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the Annotated Popular Edition of

## SAPHO and PHAO

by John Lyly

Written c. 1582-84

Earliest Extant Edition: 1584

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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# SAPHO and PHAO

By JOHN LYLY.

Written c. 1582-4

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## DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

*Phao*, a young ferryman.  
*Sapho*, queen of Syracuse.

### Ladies of Sapho's Court:

*Mileta.*

*Lamia.*

*Ismena.*

*Canope.*

*Eugenue.*

*Favilla.*

*Trachinus*, a courtier.

*Criticus*, page to Trachinus.

*Pandion*, a scholar.

*Molus*, servant to Pandion.

*Sybilla*, an aged soothsayer.

### Gods and Goddesses:

*Venus*, goddess of love and beauty.

*Cupid*, her son, god of love.

*Vulcan*, her husband, the blacksmith god.

*Calypho*, one of the Cyclops.

**Scene:** Syracuse

## INTRODUCTION to the PLAY

With *Sapho and Phao*, dramatist John Lyly sought not to elicit loud guffaws from the audience through slapstick or vulgar humour, but rather to bring "soft smiles" to the viewers' faces, along with a genial delight. The plot explores what happens when members of opposite castes in society – royal and menial – fall in love, and the limitations that rank can impose on romance. Add in a generous dose of light comedy from a typical Lyly-esque company of servants and ladies-in-waiting, and some supernatural fun from two quarrelsome gods and a goddess, and the result is a good-natured play, well worth the reader's time to explore.

## OUR PLAY'S SOURCE

The text of this play was originally adapted from the 1902 edition of Lyly's plays edited by Warwick Bond, but was then carefully compared to the British Library's 1584 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. Bond, R. Warwick (ed.). *The Complete Works of John Lyly, Vol. II*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902.
4. Daniel, Carter A. (ed.). *The Plays of John Lyly*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1988.
5. Fairholt, F.W., ed. *The Dramatic Works of John Lilly, Vol. II*. London: John Russell Smith, 1858.
6. Bevington, David, ed. *Sapho and Phao*. From the *Revels Plays* series: Hunter, G.K. and Bevington, David, eds. *Campaspe / Sapho and Phao*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.

## **NOTES on the PLAY.**

### **A. Conflicting Quartos.**

*Sapho and Phao* was published in two editions in 1584, but the question as to which is the original and which is the reprint is an open question. Earlier editors assumed the copy held by the British Library was the first, and that the other edition, several copies of which are extant, represents the reprint. Bevington,<sup>6</sup> however, argues persuasively that the British Library version is the reprint.

We do not propose to address the issue here. Our text will be based on the British Library edition, whose text can be found on the web at any of the various *Early English Books Online* websites. Our notes will distinguish between the editions by referring to them as the "B.L. quarto" (for the British Library quarto) and the "alternate quartos" respectively.

Having said that, the differences between the two editions are few and minor; as a result, our comments on the variations between the texts will be few as well.

### **B. The Songs of *Sapho and Phao*.**

The first editions of John Lyly's plays did not include lyrics to the included songs, simply indicating "Song" in a stage direction. However, a compilation of six of Lyly's plays was published in 1632 by Edward Blount. The Blount edition includes lyrics for all of the songs in these plays. While the author of the lyrics has always been an open question, it is generally assumed that Lyly was not the source – he had died in 1606; this edition of *Sapho and Phao*, however, follows the long-standing tradition of incorporating the lyrics of 1632 within the text of the play inserted at the appropriate locations.

### **C. 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 most of these speeches into multiple smaller paragraphs, separated by theme, to facilitate reading.

### **D. Lyly's Wacky Natural "Facts".**

John Lyly's works are permeated with his famous style of writing known as "euphuism", whose key features include the use of parallel phrasing, alliteration, wordplay, and the incorporation of wild and unsubstantiated "facts" about the natural world (e.g., that eagles are never struck by lightning). Lyly borrowed or adapted many of these fancies from *The Natural History*, an ancient encyclopedic work compiled by the 1st century A.D. Roman Pliny the Elder, but also frequently invented his own.

The important thing to note about Lyly's allusions to the natural world is that he always uses them as analogies to help make a point about human behaviour and attitudes. For example, Lyly employs the point about the eagle never being struck by lightning to support Sapho's

complaint that she, a queen – and thus of comparable nobility to the eagle – should never have to suffer misfortune.

### **E. *Sapho and Phao's* Wordplay.**

With the first line of the first Act – "*Thou art a **ferryman**, Phao, yet a **free man***" – Lyly sets the tone for this play, signaling that *Sapho and Phao* will be filled with puns and wordplay of all sorts. While our annotations will identify some of the more interesting examples of Lyly's fun with language, we will forbear from commenting on all of it, and hope that you, the reader, will remain ever attentive to the ubiquitous wordplay in this comedy.

### **F. Acts, Scenes, and Stage Directions.**

*Sapho and Phao* was originally published in 1584 in two separate quarto editions. 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, *Sapho and Phao* 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.

# SAPHO and PHAO

By John Lyly.

Written c. 1582-4

Earliest Extant Edition: 1584

## THE PROLOGUE AT THE BLACKFRIARS.

1       Where the bee can suck no honey, she leaveth her  
2       sting behind; and where the bear cannot find origanum  
3       to heal his grief, he blasteth all other leaves with his  
4       breath. We fear it is like to fare so with us, that seeing  
5       you cannot draw from our labours sweet content, you  
6       leave behind you a sour mislike, and with open  
7       reproach blame our good meanings, because you  
8       cannot reap your wonted mirths.

9       Our intent was at this time to move inward delight,  
10      not outward lightness; and to breed (if it might be)  
11      soft smiling, not loud laughing; knowing it to the  
12      wise to be as great pleasure to hear counsel mixed  
13      with wit, as to the foolish to have sport mingled with  
14      rudeness.

**Prologue I:** Lyly generally rehearsed his plays at the former monastery known as *Blackfriars* in front of a paying audience, before performing them before Queen Elizabeth.

Lyly's prologues typically followed a specific pattern of using fantastic analogies drawn from the natural world to help acknowledge the insufficient quality of the play, followed by explicit appeals for the audience to receive the performance with favour.

**Lines 1-8 (below):** Lyly worries that the audience might be expecting a broad farce, and, finding the play to be more refined, will be disappointed.

1-2: *Where the...behind* = a variation on Pliny's observation that if a bee loses its sting after stinging, but survives, it turns into a drone, and produces no more honey (*The Natural History*, 11.19).

2-4: *where the bear...breath* = Pliny mentions only that the breath of a bear is "quite pestilential" (11.115).<sup>13</sup>

2: *origanum* = term used for oregano and marjoram,<sup>1</sup>

3: *grief* = injury, pain or suffering.<sup>1</sup>

4: *like* = likely.

6-7: *with open...meanings* = ie. with hissing or other obvious demonstrations of displeasure find fault with the play, despite Lyly's good intentions (*meanings*).<sup>1</sup>

8: *reap your wonted mirths* = "enjoy your accustomed hearty laughs."

**9-14 (below):** Lyly explains that his intent was to produce a play that is subtly delightful, rather than one which would give the audience great belly-laughs.

9-10: *move...lightness* = give the viewers pleasure rather than summon loud guffaws.

12: *counsel* = ie. good advice

13: *foolish* = ie. the ruder sorts.

13: *sport* = entertainment.

**15-21 (below):** Lyly further explains that the audience should expect *Sapho and Phao* to keep within the bounds of decorum: nothing vulgar or inappropriate will appear in this play!

16 They were banished the theater at Athens and from  
 18 Rome hissed, that brought parasites on the stage with  
 20 apish actions, or fools with uncivil habits, or  
courtesans with immodest words. We have endeavored  
 to be as far from unseemly speeches, to make your  
 ears glow, as we hope you will be from unkind  
 reports to make our cheeks blush.

22 The griffin never spreadeth her wings in the sun  
 24 when she hath any sick feathers; yet have we ventured  
 to present our exercises before your judgments when  
 we know them full of weak matter, yielding rather  
 26 ourselves to the courtesy which we have ever found,  
 than to the preciseness which we ought to fear.

15-18: ***They were...words*** = allusion to the passing of laws  
 in Rome that banned excessively immodest stage pro-  
 ductions. The source seems to be Horace's *Ars Poetica*,  
 lines 281-3;<sup>6</sup> ***banished*** = ie. banished from.

16: ***hissed*** = hissing has always been the audience's favourite  
 way of letting the actors know of its displeasure.

16, 18: ***parasites, courtesans*** = a ***parasite*** was a poor man  
 who attached himself to a rich patron, receiving food and  
 protection in return for flattering and otherwise serving  
 his patron. ***Courtesans*** were high-class prostitutes or  
 madams. Both character types feature commonly in  
 ancient Roman comedies.<sup>6</sup>

17: ***apish actions*** = foolish acting.<sup>1</sup>

17: ***uncivil*** = rude, impolite.<sup>1</sup>

19-20: ***make your ears glow*** = ie. from embarrassment at  
 the goings-on on stage.

20-21: ***as we...blush*** = Lyly hopes the crowd will refrain  
 from passing along bad reviews of the play, which  
 would embarrass the company.

22-23: ***The griffin...feathers*** = a bit of invented stuff from  
 Lyly; the ***griffin*** is a mythical bird with the head and  
 wings of an eagle and the body of a lion.<sup>1</sup>

25-27: ***we know...to fear*** = despite the poor quality of the  
 play, Lyly hopes the audience will receive the production  
 with its accustomed politeness, rather than respond in a  
 way commensurate with what the play deserves.

## THE PROLOGUE AT THE COURT.

- 1       The Arabians, being stuffed with perfumes, burn  
2 hemlock, a rank poison; and in Hybla, being cloyed  
with honey, they account it dainty to feed on wax.  
4 Your Highness' eyes, whom variety hath filled with  
fair shows and whose ears pleasure hath possessed  
6 with rare sounds, will, we trust, at this time resemble  
the princely eagle, who fearing to surfeit on spices,  
8 stoopeth to bite on worm-wood.
- 10       We present no conceits nor wars, but deceits and  
loves, wherein the truth may excuse the plainness, the  
necessity the length, the poetry the bitterness.
- 12       There is no needle's point so small which hath not  
14 his compass, nor hair so slender which hath not his  
shadow, nor sport so simple which hath not his show.  
Whatsoever we present, whether it be tedious (which  
16 we fear) or toyish (which we doubt), sweet or sour,  
absolute or imperfect, or whatsoever, in all humbleness  
18 we all, and I on knee for all, entreat that your Highness  
imagine yourself to be in a deep dream, that staying  
20 the conclusion, in your rising your Majesty vouchsafe  
but to say, "And so you awaked."

**1-8 (below):** just as certain peoples, having had their fill of the finer things in life, are satisfied to lower their standards so as to continue to tickle their senses. Lyly hopes Queen Elizabeth will be pleased to deign to watch this poor play, when she has been used to being amused by superior entertainment.

- 1: *The Arabians...perfumes* = Pliny tells us that the people of Arabia are fond of importing perfumes from foreign lands (12.38).  
1: *being stuffed* = their sense gluttoned.  
2-3: *in Hybla...honey* = the town of *Hybla* in Sicily was famed for its honey.  
2: *cloyed* = satiated, from having overfed on honey.  
3: *dainty* = delightful, pleasant.<sup>1</sup>  
6: *rare* = excellent.  
7-8: more invented natural history from Lyly.  
7: *surfeit on* = become gluttoned from feeding on.  
8: *worm-wood* = common term for absinthium, a plant which was proverbial for its bitter taste.<sup>1</sup>  
9: *conceits* = fanciful stories.<sup>1</sup>  
10: *wherein...plainness* = it was proverbial to suggest that one must speak plainly in order to speak the truth. Bevington sees these lines as Lyly's apology for presenting a play which "touches on sensitive issues...related to court politics" (p. 203).<sup>6</sup>  
13: *his compass* = ie. a substantive circumference, with obvious playful allusion to a needle's ability to point to true north.<sup>6</sup>  
14: *nor sport...show* = nor an amusement so plain or humble that it does not entertain at least a little bit.  
16: *toyish* = frivolous.<sup>1</sup>  
16: *doubt* = suspect (it to be).  
17: *absolute* = perfect.<sup>1</sup>  
19-21: with a clever analogy, Lyly hopes that the queen's reaction to the play (if she sticks around to the end) will be no worse than to simply say, "it is over."  
19: *staying* = awaiting.  
20: *vouchsafe* = deign.

# SAPHO and PHAO

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## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

*Syracuse: at the Ferry.*

*Enter Phao.*

1 **Phao.** Thou art a ferryman, Phao, yet a free man,  
2 possessing for riches content, and for honours quiet.  
Thy thoughts are no higher than thy fortunes, nor thy  
4 desires greater than thy calling. Who climbeth  
standeth on glass, and falleth on thorn. Thy heart's  
6 thirst is satisfied with thy hand's thrift, and thy gentle  
labours in the day turn to sweet slumbers in the night.  
8 As much doth it delight thee to rule thine oar in a calm  
stream as it doth Sapho to sway the sceptre in her  
10 brave court. Envy never casteth her eye low, ambition  
pointeth always upward, and revenge barketh only at  
12 stars. Thou farest delicately, if thou have a fare to buy

**Scene Setting:** the exact site of *the ferry* is unclear, but Bond imagines it to be located to be at the west end of Syracuse's Great Harbour, perhaps at or near the mouth of the Anapo River, from which Phao would carry travellers to the island of Ortygia, on which the oldest part of Syracuse was built (see Bond, p. 554).<sup>3</sup>

We have adopted Bond's suggestion that the entire first Act takes place at the ferry.

**Entering Character:** *Phao* is the ferryman. He begins the scene with a lengthy soliloquy, in which he expresses a supreme contentment with his station in life, mean as it is.

1: note the typical Lyly-esque wordplay of *ferryman* and *free man*.

2: Phao's wealth and honour are comprised of his serenity and peace of mind.

3-4: *Thy thoughts...calling* = Phao is without ambition. *calling* (line 4) = rank, but also vocation.<sup>1</sup>

4-5: *Who climbeth...thorn* = a double-metaphor describing the fickleness of fortune: any rise in status is tenuous (*glass* is slippery),<sup>6</sup> any falling from grace or power painful.

5-6: *Thy heart's thirst is* = ie. "your desires are". = work, industry.<sup>1</sup> = noble.<sup>1</sup>

= the queen of Syracuse.

10: *brave* = excellent.

10-11 = *Envy...upward* = those who are higher on the social scale have no reason to feel ill-will towards those on the bottom; their jealous eyes are instead fixed on their superiors.

11-12: *revenge...stars* = the ambitious direct their spite toward those above them.

12-13: *Thou farest...anything* = Phao considers himself to be living luxuriously (*delicately*)<sup>1</sup> if he has a passenger (*fare*) who gives him money with which he can purchase

	anything. <u>Thine angle is ready when thine oar is idle,</u>	whatever his simple tastes require.
14	and as sweet is the fish which thou gettest in the river	= when there are no customers, Phao is satisfied to spend his time fishing; <b>angle</b> = hook, fishing rod. <sup>2</sup>
16	as the fowl which <u>other</u> buy in the market. Thou needst not fear poison in thy glass, nor treason <u>in</u> thy	15: <b>other</b> = ie. others. 15-17: <b>Thou needst...guard</b> = a nod to the dangers, and concomitant anxiety, faced daily by any Renaissance monarch. <b>in</b> (line 16) = from.
	guard. The wind is thy greatest enemy, whose might is	17-18: <b>the wind...policy</b> = a fierce wind can only be managed with skill and strategy.
18	withstood with policy. Oh sweet life, seldom found under a golden <u>covert</u> , often under a thatched cottage.	18-19: <b>sweet life...cottage</b> = the poor are often less troubled than the rich. <b>covert</b> = cover, shelter; the quartos print <i>couert</i> (ie. covert), but many editors emend <b>covert</b> to <b>court</b> .
20	– But here cometh one. I will withdraw myself aside;	20-21: a convention of the Elizabethan stage permitted a character to withdraw and observe another who has just entered, and even be able to hear everything the person says, without being observed him- or herself.
22	it may be a passenger.	The employment of this convention was sometimes, as here, a bit awkward: after all, it does not really make sense for Phao to hide from a potential fare. As a matter of stagecraft, though, Phao's withdrawal allows the new characters to freely introduce themselves to the audience.
24	<i>[Phao retires.]</i>  <i>Enter Venus and Cupid.</i>	<b>Entering Characters:</b> <b>Venus</b> is the goddess of love and beauty; her son <b>Cupid</b> , a young boy, is the well-known cherubic god of love and desire. In Venus' opening monologue, she expresses her utter disdain for her crippled husband <b>Vulcan</b> , the god who serves as the blacksmith for the rest of the Roman pantheon.
26	<b>Venus.</b> It is no less <u>unseemly</u> than <u>unwholesome</u> for	= unfitting. = detrimental, injurious. <sup>1</sup>
28	Venus, who is most honoured in princes' courts, to <u>sojourn</u> with Vulcan in a smith's forge, where bellows	= reside. <sup>1</sup>
30	blow instead of <u>sighs</u> , dark smokes rise <u>for</u> sweet	= ie. sighs of lovers in love. = instead of.
32	perfumes, and <u>for</u> the panting of loving hearts, is only	= in place of.
34	heard the beating of steeled hammers. Unhappy Venus, that carrying <u>fire</u> in thine own breast, thou	= common metaphor for passion.
36	shouldest dwell with fire in his forge. What doth Vulcan all day but endeavor to be as crabbed in	35-36: <b>crabbed in manners</b> = ill-tempered, irritable. <sup>2</sup>
38	manners as <u>he is crooked in body</u> , driving nails when	= according to <b>Homer</b> , <b>Vulcan</b> was lame from birth; but another popular myth told how Vulcan once took the side of his mother <b>Juno</b> in one of her many arguments with her husband <b>Jupiter</b> , enraging the latter so greatly that he threw Vulcan off of <b>Mt. Olympus</b> . Vulcan fell for an entire day before landing on earth (the island of <b>Lemnos</b> , specifically), laming him permanently. <sup>8</sup>
	he should give kisses, and hammering hard armours	38: <b>amours</b> = properly love, love-making, or love affairs, <sup>1</sup> hence "love songs"; note the wordplay of <b>armours</b> and <b>amours</b> .
	when he should sing sweet <u>amours</u> ? It came <u>by lot</u> , not	

40 love, that I was linked with him. He gives thee bolts,  
 42 Cupid, instead of arrows, fearing belike (jealous fool  
 that he is) that if he should give thee an arrowhead, he  
 should make himself a broad head. But come, we will

to Syracuse, where thy deity shall be shown, and my

44 disdain. I will yoke the neck that yet never bowed, at  
 46 which, if Jove repine, Jove shall repent. Sapho shall  
 know, be she never so fair, that there is a Venus which  
 can conquer, were she never so fortunate.

48 **Cupid.** If Jove espy Sapho, he will devise some new  
 50 shape to entertain her.

52 **Venus.** Strike thou Sapho. Let Jove devise what shape  
 he can.

54 **Cupid.** Mother, they say she hath her thoughts in a

38-39: *It came...with him* = The idea that **Venus** was given to **Vulcan** to be his wife *by lot* is a fiction invented by Lyly. The original story seems to be that when **Juno** gave birth to the crippled boy Vulcan, she was so ashamed that she threw him out of heaven; raised by the marine goddesses **Thetis** and **Eurynome**, Vulcan grew up to be a skilled blacksmith. To get revenge on his mother for rejecting him, Vulcan built a special golden throne as a gift for Juno, which, when she sat upon it, released shackles which bound her to the seat. The only way Jupiter could win Juno's release was to give Venus to Vulcan as his wife.<sup>7</sup>

39-42: *He gives...broad head* = Vulcan is perpetually suspicious – with good reason – about Venus' carrying on with other men. Knowing that Cupid can help his mother get a paramour by firing an arrow into any man, which would cause him to fall in love with her, Vulcan provides Cupid with arrows comprised of shorter and blunter heads (*bolts*), with which an archer could stun or knock down his victims (usually hunting-prey such as birds), but not pierce their skins.<sup>5</sup>

*belike* (line 40) = most likely.

41-42: *he should...broad head* = metaphorically, that Vulcan would become a cuckold. The reference is to a *head* which was *broad* enough to hold the horns that were said to grow on the forehead of a man whose wife cheats on him.<sup>4</sup>

43: *to* = ie. go to.

*thy deity...shown* = ie. Cupid will get to exercise his supernatural powers.

43-44: *and my disdain* = ie. and also where Venus will get to make evident her low opinion of either Vulcan or Sapho, or both.

44-47: *I will yoke...fortunate* = Venus intends to reduce Sapho's arrogant pride in her ability to keep aloof from affairs of the heart, by causing her, with Cupid's help, to fall madly in love.

45: *if Jove...repent* = if Venus' father Jupiter (aka **Jove**) complains, he will do so to his own regret. Venus' point is that by causing Sapho to fall in love with another mortal, she may be thwarting Jove, who might want to take her as a lover for himself.

45-47: *Sapho...fortunate* = no matter how much Sapho is favoured by fortune, Venus intends to prove that she (Venus) is still more powerful.

49-50: the waggish Cupid indirectly suggests that if Jove sees (*espies*) Sapho, he will attempt to seduce her. He refers to the king of the god's penchant for taking on different animal *shapes* with which to catch his women. Note how all of Cupid's responses to his mother's instructions display a high degree of mischievousness.

= "shoot one of your arrows at Sapho."

55-57: *they say...arrands* = with various metaphors, Cupid,

56	<u>string</u> , that she conquers affections, and sendeth love	perhaps teasing, expresses doubt over his ability to affect Sapho, whom he hears has complete mastery over her emotions and passions. <b>string</b> = cord for keeping a person or animal under control, ie. a leash. <sup>1</sup> <b>arrands</b> (line 57) = ie. errands, an alternate form. <sup>1</sup>
58	up and down upon arrands; I am afraid she will <u>yerk</u> me if I <u>hit her</u> .	= thrash, kick, or whip. <sup>1,5,6</sup> = strike Sapho with an arrow.
60	<b>Venus.</b> Peevish boy, can mortal creatures resist that, which the immortal gods cannot <u>redress</u> ?	60-61: the gods themselves are unable to avoid the effects from being struck by one of Cupid's arrows; so how can any mortal man or woman hope to do any better? <b>redress</b> = remedy.
62		
64	<b>Cupid.</b> The gods are amorous, and therefore willing to be <u>pierced</u> .	63-64; because the gods are such a randy lot, they actually like to be struck by Cupid's arrows. With <b>pierced</b> , Cupid means both with his arrow and sexually: <sup>6</sup> the lad continues to be sly!
66	<b>Venus.</b> And <u>she amiable</u> , and therefore must be pierced.	= Sapho is lovely or desireable. <sup>1</sup>
68		
70	<b>Cupid.</b> I dare not.	
72	<b>Venus.</b> Draw thine arrow <u>to the head</u> , else I will make thee repent it at the heart. Come away, and behold the ferry-boy ready to conduct us.	= ie. so that the arrowhead is aligned between the two ends of the bent bow, hence, as far back as possible: Venus wants Cupid to put all his strength into the shot.
74		72-73: <b>Come away...conduct us</b> = Venus and Cupid will take the ferry to old town Syracuse to enact their plan.
76	[Phao advances.]	
78	Pretty youth, do you keep the ferry that <u>bendeth to</u> Syracusa?	= is directed towards, ie. travels to.
80	<b>Phao.</b> The ferry, fair lady, that bendeth to Syracusa.	
82	<b>Venus.</b> I fear, if the water should <u>begin to swell</u> , thou wilt <u>want cunning to guide</u> .	= become rough. = lack skill to steer the ferry; Venus seems concerned about Phao's youth and inexperience.
84		
86	<b>Phao.</b> These waters are commonly as the passengers be; and therefore carrying one so <u>fair in shew</u> , there is no cause to fear a rough sea.	85-86: <b>These waters...be</b> = the nature of the water can be expected to reflect the disposition of the passengers. = attractive in appearance (referring to Venus); <b>shew</b> was a common alternate form of <b>show</b> .
88		
90	<b>Venus.</b> To pass the time in thy boat, canst thou devise any <u>pastime</u> ?	= amusements or diversion.
92	<b>Phao.</b> If the wind be with me, I can <u>angle</u> or tell tales; if against me, it will be pleasure for you to see me take pains.	= fish, typically with hook and bait. <sup>1</sup>
94		93-94: Venus will be entertained by watching Phao strive to control the ferry in the face of a contrary wind.
96	<b>Venus.</b> I like not fishing, yet <u>was I born of the sea</u> .	= according to one story, Venus was born from the foam of the sea.

98 **Phao.** But he may bless fishing, that caught such an  
one in the sea.

100 **Venus.** It was not with an angle, my boy, but with a  
102 net.

104 **Phao.** So was it said that Vulcan caught Mars with  
Venus.

106 **Venus.** Didst thou hear so? It was some tale.

108 **Phao.** Yea, madam, and that in the boat I did mean to  
110 make my tale.

112 **Venus.** It is not for a ferryman to talk of the gods'  
  
loves, but to tell how thy father could dig and thy  
  
mother spin. – But come, let us away.

114 **Phao.** I am ready to wait.

116

118 [Exeunt.]

## ACT I, SCENE II.

*The same: the Ferry .*

*Enter Trachinus (a courtier), Criticus (his page),  
Pandion (a scholar), and Molus (his servant).*

1 **Trach.** Pandion, since your coming from the  
2 university to the court, from Athens to Syracusa, how  
do you feel yourself altered, either in humour or  
4 opinion?

6 **Pand.** Altered, Trachinus: I say no more, and shame  
that any should know so much.

98-99: **such an one** = ie. such a catch as Venus.

Interestingly, **such an one** was used about 30-40% of the time, compared with **such a one**, throughout the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

101-2: there is no point in Venus' playful suggestion that she might be caught with a **net** rather than a hook (**an angle**), except to accidentally, and awkwardly, allude to the famous story in which **Vulcan** designed a special net with which to catch **Venus** in the middle of a bout of love-making with her paramour **Mars**. Intentional or not, Phao makes the connection.

107: Venus denies the incident.

112-4: Venus reminds Phao that he is a mortal,<sup>6</sup> and ought not to concern himself with the lives of the gods.

113-4: **thy father...spin** = allusion to Genesis 3:23, in which we are told, of Adam, that "*the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to work the ground whence he was taken*" (Bishop's Bible, 1568). The reference to this verse can be found in numerous 16th century works, the most frequent phrasing being, "*when Adam delved and Eve span*".

= get going.

= ie. "attend you."

**Entering Characters:** **Trachinus** is a veteran frequenter or attender of the court (a **courtier**) of Syracuse. **Pandion** is a scholar, recently arrived from the universities of Athens. They are attended by their servants, **Criticus** and **Molus**, respectively.

Trachinus spends much of the scene explaining to the dubious Pandion the advantages of abandoning his sparse scholar's life, and taking up the habits of a courtier.

= famous Greek seat of learning.

= disposition or temperament.

6-7: Pandion is embarrassed to admit he has changed.

