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presents

a Theatre Script of

# ARDEN of FEVERSHAM

ANONYMOUS

Earliest Extant Edition: 1592

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# ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

## ANONYMOUS

Earliest Extant Edition: 1592

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

*THOMAS ARDEN*, a Gentleman of Feversham

*ALICE*, Wife of Arden.

*MICHAEL*, Servant of Arden.

*FRANKLIN*, a Friend of Arden.

*MOSBIE*, Lover of Alice.

*SUSAN*, Mosbie's Sister, and Maid to Alice.

*CLARKE*, a Painter.

*ADAM FOWLE*, Landlord of the Flower-de-Luce.

*BRADSHAW*, a Goldsmith.

*DICK GREENE*.

*RICHARD REEDE*, a Sailor

*BLACK WILL*, a Murderer.

*SHAKEBAG*, a Murderer.

*A PRENTICE*.

*A FERRYMAN*.

*LORD CHEINY, AND HIS MEN*

*MAYOR OF FEVERSHAM, and WATCH*

### **A. Scene Breaks, Settings, and Stage Directions.**

*Arden of Feversham* was originally published in a 1592. As usual, we lean towards adhering to the wording of the earliest volume as much as possible.

Words or syllables which have been added to the original text to clarify the sense or repair the meter are surrounded by hard brackets [ ]; these additions are often adopted from the play's later editions. A director who wishes to remain truer to the original text may of course choose to omit any of the supplementary wording.

The 1592 quarto does not divide *Arden* into Acts and Scenes, or provide settings. We separate the play into Acts and Scenes based on the suggestions of Bayne, and adopt his suggestions for scene locations as well.

Finally, as is our normal practice, a good number of the quarto's stage directions have been modified, and others added, usually without comment, to give clarity to the action. These changes are adopted from various sources.

### **B. Optional Textual Changes.**

A list of optional emendations to the text can be found at the end of this play.

ACT I.SCENE I.

*A Room in Arden's House.*

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

1 **Frank.** Arden, cheer up thy spirits, and droop no more!  
 2 My gracious Lord, the Duke of Somerset,  
 Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,  
 4 By letters patents from his Majesty,  
 All the lands of the Abbey of Feversham.  
 6 Here are the deeds,

8 [He hands them.]

10 Sealed and subscribed with his name and the king's:  
 Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

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

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

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

30 **Frank.** Why, what is he?

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

40 **Frank.** No nobleman will countenance such a peasant.

42 **Arden.** Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loves not me.  
 But through his favour let not him grow proud;  
 44 For were he by the Lord Protector backed,  
 He should not make me to be pointed at.  
 46 I am by birth a gentleman of blood,  
 And that injurious ribald, that attempts  
 48 To violate my dear wife's chastity  
 (For dear I hold her love, as dear as Heaven)  
 50 Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile  
 See his dissevered joints and sinews torn,  
 52 Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,  
 Smear'd in the channels of his lustful blood.

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

66 **Arden.** Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it,  
 And call her forth and presently take leave. –  
 68 How! Alice!

70 *Here enters Alice.*

72 **Alice.** Husband, what mean you to get up so early?  
 Summer-nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.  
 74 Had I been wake, you had not rise so soon.

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

84 **Alice.** 'Tis like I was asleep when I named him,  
 For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.

86 **Arden.** Ay, but you started up and suddenly,  
 88 Instead of him, caught me about the neck.

90 **Alice.** Instead of him? why, who was there but you?  
And where but one is, how can I mistake?

92 **Frank.** Arden, leave to urge her over-far.

94 **Arden.** Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream;  
96 Let it suffice I know thou lovest me well.

98 **Alice.** Now I remember whereupon it came:  
Had we no talk of Mosbie yesternight?

100 **Frank.** Mistress Alice, I hard you name him once or twice.

102 **Alice.** And thereof came it, and therefore blame not me.

104 **Arden.** I know it did, and therefore let it pass.  
106 I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.

108 **Alice.** But tell me, do you mean to stay there long?

110 **Arden.** No longer there till my affairs be done.

112 **Frank.** He will not stay above a month at most.

114 **Alice.** A month? ay me! Sweet Arden, come again  
Within a day or two, or else I die.

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

124 *[Exeunt Arden and Franklin.]*

126 **Alice.** Ere noon he means to take horse and away!  
Sweet news is this. Oh, that some airy spirit  
128 Would in the shape and likeness of a horse  
Gallop with Arden 'cross the Ocean,  
130 And throw him from his back into the waves!  
Sweet Mosbie is the man that hath my heart:  
132 And he usurps it, having nought but this,  
That I am tied to him by marriage.  
134 Love is a God, and marriage is but words;  
And therefore Mosbie's title is the best.  
136 Tush! whether it be or no, he shall be mine,  
In spite of him, of Hymen, and of rites.

138

*Here enters Adam of the Flower-de-luce.*

140

And here comes Adam of the Flower-de-luce;

142

I hope he brings me tidings of my love. –

How now, Adam, what is the news with you?

144

Be not afraid; my husband is now from home.

146

**Adam.** He whom you wot of, Mosbie, Mistress Alice,

Is come to town, and sends you word by me

148

In any case you may not visit him.

150

**Alice.** Not visit him?

152

**Adam.** No, nor take no knowledge of his being here.

154

**Alice.** But tell me, is he angry or displeas'd?

156

**Adam.** [It] should seem so, for he is wondrous sad.

158

**Alice.** Were he as mad as raving Hercules,

I'll see him, I; and were thy house of force,

160

These hands of mine should race it to the ground,

Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love.

162

**Adam.** Nay, and you be so impatient, I'll be gone.

164

**Alice.** Stay, Adam, stay; thou wert wont to be my friend.

166

Ask Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath;

Bear him from me these pair of silver dice,

168

With which we played for kisses many a time,

And when I lost, I won, and so did he; –

170

Such winning and such losing Jove send me!

And bid him, if his love do not decline,

172

[To] come this morning but along my door,

And as a stranger but salute me there:

174

This may he do without suspect or fear.

176

**Adam.** I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell.

178

[Exit Adam.]

180

**Alice.** Do, and one day I'll make amends for all. –

I know he loves me well, but dares not come,

182

Because my husband is so jealous,

And these my narrow-prying neighbours blab,

184

Hinder our meetings when we would confer.

But, if I live, that block shall be removed,

186

And, Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stealth,

Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men,

188

Nor Arden's looks; as surely shall he die

190 As I abhor him and love only thee.

192 *Here enters Michael.*

194 How now, Michael, whither are you going?

196 *Mich.* To fetch my master's nag.  
I hope you'll think on me.

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

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

202 *Alice.* On that condition, Michael, here is my hand:  
204 None shall have Mosbie's sister but thyself.

206 *Mich.* I understand the painter here hard by  
Hath made report that he and Sue is sure.

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

210 *Mich.* But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a heart,  
212 With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth,  
The which I hear the wench keeps in her chest.  
214 Well, let her keep it! I shall find a fellow  
That can both write and read and make rhyme too.  
216 And if I do – well, I say no more:  
I'll send from London such a taunting letter  
218 [As] she shall eat the heart he sent with salt  
And fling the dagger at the painter's head.

220 *Alice.* What needs all this? I say that Susan's thine.

222 *Mich.* Why, then I say that I will kill my master,  
224 Or anything that you will have me do.

226 *Alice.* But, Michael, see you do it cunningly.

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

232 *Alice.* Trust not to that, Michael.

234 *Mich.* You cannot tell me, I have seen it, I.  
But, mistress, tell her, whether I live or die,  
236 I'll make her more worth than twenty painters can;  
For I will rid mine elder brother away,



238 | And then the farm of Bolton is mine own.  
Who would not venture upon house and land,  
240 | When he may have it for a right-down blow?

242 | *Here enters Mosbie.*

244 | **Alice.** Yonder comes Mosbie. Michael, get thee gone,  
And let not him nor any know thy drifts. –

246 | *[Exit Michael.]*

248 | Mosbie, my love!

250 | **Mosb.** Away, I say, and talk not to me now.

252 | **Alice.** A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.  
254 | 'Tis yet but early days, thou need'st not fear.

256 | **Mosb.** Where is your husband?

258 | **Alice.** 'Tis now high water, and he is at the key.

260 | **Mosb.** There let him be; henceforward know me not.

262 | **Alice.** Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?  
Is this the fruit thy reconciliation buds?  
264 | Have I for this given thee so many favours,  
Incurred my husband's hate, and, out alas!  
266 | Made shipwreck of mine honour for thy sake?  
And dost thou say 'henceforward know me not'?  
268 | Remember, when I locked thee in my closet,  
What were thy words and mine; did we not both  
270 | Decree to murder Arden in the night?  
The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,  
272 | Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,  
'Fore I was tangled with thy ticing speech,  
274 | Arden to me was dearer than my soul, –  
And shall be still: base peasant, get thee gone,  
276 | And boast not of thy conquest over me,  
Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery!  
278 | For what hast thou to countenance my love,  
Being descended of a noble house,  
280 | And matched already with a gentleman  
Whose servant thou may'st be! – and so farewell.

282 | **Mosb.** Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see  
284 | That which I ever feared, and find too true:  
A woman's love is as the lightning-flame,  
286 | Which even in bursting forth consumes itself.

288 To try thy constancy have I been strange;  
Would I had never tried, but lived in hope!

290 *Alice.* What needs thou try me whom thou ne'er found false?

292 *Mosb.* Yet pardon me, for love is jealous.

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

298 *Mosb.* Thine overthrow? first let the world dissolve.

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

308 *Mosb.* To London, Alice? if thou'lt be ruled by me,  
We'll make him sure enough for coming there.

310 *Alice.* Ah, would we could!

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

322 *Alice.* Ay, but Mosbie, that is dangerous,  
For thou, or I, or any other else,  
324 Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die.

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

328 *Alice.* It may not be, for when the picture's drawn,  
330 Arden, I know, will come and shew it me.

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

334 *Alice.* But Mosbie, I'll have no such picture, I.

336

**Mosb.** I pray thee, leave it to my discretion. –

338

How! Clarke!

340

*Here enters Clarke.*

342

Oh, you are an honest man of your word! you served me well.

344

**Clark.** Why, sir, I'll do it for you at any time,

346

Provided, as you have given your word,

I may have Susan Mosbie to my wife.

348

For, as sharp-witted poets, whose sweet verse

Make heavenly gods break off their nectar draughts

350

And lay their ears down to the lowly earth,

Use humble promise to their sacred Muse,

352

So we that are the poets' favourites

Must have a love: ay, Love is the painter's Muse,

354

That makes him frame a speaking countenance,

A weeping eye that witnesses heart's grief.

356

Then tell me, Master Mosbie, shall I have her?

358

**Alice.** 'Tis pity but he should; he'll use her well.

360

**Mosb.** Clarke, here's my hand: my sister shall be thine.

362

**Clark.** Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,

You shall command my life, my skill, and all.

364

**Alice.** Ah, that thou couldst be secret.

366

**Mosb.** Fear him not; leave; I have talked sufficient.

368

**Clark.** [To Alice] You know not me that ask such questions.

370

Let it suffice I know you love him well,

And fain would have your husband made away:

372

Wherein, trust me, you shew a noble mind,

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

374

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

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

376

**Alice.** Yet nothing could enforce me to the deed

378

But Mosbie's love. – Might I without control

Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die:

380

But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

382

**Mosb.** Enough, sweet Alice; thy kind words makes me melt. –

Your trick of poisoned pictures we dislike;

384

Some other poison would do better far.

386 **Alice.** Ay, such as might be put into his broth,  
And yet in taste not to be found at all.

388

**Clark.** I know your mind, and here I have it for you.  
390 Put but a dram of this into his drink,  
Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,  
392 And he shall die within an hour after.

394 **Alice.** As I am a gentlewoman, Clarke, next day  
Thou and Susan shall be married.

396

**Mosb.** And I'll make her dowry more than I'll talk of, Clarke.

398

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

400

*Here enters Arden and Franklin.*

402

**Alice.** In good time see where my husband comes. –  
404 Master Mosbie, ask him the question yourself.

406

[Exit Clarke.]

408 **Mosb.** Master Arden, being at London yesternight,  
The Abbey lands, whereof you are now possessed,  
410 Were offered me on some occasion  
By Greene, one of Sir Antony Ager's men:  
412 I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours?  
Hath any other interest herein?

414

**Arden.** Mosbie, that question we'll decide anon. –  
416 Alice, make ready my breakfast, I must hence.

418

[Exit Alice.]

420 As for the lands, Mosbie, they are mine  
By letters patents from his Majesty. –  
422 But I must have a mandate for my wife;  
They say you seek to rob me of her love: –  
424 Villain, what makes thou in her company?  
She's no companion for so base a groom.

426

**Mosb.** Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee;  
428 But rather than I pocket up this wrong –

430 **Frank.** What will you do, sir?

432 **Mosb.** Revenge it on the proudest of you both.

434

[Then Arden draws forth Mosbie's sword.]

436 **Arden.** So, sirrah; you may not wear a sword,  
The statute makes against artificers;  
438 I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,  
Your Spanish needle, and your pressing iron,  
440 For this shall go with me; and mark my words,  
You goodman botcher, 'tis to you I speak:  
442 The next time that I take thee near my house,  
Instead of legs I'll make thee crawl on stumps.  
444

**Mosb.** Ah, Master Arden, you have injured me:  
446 I do appeal to God and to the world.

**Frank.** Why, canst thou deny thou wert a botcher once?  
448

**Mosb.** Measure me what I am, not what I was.  
450

**Arden.** Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,  
452 A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant?  
454

**Mosb.** Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited  
456 The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll'n heart,  
Hear me but speak: as I intend to live  
458 With God and his elected saints in Heaven,  
I never meant more to solicit her;  
460 And that she knows, and all the world shall see.  
I loved her once; – sweet Arden, pardon me,  
462 I could not choose, her beauty fired my heart!  
But time hath quenched these over-raging coals;  
464 And, Arden, though I now frequent thy house,  
'Tis for my sister's sake, her waiting-maid,  
466 And not for hers. Mayest thou enjoy her long:  
Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me,  
468 If I dishonour her or injure thee.

**Arden.** Mosbie, with these thy protestations  
470 The deadly hatred of my heart is appeased,  
472 And thou and I'll be friends, if this prove true.  
As for the base terms [that] I gave thee late,  
474 Forget them, Mosbie: I had cause to speak,  
When all the knights and gentlemen of Kent  
476 Make common table-talk of her and thee.

**Mosb.** Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues?  
478

**Frank.** Then, Mosbie, to eschew the speech of men,  
480 Upon whose general brute all honour hangs,  
482 Forbear his house.

484 **Arden.** Forbear it! nay, rather frequent it more:  
The world shall see that I distrust her not.  
486 To warn him on the sudden from my house  
Were to confirm the rumour that is grown.

488  
**Mosb.** By my faith, sir, you say true,  
490 And therefore will I sojourn here a while,  
Until our enemies have talked their fill;  
492 And then, I hope, they'll cease, and at last confess  
How causeless they have injured her and me.

494  
**Arden.** And I will lie at London all this term  
496 To let them see how light I weigh their words.

498 *Here enters Alice.*

500 **Alice.** Husband, sit down; your breakfast will be cold.

502 **Arden.** Come, Master Mosbie, will you sit with us?

504 **Mosb.** I cannot eat, but I'll sit for company.

506 **Arden.** Sirrah Michael, see our horse be ready.

508 *[Arden tastes the broth, then stops eating.]*

510 **Alice.** Husband, why pause ye? why eat you not?

512 **Arden.** I am not well; there's something in this broth  
That is not wholesome: didst thou make it, Alice?

514  
**Alice.** I did, and that's the cause it likes not you.

