react to his letter, when he has never yet spoken to her, and barely ever even seen her.

***Bass.*** Well, Vince, I swear thou shalt both see and kiss her.

***Vinc.*** Swears my dear friend? By what?

***Bass.*** Even by our friendship.

***Vinc.*** Oh, sacred oath! Which how long will you keep?

***Bass.*** While there be bees in Hybla, or white swans

330: *Hybla* = a town in ancient Sicily, famous for its honey.[3]
330-1: *white swans…Meander* = the *Meander* is a river in western Asia Minor; the reference to the *swans* comes from the *Heroides*, a series of verses by the Roman poet Ovid (author of the *Metamorphoses*), who in Poem #7 refers to the "shallows of Meander, (where) sings the white swan".[3,9]

In bright Meander; while the banks of Po
Shall bear brave lilies; or Italian dames

= the *Po* is a river in northern Italy.

Be called the bona-robas of the world.

= prostitutes; Italy was considered by the English to be a particularly dissolute and debauched nation. Smith notes how anti-climactic Bassiolo's final analogy is, after having spoken in such sweetly poetic terms until then.

***Vinc.*** 'Tis elegantly said; and when I fail,

= ie. to observe their friendship.

Let there be found in Hybla hives no bees;
Let no swans swim in bright Meander stream,
Nor lilies spring upon the banks of Po,
Nor let one fat Italian dame be found,
But lean and brawn-fall'n; ay, and scarcely sound.

340: *brawn-fall'n* = thin, with the flesh (*brawn*) wasted away.[1]
*scarcely sound* = hardly healthy, ie. wracked with syphilis.

***Bass.*** It is enough, but let's embrace withal.

= nevertheless.

***Vinc.*** With all my heart.

***Bass.*** So, now farewell, sweet Vince!

[*Exit*.]

***Vinc.*** Farewell, my worthy friend! − I think I have him.

*Enter Bassiolo*.

***Bass.*** [*Aside*]
I had forgot the parting phrase he taught me. −
I commend me t'ye, sir.

[*Exit instanter*.]

= immediately, ie. hurriedly.[1]

***Vinc.*** At your wished service, sir. −
Oh fine friend, he had forgot the phrase:
How serious apish souls are in vain form!

= foolishly copying or imitative.[2]

Well, he is mine and he, being trusted most

= ie. Vincentio has successfully recruited Bassiolo to act as his agent.

With my dear love, may often work our meeting,

= arrange for Margaret and Vincentio to meet on the sly.

And being thus engaged, dare not reveal.

365: and since Bassiolo is now up to his neck in his involvement in Vincentio's scheme, he cannot turn around and report it to anyone without implicating himself.

*Enter Poggio in haste, Strozza following*.

***Pog.*** Horse, horse, horse, my lord, horse! Your father is going a hunting.

***Vinc.*** My lord horse? You ass, you! D'ye call my lord horse?

372-3: *D'ye…horse* = "are you calling my lord a horse?"

***Stroz.*** Nay, he speaks huddles still; let's slit his tongue.

= ie. confusingly.[1]

***Pog.*** Nay, good uncle now, 'sblood, what captious

= fault-finding.[1]

merchants you be! So the Duke took me up even now, my lord uncle here, and my old Lord Lasso. By Heaven

= fellows.[1] = "rebuked me".[1]

y' are all too witty for me; I am the veriest fool on you all, I'll be sworn!

= "greatest fool of".

***Vinc.*** Therein thou art worth us all, for thou know'st

383: *Therein…all* = "in that respect, you are equal to the

thyself.

rest of us combined".
383-4: *thou know'st thyself* = a reference to the ancient maxim "know thyself", which was famously inscribed at the entrance to Apollo's oracle at Delphi.

***Stroz.*** But your wisdom was in a pretty taking last night; was it not, I pray?

= ironic title, addressing Poggio. = nice situation, good condition.[1]

***Pog.*** Oh, for taking my drink a little? I'faith, my lord, for that, you shall have the best sport presently, with Madam Cortezza, that ever was; I have made her so drunk that she does nothing but kiss my lord Medice. See, she comes riding the Duke; she's passing well mounted, believe it.

= regarding drinking. = entertainment. = in a moment.

= exceedingly; the duke enters the stage supporting the drunken Cortezza; Poggio's use of *riding* and *mounting* are playfully suggestive.

*Enter Alphonso, Cortezza leaning on the Duke, Cynanche, Margaret, Bassiolo first, two women attendants, and Huntsmen, Lasso.*

***Alph.*** Good wench, forbear!

= affectionate term meaning simply "lady".

***Cort.*** My lord, you must put forth yourself among ladies. I warrant you have much in you, if you would show it; see, a cheek o' twenty, the body of a George, a good leg still, still a good calf, and not flabby, nor hanging, I warrant you; a brawn of a thumb here, and 'twere a pulled partridge. − Niece Meg, thou shalt have the sweetest bedfellow on him that ever called lady husband; try him, you shame-faced bable you, try him.

402*ff*: Smith notes that Cortezza's drunken speeches are filled with double entendres, such as the phrase *put forth yourself*, and with *thumb* implying a man's organ.

= ie. a young man's face. = a second allusion in the play to the duke as St. George.

= fleshy or muscular.[1]
= as if it were. = plucked.[1]
= in.
= bashful.[1] = ie. bauble: a foolish person, or one who trifles.[1]

***Marg.*** Good madam, be ruled.

= "please listen to the duke", or "please control yourself."

***Cort.*** What a nice thing it is! My lord, you must set forth this gear, and kiss her; i'faith, you must! Get you together and be naughts awhile, get you together.

= dainty, delicate. = ie. she, meaning Margaret.
= get this business (*gear*) going, ie. be the aggressor.
= literally "be quiet", but the phrase was also a common Elizabethan euphemism for having sex.

***Alph.*** Now, what a merry, harmless dame it is!

***Cort.*** My lord Medice, you are a right noble man, and will do a woman right in a wrong matter, and need be; pray, do you give the Duke ensample upon me; you come a wooing to me now; I accept it.

= "give". = "an example (of a kiss) on me."[1] Cortezza has, we remember, previously expressed her attraction to Medice.

***Lasso.*** What mean you, sister?

***Cort.*** Pray, my lord, away; − consider me as I am, a woman.

427-8: the first utterance is likely directed to Lasso; the second, to Medice.

***Pog.*** [*Aside*] Lord, how I have whittled her!

= made her drunk.[3]

***Cort.*** You come a wooing to me now; − pray thee, Duke, mark my lord Medice; and do you mark me, virgin. Stand you aside, my lords all, and you, give place. Now, my lord Medice, put case I be strange a little, yet you like a man put me to it. Come, kiss me,

= "pay attention (to how Medice does this)".
= young unmarried woman, ie. Margaret.
= suppose. = aloof.
= "force me to acquiesce."

my lord; be not ashamed.

***Med.*** Not I, madam! I come not a wooing to you.

***Cort.*** 'Tis no matter, my lord, make as though you did, and come kiss me; I won't be strange a whit. = the least bit, at all.

***Lasso.*** Fie, sister, y' are to blame! Pray will you go to your chamber?

***Cort.*** Why, hark you, brother. = listen.

***Lasso.*** What's the matter?

***Cort.*** D'ye think I am drunk?

***Lasso.*** I think so, truly.

***Cort.*** But are you sure I am drunk?

***Lasso.*** Else I would not think so.

***Cort.*** But I would be glad to be sure on't.

***Lasso.*** I assure you then.

***Cort.*** Why, then, say nothing, and I'll begone. − God b'w'y', Lord Duke, I'll come again anon.

464: *God b'w'y'* = "God be with ye": one can see how this abbreviated form of the full phrase became the modern "goodbye."[1]
*anon* = soon.

[*Exit*.]

***Lasso.*** I hope your Grace will pardon her, my Liege,
For 'tis most strange; she's as discreet a dame
As any in these countries, and as sober,
But for this only humour of the cup.

471: "except for this inclination (*humour*) of hers to drink."

***Alph.*** 'Tis good, my lord, sometimes.
Come, to our hunting; now 'tis time, I think.

473: Alphonso is very understanding!

***Omnes.*** The very best time of the day, my lord. = everybody.

***Alph.*** Then, my lord, I will take my leave till night,
Reserving thanks for all my entertainment
Till I return; − in meantime, lovely dame, = the duke now addresses Margaret.
Remember the high state you last presented,
And think it was not a mere festival show,

481-4: the sense is, "remember how I placed you on the throne in the masque, and don't think it was just for show; but it rather symbolized exactly how I think of you."

But an essential type of that you are = representation or symbol.[1] = ie. "that which".
In full consent of all my faculties, −

481-4: the duke's continuing unwillingness to explicitly ask Margaret to marry him is a little aggravating; but it allows Margaret just enough wiggle-room to avoid having to make a direct answer.

And hark you, good my lord.

[*He whispers to Lasso*.]

[*Vincentio and Strozza have all this while talked together a pretty way*.]

***Vinc.*** [*Aside to Strozza and Cynanche*]
See now, they whisper
Some private order (I dare lay my life)
For a forced marriage 'twixt my love and father;
I therefore must make sure; and, noble friends,
I'll leave you all when I have brought you forth
And seen you in the chase; meanwhile observe
In all the time this solemn hunting lasts
My father and his minion, Medice,
And note if you can gather any sign
That they have missed me, and suspect my being;
If which fall out, send home my page before.

***Stroz.*** I will not fail, my lord.

[*Medice whispers with 1st Huntsman all this while*.]

***Med.*** Now take thy time.

***1st Hunts.*** I warrant you, my lord, he shall not scape me.

***Alph.*** Now, my dear mistress, till our sports intended
End with my absence, I will take my leave.

***Lasso.*** Bassiolo, attend you on my daughter.

[*Exeunt Alphonso, Lasso, Medice, Strozza, Poggio, Huntsmen, and attendants*.]

***Bass.*** I will, my lord.

***Vinc.*** [*Aside*] Now will the sport begin; I think my love
Will handle him as well as I have done.

[*Exit*.]

***Cyn.*** Madam, I take my leave, and humbly thank you.

***Marg.*** Welcome, good madam; − maids, wait on my lady.

[*Exit Cynanche*.]

***Bass.*** So, mistress, this is fit.

***Marg.*** Fit, sir; why so?

***Bass.*** Why so? I have most fortunate news for you.

***Marg.*** For me, sir? I beseech you, what are they?

493-5: Vincentio worries that the duke and Lasso are secretly arranging a marriage between Margaret and Alphonso.

= bet.

497-8: *I'll leave…chase* = Vincentio plans to sneak away from the hunt (*chase*) once it is in full progress to meet with Margaret to learn how things stand with her.

498-502: *meanwhile…being* = Vincentio asks Strozza to keep an eye on whether Vincentio's absence from the hunt is noticed.

503: "and if this occurs (*falls out*), ie. someone notices I am absent, send my page to warn me."

507: in Act III.i, the individual to whom Medice gave instructions to shoot Strozza was identified as his servant, not a huntsman.

= choose (Smith).

= escape

513-4: *till our…absence* = the sense is, "until the hunt ends, which will be when I withdraw from it, and I can return to you, etc."[3,5]

518-9: Vincentio, Margaret, Cynanche and Bassiolo remain onstage.

523-4: Vincentio prepares the audience for the next scene, in which Bassiolo will deliver his letter to Margaret; he expects Margaret will be able to humorously manipulate the usher as well as he did.

= note the plural treatment of *news*; Elizabethan writers

went back and forth in treating *news* as singular or not.

***Bass.*** Merit and fortune, for you both agree;
Merit what you have, and have what you merit. = deserve.

***Marg.*** Lord, with what rhetoric you prepare your news!

***Bass.*** I need not; for the plain contents they bear,
Uttered in any words, deserve their welcome;
And yet I hope the words will serve the turn. = purpose.

***Marg.*** What, in a letter?

[*He offers her the letter*.]

***Bass.*** Why not?

***Marg.*** Whence is it? = from where.

***Bass.*** From one that will not shame it with his name, 559: "from one whose name will not discredit it".
And that is Lord Vincentio.

***Marg.*** King of Heaven!
Is the man mad?

***Bass.*** Mad, madam, why?

***Marg.*** Oh, Heaven! I muse a man of your importance
Will offer to bring me a letter thus.

***Bass.*** Why, why, good mistress, are you hurt in that?
Your answer may be what you will yourself. 571: "you can answer the letter any way you wish."

***Marg.*** Ay, but you should not do it; God's my life! = ie. bring her such a letter.
You shall answer it.

***Bass.*** Nay, you must answer it.

***Marg.*** I answer it! Are you the man I trusted, 578*ff*: Margaret plays the role of the innocent perfectly; notice how she sets the blame for the delivery of the the letter squarely onto Bassiolo's shoulders.
And will betray me to a stranger thus?

***Bass.*** That's nothing, dame; all friends were strangers first.

***Marg.*** Now, was there ever woman over-seen so = *overseen* can mean (1) "mistaken", as Parrott believes, or (2) "looked after";[1] either way, Margaret appears to be bemoaning her misplaced belief in the usher's ability or wisdom to manage her affairs, though she could also be referring to Vincentio's clumsy handling of the situation.
In a wise man's discretion?

***Bass.*** Your brain is shallow; come, receive this letter. = to be *shallow-brained* was to lack depth of intellect.[1]

***Marg.*** How dare you say so, when you know so well
How much I am engagèd to the duke?

***Bass.*** The duke? A proper match! A grave old gentleman, = "well, that would be a fine marriage!"
Has beard at will, and would, in my conceit, 592: *Has beard at will* = in pointing out that the duke can easily grow a full beard, Bassiolo is suggesting that Alphonso is too old for Margaret; Vincentio, in contrast, may be young enough to only have a few pubescent

whiskers at this point.
*conceit* = imagination or thinking.

Make a most excellent pattern for a potter, = model or example.[2] = maker of ceramic ware, and drinking vessels specifically.

To have his picture stampèd on a jug,
To keep ale-knights in memory of sobriety. = drunks.[1]
Here, gentle madam, take it.

***Marg.*** Take it, sir?
Am I a common taker of love-letters? = ordinary, but also base or vulgar.[1]

***Bass.*** Common? Why, when received you one before?

***Marg.*** Come 'tis no matter; I had thought your care
Of my bestowing would not tempt me thus = "regarding who I will marry".
To one I know not; but it is because
You know I dote so much on your direction. = guidance;[2] Margaret flatters the usher.

***Bass.*** On my direction? = Bassiolo misunderstands Margaret's phrase *on your direction* to mean "towards you", interpreting it as an expression of Margaret's fondness for him personally.

***Marg.*** No, sir, not on yours! 610: Margaret quickly disabuses the usher! Parrott, however, believes this line may be an aside.

***Bass.*** Well, mistress, if you will take my advice
At any time, then take this letter now.

***Marg.*** 'Tis strange; I wonder the coy gentleman, = ie. that the.
That seeing me so oft would never speak, = Margaret here contradicts Vincentio's assertion to Bassiolo above at line 320 that he has scarcely ever even seen her.
Is on the sudden so far rapt to write. = driven by emotion.

***Bass.*** It showed his judgment that he would not speak,
Knowing with what a strict and jealous eye = ie. the duke's.
He should be noted; hold, if you love yourself. = observed.[5]
Now will you take this letter? Pray be ruled. = "follow my advice."

[*Gives her the letter*.]

***Marg.*** Come, you have such another plaguy tongue! = vexatious or damned,[1] referring to the usher's ability to sway other's actions.
And yet, i'faith, I will not.

[*Drops the letter*.]

***Bass.*** Lord of Heaven!
What, did it burn your hands? Hold, hold, I pray.
And let the words within it fire your heart. = punning with *burn*.

[*Gives her the letter again*.]

***Marg.*** I wonder how the devil he found you out = *devil* here is a one-syllable word: *de'il*.
To be his spokesman. − Oh, the Duke would thank you
If he knew how you urged me for his son. = on behalf of.

[*Reads the letter*.]

***Bass.*** [*Aside*] The Duke! I have fretted her, = "successfully worn down (*fretted*)[1] her resistance"

Even to the liver, and had much ado
To make her take it; but I knew 'twas sure,
For he that cannot turn and wind a woman
Like silk about his finger is no man.
I'll make her answer 't too.

= the *liver* was believed to be the seat of passion.

648: now that Bassiolo has gotten Margaret to finally receive the letter, he must convince her to answer it!

***Marg.*** Oh, here's good stuff!
Hold, pray take it for your pains to bring it.

[*Returning the letter*.]

***Bass.*** Lady, you err in my reward a little,
Which must be a kind answer to this letter.

***Marg.*** Nay then, i'faith, 'twere best you brought a priest,
And then your client, and then keep the door.
Gods me, I never knew so rude a man!

= "you might as well bring, etc." Margaret is sarcastic.
= ie. keep watch at.

***Bass.*** Well, you shall answer; I'll fetch pen and paper.

[*Exit*.]

