

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
Between Lord PeÂrigord and the beauteous heir
Of Jaques Fauconbridge solemnizeÂd
In Normandy saw I this Longueville.

40

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 Alenc on'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 ravishe'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, 105
And sin to break it.
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 unseemingly 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 Ad with eyes,

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