516  
*[Then she throws down the broth on the ground.]*

518  
There's nothing that I do can please your taste;  
520 You were best to say I would have poisoned you.  
I cannot speak or cast aside my eye,  
522 But he imagines I have stepped awry.  
Here's he that you cast in my teeth so oft:  
524 Now will I be convinced or purge myself. –  
*[to Mosbie]* I charge thee speak to this mistrustful man,  
526 Thou that wouldst see me hang, thou, Mosbie, thou:  
What favour hast thou had more than a kiss  
528 At coming or departing from the town?

530 **Mosb.** You wrong yourself and me to cast these doubts:  
Your loving husband is not jealous.

532  
**Arden.** Why, gentle Mistress Alice, cannot I be ill

534 | But you'll accuse yourself? –  
 Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate;  
 536 | I'll take a little to prevent the worst.

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

540 | **Alice.** Give me a spoon, I'll eat of it myself;  
 542 | Would it were full of poison to the brim,  
 Then should my cares and troubles have an end.  
 544 | Was ever silly woman so tormented?

546 | **Arden.** Be patient, sweet love; I mistrust not thee.

548 | **Alice.** God will revenge it, Arden, if thou dost;  
 For never woman loved her husband better  
 550 | Than I do thee.

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

554 | **Frank.** Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.

556 | **Alice.** Forbear to wound me with that bitter word;  
 558 | Arden shall go to London in my arms.

560 | **Arden.** Loth am I to depart, yet I must go.

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

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

572 | **Alice.** Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so; –  
 574 | And, Master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,  
 In hope you'll hasten him home, I'll give you this.

576 |

578 | *[And then she kisseth him.]*

578 | **Frank.** And if he stay, the fault shall not be mine. –  
 580 | Mosbie, farewell, and see you keep your oath.

582 | **Mosb.** I hope he is not jealous of me now.

584 **Arden.** No, Mosbie, no; hereafter think of me  
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.

586

[*Exeunt Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*]

588

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

592 **Mosb.** Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed.  
But what a villain is this painter Clarke!

594

**Alice.** Was it not a goodly poison that he gave?  
596 Why, he's as well now as he was before.  
It should have been some fine confection  
598 That might have given the broth some dainty taste:  
This powder was too gross and populous.

600

**Mosb.** But had he eaten but three spoonfuls more,  
602 Then had he died and our love continued.

604 **Alice.** Why, so it shall, Mosbie, albeit he live.

606 **Mosb.** It is impossible, for I have sworn  
Never hereafter to solicit thee,  
608 Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

610 **Alice.** Thou shalt not need, I will importune thee. —  
What? shall an oath make thee forsake my love?  
612 As if I have not sworn as much myself  
And given my hand unto him in the church!  
614 Tush, Mosbie; oaths are words, and words is wind,  
And wind is mutable: then, I conclude,  
616 'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

618 **Mosb.** Well proved, Mistress Alice; yet by your leave  
I'll keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

620

**Alice.** Ay, do, and spare not, his time is but short;  
622 For if thou beest as resolute as I,  
We'll have him murdered as he walks the streets.  
624 In London many alehouse ruffians keep,  
Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.  
626 They shall be soundly fee'd to pay him home.

628

*Here enters Greene.*

630 **Mosb.** Alice, what's he that comes yonder? know'st thou him?

632 **Alice.** Mosbie, be gone: I hope 'tis one that comes



To put in practice our intended drifts.

634

[Exit Mosbie.]

636

**Greene.** Mistress Arden, you are well met.

638

I am sorry that your husband is from home,

Whenas my purposed journey was to him:

640

Yet all my labour is not spent in vain,

For I suppose that you can full discourse

642

And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

644

**Alice.** What is it, Master Greene? If that I may

Or can with safety, I will answer you.

646

**Greene.** I heard your husband hath the grant of late,

648

Confirmed by letters patents from the king,

Of all the lands of the Abbey of Feversham,

650

Generally intituled, so that all former grants

Are cut off; whereof I myself had one;

652

But now my interest by that is void.

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

654

**Alice.** True, Master Greene; the lands are his in state,

656

And whatsoever leases were before

Are void for term of Master Arden's life;

658

He hath the grant under the Chancery seal.

660

**Greene.** Pardon me, Mistress Arden, I must speak,

For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong

662

To wring me from the little land I have.

My living is my life, [and] only that

664

Resteth remainder of my portiön.

Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,

666

And he is greedy-gaping still for gain;

Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,

668

So he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch.

But, seeing he hath ta'en my lands, I'll value life

670

As careless as he is careful for to get:

And tell him this from me, I'll be revenged,

672

And so as he shall wish the Abbey lands

Had rested still within their former state.

674

**Alice.** Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,

676

And woe is me that any man should want!

God knows 'tis not my fault; but wonder not

678

Though he be hard to others, when to me, —

Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am used.

680

682 **Greene.** Why, Mistress Arden, can the crabbèd churl  
Use you unkindly? respects he not your birth,  
Your honourable friends, nor what you brought?  
684 Why, all Kent knows your parentage and what you are.

686 **Alice.** Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,  
I never live good day with him alone:  
688 When he is at home, then have I froward looks,  
Hard words and blows to mend the match withal;  
690 And though I might content as good a man,  
Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls;  
692 And [when he's] weary with his trugs at home,  
Then rides he straight to London; there, forsooth,  
694 He revels it among such filthy ones  
As counsels him to make away his wife.  
696 Thus live I daily in continual fear,  
In sorrow; so despairing of redress  
698 As every day I wish with hearty prayer  
That he or I were taken forth the world.

700 **Greene.** Now trust me, Mistress Alice, it grieveth me  
702 So fair a creature should be so abused.  
Why, who would have thought the civil sir so sullen?  
704 He looks so smoothly. Now, fie upon him, churl!  
And if he live a day, he lives too long.  
706 But frolic, woman! I shall be the man  
Shall set you free from all this discontent;  
708 And if the churl deny my interest  
And will not yield my lease into my hand,  
710 I'll pay him home, whatever hap to me.

712 **Alice.** But speak you as you think?

714 **Greene.** Ay, God's my witness, I mean plain dealing,  
For I had rather die than lose my land.

716 **Alice.** Then, Master Greene, be counsellèd by me:  
718 Indanger not yourself for such a churl,  
But hire some cutter for to cut him short,  
720 And here's ten pound to wager them withal;  
When he is dead, you shall have twenty more,  
722 And the lands whereof my husband is possessed  
Shall be intitled as they were before.

724 **Greene.** Will you keep promise with me?  
726

728 **Alice.** Or count me false and perjured whilst I live.

730 **Greene.** Then here's my hand, I'll have him so dispatched.  
 I'll up to London straight, I'll thither post,  
 And never rest till I have compassed it.  
 732 Till then, farewell.

734 **Alice.** Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.

736 [Exit Greene.]

738 And whosoever doth attempt the deed,  
 A happy hand I wish, and so farewell. –  
 740 All this goes well: – Mosbie, I long for thee  
 To let thee know all that I have contrived.

742 [Here enters Mosbie and Clarke.]

744 **Mosb.** How, now, Alice, what's the news?  
 746

**Alice.** Such as will content thee well, sweetheart.

748 **Mosb.** Well, let them pass a while, and tell me, Alice,  
 750 How have you dealt and tempered with my sister?  
 What, will she have my neighbour Clarke, or no?

752 **Alice.** What, Master Mosbie! let him woo himself!  
 754 Think you that maids look not for fair words? –  
 Go to her, Clarke; she's all alone within;  
 756 Michael my man is clean out of her books.

758 **Clark.** I thank you, Mistress Arden, I will in;  
 And if fair Susan and I can make a gree,  
 760 You shall command me to the uttermost,  
 As far as either goods or life may stretch.

762 [Exit Clarke.]

764 **Mosb.** Now, Alice, let's hear thy news.  
 766

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

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

772 **Alice.** This morning, Master Greene, Dick Greene I mean,  
 From whom my husband had the Abbey land,  
 774 Came hither, railing, for to know the truth  
 Whether my husband had the lands by grant.  
 776 I told him all, whereat he stormed amain  
 And swore he would cry quittance with the churl,

778 | And, if he did deny his interest,  
 Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.  
 780 | Whenas I saw his choler thus to rise,  
 I whetted on the gentleman with words;  
 782 | And, to conclude, Mosbie, at last we grew  
 To composition for my husband's death.  
 784 | I gave him ten pound [for] to hire knaves,  
 By some device to make away the churl;  
 786 | When he is dead, he should have twenty more  
 And repossess his former lands again.  
 788 | On this we 'greed, and he is ridden straight  
 To London, for to bring his death about.

790 | **Mosb.** But call you this good news?

792 | **Alice.** Ay, sweetheart, be they not?

794 | **Mosb.** 'Twere cheerful news to hear the churl were dead;  
 796 | But trust me, Alice, I take it passing ill  
 You would be so forgetful of our state  
 798 | To make recount of it to every groom.  
 What! to acquaint each stranger with our drifts,  
 800 | Chiefly in case of murther, why, 'tis the way  
 To make it open unto Arden's self  
 802 | And bring thyself and me to ruin both.  
 Forewarned, forearmed; who threats his enemy,  
 804 | Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.

806 | **Alice.** I did it for the best.

808 | **Mosb.** Well, seeing 'tis done, cheerly let it pass.  
 You know this Greene; is he not religious?  
 810 | A man, I guess, of great devotiön?

812 | **Alice.** He is.

814 | **Mosb.** Then, sweet Alice, let it pass: I have a drift  
 Will quiet all, whatever is amiss.

816 |

*Here re-enters Clarke with Susan.*

818 |

**Alice.** How now, Clarke? have you found me false?  
 820 | Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

822 | **Clark.** You did.

824 | **Mosb.** And what? wilt be a match?

826 | **Clark.** A match, i' faith, sir: ay, the day is mine.

828 The painter lays his colours to the life,  
His pencil draws no shadows in his love.  
Susan is mine.

830 *Alice.* You make her blush.

832 *Mosb.* What, sister, is it Clarke must be the man?

834 *Susan.* It resteth in your grant; some words are past,  
836 And haply we be grown unto a match,  
If you be willing that it shall be so.

838 *Mosb.* Ah, Master Clarke, it resteth at my grant:  
840 You see my sister's yet at my dispose,  
But, so you'll grant me one thing I shall ask,  
842 I am content my sister shall be yours.

844 *Clark.* What is it, Master Mosbie?

846 *Mosb.* I do remember once in secret talk  
You told me how you could compound by art  
848 A crucifix impoisonèd,  
That whoso look upon it should wax blind  
850 And with the scent be stifled, that ere long  
He should die poisoned that did view it well.  
852 I would have you make me such a crucifix.  
And then I'll grant my sister shall be yours.

854 *Clark.* Though I am loth, because it toucheth life,  
856 Yet, rather or I'll leave sweet Susan's love,  
I'll do it, and with all the haste I may.  
858 But for whom is it?

860 *Alice.* Leave that to us. Why, Clarke, is it possible  
That you should paint and draw it out yourself,  
862 The colours being baleful and impoisoned,  
And no ways prejudice yourself withal?

864 *Mosb.* Well questioned, Alice; Clarke, how answer you that?

866 *Clark.* Very easily: I'll tell you straight  
868 How I do work of these impoisoned drugs.  
I fasten on my spectacles so close  
870 As nothing can any way offend my sight;  
Then, as I put a leaf within my nose,  
872 So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell,  
And softly as another work I paint.

874

876 **Mosb.** 'Tis very well; but against when shall I have it?

878 **Clark.** Within this ten days.

880 **Mosb.** 'Twill serve the turn. –  
Now, Alice, let's in and see what cheer you keep.

882 *[Exit Clarke.]*

884 I hope, now Master Arden is from home,  
You'll give me leave to play your husband's part.

886 **Alice.** Mosbie, you know, who's master of my heart,  
888 He well may be the master of the house.

890 *[Exeunt.]*

ACT II.SCENE I.

*Country between Feversham and London.*

*Enter Greene and Bradshaw.*

1 **Brad.** See you them that comes yonder, Master Greene?  
2

3 **Greene.** Ay, very well: do you know them?  
4

*Here enters Black Will and Shakebag.*

5  
6 **Brad.** The one I know not, but he seems a knave  
7  
8 Chiefly for bearing the other company;  
9 For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,  
10 Lives not again upon the earth.  
11 Black Will is his name. I tell you, Master Greene,  
12 At Boulogne, he and I were fellow-soldiers,  
13 Where he played such pranks  
14 As all the camp feared him for his villainy.  
15 I warrant you he bears so bad a mind  
16 That for a crown he'll murder any man.

17 **Greene.** The fitter is he for my purpose, marry!

18 **Will.** How now, fellow Bradshaw? Whither away so  
19 early?  
20

21 **Brad.** O Will, times are changed: no fellows now,  
22  
23 Though we were once together in the field;  
24 Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can.  
25

26 **Will.** Why, Bradshaw, was not thou and I fellow-  
27 soldiers at Boulogne, where I was a corporal, and thou  
28 but a base mercenary groom? No fellows now!  
29 because you are a goldsmith and have a little plate in  
30 your shop! You were glad to call me 'fellow Will,'  
31 and with a cursy to the earth, 'One snatch, good  
32 corporal,' when I stole the half-ox from John the  
33 vitler, and domineered with it amongst good  
34 fellows in one night.  
35

36 **Brad.** Ay, Will, those days are past with me.  
37

38 **Will.** Ay, but they be not past with me, for I keep that

40 | same honourable mind still. Good neighbour  
 42 | Bradshaw, you are too proud to be my fellow; but  
 44 | were it not that I see more company coming down the  
 46 | hill, I would be fellows with you once more, and share  
 48 | crowns with you too. But let that pass, and tell me  
 50 | whither you go.

46 | **Brad.** To London, Will, about a piece of service,  
 48 | Wherein haply thou mayest pleasure me.

50 | **Will.** What is it?

52 | **Brad.** Of late Lord Cheiny lost some plate,  
 54 | Which one did bring and sold it at my shop,  
 56 | Saying he served Sir Antony Cooke.  
 58 | A search was made, the plate was found with me,  
 60 | And I am bound to answer at the 'size.  
 62 | Now, Lord Cheiny solemnly vows, if law  
 64 | Will serve him, he'll hang me for his plate.  
 66 | Now I am going to London upon hope  
 68 | To find the fellow. Now, Will, I know  
 70 | Thou art acquainted with such companions.

62 | **Will.** What manner of man was he?

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

72 | **Will.** What apparel had he?

74 | **Brad.** A watchet satin doublet all-to torn,  
 76 | The inner side did bear the greater show;  
 78 | A pair of thread-bare velvet hose, seam rent,  
 80 | A wosted stockin rent above the shoe,  
 82 | A livery cloak, but all the lace was off;  
 84 | 'Twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate.

80 | **Will.** Sirrah Shakebag, canst thou remember since  
 82 | we trolled the bowl at Sittingburgh, where I broke  
 84 | the tapster's head of the Lion with a cudgel-stick?

84 | **Shake.** Ay, very well, Will.

86 | **Will.** Why, it was with the money that the plate was



88 | sold for. – Sirrah Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him  
 90 | that can tell thee who sold thy plate?

92 | **Brad.** Who, I pray thee, good Will?

94 | **Will.** Why, 'twas one Jack Fitten. He's now in  
 96 | Newgate for stealing a horse, and shall be arraigned  
 98 | the next 'size.

100 | **Brad.** Why, then let Lord Cheiny seek Jack Fitten forth,  
 102 | For I'll back and tell him who robbed him of his plate.  
 104 | This cheers my heart; – Master Greene, I'll leave you,  
 106 | For I must to the Isle of Sheppy with speed.