***Marg.*** Poor usher, how wert thou wrought to this brake?

= manipulated into this snare or entanglement;[2] Margaret expresses pity for Bassiolo for being deceived into becoming involved in Vincentio's scheme; but, as we noted, she plays her part perfectly.

Men work on one another for we women,
Nay, each man on himself; and all in one
Say, “No man is content that lies alone.”
Here comes our gullèd squire.

= ie. all in one voice,[5] ie. unanimously.
= deceived.

***Bass.*** Here, mistress, write.

***Marg.*** What should I write?

***Bass.*** An answer to this letter.

***Marg.*** Why, sir, I see no cause of answer in it;
But if you needs will show how much you rule me,
Sit down and answer it as you please yourself;
Here is your paper, lay it fair afore you.

678: "I see nothing in this letter that compels me to answer it."
= "squarely in front of".[1,5]

***Bass.*** Lady, content; I'll be your secretary.

= be satisfied.

[*He sits down to write*.]

***Marg.*** [*Aside*] I fit him in this task; he thinks his pen
The shaft of Cupid in an amorous letter.

= ie. "is like an arrow".

***Bass.*** Is here no great worth of your answer, say you?
Believe it, 'tis exceedingly well writ.

690: "do you really think that there is nothing in this letter which deserves a response from you?" Bassiolo is responding to Margaret's assertion of line 678.

***Marg.*** So much the more unfit for me to answer,
And therefore let your style and it contend.

= humorous: "why don't you see how well your writing (*style*) does in competition with Vincentio's?"

***Bass.*** Well, you shall see I will not be far short,
Although, indeed, I cannot write so well
When one is by as when I am alone.

= "my writing will not appear too poorly in comparison."

***Marg.*** Oh, a good scribe must write though twenty talk,
And he talk to them too.

***Bass.*** Well, you shall see.

[*He writes*.]

***Marg.*** [*Aside*]
A proper piece of scribeship, there's no doubt;

Some words picked out of proclamatiöns,
Or great men's speeches, or well-selling pamphlets:
See how he rubs his temples; I believe
His muse lies in the back part of his brain,

Which, thick and gross, is hard to be brought forward. −
What, is it loath to come?

***Bass.*** No, not a whit:
Pray hold your peace a little.

***Marg.*** [*Aside*]
He sweats with bringing on his heavy style;
I'll ply him still till he sweat all his wit out. −
What man, not yet?

***Bass.*** 'Swoons, you'll not extort it from a man!
How do you like the word *endear*?

***Marg.*** O fie upon't!

***Bass.*** Nay, then, I see your judgment. What say you to *condole*?

***Marg.*** Worse and worse!

***Bass.*** Oh brave! I should make a sweet answer, if I should use no words but of your admittance.

***Marg.*** Well, sir, write what you please.

***Bass.*** Is *model* a good word with you?

***Marg.*** Put them together, I pray.

***Bass.*** So I will, I warrant you! [*He writes*.]

***Marg.*** [*Aside*] See, see, see, now it comes pouring down.

= "even if a score of people are talking all around him (ie. so as to be great distractions)".

= OED defines the word as "the office of a scribe", but the sense here may be "writing".

709-10: Margaret, for the audience's entertainment, details Bassiolo's expected inspirations for his writing.

= inspiration; Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*, all begin with an invocation to one of the nine Muses for inspiration; the Muses were Greek goddesses who dedicated themselves to the protection of all the arts.

= *which* refers to *his muse* (Smith). = ie. hard-pressed.

= "be silent".

= serious or weighty.[1]

= "not finished yet?"

= yet another variation of *God's wounds*

= a phrase expressing scornful reproach.[1]

= great (sarcastic).

= Parrot has cleverly figured out that *endear*, *condole* and *model* were all words which, as of 1606, were relatively new to the English vocabulary, appearing for the first time in surviving texts in 1586, 1588, and 1570 respectively, as per the OED; Bassiolo is trying very hard to incorporate such effective and new words into his letter, and show off his learning at the same time.

***Bass.*** I hope you'll take no exceptions to *believe it*.

***Marg.*** Out upon't! That phrase is so run out of breath in trifles, that we shall have no belief at all in earnest shortly. “Believe it, 'tis a pretty feather.” “Believe it, a dainty rush.” “Believe it, an excellent cockscomb.”

750*f*: Margaret complains about how trite the phrase *believe it* has become.

= fool (indirectly suggesting Bassiolo).

***Bass.*** So, so, so; your exceptions sort very collaterally.

755: "your objections fall out (*sort*) away from the main point (*collaterally*).[3]

***Marg.*** Collaterally! There's a fine word now; wrest in that if you can by any means.

= work, with a sense of "twisting".[1]

***Bass.*** I thought she would like the very worst of them all! − How think you? Do not I write, and hear, and talk too now?

= ie. of the sophisticated words.

***Marg.*** By my soul, if you can tell what you write now, you write very readily.

***Bass.*** That you shall see straight.

= right away.

***Marg.*** But do you not write that you speak now?

= ie. that which.

***Bass.*** Oh yes; do you not see how I write it? I cannot write when anybody is by me, I!

***Marg.*** God's my life! Stay, man; you'll make it too long.

= ie. "stop already".

***Bass.*** Nay, if I cannot tell what belongs to the length of a lady's device, i'faith!

777-8: "as if I could not tell how long a lady's instrument of wooing should be", with a bawdy sense.

***Marg.*** But I will not have it so long.

***Bass.*** If I cannot fit you!

= satisfy, suit. Lines 780-2 are no doubt intended by Chapman to be double entendres.

***Marg.*** Oh me, how it comes upon him! Prithee be short.

***Bass.*** Well, now I have done, and now I will read it:

Y*our lordship's motive accommodating my thoughts with the very model of my heart's mature consideration, it shall not be out of my element to negotiate with you in this amorous duello; wherein I will condole with you that our project cannot he so collaterally made as our endeared hearts may very well seem to insinuate*.

789-795: Bassiolo demonstrates, in this very funny attempt at a love letter, that he does not really understand yet how to use the aforementioned new words, or many others, such as *accommodating*, *negotiate*, and *duello*, as well as the phrase *out of one's element*, all of which first appeared in the late 16th century.

***Marg.*** No more, no more; fie upon this!

***Bass.*** Fie upon this? He's accursed that has to do with these unsound women of judgment: if this be not good, i'faith!

= ie. women of unsound judgment.

***Marg.*** But 'tis so good, 'twill not be thought to come

803-4: the sense is, "oh, no, you misunderstand me: you

from a woman's brain.

wrote too good a letter for anyone to believe it had been composed by me, a mere woman."

***Bass.*** That's another matter.

806: Margaret has mollified the momentarily upset usher.

***Marg.*** Come, I will write myself.

[*She sits down to write*.]

***Bass.*** O' God's name lady! And yet I will not lose this I warrant you; I know for what lady this will serve as fit.

812-4: Bassiolo will hang on to his masterpiece to use on behalf of another lady; however, Chapman never follows up on this idea.

[*Folding up his letter*.]

Now we shall have a sweet piece of <u>inditement</u>.

= composition.[2] Bassiolo has low expectations for Margaret's letter.

***Marg.*** How spell you *foolish*?

***Bass.*** F-oo-l-i-sh.

822: in his 1578 publication, *First Fruits*, lexicographer John Florio, in writing out the alphabet, listed *ee* and *oo* as "letters" distinct from *e* and *o* in its alphabet.

[*Aside*] She will presume t' <u>indite</u> that cannot spell.

823: "she, who cannot spell, will presume to compose (*indite*)."

***Marg.*** How spell you *usher*?

***Bass.*** 'Sblood, you put not in those words together, do you?

***Marg.*** No, not together.

***Bass.*** What is <u>betwixt</u>, I pray?

= ie. between the two words.

***Marg.*** *As the*.

***Bass.*** *Ass the*? Betwixt *foolish* and *usher*? God's my life, *foolish ass the usher*!

***Marg.*** Nay, then, you are so <u>jealous</u> of your <u>wit</u>! Now read all I have written, I pray.

= vigilant or protective.[1] = cleverness.

***Bass.*** [*Reads*] "*I am not so foolish as the usher would make me*" − Oh, so foolish as the usher would make me? <u>Wherein would</u> I make you foolish?

= "how do".

***Marg.*** Why, sir, in willing me to believe he loved me so well, being so <u>mere</u> a stranger.

= complete.

***Bass.*** Oh, is't so? You may say so, indeed.

***Marg.*** Cry mercy, sir, and I will write so too.

[*She begins to write, but stops*.]

And yet my <u>hand</u> is so vile. Pray thee sit thee down, and write, as I bid thee.

= handwriting.

***Bass.*** With all my heart, lady! What shall I write now?

***Marg.*** You shall write this, sir: *I am not so foolish to think you love me, being so mere a stranger* −

***Bass.*** [*Writing*] "So mere a stranger" −

***Marg.*** *And yet I know love works strangely* −

***Bass.*** "Love works strangely" −

***Marg.*** *And therefore take heed by whom you speak for love* −

869-870: "be careful regarding by whose agency (ie. meaning Bassiolo) you speak of your love for me -"

***Bass.*** "Speak for love" −

***Marg.*** *For he may speak for himself* −

874*ff*: *he* again refers to the usher, and though Margaret's flood of pronouns makes her exact intent ambiguous, she seems to be suggesting that Vincentio must be careful because Bassiolo may use his powers of persuasion to work on her for himself, which further serves to implicate the usher in their plot. Either way, as Smith observes, Bassiolo is oblivious to the substance of her dictation, as he is too busy writing, and "cannot write and think simultaneously" (p. 70).

***Bass.*** "May speak for himself" −

***Marg.*** *Not that I desire it* −

***Bass.*** "Desire it" −

***Marg.*** *But, if he do, you may speed, I confess*.

= *speed* here means "fail", though it was often used to mean "succeed"; Margaret continues to equivocate.[1,5]

***Bass.*** "Speed, I confess."

***Marg.*** *But let that pass, I do not love to discourage anybody* −

***Bass.*** "Discourage anybody – "

***Marg.*** *Do you, or he, pick out what you can; and so, farewell!*

= perhaps meaning "extract whatever meaning you can from this letter", or "both you and he are free to try to obtain (my love) as best as you can"; Margaret continues to be obscure.

***Bass.*** "And so, farewell." Is this all?

***Marg.*** Ay, and he may thank your siren's tongue that it is so much.

= the *Sirens* were the mythological sea creatures who lured sailors to their deaths with their singing; the allusion here thus compliments Bassiolo again for his smooth tongue.

***Bass.*** [*Looking over the letter*] A proper letter, if you mark it.

***Marg.*** Well, sir, though it be not so proper as the writer, yet 'tis as proper as the inditer. Every woman cannot be a gentleman usher; they that cannot go before must come behind.

= the one who composed it; note Margaret's little rhyme.

904-5: *go before* = the usher, as we have observed, would precede his master or mistress as he or she moved about.

***Bass.*** Well, lady, this I will carry instantly: I commend me t'ye, lady.

[*Exit*.]

***Marg.*** Pitiful usher, what a pretty sleight
Goes to the working up of everything!

= trickery.[2]

What sweet variety serves a woman's wit!
We make men sue to us for that we wish.
Poor men, hold out awhile, and do not sue.
And, spite of custom, we will sue to you.

[*Exit*.]

END OF ACT III.

914-5: in this scene-closing rhyming couplet, Margaret gives some heartfelt advice to men: "if you stop so obviously pursuing women, the women, against tradition, will come after you."

# ACT IV.

## SCENE I.

*Before the House of Strozza*.

*Enter Poggio, running in, and knocking at Cynanche's door*.

***Pog.*** Oh, God, how weary I am! Aunt, Madam Cynanche, aunt!

*Enter Cynanche*.

***Cyn.*** How now?

***Pog.*** O God, aunt! O God, aunt! O God!

***Cyn.*** What bad news brings this man? Where is my lord?

***Pog.*** Oh, aunt, my uncle! He's shot!

***Cyn.*** Shot? Ay me! How is he shot?

***Pog.*** Why, with a forkèd shaft, As he was hunting, full in his left side.

= barbed arrow;[3] the head of the arrow would, at its base, have two hooks extending in the reverse direction, making it impossible to pull out without causing greater damage to the wounded person's insides.

***Cyn.*** Oh me accursed! Where is he? Bring me; where?

***Pog.*** Coming with Doctor Benevemus; I'll leave you, and go tell my Lord Vincentio.

[*Exit*.]

*Enter Benevemus, with others, bringing in Strozza with an arrow in his side*.

= the others could be carrying Strozza in, or he could be walking with their support.

***Cyn.*** See the sad sight; I dare not yield to grief, But force feigned patience to recomfort him. − My lord, what chance is this? How fares your lordship?

= hearten or console.[1]

= "what happened?" *chance* = occurrence.

***Stroz.*** Wounded, and faint with anguish; let me rest.

***Ben.*** A chair!

36: the doctor calls for a litter.

***Cyn.*** Oh, Doctor, is't a deadly hurt?

= a mortal wound.

***Ben.*** I hope not, madam, though not free from danger.

***Cyn.*** Why pluck you not the arrow from his side?

***Ben.*** We cannot, lady; the forked head so fast Sticks in the bottom of his solid rib.

***Stroz.*** No mean then, Doctor, rests there to educe it?

= means, ie. way. = draw it out.[1]

***Ben.*** This only, my good lord, to give your wound A greater orifice, and in sunder break The piercèd rib, which being so near the midriff, And opening to the region of the heart,

= into separate pieces.[1]

= the sense seems to be "ribcage".

Will be exceeding dangerous to your life.

***Stroz.*** I will not see my bosom mangled so,
Nor sternly be anatomized alive;
I'll rather perish with it sticking still.

***Cyn.*** Oh no! Sweet Doctor, think upon some help.

***Ben.*** I told you all that can be thought in art,
Which since your lordship will not yield to use,
Our last hope rests in Nature's secret aid,
Whose power at length may happily expel it.

= roughly or harshly.[2] = dissected.[1]

= knowledge or science.[2]

= *Nature* could refer to the body's own power to heal itself.[1]
= I am reminded of the wound received by Union General Winfield Scott Hancock during the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863, in the middle of the American Civil War; a minié ball (rifle bullet) had entered his leg, and for many months afterwards pieces of bone would be expelled by the hideous wound.

***Stroz.*** Must we attend at Death's abhorrèd door
The torturing delays of slavish Nature?
My life is in mine own powers to dissolve:

And why not then the pains that plague my life?
Rise, Furies, and this fury of my bane

68-69: "since I can myself choose to end my life, can I not therefore end my pains with the same decision?"

70-71: *Rise…conquer* = Strozza invokes the *Furies* (classical mythology's spirits of madness) to drive him mad, and in so doing *conquer* his pain by making him senseless to it.[3]
*this fury of my bane* = his pain (*bane* = ruin or destruction)[2].

Assail and conquer: what men madness call
(That hath no eye to sense, but frees the soul,
Exempt of hope and fear, with instant fate)

Is manliest reason; − manliest reason, then,
Resolve and rid me of this brutish life,
Hasten the cowardly protracted cure

Of all diseases. King of physicians, Death,
I'll dig thee from this mine of misery.

71-74: *what men…reason* = madness, which is not capable of experiencing physical sensation, stops a man's ability to reason, thus ending his hoping and fearing; and thus to choose madness is reasonable.

= dissolve. = animal-like existence.
76-7: *Hasten…diseases* = "quickly bring on death (*the cure*), which men hold onto in a cowardly fashion."[5]

78: a brief mining metaphor, with *dig* and *mine*.

***Cyn.*** Oh, hold, my lord! This is no Christian part,
Nor yet scarce manly, when your mankind foe,
Imperious Death, shall make your groans his trumpets
To summon resignation of Life's fort,

To fly without resistance; you must force
A countermine of fortitude, more deep

Than this poor mine of pains, to blow him up,
And spite of him live victor, though subdued;

Patience in torment is a valour more
Than ever crowned th' Alcmenean conqueror.

= Christianity has always looked on suicide as a sin.

82-87: an extended military metaphor, comparing one's life to a *fort* that must be defended. The *trumpets* are the signals sent by the besiegers of a fort, summoning a parley to discuss surrender (*resignation*). Similarly, Death will hear Strozza's groans as a signal that he is ready to surrender his life.

= a besieging force would often dig a tunnel (or mine) underneath a fort, hoping to cause a collapse of the walls above the tunnel, sometimes with the help of explosives; those inside a fort might dig a tunnel in the opposite direction (a *countermine*) to intercept the original tunnel.

= "and in spite of death, conquer it, even as it overcomes you."

88-89: patience displayed while one is tormented by pain

deserves more honour than was ever even showered on Hercules (the *Alcmenean conqueror*, whose parents were the god Zeus and the mortal *Alcmene* of Thebes).

There may also be an allusion by Cynanche to the story of the death of the hero: his wife Deianeira, worried Hercules would fall in love with a young princess he had recently captured, sent him a charmed garment to wear in the hopes it would keep him loyal to her; the garment, which unbeknownst to Deianeira was poisoned, caused Hercules such suffering that he could not bear it, and only his death could bring him relief.