8	<b>Trach.</b> <u>Here</u> you see as great virtue, far greater	= ie. in the queen's court.
10	<u>bravery, the action of that which you contemplate:</u>	10: <b>bravery</b> = ostentation or splendour. <sup>1</sup> <b>the action...contemplate</b> = by alluding to the common philosophical distinction between living a life of activity and a life of contemplation, Trachinus cleverly frames his argument using a bit of phrasing with which Pandion would be very familiar. <sup>6</sup>
12	Sapho, <u>fair by nature</u> , by birth royal, learned by education, <u>by government politic</u> , rich by peace:	= made beautiful by nature. = prudent or shrewd thanks to her self-control. <sup>2</sup>
14	insomuch as it is hard to judge whether she be more beautiful or wise, virtuous or fortunate. Besides, do you not look on fair ladies instead of <u>good letters</u> ,	14-16: <b>Besides...phrases</b> = Trachinus cites the presence of the ladies as a benefit of being in court rather than in school. Note the nifty alliteration of <b>fair faces</b> and <b>fine phrases</b> . <b>good letters</b> = works of scholarship, literature. <sup>1,6</sup>
16	and behold fair faces instead of fine phrases? In universities, virtues and vices are but shadowed in	16-19: <b>In universities...bad</b> = at school, one comes to think about right and wrong in theoretical terms, but at court, good and bad are acted out in real life.
18	colours, white and black; <u>in courts shewed</u> to life, good and bad. There, times past are read of in old	<b>in courts shewed</b> = ie. "but in courts shown".
20	books, <u>times present set down by new devices</u> , times to come conjectured at by aim, by prophecy, or	20: <b>times present...devices</b> = the history of the present day is recorded using new ways of thinking. <sup>2</sup> 20-22: <b>times to come...chance</b> = "and the future can only be guessed at."
22	chance; here, are times in perfection, not by device, as fables, but in execution, as truths. Believe me, Pandion,	22-23: <b>here...truths</b> = Trachinus again extols living life in all its messy reality in Syracuse over the theoretical study of it in school.
24	in Athens <u>you have but tombs</u> , we in court the bodies; you the pictures of Venus and the wise goddesses, we	= ie. "you live like dead men" (Bond, p. 556). <sup>3</sup>
26	the persons and the virtues. What hath a scholar found out by study, that a courtier hath not found out by	
28	practice? <u>Simple</u> are you that think to see more at the candle-snuff than the sunbeams, to sail further in a	28-31: <b>Simple...reaping</b> = through various analogies, Trachinus presses the point that what one experiences in court is many times more intense and satisfying than what one learns at school.
30	little brook than in the main ocean, to make a greater harvest by <u>gleaning</u> than reaping. How say you,	<b>Simple</b> (line 28) = foolish. <sup>1</sup> 28-29: <b>see more at the candle-snuff</b> = the suggested image is of academics studying by the minimal light of a candle.
32	Pandion, is not all this true?	<b>candle-snuff</b> = snuffed-out or burned wick of a candle. <sup>1</sup> <b>gleaning</b> (line 31) = gathering ears of corn left uncollected by the reaper. <sup>1</sup>
34	<b>Pand.</b> Trachinus, <u>what would you more?</u> All true.	= "what more do you want?"
36	<b>Trach.</b> Cease then to lead thy life in a study, <u>pinned</u> with a few boards, and endeavor to be a courtier to live	36-37: <b>pinned...boards</b> = ie. confined in a small room constructed of poor material.
38	in <u>embossed</u> roofs.	<b>pinned</b> = hemmed in. <sup>1</sup> = decoratively carved or ornamented with figures in relief. <sup>1</sup>
40	<b>Pand.</b> A labour intolerable for Pandion.	
42	<b>Trach.</b> Why?	

44 **Pand.** Because it is harder to shape a life to  
dissemble, than to go forward with the liberty of truth.

46 **Trach.** Why, do you think in court any use to  
48 dissemble?

50 **Pand.** Do you know in court any that mean to live?

52 **Trach.** You have no reason for it, but an old report.

54 **Pand.** Report hath not always a blister on her tongue.

56 **Trach.** Aye, but this is the court of Sapho, nature's  
58 miracle, which resembleth the tree salurus, whose root  
is fastened upon knotted steel, and in whose top bud  
leaves of pure gold.

60 **Pand.** Yet hath salurus blasts and water boughs,  
62 worms and caterpillars.

64 **Trach.** The virtue of the tree is not the cause, but the  
easterly wind, which is thought commonly to bring  
66 cankers and rottenness.

68 **Pand.** Nor the excellency of Sapho the occasion, but  
the iniquity of flatterers, who always whisper in  
70 princes' ears suspicion and sourness.

72 **Trach.** Why, then you conclude with me, that Sapho  
for virtue hath no copartner.

74 **Pand.** Yea, and with the judgment of the world, that  
76 she is without comparison.

78 **Trach.** We will thither straight.

44-45: **Because...dissemble** = Pandion makes the common  
observation about the deceit in personal relations which is  
universal at, and in fact necessary to thrive at, court.

47-48: **any use to dissemble** = "people are in the habit of  
dissembling?"<sup>3</sup> Trachinus is unconvincingly offended by  
Pandion's suggestion.

50: Pandion answers Trachinus in the affirmative by asking  
a question with an easy answer of "yes".

= ie. "to believe that". = rumour.

54: "rumours are not always so vicious as to cause the  
speakers' tongues to become blistered," ie. what Pandion  
said is true, and not just scandalous talk. One's **tongue** was  
said to **blister** when one spoke something of a wicked or  
scandalous enough quality. Rumour was frequently  
personified, as here.

57: **the tree salurus** = Lyly appears to have invented this  
tree out of whole cloth.<sup>4</sup>

57-58: **whose root...steel** = perhaps suggesting that the  
tree, like Sapho's court, will never be toppled; the adjective  
**knotted** was typically used to describe a tree or piece of  
wood which was either gnarled or covered with knots, or  
protuberances.<sup>1</sup>

61-62: Pandion's point is that even nature's most brilliant  
organisms have faults and blemishes.

**blasts** = blights, or withered state.<sup>1</sup>

**water boughs** = lower branches or side shoots which  
starve the upper part of the tree of sap. A 1631 gardening  
book describes how trees suffering from water boughs "*can  
scarcely get sap to liue*."

= ie. the reason for its defects.

65-66: the **east wind** was proverbially considered harsh or  
sharp; Bevington identifies Genesis 41:6, in which the  
Pharoah dreamt of "*seven thin ears [of corn] blasted with the  
east wind*" (*Bishop's Bible*), as the source of Lyly's take here.

**cankers** = (destructive) caterpillars.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. "nor is". = ie. the reason for any corruption in court.

= wickedness.

68-70: a running theme in Elizabethan drama is the regret-  
table influence of **flatterers** on those in power.

= Trachinus employs a term from the field of logic.

= equal.

78: Trachinus and Pandion will take the ferry to the court at  
Syracuse.

80 **Pand.** I would I might return straight.

82 **Trach.** Why, there you may live still.

84 **Pand.** But not still.

86 **Trach.** How like you the ladies, are they not passing  
88 fair?

90 **Pand.** Mine eye drinketh neither the colour of wine  
92 nor women.

94 **Trach.** Yet I am sure that in judgment you are not so  
96 severe, but that you can be content to allow of beauty  
98 by day or by night.

100 **Pand.** When I behold beauty before the sun, his  
102 beams dim beauty; when by candle, beauty obscures  
104 torchlight: so as no time I can judge, because at any  
106 time I cannot discern, being in the sun a brightness to  
108 shadow beauty, and in beauty a glistering to extinguish  
110 light.

112 **Trach.** Scholarlike said: you flatter that which you  
114 seem to mislike, and to disgrace that which you most  
116 wonder at. But let us away.

118 **Pand.** I follow. – [*To Molus.*] And you, sir boy, go  
to Syracuse about by land, where you shall meet my  
stuff, pay for the carriage, and convey it to my  
lodging.

112 **Trach.** I think all your stuff are bundles of paper; but  
now must you learn to turn your library to a wardrobe,

114 and see whether your rapier hang better by your side,  
116 than the pen did in your ear.

118 [Exeunt Trachinus and Pandion;  
Criticus and Molus remain.]

**will thither** = ie. will go to there.  
**straight** = right away.

80: Pandion wishes he could return to his old life at the uni-  
versity;<sup>3</sup> **would** = wish.

= ie. at court. = always.

= in peace: Pandion puns on **still**.

= exceedingly.

= beautiful.

93-94: **allow...night** = ie. "praise or approve of (**allow of**)"<sup>1</sup>  
beauty when you see it."

96-101: there is never the right amount of light available  
by which Pandion can properly view beauty in order to  
assess it.

**his** = ie. the sun's; the use of the possessive pronoun  
**its** only became widespread in the 17th century.

= ie. candlelight.

100: **shadow** = ie. cast a shadow over, so it may not be dis-  
cerned clearly.

**glistering** = brilliance, sparkle.<sup>2</sup>

100-1: **extinguish light** = outshine the candlelight, or  
cast it in relative shadow.

= marvel.

= ie. Molus should walk to Syracuse around the harbour,  
rather than take the ferry directly to the city.

= baggage.<sup>2</sup> = transportation (thereof).

113: Pandion will need to purchase a new set of clothes  
appropriate to wear at court: academics were known for  
their plain, even threadbare, dress.

**wardrobe** = ie. wardrobe, a common alternate form.

= light sword with a sharp point, worn by gentlemen.<sup>2</sup>

117-8: our courtier and scholar presumably embark on the  
ferry for Syracuse proper, while their servants, remaining  
behind, immediately begin to converse. In this way, Scene II  
seamlessly blends into Scene III. Such imperceptible meld-  
ing of what were considered to be separate scenes was a  
common feature of Elizabethan drama.

## ACT I, SCENE III.

*The same: the Ferry.*

*Still on stage: Criticus and Molus.*

1 **Crit.** Molus, what odds between thy commons in  
2 Athens, and thy diet in court? a page's life, and a  
scholar's?

4 **Molus.** This difference: there, of a little I had  
6 somewhat; here, of a great deal, nothing. There did I

8 wear pantofles on my legs; here do I bear them in my  
hands.

10 **Crit.** Thou mayst be skilled in thy logic, but not in thy  
12 liripoop; belike no meat can down with you, unless  
you have a knife to cut it. But come among us, and

14 you shall see us once in a morning have a mouse at a  
bay.

16 **Molus.** A mouse? Unproperly spoken.

18 **Crit.** Aptly understood, a mouse of beef.

20 **Molus.** I think indeed a piece of beef as big as a

**Onstage Characters:** **Criticus** (the servant of **Trachinus** the courtier) and **Molus** (the servant of **Pandion** the scholar) will provide much of the play's comic relief. The lads follow the Elizabethan stage convention by which servants adopt the attitudes, opinions and skills of their individual masters. Molus, like Pandion, finds the adjustment to court life confusing, even difficult.

= "is the difference". = food rations, board.<sup>1</sup>

5-8: Molus answers Criticus' two queries in order.

5-6: **there...nothing** = at the university, mealtime always promised something (**somewhat**) to eat, of which Molus would consume only a limited amount (scholars famously were served plain and minimal rations); at court, however, he is unable to eat any of the rich food, of which there is an abundance.

7: **pantofles** = slippers.

**legs** = ie. feet.

7-8: **here do I...hands** = as a servant in court, Molus finds himself carrying his master's slippers.<sup>6</sup>

11: **liripoop** = common sense<sup>3,4</sup> or eloquence.<sup>5</sup>

11-12: **belike...cut it** = while on the surface, Criticus seems to be commenting on Molus' diet, Bevington suggests that Criticus is actually teasing Molus on his inability to adjust to life in the real world: "you are unable to think or speak sensibly, without dissecting everything with sophistry."

13-14: **have a mouse at bay** = Criticus' meaning is a bit obscure: he may simply be meaning, "capture a piece of meat";<sup>6</sup> but **mouse** was also used to mean "woman". Either way, the image of an organized hunting party tracking a mouse is intended to be absurd.<sup>6</sup>

**at a bay** = a hunting expression, referring to the point at which an animal, having been driven into a position from which it can no longer retreat or flee, turns to face its pursuer.

16: Molus is confused.

18: **Aptly** = "(but) appropriately".<sup>1</sup>

**a mouse of beef** = a rich piece of beef,<sup>1</sup> specifically the joint or "piece below the round" (Halliwell, p. 587);<sup>9</sup> **mouse** was sometimes used to mean "muscle".<sup>1</sup>

20-21: **I think...cats** = Molus, taking **mouse** literally, re-

22	mouse serves a great company of such cats. But what else?	sponds ironically.
24	<b>Crit.</b> For other sports: <u>a square die in a page's pocket</u>	= reference to the popular pastime of gambling. <i>square</i> = cube-shaped. <sup>1</sup>
26	is as <u>decent</u> as a <u>square cap</u> on a graduate's head.	= appropriate. <sup>1</sup> = ie. square-topped academic cap. <sup>1</sup>
28	<b>Molus.</b> You courtiers be mad fellows! <u>We silly souls are only plodders at ergo</u> , whose wits are clasped up	<b>27-36 (below):</b> Molus admits to the naivety of scholars when it comes to how to behave in the real world.  = ie. "we simple scholars". = ie. are only good for engaging laboriously in exercises in logic. <i>plodders</i> = persistent toilers. <sup>1</sup> <i>ergo</i> = Latin for "therefore", a term from logic.
30	with our books; and so full of learning are we at home, that we scarce know good manners when we come	30-31: <i>come abroad</i> = go out and about, ie. leave the grounds of the university.
32	abroad; cunning in nothing but in making small things	31-32: <i>cunning...figures</i> = skilled only in the use of rhetoric to inflate the importance or distort the meaning of ideas through logic ( <i>figures</i> ). <sup>1</sup>
34	great by figures, pulling on with the sweat of our studies a great shoe upon a little foot, burning out	32-34: <i>pulling on...another</i> = Molus lists a couple of exaggerated examples of the types of profitless intellectual exercises at which scholars are good.
36	one candle in seeking for another; <u>raw wordlings</u> in	= "naïve citizens of the world", <sup>1</sup> ie. an oxymoronic way of describing those who are inexperienced in the ways of the world; <i>wordlings</i> was a common alternate form of <i>worldlings</i> . However, there may be a play on words here, as <i>wordlings</i> also suggests one who is an expert at using <i>words</i> , ie. rhetoric.
38	matters of <u>substance</u> , <u>passing wranglers</u> about <u>shadows</u> .	35: <i>substance</i> = ie. reality, the real world. 35-36: <i>passing...shadows</i> = (but) exceedingly good ( <i>passing</i> ) debaters ( <i>wranglers</i> ) of immaterial or insubstantial, hence trivial or abstract, matters ( <i>shadows</i> ). <sup>2</sup>
40	<b>Crit.</b> Then is it <u>time lost</u> to be a scholar. We pages are <u>politians</u> : <u>for look what</u> we hear our masters talk of,	= a waste of time.  39: <i>politians</i> = ie. politicians, experts in practicing politics, hence manipulators and schemers. According to the OED, the word <i>politian</i> (which, as a noun, originates here with Lyly), was derived from the word <i>polity</i> ; but Fairholt believes that Lyly intended for <i>politians</i> to be the pluralization of the name of <b>Angelo Politian</b> , a well-known 15th century Italian scholar, who was discussed in a number of 16th century English works. 39-40: <i>for look what...determine of</i> = the pages of the court make decisions on topics discussed by their masters. <i>for look what</i> = for whatever. <sup>1,6</sup>
	we determine of; <u>where we suspect, we undermine</u> ;	= "those we mistrust, we sneakily destroy."
	and where we mislike for some particular grudge,	41-42: <i>where we...grief</i> = with those individuals the pages dislike, the pages pick quarrels "under the pretext of squaring general grievances" (Bevington, p. 217). <sup>6</sup>

42 there we pick quarrels for a general grief. Nothing  
among us but instead of “Good morrow”, “What  
44 news?” We fall from cogging at dice to cog with  
  
states; and so forward are mean men in those matters,  
46 that they would be cocks to tread down others, before  
they be chickens to rise themselves. Youths are very  
48 forward to stroke their chins, though they have no  
beards, and to lie as loud as he that hath lived longest.  
50  
**Molus.** These be the golden days!  
52  
**Crit.** Then be they very dark days, for I can see no  
54 gold.  
56 **Molus.** You are gross-witted, master courtier.  
  
58 **Crit.** And you, master scholar, slender-witted.  
  
  
60 **Molus.** I meant times which were prophesied golden  
for plenty of all things: sharpness of wit, excellency in  
62 knowledge, policy in government, for –  
64 **Crit.** Soft, scholaris. I deny your argument.  
  
66 **Molus.** Why, it is no argument.  
68 **Crit.** Then I deny it because it is no argument. – But  
let us go and follow our masters.  
70  
  
[Exeunt.]

## ACT I, SCENE IV.

*The same: the Ferry.*

*Enter Mileta, Lamia, Favilla, Ismena,  
Canope, and Eugenua.*

1 **Mileta.** Is it not strange that Phao on the sudden  
2 should be so fair?

42-44: **Nothing...news** = no time is wasted an exchanging  
meaningless civilities: keeping pace with events takes  
precedence over good manners.

44-45: **We fall...states** = the pages move easily between  
cheating (**cogging**) at gambling to flattering (**to cog** = to  
sweet-talk)<sup>1</sup> men of high rank (**states**).

45-47: **and so...themselves** = and so eager are the servants  
to play the game, that they find more satisfaction in destroy-  
ing those above them than in improving their own stations.

= ie. eager to pretentiously appear deep in thought.<sup>1,4</sup>

= ie. who is the most experienced in doing so.

51: Molus will explain what he means at lines 60-62 below.

53-54: Criticus admits that all their conniving brings the  
pages no wealth.

= stupid, dull-witted;<sup>1</sup> Criticus has misunderstood Molus'  
point.

= simple-minded; Bevington notes that **slender** (meaning  
"thin") was an antonym of **gross** ("thick"), even though  
**gross-witted** and **slender-witted** are synonyms; the wordplay  
is of course deliberate.

= ie. "these are times".

= ie. an abundance.

60-62: Molus is again ironic.

64: **Soft** = "wait a moment", used as here to interrupt.  
**scholaris** = Latin for "scholar".

66: Molus was not engaging in a logical proof.<sup>6</sup>

**Scene IV:** though not depicted on stage, an important de-  
velopment has taken place between scenes: Venus has made  
Phao exceedingly handsome. Unfortunately, the gift has  
come with a price: Phao finds himself disagreeably proud of  
his new looks, but repelled by the idea of falling in love.

**Entering Characters:** we meet Queen Sapho's female  
attendants.

= ie. suddenly, an alternate expression which appeared in  
the 1560's.

= beautiful, attractive.

4	<b>Lamia.</b> It cannot be strange, <u>sith</u> Venus was disposed	4-5: <b>It cannot...fair</b> = somehow it has become public knowledge that Venus is responsible for Phao's transformation. <b>sith</b> = since.
6	to make him fair. That <u>cunning</u> had been better bestowed on women, which would have deserved thanks of nature.	5-6: <b>That cunning...women</b> = ie. it would have been preferable if Venus had used her skill ( <b>cunning</b> ) to make <b>women</b> more attractive.
8		= perhaps. = ie. to spite.
10	<b>Ism.</b> <u>Haply</u> she did it <u>in spite of</u> women, or scorn of nature.	
12	<b>Can.</b> <u>Proud elf</u> ! How <u>squeamish</u> he is become already,	12: <b>Proud elf</b> = Canope refers to Phao; <b>elf</b> is used here either (1) in a general derogatory sense, or (2) to indicate Phao's small size. <sup>1</sup> <b>squeamish</b> = aloof. <sup>1</sup>
14	using both disdainful looks and imperious words, insomuch that he <u>galleth with ingratitude</u> . And then,	= "irritates (others) with his unfriendliness." <sup>1,2</sup>
16	ladies, you know how it cutteth a woman to become a wooer.	15-16: <b>how it...wooer</b> = women hate to find themselves in the position of having to pursue a man! Canope's comment suggests that the ladies are smitten with Phao.
18	<b>Eug.</b> Tush! Children and fools, the fairer they are, the sooner they <u>yield</u> ; an apple will catch <u>the one</u> , a <u>baby</u> the other.	= submit. <sup>1</sup> = ie. a fool. = doll. <sup>1</sup>
20		
22	<b>Ism.</b> <u>Your lover</u> , I think, be a fair fool, for you love nothing but fruit and <u>puppets</u> .	= ie. Phao. = dolls. <sup>1</sup>
24		
26	<b>Mileta.</b> I laugh at <u>that</u> you all call "love", and judge it only a word called "love". Methinks <u>liking</u> , a curtsy, a smile, a <u>beck</u> , and such-like are the very <u>quintessence</u> of love.	= ie. that which. = fondness. <sup>1</sup>
28		27: <b>beck</b> = a mute signaling, as with a finger or nod. <sup>1</sup> <b>quintessence</b> = embodiments or essence. <sup>1</sup>
30	<b>Fav.</b> Aye Mileta, but were you as wise as you <u>would</u>	30-34: if Mileta were wiser, she would be less of a prude or flirt and more of a lover. <b>would</b> (line 30) = wish to.
32	be thought fair, or as fair as you think yourself wise, you would be as ready to please men, as you are coy	32-33: <b>coy to prank yourself</b> = reluctant to dress showily; but Daniel <sup>4</sup> suggests simply "preen" for <b>prank</b> . = anxious. = thought, judged.
34	to prank yourself; and as <u>careful</u> to be <u>accounted</u> amorous, as you are willing to be thought discreet.	
36	<b>Mileta.</b> No, no; men are good souls (poor souls) who never inquire but with their eyes, loving to father the cradle, though they but mother the child. Give me their	37-38: <b>loving...child</b> = "and eager to become fathers (ie. sleep with women), but leaving the resulting child to be raised by its mother". <sup>3</sup>
38	gifts, not their virtues: a grain of their gold weigheth	39-40: <b>a grain...wit</b> = a man's wealth (which should be showered on a woman) is more important than his intelligence.
40	down a pound of their wit; a dram of "give me" is heavier than an ounce of "hear me". Believe me,	40-41: <b>a dram..."hear me"</b> = Mileta would rather receive a modest present than waste time in idle chatter with a man. <b>dram</b> = small dose, or a weight of but 1/8 ounce. <sup>1</sup>
42	ladies, "give" is a pretty thing.	
44	<b>Ism.</b> I <u>cannot</u> but oftentimes smile to myself to hear	= ie. cannot help.

	men call us weak vessels, when they prove themselves	45-46: <i>when they...broken-hearted</i> = when frustrated male lovers are so quick to act heartbroken, hence showing that they are as constitutionally delicate as are women.
46	broken-hearted; us <u>frail</u> , when their thoughts cannot	46: <i>frail</i> = weak-minded. 46-47: <i>their thoughts...together</i> = men are scatter-brained.
	hang together; <u>studying with words to flatter</u> , and	= taking pains to flatter those women to whom they are attracted.
48	<u>with bribes to allure</u> ; when we <u>commonly</u> wish their	48: <i>with bribes to flatter</i> = ie. attempt to win over women with gifts. 48-49: <i>when we...simply</i> = metaphorically, women prefer their suitors to give them rich gifts but to keep quiet, because their ability to speak is so feeble. <i>commonly</i> = customarily. <sup>1</sup> <i>they speak</i> (line 49) = ie. "because they speak".
50	tongues in their purses, they speak so simply; and their offers in their bellies, they do it so <u>peevisly</u> .	49-50: <i>their offers...peevisly</i> = "we wish men would refrain from making their proposals, because they always come out sounding so foolishly ( <i>peevisly</i> )." <sup>1,6</sup>
52	<i>Mileta</i> . It is <u>good sport</u> to see them <u>want manner</u> : for	= amusing, entertaining. = lack skill in correct courting behaviour.
54	then fall they to good manners, having nothing in their mouths but "sweet mistress", wearing our hands out	53-59: <i>having nothing...ceremonies</i> = when attempting to woo, tongue-tied men are unable to engage in anything beyond trite conversation and hackneyed gestures.
	with courtly kissings, when their wits fail in courtly	55-56: <i>courtly discourses</i> = speaking cleverly, as was expected of those who sought to win high-ranking women.
56	discourses. Now ruffling their hairs, now setting their <u>ruffs</u> , then gazing with their eyes, then sighing with a	56-57: <i>setting their ruffs</i> = "putting their high collars ( <i>ruffs</i> ) in order by arranging the pleats" (Fairholt, p. 293). <sup>5</sup>
58	<u>privy wring by the hand</u> , thinking us <u>like to be wowed</u>	58: <i>privy wring by the hand</i> = secret squeezing of a woman's hand. <i>like to be wowed</i> = likely to be successfully won. <i>wowed</i> = alternate form of <i>wooed</i> .
	by <u>signs and ceremonies</u> .	= gestures and empty acts of regard or politeness. <sup>1</sup>
60	<i>Eug</i> . Yet we, when we swear with our mouths we are	61-63: Eugenia points out women's own hypocrisies.
62	not in love, then we sigh from the heart and <u>pine in</u>	= languish from, or are vexed or tormented with. <sup>1,2</sup>
64	love.	
	<i>Can</i> . We are mad wenches if men mark our words:	65: women are furious when men pay attention to women's literal words.
66	for when I say "I would none cared for love more than I", what mean I, but "I would none loved but I?" Where	66-67: <i>for when...loved but I?"</i> = paraphrasing Bevington, who suggests: "for when I say that I wish that all women regarded love with as much indifference as I do, what else do I mean except that I wish I was the <i>only</i> woman to feel loved?" (p. 221). <sup>6</sup>
68	we cry "away!", do we not <u>presently</u> say " <u>go to</u> "; and	= immediately (also). <sup>1</sup> = ie. "get to it."
70	when men strive for kisses, we exclaim "let us alone", as though we would fall to that ourselves.	70: "in a tone that suggests we would initiate the kissing ourselves." <sup>3,6</sup>

72	<b>Fav.</b> Nay then, Canope, it is time to go – and <u>behold</u> Phao.	= according to Fairholt, <sup>5</sup> Favilla means "consider", but Ismena takes <i>behold</i> literally, to mean "to see".
74	<b>Ism.</b> Where?	
76	<b>Fav.</b> In your <u>head</u> , Ismena, nowhere else. But let us	77: <i>head</i> = ie. imagination.
78	keep on our way.	77-78: <i>But let...way</i> = the ladies are on their way to court.
80	<b>Ism.</b> Wisely.	
82	[ <i>Exeunt.</i> ]	
	END OF ACT I.	

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.

*Before Sybilla's Cave; night-time.*

*Enter Phao with a small glass;  
Sybilla sitting in her cave.*

- 1 **Phao.** Phao, thy mean fortune causeth thee to use an
- 2 oar, and thy sudden beauty a glass: by the one is seen
- 4 thy need, in the other thy pride. Oh Venus! In thinking  
thou hast blessed me, thou hast cursed me, adding to
- a poor estate a proud heart; and to a disdained man a
- 6 disdaining mind. Thou dost not flatter thyself, Phao,
- thou art fair. – Fair? I fear me, "fair" be a word too
- 8 foul for a face so passing fair. – But what availeth  
beauty? Hadst thou all things thou wouldest wish,
- 10 thou mightst die tomorrow; and didst thou want all  
things thou desirest, thou shalt live till thou diest. –
- 12 Tush, Phao! there is grown more pride in thy mind  
than favour in thy face. Blush, foolish boy, to think
- 14 on thine own thoughts: cease complaints, and crave  
counsel. – And lo! behold Sybilla in the mouth of her

**Entering Characters:** our ferryman **Phao** is carrying a mirror (**glass**), the obvious prop of a man obsessed with his own good looks. However, despite his superficially wonderful gift of beauty, Phao is actually now miserable, whereas before he met Venus he was contented.

**Sybilla** is a prophetess. In the *Aeneid*, the Roman poet Virgil portrayed Sybil as living in a cave. The story of her incredible age was told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*.

**1-18 (below):** Phao begins the scene with a lengthy soliloquy. Note the frequent dashes, which signal Phao's scattered reflections and rapidly-changing stream of thought.

1: **mean fortune** = lot in life as one of inferior means and social status.

1-2: **use an oar** = ie. work for a living.

2-3: **by the one...need** = the fact that Phao must work on a ferry belies his lack of material possessions.

3-6: **Oh Venus...mind** = interestingly, Phao recognizes that his gift of beauty has had the undesirable effect of creating within him an arrogant pride in his good looks, a feeling he is unable to minimize or control.

5: **a poor estate** = material poverty.<sup>1</sup>

5-6: **and to...mind** = in addition to being regularly snubbed due to his low station in life, Phao unpleasantly finds himself now to be a scorner of women.

6-7: **Thou dost...art fair** = it is not just flattery, it is true: he really is gorgeous!

7-8: **too foul** = ie. not good enough. Note the repetition of the word **fair**, the wordplay between **fair** and **fear**, and the extensive alliteration in the sentence across lines 7-8.

= exceedingly. = what good is.

= ie. "even if you possessed".

= "even if you lacked".

= proverbial.

13: **favour** = comeliness.

**Blush** = ie. from shame.

13-14: **to think...thoughts** = ie. to waste time only *thinking* about his problems (which gets him nowhere) instead of *doing* something about them.

14-15: **crave counsel** = solicit advice.

= behold.