108 | **Greene.** Before you go, let me intreat you  
 110 | To carry this letter to Mistress Arden of Feversham  
 112 | And humbly recommend me to herself.

114 | **Brad.** That will I, Master Greene, and so farewell. –  
 116 | Here, Will, there's a crown for thy good news.

118 | [Exit Bradshaw.]

120 | **Will.** Farewell, Bradshaw; I'll drink no water for thy  
 122 | sake whilst this lasts. – Now, gentleman, shall we have  
 124 | your company to London?

126 | **Greene.** Nay, stay, sirs:  
 128 | A little more I needs must use your help,  
 130 | And in a matter of great consequence,  
 132 | Wherein if you'll be secret and profound,  
 134 | I'll give you twenty angels for your pains.

136 | **Will.** How? twenty angels? give my fellow George  
 138 | Shakebag and me twenty angels? And if thou'lt have  
 140 | thy own father slain, that thou may'st inherit his land,  
 142 | we'll kill him.

144 | **Shake.** Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all  
 146 | thy kin.

148 | **Greene.** Well, this it is: Arden of Feversham  
 150 | Hath highly wrongèd me about the Abbey land,  
 152 | That no revenge but death will serve the turn.  
 154 | Will you two kill him? here's the angels down,  
 156 | And I will lay the platform of his death.

158 | **Will.** Plat me no platforms; give me the money, and

136 | I'll stab him as he stands pissing against a wall, but I'll  
kill him.

138 | **Shake.** Where is he?

140 | **Greene.** He is now at London, in Aldersgate Street.

142 | **Shake.** He's dead as if he had been condemned by an  
144 | Act of Parliament, if once Black Will and I swear his  
death.

146 | **Greene.** Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,  
148 | Ye shall have twenty more.

150 | **Will.** My fingers itches to be at the peasant. Ah, that  
I might be set a-work thus through the year, and that  
152 | murther would grow to an occupation, that a man might  
[follow] without danger of law: – zounds, I warrant I  
154 | should be warden of the company! Come, let us be  
going, and we'll bait at Rochester, where I'll give thee  
156 | a gallon of sack to hansel the match withal.

158 | [Exeunt.]

ACT II, SCENE II.

*London. A Street near St. Paul's.*

*Enter Michael.*

1 **Mich.** I have gotten such a letter as will touch the  
2 painter: And thus it is:

4 *Here enters Arden and Franklin  
and hears Michael read this letter.*

6 'My duty remembered, Mistress Susan, hoping in God  
8 you be in good health, as I Michael was at the making  
hereof. This is to certify you that as the turtle true,  
10 when she hath lost her mate, sitteth alone, so I,  
mourning for your absence, do walk up and down  
12 Paul's till one day I fell asleep and lost my master's  
pantofles. Ah, Mistress Susan, abolish that paltry  
14 painter, cut him off by the shins with a frowning look  
of your crabbed countenance, and think upon Michael,  
16 who, drunk with the dregs of your favour, will cleave  
as fast to your love as a plaster of pitch to a galled  
18 horse-back. Thus hoping you will let my passions  
penetrate, or rather impetrate mercy of your meek  
20 hands, I end.

22 'Yours, Michael, or else not Michael.'

24 **Arden.** Why, you paltry knave,  
Stand you here loitering, knowing my affairs,  
26 What haste my business craves to send to Kent?

28 **Frank.** Faith, friend Michael, this is very ill,  
Knowing your master hath no more but you,  
30 And do ye slack his business for your own?

32 **Arden.** Where is the letter, sirrah? let me see it.

34 *[Then he gives him the letter.]*

36 See, Master Franklin, here's proper stuff:  
Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,  
38 A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth; –  
Sirrah, let me hear no more of this,  
40 Nor for thy life once write to her a word.

42 *Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*

44 | Wilt thou be married to so base a trull?  
 'Tis Mosbie's sister: come I once at home,  
 46 | I'll rouse her from remaining in my house. –  
 Now, Master Franklin, let us go walk in Paul's;  
 48 | Come but a turn or two, and then away.

50 | *[Exeunt Arden, Franklin and Michael.]*

52 | **Greene.** The first is Arden, and that's his man,  
 The other is Franklin, Arden's dearest friend.

54 | **Will.** Zounds, I'll kill them all three.

56 | **Greene.** Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case;  
 58 | But stand close, and take you fittest standing,  
 And at his coming forth speed him:  
 60 | To the Nag's Head, there is this coward's haunt.  
 But now I'll leave you till the deed be done.

62 | *[Exit Greene.]*

64 | **Shake.** If he be not paid his own, ne'er trust  
 66 | Shakebag.

68 | **Will.** Sirrah Shakebag, at his coming forth I'll run him  
 through, and then to the Blackfriars, and there take  
 70 | water and away.

72 | **Shake.** Why, that's the best; but see thou miss him  
 not.

74 | **Will.** How can I miss him, when I think on the forty  
 76 | angels I must have more?

78 | *Here enters Prentice.*

80 | **Prent.** 'Tis very late; I were best shut up my stall, for  
 here will be old filching, when the press comes forth  
 82 | of Paul's.

84 | *[Then lets he down his window,  
 and it breaks Black Will's head.]*

86 | **Will.** Zounds, draw, Shakebag, draw, I am almost killed.

88 | **Prent.** We'll tame you, I warrant.

90 | **Will.** Zounds, I am tame enough already.

92 |

*Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*

94

**Arden.** What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

96

**Frank.** 'Tis nothing but some brabbling paltry fray,  
Devised to pick men's pockets in the throng.

98

**Arden.** Is't nothing else? come, Franklin, let's away.

100

[*Exeunt Arden, Franklin and Michael.*]

102

**Will.** What 'mends shall I have for my broken head?

104

**Prent.** Marry, this 'mends, that if you get you not  
away all the sooner, you shall be well beaten and sent  
to the Counter.

106

108

[*Exit Prentice.*]

110

**Will.** Well, I'll be gone, but look to your signs, for I'll  
pull them down all. – Shakebag, my broken head  
grieves me not so much as by this means Arden hath  
escaped.

112

114

116

*Here enters Greene.*

118

I had a glimpse of him and his companion.

120

**Greene.** Why, sirs, Arden's as well as I; I met him  
and Franklin going merrily to the ordinary. – What,  
dare you not do it?

122

124

**Will.** Yes, sir, we dare do it; but, were my consent to  
give again, we would not do it under ten pound more.  
I value every drop of my blood at a French crown.  
I have had ten pound to steal a dog, and we have no  
more here to kill a man; but that a bargain is a bargain,  
and so forth, you should do it yourself.

126

128

130

**Greene.** I pray thee, how came thy head broke?

132

**Will.** Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not?

134

**Shake.** Standing against a stall, watching Arden's  
coming, a boy let down his shop-window and broke  
his head; whereupon arose a brawl, and in the tumult  
Arden escaped us and passed by unthought on. But  
forbearance is no acquittance; another time we'll do it,  
I warrant thee.

136

138

140

142

144 **Greene.** I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow,  
 And let us bethink us on some other place  
 Where Arden may be met with handsomely.  
 146 Remember how devoutly thou hast sworn  
 To kill the villain; think upon thine oath.

148  
 150 **Will.** Tush, I have broken five hundred oaths!  
 But wouldst thou charm me to effect this deed,  
 Tell me of gold, my resolution's fee;  
 152 Say thou seest Mosbie kneeling at my knees,  
 Offering me service for my high attempt,  
 154 And sweet Alice Arden, with a lap of crowns,  
 Comes with a lowly cursy to the earth,  
 156 Saying 'Take this but for thy quarterage,  
 Such yearly tribute will I answer thee.'  
 158 Why, this would steel soft-mettled cowardice,  
 With which Black Will was never tainted yet.  
 160 I tell thee, Greene, the forlorn traveller,  
 Whose lips are glued with summer's parching heat,  
 162 Ne'er longed so much to see a running brook  
 As I to finish Arden's tragedy.  
 164 Seest thou this gore that cleaveth to my face?  
 From hence ne'er will I wash this bloody stain,  
 166 Till Arden's heart be panting in my hand.

168 **Greene.** Why, that's well said; but what saith Shakebag?

170 **Shake.** I cannot paint my valour out with words:  
 But, give me place and opportunity,  
 172 Such mercy as the starven lioness,  
 When she is dry-sucked of her eager young,  
 174 Shows to the prey that next encounters her,  
 On Arden so much pity would I take.

176  
 178 **Greene.** So should it fare with men of firm resolve.  
 And now, sirs, seeing that this accident  
 Of meeting him in Paul's hath no success,  
 180 Let us bethink us on some other place  
 Whose earth may swallow up this Arden's blood.

182

*Here enters Michael.*

184

See, yonder comes his man: and wot you what?  
 186 The foolish knave is in love with Mosbie's sister,  
 And for her sake, whose love he cannot get  
 188 Unless Mosbie solicit his suit,  
 The villain hath sworn the slaughter of his master.

190 We'll question him, for he may stead us much, –  
 How now, Michael, whither are you going?

192 *Mich.* My master hath new-supped,  
 194 And I am going to prepare his chamber.

196 *Greene.* Where supped Master Arden?

198 *Mich.* At the Nag's Head, at the eighteen-pence  
 ordinary. – How now, Master Shakebag? what, Black  
 200 Will! God's dear lady, how chance your face is so  
 bloody?

202 *Will.* Go to, sirrah, there is a chance in it; this  
 204 sauciness in you will make you be knocked.

206 *Mich.* Nay, an you be offended, I'll be gone.

208 *Greene.* Stay, Michael, you may not [es]cape us so.  
 Michael, I know you love your master well.

210 *Mich.* Why, so I do; but wherefore urge you that?

212 *Greene.* Because I think you love your mistress better.

214 *Mich.* So think not I; but say, i' faith, what, if I should?

216 *Shake.* Come to the purpose, Michael; we hear  
 218 You have a pretty love in Feversham.

220 *Mich.* Why, have I two or three, what's that to thee!

222 *Will.* You deal too mildly with the peasant. Thus it is: –  
 'Tis known to us that you love Mosbie's sister;  
 224 We know besides that you have ta'en your oath  
 To further Mosbie to your mistress' bed,  
 226 And kill your master for his sister's sake.  
 Now, sir, a poorer coward than yourself  
 228 Was never fostered in the coast of Kent:  
 How comes it then that such a knave as you  
 230 Dare swear a matter of such consequence?

232 *Greene.* Ah, Will –

234 *Will.* Tush, give me leave, there's no more but this:  
 Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all;  
 236 And hadst thou or should'st thou utter it,  
 We have devised a complat under hand,  
 238 Whatever shall betide to any of us,  
 To send thee roundly to the devil of hell.

240 | And therefore thus: I am the very man,  
 Marked in my birth-hour by the Destinies,  
 242 | To give an end to Arden's life on earth;  
 Thou but a member but to whet the knife  
 244 | Whose edge must search the closet of his breast:  
 Thy office is but to appoint the place,  
 246 | And train thy master to his tragedy;  
 Mine to perform it when occasion serves.  
 248 | Then be not nice, but here devise with us  
 How and what way we may conclude his death.

250 | **Shake.** So shalt thou purchase Mosbie for thy frien[d],  
 252 | And by his friendship gain his sister's love.

254 | **Greene.** So shall thy mistress be thy favourer,  
 And thou disburdened of the oath thou made.

256 | **Mich.** Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,  
 258 | Sith you have urged me so apparently,  
 That I have vowed my master Arden's death;  
 260 | And he whose kindly love and liberal hand  
 Doth challenge nought but good deserts of me,  
 262 | I will deliver over to your hands.  
 This night come to his house at Aldersgate:  
 264 | The doors I'll leave unlocked against you come.  
 No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,  
 266 | Over the threshold to the inner court,  
 But on your left hand shall you see the stairs  
 268 | That leads directly to my master's chamber:  
 There take him and dispose him as ye please.  
 270 | Now it were good we parted company;  
 What I have promisèd, I will perform.

272 | **Will.** Should you deceive us, 'twould go wrong with you.

274 | **Mich.** I will accomplish all I have revealed.

276 | **Will.** Come, let's go drink: choler makes me as dry as  
 278 | a dog.

280 | *[Exeunt Will, Greene, and Shakebag. Manet Michael.]*

282 | **Mich.** Thus feeds the lamb securely on the down,  
 Whilst through the thicket of an arbour brake  
 284 | The hunger-bitten wolf o'erpriest his hant  
 And takes advantage for to eat him up.  
 286 | Ah, harmless Arden, how, how hast thou misdome,  
 That thus thy gentle life is levelled at?



288 | The many good turns that thou hast done to me.  
Now must I quittance with betraying thee.  
290 | I that should take the weapon in my hand  
And buckler thee from ill-intending foes,  
292 | Do lead thee with a wicked fraudulent smile,  
As unsuspected, to the slaughter-house.  
294 | So have I sworn to Mosbie and my mistress,  
So have I promised to the slaughtermen;  
296 | And should I not deal currently with them,  
Their lawless rage would take revenge on me.  
298 | Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once:  
Let pity lodge where feeble women lie,  
300 | I am resolved, and Arden needs must die.

302 |

[*Exit Michael.*]

ACT III.SCENE I.

*A Room in Franklin's House, at Aldersgate in London.*

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

1 **Arden.** No, Franklin, no: if fear or stormy threats,  
 2 If love of me or care of womanhood,  
 If fear of God or common speech of men,  
 4 Who mangle credit with their wounding words,  
 And couch dishonour as dishonour buds,  
 6 Might join repentance in her wanton thoughts,  
 No question then but she would turn the leaf  
 8 And sorrow for her dissolution;  
 But she is rooted in her wickedness,  
 10 Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed;  
 Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,  
 12 And reprehension makes her vice to grow  
 As Hydra's head that plenished by decay.  
 14 Her faults, methink, are painted in my face,  
 For every searching eye to over-read;  
 16 And Mosbie's name, a scandal unto mine,  
 Is deeply trenchèd in my blushing brow.  
 18 Ah, Franklin, Franklin, when I think on this,  
 My heart's grief rends my other powers  
 20 Worse than the conflict at the hour of death.

22 **Frank.** Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament:  
 She will amend, and so your griefs will cease;  
 24 Or else she'll die, and so your sorrows end.  
 If neither of these two do haply fall,  
 26 Yet let your comfort be that others bear  
 Your woes, twice doubled all, with patiënce.

28 **Arden.** My house is irksome; there I cannot rest.

30 **Frank.** Then stay with me in London; go not home.

32 **Arden.** Then that base Mosbie doth usurp my room  
 34 And makes his triumph of my being thence.  
 At home or not at home, where'er I be,  
 36 Here, here it lies, ah Franklin, here it lies  
 That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

38

*Here enters Michael.*

40 **Frank.** Forget your griefs a while; here comes your man.

42 **Arden.** What a-clock is't, sirrah?

44 **Mich.** Almost ten.

46 **Arden.** See, see, how runs away the weary time!  
48 Come, Master Franklin, shall we go to bed?

50 [Exeunt Arden and Michael. Manet Franklin.]

52 **Frank.** I pray you, go before: I'll follow you. –  
Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy!  
54 What pity-moving words, what deep-fetched sighs,  
What grievous groans and overlading woes  
56 Accompanies this gentle gentleman!  
Now will he shake his care-oppressèd head,  
58 Then fix his sad eyes on the sullen earth,  
Ashamed to gaze upon the open world;  
60 Now will he cast his eyes up towards the heavens,  
Looking that ways for redress of wrong:  
62 Sometimes he seeketh to beguile his grief  
And tells a story with his careful tongue;  
64 Then comes his wife's dishonour in his thoughts  
And in the middle cutteth off his tale,  
66 Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.  
So woe-begone, so inly-charged with woe,  
68 Was never any lived and bare it so.

