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presents

the Annotated Popular Edition of

LOVE'S METAMORPHOSIS

by John Lyly

Written c. 1590?

Earliest Extant Edition: 1601

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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LOVE'S METAMORPHOSIS

By John Lyly.

Written: c. 1590?

Earliest Extant Edition: 1601.

Dramatis Personae.

Cupid, God of Love.

Ceres, Goddess of Agriculture.

Foresters:

Ramis, in love with Nisa.

Montanus, in love with Celia.

Silvestris, in love with Niobe.

Erisichthon, a churlish farmer.

Protea, daughter to Erisichthon.

Petulius, in love with Protea.

Nymphs of Ceres:

Nisa.

Niobe.

Celia.

Tirtena.

Fidelia, transformed in to a tree.

A Merchant.

A Siren.

The Scene: Arcadia.

INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

Love's Metamorphosis is John Lyly's shortest, and perhaps most simplistic, play, its story revolving around three woodsmen who are in love with three nymphs, but are frustrated by the nymphs' desire to remain virgins in the service of Ceres, the goddess of agriculture. The play also possesses an Ovidian nature, with numerous physical transformations – metamorphoses – to amuse the reader. This is a quick read, and serves as a good introductory play for those wishing to explore the dramatic output of Elizabethan drama's first superstar, John Lyly.

OUR PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of this play was originally adapted from the 1902 volume of Lyly's plays edited by Warwick Bond, but was then carefully compared to the original 1601 quarto, whose text can be found on the Early English Books Online database. Consequently, much of the original wording and spelling from this earliest printing of the play has been reinstated.

NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS

Mention in the annotations of various editors refers to the notes supplied by these scholars for their editions of this play. Their works are cited fully below.

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

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Fairholt, F.W. (ed.). *The Dramatic Works of John Lilly, Vol. II*. London: John Russell Smith, 1858.
4. Bond, R. Warwick (ed.). *The Complete Works of John Lyly, Vol. III*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902.
5. Daniel, Carter A. (ed.). *The Plays of John Lyly*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1988.
6. Scragg, Leah (ed.). *Love's Metamorphosis: John Lyly*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008.

A. The Songs of *Love's Metamorphosis*.

The first editions of John Lyly's plays did not include lyrics for their songs, rather only indicating in a stage direction wherever a bit of crooning was called for. In 1632, however, a compilation of six of Lyly's plays was published by Edward Blount. The Blount edition includes lyrics for all of the songs in these plays.

Unfortunately, *Love's Metamorphosis* was not included in Blount's updated volume. So, following the tradition of earlier editions of this play, the stage directions indicate when a song is to be sung, but no lyrics are provided.

B. Lyly's Long Monologues.

John Lyly regularly included in his plays prose speeches of 300-500 words in length. These protracted monologues have traditionally been printed as single paragraphs, just as they appeared in the early quartos. Unfortunately, trying to read and follow the trains of thought in such lengthy paragraphs makes for a mind-numbing experience.

As a result, we have broken up the longer speeches of *Love's Metamorphosis* into multiple smaller paragraphs, separated by theme, to facilitate reading.

C. Acts, Scenes, and Stage Directions.

Love's Metamorphosis was originally published in 1601 in quarto form. As usual, we lean towards adhering to the wording of this earliest volume as much as possible.

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

Unusually for the era, *Love's Metamorphosis* was, in its original printing, divided into both numbered Acts and Scenes. Suggested scene settings, however, are adopted from Bond.⁹

Finally, as is our normal practice, some of the quarto's stage directions have been modified, and others have been added to the text, usually without comment, to give clarity to the action. Most of these changes are adopted from Bond.

LOVE'S METAMORPHOSIS.

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ACT I.

SCENE I.

At Ceres' Tree.

*Enter Ramis, Montanus, Silvestris (three Foresters),
carrying scutcheons and garlands.*

1 **Ramis.** I cannot see, Montanus, why it is fained by
2 the poets that Love sat upon the chaos and created
the world, since in the world there is so little love.

4 **Mont.** Ramis, thou canst not see that which cannot
6 with reason be imagined; for if the divine virtues of
8 Love had dispersed themselves through the powers
of the world so forcibly as to make them take by his

Scene I: the play opens at the site of a tree which is sacred to Ceres, the goddess of agriculture.

Entering Characters: the three woodsmen entering the stage are in love respectively with three Nymphs (Nisa, Celia and Niobe), minor deities of the woods. Unfortunately, the boys' feelings are unreciprocated.

While in the early part of the conversation, the Foresters appear to be engaged in a general philosophical debate, it is clear that their bitter feelings about love stem from their rejection at the hands of the Nymphs.

The boys are carrying garlands and shields (*scutcheons*; see the note at line 41 below).

A *forester* properly is a custodian of woods growing on an estate.¹

Scragg⁶ explains that the Foresters' names (all derived from Latin) are evocative of the environment in which they live: **Ramis**, from *ramus*, meaning "branch"; **Montanus**, a "mountain dweller"; and **Silvestris**, a "dweller of the woods".

1-3: Ramis refers to the traditional mythological description of the original state of the universe as **chaos**, or a confused scrambling of all matter, upon which order was eventually imposed.

fained = fabled.¹

The notion that order was brought about by an ancient deity named **Love** was traced by Fairholt³ to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Introduction to I.4), in which the philosopher cited two previous poets:

(1) Parmenides, who wrote, "*Love first of all the gods she planned*", and

(2) Hesiod, who wrote, "*First of all things was chaos made, and then / Broad-breasted earth... / And love, 'mid all the gods pre-eminent.*"⁷

5-6: **thou...imagined** = Montanus accuses Ramis of an inability to analyze things logically.

6-11: **for if...divinity** = briefly, if Love indeed gave the universe its systematic arrangement, then the essence of Love should permeate all things.

10 influence the forms and qualities impressed within
 12 them, no doubt they could not choose but savour
 more of his divinity.

Silv. I do not think Love hath any spark of divinity

14 in him, since the end of his being is earthly: in the
 blood is he begot by the frail fires of the eye, and

16 quenche[d] by the frailer shadows of thought. What
 18 reason have we then to soothe his humour with such
 zeal, and follow his fading delights with such passion?

20 **Ramis.** We have bodies, Silvestris, and human
 22 bodies, which in their own natures being much more
 wretched than beasts, do much more miserably than

24 beasts pursue their own ruins; and since it will ask
 longer labour and study to subdue the powers of our
 26 blood to the rule of the soul, than to satisfy them
 with the fruition of our loves, let us be constant in
 28 the world's errors, and seek our own torments.

30 **Mont.** As good yield indeed submissively, and satisfy
 32 part of our affections, as be stubborn without ability
 to resist, and enjoy none of them. I am in worst plight,
 since I love a Nymph that mocks love.

34 **Ramis.** And I one that hates love.

36 **Silv.** I, one that thinks herself above love.

38 **Ramis.** Let us not dispute whose mistress is most bad,
 40 since they be all cruel; nor which of our fortunes be
 most froward, since they be all desperate. I will hang

my scutcheon on this tree in honour of Ceres, and write

42 this verse on the tree in hope of my success: *Penelopen*
ipsam perstes, modo tempore vinces. Penelope will
 44 yield at last: continue and conquer.

= could not help but be infused with.

13-14: ***I do not...earthly*** = Silvestris, who is generally more skeptical than his fellow Foresters, believes love is a base (***earthly***) emotion, lacking any divine or spiritual essence.⁶

However, the woodsman can also be seen as shifting the conception of Love from the impossibly ancient abstract essence that brought order to the universe to the well-known Roman god Love (personified as **Cupid**), whom Silvestris similarly describes as certainly lacking a divine essence, since he lives on earth.

14-16: ***in the blood...thought*** = feelings of love first appear when you see someone who attracts you, but later fades away when you begin to think about your beloved rationally rather than emotionally.

14-15: ***in the blood he is begot*** = love is born in the blood.

16-18: ***What reason...passion*** = so what is the point of enthusiastically mollifying Cupid and celebrating love, which brings the boys rapidly diminishing returns?

his fading delights = love's decreasing pleasure.

20-23: ***We have...ruins*** = Ramis admits that humans are basically weak in character, and cannot help but get themselves into situations which lead to disaster.

23-27: ***since it...torments*** = "because it would take more effort to suppress our desires and lust (***blood***) than it would to satisfy them by conquering our women, we should just go along with how nature created us (which Ramis describes as ***the world's errors***), and knowingly pursue our own agony."

29-31: ***As good...of them*** = Montanus agrees with Ramis: it is better to get some reward by following one's heart, than to get no relief in love by trying futilely to resist it.

= perverse. = ie. their fortunes. = hopeless.¹

41: ***scutcheon*** = ie. escutcheon, a shield on which a coat-of-arms is typically painted.¹

41-42: ***write...tree*** = the boys will write pointed mottos (***verses***) on garlands, which they will hang on the tree.⁶

42-43: ***Latin*** = "only persist, and you will conquer Penelope herself in time."⁸ Ramis quotes from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, or *The Art of Love* (I.477).

Wife of the Greek hero **Ulysses** (the Roman name for

46 **Mont.** I this: *Fructus abest facies cum bona teste*

48 *caret.* Fair faces lose their favours, if they admit no lovers.

50 **Ramis.** [*To Silvestris*] But why studiest thou? what wilt thou write for thy lady to read?

52 **Silv.** That which necessity maketh me to endure: love
54 reverence, wisdom wonder at: *Rivalem patienter habe.*

56 **Mont.** Come, let us every one to our walks: it may be we shall meet them walking.

58 [Exeunt.]

60

ACT I, SCENE II.

The same: at Ceres' tree.

Enter Nisa, Celia, Niobe (three Nymphs).

1 **Nisa.** It is time to hang up our garlands; this is our
2 harvest holyday: we must both sing and dance in the

4 honour of Ceres. Of what colours or flowers is thine
4 made of, Niobe?

6 **Niobe.** Of salamints, which in the morning are white,

8 red at noon, and in the evening purple, for in my
8 affections shall there be no staidness but in unsteadiness;
8 but what is yours of, Nisa?

10 **Nisa.** Of holly, because it is most holy, which lovely
12 green neither the sun's beams, nor the wind's blasts,
12 can alter or diminish. But, Celia, what garland have

Odysseus), **Penelope** remained famously faithful to her husband (who disappeared for twenty years after he left Ithaca to fight in the Trojan War), despite the hundred suitors who, assuming Ulysses must be dead, tried desperately to win her hand.

46-47: **Latin** = "all advantage is lost, when a pretty face is without anyone to see it."⁸ Also from *The Art of Love* (III.398).

= good looks. = accept.

= "are you pondering?"

53-54: **love...wonder at** = to revere love, to be amazed at wisdom.

54: **Latin** = "endure a rival with patience."⁸ This is the first half of a line from *The Art of Love* (II.539).

= Montanus suggests the Foresters separate, and check on the part of the woods for which each is responsible.⁶

Entering Characters: the Nymphs are minor deities, and followers, or groupies, of Ceres; as such, they maintain their virginity like the goddess they serve.

= day of religious observance; **holyday** was a common alternate form of **holiday**.

6-7: **Of salamints...purple** = Lyly has invented the plant **salamint**, a bit of literary license in which our playwright commonly engaged. Bond notes that Lyly likely borrowed the description of this fictional flora from the Roman Pliny the Elder, who wrote a fantastical but major treatise on the workings of nature, *The Natural History*. Pliny described the leaves of the herb "**polium**" as "**white in the morning, purple at midday, and azure at sunset**" (xxi.21).¹⁵

7-8: **in my...unsteadiness** = the salamint is a metaphor for Niobe's plans for her own life, which shall be characterized by constancy (**staidness**) only in inconstancy – specifically, an unwillingness to commit to a single man.

11-13: **Of holly...diminish** = just as holly cannot be damaged by the elements, so Nisa can resist the attempts of any man to seduce her.⁶

14 you?

16 **Celia.** Mine all of cypress leaves, which are
broadest and beautifulest, yet beareth the least fruit;

18 for beauty maketh the brightest shew, being the

slightest substance; and I am content to wither
20 before I be worn, and deprive myself of that which
so many desire.

22 **Niobe.** Come, let us make an end, lest Ceres come
24 and find us slack in performing that which we owe. –
But soft, some have been here this morning before
26 us.

28 **Nisa.** The amorous Foresters, or none; for in the
woods they have eaten so much wake-robin, that
30 they cannot sleep for love.

32 **Celia.** Alas, poor souls, how ill love sounds in their
lips, who telling a long tale of hunting, think they
34 have bewrayed a sad passion of love!

36 **Niobe.** Give them leave to love, since we have liberty

to choose, for as great sport do I take in coursing their

38 tame hearts, as they do pains in hunting their wild harts.

40 **Celia.** Niobe, your affection is but pinned to your
tongue, which when you list you can unloose. – But

42 let us read what they have written: *Penelopen ipsam
perstes modo tempore vinces*. That is for you, Nisa,

44 whom nothing will move, yet hope makes him hover.

46 **Nisa.** A fond hobby to hover over an eagle.

which (line 11) = ie. whose.

16-17: Lyly again borrows from Pliny,⁴ who described the cypress tree as one which "bears a fruit that is utterly useless" (xvi.60).¹⁵

18-21: Celia is satisfied to be beautiful but shallow, and to live her entire life without love.

shew = show, a common alternate form.

19-20: **wither before I be worn** = lose her beauty as she ages without indulging in love.

= finish up.

= ie. dancing in Ceres' honour.

= wait a moment. = ie. some people.

= ie. it must have been the Foresters.

= old name for the herb cuckoo-pint, which, Daniel tells us, was taken as an antidote for depression, or melancholia.

33-34: **who telling...love** = ie. their suitors try to demonstrate their love for the ladies by talking about hunting. This is a nice bit of psychological insight shown by Lyly: it is difficult for many men to express their feelings, so they instead talk of other topics with which they are more comfortable (even if such babble will bore the targets of their affection), in the hopes that the underlying message will get across!

bewrayed = betrayed, ie. revealed.

36: **leave** = permission.

36-37: **liberty to choose** = ie. "freedom to decide whether, and on whom, to bestow our love".

= worrying, troubling.¹

38: **pains** = ie. make great efforts.

harts = male deer, especially the red deer,¹ with obvious and frequently-employed pun.

40-41: **your affection...unloose** = it is easy for Niobe to talk about or express her love – indeed, too much so!

list = desire.

42-43: **Latin** = "only persist, and you will conquer Penelope herself in time." This motto had been placed on the tree by Ramis for Nisa.

= arouse.¹ = hang around.¹

46: Nisa refers to the tradition by which inferior birds of prey were employed by men of lesser rank for hawking.³ A **hobby** is a type of falcon,¹ typically trained by young men, while the **eagle** was considered an emperor's bird. Nisa's

48 **Niobe.** But foresters think all birds to be buntings. –

50 What's the next? *Fructus abest facies cum bona teste caret.* Celia, the Forester gives you good counsel:

take your pennyworth whiles the market serves.

52 **Celia.** I hope it will be market day till my death's day.

54 **Nisa.** Let me read too: *Rivalem patienter habe.* He
56 toucheth you, Niobe, on the quick, yet you see how
patient he is in your [in]constancy.

58 **Niobe.** Inconstancy is a vice, which I will not swap

60 for all the virtues; though I throw one off with my
62 whole hand, I can pull him again with my little
finger. – Let us encourage them, and write something:

64 if they censure it favourably, we know them fools; if
64 angrily, we will say they are froward.

66 **Nisa.** I will begin. *Cedit amor rebus, res age, tutus eris.*

68 **Celia.** Indeed better to tell stars than be idle, yet

70 better idle then ill-employed. Mine this: *Sat mihi si facies, sit bene nota mihi.*

72 **Niobe.** You care for nothing but a glass, – that is, a
74 flatterer.

76 **Nisa.** Then all men are glasses.

78 **Celia.** Some glasses are true.

point is that she considers herself superior to Ramis.
fond = foolish.

48: men think that women, like birds, are all alike,⁵ or that all women are "fair game" (Bond, p. 564).⁴
buntings = small, colourful passerine birds.¹

49-50: **Latin** = "all advantage is lost, when a pretty face is without anyone to see it." This was hung by Montanus for Celia.

52: Celia should take a husband before she loses her market value, ie. before her beauty fades!

53: ie. Celia hopes that there will be "no sale" on her affections during her lifetime.

55: **Latin** = "endure a rival with patience." This was Silvestris' motto for Niobe.

55-56: *He toucheth...quick* = these words concern Niobe closely. The *quick* is the essence of a matter; the expression *to touch to the quick* was a common one.

= according to the OED, Lyly was the first to use the word *swap* to mean "exchange".

60-62: *though I...finger* = metaphorically, Niobe may need to put in some effort to repulse a man (*throw one off*),¹ but she can recapture him with a mere gesture.

63-64: the Nymphs are toying with their pursuers: if the Foresters interpret the mottos the Nymphs will hang as encouraging, then they are foolish; if they respond with petulance, then they are perverse or stubborn (*froward*).
censure = judge.

66-67: **Latin** = "Love gives way before business: then you will be safe." From Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*, or *The Cures for Love*, line 144.⁸ A common theme of Lyly's, that love can be avoided by keeping busy.

69-70: *Indeed...ill-employed* = ie. "it is better to engage in a time-wasting activity,⁶ such as counting stars, than to remain idle, and it is better to remain idle than to engage in unwholesome behaviour."
tell = count.

70-71: **Latin** = "if my face is so beautiful, tell me about it" (Daniel, p. 380).⁵ A variation of a line in Ovid's *Heroides* (xvii.38). Celia's motto reflects her pride in her good looks.

