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THOMAS MIDDLETON

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with our own times. Moreover, the popular success of films such as *The Crying Game* (1992), and of plays such as *M. Butterfly* (1988) that challenge traditional thinking about gender as innate and fixed, may encourage performances of *The Roaring Girl* that release its intellectual and dramatic energies anew.

SEE ALSO

Textual introduction and apparatus: *Companion*, 610
 Authorship and date: *Companion*, 369
 Other Middleton-Dekker works: *Caesar's Fall*, 328; *Gravesend*, 128; *Meeting*, 183; *Magnificent*, 219; *Patient Man*, 280; *Banquet*, 637; *Gypsy*, 1723

THOMAS MIDDLETON and THOMAS DEKKER

The Roaring Girl

[for Prince Henry's Men at The Fortune]

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Sir ALEXANDER Wengrave
 NEATFOOT, his man
 [SIR THOMAS Long]
 SIR ADAM Appleton
 SIR DAVY Dapper
 SIR BEAUTEOUS Ganymede
 LORD NOLAND
 Young [SEBASTIAN] Wengrave
 JACK DAPPER, and GULL his page
 GOSHAWK
 GREENWIT
 LAXTON
 TILTYARD and MISTRESS TILTYARD

OPENWORK and MISTRESS OPENWORK
 GALLIPOT and MISTRESS GALLIPOT

MOLL, the Roaring Girl
 TRAPDOOR
 [TEARCAT]

SIR GUY Fitzallard
 MARY Fitzallard, his daughter

CURTALAX, a Sergeant
 HANGER, his Yeoman

Ministri [FELLOW with long rapier, PORTER, TAILOR, COACHMAN, 5 or 6 CUTPURSES]

quaint conceits, lecherous jests dressed up in hanging sleeves; and those are fit for the times and the termers. Such a kind of light-colour summer stuff, mingled with diverse colours, you shall find this published comedy—good to keep you in an afternoon from dice, at home in your chambers; and for venery you shall find enough, for sixpence, but well couched an you mark it. For Venus, being a woman, passes through the play in doublet and

Persons. 23 Ministri servants (Latin)
 Epistle preface in form of a letter
 0.1 Venery hunting game animals; pursuing sexual pleasure
 3 great-crop doublet upper body garment worn by men, padded according to fashion
 bombasted enlarged with cotton stuffing;

padded with inflated language
 6 spruceness neatness
 7 niceness elegance
 single separate
 8 quaint conceits clever expressions
 8-9 hanging sleeves long, open sleeves hanging to knee or foot
 9 termers people who come to London

for legal business, pleasure, or intrigue during terms, periods when courts are in session
 14 sixpence price of a printed play
 couched hidden; decorated
 Venus goddess of love; here, Moll Cutpurse

breeches: a brave disguise and a safe one, if the statute untie not her codpiece point! The book I make no question but is fit for many of your companies, as well as the person itself, and may be allowed both gallery-room at the play-house and chamber-room at your lodging. Worse things, I must needs confess, the world has taxed her for than has been written of her; but 'tis the excellency of a writer to leave things better than he finds 'em; though some obscene fellow, that cares not what he writes against others, yet keeps a mystical bawdy-house himself, and entertains drunkards to make use of their pockets and vent his private bottle-ale at midnight—though such a one would have ripped up the most nasty vice that ever hell belched forth, and presented it to a modest assembly, yet we rather wish in such discoveries where reputation lies bleeding, a slackness of truth, than fulness of slander.

Thomas Middleton.

Prologue

A play (expected long) makes the audience look For wonders—that each scene should be a book, Composed to all perfection; each one comes And brings a play in's head with him: up he sums, What he would of a roaring girl have writ— If that he finds not here, he mews at it. Only we entreat you think our scene Cannot speak high, the subject being but mean. A roaring girl, whose notes till now never were, Shall fill with laughter our vast theatre: That's all which I dare promise; tragic passion, And such grave stuff, is this day out of fashion. I see attention sets wide ope her gates Of hearing, and with covetous listening waits

16 disguise fashion; deceptive dress
 statute could refer to misdemeanors, including male dress, for which Mary Frith was brought before a church court in January 1611/12 (see Introduction). Church laws, based on Deut. 22:5, prohibited women from dressing as men, but civil law did not.
 17 untie not her codpiece point does not reveal that she is a woman (the codpiece, a cloth bag covering the male genitals, was tied to hose or breeches by laces called points)
 19 gallery-room a place in the covered, tiered seating of the playhouse
 24 obscene offensive
 25 keeps a mystical bawdy-house secretly enjoys illicit sex
 27 vent pour out
 27-9 though such a one... modest assembly Unlike the author, this writer is hypocritical; though personally immoral, he self-righteously exposes extreme vice to decent people.
 Prologue. 5 a roaring girl see Moll Cutpurse, 1.72, note
 6 mews derides by imitating a cat's cry
 7-8 our scene... but mean Our play

can't be tragic (high), because its subject (Moll) is of low social rank; see 11-12.
 9 whose notes... never were who has never been represented on stage before
 10 our vast theatre the Fortune Theatre, in which the play was first performed; like other public theatres, it held approximately 2000-3000 persons
 17 bowls drinking vessels
 18 constables officers of the ward or parish responsible for keeping order
 controls rebukes
 19 gives braves defies, flouts
 21 suburb-roaders Suburbs were areas outside the city walls, not subject to city authorities.
 24 through an iron grate behind the iron-barred window of a cell in debtors' prison
 26 character distinctive traits
 30 Mad Moll wild, eccentric, not conforming to standards of female behaviour; cf. 1.102, note
 1.0.1 Mary Fitzallard Mary connotes chastity, especially in conjunction with Moll (see 1.73, note).
 sempster one who sews garments for a

To know what girl this roaring girl should be—
 For of that tribe are many. One is she
 That roars at midnight in deep tavern bowls,
 That beats the watch, and constables controls;
 Another roars i'th' day-time, swears, stabs, gives
 braves,
 Yet sells her soul to the lust of fools and slaves:
 Both these are suburb-roaders. Then there's besides
 A civil, city-roaring girl, whose pride,
 Feasting, and riding, shakes her husband's state,
 And leaves him roaring through an iron grate.
 None of these roaring girls is ours: she flies
 With wings more lofty. Thus her character lies—
 Yet what need characters, when to give a guess,
 Is better than the person to express?
 But would you know who 'tis? would you hear her
 name?
 She is called Mad Moll; her life, our acts proclaim.

Enter Mary Fitzallard disguised like a sempster with a case for bands, and Neatfoot a servingman with her, with a napkin on his shoulder, and a trencher in his hand as from table

NEATFOOT The young gentleman, our young master, Sir Alexander's son—is it into his ears, sweet damsel, emblem of fragility, you desire to have a message transported, or to be transcendent?
 MARY A private word or two, sir, nothing else.
 NEATFOOT You shall fructify in that which you come for: your pleasure shall be satisfied to your full contentation. I will, fairest tree of generation, watch when our young master is erected—that is to say up—and deliver him to this your most white hand.

living, either man or woman
 0.2 case for bands a box for neck-bands or collars
 Neatfoot suggests skill and efficiency as a servant; pun on oxfoot prepared as food
 0.4 trencher wooden plate or shallow dish, common in noble or fashionable households at this time
 1-2 The young gentleman... son Sebastian, Sir Alexander's son and heir, in love with Mary Fitzallard
 Sir Alexander's Sir Alexander Wengrave; 'grave' suggests his dignity as Justice of the Peace. In the original quarto, spelled 'Went-grave' only in the dramatis personae, suggesting his response to Mary Fitzallard's dowry.
 4 transcendent affected diction typical of Neatfoot
 6 fructify... come for suggests sexual consummation
 8 tree of generation suggests Mary's desired union with Sebastian, which would make her part of his family tree
 9 erected no longer seated, punning on erection as sexual arousal

MARY Thanks, sir.
 NEATFOOT And withal certify him that I have culled out for him, now his belly is replenished, a daintier bit or modicum than any lay upon his trencher at dinner.
 15 Hath he notion of your name, I beseech your chastity?
 MARY One, sir, of whom he bespake falling-bands.
 NEATFOOT Falling bands, it shall so be given him. If you please to venture your modesty in the hall, amongst a curl-pated company of rude servingmen, and take such as they can set before you, you shall be most seriously, and ingeniously welcome.
 20 MARY I have dined indeed already, sir.
 NEATFOOT —Or will you vouchsafe to kiss the lip of a cup of rich Orleans in the buttery amongst our waiting-women?
 25 MARY Not now in truth, sir.
 NEATFOOT Our young master shall then have a feeling of your being here presently. It shall so be given him.
 MARY I humbly thank you, sir. *Exit Neatfoot*
 30 But that my bosom
 Is full of bitter sorrows, I could smile
 To see this formal ape play antic tricks;
 But in my breast a poisoned arrow sticks,
 And smiles cannot become me. Love woven sleightly,
 35 Such as thy false heart makes, wears out as lightly,
 But love being truly bred i'th' soul, like mine,
 Bleeds even to death at the least wound it takes.
 The more we quench this, the less it slakes. O me!
Enter Sebastian Wengrave with Neatfoot
 SEBASTIAN A sempster speak with me, sayst thou?
 NEATFOOT Yes, sir, she's there, *viva voce*, to deliver her auricular confession.
 40 SEBASTIAN With me, sweetheart? What is't?
 MARY I have brought home your bands, sir.
 SEBASTIAN Bands? Neatfoot!
 NEATFOOT Sir.

