

*ElizabethanDrama.org*

presents  
a Theatre Script of

# LOVE'S METAMORPHOSIS

By John Lyly

Written c. 1590?

Earliest Extant Edition: 1601

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# LOVE'S METAMORPHOSIS

By John Lyly

Written: c. 1590?

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*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.

### **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. 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.

### **C. Optional Textual Changes.**

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

# 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  
6 **Mont.** Ramis, thou canst not see that which cannot  
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  
10 influence the forms and qualities impressed within  
them, no doubt they could not choose but savour  
more of his divinity.

12  
14 **Silv.** I do not think Love hath any spark of divinity  
in him, since the end of his being is earthly: in the  
16 blood is he begot by the frail fires of the eye, and  
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  
bodies, which in their own natures being much more  
22 wretched than beasts, do much more miserably than  
beasts pursue their own ruins; and since it will ask  
24 longer labour and study to subdue the powers of our  
blood to the rule of the soul, than to satisfy them  
26 with the fruition of our loves, let us be constant in  
the world's errors, and seek our own torments.

28

30 **Mont.** As good yield indeed submissively, and satisfy  
part of our affections, as be stubborn without ability  
32 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,  
since they be all cruel; nor which of our fortunes be  
40 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.

46 **Mont.** I this: *Fructus abest facies cum bona teste*  
*caret.* Fair faces lose their favours, if they admit no  
48 lovers.

50 **Ramis.** [To *Silvestris*] But why studieth 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  
honour of Ceres. Of what colours or flowers is thine  
4 made of, Niobe?

6 **Niobe.** Of salamints, which in the morning are white,  
red at noon, and in the evening purple, for in my  
8 affections shall there be no staidness but in unstaidness;  
but what is yours of, Nisa?

10  
12 **Nisa.** Of holly, because it is most holy, which lovely  
green neither the sun's beams, nor the wind's blasts,  
can alter or diminish. But, Celia, what garland have  
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  
24 **Niobe.** Come, let us make an end, lest Ceres come  
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.

48 | **Niobe.** But foresters think all birds to be buntings. –  
What's the next? *Fructus abest facies cum bona teste*  
50 | *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  
whole hand, I can pull him again with my little  
62 | finger. – Let us encourage them, and write something:  
if they censure it favourably, we know them fools; if  
64 | angerly, 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.

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,  
88 | although into her heart never entered any motion of  
love, yet usually to the temple of Cupid, [s]he offereth  
90 | two white doves, as entreating his favour, and one  
eagle as commanding his power. *Praecibusq[ue]*  
92 | *minas regaliter addet.*

94 [*They sing and dance.*]

96 *Enter Erisichthon.*

98 **Eris.** What noise is this, what assembly, what idolatry?  
 Is the modesty of virgins turned to wantonness? The  
 100 honour of Ceres accompted immortal? And Erisichthon,  
 ruler of this forest, esteemed of no force? Impudent  
 102 giglots that you are, to disturb my game, or dare do  
 honour to any but Erisichthon. It is not your fair faces  
 104 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  
 way flexible.

108 **Niobe.** Erisichthon, thy stern looks joined with thy  
 110 stout speeches, thy words as unkembed as thy locks,  
 were able to affright men of bold courage, and to  
 112 make us silly girls frantic, that are full of fear; but  
 know thou, Erisichthon, that were thy hands so  
 114 unstayed as thy tongue, and th' one as ready to execute  
 mischief as the other to threaten it, it should neither  
 116 move our hearts to ask pity, or remove our bodies  
 from this place. We are the handmaids of divine  
 118 Ceres: to fair Ceres is this holy tree dedicated; to  
 Ceres, by whose favour thyself livest, that art worthy  
 120 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  
 regard of your sex which men should tender, nor of  
 126 your beauty which foolish love would dote on, nor  
 of your goddess, which none but peevish girls  
 128 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  
 malice, my last word shall be the beginning of the  
 132 first blow.

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

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

138 **Niobe.** Ourselves, I fear, must also minister matter  
 to his fury!

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



142 | blood, and I hear a voice.

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

It is thy spite, Cupid, that, having no power to wound  
 152 | 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  
 been many years, in recompence of my inviolable  
 160 | faith, reward me with unspeakable torments?

Divine Phoebus, that pursued Daphne till she was  
 162 | turned to a bay tree, ceased then to trouble her: aye,  
 the gods are pitiful; and Cinyras, that with fury followed  
 164 | his daughter Myrrha, till she was changed to a myrrh  
 tree, left then to prosecute her: yea, parents are natural.  
 166 | Phoebus lamented the loss of his friend, Cinyras of  
 his child.

But both gods and men either forget or neglect the  
 168 | change of Fidelia, nay, follow her after her change, to  
 make her more miserable: so that there is nothing more  
 170 | hateful than to be chaste, whose bodies are followed  
 in the world with lust, and prosecuted in the graves  
 172 | with tyranny; whose minds the freer they are from  
 vice, their bodies are in the more danger of mischief;  
 174 | so that they are not safe when they live, because of  
 men's love; nor being changed, because of their hates;  
 176 | nor being dead, because of their defaming.