16	cave: I will <u>salute</u> her. – Lady, I fear me I am out of	16: <i>salute</i> = greet.
18	my way, and so <u>benighted</u> <u>withal</u> that I am compelled to ask your direction.	16-17: <i>out of my way</i> = lost.
20	<b>Syb.</b> Fair youth, if you will be advised by me, you shall <u>for this time</u> seek none other inn than my cave,	17: <i>benighted</i> = means both (1) overcome by nightfall, and (2) lost in a spiritual darkness. <sup>1</sup>
22	<u>for that</u> it is no less perilous to travel by night, than <u>uncomfortable</u> .	<i>withal</i> = besides. <sup>1</sup>
24		= ie. at this time.
26	<b>Phao.</b> Your courtesy offered hath <u>prevented</u> what my necessity was to entreat.	= because.
28		= disquieting. <sup>1</sup>
30	<b>Syb.</b> Come near, take a stool, and sit down. Now, for that these winter nights are long, and that children delight in nothing more than to hear old wives' tales, we will <u>beguile</u> the time with some story. And though you behold wrinkles and furrows in my <u>tawny</u> face, yet may you happily find wisdom and counsel in my white hairs.	25-26: Sybilla's courteous invitation to Phao to stay with her has anticipated ( <i>prevented</i> ) that which circumstances require him to ask for.
32		28-29: <i>for that</i> = because.
34		
36	<b>Phao.</b> Lady, nothing can content me better than a tale; neither is there anything more necessary for me than counsel.	= pleasantly pass. <sup>2</sup>
38		= yellowish-brown, and perhaps blotchy, with age. <sup>1,2</sup>
40	<b>Syb.</b> Were you born so <u>fair by nature</u> ?	
42	<b>Phao.</b> No, made so fair by Venus.	= naturally beautiful.
44	<b>Syb.</b> For what cause?	
46	<b>Phao.</b> I fear me for some curse.	
48	<b>Syb.</b> Why, do you love and cannot obtain?	48: ie. "are you in love with a woman who is not attracted to you?"
50	<b>Phao.</b> No, I may obtain but cannot love.	50: Phao acknowledges that, thanks to his beauty, he can possess any woman he desires, but he does not want any because of his disdain for the gentler sex.
52	<b>Syb.</b> <u>Take heed</u> of that, my child!	= be careful.
54	<b>Phao.</b> I <u>cannot choose</u> , good Madame.	= "have no choice", "cannot help it".
56	<b>Syb.</b> Then <u>hearken</u> to my tale, which I hope shall be as a straight <u>thread</u> to lead you out of those crooked conceits, and place you in the <u>plain</u> path of love.	56: <i>hearken</i> = listen.
58		56-58: <i>which I hope...love</i> = metaphorically, which shall give Phao a plan to follow to overcome his perverse fancies ( <i>crooked conceits</i> ), ie. his unnatural and debilitating disdain for all women.
		<i>plain</i> (line 58) = clear, unobstructed. <sup>1</sup>
		Sybilla alludes to the story of the Greek hero <b>Theseus</b> , who went to <b>Crete</b> to slay the monster known as the <b>Minotaur</b> , which was kept in a <b>labyrinth</b> . Theseus was helped by the Princess <b>Ariadne</b> , who, infatuated with the hero, gave him not only a sword with which to kill the Minotaur, but also a spool of <i>thread</i> which he unwound as he entered the

60 **Phao.** I attend.

62 **Syb.** When I was young, as you now are – I speak it  
without boasting, – I was as beautiful: for Phoebus in  
64 his godhead sought to get my maidenhead; but I, fond  
wench, receiving a benefit from above, began to wax

66 squeamish beneath: not unlike to asolis, which being  
made green by heavenly drops, shrinketh into the  
68 ground when there fall showers; or the Syrian mud,  
which being made white chalk by the sun, never  
70 ceaseth rolling till it lie in the shadow. He, to sweet

72 prayers, added great promises. I, either desirous to  
make trial of his power, or willing to prolong mine

74 own life, caught up my handful of sand, consenting to  
his suit if I might live as many years as there were

76 grains. Phoebus (for what cannot gods do, and what  
for love will they not do?) granted my petition. And  
then, I sigh and blush to tell the rest, I recalled my  
78 promise.

80 **Phao.** Was not the god angry to see you unkind?

82 **Syb.** Angry, my boy, which was the cause that I was  
unfortunate.

84 **Phao.** What revenge for such rigour used the gods?

86 **Syb.** None, but suffering us to live, and know we are  
88 no gods.

90 **Phao.** I pray tell on.

92 **Syb.** I will. Having received long life by Phoebus and

94 rare beauty by nature, I thought all the year would  
have been May, that fresh colours would always  
continue, that time and fortune could not wear out

labyrinth. Having dispensed with the beast, he was able to  
easily leave the maze by following the thread back to its exit.

60: "I am listening."

**62-116 (below):** Sybilla's sad tale was told by Ovid in Book  
XIV of the *Metamorphoses*.

= alternate name for the Olympian god Apollo.

= divineness. = ie. seduce the virgin Sybilla. = foolish.

= girl. = ie. attention from a god. = grow.

66: *squeamish* = coy or prudish.<sup>1</sup>

*beneath* = beneath heaven, ie. on earth; *beneath* is  
used in opposition to *above* in line 65.

66-70: *asolis...shadow* = a pair of analogies makes the  
point that gifts from Heaven should not be shunned. Lyly  
appears to have fabricated both the supposed "plant" called  
the *asolis* and the qualities of *Syrian mud*.<sup>4</sup>

*heavenly drops* = dew.

*showers* = rain.

= entreaties, ie. begging.

= test; the sense is that she wanted to see how far she could  
push Apollo's patience.

73: *caught up...sand* = in the *Metamorphoses*, Sybilla only  
points to a mound of sand.

73-74: *consenting...suit* = agreeing to give herself to  
him.

77-78: *I recalled my promise* = Sybilla retracted her  
promise to sleep with Apollo after he had extended  
her lifespan.

= reason.

85: "how did the gods punish you for such stubbornness or  
cruelty (*rigour*)<sup>1</sup>?"

= allowing.

92-98: *Having...yellow* = Apollo's gift of a long life was not  
accompanied by perpetual youth, so that most of Sybilla's  
life has been spent in aged decrepitude.

93-94: *I thought...May* = Sybilla expected to live her  
entire, and now exceptionally long, life as a young and  
beautiful woman.

96 what gods and nature had wrought up; not once  
 98 imagining that white and red should return to black  
 and yellow: the juniper, the longer it grew, the  
 100 crookeder it waxed; or that in a face without blemish,  
 there should come wrinkles without number. I did as  
 you do, go with my glass, ravished with the pride of  
 102 mine own beauty; and you shall do as I do, loathe to  
 see a glass, disdaining deformity. There was none that  
 104 heard of my fault, but shunned my favour, insomuch as  
 I stooped for age before I tasted of youth, sure to be  
 106 long-lived, uncertain to be beloved. Gentlemen that  
 used to sigh from their hearts for my sweet love, began  
 108 to point with their fingers at my withered face, and  
 laughed to see the eyes, out of which fire seemed to  
 110 sparkle, to be succoured, being old, with spectacles.  
 This causeth me to withdraw myself to a solitary  
 112 cave, where I must lead six hundred years in no less  
pensiveness of crabbed age, than grief of remembered  
 114 youth. Only this comfort, that being ceased to be fair, I  
 study to be wise, wishing to be thought a grave matron,  
 116 since I cannot return to be a young maid.

118 **Phao.** Is it not possible to die before you become so  
 old?  
 120  
 122 **Syb.** No more possible than to return as you are, to be  
 so young.

124 **Phao.** Could not you settle your fancy upon any, or  
 would not destiny suffer it?  
 126  
 128 **Syb.** Women willingly ascribe that to fortune, which  
wittingly was committed by frowardness.

= shaped, such as by kneading paste or dough.<sup>1</sup>

97: **white and red** = ie. pale skin tinted with the blush of  
 beauty, traditional poetic colours used to describe a youthful  
 and lovely face.

97-98: **black and yellow** = tawny (see line 32 above) with  
 age.

= grew, ie. became. = ie. nor did she imagine once that.  
 = a countless number of wrinkles.

101: **go with my glass** = walk around gripping a mirror  
 (in which to continually peer).

**ravished with** = in rhapsody over.

102-3: **and you...deformity** = Sybilla admonishes Phao:  
 there will be a time when he too, fearing how he has aged,  
 will avoid looking into a mirror.

104: **heard of my fault** = ie. learned of her worn-out appear-  
 ance.

**shunned my favour** = avoided becoming romantically  
 linked with her.

105: **I stooped...youth** = Sybilla grew bent over with age  
 before she had a chance to enjoy her prime of life, or perhaps  
 more specifically, before she had a chance to sample the  
 delights of love.

**sure** = certain, ie. irrevocably.

= perhaps meaning the opposite of "certain", ie. definitely  
 never.

= assisted.

= ie. in at least as much.

= mournful meditation over her harsh old age.<sup>2</sup> = ie. than in.

**Sybilla's Age:** in the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid tells us that the  
 Sybil was already 700 years old, and destined to live 300  
 more, until "*I shall shrivel to almost nothing, / Weigh almost  
 nothing, when no one, seeing me, / Would ever think a god  
 had found me lovely*" (Humphries, p. 343).<sup>15</sup>

124-5: "were you able to find a lover, or was it your fate  
 never to do so?"

127-8: when women cannot get a man, due to their refractory  
 or perverse natures (**frowardness**), they blame their bad  
 luck.

**wittingly** = knowingly.

130	<b>Phao.</b> What will you have me do?	
132	<b>Syb.</b> Take heed you do not as I did. Make not too much of fading beauty, which is fair in the cradle and	<b>132-156 (below):</b> Sybilla addresses Phao's first problem – his pride in his looks – with a warning to appreciate and take advantage of his beauty, because it can be expected to fade quickly enough!
134	foul in the grave; resembling <u>polyon</u> , whose leaves are	132-3: <b>Make not...beauty</b> = "do not obsess over your good looks, which will fade away soon enough".
	white in the morning and blue before night; or <u>anyta</u> ,	134-5: <b>resembling...night</b> = <b>polyon</b> (properly called simply <b>poly</b> ) is an herb actually covered with white hairs. <sup>1</sup> Lyly has borrowed its description from Pliny, who wrote that the leaves of poly " <i>are white in the morning, purple at midday, and azure at sunset</i> " (Bostock, Vol. IV, p. 325-326, from Pliny 21.21). <sup>13</sup>
136	which being a sweet flower at the rising of the sun, becometh a weed if it be not plucked before the	= a fictitious herb, invented here by Lyly, <sup>4</sup> then borrowed by other writers, including Robert Greene, for mention in later works.
138	setting. Fair faces have no fruits if they have no	138-9: <b>Fair faces...witnesses</b> = there is no benefit to being beautiful if there is no one around to see it. Note the nice alliteration in this line.
	witnesses. When you shall behold over <u>this</u> tender	= Sybilla points to Phao's own face or skin.
140	flesh a tough skin, your eyes, which were <u>wont</u> to	= accustomed.
142	glance on others' faces, to be sunk so hollow that you	
144	can scarce look out of your own head; and when all	= wiggle (from looseness).
146	your teeth shall <u>wag</u> as fast as your tongue, then will	= ie. the frustrations of old age, which he will find fault with. <sup>1,6</sup>
	you repent the time which you cannot recall, and be	147-8: <b>Beauty...good</b> = ie. because it is difficult to hang onto.
	enforced to bear <u>what most you blame</u> . Lose not the	<b>good</b> (line 148) = ie. a thing which is good. <sup>1</sup>
	pleasant time of your youth, than the which there is	= even as one becomes more beautiful while approaching the full bloom of youth, the onset of the body's built-in program for aging, and the accompanying fading of one's looks, is already underway.
	nothing swifter, nothing sweeter. Beauty is a slippery	= the apple-like fruit of the tree of the same name. <sup>1</sup> = ie. its.
148	good, <u>which decreaseth whilest it is increasing</u> ,	= ie. "your face grows". = ie. "you face".
	resembling the <u>medlar</u> , which in the moment of <u>his</u> full	= ie. "your skin becomes parched", = withered.
150	ripeness, is known to be in a rottenness. Whiles you	153-4: <b>a sudden time to lose it</b> = the beauty of one's countenance disappears quite suddenly.
152	look in the glass, <u>it waxeth</u> old with time; if <u>on</u> the sun,	= "don't waste time playing hard-to-get."
	<u>parched</u> with heat; if on the wind, <u>blasted</u> with cold. A	= poetical way of admonishing, "time flies."
154	great care to keep it, a short space to enjoy it, a sudden	= wait around, delay.
	time to lose it. <u>Be not coy when you are courted</u> .	<b>157-165 (below):</b> Sybilla now turns to Phao's cynical attitude towards his fellows (especially women), warning the ferryman not to be so arrogant in his youth, but instead to be
156	<u>Fortune's wings are made of time's feathers</u> , which	
	<u>stay</u> not whilest one may measure them.	

158 Be affable and courteous in youth, that you may be  
honoured in age. Roses that lose their colours, keep  
their savours, and plucked from the stalk, are put to

160 the still. Cotonea, because it boweth when the sun  
riseth, is sweetest when it is oldest; and children,  
162 which in their tender years sow courtesy, shall in  
their declining states reap pity. Be not proud of  
164 beauty's painting, whose colours consume themselves,  
because they are beauty's painting.

166 **Phao.** I am driven by your counsel into díverse

168 conceits, neither knowing how to stand, or where to  
fall; but to yield to love is the only thing I hate.

170 **Syb.** I commit you to Fortune, who is like to play such  
172 pranks with you as your tender years can scarce bear,

174 nor your green wits understand. But repair unto me  
often, and if I cannot remove the effects, yet I will  
176 manifest the causes.

178 **Phao.** I go, ready to return for advice before I am  
resolved to adventure.

180 **Syb.** Yet hearken two words: thou shalt get friendship

by dissembling, love by hatred; unless thou perish,

respectful of others, so that he will be revered himself when  
he enters old age.

= a metaphor for fading looks.

159: *savours* = smell.

159-160: *put to the still* = ie. distilled, so as to produce  
rose oil. Lyly used this exact analogy in his later play *Midas*  
to describe fading beauty.

= Latin name for the quince tree; so called because the fruit  
is covered with fine hairs called "cotton".<sup>1</sup>

= ie. which if. = youth.

= mercy or compassion.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. "your natural beauty" (Bevington, p. 229).<sup>6</sup>

= ie. an artifice (Bevington, p. 229).<sup>6</sup>

167-9: Phao finds Sybilla's widely scattered advice befud-  
dling.<sup>6</sup>

167-8: *diverse conceits* = various and sundry lines of  
thought. Editors typically emend the B.L. quarto's *diverse* to  
*divers*, the era's more common form (the two words have  
separate entries in the OED), but in this period, both *divers*  
and *diverse* were stressed on the first syllable.

= despite Sybilla's long-winded efforts to guide Phao, the  
ferryman remains possessed of a scorn for love and  
women.

171-3: *I commit...understand* = Sybilla cannot do anything  
more for Phao at this time. She describes personified *For-*  
*tune* as a trickster who will likely (*like*) place unexpected  
adversity into Phao's life.

*green* (line 173) = immature.

= come.

= mitigate the harm that alights on Phao.

= reveal, ie. explain, why these things are happening to him.

177-8: *am resolved to adventure* = "make any decision as  
to what plan of action to pursue."

**180-4 (below):** Sybilla makes some predictions for Phao,  
before resuming her dispensing of advice. As you, the  
reader, struggle to make sense of each element of the  
prophetess' counsel, you may wish to keep in mind Bond's  
dictum, that Sybilla's "*oracles need not be explicable*  
*everywhere*" (p. 558).<sup>3</sup>

180: *Yet hearken two words* = "yet listen to a few more  
words (of advice and prediction)."

180-1: *thou shalt...hatred* = basically, Phao will only  
get people to like him by acting like a fake and a jerk.

181-2: *unless...shalt perish* = an obscure line, which  
Fairholt believes to be corrupt. Bond's attempt to interpret

182 thou shalt perish: in digging for a stone, thou shalt  
 184 reach a star; thou shalt be hated most, because thou art  
 loved most. Thy death shall be feared and wished. –  
 186 So much for prophecy, which nothing can prevent;  
 and this for counsel, which thou mayst follow. Keep  
 not company with ants that have wings, nor talk with  
 any near the hill of a mole; where thou smellst the  
 188 sweetness of serpent's breath, beware thou touch no  
 190 part of the body. Be not merry among those that put  
bugloss in their wine, and sugar in thine. If any talk  
 192 of the eclipse of the sun, say thou never sawest it.

Nourish no conies in thy vaults, nor swallows in thine  
 194 eaves. Sow next thy vines mandrage, and ever keep  
 thine ears open, and thy mouth shut; thine eyes  
 196 upward, and thy fingers down: so shalt thou do better  
 than otherwise, though never so well as I wish.  
 198 **Phao.** Alas! Madam, your prophecy threateneth  
 200 miseries, and your counsel warneth impossibilities.  
 202 **Syb.** Farewell, I can answer no more.

this ominous-sounding warning is worth repeating: "unless [Phao] injures himself by becoming a dissimulator and hater, he will suffer lack of love and friendship" (p. 557).<sup>3</sup>

182-3: **in digging...star** = by acting cruelly, he will obtain a woman of an exalted position. Sybilla basically predicts that Phao will fall in love with Sapho.

186: **this for counsel** = "here is some advice".

187: **ants...wings** = ie. ambitious men,<sup>3</sup> a metaphor Lyly reused in his later play *Midas*.

187-8: **nor talk...mole** = ie. "be careful not to speak anywhere where you might be overheard",<sup>3</sup> a warning, suggests Bevington, to avoid becoming involved with intrigue. The metaphor takes advantage of the common belief that *moles* had a keen sense of hearing.

188-190: **where thou...body** = "avoid being seduced by those who flatter you, or those who seem attractive on the surface but are really malevolent."

190-1: **Be not merry...thine** = a warning not to let others take advantage of Phao as they climb in status.

190-1: **put bugloss...wine** = steep their own wine with *bugloss*; bugloss, a pretty, blue and hairy flower,<sup>1</sup> was thought in the 16th century to cure depression. In *Euphues and His England* (1580, hereafter *Euphues*), Lyly described wine mixed with bugloss as increasing one's "desire or lust". Earlier editors only pointed out that in former times, bugloss was mixed with wine to "improve" it or "flavour" it.<sup>3,5</sup>

**sugar in thine** = Bond says that adding sugar to wine ruins it, but there are plenty of references in the era's literature to those who enjoyed wine sweetened with sugar or honey.

191-2: **If any talk...sawest it** = ie. because anyone over-hearing talk of an *eclipse* may interpret it to be a discussion of the demise of the monarch (Bond, p. 558).<sup>3</sup>

193-4: **Nourish...eaves** = a warning for Phao not to support (human) parasites in his own home.<sup>6</sup>

**Nourish no conies** = feed no rabbits,  
**vaults** = rooms for storage of liquor or wine.<sup>1,3</sup>

194: **Sow...mandrage** = in *Euphues*, Lyly wrote that planting or grafting the poisonous narcotic plant mandrake (sometimes called *mandrage*, as here) next to one's *vines* improved the quality of the grapes.

195-6: **thine eyes upward** = Phao should direct his eyes towards Heaven, so as to keep his thoughts pure. = a metaphoric admonition to shun ambition.<sup>6</sup>

## ACT II, SCENE II.

*The Ferry.*

*Still onstage: Phao.*

*Enter Sapho, Trachinus, Pandion,  
Criticus, and Molus.*

**Phao.** Unhappy Phao! – But soft, what gallant troupe is this? What gentlewoman is this?

**Crit.** Sapho, a lady here in Sicily.

**Sapho.** What fair boy is that?

**Trach.** Phao, the ferryman of Syracuse.

**Phao.** I never saw one more brave: be all ladies of such majesty?

**Crit.** No, this is she that all wonder at and worship.

**Sapho.** I have seldom seen a sweeter face. Be all ferrymen of that fairness?

**Trach.** No, Madam, this is he that Venus determined among men to make the fairest.

**Sapho.** Seeing I am only come forth to take the air, I will cross the ferry, and so the fields, then going in through the park. I think the walk will be pleasant.

**Trach.** You will much delight in the flattering green, which now beginneth to be in his glory.

**Sapho.** Sir boy, will ye undertake to carry us over the water? – Are you dumb, can you not speak?

**Phao.** Madam, I crave pardon. I am spurbblind, I could scarce see.

**Sapho.** It is pity in so good a face there should be an evil eye.

**Scene Setting:** Phao is to be understood to have returned from Sybilla's cave to his outpost.

**Entering Characters:** along with *Queen Sapho*, we regreet to the stage the courtier *Trachinus* with his page *Criticus*, and *Pandion* the scholar with his servant *Molus*.

= wait a moment. = grand or ostentatious company.<sup>1,2</sup>  
= Phao is struck by Sapho's beauty, or perhaps he simply picks her out as the head of the party.

= good-looking.

= excellent, impressive.<sup>2</sup>

15-16: *Be all...fairness* = Bevington suggests the presence of an inside joke here, as the audience would recognize the ironic reference to the unattractive boatmen who ride the Thames.

= ie. take crossing on the ferry.  
= enclosed royal hunting preserve.<sup>1</sup>

= pleasant vegetation.<sup>2</sup>  
= ie. to bloom; *his* = its.

= condescending term of address.

28-29: after Sapho asks her question, there is a pause as she vainly waits for the stunned Phao to reply.

31-32: Phao claims to have been struck blind, or nearly so, upon viewing Her Majesty; *spurbblind* is an alternate form of the term *purblind*, which in the 16th century meant "short-sighted" or "nearly blind"; one may ask how Phao's having poor vision affects his hearing.

34-35: *there should...evil eye* = ie. that Phao should possess a bewitching eye (*evil eye*);<sup>9</sup> Sapho means that she herself has been charmed by Phao.<sup>6</sup>

38 **Phao.** I would in my face there were never an eye.

40 **Sapho.** Thou canst never be rich in a trade of life of  
all the basest.

42 **Phao.** Yet content, Madam, which is a kind of life of  
all the best.

44 **Sapho.** Wilt thou forsake the ferry, and follow the  
46 court as a page?

48 **Phao.** As it pleaseth Fortune, Madam, to whom I am  
a prentice.

50 **Sapho.** Come, let us go.

52 **Trach.** Will you go, Pandion?

54 **Pand.** Yea.

56 [Exeunt.]

## ACT II, SCENE III.

*A Street.*

*Enter Molus and Criticus, meeting.*

1 **Molus.** Criticus comes in good time; I shall not be  
2 alone. – What news, Criticus?

4 **Crit.** I taught you that lesson, to ask what news, and  
this is the news: tomorrow there shall be a desperate  
6 fray between two, made at all weapons, from the  
brown bill to the bodkin.

8

10 **Molus.** Now thou talkest of frays, I pray thee, what is  
that whereof they talk so commonly in court – valour,  
the stab, the pistol – for the which every man that  
12 dareth is so much honoured?

38: Phao wishes he had never seen Sapho: he appears to  
have just fallen in love.  
**would** = wish.

40-41: **in a trade...basest** = ie. working in the meanest of  
all professions.

= usually emended to **thy**.

49-50: ie. Phao goes along with whatever fate has in store  
for him.

**a prentice** = ie. an apprentice.

**Entering Characters:** once again we meet **Molus** (the  
servant of **Pandion** the scholar) and **Criticus** (the servant of  
the courtier **Trachinus**). Molus is trying to learn the ropes of  
serving as a page in the queen's court.

= see Act I.iii.42-44.

5-7: **tomorrow...bodkin** = Criticus announces the upcoming  
duel between two members of the court.

= ie. with any and all weapons permitted, ie. a no-holds-  
barred contest.

7: **brown bill** = an English pole-weapon, traditionally  
employed by watchmen, and possessing a combination  
axe-head and spear-point at one end.<sup>1</sup>

**bodkin** = sharp-pointed dagger.<sup>1</sup>

**9-12 (below):** Molus asks Criticus to explain the meaning  
of some of the lingo he has overheard in court. He has been  
hearing people praise the courage of those who challenge  
others to duels.

= ie. now that. = ie. "please tell me".

= of which.

= challenges (another).

14	<b>Crit.</b> Oh Molus, beware of <u>valour</u> ! He that can look <u>big</u> , and <u>wear his dagger pommel lower than the point</u> ;	= martial courage. <sup>1</sup> 15: <b>big</b> = fierce. <sup>1</sup> <b>wear...point</b> = a threatening way of wearing one's <b>dagger</b> , with the <b>point</b> directed upward; the <b>pommel</b> is a knob at the end of the handle, ie. the opposite end of the dagger's point. <sup>1,3</sup>
16	<u>that lieth at a good ward</u> , and can hit a button with a  thrust; and will into <u>the field</u> man to man for a bout or	16: <b>that lieth...ward</b> = who is able to maintain a skillful defensive position. 16-17: <b>can hit...thrust</b> = is a skilled fencer who can accurately strike even a very small target.
18	two: he, Molus, is a <u>shrewd</u> fellow and shall be well- followed.	17-18: <b>into the...two</b> = briefly, willingly engage in a duel. <b>the field</b> = a dueling ground. <b>a bout or two</b> = a round or two; apparently ironic allusion to a vicious fight; this expression appears to have been invented by Lyly here, and was adopted by later writers.
20	<b>Molus.</b> What is the end?	18: <b>shrewd</b> = wily, artful, cunning. <sup>1,2</sup> 18-19: <b>well-followed</b> = attended by a large number of admirers.
22	<b>Crit.</b> Danger or death.	21: "what is the purpose or point of all of this?"
24	<b>Molus.</b> If it be but death that bringeth all this	
26	<u>commendation</u> , I <u>account</u> him as valiant that is killed with a <u>surfeit</u> , as with a sword.	= credit or general approval. <sup>1</sup> = judge. = overeating or drinking.
28	<b>Crit.</b> How so?	
30	<b>Molus.</b> If I <u>venture</u> upon a full stomach to eat a rasher	31: <b>venture</b> = dare. 31-32: <b>rasher on the coals</b> = grilled strip of bacon. <sup>1</sup> = hunk of cross-cut grilled meat. <sup>1,9</sup> = full cup of liquor. = bring on. = ie. dueling ground, location of combat.
32	on the coals, a <u>carbonado</u> , drink a <u>carouse</u> , swallow all	
34	things that may <u>procure</u> sickness or death, am not I as valiant to die so in a house, as the other in a <u>field</u> ?	35: <b>epicures</b> = gourmets, so-called from the philosophy of the Greek Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), who argued that pleasure is the only worthwhile pursuit in life. <sup>1</sup> We may note that the other half of his belief-system, that pleasure should be sought with moderation, is usually forgotten. <b>desperate</b> = reckless (with their lives). <sup>1</sup>
	Methinks that <u>epicures</u> are as <u>desperate</u> as soldiers,	
36	and cooks provide as good weapons as <u>cutlers</u> .	= makers of swords.
38	<b>Crit.</b> Oh valiant knight!	
40	<b>Molus.</b> I will die for it: what greater valour?	
42	<b>Crit.</b> Scholars fight, who rather seek to choke their stomachs, than see their blood.	42-43: Criticus suggests that academics are cowardly. <b>choke their stomachs</b> = ie. overeat.
44	<b>Molus.</b> I will <u>stand upon</u> this point: if it be valour to	= maintain.
46	dare die, he is valiant howsoever he dieth.	

48	<b>Crit.</b> Well, <u>of this hereafter</u> : but here cometh Calypho, <u>we will have some sport</u> .	= ie. "we will speak more of this later." = Criticus plans to use further sophistry to toy with Calypho.
50		
	<i>Enter Calypho.</i>	<b>Entering Character:</b> <i>Calypho</i> is a <b>Cyclops</b> , one of the well-known mythological one-eyed monsters who served as workmen in the forge of Vulcan, the blacksmith god.
52		<b>53-60 (below):</b> a bit of a smart-aleck, Calypho remarks on the disadvantages Vulcan has incurred in marrying Venus. Calypho has been sent by Vulcan to find Venus.
	<b>Caly.</b> My mistress, I think, <u>hath got a gadfly</u> : never at	53-54: <b>My mistress...abroad</b> = Venus is difficult to track down, as she is always on the go. <b>hath got a gadfly</b> = metaphorically, is possessed with a wanderlust; the allusion is to the myth of <b>Io</b> , an unfortunate target of the lusty <b>Jupiter's</b> eye. <b>Juno</b> , the jealous wife of the king of the gods, turned Io into a cow, then assigned a <b>gadfly</b> (a type of parasitic fly) <sup>1</sup> to torment her, driving Io to wander all over Europe and Asia. <sup>10</sup> <b>abroad</b> (line 54) = out and about.
54	home, and yet none can tell where abroad. <u>My master</u>	= ie. Vulcan.
	<u>was a wise man</u> when he <u>matched with</u> such a woman.	= Calypho is sarcastic. = married.
56	When she comes in, we must put out the fire, because	
	of the smoke; hang up our hammers, because of the	= cater to her every need.
58	noise; and do no work, but <u>watch what she wanteth</u> . She is fair, but <u>by my troth</u> I <u>doubt of her honesty</u> . I	59: <b>by my troth</b> = truly, "I swear". <b>doubt of her honesty</b> = "suspect her chastity", ie. Calypho believes Venus regularly cheats on Vulcan.
60	must seek her, <u>that I fear Mars hath found</u> .	= another reference to Mars' famous affair with Venus.
62	<b>Crit.</b> Whom dost thou seek?	
64	<b>Caly.</b> I have found those I seek not.	
66	<b>Molus.</b> I hope you have found those which are <u>honest</u> .	= Molus uses <b>honest</b> in the modern sense, but Calypho's response takes <b>honest</b> in its other common meaning of "chaste".
68	<b>Caly.</b> It may be, but <u>I seek no such</u> .	= ie. "the one I am seeking (ie. Venus) is not chaste."
70	<b>Molus.</b> Criticus, you shall see me by learning to prove Calypho to be the devil.	70-71: Molus will use a scholar's sophistry to prove an obviously absurd proposition.
72		
	<b>Crit.</b> Let us see; but I pray thee, prove it better than	
74	thou didst thyself to be valiant.	
76	<b>Molus.</b> Calypho, I will prove thee to be the devil.	
78	<b>Caly.</b> Then will I swear thee to be a god.	
80	<b>Molus.</b> The devil is black.	80: Medieval artwork often depicted the devil as black, and Renaissance literature often described the devil as black.
82	<b>Caly.</b> What care I?	
84	<b>Molus.</b> Thou art <u>black</u> .	= swarthy.
86	<b>Caly.</b> What care you?	86: ie. "so what?"