= mirror.
= anyone or anything that praises one's beauty.

= ie. flatterers.

78: just because certain praise (whether from a man or mirror) qualifies as flattery doesn't mean it isn't true.

80 *Niobe.* No men are; but this is mine: *Victoria tecum stabit.*

82 *Nisa.* Thou givest hope.

84 *Niobe.* He is worthy of it, that is patient.

86 *Celia.* Let us sing, and so attend on Ceres; for this day, although into her heart never entered any motion of love, yet usually to the temple of Cupid, [s]he offereth two white doves, as entreating his favour, and one eagle as commanding his power. *Praecibusq[ue] minas regaliter addet.*

92 [They sing and dance.]

94

96 *Enter Erisichthon.*

98 *Eris.* What noise is this, what assembly, what idolatry? Is the modesty of virgins turned to wantonness? The honour of Ceres accompted immortal? And Erisichthon,

100 ruler of this forest, esteemed of no force? Impudent giglots that you are, to disturb my game, or dare do honour to any but Erisichthon. It is not your fair faces as smooth as jet, nor your enticing eyes, though they drew iron like adamants, nor your filed speeches, were

106 they as forcible as Thessalides', that shall make me any

80: **No men are** = ie. all men are liars.
 80-81: **Latin** = "victory will rest with yourself."⁸ Niobe concludes the line only partially cited by Silvestris ("endure a rival with patience").

83: Nisa is surprised or disappointed that Niobe would give Silvestris encouragement, but Niobe has previously expressed her pleasure in being a flirt.
 = ie. "he who".
 = impulse.
 = bird usually associated with Venus. = to plead for.

91: **eagle** = symbol usually associated with Jupiter.
as commanding his power = as a nod to Cupid's power, or asking for his protection.⁶
 91-92: **Latin** = "to her prayers she adds threats in a royal style."¹³ Adapted from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (II.397).

96: of Lyly's eight plays, six were republished in 1632 with lyrics for the songs. Unfortunately, *Love's Metamorphosis* was not one of them.
Entering Character: Erisichthon, Bond tells us, is a wealthy farmer. Erisichthon has what feels like the most gratuitously complex name of any character in Elizabethan drama. However, he was an actual mythological mortal, whose story, as told by Ovid in Book VIII of his *Metamorphoses*, Lyly closely adapted as a subplot to our play.
 = excessive worship or adoration.¹
 = sexual promiscuousness.

100: **accompted immortal** = considered to be divine.⁶
 But Fairholt wonders if **immortal** is an error for **immoral**.
And = ie. and is.
 = believed to be powerless, ie. disregarded as being without authority.
 = loose women.
 = black marble.¹

105: **drew** = attracted.
adamants = **adamant** was a legendary material possessing great magnetism.²
filed speeches = polished or smooth talk.

106: **forcible** = persuasive or appealing.
Thessalides' = no such person is known from the ancient record. Bond suggests the typographer may have made an error in printing, and that Lyly had originally written **Messalina's**, referring to the depraved wife of the Roman Emperor Claudius. Scragg wonders if Lyly intended

way flexible.

108 **Niobe.** Erisichthon, thy stern looks joined with thy

110 stout speeches, thy words as unkemmed as thy locks,

112 were able to affright men of bold courage, and to

114 make us silly girls frantic, that are full of fear; but

116 know thou, Erisichthon, that were thy hands so

118 unstayed as thy tongue, and th' one as ready to execute

120 mischief as the other to threaten it, it should neither

move our hearts to ask pity, or remove our bodies

from this place. We are the handmaids of divine

Ceres: to fair Ceres is this holy tree dedicated; to

Ceres, by whose favour thyself livest, that art worthy

to perish.

122 **Eris.** Are you addicted to Ceres, that in spite of

Erisichthon, you will use these sacrifices? No,

124 immodest girls, you shall see that I have neither

126 regard of your sex which men should tender, nor of

128 your beauty which foolish love would dote on, nor

of your goddess, which none but peevish girls

reverence. I will destroy this tree in despite of all;

and, that you may see my hand execute what my

130 heart intendeth, and that no mean may appease my

132 malice, my last word shall be the beginning of the

134 first blow.

[*Erisichthon strikes the tree with his axe.*]

136 **Celia.** Out, alas! what hath he done?

138 **Niobe.** Ourselves, I fear, must also minister matter

140 to his fury!

142 **Nisa.** Let him alone: – but see, the tree poureth out

blood, and I hear a voice.

144 **Eris.** What voice? [*To tree*] If in the tree there be

Thessalians' here, alluding to the women of Thessaly in Greece, whose female witches were frequently referred to.

= ie. think any differently.

= combined.

111: **stout** = arrogant.¹

unkemmed = ie. unkempt, a common alternate form, meaning untidy or uncombed, referring to Erisichthon's hair (**locks**);¹ but the OED gives **unkempt** an additional applicable meaning of "uncouth" or "crude", which would refer to Erisichthon's speech.

= would frighten.

= simple, weak. = ie. "we who are".

= even if.

= unrestrained.¹ = ie. his hands.

= harm, evil.¹ = ie. his words.

116-7: **remove...place** = ie. "persuade us to leave here."

119: **by whose...livest** = as a farmer, Erisichthon's livelihood depends on his being in the good graces of Ceres, the goddess of agriculture.

119-120: **that art...perish** = "you who deserve to die."

= (so) devoted or vowed to.^{1,4} = ie. to spite.

123: **use** = engage in.

sacrifices = offerings;¹ throughout the play, a **sacrifice** refers only to an offering made to a god, not the slaughter of an animal.

= respect for.² = proffer.¹ = ie. "nor do I have regard for".

= a foolish lover or suitor might become infatuated with.

= who. = silly.¹

= ie. revere.

129-130: **and that...intendeth** = Erisichthon alludes to Niobe's comment above at lines 113-5.

that = ie. so that.

= ie. "there exists no means by which you".

= common exclamation expressing indignation.^{1,2}

138-9: the Nymphs themselves are increasing Erisichthon's ire.

minister matter = provide fodder.⁶

146 anybody, speak quickly, lest the next blow hit the tale
out of thy mouth.

148 **Fidelia.** [From the trunk] Monster of men, hate of
the heavens, and to the earth a burthen, what hath

150 chaste Fidelia committed?

152 It is thy spite, Cupid, that, having no power to wound
my unspotted mind, procurest means to mangle my
tender body, and by violence to gash those sides that

154 enclose a heart dedicate to virtue; or is it that savage
Satyr, that feeding his sensual appetite upon lust,
156 seeketh now to quench it with blood, that being
without hope to attain my love, he may with cruelty
158 end my life? Or doth Ceres, whose nymph I have

160 been many years, in recompence of my inviolable
faith, reward me with unspeakable torments?

162 Divine Phoebus, that pursued Daphne till she was
turned to a bay tree, ceased then to trouble her: aye,

164 the gods are pitiful; and Cinyras, that with fury followed
his daughter Myrrha, till she was changed to a myrrh

149: **burthen** = ie. burden, a common alternate form.

149-150: **what hath...committed** = ie. "what trans-
gression have I committed to deserve this punishment?"

151-160 (below): Fidelia inquires as to the identity of the
party who persuaded Erisichthon to kill her.

154-7: **It is...virtue** = Fidelia first blames Cupid for getting
Erisichthon to do his dirty work, because the god was unable
to cause or convince her to turn her desire to remain a virgin
into a willingness to take a man.

It is = Scragg wonders if the sentence's opening two
words were accidentally transposed, ie. should read **Is it**.

unspotted = pure, morally untainted.

dedicate (line 154) = ie. dedicated.

154-8: **or is...my life** = Fidelia next considers whether
the **Satyr**, who pursued her but failed to win her, is
the culprit.

Satyr = the **Satyrs** comprised a race of notoriously
lewd, half-man half-goat denizens of the woods.

= repayment (sarcastic).

161-7 (below): Fidelia cites two mythological examples of
other maidens who were changed to trees, but, once their
transformations were complete, were permitted to live
undisturbed. Her point is that, unlike these ladies of myth,
she (Fidelia) must now suffer further torment, even after her
metamorphosis.

161-2: **Divine...trouble her** = Apollo (**Phoebus**) was des-
perately in love with the beautiful maiden **Daphne**. Chased
through the forest by the amorous god, Daphne prayed for a
means of escape from Apollo's imminent assault: the gods
above, hearing her pleading, changed her into a laurel (**bay**)
tree to save her.

163: **pitiful** = merciful.

163-5: **Cinyras...prosecute her** = **Myrrha** was in
desperate, but unnatural, love with her father, the famous
Cyprian hero **Cinyras**. One night, when her father was
drunk, Myrrha was able to seduce him, which resulted in
her becoming pregnant. Discovering his daughter's crime,
Cinyras exiled her. Myrrha prayed to be turned into
something other than who she was, and the gods responded
by transforming her into a myrrh tree. It may be noted that
her metamorphosis occurred after her baby – the boy who
would grow up to be the beautiful human Adonis – was
born.

left then to prosecute her (line 165) = ceased afterward
to torment her.

tree, left then to prosecute her: yea, <u>parents are natural</u> .	= parents are affectionate towards their own children.
166 Phoebe lamented the loss of his <u>friend</u> , Cinyras of his child.	166-7: Apollo missed Daphne, and Cinyras Myrrha. Fidelity's point again is that even those who had the greatest cause to regret or feel bitter over the loss of their loved ones left them alone once they were turned into trees. <i>friend</i> = lover.
168 But both gods and men either <u>forget</u> or neglect the 170 <u>change</u> of Fidelity, nay, follow her after her change, to 172 make her more miserable: so that there is nothing more 174 hateful than to be chaste, <u>whose bodies</u> are followed 176 in the world with lust, and <u>prosecuted</u> in the graves with tyranny; whose minds the freer they are from vice, their bodies are in the more danger of mischief; so that they are not safe when they live, because of men's love; nor being <u>changed</u> , because of their hates; nor being dead, because of their defaming.	= early editors emend the quarto's <i>forget</i> to <i>forgot</i> . = metamorphosis. = ie. those women whose bodies. = tormented. = transformed. 177: even after women have passed on, they are not safe, because their reputations will be slandered.
178 What is that chastity which so few women <u>study</u> 180 to keep, and both gods and men seek to violate? If only a <u>naked name</u> , why are we so superstitious of a	= take pains. 179-181: <i>If only...sound</i> = if <i>chaste</i> is nothing more than a simple word (<i>naked name</i>), why do we venerate what is in essence an unsubstantial sound?
182 hollow sound? <u>If a rare virtue</u> , why are men so <u>careless of</u> such an exceeding rareness?	= ie. if it is an excellent virtue. = negligent in nurturing or respecting.
184 Go, ladies, tell Ceres I am that Fidelity that so long <u>knit garlands</u> in her honour, and, chased <u>with</u> a Satyr, 186 by prayer to the gods became turned to a tree; whose body now is grown over with a rough bark, and whose golden locks are covered with green leaves; yet whose 188 <u>mind</u> nothing can alter, neither the fear of death, nor	= tied garlands in knots. ¹ = by. = ie. dedication to the correctness of her beliefs.
190 the torments. If Ceres seek no revenge, then let virginity be not only the scorn of savage people, but the spoil.	189-190: <i>If Ceres...spoil</i> = if Ceres does not get revenge on the one who cut Fidelity down, then let people everywhere despise chastity, and let men forever be permitted to rob women of their virginities.
192 But, alas, I feel <u>my last blood to come</u> , and therefore must end my last breath. – Farewell, ladies, <u>whose lives are subject to many mischiefs</u> ; for if you 194 be <u>fair</u> , it is hard to be chaste; if chaste, impossible to	= ie. she is dying. = ie. who are fated to be the subjects of much harm. = beautiful.
194 <u>be safe</u> ; if you be young, you will quickly bend; if	195: <i>be safe</i> = remain a virgin, due to the determination of men to seduce women.
196 bend, you are suddenly broken. If you be <u>foul</u> , you shall seldom be <u>flattered</u> ; if you be not flattered, you 198 will ever be sorrowful. <u>Beauty is a firm fickleness</u> ,	195-6: <i>if you...broken</i> = a young woman will naturally be inclined to take a lover, a feeling by which, if she gives into it, she will be ruined in a single moment. = ugly. = complimented. = beauty is unrelievedly variable, ie. it is soon lost, a common theme of Lyly's.
youth a <u>feeble</u> staidness, deformity a continual sadness.	199: the young are unvaryingly lacking in moral character

<p>200</p> <p>202</p> <p>204</p> <p>206</p> <p>208</p> <p>210</p> <p>212</p> <p>214</p> <p>216</p> <p>218</p> <p>220</p> <p>222</p> <p>224</p> <p>226</p> <p>228</p> <p>230</p> <p>232</p> <p>234</p> <p>236</p>	<p>[<i>Dies.</i>]</p> <p>Niobe. [<i>To Erisichthon</i>] Thou monster, canst thou hear this without grief?</p> <p>Eris. Yea, and double your griefs with my blows.</p> <p>[<i>He proceeds to fell the tree to the ground.</i>]</p> <p>Nisa. Ah, poor Fidelity, the <u>express pattern</u> of chastity, and example of misfortune!</p> <p>Celia. Ah, cruel Erisichthon, that not only defaceth these holy trees, but <u>murtherest</u> also this chaste nymph!</p> <p>Eris. Nymph, or goddess, it <u>skilleth</u> not, for there is <u>none</u> that Erisichthon careth for, but Erisichthon; let Ceres, the lady of your harvest, revenge when she will, nay, when she dares! and tell her this, that I am Erisichthon.</p> <p>Niobe. Thou art none of the gods.</p> <p>Eris. No, a <u>contemner</u> of the gods.</p> <p>Nisa. And hopest thou to escape revenge, being but a man?</p> <p>Eris. Yea, I <u>care not for</u> revenge, being a man and Erisichthon.</p> <p>Nisa. Come, <u>let us to</u> Ceres, and complain of this <u>unacquainted</u> and incredible villain: if there be power in her deity, in her mind pity, or virtue in virginity, this monster cannot escape.</p> <p>[<i>Exeunt.</i>]</p>	<p>(they are <i>feeble</i>), and disfigurement causes permanent sorrow (Fidelity refers here to her own loss of her human form).¹</p> <p>= perfect model or example.</p> <p>= ie. murderest, a common alternate form.</p> <p>= matters.</p> <p>= no person.</p> <p>= scorners.</p> <p>= "do not concern myself with".</p> <p>= ie. "let us go to". In the presence of a word of intent (here, <i>let</i>), the word of action (<i>go</i>) is frequently omitted.</p> <p>= ie. unparalleled³ or unheard of.⁴</p> <p>Characterization of the Nymphs: for those wishing to keep track, we briefly summarize the key mindset of each of the Nymphs, which they use as their excuses to avoid taking the Foresters as husbands (beyond their overarching desires to remain in the service of Ceres):</p> <p>Nisa does not believe love exists.</p> <p>Celia is pleased to remain single and beautiful for as long as she can.</p> <p>Niobe is unwilling to dedicate her love to but a single man.</p>
<p>END OF ACT I.</p>		

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Same: At Ceres' Tree.

Enter Ceres, Niobe, Nisa, [Celia] and Tirtena.

1 **Ceres.** Doth Erisichthon offer force to my Nymphs,
2 and to my deity disgrace? Have I stuffed his barns
3 with fruitful grain, and doth he stretch his hand
4 against me with intolerable pride? So it is, Ceres,
5 thine eyes may witness what thy Nymphs have told;
6 here lyeth the tree hacked in pieces, and the blood
7 scarce cold of the fairest virgin. – If this be thy cruelty,
8 Cupid, I will no more hallow thy temple with sacred
9 vows; if thy cankered nature, Erisichthon, thou shalt
10 find as great misery as thou shewest malice: I am
11 resolved of thy punishment, and as speedy shall be
12 my revenge, as thy rigour barbarous.
13 Tirtena, on yonder hill, where never grew grain nor
14 leaf, where nothing is but barrenness and coldness,
15 fear and paleness, lyeth Famine; go to her, and say
16 that Ceres commandeth her to gnaw on the bowels of
17 Erisichthon, that his hunger may be as unquenchable
18 as his fury.
19 **Tirt.** I obey; but how should I know her from others?
20 **Ceres.** Thou canst not miss of her, if thou remember
21 but her name; and that canst thou not forget, for that
22 coming near to the place, thou shalt find gnawing in
23 thy stomach. She lyeth gaping, and swalloweth
24 nought but air; her face pale, and so lean, that as
25 easily thou mayest through the very skin behold the
26 bone, as in a glass thy shadow; her hair long, black
27 and shaggy; her eyes sunk so far into her head, that

Entering Characters: having left the stage at the end of the last scene to report to Ceres the destruction of her tree, the Nymphs now return with both the goddess and a new Nymph, **Tirtena**.

The quarto's inclusion of Tirtena (who speaks only one line in this scene, and has one additional non-speaking appearance later in the play) is almost certainly an erroneous one, suggesting, as Bond points out, that she was an original, but later deleted, character in the play. The typographer or printer, however, may have been working from an imperfect copy of the play, leading them to include her in the 1601 quarto. A modern producer of *Love's Metamorphosis* can simply omit Tirtena from this scene, and give her line to one of the other Nymphs.

Celia was actually omitted from the quarto's stage directions here, but we follow Scragg's lead in including her, since Ceres would naturally want to include her in the lesson on love given by Cupid in the second half of this scene.

= violence.

3-4: **stretch his hand against** = occasionally appearing expression which seems to mean, "reach out as if to strike".

