

LOVE'S LABOURS LOST

By William Shakespeare

Sample

Edited by Tom Smith, © 2004
(575) 635-5194
tom@tomsmithplaywright.com

Characters

Ferdinand, *King of Navarre*

Berowne, Longaville, Dumaine, *three Lords attending upon the King*

Boyet, *Lord attending upon the Princess of France*

Don Adriano de Armado, *a fantastical Spaniard*

Sir Nathaniel, *a curate*

Dull, *a constable*

Costard, *a clown*

Mercade, *a messenger*

Princess of France

Rosaline, Maria, Katharine, *ladies attending upon the Princess*

Jaquenetta, *a country wench*

SCENE I. The king of Navarre's park.

Enter FERDINAND king of Navarre, BEROWNE, LONGAVILLE and DUMAIN.

FERDINAND

You three, Berowne, Dumain, and Longaville,
Have sworn for three years' term to live with me
My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes
That are recorded in this schedule here:
Now subscribe your names.

LONGAVILLE

I am resolved; 'tis but a three years' fast:
The mind shall banquet, though the body pine.

DUMAIN

The grosser manner of these world's delights
I throw upon the gross world's baser slaves.

BEROWNE

There are other strict observances;
As, not to see a woman in that term,
And one day in a week to touch no food
And then, to sleep but three hours in the night.
O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep!
There, my good lord; I have sworn to stay with you:
And confident I'll keep what I have swore
And bide the penance of each three years' day.

Reads.

'Item, If any man be seen to talk with a woman
within the term of three years, he shall endure such
public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise.'
This article, my liege, yourself must break;
For well you know here comes in embassy
The French king's daughter with yourself to speak.

FERDINAND

What say you, lords? Why, this was quite forgot.
We must of force dispense with this decree;
She must lie here on mere necessity.

BEROWNE

Is there no quick recreation granted?

FERDINAND

Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is haunted
With a refined traveller of Spain: Don Armado.
I love to hear him lie and I will use him for my minstrelsy.

LONGAVILLE

Costard the swain and he shall be our sport;
And so to study, three years is but short.

Enter DULL with a letter, and COSTARD.

DULL

Which is the duke's own person?

BEROWNE

This is he.

DULL

Signior Arme--Arme--commends you. There's villany
abroad: this letter will tell you more.

FERDINAND

A letter from the magnificent Armado.

COSTARD

The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta.
The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

BEROWNE

In what manner?

COSTARD

I was seen with her in the manor-house, in the
manner of a man to speak to a woman.

FERDINAND

Will you hear this letter with attention?
[Reads] 'Great deputy, the sole dominator of Navarre,
my soul's earth's god, and body's fostering patron.'

COSTARD

Not a word of Costard yet.

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'As I am a gentleman, betook myself to
walk. I did encounter that obscene and preposterous

minnow of thy mirth,'—

COSTARD

Me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'that unlettered small-knowing soul,'—

COSTARD

Me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'that shallow vassal,'—

COSTARD

Still me?

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'which, as I remember, hight Costard,'—

COSTARD

O, me!

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict'—

COSTARD

With a wench.

FERDINAND

[Reads] 'with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment.

For Jaquenetta,--so is the weaker vessel called--I keep her as a vessel of the law's fury; and shall bring her to trial.

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.'

Sirrah, what say you to this?

COSTARD

Sir, I confess the wench.

FERDINAND

Did you hear the proclamation?

It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken with a wench.
Sir, I will pronounce your sentence: you shall fast
a week with bran and water.
And Don Armado shall be your keeper.
My Lord Berowne, see him deliver'd o'er:
And go we, lords, to put in practice that
Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

Exeunt FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN.

BEROWNE

Sirrah, come on.

COSTARD

I suffer for Jaquenetta, sir!

Exeunt.

SCENE II. The same.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I have promised to study three years with the duke
Yet I confess I am in love: and as it is base for a soldier to love,
so am I in love with a base wench.
I do love that country girl that I took in the
park with the rational hind Costard: my spirit grows heavy in love.

Enter DULL, COSTARD, and JAQUENETTA.

DULL

Sir, the duke's pleasure is, that you keep Costard.
For this damsel, I must keep her at the park. Fare you well.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I do betray myself with blushing. Maid!
I will visit thee at the lodge. Farewell.

DULL

Come, Jaquenetta, away!

Exeunt DULL and JAQUENETTA.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences ere thou
be pardoned.

COSTARD

Well, sir, I hope, when I do it, I shall do it on a full stomach.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

Thou shalt be heavily punished.