What is that chastity which so few women study  
 178 | to keep, and both gods and men seek to violate? If  
 only a naked name, why are we so superstitious of a  
 180 | hollow sound? If a rare virtue, why are men so  
 careless of such an exceeding rareness?  
 182 |

Go, ladies, tell Ceres I am that Fidelia that so long  
 184 | knit garlands in her honour, and, chased with a Satyr,  
 by prayer to the gods became turned to a tree; whose  
 186 | body now is grown over with a rough bark, and whose  
 golden locks are covered with green leaves; yet whose  
 188 | mind nothing can alter, neither the fear of death, nor

190 the torments. If Ceres seek no revenge, then let virginity  
be not only the scorn of savage people, but the spoil.

192 But, alas, I feel my last blood to come, and  
therefore must end my last breath. – Farewell, ladies,  
194 whose lives are subject to many mischieves; for if you  
be fair, it is hard to be chaste; if chaste, impossible to  
196 be safe; if you be young, you will quickly bend; if  
bend, you are suddenly broken. If you be foul, you  
198 shall seldom be flattered; if you be not flattered, you  
will ever be sorrowful. Beauty is a firm fickleness,  
youth a feeble staidness, deformity a continual sadness.

200

[Dies.]

202

**Niobe.** [To Erisichthon] Thou monster, canst thou  
204 hear this without grief?

206 **Eris.** Yea, and double your griefs with my blows.

208

[He proceeds to fell the tree to the ground.]

210 **Nisa.** Ah, poor Fidelia, the express pattern of chastity,  
and example of misfortune!

212

214 **Celia.** Ah, cruel Erisichthon, that not only defaceth  
these holy trees, but murtherest also this chaste nymph!

216 **Eris.** Nymph, or goddess, it skilleth not, for there is  
none that Erisichthon careth for, but Erisichthon; let  
218 Ceres, the lady of your harvest, revenge when she  
will, nay, when she dares! and tell her this, that I am  
220 Erisichthon.

222 **Niobe.** Thou art none of the gods.

224 **Eris.** No, a contemner of the gods.

226 **Nisa.** And hopest thou to escape revenge, being but  
a man?

228

230 **Eris.** Yea, I care not for revenge, being a man and  
Erisichthon.

232 **Nisa.** Come, let us to Ceres, and complain of this  
unacquainted and incredible villain: if there be power  
234 in her deity, in her mind pity, or virtue in virginity, this  
monster cannot escape.

236

[Exeunt.]

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  
 with fruitful grain, and doth he stretch his hand  
 4 against me with intolerable pride? So it is, Ceres,  
 thine eyes may witness what thy Nymphs have told;  
 6 here lyeth the tree hacked in pieces, and the blood  
 scarce cold of the fairest virgin. – If this be thy cruelty,  
 8 Cupid, I will no more hallow thy temple with sacred  
 vows; if thy cankered nature, Erisichthon, thou shalt  
 10 find as great misery as thou shewest malice: I am  
 resolved of thy punishment, and as speedy shall be  
 12 my revenge, as thy rigour barbarous.

Tirtena, on yonder hill, where never grew grain nor  
 14 leaf, where nothing is but barrenness and coldness,  
 fear and paleness, lyeth Famine; go to her, and say  
 16 that Ceres commandeth her to gnaw on the bowels of  
 Erisichthon, that his hunger may be as unquenchable  
 18 as his fury.

20 **Tirt.** I obey; but how should I know her from others?

22 **Ceres.** Thou canst not miss of her, if thou remember  
 but her name; and that canst thou not forget, for that  
 24 coming near to the place, thou shalt find gnawing in  
 thy stomach. She lyeth gaping, and swalloweth  
 26 nought but air; her face pale, and so lean, that as  
 easily thou mayest through the very skin behold the  
 28 bone, as in a glass thy shadow; her hair long, black  
 and shaggy; her eyes sunk so far into her head, that  
 30 she looketh out of the nape of her neck; her lips  
 white and rough; her teeth hollow and red with  
 32 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  
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 **Nisa.** No: but I have heard him described at the full,  
76 and, as I imagined, foolishly. First, that he should be  
a god blind and naked, with wings, with bow, with  
78 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  
poets' apes, have taken as great pains to shadow, as  
82 they to lie. Can I think that gods that command all  
things would go naked? What should he do with  
84 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  
to take level, than a blind boy to shoot at random. If

88 | he were fire, the sea would quench those coals, or the  
 90 | flame turn him into cinders.

92 | **Ceres.** Well, Nisa, thou shalt see him.

94 | **Nisa.** I fear Niobe hath felt him.

96 | **Niobe.** Not I, madam; yet must I confess, that  
 98 | oftentimes I have had sweet thoughts, sometimes  
 100 | hard conceits; betwixt both, a kind of yielding; I  
 102 | know not what. But certainly I think it is not love:  
 104 | sigh I can, and find ease in melancholy; smile I do,  
 106 | and take pleasure in imagination; I feel in myself a  
 108 | pleasing pain, a chill heat, a delicate bitterness, –  
 110 | how to term it I know not; without doubt it may be  
 112 | love; sure I am it is not hate.

114 | **Nisa.** Niobe is tender-hearted, whose thoughts are  
 116 | like water: yielding to everything, and nothing to be  
 118 | seen.