7-8: **If this...Cupid** = if Cupid is responsible for the tree's having been felled.

= ie. "if it is your malignant character, Erisichthon, which led you to do this".

= ie. suffer. = showest, ie. shows, demonstrates.

= decided.

= cruelty.¹

= a personified, and most cruel, deity.

= entrails, intestines or stomach.^{1,6}

= recognize.

= because.

= nothing.

= ie. her.

= mirror. = image.¹

30 she looketh out of the nape of her neck; her lips
 32 white and rough; her teeth hollow and red with
 rustiness: her skin so thin, that thou mayest as lively
make an anatomy of her body, as she were cut up

34 chirurgions; her maw like a dry bladder; her
 heart swolne big with wind; and all her bowels like

36 snakes working in her body. This monster, when
 thou shalt behold, tell her my mind, and return with
 38 speed.

40 **Tirt.** I go, fearing more the sight of Famine, than the
 force.

42 **Ceres.** Take thou these few ears of corn, but let not
 44 Famine so much as smell to them; and let her go aloof
 from thee.

46

[Exit Tirtena.]

48 Now shall Erisichthon see that Ceres is a great goddess,
 50 as full of power as himself of pride, and as pitiless as
 he presumptuous; – how think you, ladies, is not this
 52 revenge apt for so great injury?

54 **Niobe.** Yes, madam: to let men see, they that contend
 with the gods do but confound themselves.

56

Ceres. But let us to the temple of Cupid and offer

58 sacrifice; they, that think it strange for chastity to
 humble itself to Cupid, know neither the power of
 60 love, nor the nature of virginity: th' one having
 absolute authority to command, the other difficulty

= back.

32-34: **that thou...chirurgions** = that Tirtena will be able to analyze (**make an anatomy**) the inside of Famine's body as clearly (**lively**)¹ as if (**as**) she had been watching a dissection of the deity being performed by surgeons.
make an anatomy = examine closely or analyze;¹ a common expression, with obvious play on the usual meaning of **anatomy**.
chirurgions (line 34) = **chirurgion** was a common alternate form of **surgeon**.

= stomach.
 35: **swolne** = ie. swollen, a common monosyllabic alternate form.
bowels = intestines.
 = writhing.⁶
 = see her. = ie. "give her my instructions".

40-41: **the force** = "the effect of famine itself."⁶

43-45: Ceres gives Tirtena some food to eat to prevent her from feeling hunger in the presence of Famine, but warns the Nymph to keep the deity on her windward side (**aloof**),¹ ie. on the side from which the wind is blowing, so that Famine cannot smell the corn.

= appropriate. = harm.
 = see that or know that. = those who.
 = bring ruin on.

57-66 (below): Ceres, a goddess who celebrates virginity and chastity, acknowledges how unusual it must appear for her to make offerings to the god of love, Cupid, who is known for recklessly firing his golden arrows into individuals, causing them to fall in love. Because it is so difficult for young women to remain chaste – what with men continuously pursuing them, pressing them to surrender their bodies to the pleasures of love – it is necessary for Ceres to propitiate Cupid to ensure that he will leave her Nymphs alone, and not lead them to do anything to sully their purity!

57-58: **But let...sacrifice** = Ceres and the Nymphs should be understood to now be leaving the tree, and heading over to Cupid's temple.
 = "those people who".

60-61: **th' one...command** = love is all-consuming and irrepressible.

61-62: **the other...resist** = virginity, ie. virgins, cannot resist

62 to resist; and where such continual war is between
love and virtue, there must be some parlies and
64 continual perils; Cupid was never conquered, and
therefore must be flattered; virginity hath, and
66 therefore must be humble.

68 *Nisa*. Into my heart, madam, there did never enter
any motion of love.

70 *Ceres*. Those that often say they cannot love, or will
72 not love, certainly they love. Did'st thou never see
Cupid?
74

76 *Nisa*. No: but I have heard him described at the full,
and, as I imagined, foolishly. First, that he should be
78 a god blind and naked, with wings, with bow, with
arrows, with fire-brands; swimming sometimes in
the sea, and playing sometimes on the shore; with
80 many other devices, which the painters, being the

82 poets' apes, have taken as great pains to shadow, as
they to lie. Can I think that gods that command all
84 things would go naked? What should he do with
wings that knows not where to fly? Or what with
arrows, that sees not how to aim? The heart is a
86 narrow mark to hit, and rather requireth Argus' eyes

88 to take level, than a blind boy to shoot at random. If
he were fire, the sea would quench those coals, or the
flame turn him into cinders.

90 *Ceres*. Well, Nisa, thou shalt see him.

92 *Nisa*. I fear Niobe hath felt him.

94 *Niobe*. Not I, madam; yet must I confess, that
96 oftentimes I have had sweet thoughts, sometimes
hard conceits; betwixt both, a kind of yielding; I
98 know not what. But certainly I think it is not love:
sigh I can, and find ease in melancholy; smile I do,
100 and take pleasure in imagination; I feel in myself a

the temptation of love.

= negotiations or debates, as between contending armies.
= ie. no one has ever been able to thwart the effects of
Cupid's arrows.
= ie. has been conquered.

= impulse.

75-89 (below): though Nisa has never seen Cupid, she has heard of all the attributes commonly ascribed to him, e.g., that he is blind, naked and winged. But none of these descriptions make any sense to her, given how powerful and accomplished the young god is.

= at length.¹

= Cupid was sometimes portrayed as carrying a torch in addition to his bow and arrows.

80: *devices* = conceits, ie. attributes.

80-81: *being the poets' apes* = artists like to portray in painting what they read in poetry, hence they can be thought of as mimics (*apes*) of the poets.

= efforts to portray.

= ie. poets. = believe.

86: *narrow* = very small, hence difficult.

mark = target.

Argus' eyes = *Argus* was a notorious monster possessed of one hundred eyes.

= aim.

93: Nisa worries that Niobe has already fallen in love.

= hostile thoughts or notions.^{1,2} = between.

= relief or pleasure in a somber or pensive mood.

pleasing pain, a chill heat, a delicate bitterness, –
 102 how to term it I know not; without doubt it may be
 104 love; sure I am it is not hate.
 106 *Nisa.* Niobe is tender-hearted, whose thoughts are
 108 like water: yielding to everything, and nothing to be
 110 seen.
 112 *Ceres.* Well, let us to Cupid; and take heed that in
 your stubbornness you offend him not, whom by
 entreaties you ought to follow. Diana's nymphs were
 as chaste as Ceres' virgins, as fair, as wise: how
 Cupid tormented them, I had rather you should hear
 114 than feel; but this is truth, they all yielded to love;
 look not scornfully, my nymphs, I say they are yielded
 116 to love. – This is the temple.
 118 [The temple-doors open.]
 120 Thou great god Cupid, whom the gods regard, and
 men reverence, let it be lawful for Ceres to offer her
 122 sacrifice.
 124 *Cupid.* Divine Ceres, Cupid accepteth anything that
 cometh from Ceres, which feedeth my sparrows with
 126 ripe corn, my pigeons with wholesome seeds, and
 honourest my temple with chaste virgins.
 128 *Ceres.* Then, Love, to thee I bring these white and
 130 spotless doves, in token that my heart is as free from
 any thought of love, as these from any blemish, and
 132 as clear in virginity, as these perfect in whiteness. –
 But that my Nymphs may know both thy power and
 134 thy laws, and neither err in ignorance nor pride, let

102: Lyly frequently employed such strings of oxymorons
 to describe the concomitant pleasure and pain of love.
 = call.

107-8: *nothing to be seen* = Nisa does not believe true love
 exists.

109-111: *take heed...follow* = the Nymphs must be careful
 to remain on the good side of Cupid, who may be offended
 by the Nymphs' refusal to commit to love.

111-3: *Diana's...tormented them* = the virgin goddess
 Diana's own nymphs, also virgins, suffered harsh conse-
 quences when one of them offended Cupid.

Bond and others point out that Ceres is alluding to the
 story of Cupid and Diana told in an earlier play of Lyly's! In
Gallathea, Cupid's advances are repulsed by one of Diana's
 nymphs. In revenge, he punishes the nymphs collectively by
 causing each of them to fall in love with one of a pair of girls
 who are, for certain reasons, disguised as boys.

113-4: *I had...feel* = it is better the Nymphs should learn a
 lesson here by heeding the story of Diana's nymphs than by
 suffering any punishment dispensed by Cupid because they
 disregarded the young god's feelings.

feel = ie. experience.

118: the scene shifts to Cupid's temple.

= the other gods nurse a healthy respect (*regard*)² for
 Cupid, because they have no defense against the power
 of his arrows.

= revere or worship.¹ = permissible.

124ff: in this play, Cupid is a young man, rather than the
 cherubic small boy with which we are more familiar.

125: *which* = ie. who.

my sparrows = sparrows, which were proverbially lewd,
 were normally associated with Venus.

125-6: *feedeth...corn* = Lyly was not above reusing his
 own language from play to play: in his earlier drama, *Sapho*
 and *Phao*, we find "*fed thy sparrows with ripe corn*".

129: *Love* = common alternate epithet for Cupid.

129-130: *these white...doves* = both the *dove* and
 the colour *white* were symbols of purity and moral
 goodness.

spotless = pure.

= ie. so that.

136 me ask some questions to instruct them that they
offend not thee, whom resist they cannot. – In virgins
138 what dost thou chiefest desire?

140 **Cupid.** In those that are not in love, reverent thoughts
of love; in those that be, faithful vows.

142 **Ceres.** What dost thou most hate in virgins?

144 **Cupid.** Pride in the beautiful, bitter taunts in the
witty, incredulity in all.

146 **Ceres.** What may protect my virgins that they may
148 never love?

150 **Cupid.** That they be never idle.

152 **Ceres.** Why didst thou so cruelly torment all Diana's
nymphs with love?

154 **Cupid.** Because they thought it impossible to love.

156 **Ceres.** What is the substance of love?

158 **Cupid.** Constancy and secrecy.

160 **Ceres.** What the signs?

162 **Cupid.** Sighs and tears.

164 **Ceres.** What the causes?

166 **Cupid.** Wit and idleness.

168 **Ceres.** What the means?

170 **Cupid.** Opportunity and importunity.

172 **Ceres.** What the end?

174 **Cupid.** Happiness without end.

176 **Ceres.** What requirest thou of men?

178 **Cupid.** That only shall be known to men.

180 **Ceres.** What revenge for those that will not love?
182

= ie. so that.

= ie. if Cupid decides to cause any of the Nymphs to fall in
love, they will be powerless to resist him.

144-5: Cupid unwittingly describes the characteristics of
Ceres' Nymphs: he does not like women who, in avoiding
love:

(1) take pride in their good looks (Celia);

(2) tease men when they (the women) have no intention
of surrendering themselves to their pursuers (Niobe); and

(3) believe that love is a fiction (Nisa).

147-8: how can the Nymphs avoid falling in love in a way
that does not offend Cupid?

150: keeping busy, so that one's mind is otherwise occupied,
is the best way to avoid susceptibility to the pleasures of the
flesh.

152-3: another reference to Lyly's earlier play *Gallathea*;
see the note above at lines 111-3.

159: faithfulness and secrecy: Lyly refers in other plays to
the conceit that secrecy is desirable for lovers, because
"secrecy nurtures passion", as described by Ovid in *The
Cures for Love* (line 581).¹⁷

= physical manifestations of those who are in love.

169: what are the tactics a lover employs to win his beloved?

= begging.

173: what is the goal of love?

179: Cupid will not reveal to a woman how he wants men to
behave.

Cupid. To be deceived when they do.

184

Ceres. Well, Cupid, entreat my Nymphs with favour,
and though to love it be no vice, yet spotless virginity
is the only virtue: let me keep their thoughts as chaste
as their bodies, that Ceres may be happy, and they
praised.

190

Cupid. Why, Ceres, do you think that lust followeth
love? Ceres, lovers are chaste: for what is love, divine

192

love, but the quintessence of chastity, and affections

194

binding by heavenly motions, that cannot be undone
by earthly means, and must not be comptrolled by any
man?

196

Ceres. We will honour thee with continual sacrifice:
warm us with mild affections; lest being too hot, we
seem immodest like wantons, or too cold, immoveable
like stocks.

198

200

202

Cupid. Ceres, let this serve for all; let not thy Nymphs
be light nor obstinate; but as virgins should be, pitiful
and faithful; so shall your flames warm, but not burn;
delight, and never discomfort.

204

206

Ceres. How say you, my Nymphs, doth not Cupid
speak like a god? Counsel you I will not to love, but
conjure you I must that you be not disdainful. Let us

208

210

in, and see how Erisichthon speedeth; Famine flieth
swiftly, and hath already seized on his stomach.

212

214

[*Exeunt.*]

183: Cupid as a rule does not approve of people shunning
love; to punish those that choose to remain single, he causes
them to be deceived by would-be lovers, e.g., having
successfully seduced a virgin by vowing he loves her, the
lover will abandon her, even as she has fallen for him.

= ie. "treat my Nymphs favourably".

= ie. it is no vice to be in love. = morally uncorrupted.

191-6 (below): Cupid clears up a common misunderstand-
ing: he actually celebrates genuine and honourable love
between a man and a woman, but not reckless and unfocused
wanton behaviour.

= ie. is inevitably linked to.

= ie. honourable lovers.

193: *quintessence* = essence, essential characteristic.

193-4: *affections...motions* = true mutual love is sacred.

= controlled, an old alternate form.

199-201: Ceres asks Cupid to permit her Nymphs to experi-
ence fondness for others without extremes: if love is too
passionate (*too hot*), they will be led to behave like whores
(*wantons*); but if they lack any affectionate concern at all for
men, they will become undesirably cold and rigid.

200-1: *immoveable like stocks* = unfeeling or unyielding
as wood (*stocks*); *stocks and stones* was a common expres-
sion used to describe anything lackluster or comparatively
lifeless.

= "let the following advice suffice for all of you."

= (either) licentious or coldly unyielding. = compassionate.¹

= distress.¹

= ie. "I will not advise you to fall in love".

= beseech.²

212: *speedeth* = is getting on.

211-2: *Famine...stomach* = Ceres is aware that
Famine has already inflicted her malignant punishment on
Erisichthon, causing him to suffer intolerable starvation.

Lines 75-89 (above): Nisa's Description of Cupid: Bond
informs us that the fanciful portrait of Cupid spoken by Nisa
was clearly inspired by a similar description of the god of
love which appeared in a collection of verse entitled
Hecatompattia, composed by the highly-regarded poet
Thomas Watson (1555-1592).

Poem XIX reads as follows (spelling modernized):

*If Cupid were a child, as poets fain,
How comes it then that Mars doth fear his might?
If blind, how chance so many to their pain,
Whom he hath hit, can witness of his sight?
If he have wings to fly where thinks him best,
How haps he lurketh still within my breast?
If bow and shafts should be his choicest tools,
Why doth he set so many hearts on fire?
If he were mad, how could he further fools
To whet their wits, as place and time require?
If wise, how could so many leeze their wits,
Or dote through love, and die in frantic fits?
If naked still he wander too and fro,
How doth not sun or frost offend his skin?
If that a god he be, how falls it so,
That all wants end, which he doth once begin?
O wondrous thing, that I, whom love hath spent,
Can scarcely know himself, or his intent.*

Lyly appears to also have adapted this poem's first line to play's opening line, spoken by Ramis, who said, "*I cannot see...why it is **fained** by the **poets** ...*"

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A Glade in the Forest.

Enter Ramis, pursuing Nisa.

1 **Ramis.** Stay, cruel Nisa, thou knowest not from whom
2 thou fliest, and therefore fliest; I come not to offer
4 violence, but that which is inviolable: my thoughts are
as holy as thy vows, and I as constant in love as thou

in cruelty: lust followeth not my love as shadow do

6 bodies, but truth is woven into my love, as veins into
bodies: let me touch this tender arm, and say my love
8 is endless.

10 **Nisa.** And to no end.

12 **Ramis.** It is without spot.

14 **Nisa.** And shall be without hope.

16 **Ramis.** Dost thou disdain Love and his laws?

18 **Nisa.** I do not disdain that which I think is not, yet
laugh at those that honour it if it be.

20 **Ramis.** Time shall bring to pass that Nisa shall
22 confess there is love.

24 **Nisa.** Then also will love make me confess that Nisa
is a fool.

26 **Ramis.** Is it folly to love, which the gods accompt
28 honourable, and men esteem holy?

30 **Nisa.** The gods make anything lawful, because they
be gods, and men honour shadows for substance,
32 because they are men.

34 **Ramis.** Both gods and men agree that love is a
consuming of the heart and restoring, a bitter death
36 in a sweet life.

38 **Nisa.** Gods do know, and men should, that love is a
consuming of wit, and restoring of folly; a staring
40 blindness, and a blind gazing.

Scene I: a *glade* is an open area in the woods.

= stop.

= to *fly* is to flee. = ie. "you flee."

= ie. Nisa's vows to remain a virgin. = faithful.

= ie. Ramis is not just looking for sex. Note how Ramis has unintentionally repeated the same clause used by Cupid at Act II.i.191-2 above to describe the type of love of which he (the god) approves.

= a lovely metaphor for Ramis' fidelity to Nisa as an integral part of his love for her.

= ie. Nisa's.

10: ie. and it is without purpose.

= impurity.

= ie. Cupid.

= since Nisa does not believe true love exists, she cannot scorn it.

= ie. as if.

= judge, consider; an alternate form of *account*.

= can make, or are capable of making.

= worship abstract or hollow (and hence illusory) ideas (such as love).

34-36: Ramis expresses the common conceit that love simultaneously brings agony and pleasure.

