Act IV, scene i

Enter [the] Clown, Butler, Bailiff, Tailor, Cook, Drawer, Wench.

DRAWER
Welcome, gentlemen, will you not draw near? Will you drink at door, gentlemen?

BUTLER
Oh, the summer air’s best!

DRAWER
What wine will [it] please you drink, gentlemen?

BUTLER
De Clare, sirrah.

CLOWN
What! You’re all sped already, bullies?

COOK
My widow’s a’ the spit and half ready, lad. A turn or two more, and I have done with her.

CLOWN
Then, cook, I hope you have basted her before this time.

COOK
And stuck her with rosemary too, to sweeten her; she was tainted ere she came to my hands. What an old piece of flesh of fifty-nine, eleven months and upwards! She must needs be flyblown.

CLOWN
Put her off, put her off, though you lose by her; the weather’s hot.

COOK
Why, drawer!

Enter Drawer.

DRAWER
By and by! Here, gentlemen, here’s the quintessence of Greece; the sages never drunk better grape.
COOK
Sir, the mad Greeks of this age can taste their Palermo as well as the sage Greeks
did before ’em. Fill, lick-spigot.

DRAWER
*Ad imum*, sir.

CLOWN
My friends, I must doubly invite you all, the fifth of the next month, to the funeral
of my first wife and to the marriage of my second. My two to one, this is she!

COOK
I hope some of us will be ready for the funeral of our wives by that time to go with
thee; but shall they be both of a day?

CLOWN
Oh, best of all, sir! Where sorrow and joy meet together, one will help away with
another the better. Besides, there will be charges saved too, the same rosemary that
serves for the funeral, will serve for the wedding.

BUTLER
How long do you make account to be a widower, sir?

CLOWN
Some half an hour; long enough [for] a conscience!
Come, come, let’s have some agility: is there no music in the house?

DRAWER
Yes, sir, here are sweet wire-drawers.

COOK
Oh, that makes them and you seldom part; you are wine-drawers and they wire-
drawers.

TAILOR
And both govern by the pegs too.

CLOWN
And you have pipes in your consort too?

DRAWER
And sack butts too, sir.

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1 *wire-drawers*] Shaw ; *wire-drawers in the house* Q.
BUTLER
But the heads of your instruments differ; yours are hogsheads, their[s] cittern and gitternheads.

BAILIFF
All wooden heads! There, they meet again!

COOK
Bid ’em strike up, we’ll have a dance. Gnothos, come, thou shall foot it too.

CLOWN
No dancing with me, we have Siren here.

COOK
Siren! ’Twas Hiren, the fair Greek, man.

CLOWN
Five drachmas of that! I say Siren, the fair Greek, and so are all fair Greeks.

COOK
A match! Five drachmas her name was Hiren.

CLOWN
Siren’s name was Siren for five drachmas.

COOK
’Tis done.

TAILOR
Take heed what you do, Gnothos.

CLOWN
Do not I know our own countrywomen? Siren and Nell of Greece, two of the fairest Greeks that ever were.

COOK
That Nell was Helen of Greece too.

CLOWN
As long as she tarried with her husband, she was Ellen; but after she came to Troy, she was Nell of Troy, or Bonny Nell, whether you will or no.
TAILLOR
Why? Did she grow shorter when she came to Troy?

CLOWN
She grew longer, if you mark the story. When she grew to be an ell, she was deeper
than any yard of Troy could reach by a quarter. There was Cressid was Troy
weight, and Nell was haberdepoise; she held more by four ounces than Cressida.

BAILIFF
They say she caused many wounds to be given in Troy.

CLOWN
True, she was wounded there herself and cured again by plaster of Paris, and ever
since that has been used to stop holes with.

Enter Drawer.

DRAWER
Gentlemen, if you be disposed to be merry, the music is ready to strike up and
here’s a consort of mad Greeks. I know not whether they be men or women, or
between both, they have what-you-call-’em, wizards, on their faces.

COOK
Vizards, goodman lick-spigot.