SEBASTIAN Prithee look in, for all the gentlemen are upon rising.
 NEATFOOT Yes, sir, a most methodical attendance shall be given.
 SEBASTIAN And, dost hear, if my father call for me, say I am busy with a sempster.
 NEATFOOT Yes, sir, he shall know it that you are busied with a needlewoman.
 SEBASTIAN In's ear, good Neatfoot.
 NEATFOOT It shall be so given him. *Exit*
 SEBASTIAN Bands? You're mistaken, sweetheart, I bespake none. When, where, I prithee? What bands? Let me see them.
 MARY Yes, sir, a bond fast sealed with solemn oaths, subscribed unto, as I thought, with your soul, delivered as your deed in sight of heaven, is this bond cancelled? Have you forgot me?
 SEBASTIAN Ha! Life of my life! Sir Guy Fitzallard's daughter! What has transformed my love to this strange shape? Stay; make all sure; so. Now speak and be brief, because the wolf's at door that lies in wait to prey upon us both. Albeit mine eyes are blessed by thine, yet this so strange disguise holds me with fear and wonder.
 MARY Mine's a loathed sight. Why from it are you banished else so long?
 SEBASTIAN I must cut short my speech: in broken language, thus much, sweet Moll, I must thy company shun. I court another Moll; my thoughts must run as a horse runs that's blind: round in a mill, out every step, yet keeping one path still.
 MARY Um! Must you shun my company? In one knot

14 modicum small quantity of food
 16 falling-bands collars worn flat (falling), with puns on bond (her precontract with Sebastian) and banns, part of the betrothal ritual (see 56-8, note)
 19 curl-pated curly-headed
 21 rude unmannerly
 21 ingeniously graciously
 24 Orleans French wine from region of Orleans
 24-5 buttery storeroom for food
 24-5 waiting-women female servants
 28 presently immediately
 29 But except
 31 formal ape referring to Neatfoot's affectation or aping of formality
 33 antic tricks grotesque gestures
 33 sleightly craftily, skillfully
 39 viva voce by word of mouth; in person
 40 auricular confession normally used for confession of sins to a priest; here, insinuates confession of sexual misde-

meanors
 52 needlewoman needle could mean penis
 56-8 bands...bond The two words were used interchangeably. Mary refers to her precontract with Sebastian, a ceremony in which the couple joined hands (with or without witnesses) to signify their union before God, after which they were regarded as husband and wife, but weren't considered fully married until a wedding ceremony took place in church. Before the ceremony, 'banns' had to be called in church on three successive Sundays, announcing the expected wedding ceremony so that those who knew of any impediment could voice their objection.
 62 Sir Guy Fitzallard's recalls Guy of Warwick, hero of chivalric romance
 65 the wolf's at door proverbial; refers to Sir Alexander

72 Moll nickname for Mary; see l. 73, note; 5-4, note
 73 Moll the roaring girl. As a proper noun 'moll' means a whore, a thief's female companion, or a female thief. Moll's surname, Cutpurse, associates her with thieves who robbed people by cutting the cord that attached purses to clothing. Purse could also refer to the scrotum. Given Moll's appropriation of masculine prerogatives and the reactions it provokes, 'Cutpurse' hints at castration, the removal of the testicles. Roaring boys were swaggering, quarrelsome young men given to gaming, whoring, and thieving, in defiance of law and social mores.
 74-5 As a horse runs that's blind...keeping one path still proverbial; blindfolded horses provided power for grist mills; suggests persistence

Have both our hands by th' hands of heaven been tied
 Now to be broke? I thought me once your bride—
 Our fathers did agree on the time when—
 And must another bedfellow fill my room?
 SEBASTIAN Sweet maid, let's lose no time. 'Tis in heaven's book
 80 Set down that I must have thee; an oath we took
 To keep our vows; but when the knight, your father,
 Was from mine parted, storms began to sit
 Upon my covetous father's brows, which fell
 85 From them on me. He reckoned up what gold
 This marriage would draw from him, at which he
 swore
 To lose so much blood could not grieve him more.
 He then dissuades me from thee, called thee not fair,
 And asked, 'What is she but a beggar's heir?'
 90 He scorned thy dowry of five thousand marks.
 If such a sum of money could be found,
 And I would match with that, he'd not undo it,
 Provided his bags might add nothing to it;
 But vowed, if I took thee—nay more, did swear it—
 95 Save birth from him I nothing should inherit.
 MARY What follows then—my shipwreck?
 SEBASTIAN Dearest, no.
 Though wildly in a labyrinth I go,
 My end is to meet thee: with a side wind
 100 Must I now sail, else I no haven can find,
 But both must sink forever. There's a wench
 Called Moll, Mad Moll, or Merry Moll, a creature
 So strange in quality, a whole city takes
 Note of her name and person. All that affection
 105 I owe to thee, on her, in counterfeit passion,
 I spend to mad my father; he believes
 I dote upon this roaring girl, and grieves
 As it becomes a father for a son
 That could be so bewitched; yet I'll go on
 110 This crooked way, sigh still for her, feign dreams
 In which I'll talk only of her: these streams
 Shall, I hope, force my father to consent
 That here I anchor, rather than be rent
 Upon a rock so dangerous. Art thou pleased,
 115 Because thou seest we are waylaid, that I take

77 our hands...tied refers to precontract; see 56-8, note
 80 bedfellow If they have had sexual intercourse (which could be implied here), then they would be considered married; could also refer to another match for Sebastian.
 81 heaven's book refers to precontract as sacred, binding
 91 five thousand marks worth £3,330, well above the average dowry offered by gentry in 1600-1624, and only slightly below the average offered by peers
 94 bags money bags
 102 Mad Moll mad in the sense of not

conforming to conventions of behaviour for women; spirited, wild (cf. Prologue.30 and 1.73, note)
 103 quality character; occupation
 111 streams currents
 113 rent torn apart
 2.0.1 Wengrave see 1.1, note
 0.1-2 Sir Davy Dapper Dapper suggests smart dress, brisk movements.
 0.2 Sir Adam Appleton in alluding to the Adam of Genesis, suggests both venerable age and human fallibility
 Goshawk female hawk used in falconry; refers to his predatory schemes
 Laxton 'lacks stone' (testicle), implying

A path that's safe, though it be far about?
 MARY My prayers with heaven guide thee!
 SEBASTIAN Then I will on,
 My father is at hand; kiss and be gone.
 Hours shall be watched for meetings. I must now,
 120 As men for fear, to a strange idol bow.
 MARY Farewell!
 SEBASTIAN I'll guide thee forth. When next we meet,
 A story of Moll shall make our mirth more sweet. *Exeunt*
Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave, Sir Davy Dapper, Sir Adam Appleton, Goshawk, Laxton, and Gentlemen
 OMNES Thanks, good Sir Alexander, for our bounteous cheer.
 ALEXANDER Fie, fie, in giving thanks you pay too dear!
 SIR DAVY When bounty spreads the table, faith, 'twere sin,
 At going off, if thanks should not step in.
 ALEXANDER No more of thanks, no more. Ay marry, sir,
 5 Th'inner room was too close; how do you like
 This parlour, gentlemen?
 OMNES O, passing well!
 SIR ADAM What a sweet breath the air casts here—so cool!
 GOSHAWK I like the prospect best.
 LAXTON See how 'tis furnished.
 SIR DAVY A very fair sweet room.
 ALEXANDER Sir Davy Dapper,
 10 The furniture that doth adorn this room
 Cost many a fair grey groat ere it came here;
 But good things are most cheap when they're most
 dear.
 Nay, when you look into my galleries—

his impotence and his landlessness (see 2.57, note)
 5 marry exclamation denoting surprise or emphasis; from the Virgin Mary
 7 parlour a spacious and handsomely furnished sitting room
 9 prospect view of landscape
 12 fair grey groat A groat was a silver coin worth fourpence; figuratively, any small sum. Sir Alexander, though, stresses its worth in 'fair'.
 14 galleries long, narrow rooms in manor houses for the display of family portraits often hung very closely together

How bravely they are trimmed up—you all shall swear
 15 You're highly pleased to see what's set down there:
 Stories of men and women, mixed together
 Fair ones with foul, like sunshine in wet weather.
 Within one square a thousand heads are laid
 20 So close that all of heads the room seems made;
 As many faces there, filled with blithe looks,
 Show like the promising titles of new books
 Writ merrily, the readers being their own eyes,
 Which seem to move and to give plaudities.
 25 And here and there, whilst with obsequious ears
 Thronged heaps do listen, a cutpurse thrusts and leers
 With hawk's eyes for his prey—I need not show him:
 By a hanging villainous look yourselves may know
 him,
 The face is drawn so rarely. Then, sir, below,
 30 The very floor, as 'twere, waves to and fro,
 And like a floating island, seems to move
 Upon a sea bound in with shore above.
Enter Sebastian and Greenwit
 OMNES
 These sights are excellent!
 ALEXANDER I'll show you all;
 Since we are met, make our parting comical.
 SEBASTIAN
 35 This gentleman—my friend—will take his leave, sir.
 ALEXANDER
 Ha? Take his leave, Sebastian? Who?
 SEBASTIAN This gentleman.
 ALEXANDER
 Your love, sir, has already given me some time,
 And if you please to trust my age with more,
 It shall pay double interest—good sir, stay.
 GREENWIT
 I have been too bold.
 40 ALEXANDER Not so, sir. A merry day
 'Mongst friends being spent, is better than gold saved.
 Some wine, some wine! Where be these knaves I
 keep?
Enter three or four Servingmen and Neatfoot
 NEATFOOT
 At your worshipful elbow, sir.