= wearing away or burning up.¹

38-39: *love is...of folly* = love makes people stupid and causes them to act foolishly.

39-40: *a staring...gazing* = people in love are unable to think of anything else when they see their beloveds. There

42 **Ramis.** Wouldst thou allot me death?

44 **Nisa.** No, but discretion.

46 **Ramis.** Yield some hope.

48 **Nisa.** Hope to despair.

50 **Ramis.** Not so long as Nisa is a woman.

52 **Nisa.** Therein, Ramis, you show yourself a man.

54 **Ramis.** Why?

56 **Nisa.** In flattering yourself that all women will yield.

58 **Ramis.** All may.

60 **Nisa.** Thou shalt swear that we cannot.

62 **Ramis.** I will follow thee, and practice by denials to be patient, or by disdain die, and so be happy.

64

[*Exeunt Ramis and Nisa.*]

66

Enter Montanus, pursuing Celia.

68 **Mont.** Though thou hast overtaken me in love, yet have I overtaken thee in running: fair Celia, yield to love, to sweet love!

70

72 **Celia.** Montanus, thou art mad, that having no breath almost in running so fast, thou wilt yet spend more in speaking so foolishly: yield to love I cannot; or if I do, to thy love I will not.

74

76

78 **Mont.** The fairest wolf chooseth the foulest, if he be faithful; and he that endureth most grief, not he that hath most beauty.

80

82 **Celia.** If my thoughts were wolvish, thy hopes might be as thy comparison is, – beastly.

84

86 **Mont.** I would thy words were, as thy looks are, – lovely.

88 **Celia.** I would thy looks were, as thy affection is, – blind.

may also be a sense here that lovers are blind to the faults of those they love.

= expect.

60: ie. in the end, Ramis will admit that he is wrong to think that all women will surrender themselves.

62-63: *practice...patient* = learn patience by suffering Nisa's persistent rejection.

67: the couple actually run onto the stage, where they pause, as the dialogue discloses below, to catch their breaths.

= ie. having run out of breath.

78-80: Lyly borrows a conceit from a collection of stories published under the title *A Petite Pallace of Pettie His Pleasure*, in which author George Pettie asserts that the she-wolf "*chooseth that wolf for her mate* (ie. mate)¹ *who is made most lean and foul by following her* (most persistently)." ¹⁰

he (line 78) = ie. the ugliest (**foulest**) one.

and he (line 79) = ie. "and she chooseth the one".

= wolfish, ie. animal-like.

= wish.

88-89: Celia wishes Montanus was literally **blind**, so he could not see her, just as his love is blind, it being bestowed on her indiscriminately. The collocation **blind affection** was a common one.

thy looks = Montanus' sense of sight.

90	Mont. Fair faces should <u>have smooth</u> hearts.	= be accompanied by. = pleasant, affable. ¹
92	Celia. Fresh flowers have <u>crooked</u> roots.	93: just as a pretty flower has literally crooked roots, so an attractive girl can be perverse (ie. crooked). ¹
94	Mont. Women's beauties will <u>wain</u> , and then no art	= diminish.
96	can make them fair!	
98	Celia. Men's follies will ever <u>wax</u> , and then what	= grow.
98	reason can make them wise?	
100	Mont. To be amiable, and not to love, is like a painted	101-2: is like...life = is like a woman in a painting: colour-
102	lady, to have colours, and no life.	ful, yet lifeless.
104	Celia. To be amorous, and not lovely, is like a <u>pleasant</u>	= merry or ridiculous. ¹
104	fool, full of words, and <u>no deserts</u> .	= without merit.
106		
108	Mont. What call you deserts, what lovely?	
108	Celia. <u>No</u> lovelier thing then <u>wit</u> , no <u>greater desert</u>	109: No = ie. there is no.
110	than patience.	wit = a catch-all word encompassing the concepts of intelligence, cleverness, perception and wittiness.
112	Mont. Have not I an excellent wit?	greater desert = ie. worthier quality.
114	Celia. If thou think so thyself, thou art an excellent	
114	fool.	
116	Mont. [<u>With heat</u>] Fool? no, Celia, thou shalt find me	= Montanus is getting obviously frustrated.
118	as wise as I do thee proud; and as little to <u>digest</u> thy	118-9: as little...love = with as little ability to tolerate Celia's
118	taunts, as thou to <u>brook</u> my love.	taunting as she does his love.
120		Both digest (a common alternate form of digest) and
120	Celia. <u>I thought</u> , Montanus, that you could not deserve,	brook mean "tolerate" or "endure".
122	when I told you what <u>it</u> was, patience.	= ie. "I knew all along".
124	Mont. Sweet Celia, I will be patient and forget this.	= it is desert ; see lines 109-100 above.
126	Celia. Then <u>want you wit</u> , that you can be content to	= "you lack cleverness".
126	be patient.	
128	Mont. A hard choice: if I take all well, to be a fool;	129-130: Montanus finds he is in a no-win situation: if he
130	if find fault, then to want patience.	accepts the situation as presented by Celia, he is a fool; but
132	Celia. The fortune of love, and the virtue, is neither	if he complains, then he is impatient.
132	to have <u>success nor mean</u> . Farewell!	= ie. success in love or the means to acquire it.
134		
136	[Exit Celia.]	
138	Mont. Farewell? nay, I will follow! and I know not	= "but your scorn increases my desire."
138	how it commeth to pass, <u>disdain increaseth desire</u> ; and	
140	the further possibility standeth, the nearer approacheth	139-140: the further...hope = "the farther away I am
140	hope. I follow!	from any possibility of success, the more hopeful I am."

142 [Exit Montanus.]

144 Enter Silvestris and Niobe.

146 *Silv.* Polypus, Niobe, is ever of the colour of the

148 stone it sticketh to; and thou ever of his humour thou talkest with.

150 *Niobe.* Find you fault that I love?

152 *Silv.* So many.

154 *Niobe.* Would you have me like none?

156 *Silv.* Yes, one.

158 *Niobe.* Who shall make choice but myself?

160 *Silv.* Myself.

162 *Niobe.* For another to put thoughts into my head were

164 to pull the brains out of my head. Take not measure of

166 my affections, but weigh your own; the oak findeth no fault with the dew, because it also falleth on the

168 bramble. Believe me, Silvestris, the only way to be

mad is to be constant. Poets make their wreathes of laurel; ladies, of sundry flowers.

170 *Silv.* Sweet Niobe, a river running into divers brooks becometh shallow, and a mind divided into sundry

172 affections, in the end will have none. What joy can I take in the fortune of my love, when I shall know

174 many to have the like favours? Turtles flock by couples, and breed both joy and young ones.

176

Possibility is metaphorically described as *standing* far away, and *hope* as moving closer to Montanus.

146-7: *Polypus...sticketh to* = a *polypus* is a cephalopod (a class of sea creatures known as *mollusks*, which include predators such as octopi and squid) that possesses the ability to change its colour.¹ Lyly would have learned about the polypus from Pliny,⁴ who also fancifully wrote that this creature could crawl onto dry land, and that it possessed a forked tail (ix.46).

147-8: *and thou...with* = Niobe similarly always mirrors the mood of whomever she is conversing with.

152: ie. that Niobe loves so many men.

= ie. love no one.

= ie. other than.

162-3: *For another...head* = if someone else is to make Niobe's decisions for her, then she has no need for a brain of her own.

163-4: *take not...own* = "judge not my love, but rather critically appraise your own."

164-6: *the oak...bramble* = because the *dew* settles on all physical objects – both the low and the mighty – without discrimination, the mighty oak tree cannot accuse it of any impropriety; similarly, if Niobe prefers to scatter her affection among many lovers, she too should be viewed as faultless.

166-7: *the only...constant* = faithfulness to but a single lover inevitably leads a person to go mad.

167-8: *Poets...flowers* = another analogy: it is fine for poets to make wreathes of leaves from a single species of plant, but women thrive on making theirs from the leaves of a variety of flowers.

sundry = various.

= various, ie. multiple.

174: *the like* = similar.

174-5: *Turtles...couples* = common reference to the turtledove as sticking to a single mate.

178	<i>Niobe.</i> <u>But bees</u> in swarms, and bring forth wax and honey.	= ie. "but bees flock, ie. assemble".
180	<i>Silv.</i> Why do you <u>covet</u> many, <u>that</u> may find sweetness in one?	= desire. = ie. "when you".
182		
184	<i>Niobe.</i> Why had Argus an hundred eyes, and might have seen with one?	183-4: the play's second reference to the famous one-hundred-eyed monster.
186	<i>Silv.</i> Because whilst he slept with some, he might <u>wake</u> with <u>other some</u> .	= keep awake. = ie. others.
188		
190	<i>Niobe.</i> And I love many, because, being deceived by the inconstancy of <u>divers</u> , I might yet have one.	189-190: being deceived...divers = since women are repeatedly deceived by the lack of faithfulness of men. divers = several, various.
192	<i>Silv.</i> That was but a device of <u>Juno</u> , that knew <u>Jupiter's</u> love.	192-3: the notion that men are deceitful was invented by Juno (the queen of the gods), whose own husband Jupiter was notorious for his lack of fidelity.
194		
196	<i>Niobe.</i> And this a rule of Venus, <u>that</u> knew men's <u>lightness</u> .	= who. = promiscuousness.
198	<i>Silv.</i> The whole heaven hath but one sun.	
200	<i>Niobe.</i> But stars infinite.	
202	<i>Silv.</i> The rainbow is ever in one <u>compass</u> .	= circumference or range. ¹
204	<i>Niobe.</i> But of sundry colours.	
206	<i>Silv.</i> A woman hath but one heart.	
208	<i>Niobe.</i> But a thousand thoughts.	
210	<i>Silv.</i> My lute, though it have many strings, maketh a sweet <u>consent</u> ; and a lady's heart, though it <u>harbour</u> many <u>fancies</u> , should embrace but one love.	= harmony. = contains. = notions, ideas.
212		
214	<i>Niobe.</i> The strings of my heart are tuned in a <u>contrary</u> key to your lute, and make as sweet harmony in <u>discords</u> , as yours in <u>concord</u> .	= different, conflicting. = disharmony. ¹ = harmony. ^{1,4}
216		
218	<i>Silv.</i> Why, what strings are in ladies' hearts? not the <u>bass</u> .	= ie. the bass string, or the one that produces the lowest note.
220	<i>Niobe.</i> There is no <u>base</u> string in a woman's heart.	= low or vulgar; this is the first of three successive musical puns appearing through line 230. ⁴
222	<i>Silv.</i> The <u>mean</u> ?	= ie. a string producing an intermediate part in a multi-part, or polyphonic, tune.
224		
226	<i>Niobe.</i> There was never <u>mean</u> in woman's heart.	= lowness or vulgarity.
228	<i>Silv.</i> The treble?	
230	<i>Niobe.</i> Yea, the treble double and <u>treble</u> ; and so are all my heartstrings. Farewell!	= ie. triple.

232	Silv. Sweet Niobe, let us sing, that I may die with the swan.	232-3: common reference to the swansong, the song believed to be sung by a swan before it dies.
234		= ie. sigh out of love.
236	Niobe. It will make you <u>sigh</u> the more, and live with <u>the salamich</u> .	= ie. the salamander, which Daniel tells us was believed to be able to live inside of a fire without suffering harm.
238	Silv. Are thy tunes fire?	
240	Niobe. Are yours death?	
242	Silv. No; but when I have heard thy voice, I am content to die.	
244	Niobe. I will sing to content thee.	245: in which case, Niobe will gladly sing to fulfill Silvestris' wish!
246		
248	[<i>Niobe sings.</i>]	
	[<i>Exit Niobe.</i>]	
250		
252	Silv. Inconstant Niobe! unhappy Silvestris! yet <u>had I</u> rather she should rather love all than none: for now though I have no certainty, yet do I find a kind of sweetness.	= ie. "I would".
254		
256	<i>Re-enter Ramis.</i>	
258	Ramis. Cruel Nisa, born to slaughter men!	
260	<i>Re-enter Montanus.</i>	
262	Mont. Coy Celia, <u>bred up</u> in scoffs!	= raised.
264	Silv. Wavering, yet witty Niobe! But are we all met?	
266	Ramis. Yea, and <u>met withal</u> , if your fortunes be	= according to Bond, this was a common expression which in the present context would mean "we have found our matches" or "we are being made to pay for it".
268	<u>answerable</u> to mine, for I find my mistress <u>immoveable</u> , and the hope I have <u>is to</u> despair.	= similar. ¹ = resolute, unpersuadable. = ie. is changed to.
270	Mont. Mine in pride intolerable, who <u>biddeth</u> me look for no other comfort than <u>contempt</u> .	= instructs. = ie. her scorn.
272		
274	Silv. Mine is best of all, and worst; this is my hope, that either she will have many or none.	
276	Ramis. I fear our fortunes cannot thrive, for Erisichthon hath <u>felled down</u> the holy tree of Ceres,	= occasionally-appearing redundancy of the 16th-17th centuries. = which action will cause Ceres' ire to grow.
278	<u>which will increase in her choler</u> , and in her Nymphs cruelty. Let us see whether our garlands be there which we hanged on that tree; and let us hang ourselves upon another.	
280		
282	Silv. <u>A remedy</u> for love <u>irremovable</u> ; but I will first	= ie. hanging is a remedy. = unbudgeable or inflexible.

284 see whether all those that love Niobe do like: in the

286 mean season I will content myself with my share.

288 **Mont.** Here is the tree. – O mischief scarce to be believed, impossible to be pardoned!

290 **Ramis.** Pardoned it is not, for Erisichthon perisheth with famine, and is able to starve those that look on him. – Here hang our garlands: something is written; read mine.

294 **Silv.** *Cedit amor rebus, res age, tutus eris.*

296 **Mont.** And mine.

298 **Silv.** *Sat mihi si facies, sit bene nota mihi.* Now for myself, *Victoria tecum stabit* – *scilicet*.

302 **Mont.** You see their posies is as their hearts; and their hearts as their speeches, – cruel, proud, and

304 wavering: let us all to the temple of Cupid, and entreat his favour, if not to obtain their loves, yet

306 to revenge their hates: Cupid is a kind god, who, knowing our unspotted thoughts, will punish them,

308 or release us. We will study what revenge to have,

310 that, our pains proceeding of our own minds, their plagues may also proceed from theirs. Are you all agreed?

312 **Silv.** I consent; but what if Cupid deny help?

314 **Mont.** Then he is no god.

316 **Silv.** But if he yield, what shall we ask?

318

284: **that love Niobe** = Fairholt suggests this is not really correct, and that a better reading may be, "that love, as I love Niobe".

do like = do the same, ie. hang themselves.⁴

= meantime. = ie. "my small share of Niobe's affections."

286: the scene changes to the sacred tree of Ceres.

= evil, wickedness.

= ie. impossible; a Middle English form that occasionally still appeared in the 16th and 17th centuries.

290-1: **Pardoned...famine** = the felling of the sacred tree was in fact not forgiven, as the malefactor Erisichthon has indeed been punished.

295: **Latin** = "love gives way before business: then you will be safe."

299: **Latin** = "if my face is so beautiful, tell me about it."

300: **Latin** (*Victoria tecum stabit*) = "victory will rest with yourself."

Latin (*scilicet*) = "indeed." This last word is not part of the original quote, but rather reflects Silvestris' skeptical commentary.

= "mottos are"; note the example of the lack of agreement between subject and verb, a common trait of 16th century writing.

303-4: **cruel, proud, and wavering** = Nisa is cruel, Celia is proud, and Niobe is wavering, or fickle.

= beg for.

= the pure and honourable love of the Foresters for the Nymphs.

308: **release us** = "relieve us of our obsession with our ladies"; Montanus refers to Cupid's lesser-known ability to reverse lovers' affections into hate (by shooting them with a leaden arrow).

study = "set our minds to think up".

= "so that, like our mental efforts". = from.

Ramis. Revenge.

320

Mont. Then let us prepare ourselves for Cupid's sacrifice.

322

324

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III, SCENE II.

The Seashore near Erisichthon's Farm.

Enter Erisichthon and Protea.

Entering Characters: *Erisichthon* is the ill-tempered farmer who cut down Ceres' sacred tree. Now he is suffering from intense starvation as punishment. *Protea* is his daughter.

Protea's name is a feminized version of *Proteas*, the Greek river deity who was noted for his ability to change his shape. The reason Lyly gave her this moniker will soon become apparent.

1-2: **that name...dear** = the appellation of "daughter to Erisichthon" will now prove to be costly (**too dear**). = constraining circumstances,¹ ie. poverty.

= Protea will have to accept what must happen.

nature = the natural bond between parent and child.⁶

frame = shape, form.

4: **space** = time.

4-5: **I have...guts** = Erisichthon has had to sell all his possessions to buy food, of which he can never eat enough to fend off his punishing hunger.

= ie. burning from starvation.

8: **sharp** = intensely painful.¹

8-10: **between them...prolong it** = the battle between life and hunger cannot last long, ie. hunger will win: Erisichthon will die, unless he sells Protea to get money for additional food.

11-13: **make amends...punishments** = because the gods themselves decide what punishment to inflict on one who offends them, it is impossible for a transgressor to conceive of a penance that would mollify them; Erisichthon imagines the gods as holding scales on which the self-imposed penance of a transgressor, as a means to atone for his or her offense, can never out-weigh any punishment the gods choose to impose.

13-15: **Or what...actions** = if a god is offended by even the most trivial offense, all the atonement in the world cannot convince the god to reverse any imposed penalty.

race = ie. erase.