BUTLER
If they be wise women, they may be wizards too.

DRAWER
They desire to enter amongst any merry company of gentlemen goodfellows for a
strain or two.

[Enter] old women.

COOK
We’ll strain ourselves with ’em. Say let ’em come now, for the honour of Epire!

[The old women] dance.

CLOWN
We have Siren here. She[’s] dancing with me.

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2 wizards] Shaw ; vizards Q. |
**The Old Law**

*The dance of old women masked; then they offer to take the men; they agree all but GNOTHOS; he sits with his wench, after [the dance], they whisper.*

**COOK**
Aye, so kind! Then everyone his wench to his several room. Gnothos, we are all provided now, as you are.

*Exeunt each with his wife; manet GNOTHOS’ wife.*

**CLOWN**
I shall have two, it seems. Away! I have Siren here already.

**AGATHA**
What a mermaid!

**CLOWN**
No, but a maid, horse-face. [AGATHA unmasks] Oh, old woman, is it you?

**AGATHA**
Yes, ’tis I. All the rest have gulled themselves and taken their own wives; and shall know that they have done more than they can well answer. But, I pray you, husband, what are you doing?

**CLOWN**
Faith, thus should I do if thou wert dead, old Ag, and thou has not long to live, I’m sure. We have Siren here.

**AGATHA**
Art thou so shameless whilst I am living, to keep one under my nose?

**CLOWN**
No, Ag, I do prize her far above thy nose. If thou wouldst lay me both thine eyes in my hand to boot, I’ll not leave her. Art not ashamed to be seen in a tavern, and hast scarce a fortnight to live? Oh, old woman, what art thou! Must thou find no time to think of thy end?

**AGATHA**
Oh, unkind villain!

**CLOWN**
And then, sweetheart, thou shalt have two new gowns, and the best of this old, old woman’s shall make thee raiments for the working days.
AGATHA
Oh, rascal! Dost thou quarter my clothes already too?

CLOWN
Her ruffs will serve thee for nothing but to wash dishes, for thou shalt have nine of
the new fashion.

AGATHA
Impudent villain! Shameless harlot!

CLOWN
You may hear she never wore any but rails all her lifetime.

AGATHA
Let me come, I’ll tear the strumpet from him!

CLOWN
Dar’st thou call my wife strumpet, thou preterpluperfect tense of a woman? I’ll
make thee do penance in the sheet thou shalt be buried in. Abuse my choice, my
two to one!

AGATHA
No, unkind villain, I’ll deceive thee yet! I have a reprieve for five years of life, I
am with child.

WENCH
Cud, so, Gnotho, I’ll not tarry so long! Five years! I may bury two husbands by
that time.

CLOWN
Alas, give the poor woman leave to talk. She with child? Aye, with a puppy! As
long as I have thee by me, she shall not be with child, I warrant thee.

AGATHA
The law and thou and all shall find I am with child.

CLOWN
I’ll take my corporal oath I begat it not, and then thou die’st for adultery.

AGATHA
No matter, that will ask some time in the proof.
CLOWN
Oh, you’d be stoned to death, would you? All old women would die of that fashion with all their hearts, but the law shall overthrow you the other way first.

WENCH
Indeed, if it be so, I will not linger so long, Gnothos.

CLOWN
Away, away, some botcher has got it; ’tis but a cushion, I warrant thee. The old woman is loath to depart; she never sung other tune in her life.

WENCH
We will not have our noses bored with a cushion if it be so.

CLOWN
Go, go thy ways, thou old almanac at the twenty-eighth day of December, e’en almost out of date! Down on thy knees and make thee ready. Sell some of thy clothes to buy thee a death’s head and put upon thy middle finger; your least considering bawd doe[s] so much; be not thou worse, though thou art an old woman as she is. I am cloyed with old stock fish, here’s a young perch is sweeter meat by half. Prithee, die before thy day if thou can’st, that thou may’st not be counted a witch.