70 *Here re-enters Michael.*

72 **Mich.** My master would desire you come to bed.

74 **Frank.** Is he himself already in his bed?

76 [Exit Franklin. Manet Michael.]

78 **Mich.** He is, and fain would have the light away. –  
Conflicting thoughts, encampèd in my breast,  
80 Awake me with the echo of their strokes,  
And I, a judge to censure either side,  
82 Can give to neither wishèd victory.  
My master's kindness pleads to me for life  
84 With just demand, and I must grant it him:  
My mistress she hath forced me with an oath,  
86 For Susan's sake, the which I may not break,  
For that is nearer than a master's love:  
88 That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,

90 And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem, –  
 Two rougher ruffians never lived in Kent, –  
 Have sworn my death, if I infringe my vow,  
 92 A dreadful thing to be considered of.  
 Methinks I see them with their bolstered hair  
 94 Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,  
 And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,  
 96 Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths,  
 Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,  
 98 Art mangled by their ireful instruments.  
 Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,  
 100 And pitiless Black Will cries: 'Stab the slave!  
 The peasant will detect the tragedy!'  
 102 The wrinkles in his foul death-threatening face  
 Gapes open wide, like graves to swallow men.  
 104 My death to him is but a merriment,  
 And he will murder me to make him sport. –  
 106 He comes, he comes! Ah, Master Franklin, help!  
 Call on the neighbours, or we are but dead!

108

*Here enters Franklin and Arden.*

110

**Frank.** What dismal outcry calls me from my rest?

112

**Arden.** What hath occasioned such a fearful cry?

114

Speak, Michael: hath any injured thee?

116

**Mich.** Nothing, sir; but as I fell asleep,

118

Upon the threshold leaning to the stairs,

120

I had a fearful dream that troubled me,

122

And in my slumber thought I was beset

124

With murderer-thieves that came to rifle me.

126

My trembling joints witness my inward fear:

128

I crave your pardons for disturbing you.

124

**Arden.** So great a cry for nothing I ne'er heard.

126

What? are the doors fast locked and all things safe?

128

**Mich.** I cannot tell; I think I locked the doors.

130

**Arden.** I like not this, but I'll go see myself. –

132

Ne'er trust me but the doors were all unlocked:

134

This negligence not half contenteth me.

136

Get you to bed, and if you love my favour,

138

Let me have no more such pranks as these. –

140

Come, Master Franklin, let us go to bed.

142

**Frank.** Ay, by my faith; the air is very cold. –

144

**Arden.** Ay, by my faith; the air is very cold. –

138

Michael, farewell; I pray thee dream no more.

*[Exeunt.]*

ACT III, SCENE II.*Outside Franklin's house.**Here enters Will, Greene, and Shakebag.*

1 **Shake.** Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,  
 2 And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth,  
 And with the black fold of her cloudy robe  
 4 Obscures us from the eyesight of the world,  
 In which sweet silence such as we triumph.  
 6 The lazy minutes linger on their time,  
 As loth to give due audit to the hour,  
 8 Till in the watch our purpose be complete  
 And Arden sent to everlasting night. –  
 10 Greene, get you gone, and linger here about,  
 And at some hour hence come to us again,  
 12 Where we will give you instance of his death.

14 **Greene.** Speed to my wish, whose will so e'er says no;  
 And so I'll leave you for an hour or two.

[Exit Greene.]

18 **Will.** I tell thee, Shakebag, would this thing were done:  
 20 I am so heavy that I can scarce go;  
 This drowsiness in me bodes little good.

22 **Shake.** How now, Will? become a precisian?  
 24 Nay, then let's go sleep, when bugs and fears  
 Shall kill our courages with their fancy's work.

26 **Will.** Why, Shakebag, thou mistakes me much,  
 28 And wrongs me too in telling me of fear.  
 Were't not a serious thing we go about,  
 30 It should be slipt till I had fought with thee,  
 To let thee know I am no coward, I.  
 32 I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.

34 **Shake.** Why, thy speech bewrayed an inly-kind of fear,  
 And savoured of a weak-relenting spirit.  
 36 Go forward now in that we have begun,  
 And afterwards attempt me when thou darest.

38 **Will.** And if I do not, Heaven cut me off!  
 40 But let that pass, and show me to this house,  
 Where thou shalt see I'll do as much as Shakebag.

42

44 **Shake.** This is the door; – but soft, methinks 'tis shut.  
The villain Michael hath deceivèd us.

46 **Will.** Soft, let me see, Shakebag; – 'tis shut indeed.  
48 Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slave will hear.

**Shake.** It will not be; the white-livered peasant  
50 Is gone to bed, and laughs us both to scorn.

52 **Will.** And he shall buy his merriment as dear  
As ever coistril bought so little sport:  
54 Ne'er let this sword assist me when I need,  
But rust and canker after I have sworn,  
56 If I, the next time that I meet the hind,  
Lop not away his leg, his arm, or both.

58 **Shake.** And let me never draw a sword again,  
60 Nor prosper in the twilight, cockshut light,  
When I would fleece the wealthy passenger,  
62 But lie and languish in a loathsome den,  
Hated and spit at by the goers-by,  
64 And in that death may die unpitièd,  
If I, the next time that I meet the slave,  
66 Cut not the nose from off the coward's face  
And trample on it for this villainy.

68 **Will.** Come, let's go seek out Greene; I know he'll swear.

70 **Shake.** He were a villain, an he would not swear.  
72 'Twould make a peasant swear amongst his boys,  
That ne'er durst say before but 'yea' and 'no,'  
74 To be thus flouted of a coistril.

76 **Will.** Shakebag, let's seek out Greene, and in the morning  
At the alehouse butting Arden's house  
78 Watch the out-coming of that prick-eared cur,  
And then let me alone to handle him.

80

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III, SCENE III.

*A room in Franklin's house as before.*

*Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*

1 **Arden.** Sirrah, get you back to Billingsgate  
2 And learn what time the tide will serve our turn;  
3 Come to us in Paul's. First go make the bed,  
4 And afterwards go hearken for the flood.

6 [Exit Michael.]

8 Come, Master Franklin, you shall go with me.  
9 This night I dreamed that, being in a park,  
10 A toil was pitched to overthrow the deer,  
11 And I upon a little rising hill  
12 Stood whistly watching for the herd's approach.  
13 Even there, methoughts, a gentle slumber took me,  
14 And summoned all my parts to sweet repose;  
15 But in the pleasure of this golden rest  
16 An ill-thewed foster had removed the toil,  
17 And rounded me with that beguiling home  
18 Which late, methought, was pitched to cast the deer.  
19 With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,  
20 And at the noise another herdman came,  
21 With fauchon drawn, and bent it at my breast,  
22 Crying aloud, 'Thou art the game we seek!'  
23 With this I waked and trembled every joint,  
24 Like one obscured in a little bush,  
25 That sees a lion foraging about,  
26 And, when the dreadful forest-king is gone,  
27 He pries about with timorous suspect  
28 Throughout the thorny casements of the brake,  
29 And will not think his person dangerless,  
30 But quakes and shivers, though the cause be gone:  
31 So, trust me, Franklin, when I did awake,  
32 I stood in doubt whether I waked or no:  
33 Such great impression took this fond surprise.  
34 God grant this vision bedem me any good.

36 **Frank.** This fantasy doth rise from Michael's fear,  
37 Who being awakèd with the noise he made,  
38 His troubled senses yet could take no rest;  
39 And this, I warrant you, procured your dream.

40 **Arden.** It may be so, God frame it to the best:



42 | But oftentimes my dreams presage too true.

44 | **Frank.** To such as note their nightly fantasies,  
Some one in twenty may incur belief;  
46 | But use it not, 'tis but a mockery.

48 | **Arden.** Come, Master Franklin; we'll now walk in Paul's  
And dine together at the ordinary,  
50 | And by my man's direction draw to the key,  
And with the tide go down to Feversham.  
52 | Say, Master Franklin, shall it not be so?

54 | **Frank.** At your good pleasure, sir; I'll bear you company.

56 | [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III, SCENE IV.

*Aldersgate.*

*Here enters Michael at one door.*

*Here enters Greene, Will,  
and Shakebag at another door.*

1 **Will.** Draw, Shakebag, for here's that villain Michael.

2  
3 **Greene.** First, Will, let's hear what he can say.

4 **Will.** Speak, milksop slave, and never after speak.

6 **Mich.** For God's sake, sirs, let me excuse myself:  
8 For here I swear, by Heaven and earth and all,  
I did perform the outmost of my task,  
10 And left the doors unbolted and unlocked.  
But see the chance: Franklin and my master  
12 Were very late conferring in the porch,  
And Franklin left his napkin where he sat  
14 With certain gold knit in it, as he said.  
Being in bed, he did bethink himself,  
16 And coming down he found the doors unshut:  
He locked the gates, and brought away the keys,  
18 For which offence my master rated me.  
But now I am going to see what flood it is,  
20 For with the tide my master will away;  
Where you may fron[t] him well on Rainham Down,  
22 A place well-fitting such a stratagem.

24 **Will.** Your excuse hath somewhat mollified my choler. –  
Why now, Greene, 'tis better now nor e'er it was.

26 **Greene.** But, Michael, is this true?

28 **Mich.** As true as I report it to be true.

30 **Shake.** Then, Michael, this shall be your penance,  
32 To feast us all at the Salutation,  
Where we will plat our purpose th[o]roughly.

34 **Greene.** And, Michael, you shall bear no news of this tide,  
36 Because they two may be in Rainham Down  
Before your master.

38 **Mich.** Why, I'll agree to anything you'll have me,

40 | So you will except of my company.

42 |

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III, SCENE V.*Arden's House at Feversham.**Here enters Mosbie.*

1 **Mosb.** Disturbèd thoughts drives me from company  
 2 And dries my marrow with their watchfulness;  
 Continual trouble of my moody brain  
 4 Feebles my body by excess of drink,  
 And nips me as the bitter north-east wind  
 6 Doth check the tender blossoms in the spring.  
 Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,  
 8 That tables not with foul suspiciön;  
 And he but pines amongst his delicates,  
 10 Whose troubled mind is stuffed with discontent.  
 My golden time was when I had no gold;  
 12 Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure;  
 My daily toil begat me night's repose,  
 14 My night's repose made daylight fresh to me.  
 But since I climbed the top-bough of the tree  
 16 And sought to build my nest among the clouds,  
 Each gentle starry gale doth shake my bed,  
 18 And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.  
 But whither doth contemplation carry me?  
 20 The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells,  
 Is hedged behind me that I cannot back,  
 22 But needs must on, although to danger's gate.  
 Then, Arden, perish thou by that decree;  
 24 For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up  
 To make my harvest nothing but pure corn.  
 26 And for his pains I'll heave him up a while,  
 And after smother him to have his wax:  
 28 Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.  
 Then is there Michael and the painter too,  
 30 Chief actors to Arden's overthrow;  
 Who when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat,  
 32 They will insult upon me for my meed,  
 Or fright me by detecting of his end.  
 34 I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone  
 To make these curs pluck out each other's throat,  
 36 And then am I sole ruler of mine own.  
 Yet Mistress Arden lives; but she's myself,  
 38 And holy Church rites makes us two but one.  
 But what for that? I may not trust you, Alice:  
 40 You have supplanted Arden for my sake,

42 And will extirpen me to plant another.  
 'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed,  
 44 And I will cleanly rid my hands of her.

*Here enters Alice.*

46 But here she comes, and I must flatter her. —  
 48 How now, Alice? what, sad and passionate?  
 Make me partaker of thy pensiveness:  
 50 Fire divided burns with lesser force.

52 *Alice.* But I will dam that fire in my breast  
 Till by the force thereof my part consume.  
 54 Ah, Mosbie!

56 *Mosb.* Such deep pathaires, like to a cannon's burst  
 Discharged against a ruinated wall,  
 58 Breaks my relenting heart in thousand pieces.  
 Ungentle Alice, thy sorrow is my sore;  
 60 Thou know'st it well, and 'tis thy policy  
 To forge distressful looks to wound a breast  
 62 Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad.  
 It is not love that loves to anger love.

64 *Alice.* It is not love that loves to murder love.

66 *Mosb.* How mean you that?

68 *Alice.* Thou knowest how dearly Arden loved me.

70 *Mosb.* And then?

72 *Alice.* And then — conceal the rest, for 'tis too bad,  
 74 Lest that my words be carried with the wind,  
 And published in the world to both our shames.  
 76 I pray thee, Mosbie, let our springtime wither;  
 Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.  
 78 Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwix us,  
 For now I blush and tremble at the thoughts!

80 *Mosb.* What? are you changed?

82 *Alice.* Ay, to my former happy life again,  
 84 From title of an odious strumpet's name  
 To honest Arden's wife, not Arden's honest wife.  
 86 Ha, Mosbie! 'tis thou has rifled me of that  
 And made me slanderous to all my kin;  
 88 Even in my forehead is thy name engraven,

A mean artificer, that low-born name.  
 90 I was bewitched: woe worth the hapless hour  
 And all the causes that enchanted me!  
 92 *Mosb.* Nay, if thou ban, let me breathe curses forth,  
 94 And if you stand so nicely at your fame,  
 Let me repent the credit I have lost.  
 96 I have neglected matters of import  
 That would have stated me above thy state,  
 98 Forslowed advantages, and spurned at time:  
 Ay, Fortune's right hand Mosbie hath forsook  
 100 To take a wanton giglot by the left.  
 I left the marriage of an honest maid,  
 102 Whose dowry would have weighed down all thy wealth,  
 Whose beauty and demeanour far exceeded thee:  
 104 This certain good I lost for changing bad,  
 And wrapt my credit in thy company.  
 106 I was bewitched, – that is no theme of thine,  
 And thou unhallowed has enchanted me.  
 108 But I will break thy spells and exorcisms,  
 And put another sight upon these eyes  
 110 That shewed my heart a raven for a dove.  
 Thou art not fair, I viewed thee not till now;  
 112 Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not;  
 And now the rain hath beaten off thy guilt,  
 114 Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit.  
 It grieves me not to see how foul thou art,  
 116 But mads me that ever I thought thee fair.  
 Go, get thee gone, a copesmate for thy hinds;  
 118 I am too good to be thy favourite.  
 120 *Alice.* Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true,  
 Which often hath been told me by my friends,  
 122 That Mosbie loves me not but for my wealth,  
 Which too incredulous I ne'er believed.  
 124 Nay, hear me speak, Mosbie, a word or two;  
 I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.  
 126 Look on me, Mosbie, or I'll kill myself:  
 Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.  
 128 If thou cry war, there is no peace for me;  
 I will do penance for offending thee,  
 130 And burn this prayer-book, where I here use  
 The holy word that had converted me.  
 132 See, Mosbie, I will tear away the leaves,  
 And all the leaves, and in this golden cover  
 134 Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell;  
 And thereon will I chiefly meditate,

136 And hold no other sect but such devotion.  
 Wilt thou not look? is all thy love overwhelmed?  
 138 Wilt thou not hear? what malice stops thine ears?  
 Why speaks thou not? what silence ties thy tongue?  
 140 Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is,  
 And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,  
 142 And spoke as smoothly as an orator,  
 When I have bid thee hear or see or speak,  
 144 And art thou sensible in none of these?  
 Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault,  
 146 And I deserve not Mosbie's muddy looks.  
 A fence of trouble is not thickened still:  
 148 Be clear again, I'll ne'er more trouble thee.

150 **Mosb.** O no, I am a base artificer:  
 My wings are feathered for a lowly flight.  
 152 Mosbie? fie! no, not for a thousand pound.  
 Make love to you? why, 'tis unpardonable;  
 154 We beggars must not breathe where gentiles are.

