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the Annotated Popular Edition of

The Old Wives' Tale

by George Peele

Written c. 1590-5

First published 1595

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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THE OLD WIVES' TALE

by George Peele

Written c. 1590-5

First Published 1595

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Contemporary Characters:

Antic, a Servant.

Frolic, a Servant.

Fantastic, a Servant.

Clunch, a Smith,

Madge, his wife.

Fairy Tale Characters:

Sacrapant, a conjuror.

First Brother, named Calypha, a Prince.

Second Brother, named Thelea, a Prince.

Delia, sister to Calypha and Thelea, a Princess.

Eumenides, a Wandering Knight.

Huanebango, a Knight.

Corebus, a Clown.

Erestus.

Venelia, betrothed to Erestus.

Lampriscus.

Zantippa, daughter to Lampriscus.

Celanta, daughter to Lampriscus.

Wiggen.

Ghost of Jack, a deceased person.

Churchwarden.

Sexton.

Hostess.

Friar, Harvest-men, Furies, Fiddlers, &c.

SCENE I.

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

George Peele's *The Old Wives' Tale* is a charming, if not weighty, play, and one of the easiest works of the era to read. Its "play-within-a-play", in which a minor plot involving some contemporary English characters frames a larger story, anticipates that of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, but is more interesting than the latter because Peele's English characters regularly comment on the main action, risking breaking the audience's suspension of belief.

Wives' Tale is ultimately a fairy tale, complete with sorcerer, magic disembodied heads, and a kidnapped princess.

NOTE on the PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of the play is taken from Alexander Dyce's 1874 edition of *The Old Wives' Tale*, cited below at #3.

NOTES on the ANNOTATIONS

Mention of Dyce, Gummere, Bullen, Nielson and Whitworth 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. Dyce, Rev. Alexander. *The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Robert Greene and George Peele*. London: George Routledge and Sons: 1874.

4. Gummere, F.B., ed. *The Old Wives' Tale*, pp. 333-383; from *Representative English Comedies*, Charles Mills Gayley, ed. London: MacMillan & Co., 1916.

5. Bullen, A.H. *The Works of George Peele*. London: John C. Nimmo, 1888.

6. Nielson, William Allen. *The Chief Elizabethan Dramatists*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911.

7. Whitworth, Charles W. *Three Sixteenth Century Comedies*. London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1984.

The Woods, Contemporary England.

Enter Antic, Frolic, and Fantastic.

1 **Antic.** How now, fellow Frolic! what, all amort? doth

2 this sadness become thy madness? What though we
4 have lost our way in the woods? yet never hang the
6 head as though thou hadst no hope to live till to-
morrow; for Fantastic and I will warrant thy life to-
night for twenty in the hundred.

8 **Frol.** Antic, and Fantastic, as I am frolic franion, never
in all my life was I so dead slain. What, to lose our

10 way in the wood, without either fire or candle, so

uncomfortable? O cælum! O terra! O maria! O

12 Neptune!

14 **Fan.** Why makes thou it so strange, seeing Cupid hath
16 led our young master to the fair lady, and she is the
only saint that he hath sworn to serve?

18 **Frol.** What resteth, then, but we commit him to his
wench, and each of us take his stand up in a tree, and

20 sing out our ill fortune to the tune of "O man in
desperation"?

22 **Antic.** Desperately spoken, fellow Frolic, in the dark:
24 but seeing it falls out thus, let us rehearse the old
proverb:

The Settings: the original 1595 edition of *The Old Wives' Tale* did not provide scene settings, a normal practice of the era. All settings are the suggestion of the editor.

We may also note here that many of the stage directions appearing in this edition are modified, and clarifying, versions of those appearing in the original edition, and are generally adapted from Dyce's suggestions.

Entering Characters: *Antic*, *Frolic* and *Fantastic* are servants to some unnamed master; they are travelling through the woods, on an unspecified mission related to their employer's love-life, and are lost.

Antic = bizarre, grotesque.¹

Frolic = merry.

Fantastic = fanciful, imagined.²

1: *Frolic* = the original edition accidentally prints *Franticke* here.

amort = downcast, dejected.

1-2: *doth...madness* = "does this sad mood fit your normal merry character?"

= suppose, ie. "who cares if".

= ie. "your".

5-6: *for Fantastic...hundred* = Antic offers 5-to-1 odds that Frolic will not die or be killed this night.

warrant = assure, guarantee.

8: *frolic franion* = "a merry fellow"; the OED defines *franion* as a "gay and reckless fellow", though Dyce alone suggests "idle". Peele uses *frolic'st franion* again in Scene VI.56.

8-9: *never...slain* = Frolic expects to die in the woods this night, ie. "I am already dead."

= the boys are not only lost, but it is night, and they have no source of light.

11: *uncomfortable* = disquieted or inconsolable.¹

O cælum! = Oh Heaven!

O terra! = Oh earth!

O maria! = Oh sea!

= Roman god of the sea.

14: *Why...strange* = "why are you being so difficult".¹

14-16: *seeing...serve* = typical Elizabethan language describing a man in love.

= ie. "remains for us to do". = consign, entrust.¹

19: *wench* = girl or maid; *wench* did not necessarily carry any negative connotation.

take...tree = climb or take a position up in a tree.

20: *ill fortune* = bad luck.

20-21: *O man in desperation* = a popular song of the late 16th century.

= "this is how things have turned out". = recite.

26 Three merry men, and three merry men,
 28 And three merry men be we;
 I in the wood, and thou on the ground,
 30 And Jack sleeps in the tree.

Fan. Hush! a dog in the wood, or a wooden dog! O

32 comfortable hearing! I had even as lief the
 34 chamberlain of the White Horse had called me up to
 bed.

36 **Frol.** Either hath this trotting cur gone out of his
 circuit, or else are we near some village, which should

38 not be far off, for I perceive the glimmering of a
 40 glow-worm, a candle, or a cat's eye, my life for a
 halfpenny!

42 *Enter Clunch, a Smith with a lantern and candle.*

44 In the name of my own father, be thou ox or ass that
 46 appearest, tell us what thou art.

Clunch. What am I? why, I am Clunch the smith.
 48 What are you? what make you in my territories at this
 time of the night?

50 **Antic.** What do we make, dost thou ask? why, we

52 make faces for fear; such as if thy mortal eyes could
 behold, would make thee water the long seams of thy
 54 side slops, smith.

56 **Frol.** And, in faith, sir, unless your hospitality do
 58 relieve us, we are like to wander, with a sorrowful
heigh-ho, among the owlets and hobgoblins of the
 forest. Good Vulcan, for Cupid's sake that hath

26-29: frequently mentioned old song; in Shakespeare's
Twelfth Night, Sir Toby Belch speaks the words "three
 merry men be we".

31: Fantastic hears a dog bark; he playfully puns as well:
wooden = dull or stupid,¹ though Dyce prefers "mad".

32: **comfortable hearing** = "what a reassuring thing to
 hear!" - but based on Fantastic's next line, this may be
 ironic.

32-34: **I had...to bed** = "I would just as much prefer,
 however, that the man in charge of the bedrooms (the
chamberlain) at the White Horse tavern had been inviting
 me to take a bed there for the night."

White Horse = common name for a tavern; the one on
 Friday Street in London was much frequented by our author
 George Peele.¹⁶

36-37: **Either...circuit** = "either this trotting dog has
 escaped from its enclosure (ie. and hence is lost too)".¹

trotting = the easy locomotion of a dog was frequently
 called a **trot**; indeed, the word **dogtrot** itself became popular
 in the 17th century.¹

cur = dog, usually used contemptuously.

38-40: **I perceive...cat's eye** = Frolic is confident he sees a
 light in the distance.

39: **glow-worm** = firefly.

39-40: **my life...halfpenny** = an expression of the
 confidence Frolic has in his vision, ie. "I bet my life to a
 halfpenny."

Entering Character: Clunch is an elderly blacksmith who
 lives in a cottage in the woods with his wife Madge. The
 word **clunch** came to be used to describe a clown.¹

= ie. "even if you are an".

= who.

= "what are you doing" or "what is your business";⁵ Clunch
 is genuinely surprised and concerned over the unexpected
 appearance of the three lost lads in the woods, and not, as the
 words might suggest, expressing hostility.

51-52: **What do...fear** = Antic puns on the word **make**;
 the phrase "to make a face", or "to make faces", first
 appeared in English letters in the early 16th century.¹

52-54: **such as...side slops** = "if you could see the terrified
 looks on our faces, you would urinate in your trousers".

side slops = long wide breeches or trousers.³

= truly.

= likely to keep wandering.

= sigh.¹

59: **Vulcan** = a form of address to the smith: **Vulcan** was the
 Roman blacksmith god.

60 cozened us all, befriend us as thou mayst; and
62 command us howsoever, wheresoever, whensoever, in
whatsoever, for ever and ever.

64 **Clunch.** Well, masters, it seems to me you have lost
66 your way in the wood: in consideration whereof, if you
will go with Clunch to his cottage, you shall have
68 houseroom and a good fire to sit by, although we have
no bedding to put you in.

70 **All.** O blessed smith, O bountiful Clunch!

72 **Clunch.** For your further entertainment, it shall be as
74 it may be, so and so.

[Hear a dog bark.]

76 Hark! this is Ball my dog, that bids you all welcome in
78 his own language: come, take heed for stumbling on
the threshold. – Open door, Madge; take in guests.

80
82 *Enter Madge, an Old Woman.*

84 **Madge.** Welcome, Clunch, and good fellows all, that
86 come with my good-man: for my good-man's sake,
come on, sit down: here is a piece of cheese, and a
pudding of my own making.

88 **Antic.** Thanks, gammer: a good example for the wives
90 of our town.

92 **Frol.** Gammer, thou and thy good-man sit lovingly
together; we come to chat, and not to eat

94 **Clunch.** Well, masters, if you will eat nothing, take
96 away. Come, what do we to pass away the time? – Lay
a crab in the fire to roast for lamb's-wool. – What,

98 shall we have a game at trump or ruff to drive away
the time? how say you?

100 **Fant.** This smith leads a life as merry as a king with

59-60: *for Cupid's sake...us all* = Cupid is the cherubic
god of love; Frolic names him as the cause of the lads'
predicament, in the sense that they are on their present
errand because the god has caused their master to fall in
love.

cozened = tricked, deceived.

60-62: *befriend...and ever* = briefly, "if you will help us,
we will do anything you ask us to do forever", ie. "we will
forever be in your debt." Gummere categorizes this line as a
parody of the sort of speech a wandering knight might make
on entering the territory of a giant or the like.

= sirs.

= Gummere notes the frequency with which characters refer
to themselves in the third person in plays of the era.

= generous.

= ie. "and so forth".

75: the audience is to understand that the characters have
reached Clunch's home.

= "listen!"

78-79: *take heed...threshold* = "be careful not to trip on
the threshold"; *threshold* is an ancient word from Old
English, referring to the stone or piece of timber at the
bottom of a doorway.¹ Whitworth notes it is bad luck to
stumble at the entrance.

Entering Characters: the blacksmith Clunch's wife **Madge**
enters the stage.

= "my husband".¹

= either a sausage or a sweet baked dish.¹

= a vocative expression: old woman, grandma.

91-92: Frolic basically asks Madge not to put herself to any
trouble on their account.

94-95: *take away* = "clear the table".¹

96: *crab* = crabapple.

lamb's wool = a popular drink comprised of the pulp
of roasted apples and ale.⁸

97: *trump or ruff* = names of popular card games, though
they may be one and the same.

drive away = pass, wile away.

= common simile of the period.

Madge his wife. Sirrah Frolic, I am sure thou art not

102 without some round or other: no doubt but Clunch can
bear his part.

104

106 **Frol.** Else think you me ill brought up: so set to it
when you will.

108 [They sing.]

110 SONG.

112 Whenas the rye reach to the chin,
114 And chopcherry, chopcherry ripe within,
116 Strawberries swimming in the cream,
118 And school-boys playing in the stream;
120 Then, O, then, O, then, O, my true-love said,
122 Till that time come again
124 She could not live a maid.

126 **Antic.** This sport does well; but methinks, gammer, a
merry winter's tale would drive away the time trimly:

128 come, I am sure you are not without a score.

130 **Fant.** I'faith, gammer, a tale of an hour long were as
good as an hour's sleep.

132 **Frol.** Look you, gammer, of the giant and the king's
daughter, and I know not what: I have seen the day,
when I was a little one, you might have drawn me a
mile after you with such a discourse.

134 **Madge.** Well, since you be so importunate, my good-
man shall fill the pot and get him to bed; they that ply
their work must keep good hours: one of you go lie

136 with him; he is a clean-skinned man I tell you, without
either spavin or windgall: so I am content to drive
away the time with an old wives' winter's tale.

138 **Fant.** No better hay in Devonshire; o' my word,

101: **Sirrah** = common familiar form of address.
I am sure...or other = "I am sure you know a song
we can sing."
round = a song in which singers sing in turn.

102-3: **no doubt...part** = Fantastic expresses confidence
that Clunch can sing his own part in a satisfactory manner.
Bullen and Gummere note that in this era, citizens of all
ranks were expected to be able to participate in a song with
multiple parts.

105-6: "if I did not, you would think I was not raised
properly; go ahead and start when you are ready."

= when. = a grain.
= a game in which one tries to catch a cherry suspended on
a string.¹

118: she could not stand to remain unmarried.

= ie. "this is great fun."
121: **winter's tale** = tale of fantasy; the expression predates
Shakespeare's play of the same name.
trimly = well, finely.
= ie. twenty such stories.

= truly.

127-8: **of the giant...daughter** = Frolic gives a generic
example of the type of story he is hoping to hear.
128-130: **I have seen...discourse** = Frolic recalls how in
his childhood, he was so enchanted by such tales, he
would have followed a moving story-teller for a mile to
keep listening.

132: **importunate** = insistent.
132-3: **good-man** = husband.
133: **fill the pot** = ie. with ale.
133-4: **they that...hours** = ie. "those who work hard
must keep regular hours", ie. get enough sleep.
134-5: **one of you...with him** = it was normal in this era for
individuals of the same sex to share a bed for the night.

135-6: **he is...windgall** = Madge assures the lads they
should have no fear of catching any untoward disease
from the old man.
clean-skinned = free from scabs or other skin-
conditions such as leprosy.
spavin or windgall = names for horse maladies, each
referring to a tumour or disease caused by a tumour in a
horse's leg.