120 | **Ceres.** Well, let us to Cupid; and take heed that in  
 122 | your stubbornness you offend him not, whom by  
 124 | entreaties you ought to follow. Diana's nymphs were  
 126 | as chaste as Ceres' virgins, as fair, as wise: how  
 128 | Cupid tormented them, I had rather you should hear  
 130 | than feel; but this is truth, they all yielded to love;  
 132 | look not scornfully, my nymphs, I say they are yielded  
 134 | to love. – This is the temple.

136 | *[The temple-doors open.]*

140 | Thou great god Cupid, whom the gods regard, and  
 142 | men reverence, let it be lawful for Ceres to offer her  
 144 | sacrifice.

146 | **Cupid.** Divine Ceres, Cupid accepteth anything that  
 148 | cometh from Ceres, which feedeth my sparrows with  
 150 | ripe corn, my pigeons with wholesome seeds, and  
 152 | honourest my temple with chaste virgins.

154 | **Ceres.** Then, Love, to thee I bring these white and  
 156 | spotless doves, in token that my heart is as free from  
 158 | any thought of love, as these from any blemish, and  
 160 | as clear in virginity, as these perfect in whiteness. –  
 162 | But that my Nymphs may know both thy power and  
 164 | thy laws, and neither err in ignorance nor pride, let  
 166 | me ask some questions to instruct them that they

136 | offend not thee, whom resist they cannot. – In virgins  
what dost thou chiefest desire?

138

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

140

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  
never love?

148

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

**Cupid.** To be deceived when they do.

184

186 **Ceres.** Well, Cupid, entreat my Nymphs with favour,  
and though to love it be no vice, yet spotless virginity  
188 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  
192 love? Ceres, lovers are chaste: for what is love, divine  
love, but the quintessence of chastity, and affections  
194 binding by heavenly motions, that cannot be undone  
by earthly means, and must not be controlled by any  
196 man?

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

202  
**Cupid.** Ceres, let this serve for all; let not thy Nymphs  
204 be light nor obstinate; but as virgins should be, pitiful  
and faithful; so shall your flames warm, but not burn;  
206 delight, and never discomfort.

208 **Ceres.** How say you, my Nymphs, doth not Cupid  
speak like a god? Counsel you I will not to love, but  
210 conjure you I must that you be not disdainful. Let us  
in, and see how Erisichthon speedeth; Famine flieth  
212 swiftly, and hath already seized on his stomach.

214  
[Exeunt.]

## 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  
violence, but that which is inviolable: my thoughts are  
4 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.

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 disdainings 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!

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

78

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

82

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

86

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

90

92 **Mont.** Fair faces should have smooth hearts.

94

**Celia.** Fresh flowers have crooked roots.

94

**Mont.** Women's beauties will wain, and then no art  
can make them fair!

96

98

**Celia.** Men's follies will ever wax, and then what  
reason can make them wise?

100

102

**Mont.** To be amiable, and not to love, is like a painted  
lady, to have colours, and no life.

104

**Celia.** To be amorous, and not lovely, is like a pleasant  
fool, full of words, and no deserts.

106

108

**Mont.** What call you deserts, what lovely?

110

**Celia.** No lovelier thing then wit, no greater desert  
than patience.

112

**Mont.** Have not I an excellent wit?

114

**Celia.** If thou think so thyself, thou art an excellent  
fool.

116

118

**Mont.** [*With heat*] Fool? no, Celia, thou shalt find me  
as wise as I do thee proud; and as little to digest thy  
taunts, as thou to brook my love.

120

122

**Celia.** I thought, Montanus, that you could not deserve,  
when I told you what it was, patience.

124

**Mont.** Sweet Celia, I will be patient and forget this.

126

**Celia.** Then want you wit, that you can be content to  
be patient.

128

130

**Mont.** A hard choice: if I take all well, to be a fool;  
if find fault, then to want patience.

132

**Celia.** The fortune of love, and the virtue, is neither  
to have success nor mean. Farewell!

134

[*Exit Celia.*]

136

138

**Mont.** Farewell? nay, I will follow! and I know not  
how it commeth to pass, disdain increaseth desire; and  
the further possibility standeth, the nearer approacheth  
hope. I follow!

140

142

[*Exit Montanus.*]

144 | *Enter Silvestris and Niobe.*

146 | **Silv.** Polypus, Niobe, is ever of the colour of the  
stone it sticketh to; and thou ever of his humour thou  
148 | 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  
to pull the brains out of my head. Take not measure of  
164 | my affections, but weigh your own; the oak findeth  
no fault with the dew, because it also falleth on the  
166 | bramble. Believe me, Silvestris, the only way to be  
mad is to be constant. Poets make their wreathes of  
168 | 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 | **Niobe.** But bees in swarms, and bring forth wax and  
178 | honey.

180 | **Silv.** Why do you covet many, that may find sweetness  
in one?

182 | **Niobe.** Why had Argus an hundred eyes, and might  
184 | have seen with one?

186 | **Silv.** Because whilst he slept with some, he might  
wake with other some.

188 | **Niobe.** And I love many, because, being deceived by  
190 | the inconstancy of divers, I might yet have one.

192 | **Silv.** That was but a device of Juno, that knew Jupiter's  
love.

194 |

196 *Niobe.* And this a rule of Venus, that knew men's  
lightness.

198 *Silv.* The whole heaven hath but one sun.

200 *Niobe.* But stars infinite.