88	<b>Molus.</b> Therefore thou art the devil.	
90	<b>Caly.</b> I deny that.	
92	<b>Molus.</b> It is the <u>conclusion</u> , thou must not deny it.	= a term from logic.
94	<b>Caly.</b> In spite of all conclusions, I will deny it.	
96	<b>Crit.</b> Molus, the smith holds you hard.	96: ie. Calypho (himself a blacksmith) has stopped Molus in his tracks.
98	<b>Molus.</b> Thou seest he hath no <u>reason</u> .	= ie. ability to engage in exercises of logic.
100	<b>Crit.</b> Try him again.	
102	<b>Molus.</b> I will reason with thee now <u>from a place</u> .	102: Molus will employ a new tautology to prove Calypho is a demon. <i>from a place</i> = Bond tells us that this is an expression from logic, meaning that the debater will prove an argument using a familiar proverb or Biblical passage as a starting point.
104	<b>Caly.</b> I mean to answer you <u>in no other place</u> .	= ie. "right here."
106	<b>Molus.</b> Like master, like <u>man</u> .	106: proverbial: a servant ( <i>man</i> ) will resemble his master.
108	<b>Caly.</b> It may be.	
110	<b>Molus.</b> But thy master hath horns.	110: Molus means that Vulcan is a cuckold: the allusion is to the familiar horns that were said to grow on a man's forehead when his wife cheats on him.
112	<b>Caly.</b> And so mayst thou.	112: ie. Molus too may be cuckolded one day. <sup>6</sup>
114	<b>Molus.</b> Therefore, thou hast horns, and <u>ergo</u> a devil.	= "therefore (you are)". The Latin word <i>ergo</i> is another term from logic.
116	<b>Caly.</b> Be they all devils <u>have</u> horns?	= ie. who have.
118	<b>Molus.</b> All men that have horns are.	
120	<b>Caly.</b> Then are there <u>mo</u> devils on earth than in hell.	120: a seeming joke about the ubiquity of cuckolded men. <i>mo</i> = more, a common variant.
122	<b>Molus.</b> But what dost thou answer?	
124	<b>Caly.</b> I deny that.	
126	<b>Molus.</b> What?	
128	<b>Caly.</b> Whatsoever it is, that shall prove me a devil.	
130	But hearest thou, scholar, I am a plain fellow, and can <u>fashion</u> nothing but with the hammer. What wilt thou say, if I prove thee <u>a</u> smith?	= create, make. = ie. to be a.
132	<b>Molus.</b> Then will I say thou art a scholar.	
134	<b>Crit.</b> Prove it, Calypho, and I will give thee a good <u>colaphum</u> .	= Latin for "blow" or "buffet", especially on the cheek; an

138 **Caly.** I will prove it or else –

140 **Crit.** Or else what?

142 **Caly.** Or else I will not prove it. Thou art a smith:  
144 therefore, thou art a smith. The conclusion, you say,  
must not be denied: and therefore it is true, thou art a  
smith.

146 **Molus.** Aye, but I deny your antecedent.

148 **Caly.** Aye, but you shall not. – Have I not touched  
150 him, Criticus?

152 **Crit.** You have both done learnedly: for as sure as he  
is a smith, thou art a devil.

154 **Caly.** And then he a devil, because a smith: for that it  
156 was his reason to make me a devil, being a smith.

158 **Molus.** There is no reasoning with these mechanical  
dolts, whose wits are in their hands, not in their heads.

160 **Crit.** Be not choleric: you are wise. But let us take up  
162 this matter with a song.

164 **Caly.** I am content, my voice is as good as my reason.

166 **Molus.** Then shall we have sweet music. But come, I  
will not break off.

168 [Song.]

170 **Crit.** Merry knaves are we three-a,

172 **Molus.** When our songs do agree-a.

174 **Caly.** Oh now I well see-a  
176 What anon we shall be-a.

178 **Crit.** If we ply thus our singing,

180 **Molus.** Pots then must be flinging;

182 **Caly.** If the drink be but stinging,

184 **Molus.** I shall forget the rules of grammar,

obvious pun on Calypho's name. Daniel notes that, based on his response, the Cyclops clearly does not recognize this foreign word.

147: Molus means that, if Calypho's premise (*antecedent*, another term from logic) is false, then his conclusion is not necessarily true.<sup>6</sup>

149-150: *touched him* = figuratively wounded Molus, ie. "won the round".<sup>2</sup>

155-6: Calypho's unsophisticated logic is as follows:

- (1) "Molus proved that I am a devil, because I am a blacksmith;
- (2) I proved Molus is a blacksmith; therefore
- (3) Molus is a devil."

= vulgar or coarse,<sup>1</sup> an adjective used to malign those who are skilled in manual labour.

= angry.

= logic.

= begin (the song).<sup>1</sup>

**171-191 (below):** the lads sing a drinking song.

= it was common in this era for poets to add an extra syllable to a word by tagging the suffix *-a* to its end.

= soon.

= burning.<sup>1</sup>

184: if Molus gets drunk enough, he will forget those things a scholar should know well.

186 *Caly. And I the pit-a-pat of my hammer.*

188 *All. To the tap-house then let's gang and roar.*  
*Call hard, 'tis rare to vamp a score.*

190 *Draw dry the tub, be it old or new,*  
192 *And part not till the ground look blue.*

[Exeunt.]

**ACT II, SCENE IV.**

*Before Sybilla's Cave.*

*Enter Phao.*

1 ***Phao.** What unacquainted thoughts are these, Phao,*  
2 *far unfit for thy thoughts: unmeet for thy birth, thy*  
3 *fortune, thy years, for Phao! Unhappy, canst thou not*  
4 *be content to behold the sun, but thou must covet to*  
*build thy nest in the sun? Doth Sapho bewitch thee,*

6 *whom all the ladies in Sicily could not woo? Yea, poor*  
7 *Phao, the greatness of thy mind is far above the beauty*  
8 *of thy face, and the hardness of thy fortune beyond the*  
9 *bitterness of thy words. Die, Phao, Phao, die: for there*  
10 *is no hope if thou be wise; nor safety, if thou be*

186: "and I shall forget the skills of a blacksmith."  
*pit-a-pat* = while this bit of onomatopoeia is mostly applied today to describe the sound made by falling rain or one's heart or feet, we find that in the early 16th and 17th centuries, *pit-a-pat* was also used to describe the popping of muskets, the bestowing of numerous kisses, and even, in one bizarre citation, "*Diana's buttocks went so fast pit-a-pat when she was driven to Heaven.*"

= ale-house, tavern. = go. = drunkenly revel.

189: *Call hard* = demand (drinks).  
*rare* = fine.  
*vamp a score* = add drinks to the tavern bill.<sup>3</sup>  
*score* = reference to the marks or tallies drawn in chalk by a tapster to keep track of the liquor consumed by those patrons who were receiving their booze on credit.

= ie. basically, drink the keg of ale dry.  
= expression used in the 16th and 17th centuries to describe an extreme state of drunkenness.

**Entering Character:** our ferryman *Phao* begins the scene with a lengthy soliloquy of 411 words. As with many of the longer monologues in this play, we have broken up this speech into separate paragraphs to facilitate reading.

**1-11 (below):** having fallen desperately in love with Sapho, Phao recognizes the impossibility of his situation: a mere labourer has no business courting a queen!

= ie. thoughts Phao has never entertained before.<sup>5</sup>  
= inappropriate for one who was born into a lower class.  
= ill-fated and miserable.<sup>1</sup>  
= metaphorically Sapho. = desire.

5: *build thy nest in the sun* = early version of the modern expression, "build castles in the air": to envision an unrealistic or unattainable goal.  
*Doth Sapho...thee* = whenever Elizabethan characters fall in love with those who are unsuited for them, they often accuse the targets of their love of *bewitching* them.

= ie. because Phao has, until this moment, scorned to get involved with a woman.  
= pride<sup>1</sup> or hubris.<sup>6</sup>  
= cruelty.

9: *Die, Phao, Phao, die* = an example of a favourite figure of speech of Lyly's, known as *antimetabole*, in which a

	fortunate.	phrase is repeated in reverse order. <sup>1</sup>
12	Ah, Phao, the more thou seekest to suppress those <u>mounting affections</u> , they soar the <u>loftier</u> , and the	9-11: <b>for there...fortunate</b> = on the one hand, if Phao is wise, he will not pursue Sapho, but this will leave him unfulfilled in love; on the other hand, if he is lucky and wins Sapho, he will find himself in a dangerous relationship indeed!
14	more thou <u>wrastlest</u> with them, the stronger they <u>wax</u> ; not unlike unto a ball, which, the harder it is	= rising or growing passions. = higher.
16	thrown against the earth, the higher it <u>boundeth</u> into the air; or our Sicilian stone, which groweth hardest by	= ie. wrestlest, a very common alternate form.
18	hammering.	= grow.
20	Oh divine love! and therefore divine, because love, <u>whose deity no conceit can compass</u> , and	= bounces.
	therefore <u>no authority can constrain</u> ; as miraculous	17-18: <b>our Sicilian...hammering</b> = another invention of our author's.
22	in working <u>as</u> mighty, and no more to be suppressed	= whose god (ie. Cupid) no one has the imagination to fully comprehend ( <b>compass</b> ). <sup>1</sup>
24	than comprehended. – How now, Phao, <u>whither</u> art thou carried, committing idolatry with that god, whom thou hast cause to blaspheme?	= no one has the power to prevent Cupid from shooting his arrows at his victims: a metaphor for the inability of even the most rational individuals to avoid falling in love.
26	Oh Sapho! fair Sapho! – <u>peace</u> , miserable wretch, <u>enjoy thy care in covert</u> , <u>wear willow in thy hat</u> ,	= ie. as he is.
28	and <u>bays in thy heart</u> . Lead a lamb in thy hand,	23-25: <b>whither...blaspheme</b> = Phao recognizes that he has lost control of his emotions, berating himself for venerating the god he should be cursing! <b>whither</b> = to where.
30	and a sparrow in the palm. Gold boileth best when it bubbleth least; water runneth smoothest, where	<b>26-35 (below)</b> : Phao hopes to be able to manage his growing attraction for Sapho by deemphasizing or ignoring it.
32	it is deepest. Let thy love hang at thy heart's bottom, not at the <u>tongue's brim</u> . Things untold are undone;	= "calm down"; Phao addresses himself.
34	there can be no greater comfort than to know much, nor any less labour, than to say nothing. –	27: <b>enjoy thy care in covert</b> = love Sapho in secret. <b>wear willow in thy hat</b> = the <b>willow</b> was a symbol of unrequited love.
		28: <b>bays in thy heart</b> = Lyly employs the leaves of the bay tree ( <b>bays</b> ) as another symbol of unattained love, and also possibly poetry. <sup>3,6</sup> The allusion is to the story of the maiden <b>Daphne</b> , who, pursued by the amorous god <b>Apollo</b> , prayed for escape from above; having heard her pleas, the gods turned her into a bay tree. Lyly frequently depicts Apollo as mourning for his lost love.
		28-29: <b>Lead a lamb...head</b> = the lamb is the symbol of gentleness, the fox of cunning. <sup>1,6</sup>
		29-30: <b>a dove...palm</b> = the faithful and sincere love represented by the <b>dove</b> may be exhibited openly, but the lecherous yearnings symbolized by the <b>sparrow</b> should be concealed (Bevington, p. 241). <sup>6</sup>
		30-33: <b>Gold...brim</b> = Phao employs two additional analogies to convince himself that, in order to subdue the love raging in his breast, he must act and appear outwardly collected, not revealing his tumultuous emotions! <b>tongue's brim</b> = tip of the tongue. <sup>1</sup>
		35: is there anything easier to do than to say nothing?

36	But ah, thy beauty, Sapho, thy beauty! – Beginnest	
38	thou to blab? – Aye, blab it, Phao, as long as thou <u>blabbest her beauty</u> . Bees that die with honey are	38: <b>blabbest her beauty</b> = speak copiously about Sapho's beauty.
		38-42: <b>Bees...benefits</b> = Phao's animal analogies support his point that those who die with compliments on their lips will be rewarded with honour.
40	buried with harmony; swans that end their lives with songs are covered when they are dead with flowers;	39-40: <b>swans...flowers</b> = allusion to the very old belief that swans sing before they die.
42	and they that <u>till</u> their <u>latter</u> gasp <u>commend</u> beauty, shall be ever honoured with benefits.	= until. = last. = extol.
44	In these extremities, I will go to none other oracle than Sybilla, whose old years have not been idle in <u>these young attempts</u> , and whose sound advice may mitigate (though the heavens cannot remove) my miseries. Oh Sapho! sweet Sapho! Sapho! – Sybilla?	= "advising the young on their efforts to find love". <sup>6</sup>
48	[ <i>Sybilla appears in the mouth of the cave.</i> ]	
50	<b>Syb.</b> Who is there?	
52	<b>Phao.</b> One not worthy <u>to be one</u> .	= ie. to live. <sup>6</sup>
54	<b>Syb.</b> Fair Phao?	
56	<b>Phao.</b> Unfortunate Phao!	
58	<b>Syb.</b> Come in.	
60	<b>Phao.</b> So I will; and <u>quite thy tale of Phoebus</u> with	= Phao will repay ( <b>quite</b> ) Sybilla's sad story of Apollo ( <b>Phoebus</b> ) with his own tale of woe.
62	<u>one whose brightness darkeneth Phoebus</u> . I love	= ie. a story about Sapho, whose beauty Phao describes as so brilliant that it actually outshines the sun; <b>Phoebus</b> , an alternate name for the sun-god Apollo, is equated with the sun itself here.
64	Sapho, Sybilla; Sapho, ah Sapho, Sybilla!	
66	<b>Syb.</b> A short tale, Phao, and a <u>sorrowful</u> ; it asketh pity rather than counsel.	= ie. a lamentable one.
68	<b>Phao.</b> So it is, Sybilla: yet <u>in those firm years</u> , methinketh there should harbour such experience as may <u>defer</u> , though not take away, my destiny.	68-70: Phao hopes that Sybilla, who with her great age has extensive experience helping those in similar trouble, can assist Phao to at least put off ( <b>defer</b> ) whatever trouble fate has in store for him, if not change his destiny completely.
70		<b>in those firm years</b> = Bevington suggests, "possessing the stability and wisdom of age" (p. 243). <sup>6</sup>
72	<b>Syb.</b> It is hard to cure that by words which cannot be eased by <u>herbs</u> ; and yet, if thou wilt take advice, be attentive.	= ie. folk remedies made from herbs.
74		
76	<b>Phao.</b> I have brought mine ears <u>of purpose</u> , and will hang at your mouth till you have finished your discourse.	= deliberately, ie. in order to hear out Sybilla.
78		

80 **Syb.** Love, fair child, is to be governed by art, as thy  
 82 boat by an oar; for fancy, though it cometh by hazard,  
 84 is ruled by wisdom. If my precepts may persuade (and  
 I pray thee, let them persuade), I would wish thee first  
 to be diligent, for that women desire nothing more  
 than to have their servants officious. Be always in  
 86 sight, but never slothful. Flatter, – I mean lie: little  
 things catch light minds, and fancy is a worm that  
 feedeth first upon fennel. Imagine with thyself all are  
 88 to be won: otherwise mine advice were as unnecessary  
 as thy labour. It is impossible for the brittle metal of  
 90 women to withstand the flattering attempts of men;  
 92 only this, let them be asked: their sex requireth no less,  
 their modesties are to be allowed so much.  
 94 Be prodigal in praises and promises: beauty must  
 have a trumpet, and pride a gift. Peacocks never spread  
 96 their feathers but when they are flattered, and gods  
 are seldom pleased if they be not bribed. There is none

**79-154 (below):** in a pair of rambling – and lengthy – speeches, Sybilla, perhaps distracted by the memory of her own pathetic story, dispenses a seemingly interminable string of pithy, sometimes trite, and occasionally even contradictory, pieces of advice to her lovelorn listener. The second speech, at 502 words, is especially numbing.

Quite a large number of Sybilla's precepts are borrowed from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (*The Art of Love*); see Bevington, pp. 243-9, for an inventory of the adopted maxims.<sup>6</sup>

= beautiful. = must be managed skillfully.  
 = love. = by chance.<sup>1</sup>  
 = instructions.<sup>1</sup>  
 = implore.  
 = watchful, assiduous. = because.  
 = their lovers (*servants*) be zealously attentive.

86: *slothful* = negligent in showering attention.

86-87: *little...minds* = expression used to suggest that foolish people are easily amused by childish things:<sup>1</sup> here, referring to compliments, which, like traps, easily *catch* a woman's attention, which in turn then blossoms into attraction.

*light* (line 87) = frivolous.<sup>1</sup>

87-88: *fancy...fennel* = metaphorically, love (*fancy*) grows when one is flattered. Lyly seems to have combined two allusions here:

(1) Pliny (20.95) states that the snake (*worm*) will eat *fennel* to sharpen its eyesight, and

(2) Lyly uses *fennel* as a metaphor for flattery. The OED tells us this trope originated with our author, but the idea may have been suggested to Lyly in a 1582 work, in which was written, "*Yet some will say, that Fennill is to flatter*"). The metaphor was adopted by later writers as well.

88-89: *Imagine...to be won* = Sybilla anticipates a modern technique for success, recommending that Phao envision how all women are available for him to win.

= ie. frail constitution or make-up; *metal* = mettle.

92-93: *only this...much* = having said all that, Phao should be careful not to force himself onto his target: a woman likes to think that she is the one choosing her mate.

94: *prodigal* = lavish.

94-95: *beauty must have a trumpet* = a woman needs to have her loveliness loudly extolled! an exceptional metaphor.

= except.

97: *if they be not bribed* = ie. if they are not regularly propitiated with sacrifices and gifts.

97-98: *none so foul* = "no woman so ugly".

98	so foul that thinketh not herself fair. In commending,	98-99: <i>In commending...labour</i> = time spent praising a woman is never wasted! = ie. by all women. <sup>6</sup>
100	thou canst lose no labour, for, <u>of everyone</u> , thou shalt	= from.
102	be believed. – Oh, simple women! that are brought rather to believe what their ears hear <u>of</u> flattering men,	= ie. mirrors that show women what they really look like!
104	than what their eyes see in <u>true glasses</u> !	
106	<b>Phao.</b> You <u>digress</u> , only to make me believe that women do so <u>lightly</u> believe.	104-5: Phao is incredulous to think that women are so shallow. <i>You digress</i> = Phao points out that with her last three lines, Sybilla seems to have deviated from the true subject at hand: to help Phao! <i>lightly</i> = easily.
108	<b>Syb.</b> Then to the purpose. Choose such times to break	107-8: <i>Choose...pleasant</i> = Phao should make sure to commence wooing Sapho only when she is in a good or receptive mood!
110	thy suit, as thy lady is pleasant. The <u>wooden horse</u>	108-9: <i>The wooden...quaffing</i> = ie. one must choose one's timing carefully. The <b>Trojan War</b> ended when the Greeks tricked the defenders of Troy into admitting the famous giant <b>wooden horse</b> , which was filled with Greek soldiers primed to attack, into the city; thinking the war was over, the Trojans celebrated, drinking themselves city-wide into unconsciousness; it was at this point that the wily Greeks exited the horse, and slaughtered the city's population.
112	entered Troy when the soldiers were quaffing; and	
114	<u>Penelope</u> , forsooth, whom fables make so coy, among the pots <u>wrong</u> her wooers by the <u>fists</u> when she loured on their faces.	110-2: <i>Penelope...faces</i> = the wife of <b>Ulysses</b> (whose trip home from the <b>Trojan War</b> was delayed by a full decade), <b>Penelope</b> was forced to fend off a hundred suitors who assumed her husband must be dead. Sybilla, a bit creatively, suggests that Penelope, who in myth was portrayed as being modest, actually encouraged her pursuers by tightly grasping their hands ( <i>fists</i> ), even as she frowned on them, once she had gotten a bit tipsy (see Bevington, p. 245). <sup>6</sup> <i>wrong</i> = alternate form of <i>wrung</i> , largely obsolete by the late 16th century, but used by Lyly here and in <i>Euphues</i> .
116	<u>Grapes are mind-glasses</u> . Venus worketh in <u>Bacchus'</u> <u>press</u> , and bloweth <u>fire</u> upon his liquor. When thou	113: <i>Grapes are mind-glasses</i> = a seeming recommendation to get Sapho drunk: when one is drunk, one speaks what is truly on one's mind; a pedestrian version of the famous Latin maxim, <i>in vino veritas</i> (in wine there is truth). We note that Lyly had also used this same conceit in <i>Euphues</i> , in which he wrote, "Wine is the glass of the mind." <i>glasses</i> = mirrors. 113-4: <i>Venus...liquor</i> = metaphorically supporting the previous point, Sybilla notes that love can be promoted through drink. The literal meaning here is that <b>Venus</b> , as the goddess of love, eagerly helps the god of wine <b>Bacchus</b> to work his <b>wine-press</b> , infusing it with passion ( <i>fire</i> ).
118	talkest with her, let thy speech be pleasant, but not incredible. Choose such words as may (as many may)	115-6: <i>but not incredible</i> = but do not say anything she won't believe.
	<u>melt her mind</u> . Honey <u>rankleth</u> when it is eaten for pleasure, and fair words wound when they are heard	117: <i>melt her mind</i> = ie. break her resistance down. 117-9: <i>Honey...for love</i> = a warning for Phao not to impose himself on Sapho too intemperately. Lyly had written in <i>Euphues</i> that "honey taken excessively cloyeth the stomach, though it be honey", ie. it makes one sick if too

120 for love. Write, and persist in writing: they read more  
than is written to them, and write less than they think.

122 In conceit study to be pleasant; in attire brave, but  
not too curious. When she smileth, laugh outright; if

124 rise, stand up; if sit, lie down. Lose all thy time to  
keep time with her.

126 Can you sing? shew your cunning. Can you dance?  
use your legs. Can you play upon any instrument?  
128 practice your fingers to please her fancy; seek out  
qualities.

130 If she seem at the first cruel, be not discouraged. I  
tell thee a strange thing: women strive because they  
would be overcome. "Force" they call it, but such a  
132 welcome force they account it, that continually they  
study to be enforced.

134 To fair words join sweet kisses, which if they gently  
receive – I say no more, they will gently receive.

136 But be not pinned always on her sleeves: strangers  
have green rushes, when daily guests are not

138 worth a rush. Look pale, and learn to be lean, that

140 whoso seeth thee may say, "the gentleman is in love."  
Use no sorcery to hasten thy success: wit is a witch.

142 Ulysses was not fair, but wise; not cunning in charms  
but sweet in speech; whose filed tongue made those  
enamoured that sought to have him enchanted. Be not

much is eaten, even though it is delicious.

**rankleth** = poisons or inflicts pain.<sup>1</sup>

119-120: **they read...to them** = women naturally read more  
into a lover's letter than what is actually written.  
= on the other hand, women modestly resist putting their  
true feelings into written words.

121: **In conceit...pleasant** = "strive to be delightful in how  
you express yourself."<sup>1</sup>

121-2: **in attire...curious** = dress well (**brave**), but  
not too fastidiously (**curious**).

123: **rise** = ie. she rises.

123-4: **Lose all...with her** = a musical metaphor: "be  
diligent to match the movements of your lady."

= show your ability.

127-8: **seek out qualities** = find things to do that will enter-  
tain and impress her; **qualities** = skills.

130-3: **women strive...enforced** = women act to fight off  
their suitors because they want them to be aggressive.

= endeavor to be overcome.<sup>1</sup>

= tenderly.<sup>1</sup>

= Sybilla does not feel it necessary to explain what warmly-  
received kisses will lead to!

136-8: **But be not...rush** = Sybilla seemingly contradicts  
herself: "do not be too familiar to her, so as to jade her,  
because someone new may come along and grab her  
attention."

**be not pinned...sleeves** = the OED cites this line to mean,  
"do not become too reliant or smitten with her."

The lines refer to the custom of strewing fresh, or **green**,  
**rushes**, which have a pleasant and sweet odour, onto one's  
floors when important or special guests are expected; hence,  
the idea is that new arrivals get more attention.

137-8: **not worth a rush** = very common expression, used  
to describe anything of little or no value.

= Phao should adopt the traditional physical manifestations  
of one desperately in love: a countenance pale from anxiety  
over whether one's feelings are reciprocated, leading to an  
inability to eat.

140: "do not take shortcuts: your cleverness and intelligence  
will woo her successfully in due time."

141-3: **Ulysses...enchanted** = though not an attractive man,  
**Ulysses** was a skilled orator, which led to women falling for  
him. The allusion is to the sorceress **Circe**, who famously  
turned Ulysses' companions into pigs after he landed on her  
island during his trip home from Troy. Ulysses possessed a  
special herb which prevented Circe from harming him  
(hence, **that sought to have him enchanted**). Circe fell in

		love with her guest, and induced him to remain with her for a full year before he re-embarked for home. <i>filed tongue</i> = metaphor for one whose speech is eloquent. <sup>1</sup>
144	<u>coy</u> : <u>bear</u> , <u>sooth</u> , swear, die to please thy lady.	144: <i>coy</i> = shy, hard-to-get. <i>bear</i> = perhaps, "bring her gifts", or "put up with her", e.g., her mood swings, etc. <i>sooth</i> = "humour her". <sup>1</sup>
146	These are rules for poor lovers; to others I am no mistress. He hath wit enough, that can give enough.	145-8: men with money do not need Sybilla's advice on how to win women with words or manners, because they can easily obtain lovers through the generous ( <i>liberal</i> ) bestowal of gifts.
148	Dumb men are eloquent, if they be <u>liberal</u> . Believe me, great gifts are little gods.	
	When thy mistress doth <u>bend her brow</u> , do not thou	149-150: <i>When thy...fist</i> = a wooer must not respond with threats or violence when his beloved is angry (she <i>bends her brow</i> ). 150: <i>bend thy fist</i> = expression used to describe the hand preparing to strike.
150	bend thy fist. Cammocks must be bowed with <u>sleight</u> ,	150-3: <i>Cammocks...swords</i> = using sundry analogies, Sybilla makes the point that women must be managed and won through craft, not force. 150-1: <i>Cammocks...strength</i> = the tree known as the <i>cammock</i> naturally grows crooked, but its twisted shape can be encouraged and intensified through careful tending, so that it may serve as a staff or crook. <sup>1,3,9</sup> <i>sleight</i> = cunning, artifice.
152	not strength; water to be <u>trained</u> with pipes, not stopped with <u>sluices</u> ; fire to be quenched with dust, not with swords.	= conducted, ie. controlled. = dams.
154	If thou have a rival, be patient: art must wind him	154-6: <i>If thou...constancy</i> = one must be patient if a <i>rival</i> appears on the scene. 154-5: <i>art must wind him out</i> = the wooer must use cunning to extricate the rival from the scene. The expression <i>to wind one (or oneself) out</i> of a situation was a common one.
156	out, not malice; time, not <u>might</u> ; her change, and thy constancy. Whatsoever she wareth, swear it	155: <i>might</i> = force. 155-6: <i>her change, and thy constancy</i> = with patience, your beloved's favour will return to you, especially when combined with your faithfulness to her.
158	becomes her. In thy love be secret. Venus' coffers, though they be hollow, never sound, and when they seem emptiest, they are fullest.	157-9: <i>Venus'...fullest</i> = a difficult passage, adapted from Ovid's <i>Ars Amatoria</i> , <sup>6</sup> in which the Roman advised that love-making should be done in secret: " <i>If the mysteries of Venus are not enclosed in chests, and the hollow cymbals do not resound with frantic blows; although among ourselves they are celebrated by universal custom, yet it is in such a manner that among us they demand concealment.</i> " <sup>16</sup> We may note that in succeeding works, Elizabethan writers such as Robert Greene, and even Lyly himself, employed the conceit that "Venus' coffers must be full" to mean that a wooer must be willing to spend money if he wants to win his girl.
160	Old fool that I am! to do thee good, I begin to <u>dote</u> ,	= talk stupidly or foolishly. <sup>1</sup>

162	and <u>counsel that which I would have concealed</u> . Thus, Phao, have I given thee certain <u>regards, no rules</u> , only	= ie. Sybilla has given away women's secrets. <sup>6</sup> = considerations, ie. guidelines, not hard and fast rules.
164	to set thee in the way, not to bring thee home.	163: metaphorically, to put Phao on the path which may help him to win Sapho, but it is up to Phao to implement these precepts.
166	<b>Phao.</b> Ah, Sybilla, I pray go on, that I may glut myself in this <u>science</u> .	= knowledge. <sup>6</sup>
168	<b>Syb.</b> Thou shalt not <u>surfeit</u> , Phao, whilst I <u>diet</u> thee.	168: <b>surfeit</b> = overeat (on her wisdom), continuing Phao's metaphor with <b>glut</b> . <b>diet</b> = feed.
170	Flies that die on the honeysuckle become poison to bees. A <u>little</u> in love is a great deal.	= ie. small bit of advice.
172	<b>Phao.</b> But all that can be said not enough.	
174	<b>Syb.</b> <u>White silver</u> draweth black lines, and sweet words <u>will breed sharp torments</u> .	174-5: an action which is expected to bring one result can often cause the opposite to occur. The observation regarding <b>white silver</b> was proverbial. <b>will breed sharp torments</b> = cause acute misery.
176		
178	<b>Phao.</b> What shall become of me?	
180	<b>Syb.</b> <u>Go dare</u> .	= ie. "be brave and go find out."
182	[ <i>Sybilla exits into cave.</i> ]	
184	<b>Phao.</b> I go! – Phao, thou canst but die; and then as good die with great desires, <u>as pine in base fortunes</u> .	183-4: <b>as good</b> = ie. "it is better to". = "than to remain in distress (to <b>pine</b> ) due to ill luck or fate."
186	[ <i>Exit.</i> ]	
	END OF ACT II.	