You are
 Kissing my maids, drinking, or fast asleep.
 NEATFOOT
 Your worship has given it us right.
 ALEXANDER You varlets, stir!
 Chairs, stools, and cushions.
Servants bring on wine, chairs, stools and cushions
 Prithee, Sir Davy Dapper,
 Make that chair thine.
 SIR DAVY 'Tis but an easy gift,
 And yet I thank you for it, sir; I'll take it.
 ALEXANDER
 A chair for old Sir Adam Appleton.
 NEATFOOT
 A backfriend to your worship.
 SIR ADAM Marry, good Neatfoot,
 I thank thee for it: backfriends sometimes are good.
 ALEXANDER
 Pray make that stool your perch, good Master Gos-
 hawk.
 GOSHAWK
 I stoop to your lure, sir.
 ALEXANDER Son Sebastian,
 Take Master Greenwit to you.
 SEBASTIAN Sit, dear friend.
 ALEXANDER
 Nay, Master Laxton. *(To Servant)*—Furnish Master
 Laxton
 50 With what he wants, a stone—a stool, I would say, a
 stool.
 LAXTON
 I had rather stand, sir.
Exeunt [Neatfoot and] Servants
 ALEXANDER
 I know you had, good Master Laxton. So, so—
 Now here's a mess of friends; and gentlemen,
 Because time's glass shall not be running long,
 I'll quicken it with a pretty tale.
 SIR DAVY Good tales do well
 In these bad days, where vice does so excel.
 SIR ADAM
 Begin, Sir Alexander.
 ALEXANDER Last day I met

19–24 **Within one square...** give plaudities
 Sir Alexander's description of his galleries
 modulates into a vision of the tiered
 galleries of the Fortune Theatre (the
 only public theatre built as a square) in
 which the faces of the audience crowded
 together resemble those in the galleries'
 portraits, and then, figuratively, the titles
 of books displayed on library shelves.
 24 **plaudities** conflates *plaudite* (Latin),
 customary appeal for applause made by
 actors at end of play, with applause
 26 **heaps** multitudes
 26–7 **a cutpurse...** for his prey In court
 records and other writings, the Fortune

was associated with cutpurses and
 pickpockets.
 30–2 **The very floor... with shore above**
 likens the Fortune's floor, crowded with
 standing spectators, to a sea and the
 stage to an island
 32.1 **Greenwit** suggests youth, naivete
 34 **comical happy**
 45 **varlets** servants, or abusively, knaves
 46 **Chairs, stools, and cushions** Even in
 wealthy houses chairs were not plentiful
 and were often reserved for those of
 highest rank.
 50 **backfriend** chair supporting his back;
 pun on 'backfriend' as pretended or false

friend, and on officer arresting debtor,
 laying hands on him from behind
 52–3 **perch... lure** word play on Goshawk's
 name; in falconry, a hawk stoops to the
 lure when it comes down for its food
 56 **a stone... a stool** a jab at Laxton's
 impotence, punning on 'wants' as lacks,
 and 'stone' as testicle
 57 **stand** be capable of erection; refers to his
 impotence
 59 **mess** proverbially, 'four make up a
 mess'; a group of four
 94 **read o'er his cards** take note of the hand
 fortune dealt him
 101 **like a lamp** draws on a parable (Luke
 8:16) which had become proverbial: 'a

An aged man upon whose head was scored
 A debt of just so many years as these
 65 Which I owe to my grave: the man you all know.
 OMNES
 His name, I pray you, sir?
 ALEXANDER Nay, you shall pardon me.
 But when he saw me, with a sigh that brake,
 Or seemed to break, his heart-strings, thus he spake:
 'O my good knight', says he—and then his eyes
 70 Were richer even by that which made them poor,
 They had spent so many tears, they had no more—
 'O sir', says he, 'you know it, for you ha' seen
 Blessings to rain upon mine house and me.
 Fortune, who slaves men, was my slave; her wheel
 75 Hath spun me golden threads, for, I thank heaven,
 I ne'er had but one cause to curse my stars.'
 I asked him then what that one cause might be.
 OMNES
 So, sir.
 ALEXANDER
 He paused, and as we often see
 A sea so much becalmed there can be found
 80 No wrinkle on his brow, his waves being drowned
 In their own rage; but when th'imperious winds
 Use strange invisible tyranny to shake
 Both heaven's and earth's foundation at their noise,
 The seas swelling with wrath to part that fray
 85 Rise up and are more wild, more mad, than they:
 Even so this good old man was by my question
 Stirred up to roughness; you might see his gall
 Flow even in's eyes; then grew he fantastical.
 SIR DAVY
 Fantastical? Ha, ha!
 ALEXANDER
 Yes, and talked oddly.
 SIR ADAM
 Pray, sir, proceed. How did this old man end?
 ALEXANDER
 Marry, sir, thus:
 He left his wild fit to read o'er his cards;
 90 Yet then, though age cast snow on all his hairs,
 He joyed, 'Because', says he, 'the god of gold
 Has been to me no niggard. That disease

Of which all old men sicken, avarice,
 Never infected me—'
 LAXTON *(aside)* He means not himself, I'm sure. 100
 ALEXANDER 'For like a lamp
 Fed with continual oil, I spend and throw
 My light to all that need it, yet have still
 Enough to serve myself. O but', quoth he,
 105 'Though heaven's dew fall thus on this aged tree,
 I have a son that's like a wedge doth cleave,
 My very heart-root.'
 SIR DAVY Had he such a son?
 SEBASTIAN *(aside)* Now I do smell a fox strongly.
 ALEXANDER
 Let's see; no, Master Greenwit is not yet
 So mellow in years as he, but as like Sebastian,
 110 Just like my son Sebastian—such another.
 SEBASTIAN *(aside)* How finely, like a fencer, my father
 fetches his by-blows to hit me; but if I beat you not
 at your own weapon of subtlety—
 ALEXANDER
 'This son', saith he, 'that should be 115
 The column and main arch unto my house,
 The crutch unto my age, becomes a whirlwind
 Shaking the firm foundation.'
 SIR ADAM 'Tis some prodigal.
 SEBASTIAN *(aside)* Well shot, old Adam Bell!
 ALEXANDER
 No city monster neither, no prodigal,
 120 But sparing, wary, civil, and—though wifeless—
 An excellent husband; and such a traveller,
 He has more tongues in his head than some have
 teeth.
 SIR DAVY
 I have but two in mine.
 GOSHAWK So sparing and so wary,
 What then could vex his father so?
 ALEXANDER O, a woman. 125
 SEBASTIAN A flesh-fly: that can vex any man!
 ALEXANDER
 A scurvy woman,
 On whom the passionate old man swore he doted.
 'A creature', saith he, 'nature hath brought forth
 130 To mock the sex of woman.' It is a thing

64 **scored** marked; word play on physical
 signs of age and 'score' as notch cut on
 stick in keeping accounts
 75–6 **Fortune... golden threads** combines
 the wheel of Fortune and the Fates' spin-
 ning wheel, both emblems of Fortune's
 control over human life; may also allude
 to Fortune Theatre (see 19–24, note)
 88 **gall** bile, a bodily substance associated
 with bitterness; here, merged with tears
 89 **fantastical** eccentric, strange
 94 **read o'er his cards** take note of the hand
 fortune dealt him
 101 **like a lamp** draws on a parable (Luke
 8:16) which had become proverbial: 'a

candle lights others and consumes itself'
 106 **wedge** tool used for splitting wood or
 stone
 108 **smell a fox** as in 'smell a rat', meaning
 suspect a trick; fox can also mean a kind
 of sword (see fencing imagery in 112–
 14)
 113 **by-blows** side strokes with a sword
 114 **subtlety** craftiness, cunning device
 118 **prodigal** alludes to parable of the
 prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), who
 squandered his paternal inheritance
 119 **Adam Bell** refers to famous archer and
 outlaw; also plays on Sir Adam's name
 122 **husband** plays on senses of 'spouse' and

of 'household manager' who is thrifty,
 careful
 122–3 **traveller... teeth** Travellers' stories
 were thought to be exaggerated, fanciful.
 126 **flesh-fly** fly that lives on and lays
 eggs in dead flesh; implies that Moll is a
 prostitute and by infecting her customers
 with venereal disease, makes her living
 from their 'dead flesh'
 127 **scurvy** contemptible
 130–2 **a thing...** | Ere she was all made
 associates Moll's masculine dress with
 the monstrous, that which transgresses
 the laws of nature, by likening her to a
 deformed infant born prematurely

135 One knows not how to name: her birth began
Ere she was all made. 'Tis woman more than man,
Man more than woman, and which to none can hap,
The sun gives her two shadows to one shape;
Nay, more, let this strange thing walk, stand, or sit,
No blazing star draws more eyes after it.

SIR DAVY
A monster! 'Tis some monster!
She's a varlet!

ALEXANDER
SEBASTIAN [*aside*] Now is my cue to bristle.

ALEXANDER
A naughty pack.

SEBASTIAN 'Tis false!

ALEXANDER Ha, boy?

SEBASTIAN 'Tis false!

ALEXANDER What's false? I say she's naught.

140 SEBASTIAN I say that tongue
That dares speak so—but yours—sticks in the throat
Of a rank villain. Set yourself aside.

ALEXANDER
So, sir, what then?

SEBASTIAN Any here else had lied.
(*aside*)—I think I shall fit you.

ALEXANDER
Lie?

SEBASTIAN
Yes.

SIR DAVY
Doth this concern him?

145 ALEXANDER Ah, sirrah boy,
Is your blood heated? Boils it? Are you stung?
I'll pierce you deeper yet. O my dear friends,
I am that wretched father, this that son
150 That sees his ruin, yet headlong on doth run.

SIR ADAM
Will you love such a poison?

SIR DAVY Fie, fie!

SEBASTIAN You're all mad!

ALEXANDER
Thou'rt sick at heart, yet feel'st it not. Of all these,
What gentleman, but thou, knowing his disease
Mortal, would shun the cure? O Master Greenwit,
Would you to such an idol bow?

155 GREENWIT Not I sir.

ALEXANDER
Here's Master Laxton: has he mind to a woman

As thou hast?

LAXTON No, not I, sir.

ALEXANDER Sir, I know it.

LAXTON
Their good parts are so rare, their bad so common,
I will have naught to do with any woman.

SIR DAVY
'Tis well done, Master Laxton.

ALEXANDER O thou cruel boy,
Thou wouldst with lust an old man's life destroy.
Because thou seest I'm halfway in my grave,
Thou shovel'st dust upon me: would thou mightest
have

Thy wish, most wicked, most unnatural!

SIR DAVY
Why sir, 'tis thought Sir Guy Fitzallard's daughter
Shall wed your son Sebastian.

ALEXANDER Sir Davy Dapper,
I have upon my knees wooed this fond boy
To take that virtuous maiden.

SEBASTIAN Hark you a word, sir.
You on your knees have cursed that virtuous maiden,
And me for loving her; yet do you now
Thus baffle me to my face? Wear not your knees
In such entreats! Give me Fitzallard's daughter!

ALEXANDER
I'll give thee ratsbane rather!

SEBASTIAN Well then, you know
What dish I mean to feed upon.

ALEXANDER Hark, gentlemen,
He swears to have this cutpurse drab to spite my gall.

OMNES
Master Sebastian!

SEBASTIAN I am deaf to you all!
I'm so bewitched, so bound to my desires,
Tears, prayers, threats, nothing can quench out those
fires

That burn within me!

