

# Love's Labour's Lost

## 2.1

*Enter the Princess of France with three attending ladies++Maria, Catherine, and Rosaline++and three lords, one named Boyet*

### BOYET

Now, madam, summon up your dearest spirits.  
Consider who the King your father sends,  
To whom he sends, and what's his embassy:  
Yourself, held precious in the world's esteem,  
To parley with the sole inheritor 5  
Of all perfections that a man may owe,  
Matchless Navarre; the plea of no less weight  
Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.  
Be now as prodigal of all dear grace  
As nature was in making graces dear 10  
When she did starve the general world beside  
And prodigally gave them all to you.

### PRINCESS

Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,  
Needs not the painted flourish of your praise.  
Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye, 15  
Not uttered by base sale of chapmen's tongues.  
I am less proud to hear you tell my worth  
Than you much willing to be counted wise  
In spending your wit in the praise of mine.  
But now to task the tasker: good Boyet, 20  
You are not ignorant all-telling fame  
Doth noise abroad Navarre hath made a vow  
Till painful study shall outwear three years  
No woman may approach his silent court.  
Therefore to's seemeth it a needful course, 25  
Before we enter his forbidden gates,  
To know his pleasure; and in that behalf,  
Bold of your worthiness, we single you  
As our best-moving fair solicitor.  
Tell him the daughter of the King of France 30  
On serious business, craving quick dispatch,

Importunes personal conference with his grace.  
Haste, signify so much while we attend,  
Like humble-visaged suitors, his high will.

**BOYET**

Proud of employment, willingly I go. 35

**PRINCESS**

All pride is willing pride, and yours is so.

*Exit Boyet*

Who are the votaries, my loving lords,  
That are vow-fellows with this virtuous duke?

**A LORD**

Lord Longueville is one.

**PRINCESS**

Know you the man?

**MARIA**

I know him, madam. At a marriage feast 40

Between Lord PeÂrigrond and the beauteous heir

Of Jaques Fauconbridge solemnizeÁd

In Normandy saw I this Longueville.

A man of sovereign parts he is esteemed,  
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms. 45

Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.

The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss±±

If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil±±

Is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will,

Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills 50

It should none spare that come within his power.

**PRINCESS**

Some merry mocking lord, belike±±is't so?

**MARIA**

They say so most that most his humours know.

**PRINCESS**

Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow.

Who are the rest? 55

**CATHERINE**

The young Dumaine, a well-accomplished youth,  
Of all that virtue love for virtue loved.

Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill,

For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,

And shape to win grace, though he had no wit. 60

I saw him at the Duke AlencËon's once,

And much too little of that good I saw

Is my report to his great worthiness.

**ROSALINE**

Another of these students at that time  
Was there with him, if I have heard a truth. 65  
Biron they call him, but a merrier man,  
Within the limit of becoming mirth,  
I never spent an hour's talk withal.  
His eye begets occasion for his wit,  
For every object that the one doth catch 70  
The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,  
Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,  
Delivers in such apt and gracious words  
That age's ears play truant at his tales,  
And younger hearings are quite ravish'd, 75  
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

**PRINCESS**

God bless my ladies, are they all in love,  
That every one her own hath garnish'd  
With such bedecking ornaments of praise?

**A LORD**

Here comes Boyet.

*Enter Boyet*

**PRINCESS** Now, what admittance, lord? 80

**BOYET**

Navarre had notice of your fair approach,  
And he and his competitors in oath  
Were all addressed to meet you, gentle lady,  
Before I came. Marry, thus much I have learnt:  
He rather means to lodge you in the field, 85  
Like one that comes here to besiege his court,  
Than seek a dispensation for his oath  
To let you enter his unpeopled house.

*Enter Navarre, Longueville, Dumaine, and Biron*

Here comes Navarre.

**KING** Fair Princess, welcome to the court of Navarre. 90

**PRINCESS** 'Fair' I give you back again, and welcome I  
have not yet. The roof of this court is too high to be  
yours, and welcome to the wide fields too base to be  
mine.

**KING**

You shall be welcome, madam, to my court. 95

**PRINCESS**

I will be welcome, then. Conduct me thither.