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.

*Ante-room of Sapho's Chamber.*

*Enter Trachinus, Pandion, Mileta, Ismena,  
Criticus and Molus.*

1 **Trach.** Sapho is fallen suddenly sick. I cannot guess  
2 the cause.

4 **Mileta.** Some cold belike, or else a woman's qualm.

6 **Pand.** A strange nature of cold, to drive one into such  
8 an heat.

10 **Mileta.** Your physic, sir, I think be of the second sort;  
12 else would you not judge it rare, that hot fevers are  
14 engendered by cold causes.

**Pand.** Indeed, lady, I have no more physic than will  
14 purge choler; and that if it please you, I will practice

16 upon you. It is good for women that be waspish.

18 **Ism.** Faith, sir, no; you are best purge your own  
18 melancholy: belike you are a male-content.

20 **Pand.** It is true, and are not you a female-content?

22 **Trach.** Soft! I am not content, that a male and female  
24 content should go together.

26 **Mileta.** Ismena is disposed to be merry.

28 **Ism.** No, it is Pandion would fain seem wise.

30 **Trach.** You shall not fall out; for pigeons, after biting,  
32 fall to billing, and open jars make the closest jests.

32 *Enter Eugenia.*

34 **Eug.** Mileta! Ismena! Mileta! come away! my lady is  
36 in a sowne!

= bedroom, boudoir.

**Entering Characters:** we once again meet our courtier  
**Trachinus**, our scholar **Pandion**, and **Mileta** and **Ismena**,  
two of Sapho's ladies-in-waiting.

= probably. = fainting fit or nausea.<sup>1</sup>

= fever.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. skill in medical science.<sup>1</sup> = an inferior kind.

= unusual.

= produced.<sup>1</sup>

14: **purge choler** = rid one of his or her ill-temper, or **choler**  
(ie. yellow bile), one of the four bodily fluids which were  
traditionally believed to determine one's temperament based  
on the proportion in which they appear in the human body. A  
preponderance of **choler** was thought to lead to an irritable  
disposition.

14-15: **I will practice upon you** = Pandion offers to treat  
Mileta, indirectly accusing her of being irascible.

= ie. Pandion's treatment is an effective cure for petulant or  
spiteful women.<sup>1</sup>

18: **melancholy** = depression or sullenness, the result of  
having too much black bile, another humour.

**male-content** = a good pun from Ismena.

22-23: Trachinus, continuing the banter, claims it is not a  
good idea for a couple comprised of two malcontents to  
get talking. He explains at lines 29-30 below.

= be delighted to.<sup>1</sup>

29-30: Trachinus warns Pandion and Ismena not to argue  
(**fall out**), because it will lead to them making up!

**billing** = cooing bill-to-bill, the avian version of kissing.

**open jars...jests** = "unconcealed hostility resolves to the  
friendliest good feeling" (Daniel, p.364);<sup>4</sup> **jars** = quarreling.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. in a swoon; **sowne** was more commonly used than  
**swoon** in the 16th century.

38	<b>Mileta.</b> Aye me!	
40	<b>Ism.</b> Come, let us make haste.	
42	[ <i>Exeunt Eugenia, Mileta, and Ismena.</i> ]	41: the ladies-in-waiting exit the stage, leaving the men behind.
44	<b>Trach.</b> I am sorry for Sapho, because she will take no <u>physic</u> ; like you, Pandion, who, being sick of the	44: <b>physic</b> = medicine. 44-45: <b>sick of the sullens</b> = in ill-humour or sulking. = ie. remedy.
46	sullens, will seek no <u>friend</u> .	
	<b>Pand.</b> <u>Of men</u> we learn to speak, of Gods to hold our	47-49: Pandion expounds on the value of remaining silent. Bond wonders if perhaps our scholar has guessed Sapho's secret – she is lovesick – but feels it is wiser not to discuss it. <b>Of men</b> = from other people.
48	peace. <u>Silence shall digest what folly hath swallowed,</u>	48: <b>Silence...swallowed</b> = metaphorically, a penchant for proving oneself foolish can be suppressed by keeping quiet. <b>digest</b> = digest, a common alternate form.
	and wisdom <u>wean</u> what <u>fancy</u> hath <u>nursed</u> .	49: and while one may indulge in capricious or imaginative ideas ( <b>fancy</b> ), one must ultimately be guided by one's good sense. A nice suckling metaphor. <b>nursed</b> = breast-fed, hence fostered. <sup>1</sup> <b>wean</b> = withdraw from suckling.
50		
52	<b>Trach.</b> Is it not love?	51: Trachinus too now guesses the source of Sapho's malady.
54	<b>Pand.</b> If it were, what then?	
56	<b>Trach.</b> Nothing, but that I hope it be not.	
58	<b>Pand.</b> Why, in <u>courts</u> there is nothing more common. And as <u>to be bald among the Micanians</u> , it was	= royal courts. = Pliny (11.47) is the source of the belief that the residents of the Greek island of <b>Mykonos</b> were all bald.
60	accounted no shame, because they were all bald; so to be in love among courtiers it <u>is no discredit, for that</u>	= brings no disrepute. = because.
62	they are all in love.	
64	<b>Trach.</b> Why, what do you think of our ladies?	
	<b>Pand.</b> <u>As of the Seres wool</u> , which being [the] whitest	65: <b>As of</b> = ie. "the same way as I feel about". <b>Seres wool</b> = wool from some indeterminate part of East Asia, where the silk industry was believed to have originated. <sup>1</sup> Lyly refers to the " <i>fine wool of Seres</i> " in a later play, <i>Endymion</i> .
66	and softest, <u>fretteth</u> soonest and deepest.	= wears away. <sup>2</sup>
68	<b>Trach.</b> I will not tempt you in your deep melancholy, lest you seem sour to <u>those</u> which are so sweet. But	= ie. the ladies.
70	come, let us walk a little into the fields. It may be the open air will <u>disclose your close conceits</u> .	= "lead you to reveal your most secret thoughts."
72		
74	<b>Pand.</b> I will go with you; but send our pages away.	

[Exeunt.]

## ACT III, SCENE II.

*A Street.*

*Enter Criticus and Molus.*

**Entering Characters:** another scene featuring *Criticus* (servant of the courtier **Trachinus**) and *Molus* (servant of the scholar **Pandion**) is presented for its comic relief.

= state of gloomy musing.<sup>1</sup>

**4ff (below):** Molus has a problem: he loves food. When he was residing in Athens, working for Pandion at the university, it was easier to suffer a lean diet, because he lived amongst students and scholars who as a regular habit ate very little. But with the approach of Lent, when options for eating will be limited, Molus wonders how he will satisfy his hunger.

5: *muse* = ie. musing state (a noun).

*Lent* = a 40-day period of fasting, lasting from Ash Wednesday to near Easter. Here we see a most egregious example of an anachronism (having ancient Greeks observing a Christian rite) in Elizabethan drama, even within a literary form in which the authors regularly ignored historical accuracy and propriety.

*scamble* = shift, endure.<sup>1</sup>

*that* = ie. "I who".

= accustomed. = ie. often.

8: ie. "you are obsessed with eating."

14: **Latin** = the belly has no ears, ie. "a hungry man will not take advice",<sup>11</sup> or "mere talk of food will not satisfy hunger."<sup>4</sup>

14-15: *thy back is thy god* = ie. Criticus loves to wear showy or fine clothes.<sup>3</sup>

Lyly used the same *belly vs. back* antithesis in his first play, *Campaspe*, in which the philosopher Diogenes complained of those who worship "*back-gods in the morning with pride, in the evening belly-gods with gluttony!*"

21: **Latin** = "no one sees the pouch (or wallet) that is on his own back," meaning that people do not see their own faults, even as they easily recognize those of others.<sup>4</sup> This moral

1 *Crit.* What brown study art thou in, Molus? no mirth?  
2 no life?

4 *Molus.* I am in the depth of my learning driven to a muse, how this Lent I shall scamble in the court, that

6 was wont to fast so oft in the university.

8 *Crit.* Thy belly is thy god.

10 *Molus.* Then is he a deaf god.

12 *Crit.* Why?

14 *Molus.* For venter non habet aures. But thy back is thy god.  
16

18 *Crit.* Then is it a blind god.

20 *Molus.* How prove you that?

*Crit.* Easy. *Nemo videt manticae quod in tergo est.*

22 **Molus.** Then would the satchel that hangs at your god,  
 24 id est, your back, were full of meat to stuff my god,  
 26 hoc est, my belly.  
 28 **Crit.** Excellent. But how canst thou study, when thy  
 mind is only in the kitchen?  
 30 **Molus.** Doth not the horse travel best, that sleepeth  
 with his head in the manger?  
 32 **Crit.** Yes, what then?  
 34 **Molus.** Good wits will apply. But what cheer is there  
 36 here this Lent?  
 38 **Crit.** Fish.  
 40 **Molus.** I can eat none, it is wind.  
 42 **Crit.** Eggs.  
 44 **Molus.** I must eat none, they are fire.  
 46 **Crit.** Cheese.  
 48 **Molus.** It is against the old verse, *caseus est nequam*.  
 50 **Crit.** Yea, but it disgesteth all things except itself.

lesson is derived from one of Aesop's fables (#266 in the Perry Index), in which Prometheus, when he created humanity, gave all people two pouches to wear around their necks: the first, which contained other people's faults, to be worn in front, and the second, containing their own faults, to be born on their backs.<sup>3</sup>

= if only.  
 = "that is". = food.  
 = "that is".

27-28: **thy mind...kitchen** = Molus is always thinking about food.

30-31: **that sleepeth...manger** = ie. that can eat when it wants to.  
**manger** = a trough of fodder.

35: **Good wits will apply** = those with perceptive minds will understand this maxim (ie. lines 30-31 above), and how it applies equally to people.  
**cheer** = food and drink.  
**this Lent** = the quartos' title page states that *Sapho and Phao* was performed before the queen on a Shrove Tuesday (the day before Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent).

40: Bevington suggests that by **wind**, Molus means air, in its role as one of the four elements (the others being earth, fire and water): air was associated with the humour **blood** (each element being connected with a bodily humour), and so, what Molus is enigmatically saying is that eating fish will cause him to suffer from an imbalance in his humours, which would cause his disposition to become uneven (an excess amount of blood was thought to make one sanguine).

Bevington analyzes Molus' response to Criticus' next proposal (that he eat eggs) in a similar fashion: fire, another element, was associated with yellow bile, which, if a person possessed an excessive amount of it, was thought to make him or her choleric.

= bring on a burning passion; **eggs** were considered an aphrodisiac. We may note here that much 16th century literature actually identified **eggs** and **cheese** (Criticus' next suggestion) as prohibited menu items during Lent.

48: **against** = contrary to.

**caseus est nequam** = **Latin**: cheese is worthless. Bond traces the saying back to *Adagia*, the early 16th century collection of ancient sayings and proverbs compiled by the Dutch humanist Erasmus.

50: there seems to have been a belief that cheese was itself indigestible, even as it helped to digest other foods; a 1595 work attributes this idea to the ancient Greeks: "*it is said*,

52 **Molus.** Yea, but if a man hath nothing else to eat,  
54 what shall it disgest?

**Crit.** You are disposed to jest. But if your silken throat

56 can swallow no packthread, you must pick your teeth,  
58 and play with your trencher.

**Molus.** So shall I not incur the fulsome and  
60 unmannerly sin of surfeiting. – But here cometh  
62 Calypho.

*Enter Calypho.*

64 **Crit.** What news?

66 **Caly.** Since my being here, I have sweat like a dog to  
68 prove my master a devil; he brought such reasons to  
70 refel me as, I promise you, I shall like the better of his  
72 wit, as long as I am with him.

**Molus.** How?

74 **Caly.** Thus, I always arguing that he had horns, and  
76 therefore a devil, he said, “Fool, they are things like  
horns, but no horns. For once in the senate of gods  
being hold a solemn session, in the midst of their talk,

78 I put in my sentence, which was so indifferent, that  
80 they all concluded it might as well have been left out  
as put in, and so placed on each side of my head things

like horns, and called me a *parenthesis*.” Now, my  
82 masters, this may be true, for I have seen it myself  
about diverse sentences.

84 **Molus.** It is true, and the same did Mars make a full  
86 point, that Vulcan's head was made a *parenthesis*.

*that cheese is naught, and digesteth all things but it selfe.”*  
**digesteth** = **digest** was a common alternate form of  
**digest**.

55-56: **your silken...packthread** = Criticus suggests Molus  
is a fastidious eater, or one used to snacking on delicacies, so  
that his stomach cannot handle more commonplace food.<sup>4</sup>

**packthread** (line 56) = rough twine used for tying up  
packages, etc.,<sup>1</sup> a metaphor for coarser foods.

56-57: **pick your...trencher** = ie. sit idly by, watching  
everyone else eat; **trencher** = dish.

= in this manner. = reprehensible.<sup>1</sup>

= allusion to gluttony as one of the seven deadly sins.

**Entering Character:** Vulcan's Cyclops-messenger **Calypho**  
returns.

Having learned some sophistry from the boys back in  
Act II.iii, Calypho has been trying to prove logically to his  
master Vulcan that he (Vulcan) is a devil, but Vulcan is  
having none of it.

65: note that Criticus is following his own precept: skipping  
over pleasantries, he immediately inquires as to what is  
going on.

= ie. "ever since I last left you here".

69: **refel** = refute.

69-70: **I shall...wit** = Calypho will think more highly  
of Vulcan's intelligence in the future.

**74-83 (below):** Calypho's account of his debate with Vulcan  
demonstrates that the blacksmith-god was as capable of  
engaging in sophistry as anyone else.

= ie. because Vulcan was a cuckold.

= assembly.

= ie. there being held.

78-80: **I put...put in** = when Vulcan spoke out at the  
assemblage, he was mocked for having made such an  
irrelevant (**indifferent**) point.

**sentence** = in addition to its regular grammatical  
meaning, **sentence** also meant "opinion" in this period.<sup>1,3</sup>

82-83: **I have...sentences** = Calypho has seen these things  
called **parentheses** in various (**diverse**) written sentences.

85-86: Mars, through his notorious affair with Venus, could  
be said to be the source of the horns, or **parentheses**, on  
Vulcan's head.

88 **Crit.** This shall go with me: I trust in Syracuse to give  
 90 one or other a *parenthesis*.  
 92 **Molus.** Is Venus yet come home?  
 94 **Caly.** No, but were I Vulcan, I would by the gods –  
 96 **Crit.** What wouldest thou?  
 98 **Caly.** Nothing, but as Vulcan, halt by the gods.  
 100 **Crit.** I thought you would have hardly entreated  
 102 Venus.  
 104 **Caly.** Nay, Venus is easily entreated; but let that go by.  
 106 **Crit.** What?  
 108 **Caly.** That which maketh so many *parenthesis*.  
 110 **Molus.** I must go by too, or else my master will not go  
 112 by me, but meet me full with his fist. Therefore, if we  
 114 shall sing, give me my part quickly: for if I tarry long,  
 116 I shall cry my part woefully.  
 118 [Song.]  
 120 **Omnes.** *Arm, arm, the foe comes on apace.*  
 122 **Caly.** *What's that red nose and sulfury face?*  
 124 **Molus.** *'Tis the hot leader.*  
**Crit.** *What's his name?*  
**Molus.** *Bacchus, a captain of plump fame:*  
*A goat the beast on which he rides,*

85-86: **make a full point** = "conclude".<sup>1,6</sup> The expression **full point** usually referred to a punctuation mark used to terminate a sentence.<sup>1</sup>

88-89: Criticus will make use of this information, expecting he will be able to give **parentheses**, ie. horns, to husbands throughout the city by cheating with their wives.<sup>6</sup>

97: **as** = like.

**halt** = both (1) limp (Vulcan **halts** because he is crippled), and (2) stop speaking (as Vulcan did at the meeting of the gods).<sup>3</sup>

99-100: **hardly entreated Venus** = vigorously or boldly begged Venus. Calypho responds by employing **easily** to pun with **hardly**.<sup>6</sup>

= let it pass, ie. "let us no longer discuss that."

106: ie. the topic of cuckoldry.

= get going, punning.

= ie. "shall thrash me."

111: ie. Molus anticipates being beaten. There is much alleged humour to be found in the era's dramas involving the beating of servants, a tradition that can be traced back to the ancient Roman comedies of Terence and Plautus.

**115-162 (below):** the song is a well-executed parody of a drinking party, disguised as an account of a military battle.

= swiftly.<sup>1</sup>

117: Calypho inquires as to the identity of the approaching general, whose countenance betrays a heavy drinking habit.

**sulfury** = fiery,<sup>1</sup> ie. red from heavy drinking.

123: **Bacchus** = god of wine.

**captain** = military commander.

**plump fame** = perhaps, "great reputation"; Shakespeare referred to "**plumpy Bacchus**" in *Antony and Cleopatra*, but images of the god of wine did not typically show him as overweight.

124: ie. rather than riding a war-horse.

126	<i>Fat grunting swine run by his sides, His <u>standard-bearer</u> <u>fears no knocks</u>,</i>	126: <b>standard-bearer</b> = carrier of the unit's flag or pennant. <b>fears no knocks</b> = is not afraid of being struck or hit in any way.
	<i>For he's a drunken <u>butter-box</u>,</i>	= derogatory term for a Dutchman; the Dutch were thought to be both heavy drinkers and great consumers of butter. <sup>1,5</sup>
128	<i>Who when i' th' <u>red field</u> thus he <u>revels</u>, Cries, out "<u>ten tousan ton of tevils</u>!"</i>	= battlefield covered with blood. = drinks and feasts. = stereotyped Dutch accent.
130		
132	<i><b>Caly.</b> <u>What's</u> he so swaggers in the <u>van</u>?</i>	= who is. = leading part of a travelling army.
134	<i><b>Molus.</b> Oh! that's a <u>roaring</u> Englishman, Who in <u>deep healths</u> does so excel, From Dutch and French he <u>bears the bell</u>.</i>	= boisterous, carousing. <sup>1,4</sup> = large quaffs drunk to other's good health. = takes first place, ie. is the best at drinking. <sup>1</sup>
136		
138	<i><b>Crit.</b> What <u>vict'lers</u> follow Bacchus' camps?</i>	= victualers, ie. providers of an army's food and supplies.
	<i><b>Molus.</b> Fools, fiddlers, panders, pimps, and <u>ramps</u>.</i>	139: Molus lists the typical sorts of amusement-providers who can always be found attached to an army camp. <b>ramps</b> = wanton or flirtatious women. <sup>1,4</sup>
140		
142	<i><b>Caly.</b> See, see, the battle now grows <u>hot</u>; Here legs <u>fly</u>, here goes heads <u>to the pot</u>,</i>	= fierce, wild, unrestrained. 142: <b>Here legs fly</b> = ie. from being blown up. <b>here goes heads to the pot</b> = heads are smashed; the expression <b>to the pot</b> meant "destroyed" or "ruined". <sup>1</sup>
	<i>Here whores and knaves toss broken glasses, Here all the soldiers look like asses.</i>	
146	<i><b>Crit.</b> What man e'er heard such hideous noise?</i>	
148	<i><b>Molus.</b> Oh! that's the vintner's bawling boys. <u>Anon, anon</u>, the trumpets are,</i>	= "one moment!", the server's cry to impatient customers. <sup>6</sup>
150	<i>Which call them <u>to the fearful bar</u>.</i>	= to rush to take part in the fight taking place at the defensive bulwark or barrier set up at the entrance to a city ( <b>bar</b> ); but also a pun on the expression, <b>called to the bar</b> , which refers to the moment when a law student is promoted to practicing barrister, by being invited to cross the barrier, or <b>bar</b> , separating the benchers from the students. <sup>1</sup> <b>fearful</b> = dreadful, ie. that which causes fear.
152	<i><b>Caly.</b> Rush in, and let's our forces try.</i>	
154	<i><b>Molus.</b> Oh no, for see they <u>fly</u>, they fly!</i>	154: the enemy is fleeing! <b>fly</b> = flee.
156	<i><b>Crit.</b> And so will I.</i>	
158	<i><b>Caly.</b>                      And I.</i>	
160	<i><b>Molus.</b>                      And I.</i>	
162	<i><b>All.</b> 'Tis a hot day in drink to die.</i>	
164		
	[Exeunt.]	

### ACT III, SCENE III.

*Sapho's Chamber.*

*Sapho in her bed.*

*Enter Mileta, Ismena, Canope, Eugenua,  
Favilla, and Lamia.*

1 **Sapho.** Hey ho: I know not which way to turn me. Ah,  
2 ah, I faint, I die.

4 **Mileta.** Madam, I think it good you have more clothes  
and sweat it out.

6 **Sapho.** No, no, the best ease I find is to sigh it out.

8 **Ism.** A strange disease, that should breed such a  
10 desire.

12 **Sapho.** A strange desire that hath brought such a  
disease.

14 **Can.** Where, Lady, do you feel your most pain?

16 **Sapho.** Where nobody else can feel it, Canope.

18 **Can.** At the heart?

20 **Sapho.** In the heart.

22 **Can.** Will you have any mithridate?

24 **Sapho.** Yea, if for this disease there were any  
26 mithridate.

28 **Mileta.** Why? what disease is it, Madam, that physic  
cannot cure?

30 **Sapho.** Only the disease, Mileta, that I have.

32 **Mileta.** Is it a burning ague?

34 **Sapho.** I think so, or a burning agony.

36 **Eug.** Will you have any of this syrup, to moisture  
38 your mouth?

40 **Sapho.** Would I had some local things to dry my  
brain.

**Scene Setting:** much of the rest of the play takes place in Sapho's bedroom (her **chamber**), where she will be found mostly languishing in bed. The bed and chamber are located at the back of the stage, whose curtain will be drawn open and closed repeatedly to indicate a shifting of the action in and out of the queen's boudoir.

**Entering Characters:** **Sapho** is still ill from her undiagnosed disease. She is visited by her company of ladies-in-waiting.

= phrase used to express lethargy or weariness.

4-5: Mileta assumes Sapho is suffering from a fever.  
**good you have** = "would be better if you put on".

= relief.<sup>1</sup>

19: Canope is asking if Sapho is suffering from a stomach-ache, the definition of **a pain at the heart**, according to the OED.

21: Sapho means she is enduring emotional heartache.<sup>6</sup>

= any preparation used as an antidote against poison.

= medicine.

31: Sapho is, and will continue to be, tight-lipped regarding the cause of her condition.

= fever, especially malaria.<sup>1</sup>

= note the wordplay or **ague** and **agony**.

40: **some local things** = remedies which treat only a single part of the body.<sup>1,3</sup> She is also probably cryptically referring

42		to Phao as a "local thing". <sup>3</sup>
		40-41: <i>to dry my brain</i> = contemporary literature suggests that a medically <i>dry brain</i> was less susceptible to "venery", or the pursuit of sexual pleasure. <sup>1</sup> Bond suggests Sapho means she wishes to "put a halt to her flow of imagination" (p. 561). <sup>3</sup>
44	<i>Fav.</i> Madam, will you see if you can sleep?	
46	<i>Sapho.</i> Sleep, Favilla? I shall then dream.	
48	<i>Lamia.</i> <u>As good</u> dream sleeping, as sigh waking.	= ie. it is as good to.
50	<i>Eug.</i> Phao is cunning in all kind of <u>simples</u> , and it is hard, if there be none, to procure sleep.	= curatives comprised of one or more herbs. <sup>1</sup>
52	<i>Sapho.</i> Who?	
54	<i>Eug.</i> Phao.	
56	<i>Sapho.</i> Yea, Phao! Phao! – Ah Phao, let him come <u>presently</u> !	= immediately.
58	<i>Mileta.</i> Shall we draw the curtains whilest you give yourself to slumber?	
62	<i>Sapho.</i> Do, but depart not: I have such starts in my sleep, disquieted I know not how. – [ <i>In a slumber.</i> ]	
64	Phao! Phao!	
66	<i>Ism.</i> What say you, Madam?	
68	<i>Sapho.</i> Nothing, but if I sleep not now, you send for Phao. – Ah Gods!	
70		
72	<i>[She falls asleep, and her attendants draw the curtains.]</i>	
74	<i>Mileta.</i> There is a fish called garus, that healeth all sickness, so as whilest it is applied one name not garus.	75-76: <i>so as...garus</i> = so long as no one speaks the word <i>garus</i> during treatment. Bond notes that Pliny mentions a fish called <i>garus</i> in his <i>Natural History</i> , but the properties mentioned here were Lyly's invention.
76		
78	<i>Eug.</i> An evil medicine for us women: for if we should be forbidden to name garus, we should chat nothing but garus.	78-80: with good psychological insight, Eugenua slyly comments on the difficulty women, and perhaps all people, have in avoiding saying something they have been expressly forbidden to say.
80		
82	<i>Can.</i> Well said, Eugenua, you <u>know yourself</u> .	= allusion to the famous injunction, "know thyself", which was carved onto a wall of the temple of the Delphic oracle.
84	<i>Eug.</i> Yea, Canope, <u>and</u> that I am one of your sex.	= ie. "and you also know".
86	<i>Ism.</i> I have heard of an herb called <u>lunary</u> , that being bound to the pulses of the sick, causeth nothing but dreams of weddings and dances.	= ie. the fern moonwort. <sup>1</sup>
88		

90 **Fav.** I think, Ismena, that herb be at thy pulses now:  
 92 for thou art ever talking of matches and merriments.

94 **Can.** It is an unlucky sign in the chamber of the sick  
 96 to talk of marriages, for my mother said it foresheweth  
 98 death.

100 **Mileta.** It is very evil too, Canope, to sit at the bed's  
 98 feet, and foretellet danger: therefore, remove your  
 stool, and sit by me.

102 **Lamia.** Sure it is some cold she hath taken.

104 **Ism.** If one were burnt, I think we women would say,  
 104 he died of a cold.

106 **Fav.** It may be some conceit.

108 **Mileta.** Then is there no fear, for yet did I never hear  
 110 of a woman that died of a conceit.

112 **Eug.** I mistrust her not, for that the owl hath not  
 112 shrieked at the window, or the night raven croaked,  
 both being fatal.

114 **Fav.** You are all superstitious, for these be but fancies  
 116 of doting age, who by chance observing it in some,  
 have set it down as a religion for all.

118 **Mileta.** Favilla, thou art but a girl: I would not have

120 a weasel cry, nor desire to see a glass, nor an old wife  
 122 come into my chamber; for then, though I lingered in  
 my disease, I should never escape it.

124 **Sapho.** Ah, who is there?

126 [The curtains again drawn back.]

128 What sudden affrights be these? Methought Phao came  
 130 with simples to make me sleep. Did nobody name  
 Phao before I began to slumber?

132 **Mileta.** Yes, we told you of him.

134 **Sapho.** Let him be here tomorrow.

136 **Mileta.** He shall; will you have a little broth to comfort  
 you?

= is attached or pressed to.  
 = marriages. = festivities.<sup>1</sup>

= foreshadows.<sup>1</sup> The root word is *foreshow*; *shew* was  
 frequently used for *show*.

98-99: **remove your stool** = ie. "move your seat away from  
 the bed". There is a continuity problem here, as Canope is  
 no longer sitting by the foot of the bed, since the ladies are  
 now in front of the curtains, which were drawn at line 72  
 above.

103-4: no matter what ails one, women always attribute ill-  
 health to a cold.

= an imagined, or psychosomatic, problem.