AGATHA
No, thou art a witch and I’ll prove it. I said I was with child, thou knew’st no other but by sorcery. Thou said’st it was a cushion, and so it is! Thou art a witch for it; I’ll be sworn to it!

CLOWN
Ha, ha, ha; I told thee ’twas a cushion! Go get thy sheet ready, we’ll see thee buried as we go to the church to be married.

Ex[eunt].

AGATHA
Nay, I’ll follow thee and show myself a wife. I’ll plague thee as long as I live with thee, and I’ll bury some money before I die that my ghost may haunt thee afterward!

Exit.

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3 o’] Shaw; a’ Q.
4 the other] Q (the tother).

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[Act IV, scene ii]

Enter CLEANTHES

CLEANTHES
What’s that? Oh, nothing but the whispering wind
Breathes through yon churlish hawthorn that grew rude
As if it chid the gentle breath that kissed it.
I cannot be too circumspect, too careful,
For in these woods lies hid all my life’s treasure,
Which is too much ever to fear to lose,
Though it be never lost. And if our watchfulness
Ought to be wise and serious against a thief
That comes to steal our goods, things all without us,
That proves vexation often more than comfort,
How mighty ought our providence to be
To prevent those, if any such there were,
That come to rob our bosom of our joys
That only makes poor man delight to live!
Pshaw! I’m too fearful. Fie, fie, who can hurt me?
But ‘tis a general cowardice that shakes
The nerves of confidence. He that hides treasure
Imagines everyone thinks of that place,
When ‘tis a thing least minded. Nay, let him change
The place continually, where’er it keeps,
There will the fear keep still. Yonder’s the storehouse

Enter HIPPOLITA

Of all my comfort now; and see, it sends forth
A dear one to me. Precious chief of women,
How does the good old soul? Has he fed well?

HIPPOLITA
Beshrew me, sir, he made the heartiest meal today,
Much good may it do his health!

CLEANTHES
A blessing on thee,
Both for thy news and wish.

3 CLEANTHES] les vers suivants de cette tirade attribués à HIPPOLITA dans Q.

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HIPPOLITA
His stomach, sir,
Is better’d wondrously since his concealment.

CLEANTHES
Heaven has a blessed work in’t. Come, we’re safe here;
I prithee, call him forth, the air’s much wholesomer.

HIPPOLITA
Father!

Enter LEONIDES

[LEONIDES]
How sweetly sounds the voice of a good woman!
It is so seldom heard, that when it speaks
It ravishes all senses. Lists of honour!
I’ve a joy weeps to see you, ’tis so full,
So fairly fruitful.

CLEANTHES
I hope to see you often and return
Loaden with blessings still to pour on some.
I find ’em all in my contented peace,
And lose not one in thousands. They’re dispers’d
So gloriously, I know not which are brightest!
I find ’em as angels are found, by legions:
First in the love and honesty of a wife,
Which is the first and chiefest of all temporal blessings;
Next in yourself, which is the hope and joy
Of all my actions, my affairs, my wishes;
And lastly, which crowns all, I find my soul
Crowned with the peace of ’em, the eternal riches,
Man’s only portion for his heavenly marriage.

LEONIDES
Rise, thou art all obedience, love, and goodness.
I dare say that which thousand fathers cannot,
And that’s my precious comfort, never son
Was in the way more of celestial rising!

9 LEONIDES] attribués à HIPPOLITA dans Q.
7 CLEANTHES] attribués à LEONIDES dans Q.
Thou art so made of such ascending virtue
That all the powers of hell cannot sink thee.

*A horn.*

CLEANTHES
Ha!

LEONIDES
What was it disturbed my joy?

CLEANTHES [*To LEONIDES*]
Did you not hear,
As afar off?

LEONIDES [*To HIPPOLITA*]
What, my excellent consort?

CLEANTHES [*To HIPPOLITA*]
Nor you?

HIPPOLITA
I heard a – *A horn.*

CLEANTHES
Hark, again!

LEONIDES
Bless my joy,
What ails it on a sudden?