If this indeed is the story Cynanche has in mind, then her point would be that Strozza has an opportunity to surpass Hercules in glory if he can keep his composure now when even Hercules, similarly situated, could not.

***Stroz.*** Rage is the vent of torment; let me rise.

***Cyn.*** Men do but cry that rage in miseries,
And scarcely beaten children become cries;

94: crying is fitting for *scarcely beaten children*, ie. it *becomes* them.[3]

Pains are like women's clamours, which the less
They find men's patience stirred, the more they cease.

95-96: as with a nagging woman, pain will choose to bother you less if you ignore it.

Of this 'tis said afflictions bring to God,

= ie. bring one closer to God.

Because they make us like him, drinking up
Joys that deform us with the lusts of sense,

98-99: *drinking up…sense* = ie. by taking away one's pleasures with which we indulge our sensual needs, taking us away from God."

And turn our general being into soul,
Whose actions, simply formèd and applied,
Draw all our body's frailties from respect.

101-2: typically difficult Chapman lines: the soul, when brought into being and put into operation (*applied*)[1] on its own (*simply*),[1] removes the body's weaknesses from consideration (*respect*),[1,3] ie. the human soul, when existing without a body, does not suffer from the infirmities and pain that afflict the body.

***Stroz.*** Away with this unmed'cinable balm
Of worded breath! Forbear, friends, let me rest;

= having no curative powers.[1]

I swear I will be bands unto myself.

= restraint;[1] Strozza promises not to hurt himself.

***Ben.*** That will become your lordship best indeed.

***Stroz.*** I'll break away, and leap into the sea,

110-2: Parrott suggests this outburst from Strozza, so emotional compared with his previous, measured utterance, must be the result of a fresh wave of agonizing pain.

Or from some turret cast me headlong down
To shiver this frail carcase into dust.

= break into small pieces.[1] = carcass, body.

***Cyn.*** Oh, my dear lord, what unlike words are these
To the late fruits of your religious noblesse?

114-5: Cynanche reacts to Strozza's sudden change in tone.
= ie. "(your) previous statement". = pious nobility.[3]

***Stroz.*** Leave me, fond woman!

= foolish.

***Cyn.*** I'll be hewn from hence
Before I leave you; − help, me, gentle Doctor.

= severed, as with an axe;[1] the sense of the line is similar to "they will have to drag me away from you."

***Ben.*** Have patience, good my lord.

***Stroz.*** Then lead me in;
Cut off the timber of this cursèd shaft,
And let the forked pile canker to my heart.

= arrowhead. = cause to corrode or waste away.[1]

***Cyn.*** Dear lord, resolve on humble sufferance.

128: "please decide to humbly accept this suffering", ie. as opposed to violently ranting about wanting to die.

***Stroz.*** I will not hear thee, woman; be content.

***Cyn.*** Oh, never shall my counsels cease to knock
At thy impatient ears, till they fly in
And salve with Christian patience pagan sin.

132-4: Cynanche shall not cease to admonish Strozza until Christian patience succeeds in removing her husband's desire to die (his *pagan sin*); *salve* = heal.

[*Exeunt*.]

## ACT IV, SCENE II.

*A Room in the House of Lasso.*

*Enter Vincentio with a letter in his hand, Bassiolo*.

= based on Bassiolo's speech at 17*f* below, the letter Vincentio carries is the one the usher wrote on behalf of Margaret.

***Bass.*** This is her letter, sir; − you now shall see
How seely a thing 'tis in respect of mine,
And what a simple woman she has proved
To refuse mine for hers; I pray look here.

1-4: having previously given Vincentio the letter Margaret wrote, Bassiolo asks the prince to read his own missive; he cannot believe Margaret chose to send her own letter over his!

= feeble. = ie. compared to.

***Vinc.*** Soft, sir, I know not, I being her sworn servant,
If I may put up these disgraceful words,
Given of my mistress, without touch of honour.

= "hold on there". = lover or devotee.
= put up with, tolerate.
8: *Given of* = spoken about; Vincentio pretends to be offended by the usher's criticism of Margaret's own composition.
*without touch of honour* = "without it tarnishing my honour."

***Bass.*** Disgraceful words! I protest I speak not
To disgrace her, but to grace myself.

***Vinc.*** Nay then, sir, if it be to grace yourself,
I am content; but otherwise, you know,
I was to take exceptions to a king.

15: "I would take exception even if a king had said such words."

***Bass.*** Nay, y' are i' th' right for that; but read, I pray;
If there be not more choice words in that letter
Than in any three of Guevara's *Golden Epistles*,
I am a very ass. How think you, Vince?

= *Antonio de Guevara* (1490-1544) was a Spanish monk, bishop, and writer. The book referred to is *Epistolas familiares*, an influential work which was translated into all the major European languages. A comment of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1911) on the *Epistolas* is worth quoting: this book is "in reality a collection of stiff and formal essays which have long ago fallen into merited oblivion."[10]

***Vinc.*** By Heaven, no less, sir; it is the best thing −

[*He rends it*.]

24: Vincentio tears up the letter; Smith suggests he does so accidentally.

Gods, what a beast am I!

26: Vincentio immediately expresses regret.

***Bass.*** It is no matter,

28-29: Vincentio may have dropped the two halves of the

I can set it together again.

letter, which Bassiolo picks up here; alternatively, the usher may simply take the pieces out of Vincentio's hands.

***Vinc.*** Pardon me, sir, I protest I was ravished;

= "I swear I was overcome with emotion." Vincentio is swept away by the power of the usher's writing!

But was it possible she should prefer
Hers before this?

32-33: Vincentio says he cannot imagine that Margaret would think her own letter better than Bassiolo's.

***Bass.*** Oh, sir, she cried "Fie upon this!"

***Vinc.*** Well, I must say nothing; love is blind, you know,
and can find no fault in his beloved.

***Bass.*** Nay, that's most certain.

***Vinc.*** Gi'e 't me; I'll have this letter.

42: Vincentio cleverly wants to keep the letter written by Bassiolo; this evidence of the usher's participation in the plot will guarantee his silence!
*Gi'e 't me* = "give it to me."

***Bass.*** No, good Vince; 'tis not worth it.

***Vinc.*** I'll ha't, i'faith. [*Taking Bassiolo's letter*.]
Here's enough in it to serve for my letters as long as
I live; I'll keep it to breed on as 'twere.
But I much wonder you could make her write.

= have it.
= ie. "serve as a model for future letters I will write".

***Bass.*** Indeed there were some words belonged to that.

51: "indeed, it took some doing on my part" (Smith, p. 54).

***Vinc.*** How strong an influence works in well-placed words!
And yet there must be a preparèd love
To give those words so mighty a command.
Or 'twere impossible they should move so much:
And will you tell me true?

54*ff*: continuing to manipulate Bassiolo, Vincentio now suggests the usher's power to persuade Margaret must have been inspired by her love for Bassiolo. The sense of *prepared* in line 54 seems to be "pre-existing".

***Bass.*** In anything.

***Vinc.*** Does not this lady love you?

***Bass.*** Love me? Why, yes; I think she does not hate me.

***Vinc.*** Nay, but, i'faith, does she not love you dearly?

***Bass.*** No, I protest!

***Vinc.*** Nor have you never kissed her?

***Bass.*** Kissed her? That's nothing.

71: Bassiolo assumes Vincentio is referring to an innocent kiss, especially as Bassiolo would likely have been in the household since Margaret was a child.

***Vinc.*** But you know my meaning;
Have you not been, as one would say, afore me?

= before; Vincentio intends this to be understood as suggestive.

***Bass.*** Not I, I swear!

***Vinc.*** Oh, y' are too true to tell.

= loyal (to Margaret).

***Bass.*** Nay, by my troth, she has, I must confess,

= "I swear".

Used me with good respect, and nobly still; = treated. = always.
But for such matters −

**Vinc.** [*Aside*] Very little more
Would make him take her maidenhead upon him. − 84-85: "if I keep pushing him, I can get him to take responsibility for (*take upon*) the loss of Margaret's virginity (*maidenhead*) on himself!"

Well, friend, I rest yet in a little doubt, 86-87: switching tactics, Vincentio now indirectly accuses Bassiolo of forging the letter from Margaret.
This was not hers.

***Bass.*** 'Twas, by that light that shines! = ie. "I swear (on that candle)!"
And I'll go fetch her to you to confirm it. 90: Vincentio has successfully tricked Bassiolo into fetching Margaret to meet him.

***Vinc.*** O passing friend! 92: "what a good friend!"

***Bass.*** But when she comes, in any case be bold, 94*ff*: Bassiolo now presumes to advise Vincentio how to woo Margaret.

And come upon her with some pleasing thing, = Bassiolo means "some clever response", but the phrase is suggestive.
To show y' are pleased, however she behaves her:
As, for example, if she turn her back,
Use you that action you would do before, = gesturing.
And court her thus:
"Lady, your back part is as fair to me
As is your fore-part."

***Vinc.*** 'Twill be most pleasing.

***Bass.*** Ay, for if you love
One part above another, 'tis a sign
You like not all alike; and the worst part
About your mistress you must think as fair,
As sweet and dainty, as the very best,
So much for so much, and considering, too,
Each several limb and member in his kind. = individual. = "according to its nature" (quoting Parrott).

***Vinc.*** As a man should.

***Bass.*** True! Will you think of this? = remember.

***Vinc.*** I hope I shall.

***Bass.*** But if she chance to laugh,
You must not lose your countenance, but devise = ie. composure.
Some speech to show you pleased, even being laughed at.

***Vinc.*** Ay, but what speech?

***Bass.*** God's precious, man, do something of yourself!
But I'll devise a speech.

[*He studies*.] = thinks hard.

***Vinc.*** [*Aside*] Inspire him, Folly. 130: Vincentio apostrophizes to personified *Folly*.

***Bass.*** Or 'tis no matter; be but bold enough, 132-4: Bassiolo cannot yet come up with another witty comeback.
And laugh when she laughs, and it is enough;
I'll fetch her to you.

[*Exit*.]

***Vinc.*** Now was there ever such a demi-lance,

To bear a man so clear through thick and thin?

*Enter Bassiolo.*

***Bass.*** Or hark you, sir, if she should steal a laughter

Under her fan, thus you may say: “Sweet lady,
If you will laugh and lie down, I am pleased.”

***Vinc.*** And so I were, by Heaven! How know you that?

***Bass.*** 'Slid, man, I'll hit your very thoughts in these things!

***Vinc.*** Fetch her, sweet friend; I'll hit your words, I warrant!

***Bass.*** Be bold then, Vince, and press her to it hard;
A shame-faced man is of all women barred.

[*Exit*.]

***Vinc.*** How eas'ly worthless men take worth upon them,
And being over-credulous of their own worths,
Do underprize as much the worth of others.
The fool is rich, and absurd riches thinks
All merit is rung out where his purse chinks.

*Enter Bassiolo and Margaret*.

***Bass.*** My lord, with much entreaty here's my lady. −
Nay, madam, look not back; − why, Vince, I say!

***Marg.*** [*Aside*] Vince? Oh monstrous jest!

***Bass.*** To her, for shame!

***Vinc.*** Lady, your back part is as sweet to me
As all your fore-part.

***Bass.*** [*Aside*] He missed a little: he said her back part was sweet, when he should have said fair; but see, she laughs most fitly to bring in the tother. −
Vince, to her again; she laughs.

***Vinc.*** Laugh you, fair dame?
If you will laugh and lie down, I am pleased.

***Marg.*** What villanous stuff is here?

= literally a cavalryman carrying a short lance, but applied humorously in Chapman's time to mean "cavalier."[1]

= unharmed.[5]

143-5: Bassiolo finally has come up with a clever quip for Vincentio to make should Margaret laugh at him.

= the name of a card game; Vincentio, in his response, picks up on the phrase's suggestive character.

= would be.

149: the sense is, "by God, I know exactly how to fit my words to your thoughts in this area!"
*'Slid* = God's eyelid, one of the odder Elizabethan oaths.

153-4: Bassiolo's last lines before exiting (albeit only briefly) comprise a rhyming couplet, as is sometimes done in Elizabethan drama; such final words often express a pithy and proverbial-sounding sentiment.
*of* in line 154 means "from".

158-160: note Vincentio's repeated use of the word *worth* to make his point.

161-2: to a rich fool, the clinking of his coins are like bells *ringing out* to proclaim all his merit.[3]

= Margaret tries to leave, which allows Vincentio at lines 173-4 to playfully use the first of the absurd flirting lines taught him by Bassiolo.

169: Margaret is shocked that the usher dares call the prince by his first name!

= "go to her"

= misspoke, ie. messed up his line.

= ie. the other, referring to the second riposte the usher gave Vincentio to use.

***Bass.*** Sweet mistress, of mere grace embolden now

The kind young prince here; it is only love
Upon my protestation that thus daunts
His most heroic spirit: so awhile
I'll leave you close together; Vince, I say −

[*Exit*.]

***Marg.*** Oh horrible hearing! Does he call you Vince?

***Vinc.*** Oh, ay, what else? And I made him embrace me,
Knitting a most familiar league of friendship.

***Marg.*** But wherefore did you court me so absurdly?

***Vinc.*** God's me, he taught me! I spake out of him.

***Marg.*** Oh fie upon't! Could you for pity make him
Such a poor creature? 'Twas abuse enough
To make him take on him such saucy friendship;
And yet his place is great, for he's not only
My father's usher, but the world's beside,
Because he goes before it all in folly.

***Vinc.*** Well, in these homely wiles must our loves mask,
Since power denies him his apparent right.

***Marg.*** But is there no mean to dissolve that power,
And to prevent all further wrong to us
Which it may work by forcing marriage rites
Betwixt me and the Duke?

***Vinc.*** No mean but one,
And that is closely to be married first,
Which I perceive not how we can perform;
For at my father's coming back from hunting,
I fear your father and himself resolve
To bar my interest with his present nuptials.

***Marg.*** That shall they never do; may not we now
Our contract make, and marry before Heaven?
Are not the laws of God and Nature more
Than formal laws of men? Are outward rites

186-190: Bassiolo believes that Margaret is responding to Vincentio's lack of aggression in his wooing, rather than his quip, and nudges her to encourage (*embolden*) him.[5]

188 = "I swear" (*protestation* = affirmation).[1]

190 = privately, ie. alone.

194 = why.

196 = ie. "I swear", a phrase of attestation to the truth of an assertion.

202 203-8: Margaret feels sorry for Bassiolo, that he must be the victim of Vincentio's manipulation.

204 = agent or instrument.[2]

= impudent, ie. improper; Margaret rues that Vincentio insisted on shattering the difference in class between prince and servant.

206 206-8: one of the usher's roles, as has been described previously, is to *go before*, ie. precede, his master or mistress in a procession; punning nicely, Margaret suggests Bassiolo is actually usher to the world, as he *goes before it* in all folly, ie. is the most foolish person on earth.

210 210: "well, we must disguise our loves in these artless deceptions (*homely wiles*)."[1]

211: an unclear line, but based on Margaret's response, perhaps Vincentio means something like, "since the powers that be are denying me of my right to openly love you."

214

216

218 = means.

= secretly.

220

222 222-3: Vincentio worries that Strozza and the duke have concluded an agreement to have Margaret marry the prince's father immediately; *present* = immediate.

224 225-6: vows taken by a couple pledging themselves to be man and wife were for practical purposes as binding as if they had been officially married by a minister or priest, especially if these vows were made in front of witnesses.

226

= ie. more powerful, to be respected more.