111-3: Eugenia is not anxious over Sapho's health (***I mis-  
 trust her not***), because she has yet to hear either of two  
 sounds of nature that were commonly believed to presage  
 death, to wit, the screeching of an *owl* and the harsh cawing  
 of a *raven*.

115-7: **for these...for all** = Favilla supposes the superstitions  
 mentioned by Eugenia arose from the experience of some  
 senile old man or woman (***doting age***), who, having once  
 seen someone die after hearing the call of an owl or raven,  
 told others of this coincidence, which report was then spread  
 to such an extent that it became a general belief.

119-122: Mileta mentions some things she would not want  
 to have happen were she lying ill in bed, occurrences  
 superstitiously connected to misfortune.

= ie. look into a mirror.

124: Sapho calls out from behind the curtain.

138	<i>Sapho.</i> I can <u>relish nothing</u> .	= savour no food.
140	<i>Mileta.</i> Yet a little you must take to sustain nature.	
142	<i>Sapho.</i> I cannot, Mileta, I will not. – Oh, which way	
144	shall I lie? what shall I do? <u>Heigh ho</u> . Oh, Mileta, help to <u>rear</u> me up my <u>bed</u> , my head lies too low. You	= again, an expression of lethargy. 145: <i>rear</i> = raise. <i>bed</i> = this is the wording of the B.L. quarto, but many editors replace <i>bed</i> with the alternate quartos' <i>head</i> . = ie. "leave my chamber." <sup>3</sup>
146	pester me with too many clothes. Fie, you keep the chamber too hot – <u>avoid it</u> . It may be I shall steal a nap	
148	when all are gone.	
150	<i>Mileta.</i> We will.	
152	[ <i>Exeunt all the Ladies.</i> ]	154-192 (below): Sapho engages in a lengthy soliloquy.
154	<i>Sapho.</i> Ah, <u>impatient</u> disease of love, and goddess of love <u>thrice unpitiful</u> . The eagle is never stricken with	= restless. <sup>1</sup> 155: <i>thrice</i> = an intensifier. <i>unpitiful</i> = unmerciful 155-7: <i>The eagle...with love</i> = if the noblest bird and finest fruit are innately protected from natural harm, then how can Sapho – the epitome of a great queen – be susceptible to the wounds of love? Pliny mentions both the eagle and the sea-calf as animals that are never struck by lightning (2.56).
156	thunder, nor the olive with lightning; and may great	
	ladies be plagued with love? Oh, Venus, have I not	157-165: <i>Oh, Venus...by fancy</i> = Sapho is disappointed that Venus, whom she has always revered, has let her down so badly.
158	<u>strawed</u> thine altars with sweet roses? kept thy swans in clear rivers? fed thy sparrows with ripe corn? and	= strewn, a dialect form. <sup>1</sup> 158-161: <i>swans, sparrows, doves</i> and <i>tortoises</i> were all sacred to Venus. <sup>12</sup>
160	harboured thy doves in fair houses? Thy tortoise have I nourished under my fig tree, my <u>chamber</u> have I	= bedroom, boudoir.
162	<u>ceiled</u> with thy <u>cockleshells</u> , and dipped thy <u>sponge</u>	162: <i>ceiled</i> = adorned the ceiling of. <sup>1</sup> <i>cockleshells</i> = the <i>cockleshell</i> , or scallop shell, was one of Venus' attributes. <i>sponge</i> = Lyly associated the <i>sponge</i> with Venus, though there was no mythological authority for doing so; Lyly's notion seems to derive from a painting, to which he referred in <i>Euphues</i> , by the 4th century Greek artist Protogenes of "Venus with a sponge".
	into the freshest waters. Didst thou nurse me in my <u>swaddling clouts</u> with wholesome herbs, that I might	= bandages wrapped around a newborn infant's limbs to prevent it from moving. <sup>1</sup> = prime of life. <sup>1</sup> = from love.
166	perish in my <u>flowering years by fancy</u> ? I perceive, but too late I perceive, and yet not too late, because <u>at last</u> , that <u>strains are caught</u> as well by	167: <i>at last</i> = ie. "I ultimately did perceive". 167-8: <i>strains...too high</i> = metaphorically, harm can be sustained just as easily by consorting with those beneath one (referring to Sapho's having fallen in love with Phao) as by stretching to obtain things, or people, above one's reach.
168	stooping too low, as reaching too high; that eyes are	168-170: <i>that eyes...the sun</i> = analogously, one's eyesight

	<u>bleared</u> <u>as soon</u> with vapours that come from the	is injured or diminished just as easily when one's eyes are stung by vapours emanating from the earth as when one stares directly at the sun. <b>bleared</b> = literally dimmed by tears or other watery discharge. <sup>1</sup> 169: <b>as soon</b> = just as quickly. 169-170: <b>vapours...earth</b> = there are numerous references in 16th and 17th century literature to the <b>vapours</b> which were believed to reside within the empty spaces inside the earth.
170	earth, as with beams that proceed from the sun. Love	170-1: <b>Love...caves</b> = a possible allusion to the famous affair between the Trojan prince <b>Aeneas</b> and the queen of Carthage <b>Dido</b> , who consummated their love in a <b>cave</b> during a terrible storm.
	lodgeth sometimes in caves; and thou, <u>Phoebus</u> , that	= ie. Apollo, in his guise as the sun-god, or the sun itself.
172	in the pride of thy <u>heat</u> shinest all day in our <u>horizon</u> ,	172: <b>heat</b> = the B.L. quarto prints an ambiguous <b>heate</b> here; early editors emended the word to <b>heart</b> , which is what was printed in the alternate quartos. <b>horizon</b> = basically, "sky". <sup>1</sup>
174	at night dippest thy head in the ocean. Resist <u>it</u> , Sapho, whilest it is yet <u>tender</u> .	= ie. love. = immature, so as to be more easily suppressed or overcome. <sup>1</sup>
	<u>Of</u> acorns comes oaks, of drops floods, of sparks	= from.
176	flames, of <u>atomies</u> <u>elements</u> . But alas, it fareth with me	176: <b>atomies</b> = alternate form of <b>atoms</b> , Sapho alludes to a conceptual idea from Greek philosophy, referring to the imagined particles of which all matter was formed. <b>elements</b> = it was thought that all matter in the universe was ultimately comprised of any of the four elements, viz. air, earth, fire and water.
178	as with wasps, who, feeding on serpents, make their stings more venomous: for glutting myself on the face	177-8: <b>wasps...venomous</b> = an observation lifted directly from Pliny (11.116). <sup>3</sup>
180	of Phao, I have made my desire more desperate. Into the nest of an <u>alcyon</u> , no bird can enter but the alcyon;	179-180: <b>Into...the halcyon</b> = allusion to Pliny's observation that the mouth of the kingfisher's nest is very narrow (10.47). <b>alcyon</b> = halcyon, a common alternate form for the bird more familiarly known as the kingfisher. <sup>1</sup>
	and into the heart of so great a lady, can any creep	181-2: <b>into the heart...lord</b> = Sapho again rebukes herself for falling for such a low-ranking subject.
182	but a great lord? There is an herb (not unlike unto my love), which, the further it groweth from the	182-4: <b>There is...it is</b> = another conceit invented by Lyly.
184	sea, the <u>salter</u> it is; and my desires, the more they	= ie. saltier, an occasionally used alternate form.
	<u>swarve from reason</u> , the more seem they <u>reasonable</u> .	185: <b>swarve from reason</b> = become immoderate; <sup>1</sup> <b>swarve</b> was the more common form of <b>swerve</b> until the 1620's. <b>reasonable</b> = rational.
186	When Phao cometh, what then? wilt thou <u>open</u> thy	= reveal (to him).
188	love? Yea. – No, Sapho: but staring in his face till thine eyes dazzle, and thy spirits faint, die before his face: then this shall be written on thy tomb, that though	

190	thy love were greater than wisdom could endure, yet	
192	thine honour was such as love could not violate. –	
	Mileta!	
194		[ <i>Re-enter Mileta and Ismena.</i> ]
196	<b>Mileta.</b> I come.	
198	<b>Sapho.</b> <u>It will not be</u> : I can take no rest, which way	= "it is all futile", <sup>1</sup> ie. Sapho can find no peace.
200	soever I turn.	
202	<b>Mileta.</b> A strange malady!	
204	<b>Sapho.</b> Mileta, <u>if thou wilt, a martyrdom</u> . But give	= "it is rather a great agony ( <i>martyrdom</i> )." <sup>1</sup>
206	me my lute, and I will see if in song I can <u>beguile</u> mine	= deceive (into sleep).
	own eyes.	
208	<b>Mileta.</b> Here, Madam.	
210	<b>Sapho.</b> Have you sent for Phao?	
212	<b>Mileta.</b> Yea.	
214	<b>Sapho.</b> And to bring simples that will procure sleep?	
216	<b>Mileta.</b> No.	
218	<b>Sapho.</b> Foolish wench, what should the boy do here,	
220	if he bring not remedies with him? you think <u>belike</u> I	= ie. "it likely or probable that".
222	could sleep if I did but see him. Let him not come at	
224	all – yes, let him come – no, it is no matter: yet will I	
	try, let him come: do you hear?	
226	<b>Mileta.</b> Yea, Madam, it shall be done.	
		225: Mileta "leaves" Sapho's boudoir at the rear of the stage.
228		
230	Peace, no noise: she beginneth to fall asleep. I will go	
232	to Phao.	
234	<b>Ism.</b> Go speedily: for if she wake, and find you not	
	here, she will be angry. Sick folks are testy, who	
236	though they eat nothing, yet they <u>feed on gall</u> .	= literally "eat gall", a metaphor for being ill-tempered; <i>gall</i> is bile, the secretion of the liver; but figuratively used, as here, to describe, when consumed, a feeling of bitterness or rancour. <sup>1</sup>
		= steps back, so as to be out of the figurative spotlight. Bond notes that Ismena would not hear Sapho's song, in which Sapho reveals her secret yearning for Phao.
238-253 (below):	<b>Sapho's song:</b> Sapho rails at Cupid, cursing him and wishing him endless woes. Note how the song is written in rhyming couplets, as well as mostly in iambic tetrameter, ie. lines comprised of four iambs, or pairs of syllables in which the first is unstressed, the second stressed.	

238 **Sapho.** *Oh cruël Love! on thee I lay*  
*My curse, which shall strike blind the day:*  
240 *Never may sleep with velvet hand*  
*Charm thine eyes with sacred wand;*  
242 *Thy jailers shall be hopes and fears;*  
*Thy prison-mates, groans, sighs, and tears;*  
244 *Thy play, to wear out weary times,*

*Fantastic passions, vows, and rhymes;*  
246 *Thy bread be frowns, thy drink be gall,*  
*Such as when you Phao call.*

248 *The bed thou liest on be despair;*  
*Thy sleep, fond dreams; thy dreams, long care;*

250 *Hope (like thy fool) at thy bed's head,*  
*Mock thee, till madness strike thee dead,*  
252 *As Phaö, thou dost me with thy proud eyes;*  
*In thee poor Sapho lives; for thee she dies.*

254 [The curtains close.]

### ACT III, SCENE IV.

*Ante-room to Sapho's Chamber.*

*Enter Mileta and Phao.*

1 **Mileta.** *I would either your cunning, Phao, or your*  
2 *fortune might by simples provoke my lady to some*  
*slumber.*

4 **Phao.** *My simples are in operation as my simplicity*  
6 *is, which if they do little good, assuredly they can do*  
*no harm.*

8 **Mileta.** *Were I sick, the very sight of thy fair face*  
10 *would drive me into a sound sleep.*

12 **Phao.** *Indeed, gentlewomen are so drowsy in their*  
14 *desires, that they can scarce hold up their eyes for*  
*love.*

16 **Mileta.** *I mean the delight of beauty would so blind*  
18 *my senses, as I should be quickly rocked into a deep*  
*rest.*

20 **Phao.** *You women have an excuse for an advantage,*

Sapho plays her lute (which she asked for at lines 203-4 above) as she sings.

= ie. Cupid.  
= cause Cupid to endure perpetual night, ie. by blinding him.  
240-1: ie. "may you never sleep again."

= ie. "thy prison-mates shall be".  
244: "your playtime, by which you will pass slow-moving time, shall be comprised of".

246-7: Sapho wishes Cupid to suffer the same bitterness as she herself experiences when she calls for Phao in vain.

249: "may your sleep be filled with mad (**fond**) dreams, and may your dreams cause you endless anxiety."  
= ie. "may hope". = ie. "like your jester".

252: **me** = ie. "strike me dead".  
252-3: the song ends with a pair of lines in iambic pentameter; **Phao** in line 252 is likely intended to be a disyllable.

**Stage direction:** Sapho and Ismena are behind the closing curtain.

**Entering Characters:** **Mileta** enters the stage with **Phao**, who has responded to Sapho's summons.

= wish, hope, expect.  
= remedies made from herbs.

5: **in** = ie. "in their".  
**as** = like.  
**simplicity** = foolishness or ignorance; Phao is modest.

9-10: while intending to be flattering to the attractive Phao, Mileta's compliment is an odd one at best.

= **blind** is the B.L. quarto's reading; the alternate quartos print **bind** instead.

20-22: Phao understands that women, being women, must

22	which must be allowed, because only to you women it was allotted.	be permitted to "presume upon their sex" (Bond, p. 561), <sup>3</sup> and as such prevail in an argument. <sup>6</sup>
24	<b>Mileta.</b> Phao, thou art <u>passing</u> fair, and able to <u>draw</u> a chaste eye, not only to glance, but to gaze on thee.	24-25: Phao's beauty is such that it can tempt even the chastest of women. <i>passing</i> = exceedingly. <i>draw</i> = attract.
26	Thy young years, thy quick wit, thy <u>stayed</u> desires are of force to control those which should <u>command</u> .	= suppressed sensual appetite; <sup>1</sup> but the quartos print <i>staied</i> here, which could also be interpreted to be the word <i>staid</i> , meaning "steady" or "unchanging". <sup>1,6</sup>
28	<b>Phao.</b> Lady, I forgot to <u>commend</u> you first, and lest I should have <u>overslipped</u> to praise you at all, you have brought in my beauty, which is <u>simple</u> , that in courtesy I might remember yours, which is <u>singular</u> .	27: "powerful enough to cause those (ie. women) who are in high positions (and thus in position to <i>command</i> you) to submit to you." Mileta is talking about herself here, but her observation could be seen as unintentionally applying to Sapho as well. <sup>6</sup> 29-32: the polite Phao realizes that he should have praised ( <i>commended</i> ) Mileta's beauty before she did his. 30: <i>overslipped</i> = omitted. <sup>1</sup> 30-32: <i>you have...singular</i> = Phao suggests that Mileta has deliberately introduced his beauty (which he calls <i>simple</i> , ie. plain or unexceptionable) into the conversation specifically to induce Phao to compliment her own rare ( <i>singular</i> ) good looks. Mileta is offended by Phao's suggestion.
34	<b>Mileta.</b> You <u>mistake of purpose</u> , or <u>misconster of</u> malice.	34: <i>mistake of purpose</i> = "deliberately misinterpret what I said", or "mistake my reason for saying what I did". <i>misconster of</i> = "misconstrue me out of".
36	<b>Phao.</b> I am as far from malice as you from love, and to mistake of purpose were to <u>mislike of peevishness</u> .	= "(be as bad as to) dislike (you) out of perversity, obstinacy, foolishness or caprice." <sup>1,2,3</sup>
40	<b>Mileta.</b> As far as I from love? Why, think you me so <u>dull</u> I cannot love, or so spiteful I will not?	= sullen or lifeless. <sup>1</sup>
42	<b>Phao.</b> Neither, lady: but how should men imagine women can love, when in their mouths there is nothing <u>rifer</u> , than " <u>In faith</u> , I do not love."	44-45: <i>when in...not love</i> = an observation on the dissembling nature of women, who always claim to be disinterested in a man. <i>rifer</i> = more common, ie. more commonly spoken. <i>In faith</i> = truly.
46	<b>Mileta.</b> Why, will you have women's love in their tongues?	47-48: ie. should women actually open their hearts to a man?
50	<b>Phao.</b> Yea, else do I think there is none in their hearts.	
52	<b>Mileta.</b> Why?	
54	<b>Phao.</b> Because there was never anything in the bottom of a woman's heart that cometh not to her tongue's end.	54: Phao's logic is as follows: because a woman can never resist speaking what is in her heart, then, if she will not tell a man she loves him, it would be understandable if he thought she was rejecting him.
58	<b>Mileta.</b> You are too young to <u>cheapen</u> love.	= trivialize. <sup>1</sup>

60	<b>Phao.</b> Yet old enough to talk with market folks.	60: Phao, punning, takes <i>cheapen</i> in its original and still common 16th century commercial meaning, to "haggle" or "bid for". <sup>1</sup>
62	<b>Mileta.</b> Well, let us <u>in</u> .	= ie. go in.
64	[ <i>The curtains are drawn back.</i> ]	64: Sapho and Ismena are revealed at the back of the stage.
66	<b>Ism.</b> Phao is come.	
68	<b>Sapho.</b> Who? Phao? Phao, let him come near: but who sent for him?	
70		
72	<b>Mileta.</b> You, madam.	
74	<b>Sapho.</b> I am loath to take any medicines: yet must I, rather than <u>pine in these maladies</u> . – Phao, you may make me sleep, if you will.	= waste away from, or be tormented by, this ailment. <sup>1,2</sup>
76		
78	<b>Phao.</b> If I can, I must, if you <u>will</u> .	= desire it.
80	<b>Sapho.</b> What herbs have you brought, Phao?	
82	<b>Phao.</b> Such as will make you sleep, madam, though they cannot make me slumber.	
84	<b>Sapho.</b> Why, how can you cure me, when you cannot remedy yourself?	
86	<b>Phao.</b> Yes, madam, <u>the causes are contrary</u> : for it is	= ie. "our cases are different."
88	only a <u>dryness in your brains</u> that keepeth you from rest; but –	88-89: <i>a dryness...rest</i> = a <i>dry brain</i> keeps one from sleeping, because, suggests Professor Thomas Roche in his notes to Edmund Spenser's epic poem of 1590, <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , it has not been "moistened with the dew of sleep" (p. 1078, notes to Book I, Canto I). <sup>17</sup> This interpretation seems to be antithetical to that of <i>dryness of the brain</i> as it was used Act III.iii.40-41 above.
90		
92	<b>Sapho.</b> But what?	
94	<b>Phao.</b> Nothing, but <u>mine is not so</u> .	= ie. Phao's brain is not dry (thus he can sleep).
96	<b>Sapho.</b> Nay, then I despair of help if our disease be not <u>all one</u> .	= the same.
98	<b>Phao.</b> I <u>would</u> our diseases were all one.	= wish.
100	<b>Sapho.</b> It goes hard with the patient, when the physician <u>is desperate</u> .	= ie. is unable to effect a cure. <sup>6</sup>
102		
104	<b>Phao.</b> Yet Medea made the ever-waking dragon to <u>snort</u> , when she, poor soul, <u>could not wink</u> .	103-4: yet even Medea could put the dragon to sleep when she herself was unable to sleep a wink. Phao alludes to a well-known episode from the story of <b>Jason and the Argonauts</b> : Jason had sailed to <b>Colchis</b> on the Black Sea to find the golden fleece. <b>King Aeetes</b> promised to give the fleece to his visitor, if he (Jason) could perform three impossibly difficult tasks; the first two

106 **Sapho.** Medea was in love, and nothing could cause  
her rest but Jason.

108

110 **Phao.** Indeed, I know no herb to make lovers sleep,  
but heartsease, which, because it groweth so high, I  
cannot reach: for –

112

114 **Sapho.** For whom?

116 **Phao.** For such as love.

118 **Sapho.** It groweth very low, and I can never stoop to  
it, that –

120 **Phao.** That what?

122 **Sapho.** That I may gather it: but why do you sigh so,  
Phao?

124 **Phao.** It is mine use, madam.

126 **Sapho.** It will do you harm, and me too: for I never  
128 hear one sigh, but I must sigh't also.

130 **Phao.** It were best, then, that your ladyship give me  
leave to be gone, for I can but sigh.

132 **Sapho.** Nay, stay: for now I begin to sigh, I shall not  
134 leave, though you be gone. But what do you think best  
for your sighing to take it away?

136 **Phao.** Yew, Madam.

138 **Sapho.** Me?

140 **Phao.** No, madam, yew of the tree.

142 **Sapho.** Then will I love yew the better. And, indeed, I  
144 think it would make me sleep too; therefore, all other

completed, Jason's last job was to take the fleece from the ever-watchful **dragon** which guarded it. The princess – and witch – **Medea**, who had fallen in love with Jason, and had been helping Jason with his tasks, gave Jason a potion with which he was able to put the dragon to sleep, allowing Jason to capture the golden fleece.

**snort** = snore, ie. enter a deep sleep.<sup>1</sup>

**could not wink** = Medea could not sleep (**wink**)<sup>1</sup> because of the restlessness caused by her love for Jason.

110, 117: the name **heartsease** was given to two distinct flowers:

(1) the wallflower (line 110), which grows on walls, rocks and quarries (and hence **groweth so high**), and

(2) the pansy (**It** of line 117, which **groweth very low**).

There is also of course an implied pun on the unbotanical meaning of **heartsease**, "contentment", or "peace of mind".<sup>1,6</sup>

In line 110, **heartsease** as wallflower represents Sapho, who, as a queen, is too high in status for Phao to properly pursue.

117-8: **It** is heartsease as pansy, which represents Phao, who is too far below Sapho in rank for her to deign to take as a lover.

= "my custom".

= Sapho alludes to the common superstition that each sigh costs the heart the loss of a drop of blood.<sup>6</sup>

= "sigh it", ie. sigh.

= permission to leave. = only.

134: **leave** = Sapho puns, using **leave** to mean "cease".

134-5: **But what...away** = ie. what does Phao do to treat his need to sigh?

= the well-known coniferous tree: Sapho makes the obvious error.

143-8: Phao and Sapho are flirting: while ostensibly discussing the yew tree, they clearly intend for **yew**

146	simples set aside, I will simply use only yew.	to be understood as <b>you</b> .
148	<b>Phao.</b> Do, madam, for I think nothing in the world so good as yew.	
150	<b>Sapho.</b> Farewell for this time.	
152	<i>[He comes from the recess, the curtains closing behind him.]</i>	152-3: Phao comes forward, while Sapho, in her bed, remains behind the curtain.
154	<i>Enter Venus and Cupid.</i>	
156	<b>Venus.</b> Is not your name Phao?	
158	<b>Phao.</b> Phao, fair Venus, whom you made so fair.	
160	<b>Venus.</b> So <u>passing</u> fair! Oh, fair Phao, oh, sweet Phao: what wilt thou do for Venus?	161: Venus now falls in love with Phao! <b>passing</b> = exceedingly.
162		
164	<b>Phao.</b> Anything that cometh <u>in the compass</u> of my poor fortune.	= within the limit.
166	<b>Venus.</b> Cupid shall teach thee to shoot, and I will instruct thee to <u>dissemble</u> .	= speak, and thus behave, disingenuously.
168		
170	<b>Phao.</b> I will learn anything but dissembling.	
172	<b>Venus.</b> Why, my boy?	
174	<b>Phao.</b> Because then I must learn to be a woman.	174: the common trope of women being dissemblers.
176	<b>Venus.</b> Thou heardest that <u>of</u> a man.	= ie. from.
178	<b>Phao.</b> Men speak truth.	
180	<b>Venus.</b> But <u>truth</u> is a she, and so always <u>painted</u> .	180: Venus refers to personified <b>Truth</b> , who was always portrayed ( <b>painted</b> ) as a goddess.
182	<b>Phao.</b> I think a <u>painted</u> truth.	= pretended.
184	<b>Venus.</b> Well, farewell for this time: for I must visit Sapho.	
186	<i>[Phao exit.]</i>	187: Venus and Cupid remain on stage.
	END OF ACT III.	

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.

*Sapho's Chamber: the curtains are drawn back.*

*Still on Stage: Venus and Cupid.*

1 **Venus.** Sapho, I have heard thy complaints, and pitied  
2 thine agonies.

= see Act III.iii.154f.

4 **Sapho.** Oh, Venus, my cares are only known to thee,  
and by thee only came the cause. – Cupid, why didst  
6 thou wound me so deep?

= griefs.<sup>1</sup>

= from, ie. because of.

8 **Cupid.** My mother bad me draw mine arrow to the  
head.

= commanded; **bad** is the past tense form of the verb **to bid**.

10 **Sapho.** Venus, why didst thou prove so hateful?

12 **Venus.** Cupid took a wrong shaft.

13: Venus interestingly blames Cupid for Sapho's problems.  
**shaft** = arrow.

14 **Sapho.** Oh, Cupid, too unkind, to make me so kind,  
16 that almost I transgress the modesty of my kind.

= foolishly in love.<sup>1</sup>

16: Sapho's heartache has nearly driven her to shameless  
behaviour inappropriate for one of her gender (**kind**  
in line 16).<sup>6</sup> Note the triple-pun on **kind**.

18 **Cupid.** I was blind, and could not see mine arrow.

18: Cupid admits his error, but claims it was an accident. He  
has taken advantage of the traditional human depiction of  
him as either blindfolded or literally blind, as a way to meta-  
phorically describe the arbitrariness with which love strikes  
a person.

20 **Sapho.** How came it to pass, thou didst hit my heart?

22 **Cupid.** That came by the nature of the head, which  
being once let out of the bow, can find none other  
24 lighting place but the heart.

= landing.

26 **Venus.** Be not dismayed, Phao shall yield.

= ie. "give himself to you."

28 **Sapho.** If he yield, then shall I shame to embrace one  
so mean; if not, die, because I cannot embrace one so

28-30: Sapho describes her conundrum. Note her triple-pun  
with **mean** in these lines.

29: **mean** = low-ranked socially.

**if not, die** = ie. "if he does not yield, than I shall die".

29-30: **cannot...so mean** = ie. will be unable to embrace  
the cruel (**mean**) Phao (whom she really wants to embrace).

30 mean. Thus do I find no mean.

= middle-ground (for relief).

32 **Venus.** Well, I will work for thee. Farewell.

= for Sapho's benefit, ie. Venus will help the queen. The  
goddess' intention will be to break the mutual attraction  
between Phao and Sapho, and take Phao for herself!

34 **Sapho.** Farewell, sweet Venus, and thou, Cupid,  
which art sweetest in thy sharpness.

= shrewdness, with obvious pun on the **sharpness** of his

[Exit Sapho.]

arrows.

ACT IV, SCENE II.*The same: Sapho's Chamber.**Still on Stage: Venus, Cupid.*

1 **Venus.** Cupid, what hast thou done? put thine arrows  
2 in Phao's eyes, and wounded thy mother's heart?

1-2: the conceit here is that a glance from Phao's eyes has acted like one of Cupid's arrows, causing Venus to fall in love with him when he looked at her. Venus absurdly blames her son for this, but though he plays along, she does not pursue this idea.

4 **Cupid.** You gave him a face to allure, then why  
should not I give him eyes to pierce?

6 **Venus.** Oh Venus! unhappy Venus! who in bestowing  
8 a benefit upon a man, hast brought a bane unto a  
goddess. What perplexities dost thou feel? Oh, fair  
10 Phao! And therefore made fair to breed in me a frenzy!

7-9: **who in...goddess** = ie. who by giving the gift of beauty to Phao, has brought ruin (*a bane*) on herself.

= bewilderment.<sup>1</sup>  
= delirium.

12 Oh, would that when I gave thee golden locks to curl  
thy head, I had shackled thee with iron locks on thy

11-12: **golden...head** = ie. the gift of unsurpassed beauty. Note the pun on **locks**, with its meaning of "hair" in line 11 and "fetters" in line 12.

feet! And when I nursed thee, Sapho, with lettuce,

= the odd reference to **lettuce** here is probably explained by its appearance in the enigmatic first line of the very brief chapter on Phao in the *Various Histories* (one of Lyly's sources for this play), written by the Roman Aelian (c.175 - c.235 A.D.): "*Phaon, being the most beautiful of all men, was by Venus hid among lettices.*"<sup>14</sup> We may note that **lettuce** is mentioned in some 17th century works as a curative for an infant's inflammations and fever, when it is consumed by the baby's nurse.

14 would it had turned to hemlock! Have I brought a  
smooth skin over thy face, to make a rough scar in my

14: **hemlock** = well-known poisonous plant.

14-15: **brought...face** = ie. "made thee beautiful".

16 heart? And given thee a fresh colour like the damask  
rose, to make mine pale like the stained turquie? Oh

16-17: **damask rose** = well-known pink rose.

= allusion to the belief that the colour of turquoise (*turquie*) would turn lighter as a warning of impending danger for the jewel's wearer.<sup>5</sup>

18 Cupid, thy flames with Psyche's were but sparks, and  
my desires with Adonis but dreams, in respect of these  
20 unacquainted torments.