**KING**

Hear me, dear lady. I have sworn an oath±±

**PRINCESS**

Our Lady help my lord! He'll be forsworn.

**KING**

Not for the world, fair madam, by my will.

**PRINCESS**

Why, will shall break it±±will and nothing else. 100

**KING**

Your ladyship is ignorant what it is.

**PRINCESS**

Were my lord so his ignorance were wise,  
Where now his knowledge must prove ignorance.  
I hear your grace hath sworn out housekeeping.  
'Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord,  
And sin to break it. 105

But pardon me, I am too sudden-bold.

To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me.

Vouchsafe to read the purpose of my coming,

And suddenly resolve me in my suit. 110

*She gives him a paper*

**KING**

Madam, I will, if suddenly I may.

**PRINCESS**

You will the sooner that I were away,

For you'll prove perjured if you make me stay.

*Navarre reads the paper*

**BIRON** *(to Rosaline)*

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

**[ROSALINE]**

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once? 115

**BIRON**

I know you did.

**[ROSALINE]** How needless was it then

To ask the question!

**BIRON** You must not be so quick.

**[ROSALINE]**

'Tis 'long of you, that spur me with such questions.

**BIRON**

Your wit's too hot, it speeds too fast, 'twill tire.

**[ROSALINE]**  
 Not till it leave the rider in the mire. 120

**BIRON**  
 What time o' day?

**[ROSALINE]**  
 The hour that fools should ask.

**BIRON**  
 Now fair befall your mask.

**[ROSALINE]**  
 Fair fall the face it covers.

**BIRON**  
 And send you many lovers. 125

**[ROSALINE]**  
 Amen, so you be none.

**BIRON**  
 Nay, then will I be gone.

**KING** (*to the Princess*)  
 Madam, your father here doth intimate  
 The payment of a hundred thousand crowns,  
 Being but the one-half of an entire sum 130  
 DisburseÁd by my father in his wars.  
 But say that he or we±±as neither have±±  
 Received that sum, yet there remains unpaid  
 A hundred thousand more, in surety of the which  
 One part of Aquitaine is bound to us, 135  
 Although not valued to the money's worth.  
 If then the King your father will restore  
 But that one half which is unsatisfied,  
 We will give up our right in Aquitaine  
 And hold fair friendship with his majesty. 140  
 But that, it seems, he little purposeth,  
 For here he doth demand to have repaid  
 A hundred thousand crowns, and not demands,  
 On payment of a hundred thousand crowns,  
 To have his title live in Aquitaine, 145  
 Which we much rather had depart withal,  
 And have the money by our father lent,  
 Than Aquitaine, so gelded as it is.  
 Dear Princess, were not his requests so far  
 From reason's yielding, your fair self should make 150

A yielding 'gainst some reason in my breast,  
And go well satisfied to France again.

**PRINCESS**

You do the King my father too much wrong,  
And wrong the reputation of your name,  
In so unseeming to confess receipt 155  
Of that which hath so faithfully been paid.

**KING**

I do protest I never heard of it,  
And if you prove it I'll repay it back  
Or yield up Aquitaine.

**PRINCESS**

We arrest your word.  
Boyet, you can produce acquittances 160  
For such a sum from special officers  
Of Charles, his father.

**KING**

Satisfy me so.

**BOYET**

So please your grace, the packet is not come  
Where that and other specialties are bound.  
Tomorrow you shall have a sight of them. 165

**KING**

It shall suffice me, at which interview  
All liberal reason I will yield unto.  
Meantime receive such welcome at my hand  
As honour, without breach of honour, may  
Make tender of to thy true worthiness. 170

You may not come, fair princess, within my gates,  
But here without you shall be so received  
As you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart,  
Though so denied fair harbour in my house.  
Your own good thoughts excuse me, and farewell. 175  
Tomorrow shall we visit you again.

**PRINCESS**

Sweet health and fair desires consort your grace.

**KING**

Thy own wish wish I thee in every place.

*Exit with Longueville and Dumaine*

**BIRON** (to Rosaline) Lady, I will commend you to mine  
own heart. 180

**ROSALINE** Pray you, do my commendations. I would be  
glad to see it.

**BIRON** I would you heard it groan.

**ROSALINE** Is the fool sick?

**BIRON** Sick at the heart.

185

**ROSALINE**

Alack, let it blood.