156 **Alice.** Sweet Mosbie is as gentle as a king,  
 And I too blind to judge him otherwise.  
 158 Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands,  
 Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns;  
 160 So, whatsoe'er my Mosbie's father was,  
 Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

162 **Mosb.** Ah, how you women can insinuate,  
 164 And clear a trespass with your sweet-set tongue!  
 I will forget this quarrel, gentle Alice,  
 166 Provided I'll be tempted so no more.

168 *Here enters Bradshaw.*

170 **Alice.** Then with thy lips seal up this new-made match.

172 **Mosb.** Soft, Alice, here comes somebody.

174 **Alice.** How now, Bradshaw, what's the news with you?

176 **Brad.** I have little news, but here's a letter  
 That Master Greene importuned me to give you.

178 **Alice.** Go in, Bradshaw; call for a cup of beer;  
 180 'Tis almost supper-time, thou shalt stay with us.

182 *[Exit Bradshaw.]*

184 *Then she reads the letter.*

186 | *'We have missed of our purpose at London, but shall*  
188 | *perform it by the way. We thank our neighbour*

188 | *Bradshaw. –*

190 | *Yours, Richard Greene.'*

192 | How likes my love the tenor of this letter?

194 | **Mosb.** Well, were his date completed and expired.

196 | **Alice.** Ah, would it were! Then comes my happy hour:  
198 | Till then my bliss is mixed with bitter gall.

198 | Come, let us in to shun suspicion.

200 | **Mosb.** Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee.

202 |

[*Exeunt.*]



ACT III, SCENE VI.*Rainham Down, Kent.**Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*

1 **Shake.** Come, Will, see thy tools be in a readiness!  
 2 Is not thy powder dank, or will thy flint strike fire?

4 **Will.** Then ask me if my nose be on my face,  
 Or whether my tongue be frozen in my mouth.  
 6 Zounds, here's a coil!  
 You were best swear me on th' intergatories  
 8 How many pistols I have took in hand,  
 Or whether I love the smell of gunpowder,  
 10 Or dare abide the noise the dag will make,  
 Or will not wink at flashing of the fire.  
 12 I pray thee, Shakebag, let this answer thee,  
 That I have took more purses in this down  
 14 Than e'er thou handledst pistols in thy life.

16 **Shake.** Ay, haply thou has picked more in a throng:  
 But, should I brag what booties I have took,  
 18 I think the overplus that's more than thine  
 Would mount to a greater sum of money  
 20 Then either thou or all thy kin are worth.  
 Zounds, I hate them as I hate a toad  
 22 That carry a muscado in their tongue,  
 And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand.

24 **Will.** O Greene, intolerable!  
 26 It is not for mine honour to bear this.  
 Why, Shakebag, I did serve the king at Boulogne,  
 28 And thou canst brag of nothing that thou hast done.

30 **Shake.** Why, so can Jack of Feversham,  
 That sounded for a fillip on the nose,  
 32 When he that gave it him holloed in his ear,  
 And he supposed a cannon-bullet hit him.

*Then they fight.*

36 **Greene.** I pray you, sirs, list to Aesop's talk:  
 38 Whilst two stout dogs were striving for a bone,  
 There comes a cur and stole it from them both;  
 40 So, while you stand striving on these terms of manhood,  
 Arden escapes us, and deceives us all.

42

44 **Shake.** Why, he begun.

45 **Will.** And thou shalt find I'll end;  
46 I do but slip it until better time:  
47 But, if I do forget –

48 [Then he kneels down  
49 and holds up his hands to Heaven.]

50

51 **Greene.** Well, take your fittest standings, and once more  
52 Lime well your twigs to catch this weary bird.  
53 I'll leave you, and at your dag's discharge  
54 Make towards, like the longing water-dog  
55 That coucheth till the fowling-piece be off,  
56 Then seizeth on the prey with eager mood.  
57 Ah, might I see him stretching forth his limbs,  
58 As I have seen them beat their wings ere now!

59

60 **Shake.** Why, that thou shalt see, if he come this way.

61

62 **Greene.** Yes, that he doth, Shakebag, I warrant thee:  
63 But brawl not when I am gone in any case.  
64 But, sirs, be sure to speed him when he comes,  
65 And in that hope I'll leave you for an hour.

66

67 [Exit Greene.]

68

69 Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.

70

71 **Mich.** 'Twere best that I went back to Rochester:  
72 The horse halts downright; it were not good  
73 He travelled in such pain to Feversham;  
74 Removing of a shoe may haply help it.

75

76 **Arden.** Well, get you back to Rochester; but, sirrah, see  
77 Ye overtake us ere we come to Rainham Down,  
78 For 't will be very late ere we get home.

79

80 **Mich.** [Aside] Ay, God he knows, and so doth Will and Shakebag,  
81 That thou shalt never go further than that down;  
82 And therefore have I pricked the horse on purpose,  
83 Because I would not view the massacre.

84

85 [Exit Michael.]

86

87 **Arden.** Come, Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.

88

89 **Frank.** I [do] assure you, sir, you task me much:  
90 A heavy blood is gathered at my heart,

92 | And on the sudden is my wind so short  
 As hindereth the passage of my speech;  
 94 | So fierce a qualm yet ne'er assailed me.

96 | **Arden.** Come, Master Franklin, let us go on softly:  
 The annoyance of the dust or else some meat  
 98 | You eat at dinner cannot brook you.  
 I have been often so, and soon amended.

100 | **Frank.** Do you remember where my tale did leave?

102 | **Arden.** Ay, where the gentleman did check his wife.

104 | **Frank.** She being reprehended for the fact,  
 106 | Witness produced that took her with the deed,  
 Her glove brought in which there she left behind,  
 108 | And many other assured arguments,  
 Her husband asked her whether it were not so.

110 | **Arden.** Her answer then? I wonder how she looked,  
 112 | Having forsworn it with such vehement oaths,  
 And at the instant so approved upon her.

114 | **Frank.** First did she cast her eyes down to the earth,  
 116 | Watching the drops that fell amain from thence;  
 Then softly draws she forth her handkercher,  
 118 | And modestly she wipes her tear-stained face;  
 Then hemmed she out, to clear her voice should seem,  
 120 | And with a majesty addressed herself  
 T' encounter all their accusatiöns. –  
 122 | Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more;  
 This fighting at my heart makes short my wind.

124 | **Arden.** Come, we are almost now at Rainham Down:  
 126 | Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way;  
 I would you were in state to tell it out.

128 | **Shake.** Stand close, Will, I hear them coming.

130 | *Here enters Lord Cheiny with his men.*

132 | **Will.** Stand to it, Shakebag, and be resolute.

134 | **Cheiny.** Is it so near night as it seems,  
 136 | Or will this black-faced evening have a shower? –  
 What, Master Arden? you are well met,  
 138 | I have longed this fortnight's day to speak with you:  
 You are a stranger, man, in the Isle of Sheppy.

140 | **Arden.** Your honour's always! bound to do you service.  
 142 | **Cheiny.** Come you from London, and ne'er a man with you?  
 144 | **Arden.** My man's coming after, but here's  
 146 | My honest friend that came along with me.  
 148 | **Cheiny.** My Lord Protector's man I take you to be.  
 150 | **Frank.** Ay, my good lord, and highly bound to you.  
 152 | **Cheiny.** You and your friend come home and sup with me.  
 154 | **Arden.** I beseech your honour pardon me;  
 I have made a promise to a gentleman,  
 156 | My honest friend, to meet him at my house;  
 The occasion is great, or else would I wait on you.  
 158 | **Cheiny.** Will you come to-morrow and dine with me,  
 160 | And bring your honest friend along with you?  
 I have divers matters to talk with you about.  
 162 | **Arden.** To-morrow we'll wait upon your honour.  
 164 | **Cheiny.** [*To his men*]  
 166 | One of you stay my horse at the top of the hill. –  
 What! Black Will? for whose purse wait you?  
 168 | Thou wilt be hanged in Kent, when all is done.  
 170 | **Will.** Not hanged, God save your honour;  
 I am your bedesman, bound to pray for you.  
 172 | **Cheiny.** I think thou ne'er said'st prayer in all thy life. –  
 174 | [*To his men*] One of you give him a crown: –  
 And, sirrah, leave this kind of life;  
 176 | If thou beest tainted for a penny-matter,  
 And come in question, surely thou wilt truss. –  
 178 | Come, Master Arden, let us be going;  
 Your way and mine lies four miles together.  
 180 |   
 [Exeunt. Manet Black Will and Shakebag.]  
 182 | **Will.** The devil break all your necks at four miles' end!  
 184 | Zounds, I could kill myself for very anger!  
 His lordship chops me in,  
 186 | Even when my dag was levelled at his heart.  
 I would his crown were molten down his throat.  
 188 |

190 **Shake.** Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck.  
Did ever man escape as thou hast done?  
Well, I'll discharge my pistol at the sky,  
192 For by this bullet Arden might not die.

194 *Here enters Greene.*

196 **Greene.** What, is he down? is he dispatched?

198 **Shake.** Ay, in health towards Feversham, to shame us all.

200 **Greene.** The devil he is! why, sirs, how escaped he?

202 **Shake.** When we were ready to shoot,  
Comes my Lord Cheiny to prevent his death.

204 **Greene.** The Lord of Heaven hath preserved him.  
206

**Will.** Preserved a fig! The Lord Cheiny hath preserved him,  
208 And bids him to a feast to his house at Shorlow.  
But by the way once more I'll meet with him,  
210 And, if all the Cheinies in the world say no,  
I'll have a bullet in his breast to-morrow.  
212 Therefore come, Greene, and let us to Feversham.

214 **Greene.** Ay, and excuse ourselves to Mistress Arden:  
O, how she'll chafe when she hears of this!

216 **Shake.** Why, I'll warrant you she'll think we dare not do it.  
218

**Will.** Why, then let us go, and tell her all the matter,  
220 And plat the news to cut him off to-morrow.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.SCENE I.

*Arden's House at Feversham.*

*Here enters Arden, Alice, Franklin, and Michael.*

1 **Arden.** See how the Hours, the guardant of Heaven's gate,  
2 Have by their toil removed the darksome clouds,  
That Sol may well discern the trampled pace  
4 Wherein he wont to guide his golden car;  
The season fits; come, Franklin, let's away.

6 **Alice.** I thought you did pretend some special hunt,  
8 That made you thus cut short the time of rest.

10 **Arden.** It was no chase that made me rise so early,  
But, as I told thee yesternight, to go  
12 To the Isle of Sheppy, there to dine with my Lord Cheiny;  
For so his honour late commanded me.

14 **Alice.** Ay, such kind husbands seldom want excuses;  
16 Home is a wild-cat to a wandering wit.  
The time hath been, – would God it were not past, –  
18 That honour's title nor a lord's command  
Could once have drawn you from these arms of mine.  
20 But my deserts or your desires decay,  
Or both; yet if true love may seem desert,  
22 I merit still to have thy company.

24 **Frank.** Why, I pray you, sir, let her go along with us;  
I am sure his honour will welcome her  
26 And us the more for bringing her along.

28 **Arden.** Content; – [*To Michael*] sirrah, saddle your mistress' nag.

30 [*Exit Michael.*]

32 **Alice.** No, begged favour merits little thanks;  
If I should go, our house would run away,  
34 Or else be stolen; therefore, I'll stay behind.

36 **Arden.** Nay, see how mistaking you are! I pray thee, go.

38 **Alice.** No, no, not now.

40 **Arden.** Then let me leave thee satisfied in this,  
That time nor place nor persons alter me,

42 | But that I hold thee dearer than my life.

44 | **Alice.** That will be seen by your quick return.

46 | **Arden.** And that shall be ere night, and if I live.  
Farewell, sweet Alice, we mind to sup with thee.

48 |

[Exit Alice.]

50 |

*Re-enter Michael.*

52 |

**Frank.** Come, Michael, are our horses ready?

54 |

**Mich.** Ay, your horse are ready, but I am not ready,  
for I have lost my purse, with six and thirty shillings  
in it, with taking up of my master's nag.

58 |

**Frank.** [To Arden] Why, I pray you, let us go before,  
Whilst he stays behind to seek his purse.

60 |

**Arden.** Go to, sirrah, see you follow us to the Isle of Sheppy  
To my Lord Cheiny's, where we mean to dine.

64 |

[Exeunt Arden and Franklin. Manet Michael.]

66 |

**Mich.** So, fair weather after you, for before you lies  
Black Will and Shakebag in the broom close, too close  
for you: they'll be your ferrymen to long home.

70 |

*Here enters the Painter.*

72 |

But who is this? the painter, my corrival, that would  
needs win Mistress Susan.

74 |

**Clark.** How now, Michael? how doth my mistress and  
all at home?

78 |

**Mich.** Who? Susan Mosbie? she is your mistress, too?

80 |

**Clark.** Ay, how doth she and all the rest?

82 |

**Mich.** All's well but Susan; she is sick.

84 |

**Clark.** Sick? Of what disease?

86 |

**Mich.** Of a great fear.

88 |

**Clark.** A fear of what?

90 |

92 **Mich.** A great fever.

94 **Clark.** A fever? God forbid!

96 **Mich.** Yes, faith, and of a lordaine, too, as big as  
yourself.

98 **Clark.** O, Michael, the spleen prickles you. Go to, you  
carry an eye over Mistress Susan.

100 **Mich.** I' faith, to keep her from the painter.  
102

**Clark.** Why more from a painter than from a serving-  
104 creature like yourself?

106 **Mich.** Because you painters make but a painting table  
of a pretty wench, and spoil her beauty with blotting.

108 **Clark.** What mean you by that?  
110

**Mich.** Why, that you painters paint lambs in the lining  
112 of wench's petticoats, and we serving-men put horns  
to them to make them become sheep.

114 **Clark.** Such another word will cost you a cuff or a  
116 knock.

118 **Mich.** What, with a dagger made of a pencil? Faith,  
'tis too weak, and therefore thou too weak to win  
120 Susan.

122 **Clark.** Would Susan's love lay upon this stroke.

124 *[Then he breaks Michael's head.]*

126 *Here enters Mosbie, Greene, and Alice.*

128 **Alice.** I'll lay my life, this is for Susan's love. –  
Stayed you behind your master to this end?  
130 Have you no other time to brabble in  
But now when serious matters are in hand? –  
132 Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised?

134 **Clark.** Ay, here it is; the very touch is death.

136 **Alice.** Then this, I hope, if all the rest do fail,  
Will catch Master Arden,  
138 And make him wise in death that lived a fool. –  
*[To Mosbie]* Why should he thrust his sickle in our corn,  
140 Or what hath he to do with thee, my love,



Or govern me that am to rule myself? –  
142 Forsooth, for credit sake, I must leave thee! –  
Nay, he must leave to live that we may love,  
144 May live, may love; for what is life but love?  
And love shall last as long as life remains,  
146 And life shall end before my love depart.

148 **Mosb.** Why, what [i]s love without true constancy?  
Like to a pillar built of many stones,  
150 Yet neither with good mortar well-compact  
Nor with cement to fasten it in the joints,  
152 But that it shakes with every blast of wind,  
And, being touched, straight falls unto the earth,  
154 And buries all his haughty pride in dust.  
No, let our love be rocks of adamant,  
156 Which time nor place nor tempest can asunder.

158 **Greene.** Mosbie, leave protestations now,  
And let us bethink us what we have to do.  
160 Black Will and Shakebag I have placed in the broom,  
Close watching Arden's coming; let's to them  
162 And see what they have done.

164

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV, SCENE II.

*The Kentish Coast opposite the Isle of Sheppy.*

*Here enters Arden and Franklin.*

1 **Arden.** Oh, ferryman, where art thou?  
2

*Here enters the Ferryman.*

4 **Ferryman.** Here, here, go before to the boat, and I will follow you.  
6

8 **Arden.** We have great haste; I pray thee, come away.