18-20: Cupid's and Venus' love for Psyche and Adonis respectively were nothing compared to the intensity of Venus' passion for Phao.

**in respect of** = compared to.

**unacquainted** = unfamiliar.<sup>1</sup>

The affair between **Cupid** and the princess **Psyche**, who were deeply in love, makes for one of the more pleasing tales of ancient myth. The god – a beautiful young man in this tale – secreted the mortal Psyche away to some unknown location, where he visited her every night, but only in the dark, so as to keep his identity secret; the god warned

		Psyche that the arrangement could continue only so long as she never discovered who her lover was. Urged on by her sisters, Psyche deliberately discovered Cupid's identity, driving him to abandon her. Mourning her loss, Psyche wandered aimlessly seeking Cupid, only to stumble into the palace of Venus, who, jealous of Psyche's attentions to Cupid, enslaved her. Cupid helped Psyche overcome Venus' hatred, and she (Psyche) was made immortal. The story ends with Psyche and Cupid marrying. Psyche has been understood to be the embodiment of the human soul. <sup>8</sup>
		<i>Adonis</i> was a beautiful young man beloved by <i>Venus</i> . Venus warned Adonis against his favourite sport, hunting, but he ignored her admonition, only to be killed by a wild boar. Venus, distraught, dripped nectar onto his flowing blood, from which sprung beautiful purple flowers, said to be the first anemones or hyacinths.
		<b>21-31 (below):</b> the dashes in the paragraph indicate where Venus' mood swings violently between distraught self-pity and proud exaltation.
	Laugh, Juno! Venus is in love; but Juno shall not	21-22: <i>Laugh...be in love</i> = Venus arrogantly mocks Juno, the queen of the gods. This is the first of several references in the play to the rivalry between Juno and Venus, which is described in a number of ancient sources. <sup>6</sup>
22	see with whom, lest she be in love. – Venus <u>belike</u> is	<i>lest she be in love</i> (line 22) = in case Juno too finds herself attracted to Phao.
24	become <u>stale</u> . Sapho, <u>forsooth</u> , because she hath many virtues, therefore she must have <u>all the favours</u> . Venus <u>waxeth</u> old; and <u>then</u> she was a pretty <u>wench</u> , when	22-27: <i>Venus...foot</i> = Venus wonders if she has lost her touch, due to her age. <i>belike</i> = likely. = worn-out, faded, ie. past her prime. <sup>2</sup> = certainly. <sup>1</sup> = the regard of all the men. <sup>1</sup> = grows. = ie. once. = lass.
26	Juno was a young wife; now <u>crow's foot</u> is on <u>her</u>	26: <i>crow's foot</i> = still current term used to describe the wrinkles that appear later in life near the corners of one's eyes. <i>her</i> = ie. Venus'.
	eye, and <u>the black ox hath trod on her foot</u> . – But were	27: <i>the black...foot</i> = ie. Venus has aged. The <i>black ox</i> was a symbol of age and adversity: <sup>1</sup> this exact expression goes back at least to 1546: " <i>the blacke oxe had not trode on his nor her foote</i> ." <i>troad</i> = trod, a common alternate form, 27-28: <i>But were...virtuous</i> = ie. "but no matter how virtuous Sapho is".
28	Sapho never so virtuous, doth she think to contend with Venus to be as amorous? Yield, Phao; but yield	28-29: <i>doth she...amorous</i> = ie. does Sapho think she can compete with Sapho in the game of love?
30	to me, Phao: I entreat where I may command; command thou, where thou shouldest entreat.	30-31: <i>I entreat...entreat</i> = Venus finds herself begging, when, as a goddess, she should be ordering Phao to submit himself to her.
32	In this case, Cupid, what is thy counsel? Venus must both play the lover and the dissembler, and therefore	32-34: <i>Venus...lover</i> = Venus has previously noted that deceit and disingenuousness are an inextricable part of the act of courtship.
34	the dissembler, because the lover.	

36 **Cupid.** You will ever be playing with arrows, like  
children with knives: and then, when you bleed, you

38 cry: go to Vulcan, entreat by prayers, threaten with  
40 blows, woo with kisses, ban with curses, try all means  
to rid these extremities.

42 **Venus.** To what end?

44 **Cupid.** That he might make me new arrows, for

46 nothing can root out the desires of Phao, but a new  
shaft of inconstancy; nor anything turn Sapho's heart,  
48 but a new arrow of disdain. And then, they disliking  
one the other, who shall enjoy Phao but Venus?

50 **Venus.** I will follow thy counsel. For Venus, though  
she be in her latter age for years, yet is she in her  
52 nonage for affections. When Venus ceaseth to love,  
let Jove cease to rule. But come, let us to Vulcan.

54 [Exeunt.]

### ACT IV, SCENE III.

*Sapho's Chamber: the curtains again drawn back.*

*Sapho, Mileta, Ismena, Eugenia, Lamyia,  
Favilla, and Canope.*

1 **Sapho.** What dreams are these, Mileta? And can there  
2 be no truth in dreams? Yea, dreams have their truth.  
Methought I saw a stockdove or woodquint, I know

4 not how to term it, that brought short straws to build  
his nest in a tall cedar, where, whiles with his bill he

6 was framing his building, he lost as many feathers  
from his wings as he laid straws in his nest; yet

8 scambling to catch hold to harbour in the house he had

10 made, he suddenly fell from the bough where he stood.  
And then, pitifully casting up his eyes, he cried in such  
terms (as I imagined) as might either condemn the

36-38: **You will...cry** = Venus should not be surprised to  
be getting hurt herself when she meddles with Cupid and his  
powerful – and very dangerous – arrows. Cupid seems to be  
metaphorically chiding Venus for involving herself too  
much in the affairs of human hearts, and should thus not be  
surprised to find herself incurring self-inflicted wounds.

38-40: **go to...extremities** = Venus should use all of a  
woman's manipulative tricks to obtain a favour from her  
husband Vulcan.

**ban** = "damn him".

**rid these extremities** = rectify this adverse situation.<sup>1</sup>

44-48: interestingly, Cupid can only reverse or supersede the  
effects of a previous arrow by shooting his victim with a  
new one.

45-47: **nothing...disdain** = the only way to turn Phao's  
affections away from Sapho is to strike him with an arrow  
that will cause him to be faithless to her; similarly, Sapho's  
yearning for Phao can only be ended by shooting her with  
an arrow which will cause her to scorn him.

**inconstancy** (line 46) = fickleness.

= "youth when it comes to love."<sup>1</sup>

= ie. go to.

**Entering Characters:** Sapho, still languishing in bed, is  
surrounded by her attendants. What follows is an entertain-  
ing, if pointless, debate about the meanings of the ladies'  
dreams.

= wild pigeon.<sup>1</sup> = ringdove or wood pigeon.<sup>1</sup>

4: **how to term it** = ie. what to call the bird in her dream.

4-5: **that brought...nest** = Bevington notes that long  
straws make for more stable and secure nests than do short  
straws.

= shaping or building his nest.

8: **scambling** = struggling; predecessor to "scrambling".<sup>1</sup>  
**harbour in the house** = shelter in the nest.

10-12: **he cried...a mind** = the bird's complaint about its  
predicament could be interpreted as either blaming the tree,

12	nature of such a tree, or the daring of such a mind.	or blaming itself, for being so ambitious as to attempt to build a nest in a tree as tall as the cedar.
14	Whilest he lay quaking upon the ground, and I gazing on the cedar, I <u>might perceive</u> ants to breed in the <u>rind</u> , <u>coveting only to hoard</u> , and caterpillars to <u>cleave</u> to the	= ie. saw. = bark. <sup>1</sup>  15: <b>coveting...hoard</b> = desiring only to amass provisions; note, however, that this is a description of ants as corrupt (see the note at after line 24 below); the more familiar and admirable image of ants as storers of food for the winter can be traced back to Aesop's famous story of the ant and the grasshopper. <b>cleave</b> = attach themselves.
16	leaves, labouring only to <u>suck</u> , which caused <u>mo</u>	16: <b>suck</b> = draw liquid or nutrients from the leaves, hence killing the tree. <b>mo</b> = ie. more, a common alternate form.
18	leaves to fall from the tree, than there did feathers before from the dove. Methought, Mileta, I sighed in my sleep, pitying both the <u>fortune</u> of the bird, and the	= (bad) luck. = hollow shafts of feathers, hence "new feathers". <sup>1</sup>
20	misfortune of the tree; but in this time, <u>quills</u> began to bud again in the bird, which made him look as though	
22	he would fly up, and then wished I that the body of the tree would <u>bow</u> , that he might but <u>creep</u> up the tree;	= ie. bow down. = climb.
24	then – and so – <u>hey ho</u> .	= again, Sapho is struck by a wave of ennui.
		<b>1-24 (above): Sapho's Dream:</b> according to Bond, the queen's dream was allegorical: The <b>cedar tree</b> represented Queen Elizabeth; The <b>ants</b> , human parasites who got rich at the government's expense; The <b>caterpillars</b> , England's Catholic clergy who were thought to always be plotting against the queen; and The <b>stockdove</b> , Robert Dudley, the 1st Earl of Leicester, who was a suitor for the queen's hand for many years; Leicester fell into disgrace in 1579-1580, only to return to favour afterwards (see Bond, p. 562). <sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Daniel sees Sapho's dream as "simply an allegory for yearning" (page 365). <sup>4</sup>
26	<b>Mileta.</b> And so what?	
28	<b>Sapho.</b> Nothing Mileta: but, <u>and so I waked</u> . But did nobody dream but I?	= note that Lyly imputed basically this same line to Queen Elizabeth at the conclusion of the Prologue at Court, ie. "And so you awaked." <sup>6</sup>
30		
32	<b>Mileta.</b> I dreamed last night – but I hope dreams are <u>contrary</u> – that holding my head over a sweet smoke, all my hair blazed on a bright flame. Methought Ismena	= ie. they predict the opposite of what will happen.
34	cast water to quench it: yet the sparks fell on my bosom, and, wiping them away with my hand, I was	
36	<u>all in gore blood</u> , till <u>one</u> with a few fresh flowers	36: <b>all in gore blood</b> = covered in gory or clotted blood; <sup>1</sup> <b>gore blood</b> was a surprisingly common collocation of the 16th and 17 centuries. <b>one</b> = ie. someone.
		= ie. stopped the flow of the blood. <sup>1</sup> = ie. was startled, and hence woke up.
38	<u>staunch</u> ed it. And so stretching myself as stiff, I <u>start</u> ed: it was but a dream.	

40	<b>Ism.</b> It is a sign you shall fall in love with hearing fair	40-41: <b>with hearing fair words</b> = ie. "with the man who speaks flattering to you."
42	words. Water <u>signifieth counsel</u> , flowers death. And	= "represents the giving of advice".
44	<b>Mileta.</b> You are no interpreter, but an <u>inter-prater</u> ,	= "dislodge your inclination towards amorousness".
46	<u>harping</u> always upon love, till you be as blind as a harper.	= the OED defines this unique word (invented by Lyly) to mean "one who prates (ie. chatters) at intervals"; this is the only citation for this entry in the OED, and is in fact the only appearance of this word in all of old English literature.
48	<b>Ism.</b> I remember <u>last night but one</u> : I dreamed <u>mine eyetooth</u> was loose, and that I thrust it out with my	45: <b>harping</b> = dwelling tiresomely.
50	tongue.	45-46: <b>blind as a harper</b> = proverbial conceit in English literature.
52	<b>Mileta.</b> It foretelleth the loss of a friend: and I <u>ever</u> thought <u>thee so full of prattle</u> , that thou wouldest thrust	= ie. two nights previous. = ie. my.
54	out <u>the</u> best friend with thy <u>tattling</u> .	= ie. canine tooth. <sup>1</sup>
56	<b>Ism.</b> Yea, Mileta, but it was loose before; and if my friend be <u>loose</u> , <u>as good thrust out</u> with plain words,	= always.
58	<u>as kept in with dissembling</u> .	53: <b>thee...prattle</b> = ie. "that you were so full of idle talk".
60	<b>Eug.</b> Dreams are but <u>dotings</u> , which <u>come</u> either by things we see in the day, or <u>meats</u> that we eat, and so	53-54: <b>thrust out</b> = ie. like a tooth: hence, "lose".
62	the common sense <u>preferring</u> it to be the imaginative.	= Bevington emends to <b>thy</b> . = gossiping. <sup>1</sup>
64	<b>Ism.</b> <u>Soft</u> , <u>philosophatrix</u> , well <u>seen</u> in the secrets of <u>art</u> , and not <u>seduced</u> with the superstitions of nature!	= lascivious, wanton. = "it is better to break up with the friend".
66		= ie. than to keep up a false friendship.
68	<b>Sapho.</b> Ismena's tongue never lieth still: I think all her teeth will be loose, they are so often jogged against her tongue. But say on, Eugenia.	= foolishness. = ie. are brought on.
70	<b>Eug.</b> <u>There</u> is all.	= food.
72	<b>Sapho.</b> What did you dream, Canope?	62: ie. "it is generally understood that dreams are nothing more than the product of imagination." Eugenia is dismissive of the other ladies' interpretive approach to dreaming.
74	<b>Can.</b> I seldom dream, Madam: but <u>sithence</u> your sickness, I cannot tell <u>whether with overwatching</u> ,	<b>preferring</b> = promoting. <sup>3</sup>
76		64-65: Ismena, in turn, lightly mocks Eugenia's "scientific" view of the insignificance of dreams.
		<b>Soft</b> = "wait a moment".
		<b>philosophatrix</b> = female philosopher; another word invented by Lyly. As with <b>inter-prater</b> above, this is the only appearance of this word in old English literature; in this case, however, the word is completely absent from the OED.
		<b>seen</b> = skilled.
		<b>art</b> = scholarship or science. <sup>2</sup>
		<b>seduced</b> = misled. <sup>1</sup>
		= ie. that.
		= since.
		= "if it is due to exhaustion from my keeping watch over you without sleep for so long".

78 but I have had many fantastical visions; for even  
 80 now, slumbering by your bed's side, methought I was  
 82 shadowed with a cloud, where labouring to unwrap  
 84 myself, I was more entangled. But in the midst of my  
 86 striving, it seemed to mizzle gold, with fair drops; I  
 88 filled my lap, and running to shew it my fellows, it  
 turned to dust. I blushed, they laughed; and then I  
 waked, being glad it was but a dream.

**Ism.** Take heed, Canope, that gold tempt not your lap,  
 and then you blush for shame.

**Can.** It is good luck to dream of gold.

**Ism.** Yea, if it had continued gold.

**Lamia.** I dream every night, and the last night this: me  
 thought that, walking in the sun, I was stung with the  
fly tarantula, whose venom nothing can expel but the  
 sweet consent of music. I tried all kind of instruments,

but found no ease, till, at the last, two lutes tuned in  
 one key so glutted my thirsting ears, that my grief  
 presently ceased, for joy whereof as I was clapping my  
 hands, your ladyship called.

**Mileta.** It is a sign that nothing shall assuage your  
 love but marriage: for such is the tying of two in  
 wedlock, as is the tuning of two lutes in one key: for  
 striking the strings of the one, straws will stir upon the

strings of the other; and in two minds linked in love,  
 one cannot be delighted but the other rejoiceth.

**Fav.** Methought, going by the seaside among pebbles,  
 I saw one playing with a round stone, ever throwing it

= concealed within.<sup>1</sup>

81: *it seemed...gold* = ie. the cloud seemed to drizzle gold.  
 = "show the gold to my companions".

86-87: Ismena warns Canope not to let herself be tempted to  
 give herself over to a man just because he showers her with  
 gifts or other forms of his wealth. There is a possible  
 allusion to the myth of the beautiful maiden *Danae*, who  
 was visited by Jupiter in the guise of a shower of gold,  
 impregnating her. References to the gold falling into the *lap*  
 of *Danae* were common in this era.

*Take heed* = beware.

*lap* = perhaps referring to the front portion of Canope's  
 skirt (OED def. 4b); *lap* was also sometimes used to refer to  
 the female genitalia (OED def. 3b).

91: ie. "yes, if I had found real gold in front of me when  
 I awoke."<sup>6</sup>

94-96: *I was stung...music* = Lyly was the first to refer to  
 the *tarantula* as a type of *fly*; a few tantalizing 17th century  
 works described a fit of joyful madness or uncontrolled  
 laughter that resulted from the bite of the tarantula. This  
 frenzy, called *tarantism* by 17th century writers, was thought  
 to have been possibly fatal, and only curable upon the  
 playing of music. The OED states that an epidemic of  
 frenzied dancing caused by tarantism actually took place in  
 Italy in the 15th-17th centuries.

*with* (line 94) = by.

*consent* = harmony.

= relief (from the effects of the bite).

= alleviate.

104-6: *for striking...other* = a mixed metaphor for descri-  
 bing the deep connection between two minds joined in love:

(1) the vibrations of one instrument's *strings* will cause  
 the strings of another to vibrate as well; and

(2) the rustle, or *stirring*, of a *straw* was often used as a  
 metaphor for the subtle effect of, e.g. a soft wind.

= ie. "just as".

110: *one* = someone.

	into the water when the sun shined: I asked the name;	110-1: <i>ever...shined</i> = continuously immersing the stone into water to keep it from igniting. <sup>3</sup>
112	he said it was called “asbeston”, which, being once <u>hot</u> , would never be cold. He gave it me, and vanished.	112-3: <i>it was called...cold</i> = the legendary stone known as <i>asbeston</i> was thought to be unquenchable once it caught fire. <sup>1</sup> <i>hot</i> = spelling in the 16th century remained casual, but the B.L. quarto's particularly unusual rendering of <i>hot</i> as <i>whotte</i> is worth mentioning.
114	I, forgetting myself, delighted with the fair <u>show</u> ,	= the spelling of individual words was wildly inconsistent even within 16th century publications: the B.L. quarto prints <i>show</i> here, but <i>shew</i> elsewhere, even in the next line!
116	would always shew it by candlelight, pull it out in the sun, and see how bright it would look in the fire, where, catching heat, nothing could cool it. <u>For</u> anger,	= out of.
118	I threw it against the wall, and, with the heaving up of mine arm, I waked.	
120	<b>Mileta.</b> Beware of love, Favilla; for women's hearts	
122	are such stones, which, warmed by <u>affection</u> , cannot be cooled by wisdom.	= passion.
124	<b>Fav.</b> <u>I warrant you</u> , for I never <u>credit</u> men's words.	= ie. "I assure you what you say is true". <sup>1</sup> = believe.
126	<b>Ism.</b> Yet be wary, for women are scorched sometimes	
128	with men's eyes, though they had rather <u>consume</u> than <u>confess</u> .	= metaphorically "burn up", hence "pine" or "waste away". <sup>1</sup> = ie. admit to being in love.
130	<b>Sapho.</b> Cease your talking; for I <u>would fain</u> sleep, to	= desire to.
132	see if I can dream whether the bird hath feathers or the ants wings. Draw the curtain.	132-3: <i>see if...wings</i> = Sapho hopes to resume her dream!
134		
	[ <i>The curtains close.</i> ]	
	 <u>ACT IV, SCENE IV.</u>	
	<i>Vulcan's Forge.</i>	<b>Scene IV:</b> we have here a creative stage producer's dream, perhaps the most fantastical scene setting in the entire Lyly canon: the workshop of the blacksmith god, Vulcan, located underneath the volcano Mt. Etna in Sicily. Vulcan was assisted in the smithy by a team of Cyclops, the famous one-eyed giants.
	 <i>Enter Venus and Cupid, and, separately, Vulcan and Calypho.</i>	<b>Entering Characters:</b> in order for Venus' love for Phao to be consummated, the mutual desire between Phao and Sapho will have to be quashed. To accomplish this, Cupid will have to strike the couple with new arrows, which he at present does not possess. Venus has thus come to Vulcan to ask him to manufacture for Cupid a new set of arrows. The crippled Vulcan is naturally suspicious of anything Venus does, since she regularly cheats on him. Venus' request will require from her a generous dose of persuasive sweet-talk to get what she wants from her husband.

1	<b>Venus.</b> Come, Cupid, Vulcan's flames must quench	1-2: metaphorically, Vulcan must forge new arrows for
2	Venus' <u>fires</u> . – Vulcan?	Cupid to use in order for Venus' passion (her <i>fires</i> ) to
4		be fulfilled.
	[ <i>Vulcan looks out of the Forge.</i> ]	
6	<b>Vulcan.</b> Who?	
8	<b>Venus.</b> Venus.	
10	<b>Vulcan.</b> Ho ho! Venus.	
12	<b>Venus.</b> Come, sweet Vulcan. Thou knowest how	
14	sweet thou hast found Venus, who, being of all the	= ie. to be her spouse.
16	goddesses the most fair, <u>hath chosen thee</u> , of all the	= ugliest.
	gods the <u>most foul</u> . Thou must needs then confess I	= request.
	was most loving. Inquire not the cause of my <u>suit</u> by	= "alleviate the (harm caused by my) problem as a favour."
	questions, but <u>prevent the effects by courtesy</u> . Make	
18	me six arrowheads. It is given thee of the gods by	18-19: <b><i>It is given...purpose</i></b> = Vulcan has the power to give
	permission to frame them to any purpose. I shall	the arrows any capabilities he wants them to have.
20	request them by prayer. – Why <u>lourest</u> thou, Vulcan?	= frownest or scowlest.
22	Wilt thou have a kiss? Hold up thy head: Venus hath	
	young thoughts and fresh affections. Roots have	22-23: <b><i>Roots...leaves</i></b> = a metaphor for what Venus de-
		scribes as the deep and abiding love she has for Vulcan,
		despite her frequent straying.
		<b><i>strings</i></b> (line 23) = fine threads or filaments. <sup>1</sup>
24	strings, when boughs have no leaves. But <u>hearken</u> in	= listen.
	thine ear, Vulcan: how sayest thou?	
26	<b>Vulcan.</b> Vulcan is a god with you when you are	= a genuine woman, ie. the real thing, meant cynically.
	disposed to flatter. <u>A right woman</u> , whose tongue is	
28	like a bee's sting, which pricketh deepest when it is	28-29: <b><i>a bee's sting...honey</i></b> = Lyly had previously (in
	fullest of honey. Because you have made mine eyes	<i>Euphues</i> ) used the same analogy to make the point that
		women are most dangerous when they flatter. <sup>3,6</sup>
30	<u>drunk</u> with fair looks, you will set mine ears on edge	= ie. drunk, a common 16th century alternate form.
32	with sweet words. You were <u>wont</u> to say that the	= accustomed.
34	beating of hammers made your head ache, and the	
	smoke of the forge your eyes water, and every coal	34-35: <b><i>You weep...obtained</i></b> = Venus begs most piteously
	was a block in your way. You weep rose water when	when she wants something from Vulcan, but the moment
	you ask, and spit vinegar when you have obtained.	he has given her what she wants, she returns to her normal
		mode of speaking to him with open loathing.
36	What <u>would you</u> now with new arrows? Belike Mars	36: <b><i>would you</i></b> = "do you want".
38	hath a tougher skin on his heart, or Cupid a weaker	36-38: <b><i>Belike...courage</i></b> = Vulcan grimly brings up
	arm, or Venus a better courage. Well, Venus, there is	Venus' notorious affair with Mars; mocking Venus, he
		guesses that she needs more powerful arrows to regain the
		affections of Mars, who is perhaps no longer interested in
		her.
	never a smile in your face but hath made a wrinkle in	39-40: <b><i>made a wrinkle...forehead</i></b> = ie. brought Vulcan
		anxiety.
40	my forehead. <u>Ganymedes</u> must fill your cup, and you	40-41: <b><i>Ganymedes...Jupiter</i></b> = per Bond, Vulcan is pointing

will pledge none but Jupiter. But I will not chide

42 Venus. – Come, Cyclops, my wife must have her will:  
 44 let us do that in earth which the gods cannot undo in  
 heaven.

46 **Venus.** Gramercy, sweet Vulcan: to your work.

48 [*The Song, in making of the arrows.*]

50 **Vulcan.** My shag-hair Cyclops, come let's ply  
*Our Lemnian hammers lustily.*

52 *By my wife's sparrows,*  
 54 *I swear these arrows*  
*Shall singing fly*  
*Through many a wanton's eye.*

56 *These headed are with golden blisses,*

58 *These silver ones feathered with kisses,*  
*But this of lead*

60 *Strikes a clown dead,*  
*When in a dance*  
*He falls in a trance.*

62 *To see his black-brow lass not buss him,*  
*And then whines out for Death t' untruss him.*

64 *So, so, our work being done, let's play,*  
 66 *Holiday, boys, cry holiday!*

68 **Vulcan.** Here, Venus, I have finished these arrows by  
art, bestow them you by wit; for as great advice must  
 he use that hath them, as he cunning that made them.

70

out how Venus always prefers the best that life has to offer.  
**Ganymedes** = cup-bearer of the gods.

= ie. to Calypho.

43-44: Vulcan refers to the ancient rule of the pantheon that no god can undo any spell cast by any other god.  
**that** = ie. cause people to fall in love.<sup>6</sup>

= thank you.

= shaggy. = employ, work.

51: **Lemnian hammers** = allusion to the **hammers** of Vulcan and his fellow blacksmiths, and to the island of **Lemnos** onto which Vulcan fell when Jupiter tossed him off of Mt. Olympus, laming him. The islanders tended him during his recovery. See the note at Act 1.i.36.  
**lustily** = vigorously.

52: **sparrows** were sacred to Venus.

= loose woman's.

56-58: Vulcan describes the features of some of the arrows he is making. Some have golden heads, some silver, and some lead.  
**line 56:** "the heads of these arrow are infused with golden joys (**blisses**)".<sup>1</sup>

58-63: traditionally, when Cupid struck someone with a **lead**-headed arrow, it caused the victim to fall to loathing, rather than loving, another.  
 = peasant or otherwise ignorant man.

62-63: the despondent lover wants only to die when his scowling (**black-brow**) girl refuses to kiss (**buss**) him, after she has been struck by the leaden arrow.  
**t' untruss him** = ie. "to untruss him", a metaphor for "take his life", or some such: **to untruss** was to undress in part by undoing one's points (tagged laces used to attach one's hose to one's doublet).<sup>1,2</sup>

68: **art** = skill.  
**bestow...by wit** = "use them wisely."  
 68-69: **for as...made them** = the possessor of these arrows must use them with judgment which is as good as is the skill of the man who made them.

	<b>Venus.</b> Vulcan, now you have done with your forge,	71-73: with arrows in hand, Venus, unsurprisingly, reverts to her accustomed surly manner towards her husband!
72	<u>let us alone with the fancy</u> . You are <u>as the fletcher</u> , not the archer; to meddle with the arrow, not the aim.	72: <i>let us...fancy</i> = ie. "keep your flights of imagination to yourself!"
		72-73: <i>You are...aim</i> = since Vulcan is only the manufacturer of the arrow ( <i>the fletcher</i> ), <sup>1</sup> his advice regarding how to fire them is unwelcome.
		<i>as</i> = like.
74		
76	<b>Vulcan.</b> I thought so: when I have done working, you have done wooing. Where is now "sweet Vulcan"?	75-78: Vulcan is not surprised by his wife's about-face.
78	Well, I can say no more but this, which is enough and as much as any can say: <u>Venus is a woman</u> .	= common Elizabethan poet's complaint about the fickleness of women.
80	<b>Venus.</b> Be not angry, Vulcan: I will love thee again, when I have either business or nothing else to do.	
82		
84	<b>Vulcan.</b> My <u>mother</u> will make much of you, when there are no more men than Vulcan.	83-84: Juno (Vulcan's <i>mother</i> ) will have the last laugh when he (Vulcan) is the last man on earth, <sup>6</sup> and there are no other men alive for Venus to love: another reference to the contentious relationship between Juno and Venus.
86	<i>[Vulcan retires into the Forge.]</i>	
	END OF ACT IV.	

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.

*The same: Vulcan's Forge.*

*Still on Stage: Venus, Cupid.*

1 **Venus.** Come, Cupid, receive with thy father's  
2 instruments thy mother's instructions: for thou  
must be wise in conceit, if thou wilt be fortunate  
4 in execution.  
6 This arrow is feathered with the wings of aegitus,  
which never sleepeth for fear of his hen; the head  
touched with the stone perillus, which causeth mistrust  
8 and jealousy. Shoot this, Cupid, at men that have fair  
wives, which will make them rub the brows when they  
10 swell in the brains.  
This shaft is headed with Lydian steel, which  
12 striketh a deep disdain of that which we most desire;  
the feathers are of turtle, but dipped in the blood of a

**Scene Setting:** Venus and Cupid, still on stage, converse as they make their way to the palace.<sup>3</sup>

**Scene I:** having received the completed order from **Vulcan**, **Venus** catalogues her six new arrows, describing each one's function and the material of which each is comprised.