1 **Eris.** Come, Protea, dear daughter: that name must

2 thou buy too dear; necessity causeth thee to be sold;

nature must frame thee to be contented. Thou seest

4 in how short a space I have turned all my goods into

6 my guts, where I feel a continual fire, which nothing
can quench; my famine increaseth by eating,
resembling the sea, which receiveth all things, and
8 cannot be filled. Life is sweet, hunger sharp; between
them the contention must be short, unless thou,
10 Protea, prolong it. I have acknowledged my offence

12 against Ceres; make amends I cannot, for the gods
holding the balance in their hands, what recompence

14 can equally weigh with their punishments? Or what
is he that having but one ill thought of Ceres, that
can race it with a thousand dutiful actions? Such is

16	the difference, <u>that none can find defense</u> ; this is the	= there is nothing anyone can do to protect him- or herself from a wrathful god.
18	<u>odds</u> : <u>we miserable, and men</u> ; they immortal, and gods.	17: <i>odds</i> = difference. <i>we miserable, and men</i> = ie. men, being mortal, are unalterably miserable.
20	Protea. Dear father, I will obey both to sale and	20-21: <i>sale and slaughter</i> = not meant literally; this was a common expression referring to the selling of animals for meat.
22	slaughter, <u>accompting</u> it the only happiness of my	= considering.
24	life, should I live an hundred years, to prolong yours but one minute: I yield, father: <u>chop and change me</u> ,	= common expression meaning "barter away". ¹
26	I am ready; but first let me make my prayers to Neptune, and <u>withdraw</u> yourself till I have done:	= step back, out of Protea's hearing.
28	long it shall not be, now it must be.	
30	Eris. Stay, sweet Protea, and <u>that</u> great god hear thy prayer, though Ceres stop her ears to mine.	= may that. ⁶
32	[<i>Erisichthon retires.</i>]	= withdraws.
34	Protea. Sacred Neptune, whose godhead conquered my <u>maidenhead</u> , be as ready to hear my passions, as I was to believe thine, and perform that <u>now I entreat</u> ,	33-48 (below): there appears to be a backstory here, about which Protea understandably does not want her father to know: Neptune seems to have once promised to save or help Protea if she were ever in trouble if she would yield herself to his lust, a bargain which she apparently accepted.
36	which thou didst promise when thyself didst <u>love</u> .	= virginity. = ie. "which I now ask of you". = ie. "love me."
38	Let not me be a prey to this Merchant, who knows no other god then gold, unless it be falsely swearing by a god to get gold; let me, as often as I be bought for money, or pawned for <u>meat</u> , be turned into a bird, hare, or lamb, or any shape wherein I may be safe; so shall I preserve mine own honour, my father's life, and never repent me of thy love: – and now bestir thee, for of all men I hate that Merchant, who, if he find my beauty worth one penny, will put it to use to gain ten; having no religion in his mind, nor word in his mouth, but money. Neptune, hear now or never. – Father, I have <u>done</u> .	37-39: <i>Let me...gold</i> = Erisichthon has already made a deal to sell Protea to a certain miserly businessman. = food.
40		
42		
44		
46		
48		= finished.
50	Eris. [<i>Advancing</i>] In good time, Protea, thou hast done; for <u>lo</u> , the Merchant <u>keepeth not only day</u> , but hour.	= behold, look. = ie. not only keeps the appointed day.
52		
54	Protea. If I had not been here, <u>had I been forfeited</u> ?	= ie. "would the sale still have gone through?"
56	Eris. No, Protea, but thy father famished.	56: ie. if Protea were not present to close the deal with the Merchant, Erisichthon would starve to death.
58	<i>Enter Merchant.</i>	Entering Character: the <i>Merchant</i> is actually a usurer,

one who makes his living charging interest on loans of money. Needless to say, the English despised moneylenders, who were frequently made the target of opprobrium on the Elizabethan stage.

60 Here, gentleman, I am ready with my daughter.

62 **Protea.** Gentleman?

62-65: Protea questions whether, and the Merchant defensively confirms that, he has entered the ranks of **gentlemen**, a desirable if unofficial status assumed by those in Elizabethan England who could make a living without working with their hands.

64 **Merch.** Yea, gentleman, fair maid! my conditions make me no less.

= circumstances, ie. economic prosperity.

66 **Protea.** Your conditions indeed brought in your obligations, your obligations your usury, your usury your gentry.

67-69: "your wealth you purchased with your contracts (**obligations**, ie. loans), your loans you engender by your usury, and your usury has purchased you the status of gentleman (and hence membership in the **gentry**)."

According to Fairholt, Protea is satirizing the language of bonds, on which the language typically began, "*The condition of this obligation...*"

72 **Merch.** Why, do you judge no merchants gentlemen?

74 **Protea.** Yes, many, and some no men!

= are not men, ie. they are on the same level as beasts.⁶

76 **Merch.** You shall be well entreated at my hands.

= used, treated.

78 **Protea.** It may. Commanded I will not be.

= perhaps.

80 **Merch.** If you be mine by bargain, you shall.

82 **Protea.** Father, hath this Merchant also bought my mind?

84 **Eris.** He cannot buy that which cannot be sold.

86 **Merch.** Here is the money.

88 **Eris.** Here the maid: – farewell, my sweet daughter; I commit thee to the gods and this man's courtesy, who I hope will deal no worse with thee, than he would have the gods with him. I must be gone, lest I do starve as I stand.

90-91: **who I...with him** = Erisichthon hopes that the Merchant will treat Protea as he would want the gods to treat him.

94 [Exit Erisichthon.]

96 **Protea.** Farewell, dear father, I will not cease continually to pray to Ceres for thy recovery.

98 **Merch.** You are now mine, Protea.

100 **Protea.** And mine own.

101: ie. "I belong to myself": Protea asserts her independence of spirit and thought from the Merchant.

102 **Merch.** In will, not power.

103: Protea may possess in mind whatever inclinations and desires she wishes, but, legally, she has no rights with respect to what she can and cannot do, or to what can be done to or with her.

104
106
108

110
112
114
116
118
120

Protea. In power if I will.

Merch. I perceive nettles, gently touched, sting; but, roughly handled, make no smart.

Protea. Yet, roughly handled, nettles are nettles, and a wasp is a wasp, though she lose her sting.

Merch. But then they do no harm.

Protea. Nor good.

Merch. Come with me, and you shall see that merchants know their good as well as gentlemen.

Protea. Sure I am, they have gentlemen's goods.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT III.

105: Protea disagrees: she will do what she wants.

107-8: a warning: if Protea plans to be difficult, the Merchant will have to treat her more roughly in order to protect his own interests.

perceive = know.

make no smart = cause no pain.

= ie. know how to behave courteously.⁴

= possessions.

As Scragg explains, Lyly, through Protea, is expressing the common 16th century complaint of the effect of usurers on English society. Young men with property, tempted by the vices of the city, such as gambling and whoring, and the possibility of purchasing fashionable but expensive clothing, took loans to live the wild lifestyles promised them by unscrupulous lenders. When they were unable to pay off their debts, the usurers took possession of the entire security put up by the borrowers, even if the value of the security was significantly larger than the amount of the loan.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Before the Temple of Cupid.

*Enter Ramis, Montanus, Silvestris (the three Foresters)
with offerings.*

1 **Ramis.** This is the temple of our great god: let us offer
2 our sacrifice.

4 **Mont.** I am ready.

6 **Silv.** And I. – Cupid, thou god of love, whose arrows
8 have pierced our hearts, give ear to our plaints.

[*The temple-doors open.*]

10 **Cupid.** If you come to Cupid, speak boldly, so must
12 lovers; spea faithfully, so must speeders.

14 **Ramis.** These ever-burning lamps are signs of my
never-to-be-quenched flames; this bleeding heart, in

16 which yet sticks the head of the golden shaft, is the
lively picture of inward torments: mine eyes shall

18 bedew thine altars with tears, and my sighs cover thy
temple with a dark smoke: pity poor Ramis.

20 **Mont.** With this distaff have I spun, that my exercises

22 may be as womanish as my affections, and so did

Entering Characters: the **Foresters**, bearing gifts, have come to Cupid's temple to ask the god to punish the girls for their refractoriness.

= lamentations, complaints.^{1,2}

11-12: **so must lovers** = ie. "this is how lovers must speak."

= ie. "speak truthfully, if you wish to be one of those who appeal to me successfully."

speeders = those who succeed.

14-15: **These ever...flames** = Ramis brings perpetually-burning torches (**lamps**), which represent his never-dying passion, as a gift for Cupid.

15-17: **this bleeding...torments** = each of the boys also offers a **heart** to Cupid, though whether these hearts are physical, artistically-rendered images of hearts, or figurative offerings of their own hearts, is unclear.

= allusion to the golden arrows with which Cupid strikes individuals, causing them to fall in love.

= lifelike or striking image.¹

18-19: **my sighs...smoke** = it was a common trope to describe **sighs** as **smoky**, or filling the air with smoke (perhaps meaning mist or fog), e.g., "*from love's altars clouds of sighs arise in smoking incense to adore thine eye*" (1651).

21: **distaff** = instrument for spinning.

21-22: **that my...affections** = Montanus acknowledges that his desperation is so great, that he has engaged in woman's work to gain Cupid's favour.

22-23: **and so did Hercules** = ie. "just as did Hercules."

Montanus alludes to the oft-referred-to story of the great hero: **Hercules**, attacked with a severe illness, was told by the **Delphic oracle** that his health would be restored if he sold himself as a slave and worked for three years for wages; Hercules subsequently was purchased by **Omphale**, the queen of Lydia; it was written by later Roman authors that he frequently did women's work while dressed in women's clothes, while Omphale wore the lion-skin normally

Hercules: and with this halter will I hang myself, if my
 24 fortunes answer not my deserts, and so did Iphis. To
 thee, divine Cupid, I present not a bleeding, but a
 26 bloodless heart, dried only with sorrow, and worn
 with faithful service. This picture I offer, carved with
 28 no other instrument than love: pity poor Montanus.
 30 **Silv.** This fan of swans' and turtles' feathers is token
 of my truth and jealousy; jealousy, without which
 32 love is dotage, and with which love is madness;
 34 without the which love is lust, and with which love
 is folly. This heart, neither bleeding nor bloodless,
 36 but swolne with sighs, I offer to thy godhead,
protesting that all my thoughts are, as my words,
 without lust, and all my love, as my fortune, without
 38 sweetness. This garland of flowers, which hath all
 colours of the rainbow, witnesseth that my heart hath
 40 all torments of the world: pity poor Silvestris.
 42 **Cupid.** I accept your offers, not without cause; and
wonder at your loves, not without pleasure: but be
 44 your thoughts as true as your words?
 46 **Ramis.** Thou Cupid, that givest the wound, knowest
 the heart; for as impossible it is to conceal our
 48 affections, as to resist thy force.
 50 **Cupid.** I know that where mine arrow lighteth, there
breedeth love; but shooting every minute a thousand
 52 shafts, I know not on whose heart they light, though

associated with Hercules.¹¹

23: **halter** = noose.

23-24: **if my...deserts** = "if my luck does not improve to a level which is commensurate with what I deserve".

24: "just as did Iphis."

An allusion to the tragic story of **Anaxarete**, a Cyprian maiden who scorned the amorous attentions of one **Iphis**, who hanged himself in his despair. When Anaxarete looked on with apathy as Iphis' funeral cortège passed by her window, an enraged **Venus** turned her into stone.

= designed, ie. artistically created.²

30-31: **This fan...jealousy** = the reason for using the feathers of *swans* and turtledoves (*turtles*) is twofold:

(1) both birds were believed to mate for life;

(2) according to Bond, Lyly regularly employed the turtledove as a symbol (**token**) of faithfulness (**truth**); Bond also believes that the reference to swans as **jealous** is a nod to their notorious ferocity. We may note that Geoffrey Chaucer mentioned the "**jealous swan**" in his poem, *The Parliament of Fowls*.

31-32: **jealousy...dotage** = it was commonly written that **love** and **jealousy** go hand-in-hand.

dotage (line 32) = infatuation.¹

= jealousy, naturally, drives lovers crazy.

= without jealousy, love is nothing more than lust.

= ie. swollen, a common monosyllabic form.

= professing.

= luck.

= symbolizes.²

= (good) reason.

= marvel at,¹ ie. admire.

= landeth.

51: **breedeth** = grows.

51-53: **but shooting...hearts** = a fascinating conceit from Lyly: this might be thought of as a variation on the "Santa Clause Paradox", by which it may be said that, since Santa is required to deliver gifts to many tens of millions of children around the world in a single night, he must move with such lightning speed that it would be impossible to see him.

54 they fall on no place but hearts. – What are your
mistresses?

56 **Ramis.** Ceres' maidens: mine most cruel, which she
calleth "constancy".

58 **Mont.** Mine most fair, but most proud.

60 **Silv.** Mine most witty, but most wavering.

62 **Cupid.** Is the one cruel, th' other coy, the third
inconstant?

64 **Ramis.** Too cruel!

66 **Mont.** Too coy!

68 **Silv.** Too fickle!

70 **Cupid.** What do they think of Cupid?

72 **Ramis.** One saith he hath no eyes, because he hits he
knows not whom.

74 **Mont.** Th' other, that he hath no ears, to hear those
that call.

76 **Silv.** The third, that he hath no nose, for savours are
not found of lovers.

82 **Ramis.** All, that he hath no taste, because sweet and
sour is all one.

84 **Mont.** All, that he hath no sense, because pains are
pleasures, and pleasures pains.

86 **Silv.** All, that he is a foolish god, working without
reason, and suffering the repulse without regard.

88 **Cupid.** Dare they blaspheme my god-head, which
Jove doth worship, Neptune reverence, and all the

In a similar sense, because so many thousands of people around the world fall in love every minute – each requiring an individual arrow from Cupid – the god of love could not possibly be expected to keep track of every arrow he shoots; rather, he just shoots them out at a rapid rate, like a machine gun, and the arrows land where they will.

= who.

= steadfastness or perseverance;¹ we may note that none of the Nymphs has described herself as "constant".

= ie. not faithful to one man.

= ie. she plays hard to get.

801-81: *savours...lovers* = this passage has puzzled editors. Bond believes the meaning to be, that those who are in love do not notice if their beloveds smell bad, especially their breath; he references Shakespeare's satirical sonnet 130, in which lines 7-8 read, "*And in some more perfumes more delight / Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.*"⁴ Scragg wonders if the reference is to how those in love themselves were said to "neglect...personal hygiene" (p. 97).⁶

= ie. "all of them say that".⁶

= ability to feel.

89-90: *working...regard* = because Cupid strikes randomly, he appears to be acting irrationally, not caring when the newly-created lovers are rejected.

93-94: *Jove...tremble at* = the other deities in the Pantheon are very respectful of Cupid's powers, since they are unable to resist the effects of his arrows.

94 gods tremble at? To make them love were a revenge
too gentle for Cupid; to make you hate, a recompense

96 too small for lovers. But of that anon: what have you
used in love?

98 **Ramis.** All things that may procure love, – gifts,
100 words, oaths, sighs, and swoonings.

102 **Cupid.** What said they of gifts?

104 **Mont.** That affection could not be bought with gold.

106 **Cupid.** What of words?

108 **Ramis.** That they were golden blasts, out of leaden
110 bellows.

Cupid. What of oaths?

112 **Silv.** That Jupiter never sware true to Juno.

114

Cupid. What of sighs?

116 **Silv.** That deceit kept a forge in the hearts of fools.

118

Cupid. What of swoonings?

120 **Mont.** Nothing, but that they wished them deaths.

122

Cupid. What reasons gave they not to love?

124 **Silv.** Women's reasons: they would not, because they
126 would not.

128 **Cupid.** Well, then shall you see Cupid requite their
reasons with his rigour. What punishment do you
130 desire, that Cupid will deny?

132 **Ramis.** Mine, being so hard as stone, would I have
turned to stone: that being to lovers pitiless, she may
134 to all the world be senseless.

136 **Mont.** Mine, being so fair and so proud, would I have
turned into some flower: that she may know beauty is
138 as fading as grass, which, being fresh in the morning,

= would be.

95-96: *to make...lovers* = "to cause you to hate, rather than love, the Nymphs is not a sufficient remedy for faithful lovers (such as are the Foresters)."

= more on that shortly. = ie. what tactics.
= ie. "to win your women?"

100: *words* = ie. persuasion.

oaths = vows and promises.

swoonings = fainting, from the emotional exhaustion caused by being in unrequited love.

= love.

108-9: the amorous talk of the Foresters is sweet-sounding, but ultimately of little inherent worth. *Gold* and *lead* were frequently contrasted as possessing opposite intrinsic value. The implied image of breath being expended from the lungs as metaphoric *bellows* is a pleasing one.

113: ie. since the notoriously unfaithful king of the gods *Jupiter* never promised to remain true to his sister-wife *Juno*, why should the Nymphs believe the Foresters would be able to behave any better?

sware = swore, a common alternate form.

117: picking up on Ramis' blacksmith imagery, Silvestris describes *deceit* as keeping its own smithy (*forge*) in the hearts of men, meaning that men can never be trusted.

= ie. wish a faint was actually a fatal swoon.

125-6: just because!

= repay.

= severity.¹

129-130: *What punishment...deny* = ie. there is no penalty that Cupid will refuse to grant.

= ie. "my beloved".

= without the physical senses, insentient.

is withered before night.

140

Silv. Mine, divine Cupid, whose affection nothing

142

can make stayed, let her be turned to that bird that liveth only by air, and dieth if she touch the earth,

144

because it is constant. The bird-of-paradise, Cupid, that, drawing in her bowels nothing but air, she may

146

know her heart fed on nothing but fickleness.