202 *Silv.* The rainbow is ever in one compass.

204 *Niobe.* But of sundry colours.

206 *Silv.* A woman hath but one heart.

208 *Niobe.* But a thousand thoughts.

210 *Silv.* My lute, though it have many strings, maketh a  
sweet consent; and a lady's heart, though it harbour  
212 many fancies, should embrace but one love.

214 *Niobe.* The strings of my heart are tuned in a contrary  
key to your lute, and make as sweet harmony in  
216 discords, as yours in concord.

218 *Silv.* Why, what strings are in ladies' hearts? not the  
bass.

220 *Niobe.* There is no base string in a woman's heart.

222 *Silv.* The mean?

224 *Niobe.* There was never mean in woman's heart.

226 *Silv.* The treble?

228 *Niobe.* Yea, the treble double and treble; and so are  
230 all my heartstrings. Farewell!

232 *Silv.* Sweet Niobe, let us sing, that I may die with the  
swan.

234 *Niobe.* It will make you sigh the more, and live with  
236 the salamich.

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.

246

[*Niobe sings.*]

248

[*Exit Niobe.*]

250

**Silv.** Inconstant Niobe! unhappy Silvestris! yet had I  
 252 rather she should rather love all than none: for now  
 254 though I have no certainty, yet do I find a kind of  
 sweetness.

256

*Re-enter Ramis.*

258

**Ramis.** Cruel Nisa, born to slaughter men!

260

*Re-enter Montanus.*

262

**Mont.** Coy Celia, bred up in scoffs!

264

**Silv.** Wavering, yet witty Niobe! But are we all met?

266

**Ramis.** Yea, and met withal, if your fortunes be  
 268 answerable to mine, for I find my mistress  
 immoveable, and the hope I have is to despair.

270

**Mont.** Mine in pride intolerable, who biddeth me look  
 for no other comfort than contempt.

272

**Silv.** Mine is best of all, and worst; this is my hope,  
 274 that either she will have many or none.

276

**Ramis.** I fear our fortunes cannot thrive, for  
 278 Erisichthon hath felled down the holy tree of Ceres,  
 which will increase in her choler, and in her Nymphs  
 cruelty. Let us see whether our garlands be there which  
 280 we hanged on that tree; and let us hang ourselves upon  
 another.

282

**Silv.** A remedy for love irremovable; but I will first  
 284 see whether all those that love Niobe do like: in the  
 mean season I will content myself with my share.

286

**Mont.** Here is the tree. – O mischief scarce to be  
 288 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  
 292 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.*

300

302

**Mont.** You see their posies is as their hearts; and their hearts as their speeches, – cruel, proud, and wavering: let us all to the temple of Cupid, and entreat his favour, if not to obtain their loves, yet to revenge their hates: Cupid is a kind god, who, knowing our unspotted thoughts, will punish them, or release us. We will study what revenge to have, that, our pains proceeding of our own minds, their plagues may also proceed from theirs. Are you all agreed?

304

306

308

310

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

**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.*

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  
 my guts, where I feel a continual fire, which nothing  
 6 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  
 against Ceres; make amends I cannot, for the gods  
 12 holding the balance in their hands, what recompence  
 can equally weigh with their punishments? Or what  
 14 is he that having but one ill thought of Ceres, that  
 can race it with a thousand dutiful actions? Such is  
 16 the difference, that none can find defense; this is the  
 odds: we miserable, and men; they immortal, and  
 18 gods.

20 **Protea.** Dear father, I will obey both to sale and  
 slaughter, accompting it the only happiness of my  
 22 life, should I live an hundred years, to prolong yours  
 but one minute: I yield, father: chop and change me,  
 24 I am ready; but first let me make my prayers to  
 Neptune, and withdraw yourself till I have done:  
 26 long it shall not be, now it must be.

28 **Eris.** Stay, sweet Protea, and that great god hear thy  
 prayer, though Ceres stop her ears to mine.

30

*[Erisichthon retires.]*

32

**Protea.** Sacred Neptune, whose godhead conquered  
 34 my maidenhead, be as ready to hear my passions, as  
 I was to believe thine, and perform that now I entreat,  
 36 which thou didst promise when thyself didst love.  
 Let not me be a prey to this Merchant, who knows  
 38 no other god then gold, unless it be falsely swearing  
 by a god to get gold; let me, as often as I be bought  
 40 for money, or pawned for meat, be turned into a bird,  
 hare, or lamb, or any shape wherein I may be safe; so

42 | shall I preserve mine own honour, my father's life,  
44 | and never repent me of thy love: – and now bestir thee,  
46 | for of all men I hate that Merchant, who, if he find my  
48 | beauty worth one penny, will put it to use to gain ten;  
50 | having no religion in his mind, nor word in his mouth,  
52 | but money. Neptune, hear now or never. – Father, I  
54 | have done.

50 | **Eris.** [*Advancing*] In good time, Protea, thou hast  
52 | done; for lo, the Merchant keepeth not only day, but  
54 | hour.

54 | **Protea.** If I had not been here, had I been forfeited?

56 | **Eris.** No, Protea, but thy father famished.

58 | *Enter Merchant.*

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

62 | **Protea.** Gentleman?

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

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

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

72 | **Protea.** Yes, many, and some no men!

74 | **Merch.** You shall be well entreated at my hands.