CLEANTHES
Now, since lately.

LEONIDES
'Tis nothing but a symptom of thy care, man.

CLEANTHES
Alas, you do not hear well.

LEONIDES
What was it, daughter?
The Old Law

HIPPOLITA
I heard a sound twice. A horn.

CLEANTHES
Hark, louder and nearer.
In, for the precious good of virtue, quick, sir!
Louder and nearer yet; at hand, at hand!
A hunting here 'tis strange: I never
Knew game followed in these woods before.

Enter Duke, SIMONIDES, Courtiers, and executioner.

HIPPOLITA
Now let 'em come and spare not.

CLEANTHES
Ha! 'tis – is't not the Duke? Look sparingly.

HIPPOLITA
'Tis he, but what of that? Alas, take heed, sir,
Your care will overthrow us.

CLEANTHES
Come, it shall not;
Let's set a pleasant face upon our fears
 Though our hearts shake with horror. Ha, ha, ha!

DUKE
Hark!

CLEANTHES
Prithee, proceed.
I'm taken with these light things infinitely
Since the old man's decease. Ha, so they parted, ha, ha, ha!

DUKE
Why, how should I believe this? Look, he's merry
As if he had no such charge. One with that care
Could never be so. Still, he holds his temper,
And 'tis the same, still with no difference,
He brought his father's corpse to the grave with.
He laughed thus then, you know.
FIRST COURTIER
Aye, he may laugh, my lord,
That shows but how he glories in his cunning,
And, perhaps, done more to advance his wit
Than to express affection to his father;
That only he has overreached the law.

SIMONIDES
He tells you right, my lord; his own cousin-german
Revealed it first to me, a free-tongued woman,
And very excellent at telling secrets.

DUKE
If a contempt can be so neatly carried,
It gives me cause of wonder.

SIMONIDES
Troth, my lord,
'Twill prove a delicate cozening, I believe.
I'd have no scrivener offer to come near it.

DUKE
Cleanthes.

CLEANHTHES
My loved lord?

DUKE [Aside]
Not moved a whit,
Constant to lightning still. 'Tis strange to meet you
Upon a ground so unfrequented, sir.
This does not sit your passion, you’re for mirth
Or I mistake you much.

CLEANHTHES
But, finding it
Grow to a noted imperfection in me,
For anything too much is vicious,
I come to these disconsolate walks of purpose,
Only to dull and take away the edge on’t.
I ever had a greater zeal to sadness;
A natural proportion, I confess, my lord,
Before that cheerful accident fell out,
If I may call a father’s funeral cheerful
The Old Law

Without wrong done to duty or my love.

DUKE
It seems, then, you take pleasure in these walks, sir?

CLEANTHES
Contemplative content, I do, my lord,
They bring into my mind oft meditations
So sweetly precious, that in the parting
I find a shower of grace upon my cheeks
They take their leave so feelingly.

DUKE
So, sir.

CLEANTHES
Which is a kind of grave delight, my lord.

DUKE
And I’ve small cause, Cleanthes, to afford you the least delight that has a name.

CLEANTHES
My lord?

SIMONIDES [To Courtier]
Now it begins to fadge.

FIRST COURTIER
Peace! Thou art so greedy, Sim.

DUKE
In your excess of joy, you have expressed
Your rancour and contempt against my law.
Your smiles deserve fining; you’ve professed
Derision openly, e’en to my face,
Which might be death, a little more incensed.
You do not come for any freedom here,
But for a project of your own.
But all that’s known to be contentful to thee,
Shall in the use prove deadly. Your life’s mine
If ever thy presumption do but lead thee
Into these walks again, ay, or that woman.
I’ll have ’em watched on purpose.

FIRST COURTIER
Now, now, his colour ebbs and flows!

SIMONIDES
Mark hers too.

HIPPOLITA
Oh, who shall bring food to the poor old man now?
Speak somewhat good, sir, or we’re lost forever.