Exit

ALEXANDER
Her blood shall quench it then.
Lose him not: O dissuade him, gentlemen!

SIR DAVY
He shall be weaned, I warrant you.

ALEXANDER Before his eyes
Lay down his shame, my grief, his miseries.

132-3 woman... woman Like a hermaphroditic, also considered a monstrosity, she belongs to both genders indeterminately.

134 two shadows possibly, a different shadow for each gender

136 blazing star comet

139 naughty pack person of bad character

140 naught immoral; wanton

141 but except

144 I shall fit you echoes the revenger-hero's famous line from Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (c.1582-92): 'Why then, I'll fit you', 4.1.70 (ed. Mulryne)

158 common plays on senses of frequently found and promiscuous

159 naught See 140; 'to do naught' means

to have sex with someone; Laxton equivocates, implying that he refuses to have sex, that he can't have sex (because of impotence), and that he will have it indiscriminately.

171 baffle subject to public disgrace; cheat

173 ratsbane rat poison

175 drab whore

OMNES
No more, no more; away!

Exeunt all but Sir Alexander

185 ALEXANDER
I wash a negro,
Losing both pains and cost. But take thy flight:
I'll be most near thee when I'm least in sight.
Wild buck, I'll hunt thee breathless: thou shalt run

on,
But I will turn thee when I'm not thought upon.

190 Enter Ralph Trapdoor [*with a letter*]
Now, sirrah, what are you? Leave your ape's tricks and speak.

TRAPDOOR A letter from my captain to your worship.
ALEXANDER O, O, now I remember, 'tis to prefer thee into my service.

TRAPDOOR To be a shifter under your worship's nose of a clean trencher, when there's a good bit upon't.

ALEXANDER [*reads letter*]
Troth, honest fellow.—[*Aside*—Hm—ha—let me see—

This knave shall be the axe to hew that down
At which I stumble: h'as a face that promiseth
Much of a villain; I will grind his wit,
And if the edge prove fine make use of it.

200 Come hither sirrah, canst thou be secret, ha?
TRAPDOOR As two crafty attorneys plotting the undoing of their clients.

ALEXANDER
Didst never, as thou hast walked about this town,
Hear of a wench called Moll—Mad, Merry Moll?

TRAPDOOR Moll Cutpurse, sir?

ALEXANDER The same; dost thou know her then?

210 TRAPDOOR As well as I know 'twill rain upon Simon and Judes day next. I will sift all the taverns i'th' city, and drink half-pots with all the watermen o'th' Bankside, but if you will, sir, I'll find her out.

ALEXANDER That task is easy; do't then. Hold thy hand up.
What's this? Is't burnt?

185 I wash a negro proverbial: 'To wash an Ehiop (blackamoor, moor) white', meaning that an action is futile

189.1 Ralph Trapdoor Ralph puns on 'raff' (trash); Trapdoor refers to his efforts to trap Moll.

190 ape's tricks possibly refers to Trapdoor's attempt at courteous gestures

192 letter...to your worship Justices of the Peace such as Sir Alexander were responsible for administering laws concerning discharged soldiers who turned to begging and became vagrants.

195-6 To be a shifter...clean trencher to wait on table as your servant

209-10 Simon and Judes day 28 October, a feast day honouring the holy apostles, was closely associated with the annual

Lord Mayor's Pageants held in London the following day; in 1605, the celebration was postponed because of rain and foul weather.

210 sift search closely

211 watermen o'th' Bankside boatmen who ferried passengers from the City across the Thames to the Bankside in Southwark, where many public theatres were located

214 burnt branded as a felon; common punishment for first offences

222 mermaid suggests Moll's allegedly dual nature as both woman and man (see 130-3, note); also associated with sirens who lured sailors to shipwreck by singing

224 cut her comb humiliate by destroying her 'masculine' potency

TRAPDOOR No, sir, no: a little singed with making fire-works.

ALEXANDER There's money. Spend it; that being spent, fetch more.

TRAPDOOR O sir, that all the poor soldiers in England had such a leader! For fetching, no water-spaniel is like me.

ALEXANDER
This wench we speak of strays so from her kind
Nature repents she made her; 'tis a mermaid
Has tolled my son to shipwreck.

TRAPDOOR I'll cut her comb for you.

ALEXANDER
I'll tell out gold for thee then; hunt her forth,
Cast out a line hung full of silver hooks
To catch her to thy company: deep spendings
May draw her that's most chaste to a man's bosom.

TRAPDOOR The jingling of golden bells, and a good fool with a hobbyhorse, will draw all the whores i'th' town to dance in a morris.

ALEXANDER Or rather, for that's best, they say sometimes
She goes in breeches; follow her as her man.

TRAPDOOR And when her breeches are off, she shall follow me!

ALEXANDER Beat all thy brains to serve her.
TRAPDOOR Zounds, sir, as country wenches beat cream, till butter comes.

ALEXANDER Play thou the subtle spider: weave fine nets
To ensnare her very life.

TRAPDOOR Her life?
ALEXANDER Yes, suck
Her heart-blood if thou canst. Twist thou but cords
To catch her; I'll find law to hang her up.

TRAPDOOR
Spoke like a worshipful bencher!

ALEXANDER
Trace all her steps; at this she-fox's den
Watch what lambs enter; let me play the shepherd
To save their throats from bleeding, and cut hers.

TRAPDOOR
This is the goll shall do't.

225 tell out count out

229-31 The jingling of golden bells...dance in a morris A hobbyhorse is both a figure in the morris dance who wears bells and figuratively a whore; Trapdoor suggests that the morris dancer's golden bells and lewd capers will attract whores, as like is drawn to like.

233 her man her servant

237 zounds abbreviation of 'by God's (Christ's) wounds'; considered profane and banned from the stage in the Act of Abuses, 1606

237-8 till butter comes punning on come as orgasm

243 bencher magistrate

247 goll hand, in thieves' jargon or 'cant'; see 10.134-372

Scene 2

The Roaring Girle.

Be firm and gain me

ALEXANDER
Ever thine own. This done, I entertain thee.
How is thy name?

TRAPDOOR
My name, sir, is Ralph Trapdoor—honest Ralph.

ALEXANDER
Trapdoor, be like thy name, a dangerous step
For her to venture on; but unto me—

TRAPDOOR
As fast as your sole to your boot or shoe, sir.

ALEXANDER
Hence then, be little seen here as thou canst;
I'll still be at thine elbow.

TRAPDOOR
The trapdoor's set.
Moll, if you budge you're gone. This me shall crown:
A roaring boy the Roaring Girl puts down.

ALEXANDER
God-a-mercy, lose no time. *Exeunt*

*The three shops open in a rank: the first a
pothecary's shop, the next a feather shop, the third
a sempster's shop. Mistress Gallipot in the first,
Mistress Tiltyard in the next, Master Openwork
and his wife in the third. To them enters Laxton,
Goshawk, and Greenwit*

MISTRESS OPENWORK Gentlemen, what is't you lack? What
is't you buy? See fine bands and ruffs, fine lawns, fine

cambrics. What is't you lack, gentlemen, what is't you
buy?

LAXTON Yonder's the shop.

GOSHAWK Is that she?

LAXTON Peace!

GREENWIT She that minces tobacco?

LAXTON Ay: she's a gentlewoman born, I can tell you,
though it be her hard fortune now to shred Indian
pot-herbs.

GOSHAWK O sir, 'tis many a good woman's fortune, when
her husband turns bankrupt, to begin with pipes and
set up again.

LAXTON And indeed the raising of the woman is the lifting
up of the man's head at all times: if one flourish, t'other
will bud as fast, I warrant ye.

GOSHAWK Come, thou'rt familiarly acquainted there, I
grope that.

LAXTON And you grope no better i'th' dark, you may
chance lie i'th' ditch when you're drunk.

GOSHAWK Go, thou'rt a mystical lecher!

LAXTON I will not deny but my credit may take up an
ounce of pure smoke.

GOSHAWK May take up an ell of pure smock! Away, go!
[Aside] 'Tis the closest striker! Life, I think he commits
venery forty foot deep: no man's aware on't. I, like
a palpable smockster, go to work so openly with the
tricks of art that I'm as apparently seen as a naked
boy in a vial; and were it not for a gift of treachery
that I have in me to betray my friend when he puts

male customers

15-17 the raising of the woman... bud
as fast implies a connection between
financial profit and sexual vigour, with
wordplay on 'head' and 'bud' suggesting
erection

19, 20 grope understand; feel, in sexual
play

22 mystical secret; see Epistle.24-5

23 credit good reputation; sale on trust

24-5 ounce of pure smoke... ell of pure
smock pun on smoke/smock, a shirt
worn both as underwear and nightgown:
Laxton implies that Mistress Gallipot sells
him tobacco on credit, Goshawk that
Laxton is having sex with her, i.e., lifts
up her smock

25 ell measure of length: 45 inches

26 closest most secret; intimate

27 striker implies aggressive sexual conquest

28 venery sexual pleasure; in this context,
with predatory implication; see Epistle.1

28 smockster lecher (see 24-5, note)

29-30 a naked boy in a vial Goshawk's
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26 closest most secret; intimate

27 striker implies aggressive sexual conquest

28 venery sexual pleasure; in this context,
with predatory implication; see Epistle.1

28 smockster lecher (see 24-5, note)

29-30 a naked boy in a vial Goshawk's
attempts at secrecy in seduction turn out
to be as open as the curiosities displayed
in early collections or 'wonder cabinets';
among them the 'embalmed child'—letus
displayed in glass as a curiosity—listed
by Thomas Platter in 1599.

19, 20 grope understand; feel, in sexual
play

22 mystical secret; see Epistle.24-5

23 credit good reputation; sale on trust

24-5 ounce of pure smoke... ell of pure
smock pun on smoke/smock, a shirt
worn both as underwear and nightgown:
Laxton implies that Mistress Gallipot sells
him tobacco on credit, Goshawk that
Laxton is having sex with her, i.e., lifts
up her smock

25 ell measure of length: 45 inches

26 closest most secret; intimate

27 striker implies aggressive sexual conquest

Scene 3

The Roaring Girle.