76 | **Protea.** It may. Commanded I will not be.

78 | **Merch.** If you be mine by bargain, you shall.

80 | **Protea.** Father, hath this Merchant also bought my  
82 | 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;  
90 | I commit thee to the gods and this man's courtesy,  
90 | who I hope will deal no worse with thee, than he  
90 | would have the gods with him. I must be gone, lest I



92 | do starve as I stand.

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.

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

104 | **Protea.** In power if I will.

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

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

112 | **Merch.** But then they do no harm.

114 | **Protea.** Nor good.

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

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

*[Exeunt.]*

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  
have pierced our hearts, give ear to our plaints.

8

*[The temple-doors open.]*

10

12 **Cupid.** If you come to Cupid, speak boldly, so must  
lovers; speak 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

22 **Mont.** With this distaff have I spun, that my exercises  
may be as womanish as my affections, and so did  
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;  
without the which love is lust, and with which love  
34 is folly. This heart, neither bleeding nor bloodless,  
but swolne with sighs, I offer to thy godhead,  
36 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  
44 | wonder at your loves, not without pleasure: but be  
46 | your thoughts as true as your words?

46 | **Ramis.** Thou Cupid, that givest the wound, knowest  
48 | the heart; for as impossible it is to conceal our  
50 | affections, as to resist thy force.

50 | **Cupid.** I know that where mine arrow lighteth, there  
52 | breedeth love; but shooting every minute a thousand  
54 | shafts, I know not on whose heart they light, though  
56 | they fall on no place but hearts. – What are your  
58 | mistresses?

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

60 | **Mont.** Mine most fair, but most proud.

62 | **Silv.** Mine most witty, but most wavering.

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

66 | **Ramis.** Too cruel!

68 | **Mont.** Too coy!

70 | **Silv.** Too fickle!

72 | **Cupid.** What do they think of Cupid?

74 | **Ramis.** One saith he hath no eyes, because he hits he  
76 | knows not whom.

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

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

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

86 | **Mont.** All, that he hath no sense, because pains are  
88 | pleasures, and pleasures pains.

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

92 **Cupid.** Dare they blaspheme my god-head, which  
94 Jove doth worship, Neptune reverence, and all the  
96 gods tremble at? To make them love were a revenge  
too gentle for Cupid; to make you hate, a recompense  
too small for lovers. But of that anon: what have you  
used in love?

98  
100 **Ramis.** All things that may procure love, – gifts,  
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  
bellows.

110  
112 **Cupid.** What of oaths?

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

116 **Cupid.** What of sighs?

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

120 **Cupid.** What of swoonings?

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

124 **Cupid.** What reasons gave they not to love?

126 **Silv.** Women's reasons: they would not, because they  
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,  
is withered before night.

140

142 *Silv.* Mine, divine Cupid, whose affection nothing  
144 can make stayed, let her be turned to that bird that  
146 liveth only by air, and dieth if she touch the earth,  
because it is constant. The bird-of-paradise, Cupid,  
that, drawing in her bowels nothing but air, she may  
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,  
152 shalt with continual waves be wasted: instead of thy  
154 fair hair, shalt thou have green moss; thy face of flint,  
because thy heart is of marble; thine ears shall be holes  
for fishes, whose ears were more deaf than fishes'.

156 Thou, Celia, whom beauty made proud, shalt  
158 have the fruit of beauty, that is, to fade whiles it is  
flourishing, and to blast before it is blown. Thy face,  
160 as fair as the damask rose, shall perish like the damask  
162 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.

164 Thou, Niobe, whom nothing can please, (but that  
166 which most displeaseth Cupid, inconstancy) shalt only  
breath and suck air for food, and wear feathers for  
silk, being more wavering than air, and lighter than  
feathers.

168 This will Cupid do. Therefore, when next you  
170 shall behold your ladies, do but send a faithful sigh  
to Cupid, and there shall arise a thick mist which  
172 Proserpine shall send, and in the moment you shall  
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  
180 hearts, and hourly bestow all your wits in loving  
devices; think all the time lost that is not spent in  
182 love; let your oaths be without number, but not  
without truth; your words full of alluring sweetness,  
184 but not of broad flattery; your attires neat, but not  
womanish; your gifts of more price for the fine  
186 device, than the great value, and yet of such value  
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.

192 | *[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.

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

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

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

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

30 *[Exit Erisichthon.]*

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

*[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  
42 men, whose loves are built on truths, and whose  
hearts are removed by courtesy: I will hear the depth  
of her malice.

44  
 46 **Siren.** Of all creatures most unkind, most cunning,  
 48 by whose subtleties I am half fish, half flesh,  
 50 themselves being neither fish nor flesh; in love  
 52 lukewarm, in cruelty red hot; if they praise, they  
 54 flatter; if flatter, deceive; if deceive, destroy.

56 **Protea.** She rails at men, but seeks to entangle them.  
 58 This sleight is prepared for my sweet Petulius; I will  
 60 withdraw myself close, for Petulius followeth: he  
 62 will without doubt be enamoured of her; enchanted  
 64 he shall not be, – my charms shall countervail hers; it  
 66 is he hath saved my father's life with money, and must  
 68 prolong mine with love.