139: I have found no other instances of this proverbial-

140	gammer, I'll be one of your audience.	sounding expression. <i>Devonshire</i> is noted for the fertility of its land. ¹⁶ Our author George Peele was believed to hail from a Devonshire family. ⁴
142	Frol. And I another, <u>that's flat</u> .	= ie. "that's settled." ¹
144	Antic. Then must I to bed with the good-man. – <i>Bona Nox</i> , gammer. – <u>God night</u> , Frolic.	144-5: <i>Bona nox</i> = Latin for "good night".
146	Clunch. Come on, my lad, thou shalt take thy	= a variation of <i>good night</i> which appears intermittently in this period.
148	<u>unnatural rest</u> with me.	= <i>unnatural</i> presumably because two men will sleep together in a single bed.
150	[<i>Exeunt Antic and the Smith.</i>]	150: we may note here that Madge, Frolic and Fantastic remain on stage for the entirety of the play; the actors who play Antic and Clunch are now freed to play other characters.
152	Frol. Yet this <u>vantage</u> shall we have <u>of</u> them in the morning, <u>to be ready at the sight thereof extempore</u> .	= advantage. = ie. over. = something like, "we will be ready (ie. dressed and ready) ¹ to move out at once (<i>extempore</i>) ¹ at the sight (ie. moment) of dawn."
154	Madge. Now this <u>bargain</u> , my masters, must I make	155-7: Madge wants her audience of two to at least grunt every once in a while as she tells her tale to show her they have not fallen asleep.
156	with you, that you will say "hum" and "ha" to my tale, so shall I know you are awake.	<i>bargain</i> = deal.
158	Both. <u>Content</u> , gammer, that will we do.	= "ok".
160	Madge. <u>Once upon a time</u> , there was a king, or a lord,	= here is the earliest appearance in English literature of this still common formula used to open a story (though other permutations, such as <i>once on a time</i> and <i>once upon a day</i> had appeared earlier).
162	or a duke, that had a <u>fair</u> daughter, the fairest that ever was; <u>as white as snow and as red as blood</u> : and once	= beautiful. = <i>white</i> and <i>red</i> were frequently paired in describing a woman's beauty; pale skin was considered to be most attractive in this period, and <i>red</i> refers to a healthy ruddy hue.
164	upon a time his daughter was <u>stolen away</u> : and he sent all his men to seek out his daughter; and he sent so	= kidnapped.
166	long, that he sent all his men out of his land.	165-6: <i>he sent so long</i> = ie. "he sent out men to find his daughter over such a long period of time".
168	Frol. Who <u>dress</u> his dinner, then?	= prepared.
170	Madge. Nay, either hear my tale, or <u>kiss my tail</u> .	= Madge puns on <i>tale</i> and <i>tail</i> ; this expression first appeared in the 16th century's earlier comedy <i>Gammer Gurton's Needle</i> . Variants, including <i>kiss my behind</i> (and <i>ar*e</i> and <i>a*s</i>) came later.
172	Fant. Well said! on with your tale, gammer.	
174	Madge. O Lord, I quite forgot! there was a <u>conjurer</u> ,	= sorcerer or wizard.
176	and this conjurer could do anything, and he turned himself into a great dragon, and carried the king's	
178	daughter away in his mouth to a castle that he made of stone; and there he kept her I know not how long, till at last all the king's men went out so long that her two	

180 brothers went to seek her. O, I forget! she (he, I would
say), turned a proper young man to a bear in the night,
182 and a man in the day, and keeps by a cross that parts

three several ways; and he made his lady run mad, –
184 Gods me bones, who comes here?

SCENE II.

A Cross-road in England.

Enter the Two Brothers.

1 **Frol.** Soft, gammer, here some come to tell your tale
2 for you.

4 **Fant.** Let them alone; let us hear what they will say.

6 **1st Broth.** Upon these chalky cliffs of Albion

We are arrivèd now with tedious toil;

8 And compassing the wide world round about,

To seek our sister, seek fair Delia forth,
10 Yet cannot we so much as hear of her.

12 **2nd Broth.** O fortune cruèl, cruèl and unkind!
Unkind in that we cannot find our sister,
14 Our sister, hapless in her cruèl chance. –
Soft! who have we here?
16

Enter Erestus at the cross, stooping to gather.

180-1: (**he...say**) = "no, I mean *he*".
= handsome. = into.

182: **a man** = ie. into an old man.

keeps = ie. "he dwells".¹

182-3: **cross...ways** = ie. three-way intersection,
marked by an actual cross.

= ie. the sorcerer. = ie. the sweetheart of the man whom the
sorcerer turned into a part-time bear.

= typical Elizabethan oath, "by God's bones".

The Play's Scenes: the original edition of *The Old Wives' Tale* was not broken up into Acts or Scenes; for ease of reading, the editor has provided suggested scene breaks.

Entering Characters: here begins Peele's "play within a play", as Madge's story gets acted out in front of the old lady and her auditors; the **Two Brothers** are princes, sons of the king whose daughter was kidnapped by the sorcerer described by Madge. Named **Calypha** and **Thelea**, the young men are searching for their sister.

= "wait a moment".

6ff: unlike the low-brow rustics and pages in the cottage, who only speak in prose, the characters of the fairy tale will frequently speak in verse whenever they employ loftier language.

These chalky...Albion = **Albion** was the earliest name for the island of Great Britain¹⁶ (today comprising England, Scotland and Wales). The **chalky cliffs** are the White Cliffs of Dover.

= painstaking effort.

= circling; as will become clear, the princes, and in fact most of the characters, are originally from the Greek district of Thessaly, so that they have indeed travelled widely to find their sister, named Delia.

= **Delia** is stressed on the first syllable; it is sometimes pronounced with two, and sometimes with three, syllables: *DE-lya* or *DE-li-a*.

= unfortunate. = very bad luck.

= "hold on!"

Entering Character: Erestus is the young man whom the sorcerer has caused to turn into a bear at night and an old man during the day, and who lives at the intersection marked

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44

Ist Broth. Now, father, God be your speed! what do you gather there?

Erest. Hips and haws, and sticks and straws, and things that I gather on the ground, my son.

Ist Broth. Hips and haws, and sticks and straws! why, is that all your food, father?

Erest. Yea, son.

2nd Broth. Father, here is an alms-penny for me; and if I speed in that I go for, I will give thee as good a gown of grey as ever thou didst wear.

Ist Broth. And, father, here is another alms-penny for me; and if I speed in my journey, I will give thee a palmer's staff of ivory, and a scallop-shell of beaten gold.

Erest. Was she fair?

2nd Broth. Ay, the fairest for white, and the purest for red, as the blood of the deer, or the driven snow.

Erest. Then hark well, and mark well, my old spell: –

by a cross during the day.

Erestus is gathering whatever roots and herbs he can find for food; impoverished characters can frequently be found in Elizabethan drama digging up vegetable or other plant roots to eat.

Erestus is actually identified as *Senex* here, and only here, in the original edition.

= common variation for "God speed", an expression of good wishes.

= the fruit of the rose and hawthorn respectively; the two words *hips* and *haws* were frequently paired in old literature.¹

We may note that Erestus has somehow, in the process of being transformed into both an old man and a bear, gained the powers of prophecy; and as such, has a penchant for speaking in minor rhymes, e.g. *haws* and *straws*.

= a penny given as an act of charity.

= ie. "am successful in (finding) that which".

= traditional habit of a pilgrim.⁷

36: the 1st Brother promises gifts associated with a pilgrim.

Palmer's staff = a *palmer* was a pilgrim who made the long journey to Jerusalem, so-called because of the palm leaf or branch such a pilgrim traditionally carried.

scallop-shell = carried as a badge by a pilgrim; the OED notes that the tradition arose from those pilgrims who, having visited the Shrine of St. James of Compostela in Galicia in north-west Spain, picked up such a shell (which is the symbol of St. James) from the shore there and returned home with it.¹

39: Gummere notes that as an oracle, it is natural that Erestus would know the purpose of the brothers' mission.

41-42: note the reversal of associations: the *blood*, mentioned before the *snow*, is compared to the *red*, which is mentioned after the *white*.

The association of *red* with *purity* might seem odd, but the reference here may be to unalloyed gold, which turns *red*, and hence proves itself *pure*, when it is heated.¹

The simile of *white* with *driven snow* seems to have appeared in English letters first in 1566, in a translation of *Lamentations*.

44: *hark* and *mark* are basically synonyms for "listen closely".

my = ie. "to my".

spell = ie. prophecy.

	Be not afraid of every stranger;	45-52: note the rhyming couplets and iambic tetrameter (four pairs of beats, or iambs, compared to the five of iambic pentameter) of Erestus' spell.
46	<u>Start not aside</u> at every danger;	= ie. "do not shy away from"; the phrase <i>start aside</i> was a common one describing one who steers clear from danger or something frightening. ¹
48	Things that seem are not the same: Blow a <u>blast</u> at every flame; For when one flame of fire goes out, 50 Then come your wishes well about: If any ask who told you this good, 52 Say, the <u>white bear</u> of England's wood.	= breath. = interestingly, the original name for a polar bear, in use since the 14th century; <i>polar bear</i> doesn't appear until the mid-17th century. ¹
54	1st Broth. Brother, heard you not what the old man said? Be not afraid of every stranger; 56 Start not aside for every danger; Things that seem are not the same; 58 Blow a blast at every flame; [For when one flame of fire goes out. 60 Then come your wishes well about:] If any ask who told you this good, 62 Say, the white bear of England's wood.	55-62: Gummere notes that it would be normal to repeat such a solemn and important spell. 59-60: the original edition of the play, accidentally or not, omits the final two lines of the spell in the 1st Brother's speech.
64	2nd Broth. Well, if this do us any good, <u>Well fare</u> the white bear of England's wood! 66 [<i>Exeunt the Two Brothers.</i>]	= ie. fare well; <i>fare</i> may be disyllabic for the sake of the meter: <i>FAY-er</i> . ³
68	Erest. Now sit thee here, and tell a <u>heavy</u> tale, 70 <u>Sad</u> in thy mood, and <u>sober</u> in thy cheer:	69f: Erestus talks to himself. <i>heavy</i> = distressing, grave. ¹ 70: <i>Sad</i> = serious. <i>sober in thy cheer</i> = certainly meaning "serious in your demeanor", but could also mean "moderate in your consumption of food".
72	Here sit thee now, and to thyself relate The hard <u>mishap</u> of thy most wretched state.	258-275: note that Erestus' story is related partially in rhyming couplets, while sometimes a rhyme is found in every other line, and some lines stand unrhymed at all. = misfortune. ²
74	In <u>Thessaly</u> I lived in sweet content, Until that fortune <u>wrought my overthrow</u> ;	= an ancient region of Greece, notorious for the witchcraft which thrived and poisonous herbs and drugs which grew there. ¹⁶ = "worked my ruin."
76	For there I <u>wedded</u> was unto a dame, That lived in honour, virtue, love, and fame. 78 But Sacrapant, that cursèd sorcerer, Being besotted with my beauteous love. My dearest love, my true betrothèd wife, 80 Did seek the means to rid me of my life. But worse than this, he with his <u>chanting</u> spells	= actually, Erestus is only engaged to be married; such minor internal inconsistencies were common in Elizabethan drama, though here we can perhaps blame Madge for unintentionally forgetting such occasional details as she tells her story.
		= may or may not be short for <i>enchanting</i> . ^{3,6}

<p>82 84 86</p>	<p>Did turn me straight unto an ugly bear; And when the sun doth settle in the west. Then I begin to <u>don</u> my ugly hide: And all the day I sit, as now you see, And <u>speaking in riddles, all inspired with rage,</u></p>	<p>83-84: he turns into a bear at sunset. = wear, put on. 86: <i>speaking in riddles</i> = like those spoken by the oracles of ancient Greece, Erestus' prophecies are usually highly ambiguous in meaning. <i>all inspired with rage</i> = ie. divinely inspired with prophetic ability.¹</p>
<p>88 90</p>	<p>Seeming an old and miserable man, And yet I am <u>in April of my age.</u> <i>Enter Venelia his lady mad; and goes in again.</i></p>	<p>= ie. "(actually) a young man." Entering Character: Venelia is poor Erestus' fiancée, whom the sorcerer has caused to go mad: she enters, then exits the stage, after passing by but not recognizing Erestus.</p>
<p>92 94 96</p>	<p>See where Venelia, my betrothèd love, <u>Runs madding</u>, all enraged, about the woods, All by his cursèd and enchanting spells. – But here comes Lampriscus, my discontented neighbour. <i>Enter Lampriscus with a pot of honey.</i></p>	<p>= acting in a mad or frenzied manner; the OED files this use of <i>madding</i> as a verb. Entering Character: Lampriscus is identified a little later by Madge as a beggar who lives on the green.</p>
<p>98 100</p>	<p>How now, neighbour! you look toward the ground as well as I: you muse on something.</p>	<p>99-100: <i>you look...as I</i> = except that Erestus is looking down to find food, while Lampriscus stares at the ground in either sorrow or deep thought.</p>
<p>102 104 106 108</p>	<p>Lamp. Neighbour, on nothing but on the matter I <u>so often moved to you</u>: if you do anything for charity, help me; if for neighbourhood or brotherhood, help me: never was one <u>so cumbered</u> as is poor Lampriscus; and to begin, <u>I pray receive</u> this pot of honey, to <u>mend</u> your fare.</p>	<p>= ie. "have previously appealed to you regarding." = encumbered, burdened. = "please accept". = supplement; Lampriscus hopes that in return for this gift, Erestus will be more willing to help him with his problem.</p>
<p>110 112</p>	<p>Erest. Thanks, neighbour, set it down; honey is always welcome to the bear. And now, neighbour, let me hear the cause of your coming.</p>	
<p>114 116</p>	<p>Lamp. I am, as you know, neighbour, a man unmarried, and lived so unquietly with my two wives, that I keep every year holy the day wherein I buried them both: the first was on <u>Saint Andrew's day</u>, the</p>	<p>= ie. November 30: <i>St. Andrew</i> was thought to bring good luck to lovers.⁵</p>
	<p>other on <u>Saint Luke's</u>.</p>	<p>= ie. October 18, a day thought to be favourable for those who wished to learn of their future spouses: if a seeker of love applied a certain concoction to one's face, and recited a specific formula, one would dream of one's future love. Bullen notes that the Horn Fair was also held on this day, as <i>St. Luke</i> was jestingly considered the patron saint of cuckolds (horns were said to grow on the foreheads of husbands whose wives cheated on them), making this, perhaps, an even more poignant day for Lampriscus. The 1886 <i>Glossaries of South-West Lincolnshire, Kent and Berkshire</i> confirms such a fair was held on October 18 in Charlton in Kent, and the fair included a tradition of a riotous mob marching in a procession from Cuckold's Point,</p>