**BIRON**

Would that do it good?

**ROSALINE**

My physic says `Ay'.

**BIRON**

Will you prick't with your eye?

**ROSALINE**

*Non point*, with my knife.

190

**BIRON**

Now God save thy life.

**ROSALINE**

And yours, from long living.

**BIRON**

I cannot stay thanksgiving.

*Exit*

*Enter Dumaine*

**DUMAINE** *(to Boyet)*

Sir, I pray you a word. What lady is that same?

**BOYET**

The heir of Alenc on, Catherine her name.

195

**DUMAINE**

A gallant lady. Monsieur, fare you well.

*Exit*

*Enter Longueville*

**LONGUEVILLE** *(to Boyet)*

I beseech you a word, what is she in the white?

**BOYET**

A woman sometimes, an you saw her in the light.

**LONGUEVILLE**

Perchance light in the light. I desire her name.

**BOYET**

She hath but one for herself; to desire that were a  
shame.

200

**LONGUEVILLE**

Pray you, sir, whose daughter?

**BOYET**

Her mother's, I have heard.

**LONGUEVILLE**

God's blessing on your beard!

**BOYET**

Good sir, be not offended.  
She is an heir of Fauconbridge.

205

**LONGUEVILLE**

Nay, my choler is ended.  
She is a most sweet lady.

**BOYET**

Not unlike, sir. That may be.

*Exit Longueville*

*Enter Biron*

**BIRON**

What's her name in the cap?

**BOYET**

Rosaline, by good hap.

210

**BIRON**

Is she wedded or no?

**BOYET**

To her will, sir, or so.

**BIRON**

O, you are welcome, sir. Adieu.

**BOYET**

Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you.

*Exit Biron*

**MARIA**

That last is Biron, the merry madcap lord.

215

Not a word with him but a jest.

**BOYET**

And every jest but a word.

**PRINCESS**

It was well done of you to take him at his word.

**BOYET**

I was as willing to grapple as he was to board.

**[CATHERINE]**

Two hot sheeps, marry.

**BOYET**

And wherefore not ships?

No sheep, sweet lamb, unless we feed on your lips. 220

**[CATHERINE]**

You sheep and I pasture±±shall that finish the jest?

**BOYET**

So you grant pasture for me.

**[CATHERINE]**

Not so, gentle beast.

My lips are no common, though several they be.

**BOYET**

Belonging to whom?

**[CATHERINE]** To my fortunes and me.

**PRINCESS**

Good wits will be jangling; but, gentles, agree. 225  
This civil war of wits were much better used  
On Navarre and his bookmen, for here 'tis abused.

**BOYET**

If my observation, which very seldom lies,  
By the heart's still rhetoric disclose  
Deceive me not now, Navarre is infected. 230

**PRINCESS** With what?

**BOYET**

With that which we lovers entitle `affected'.

**PRINCESS** Your reason?

**BOYET**

Why, all his behaviours did make their retire  
To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire. 235  
His heart like an agate with your print impressed,  
Proud with his form, in his eye pride expressed.  
His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,  
Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be.  
All senses to that sense did make their repair, 240  
To feel only looking on fairest of fair.

Methought all his senses were locked in his eye,  
As jewels in crystal, for some prince to buy,  
Who, tendering their own worth from where they  
were glassed,  
Did point you to buy them along as you passed. 245  
His face's own margin did quote such amazes  
That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.  
I'll give you Aquitaine and all that is his  
An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.

**PRINCESS**

Come, to our pavilion. Boyet is disposed. 250

**BOYET**

But to speak that in words which his eye hath  
disclosed.

I only have made a mouth of his eye  
By adding a tongue, which I know will not lie.

**[ROSALINE]**

Thou art an old love-monger, and speak'st skilfully.

**[MARIA]**

He is Cupid's grandfather, and learns news of him. 255

**[CATHERINE]**

Then was Venus like her mother, for her father is but  
grim.

**BOYET**

Do you hear, my mad wenches?

**[MARIA]**

No.

**BOYET**

What then, do you see?

**[CATHERINE]**

Ay±±our way to be gone.

**BOYET**

You are too hard for me.

*Exeunt*