148

Cupid. Your revenges are reasonable, and shall be granted.

150

Thou, Nisa, whose heart no tears could pierce, shalt with continual waves be wasted: instead of thy fair hair, shalt thou have green moss; thy face of flint, because thy heart is of marble; thine ears shall be holes

152

154

for fishes, whose ears were more deaf than fishes'.

156

Thou, Celia, whom beauty made proud, shalt have the fruit of beauty, that is, to fade whiles it is flourishing, and to blast before it is blown. Thy face,

158

as fair as the damask rose, shall perish like the damask rose; the canker shall eat thee in the bud, and every little wind blow thee from the stalk, and then shall men in the morning wear thee in their hats, and at night cast thee at their heels.

160

162

Thou, Niobe, whom nothing can please, (but that which most displeaseth Cupid, inconstancy) shalt only

164

breath and suck air for food, and wear feathers for

166

silk, being more wavering than air, and lighter than feathers.

168

This will Cupid do. Therefore, when next you shall behold your ladies, do but send a faithful sigh to Cupid, and there shall arise a thick mist which Proserpine shall send, and in the moment you shall

170

141-2: *whose affection...stayed* = there exists no means by which Niobe's flitting love for many men can be restrained or checked (*stayed*).¹

142-5: *that bird...air* = the *bird-of-paradise* was believed to spend its entire life aloft, never landing to pause and rest. It was also thought to consume neither food nor drink. A 1566 book of natural history stated that the bird-of-paradise actually had no feet on which to land, but that it did occasionally take rest from flight by hanging onto a tree branch by its long hair. The work also suggested the bird survived by consuming only "*the dew of Heaven*".

drawing...air (line 145) = ie. consuming nothing but air.

150-4: note how Cupid describes the effects of his turning Nisa into a stone without ever actually using the word *stone* or a synonym. The same curious omission will occur in Cupid's portrayal of Celia as a flower and Niobe as a bird.

= contemporary literature refers occasionally to the belief that *fishes* are *deaf*.

whose = ie. "you whose".

156: *have the fruit of beauty* = experience the consequences of being beautiful.

156-7: *to fade...blown* = Lyly frequently describes beauty as being predisposed to fade even as it is in full-bloom (*is blown*).

to blast = to suffer blight or to wither.

= the well-known pink rose.

= blight, grub or parasite.²

164-5: *shalt only...food* = see the description of the bird-of-paradise at lines 142-5 above.

= instead of.

166: *wavering* = fickle, changeable.

lighter = meaning both (1) less heavy, and (2) more promiscuous.

170-1: *there shall...send* = Cupid will assign the job of sending up a transforming *mist* to *Proserpine*, the goddess of *Hades*, which was frequently alluded to in contemporary literature as a land of *mist and darkness*.

As the daughter of Ceres, Proserpine is an interesting agent for Cupid to select for this job.

Proserpine's story is a typically tragic one: the god of Hades *Pluto*, with *Jupiter's* permission, kidnapped and married Proserpine. Ceres, having found her daughter after a

172 be revenged, and they changed, Cupid prove himself
a great god, and they peevish girls.

174 **Ramis.** With what sacrifice shall we shew ourselves
176 thankful, or how may we requite this benefit?

178 **Cupid.** You shall yearly at my temple offer true
hearts, and hourly bestow all your wits in loving

180 devices; think all the time lost that is not spent in
love; let your oaths be without number, but not
182 without truth; your words full of alluring sweetness,
but not of broad flattery; your attires neat, but not

184 womanish; your gifts of more price for the fine
device, than the great value, and yet of such value
186 that the device seem not beggarly, nor yourselves

blockish; be secret, that worketh miracles; be

188 constant – that bringeth secrecy. This is all Cupid
doth command. Away!

190 **Ramis.** And to this we all willingly consent.

[The temple-doors close.]

194 **Silv.** Now what resteth but revenge on them that have
196 practised malice on us? let mine be anything, seeing
she will not be only mine.

198 **Mont.** Let us not now stand wishing, but presently
200 seek them out, using as great speed in following
revenge as we did in pursuing our love; certainly we
202 shall find them about Ceres' tree, singing or
sacrificing.

lengthy search, begged the gods to return Proserpine to her; the gods assented, permitting her to return so long as she had not yet eaten anything from the underworld. Unfortunately, Proserpine had already eaten half of a pomegranate (which had been given to her by Pluto as a love-offering), and as a consequence was allowed to stay with her mother for only half of each year.

= ie. Cupid shall have proven.
= stubborn or foolish.¹

= repay (to Cupid).

178-9: *offer true hearts* = "affirm that your loves are true".

179-180: *and hourly...devices* = ie. the Foresters must spend every waking moment thinking about love, and devising ways (*devices*) of expressing, demonstrating or acquiring it.

= ie. wasted.

= gross or obvious.

184-6: *your gifts...beggarly* = presents should not be unnecessarily expensive, their true value (*price*) deriving from their careful selection; on the other hand, the boys shouldn't be cheap either. Scragg suggests the reference here is to the great value placed on small and personalized gifts exchanged between sweethearts.

184-5: *fine device* = intricacy of conception (Scragg, p. 101).⁶

187: *blockish* = obtuse.¹

be secret...miracles = Lyly elsewhere in his works extols the value of plying one's love in secret.

= remains.

= ie. "my revenge".

195-7: the quarto gives this speech to Ramis, but we adopt Scragg's reassigning it to Silvestris, since the speech clearly refers to Niobe, the Nymph who refuses to love only one man.

= immediately.

204 *Silv.* But shall we not go visit Erisichthon?
 206 *Mont.* Not I, lest he eat us, that devoureth all things;
 208 his looks are of force to famish: let us in, and let all
 ladies beware to offend those in spite, that love them
 210 in honour; for when the crow shall set his foot in
 their eye, and the black ox tread on their foot, they
 212 shall find their misfortunes to be equal with their
deformities, and men both to loath and laugh at them.
 214 [Exeunt.]

ACT IV, SCENE II.

The Seashore near Erisichthon's Farm.

Enter Erisichthon and Protea.

1 *Eris.* Come, Protea, tell me, how didst thou escape
 2 from the Merchant?
 4 *Protea.* Neptune, that great god, when I was ready
 to go with the Merchant into the ship, turned me to
 6 a fisherman on the shore, with an angle in my hand,
 and on my shoulder a net; the Merchant missing me,
 8 and yet finding me, asked me who I was, and whether
 I saw not a fair maiden? I answered, no! He, marveling
 10 and raging, was forced either to lose his passage, or
seek for me among the pebbles! To make short – a
 12 good wind caused him to go I know not whither, and
 me (thanks be to Neptune) to return home.
 14

= ie. "he who".
 208: *his looks...famish* = Erisichthon's appearance alone is sufficient to cause those who see him to turn hungry.
in = ie. go in.
 = who.
 210-1: *when the crow...foot* = common metaphors for aging. The first allusion is to the wrinkles that appear on the edges of one's eyes, called *crow's feet*, as one grows older.
 = malformations.¹
Entering Characters: in Lyly's plays, important plot developments frequently took place between scenes, not being portrayed on stage. Here, Protea has escaped from the Merchant, but we will only hear what transpired after the fact.
 = into.
 = a fishing rod.
 = ie. unable to find Protea.
 = ie. and yet unaware that the fisherman in front of him was Protea.
 = astonished.
 10-11: *was forced...pebbles* = with his boat about to leave, the Merchant had to choose between departing without Protea, or remaining behind to search for her, losing his place on the ship, and thus the cost of his ticket as well!
 11: *seek for...pebbles* = attempt to find her as if she were one pebble among thousands, ie. an impossible search; the expression, a Lyly original, seems to have the same meaning as the modern "to find a needle in a haystack".
To make short = "to cut my speech short",¹ ie. an early version of "to make a long story short".
 = the boat took advantage of a favourable wind to depart, and the Merchant decided to go with it; and Protea couldn't care less where the journey took him!
whither = to where.

16 *Eris.* Thou art happy, Protea, though thy father be
miserable: and Neptune gracious, though Ceres cruel:
18 thy escape from the Merchant breedeth in me life, joy,
and fullness.

20 *Protea.* My father cannot be miserable, if Protea be
happy; for by selling me every day, he shall never
22 want meat, nor I shifts to escape. And, now, father,
give me leave to enjoy my Petulius, that on this

24 unfortunate shore still seeks me sorrowing.

26 *Eris.* Seek him, dear Protea; find, and enjoy him; and
live ever hereafter to thine own comforts, that hast
28 hitherto been the preserver of mine.

30 [Exit *Erisichthon*.]

32 *Protea.* Aye me, behold, a Siren haunts this shore!
the gods forbid she should entangle my Petulius.

34 [Siren appears.]

36 *Siren.* Accursed men! whose loves have no other
38 mean than extremities, nor hates end but mischief.

40 *Protea.* Unnatural monster! no maid, that accuseth
men, whose loves are built on truths, and whose

42 hearts are removed by courtesy: I will hear the depth
of her malice.

44 *Siren.* Of all creatures most unkind, most cunning,
46 by whose subtleties I am half fish, half flesh,

= fortunate.

= ie. fulfillment.¹

20-21: *if Protea be happy* = "if I am always so fortunate."

21-22: *for by...escape* = Protea suggests that her father
should repeatedly sell her to get money for food, because
she will never lack means (*shifts*) to escape her new owners.

23-24: we learn that Protea has a boyfriend, who, sorrowed
by the sale of Protea and her presumed relocation to the
distant home of the Merchant, haunts the seashore in a futile
search for his beloved.

leave = permission.

24: *unfortunate shore* = referring to the bad luck experi-
enced by Protea, Erisichthon and Petulius.

still = always, continuously.

still...sorrowing = note the nice alliteration.

= until now.

32-33: see the next note for a sketch of the Siren.

Aye me = a common exclamation: "oh no!"

Entering Character: the *Sirens* were mythological
monsters, traditionally portrayed as part-woman and part-
bird, who possessed the power to enchant those men who
heard them singing, usually leading them to their deaths.¹²
Our particular Siren seems to be having trouble finding a
man to entice.

37-38: men have no other methods by which to acquire
love than by employing extreme measures (e.g., deceit), but
whose hatred inevitably leads them to bring harm (*mis-
chief*)¹ to those that love them.

Note that Protea is able to hear the Siren exclaim loudly,
while remaining unseen herself; see the note at lines 42-43
below.

= "she is no mere girl".

= Protea's experience with men has clearly been more
benign.

42: *removed by courtesy* = moved or stirred³ by (a woman's)
goodness or kindness.

42-43: *I will...malice* = a convention of the Elizabethan
stage permitted characters to eavesdrop on others unseen,
while the speaker would unrealistically but conveniently
describe his or her thoughts and feelings out loud.

45-46: Bond notes that there is no authority for the claim
that the Sirens got their form as a result of the deceit of
men; our Siren's self-description, continues Bond, actually

themselves being neither fish nor flesh; in love
48 lukewarm, in cruelty red hot; if they praise, they
flatter; if flatter, deceive; if deceive, destroy.

50 **Protea.** She rails at men, but seeks to entangle them.

52 This sleight is prepared for my sweet Petulius; I will
54 withdraw myself close, for Petulius followeth: he
will without doubt be enamoured of her; enchanted
he shall not be, – my charms shall countervail hers; it
56 is he hath saved my father's life with money, and must
prolong mine with love.

58 *Enter Petulius.*

60 **Petul.** I marvel Protea is so far before me: if she run,
62 I'll fly: – sweet Protea, where art thou? it is Petulius
calleth Protea.

64 **Siren.** Here commeth a brave youth. Now, Siren,
66 leave out nothing that may allure – thy golden locks,
thy enticing looks, thy tuned voice, thy subtle speech,

68 thy fair promises, which never missed the heart of any
but Ulysses.

70 [Sings, with a glass in her hand and a comb.]

72 **Petul.** What divine goddess is this? What sweet
74 harmony! my heart is ravished with such tickling
thoughts, and mine eyes stayed with such a bewitching
76 beauty, that I can neither find the means to remove
my affection, nor to turn aside my looks. –

corresponds to that of the mermaid (*half-fish*), which
contemporary literature frequently described as holding a
comb and mirror (see line 71 below).

subtleties = craft or connivance.¹

flesh = animal, ie. human.

= common expression meaning "neither one nor the other",
or "without the particular traits of either".¹
= ie. "men are indifferent".¹

51: the Siren verbally abuses men, but still tries to attain
lovers from amongst them.

= Protea has some trickery (*sleight*) in mind to employ to
protect Petulius from the Siren's clutches.

= ie. hide. = Petulius has seen Protea.

= match or counterbalance,¹ ie. checkmate.

= we learn that Petulius has gifted money to Erisichthon so
he could continue to buy food to survive.

= ahead of.

= ie. to catch her.

= fine.

67: *tuned* = musically in tune: the Sirens traditionally
attracted men with singing.

subtle = deceitfully or craftily persuasive.¹

68-69: *which never...Ulysses* = the Siren alludes to the
well-known tale from the *Odyssey*, in which *Ulysses*,
wanting to hear the Sirens' song without losing his life, had
his men lash him to a mast as they sailed past the Sirens'
island of Anthemoessa (to protect his crew, Ulysses
instructed them to stop their ears with wax so they could not
hear the music). Ulysses successful in his plot, the Sirens'
were so distressed at having failed to catch a man who had
heard their song that they threw themselves into the ocean.¹²

Technically, the Siren is wrong to say that Ulysses was
the only prey the Sirens failed to catch: the famous musician
Orpheus was also able to protect the crew of the **Argo**
(known collectively as the **Argonauts**) when it sailed past
the Sirens' island by playing his lyre very loudly, drowning
out the singing of the monstrous ladies.

71: the Siren holds the traditional accessories of a vain wo-
man (and also a mermaid), a mirror (*glass*) and comb.

= music, sound.¹ = enraptured. = pleasing.²

= held in place, ie. he cannot look away.

76-77: *remove my affection* = ie. avoid the feeling of falling
in love.

= turn his eyes away from her.

78		
		[Sing again Siren.]
80		
82	[To Siren] I yield to death, but with such delight, that I would not wish to live, unless it were to hear thy sweet <u>lays</u> .	= songs.
84		
86	Siren. Live <u>still</u> , <u>so</u> thou love me! – why standest thou amazed at the word love?	= always. = ie. so long as.
88	Protea. [<i>Behind</i>] It is high time to prevent this mischief. – Now, Neptune, stand to thy promise, and let me take suddenly the shape of an old man; so shall I mar what she makes.	90-91: so shall...mar = variation on the old expression, "to make or mar", meaning "to either make a success of something or destroy it". ^{1,6}
92		
94		[Exit Protea.]
96	Petul. Not yet come to myself, or if I be, I dare not credit mine ears. Love thee, divine goddess? <u>Vouchsafe</u> I may honour thee, and live by the imagination I have of thy words and worthiness.	95-96: Not yet...ears = "I have not yet come to my right mind, or, if I have, I cannot believe what I am hearing." = ie. "grant me that".
98		
100	Siren. I am [not] a goddess, but a lady and a virgin, whose love if thou embrace, thou shalt live no less happy than the gods in heaven.	
102		
104		<i>Re-enter Protea as an old man.</i>
106	Protea. Believe not this enchantress, sweet youth, who retaineth the face of a virgin, but the heart of a fiend, whose sweet tongue sheddeth more drops of blood than it uttereth syllables.	
108		
110	Petul. <u>Out</u> , <u>dottrell</u> ! whose dim eyes cannot <u>discern</u> beauty, <u>nor doting age judge of love</u> .	111: Out = exclamation of indignation. dottrell = dotterel, ie. senile old man. ¹ Editors usually suggest this term of opprobrium derived from the name of the bird dotterel (a small plover, considered, due to its stupidity, to be easily caught); however, the OED's entry for dotterel demonstrates that the word was used with both meanings – human and avian – as far back as the early 15th century, so that it is actually unclear which sense appeared first. discern = recognize. ¹
112		= ie. "nor whose judgment, which has been impaired by age, can properly appraise true love."
114	Protea. If thou listen to her words, thou shalt not live <u>to repent</u> : for her malice is as sudden as her joys are sweet.	= ie. to repent hearing them.
116		
118	Petul. Thy silver hairs are not <u>so precious</u> as her golden locks, <u>nor thy crooked age of that estimation</u> as her flowering youth.	= as esteemed. = "nor are your advanced years as worthy of admiration". crooked = bent or bowed with age. ¹
120		
122	Siren. That old man measureth the hot assault of love with the cold skirmishes of age.	122-3: a military metaphor: the aged intruder depreciates the value of passionate love, because he is only capable of experiencing the feeble emotions of the elderly.

124 **Protea.** That young cruel resembleth old apes, who
126 kill by culling: from the top of this rock whereon she

sitteth, will she throw thee headlong into the sea,
128 whose song is the instrument of her witchcraft, never
smiling but when she meaneth to smite, and under the

130 flattery of love practiseth the shedding of blood.

132 **Petul.** What art thou, which so blasphemest this
divine creature?

134 **Protea.** I am the ghost of Ulysses, who continually
136 hover[s] about these places where this Siren haunteth,
to save those which otherwise should be spoiled: stop

138 thine ears, as I did mine, and succour the fair, but, by

thy folly, the most infortunate Protea.

140 **Petul.** Protea? what dost thou hear, Petulius? where
142 is Protea?

144 **Protea.** In this thicket, ready to hang herself, because
thou carest not for her that [thou] did swear to follow.
146 Curse this hag, who only hath the voice and face of a
virgin, the rest all fish and feathers and filth; follow

148 me, and strongly stop thine ears, lest the second
encounter make the wound incurable.