118	Erest. And now, neighbour, <u>you of this country</u> say,	wearing horns on their heads, and some of the men even dressing as women.
120	<u>your custom is out.</u> But on with your tale, neighbour.	= ie. "as you". = ie. England; despite Lampriscus' non-English name, Erestus' comment suggests he is a native of the island. = ie. "your obligation to me is paid;" custom referred to a regular payment of money or in kind by a feudal tenant to a landowner. ¹
122	Lamp. By my first wife, whose tongue wearied me	
124	alive, and sounded in my ears like the clapper of a	
126	great bell, whose talk was a continual torment to all	
128	that dwelt by her or lived <u>nigh</u> her, you have heard me	= near.
130	say I had a <u>handsome</u> daughter.	= attractive.
132	Erest. True, neighbour.	
134	Lamp. <u>She</u> it is that afflicts me with her continual	130: ie. Lampriscus' beautiful, but shrewish daughter by his first wife.
136	clamours, and hangs on me like a bur: poor she is, and	
138	proud she is; <u>as poor as a sheep new-shorn</u> , and as	= proverbial, perhaps newly-so.
140	proud of her hopes as a peacock of her tail well-grown.	132: the peacock has ever been proverbial for its pride .
142	Erest. Well said, Lampriscus! you speak it like an	135-6: this speech of Erestus' hints that Lampriscus might be another transplant from Greece after all.
144	Englishman.	= shrewish, quarrelsome. ² = stubborn.
146	Lamp. As <u>curst</u> as a wasp, and as <u>froward</u> as a child	
148	new-taken from the mother's teat; she is to my age,	140: she is...teeth = that is, highly disagreeable! Lampriscus quotes from Proverbs 10:26: " <i>As vinegar is to the teeth, as smoke is unto the eyes</i> " (all Biblical quotes in this play are from the <i>Bishop's Bible</i> of 1568).
150	as smoke to the eyes, or as vinegar to the teeth.	= Erestus, with gentle irony, indirectly acknowledges Lampriscus' quote from scripture.
152	Erest. <u>Holily praised</u> , neighbour. As much for the	145-6: hard-favoured...ill-faced = a collection of synonyms, all meaning "ugly".
154	next.	
156	Lamp. By my other wife I had a daughter so hard-	146-8: a grove...deformity = even if Lampriscus was able to provide untold wealth as a dowry to a prospective husband, his second daughter would still not find anyone to marry her because of her wretched looks.
158	favoured, so foul, and ill-faced, that I think a grove full	151: well = spring or water-hole. water of life = water possessing supernatural powers: the phrase water of life comes from Revelations 21:6 (" <i>I will give him unto him that is a thirst of the well of the water of life freely</i> ") and 22:1 (" <i>And he shewed me a pure river of water of life</i> "), and refers to eternal life in Christ.
160	of golden trees, and the leaves of rubies and diamonds,	
162	would not be a dowry answerable to her deformity.	155: "a thousand times farewell" (Dyce).
164	Erest. Well, neighbour, now you have spoke, hear me	157: Whitworth suggests that Erestus may not leave the stage, but just withdraw into the background as he keeps by the cross.
166	speak: send them to the <u>well</u> for the <u>water of life</u> ; there	= advice.
168	shall they find their fortunes unlooked for. Neighbour,	
170	farewell.	
172	Lamp. Farewell, and a thousand.	
174		
176	[<i>Exit Erestus.</i>]	
178		
180	And now goeth poor Lampriscus to put in execution	
182	this excellent <u>counsel</u> .	

SCENE III.

1 **Frol.** Why, this goes round without a fiddling-stick:
2 but, do you hear, gammer, was this the man that was a
bear in the night and a man in the day?

4
6 **Madge.** Ay, this is he! and this man that came to him
was a beggar, and dwelt upon a green. But soft! who
8 come here? O, these are the harvest-men; ten to one
they sing a song of mowing.

10 *Enter the Harvest-men a-singing,
with this song double repeated.*

Harvest-Men.

14 *All ye that lovely lovers be,
Pray you for me:
16 Lo, here we come a-sowing, a-sowing,
And sow sweet fruits of love;
18 In your sweet hearts well may it prove!*

20 [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

The Cross.

*Enter Huanebango with his two-hand sword,
and Corebus the Clown.*

1: the story is moving along nicely, even without musical accompaniment (Whitworth, p. 231).

ie. Lampriscus.

= reapers.¹

= cutting the grain, as with a scythe.¹

Scene IV: it appears that this scene contains numerous allusions to an intense feud which raged in the early 1590's between the playwright Thomas Nashe and poet Gabriel Harvey; the scene and its many specific references to the harsh words that passed between the two authors is discussed in detail at the following site: www.anonymous-shakespeare.com/cms/index.248.0.1.html.

In the interest of not burdening the reader with the minutia of these allusions, we have chosen to mostly omit their discussion.

Entering Characters: **Huanebango** is a mock-errant, or wandering, knight, of the type the Spanish author Cervantes would make famous in his *Don Quixote* about a decade later; Huanebango's Spanish-sounding name is symbolic of the contempt the English held of all things Spanish during the reign of Elizabeth, especially in light of the fact that the English had destroyed the invading Spanish armada so recently (1588).

Huanebango carries a *two-handed sword*, a large unwieldy instrument that had long been out of date by the late 16th century - another clue to the parodical nature of this character.

Corebus is a country bumpkin (**clown**), who appears also to have visions of acting the errant-knight. **Corebus** was the name of the first victor in the first Olympic games.

We note that the original edition refers to Corebus sometimes as **Booby**; we will stick with **Corebus**.

1 **Fant.** Gammer, what is he?
2
3 **Madge.** O, this is one that is going to the conjurer: let
4 him alone, hear what he says.
5
6 **Huan.** Now, by Mars and Mercury, Jupiter and

7
8 Janus, Sol and Saturnus, Venus and Vesta, Pallas and
Proserpina, and by the honour of my house,
Polimackeroeplacydus, it is a wonder to see what this

9
10 love will make silly fellows adventure, even in the
wane of their wits and infancy of their discretion. Alas,

11
12 my friend! what fortune calls thee forth to seek thy
fortune among brazen gates, enchanted towers, fire
13 and brimstone, thunder and lightning? [Her] beauty, I
14 tell thee, is peerless, and she precious whom thou
15 affectest. Do off these desires, good countryman: good
16 friend, run away from thyself; and, so soon as thou
17 canst, forget her, whom none must inherit but he that
18 can monsters tame, labours achieve, riddles absolve,

19
20 loose enchantments, murder magic, and kill conjuring,
– and that is the great and mighty Huanebango.
21
22

= who, referring to Huanebango.

6-8: with an exaggerated oath, Huanebango swears on a multiplicity of Roman gods. Note how he alliteratively pairs the deities.

Mars and Mercury = god of war and the messenger god.

Jupiter and Janus = king of the gods and the two-faced god of doorways.

Sol = the god of the sun, sometimes identified with Apollo.

Saturnus = an ancient king of Italy, often identified with the Greek god Cronus, the father of the Olympian gods.

Venus and Vesta = goddesses of beauty and the hearth.

Pallas = alternate name for Minerva, goddess of wisdom and war.

Proserpina = goddess of vegetation.

= ie. family, ancestry.

= our knight's family name is even more ridiculous than his given name; Whitworth observes that this name is a close adaptation of a name that actually appears in the ancient Roman dramatist Plautus' play *Pseudolus*,

Polymachaeroplages. This mouthful of a name appears to be a compound of three Greek words, meaning roughly "the son of many blows with a sword."¹⁷ See the note at lines 43-46 below for additional discussion of this name.

9-10: **what this...adventure** = "what love will cause foolish (*silly*) men to risk to do"; while it is possible that Huanebango is addressing himself in this speech, it seems more likely he is admonishing Corebus, who apparently has arrived also planning to try to rescue Delia from the sorcerer.

10: **adventure** = risk.

10-11: **even...discretion** = even in the decline of their intelligences and immaturity of their judgment."

The style of Huanebango's speech is reminiscent of the manner of writing, popularized by the playwright John Lyly in the 1580's, known as **euphuism**, which was characterized by the heavy use of parallel phrases and alliteration.

= brass.

= added by Dyce.

= without equal.

= lovest. = do away with, dispense with.

= ie. "she whom". = take possession of.

19: **labours achieve** = great deeds were often performed by errant-knights for their ladies; fairy tales generally also featured noble acts performed by the hero.

absolve = solve.

20: **loose** = ie. remove, free a person from.

murder = ie. put an end to one's ability to use.

24 **Core.** Hark you, sir, hark you. First know I have here
the flurting feather, and have given the parish the start
for the long stock: now, sir, if it be no more but

26 running through a little lightning and thunder, and
"riddle me, riddle me what's this?" I'll have the wench

28 from the conjurer, if he were ten conjurers.

30 **Huan.** I have abandoned the court and honourable
company, to do my devoir against this sore sorcerer

32 and mighty magician: if this lady be so fair as she is
said to be, she is mine, she is mine; meus, mea, meum,

34 *in contemptum omnium grammaticorum.*

36 **Core.** *O falsum Latinum!*

38 The fair maid is minum,
Cum apurtinantibus gibletis and all.

40 **Huan.** If she be mine, as I assure myself the heavens
will do somewhat to reward my worthiness, she shall
42 be allied to none of the meanest gods, but be invested

44 in the most famous stock of Huanebango
Polimackeroeplacydus my grandfather; my father
Pergopolineo; my mother Dionora de Sardinia,
46 famously descended.

23ff: Corebus' earthy and humorous responses and decidedly
less-exalted language are the perfect foils for the inflated
language of the self-aggrandizing Huanebango.

Hark you = "listen up".

23-25: **I have...stock** = a difficult passage; the best
interpretation suggested by past editors is that Corebus is
showing off elements of his dress, as a way to demonstrate
his equal status to Huanebango. He first points to a
decorative feather on his hat, which he describes as **flurting**,
which while not clearly defined in this context in the OED,
may mean "erect" or "flaunting", based on a mid-17th
century citation; then he gestures toward his **stockings**,
which are fashionably fastened high above the knees.⁴

In saying he has **given the parish the start**, Corebus
means he has run away from his parish; Elizabethan laws
proscribing vagabondage give this act significance. Another
editor hence suggests that Corebus is actually daring parish
officials to catch him if they can and put him into stocks.⁴

Bullen has a different take, suggesting that Corebus is
saying "I have been the first beau in the parish to adopt the
long stocking of the town-gallants."

Dyce, finally, wonders if by **stock** Peele means "sword",
so that Corebus is saying, "I have left the parish for the long-
sword", ie. to become a knight-errant.

27: **riddle...what's this** = Gummere notes that the solving
of riddles to win a bride or fortune or the like is common
in folk-tales.

have = take, ie. rescue.
= ie. even if.

31: **do my devoir** = "do my duty" or "take on this task".¹
sore = troublesome, severe;¹ note the wordplay of
sore sorcerer.

= the knight lists the masculine, feminine and neutral Latin
forms of **my**, as if he is reciting from a Latin grammar
book.

= in contempt of all grammar.

36: "oh, false Latin!"

37: faux, and mocking, Latin for **mine**.

= "with its appurtenances". = mock Latin for **giblets**,
ie. guts.

= something.

= "not even the least of the".

43-46: Huanebango exalts his family; Dyce notes that Peele
is likely satirizing the lengthy character names used by
Plautus in his comedy *Miles Gloriosus*, e.g. Pyrgopolynices
and Periplectomenus, but he seems to have missed the fact,
as Whitworth points out, that the name of Huanebango's
father, **Pergopolineo**, is actually an adaptation of
Pyrgopolynices; the latter was the name of the boastful
soldier in *Miles Gloriosus*.

stock = progenitor of a family line.¹

A fascinating theory by 19th century drama scholar

48 **Core.** Do you hear, sir? had not you a cousin that was
called Gusteceridis?

50
52 **Huan.** Indeed, I had a cousin that sometime followed
the court infortunately, and his name

54 Bustegusteceridis.

56 **Core.** O lord, I know him well! he is the knight of the
neat's-feet.

58 **Huan.** O, he loved no capon better! he hath often-
times deceived his boy of his dinner; that was his fault,
60 good Bustegusteceridis.

62 **Core.** Come, shall we go along?

64 *Enter Erestus at the Cross.*

66 Soft! here is an old man at the cross: let us ask him the
way thither. – Ho, you gaffer! I pray you tell where the
68 wise man the conjurer dwells.

70 **Huan.** Where that earthly goddess keepeth her abode,
the commander of my thoughts, and fair mistress of
72 my heart.

74 **Erest.** Fair enough, and far enough from thy
fingering, son.

76

78 **Huan.** I will follow my fortune after mine own fancy,
and do according to mine own discretion.

80 **Erest.** Yet give something to an old man before you
go.

82

84 **Huan.** Father, methinks a piece of this cake might
serve your turn.

Frederick Fleay (as described by Gummere) suggests these names were designed to satirize the lowly background of poet and author Gabriel Harvey (supposedly a favourite sport of his enemies), and specifically to mock Harvey's father for being a mere rope-maker: hence, the names may be understood to read as Grecianized versions of "Polly-make-a-rope-lass" and "Perg-up-a-line-O".

Having shared Fleay's theory, Gummere lets his readers know he himself is not convinced, with this single comment: "Fleay is bold."

Dionora de Sardinia = another invented name by Peele.

= common variation of *unfortunately*, meaning "without luck".

= this name of the knight's kin includes elements of *bust*, meaning "container", and *gust*, referring to the sense of taste;¹ the name suggests that this gentleman was a notorious glutton, as the succeeding discussion confirms.

A modern reader might sense the modern phrase "bust a gut" in the name, but the OED suggests the word *bust* did not gain its meaning of "burst" for another half-century.

= a popular food, the heel of a cow or ox.¹

= castrated cock, another popular food.¹

59: *deceived...dinner* = ie. tricked his servant boy out of his dinner.

fault = weakness, defect.

= to there, ie. Sacrapant's castle. = grandfather. = please.
= term for a magician or wizard.¹

70-72: Huanebango describes Delia.

74-75: ie. "she is truly beautiful enough, and far away enough from your ability to capture her, sonny."

Note the exceptional alliteration in this line, which is continued by Huanebango in the next line, as well as the wordplay of *fair enough* and *far enough*.

fingering = pilfering, laying one's hands on.^{1,2}

= act.

83-84: Huanebango contemptuously gestures to some sweetened bread carried by Corebus.

turn = purpose or need.

86 *Erest.* Yea, son.