Enter Jack Dapper, and his man Gull

Jack Dapper!

105 GREENWIT Monsieur Dapper, I dive down to your ankles.
JACK DAPPER Save ye, gentlemen, all three, in a peculiar salute.

GOSHAWK He were ill to make a lawyer: he dispatches three at once!

110 LAXTON So well said! [Receiving purse from Mistress Gallipot] But is this of the same tobacco, Mistress Gallipot?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT The same you had at first, sir.

LAXTON I wish it no better: this will serve to drink at my chamber.

GOSHAWK Shall we taste a pipe on't?

LAXTON Not of this, by my troth, gentlemen; I have sworn before you.

GOSHAWK What, not Jack Dapper?

LAXTON Pardon me sweet Jack, I'm sorry I made such a rash oath, but foolish oaths must stand. Where art going, Jack?

JACK DAPPER Faith, to buy one feather.

LAXTON One feather? [Aside] The fool's peculiar still!

JACK DAPPER Gull.

GULL Master?

JACK DAPPER Here's three halfpence for your ordinary, boy; meet me an hour hence in Paul's.

GULL [aside] How? Three single halfpence? Life, this will scarce serve a man in sauce: a ha'p'orth of mustard, a ha'p'orth of oil, and a ha'p'orth of vinegar—what's left then for the pickle herring? This shows like small beer i'th' morning after a great surfeit of wine o'ernight. He could spend his three pound last night in a supper amongst girls and brave bawdy-house boys. I thought

his pockets cackled not for nothing: these are the eggs of three pound. I'll go sup 'em up presently. Exit Gull
LAXTON [aside] Eight, nine, ten angels. Good wench, i'faith, and one that loves darkness well. She puts out a candle with the best tricks of any drugster's wife in England; but that which mads her, I rail upon opportunity still, and take no notice on't. The other night she would needs lead me into a room with a candle in her hand to show me a naked picture, where no sooner entered, but the candle was sent of an errand; now I, not intending to understand her, but like a puny at the inns of ventry, called for another light innocently. Thus reward I all her cunning with simple mistaking. I know she cozens her husband to keep me, and I'll keep her honest, as long as I can, to make the poor man some part of amends. An honest mind of a whoremaster! [To Gallants] How think you amongst you? What, a fresh pipe? Draw in a third man.

GOSHAWK No, you're a hoarder: you engross by th'ounces! At the feather shop now

JACK DAPPER Puh, I like it not.

MISTRESS TILTYARD

What feather is't you'd have, sir?

These are most worn and most in fashion
Amongst the beaver gallants, the stone-riders,
The private stage's audience, the twelvepenny-stool gentlemen:

I can inform you 'tis the general feather.

JACK DAPPER

And therefore I mislike it—tell me of general!

Now a continual Simon and Jude's rain

Beat all your feathers as flat down as pancakes.

103.1 Jack Dapper Son of Sir Davy Dapper.

Jack is a generic name for an ordinary fellow; the surname suggests smart dress and brisk movements similar to his father's (see 2.0.1-2, note). his man Gull Man means manservant; a gull is a fool or simpleton.

105 dive down in an exaggerated bow, like a dive-dapper, bird that dives into water; playing on Dapper's name

106 Save ye short for 'God save ye' peculiar single; special

108-9 lawyer... three at once! He would make a bad lawyer (ironically, because he is efficient, doesn't prolong business).

113 drink smoke

122 one feather Feathers were proverbially linked to fools, as in 'a feather for a fool'.

123 peculiar odd; playing on 106

126 ordinary eating house serving a fixed-price meal, or the meal itself, here a very cheap one; ordinaries were often considered meeting places for rogues and outlaws

127 Paul's probably Paul's Walk, the middle aisle of St Paul's Cathedral, a meeting place for high and low

128 Life short for 'God's life'

129 in sauce he can only buy sauce, not the meal itself

ha'p'orth halfpenny's worth

131-2 small beer weak beer, recommended for the morning after a night of heavy drinking

134 brave handsome

135-6 his pockets cackled... eggs of three pound The coins in Jack's pockets chinked like hens cackling before laying eggs; Gull's small change is like the eggs.

136 presently right now

137 angels the money he received from Mistress Gallipot; an angel, a coin worth ten shillings at this time, was named for its design of St Michael slaying the dragon

138 loves darkness well... puts out a candle implies that she is promiscuous

139 drugster's apothecary's

140 rail... still complain that circumstances keep us from having sex

144 sent of an errand put out

145 understand playing on stand as erection; have sex

puny freshman at university or Inns of Court, residential colleges of law

147 cozens tricks, deceives

148 keep support me; hold my affection

150 whoremaster lecher

153 hoarder Laxton hasn't shared the tobacco (actually, money) Mistress Gallipot gave him earlier (see 110-11)

156 beaver gallants gallants wearing fashionable, costly beaver hats; because the beaver was considered lustful, may suggest sexual desire, potency
stone-riders riders of stallions, playing on stone as testicle; implies masculine sexual potency

157 private stage's indoor theatres that charged more than public (outdoor) theatres; attended by wealthier people, of somewhat higher rank
twelvepenny-stool gentlemen Stools for sitting onstage were available in both public and private theatres, and were much favoured by gallants.

158 the general feather most fashionable feather

160 Simon and Jude's rain see 2.209-10

Show me—a—spangled feather.

MISTRESS TILTYARD O, to go a-feasting with!
You'd have it for a hench-boy; you shall.

At the sempster's shop now

OPENWORK

Mass, I had quite forgot!

140 His honour's footman was here last night, wife:
Ha'you done with my lord's shirt?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I was this morning at his honour's lodging
Ere such a snail as you crept out of your shell.

OPENWORK

O, 'twas well done, good wife.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

145 Than if you had done't yourself. I hold it better, sir,
Nay, so say I:

OPENWORK

150 But is the countess's smock almost done, mouse?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Here lies the cambric, sir, but wants, I fear me.

OPENWORK

I'll resolve you of that presently.

[Makes sexual gesture]

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Heyday! O audacious groom,

Dare you presume to noblewomen's linen?

155 175 Keep you your yard to measure shepherd's holland!
I must confine you, I see that.

At the Tobacco Shop now

GOSHAWK What say you to this gear?

LAXTON I dare the arrantest critic in tobacco to lay one fault upon't.

180

Enter Moll in a frieze jerkin and a black safeguard

GOSHAWK Life, yonder's Moll.

LAXTON Moll, which Moll?

GOSHAWK Honest Moll.

162 spangled decorated with spangles; speckled

163 hench-boy page you shall you shall have it

171 mouse term of endearment

172 wants isn't yet finished

176 yard measuring stick; penis shepherd's holland coarse linen fabric first made in Holland

178 gear stuff; here, tobacco

180.1 frieze jerkin short coat with collar and (usually) sleeves, made of coarse woollen cloth; worn by men

safeguard outer skirt worn by women to protect clothing from dirt when riding horseback (Moll enters the play wearing both male and female dress)

192 sirrah often used to address women

193 Heart short form of 'God's heart', an exclamation

195 four great parishes possibly those of Southwark, composed of four parishes much larger than any of those within

the city: St Savior's, St Olave's, St Thomas's, and St George's

196-7 get all his soldiers upon her Medical writers debated the contributions made by female and male in conceiving a child; some followed Aristotle in believing that the male gave it form or spirit, and the female, matter, while others followed Galen in thinking the female contributed both matter and form. Laxton reasons that a 'mannish' woman like Moll will produce only male children.

198 Mile End a field south of Mile End Road used as a drill ground for citizens' militia come on, and come off military terms for advance and retire, with sense of sexual conquest

199-200 marrowbone before an Italian Bones containing marrow were considered a delicacy and an aphrodisiac; Italians were reputedly lustful.

200-1 cry bona-roba... nothing but bone Bona-roba is a term for prostitute; the

LAXTON Prithee let's call her. Moll!

ALL Moll, Moll, pist, Moll!

MOLL How now, what's the matter?

GOSHAWK A pipe of good tobacco, Moll?

MOLL I cannot stay.

GOSHAWK Nay Moll—puh—prithree hark, but one word, i'faith.

MOLL Well, what is't?

GREENWIT Prithee come hither, sirrah.

LAXTON [aside] Heart, I would give but too much money

to be nibbling with that wench. Life, sh'as the spirit of four great parishes, and a voice that will drown all

the city! Methinks a brave captain might get all his soldiers upon her, and ne'er be beholding to a company of Mile End milksops, if he could come on, and come off

quick enough. Such a Moll were a marrowbone before an Italian: he would cry bona-roba till his ribs were

nothing but bone. I'll lay hard siege to her—money is that aquafortis that eats into many a maidenhead: where

the walls are flesh and blood, I'll ever pierce through with a golden auger.

GOSHAWK Now thy judgement, Moll—is't not good?

MOLL Yes, faith, 'tis very good tobacco. How do you sell an ounce? Farewell. God buy you, Mistress Gallipot.

GOSHAWK Why Moll, Moll!

MOLL I cannot stay now, i'faith; I am going to buy a shag ruff—the shop will be shut in presently.

GOSHAWK 'Tis the maddest, fantasticalst girl! I never knew so much flesh and so much nimbleness put together!

LAXTON She slips from one company to another like a fat eel between a Dutchman's fingers.—[Aside] I'll watch my time for her.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Some will not stick to say she's a man, and some both man and woman.

(supposedly) lusty Italian would exhaust himself in having sex with her till his marrow, believed the seat of animal vitality, was consumed.

201 lay hard siege military language connoting aggressive sexual pursuit

202 aquafortis nitric acid, a powerful solvent and corrosive

204 auger long pointed tool for boring holes in wood; a phallic image

206 How at what price?

207 God buy you God redeem you; equivalent to 'good-bye'

209-10 shag ruff a fluted collar standing up around the neck, made of worsted or silk cloth with a velvet nap on one side

211 fantasticalst from fantastical, meaning eccentric or strange; see 2.89, note

214 eel a favourite food in Holland

216-17 a man... both man and woman Mistress Gallipot echoes Sir Alexander's remarks; see 2.129-30, 132-3.

LAXTON That were excellent: she might first cuckold the husband and then make him do as much for the wife!