150 **Petul.** Is this a Siren, and thou Ulysses? Cursed be
152 that hellish carcass, and blessed be thy heavenly
spirit.

154 **Siren.** I shrink my head for shame. O, Ulysses! is it
156 not enough for thee to escape, but also to teach others?
– Sing and die, nay die, and never sing more.

158 **Protea.** Follow me at this door, and out at the other.

160
162 [Exeunt Protea.
Re-enter Protea in her own character.]

164 **Petul.** How am I delivered! the old man is vanished,
and here for him stands Protea.

166

125: **cruel** = ie. cruel one, a noun.

125-6: **old apes...culling** = apes kill their young with excess kindness. Tilley¹⁰ traces this proverbial notion back to the *Adagia*, an early 16th century collection of ancient sayings and proverbs compiled by the Dutch humanist Erasmus.

culling = hugging.¹

= ie. she whose. = agent, means.

129: **smiling...smite** = note the typical Lylyian wordplay of **smiling** and **smite**.

under the = under the cloak or cover of.
= plots.¹

= who. = who.

= taken by force or ruined.¹ = close up or block up.

138: **as I did mine** = Protea is in error here: it was Ulysses' sailors who stopped their ears to the Sirens' song; see the note above at lines 68-69.

succour = help.

= unfortunate, ie. unlucky.

= "whom you did".

= a fabulous bit of alliteration; note how Protea now grants the Siren attributes of both fish and bird.

148-9: **lest...incurable** = ie. "in case the next round of singing drags you to your death."

= turn away.¹

= instruct others how to avoid her clutches.

157: spoken to herself.

= ie. through this door; Fairholt notes the illogic of there being a door on the beach, but of course Protea is referring to the stage door.

= saved.

168 **Protea.** Here standeth Protea, that hath saved thy life:
thou must also prolong hers, but let us into the woods,
170 and there I will tell thee how I came to Ulysses, and
the sum of all my fortunes, which happily will breed
172 in thee both love and wonder.

174 **Petul.** I will, and only love Protea, and never cease
to wonder at Protea.

176 [Exeunt.]

END OF ACT IV.

170: *sum...fortunes* = ie. "summary of all that has happened to me".

happily = perhaps.¹

breed = cause to grow.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Before the Temple of Cupid.

Enter Ceres, Cupid, and Tirtena.

1 **Ceres.** Cupid, thou hast transformed my Nymphs and
2 incensed me; them to shapes unreasonable, me to anger
3 immortal, for at one time I am both robbed of mine
4 honour and my Nymphs.

6 **Cupid.** Ceres, thy Nymphs were stubborn, and
7 thyself, speaking so imperiously to Cupid, somewhat
8 stately. If you ask the cause in choler, *Sic volo, sic*

iubeo: if in courtesy, *Quae venit ex merito poena*

10 *dolenda venit*. They were disdainful, and have their
deserts; thou Ceres, dost but govern the guts of men,

12 I the hearts: thou seekest to starve Erisichthon with thy

14 ministered famine, whom his daughter shall preserve
by my virtue, love.

16 **Ceres.** Thou art but a god, Cupid.

18 **Cupid.** No Ceres, but such a god as maketh thunder
fall out of Jove's hand, by throwing thoughts into his

20 heart, and to be more terrified with the sparkling of a
lady's eye, than men with the flashes of his lightning;
22 such a god that hath kindled more fire in Neptune's
bosom, than the whole sea which he is king of can

Entering Characters: the quarto once again calls for the appearance of the Nymph *Tirtena*, who remains silent throughout the scene – another clue that Lyly originally gave her a substantive role in the play, but later intended to fully erase her.

= without capacity to reason.¹

= eternal, undying. = at the same time, in one moment.

8: *stately* = haughty.¹

If you...choler = ie. "if you ask me this when you are angry, then my answer is as follows".

8-9: **Latin** (*Sic volo, sic iubeo*) = "thus do I will, thus do I command" (Daniel, p. 382).⁵ A commonly cited expression.

9: *if in courtesy* = "if you ask me courteously".

9-10: Latin (*Quae venit...venit*) = "a deserved punishment is painful."⁶ An adaptation from Ovid's *Heroides* (v.8).

10-11: *have their deserts* = "got what they deserved."

= ie. because she is the goddess of agriculture.

12-13: *thy ministered famine* = ie. the starvation Ceres visited on Erisichthon; but Bond and others likely correctly emend this to "*thy minister* (meaning agent or servant), *Famine*." According to the OED, the use of *ministered* as an adjective was extremely rare.

= keep alive, save.¹

16: ie. Ceres reminds Cupid he is no greater than any other deity.

18-27 (below): Cupid reminds Ceres that he has power over even the most powerful of gods.

18-20: *such a god...heart* = Cupid can cause even the king of the gods to fall in love, leading him to forget about everything else. Jupiter (*Jove*) is alluded to in his role as controller of thunderbolts (*thunder*)¹ and lightning.

thoughts = ie. thoughts of love.

= ie. and causing Jupiter to be.

= ie. than mortals are frightened by.

= ie. heat of passionate love.

24 quench; such power have I, that Pluto's never-dying
 fire doth but scorch in respect of my flames. Diana
 26 hath felt some motions of love, Vesta doth, Ceres
 shall.
 28
 30 **Ceres.** Art thou so cruel?
 32 **Cupid.** To those that resist, a lion; to those that
 submit, a lamb.
 34 **Ceres.** Canst thou make such difference in affection,
 and yet shall it all be love?
 36
 38 **Cupid.** Yea, as much as between sickness and
 health, though in both be life. Those that yield and
 honour Cupid shall possess sweet thoughts and
 40 enjoy pleasing wishes; the other shall be tormented
 with vain imaginations and impossible hopes.
 42
 44 **Ceres.** How may my Nymphs be restored?
 46 **Cupid.** If thou restore Erisichthon, they embrace their
 loves, and all offer sacrifice to me.
 48 **Ceres.** Erisichthon did in contempt hew down my
 sacred tree.
 50
 52 **Cupid.** Thy Nymphs did in disdain scorn my constant
 love.
 54 **Ceres.** He slew most cruelly my chaste Fidelity, whose
 blood lieth yet on the ground.
 56
 58 **Cupid.** But Diana hath changed her blood to fresh
 flowers, which are to be seen on the ground.
 60 **Ceres.** What honour shall he do to Ceres? What
 amends can he make to Fidelity?
 62
 64 **Cupid.** All Ceres' grove shall he deck with garlands,
 and accommpt every tree holy; a stately monument
 shall he erect in remembrance of Fidelity, and offer
 66 yearly sacrifice.
 68 **Ceres.** What sacrifice shall I and my Nymphs offer

24-25: **that Pluto's...flames** = that the eternal flames of Hades (which is ruled by the god **Pluto**) cause only superficial injuries compared to (**in respect of**) the passion Cupid can kindle in the hearts of men and gods.

25-26: **Diana...love** = ie. but even the goddess **Diana**, who was sworn to eternal virginity, fell in love. According to Bond, Cupid is alluding to an earlier Lyly play, *Endymion*, in which Diana permitted herself to kiss the title character. **motions** (line 26) = impulses.

= the virgin goddess of hearth and home; Bond points to a passage in *Endymion*, which hints that Vesta may have once felt the tug of love, as the only explanation for this reference.

= ie. "I am a lion."

34-35: Scragg interprets this to mean, "can genuine love really encompass such a wide range of both pleasurable and painful emotions?"

= ie. as much difference as there is.

= ie. though both extremes are experienced in life.

= ie. those who do not submit to or honour Cupid.
 = foolish.

45: **restore Erisichthon** = remove the farmer's punishment of starvation.

45-46: **they embrace their loves** = if the Nymphs accept the Foresters to be their husbands.

57-58: Diana has caused flowers to grow where Fidelity's blood has spilled onto the ground. We may note that Cupid's response here does not really address Ceres' point.

= ie. shall Erisichthon perform for.

= adorn.

= consider, value; a common alternate form of **account**.

70 thee? for I will do anything to restore my Nymphs,
and honour thee.

72 **Cupid.** You shall present in honour of my mother
Venus grapes and wheat; for *Sine Cerere et Baccho*

74 *friget Venus.* You shall suffer your Nymphs to play,
sometimes to be idle, in the favour of Cupid; for

76 *Otia si tollas, periere Cupidinis arcus.* So much for
Ceres. Thy Nymphs shall make no vows to continue

78 virgins, nor use words to disgrace love, nor fly from
opportunities that kindle affections: if they be chaste,
80 let them not be cruel; if fair, not proud; if loving, not
inconstant; cruelty is for tigers, pride for peacocks,
82 inconstancy for fools.

84 **Ceres.** Cupid, I yield, and they shall: but sweet Cupid,

let them not be deceived by flattery, which taketh the
86 shape of affection; nor by lust, which is clothed in the

habit of love: for men have as many sleights to delude,
88 as they have words to speak.

90 **Cupid.** Those that practice deceit shall perish: Cupid
favoureth none but the faithful.

92 **Ceres.** Well, I will go to Erisichthon, and bring him
94 before thee.

96 **Cupid.** Then shall thy nymphs recover their forms,

so as they yield to love.

98 **Ceres.** They shall.

100

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V, SCENE II.

The Same: Before the Temple of Cupid.

73: **grapes and wheat** = symbols for drink and food.

73-74: **Latin** (*Sine...Venus*) = "Venus grows cold without Ceres and Bacchus." **Bacchus** is the god of wine. Adapted from line II.v.6 of *The Eunuch*, a comic play by the Roman dramatist **Terence**.⁴

= allow.

= ie. which would make them more vulnerable to feelings of love, the condition Cupid prefers.

76: **Latin** = "if you remove all idleness, Cupid's bow is broken".⁸ Cupid, citing line 139 of Ovid's *The Cures for Love*, naturally prefers that individuals follow the opposite advice to what he gave Ceres at Act II.ii.150, to wit, that one can avoid falling in love by keeping occupied.

76-77: **So much for Ceres** = ie. "these are all the instructions I have for you."

= flee from, avoid.

79-81: **if they...inconstant** = Cupid refers to Nisa, Celia and Niobe respectively.

84-88: Ceres naturally worries that her Nymphs will be the victims of men whose professed love is not genuine.

85-87: **by flattery...of love** = both flattery and lust **taketh** on the appearance of love.

habit (line 87) = outward appearance.¹

= tricks, contrivances.

= the quarto prints **fames** here, emended by most editors as shown, except for Daniel, who leaves the original text undisturbed.

= ie. so long as.

Enter Petulius and Protea.

1 **Petul.** A strange discourse, Protea, by which I find the
2 gods amorous, and virgins immortal, goddesses full of
3
4 cruelty, and men of unhappiness.
5
6 **Protea.** I have told both my father's misfortunes,
7 grown by stoutness, and mine by weakness; his
8 thwarting of Ceres, my yielding to Neptune.
9
10 **Petul.** I know, Protea, that hard iron, falling into fire,
11 waxeth soft; and then the tender heart of a virgin, being
12 in love, must needs melt: for what should a fair, young
13 and witty lady answer to the sweet enticements of
14 love, but *Molle meum levibus cor est violabile telit?*
15
16 **Protea.** I have heard too, that hearts of men, stiffer
17 than steel, have by love been made softer than wool,
18 and then they cry, *Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus
19 amori.*
20
21 **Petul.** Men have often feigned sighs.
22
23 **Protea.** And women forged tears.
24
25 **Petul.** Suppose I love not.
26
27 **Protea.** Suppose I care not.
28
29 **Petul.** If men swear and lie, how will you try their
30 loves?
31
32 **Protea.** If women swear they love, how will you try
33 their dissembling?
34
35 **Petul.** The gods put wit into women.
36
37 **Protea.** And nature deceit into men.
38
39 **Petul.** I did this but to try your patience.
40
41 **Protea.** Nor I, but to prove your faith. – But see,
42
43 Petulius, what miraculous punishments here are for
44 deserts in love: this rock was a Nymph to Ceres; so
was this rose; so that bird.
45
46 **Petul.** All changed from their shapes?

1: *discourse* = story.

1-2: *the gods amorous* = allusion to Neptune's affair with Protea.⁶

= this phrase has puzzled editors. Scragg perhaps gives the best gloss, suggesting that the reference is to Protea's deity-like ability to change her shape (p. 114).⁶

= possessed of bad luck.

5-7: ie. Erisichthon's misfortunes were caused or increased by his arrogant defiance of Ceres, and Protea's by her yielding herself to Neptune's advances.

stoutness = pride.¹

= grows.

= necessarily.

13: **Latin** = "my heart is tender, and is easily hurt by the light shafts (of Cupid)."⁸ From Ovid's *Heroides* (xv.79).

17-18: **Latin** = "Love conquers all; then we too will bow down before him (Cupid)."⁹ From Virgil's *Eclogues*, x.69.

20-22: both men and women use deceit during courtship.

24ff: Protea and Petulius engage in a strange and unexpected testing of the genuineness of their feelings for each other.

28: *men* = ie. "if you believe all men".

28-29: *try their loves* = determine if their love is genuine; *try* = test.

31-32: *try their dissembling* = determine if they are really lying.

38: Bond suggests that Petulius is trying to excuse his attraction to the Siren by claiming it was a test of Protea's love.

= similarly, Protea may be attempting to excuse her affair with Neptune.

prove = make trial of.

= Scragg suggests, "deeds deserving punishment";⁶ Bond, "deserters or defaulters."⁴

46 **Protea.** All changed by Cupid, because they disdained
48 love, or dissembled in it.

50 **Petul.** A fair warning to Protea; I hope she will love
without dissembling.

52 **Protea.** An item for Petulius, that he delude not those
54 that love him; for Cupid can also change men. Let us
in.

56 [Exeunt.]

ACT V, SCENE III.

The Same: Before the Temple of Cupid.

Enter Ramis, Silvestris and Montanus.

1 **Ramis.** This goeth luckily, that Cupid hath promised
2 to restore our mistresses; and Ceres, that they shall
accept our loves.

4 **Mont.** I did ever imagine that true love would end
6 with sweet joys, though it was begun with deep sighs.

8 **Silv.** But how shall we look on them when we shall
10 see them smile? We must, and perchance they will
frown.

12 **Ramis.** Tush! let us endure the bending of their fair
brows, and the scorching of their sparkling eyes, so
14 that we may possess at last the depth of their affections.

16 **Mont.** Possess? Never doubt it; for Ceres hath restored
Erisichthon, and therefore will persuade with them, nay,
18 command them.

20 **Silv.** If it come by commandment of Ceres, not their
own motions, I rather they should hate: for what joy

22 can there be in our lives, or in our loves sweetness,
when every kiss shall be sealed with a curse, and
24 every kind word proceed of fear, not affection?
enforcement is worse than enchantment.

26 **Ramis.** Art thou so superstitious in love, that wast
28 wont to be most careless? Let them curse all day, so
I may have but one kiss at night.

= a warning or hint.²

2: *restore out mistress* = return the Nymphs to their proper
bodily forms.

and Ceres = ie. "and Ceres has promised".

8-10: Silvestris reasonably wonders whether the Nymphs'
attitudes towards them will have changed at all once their
punishments have been lifted.

look on them = ie. behave towards the Nymphs.

We must = ie. "we will have to engage them sooner or
later".

perchance = perhaps.

12-13: *the bending...eyes* = ie. the Nymphs' displeasure.

13-14: *so that* = so long as.

= in the end.

20-21: *If it...hate* = Silvestris is again skeptical: he would
rather the Nymphs despise the Foresters than acquiesce to
their lovemaking only because they were ordered to do so
by Ceres.

motions = impulses.

= from.

= force.

27-28: *Art thou...careless* = "are you so overly scrupulous
(*superstitious*)¹ now about love, you who used to be
most unconcerned (*careless*)¹ about it?"