228 228-230: *Are outward…within* = "is the superficial acting

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | More virtuous than the very substance is | out of a formal wedding ceremony more powerful, ie. legally effective (*virtuous*)[1] than the intent of the souls that take part in it?" The linguistic contrast is between *outward* and *within*. |
| 230 | Of holy nuptials solemnized within? | |
| | Or shall laws made to curb the common world, | = restrain or tame. = ordinary world, ie. the masses.[2] |
| 232 | That would not be contained in form without them, | 232: common people's actions would not fall within the limits of moral behaviour if the laws did not exist to demarcate those boundaries. |
| | Hurt them that are a law unto themselves? | 233: "so why should those laws be allowed to bring undesirable results to those of us who are born superior to the common people?" Smith notes that Chapman frequently commented on the superiority of the noble classes over the great unwashed (p. 81). |
| 234 | My princely love, 'tis not a priest shall let us; | = "hinder us", ie. by marrying Margaret to the duke. |
| | But since th' eternal acts of our pure souls | |
| 236 | Knit us with God, the soul of all the world, | |
| | He shall be priest to us; and with such rites | |
| 238 | As we can here devise we will express | |
| | And strongly ratify our hearts' true vows, | |
| 240 | Which no external violence shall dissolve. | |
| 242 | ***Vinc.*** This is our only mean t' enjoy each other: | |
| | And, my dear life, I will devise a form | |
| 244 | To execute the substance of our minds | = aim or goal.[1] |
| | In honoured nuptials. First, then, hide your face | |
| 246 | With this your spotless white and virgin veil; | = without stain or sin. |
| | Now this my scarf I'll knit about your arm, | = a broad sash-like cloth worn to ornament the prince's |
| 248 | As you shall knit this other end on mine; | presumably fine clothes.[1] |
| | And as I knit it, here I vow by Heaven, | |
| 250 | By the most sweet imaginary joys | = imagined; note how in lines 250-2 Vincentio intensifies his vow by swearing on a whole host of abstract concepts. |
| | Of untried nuptials, by Love's ushering fire | = ie. as yet untested or not yet experienced. |
| 252 | Fore-melting beauty, and Love's flame itself, | = melting before or in front of .[1] |
| | As this is soft and pliant to your arm | |
| 254 | In a circumferent flexure, so will I | = an encircling (*circumferent*) form. *flexure* = condition of being curved.[1] |
| | Be tender of your welfare and your will | = solicitous. |
| 256 | As of mine own, as of my life and soul, | |
| | In all things, and for ever; only you | |
| 258 | Shall have this care in fulness, only you | = "my exclusive care" (Smith, p. 82). |
| | Of all dames shall be mine, and only you | |
| 260 | I'll court, commend and joy in, till I die. | |
| 262 | ***Marg.*** With like conceit on your arm this I tie, | |
| | And here in sight of Heaven, by it I swear | = when used in verse, *Heaven* is usually pronounced as a one-syllable word, with the medial *v* essentially omitted: *Hea'n*. |
| 264 | By my love to you, which commands my life, | |
| | By the dear price of such a constant husband | = high value. |
| 266 | As you have vowed to be, and by the joy | |
| | I shall embrace by all means to requite you, | |
| 268 | I'll be as apt to govern as this silk, | = ie. to be ruled. |
| | As private as my face is to this veil, | = ie. exclusive to Vincentio (Smith, p. 83). |
| 270 | And as far from offence as this from blackness. | = referring to her white veil. |
| | I will be courted of no man but you; | = by. |

In and for you shall be my joys and woes:
If you be sick, I will be sick, though well;
If you be well, I will be well, though sick:
Yourself alone my complete world shall be
Even from this hour to all eternity.

***Vinc.*** It is enough, and binds as much as marriage.

*Enter Bassiolo.*

***Bass.*** I'll see in what plight my poor lover stands, −
God's me, a beckons me to have me gone!
It seems he's entered into some good vein;
I'll hence; Love cureth when he vents his pain.

= he; Vincentio is waving him away.

= get out of here. = ie. is finally able to discourse on his love.

[*Exit*.]

***Vinc.*** Now, my sweet life, we both remember well
What we have vowed shall all be kept entire
Maugre our fathers' wraths, danger, and death;
And to confirm this shall we spend our breath?

= ie. maintained, insisted on.
= (even) in spite of. [2]
292: "shall we swear to keep our wedding vows no matter what our fathers do or threaten to do to us?"

Be well advised, for yet your choice shall be
In all things as before, as large and free.

293-4: Vincentio gives Margaret the opportunity to change her mind.
294: *large* and *free* both mean unfettered or independent.

***Marg.*** What I have vowed I'll keep, even past my death.

***Vinc.*** And I: and now in token I dissolve
Your virgin state, I take this snowy veil
From your much fairer face, and claim the dues
Of sacred nuptials; and now, fairest Heaven,

= symbolically.
= unmarried condition.

301-5: *fairest…respects* = Vincentio asks Heaven to bless their marriage; he compares the differences in purity between their marriage and those of the general population to the differences between the essential natures of Heaven and earth.

As thou art infinitely raised from earth,
Different and opposite, so bless this match,
As far removed from custom's popular sects,
And as unstained with her abhorred respects.

= the customary beliefs of the general population.[3]
= untainted. = properties or qualities.[1]

*Enter Bassiolo.*

***Bass.*** Mistress, away! Poggio runs up and down,
Calling for Lord Vincentio; come away.
For hitherward he bends his clamorous haste.

= towards here. = turns.

***Marg.*** Remember, love!

[*Exit Margaret and Bassiolo*.]

***Vinc.*** Or else forget me Heaven!
Why am I sought for by this Poggio?
The ass is great with child of some ill news,
His mouth is never filled with other sound.

= pregnant; this is a great line, a fabulous metaphor!

*Enter Poggio.*

***Pog.*** Where is my lord Vincentio? Where is my lord?

***Vinc.*** Here he is, ass; what an exclaiming keep'st thou!

***Pog.*** 'Slud, my lord, I have followed you up and down like a Tantalus pig till I have worn out my hose here-abouts, I'll be sworn, and yet you call me ass still, but I can tell you passing ill news, my lord.

329: *Tantalus pig* = Poggio, mistaken, should have said *Tantony pig. Tantony* is short for *St. Anthony*, the patron saint of swineherds.[1] According to Parrott, the pigs owned by the Hospital of St. Anthony in London were sometimes fed by passing people, and the pigs would occasionally then follow their benefactors around; thus, a *Tantony pig* became proverbial to describe a person who followed another around.[3]

*Tantalus*, on the other hand, was a Greek king and son of Zeus, who was punished for divulging his father's secrets by being forced to endure eternal punishment in Hades, wherein he was forever thirsty and hungry, the water and hanging fruit before him always shying away from his reach whenever he stretched out to get at them.[8]

Smith notes that in line 329, Poggio means "breeches" for *hose*; *passing* in line 331 means "exceedingly".

***Vinc.*** I know that well, sir; thou never bring'st other; What's your news now, I pray?

***Pog.*** Oh, Lord, my lord uncle is shot in the side with an arrow.

***Vinc.*** Plagues take thy tongue! Is he in any danger?

***Pog.*** Oh, danger, ay; he has lien speechless this two hours, and talks so idly.

= lain.

= crazily.[2] note the ridiculously self-contradictory nature of Poggio's assertions.

***Vinc.*** Accursèd news! Where is he? Bring me to him.

***Pog.*** Yes, do you lead, and I'll guide you to him.

[*Exeunt*.]

## ACT IV, SCENE III.

*A Room in the House of Strozza*.

*Enter Strozza brought in a chair, Cynanche, with others*.

= litter.

***Cyn.*** How fares it now with my dear lord and husband?

***Stroz.*** Come near me, wife; I fare the better far

3*f*: Strozza's lengthy and touching speech, an encomium to wives, shows off Chapman's primary skill as a writer, the extended declamation on a single idea. You may wish also to note the several rhyming couplets tucked into the verse.

Note the wordplay of *fare* and *far* in line 3, the brief dining metaphor of *fare* and *sweet food* in line 4, and the extended alliteration with the letter *f* in lines 3 and 4 together.

For the sweet food of thy divine advice.
Let no man value at a little price
A virtuous woman's counsel; her winged spirit
Is feathered oftentimes with heavenly words,
And (like her beauty) ravishing, and pure;

= ie. "too little a".

= strongly moving, exciting high emotion.

The weaker body, still the stronger soul:

9: a woman may be physically weaker than a man, but she always (*still*) has a *stronger soul*.

When good endeavours do her powers apply,
Her love draws nearest man's felicity.

= "put her powers to use" (Smith, p. 85).
= happiness.

Oh, what a treasure is a virtuous wife,
Discreet and loving! Not one gift on earth
Makes a man's life so highly bound to Heaven;
She gives him double forces, to endure
And to enjoy, by being one with him,
Feeling his joys and griefs with equal sense;

15-16: a virtuous wife doubles a man's ability to both endure difficulties and enjoy pleasures.

And like the twins Hippocrates reports,

= ancient sources refer to a pair of brothers whom the 5th century B.C. physician Hippocrates declared to be twins, because the same disease struck each of them at the same time and progressed at the same rate and in the same way.[3] Literature of the 16th century refers frequently to "Hippocrates' twins" who, for example, "the one suffering, both suffers: the one reioycing, both reioyce."

If he fetch sighs, she draws her breath as short;
If he lament, she melts herself in tears;
If he be glad, she triumphs; if he stir,
She moves his way; in all things his sweet ape:
And is in alterations passing strange,

= mimicker.
23: a wife is, in such ability to match her mood to her husband's, quite exceptional (*passing strange*).[1]

Himself divinely varied without change.

24: a difficult line, but Smith gives it a try: though united as one, the wife is divinely different from her husband (as Eve was from Adam), but they are without meaningful difference (p. 86).

Gold is right precious, but his price infects

25-30: Strozza compares other valuable objects and ideas to wives; superficially they appear just as dear as wives, but at closer inspection fall short in comparison.
*his price infects* = its (ie. gold's) value infects its owner,
etc.

With pride and avarice; authority lifts
Hats from men's heads, and bows the strongest knees,

26-28: *authority…hearts* = a man in position of authority or power can cause others to raise their hats or bow to him out of due respect, but cannot make even the most submissive person love him.

Yet cannot bend in rule the weakest hearts;
Music delights but one sense, nor choice meats;
One quickly fades, the other stirs to sin;

29-30: music delights only one sense - the hearing - and furthermore, its influence *fades* quickly once it stops playing; and delicacies and quality foods (*choice meats*) give pleasure to the sense of taste, but cause licentious thoughts (a surprisingly large number of foods were believed at the time to be aphrodisiacs).

But a true wife both sense and soul delights,
And mixeth not her good with any ill;
Her virtues (ruling hearts) all powers command;

33: by nature of her virtue, a loyal wife can get anyone to do anything.

All store without her leaves a man but poor,
And with her poverty is exceeding store;

= wealth or abundance.[2]
35: a man in literal poverty is wealthy if he has a good wife.

No time is tedious with her; her true worth
Makes a true husband think his arms enfold,
With her alone, a complete world of gold.

***Cyn.*** I wish, dear love, I could deserve as much
As your most kind conceit hath well expressed;

= notion or elaborate expression.[1]

But when my best is done, I see you wounded,
And neither can recure nor ease your pains.

***Stroz.*** Cynanche, thy advice hath made me well;
My free submission to the hand of Heaven
Makes it redeem me from the rage of pain.
For though I know the malice of my wound
Shoots still the same distemper through my veins,
Yet the judicial patience I embrace
(In which my mind spreads her impassive powers
Through all my suff'ring parts) expels their frailty;

And rendering up their whole life to my soul,
Leaves me nought else but soul; and so like her,
Free from the passions of my fuming blood.

***Cyn.*** Would God you were so; and that too much pain
Were not the reason you felt sense of none.

***Stroz.*** Think'st thou me mad, Cynanche, for mad men,
By pains ungoverned, have no sense of pain?
But I, I tell you, am quite contrary,
Eased with well governing my submitted pain;
Be cheered then, wife, and look not for, in me,
The manners of a common wounded man.

Humility hath raised me to the stars;
In which (as in a sort of crystal globes)
I sit and see things hid from human sight.

Ay, even the very accidents to come
Are present with my knowledge; the seventh day
The arrow-head will fall out of my side.
The seventh day, wife, the forked head will out.

***Cyn.*** Would God it would, my lord, and leave you well!

***Stroz.*** Yes, the seventh day, I am assured it will;
And I shall live, I know it; I thank Heaven,
I know it well; and I'll teach my physician
To build his cures hereafter upon Heaven
More than on earthly med'cines; for I know
Many things shown me from the opened skies
That pass all arts. Now my physiciän
Is coming to me; he makes friendly haste;
And I will well requite his care of me.

***Cyn.*** How know you he is coming?

***Stroz.*** Passing well;

= heal; this variation of "cure" was common in the 15th and 16th centuries.[1]

= disorder or derangement of the body.[1]

= sensible, rational.[1]

= ie. its (his mind's) insensibility to pain.

= ie. "the weakness (of my veins)." One wonders whether Chapman's audience would really be able to clearly follow such intricate sentences with their parenthetical asides and numerous pronouns.

= ie. "nothing is left of me but my soul"; the sense of 50-55 is that Strozza has eased his own suffering by focusing on practicing *patience*, thereby separating himself from his violent and harmful emotions.

57-58: "I hope you are now free from such malignant emotions for the reason you state, and that your lack of pain at this moment is not caused by having too much of it"; Cynanche is hinting at her fear that Strozza has been driven out of his mind by his pain.

60-61: Strozza touches again on his earlier idea that madness ends one's ability to sense pain.

= pain he has subdued or submitted to.[1]

65: the immature and unrestrained behaviour he had previously exhibited, which was that expected of a common person, but not so acceptable in a noble.

= collection of crystal balls.[1]

68: Strozza announces he has received the gift of second sight.

= occurrences, events.[2]

= surpass all science or knowledge.

= repay, reward.

88: "extremely well I know it."

And that my dear friend, Lord Vincentio,
Will presently come see me too; I'll stay
My good physician till my true friend come.

***Cyn.*** [*Aside*] Ay me, his talk is idle; and, I fear,
Foretells his reasonable soul now leaves him.

***Stroz.*** Bring my physician in; he's at the door.

***Cyn.*** Alas, there's no physician!

***Stroz.*** But I know it;
See, he is come.

*Enter Benevemus*.

***Ben.*** How fares my worthy lord?

***Stroz.*** Good Doctor, I endure no pain at all,
And the seventh day the arrow's head will out.

***Ben.*** Why should it fall out the seventh day, my lord?

***Stroz.*** I know it; the seventh day it will not fail.

***Ben.*** I wish it may, my lord.

***Stroz.*** Yes, 'twill be so.
You come with purpose to take present leave,
But you shall stay awhile; my lord Vincentio
Would see you fain, and now is coming hither.

***Ben.*** How knows your lordship? Have you sent for him?

***Stroz.*** No, but 'tis very true; he's now hard by,
And will not hinder your affairs a whit.

***Ben.*** [*Aside*] How want of rest distempers his light brain! −
Brings my lord any train?

***Stroz.*** None but himself.
My nephew Poggio now hath left his Grace.
Good Doctor, go, and bring him by his hand,
(Which he will give you) to my longing eyes.

***Ben.*** 'Tis strange, if this be true.

[*Exit*.]

***Cyn.*** The Prince, I think,
Yet knows not of your hurt.

*Enter Vincentio holding the Doctor's hand*.

***Stroz.*** Yes, wife, too well.
See, he is come; − welcome, my princely friend!

= hold here, keep from leaving.[2]

93-94: the foolish (*idle*) babbling of a sick man was believed to presage his death.[3]

= the soul controlled the faculty of reason.

117: "you've come to say good-bye".

= "would be pleased (*fain*) to see you".

= close by.

126: Strozza's inability to rest is causing derangement in his brain, which now feels no pain (is *light*).[1] Smith suggests "delirious" for *light*, which, if correct, would predate the earliest usage identified by the OED.

= ie. "is anyone else with the prince?"

= ie. the prince.

= ie. "yes, he does"; through his clairvoyance, Strozza knows that Poggio has reported his injury to Vincentio.

I have been shot, my lord; but the seventh day
The arrow's head will fall out of my side,
And I shall live.

***Vinc.*** I do not fear your life; −
But, Doctor, is it your opinion
That the seventh day the arrow-head will out?

***Stroz.*** No, 'tis not his opinion, 'tis my knowledge;
For I do know it well; and I do wish,
Even for your only sake, my noble lord,
This were the seventh day, and I now were well,
That I might be some strength to your hard state,
For you have many perils to endure:
Great is your danger, great; your unjust ill
Is passing foul and mortal; would to God
My wound were something well, I might be with you!

[*Cynanche and Benevenius whisper*.]

Nay, do not whisper; I know what I say
Too well for you, my lord; I wonder Heaven
Will let such violence threat an innocent life.

***Vinc.*** Whate'er it be, dear friend, so you be well,
I will endure it all; your wounded state
Is all the danger I fear towards me.

***Stroz.*** Nay, mine is nothing; for the seventh day
This arrow-head will out, and I shall live;
And so shall you, I think; but very hardly;
It will be hardly you will scape indeed.

***Vinc.*** Be as will be, pray Heaven your prophecy
Be happily accomplished in yourself,
And nothing then can come amiss to me.

***Stroz.*** What says my doctor? Thinks he I say true?

***Ben.*** If your good lordship could but rest awhile,
I would hope well.

***Stroz.*** Yes, I shall rest, I know,
If that will help your judgment.

***Ben.*** Yes, it will;
And, good my lord, let's help you in to try.

***Stroz.*** You please me much; I shall sleep instantly.

[*Exeunt*.]

## ACT IV, SCENE IV.

= ie. fear for.

= grim condition.[1]

159-160: *your unjust…mortal* = ie. "your life is unfairly in extreme danger"; *passing* = extremely. Strozza is making another prediction to his ignorant friend.

= "I wish".

163: this stage direction was added by Smith.

167: "would allow such violence to threaten the innocent Vincentio's life."

= with great difficulty, ie. only barely; the original meaning of many Elizabethan adverbs can be understood if the word is considered literally: *hardly* = in a hard (difficult) way. Similarly, a word like *careful* originally meant *full of care*, ie. anxious.

*A Room in the House of Lasso*.

*Enter Alphonso and Medice*.