10 **Ferryman.** Fie, what a mist is here!

12 **Arden.** This mist, my friend, is mystical,  
14 Like to a good companion's smoky brain,  
16 That was half drowned with new ale overnight.

18 **Ferryman.** 'Twere pity but his skull were opened to  
20 make more chimney room.

22 **Frank.** Friend, what's thy opinion of this mist?

24 **Ferryman.** I think 'tis like to a curst wife in a little  
26 house, that never leaves her husband till she have  
28 driven him out at doors with a wet pair of eyes; then  
30 looks he as if his house were a-fire, or some of his  
32 friends dead.

34 **Arden.** Speaks thou this of thine own experience?

36 **Ferryman.** Perhaps, ay; perhaps, no: for my wife is as  
38 other women are, that is to say, governed by the moon.

40 **Frank.** By the moon? how, I pray thee?

42 **Ferryman.** Nay, thereby lies a bargain, and you shall not  
44 have it fresh and fasting.

46 **Arden.** Yes, I pray thee, good Ferryman.

48 **Ferryman.** Then for this once; let it be midsummer  
50 moon, but yet my wife has another moon.

52 **Frank.** Another moon?

54 **Ferryman.** Ay, and it hath influences and eclipses.

44

**Arden.** Why, then, by this reckoning you sometimes  
46 play the man in the moon?

48

**Ferrym.** Ay, but you had not best to meddle with that  
moon, lest I scratch you by the face with my bramble-  
50 bush.

52

**Arden.** I am almost stifled with this fog; come, let's away.

54

**Frank.** And, sirrah, as we go, let us have some more  
of your bold yeomanry.

56

**Ferrym.** Nay, by my troth, sir, but flat knavery.

58

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV, SCENE III.

*The Kentish coast, as before.*

*Here enters Will at one door, and Shakebag at another.*

1 **Shake.** Oh, Will, where art thou?

2

4 **Will.** Here, Shakebag, almost in hell's mouth, where I  
cannot see my way for smoke.

6 **Shake.** I pray thee speak still that we may meet by the  
8 sound, for I shall fall into some ditch or other, unless  
my feet see better than my eyes.

10 **Will.** Didst thou ever see better weather to run away  
12 with another man's wife, or play with a wench at pot-  
finger?

14 **Shake.** No; this were a fine world for chandlers, if  
16 this weather would last; for then a man should never  
dine nor sup without candle-light. But, sirrah Will,  
what horses are those that passed?

18

**Will.** Why, didst thou hear any?

20

**Shake.** Ay, that I did.

22

**Will.** My life for thine, 'twas Arden, and his  
24 companion, and then all our labour's lost.

26 **Shake.** Nay, say not so, for if it be they, they may  
28 haply lose their way as we have done, and then we  
may chance meet with them.

30 **Will.** Come, let us go on like a couple of blind  
pilgrims.

32

*[Then Shakebag falls into a ditch.]*

34

**Shake.** Help, Will, help, I am almost drowned.

36

*Here enters the Ferryman.*

38

**Ferryman.** Who's that that calls for help?

40

**Will.** 'Twas none here, 'twas thou thyself.

42

**Ferryman.** I came to help him that called for help. —

44 Why, how now? who is this that's in the ditch?  
 You are well enough served to go without a guide,  
 46 Such weather as this.

48 **Will.** Sirrah,  
 What companies hath passed your ferry this morning?

50 **Ferrym.** None but a couple of gentlemen, that went to  
 52 dine at my Lord Cheiny's.

54 **Will.** Shakebag, did not I tell thee as much?

56 **Ferrym.** Why, sir, will you have any letters carried to  
 them?

58 **Will.** No, sir; get you gone.

60 **Ferrym.** Did you ever see such a mist as this?

62 **Will.** No, nor such a fool as will rather be hought than  
 64 get his way.

66 **Ferrym.** Why, sir, this is no Hough-Monday; you are  
 deceived. – What's his name, I pray you, sir?

68 **Shake.** His name is Black Will.

70 **Ferrym.** I hope to see him one day hanged upon a hill.

72  
 [Exit Ferryman.]

74 **Shake.** See how the sun hath cleared the foggy mist,  
 76 Now we have missed the mark of our intent.

78  
*Here enters Greene, Mosbie, and Alice.*

80 **Mosb.** Black Will and Shakebag, what make you here?  
 What, is the deed done? is Arden dead?

82 **Will.** What could a blinded man perform in arms?  
 84 Saw you not how till now the sky was dark,  
 That neither horse nor man could be discerned?  
 86 Yet did we hear their horses as they passed.

88 **Greene.** Have they escaped you, then, and passed the ferry?

90 **Shake.** Ay, for a while; but here we two will stay,  
 And at their coming back meet with them once more.  
 92 Zounds, I was ne'er so toiled in all my life  
 In following so slight a task as this.

94

**Mosb.** [To Shakebag] How cam'st thou so berayed?

96

**Will.** With making false footing in the dark;  
He needs would follow them without a guide.

98

100

**Alice.** Here's to pay for a fire and good cheer:  
Get you to Feversham to the Flower-de-luce,  
And rest yourselves until some other time.

102

104

**Greene.** Let me alone; it most concerns my state.

106

**Will.** Ay, Mistress Arden, this will serve the turn,  
In case we fall into a second fog.

108

[*Exeunt Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*]

110

**Mosb.** These knaves will never do it, let us give it over.

112

**Alice.** First tell me how you like my new device:  
Soon, when my husband is returning back,  
You and I both marching arm in arm,  
Like loving friends, we'll meet him on the way,  
And boldly beard and brave him to his teeth.  
When words grow hot and blows begin to rise,  
I'll call those cutters forth your tenement,  
Who, in a manner to take up the fray,  
Shall wound my husband Hornsby to the death.

114

116

118

120

122

124

**Mosb.** A fine device! why, this deserves a kiss.

126

[*Exeunt.*]

126

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

*The open country.*

*Here enters Dick Reede and a Sailor.*

1 **Sailor.** Faith, Dick Reede, it is to little end:  
2 His conscience is too liberal, and he too niggardly  
To part from any thing may do thee good.

4  
6 **Reede.** He is coming from Shorlow as I understand;  
Here I'll intercept him, for at his house  
He never will vouchsafe to speak with me.  
8 If prayers and fair entreaties will not serve,  
Or make no battery in his flinty breast,

*Here enters Franklin, Arden, and Michael.*

12 I'll curse the carle, and see what that will do.  
14 See where he comes to further my intent! –  
Master Arden, I am now bound to the sea;  
16 My coming to you was about the plat  
Of ground which wrongfully you detain from me.  
18 Although the rent of it be very small,  
Yet it will help my wife and children,  
20 Which here I leave in Feversham, God knows,  
Needy and bare: for Christ's sake, let them have it!

22  
24 **Arden.** Franklin, hearest thou this fellow speak?  
That which he craves I dearly bought of him,  
Although the rent of it was ever mine. –  
26 Sirrah, you that ask these questions,  
If with thy clamorous impeaching tongue  
28 Thou rail on me, as I have heard thou dost,  
I'll lay thee up so close a twelve-month's day,  
30 As thou shalt neither see the sun nor moon.  
Look to it, for, as surely as I live,  
32 I'll banish pity if thou use me thus.

34 **Reede.** What, wilt thou do me wrong and threat me too,  
Nay, then, I'll tempt thee, Arden, do thy worst. –  
36 God, I beseech thee, show some miracle  
On thee or thine, in plaguing thee for this.  
38 That plot of ground which thou detains from me,  
I speak it in an agony of spirit,  
40 Be ruinous and fatal unto thee!  
Either there be butchered by thy dearest friends,

42 Or else be brought for men to wonder at,  
 Or thou or thine miscarry in that place,  
 44 Or there run mad and end thy cursèd days!

46 **Frank.** Fie, bitter knave, bridle thine envious tongue;  
 For curses are like arrows shot upright,  
 48 Which falling down light on the shooter's head.

50 **Reede.** Light where they will! Were I upon the sea,  
 As oft I have in many a bitter storm,  
 52 And saw a dreadful southern flaw at hand,  
 The pilot quaking at the doubtful storm,  
 54 And all the sailors praying on their knees,  
 Even in that fearful time would I fall down,  
 56 And ask of God, whate'er betide of me,  
 Vengeance on Arden or some misevent  
 58 To show the world what wrong the carle hath done.  
 This charge I'll leave with my distressful wife,  
 60 My children shall be taught such prayers as these;  
 And thus I go, but leave my curse with thee.

62  
 [Exeunt Reede and Sailor.]

64  
**Arden.** It is the railingest knave in Christendom,  
 66 And oftentimes the villain will be mad;  
 It greatly matters not what he says,  
 68 But I assure you I ne'er did him wrong.

70 **Frank.** I think so, Master Arden.

72 **Arden.** Now that our horses are gone home before,  
 My wife may haply meet me on the way.  
 74 For God knows she is grown passing kind of late,  
 And greatly changed from  
 76 The old humour of her wonted frowardness,  
 And seeks by fair means to redeem old faults.

78 **Frank.** Happy the change that alters for the best!  
 80 But see in any case you make no speech  
 Of the cheer we had at my Lord Cheiny's,  
 82 Although most bounteous and liberal,  
 For that will make her think herself more wronged,  
 84 In that we did not carry her along;  
 For sure she grieved that she was left behind.

86  
**Arden.** Come, Franklin, let us strain to mend our pace,  
 88 And take her unawares playing the cook;



90 *Here enters Alice and Mosbie.*

92 For I believe she'll strive to mend our cheer.

94 **Frank.** Why, there's no better creatures in the world,  
Than women are when they are in good humours.

96 **Arden.** Who is that? Mosbie? what, so familiar? –  
98 Injurious strumpet, and thou ribald knave,  
Untwine those arms.

100 **Alice.** Ay, with a sugared kiss let them untwine.

102 **Arden.** Ah, Mosbie! perjured beast! bear this and all!

104 **Mosb.** And yet no hornèd beast; the horns are thine.

106 **Frank.** O monstrous! Nay, then 'tis time to draw.

108 *[Arden and Franklin draw their swords.]*

110 **Alice.** Help, help! they murder my husband!

112 *Here enters Will and Shakebag.*

114 **Shake.** Zounds, who injures Master Mosbie?

116 *[They fight. Shakebag and Mosbie are wounded.]*

118 Help, Will! I am hurt.

120 **Mosb.** I may thank you, Mistress Arden, for this wound.

122 *[Exeunt Mosbie, Will, and Shakebag.]*

124 **Alice.** Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee?  
126 Ah, jealous harebrain man, what hast thou done!  
When we, to welcome thy intended sport,  
128 Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,  
Thou drew'st thy sword, enraged with jealousy,  
And hurt thy friend whose thoughts were free from harm:  
130 All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,  
132 Both done but merrily to try thy patience.  
And me unhappy that devised the jest,  
134 Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood!

136 **Frank.** Marry, God defend me from such a jest!

138 **Alice.** Could'st thou not see us friendly smile on thee,

140 When we joined arms, and when I kissed his cheek?  
 Hast thou not lately found me over-kind?  
 Did'st thou not hear me cry 'they murder thee'?  
 142 Called I not help to set my husband free?  
 No, ears and all were witched; ah, me accursed  
 144 To link in liking with a frantic man!  
 Henceforth I'll be thy slave, no more thy wife,  
 146 For with that name I never shall content thee.  
 If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light;  
 148 If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me;  
 If well-attired, thou thinks I will be gadding;  
 150 If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye:  
 Thus am I still, and shall be while I die.  
 152 Poor wench abused by thy misgovernment!  
  
 154 *Arden.* But is it for truth that neither thou nor he  
 Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour?  
 156  
 158 *Alice.* The heavens can witness of our harmless thoughts!  
  
 160 *Arden.* Then pardon me, sweet Alice, and forgive this fault!  
 Forget but this and never see the like.  
 Impose me penance, and I will perform it,  
 162 For in thy discontent I find a death, –  
 A death tormenting more than death itself.  
 164  
 166 *Alice.* Nay, had'st thou loved me as thou dost pretend,  
 Thou wouldst have marked the speeches of thy friend,  
 Who going wounded from the place, he said  
 168 His skin was pierced only through my device;  
 And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault,  
 170 Thou would'st have followed him, and seen him dressed,  
 And cried him mercy whom thou hast misdome:  
 172 Ne'er shall my heart be eased till this be done.  
  
 174 *Arden.* Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy will,  
 Whate'er it be. For that I injured thee,  
 176 And wronged my friend, shame scourgeth my offence;  
 Come thou thyself, and go along with me,  
 178 And be a mediator 'twixt us two.  
  
 180 *Frank.* Why, Master Arden! know you what you do?  
 Will you follow him that hath dishonoured you?  
 182  
 184 *Alice.* Why, canst thou prove I have been disloyal?  
  
 186 *Frank.* Why, Mosbie taunt you[r] husband with the horn.

188 **Alice.** Ay, after he had reviled him  
By the injurious name of "perjured beast":  
He knew no wrong could spite an jealous man  
190 More than the hateful naming of the horn.

192 **Frank.** Suppose 'tis true; yet is it dangerous  
To follow him whom he hath lately hurt.

194 **Alice.** A fault confessed is more than half amends;  
196 But men of such ill-spirit as yourself  
Work crosses and debates 'twixt man and wife.

198 **Arden.** I pray thee, gentle Franklin, hold thy peace:  
200 I know my wife counsels me for the best.  
I'll seek out Mosbie where his wound is dressed,  
202 And salve [t]his hapless quarrel if I may.

204 *[Exeunt Arden and Alice.]*

206 **Frank.** He whom the devil drives must go perforce.  
Poor gentleman, how soon he is bewitched!  
208 And yet, because his wife is the instrument,  
His friends must not be lavish in their speech.

210 *[Exit Franklin.]*

ACT V.SCENE I.

*A Street in Feversham.*

*Here enters Will, Shakebag, and Greene.*

1 **Will.** Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in killing a  
2 man?

4 **Greene.** I think we shall never do it; let us give it over.

6 **Shake.** Nay, Zounds! we'll kill him, though we be  
hanged at his door for our labour.

8  
10 **Will.** Thou knowest, Greene, that I have lived in  
London this twelve years, where I have made some go  
upon wooden legs for taking the wall on me; divers  
12 with silver noses for saying 'There goes Black Will!'  
I have cracked as many blades as thou hast done nuts.

14 **Greene.** O monstrous lie!

16  
18 **Will.** Faith, in a manner I have. The bawdy-houses  
have paid me tribute; there durst not a whore set up,  
20 unless she have agreed with me first for opening her  
shop-windows. For a cross word of a tapster I have  
pierced one barrel after another with my dagger, and  
22 held him by the ears till all his beer hath run out. In  
Thames Street a brewer's cart was like to have run  
24 over me: I made no more ado, but went to the clerk  
and cut all the notches of his tallies and beat them  
26 about his head. I and my company have taken the  
constable from his watch, and carried him about the  
28 fields on a coltstaff. I have broken a sergeant's head  
with his own mace, and bailed whom I list with my  
30 sword and buckler. All the tenpenny-alehouses[-men]  
would stand every morning with a quart-pot in their  
32 hand, saying, 'Will it please your worship drink?'  
He that had not done so, had been sure to have had  
34 his sign pulled down and his lattice borne away the  
next night. To conclude, what have I not done? Yet  
36 cannot do this; doubtless, he is preserved by miracle.

38 *Here enters Alice and Michael.*

40 **Greene.** Hence, Will! here comes Mistress Arden.

42 **Alice.** Ah, gentle Michael, art thou sure they're friends?