The feather shop again

MOLL Save you—how does Mistress Tiltyard?

JACK DAPPER Moll!

MOLL Jack Dapper!

JACK DAPPER How dost, Moll?

MOLL I'll tell thee by and by—I go but to th'next shop.

JACK DAPPER Thou shalt find me here this hour about a feather.

MOLL Nay, an a feather hold you in play a whole hour, a goose will last you all the days of your life!

The sempster shop

Let me see a good shag ruff.

OPENWORK Mistress Mary, that shalt thou, i'faith, and the best in the shop.

MISTRESS OPENWORK How now?—Greetings! Love terms, with a pox between you! Have I found out one of your haunts? I send you for hollands, and you're i'the low countries with a mischief. I'm served with good ware by th'shift, that makes it lie dead so long upon my hands, I were as good shut up shop, for when I open it, I take nothing.

OPENWORK Nay, and you fall a-ringing once the devil cannot stop you; I'll out of the belfry as fast as I can. Moll.

MISTRESS OPENWORK Get you from my shop!

MOLL I come to buy.

MISTRESS OPENWORK I'll sell ye nothing; I warn ye my house and shop.

MOLL

You, goody Openwork, you that prick out a poor living

And sews many a bawdy skin-coat together,
Thou private pandress between shirt and smock,
I wish thee for a minute but a man:
Thou shouldst never use more shapes, but as th'art,
I pity my revenge. Now my spleen's up,
I would not mock it willingly.

Enter a fellow with a long rapier by his side
Ha, be thankful,

Now I forgive thee.

MISTRESS OPENWORK Marry, hang thee! I never asked forgiveness in my life.

MOLL You, Goodman Swine's face!

FELLOW What, will you murder me?

MOLL You remember, slave, how you abused me t'other night in a tavern?

FELLOW Not I, by this light.

MOLL No, but by candlelight you did: you have tricks to save your oaths, reservations have you, and I have reserved somewhat for you. [Strikes him] As you like that, call for more: you know the sign again.

FELLOW Pox on't! Had I brought any company along with me to have borne witness on't, 'twould ne'er have grieved me; but to be struck and nobody by, 'tis my ill fortune still. Why tread upon a worm, they say, 'twill turn tail; but indeed a gentleman should have more manners.

Exit

LAXTON Gallantly performed, i'faith, Moll, and manfully! I love thee for ever for't. Base rogue, had he offered but the least counter-buff, by this hand, I was prepared for him.

MOLL You prepared for him? Why should you be prepared for him? Was he any more than a man?

218 **cuckold** A wife made her husband a cuckold by sleeping with another man; the term conveys scorn for the man who cannot keep his wife sexually satisfied. There is no fully equivalent term for the wife of an unfaithful husband.

227-8 **feather...goose** Moll evokes the traditional association between feathers, geese, and foolishness; see 123.

234-8 I **send you for hollands...I take nothing** an extended *double entendre* in which the sempster's language bears consistently sexual meaning. She claims that when she sends her husband to get cloth (hollands, linen from Holland) he pursues women with lecherous intent (low countries, for genitals). The ware (cloth, or sexual service) that he devises by this shift (subterfuge, or erotic play, shift meaning both an undergarment and a clever trick) leaves her dead (sexually unsatisfied) so that she takes in nothing (doesn't turn profits sexually or financially).

239 **fall a-ringing** proverbial language for the shrewish (articulate, assertive) wife

241 **Moll** Openwork fades from the dialogue to emerge at 313 talking to Goshawk; he then exits with Moll at 406

244 **warn ye** deny you entry to

246 **goody** goodwife
prick out Seamstresses didn't belong to guilds and were often quite poor, thus some eked out a living through prostitution (see 1.52, note, and 5.95).

247 **skin-coat** *double entendre* in which sewing also means bringing whore and customer together, and skin-coat stands for sexual intercourse

248 **Thou** Moll shows her contempt by shifting to the more intimate form; see 91-2, note.

private pandress secret bawdy
shirt and smock man and woman

249 **but a man** transformed to a man (presumably so that Moll could challenge her with physical combat)

250 **shapes** she would no longer deceive

people

251 **pity** forego
spleen's temper's

252.1 **Enter a fellow...rapier** See Persons.23-4; a quarrelsome gallant, the first of several bit parts comprised in the term *Ministri*, servants and others defined mainly by social role or vocation
long rapier long, pointed, two-edged sword

256 **goodman** title for yeomen and others beneath the rank of gentlemen

261-2 **tricks...reservations** ways of equivocating when you swear that a statement is true

266 **borne witness** on't witnessed my being struck (so that he would have grounds for retaliation)

268-9 **tread upon a worm...twill turn tail** proverbial; even the humblest person will resent an injury and retaliate (also plays on tail as male or female sexual parts)

273 **counter-buff** blow in return

LAXTON No, nor so much by a yard and a handful, London measure.

MOLL Why do you speak this, then? Do you think I cannot ride a stone-horse unless one lead him by th'snaffle?

LAXTON Yes, and sit him bravely, I know thou canst, Moll. 'Twas but an honest mistake through love, and I'll make amends for't any way; prithee, sweet plump Moll, when shall thou and I go out o' town together?

MOLL Whither? To Tyburn, prithee?

LAXTON Mass, that's out o' town indeed! Thou hangest so many jests upon thy friends still. I mean honestly to Brentford, Staines, or Ware.

MOLL What to do there?

LAXTON Nothing but be merry and lie together; I'll hire a coach with four horses.

MOLL I thought 'twould be a beastly journey. You may leave out one well; three horses will serve if I play the jade myself.

LAXTON Nay, push! Thou'rt such another kicking wench. Prithee be kind and let's meet.

MOLL 'Tis hard but we shall meet, sir.

LAXTON Nay, but appoint the place then. There's ten angels in fair gold, Moll: you see I do not trifle with you—do but say thou wilt meet me, and I'll have a coach ready for thee.

MOLL Why, here's my hand I'll meet you, sir.

LAXTON [*aside*] O good gold!—[*To her*] The place, sweet Moll?

MOLL It shall be your appointment.

LAXTON Somewhat near Holborn, Moll.

MOLL In Gray's Inn Fields then.

277 a **yard and a handful** punning on yard as penis; London mercers customarily gave a little more than the exact measure

280 **stone-horse** stallion (see 156); also figuratively a man, and an ironic reference to Laxton's impotence
th'snaffle a simple kind of bridle-bit, without a curb

285 **Tyburn** place of execution for criminals in London

288 **Brentford, Staines, or Ware** towns conveniently near London for a day's amusement or a sexual rendezvous. Ware, twenty miles north of London, housed the famous great bed of Ware (10 feet 9 inches square); Staines lay seventeen miles west and Brentford, the closest of the three, only ten miles west of the city.

294 **jade** a worn out, ill-tempered horse; 'to play the jade' means to act like a whore

297 **'Tis hard but** of course

306 **Holborn** a main thoroughfare of London, along which the inns of court (law schools) were located; gardens in its western part were locales for illicit sex

LAXTON A match.
MOLL I'll meet you there.

LAXTON The hour?

MOLL Three.
LAXTON That will be time enough to sup at Brentford.

Fall from them to the other

OPENWORK I am of such a nature, sir, I cannot endure the house when she scolds; sh'as a tongue will be heard further in a still morning than St Antholin's bell. She rails upon me for foreign wenching, that I, being a freeman, must needs keep a whore i'th' suburbs, and seek to impoverish the liberties. When we fall out, I trouble you still to make all whole with my wife.

GOSHAWK No trouble at all: 'tis a pleasure to me to join things together.

OPENWORK Go thy ways. [*Aside*] I do this but to try thy honesty, Goshawk.

The feather shop

JACK DAPPER How liketh thou this, Moll?

MOLL O, singularly: you're fitted now for a bunch. [*Aside*] He looks for all the world with those spangled feathers like a nobleman's bedpost. The purity of your wench would I fain try: she seems like Kent unconquered, and I believe as many wiles are in her. O, the gallants of these times are shallow lechers: they put not their courtship home enough to a wench; 'tis impossible to know what woman is thoroughly honest, because she's ne'er thoroughly tried. I am of that certain belief there are more queans in this town of their own making than of any man's provoking: where lies the slackness then?

307 **Gray's Inn Fields** Gray's Inn was a distinguished law school; its open fields were frequented by criminal elements.

312.1 **Fall from them to the other** signals a shift of focus from one group to another

315 **St Antholin's bell** a church in Watling Street where Puritan preachers not under church jurisdiction held an early morning lecture for which the bell was rung at 5 a.m.; the noise was resented by some in the neighbourhood

317-18 **suburbs...liberties** The city had no control over the suburbs, so that prostitution supposedly could flourish more easily in them; the liberties (named because they were free from manorial rule or obligation to the crown) were territories both within and outside the city over which no single city or county authority had jurisdiction or control. Mistress Openwork ironically suggests that her husband, as a guild member and citizen of London, goes against his own interests by seeking his sexual pleasures in the suburbs.

318 **fall out** quarrel

319 **trouble you** ask you

320-1 **join things together** Goshawk ironically alludes to his own sexual interests

322 **Go thy ways** as you please

325 **singularly** very much; alluding to Jack's intention of buying a single feather (see 123, 225)

327 **nobleman's bedpost** The 'state beds' of the great manor houses built by the gentry and nobility had four posts supporting a canopy, or tester, which were often decorated with bunches of feathers.

328 **Kent unconquered** commonly said of this county, which unlike others, retained its original laws and customs pre-dating the Norman conquest

330-1 **I put...home** They don't go far enough, get to the point (implying sexual penetration).