***Alph.*** Why should the humorous boy forsake the chase,

= capricious.[1] 1*ff*: Duke Alphonso has learned that Vincentio has disappeared during the hunt; the hunters, we must remember, would have been well spread out during the chase, so that Vincentio could easily sneak away and be gone quite for a while before anyone noticed.

As if he took advantage of my absence
To some act that my presence would offend?

3: "to do something that he would not do if I were present?" *offend* here likely means "prevent", though it would predate the OED's first citation of this usage by more than four decades.[5]

***Med.*** I warrant you, my lord, 'tis to that end;

= guarantee.

And I believe he wrongs you in your love.
Children, presuming on their parents' kindness,
Care not what unkind actions they commit

= ie. unnatural actions, in that they are performed by children against their own parents.

Against their quiet: and were I as you,

= their parents' peace of mind. = "if I were in your situation".

I would affright my son from these bold parts,

= Medice suggests the duke should scare these audacious qualities (*bold parts*) out of Vincentio; but *parts* could also mean "territories", so Medice could also be hinting the duke should exile his son.

And father him as I found his deserts.

= ie. "as he deserves."

***Alph.*** I swear I will: and can I prove he aims
At any interruption in my love,
I'll interrupt his life.

13-15: Alphonso realizes Vincentio may have snuck away to meet with Margaret.

***Med.*** We soon shall see.
For I have made Madame Cortezza search

18-20: Cortezza, we remember, is keen on Medice, and also favours Margaret's marriage to the duke; yet it is still surprising that she would spy on her own household for the minion.

With pick-locks all the ladies' cabinets
About Earl Lasso's house; and if there be
Traffic of love twixt any one of them
And your suspected son 'twill soon appear
In some sign of their amorous merchandize;

= small chests or boxes in which valuables were kept.

= exchanges;[5] with *traffic* in line 21, a commercial metaphor.

See where she comes, loaded with gems and papers.

*Enter Cortezza*.

***Cort.*** See here, my lord, I have robbed all their caskets.

= another name for the small chests or boxes used for storing valuables.[1]

Know you this ring, this carcanet, this chain?

= necklace or ornamented collar.[1]

Will any of these letters serve your turn?

= purpose.

***Alph.*** I know not these things; but come, let me read
Some of these letters.

***Med.*** Madam, in this deed
You deserve highly of my lord the Duke.

35-43: while Medice and Cortezza speak, the duke looks over the correspondence.

36: "the duke is greatly indebted to you (for this service)."

***Cort.*** Nay, my lord Medice, I think I told you

I could do pretty well in these affairs.
Oh, these young girls engross up all the love
From us, poor beldams; but, I hold my hand,
I'll ferret all the cony-holes of their kindness

Ere I have done with them.

***Alph.*** Passion of death!
See, see. Lord Medice, my trait'rous son
Hath long joyed in the favours of my love;
Woe to the womb that bore him, and my care
To bring him up to this accursèd hour,
In which all cares possess my wretched life!

***Med.*** What father would believe he had a son
So full of treachery to his innocent state?
And yet, my lord, this letter shows no meeting,
But a desire to meet.

***Cort.*** Yes, yes, my lord,
I do suspect they meet; and I believe
I know well where too; I believe I do;
And therefore tell me, does no creature know
That you have left the chase thus suddenly,
And are come hither? Have you not been seen
By any of these lovers?

***Alph.*** Not by any.

***Cort.*** Come then, come follow me; I am persuaded
I shall go near to show you their kind hands.

Their confidence that you are still a-hunting

Will make your amorous son, that stole from thence,
Bold in his love-sports; come, come, a fresh chase!
I hold this pick-lock, you shall hunt at view.

What, do they think to scape? An old wife's eye
Is a blue crystal full of sorcery.

***Alph.*** If this be true the trait'rous boy shall die.

[*Exeunt*.]

## ACT IV, SCENE V.

*Another Rooom in the House of Lasso*

= amass, accumulate.[2]
= old women. = "I swear", a vow.
42: *ferret* = search out.[1]
*cony-holes* = rabbit holes; but *cony* also referred to a woman's genitals, and so *cony-holes* is quite bawdy.[1]
*kindness* = affection.
= before.
= perhaps Alphonso has read the original letter Vincentio sent to Margaret: see lines 54-55 below.
= ie. "all the world's anxieties".
= person.
= ie. hunt.
= to here.
= loving (*kind*) hands, perhaps meaning "hands held in love."[3]
69-71: Cortezza suspects that Vincentio and Margaret would be less careful in meeting at this moment, because they would believe the duke is still on his hunting trip.
= "a new hunt is at hand!"
72: *I hold this pick-lock* = another vow.
*at view* = a hunting term, referring to when the pack of hunting dogs follow the prey by sight, rather than by scent.[3] Cortezza of course means she expects to lead the duke to catch Vincentio and Margaret together.
= escape.
73-74: *An old wife…sorcery* = Cortezza refers to her-self; old women were traditionally associated with the supernatural.[5]
*crystal* = crystal ball , suggesting second sight: the metaphor is apt, considering the spherical shape of the eye.

**Scene v:** I follow Smith in making this a separate scene.

*Enter Lasso, Margaret, Bassiolo going before.*

= as usual, the usher precedes his master as he moves around.

***Lasso.*** Tell me, I pray you, what strange hopes they are
That feed your coy conceits against the Duke,
And are preferred before th' assurèd greatness
His Highness graciously would make your fortunes?

1-4: briefly, "what expectations (*hopes*) do you have that take precedence over the *assured greatness* you would achieve by marrying the duke?"; Lasso does not yet know of Margaret's relationship with Vincentio, but he is getting annoyed by her continued resistance to Alphonso.

In line 2, *coy* means "standoffish".[2]

***Marg.*** I have small hopes, my lord, but a desire
To make my nuptial choice of one I love;

7: "to select my own husband, based on who I actually love."

And as I would be loath t' impair my state,
So I affect not honours that exceed it.

= just as; Margaret, in 8-9, is making a comparison: "just as I would not wish to decrease or harm my status (*state*), I would not presume to take on *honours* that *exceed* them."

***Lasso.*** Oh, you are very temp'rate in your choice,
Pleading a judgment past your sex and years.

12: sarcastic: "you are apparently wise beyond your gender and age."

But I believe some fancy will be found
The forge of these gay glosses: if it be,

13-14: *I believe…glosses* = "I believe we will discover the love or infatuation (*fancy*) that is the fashioner (*forge*) of these spurious (*gay*) explanations or excuses *glosses*)."[1,3]

I shall decipher what close traitor 'tis
That is your agent in your secret plots −

= secret, unknown.
= "who is helping you".

***Bass.*** [*Aside*] 'Swoons!

18: God's wounds; Bassiolo realizes that Lasso has unwittingly described him!

***Lasso.*** And him for whom you plot; and on you all
I will revenge thy disobedience
With such severe correction as shall fright
All such deluders from the like attempts:
But chiefly he shall smart that is your factor.

= "the person for whom you scheme."

= punishment.
= trying anything similar.
= suffer. = agent.

***Bass.*** [*Aside*] Oh me accursed!

***Lasso.*** Meantime I'll cut
Your poor craft short, i'faith!

= clever plan or deceit.[1,2]

***Marg.*** Poor craft, indeed,
That I or any others use for me!

= skill or art.[5]

***Lasso.*** Well, dame, if it be nothing but the jar
Of your unfitted fancy that procures
Your wilful coyness to my lord the Duke,

34-36: "if it be nothing other than a discord or derangement (*jar*) of an irrational whim (*unfitted fancy*) that causes your headstrong aloofness (*wilful coyness*) towards the duke, etc."[1,5]

No doubt but time and judgment will conform it
To such obedience as so great desert
Proposed to your acceptance doth require. −

38-39: *as so…acceptance* = the sense is, "as so great an action (*desert*),[1] ie. offer, has been presented to you for you to accept."

To which end do you counsel her, Bassiolo. −
And let me see, maid, gainst the Duke's return,
Another tincture set upon your looks
Than heretofore; for, be assured, at last
Thou shalt consent, or else incur my curse. −
Advise her you, Bassiolo.

= ie. "I want you to".
= in preparation for.
= hue.[1]

[*Exit*.]

***Bass.*** Ay, my good lord:
[*Aside*] God's pity, what an errant ass was I
To entertain the Prince's crafty friendship!
'Sblood, I half suspect the villain gulled me! = God's blood. = deceived.

***Marg.*** Our squire, I think, is startled. = servant.[2]

***Bass.*** Nay, lady, it is true;
And you must frame your fancy to the Duke;
For I protest I will not be corrupted, = vow.
For all the friends and fortunes in the world,
To gull my lord that trusts me. = ie. deceive Lasso.

***Marg.*** Oh, sir, now
Y' are true too late. = loyal.

***Bass.*** No, lady, not a whit;
'Slud, and you think to make an ass of me, = God's eyelid. = if.
May chance to rise betimes; I know't, I know. = ie. "you have to get up pretty early in the morning (*betimes*) to do so."

***Marg.*** Out, servile coward! Shall a light suspect, = slight suspicion.
That hath no slend'rest proof of what we do,
Infringe the weighty faith that thou hast sworn = solemn vow, punning on *light* in line 69.
To thy dear friend, the Prince, that dotes on thee,
And will in pieces cut thee for thy falsehood?

***Bass.*** I care not. I'll not hazard my estate = "risk my situation or position".
For any prince on earth; and I'll disclose
The complot to your father, if you yield not = conspiracy.
To his obedience.

***Marg.*** Do, if thou dar'st,
Even for thy scraped-up living, and thy life; = "just to protect the livelihood you have scraped together".
I'll tell my father, then, how thou didst woo me
To love the young Prince; and didst force me, too,
To take his letters: I was well inclined,
I will be sworn, before, to love the Duke;
But thy vile railing at him made me hate him. = ranting or speaking abusively about.

***Bass.*** I rail at him?

***Marg.*** Ay, marry, did you sir; = an oath. = a phrase of mock formality, employing the respectful *you*; otherwise, Margaret addresses her inferior with the appropriate *thou*, and Bassiolo always uses *you* to address his mistress.
And said he was a pattern for a potter,
Fit t' have his picture stamped on a stone jug,
To keep ale-knights in memory of sobriety.

***Bass.*** [*Aside*] Sh'as a plaguy memory! = the sense is "damnable" or "vexatious".

***Marg.*** I could have loved him else; nay, I did love him,
Though I dissembled it to bring him on, 98: "I was only pretending (*dissembling*) to be coy with the duke, in order to encourage him to be more forward."
And I by this time might have been a duchess;
And, now I think on't better, for revenge
I'll have the Duke, and he shall have thy head = ie. marry.
For thy false wit within it to his love. = ie. Bassiolo's head.

Now go and tell my father; pray begone!

***Bass.*** Why, and I will go.

***Marg.*** Go, for God's sake, go! Are you here yet? = ie. still here.

***Bass.*** Well, now I am resolved. [*Going*] = determined; Margaret and Bassiolo are playing a dangerous game here: who will blink first?

***Marg.*** 'Tis bravely done; farewell! But do you hear, sir?
Take this with you, besides: the young Prince keeps
A certain letter you had writ for me
(*Endearing*, and *condoling*, and *mature*) = possibly an error: the third word Bassiolo had originally struggled with was *model*, though *mature* also appears in the letter; see Act III.i.787-793.
And if you should deny things, that, I hope,
Will stop your impudent mouth: but go your ways,
If you can answer all this, why, 'tis well. = answer for, ie. "successfully talk yourself out of".

***Bass.*** Well, lady, if you will assure me here
You will refrain to meet with the young Prince,
I will say nothing.

***Marg.*** Good sir, say your worst,
For I will meet him, and that presently. = ie. "immediately, too."

***Bass.*** Then be content, I pray, and leave me out,
And meet hereafter as you can yourselves.

***Marg.*** No, no, sir, no; 'tis you must fetch him to me,
And you shall fetch him, or I'll do your errand.

***Bass.*** [*Aside*] 'Swounds, what a spite is this! I will resolve
T 'endure the worst; 'tis but my foolish fear
The plot will be discovered − O the gods!
Tis the best sport to play with these young dames; − 135: Bassiolo decides the best course after all is to humour Margaret.

I have dissembled, mistress, all this while;
Have I not made you in a pretty taking? 137: "haven't I gotten you into a nice situation?"

***Marg.*** Oh, 'tis most good! Thus you may play on me;
You cannot be content to make me love 140-6: Margaret "criticizes" the usher for his responsibility in convincing her to fall in love with Vincentio.
A man I hated till you spake for him
With such enchanting speeches as no friend
Could possibly resist; but you must use
Your villanous wit to drive me from my wits;
A plague of that bewitching tongue of yours,
Would I had never heard your scurvy words! 141-6: in criticizing Bassiolo, Margaret actually flatters him for his persuasive skill.

***Bass.*** Pardon, dear dame, I'll make amends, i'faith!
Think you that I'll play false with my dear Vince?
I swore that sooner Hybla should want bees, = lack.
And Italy bona-robas, than I faith; = prostitutes, courtesans. = loyalty.
And so they shall.
Come, you shall meet, and double meet, in spite
Of all your foes, and dukes that dare maintain them.
A plague of all old doters! I disdain them. = on. = elderly lovers, but *doters* also had a sense of "senile old men"; the allusion is of course to the duke.

156

***Marg.*** Said like a friend; oh, let me comb thy coxcomb.

158

[*Exeunt*.]

END OF ACT IV.

157: a *coxcomb* was a fool's head, so the mild insult to Bassiolo is clear; the pun with *comb* is also obvious. Smith posits that Margaret, sympathetic to the usher, may even be running her fingers through his hair here.

# ACT V.

## SCENE I.

*A Room in the House of Lasso*.

*Enter Alphonso, Medice, Lasso, Cortezza above.*

= the characters enter the balcony or gallery at the back of, and above, the main stage. From here they can spy on the scene between Vincentio and Margaret unfolding before them. Elizabethan drama allowed for characters to spy on each other in this way without being noticed.

***Cort.*** Here is the place will do the deed, i'faith!
This, Duke, will show thee how youth puts down age,
Ay, and perhaps how youth does put down youth.

= defeats.

3: we could assign a sophisticated meaning to this line of Cortezza's: for example, "*youth*, in the sense of immature and irresponsible behavior, will cause its own ruin"; but Smith suggests Cortezza is just being her usual bawdy self, referring to the likelihood that the duke will get to see one youth (Vincentio) lay down (*put down*) another youth (Margaret) in order to copulate.

***Alph.*** If I shall see my love in any sort
Prevented or abused, th' abuser dies.

= *my love* here refers to his emotion, not Margaret.
= anticipated or preceded.[1]

***Lasso.*** I hope there is no such intent, my Liege,
For sad as death should I be to behold it.

***Med.*** You must not be too confident, my lord,
Or in your daughter or in them that guard her.
The Prince is politic, and envies his father;
And though not for himself, nor any good
Intended to your daughter, yet because
He knows 'twould kill his father, he would seek her.

= Medice addresses Lasso.
= either.
= cunning.
14-16: Medice suggests Vincentio is pursuing Margaret only to hurt his father, and not because he loves her.

***Cort.*** Whist, whist, they come!

= be quiet![2]

*Enter Bassiolo, Vincentio, and Margaret*.

20*ff*: the characters on the balcony can see and hear everything that goes on on the main stage, but Bassiolo, Vincentio and Margaret will be ignorant of the presence of the duke's party above them.

***Bass.*** Come, meet me boldly, come.
And let them come from hunting when they dare.

= "meet boldly"; Bassiolo uses the ethical dative.

***Vinc.*** Has the best spirit.

= "he (Bassiolo) has".

***Bass.*** Spirit? What, a plague!
Shall a man fear capriches? − You forsooth
Must have your love come t'ye, and when he comes
Then you grow shamefaced, and he must not touch you:
But "Fie, my father comes!" and "Foh, my aunt!"
Oh, 'tis a witty hearing, is't not, think you?

= the sense is "fahgetaboutit!"
28: *capriches* = ie. foolish fancies, whims.[19]
*you*: Bassiolo advises Margaret how to behave.
*forsooth* = truly.
= ie. "thing to hear";[1] Bassiolo is proud of how clever he is.

***Vinc.*** Nay, pray thee, do not mock her, gentle friend.

***Bass.*** Nay, you are even as wise a wooer too;
If she turn from you, you even let her turn,
And say you do not love to force a lady,

= ie. just as; the line is ironic.
= ie. should.

'Tis too much rudeness. Gosh hat! What's a lady?

= Parrott believes this expression is a slurred corruption of something like "God's heart", and indicates that Bassiolo is actually a bit drunk, having imbibed to fortify his courage. There will be further clues to suggest Parrott is correct.

Must she not be touched? What, is she copper, think you,
And will not bide the touchstone? Kiss her, Vince,

40-41: *is she…touchstone* = a *touchstone* was a stone used to test a material for precious metal content; *copper*, of course, would "fail" such a test.

And thou dost love me, kiss her.

= if.