88 *Huan.* Huanebango giveth no cakes for alms: ask of
 them that give gifts for poor beggars. – Fair lady, if
 90 thou wert once shrined in this bosom, I would buckler
 thee haratantara.

92

[Exit.]

94

96 *Core.* Father, do you see this man? you little think
 he'll run a mile or two for such a cake, or pass for a
 pudding. I tell you, father, he has kept such a begging
 98 of me for a piece of this cake! Whooh! he comes upon
 me with "a superfantial substance, and the foison of
 100 the earth," that I know not what he means. If he came
 to me thus, and said, "My friend Corebus," or so, why,
 102 I could spare him a piece with all my heart; but when
 he tells me how God hath enriched me above other
 104 fellows with a cake, why, he makes me blind and deaf
 at once. Yet, father, here is a piece of cake for you, as
 106 hard as the world goes.

[Gives cake.]

108

110 *Erest.* Thanks, son, but list to me;
 He shall be deaf when thou shalt not see.
 112 Farewell, my son: things may so hit,
 Thou mayst have wealth to mend thy wit.

114

116 *Core.* Farewell, father, farewell; for I must make haste
 after my two-hand sword that is gone before.

118

[Exeunt severally.]

88-89: This is not the response one would expect from a supposedly virtuous knight-errant.

89-91: *Fair lady...haratantara* = the knight apostrophizes to Delia as he turns his attention to his mission, saying roughly, "beautiful maiden, if you ever become enshrined in my heart, I will defend (*buckler*)¹ you to the death."

Fair lady = describes, and sometimes used as a term of endearment as here for, a woman who is the object of one's love, especially in a chivalrous context.¹

haratantara = usually written *taratantara*, an imitative sound of a trumpet.¹

95-97: *you think...pudding* = Corebus notes that Huanebango seems to share the same passion for food as does his gluttonous relative: "you wouldn't believe that he actually would run a mile or two himself for a piece of cake, or that he cares for (*pass for* = care for) any such savoury desert."

99-100: *a superfantial...earth* = Corebus parodies the pompous and high-styled language of the knight.

superfantial = a made-up word; *fantial* itself is a nonsense word.

foison = plenty or abundance.³

100: "but if he were to come".

= the original edition has *Booby* written here; as mentioned earlier, we will, for the sake of consistency, stick strictly with *Corebus*.

104-5: *he makes...at once* = ie. Corebus instantly shuts out Huanebango's pleading for a piece of cake as soon as he begins speaking in his heroic manner.

105-6: *as hard...goes* = "cruel as the world is," or "hard as he times are."⁵

110-3: the short rhyming couplets of Erestus' speech are typical of those used as here for prophetic pronouncements.

list = listen.

= ie. turn out.

= "supplement or compensate for your (meager) intelligence."¹

= ie. hurry.

= ie. Huanebango. = "who has gone ahead."

118: the two men exit the stage in separate directions, Corebus presumably following in Huanebango's footsteps.

SCENE V.

Sacrapant's Castle.

Enter Sacrapant in his study.

Entering Character: we finally meet our play's villain, the sorcerer *Sacrapant*.

= sky. = Whitworth suggests *gray* means *blue*.
= sings, warbles.²

4: note the alliteration in the line.

= "was called Meroe"; *Meroe* was the name of a witch who appeared in the 2nd-century romance *Metamorphoses* (more commonly referred to as *The Golden Ass*), by the African-born Latin writer Apuleius.

= could mean "knowledge" or "magic". = "from her".

= kidnapped.

12: Sacrapant is in love with Delia; she, however, does not reciprocate his feelings.

13-15: Sacrapant is actually a very old man, but he has used his magic so as to appear to others as a handsome youth.

13: "and brought her here to give life back to the old man, ie. me."

= the sense seems to be "emotionally dead".

18: "but I may as well kiss my youthful looks goodbye": Sacrapant regrets that his appealing appearance does him no good, as Delia has not fallen in love with him.

= technically redundant, but common, expression, as *whence* alone means "from where".

Enter Delia with a pot in her hand.

Entering Character: *Delia* is the daughter of the king whom Sacrapant has kidnapped, and whose brothers, among others, are searching for her.

pot = pitcher.

= a legendary rock or mineral of great hardness.

1 **Sacr.** The day is clear, the welkin bright and gray,
2 The lark is merry and records her notes;
Each thing rejoiceth underneath the sky,
4 But only I, whom Heaven hath in hate,
Wretched and miserable Sacrapant.
6 In Thessaly was I born and brought up;
My mother Meroe hight, a famous witch,

8 And by her cunning I of her did learn
To change and alter shapes of mortal men.
10 There did I turn myself into a dragon,
And stole away the daughter to the king,
12 Fair Delia, the mistress of my heart;

And brought her hither to revive the man,

14 That seemeth young and pleasant to behold,
And yet is agèd, crookèd, weak, and numb.
16 Thus by enchanting spells I do deceive
Those that behold and look upon my face;
18 But well may I bid youthful years adieu.

See where she comes from whence my sorrows grow!

20

22

How now, fair Delia! where have you been?

24

26 **Delia.** At the foot of the rock for running water, and
gathering roots for your dinner, sir.

28 **Sacr.** Ah, Delia,
Fairer art thou than the running water.
30 Yet harder far than steel or adamant!

32 **Delia.** Will it please you to sit down, sir?

34 **Sacr.** Ay, Delia, sit and ask me what thou wilt,
Thou shalt have it brought into thy lap.

36

38	Delia. Then, I pray you, sir, let me have the best <u>meat</u> from the King of England's table, and the best wine in all France, brought in by the <u>veriest knave in all Spain</u> .	= roast beef, according to Gummere. = "greatest scoundrel in all of Spain"; as discussed earlier, relations between England and Spain were poor in these years; as Dyce points out, a particular sore point had been the discovery of Spanish involvement in the 1586 Babington Plot, a scheme to kill Elizabeth and replace her with the imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots. veriest = common superlative of the era, usually applied to a term of abuse; in Shakespeare we find veriest varlet , veriest shrew , and veriest hind .
40 42 44 46 48	Sacr. Delia, I am glad to see you so <u>pleasant</u> : Well, sit thee down. – Spread, table, spread; Meat, drink, and bread, Ever may I have What I ever crave, When I am spread: For meat for my black cock, And meat for my red.	= droll, in a good mood. 43-49: Sacrapant casts a spell; note the rhyme scheme of the spell, aabbaca . 48: most editors delete the first For . 48-49: Gummere notes that this incantation is "less uncanny than usual", as cocks of various colours held significance in various superstitions; indeed, a little research leads to the discovery that witches were typically believed to have black cocks as familiars (as well as black cats), that black cocks were used frequently in magical incantations, and that in Scotland, a formula for a cure for epilepsy included burying a live black cock; ¹⁴ another source describes a Scottish tradition of administering the blood of a red cock for medicinal purposes. ¹⁵
50	<i>Enter a Friar with a <u>chine</u> of beef and a pot of wine.</i>	= section or joint. ²
52	Here, Delia, will ye <u>fall to</u> ?	= ie. begin eating.
54	Delia. Is this the best meat in England?	
56	Sacr. Yea.	
58	Delia. What is it?	
60	Sacr. A chine of English beef, meat for a king and a king's followers.	
62	Delia. Is this the best wine in France?	
64	Sacr. Yea.	
66	Delia. What wine is it?	
70	Sacr. A cup of <u>neat</u> wine of <u>Orleans</u> , that never came near the brewers in England.	70: neat = undiluted. ¹ Orleans = a number of plays of the era reference this fine wine-growing region. ¹⁶
72		that never...England = Whitworth explains that brewers were dealers in wine who diluted it before they sold it (p. 238), though the OED does not support such a meaning.
74	Delia. Is this the veriest knave in all Spain?	
	Sacr. Yea.	

76	Delia. What, is he a friar?	
78		
80	Sacr. Yea, a friar <u>indefinite</u> , and a knave <u>infinite</u> .	79: <i>indefinite</i> = unclear meaning; Whitworth proposes "belonging to no particular order". <i>infinite</i> = ie. of boundless degree. We may note that hatred and mockery of Catholics was also encouraged during the reign of Elizabeth.
		= who. = double superlatives were common and acceptable.
82	Delia. Then, I pray ye, Sir Friar, tell me before you go, <u>which</u> is the <u>most greediest</u> Englishman?	= money-lender; these were understood to be Jewish.
84	Friar. The miserable and most covetous <u>usurer</u> .	86: ie. "maintain that opinion".
86	Sacr. Hold thee there, friar.	
88		
90		
92		
94		
96		
98		
100	1st Broth. Brother, was not that Delia did appear,	100-6: the two brothers converse briefly in rhyming couplets. = ghost.
102	Or was it but her <u>shadow</u> that was here?	
104	2nd Broth. Sister, where art thou? Delia, come again!	104: referring to himself.
106	<u>He calls</u> , that of thy absence doth complain. – Call out, Calypha, that she may hear, And cry aloud, for Delia is near.	105: Calypha is stressed on its second syllable - <i>ca-LY-pha</i> ; Dyce suggests adding a word such as "call" after <i>Calypha</i> to repair the line's meter.
108	Echo. Near.	108-116: an off-stage echo is heard which repeats the last word spoken by either of the brothers.
110	1st Broth. Near! O, where? hast thou any <u>tidings</u> ?	= news; the brothers respond to the echo under the belief that it is a real person answering them.
112	Echo. Tidings.	
114	2nd Broth. Which way is Delia, then? or that, or this?	
116	Echo. This.	
118	1st Broth. And may we safely come where Delia is?	
120	Echo. Yes.	
122	2nd Broth. Brother, remember you the white bear of England's wood? "Start not aside for every danger, Be not afeard of every stranger; Things that seem are not the same."	123-4: the 2nd Brother does not exactly repeat Erestus' admonishment: the original prophecy had <i>at</i> instead of <i>for</i> , and <i>afraid</i> for <i>afeard</i> , and reverses the order of the first two lines.
124		
126	1st Broth. Brother,	
128	Why do we not, then, courageously enter?	
130	2nd Broth. Then, brother, draw thy sword and follow me.	

132	<i>Re-enter Sacrapant the Conjuror: it <u>lightens</u> and thunders; the Second Brother falls down.</i>	= ie. flashes lightning.
134	Ist Broth. What, brother, dost thou fall?	
136	Sacr. Ay, and thou too, Calypha.	
138	[<i>The First Brother falls down.</i>]	
140	<i>Adestes, daemones!</i>	141: "come, demons!" Latin was the traditional best language with which to communicate with spirits.
142	[<i>Enter Two Furies.</i>]	= ie. demons.
144	Away with them:	
146	Go carry them straight to Sacrapanto's <u>cell</u> , There in despair and torture <u>for to</u> dwell.	= private room or chamber. = ie. to.
148	[<i>Exeunt Furies with the Two Brothers.</i>]	149: the Furies carry out the unconscious brothers.
150	These are <u>Thenores'</u> sons of Thessaly, That come to seek Delia their sister forth:	151: as a magician, Sacrapant has no trouble recognizing Delia's brothers; Thenores is presumably the queen of their homeland.
152	But, with a potion I to her have given, My <u>arts</u> have made her to forget herself.	= magic.
154	[<i>He removes a <u>turf</u>, and shows a <u>light in a glass.</u>]</i>	156: turf = ie. a section or slab of grass-covered earth. light in a glass = a burning flame in a glass case; Gummere refers to this light as an example of what is known as a life-index , an external object whose condition can be used to judge the health or safety of a particular individual.
156	See here the thing which doth prolong my life, With this enchantment I do any thing; And <u>till this fade</u> , my <u>skill</u> shall <u>still</u> endure,	160: till this fade = ie. "so long as this this light does not go out". skill = magic, ie. any spell he casts. still = always, forever.
158	And <u>never none</u> shall break this little glass.	= double negatives were common and acceptable.
160	But she that's neither wife, widow, nor maid:	162: another prophecy: the only person who can possibly break the glass and put out the light (which would release any victims from Sacrapant's spells) is a woman who is neither a wife, widow, nor maid .
162	Then cheer thyself; this is thy destiny, Never to die but by a dead man's hand.	164: yet another prophecy.
164	[<i>Exit.</i>]	
166	SCENE VI. <i>The Cross.</i> <i>Enter Eumenides.</i>	Entering Character: yet another visitor from Greece: Eumenides is one more errant-knight, but he is the real thing.
1	Eum. Tell me, Time,	

2	Tell me, just Time, when shall I Delia see? When shall I see the <u>loadstar</u> of my life?	= ie. guiding star, meaning Delia.
4	When shall my wandering course end with her sight, Or I but view my hope, my heart's delight?	
6		
8	<i>Enter Erestus at the Cross.</i>	
10	Father, <u>God speed!</u> if you tell fortunes, I pray, good father, tell me mine.	= expression of good will.
12	Erest. Son, I do see in thy face	12-21: Erestus offers another prophecy, again in rhyming couplets.
14	Thy blessèd fortune <u>work apace</u> : I do perceive that thou hast <u>wit</u> ;	= approaching quickly.
16	<u>Beg of</u> thy fate to govern it, For wisdom governed by advice, Makes many fortunate and wise.	= catch-all word for intelligence and cleverness.
18	Bestow thy alms, give more than all, Till dead men's bones come at thy call.	= "ask".
20	Farewell, my son: dream of no rest, Till thou repent that thou didst best.	18: Erestus advises Eumenides to give all he has to the poor. 19: the meaning of this ominous-sounding prediction will become clear in Scene X.
22		
24	[<i>Exit.</i>]	
26	Eum. This man hath left me <u>in a labyrinth</u> : He <u>biddeth</u> me give more than all, Till dead men's bones come at my call;	= figurative for "in a state of perplexity".
28	He biddeth me dream of no rest, Till I repent that I do best.	= instructs.
30		
32	[<i>Lies down and sleeps.</i>]	31: Eumenides has immediately forgotten or ignores Erestus' admonition to <i>dream of no rest!</i>
34	<i>Enter Wiggen, Corebus, Churchwarden, and Sexton.</i>	Entering Characters: <i>Wiggen's</i> friend Jack has just died, and he is angrily trying to convince the unwilling Churchwarden and Sexton that they should bury him. We note that the Churchwarden has been rather pointlessly given the full name of Steeven Loach . The sexton is the officer of the church responsible for digging graves and ringing the bells. The churchwarden is an elected lay officer who is responsible generally for the maintenance of the church grounds and buildings.
36	Wigg. You may be ashamed, you whoreson <u>scald</u> Sexton and Churchwarden, if you had any shame in those shameless faces of yours, to let a poor man lie so long above ground unburied. A rot on you all, that have no more compassion of a good fellow when he is gone!	= vile, contemptible; ² Bullen suggest "scabby".
38		
40		
42	Church. What, would you have us to bury him, and to <u>answer it ourselves</u> to the parish?	= ie. assume the costs of the burial.
44	Sext. Parish me no parishes; pay me my fees, and let	45-46: pay me...accounts = the Sexton only wants his fees, but otherwise doesn't care if the parish bears the other costs of the funeral. ⁷
46	the rest run on in the quarter's accounts, and put it	

down for one of your good deeds, o' God's name! for I
 48 am not one that curiously stands upon merits.
 50 **Core.** You whoreson, sodden-headed sheep's face,

shall a good fellow do less service and more honesty

52 to the parish, and will you not, when he is dead, let
 him have Christmas burial?