332 **honest** chaste; virtuous in a sexual sense

333 **tried** tested, put to the proof

334 **queans** loose (unchaste) women; whores

Many a poor soul would down, and there's nobody will push 'em!
 Women are courted but ne'er soundly tried,
 As many walk in spurs that never ride.
The sempster's shop
 340 MISTRESS OPENWORK O abominable!
 GOSHAWK Nay, more, I tell you in private, he keeps a
 whore i'th' suburbs.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK O spittle dealing! I came to him a
 gentlewoman born; I'll show you mine arms when you
 345 please, sir.
 GOSHAWK [aside] I had rather see your legs, and begin that
 way!
 MISTRESS OPENWORK 'Tis well known he took me from a
 lady's service where I was well-beloved of the steward.
 350 I had my Latin tongue and a spice of the French before I
 came to him, and now doth he keep a suburban whore
 under my nostrils.
 GOSHAWK There's ways enough to cry quit with him. Hark
 in thine ear. [Whispers]
 355 MISTRESS OPENWORK There's a friend worth a million.
 [Before the feather shop]
 MOLL I'll try one spear against your chastity, Mistress
 Tiltyard, though it prove too short by the burr.
Enter Ralph Trapdoor
 TRAPDOOR [aside] Mass, here she is! I'm bound already
 to serve her, though it be but a sluttish trick. [To her]
 360 Bless my hopeful young mistress with long life and great
 limbs, send her the upper hand of all bailiffs and their
 hungry adherents!
 MOLL How now, what art thou?
 TRAPDOOR A poor ebbing gentleman that would gladly wait
 365 for the young flood of your service.
 MOLL My service! What should move you to offer your
 service to me, sir?
 TRAPDOOR The love I bear to your heroic spirit and
 masculine womanhood.
 370 MOLL So, sir, put case we should retain you to us: what
 parts are there in you for a gentlewoman's service?

TRAPDOOR Of two kinds right worshipful: movable and
 immovable—movable to run of errands, and immovable
 to stand when you have occasion to use me.
 MOLL What strength have you?
 TRAPDOOR Strength, Mistress Moll? I have gone up into a
 375 steeple and stayed the great bell as 't has been ringing;
 stopped a windmill going.
 MOLL And never struck down yourself?
 TRAPDOOR Stood as upright as I do at this present.
Moll trips up his heels; he falls
 MOLL Come, I pardon you for this; it shall be no disgrace
 to you. I have struck up the heels of the high German's
 size ere now. What, not stand?
 TRAPDOOR I am of that nature where I love, I'll be at my
 mistress' foot to do her service.
 385 MOLL Why, well said! But say your mistress should receive
 injury: have you the spirit of fighting in you—durst you
 second her?
 TRAPDOOR Life, I have kept a bridge myself, and drove
 seven at a time before me.
 MOLL Ay?
 TRAPDOOR [aside] But they were all Lincolnshire bullocks,
 by my troth.
 MOLL Well, meet me in Gray's Inn Fields between three
 and four this afternoon, and upon better consideration
 we'll retain you.
 TRAPDOOR I humbly thank your good mistress-ship. [Aside]
 390 I'll crack your neck for this kindness. *Exit*
Moll meets Laxton
 LAXTON Remember three.
 MOLL Nay, if I fail you, hang me.
 LAXTON Good wench, i'faith.
Then Moll meets Openwork
 MOLL Who's this?
 OPENWORK 'Tis I, Moll.
 MOLL Prithce tend thy shop and prevent bastards!
 405 OPENWORK We'll have a pint of the same wine, i'faith,
 Moll. *[Exit Openwork with Moll]*

336 **would down** would 'fall' from chastity; have illicit sex
 339 **walk in spurs that never ride** Horseriding often carries sexual meanings; here, many are ready to ride (have sex) who never have the chance.
 343 **spittle** shortened form of hospital, probably referring to St Mary's Spittle which specialized in treating venereal disease, and its neighbourhood, frequented by thieves and prostitutes
 344 **arms** the shield or emblem that signifies her family's status as gentry
 349 **steward** person in charge of a gentle or noble household, responsible for expenditures, servants, etc.
 350 **a spice of the French** a little French; associated with venereal disease, called the

French pox and (especially in women) with loose sexual behaviour
 353 **cry quit with pay back**, get back at
 357 **burr** ring of iron behind handle of lance used in tilting (see 3.0.4, note); playing on 'Tiltyard'
 364 **ebbing** unfortunate, impoverished
 365 **young flood** flow of tide upriver
service the position of servant; here also implies sexual 'service'
 370 **put case** suppose
 371 **parts** abilities, talents; also, sexual organs (see 'stand', 374)
 372-3 **movable and immovable** punning on 'parts', 371
 380 **stood as upright** punning on erection
 382-3 **high German's size** a German fencer,

tall and of great strength, in London at this time
 385 **foot** playing on French *foutre*, to have sex with; continuing the implications of 'service' (see 364-5) that Moll will dominate him sexually
 388 **second** support in attacking or defending
 389-90 **kept a bridge... before me** military actions
 392 **Lincolnshire bullocks** cattle from a county well known for them; undercut his claim of valour in 389-90
 402 **Who's this?** Seemingly, Openwork is eluding his wife.
 405 **same wine** a common pun on bastard, a sweet Spanish wine

The bell rings
 GOSHAWK Hark, the bell rings; come, gentlemen. Jack
 Dapper, where shall's all munch?
 JACK DAPPER I am for Parker's Ordinary.
 LAXTON
 He's a good guest to'm, he deserves his board:
 He draws all the gentlemen in a term-time thither.
 We'll be your followers, Jack: lead the way.
 Look you, by my faith, the fool has feathered his nest
 well. *Exeunt Gallants*
Enter Master Gallipot, Master Tiltyard, and servants with water spaniels and a duck
 TILTYARD Come, shut up your shops. Where's Master
 Openwork?
 385 MISTRESS OPENWORK Nay, ask not me Master Tiltyard.
 GALLIPOT Where's his water-dog? Puh—pist—hurr—
 hurr—pist.
 TILTYARD Come wenches, come, we're going all to Hogsden.
 390 MISTRESS GALLIPOT To Hogsden, husband?
 GALLIPOT Ay, to Hogsden, pigsney.
 MISTRESS TILTYARD I'm not ready, husband.
 TILTYARD Faith, that's well. *(Spits in the dog's mouth)*
 Hum—pist—pist.
 395 GALLIPOT Come Mistress Openwork, you are so long.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK I have no joy of my life, Master
 Gallipot.
 GALLIPOT Push! Let your boy lead his water spaniel along,
 and we'll show you the bravest sport at Parlous Pond.
 Hey Trug, hey Trug, hey Trug! Here's the best duck in
 400 England, except my wife.
 Hey, hey, hey! Fetch, fetch, fetch!

408 shall's shall we
 409 Parker's Ordinary see 126
 410 to'm to him, i.e., to Parker
 411 term-time when law courts were in session and London was full of visitors
 413 fool... feathered referring to Jack Dapper's purchase of feathers; see 123
 413-3 water spaniels and a duck type of dog used for retrieving water fowl; duck-hunting was a popular pastime
 417-18 Puh... pist whistles or other sounds, for calling the dog
 419-20 Hogsden Hoxton, an area north of London with open fields, popular for excursions
 422 pigsney term of endearment, possibly playing on Hogsden
 424 Spits in the dog's mouth expression of affection toward and means of befriending a dog
 430 Parlous Pond pond in London popular

Come, let's away:
 Of all the year, this is the sportful'st day. *[Exeunt]* 435

Enter Sebastian solus
 SEBASTIAN
 If a man have a free will, where should the use
 More perfect shine than in his will to love?
 All creatures have their liberty in that;
Enter Sir Alexander and listens to him
 Though else kept under servile yoke and fear,
 The very bondslave has his freedom there.
 Amongst a world of creatures voiced and silent,
 Must my desires wear fetters?—[Aside] Yea, are you
 So near? Then I must break with my heart's truth,
 Meet grief at a back way. [Aloud] Well: why, suppose
 10 The two-leaved tongues of slander or of truth
 Pronounce Moll loathsome; if before my love
 She appear fair, what injury have I?
 I have the thing I like. In all things else
 Mine own eye guides me, and I find 'em prosper;
 15 Life, what should ail it now? I know that man
 Ne'er truly loves—if he gainsay't, he lies—
 That winks and marries with his father's eyes;
 I'll keep mine own wide open.
Enter Moll and a Porter with a viol on his back
 ALEXANDER [aside] Here's a brave wilfulness.
 A made match: here she comes; they met o' purpose.
 PORTER Must I carry this great fiddle to your chamber,
 20 Mistress Mary?
 MOLL Fiddle, goodman hog-rubber? Some of these porters
 bear so much for others, they have no time to carry wit
 for themselves.
 PORTER To your own chamber, Mistress Mary? 25

for swimming, not far from the Fortune Theatre and on the way to Hogsden; so named because of drownings that occurred there (parlous is a corruption of 'perilous')
 431 **Trug** name of dog; can also mean prostitute
 435 **sportful'st day** an enthusiastic exclamation, or possibly a reference to May Day (1 May) or Shrove Tuesday (the pre-Lenten festivity) on which 'the pancake bell' rang at 11 a.m. and apprentices stopped work, sometimes rioting and destroying property
 4.8 **break with** abandon, renounce (since his father is present, he must dissemble)
 9 **Meet grief... way** express grief covertly
 10 **two-leaved tongues** recalls both the forked tongue of the devil in the form of a serpent, who speaks a mixture of slander and truth, and Virgil's *Fama* or

Rumour (Aeneid 4.173-97, Loeb ed.), who speaks both truth and untruth
 17 **winks** closes his eyes
 18.1 **viol** a stringed instrument played with a bow, very popular with both men and women at this time. Playing an instrument often carried the meaning of sexual play, with the player assumed to be either male or female and the 'instrument' of either sex; because the viol was held between the knees (hence Ital. *gamba*, leg) it was especially suggestive. Here a female player takes the active role of 'player' (cf. scene 8 and Introduction)
 19 **made match** arranged meeting
 20 **great fiddle** great could mean pregnant; to fiddle could mean to play sexually with a woman
 22 **hog-rubber** abusive term for a swineherd

MOLL Who'll hear an ass speak? Whither else, Goodman pageant bearer? They're people of the worst memories.

Exit Porter

SEBASTIAN Why, 'twere too great a burden, love, to have them carry things in their minds and o' their backs together.

MOLL Pardon me, sir, I thought not you so near.

ALEXANDER [*aside*] So, so, so.

SEBASTIAN I would be nearer to thee, and in that fashion That makes the best part of all creatures honest. No otherwise I wish it.