CLEANTHES
Oh, you did wondrous ill to call me again;
There are not words to help us. If I entreat,
’Tis found; that will betray us worse than silence.
Prithee, let heaven alone and let’s say nothing.

FIRST COURTIER
You’ve struck ’em dumb, my lord.

SIMONIDES
Look how guilt looks!
I would not have that fear upon my flesh
To save ten fathers.

CLEANTHES
He is safe still, is he not?

HIPPOLITA
Oh, you do ill to doubt it.

CLEANTHES
Thou art all goodness.

SIMONIDES
How does your Grace believe?

DUKE
’Tis too apparent.
Search, make a speedy search, for the imposture
Cannot be far off by the fear it sends.

8 on purpose] Shaw ; a’ purpose Q.
CLEANTHES
Ha!

SIMONIDES
[He] has the lapwing’s cunning, I’m afraid, my lord,
That cries most when she’s farthest from the nest.

CLEANTHES
Oh, we’re betrayed!

HIPPOLITA
Betrayed, sir?

SIMONIDES
See, my lord,
It comes out more and more still.

*Exeunt Courtiers and SIMONIDES.*

CLEANTHES
Bloody thief!
Come from that place; ’tis sacred, homicide,
’Tis not for thy adulterate hands to touch it!

HIPPOLITA
Oh miserable virtue, what distress art thou in at this minute?

CLEANTHES
Help me, thunder, for my power’s lost!
Angels, shoot plagues and help me!
Why are these men in health and I so heart-sick?
Or why should nature have that power in me
To levy up a thousand bleeding sorrows,
And not one comfort? Only makes me lie
Like the poor mockery of an earthquake here,
Panting with horror, and have not so much force
In all my vengeance to shake a villain off of me?

*Enter Courtiers, SIMONIDES, [and] LEONIDES.*

9 off of me] Q (off a me).
HIPPODITA
Use him gently and heaven will love you for't.

CLEANTHES
Father, oh father, now I see thee full
In thy affection! Thou’rt a man of sorrow,
But reverently becom’st it, that’s my comfort.
Extremity was never better graced
Than with that look of thine. Oh, let me look still
For I shall lose it; all my joy and strength
Is e’en eclips’d together. I transgressed
Your law, my lord; let me receive the sting on’t.
Be once just, sir, and let the offender die;
He’s innocent in all, and I am guilty.

LEONIDES
Your Grace knows when affection only speaks;
Truth is not always there. His love would draw
An undeserv’d misery on his youth,
And wrong a peace resolv’d, on both parts sinful.
’Tis I am guilty of my own concealment
And, like a worldly coward, injured heaven
With fear to go to it. Now I see my fault
And am prepared with joy to suffer for’t.

DUKE
Go, give him quick dispatch, let him see his death;
And your presumption, sir, shall come to judgment.

Exeunt with LEONIDES.

HIPPODITA
He’s going! Oh, he’s gone, sir!

CLEANTHES
Let me rise.

HIPPODITA
Why do you not then, and follow?

CLEANTHES
I strive for’t.
Is there no hand of pity that will ease me
And take this villain from my heart awhile?
HIPPOLITA
Alas, he’s gone.

CLEANTHES
A worse supplies his place then,
A weight more ponderous. I cannot follow.

HIPPOLITA
Oh, misery of affliction!

CLEANTHES
They will stay
Till I can come; they must be so good ever,
Though they be ne’er so cruel.
My last leave must be taken, think o’ that,
And this last blessing given. I will not lose
That for a thousand consorts.

HIPPOLITA
That hope’s wretched.

CLEANTHES
The unutterable stings of fortune!
All griefs are to be borne, save this alone!
This, like a headlong torrent, overturns the frame of nature;
For he that gives us life first, as a father,
Locks all his natural sufferings in our blood;
The sorrow that he feels, are our heads,
They are incorporate to us.

HIPPOLITA
Noble sir!

CLEANTHES
Let me behold thee well.

HIPPOLITA
Sir!