70 *Enter Petulius.*

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

78 **Siren.** Here commeth a brave youth. Now, Siren,  
 80 leave out nothing that may allure – thy golden locks,  
 82 thy enticing looks, thy tuned voice, thy subtle speech,  
 84 thy fair promises, which never missed the heart of any  
 86 but Ulysses.

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

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

100 *[Sing again Siren.]*

102 **[To Siren]** I yield to death, but with such delight, that  
 104 I would not wish to live, unless it were to hear thy  
 106 sweet lays.

108 **Siren.** Live still, so thou love me! – why standest  
 110 thou amazed at the word love?

112 **Protea.** *[Behind]* It is high time to prevent this  
 114 mischief. – Now, Neptune, stand to thy promise, and  
 116 let me take suddenly the shape of an old man; so shall  
 118 I mar what she makes.



92

*[Exit Protea.]*

94

**Petul.** Not yet come to myself, or if I be, I dare not credit mine ears. Love thee, divine goddess? Vouchsafe I may honour thee, and live by the imagination I have of thy words and worthiness.

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.

104

*Re-enter Protea as an old man.*

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

**Petul.** Out, dottrell! whose dim eyes cannot discern beauty, nor doting age judge of love.

112

**Protea.** If thou listen to her words, thou shalt not live to repent: for her malice is as sudden as her joys are sweet.

114

**Petul.** Thy silver hairs are not so precious as her golden locks, nor thy crooked age of that estimation as her flowering youth.

118

**Siren.** That old man measureth the hot assault of love with the cold skirmishes of age.

122

**Protea.** That young cruel resembleth old apes, who kill by culling: from the top of this rock whereon she sitteth, will she throw thee headlong into the sea, whose song is the instrument of her witchcraft, never smiling but when she meaneth to smite, and under the flattery of love practiseth the shedding of blood.

124

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

132

**Protea.** I am the ghost of Ulysses, who continually hover[s] about these places where this Siren haunteth, to save those which otherwise should be spoiled: stop thine ears, as I did mine, and succour the fair, but, by thy folly, the most infortunate Protea.

134

136

138

140

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

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

[*Exeunt Protea.*

162

*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

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

172

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

176

[*Exeunt.*]

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  
immortal, for at one time I am both robbed of mine  
4 honour and my Nymphs.

6 **Cupid.** Ceres, thy Nymphs were stubborn, and  
thysself, 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  
ministered famine, whom his daughter shall preserve  
14 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  
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 **Ceres.** Art thou so cruel?

30 **Cupid.** To those that resist, a lion; to those that  
32 submit, a lamb.

34 **Ceres.** Canst thou make such difference in affection,  
and yet shall it all be love?

36 **Cupid.** Yea, as much as between sickness and  
38 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

42 with vain imaginations and impossible hopes.

44 **Ceres.** How may my Nymphs be restored?

46 **Cupid.** If thou restore Erisichthon, they embrace their  
46 loves, and all offer sacrifice to me.

48 **Ceres.** Erisichthon did in contempt hew down my  
50 sacred tree.

52 **Cupid.** Thy Nymphs did in disdain scorn my constant  
52 love.

54 **Ceres.** He slew most cruelly my chaste Fidelia, whose  
56 blood lieth yet on the ground.

58 **Cupid.** But Diana hath changed her blood to fresh  
58 flowers, which are to be seen on the ground.

60 **Ceres.** What honour shall he do to Ceres? What  
62 amends can he make to Fidelia?

64 **Cupid.** All Ceres' grove shall he deck with garlands,  
64 and accompt every tree holy; a stately monument  
66 shall he erect in remembrance of Fidelia, and offer  
66 yearly sacrifice.

68 **Ceres.** What sacrifice shall I and my Nymphs offer  
70 thee? for I will do anything to restore my Nymphs,  
70 and honour thee.

72 **Cupid.** You shall present in honour of my mother  
74 Venus grapes and wheat; for *Sine Cerere et Baccho*  
74 *friget Venus*. You shall suffer your Nymphs to play,  
76 sometimes to be idle, in the favour of Cupid; for  
76 *Otia si tollas, periere Cupidinis arcus*. So much for  
78 Ceres. Thy Nymphs shall make no vows to continue  
78 virgins, nor use words to disgrace love, nor fly from  
80 opportunities that kindle affections: if they be chaste,  
80 let them not be cruel; if fair, not proud; if loving, not  
82 inconstant; cruelty is for tigers, pride for peacocks,  
82 inconstancy for fools.

84 **Ceres.** Cupid, I yield, and they shall: but sweet Cupid,  
86 let them not be deceived by flattery, which taketh the  
86 shape of affection; nor by lust, which is clothed in the  
88 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.*

*Enter Petulius and Protea.*

1 **Petul.** A strange discourse, Protea, by which I find the  
2 gods amorous, and virgins immortal, goddesses full of  
cruelty, and men of unhappiness.

4 **Protea.** I have told both my father's misfortunes,  
6 grown by stoutness, and mine by weakness; his  
thwarting of Ceres, my yielding to Neptune.

8 **Petul.** I know, Protea, that hard iron, falling into fire,  
10 waxeth soft; and then the tender heart of a virgin, being  
in love, must needs melt: for what should a fair, young  
12 and witty lady answer to the sweet enticements of  
love, but *Molle meum levibus cor est violabile telit?*

14 **Protea.** I have heard too, that hearts of men, stiffer  
16 than steel, have by love been made softer then wool,  
and then they cry, *Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus*  
18 *amori.*

20 **Petul.** Men have often feigned sighs.