***Vinc.*** Lady, now
I were too simple if I should not offer.

= would be foolish.

[*He kisses her*.]

***Marg.*** O God, sir, pray away! This man talks idly.

49: *pray away* = "please get away from me," ie. "stop that!" Margaret is embarrassed that she and Vincentio must continue to humour the ridiculous usher.

*idly* = frivolously, in vain.[1]

***Bass.*** How shay by that? Now by that candle there,

= the drunk usher slurs *shay* for "say". = Bassiolo vows on the nearby light.

Were I as Vince is, I would handle you
In rufty-tufty wise, in your right kind.

= rough and tumble.[3] Bassiolo's bold comments give further evidence of his inebriation.

***Marg.*** [*Aside*]
Oh, you have made him a sweet beagle, ha' y' not?

56: Margaret again chastises Vincentio for what he has caused Bassiolo to become; here, she compares the loquacious and loud usher to the noisy little *beagle*.[5]

***Vinc.*** [*Aside*] 'Tis the most true believer in himself
Of all that sect of folly; faith's his fault.

= "faith in himself is his sin (*fault*)"; Vincentio has used a neat religious metaphor here, with *believer* and *sect*.

***Bass.*** So, to her, Vince! I give thee leave, my lad.

= permission.

"Sweet were the words my mistress spake,
When tears fell from her eyes."

62-63: the Folger Library in Washington D.C. contains a manuscript from 1595 of collected verse and jokes, one of which is:

*Sweet were the words my mistress said*
*Put off thy clothes and come to bed.*[20]

[*He lies down by them*.]

Thus, as the lion lies before his den,
Guarding his whelps, and streaks his careless limbs,

= strokes. = free of care or anxiety.

And when the panther, fox, or wolf comes near,
He never deigns to rise to fright them hence,

= condescends, ie. it is not worth the effort.

But only puts forth one of his stern paws,
And keeps his dear whelps safe, as in a hutch.

= ie. "as if they were in a pen for animals."[1]

So I present his person, and keep mine.

= represent the lion. = "keep my offspring (ie. Vincentio and Margaret) safe."

Foxes, go by, I put my terror forth.

74: Bassiolo speaks as if he were the lion who is not interested in the near-by fox: "move on, foxes, before I raise myself to terrify you."

The phrase *go by*, meaning "get away", appeared in the popular play *The Spanish Tragedy*, written in the 1580's by Thomas Kyd, and became a stock Elizabethan catch-phrase.

*Cantat*

= a song.

Let all the world say what they can,
Her bargain best she makes,
That hath the wit to choose a man
To pay for that he takes.
*Belle piu*, *etc*.

= Parrott suggests this may be the title or refrain of a song.

*Iterum cantat*.

83: "he sings the same song again."[5]

Dispatch, sweet whelps; the bug, the Duke, comes straight:

85: *Dispatch* = ie. "wrap it up."
*bug* = bugbear, imaginary cause of fear.[2]
*straight* = ie. any minute.

Oh, 'tis a grave old lover, that same Duke,
And chooses minions rarely, if you mark him,

= excellently (sarcastic). = note.

The noble Medice, that man, that Bobadilla,

= a reference to the boastful yet cowardly soldier from Ben Jonson's 1598 comedy *Every Man in his Humour*.

That foolish knave, that hose and doublet stinkard.

= the basic male Elizabethan outfit: the *hose* were leg coverings or breeches, and the *doublet* a close-fitting jacket; note that normally the phrase was written *doublet and hose*, but are reversed by Chapman here to fit the meter.
A man of means or nobility would typically wear a cloak or other outer garment over the ensemble; so in referring to Medice as a *hose and doublet stinkard*, the inebriated Bassiolo is highlighting the minion's presumed low-birth.

***Med.*** 'Swounds, my lord, rise, let's endure no more!

***Alph.*** A little, pray, my lord, for I believe

= ie. "let's wait a little longer before revealing ourselves":

We shall discover very notable knavery.

***Lasso.*** Alas, how I am grieved and shamed in this!

***Cort.*** Never care you, lord brother, there's no harm done!

***Bass.*** But that sweet creature, my good lord's sister,
Madam Cortezza, she, the noblest dame
That ever any vein of honour bled;

102: "that any noble lineage ever produced".[5]

There were a wife now, for my lord the Duke,

= "now there is a woman who would make a fine wife".

Had he the grace to choose her; but indeed,
To speak her true praise, I must use some study.

105: an ambiguous sentiment: "I need time to figure out how to describe her true worth."

***Cort.*** Now truly, brother, I did ever think
This man the honestest man that e'er you kept.

***Lasso.*** So, sister, so; because he praises you.

***Cort.*** Nay, sir, but you shall hear him further yet.

***Bass.*** Were not her head sometimes a little light,
And so unapt for matter of much weight,

= *light* is a loaded word: Bassiolo's primary meaning here is "frivolous", punning with *weight* (ie. serious) in the next line; but it could also mean lustful or wanton.

She were the fittest and the worthiest dame
To leap a window and to break her neck

= ie. from a.

That ever was.

***Cort.*** God's pity, arrant knave!

= absolute.[2]

I ever thought him a dissembling varlet.

= always.

***Bass.*** Well now, my hearts, be wary, for by this

= by now.

I fear the Duke is coming; I'll go watch

And give you warning. I commend me t'ye.

[*Exit*.]

***Vinc.*** Oh, fine phrase!

***Marg.*** And very timely used.

***Vinc.*** What now, sweet life, shall we resolve upon?
We never shall enjoy each other here.

132: "what should we do (about our situation)?"

***Marg.*** Direct you, then, my lord, what we shall do,
For I am at your will, and will endure
With you the cruell'st absence from the state
We both were born to that can be supposed.

= a hint that they have been considering going into exile.

***Vinc.*** That would extremely grieve me; could myself
Only endure the ill our hardest fates
May lay on both of us, I would not care;
But to behold thy sufferance I should die.

141-2: *could myself / Only endure* = "if I were the only one forced to endure, etc."

= suffering.

***Marg.*** How can your lordship wrong my love so much,
To think the more woe I sustain for you
Breeds not the more my comfort? I, alas,
Have no mean else to make my merit even
In any measure with your eminent worth.

146-150: "How can you think so little of me not to realize that the more I suffer on your behalf, the stronger (*comfort* = strength) I am? Unfortunately, I have no other way to elevate my own claim to excellence so that it even remotely approaches the same level as your own towering worthiness."

*Enter Bassiolo.*

***Bass.*** [*Aside*] Now must I exercise my timorous lovers,
Like fresh-armed soldiers, with some false alarms,
To make them yare and wary of their foe,
The boist'rous, bearded Duke: I'll rush upon them
With a most hideous cry. − The Duke! the Duke! the Duke!

= newly-armed (ie. raw) recruits.
= alert, prepared.[1,5]

[*Vincentio and Margaret run out*.]

Ha, ha, ha! Wo ho, come again, I say!
The Duke's not come, i'faith!

= a falconer shouts this to recall his hawk.

[*Enter Vincentio and Margaret*.]

***Vinc.*** God's precious, man!
What did you mean to put us in this fear?

***Bass.*** Oh, sir, to make you look about the more:
Nay, we must teach you more of this, I tell you;
What, can you be too safe, sir? What, I say,
Must you be pampered in your vanities?
[*Aside*] Ah, I do domineer, and rule the roast.

= secure.
= "indulged in your profitless behaviour".[1]
= "am completely in charge"; this phrase has been in use since as early as 1500; in the 18th century, *roast* transformed into *roost*.[1] Interestingly, the later-appearing *rule the roost* makes intuitive sense, as *roost* means henhouse; but the original meaning of *rule the roast* has long been lost to time.[1]

[*Exit*.]

***Marg.*** Was ever such an ingle? Would to God

178: *ingle* = a favorite young man or boy (though usually

(If 'twere not for ourselves) my father saw him.

applied in a sexual sense).[1]
178-9: *Would to...saw him* = "I wish to God my father could see him now, except for the fact that it would compromise us."

***Lasso.*** Minion, you have your prayer, and my curse,
For your good huswifery.

= hussy,[2] meaning Margaret.
= housewife-like behaviour, but also meaning "promiscuity";[2] Lasso, still on the balcony, is out of Margaret's earshot.

***Med.*** What says your Highness?
Can you endure these injuries any more?

***Alph.*** No more, no more! Advise me what is best
To be the penance of my graceless son.

= immoral or pitiless,[1] but also punning on its religious sense of being out of God's favor, with *penance*.

***Med.*** My lord, no mean but death or banishment
Can be fit penance for him, if you mean
T' enjoy the pleasure of your love yourself.

***Cort.*** Give him plain death, my lord, and then y' are sure.

194: Cortezza is a bit bold here in encouraging the duke to execute his own son.

***Alph.*** Death, or his banishment, he shall endure,
For wreak of that joy's exile I sustain.
Come, call our guard, and apprehend him straight.

= revenge for.[1] = the duke interestingly suggests his own joy is in exile, balancing nicely with his determination to possibly exile (*banish)* his son.

[*Exeunt Alphonso, Lasso, Medice, and Cortezza*.]

***Vinc.*** I have some jewèls then, my dearest life,
Which, with whatever we can get beside,
Shall be our means, and we will make escape.

= means of survival.

*Enter Bassiolo running.*

***Bass.*** 'Sblood, the Duke and all come now in earnest.
The Duke, by Heaven, the Duke!

***Vinc.*** Nay, then, i' faith,
Your jest is too too stale.

***Bass.*** God's precious!
By these ten bones, and by this hat and heart,
The Duke and all comes! See, we are cast away.

215: Bassiolo's affirming the truth of his report on his fingers (*ten bones*), hat and heart reveals his high level of alarm!

[*Exeunt Bassiolo and Vincentio*.]

*Enter Alphonso, Medice, Lasso, Cortezza, and Julio.*

***Alph.*** Lay hands upon them all; pursue, pursue!

***Lasso.*** Stay, thou ungracious girl!

***Alph.*** Lord Medice,
Lead you our guard, and see you apprehend
The treacherous boy, nor let him scape with life,
Unless he yield to his eternal exile.

= the play's remaining twists of plot turn on the duke's instruction here to Medice to kill Vincentio if need be.

***Med.*** 'Tis princely said, my lord.

[*Exit*.]

***Lasso.*** And take my usher.

235: "and capture my usher while you are at it."

***Marg.*** Let me go into exile with my lord;
I will not live, if I be left behind.

***Lasso.*** Impudent damsel, wouldst thou follow him?

***Marg.*** He is my husband, whom else should I follow?

242, 248: note how Margaret's responses repeat words from the questions posed to her; this technique has the effect of intensifying the connection between the single lines of dialogue.

***Lasso.*** Wretch, thou speakest treason to my lord the Duke.

***Alph.*** Yet love me, lady, and I pardon all.

***Marg.*** I have a husband, and must love none else.

***Alph.*** Despiteful dame, I'll disinherit him,
And thy good father here shall cast off thee,
And both shall feed on air, or starve, and die.

= malicious.[2] Note also the marked alliteration in this line.

**Marg.** If this be justice, let it be our dooms:
If free and spotless love in equal years,
With honours unimpaired, deserve such ends,
Let us approve what justice is in friends.

= judgments.
= free of stain or sin. = a biting comment on how the duke is much too old for her.
= the subject of *deserve* is *love*; note the lack of grammatical agreement.
257: "we will show you (*approve* = demonstrate) what justice is between lovers (*friends*)."

***Lasso.*** You shall, I swear. − Sister, take you her close
Into your chamber; lock her fast alone,
And let her stir, nor speak with any one.

= "take her and keep her shut up, etc."

***Cort.*** She shall not, brother. − Come, niece, come with me.

***Marg.*** Heaven save my love, and I will suffer gladly.

= ie. Vincentio.

[*Exeunt Cortezza and Margaret*.]

***Alph.*** Haste, Julio, follow thou my son's pursuit,
And will Lord Medice not to hurt nor touch him,
But either banish him or bring him back;
Charge him to use no violence to his life.

= *Julio*, a noble member of the court, makes his first appearance of the play here in Act V.
= command.
272: the duke hopes to recall his instructions to Medice to kill Vincentio if necessary.

***Jul.*** I will, my lord.

[*Exit Julio*.]

***Alph.*** Oh, Nature, how, alas,
Art thou and Reason, thy true guide, opposed!
More bane thou tak'st to guide sense, led amiss,
Than, being guided, Reason gives thee bliss.

278-281: very difficult lines: the duke describes how a person's visceral emotions (personified *Nature*, whom he is specifically addressing) and logic (*Reason*) create contradictory impulses. When *Nature* guides one's mind or judgment (*sense*), it leads to ruin (*bane*), but if *Reason* leads, the result is *bliss*.

Alphonso may be describing the struggle within himself

regarding how to deal with his recalcitrant son - if he follows his own instinct to banish the boy, it will lead to unhappiness for all; but Smith argues that the duke is commenting on Vincentio's lack of rational thinking, in failing to follow Alphonso's reasoned guidance, and, in chasing his own desires instead, the prince has brought disaster on them both.

279: *Reason* is described as Nature's *true guide*, because the rational mind properly acts to control one's instinctive behavior and desires.

282

[*Exeunt*.]

## ACT V, SCENE II.

*A Room in the House of Strozza*.

*Enter Cynanche, Benevemus, Ancilla,*

= *Ancilla* is simply Latin for maid, but she may have been a character who at some point edited out.

*Strozza having the arrow head in his hand*.

= holding.

***Stroz.*** Now, see, good Doctor, 'twas no frantic fancy
= insane.[2]

That made my tongue presage this head should fall
= predict. = ie. arrowhead.

Out of my wounded side the seventh day;

But an inspired rapture of my mind,

Submitted and conjoined in patiënce
= combined with.

To my Creator, in whom I foresaw

(Like to an angel) this divine event.
= ie. like.

***Ben.*** So is it plain, and happily approved

In a right Christian precedent, confirming
= example.

What a most sacred med'cine patience is,

That with the high thirst of our souls' clear fire,

Exhausts corporeal humour and all pain,

Casting our flesh off, while we it retain.

11-14: in these complex lines, Benevemus, like Cynanche earlier, expounds on the positive results when one focuses on the health of one's soul instead of one's body; the sense may be something like, "patience, combined with the desires of guiltless (*clear*) souls, draws out or drains (*exhausts*) bodily sickness (*humour*) and pain, thus metaphorically casting off our flesh, even as we hang on to it in a literal sense."

As Smith notes, the doctor's philosophy borrows directly from Christian theology, which sees the body and soul as distinct from each other.[21] Ancient philosophy further saw the soul as a *fire* which nourished and gave life to the body.[22]

*Humour* is a complex word: among its other meanings, *humours* referred to the four fluids of the body (blood, phlegm, choler and black bile) that determined one's health, depending on whether those *humours* were present in the right proportions or not.

***Cyn.*** Make some religious vow then, my dear lord,

And keep it in the proper memory

Of so celestiäl and free a grace.
= freely bestowed divine favour.[1,5]

***Stroz.*** Sweet wife, thou restest my good angel still,
= remain.

Suggesting by all means these ghostly counsels.
= spiritual.

Thou weariest not thy husband's patient ears
22-26: Strozza, in praising Cynanche, lists the kinds of trivial desires she does *not* urge on her husband, as most wives do.

With motions for new fashions in attire,
For change of jewèls, pastimes, and nice cates,
Nor studiest eminence and the higher place

Amongst thy consorts, like all other dames;
But knowing more worthy objects appertain
To every woman that desires t' enjoy
A blessed life in marriage, thou contemn'st
Those common pleasures, and pursu'st the rare,
Using thy husband in those virtuous gifts
For which thou first didst choose him, and thereby
Cloy'st not with him, but lov'st him endlessly.

In reverence of thy motion, then, and zeal
To that most sovereign power that was my cure,
I make a vow to go on foot to Rome,
And offer humbly in Saint Peter's Temple

This fatal arrow-head: which work let none judge
A superstitious rite, but a right use,
Proper to this peculiar instrument,

Which, visibly resigned to memory,

Through every eye that sees will stir the soul
To gratitude and progress, in the use
Of my tried patience, which, in my powers ending,

Would shut th' example out of future lives.

No act is superstitious that applies
All power to God, devoting hearts through eyes.

***Ben.*** Spoke with the true tongue of a nobleman:
But now are all these excitations toys,
And Honour fats his brain with other joys.
I know your true friend, Prince Vincentio,
Will triumph in this excellent effect
Of your late prophecy.

***Stroz.*** Oh, my dear friend's name
Presents my thoughts with a most mortal danger
To his right innocent life: a monstrous fact
Is now effected on him.