[10] o’ that] Shaw ; a’ that Q.
CLEANTHES
Thou shouldst be good,
Or thou art a dangerous substance to be lodg’d
So near the heart of man.

HIPPOLITA
What means this, dear sir?

CLEANTHES
To thy trust only was this blessed secret
Kindly committed. ’Tis destroyed: thou see’st
What follows to be thought on’t.

HIPPOLITA
Miserable!
Why, here’s the unhappiness of woman still,
That having forfeited in old times their trust,
Now makes their faiths suspected that are just!

Enter EUGENIA.

CLEANTHES
What shall I say to all my sorrows then,
That look for satisfaction?

EUGENIA
Ha, ha, ha, cousin!

CLEANTHES
How ill dost thou become this time!

EUGENIA
Ha, ha, ha,
Why, that’s but your opinion: a young wench
Becomes the time at all times.
Now, coz, we’re even! And you be remembered
You left a strumpet and a whore at home with me,
And such fine field-bed words which could not cost you
Less than a father.

CLEANTHES
Is it come that way?
EUGENIA
Had you an uncle
He should go the same way too.

CLEANTHES
Oh, eternity!
What monster is this fiend in labour with?

EUGENIA
An ass-colt with two heads, that’s she and you!
I will not lose so glorious a revenge
Not to be understood in’t. I betray him,
And now we’re even, you’d best keep you so.

CLEANTHES
Is there not poison yet enough to kill me?

HIPPOLITA
Oh, sir, forgive me, it was I betrayed him.

CLEANTHES
How!

HIPPOLITA
Aye.

CLEANTHES
The fellow of my heart ’twill speed me then.

HIPPOLITA
Her tears that never wept, and mine own pity
Even cozened me together and stole from me
This secret, which fierce death should not have purchased.

CLEANTHES
Nay, then we’re at an end; all we are false ones
And ought to suffer: I was false to wisdom
In trusting woman, thou were false to faith
In uttering of the secret, and thou false
To goodness in deceiving such a pity.
We are all tainted some way, but thou worst;
And for thy infectious spots ought to die first.
EUGENIA
Pray turn your weapon, sir, upon your mistress;
I come not so ill-friendèd. Rescue, servants!

*Enter SIMONIDES and Courtiers.*

CLEANTHES
Are you so whorishly provided?

SIMONIDES
Yes, sir, she has more weapons at command than one.

EUGENIA
Put forward, man; thou art most sure to have me.

SIMONIDES
I shall be surer if I keep behind, though.

EUGENIA
Now, servants, show your loves!

SIMONIDES
I’ll show my love too, afar off.

EUGENIA
I love to be so courted! Woo me, there!

SIMONIDES
I love to keep good weapons though ne’er fought;
I’m sharper set within than I am without.

HIPPOLITA
Oh, gentlemen! Cleanthes!

EUGENIA
Fight! Upon him!

HIPPOLITA
Thy thirst of blood proclaims thee now a strumpet.

EUGENIA
’Tis dainty, next to procreation fitting,
I’d either be destroying men or getting.
Enter Officers.

FIRST OFFICER
Forbear, on your allegiance, gentlemen!
He’s the Duke’s prisoner, and we seize upon him
To answer this contempt against the law.

CLEANTHES
I obey fate in all things.

HIPPOLITA
Happy rescue!

SIMONIDES
I would you’d seized upon him a minute sooner; it had saved me a cut finger. I wonder how I came by’t for I never put my hand forth, I’m sure. I think my own sword did cut it, if truth were known; maybe the wire in the handle. I have lived these five-and-twenty years and never knew what colour my blood was before. I never durst eat oysters, nor cut peck-loaves.

EUGENIA
You have shown your spirits, gentlemen, but you have cut your finger.

SIMONIDES
Aye, the wedding finger too. A pox on’t!

FIRST COURTIER
You’ll prove a bawdy bachelor, Sim, to have a cut upon your finger before you are married.

SIMONIDES
I’ll never draw sword again to have such a jest put upon me.

Exeunt.