54 **Wigg.** Peace, Corebus! as sure as Jack was Jack, the
 56 frolic'st franion amongst you, and I, Wiggen, his sweet
sworn brother. Jack shall have his funerals, or some of

58 them shall lie on God's dear earth for it, that's once.

60 **Church.** Wiggen, I hope thou wilt do no more than
 thou darrest answer.

62 **Wigg.** Sir, sir, dare or dare not, more or less, answer
 64 or not answer, do this, or have this.

66 [Wiggen sets upon the parish with a pike-staff.]

68 **Sext.** Help, help, help!
 70 [Eumenides awakes and comes to them.]

72 **Eum.** Hold thy hands, good fellow.

74 **Core.** Can you blame him, sir, if he take Jack's part
 against this shake-rotten parish that will not bury Jack?

76 **Eum.** Why, what was that Jack?

78 **Core.** Who, Jack, sir? who, our Jack, sir? as good a
 80 fellow as ever trod upon neat's-leather.

47-48: **for I...merits** = the sense is, "as long as I get my money, I don't care about the merits of the case." = fastidiously.¹

50: **sodden-headed** = one who appears stupidly as if his head had been soaked in water, with a specific implication of being a drunkard.¹
sheep's face = having the face of an animal as stupid as a sheep.¹

51-52: **shall a...parish** = "shall a man like Jack perform so many good deeds for and be so generous to the parish". By **less service**, Corebus means **more service** - as Whitworth points out, Corebus is prone to comically misspeaking.
 = malapropism for **Christian**.⁴
 = "quiet".
 = merriest fellow; see line 8 of the play's opening scene.

57: **sworn brother** = ie. pledged as the closest of companions, as if they were brothers-in-arms.⁴
funerals = ie. funeral rites.³
 57-58: **some...for it** = ie. a threat to kill the church officials if Jack is not buried.
 = "that's flat," or "that's settled once and for all."^{3,5}
 = be held accountable for, take responsibility for.

63: the frustrated Wiggen mocks the Churchwarden's formulaic responses to his plea.

66: in the original edition, this line is actually printed as part of the Sexton's next speech, but most editors transform it into a stage direction.
parish = ie. the Churchwarden; we note, as did Whitworth, that the OED has no entry confirming the use of the word **parish** to refer to an individual.
pike-staff = a walking stick or staff with a metal point at one end.¹

= side.
 = the OED says simply, "a term of abuse"; **rotten** suggests putridity or corruption.
 = who.
 = "as ever walked in shoe-leather"; this expression appeared first (verbatim) in an anonymous play, *Misogonus*, which was written in the 1560's or 1570's, and was used also once in one of John Lyly's and twice in Shakespeare's plays.
neat's leather = hide of a cow.

82 **Wigg.** Look you, sir; he gave fourscore and nineteen
mourning gowns to the parish, when he died, and
84 because he would not make them up a full hundred,
they would not bury him: was not this good dealing?
86

Church. O Lord, sir, how he lies! he was not worth a
88 halfpenny, and drunk out every penny; and now his
fellows, his drunken companions, would have us to
90 bury him at the charge of the parish. And we make
many such matches, we may pull down the steeple,
92 sell the bells, and thatch the chancel: he shall lie above

ground till he dance a galliard about the church-yard,
94 for Steeven Loach.

96 **Wigg.** *Sic argumentaris, Domine Loach*, – "And we make
many such matches, we may pull down the steeple,
98 sell the bells, and thatch the chancel?" – in good time,
sir, and hang yourself in the bell-ropes, when you
100 have done. *Domine, opponens præpono tibi hanc*
questionem, whether will you have the ground broken
102 or your pates broken first? for one of them shall be
done presently, and to begin mine, I'll seal it upon

104 your coxcomb.

106 **Eum.** Hold thy hands, I pray thee, good fellow; be not
too hasty.
108

Core. You capon's face, we shall have you turned out
110 of the parish one of these days, with never a tatter to
your arse; then you are in worse taking than Jack.
112

Eum. Faith, and he is bad enough. This fellow does
114 but the part of a friend, to seek to bury his friend:
how much will bury him?
116

= 99.
= ie. gowns given to the church to be worn by the poor to
attend Jack's funeral.⁷

= ie. good conduct or treatment, fair dealing (ironic).¹
Wiggen seems to be suggesting that Jack had promised a
donation to the church in return for being properly buried,
but because Jack did not fulfill the agreement to the letter,
the church is renegeing on its end of the bargain.

= expense. = if.
= contracts, agreements. = ie. "may as well".

= the Churchwarden means they will have to sell the slate or
lead of the roof, and replace it with something cheap like
thatch (Shaugnessy, p. 30).²²
chancel = the end of the church by the alter, usually
separated from the rest of the church by a screen or bar.⁹

= an oft-mentioned lively dance.²
= the Churchwarden's own full name.

= "thus you argue, Master Loach"; a phrase from the art of
Latin disputation, which was a dominant teaching method
in universities of the Renaissance (Taylor, p. 940).¹⁰

100-1: **Domine...questionem** = "sir, in opposition, I put
before you this question".¹⁹
= ie. into which to bury Jack.
= heads.

103: **presently** = immediately.
to begin mine = the editors generally agree Wiggen
means, "to begin my argument (with the help of my pike-
staff)", though Dyce thinks words are missing here.
I'll seal it = "I'll ratify it"; to **seal** something, such as a
letter, means to pour wax on it and impress it with one's seal:
a metaphor here for giving a beating to.

= head; a **coxcomb** was the ridiculous cap sometimes worn
by a jester, which had the form of the crest of a cock.

= please.

109: **capon's face** = having the (dull-witted) face of a
castrated cock.¹
109-110: **turned out of** = driven out of, banished
from.
= not even a shred of clothing.
= "then you will be in even a worse condition or plight than
is Jack (who is dead)."

= ie. how much money.

118 **Wigg.** Faith, about some fifteen or sixteen shillings
will bestow him honestly.

120 **Sext.** Ay, even thereabouts, sir.

122 **Eum.** Here, hold it, then: – [*Aside*] and I have left me
but one poor three half-pence: now do I remember the
124 words the old man spake at the cross, "Bestow all thou
hast," and this is all, "till dead men's bones come at
126 thy call:" – here, hold it [*gives money*]; and so farewell

128 **Wigg.** God, and all good, be with you, sir!

130 [*Exit Eumenides.*]

132 Nay, you cormorants, I'll bestow one peal of Jack at
mine own proper costs and charges.

134 **Core.** You may thank God the long staff and the

136 bilbo-blade crossed not your coxcomb[s]. – Well, we'll
138 to the church-stile and have a pot, and so trill-lill.

[*Exit Coreus and Wiggen.*]

140 **Church and Sext.** Come, let's go.

142 [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

1 **Fant.** But, hark you, gammer, methinks this Jack bore
2 a great sway in the parish.

4 **Madge.** O, this Jack was a marvelous fellow! he was
but a poor man, but very well beloved: you shall see
6 anon what this Jack will come to.

8 *Enter the Harvest-men singing,
with women in their hands.*

10

= deposit or lodge, ie. bury, him respectably.¹

= Eumenides begins to hand the necessary money over to the sexton.

= from 1561 to 1582, a silver coin worth three half-pence, or 1½ pence, was minted, allowing half-penny purchases to be made.²⁰

132: **cormorants** = **cormorant** describes a voraciously greedy person, like the sea-bird of the same name with the same insatiable appetite.

I'll bestow...charges = Wiggen will pay a bit of his own money to have the bell rung to mark Jack's passing.
of = on or for.

135-6: Corebus means that the church officials are lucky they did not receive a thrashing from himself with his own weapons.

long staff = the OED suggests either (1) a simple long pole, or (2) such a long pole with a metal tip, which was a common weapon owned by England's rural population.

bilbo-blade = ie. sword; allusion to Bilboa, a Spanish city known for the manufacture there of the high-quality Spanish sword called a "bilbo".

136-7: **we'll...trill-lill** = briefly, "let's go grab a drink."

church-stile = the stile at an entrance to a church, where, as Nielson points out, an ale-house often stood. A 1642 poem contains the lines, "*For at every mile, close at the Church stile, / An house is ordain'd for a pot of Good Ale.*"

pot = vessel for drinking ale.

trill-lill = onomatopoeic word for the flowing of a liquid.¹

= listen. = had, exercised.

= influence.

= shortly.

= ie. holding the men's hands (Whitworth, p. 246).

<p>12 Frol. <u>Soft!</u> who have we here? our amorous harvesters.</p>	<p>= the original edition oddly prints <i>harvest starres</i> here.</p>
<p>14 Fant. Ay, ay, let us sit still, and let them alone.</p>	
<p>16 <i>Here the Harvest-men begin to sing, the song <u>doubled</u>.</i></p>	<p>= sung twice.</p>
<p>18 SONG.</p>	
<p>20 <i>Lo, here we come a-reaping, a-reaping, To reap our harvest-fruit! 22 And thus we pass the year so long, 24 And never be we mute.</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: right;">[<i>Exeunt the Harvest-men.</i>]</p>	
<p><u>SCENE VIII.</u></p>	
<p><i>Outside Sacrapant's Castle.</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Enter Huanebango.</i></p>	
<p>1 Frol. <u>Soft!</u> who have we here?</p>	<p>1-5: A continuity error: Frantic and Madge act as if they are meeting Huanebango for the first time.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Soft = "wait a minute!"</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>= ill-tempered.</p>
<p>4 Madge. O, this is a <u>choleric</u> gentleman! All you that love your lives, keep out of the <u>smell</u> of his two-hand sword: now goes he to the conjurer.</p>	<p>= ie. reach or range.</p>
<p>6</p>	
<p>8 Fant. Methinks the conjurer should put the fool into a <u>juggling-box</u>.</p>	<p>= unclear reference; to juggle is to conjure, so clearly some sort of magician's prop, perhaps a container into which a magician can place a person and cause the individual to "disappear".</p>
<p>10</p>	
<p>12 Huan. Fee, fa, fum, Here is the Englishman, –</p>	<p>10: Fee, fa, fum = early version of the well-known collection of nonsense syllables (fee-fi-fo-fum!) chanted by the giant in the fairy tale <i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i>; an 1877 dictionary of Gaelic terms argues the phrase may be traced back to a very ancient version of the story (told by the native Celts, in which a Celtic giant expresses a desire to eat a Saxon invader), and that the individual syllables actually have meanings, and create a coherent sentence:</p>
<p>14 Conquer him that can, – Come for his lady bright.</p>	<p>fa = <i>faich</i>, meaning "see" or "behold". fe = <i>fiadh</i>, meaning "food". fi = <i>fiù</i>, meaning "good to eat". fo = <i>fogh</i>, meaning "sufficient". fum = <i>feum</i>, meaning "hunger".</p>
<p>To prove himself a knight, And win her love in fight.</p>	<p>When you string the words together, you get a sentence that means "Behold food, good to eat, sufficient for my hunger!"¹¹</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Finally, note the rhyme scheme of Huanebango's little poem (lines 10-15): abbccc.</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>= rustic.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Enter Corebus the <u>Clown</u>.</i></p>	
<p>Core. Who-haw, Master Bango, are you here? hear</p>	<p>19-20: note Corebus' wordplay with you here and hear you.</p>

20 you, you had best sit down here, and beg an alms with
me.

22 **Huan.** Hence, base cullion! here is he that

24 commandeth ingress and egress with his weapon, and
will enter at his voluntary, whosoever saith no.

26 **A Voice.** No.

28 [A flame of fire; and Huanebango falls down.]

30 **Madge.** So with that they kissed, and spoiled the edge
32 of as good a two-hand sword as ever God put life in.

Now goes Corebus in, spite of the conjurer.

34 [Enter Sacrapant and Two Furies.]

36 **Sacr.** Away with him into the open fields,
38 To be a ravening prey to crows and kites:

40 [Huanebango is carried out by the Two Furies.]

42 And for this villain, let him wander up and down.
In naught but darkness and eternal night.

44 [Strikes Corebus blind.]

46 **Core.** Here hast thou slain Huan, a slashing knight,
48 And robbed poor Corebus of his sight.

50 **Sacr.** Hence, villain, hence!

52 [Exit Corebus.]

54 Now I have unto Delia
Given a potion of forgetfulness.
56 That, when she comes, she shall not know her brothers.
Lo, where they labour, like to country-slaves,

58 With spade and mattock, on this enchanted ground!
Now will I call her by another name;
60 For never shall she know herself again,
Until that Sacrapant hath breathed his last.
62 See where she comes.

64 [Enter Delia.]

= better. = for.

23: **Hence, base cullion!** = "get out of here, you low-born
rogue!"

he that = "he who", meaning himself.
= "decides who enters and who exits".

195: "will enter at his own say-so, regardless of who else
might say 'no'."

27: Whitworth asserts this is the voice of Sacrapant, who is
in hiding.

31-32: humorous way to describe Huanebango, sword in
hand, falling down, where his sword scraped a rock or
other surface, dulling its edge.
= ie. in spite of.

38: **ravening prey** = ravening means "ravenous" or
"voracious";¹ the line presents an arresting example of a
figure of speech called a **hypallage**, in which the adjective
ravening is applied to something other than what it actually
is describing - the **prey** is not **ravening**, but the **crows and
kites** are.

kites = a **kite** is a bird of prey.

= ie. Corebus.
= nothing.

= spirited.

47-48: note Corebus' rhyming couplet.

= "away!"

57: "look (**Lo**), there they labour, as if they were rural
slaves"; such a reference to **country-slaves** might be odd if it
had come out of an English character's mouth, but the Greek
sorcerer was presumably thinking of actual slaves in his
homeland.

= a tool for loosening hard ground; the terms **spade** and
mattock were frequently paired in the era's literature.