22 **Protea.** And women forged tears.

24 **Petul.** Suppose I love not.

26 **Protea.** Suppose I care not.

28 **Petul.** If men swear and lie, how will you try their  
loves?

30 **Protea.** If women swear they love, how will you try  
32 their dissembling?

34 **Petul.** The gods put wit into women.

36 **Protea.** And nature deceit into men.

38 **Petul.** I did this but to try your patience.

40 **Protea.** Nor I, but to prove your faith. – But see,  
Petulius, what miraculous punishments here are for  
42 deserts in love: this rock was a Nymph to Ceres; so  
was this rose; so that bird.

44

46 | **Petul.** All changed from their shapes?

48 | **Protea.** All changed by Cupid, because they disdained  
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  
56 | in.

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

8 **Silv.** But how shall we look on them when we shall  
see them smile? We must, and perchance they will  
10 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  
28 **Ramis.** Art thou so superstitious in love, that wast  
wont to be most careless? Let them curse all day, so  
I may have but one kiss at night.

30  
32 **Mont.** Thou art worse than Silvestris; he not content  
without absolute love, thou with indifferent.

34 **Silv.** But here commeth Ceres with Erisichthon: let us  
look demurely; for in her heart she hates us deeply.

36

*[Foresters remain on stage.]*



ACT V, SCENE IV.

*The Same: Before the Temple of Cupid.*

*Still on stage: the Foresters.*

*Enter Ceres and Erisichthon to the Foresters.*

1 **Eris.** I will hallow thy woods with solemn feasts, and  
2 honour all thy Nymphs with due regard.

4 **Ceres.** Well, do so; and thank Cupid that commands;  
nay, thank my foolish Nymphs, that know not how  
6 to obey; – here be the lovers ready at receipt. – How  
now, gentlemen, what seek you?

8  
**Ramis.** Nothing but what Ceres would find.

10  
**Ceres.** Ceres hath found those that I would she had  
12 lost, – vain lovers.

14 **Ramis.** Ceres may lose that that Cupid would save,  
true lovers.

16  
**Ceres.** You think so one of another.

18  
**Silv.** Cupid knoweth so of us all.

20  
**Ceres.** You might have made me a counsel of your  
22 loves.

24 **Mont.** Aye, madam, if love would admit counsel.

26 *[The temple-doors open.]*

28 **Ceres.** Cupid, here is Erisichthon in his former state;  
restore my Nymphs to theirs, then shall they embrace  
30 these lovers, who wither out their youth.

32 *Enter Petulius and Protea.*

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  
for Ceres to have any follow her in one hour, that is  
42 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  
of thy daughter Protea hath wrought both pity in me  
48 to grant her desires, and to release thy punishments. –  
Thou, Petulius, shalt enjoy thy love, because I know  
thee loyal.

50  
52 **Petul.** Then shall Petulius be most happy.

54 **Protea.** And Protea most fortunate.

56 **Cupid.** But do you, Ramis, continue your constant  
love? and you, Montanus? and you, Silvestris?

58 **Ramis.** Nothing can alter our affections, which  
increase while the means decrease, and wax stronger  
60 in being weakened.

62 **Cupid.** Then, Venus, send down that shower,  
wherewith thou wert wont to wash those that do the  
64 worship; and let love by thy beams be honoured in  
all the world, and feared, wished for, and wondered  
66 at.

68 *[The Nymphs are transformed.]*

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?  
triumph rather because you have your shapes: this  
80 great god Cupid, that for your prides and follies  
changed, hath by my prayer and promise restored  
82 you.

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.

96

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 senseless and shameful shapes.

106

108

**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 unspotted!

112

**Mont.** And mine!

114

**Silv.** And mine, Cupid! which nothing can alter!

116

**Cupid.** And will you not yield, virgins?

118

120

**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 worn with the continual beating of waves, than dulled with the importunities of men, whose open 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; pined, yet not felt the consumption! unfortunate wench, that now have ears to hear their cunning lies, and eyes to behold their dissembling looks! – turn me, Cupid, again, for love I will not!

122

124

126

128

130

132

**Remis.** Miserable Ramis! unhappy to love; to change the lady, accursed; and now lose her, desperate!

134

136

138

140

142

**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 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 fire, yieldeth sweet water: love, in extremities, kindles jealousies; in the rose, however it be, there is sweetness; in love, nothing but bitterness. If men

144 look pale, and swear, and sigh, then forsooth women  
 146 must yield, because men say they love, as though  
 148 our hearts were tied to their tongues, and we must  
 choose them by appointment, ourselves feeling no  
 affection, and so have our thoughts bound prentises  
 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,  
 182 and when his love was hottest, caused me to be changed  
 to a rock?

184 **Ramis.** Nisa, the extremity of love is madness, and  
 186 to be mad is to be senseless; upon that rock did I  
 resolve to end my life: fair Nisa, forgive him thy  
 188 change, that for himself provided a harder chance.

190 **Celia.** Shall I yield to him that made so small

192 | accompt of my beauty, that he studied how he might  
never behold it again?