44 **Mich.** Why, I saw them when they both shook hands.  
 When Mosbie bled, he even wept for sorrow,  
 46 And railed on Franklin that was cause of all.  
 No sooner came the surgeon in at doors,  
 48 But my master took to his purse and gave him money,  
 And, to conclude, sent me to bring you word  
 50 That Mosbie, Franklin, Bradshaw, Adam Fowle,  
 With divers of his neighbours and his friends,  
 52 Will come and sup with you at our house this night.

54 **Alice.** Ah, gentle Michael, run thou back again,  
 And, when my husband walks into the fair,  
 56 Bid Mosbie steal from him and come to me;  
 And this night shall thou and Susan be made sure.

58 **Mich.** I'll go tell him.

60 **Alice.** And as thou goest, tell John cook of our guests,  
 62 And bid him lay it on, spare for no cost.

64 *[Exit Michael.]*

66 **Will.** Nay, and there be such cheer, we will bid ourselves. –  
 Mistress Arden, Dick Greene and I do mean to sup with you.

68 **Alice.** And welcome shall you be. Ah, gentlemen,  
 70 How missed you of your purpose yesternight?

72 **Greene.** 'Twas 'long of Shakebag, that unlucky villain.

74 **Shake.** Thou dost me wrong; I did as much as any.

76 **Will.** Nay then, Mistress Arden, I'll tell you how it was:  
 When he should have locked with both his hilts,  
 78 He in a bravery flourished over his head;  
 With that comes Franklin at him lustily,  
 80 And hurts the slave; with that he slinks away.  
 Now his way had been to have come hand and feet,  
 82 one and two round, at his costard; he like a fool bears  
 his sword-point half a yard out of danger. I lie here  
 84 for my life;

86 *[Will demonstrates a defensive posture.]*

88 if the devil come, and he have no more strength than  
 [I have] fence, he shall never beat me from this ward.  
 90 I'll stand to it, a buckler in a skilful hand is as good as

a castle; nay, 'tis better than a sconce, for I have tried it.

92 Mosbie, perceiving this, began to faint:  
With that comes Arden with his arming-sword,  
94 And thrust him through the shoulder in a trice.

96 *Alice.* Ay, but I wonder why you both stood still.

98 *Will.* Faith, I was so amazed, I could not strike.

100 *Alice.* Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,  
For every drop of his detested blood  
102 I would cram in angels in thy fist,  
And kissed thee, too, and hugged thee in my arms.

104 *Will.* Patient yourself, we cannot help it now.  
106 Greene and we two will dog him through the fair,  
And stab him in the crowd, and steal away.

108

*Here enters Mosbie.*

110

*Alice.* It is impossible; but here comes he  
112 That will, I hope, invent some surer means. –  
Sweet Mosbie, hide thy arm, it kills my heart.

114

*Mosb.* Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favour.

116

*Alice.* Ah, say not so; for when I saw thee hurt,  
118 I could have took the weapon thou let'st fall,  
And run at Arden; for I have sworn  
120 That these mine eyes, offended with his sight,  
Shall never close till Arden's be shut up.  
122 This night I rose and walked about the chamber,  
And twice or thrice I thought to have murdered him.

124

*Mosb.* What, in the night? then had we been undone.

126

*Alice.* Why, how long shall he live?

128

*Mosb.* Faith, Alice, no longer than this night. –  
130 Black Will and Shakebag, will you two perform  
The complot that I have laid?

132

*Will.* Ay, or else think me as a villain.

134

*Greene.* And rather than you shall want, I'll help myself.

136

*Mosb.* You, Master Greene, shall single Franklin forth,  
138 And hold him with a long tale of strange news,

140 That he may not come home till supper-time.  
I'll fetch Master Arden home, and we like friends  
Will play a game or two at tables here.

142  
144 **Alice.** But what of all this? how shall he be slain?

**Mosb.** Why, Black Will and Shakebag locked within the  
counting-house  
146 Shall at a certain watchword given rush forth.

148 **Will.** What shall the watchword be?

150 **Mosb.** 'Now I take you'; that shall be the word:  
But come not forth before in any case.

152  
154 **Will.** I warrant you. But who shall lock me in?

**Alice.** That will I do; thou'st keep the key thyself.

156  
158 **Mosb.** Come, Master Greene, go you along with me. –  
See all things ready, Alice, against we come.

160 **Alice.** Take no care for that; send you him home.

162 [Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.]

164 And if he e'er go forth again, blame me.  
Come, Black Will, that in mine eyes art fair;  
166 Next unto Mosbie do I honour thee;  
Instead of fair words and large promises  
168 My hands shall play you golden harmony:  
How like you this? say, will you do it, sirs?

170  
172 **Will.** Ay, and that bravely, too. Mark my device:  
Place Mosbie, being a stranger, in a chair,  
And let your husband sit upon a stool,  
174 That I may come behind him cunningly,  
And with a towel pull him to the ground,  
176 Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve;  
That done, bear him behind the Abbey,  
178 That those that find him murdered may suppose  
Some slave or other killed him for his gold.

180  
182 **Alice.** A fine device! you shall have twenty pound,  
And, when he is dead, you shall have forty more,  
And, lest you might be suspected staying here,  
184 Michael shall saddle you two lusty geldings;  
Ride whither you will, to Scotland, or to Wales,  
186 I'll see you shall not lack, where'er you be.

188 **Will.** Such words would make one kill a thousand men!  
Give me the key: which is the counting-house?

190  
192 **Alice.** Here would I stay and still encourage you;  
But that I know how resolute you are.

194 **Shake.** Tush, you are too faint-hearted; we must do it.

196 **Alice.** But Mosbie will be there, whose very looks  
Will add unwonted courage to my thought,  
198 And make me the first that shall adventure on him.

200 **Will.** Tush, get you gone; 'tis we must do the deed.  
When this door opens next, look for his death.

202  
204 *[Exeunt Will and Shakebag into the counting-house.]*

206 **Alice.** Ah, would he now were here that it might open!  
I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms,  
That like the snakes of black Tisiphone  
208 Sting me with their embracings! Mosbie's arms  
Shall compass me, and, were I made a star,  
210 I would have none other spheres but those.  
There is no nectar but in Mosbie's lips!  
212 Had chaste Diana kissed him, she, like me,  
Would grow love-sick, and from her watery bower  
214 Fling down Endymion and snatch him up:  
Then blame not me that slay a silly man  
216 Not half so lovely as Endymion.

218 *Here enters Michael.*

220 **Mich.** Mistress, my master is coming hard by.

222 **Alice.** Who comes with him?

224 **Mich.** Nobody but Mosbie.

226 **Alice.** That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables, and  
when thou hast done, stand before the counting-house  
228 door.

230 **Mich.** Why so?

232 **Alice.** Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

234 **Mich.** What? shall he die to-night?

236 **Alice.** Ay, Michael.



238 **Mich.** But shall not Susan know it?

240 **Alice.** Yes, for she'll be as secret as ourselves.

242 **Mich.** That's brave. I'll go fetch the tables.

244 **Alice.** But, Michael, hark to me a word or two:  
When my husband is come in, lock the street-door;  
246 He shall be murdered or the guests come in.

248 [Exit Michael.]

250 *Here enters Arden and Mosbie.*

252 Husband, what mean you to bring Mosbie home?  
Although I wished you to be reconciled,  
254 'Twas more for fear of you than love of him.  
Black Will and Greene are his companiöns,  
256 And they are cutters, and may cut you short:  
Therefore I thought it good to make you friends.  
258 But wherefore do you bring him hither now?  
You have given me my supper with his sight.

260 **Mosb.** Master Arden, methinks your wife would have me gone.

262 **Arden.** No, good Master Mosbie; women will be prating. –  
264 Alice, bid him welcome; he and I are friends.

266 **Alice.** You may enforce me to it, if you will;  
But I had rather die than bid him welcome.  
268 His company hath purchased me ill friends,  
And therefore will I ne'er fréquent it more.

270 **Mosbie.** [Aside] *Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble!*

272 **Arden.** Now he is here, you will not serve me so.

274 **Alice.** I pray you be not angry or displeas'd;  
276 I'll bid him welcome, seeing you'll have it so. –  
You are welcome, Master Mosbie; will you sit down?

278 **Mosb.** I know I am welcome to your loving husband;  
280 But for yourself, you speak not from your heart.

282 **Alice.** And if I do not, sir, think I have cause.

284 **Mosb.** Pardon me, Master Arden; I'll away.

286 **Arden.** No, good Master Mosbie.

288 **Alice.** [To Mosbie]

290 We shall have guests enough, though you go hence.

292 **Mosb.** I pray you, Master Arden, let me go.

294 **Arden.** I pray thee, Mosbie, let her prate her fill.

296 **Alice.** The doors are open, sir, you may be gone.

298 **Michael.** [*Aside*] Nay, that's a lie, for I have locked the doors.

300 **Arden.** Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine, I'll make them friends. –

302 [*Michael brings a cup of wine.*]

304 And, gentle Mistress Alice, seeing you are so stout,  
You shall begin! – frown not, I'll have it so.

306 **Alice.** I pray you meddle with that you have to do.

308 **Arden.** Why, Alice! how can I do too much for him  
Whose life I have endangered without cause?

310 **Alice.** 'Tis true; and, seeing 'twas partly through my means,  
312 I am content to drink to him for this once. –

314 [*Alice drinks from cup.*]

316 Here, Master Mosbie! and I pray you, henceforth  
Be you as strange to me as I to you.

318 Your company hath purchased me ill friends,  
And I for you, God knows, have undeserved  
320 Been ill-spoken of in every place;  
Therefore henceforth frequent my house no more.

322 **Mosb.** I'll see your husband in despite of you. –

324 Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by Heaven,  
Thou ne'er shalt see me more after this night,  
326 I'll go to Rome rather than be forsworn.

328 **Arden.** Tush, I'll have no such vows made in my house.

330 **Alice.** Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear; –  
And, on that condition, Mosbie, pledge me here.

332 **Mosb.** Ay, as willingly as I mean to live.

334 **Arden.** Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet?

336 **Alice.** It will by then you have played a game at tables.

338 **Arden.** Come, Master Mosbie, what shall we play for?  
 340 **Mosb.** Three games for a French crown, sir, and please you.  
 342 **Arden.** Content.  
 344  
 346 *[Then they play at the tables.]*  
*Enter Will and Shakebag from the counting-room.*  
 348 **Will.** *[Aside to Alice]*  
*Can he not take him yet? what a spite is that!*  
 350 **Alice.** *[Aside to Will]*  
 352 *Not yet, Will; take heed he see thee not.*  
 354 **Will.** *I fear he will spy me as I am coming.*  
 356 **Michael.** *To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.*  
 358 **Mosb.** One ace, or else I lose the game.  
 360 *[Mosbie throws dice.]*  
 362 **Arden.** Marry, sir, there's two for failing.  
 364 **Mosb.** Ah, Master Arden, now I can take you.  
 366 *[Then Will pulls him down with a towel.]*  
 368 **Arden.** Mosbie! Michael! Alice! what will you do?  
 370 **Will.** Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing else.  
 372 **Mosb.** There's for the pressing iron you told me of.  
 374 *[Stabs him.]*  
 376 **Shake.** And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve.  
 378 *[Stabs him.]*  
 380 **Alice.** What! groans thou? nay, then give me the weapon!  
 Take this for hindering Mosbie's love and mine.  
 382 *[She stabs him.]*  
 384 **Mich.** O, mistress!  
 386 **Will.** Ah, that villain will betray us all.  
 388 **Mosb.** Tush, fear him not; he will be secret.

390 **Mich.** Why, dost thou think I will betray myself?  
392  
394 **Shake.** In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,  
396 The widow Chambly; I'll to her house now,  
And if she will not give me harborough,  
I'll make booty of the quean even to her smock.

398 **Will.** Shift for yourselves; we two will leave you now.

400 **Alice.** First lay the body in the counting-house.  
402 *[Then they lay the body in the Counting-house.]*

404 **Will.** We have our gold; Mistress Alice, adieu;  
Mosbie, farewell, and Michael, farewell too.  
406 *[Exeunt Will and Shakebag.]*

408 *Enter Susan.*

410 **Susan.** Mistress, the guests are at the doors.  
412 Hearken, they knock: what, shall I let them in?

414 **Alice.** Mosbie, go thou and bear them company.  
416 *[Exit Mosbie.]*

418 And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.  
420 *[Susan washes the floor.]*

422 **Susan.** The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out.  
424 *[Alice kneels and scrapes the floor.]*

426 **Alice.** But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood; –  
The more I strive, the more the blood appears!  
428

430 **Susan.** What's the reason, Mistress, can you tell?  
432 **Alice.** Because I blush not at my husband's death.  
*Here enters Mosbie.*

434 **Mosb.** How now? what's the matter? is all well?  
436 **Alice.** Ay, well, if Arden were alive again.  
438 In vain we strive, for here his blood remains.  
440 **Mosb.** Why, strew rushes on it, can you not?

442 This wench doth nothing: fall unto the work.

444 *Alice.* 'Twas thou that made me murther him.

446 *Mosb.* What of that?

448 *Alice.* Nay, nothing, Mosbie, so it be not known.

450 *Mosb.* Keep thou it close, and 'tis impossible.

452 *Alice.* Ah, but I cannot! was he not slain by me?  
My husband's death torments me at the heart.

454 *Mosb.* It shall not long torment thee, gentle Alice;  
I am thy husband, think no more of him.

456

*Here enters Adam Fowle and Bradshaw.*

458

*Brad.* How now, Mistress Arden? what ail you weep?

460

*Mosb.* Because her husband is abroad so late.  
A couple of ruffians threatened him yesternight,  
And she, poor soul, is afraid he should be hurt.

464

*Adam.* Is't nothing else? tush, he'll be here anon.

466

*Here enters Greene.*

468

*Greene.* Now, Mistress Arden, lack you any guests?

470

*Alice.* Ah, Master Greene, did you see my husband lately?

472

*Greene.* I saw him walking behind the Abbey even now.

474

*Here enters Franklin.*

476

*Alice.* I do not like this being out so late. –  
Master Franklin, where did you leave my husband?

478

480 *Frank.* Believe me I saw him not since morning.  
Fear you not, he'll come anon; meantime  
482 You may do well to bid his guests sit down.

484 *Alice.* Ay, so they shall; – Master Bradshaw, sit you there; –  
I pray you, be content, I'll have my will. –  
486 Master Mosbie, sit you in my husband's seat.

488 *Michael.* [Aside to Susan]  
*Susan, shall thou and I wait on them?*

490 | *Or, an thou sayest the word, let us sit down too.*

492 | **Susan.** [*Aside to Michael*]  
*Peace, we have other matters now in hand.*  
 494 | *I fear me, Michael, all will be bewrayed.*

496 | **Michael.** *Tush, so it be known that I shall marry thee*  
*in the morning, I care not though I be hanged ere*  
 498 | *night. But to prevent the worst, I'll buy some ratsbane.*

500 | **Susan.** *Why, Michael, wilt thou poison thyself?*

502 | **Michael.** *No, but my mistress, for I fear she'll tell.*

504 | **Susan.** *Tush, Michael; fear not her, she's wise enough.*

506 | **Mosb.** *Sirrah Michael, give's a cup of beer. –*  
*Mistress Arden, here's to your husband.*

508 | **Alice.** *My husband!*

510 | **Frank.** *What ails you, woman, to cry so suddenly?*

512 | **Alice.** *Ah, neighbours, a sudden qualm came over my heart;*  
 514 | *My husband being forth torments my mind.*  
*I know something's amiss, he is not well;*  
 516 | *Or else I should have heard of him ere now.*

518 | **Mosbie.** [*Aside*] *She will undo us through her foolishness.*

520 | **Greene.** *Fear not, Mistress Arden, he's well enough.*

522 | **Alice.** *Tell not me; I know he is not well:*  
*He was not wont for to stay thus late. –*  
 524 | *Good Master Franklin, go and seek him forth,*  
*And if you find him, send him home to me,*  
 526 | *And tell him what a fear he hath put me in.*

528 | **Franklin.** [*Aside*] *I like not this; I pray God all be well. –*  
*I'll seek him out, and find him if I can.*

530 |

[*Exeunt Franklin, Mosbie, and Greene.*]

532 |

**Alice.** [*Aside to Michael*]  
 534 | *Michael, how shall I do to rid the rest away?*

536 | **Michael.** [*Aside to Alice*]  
*Leave that to my charge, let me alone. –*  
 538 | *'Tis very late, Master Bradshaw,*  
*And there are many false knaves abroad,*

540 And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

542 **Brad.** Faith, friend Michael, and thou sayest true.  
Therefore I pray thee light's forth and lend's a link.