66 Come hither, Delia, take this goad; here hard
 67 At hand two slaves do work and dig for gold:
 68 Gore them with this, and thou shalt have enough.

70 *[He gives her a goad.]*

72 **Delia.** Good sir, I know not what you mean.

74 **Sacr.** *[Aside]* She hath forgotten to be Delia,
 But not forgot the same she should forget;

76 But I will change her name. –
 Fair Berecynthia, so this country calls you,

78 Go ply these strangers, wench; they dig for gold.

80 *[Exit Sacrapant.]*

82 **Delia.** O heavens, how
 Am I beholding to this fair young man!
 84 But I must ply these strangers to their work:
 See where they come.

86 *Enter the Two Brothers in their shirts,
 88 with spades, digging.*

90 **1st Broth.** O brother, see where Delia is!

92 **2nd Broth.** O Delia,
 Happy are we to see thee here!

94 **Delia.** What tell you me of Delia, prating swains?
 96 I know no Delia, nor know I what you mean.
Ply you your work, or else you're like to smart.

98 **1st Broth.** Why, Delia, know'st thou not thy brothers
 here?
 100 We come from Thessaly to seek thee forth;
 And thou deceiv'st thyself, for thou art Delia.

102 **Delia.** Yet more of Delia? then take this, and smart:

104 *[Pricks them with the goad.]*

106 What, feign you shifts for to defer your labour?
 108 Work, villains, work; it is for gold you dig.

110 **2nd Broth.** Peace, brother, peace: this vild enchanter
 Hath ravished Delia of her senses clean,
 112 And she forgets that she is Delia.

66: **hither** = here.
Delia = though the sorcerer just said he would not call Delia by her real name, he does so now, perhaps just to test her.
goad = a rod with a pointed metal end, used to drive cattle and draught animals.^{1,9}
 66-67: **hard at hand** = close by.

75: an unclear line: a possible interpretation is, "but she has not forgotten to call me *sir*, instead of using my given name, a sign that she is not attracted to me."
 Gummere suggests **the same** means "as much as".

= Sacrapant borrows an alternate name of the goddess Cybele, also called Rhea, who was known as the protector of castles. **Berecynthia** was the name of the mountain on which Cybele was worshipped.¹²

= spur, drive.

= beholden. = ie. Sacrapant, as he appears to her.

= undershirts, ie. with their princely outer clothing removed.

= chattering country labourers or rustics.¹

= ie. "apply yourselves to". = "likely to smart", ie. if she prods them with the goad.

= "dare you concoct false pretexts".

= "be quiet". = vile.

114	1st Broth. Leave, cruèl thou, to hurt the miserable. –	114: "please stop, you cruel one, hurting the already wretched."
	Dig, brother, dig, for she is <u>hard as steel</u> .	= this still-common expression can be traced back to at least 1560.
116		
	<i>Here they dig,</i>	
118	<i>and <u>descry</u> a light in a glass under a little hill.</i>	= see, spy.
120	2nd Broth. <u>Stay</u> , brother; what hast thou descried?	120: "stop".
122	Delia. Away, and touch it not; it is something that my lord hath hidden there.	
124		
	[<i>She covers it again.</i>]	
126		
	<i>Re-enter Sacrapant.</i>	
128	Sacr. <u>Well said!</u> <u>thou plyest</u> these <u>pioners</u> well. –	129: Well said = common phrase for "well done". thou plyest = "you are driving". pioners = diggers, excavators. ²
130	Go get you <u>in</u> , you labouring slaves.	= ie. inside.
132	[<i>Exeunt the Two Brothers.</i>]	
134	Come, Berecynthia, let us <u>in</u> likewise,	= go in.
	And hear the nightingale <u>record</u> her notes.	= sing.
136		
	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	
	<u>SCENE IX.</u>	
	<i>The Well of Life.</i>	
	<i>Enter Zantippa, the <u>curst</u> Daughter, to the Well of Life, with a <u>pot</u> in her hand.</i>	Entering Character: Zantippa is Lampriscus' shrewish (curst) daughter. Whitworth notes that the name is derived from the philosopher Socrates' famously shrewish wife Xanthippe. pot = pitcher.
1	Zant. Now for a husband, house, and home: God send	
2	<u>a good one</u> or none, I pray God! My father hath sent	= ie. a husband.
4	me to the well for the water of life, and tells me, if I	
	give <u>fair words</u> , I shall have a husband. But here	= flattering or specious words; Zantippa is perhaps sarcastic, resenting that she will have to ask politely or recite an obsequious formula just to get a man.
6	comes Celanta my sweet sister: I'll stand by and hear	We may note, however, that Erestus' prophecy did not include an instruction for Lampriscus' girls to say anything specific to get husbands, only that the unlucky father should "send them to the well for the water of life."
	what she says.	
8		8: it was a convention of Elizabethan drama for a character to hide at the approach of another, in order to hear what he or she will say; it was a further convention for the newly-appearing character to conveniently speak his or her thoughts aloud for the hidden individual to hear them.
	[<i>Retires.</i>]	
10	<i>Enter Celanta, the <u>foul</u> wench, to the well for water with a pot in her hand.</i>	Entering Character: Celanta is Lampriscus' ugly (foul) daughter.
12	Cel. My father hath sent me to the well for water, and	

14	he tells me, if I speak fair, I shall have a husband, and <u>none of the worst</u> . Well, though I am <u>black</u> , I am sure	= ie. "not a bad one either." = of swarthy complexion, hence unattractive; in the Elizabethan era, paler skin was viewed as more desirable.
16	all the world will not forsake me; and, as the old proverb is, though I am black, I am not the devil.	17: "though I am ugly, I am not a bad person." The expression appears verbatim in Elizabethan author Robert Greene's <i>A Quip for an Upstart Courtier</i> .
18	Zant. [<i>Coming forward</i>] <u>Marry-gup with a murren</u> , I	= common oath. = with a pox, ie. "a plague take you;" ⁶ an intensifier of the oath.
20	know <u>wherefore thou speakest that</u> : but go thy ways home as wise as thou camest, or I'll set thee home	= "why you said that."
22	<u>with a wanion</u> .	= with a vengeance or plague. ^{1,5}
24	<i>[Here she strikes her pitcher against her sister's, and breaks them both, and exits.]</i>	
26	Cel. I think this be the <u>curstest quean</u> in the world:	= "most ill-tempered, impudent woman". ¹
28	you see what she is, <u>a little fair</u> , but as proud as the devil, and the <u>veriest vixen</u> that lives upon God's earth.	= somewhat attractive.
30	Well, I'll let her alone, and go home, and get another pitcher, and, for all this, get me to the well for water.	= greatest shrew, most quarrelsome female. ¹
32	<i>[Exit.]</i>	
34	<i>Enter, out of Sacrapant's cell, the Two Furies carrying Huanebango; they lay him by the Well of Life, and then exeunt.</i>	= living chamber.
36	<i>Re-enter Zantippa with a pitcher to the well.</i>	35-37: Huanebango is laid behind the well where Zantippa cannot immediately see him.
38	Zant. Once again for a husband; and, in faith, Celanta, I have got <u>the start of you</u> ; <u>belike</u> husbands grow by	41f: true to her nature, Zantippa is unhappy to have to moderate her character just to get a husband. 41-42: <i>in faith...well-side</i> = probably sarcastic: "truly, my sister, I have a head-start over you in the race to get a husband (ie. because I am at the well and you are not); it is very likely (<i>belike</i>) that husbands just grow next to the spring." <i>the start of</i> = ie. an advantage over.
40		
42	the well-side. Now my father says I must <u>rule</u> my tongue: why, alas, what am I, then? a woman without a tongue is as a soldier without his weapon: but I'll have my water, and be gone.	= control.
44	<i>Here she offers to dip her pitcher in, and a Head rises in the well.</i>	49-50: here is an opportunity for some fun special effects. Peele borrowed the idea of the disembodied heads rising out of a well from an old English fairy tale, <i>The Three Heads of the Well</i> ; the story can be found in Joseph Jacob's collection <i>English Fairy Tales</i> (London: David Nutt, 1890, pp. 222-28).
46		<i>offers</i> = starts.
48		51ff: in the original 1595 edition, the various Heads that rise out of the well speak recite their own poetry, but some editors, including Bullen, assign their speeches to a "Voice", a separate entity, while the Heads themselves remain silent.
50	Head. Gently dip, but not too deep,	

52 For fear you make the golden beard to weep.

54 Fair maiden, white and red,
Stroke me smooth, and comb my head,
56 And thou shalt have some cockell-bread.

Zant. What is this?
58 "Fair maiden, white and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
60 And thou shalt have some cockell-bread "?
"Cockell" callest thou it, boy? faith, I'll give you
62 cockell-bread.

64 *She breaks her pitcher upon the Head:
then it thunders and lightens;
66 And Huanebango, who is deaf and cannot hear,
rises up.*

68 **Huan.** Philida, phileridos, pamphilida, florida, flortos:

70 Dub dub-a-dub, bounce, quoth the guns, with a
sulphurous huff-snuff:

Note the rhyme scheme of the Head's verse, *aabbb*.

= the original edition prints *bird* here, which is emended usually to *beard*.
= ie. of pale skin and healthily ruddy hue.

= bread kneaded a special way and used as a love charm;¹ but Gummere tells us that after having engaged in much research, he concludes the phrase "to have cockell-bread" means simply "to get a lover or husband".

cockell = cockle, a field weed, ie. a plant which grows in grain fields.¹

In Jacob's telling of the fairy-tale, the head recites,

*Wash me and comb me,
And lay me down softly.
And lay me on a bank to dry,
That I may look pretty
When somebody passes by.*

59: Zantippa mixes up this line: see line 54 above.

61-62: it is unclear as to whether Zantippa is offended by the inferred double *entendre* of *cockell*.

faith = truly.

= ie. flashes lightning.

69-73: at first glance, it seems as if Huanebango is engaging in pronouncing some nonsense words as he tries to adjust to the fact that he can no longer hear; but based on his speech at 86-92 below, he is more likely trying to impress Zantippa with a type of crude verse, known (as Huanebango observes) as *rim-ram-ruff*, which employs a heavy concentration of alliteration, and comes across, as here, as unsophisticated.

70: Dyce has noted that the three onomatopoeical words in this line - *Dub dub-a-dub*, *bounce*, and *huff-snuff* - all appeared in widely-dispersed passages in a collection of poetry published in 1582 by Richard Stanyhurst. In 1589, pamphleteer Thomas Nashe took the opportunity to satirize a number of contemporary writers, including Stanyhurst, in his (Nashe's) introduction to Robert Greene's *Arcadia in Menaphon*, and he included references to those passages. No doubt borrowing from Nashe, Peele re-employs these expressions.

Dub dub-a-dub = the sound of a drum.

bounce = bang, the sound of a gun.

quoth the guns = say the guns.

sulphurous huff-snuff = the sulphurous smell of the smoke of a fired weapon.

huff-snuff = the OED defines *huff-snuff* as one who brags or hectors; but *huff* and *snuff* individually have the meaning of a puff or slight blast.

	Waked with a wench, pretty <u>peat</u> , pretty love, and my sweet pretty <u>pigsnie</u> ,	71: Huanebango uses various terms of endearment to describe Zantippa. <i>peat</i> = sweetheart, girl. ¹ <i>pigsnie</i> = little pig. ³
72	Just by thy side shall sit <u>surnamed</u> great Huanebango: Safe in my arms will I keep thee, <u>threat Mars</u> , or <u>thunder Olympus</u> .	= ie. he who is surnamed. 73: <i>threat Mars</i> = even in the face of a threat of violence by the god of war. <i>thunder Olympus</i> = thunder exploding down from the mountain home of the Olympian gods.
74	Zant. [<i>Aside</i>] <u>Foh</u> , what <u>greasy groom</u> have we here?	75: Note the alliteration of <i>greasy groom</i> . <i>Foh</i> = expression of disgust. ² <i>greasy</i> = term of abuse. ¹ <i>groom</i> = fellow, man. ¹
76	He looks as though he crept <u>out of the backside of the well</u> , and <u>speaks like a drum perished at the west end</u> .	= "from behind"; but there may be a secondary, and more vulgar meaning, "from out of the buttocks of". 77: <i>speaks like a drum</i> = referring to Huanebango's drum-like sound effects of line 70 above. <i>perished...west end</i> = an unclear line, but some editors speculate that it may refer to a drum with its skin broken.
78	Huan. O, that I might, – but I may not, woe to my destiny therefore! –	79: this line is lifted verbatim from <i>Encomium Lauri (Praise for the Bay Tree)</i> , a silly brief poem written by the once-famous English poet and author Gabriel Harvey. Harvey was a well-known proponent of writing English verse in hexameter, an idea which was widely ridiculed by other poets. ^{3,5} 79-80: <i>O, that...clasp</i> = "Oh, if only I could - but I may not!" - the knight concludes the thought in the next line - "kiss the one that I would hold in my arms!"
80	Kiss that I clasp! but I cannot: tell me, <u>my destiny</u> , <u>wherefore</u> ?	80: <i>my destiny</i> = vocative expression, ie. "you who are my destiny". <i>wherefore</i> = "why", ie. "why not?" It is unclear why Huanebango is unable to embrace Zantippa; based on his comments in line 90-91 below, he may still be more or less paralyzed as a side-effect of the spell placed on him by Sacrapant.
82	Zant. [<i>Aside</i>] Whoop! <u>now I have my dream</u> . Did you	= ie. a perfect husband: see lines 93-94 below.
84	<u>never</u> hear so great a wonder as this, three blue beans in a blue bladder, rattle, bladder, rattle?	83: <i>never</i> = ie. ever. 83-84: <i>three blue...rattle</i> = <i>blue beans</i> are bullets or shot, which when inserted <i>in a bladder</i> would produce an effective rattle; Zantippa is comparing Huanebango's babbling to a noisy rattle. ¹³
86	Huan. [<i>Aside</i>] I'll now <u>set my countenance</u> , and to	86-88: <i>I'll now...encounter</i> = ie. to <i>set one's countenance</i> means to "make a show (either real or feigned) of one's actions, feelings or intentions"; ¹ Huanebango thus means he will start all over again, abandoning his ruder poetry (<i>rim-ram-ruff</i>) of lines 69-72, which he realizes is not impressing Zantippa, for a simpler declaration of his love in <i>prose</i> ; of course, Huanebango, romantic that he is, does not abandon his penchant for alliterative language.
88	her in <u>prose</u> ; it may be, this <u>rim-ram-ruff</u> is too rude an encounter. – Let me, fair lady, if you be at leisure, revel with your sweetness, and <u>rail upon</u> that	= complain or rant about. ¹