194 | **Mont.** Fair lady, in the rose did I always behold thy  
colour, and resolved by continual gazing to perish,  
196 | which I could not do when thou wast in thine own  
shape, thou wast so coy and swift in flying from me.  
198 |

200 | **Niobe.** Shall I yield to him that caused me have wings,  
that I might fly farther from him?

202 | **Silv.** Sweet Niobe, the farther you did seem to be  
from me, the nearer I was to my death; which, to  
204 | make it more speedy, wished thee wings to fly into  
the air, and myself lead on my heels to sink into the  
206 | sea.

208 | **Ceres.** Well, my good Nymphs, yield; let Ceres  
entreat you yield.  
210 |

212 | **Nisa.** I am content, so as Ramis, when he finds me  
cold in love, or hard in belief, he attribute it to his  
214 | own folly; in that I retain some nature of the rock he  
changed me into.

216 | **Ramis.** O, my sweet Nisa! be what thou wilt, and let  
all thy imperfections be excused by me, so thou but  
218 | say thou lovest me.

220 | **Nisa.** I do.

222 | **Ramis.** Happy Ramis!

224 | **Celia.** I consent, so as Montanus, when in the midst  
of his sweet delight, shall find some bitter overthwarts,  
226 | impute it to his folly, in that he suffered me to be a  
rose, that hath prickles with her pleasantness, as he  
228 | is like to have with my love shrewdness.

230 | **Mont.** Let me bleed every minute with the prickles  
of the rose, so that I may enjoy but one hour the  
232 | savour; love, fair Celia, and at thy pleasure comfort,  
and confound.  
234 |

236 | **Celia.** I do.

238 | **Mont.** Fortunate Montanus!

**Niobe.** I yielded first in mind, though it be my course

240 | last to speak: but if Silvestris find me not ever at  
 242 | 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 | **Silv.** My sweet Niobe! fly whither thou wilt all day,  
 246 | so I may find thee in my nest at night, I will love thee,  
 and believe thee. *Sit modo, non feci, dicere lingua*  
 248 | *memor.*

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

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

262 | **Cupid.** Here is none but is happy: but do not as  
 264 | Hippomanes did, when by Venus' aid he won Atalanta:  
 defile her temple with unchaste desires, and forgot to  
 266 | sacrifice vows. I will soar up into heaven, to settle the  
 the loves of the gods, that in earth have disposed the  
 268 | affections of men.

270 | **Ceres.** I to my harvest, whose corn is now come out  
 of the blade into the ear; and let all this amorous  
 272 | troop to the temple of Venus, there to consummate  
 what Cupid hath commanded.

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

## Optional Textual Changes.

The texts of the Scripts prepared for our website, ElizabethanDrama.org, generally lean towards keeping the language of the plays' earliest editions. Where obvious errors in typography have occurred, the emendations suggested by early and modern editors are usually accepted without comment.

Words and syllables have in some cases been added to the original text; such additions appear within hard brackets [ ], and may be omitted at a director's discretion. Such additions may be made for one of two reasons: (1) where words or syllables have clearly been omitted from the original text by accident, and are needed for a line to make sense; and (2) where words or syllables are added to repair a line's meter.

The text of this Script may be confidently adopted by a theatre group without further revision; however, we present below a list of changes a director may wish to consider, if he or she feels any of them would make the language more sensible, etc. Most of these emendations represent suggestions of later editors of the play, and a few represent restoring original language from the quartos.

Explanations for all these possible emendations can be found in the annotated edition of this play found on our website.

### Act I, Scene ii.

1. line 2: modernize *holyday* to *holiday*.
2. line 18: modernize *shew* to *show*.
3. line 100: modernize *accompted* to *accounted*.
4. line 100: emend *immortal* to *immoral*.
5. line 106: emend *Thessalides'* to *Messalina's* or *Thessalians'*.
6. line 110: modernize *unkembed* to *unkempt*.
7. line 149: modernize *burthen* to *burden*.
8. line 151: emend *It is* to *Is it*.
9. line 168: emend *forget* to *forgot*.
10. line 214: modernize *murtherest* to *murderest*.

### Act II, Scene i.

1. line 10: modernize *shewest* to *showest*.
2. line 34: modernize *chirurgions* to *surgeons*.
3. line 35: modernize *swolne* to *swollen*.
4. line 195: modernize *comptrolled* to *controlled*.

### Act III, Scene i.

1. line 27: modernize *accompt* to *account*.
2. line 284: emend *that love Niobe* to *that love, as I love Niobe*.
3. line 288: modernize *inpossible* to *impossible*.

### Act III, Scene ii.

1. line 21: modernize *accompting* to *accounting*.

### Act IV, Scene i.

1. line 35: modernize *swolne* to *swollen*.
2. line 113: modernize *sware* to *swore*.
3. line 175: modernize *shew* to *show*.

### Act IV, Scene ii.

1. line 139: modernize *infortunate* to *unfortunate*.

### Act V, Scene i.

1. lines 13: emend *ministered famine* to *minister, Famine*.



2. line 64: modernize *accompt* to *account*.
3. line 96: restore, in place of *forms*, the quarto's *fames*.

Act V, Scene iv.

1. line 191: modernize *accompt* to *account*.
2. line 247: restore, in place of *believe*, the quarto's *belove*.
3. line 265: emend *forgot* to *forget*.