Exeunt.

SCENE III. The same.

Enter the PRINCESS of France, ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, and BOYET.

PRINCESS

Good Lord Boyet, you are not ignorant
Navarre hath made a vow,
Till painful study shall outwear three years,
No woman may approach his silent court:
Therefore we single you as our fair solicitor.
Tell him, the daughter of the King of France,
Importunes personal conference with his grace.

BOYET

Willingly I go.

Exit BOYET.

PRINCESS

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

MARIA

Lord Longaville is one.

PRINCESS

Know you the man?

MARIA

I know him, madam:
A man of sovereign parts he is esteem'd;
Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms.

PRINCESS

Who are the rest?

KATHARINE

The young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth.
I saw him at the Duke Alencon'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.
Berowne they call him; but a merrier man,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

PRINCESS

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

Re-enter BOYET.

Now, what admittance, lord?

BOYET

Navarre had notice of your fair approach;
And he and his competitors in oath
Were all address'd to meet you, gentle lady,
Before I came. Marry, thus much I have learnt:
He rather means to lodge you in the field,
Than let you enter his unpeopled house.
Here comes Navarre.

Enter FERDINAND, LONGAVILLE, DUMAIN and BEROWNE.

FERDINAND

Fair princess, welcome to the court of Navarre.
You shall be welcome, madam, to my court.

PRINCESS

I will be welcome, then: conduct me thither.

FERDINAND

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

PRINCESS

I hear your grace hath sworn out house-keeping:
Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord,

And sin to break it.
But pardon me. I am too sudden-bold:
To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me.

BEROWNE

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?
I know I did.

ROSALINE

How needless was it then to ask the question!

FERDINAND

Madam, if the king your father will restore a hundred thousand crowns,
We will give up our right in Aquitaine,
And hold fair friendship with his majesty.

PRINCESS

You do the king my father too much wrong,
In so unseeming to confess receipt
Of that which hath so faithfully been paid.

FERDINAND

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

PRINCESS

Boyet, you can produce acquittances
For such a sum from special officers
Of Charles his father.

BOYET

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

FERDINAND

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:
You may not come, fair princess, in 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:
To-morrow shall we visit you again.

Exit.

BEROWNE

Lady, I will commend you to mine own heart.
I would you heard it groan.

ROSALINE

Is the fool sick?

BEROWNE

Sick at the heart.

Retiring.

DUMAIN

Sir, I pray you, a word: what lady is that same?

BOYET

The heir of Alencon, Katharine her name.

DUMAIN

A gallant lady. Monsieur, fare you well.

Exit.

LONGAVILLE

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

BOYET

She is an heir of Falconbridge.

LONGAVILLE

She is a most sweet lady.

Exit LONGAVILLE.

BEROWNE

What's her name?

BOYET

Rosaline.

BEROWNE

Is she wedded or no?

BOYET

To her will, sir.

Exeunt.

SCENE IV. The same.

Enter DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO.

ADRIANO DE ARMADO

I must employ the swain to carry me a letter to my love.

Enter COSTARD.

Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee.

I give thee thy liberty, set thee from durance; and,
in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this: bear this significant

Giving a letter.

to the country maid Jaquenetta:
there is remuneration; for the best ward of mine
honour is rewarding my dependents.

Exit.

COSTARD

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration!

O, that's the Latin word for three farthings:

Remuneration! why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will
never buy and sell out of this word.

Enter BEROWNE.

BEROWNE

O, my good knave Costard! exceedingly well met.

I must employ thee:

Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.

COSTARD

When would you have it done, sir?

BEROWNE

This afternoon.

COSTARD

Well, I will do it, sir: fare you well.

BEROWNE

Thou knowest not what it is.

The princess comes to hunt here in the park,
And in her train there is a gentle lady;
Rosaline they call her: ask for her;
And to her white hand see thou do commend
This seal'd-up counsel. There's thy guerdon; go.

Giving him a shilling.

COSTARD

Gardon, O sweet gardon! better than remuneration,
a'leven-pence farthing better: most sweet gardon! I
will do it sir. Gardon! Remuneration!

Exit.

BEROWNE

And I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been love's whip;
What, I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan:
Some men must love my lady and some Joan.

Exit.

SCENE V. The same.

Enter the PRINCESS, BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE.

PRINCESS

Well, lords, to-day we shall have our dispatch:
On Saturday we will return to France.
Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush
That we must stand and play the murderer in?

BOYET

Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice;
A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.

PRINCESS

But come, the bow.