544  
[*Exeunt Bradshaw, Adam, and Michael.*]

546 **Alice.** Michael, bring them to the doors, but do not stay;  
548 You know I do not love to be alone. –  
Go, Susan, and bid thy brother come:  
550 But wherefore should he come? Here is nought but fear;  
Stay, Susan, stay, and help to counsel me.

552 **Susan.** Alas, I counsel! fear frights away my wits.

554  
[*Then they open the counting-house door,  
556 and look upon Arden.*]

558 **Alice.** See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies,  
Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore.

560 **Susan.** My brother, you, and I shall rue this deed.

562 **Alice.** Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,  
564 And let our salt-tears be his obsequies.

566  
[*Alice and Susan drag out Arden's body.*]

568  
*Here enters Mosbie and Greene.*

570 **Mosb.** How now, Alice, whither will you bear him?

572 **Alice.** Sweet Mosbie, art thou come? Then weep that will:  
I have my wish in that I joy thy sight.

574 **Greene.** Well, it hooves us to be circumspect.

576 **Mosb.** Ay, for Franklin thinks that we have murdered him.

578 **Alice.** Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life.  
580 We'll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

582  
*Here enters Michael.*

584 **Mich.** O mistress, the Mayor and all the watch  
Are coming towards our house with glaives and bills.

586 **Alice.** Make the door fast; let them not come in.

588 **Mosb.** Tell me, sweet Alice, how shall I escape?

590

**Alice.** Out at the back-door, over the pile of wood,  
592 And for one night lie at the Flower-de-luce.

594

**Mosb.** That is the next way to betray myself.

596

**Greene.** Alas, Mistress Arden, the watch will take me here,  
And cause suspicion, where else would be none.

598

**Alice.** Why, take that way that Master Mosbie doth;  
600 But first convey the body to the fields.

602

[Then Michael and Susan bear the body  
into the fields.]

604

**Mosb.** Until to-morrow, sweet Alice, now farewell:  
606 And see you confess nothing in any case.

608

**Greene.** Be resolute, Mistress Alice, betray us not,  
But cleave to us as we will stick to you.

610

[Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.]

612

**Alice.** Now, let the judge and juries do their worst:  
614 My house is clear, and now I fear them not.

616

*Re-enter Michael and Susan.*

618

**Susan.** As we went, it snowed all the way,  
Which makes me fear our footsteps will be spied.

620

**Alice.** Peace, fool, the snow will cover them again.

622

**Susan.** But it had done before we came back again.

624

[A knocking is sounded.]

626

**Alice.** Hark, hark, they knock! go, Michael, let them in.

628

*Here enters the Mayor and the Watch.*

630

How now, Master Mayor, have you brought my husband home?

632

**Mayor.** I saw him come into your house an hour ago.

634

**Alice.** You are deceived; it was a Londoner.

636

**Mayor.** Mistress Arden, know you not one that is called Black  
Will?

638



640 **Alice.** I know none such: what mean these questions?

642 **Mayor.** I have the Council's warrant to apprehend him.

644 **Alice.** [*Aside*] I am glad it is no worse. –  
Why, Master Mayor, think you I harbour any such?

646 **Mayor.** We are informed that here he is;  
And therefore pardon us, for we must search.

648 **Alice.** Ay, search, and spare you not, through every room:  
650 Were my husband at home, you would not offer this.

652 *Here enters Franklin.*

654 Master Franklin, what mean you come so sad?

656 **Frank.** Arden, thy husband and my friend, is slain.

658 **Alice.** Ah, by whom? Master Franklin, can you tell?

660 **Frank.** I know not; but behind the Abbey  
There he lies murdered in most piteous case.

662 **Mayor.** But, Master Franklin, are you sure 'tis he?

664 **Frank.** I am too sure; would God I were deceived.

666 **Alice.** Find out the murtherers, let them be known.

668 **Frank.** Ay, so they shall: come you along with us.

670 **Alice.** Wherefore?

672 **Frank.** Know you this hand-towel and this knife?

674 **Susan.** [*Aside to Michael*]  
676 *Ah, Michael, through this thy negligence*  
*Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.*

678 **Michael.** [*Aside to Susan*]  
680 *I was so afraid I knew not what I did:*  
*I thought I had thrown them both into the well.*

682 **Alice.** It is the pig's blood we had to supper.  
684 But wherefore stay you? find out the murtherers.

686 **Mayor.** I fear me you'll prove one of them yourself.

688 **Alice.** I one of them? what mean such questions?

690 **Frank.** I fear me he was murdered in this house  
And carried to the fields; for from that place  
692 Backwards and forwards may you see  
The print of many feet within the snow.  
694 And look about this chamber where we are,  
And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;  
696 For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,  
Which argueth he was murdered in this room.  
698  
699 **Mayor.** Look in the place where he was wont to sit. –  
700 See, see! his blood! it is too manifest.  
702 **Alice.** It is a cup of wine that Michael shed.  
704 **Mich.** Ay, truly.  
706 **Frank.** It is his blood, which, strumpet, thou hast shed.  
But if I live, thou and thy 'complices  
708 Which have conspired and wrought his death shall rue it.  
710 **Alice.** Ah, Master Franklin, God and Heaven can tell  
I loved him more than all the world beside.  
712 But bring me to him, let me see his body.  
714 **Frank.** Bring that villain and Mosbie's sister too;  
And one of you go to the Flower-de-luce,  
716 And seek for Mosbie, and apprehend him too.  
718

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V, SCENE II.

*An obscure street in London.*

*Here enters Shakebag solus.*

1 **Shake.** The widow Chambly in her husband's days I  
2 kept; and now he's dead, she is grown so stout she will  
not know her old companions. I came thither, thinking  
4 to have had harbour as I was wont, and she was ready  
to thrust me out at doors; but whether she would or  
6 no, I got me up, and as she followed me, I spurned  
her down the stairs, and broke her neck, and cut her  
8 tapster's throat, and now I am going to fling them in  
the Thames. I have the gold; what care I though it be  
10 known! I'll cross the water and take sanctuary.

12

*[Exit.]*

ACT V, SCENE III.*Arden's House at Feversham.**Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice, Franklin,  
Michael, and Susan.*

1 **Mayor.** See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies;  
2 Confess this foul fault and be penitent.

4 **Alice.** Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say? –  
The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds;  
6 This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth  
Speaks as it falls, and asks me why I did it. –  
8 Forgive me, Arden: I repent me now,  
And, would my death save thine, thou should'st not die.  
10 Rise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy love,  
And frown not on me when we meet in Heaven:  
12 In Heaven I'll love thee, though on earth I did not.

14 **Mayor.** Say, Mosbie, what made thee murder him?

16 **Frank.** Study not for an answer; look not down:  
His purse and girdle found at thy bed's head  
18 Witness sufficiently thou didst the deed;  
It bootless is to swear thou didst it not.

20  
22 **Mosb.** I hired Black Will and Shakebag, ruffians both,  
And they and I have done this murderous deed.  
But wherefore stay we? Come and bear me hence.

24  
26 **Frank.** Those ruffians shall not escape; I will up to London,  
And get the Council's warrant to apprehend them.

28 [Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE IV.*The Kentish Coast.**Here enters Will.*

1 **Will.** Shakebag, I hear, hath taken sanctuary,  
2 But I am so pursued with hues and cries  
For petty robberies that I have done,  
4 That I can come unto no sanctuary.  
Therefore must I, in some oyster-boat,  
6 At last be fain to go on-board some hoy,  
And so to Flushing. There is no staying here.  
8 At Sittingburgh the watch was like to take me,  
And had not I with my buckler covered my head,  
10 And run full blank at all adventures,  
I am sure I had ne'er gone further than that place;  
12 For the constable had twenty warrants to apprehend me,  
Besides that, I robbed him and his man once at Gadshill.  
14 Farewell, England; I'll to Flushing now.

16

*[Exit Will.]*

ACT V, SCENE V.*Justice-room at Feversham.**Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice, Michael,  
Susan, and Bradshaw.*

1 **Mayor.** Come, make haste and bring away the prisoners.

2  
3 **Brad.** Mistress Arden, you are now going to God,  
4 And I am by the law condemned to die  
5 About a letter I brought from Master Greene.  
6 I pray you, Mistress Arden, speak the truth:  
7 Was I ever privy to your intent or no?

8  
9 **Alice.** What should I say? You brought me such a letter,  
10 But I dare swear thou knewest not the contents.  
11 Leave now to trouble me with worldly things,  
12 And let me meditate upon my saviour Christ,  
13 Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed.

14  
15 **Mosb.** How long shall I live in this hell of grief?  
16 Convey me from the presence of that strumpet.

17 **Alice.** Ah, but for thee I had never been [a] strumpet.  
18 What cannot oaths and protestations do,  
19 When men have opportunity to woo?  
20 I was too young to sound thy villainies,  
21 But now I find it and repent too late.

22  
23 **Susan.** Ah, gentle brother, wherefore should I die?  
24 I knew not of it till the deed was done.

25  
26 **Mosb.** For thee I mourn more than for myself;  
27 But let it suffice, I cannot save thee now.

28  
29 **Mich.** [To Susan] And if your brother and my mistress  
30 Had not promised me you in marriage,  
31 I had ne'er given consent to this foul deed.

32  
33 **Mayor.** Leave to accuse each other now,  
34 And listen to the sentence I shall give. —  
35 Bear Mosbie and his sister to London straight,  
36 Where they in Smithfield must be executed;  
37 Bear Mistress Arden unto Canterbury,  
38 Where her sentence is she must be burnt;  
39 Michael and Bradshaw in Feversham must suffer death.  
40

42 | **Alice.** Let my death make amends for all my sins.

44 | **Mosb.** Fie upon women! this shall be my song;  
But bear me hence, for I have lived too long.

46 | **Susan.** Seeing no hope on earth, in Heaven is my hope.

48 | **Mich.** Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

50 | **Brad.** My blood be on his head that gave the sentence.

52 | **Mayor.** To speedy execution with them all!

54

[*Exeunt.*]

EPILOGUE.

*Here enters Franklin.*

1 **Frank.** Thus have you seen the truth of Arden's death.  
 2 As for the ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will,  
 The one took sanctuary, and, being sent for out,  
 4 Was murderèd in Southwark as he passed  
 To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.  
 6 Black Will was burned in Flushing on a stage;  
 Greene was hanged at Osbridge in Kent;  
 8 The painter fled and how he died we know not.  
 But this above the rest is to be noted:  
 10 Arden lay murderèd in that plot of ground  
 Which he by force and violence held from Reede;  
 12 And in the grass his body's print was seen  
 Two years and more after the deed was done.  
 14 Gentlemen, we hope you'll pardon this naked tragedy,  
 Wherein no filèd points are foisted in  
 16 To make it gracious to the ear or eye;  
 For simple truth is graciöus enough,  
 18 And needs no other points of glosing stuff.

20

[*Exit.*]

*FINIS.*



## Optional Textual Changes.

The texts of the Scripts prepared for our website, ElizabethanDrama.org, generally lean towards keeping the language of the plays' earliest editions. Where obvious errors in typography have occurred, the emendations suggested by early and modern editors are usually accepted without comment.

Words and syllables have in some cases been added to the original text; such additions appear within hard brackets [ ], and may be omitted at a director's discretion. Such additions may be made for one of two reasons: (1) where words or syllables have clearly been omitted from the original text by accident, and are needed for a line to make sense; and (2) where words or syllables are added to repair a line's meter.

The text of this Script may be confidently adopted by a theatre group without further revision; however, we present below a list of changes a director may wish to consider, if he or she feels any of them would make the language more sensible, etc. Most of these emendations represent suggestions of later editors of the play, and a few represent restoring original language from the quartos.

Explanations for all these possible emendations can be found in the annotated edition of this play found on our website.

### Universal Emendations.

1. Modernize *Feversham* to *Faversham* everywhere.
2. Modernize *murther* (and its derivatives, such as *murthered*) to *murder* everywhere.

### Act I, Scene i.

1. line 59: modernize *jealious* to *jealous*; also at lines 182, 292 and 531.
2. line 74: emend *rise* to *risen*.
3. line 101: modernize *hard* to *heard*.
4. line 110: emend *there* to *than*.
5. line 119: modernize *key* to *quay*; also at I.i.258 and III.iii.50.
6. line 165: omit the second *stay*.
7. line 230: modernize *shriefe* to *sheriff*.
8. line 330: modernize *shew* to *show*; also at line 372.

### Act II, Scene i.

1. line 1: modernize *Billingsgate* to *Billingsgate*.
2. line 32: modernize *cursy* to *curtsey*; also at II.2.155.
3. line 34: modernize *vitler* to *victualler*.
4. line 77; modernize *wosted stockin* to *worsted stocking*.

### Act II, Scene ii.

1. line 237: modernize *complat* to *complot*.
2. line 283: modernize *hant* to *haunt*.
3. line 286: omit the second *how*.

Act III, Scene i.

1. line 54: restore, in place of *pity-moving*, the quarto's *pity-moaning*.
2. line 64: modernize *wive's* to *wife's*.
3. line 93: emend *bolstered* to *boltered* or *baltered*.

Act III, Scene ii.

1. lines 53 and 74: modernize *coistrel* to *kestrel*.

Act III, Scene v.

1. line 18: emend *starry* to *stirring*, *stirry*, or *sturdy*.
2. line 26: emend *heave* to *hive*.
3. line 78: modernize *betwix* to *betwixt*.
4. line 79: emend *now* to *how*.
5. line 110: modernize *shewed* to *showed*.
6. line 147: either (1) emend *thickened still* to *thickened; still*; or (2) emend *fence* to *fount*.
7. line 154: emend *gentile* to *gentle*.
8. line 159: emend *Weeds in gardens* to *Weeds breed* (or *breeds*) *gardens*.

Act III, Scene vi.

1. line 7: modernize *intergatories* to *interrogatories*.
2. line 28: omit *that*.
3. line 53: emend *weary* to *wary*.
4. line 98: modernize *eat* to *ate*.
5. line 98: emend *brook you* to *brook with you*.
6. line 119: modernize *handkercher* to *handkerchief*.
7. line 139: omit *man*.
8. line 207: emend *Preserved a fig!* to *The Lord of Heaven a fig!*

Act IV, Scene i.

1. line 24: omit *sir*.
2. line 95: modernize *lordaine* to *lurden*.

Act IV, Scene iii.

1. line 104: emend *alone* to *along*.

Act IV, Scene iv.

1. line 126: modernize *harebrain* to *harebrained*.
2. line 185: emend *taint* to *tainted*.
3. line 190: modernize *an jealous* to *a jealous*.

Act V, Scene v.

1. line 66: make this line an Aside.
2. line 102: emend *would cram* to *would have crammed*.
3. line 255: emend *Greene* to *Shakebag*.