= suggestions.
= delicacies.
25: she does not seek (*study*) advancement of her social status.
= companions. [1] = wives of nobles.[1]
= scorns.
= vulgar. = exquisite.[2]
= familiarizing or treating.[1] = with.
= *cloy* normally means "to become satiated with", so the sense of the clause seems to be "grow full with her husband", ie. jaded with or tired of him.
= proposal. = spiritual devotion.
= at the time of our play (1606), the construction of St. Peter's Basilica, begun in 1506, was not to be finished for another decade.
= "let no man judge this pilgrimage to be, etc."
40: "appropriate for this particular means or agent", meaning the arrowhead.
= "displayed as a visible reminder or memorial in the church" (Parrott) or "once seen, its meaning will be committed to one's memory" (Smith).
= tested. = ie. "should I die without having the arrowhead set out for the public to see".
41-45: the sense of these dense lines is, "the arrowhead will serve as a memorial to, and an example of, the benefits of patience, which, when people will recall the image of it after having seen it, will cause in them a feeling of gratitude, so long as it remains visible at the church; otherwise, when I die, the example of my behavior will disappear with me."[3]
Smith notes that this process of consigning an image to memory which, when recalled, leads to an emotional response, is "orthodox Renaissance psychophysics" (p. 107).
= ascribes.
= trivialities.
= healthily feeds. = ie. its.
= crime or deed.[1]

***Cyn.*** Where, or how?

***Stroz.*** I do not well those circumstances know,
But am assured the substance is too true. −
Come, reverend Doctor, let us harken out
Where the young Prince remains, and bear with you
Med'cines, t' allay his danger: if by wounds,
Bear precious balsam, or some sovereign juice;

If by fell poison, some choice antidote;
If by black witchcraft, our good spirits and prayers
Shall exorcise the devilish wrath of hell
Out of his princely bosom.

*Enter Poggio running*.

***Pog.*** Where, where, where?
Where's my lord uncle, my lord my uncle?

***Stroz.*** Here's the ill-tidings bringer; what news now
With thy unhappy presence?

***Pog.*** Oh, my lord, my lord Vincentio,
Is almost killed by my lord Medice.

***Stroz.*** See, Doctor, see, if my presage be true!
And well I know if he have hurt the Prince,
'Tis treacherously done, or with much help.

***Pog.*** Nay, sure he had no help, but all the Duke's guard; and they set upon him indeed; and after he had defended himself − d'ye see? − he drew, and having as good as wounded the lord Medice almost, he strake at him, and missed him − d'ye mark?

***Stroz.*** What tale is here? Where is this mischief done?

***Pog.*** At Monkswell, my lord; I'll guide you to him presently.

***Stroz.*** I doubt it not; fools are best guides to ill,
And mischief's ready way lies open still.
Lead, sir, I pray.

[*Exeunt*.]

= ie. basic idea.

= seek out.[1]

= "if his life is in danger due to wounds received, etc."

= carry, ie. bring. = effective (usually used referring to remedies).[1]

= terrible or villainous.[1]

= prediction.

89*f*: Poggio's relation of events is as full of hilarious self-contradictions as ever.

= struck.

= according to John Stow's 1598 *Survey of London*, a street called *Monkswell*, named after a well at that location which served a local hermitage, was near Cripplegate; in Stow's time, a dozen alms-houses lined Monkswell.

Note that Poggio has forgotten that the play takes place in Italy; such lapses were common in the drama of the time.

*presently* (line 98) means "immediately".

= always.

## ACT V, SCENE III.

*Cortezza's Chamber*.

*Enter Cortezza and Margaret above*.

= Margaret's appearance on the balcony is meant to convey a sense of her confinement in Lasso's tower.

***Cort.*** Quiet yourself, niece; though your love be slain,
You have another that's worth two of him.

***Marg.*** It is not possible; it cannot be
That Heaven should suffer such impiety.

***Cort.*** 'Tis true, I swear, niece.

***Marg.*** Oh, most unjust truth!
I'll cast myself down headlong from this tower,
And force an instant passage for my soul
To seek the wand'ring spirit of my lord. = ie. soul of the deceased Vincentio.

***Cort.*** Will you do so, niece? That I hope you will not; 14*ff*: note that Cortezza's long-winded advice to Margaret is not always helpful, usually self-contradictory, and always funny.

And yet there was a maid in Saint Mark's street = no such street appears in any of the contemporary published surveys of London; several, including Stow's book mentioned above, describe a *Mart* Street, which the author notes had over time been corrupted to *Mark* Street. Other plays of the era, such as Francis Beaumont's *The Woman Hater*, also mention *Saint Marks Street*.
Edward Sugden's 1925 *A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists* suggests the playwrights might be referring to the Piazza San Marco in Venice.[23]

For such a matter did so, and her clothes 16-17: *her clothes…no harm* = the maid's petticoat or skirt, acting as a parachute, saved her from injury.
Flew up about her so as she had no harm;
And, grace of God, your clothes may fly up too,
And save you harmless, for your cause and hers 19-20: *your cause…can be* = "you and the maid both suffer for the same reason."
Are e'en as like as can be.

***Marg.*** I would not scape; = escape (from death).
And certainly I think the death is easy.

***Cort.*** Oh, 'tis the easiest death that ever was;
Look, niece, it is so far hence to the ground
You should be quite dead long before you felt it.
Yet do not leap, niece.

***Marg.*** I will kill myself
With running on some sword, or drink strong poison;
Which death is easiest I would fain endure. = gladly.

***Cort.*** Sure Cleopatra was of the same mind, 34-35: Plutarch, in his *Lives*, wrote that Cleopatra collected and tested the effects of various poisons on condemned prisoners.
And did so; she was honoured ever since:
Yet do not you so, niece.

***Marg.*** Wretch that I am, my heart is soft and faint,
And trembles at the very thought of death,
Though thoughts tenfold more grievous do torment it:
I'll feel death by degrees, and first deform
This my accursèd face with ugly wounds;
That was the first cause of my dear love's death. = her face was the *first cause* of Vincentio's death, in that it was his falling in love with it that set off the chain of events leading to his supposed slaughter.
*First Cause* is also a philosophical phrase, referring impersonally to the creator of the universe.

***Cort.*** That were a cruèl deed; yet Adelasia,
In Pettie's *Palace of Petit Pleasure*,
For all the world, with such a knife as this
Cut off her cheeks and nose, and was commended
More than all dames that kept their faces whole.

45-49: the correct title of the cited work is *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure*, written by the English romance writer George Pettie (1548-1589) and published in 1576. Pettie's book, a collection of romance stories, was written in a vein deliberately similar to that of William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure*, a collection of about 100 stories translated from Latin, French, Greek and Italian, published in 1566-7.[4]

Chapman's memory of the story is faulty: it was not *Adelasia*, but Florinda who harmed her own face, and she did it by striking herself with a stone, not a knife; and finally, it was Painter in his book who related this story, not Pettie. Parrott suggests Chapman seems to have written these lines based on only a vague memory of the story. (Thanks to Chapman editor Thomas Parrott for all his leg work on this reference).

As a side note, Painter's *Palace* was hugely influential in the Elizabethan era; many of the plays of the time were inspired directly or indirectly by his collection, including Shakespeare's *All Well That Ends Well* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Pettie's book apparently also greatly influenced dramatist John Lyly, whose controversial style of writing known as *Euphuism* was directly inspired by Pettie.[4]

[*Margaret seizes the knife and offers to cut her face*.]

= attempts.

Oh, do not cut it.

***Marg.*** Fie on my faint heart!

= curse, beshrew.

It will not give my hand the wishèd strength;
Behold the just plague of a sensual life,
That to preserve itself in Reason's spite,
And shun Death's horror, feels it ten times more.

57-59: though her *Reason* tells her to kill herself, her innate will to live prevents her from doing so, thus keeping her physical senses (*sensual life*) intact, which ironically cause suffering worse than death.

Unworthy women! Why do men adore
Our fading beauties, when, their worthiest lives
Being lost for us, we dare not die for them? −
Hence, hapless ornaments that adorned this head,
Disorder ever these enticing curls,
And leave my beauty like a wilderness
That never man's eye more may dare t' invade.

63-66: in figuring out how to disfigure herself, Margaret begins by tearing out any accessories she has in her hair, and then messes up her hair.

*Hence* (line 64) = "Away!"
*hapless* = unlucky.

***Cort.*** I'll tell you, niece − and yet I will not tell you
A thing that I desire to have you do −
But I will tell you only what you might do,
Cause I would pleasure you in all I could.
I have an ointment here, which we dames use
To take off hair when it does grow too low
Upon our foreheads, and that, for a need,
If you should rub it hard upon your face
Would blister it, and make it look most vildly.

= ie. vilely; *vild* and *vile* were used interchangeably.

***Marg.*** Oh, give me that, aunt!

***Cort.*** Give it you, virgin? That were well indeed;
Shall I be thought to tempt you to such matters?

***Marg.*** None (of my faith) shall know it; gentle aunt,
Bestow it on me, and I'll ever love you.

***Cort.*** God's pity, but you shall not spoil your face!

***Marg.*** I will not, then, indeed.

***Cort.*** Why, then, niece, take it;
But you shall swear you will not.

***Marg.*** No, I swear!

[*She seizes the box and rubs her face with the ointment*.]

***Cort.*** What, do you force it from me? God's my dear!
Will you misuse your face so? What, all over?
Nay, if you be so desp'rate, I'll be gone.

[*Exit*.]

***Marg.*** Fade, hapless beauty; turn the ugliest face
That ever Æthiop or affrightful fiend
Showed in th' amazèd eye of profaned light;
See, precious love, if thou be yet in air,
And canst break darkness and the strongest towers
With thy dissolvèd intellectual powers,
See a worse torment suffered for thy death
Than if it had extended his black force
In sevenfold horror to my hated life. −
Smart, precious ointment, smart, and to my brain
Sweat thy envenomed fury; make my eyes
Burn with thy sulphur like the lakes of hell,
That fear of me may shiver him to dust
That eat his own child with the jaws of lust.

[*Exit*.]

= no one else. = "I promise".

= mistreat.

= Elizabethan term for a black person; generally in this era, the darker one's skin, the less attractive one was considered to be.

107: *precious love* = Margaret apostrophizes to the (presumed) dead Vincentio.
*yet in air* = ie. his soul not yet arrived to Heaven.

108: "and your soul, or conscious self, can penetrate darkness and towers like the one I am being kept in".

= in recompense for

= ie. personified Death.

= "hurt!", ie. "cause me pain!", an imperative.

= material known to burn easily.

= break into many pieces. = ie. the duke.

= perhaps comparing the duke to the Greek god Cronos: see the note at line 76 in Scene iv below.

## ACT V, SCENE IV.

*A Room in Lasso's House*.

*Enter Alphonso, Lasso, and others.*

***Alph.*** I wonder how far they pursued my son
That no return of him or them appears;
I fear some hapless accident is chanced
That makes the news so loath to pierce mine ears.

***Lasso.*** High Heaven vouchsafe no such effect succeed
Those wretched causes that from my house flow,
But that in harmless love all acts may end.

*Enter Cortezza.*

= unfortunate. = has occurred.

6-7: "God grant (*vouchsafe*) that no such results (*effects*) come after (*succeed*) the *causes* that began in my home".

***Cort.*** What shall I do? Alas, I cannot rule
My desperate niece; all her sweet face is spoiled,
And I dare keep her prisoner no more:
See, see, she comes frantíc and all undressed.

= control, manage.

= unkempt; Margaret no longer cares about her appearance.

*Enter Margaret.*

***Marg.*** Tyrant, behold how thou hast used thy love!
See, thief to nature, thou hast killed and robbed,
Killed what myself killed, robbed what makes thee poor.
Beauty (a lover's treasure) thou hast lost,
Where none can find it; all a poor maid's dower
Thou hast forced from me; all my joy and hope.
No man will love me more; all dames excel me.
This ugly thing is now no more a face,
Nor any vile form in all earth resembled,
But thy foul tyranny; for which all the pains
Two faithful lovers feel, that thus are parted,
All joys they might have felt, turn all to pains;
All a young virgin thinks she does endure
To lose her love and beauty, on thy heart
Be heaped and pressed down till thy soul depart.

19*f*: indignant, Margaret uses the contemptuous "thee" in addressing the duke.

= the only dowry a poor maid brings with her is her looks.

= ie. in looks.

27: "nor does it resemble any vile thing on earth".

= maiden.

33: Margaret wishes that the duke's heart be crushed by the trio of ideas described in 28-32: (1) the pain two parted lovers feel; (2) the pain caused by never getting to experience the joys they might have had; and (3) the despair experienced by a woman when her looks are gone.

*Enter Julio.*

***Jul.*** Haste, Liege, your son is dangerously hurt!
Lord Medice, contemning your command,
By me delivered as your Highness willed,
Set on him with your guard, who strook him down;
And then the coward lord with mortal wounds
And slavish insolency plowed up his soft breast;
Which barbarous fact, in part, is laid on you,
For first enjoining it, and foul exclaims
In pity of your son your subjects breathe
Gainst your unnatural fury; amongst whom
The good lord Strozza desperàtely raves,
And vengeance for his friend's injustice craves.
See where he comes, burning in zeal of friendship.

= scorning. = ie. not to injure or kill Vincentio.

43-44: *Which barbarous…enjoining it* = wow! Julio quite daringly heaps blame directly on the duke for having irresponsibly given Medice license to slay Vincentio in the first place!
*fact* = deed or crime.

44: *and foul exclaims…breathe* = "the people, in pity for Vincentio, are crying out angrily, etc."

= abnormal, acting against one's natural feelings of kinship.

*Enter Strozza, Vincentio brought in a chair, Benevemus, Poggio, Cynanche, with a guard, and Medice.*

= litter.

***Stroz.*** Where is the tyrant? Let me strike his eyes
Into his brain with horror of an object. −
See, pagan Nero, see how thou hast ripped
Thy better bosom, rooted up that flower
From whence thy now spent life should spring anew,

57-61: a common Elizabethan sentiment was that a person lives on through his or her descendents. Nero only killed his mother, but the duke has done a worse thing, because

And in him killed (that would have bred thee fresh)
Thy mother and thy father.

***Vinc.*** Good friend, cease!

***Stroz.*** What hag with child of monster would have nursed
Such a prodigious longing? But a father
Would rather eat the brawn out of his arms
Than glut the mad worm of his wild desires
With his dear issue's entrails.

***Vinc.*** Honoured friend,
He is my father, and he is my prince,
In both whose rights he may command my life.

***Stroz.*** What is a father? Turn his entrails gulfs
To swallow children when they have begot them?
And what's a prince? Had all been virtuous men,
There never had been prince upon the earth,
And so no subject; all men had been princes:
A virtuous man is subject to no prince,
But to his soul and honour; which are laws
That carry fire and sword within themselves,
Never corrupted, never out of rule;
What is there in a prince that his least lusts
Are valued at the lives of other men,
When common faults in him should prodigies be,
And his gross dotage rather loathed than soothed?

***Alph.*** How thick and heavily my plagues descend,
Not giving my mazed powers a time to speak!
Pour more rebuke upon me, worthy lord,
For I have guilt and patience for them all: −
Yet know, dear son, I did forbid thy harm;
This gentleman can witness, whom I sent
With all command of haste to interdict
This forward man in mischief not to touch thee: −
Did I not, Julio? Utter nought but truth.

by killing his son he has also killed his own parents, who will no longer live through their descendent.[3]

= ie. by a; the *monster* is the father.
= monstrous.[2]

66-69: *But a father…entrails* = the sense is, "a real father would rather eat his own flesh than allow his lustful desires to be satisfied by means of his own child's death."

= flesh.[2]
= *worm* was commonly used to describe a "maggot" of the brain, an entity that causes a fit of madness or unnatural desires;[1] but Chapman's *worm*, metaphorically representing the duke's lust, also characterizes a maggot that eats the flesh (*entrails*) of the dead.[1]

*issue's* = offspring's.

= ie. king.

= "one who turns his *entrails* into whirlpools (*gulfs*)".[1]

76: there is an allusion here to the story of Zeus's birth: Zeus' father, Cronos, was the king of the Gods; a prophecy told him one of his children would depose him, so he took to swallowing his children as soon as they were born. However, when Zeus was born, Cronos' wife Rhea gave him a stone wrapped in cloth to swallow, which he believed to be his child. Meanwhile, Zeus was hidden and raised secretly, and he did indeed return to depose his father.[8]

77-79: "and what is a king? If all men were virtuous, there would be no need for kings or subjects, for all men would be kings."

= in disorder.[1]

84-87: "why should the slightest needs or desires of a king be worth more than the lives of his subjects? Instead, such faults, which when possessed by others are considered ordinary, should be looked on as monstrosities (*prodigies*) in a king, and his coarse or vulgar desires (*gross dotage*) should be despised instead of overlooked or assented to (*soothed*)."[1]

= stunned.

= indicating Julio.
= forbid.[1]
= "this man (ie. Medice) who was eager (*forward*) to do mischief, etc."
= nothing.

***Jul.*** All your guard heard, my lord, I gave your charge
With loud and violent iteratiöns,
After all which Lord Medice cowardly hurt him.