90	cowardly conjurer, that hath cast me, or <u>congealed</u> me	= solidified, froze.
92	rather, into an unkind sleep, and <u>polluted my carcass</u> .	= "violated or desecrated my body"; Huanebango's high language is absurdly, and hilariously, stylized.
94	Zant. [<i>Aside</i>] Laugh, laugh, Zantippa; thou hast thy fortune, a fool and a husband <u>under one</u> .	= ie. in one.
96	Huan. Truly, <u>sweet-heart</u> , <u>as I seem</u> , about some twenty years, the very April of mine age.	96: sweet-heart = this term of endearment is over seven centuries old, appearing at least as early as 1290. ¹ as I seem = ie. "I am as I appear before you".
98	Zant. [<i>Aside</i>] Why, what a <u>prating</u> ass is this!	= chattering.
100	Huan. Her coral lips, her crimson chin,	101-6: now Huanebango engages in classic Elizabethan era love poetry, in which a woman's various physical attributes are painstakingly listed and described, often compared via metaphors or similes to items of exceptional beauty of the natural world; note also the lines are arranged in rhyming couplets.
102	Her silver teeth so white within,	
104	Her golden locks, her rolling eye, Her pretty parts, let them <u>go by</u> ,	104: "her other attractive features (perhaps suggestive), which I will let pass without comment (go by)". ¹ = "alas!"
106	<u>Heigh-ho</u> , have wounded me, That I must die this day to see!	
108	Zant. <u>By Gogs-bones</u> , thou art a <u>flouting</u> knave: "her coral lips, her crimson chin!" <u>ka</u> , <u>wilshaw</u> !	108: By Gog's bones = an oath; Gog's was a common euphemism for God's . flouting = mocking; ¹ Zantippa assumes Huanebango is making fun of her. 109: ka = "quoth he", ie. "says he". ⁴ wilshaw = unknown word, with no OED entry; but clearly a term of scorn.
110	Huan. True, my own, and my own because mine, and mine because mine, ha, ha! above a thousand pounds in possibility, and things fitting thy desire in possession.	112-3: above...possibility = Huanebango assures Zantippa of his wealth - he suggests his lands provide him up to 1000 pounds a year in annual rents.
112	Zant. [<i>Aside</i>] The sot thinks I ask of his lands. <u>Lob</u> be	116-7: Lob...comfort = "take consolation or comfort in that you will be living like a rustic (Lob)"; ¹ but Bullen suggests Lob is a reference to Lob's pound , an expression normally used as slang for prison, which Bullen proposes here refers to the bondage of "hen-pecked married men."
114	your comfort, and <u>cuckold be your destiny</u> ! – Hear	117: a cuckold is a husband whose wife cheats on him; Zantippa already is planning to find satisfaction elsewhere.
118	you, sir; and if you will have us, you had best say so betime.	118-9: if you...betime = "if you want to marry me, you better propose right away (betime)." Note that Zantippa also uses the royal 'we' in referring to herself as us .
120	Huan. True, sweet-heart, and will royalize thy <u>progeny</u> with my <u>pedigree</u> .	= children. = (high-ranking) blood or lineage.
122	[<i>Exeunt.</i>]	124: and so we say good-bye to our parody of a knight; the marriage of Zantippa and Huanebango gives Madge's listeners a true fairy-tale ending: the hero gets himself an attractive wife, and the shrewish woman gets herself an attractive husband, whose happiness can never be dimmed because he will always be literally deaf to her nagging and other expressions of her ill-temper.
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SCENE X.

A Road Somewhere Nearby.

Enter Eumenides.

1 **Eum.** Wretched Eumenides, still unfortunate,
2 Envied by fortune and forlorn by fate,

4 Here pine and die, wretched Eumenides,
4 Die in the spring, the April of my age!
6 Here sit thee down, repent what thou hast done:
6 I would to God that it were ne'er begun!

8 *Enter the Ghost of Jack.*

10 **G. of Jack.** You are well overtaken, sir.

12 **Eum.** Who's that?

14 **G. of Jack.** You are heartily well met, sir.

16 **Eum.** Forbear, I say: who is that which pincheth me?

18 **G. of Jack.** Trusting in God, good Master Eumenides,
20 that you are in so good health as all your friends were
at the making hereof, – God give you good morrow,

sir! Lack you not a neat, handsome, and cleanly young

22 lad, about the age of fifteen or sixteen years, that can
24 run by your horse, and, for a need, make your
mastership's shoes as black as ink? how say you, sir?

26 **Eum.** Alas, pretty lad, I know not how to keep myself,
and much less a servant, my pretty boy; my state is so
28 bad.

30 **G. of Jack.** Content yourself, you shall not be so ill a
32 master but I'll be as bad a servant. Tut, sir, I know you,
though you know not me: are not you the man, sir,
34 deny it if you can, sir, that came from a strange place
in the land of Catita, where Jack-an-apes flies with his
36 tail in his mouth, to seek out a lady as white as snow
and as red as blood? ha, ha! have I touched you now?

38 **Eum.** [*Aside*] I think this boy be a spirit. – How
knowest thou all this?

40 **G. of Jack.** Tut, are not you the man, sir, deny it if

Entering Character: Eumenides begins the scene by bemoaning his poverty and the apparent failure of his mission to find and rescue Delia.

= hated; note the alliteration in the line, and the repetition in Eumenides' use of *unfortunate* and *fortune*.
= starve, waste away.²

4: Eumenides rues the fact that he will die while still a young man.

my = changed by many editors to *thy*.

Entering Character: the ghost of *Jack*, the dead man the Sexton had earlier refused to bury, enters the stage.

10: a greeting a traveler makes to one he has overtaken.¹

14: another greeting; Jack is a most polite spirit.

16: *Forbear* = "stop it", or "leave me alone".

which pincheth me = ie. "who torments (or) afflicts me";^{1,2} but Jack may literally have pinched Eumenides. Elizabethan spirits often pinched their victims.

= another expression of good wishes on meeting.

21-24 = Jack offers himself as a servant as for Eumenides.

Lack you not = "don't you have a need for"; a peddler or vender of goods usually called out "What lack you?" to passersby as a way to get their attention.

neat = well-spoken, well-dressed, or skillful.¹

= ie. reference to a footman, a servant who literally runs next to a wealthy man's carriage as he travels about.

= "how to even provide for my own well-being".

= situation, condition.

26-28: Eumenides does not realize that Jack is a ghost.

= does not appear to be a real place. = "the monkey".

= "said something that closely concerns you".

38: Eumenides wonders how Jack knows so much, and speculates he may be a ghost.

41ff: note that Jack, who puts himself in the servant class, correctly addresses Eumenides with the formal and

42 you can, sir, that gave all the money you had to the
44 burying of a poor man, and but one three half-pence
left in your purse? Content you, sir, I'll serve you, that
is flat.

46 **Eum.** Well, my lad, since thou art so impor[tu]nate, I
48 am content to entertain thee, not as a servant, but a
copartner in my journey. But whither shall we go? for
50 I have not any money more than one bare three half-
pence.

52 **G. of Jack.** Well, master, content yourself, for if my
54 divination be not out, that shall be spent at the next inn
or alehouse we come to; for, master, I know you are
56 passing hungry: therefore I'll go before and provide
dinner until that you come; no doubt but you'll come
58 fair and softly after.

60 **Eum.** Ay, go before; I'll follow thee.

62 **G. of Jack.** But do you hear, master? do you know
my name?

64 **Eum.** No, I promise thee, not yet.

66 **G. of Jack.** Why, I am Jack.

68 [Exit.]

70 **Eum.** Jack! why, be it so, then.

SCENE XI.

An Inn.

*Enter the Hostess and Jack, setting meat on the table;
and Fiddlers come to play. Eumenides walks up
and down, and will eat no meat.*

1 **Host.** How say you, sir? do you please to sit down?

2 **Eum.** Hostess, I thank you, I have no great stomach.

4 **Host.** Pray, sir, what is the reason your master is so
6 strange? doth not this meat please him?

8 **G. of Jack.** Yes, hostess, but it is my master's fashion
to pay before he eats; therefore, a reckoning, good
10 hostess.

12 **Host.** Marry, shall you, sir, presently.

respectful **you**, while the knight appropriately addresses his
social inferior with **thou**.

= "be satisfied".

= "you are so insistent".

= hire.

= to where.

53-54: **if my...not out** = "unless my guess or prediction is
wrong".²

= exceedingly. = ahead.

= common expression for "at your own leisure", or "without
hurry".¹

71: Eumenides does not connect his companion's name
with that of the dead man of Scene VI.

The Setting: Eumenides has not left the stage, but the scene
is understood to switch to a tavern where Jack has arranged
for the knight to receive dinner. Perhaps a curtain is drawn to
reveal the interior of the establishment.

= food.

= appetite.

= habit, custom.

= "give us the bill".

14	[Exit.]	
16		Eum. Why, Jack, what dost thou mean? Thou knowest I have not any money; therefore, sweet Jack,
18		tell me what shall I do?
20		G. of Jack. Well, master, look in your purse.
22		Eum. Why, faith, <u>it is a folly</u> , for I have no money.
24		G. of Jack. Why, look you, master; do so much for me.
26		Eum. [looking into his purse]
28		Alas, Jack, my purse is full of money!
30		G. of Jack. " <u>Alas</u> ," master! does that word belong to
32		this accident? why, methinks I should have seen you cast away your cloak, and in a <u>bravado</u> danced a
34		<u>galliard</u> round about the <u>chamber</u> : why, master, your <u>man</u> can teach you <u>more wit</u> than this.
36		[Re-enter Hostess.]
38		Come, hostess, cheer up my master.
40		Host. You are heartily welcome; and if it please you to eat of a fat capon, a fairer bird, a finer bird, a
42		sweeter bird, a crisper bird, a <u>neater</u> bird, your worship <u>never eat of</u> .
44		Eum. Thanks, my fine, eloquent hostess.
46		G. of Jack. But hear you, master, one word by the way: are you content I shall be halves in all you get in your journey?
48		
50		Eum. I am, Jack; here is my hand.
52		G. of Jack. Enough, master, I ask no more.
54		Eum. Come, hostess, receive your money; and I thank you for my good entertainment.
56		
58		[Gives money.]
60		Host. You are heartily welcome, sir.
62		Eum. Come, Jack, whither go we now?
64		G. of Jack. Marry, master, to the conjurer's <u>presently</u> .
66		Eum. <u>Content</u> , Jack. – Hostess, farewell.
68		[Exeunt.]

= "that would be foolish to do".

= Jack notes that an expression of regret like *alas* is the opposite of what he would expect from Eumenides at this moment.

= normally meaning "a show of ostentation of courage", but the sense here seems to simply be "a show of joy".

= a lively dance. = room.

= servant. = "to act more smartly".

= more skillfully prepared.

= "has never eaten before."

48-49: *I shall...journey* = Jack, in return for providing Eumenides with food and money, asks if his companion will agree to split everything they come into possession of during the journey 50-50.

= immediately.

= "that is fine".

SCENE XII.

The Well of Life.

*Enter Corebus, and Celanta, the foul wench,
to the well for water.*

1 **Core.** Come, my duck, come: I have now got a wife:
2 thou art fair, art thou not?

= beautiful; we remember that Corebus has been struck blind.

4 **Cel.** My Corebus, the fairest alive; make no doubt of that.

6 **Core.** Come, wench, are we almost at the well?

= term of endearment, without negative connotation.

8 **Cel.** Ay, Corebus, we are almost at the well now. I'll
10 go fetch some water: sit down while I dip my pitcher in.

12 *A Head comes up with ears of corn,
and she combs them into her lap.*

= rakes, sweeps.

14 **Head.** Gently dip, but not too deep,
16 For fear you make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maiden, white and red,
18 Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
And thou shalt have some cockell-bread.

20 *A Second Head comes up full of gold,
which she combs into her lap.*

22 **2nd Head.** Gently dip, but not too deep,
24 For fear thou make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maid, white and red,
26 Comb me smooth, and stroke my head,
28 And every hair a sheaf shall be,
And every sheaf a golden tree.

= bundle of grain plants.¹

30 **Cel.** O, see, Corebus, I have combed a great deal of
32 gold into my lap, and a great deal of corn!

34 **Core.** Well said, wench! now we shall have just

34: **well said** = "well done".

just = some editors change **just** to **toast**, suggesting that Corebus anticipates turning the grain into bread, just as he would make coins of their new-found gold.

36 enough: God send us coiners to coin our gold. But
come, shall we go home, sweet-heart?

= ie. minters of coins.

38 **Cel.** Nay, come, Corebus, I will lead you.

40 **Core.** So, Corebus, things have well hit;
Thou hast gotten wealth to mend thy wit.

40-41: Corebus recalls Erethus' prophecy of Scene IV.112-3.

well hit = turned out well.

= supplement.

[*Exeunt.*]

Corebus and Celanta: another happy ending to our tale; like Huanebango before him, Corebus unknowingly benefits from his handicap: being blind, he may live in blissful

ignorance of his wife's unattractiveness, while Celanta, against all odds, has landed herself a husband after all.

SCENE XIII.

Outside Sacrapant's Castle.

Enter the Ghost of Jack and Eumenides.

1 **G. of Jack.** Come away, master, come.

2
3 **Eum.** Go along, Jack, I'll follow thee. Jack, they say
4 it is good to go cross-legged, and say his prayers
backward; how sayest thou?

6
7 **G. of Jack.** Tut, never fear, master; let me alone. Here
8 sit you still; speak not a word; and because you shall
9 not be enticed with his enchanting speeches, with this
10 same wool, I'll stop your ears.

12 [Puts wool into the ears of Eumenides.]

14 and so, master, sit still, for I must to the conjurer.

16 [Exit.]

18 *Enter Sacrapant.*

20 **Sacr.** How now! what man art thou, that sits so sad?
21 Why dost thou gaze upon these stately trees
22 Without the leave and will of Sacrapant? –
23 What, not a word, but mum? Then, Sacrapant,

24 Thou art betrayed.

26 *Enter the Ghost of Jack invisible,*
27 *and takes Sacrapant's wreath from his head,*
28 *and his sword out of his hand.*

30 What hand invades the head of Sacrapant?

What hateful Fury doth envy my happy state?

32 Then, Sacrapant, these are thy latest days.
33 Alas, my veins are numbed, my sinews shrink.
34 My blood is pierced, my breath fleeting away.
And now my timeless date is come to end!