30	Mont. Thou art worse than Silvestris; he not content	
32	without absolute love, <u>thou with indifferent</u> .	= "and you would be content to possess Nisa, with her indifferent feeling towards you."
34	Silv. But here commeth Ceres with Erisichthon: let us	
36	look <u>demurely</u> ; for in her heart she hates us deeply.	= serious, composed. ¹
	[<i>Foresters remain on stage.</i>]	
	<u>ACT V, SCENE IV.</u>	
	<i>The Same: Before the Temple of Cupid.</i>	
	<i>Still on stage: the Foresters.</i>	
	<i>Enter Ceres and Erisichthon to the Foresters.</i>	
1	Eris. I will <u>hallow</u> thy woods with solemn feasts, and	= sanctify.
2	honour all thy Nymphs with due <u>regard</u> .	= care or respect. ¹
4	Ceres. Well, do so; and thank Cupid that commands;	
	nay, thank my foolish Nymphs, that know not how	5-6: thank my...obey = Erisichthon should thank Ceres' Nymphs for saving his life: this they accomplished by disobeying her commands to give themselves to the boys, which in turn led to their transformations, which resulted in Ceres being forced to make a deal with Cupid – the lifting of the punishment of Erisichthon in exchange for the restoration of the Nymphs.
6	to obey; – here be the lovers <u>ready at receipt</u> . – How	= ie. "ready to receive us;" ready at receipt was a hunting term, used to describe hunters who stand at the ready, awaiting game that is to be driven towards them. ⁴
8	now, gentlemen, what seek you?	
10	Ramis. Nothing but what Ceres <u>would find</u> .	= "wishes to find", ie. her Nymphs.
12	Ceres. Ceres hath found <u>those</u> that I <u>would</u> she had	= ie. the Foresters. = wish.
14	lost, – <u>vain</u> lovers.	= foolish.
16	Ramis. Ceres may lose that that Cupid would save,	
18	<u>true</u> lovers.	= faithful.
20	Ceres. You think so one of another.	16: ie. "you believe yourselves to be faithful lovers."
22	Silv. Cupid knoweth so of us all.	
24	Ceres. You might have made me a <u>counsel</u> of your	20-21: an interesting psychological possibility: does Ceres' scorn of the Foresters stem from the fact that they never approached her for advice or assistance in the matter of their loves for the Nymphs?
26	loves.	counsel = advisor. ¹
28	Mont. Aye, madam, <u>if love would admit counsel</u> .	= one's love cannot be managed with advice. ¹⁰
	[<i>The temple-doors open.</i>]	
	Ceres. Cupid, here is Erisichthon <u>in his former state</u> ;	= ie. as he used to be – not starving.
	restore my Nymphs to theirs, then shall they embrace	

30	these lovers, who <u>wither out</u> their youth.	= waste away.
32	<i>Enter Petulius and Protea.</i>	
34	Eris. Honoured be mighty Cupid, that makes me live!	
36	Petul. Honoured be mighty Cupid, that makes me love!	
38	Protea. And me!	
40	Ceres. What, more lovers yet? I think it be impossible	
42	for Ceres to have <u>any</u> follow her in one hour, <u>that</u> is	= anyone. = who.
	not in love in the next.	
44	Cupid. Erisichthon, be thou careful to honour Ceres,	
46	and forget not to please her Nymphs. The faithful love	= evinced, brought about.
48	of thy daughter Protea hath <u>wrought</u> both pity in me	
	to grant her desires, and to release thy punishments. –	
50	Thou, Petulius, shalt enjoy thy love, because I know	
	thee <u>loyal</u> .	= faithful.
52	Petul. Then shall Petulius be most happy.	
54	Protea. And Protea most fortunate.	
56	Cupid. But do you, Ramis, continue your <u>constant</u>	= faithful.
	love? and you, Montanus? and you, Silvestris?	
58	Ramis. Nothing can alter our affections, which	
60	increase while the <u>means</u> decrease, and <u>wax</u> stronger	= ie. means available to win their loves. = grow.
	in being weakened.	
62	Cupid. Then, Venus, <u>send down that shower</u> ,	= Bond suggests some special effects may be employed here, such as the littering of the stage with torn paper, or the drawing of a translucent curtain, within or behind which the Nymphs can be metamorphosed back into their bodily forms. Note how <i>Venus' shower</i> will reverse the effects of <i>Proserpine's mist</i> (Act IV.i.170-1), which transformed the Nymphs into their non-human shapes.
64	wherewith thou wert <u>wont</u> to wash those that do the	= accustomed.
66	worship; and let love by thy beams be honoured in	
	all the world, and feared, wished for, and wondered	
	at.	
68	<i>[The Nymphs are transformed.]</i>	67: stage direction added by editor.
70	Here are thy Nymphs, Ceres.	
72	Ramis. Whom do I see? Nisa?	
74	Mont. Divine Celia, fairer then ever she was!	
76	Silv. My sweet Niobe!	
78	Ceres. Why stare you, my Nymphs, as amazed?	
80	<u>triumph</u> rather because you have your shapes: this	= rejoice. ¹
	great god Cupid, that for your prides and follies	

82	<u>changed</u> , hath by my prayer and promise restored you.	= metamorphosed.
84	Cupid. You see, ladies, what it is to make a mock of love, or a scorn of Cupid: see where your lovers stand;	
86	you must now take them for your husbands: this is my judgement, this is Ceres' promise.	
88	Ramis. Happy Ramis!	
90	Mont. Happy Montanus!	
92	Silv. Happy Silvestris!	
94	Ceres. Why speak you not, Nymphs? This must be done, and you must yield.	
98	Nisa. Not I!	
100	Niobe. Nor I!	
102	Celia. Nor I!	
104	Ceres. Not yield? Then shall Cupid in his fury turn you again to <u>senseless</u> and shameful shapes.	= insentient.
106	Cupid. Will you not yield? How say you, Ramis? Do your loves continue? Are your thoughts constant? And yours, Montanus? And yours, Silvestris?	
110	Ramis. Mine most <u>unspotted</u> !	= morally untainted, ie. pure.
112	Mont. And mine!	
114	Silv. And mine, Cupid! which nothing can alter!	
116	Cupid. And will you not yield, virgins?	
118	Nisa. Not I, Cupid! neither do I thank thee that I am restored to life, nor fear again to be changed to stone: for rather had I been <u>worn</u> with the continual beating of waves, than <u>dulled</u> with the importunities	= ie. worn down, eroded. 121-2: <u>dulled...of men</u> = stupefied or made bored (<u>dulled</u>) ¹ by the persistent demands of men. = evident, shameless. ¹
122	of men, whose <u>open</u> flatteries make way to their secret lusts, retaining as little truth in their hearts as modesty in their words. How happy was Nisa, which felt nothing; <u>pined</u> , yet not felt the consumption! unfortunate <u>wench</u> , that now have ears to hear <u>their</u> cunning lies, and eyes to behold their dissembling <u>looks</u> ! – <u>turn</u> me, Cupid, again, for love I will not!	= wasted away without feeling the decay. = lass. = ie. men's.
124		
126		
128		= glances, staring. = transform.
130	Remis. Miserable Ramis! <u>unhappy to love</u> ; to change the lady, accursed; and now lose her, desperate!	= ie. unlucky to be in love.
132		
134	Celia. Nor I, Cupid: well would I content myself to bud in the summer, and to die in the winter: for more good commeth of the rose than can by love: when it	
136		

138 is fresh, it hath a sweet savour; love, a sour taste: the
 rose, when it is old, loseth not his virtue; love, when
 it is stale, waxeth loathsome. The rose, distilled with
 140 fire, yieldeth sweet water: love, in extremities,
 kindles jealousies; in the rose, however it be, there is
 142 sweetness; in love, nothing but bitterness. If men
 look pale, and swear, and sigh, then forsooth women
 144 must yield, because men say they love, as though
 our hearts were tied to their tongues, and we must
 146 choose them by appointment, ourselves feeling no
 affection, and so have our thoughts bound prentises
 148 to their words: – turn me again. Yield I will not!
 150 **Mont.** Which way shalt thou turn thyself, since
 nothing will turn her heart? Die, Montanus, with
 152 shame and grief, and both infinite!
 154 **Niobe.** Nor I, Cupid! let me hang always in the air,
 which I found more constant than men's words: happy
 156 Niobe, that touched not the ground where they go,
 but always holding thy beak in the air, didst never
 158 turn back to behold the earth. In the heavens I saw
 an orderly course, in the earth nothing but disorderly
 160 love, and peevishness: – turn me again, Cupid, for
 yield I will not!
 162 **Silv.** I would myself were stone, flower, or fowl;
 164 seeing that Niobe hath a heart harder than stone, a
 face fairer than the rose, and a mind lighter than
 166 feathers.
 168 **Cupid.** What have we here? Hath punishment made
 you perverse? – Ceres, I vow here by my sweet mother
 170 Venus, that if they yield not, I will turn them again,
 not to flowers, or stones, or birds, but to monsters,
 172 no less filthy to be seen than to be named hateful:
 they shall creep that now stand, and be to all men
 174 odious, and be to themselves (for the mind they shall
 retain) loathsome.
 176 **Ceres.** My sweet Nymphs, for the honour of your sex,
 178 for the love of Ceres, for regard of your own country,
 yield to love: yield, my sweet nymphs, to sweet love.
 180 **Nisa.** Shall I yield to him that practised my destruction,

= smell.
 = "its beneficial traits" (Scragg, p. 122).⁶
 139: **waxeth** = grows.
 139-140: **The rose...water** = a rose, even after it has
 withered, retains its attractive aroma when its petals are
 distilled to produce rose oil.
 = in its extreme form.
 = in whatever form it takes.
 = truly.
 143-4: **as though...tongues** = as if women's emotions were
 compelled to conform with whatever men say to them.
 = "select our husbands by someone else's arrangement".
 = made apprentices, ie. made subservient.
 150-2: Montanus laments to himself.
 = ie. fly always as a bird, without ever landing.
 = fortunate.
 158-9: **In the...course** = Niobe describes the universe as
 orderly, perpetual and predictable. A 1632 work tells us that
 "the Gods...maintain and keep this **orderly course** of the
 whole world, so certain, perpetual, infallible and for the
 grandeur and beauty thereof so inexplicable."
 = unruly, untidy.¹
 = foolishness, perversity.¹
 = wish.
 = the quarto prints **Nisa** here, universally emended as shown.
 = meaning both (1) wanton, and (2) not heavy.
 = Cupid could mean serpents or short-legged creatures, both
 of whom were said to **creep** (line 173).
 = called.
 = ie. Ramis. = caused, brought about, plotted.¹

182	and when his love was hottest, caused me to be changed to a rock?	
184		
186	Ramis. Nisa, the <u>extremity</u> of love is madness, and to be mad is to be <u>senseless</u> ; upon that rock did I resolve to end my life: fair Nisa, forgive <u>him</u> thy change, <u>that for himself provided a harder chance</u> .	= extreme form or expression. = insentient. = meaning Ramis himself. = for the sake of him who brought on himself such ill fortune.
188		
190	Celia. Shall I yield to <u>him</u> that made so small	190: him = ie. Montanus. 190-1: made so small accompt of = had so little regard for.
192	accompt of my beauty, that he <u>studied</u> how he might never behold it again?	= deliberated or thought on. ²
194	Mont. Fair lady, in the rose did I always behold thy colour, and <u>resolved</u> by continual gazing to perish, which I could not do when thou wast in thine own shape, <u>thou wast</u> so coy and swift in <u>flying</u> from me.	= decided. = ie. "you who were". = running away.
196		
198	Niobe. Shall I yield to <u>him</u> that caused me have wings, that I might fly farther from him?	= ie. Silvestris.
200		
202	Silv. Sweet Niobe, the farther you did seem to be from me, the nearer I was to my death; which, to make it more speedy, wished thee <u>wings</u> to fly into the air, and <u>myself lead on my heels</u> to sink into the sea.	= ie. to possess wings. = ie. Silvestris wished his feet were wrapped in lead.
204		
206		
208	Ceres. Well, my good Nymphs, yield; let Ceres <u>entreat</u> you yield.	= implore.
210		
212	Nisa. I am content, <u>so as</u> Ramis, when he finds me cold in love, or <u>hard in belief</u> , he attribute it to his own folly; <u>in that</u> I retain some nature of the rock he changed me into.	= ie. so long as. = recalcitrant, obstinate. ¹ = ie. in that manner.
214		
216	Ramis. O, my sweet Nisa! be what thou wilt, and let all thy imperfections be excused by me, so thou but say thou lovest me.	
218		
220	Nisa. I do.	
222	Ramis. Happy Ramis!	
224	Celia. I consent, <u>so as</u> Montanus, when in the midst of his sweet delight, shall find some <u>bitter overthwarts</u> ,	= ie. so long as. = "vexing speeches" (Bond, p. 569), ⁴ "disagreeable contradictions" (Fairholt, p. 284), ³ or "impudent remarks" (Daniel, p. 382). ⁵
226	impute it to his folly, in that he <u>suffered me to be</u> a rose, that hath prickles with her pleasantness, <u>as he</u> is <u>like</u> to have <u>with</u> my love <u>shrewdness</u> .	= ie. assented to Celia being turned into. = ie. just as. = likely. = ie. combined with. = shrewishness. ³
228		
230	Mont. Let me bleed every minute with the prickles of the rose, so that I may enjoy but one hour the savour; love, fair Celia, and at thy pleasure comfort, and confound.	232-3: at thy...confound = Celia may bring Montanus joy or discomfiture as she wishes.
232		

234 **Celia.** I do.
 236
 238 **Mont.** Fortunate Montanus!
 240 **Niobe.** I yielded first in mind, though it be my course
 242 last to speak: but if Silvestris find me not ever at
 home, let him curse himself that gave me wings to
 fly abroad; whose feathers, if his jealousy shall break,

 my policy shall imp. *Non custodiri, ni velit, ulla potest.*
 244
 246 **Silv.** My sweet Niobe! fly whither thou wilt all day,
 248 so I may find the in my nest at night, I will love thee,
 and believe thee. *Sit modo, non feci, dicere lingua*
memor.

 250 **Cupid.** I am glad you are all agreed; enjoy your loves,
 252 and everyone his delight. – Thou, Erisichthon, art
 254 restored of Ceres, all the lovers pleased by Cupid,
 she joyful, I honoured. Now, ladies, I will make such
 256 unspotted love among you, that there shall be no
 suspicion nor jar, no unkindness nor jealousy: but
 258 let all ladies hereafter take heed that they resist not
 love, which worketh wonders.

 260 **Ceres.** I will charm my Nymphs, as they shall neither
 be so stately as not to stoop to love, nor so light as
presently to yield.

 262
 264 **Cupid.** Here is none but is happy: but do not as
 266 Hippomanes did, when by Venus' aid he won Atalanta:
 defile her temple with unchaste desires, and forgot to
 sacrifice vows. I will soar up into heaven, to settle the

= habit.

242-3: **whose feathers...imp** = literally, if Silvestris, through his jealousy, breaks Niobe's feathers, she will repair (**imp**) them; what Niobe means is, if Silvestris, out of jealousy, seeks to keep her from straying, she will use her cunning (**policy**) to find means to do so anyway. Niobe seems to be indirectly threatening to cheat on Silvestris in the future.

imp = the quarto prints **nip** here, emended by Bond and the later editors as shown; the reference is to Niobe's feathers, not Montanus' jealousy.

243: Latin = "no watch can be set over a woman's will."
 Adapted from Ovid's *Amores*, or *Loves* (iii.4.6).¹⁶

247: **believe** = the quarto prints **belove**, emended as shown by Bond and the later editors.

247-8: **Latin** = "let your tongue only be mindful to say, 'I did not do it.'" From Ovid's *Loves* (iii.14.48).⁸

= by.

= dispute, quarrel.¹

= bewitch, suggesting "induce".¹ = so that.

260: **stately** = proud.

stoop = yield.

260-1: **nor so...yield** = nor so promiscuous (**light**) as to immediately (**presently**) give themselves to any man who asks.

263: **none** = "no one but who".

263-6: **as Hippomanes...vows** = *Atalanta* was a beautiful and swift-footed maiden, but she refused to get married, due to an oracle which warned her that if she did become some man's wife, she would "lose herself". Under pressure to take a husband, *Atalanta* announced she would marry any suitor who could beat her in a foot-race, with the condition that he would be put to death if he lost. Many men tried, and many men died.

A young man, *Hippomanes*, also in love with *Atalanta*, prayed to *Venus* to help him win her; the goddess gave him three golden apples. During his foot-race with *Atalanta*, he tossed the apples one at a time whenever she took the lead, hoping to distract her. Sure enough, every time Hippomenes

268 the loves of the gods, that in earth have disposed the
affections of men.

270 **Ceres.** I to my harvest, whose corn is now come out

272 of the blade into the ear; and let all this amorous
troop to the temple of Venus, there to consummate
274 what Cupid hath commanded.

276 **Eris.** I, in the honour of Cupid and Ceres, will
solemnize this feast within my house; and learn, if it
278 be not too late, again to love. But you Foresters were
unkind, that in all my maladies would not visit me.

280 **Mont.** Thou knowest, Erisichthon, that lovers visit
none but their mistresses.

282 **Eris.** Well, I will not take it unkindly, since all ends
284 in kindness.

286 **Ceres.** Let it be so: – these lovers mind nothing what
we say.

288 **Ramis.** Yes, we attend on Ceres.

290 **Ceres.** Well, do.

292

[*Exeunt.*]

FINIS.

tossed an apple, Atalanta would stop to chase and gather it. With Atalanta trying to run while carrying these heavy pieces of fruit, Hippomenes won the race, and won Atalanta.

Unfortunately, the ungrateful Hippomanes failed to thank Venus for helping him win Atalanta. In revenge, the offended goddess caused Hippomenes to be driven half-mad with lust for his new wife, which led him to deflower Atalanta in a cavern next to a temple dedicated to **Cybele** (a primal nature goddess),¹⁴ who, herself offended by this act of sacrilege, turned the newlyweds into lions.

Note that Lyly has slightly modified the tale, by which Cupid describes the offensive act of love taking place in a temple of Venus, rather than near that of Cybele.

forgot (line 265) = many editors emend this to *forget*.

= ie. who on earth.

270-1: *come out...ear* = matured from simple stalks to fully-grown ears of corn.

blade (line 271) = leaf.¹

271-2: *amorous troop* = group of lovers.
= fulfill, ie. perform.

277-8: *But you...visit me* = see Act IV.i.205-7 above.

280-1: Montanus' excuse for the boys' failure to visit Erisichthon is lame.

= heed or listen not.

Postscript: like many Elizabethan plays, *Love's Metamorphosis* concludes with multiple engagements to be married; yet we may find ourselves somewhat troubled by an ending in which marriage is, despite the Nymphs' acquiescence, *forced* on them (Niobe even gives notice that she may continue to meet other men!). Petulius and Protea may also experience resentments – Protea over Petulius' attraction to the Siren, and Petulius over Protea's pre-marriage loss of her virginity, even if it was to a god. How happy can these couples really expect to be?

The reader may wish to consider, as he or she continues to explore the literature of this era, the number of plays which end in similar fashion, in which offenses between

couples, which are hastily forgiven in the dramatic world, would likely leave lingering grudges in individuals of the real world.

FOOTNOTES.

The footnotes in the play correspond as follows:

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