***The Guard.*** He did, my princely lord.

***Alph.*** Believe then, son,
And know me pierced as deeply with thy wounds: −
And pardon, virtuous lady, that have lost
The dearest treasure proper to your sex,
Ay me, it seems by my unhappy means!
Oh, would to God, I could with present cure
Of these unnatural wounds, and moaning right

Of this abusèd beauty, join you both
(As last I left you) in eternal nuptials.

***Vinc.*** My lord, I know the malice of this man,

Not your unkind consent, hath used us thus.
And since I make no doubt I shall survive
These fatal dangers, and your Grace is pleased
To give free course to my unwounded love,
'Tis not this outward beauty's ruthful loss

Can any thought discourage my desires: −
And therefore, dear life, do not wrong me so
To think my love the shadow of your beauty;

I woo your virtues, which as I am sure
No accident can alter or impair,
So, be you certain, nought can change my love.

***Marg.*** I know your honourable mind, my lord,
And will not do it that unworthy wrong,
To let it spend her forces in contending

(Spite of your sense) to love me thus deformed;
Love must have outward objects to delight him,
Else his content will be too grave and sour.
It is enough for me, my lord, you love,
And that my beauty's sacrifice redeemed

My sad fear of your slaughter. You first loved me
Closely for beauty; which being withered thus,
Your love must fade: when the most needful rights
Of Fate and Nature have dissolved your life,
And that your love must needs be all in soul,
Then will we meet again; and then, dear love,
Love me again; for then will beauty be
Of no respect with love's eternity.

= command.

108: ie. a woman's good looks.
= "due to my ill-fated agency," ie. "it is my fault."

111: *these unnatural wounds* = Vincentio's wounds are *unnatural* in that they were brought on by his own father.
*moaning right* = referring to Margaret's justifiable lamentations.[5]

115-6: ie. "my lord, I know that what was done to us was caused by the malice of Medice (*this man*), and not from any unnatural ill-feeling of your own."
= referring to feelings that are not normal between parent and child.

= in contrast to his wounded body.
= pitiful; in 120-1, Vincentio notes that Margaret's mutilation cannot cause him to change his mind about her.

= Vincentio now addresses Margaret.
= "the image of", ie. dependent on: his love is not lessened because her beauty is (Smith, p. 117).

= nothing.

129-131: "I will not wrong you by requiring you to expend energy striving (going against what you see) to love me in this deformed condition;" *it* in line 130 refers to Vincentio's love.

= it, ie. personified *Love*.

135-6: *my beauty's…slaughter* = Margaret is satisfied knowing that her face's ruin in a sense ransomed and saved Vincentio's life.

= "secretly for my beauty."
138-142: *when the…again* = Margaret's point is that they can be together again in death, when appearances no longer matter.

= of no matter, ie. will no longer be an issue.

***Vinc.*** Nor is it now; I wooed your beauty first
But as a lover; now as a dear husband,
That title and your virtues bind me ever.

***Marg.*** Alas, that title is of little force

149: "unfortunately, the title of "husband" by itself has little power, etc."

To stir up men's affections! When wives want
= lack.
Outward excitements, husbands' loves grow scant.
= exterior stimulations for passion, ie. good looks.[1]

***Ben.*** Assist me, Heaven and Art! − Give me your mask; −

153: *Art* = human or medical skill.
*Give me your mask* = Smith assumes this line is addressed to Heaven and Art, and that the doctor takes a mask out of his medical kit. Parrott suggests the Benevemus has asked one of the ladies present to give him her mask; Elizabethan women often wore masks outside to protect their faces from the elements.

Open, thou little store-house of great Nature,

154: now the doctor addresses his medical bag, and removes from it a potion he hopes will cure Margaret's disfigurement.

Use an elixir drawn through seven years' fire,
= extracted or distilled.[1]
That like Medea's cauldron can repair
= in a story related by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, Medea the sorceress (and wife of Jason the Argonaut) restored the youth of Aeson, Jason's aged father.

The ugliest loss of living temp'rature;

= *temperature* refers to the mixture of the four humours in the body that determine the state of one's health[1] (see the note at Act V.ii.11); the doctor's wish is to find a remedy that can fix even the worst derangement (*ugliest loss*) of one's constitution.[3]

And for this princely pair of virtuous turtles
= turtledoves.
Be lavish of thy precious influence. −
Lady, t' atone your honourable strife,
= to appease.[2]
And take all let from your love's tender eyes,
= obstacles.[2] = ie. Vincentio's loving or affectionate eyes.
Let me for ever hide this stain of beauty
With this recureful mask.
= ie. capable of curing.

[*Putting a mask on Margaret's face*.]

Here be it fixed
With painless operation; of itself,
(Your beauty having brooked three days' eclipse)
= put up with. = ie. covering, or deprivation of light;[1] Margaret must wear the mask continuously for three days.

Like a dissolvèd cloud it shall fall off,

170-1: in this meteorological metaphor, the doctor suggests Margaret's regained beauty will be like the sun shining forth after a covering cloud disappears (*dissolves*).

And your fair looks regain their freshest rays;
So shall your princely friend (if Heaven consent)
172-3: Vincentio will also be cured, but it will take twice as long (six days); *friend* (line 172) = lover.
In twice your suffered date renew recure;
Let me then have the honour to conjoin
Your hands, conformèd to your constant hearts.
= faithful, loyal.

***Alph.*** Grave Benevemus, honourable Doctor,
= respected.[1]
On whose most sovereign Æsculapian hand
= Aesculapius was the Greek god of healing.[8]
Fame with her richest miracles attends,
Be fortunate, as ever heretofore,

That we may quite thee both with gold and honour,
And by thy happy means have power to make
My son and his much injured love amends;
Whose well-proportioned choice we now applaud,
And bless all those that ever furthered it. −
Where is your discreet usher, my good lord,
The special furtherer of this equal match?

***Jul.*** Brought after by a couple of your guard.

***Alph.*** Let him be fetched, that we may do him grace.

***Pog.*** I'll fetch him, my lord; away, you must not go. Oh, here he comes. [*Enter Bassiolo guarded*.] Oh, Master Usher, I am sorry for you; you must presently be chopped in pieces.

***Bass.*** Woe to that wicked Prince that e'er I saw him!

***Pog.*** Come, come, I gull you, Master Usher; you are like to be the Duke's minion, man; d'ye think I would have been seen in your company and you had been out of favour? − Here's my friend Master Usher, my lord.

***Alph.*** Give me your hand, friend; pardon us, I pray.
We much have wronged your worth, as one that knew
The fitness of this match above ourselves.

***Bass.*** Sir, I did all things for the best, I swear,
And you must think I would not have been gulled;
I know what's fit, sir, as I hope you know now. −
Sweet Vince, how far'st thou? Be of honoured cheer.

***Lasso.*** Vince, does he call him? Oh, fool, dost thou call
The Prince Vince, like his equal?

***Bass.*** Oh, my lord, alas!
You know not what has passed twixt us two. −
Here in thy bosom I will lie, sweet Vince,
And die if thou die, I protest by Heaven.

***Lasso.*** I know not what this means.

***Alph.*** Nor I, my lord;
But sure he saw the fitness of the match
With freer and more noble eyes than we.

***Pog.*** Why, I saw that as well as he, my lord. I knew 'twas a foolish match betwixt you two; did not you think so, my lord Vincentio? Lord uncle, did not I say at first of the Duke: “Will his antiquity never leave his iniquity?”

***Stroz.*** Go to, too much of this; but ask this lord
If he did like it.

***Pog.*** Who, my lord Medice?

= requite, repay.

= well-conceived or laid-out.[1]

186-7: having blessed the union of the prince and Margaret, Alphonso even feels warm regard for Bassiolo, the man who surreptitiously, if unwittingly, assisted in their scheme.

= "honour him."

= "I am fooling with you".
= likely to become. = favourite.
= if.

= Alphonso honors Bassiolo not only by shaking his hand, but by addressing the servant with the respectful "you".
= "more than I did."

= "as if you were".

= between.

= swear.

= as sovereign, Alphonso uses the "royal we", meaning "I".

= "please get out of here!" = ie. Medice.

***Stroz.*** Lord Stinkard, man, his name is. Ask him: "Lord Stinkard, did you like the match?" Say.

***Pog.*** My lord Stinkard, did you like the match betwixt the Duke and my lady Margaret?

***Med.*** Presumptuous sycophant, I will have thy life!

245: the incensed Medice presumably is addressing his long-time nemesis Strozza.

The OED cites this line as an example of *sycophant's* meaning of "imposter" or "deceiver", but *sycophant* could also mean "slanderer", which may make more sense here.

[*Draws.*]

***Alph.*** Unworthy lord, put up: thirst'st thou more blood?
Thy life is fittest to be called in question
For thy most murth'rous cowardice on my son;
Thy forwardness to every cruèlty
Calls thy pretended noblesse in suspect.

= ie. "put away your sword."

= murderous.

= over-eagerness or boldness.[1]

253: the duke suggests that a true nobleman would be less prone to violent cruelty than Medice has been.

***Stroz.*** Noblesse, my lord? Set by your princely favour,
That gave the lustre to his painted state,
Who ever viewed him but with deep contempt,
As reading vileness in his very looks?
And if he prove not son of some base drudge,
Trimmed up by Fortune, being disposed to jest
And dally with your state, then that good angel
That by divine relation spake in me,
Foretelling these foul dangers to your son,
And without notice brought this reverend man
To rescue him from death, now fails my tongue,
And I'll confess I do him open wrong.

= the phrase *set by* was commonly used to mean "put aside", so that the lines 255-6 could be interpreted as an imperative: "set aside (*set by*) your viewing Medice with favour"; but insofar as line 256 ends with a comma, Smith's reading of *Set by* as "except for" may be preferable.

= counterfeited, but also punning with *lustre* on the normal meaning of *painted*.

= menial servant.

260-1: *Trimmed up...state* = Strozza suggests that *Fortune*, a notoriously fickle god, has, with its usual perverse sense of humour, bestowed success and prosperity on the undeserving Medice.

= ie. the doctor, Benevemus.

***Med.*** And so thou dost; and I return all note
Of infamy or baseness on thy throat:
Damn me, my lord, if I be not a lord.

= down.

***Stroz.*** My Liege, with all desert even now you said
His life was daily forfeit for the death
Which in these barbarous wounds he sought your son;
Vouchsafe me then his life, in my friend's right,
For many ways I know he merits death;
Which (if you grant) will instantly appear,
And that, I feel, with some rare miracle.

= deserving.

= "grant me the right to dispose of his life as I see fit".

= exceptional.

***Alph.*** His life is thine, Lord Strozza; give him death.

***Med.*** What, my lord,
Will your Grace cast away an innocent life?

***Stroz.*** Villain, thou liest; thou guilty art of death
A hundred ways, which now I'll execute.

***Med.*** Recall your word, my lord.

= take back.

***Alph.*** Not for the world!

***Stroz.*** Oh, my dear Liege, but that my spirit prophetic
Hath inward feeling of such sins in him
As ask the forfeit of his life and soul,
I would, before I took his life, give leave
To his confession and his penitence:

292-6: *but that…penitence* = "except for the fact my sixth sense tells me that Medice is guilty of such sins as deserve death and damnation, I would give him time to confess before I kill him." Strozza prefers Medice not be given an opportunity to save his soul from eternal damnation by confessing and doing penance.
*leave* (line 295) = permission.

Oh, he would tell you most notorious wonders
Of his most impious state; but life and soul
Must suffer for it in him, and my hand
Forbidden is from Heaven to let him live
Till by confession he may have forgiveness.
Die therefore, monster!

***Vinc.*** Oh, be not so uncharitable, sweet friend,
Let him confess his sins, and ask Heaven pardon.

***Stroz.*** He must not, princely friend; it is Heaven's justice
To plague his life and soul, and here's Heaven's justice.

307-8: Strozza's clairvoyance permits him to claim that he knows that God wants Medice damned forever.

[*Draws.*]

***Med.*** Oh, save my life, my lord!

***Lasso.*** Hold, good Lord Strozza!
Let him confess the sins that Heaven hath told you,
And ask forgiveness.

***Med.*** Let me, good my lord,
And I'll confess what you accuse me of:
Wonders indeed, and full of damned deserts.

= fully deserving to be damned.

***Stroz.*** I know it, and I must not let thee live
To ask forgiveness.

***Alph.*** But you shall, my lord,
Or I will take his life out of your hand.

***Stroz.*** A little then I am content, my Liege: −
Is thy name Medice?

= Strozza accepts Alphonso's suggestion that Medice be given an opportunity to confess.

***Med.*** No, my noble lord,
My true name is Mendice.

***Stroz.*** Mendice? See,

334-5: Medice has dishonored the great name of Medici by assuming it for himself.

At first a mighty scandal done to honour. −
Of what country art thou?

= from the first.[5]

***Med.*** Of no country I,
But born upon the seas, my mother passing
Twixt Zant and Venice.

= ie. on a ship.
= the large Ionian island of Zante, or Zakynthos.[3]

***Stroz.*** Where wert thou christened?

***Med.*** I was never christened,
But, being brought up with beggars, called Mendice,

= Medice's true appellation recalls the name of the *Mendicant* movement of the Middle Ages, which grew in reaction to the feudal organization of the greater church; the friars who took part in it lived amongst the poorest citizens, sharing their poverty, working when they could, and begging when they had to.[10]

Note also the powerful alliteration of line 345.

***Alph.*** Strange and unspeakable!

***Stroz.*** How cam'st thou then
To bear that port thou didst, ent'ring this Court?

350: Strozza asks Medice how he learned to act like an an aristocrat; *port* = demeanor or bearing.

***Med.*** My lord, when I was young, being able-limbed,
A captain of the gipsies entertained me,

353: *gipsies* = Smith notes that there was "official concern" regarding gypsies in early 17th century England; in 1601, a woman was even hanged for consorting with gypsies (p. 123).

*entertained me* = "took me in".

And many years I lived a loose life with them;
At last I was so favoured that they made me
The King of Gipsies; and being told my fortune
By an old sorceress that I should be great
In some great prince's love, I took the treasure
Which all our company of gipsies had
In many years by several stealths collected;

360: ie. stolen over many years.

And leaving them in wars, I lived abroad
With no less show than now; and my last wrong

= insult, injury.

I did to noblesse was in this high Court.

= the notion of nobility, as one of honourable behaviour.

***Alph.*** Never was heard so strange a counterfeit.

***Stroz.*** Didst thou not cause me to be shot in hunting?

***Med.*** I did, my lord; for which, for Heaven's love, pardon.

***Stroz.*** Now let him live, my lord; his blood's least drop
Would stain your Court more than the sea could cleanse;
His soul's too foul to expiate with death.

***Alph.*** Hence then; be ever banished from my rule,

= "go from here".

And live a monster, loathed of all the world.

= by.

***Pog.*** I'll get boys and bait him out o' th' Court, my lord.

***Alph.*** Do so, I pray thee; rid me of his sight.

***Pog.*** Come on, my lord Stinkard, I'll play "Fox, Fox, come out of thy hole"' with you, i'faith.

382-3: *Fox…hole* = Parrott identifies this as a Christmas game, in which "boys beat each other with gloves or bits of leather tied to string."[3]

However, the famed philosopher Thomas Hobbes, in a whimsical book he wrote in 1656 entitled *Six lessons to the professors of the mathematiques*, described a game called "Empura", in which one boy, being summoned by the call described by Poggio, begins to hop about.

***Med.*** I'll run and hide me from the sight of Heaven.

***Pog.*** Fox, fox, go out of thy hole! A two-legged fox,
a two-legged fox!

[*Exit with Pages beating Medice*.]

***Ben.*** Never was such an accident disclosed. = occurrence.

***Alph.*** Let us forget it, honourable friends,
And satisfy all wrongs with my son's right,
In solemn marriage of his love and him.

***Vinc.*** I humbly thank your Highness: − honoured Doctor,
The balsam you infused into my wounds
Hath eased me much, and given me sudden strength
Enough t' assure all danger is exempt = removed.[5]
That any way may let the general joy
My princely father speaks of in our nuptials.

***Alph.*** Which, my dear son, shall with thy full recure
Be celebrate in greater majesty
Than ever graced our greatest ancestry.
Then take thy love, which Heaven with all joys bless,
And make ye both mirrors of happiness.

FINIS

## Chapman's Invented Words

Like all of the writers of the era, George Chapman made up words when he 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 *The Gentleman Usher* 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:

**conformance**
**cringle-crangle** (used as an adjective)
**crystal globe**
**dictate** (meaning to declare authoritatively)
**formelting** (as an adjective)
**huddle** (meaning confusion)
**pageant** (as a verb)
**recureful**
**sortfully**
**stooped** (as an adjective)
**substance** (meaning aim or purpose)
**threave** (meaning a bundle)
**turnspit** (meaning roasting jack)
**unfitted** (meaning not provided with something suitable)
**unmedicinable** (meaning "no power to cure")
**very good** (phrase used to indicate assent)
**well-selling**
**wooden** (meaning "of the woods")

## FOOTNOTES

The footnotes in the annotations correspond as follows:

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23. Sugden, Edward. *A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists*. Manchester: The University Press, 1925.