To help the reader keep track, here is a summary of the features of Cupid's brand new arrows:

**Arrow #1** (lines 5-10): to be shot at husbands of beautiful wives, with the effect of causing them (the husbands) to suspect their wives' fidelity.

**Arrow #2** (11-17): cause the victim to hate whomever he or she loves at the moment he or she is struck. **Venus intends this arrow to be shot at Sapho, which will cause her to hate Phao.**

**Arrow #3** (18-25): cause the victim to suddenly possess a mature and faithful love for another. **Venus intends this arrow to be shot at Phao.**

**Arrow #4** (26-41): cause a woman to become a flirt.

**Arrow #5** (42-46): cause the victim to hate those who are actively pursuing him or her.

**Arrow #6** (47-52): cause the victim to fall in love only with those outside of his or her rank or station in life.

Bevington notes that Lyly has creatively augmented traditional ancient mythology, in which Cupid only possessed two types of arrows, viz. gold and lead, with which he could cause his targets to fall in love and loathing respectively.

= ie. Vulcan: different stories in mythology assigned Cupid different fathers, including Mars, but never Vulcan.<sup>6</sup>  
= weapons,<sup>1</sup> ie. the arrows.  
= judgment.<sup>2</sup>

5-6: **This arrow...hen** = Pliny describes the *aegithus* as a type of hawk which is lame in one leg (10.9). Venus' suggestion that this raptor worries about his mate being unfaithful (**for fear of his hen**)<sup>3</sup> is Lyly's invention, as is the *perillus* stone of line 7.<sup>3</sup>

9-10: **which will...brains** = the sense is that the cuckolded husbands will feel the horns growing on their foreheads as the agitation of suspicion heightens.

= the idea that the *steel* produced in *Lydia*, a state located in western Asia Minor on the Aegean Sea, was of superior quality, originated here with Lyly, and was borrowed by numerous succeeding authors.

12: causes its struck victim to hate whomever he or she loves the most.  
= from a turtledove.

14	a tigress. <u>Draw this up close to the head</u> at Sapho, that  she may despise <u>where now she dotes</u> . <u>Good my boy</u> ,	= ie. fire this arrow with great force; see the note at Act I.i.71.
16	<u>gall</u> her on the side, that for Phao's love she may  never sigh.	15: <b>where now she dotes</b> = ie. Phao, with whom she is infatuated at present. <b>Good my boy</b> = ie. "my good lad": a poetic vocative expression, paralleling the commonly used "good my lord".
18	This arrow is feathered with the <u>phoenix</u> ' wing, and	= penetrate (with this arrow); <sup>1</sup> <i>to gall with arrows</i> was a common collocation.
20	headed with the eagle's bill: it maketh men passionate in desires, in love <u>constant</u> , and <u>wise in conveyance</u> ,	= the <b>phoenix</b> was the well-known bird which lived for 500 years before being consumed by fire, after which it would rise from the ashes in a youthful state, and live its life all over again.
22	<u>melting, as it were, their fancies into faith</u> . This arrow,	20: <b>constant</b> = faithful. <b>wise in conveyance</b> = discreet in manner of expression, <sup>1</sup> or skilled in conducting courtship. <sup>6</sup>
24	sweet child, and with as great aim as thou canst, must Phao be stricken <u>withal</u> , and cry softly to thyself in the very <u>loose</u> , "Venus"! Sweet Cupid, mistake me	= transforming playful attraction into a mature and loyal love.
26	not; I will make a quiver for that by itself. The fourth hath feathers of the peacock, but glued with the gum of <u>the myrtle tree</u> , headed with fine	23: <b>withal</b> = with. 23-24: <b>cry softly...Venus</b> = by calling out Venus' name as he releases ( <b>loose</b> = release) the arrow, Cupid will cause his victim – Phao – to fall in love with Venus.
28	gold, and <u>fastened</u> with brittle <u>chrysocoll</u> . This shoot	= the <b>myrtle tree</b> was sacred to Venus. <sup>12</sup>
30	at <u>dainty</u> and coy ladies, at <u>amiable</u> and young nymphs:  choose no other <u>white</u> but women, for this will work	28: <b>fastened</b> = ie. the head is attached to the shaft. <b>chrysocoll</b> = ie. chrysocholla, a substance whose name means "gold-solder"; <sup>1</sup> Pliny describes <b>chrysocoll</b> as a liquid which is found in mining shafts (33.26).
32	liking in their minds, but not love; <u>affability</u> in speech,  but no <u>faith</u> ; courtly favours to be mistresses over	= fastidious. <sup>1</sup> = lovely. <sup>1</sup>
34	many, but constant to none; sighs to be fetched from  the lungs, not the heart; and tears to be <u>wrong out</u> with their fingers, not their eyes; secret laughing at	30: <b>white</b> = target: an archery term, referring to the white target at the center of a ring. <sup>2</sup> 30-35: <b>this will work...eyes</b> = a woman struck with this arrow will be turned into a flirt, charmed to enjoy men without loving them.  = geniality, friendliness. <sup>1</sup> 32: <b>faith</b> = constancy or loyalty in love. 32-33: <b>courtly...to none</b> = she will give her favours to many men, but will stick with no single one. 33-34: <b>sighs...heart</b> = a particularly clever contrast: there will be no genuine emotion behind her ostensible sighing out of love; her sighs will be strictly for show. 34-35: <b>tears...eyes</b> = ie. engaging in (manipulative) feigned weeping. <sup>6</sup> <b>wrong out</b> = ie. wrung out, a common alternate form.

36 men's pale looks and neat attire; open rejoicing at their  
own comeliness and men's courting. Shoot this arrow  
38 among the thickest of them, whose bosoms lie open  
because they would be stricken with it. And seeing  
40 men term women "Jupiter's fools", women shall make  
men "Venus' fools".  
42 This shaft is lead in the head, and whose feathers  
are of the night raven: a deadly and poisoned shaft,  
44 which breedeth hate only against those which sue  
for love. Take heed, Cupid, thou hit not Phao with  
46 this shaft, for then shall Venus perish.  
This last is an old arrow, but newly mended, the  
48 arrow which hit both Sapho and Phao, working only  
in mean minds an aspiring to superiors, and in high  
50 estates a stooping to inferiors. With this, Cupid, I  
am galled myself, till thou have galled Phao with the  
52 other.  
54 **Cupid.** I warrant you, I will cause Phao to languish in  
your love, and Sapho to disdain his.  
56 **Venus.** Go, loiter not, nor mistake your shaft.  
58  
[Exit Cupid.]  
60 Now, Venus, hast thou played a cunning part, though

36: *men's pale looks* = the *pale* countenances said to be possessed by men who pine away in love.  
*neat attire* = their fine or elegant clothing (worn to impress the ladies).<sup>1</sup>  
37: *comeliness* = beauty.  
*men's courting* = ie. the struck women enjoy the attention of men, without intending to consummate any single relationship.  
38-39: *among...with it* = "into the densest crowd of those women who want to be struck by this arrow." The image is of a throng of women, each one pulling open her upper garments in the conventional pose of one who is asking to be pierced in the heart with an opponent's dagger or sword.  
= ie. seeing that.  
40: *men...fools* = ie. because so many women have been seduced by the lecherous Jupiter.<sup>6</sup>  
40-41: *women shall...fools* = ie. by teasing and flirting with men, thus drawing them into falling in love, without any intention of returning their suitors' affections.  
42-46: Cupid's lesser-known *lead-headed* arrows were said to produce hatred in their victims.  
= ie. hence black.  
44-45: *which breedeth...for love* = which will cause the victim to hate any suitor who pursues him or her.  
45-46: *Take heed...perish* = if Cupid were to shoot this arrow at Phao, he would loathe Venus, who is in love with him: and this Venus could not bear!  
= restored or refurbished.  
48-50: *working...inferior* = here is an arrow which causes its victims to fall in love with those outside of their own societal status.  
50-52: *With this...other* = in having fallen for the working-class Phao, Venus feels herself to have figuratively been struck with arrow #6; as such, she sees herself as vexed (*I am galled*) until Cupid strikes (*have galled*) Phao with arrow #3, by which Phao will fall in love with Venus!  
= assure. = pine for.<sup>1</sup>  
57: Venus warns her mischievous son not to shoot the wrong arrows at the wrong persons!  
*loiter not* = "waste no time", ie. "get going!"  
61: *part* = role, as in a play.  
61-62: *though not current* = perhaps meaning "though I am not being genuine", ie. her real self, or "though I am not engaging in acceptable behaviour", ie. "her conduct goes against law and custom" (Bevington, p. 291).<sup>6</sup> In *Euphues*,

62 not current. – But why should Venus dispute of  
 64 unlawfulness in love, or faith in affection, being both  
 the goddess of love and affection, knowing there is as  
 little truth to be used in love, as there is reason? No,  
 66 sweet Phao, Venus will obtain because she is Venus.  
Not thou, Jove, with thunder in thy hand, shalt take  
 68 him out of my hands. I have new arrows now for my  
 boy, and fresh flames at which the gods shall tremble,  
 if they begin to trouble me. But I will expect the event,  
 and tarry for Cupid at the forge.

[Exit.]

## ACT V, SCENE II.

*A Room in Sapho's Palace.*

*Enter Sapho, Cupid, and Mileta.*

1 **Sapho.** What hast thou done, Cupid?  
 2  
 3 **Cupid.** That my mother commanded, Sapho.  
 4  
 5 **Sapho.** Methinks I feel an alteration in mind, and, as it  
 6 were, a withdrawing in myself of mine own affections.  
 7  
 8 **Cupid.** Then hath mine arrow his effect.  
 9  
 10 **Sapho.** I pray thee, tell me the cause.  
 11  
 12 **Cupid.** I dare not.  
 13  
 14 **Sapho.** Fear nothing: for if Venus fret, Sapho can  
frown: thou shalt be my son – Mileta, give him some  
 16 sweetmeats. – Speak, good Cupid, and I will give thee  
 many pretty things.  
 18  
**Cupid.** My mother is in love with Phao. She willed

Lyly described Venus as **current** in the former sense: "...with  
 as many inventions to make Venus current, as the ladies use  
 slights in Italy to make themselves counterfeit."

62-65: **But why...reason** = "but why am I debating the mer-  
 its of love – whether it is immoral (**unlawful**),<sup>1</sup> or whether  
 there can exist genuine faithfulness in lovers – when I am  
 the goddess of love, and am perfectly aware that much dis-  
 sembling goes on in the affairs of love?"

= ie. "possess you".

67: **Not thou** = ie. "not even thou".

**with thunder in thy hand** = Jupiter (aka **Jove**), as the god  
 of **thunder** and lightning, could strike a man or god down  
 with the latter.

= ie. await the outcome (of Cupid's assignment).

= wait.

**Scene II:** Cupid has completed the first part of his assign-  
 ment, striking Sapho with arrow #2, effacing her obsession  
 with Phao.

**Entering Characters:** on entering, Sapho sits on her throne.

= ie. that which.

= an abating of her love-sickness.

**withdrawing** = appears as **withstanding** in the B.L.  
 quarto, but emended as shown in the alternate quartos.

= its.

12: Cupid fears telling the queen what he has done; but  
 Sapho, still believing that Venus is on her side, interprets his  
 anxiety as a worry that his mother will punish him for his  
 actions.

= complains, or is vexed.<sup>2</sup>

15: **frown** = ie. at Venus, meaning she can handle the god-  
 dess.

15-16: **Mileta...sweetmeats** = Sapho bribes the boy-  
 god into spilling the beans by giving him candy.

**sweetmeats** = sugared fruits, confectionaries.<sup>1</sup>

20	me to strike you with disdain of him, and him with desire of her.	
22		
24	<b>Sapho.</b> Oh, <u>spiteful Venus!</u> – Mileta, give him some of that. – What else, Cupid?	= Sapho is naturally upset with Venus, who had promised to help her at Act IV.i.32.
26	<b>Cupid.</b> I could <u>be even</u> with my mother, and so I will if I <u>shall</u> call you mother.	= ie. get even. = may.
28		
30	<b>Sapho.</b> Yea, Cupid, call me anything, so I may be even with her.	
32	<b>Cupid.</b> I have an arrow, with which if I strike Phao, it will cause him to <u>loathe only</u> Venus.	32-33: Cupid refers to arrow #5 (see the introductory note of Scene I above). <b>loathe only</b> = feel only hatred towards.
34		
36	<b>Sapho.</b> Sweet Cupid, strike Phao with it. Thou shalt sit in my lap: I will rock thee asleep, and feed thee with all these fine <u>knacks</u> .	= delicacies, but could also refer to knick-knacks. <sup>1</sup> Christopher Marlowe, in his first play, <i>Dido, Queen of Carthage</i> , borrowed the idea of having Cupid sit on the lap of his female protagonist, but in that case, Cupid did so on Venus' orders.
38		
40	<b>Cupid.</b> I will <u>about it</u> .	= get to it.
42	[Exit Cupid.]	
44	<b>Sapho.</b> But come quickly again. – Ah, unkind Venus, is this thy promise to Sapho? But if I get Cupid from thee, I myself will be the queen of love. I will direct these arrows with better aim, and conquer mine own	
46		46-47: <b>conquer...modesty</b> = ie. "regain control of my own emotions."
48	affections with greater modesty. Venus' heart shall <u>flame</u> , and her love be as common as her <u>craft</u> . – Oh,	47-48: <b>Venus'...craft</b> = Sapho means she will drive Venus crazy by having Cupid ply her repeatedly with his golden arrows, so that she will be continuously consumed with love for others, such burning amorousness becoming as ubiquitous in her as is her constant scheming and deceit ( <b>craft</b> ). 48: <b>flame</b> = ie. burn uncontrollably.
	Mileta, time hath disclosed that which my <u>temperance</u>	49-50: <b>time...kept in</b> = finally, Sapho is ready to reveal the cause of her incapacity. <b>temperance</b> = self-control. <sup>1</sup> <b>kept in</b> (line 50) = ie. kept undisclosed. <sup>6</sup>
50	hath kept in; but <u>sith</u> I am rid of <u>the disease</u> , I will not be ashamed to confess the cause: I loved Phao, Mileta,	= since. = ie. her love-sickness.
52	a thing unfit for my <u>degree</u> , but forced by my desire.	= social status, rank.
54	<b>Mileta.</b> Phao?	
56	<b>Sapho.</b> Phao, Mileta, of whom now Venus is enamoured.	
58		
60	<b>Mileta.</b> And do you love him still?	
	<b>Sapho.</b> No, I feel <u>relenting</u> thoughts, and reason not	61: <b>relenting</b> = abating. 61-62: <b>reason...appetite</b> = ie. she has mastered her

		lustful desires ( <i>appetite</i> ).
62	yielding to appetite. Let Venus have him – no, she shall not have him. But here comes Cupid.	62-63: <b>Let Venus...not have him</b> = at first inclined to be generous, Sapho suddenly remembers that she has sent Cupid on a mission which will prevent Venus from obtaining Phao.
64		
66	[ <i>Re-enter Cupid, who sits in Sapho's lap.</i> ]	65: here we have a good example of the stage technique which may be called a <i>Compression of Time</i> : in the brief time it took to complete less than 20 lines of dialogue, Cupid was able to find Phao and shoot him with an arrow, and then return to Sapho's court.
	How now my boy, hast thou done it?	
68	<b>Cupid.</b> Yea, and left Phao <u>railing on</u> Venus, and	= ranting abusively against. <sup>1</sup>
70	cursing her name; <u>yet still sighing for Sapho</u> , and	= we must remember that Cupid struck Phao with arrow #5, which caused him to turn to loathing only those women who were in love with him; since Sapho, previously struck by arrow #2, no longer was in love with Phao, Phao's longing for Sapho has remained undiminished.
	<u>blazing</u> her virtues.	= proclaiming. <sup>1</sup>
72		
74	<b>Sapho.</b> Alas, poor Phao! thy extreme love should not be <u>requited with so mean a fortune</u> ; thy fair face	= repaid with such bad luck.
76	deserved greater favours. I cannot <u>love</u> : Venus hath hardened my heart.	= ie. "love you."
78	[ <i>Enter Venus.</i> ]	<b>Entering Character:</b> we last saw <b>Venus</b> at the end of the previous scene, waiting at Vulcan's forge for Cupid to return after completing his mission. Impatient, she has come to the palace to search for her wayward son.
80	<b>Venus.</b> I marvel Cupid cometh not all this while. –	
82	How now, in Sapho's lap?	
84	<b>Sapho.</b> Yea, Venus, what say you to it? In Sapho's lap.	
86	<b>Venus.</b> <u>Sir boy</u> , come hither.	= a mock-formal term of address, used when reprimanding a young lad.
88	<b>Cupid.</b> I will not.	
90	<b>Venus.</b> What now? Will <u>you</u> not! Hath Sapho made you so saucy?	90-91: Venus normally, and properly, uses <b>thou</b> when addressing Cupid, but with <b>you</b> , she signals a break in intimacy, a formal emotional distancing natural in a moment of anger.
92		
94	<b>Cupid.</b> I will be Sapho's son. I have, as you commanded, stricken her with a deep disdain of Phao; and Phao, as she <u>entreated</u> me, with a great <u>despite of</u> you.	= ie. "and I have struck Phao". = asked. = contempt for.
96		
98	<b>Venus.</b> <u>Unhappy wag</u> , what hast thou done? I will make thee repent it [in] every vein in thy heart.	= troublesome. <sup>1</sup> = mischievous boy.
100		
102	<b>Sapho.</b> Venus, be not <u>cholerick</u> : Cupid is mine; he hath given me his arrows, and I will give him a new	= angry.

104	bow to shoot <u>in</u> . You are not worthy to be the lady of love, that yield so often to the <u>impressions</u> of love.	= ie. with.
106	Immodest Venus, that to satisfy the <u>unbridled thoughts</u> of thy heart, transgressest so far from the stay of thine honour. – How sayest thou, Cupid, wilt thou <u>be</u> with me?	= deep stamp. = ie. uncontrolled (lascivious) thoughts.
108		106-7: <i>stay of thine honour</i> = restraining effect the desire to remain honourable should have on her behaviour.
110	<i>Cupid.</i> Yes.	= ie. remain.
112	<i>Sapho.</i> Shall not I be on earth the goddess of <u>affections</u> ?	
114	<i>Cupid.</i> Yes.	= love.
116	<i>Sapho.</i> Shall not I rule the fancies of men, and lead Venus in chains like a captive?	
118		117-8: <i>lead...captive</i> = a figurative enslavement, since Sapho, with Cupid's help, expects to lead Venus repeatedly into falling desperately in love.
120	<i>Cupid.</i> Yes.	
122	<i>Sapho.</i> It is a good boy!	
124	<i>Venus.</i> What have we here? You the goddess of love? And you her son, Cupid? I will tame <u>that proud heart</u> ,	= ie. Sapho's heart.
126	else shall the gods say, they are not Venus' friends. – And as for you, sir boy, I will teach you how to run away: you shall be stripped from top to toe, and whipped with <u>nettles</u> , not roses. I will set you to blow	126: before Venus' fellow-deities forsake her friendship.
128		129: <i>nettles</i> = any of several stinging plants. <sup>1</sup> 129-130: <i>set you...coals</i> = ie. "put you to work in Vulcan's smithy".
130	Vulcan's coals, not to <u>bear Venus' quiver</u> ; I will <u>handle</u>	130: <i>bear Venus' quiver</i> = ie. be Venus' companion in spreading love around the world. <i>handle</i> = deal with. <sup>1</sup>
	you for this <u>gear</u> . – Well, I say no more. But as for the	= business, matter.
132	new mistress of love (or, lady, I cry you mercy, I think you would be called a goddess), you shall know what	132-3: <i>or, lady...goddess</i> = Venus sarcastically begs Sapho's forgiveness for addressing her incorrectly!
134	it is to usurp the <u>name</u> of Venus! I will pull those	134: <i>name</i> = ie. title. 134-5: <i>pull those plumes</i> = common metaphor for taking another down a notch, ie. reducing their pride. The metaphor ties in with the allusion to the <i>peacock</i> in the next clause.
	plumes and cause you to cast your eyes on your feet,	135-6: <i>to cast...feathers</i> = to act humbly or modestly. The allusion is to the peacock, who was said to have been given ugly feet in order to check its arrogant pride in its feathers. <sup>5</sup>
136	not your feathers: your soft hair will I turn to hard bristles, your tongue to a sting, and those alluring eyes	137-8: <i>those alluring...unluckiness</i> = Venus threatens to remove Sapho's attractiveness to men. <sup>6</sup>
138	to unluckiness, in which, if the gods aid me not, I will curse the gods!	
140	<i>Sapho.</i> Venus, you are in a vein answerable to your	141-2: <i>you are...vanity</i> = punning, "your foolishness ( <i>vanity</i> ) is the cause of your present mood ( <i>vein</i> )."
142	vanity, whose high words neither become you, nor <u>fear</u> me. But let <u>this</u> suffice: I will keep Cupid in <u>despite</u> of	142-3: <i>whose high...fear me</i> = "and your threats neither are appropriate for a goddess, nor frighten ( <i>fear</i> ) me." = ie. the following response. = ie. spite.

144	you, and yet with the <u>content</u> of the gods.	= assent.
146	<b>Venus.</b> Will you? Why then, we shall have <u>pretty</u>	= capable, robust, or the like: Venus is sarcastic.
148	gods in heaven, when you take gods prisoners on	
148	earth. Before I sleep, you shall both repent, and find	= disrespectfully.
150	what it is but to think <u>unreverently</u> of Venus. – Come,	= employ or treat.
150	Cupid: she knows not how to <u>use</u> thee. Come with me,	
152	you know what I have for you: will you not?	
152	<b>Cupid.</b> Not I!	
154	<b>Venus.</b> Well, I will be even with you both, and that	
156	shortly.	
158	[Exit Venus.]	
160	<b>Sapho.</b> Cupid, fear not, I will direct thine arrows	160-2: Sapho plans to be more selective than is Venus with
162	better. Every rude ass shall not say he is in love. It is a	respect to whom Cupid will shoot in the future.
162	toy made for ladies, and I will keep it only for ladies.	
164	<b>Cupid.</b> But what will you do for Phao?	
166	<b>Sapho.</b> I will wish him <u>fortunate</u> . This will I do for	= good luck.
168	Phao, because I once loved Phao: for never shall it be	= ie. no longer being in love with someone.
168	said that Sapho loved to hate, or that <u>out of love</u> she	
170	could not be as courteous, as she was in love	= with her final command and stately exit, Sapho has at last
170	passionate. – <u>Come, Miletia, shut the door.</u>	fully regained her royal demeanor and dignity. <sup>6</sup>
172	[Exeunt.]	
 <b><u>ACT V, SCENE III.</u></b>  		
<i>Before Sybilla's Cave.</i>		
 <i>Enter Phao to Sybilla in the cave.</i>		
1	<b>Phao.</b> [Aside] Go to Sybilla. <u>Tell</u> the beginning of	= ie. "tell her". <sup>1</sup>
2	thy love, and the end of thy <u>fortune</u> . – And lo, how	= ie. good fortune.
4	<u>happily</u> she sitteth in her cave. – Sybilla?	= luckily.
4	<b>Syb.</b> Phao, welcome. What news?	
6	<b>Phao.</b> Venus, the goddess of love, I loathe: Cupid	
8	caused it with a <u>new shaft</u> . Sapho disdaineth me:	= ie. arrow #5.
8	Venus caused it <u>for a new spite</u> . Oh, Sybilla, <u>if Venus</u>	= out of a newly-born spite. = ie. if even Venus.
10	be unfaithful in love, where shall one fly for <u>truth</u> ? She	= fidelity, faithfulness. <sup>1</sup>
12	useth deceit; is it not then likely she will dispense with	11-13: <b><i>is it not...revenge them</i></b> = Phao, worried for his
12	<u>subtlety</u> ? And <u>being careful</u> to commit injuries, will	safety, believes that Venus will be unlikely to forgive and
		forget this whole affair, and may even avenge the injuries
		to her pride.
		<b><i>subtlety</i></b> = craft, cunning. <sup>2</sup>
		<b><i>being careful</i></b> = fervently acting. <sup>1</sup>
		<b><i>not be careless</i></b> (line 13) = ie. be eager.

14 she not be careless to revenge them? I must now fall  
from love to labour, and endeavour with mine oar to  
get a fare, not with my pen to write a fancy. Loves are

16 but smokes, which vanish in the seeing and yet hurt  
whilest they are seen. –

18 A ferry, Phao? No, the stars cannot call it a worsen  
fortune. Range rather over the world, forswear

20 affections, entreat for death. – Oh, Sapho, thou hast  
Cupid in thine arms, I in my heart; thou kissest him for  
22 sport, I must curse him for spite. Yet will I not curse  
him, Sapho, whom thou kissest. – This shall be my  
24 resolution: wherever I wander, to be as I were ever  
kneeling before Sapho, my loyalty unspotted, though  
26 unrewarded. With as little malice will I go to my grave,  
as I did lie withal in my cradle. My life shall be spent  
28 in sighing and wishing, the one for my bad fortune,  
the other for Sapho's good.

30 **Syb.** Do so, Phao, for destiny calleth thee as well from  
32 Sicily as from love. Other things hang over thy head,  
which I must neither tell, nor thou inquire. And so,  
34 farewell.

36 [Exit Sybilla.]

38 **Phao.** Farewell, Sybilla, and farewell, Sicily. –  
Thoughts shall be thy food, and in thy steps shall be  
40 printed behind thee, that there was none so loyal left  
behind thee. – Farewell, Syracuse, unworthy to harbour  
42 faith; and when I am gone, unless Sapho be here,  
unlikely to harbour any.

44 [Exit Phao.]

FINIS.

## THE EPILOGUE.

1 They that tread in a maze, walk oftentimes in one  
2 path, and at the last come out where they entered in.  
We fear we have led you all this while in a labyrinth  
4 of conceits, divers times hearing one device, and have

13-15: ***I must...fancy*** = Phao must give up his love-making,  
and return to work.  
= Fairholt suggests "love sonnet".

= ie. illusory.

18: ***A ferry, Phao?*** = Bevington turns this clause, which  
appears in the quartos as a statement, into a question, which  
Phao immediately answers.

18-19: ***the stars...fortune*** = the ***stars*** are alluded to in  
their believed-role of determining the fate of individuals.

19: ***Range*** = wander.

19-20: ***forswear affections*** = abandon the pursuit of love.  
= seek out or beg for.

= amusement; note the wordplay of ***for sport*** and ***for spite***.

= ie. remaining faithful to Sapho. = pure, morally untainted.

= with.

= ie. sighing in regret for his miserable fate.

31-34: Sybilla cannot reveal to Phao what his future has  
in store for him – except that it will carry him away from  
Sicily.

36: stage direction added by Daniel, so that Phao delivers the  
play's final speech alone on stage. Bevington has her enter  
"into her cave."

39-41: ***Thoughts...thee*** = Phao is addressing himself.  
= ie. imprinted.

**1-14 (below):** Lyly takes up the first 14 lines of the Epilogue  
to basically apologize for presenting a play in which the  
situation the characters find themselves in at the end is  
exactly the same one as they were in when the play began.

4: ***conceits*** = trifles.<sup>1</sup>

6 now brought you to an end where we first began:  
which wearisome travail you must impute to the  
8 necessity of the history, as Theseus did his labour to  
the art of the labyrinth.

10 There is nothing causeth such giddiness, as going  
in a wheel. Neither can there anything breed such  
tediousness, as hearing many words uttered in a small  
12 compass. But if you accept this dance of a fairy in a  
circle, we will hereafter at your wills frame our fingers  
14 to all forms.

16 And so we wish every one of you a thread to lead  
you out of the doubts, wherewith we leave you  
entangled: that nothing be mistaken by our rash  
18 oversights, nor misconstrued by your deep insights.

4: *divers...device* = ie. seeing the same ideas repeatedly reused.

6-7: *which wearisome...history* = the plot itself is to blame for Her Majesty's being forced to endure the tiresome play which in the end led to no change in circumstance.

6: *travail* = means both "journey" and "effort".

7-8: *as Theseus...labyrinth* = *Theseus* too ended his mission in the labyrinth by finding himself right back at its entrance. The analogy is not quite apropos. as the Greek hero had actually killed the Minotaur after he reached the center of the labyrinth, so that his situation had actually changed quite drastically by the time he exited. See the note at Act II.i.58 for the full story.

9: *giddiness* = dizziness.<sup>1</sup>

9-10: *going in a wheel* = travelling in a circle. The analogy at lines 12-13 of a *fairy dancing in a circle* similarly suggests a lack of substantive progress, or change in circumstances.

12: *compass* = space.

13-14: *we will...forms* = a promise to give the audience what it wants in the future, if they do not respond too badly to the present production.

17-18: *that nothing...insights* = as he did in the Prologue at Court, Lyly asks his viewers not to overinterpret what they have seen as a comment on the goings-on in the queen's court.<sup>6</sup>

## FOOTNOTES.

The footnotes in the play correspond as follows:

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