4-5: Eumenides describes some superstitious activities that may or may not be associated with good luck: the famous magician Henry Cornelius Agrippa Von Nettesheim (1486-1535) wrote that "to sit cross-legged is Sorcery", while reciting prayers backwards actually is associated with Black Magic, which utilizes all sorts of similar inversions, such as "consecrating obscene or filthy objects", to desecrate the rituals of Christianity.²¹

his = one's.

8-10: *because...your ears* = in order to protect Eumenides from any charms Sacrapant might cast on him, Jack plugs up the knight's ears with tufts of wool; the interesting implication of this gesture is that the spell's effectiveness is determined by whether the target hears it, and not by the sorcerer's reciting it.

because (line 8) = so that.

= get to, go to.

= permission or intention.

= with wool in his ears, Eumenides cannot hear Sacrapant; in fact, he does not even realize the wizard is present.

= Sacrapant means he has been found out.

= one of the great stage directions; obviously Jack is not invisible to the audience, but only to Sacrapant.

30: it is interesting that even with his magic powers, Sacrapant cannot protect himself from, nor even see, the specter of Jack.

31: the line contains an extra iamb, ie. it contains 12 syllables. Some old editors suggest deleting either *hateful* or *happy*.^{3,5}

= ie. last moments alive.

= ie. his life-giving blood is flowing out.

= "(what was supposed to be) my unending life".¹

<p>36</p> <p>38</p> <p>40</p> <p>42</p> <p>44</p> <p>46</p> <p>48</p> <p>50</p> <p>52</p> <p>54</p> <p>56</p> <p>58</p> <p>60</p> <p>62</p> <p>64</p> <p>66</p> <p>68</p> <p>70</p> <p>72</p> <p>74</p> <p>76</p> <p>78</p> <p>80</p> <p>82</p>	<p>He in whose life his <u>acts</u> hath been so foul, Now in his death to hell descends his soul.</p> <p>[<i>He dies.</i>]</p> <p>G. of Jack. O, sir, are you gone? now I hope we shall have some other <u>coil</u>. – Now, master, how like you this? the conjurer he is dead, and vows never to trouble us more: now get you to your fair lady, and see what you can do with her. – Alas, he heareth me not all this while! but I will help that.</p> <p>[<i>Pulls the wool out of his ears.</i>]</p> <p>Eum. How now, Jack! what news?</p> <p>G. of Jack. Here, master, take this sword, and dig with it at the foot of this hill.</p> <p>[<i>Gives sword.</i>]</p> <p>[<i>He digs and spies a light in a glass.</i>]</p> <p>Eum. How now, Jack! what is this?</p> <p>G. of Jack. Master, without this the conjurer could do nothing; and so long as this light lasts, so long doth his <u>art</u> endure, and this being out, then doth his art <u>decay</u>.</p> <p>Eum. Why, then, Jack, I will soon put out this light.</p> <p>G. of Jack. Ay, master, how?</p> <p>Eum. Why, with a stone I'll break the glass, and then blow it out.</p> <p>G. of Jack. No, master, you may as soon break the smith's anvil as this little vial: nor the biggest <u>blast</u> that ever <u>Boreas</u> blew cannot blow out this little light; but she that is neither maid, wife, nor widow. Master, <u>wind</u> this horn, and see what will happen.</p> <p>[<i>Gives horn.</i>]</p> <p><i>Eumenides winds the horn. Enter Venelia, who breaks the glass, blows out the light, and then exits.</i></p>	<p>36-37: Sacrapant's speech concludes with a rhyming couplet; this was a common occurrence in Elizabethan drama, a way to signal the end of a character's part in a scene, or in this case, the play.</p> <p>Such a concluding rhyming couplet usually comprises a pithy moral lesson.</p> <p>We may note that while <i>foul</i> and <i>soul</i> do not rhyme in modern English, in the 16th century they would have done so: <i>foul</i> would have been pronounced with a long <i>o</i>, ie. <i>foh-l</i>.</p> <p><i>acts</i> = the original edition prints <i>actions</i>, changed by most editors to <i>acts</i> for the meter.</p> <p>39: Whitworth suggests the Furies enter here and remove the sorcerer's body.</p> <p>41-42: O, sir...coil = ironic. = fuss, to-do.¹</p> <p>50: as suggested above, Eumenides is still completely oblivious to the fact that Sacrapant had been nearby, or that he has died.</p> <p>= magic, ie, the spells he has cast. = ie. fail.</p> <p>= of breath or wind. = the god of the north wind.</p> <p>75: Jack recalls the words of Sacrapant at Scene V.162. = blow.</p> <p>81-82: since Venelia is betrothed to Erestus, she satisfies the conditions of line 75 above (the requirement that she not</p>
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84 So, master, how like you this? this is she that ran
 86 madding in the woods, his betrothed love that keeps
 88 to their former liberty: and now, master, to the lady
 that you have so long looked for.

90 [The ghost of Jack draws a curtain,
 92 revealing Delia sitting asleep.]

94 **Eum.** God speed, fair maid, sitting alone, – there is once;
 God speed, fair maid, – there is twice;
 God speed, fair maid, – that is thrice.

96 **Delia.** Not so, good sir, for you are by.

98 **G. of Jack.** Enough, master, she hath spoke; now I
 100 will leave her with you.

102 [Exit.]

104 **Eum.** Thou fairest flower of these western parts,
 106 Whose beauty so reflecteth in my sight
 As doth a crystal mirror in the sun;
 For thy sweet sake I have crossed the frozen Rhine;

108 Leaving fair Po, I sailed up Danuby,
 As far as Saba, whose enhancing streams

110 Cut twixt the Tartars and the Russians:

These have I crossed for thee, fair Delia:
 112 Then grant me that which I have sued for long.

114 **Delia.** Thou gentle knight, whose fortune is so good
 To find me out and set my brothers free,
 116 My faith, my heart, my hand I give to thee.

be a *maid* seems to mean that she not be an old maid,
 or perhaps simply not unattached).

= madly, in a state of insanity. = ie. "the fiancée of he who".

= freedom (from Sacrapant's spells).

93: *God speed* = "may you thrive".
there is once = ie. "that is the first time I have recited
 the magic line."

93-94: Whitworth cites an earlier editor who suggested that
sitting alone should also be repeated after saying *fair maid*;
 this would make Delia's next line make more sense.

97: "I am not alone, sir, with you so close by."

= ie. "this most western part of Europe" - we remember that
 Eumenides comes from Greece - but so does Delia.

107-110: Eumenides reviews the various rivers he has
 encountered and crossed as a way of portraying how far he
 has traveled searching for Delia.
the frozen Rhine = the Rhine is frequently described as
 cold or frozen, in imitation of Roman writers who meditated
 on the Rhine's location so far to the north relative to Italy
 (Sugden, p. 430).¹⁶
 A variation of lines 107-110 appear in Robert Greene's
 roughly contemporaneous play *Orlando Furioso*:
Northeast as far as is the frozen Rhine,
Leaving fair Voya, crossed up Danuby,
As high as Saba, whose enhancing streams
Cut 'twixt the Tartars and the Russians.

= Italy's largest river.

109: the modern *Sava River*, which flows into the Danube in
 modern Serbia.
enhancing streams = rising waters.

110: Eumenides, with as little regard for accurate geography
 as Robert Greene, describes the Sava as flowing north of the
 Caucasus mountain range, separating Tartary (the land of the
Tartars, located vaguely somewhere in northern Asia) and
 Russia.¹⁶

= pleaded for or sought.

118 **Eum.** Thanks, gentle madam: but here comes Jack;
thank him, for he is the best friend that we have.

120
122 *Enter the Ghost of Jack,
with Sacrapant's head in his hand.*

124 How now, Jack! what hast thou there?

126 **G. of Jack.** Marry, master, the head of the conjurer.

128 **Eum.** Why, Jack, that is impossible; he was a young
man.

130 **G. of Jack.** Ah, master, so he deceived them that
132 beheld him! but he was a miserable, old, and crooked
man, though to each man's eye he seemed young and
134 fresh; for, master, this conjurer took the shape of the

old man that kept the cross, and that old man was in
136 the likeness of the conjurer. But now, master, wind
your horn.

138
140 *Eumenides winds his horn.*

142 *Enter Venelia, the Two Brothers,
and he that was at the cross.*

144 **Eum.** Welcome, Erestus! welcome, fair Venelia!
Welcome, Thelea and Calypha both!

146 Now have I her that I so long have sought;
So saith fair Delia, if we have your consent.

148 **1st Broth.** Valiant Eumenides, thou well deservest

150 To have our favours; so let us rejoice
That by thy means we are at liberty:
152 Here may we joy each in other's sight,
And this fair lady have her wandering knight

154 **G. of Jack.** So, master, now ye think you have done;
156 but I must have a saying to you: you know you and I
were partners, I to have half in all you got.

158 **Eum.** Why, so thou shalt, Jack.

160 **G. of Jack.** Why, then, master, draw your sword, part
162 your lady, let me have half of her presently.

164 **Eum.** Why, I hope, Jack, thou dost but jest: I
promised thee half I got, but not half my lady.

166 **G. of Jack.** But what else, master? have you not

122: a sliced-off head was a favourite stage prop, a
hearkening back to the old mystery plays, in which the
appearance of John the Baptist's head was guaranteed to
please the crowd.

128-9: the head is that of an old man.

134-136: **this conjuror...the conjuror** = Sacrapant - the old
conjuror - had taken the form of Erestus, while Erestus, who
was actually young, was given the appearance of Sacrapant.

= blow.

= ie. Erestus, now appearing as the young man he really is.

= the names of the brothers; it is worth noting this is the only
time in the play in which Thelea is identified by name.

= **saith** is a monosyllable. = ie. the two brothers.

= note that the brother, a prince, addresses Eumenides, his
social inferior, with **thou**, while the knight addresses the
royal brother with **you**.

152: the meter is off; Dyce suggests adding **the** before
other's; note also the rhyming couplet of 152-3.

= ie. "have completed your mission."

= "say something to you."

= immediately.

168	gotten her? therefore divide her <u>straight</u> , for I will have half; there is <u>no remedy</u> .	= right away. = ie. "no way out of this."
170	Eum. Well, <u>ere</u> I will falsify my word unto my friend,	= before.
172	take her all: here, Jack, I'll give her <u>thee</u> .	= ie. "to thee."
174	G. of Jack. Nay, neither more nor less, master, but even just half.	
176	Eum. Before I will <u>falsify my faith</u> unto my friend, I	= "prove my promise to be untrue".
178	will divide her: Jack, thou shalt have half.	
180	1st Broth. Be not so cruel unto our sister, gentle knight.	
182	2nd Broth. O, spare fair Delia! she deserves no death.	
184	Eum. <u>Content yourselves</u> ; my word is passed to him. – Therefore prepare thyself Delia, for thou must die.	= "you must be satisfied."
186	Del. Then farewell, world! adieu, Eumenides!	
188		
190	<i>[Eumenides offers to strike, and the Ghost of Jack stays him.]</i>	= begins. = stops.
192	G. of Jack. Stay, master; it is sufficient I have <u>tried</u>	= tested.
194	your <u>constancy</u> . Do you now remember since you paid for the burying of a poor fellow?	= "faithfulness (to your word)."
196	Eum. Ay, very well, Jack.	
198	G. of Jack. Then, master, thank that good deed for this good <u>turn</u> : and so God be with you all!	= deed.
200		
202	<i>[The Ghost of Jack leaps down <u>in</u> the ground.]</i>	= into; here is another opportunity for some entertaining special effects, as Jack, for example, may disappear through a trap door in a flash of smoke.
204	Eum. Jack, what, art thou gone? then farewell, Jack!– Come, brothers, and my beauteous Delia,	
206	Erestus, and thy dear Venelia, We will <u>to</u> Thessaly with joyful hearts.	= go to.
208	All. Agreed: we follow thee and Delia.	
210	<i>[Exeunt all but Frolic, Fantastic, and Madge.]</i>	
212	Fant. What, <u>gammer</u> , asleep?	= grandma (to Madge).
214	Madge. By the <u>mass</u> , son, 'tis almost day; and my windows shut at the cock's-crow.	214: <i>by the mass</i> = an oath. 214-5 <i>my windows...cock's crow</i> = Madge means her eyes are shut, indeed asleep (her <i>windows</i> are her eyelids; hence Friar Lawrence in <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> : " <i>thy eyes' windows fall</i> ").
216		
218	Frol. Do you hear, gammer? methinks this Jack bore a great <u>sway</u> amongst them.	= influence.
220	Madge. O, man, this was the ghost of the poor man that they <u>kept such a coil</u> to bury; and that <u>makes</u> him to help the wandering knight so much. But come, let us <u>in</u> : we will have <u>a cup of ale</u> and <u>a toast</u> this	= made such a fuss over. = caused.
222		223: <i>in</i> = go in; one may wonder when the group actually exited the cottage, especially if Madge was asleep.

224 morning, and so depart.

226 **Fant.** Then you have made an end of your tale,
gammer?

228 **Madge.** Yes, faith: when this was done, I took a piece
230 of bread and cheese, and came my way; and so shall
232 you have, too, before you go, to your breakfast.

[*Exeunt.*]

234 FINIS.

a cup of ale = a normal morning drink.

a toast = to use as a sop.

= ie. part.³

Postscript: Erestus' Prophecies: the reader may wish to review Erestus' various prophecies, which would have had no meaning to the reader when he or she first read them:

1. Scene II.49-50 (to the Brothers):
*For when one flame of fire goes out,
Then come your wishes well about.*
2. Scene II.151-2 (to Lampriscus):
*...send them to the well for the water of life; there
shall they find their fortunes unlooked for.*
3. Scene IV.111 (to Corebus):
He shall be deaf when thou shalt not see.
4. Scene VI.18-19 (to Eumenides):
*Bestow thy alms, give more than all,
Till dead men's bones come at thy call.*

George Peele's Invented Words

Like all of the writers of the era, George Peele may have 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 Old Wives' Tale* 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:

booby
cockle-bread
long-staff
madness (meaning enthusiasm or excitement)
palmer-staff
rot (used in an imprecation, e.g. "a rot on you all")
run (or go) madding
shake-rotten

Additional phrases which research suggests originated in *The Old Wives' Tale*

once upon a time (to start a story, though the formula **once on a time** and **once upon a day** had appeared earlier)

as ever (went) on neat's leather*
duck (as a term of endearment)
fee fa fum (predecessor to the more familiar **fee fi fo fum**)
have a saying* = to say something
lamb's wool* (referring to the drink)

* = those terms marked with an asterisk likely originated with Peele, if he indeed wrote his play, as has been speculated, before 1593.

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

1. Oxford English Dictionary (OED) online.
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22. Shaughnessy, Robert. *Four Renaissance Comedies*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.