MOLL Sir, I am so poor to requite you, you must look for nothing but thanks of me: I have no humour to marry. I love to lie o' both sides o'th'bed myself; and again o'th'other side, a wife, you know, ought to be obedient, but I fear me I am too headstrong to obey, therefore I'll ne'er go about it. I love you so well, sir, for your good will, I'd be loath you should repent your bargain after, and therefore we'll ne'er come together at first. I have the head now of myself, and am man enough for a woman; marriage is but a chopping and changing, where a maiden loses one head, and has a worse i'th' place.

ALEXANDER [*aside*] The most comfortablest answer from a roaring girl, That ever mine ears drunk in.

SEBASTIAN This were enough Now to affright a fool forever from thee, When 'tis the music that I love thee for.

ALEXANDER [*aside*] There's a boy spoils all again!

MOLL Believe it, sir, I am not of that disdainful temper,

But I could love you faithfully.
ALEXANDER [*aside*] A pox On you for that word. I like you not now; You're a cunning roarer, I see that already.

MOLL But sleep upon this once more, sir; you may chance shift a mind tomorrow: be not too hasty to wrong yourself. Never while you live, sir, take a wife running: many have run out at heels that have done't. You see, sir, I speak against myself, and if every woman would deal with their suitor so honestly, poor younger brothers would not be so often gulled with old cozening widows that turn o'er all their wealth in trust to some kinsman, and make the poor gentleman work hard for a pension. Fare you well, sir.

SEBASTIAN Nay, prithee one word more!

ALEXANDER [*aside*] How do I wrong this girl; she puts him off still.

MOLL Think upon this in cold blood, sir; you make as much haste as if you were a-going upon a sturgeon voyage. Take deliberation, sir, never choose a wife as if you were going to Virginia. [*Moves away from him*]

SEBASTIAN And so we parted, my too cursed fate! [*Retires*]
ALEXANDER [*aside*] She is but cunning; gives him longer time in't.

Enter a Tailor

TAILOR Mistress Moll, Mistress Moll! So ho ho, so ho!
MOLL There boy, there boy. What dost thou go a-hawking after me with a red clout on thy finger?

TAILOR I forgot to take measure on you for your new breeches. [*Takes measurements*]

ALEXANDER [*aside*] Heyday, breeches! What, will he marry a monster with two trinkets? What age is this? If the wife go in breeches, the man must wear long coats like a fool.

27 **pageant bearer** Pageants were spectacular displays or tableaux, either erected on fixed stages, placed on moving cars, or carried by porters in municipal celebrations.

33 **fashion marriage**

34 **the best part** most

37 **humour** inclination

38 **again** besides

39 **o'th'other side** ambiguously, the other side of the bed, or of the question of marriage

44 **have the head** a term from horsemanship that picks up the metaphor behind 'headstrong' (39): to give a horse his head means to let him go freely. Moll 'has the head of herself' in that she governs herself, without being subject to a husband (see I Cor. 11:3, 'the head of the woman is the man').

44-5 **man enough for a woman** echoes Sir Alexander's description of her as 'woman more than man, | Man more than woman' (2.132-3), but more positively implies that the 'masculine'

trait of self-governance doesn't disturb her femaleness

45-7 **marriage... i'th' place** Chopping implies some violence in defloration or loss of maidenhead in marriage, and in the change to being governed by the husband as one's 'head'.

48 **roaring girl** see 1.72, note

59 **running** on the run

62-4 **younger brothers... cozening widows** Moll contrasts her frankness to the tactics of wealthy widows, who keep suitors (here, younger brothers with modest inheritance, or none) from their wealth by secretly transferring legal control over it to male relatives; otherwise, it would normally pass by law to their second husbands.

66 **pension** denied possession of his wife's estate, the husband must obey her wishes to get even an allowance

71-2 **sturgeon voyage** a long fishing voyage; i.e., you will actually have to live with the wife you choose

73 **Virginia** as if you were going on a long

voyage to a faraway place with uncertain prospects. The Virginia Company established Jamestown, the first colony, in 1607; in its early years, more than half the settlers died within a few months of arrival.

74 **And so we parted... fate!** For his father's ears, Sebastian pretends to be downcast at being refused by Moll.

77 **So ho** cry in hare-hunting and falconry; hence 'a-hawking' in 78

79 **red clout** piece of cloth for measuring, or to stick pins and needles into

83 **a monster with two trinkets** see 2.132-3; having the features of both sexes, like a hermaphrodite

84 **breeches... long coats** proverbial; floor-length coats or skirts were worn by young children, women, and professional fools or jesters. Sir Alexander takes clothing to mark or even determine gender, and gender is dichotomized; male and female have mutually exclusive traits (cf. 2.129-36).

MOLL What fiddling's here? Would not the old pattern have served your turn?

TAILOR You change the fashion, you say you'll have the great Dutch slop, Mistress Mary.

MOLL Why sir, I say so still.

TAILOR Your breeches then will take up a yard more.

MOLL Well, pray look it be put in then.

TAILOR It shall stand round and full, I warrant you.

MOLL Pray make 'em easy enough.

TAILOR I know my fault now; t'other was somewhat stiff between the legs. I'll make these open enough, I warrant you.

ALEXANDER [*aside*] Here's good gear towards! I have brought up my son to marry a Dutch slop and a French doublet: a codpiece daughter.

TAILOR So, I have gone as far as I can go.

MOLL Why then, farewell.

TAILOR If you go presently to your chamber, Mistress Mary, pray send me the measure of your thigh by some honest body.

MOLL Well sir, I'll send it by a porter presently. *Exit*

TAILOR So you had need: it is a lusty one. Both of them would make any porter's back ache in England! *Exit*

SEBASTIAN [*comes forward*]

I have examined the best part of man— Reason and judgement—and in love, they tell me, They leave me uncontrolled. He that is swayed By an unfeeling blood, past heat of love, His springtime must needs err: his watch ne'er goes right

That sets his dial by a rusty clock.

ALEXANDER [*comes forward*]

So—and which is that rusty clock, sir, you?

SEBASTIAN

The clock at Ludgate, sir, it ne'er goes true.

ALEXANDER

But thou goest falser; not thy father's cares Can keep thee right, when that insensible work Obeys the workman's art, lets off the hour, And stops again when time is satisfied; But thou run'st on, and judgement, thy main wheel,

86 **fiddling's** fidgeting; sexual play (see 3.67, note). 'Tailor' could mean male or female sexual organ.

89 **great Dutch slop** wide-cut baggy breeches; see title-page woodcut of Moll

91 **yard** unit of measure; also penis

93 **stand round and full** as in erection; the tailor virtually attributes a penis to Moll

96 **stiff** again, refers to erection

98 **gear** doings; genitals

100 **codpiece daughter** again, implying that because she wears male dress, she must be a man anatomically—but at the same time, still a woman, combining

what ought to be mutually exclusive; see 83-4, note; Epistle.16-18, note; and

Introduction

107 **lusty** vigorous; lustful

112 **unfeeling blood** In Renaissance humours psychology, sexual passion derives from blood, a warm, moist humour which decreases with age; Sebastian objects to being 'swayed' by his father's cold, 'unfeeling blood' (referring also to their blood relationship).

113-14 **springtime... rusty clock** plays on spring as a season and as part of a clock,

both alluding to the human life cycle; youth can't develop properly if it moves to the rhythms of age

116 **clock at Ludgate** one of the ancient city gates, according to legend built by King Lud in 66 BC; made into a prison

Beats by all stops as if the work would break, Begun with long pains for a minute's ruin, Much like a suffering man brought up with care, At last bequeathed to shame and a short prayer.

SEBASTIAN

I taste you bitterer than I can deserve, sir.

ALEXANDER

Who has bewitched thee, son? What devil or drug Hath wrought upon the weakness of thy blood And betrayed all her hopes to ruinous folly?

O wake from drowsy and enchanted shame, Wherein thy soul sits with a golden dream Flattered and poisoned! I am old, my son— O let me prevail quickly,

For I have weightier business of mine own Than to chide thee. I must not to my grave As a drunkard to his bed, whereon he lies Only to sleep, and never cares to rise.

Let me dispatch in time; come no more near her.

SEBASTIAN

Not honestly? Not in the way of marriage?

ALEXANDER

What sayst thou? Marriage? In what place?—The sessions-house? And who shall give the bride, prithee?—An indictment?

SEBASTIAN

Sir, now ye take part with the world to wrong her.

ALEXANDER

Why, wouldst thou fain marry to be pointed at? Alas the number's great, do not o'erburden't.

Why, as good marry a beacon on a hill, Which all the country fix their eyes upon, As her thy folly dotes on. If thou long'st

To have the story of thy infamous fortunes Serve for discourse in ordinaries and taverns, Thou'rt in the way; or to confound thy name, Keep on, thou canst not miss it; or to strike Thy wretched father to untimely coldness, Keep the left hand still, it will bring thee to't.

Yet if no tears wrung from thy father's eyes,

for debtors and bankrupts by Richard II

121-2 Sebastian's 'uncontrolled' (111) passion drives his judgement to run wildly till it breaks, like a clock running too fast and breaking down.

128 **blood** youthful passion

132 **Flattered** encourage with false hopes

134 **weightier business** presumably, setting his estate or his soul to rights before he dies

140 **sessions-house** court house

150 **in the way** on the way to it

name family name and reputation

152 **untimely coldness** premature death

153 **left hand** the opposite of the right; associated with error, evil, disaster

155 Nor sighs that fly in sparkles from his sorrows,
Had power to alter what is wilful in thee,
Methinks her very name should fright thee from her,
And never trouble me.

SEBASTIAN
Why is the name of Moll so fatal, sir?

160 ALEXANDER
Many one, sir, where suspect is entered,
Forseek all London from one end to t'other
More whores of that name than of any ten other.

SEBASTIAN
What's that to her? Let those blush for themselves;
Can any guilt in others condemn her?
165 I've vowed to love her: let all storms oppose me
That ever beat against the breast of man,
Nothing but death's black tempest shall divide us.

ALEXANDER
O folly that can dote on naught but shame!

SEBASTIAN
Put case a wanton itch runs through one name
170 More than another: is that name the worse
Where honesty sits possessed in't? It should rather
Appear more excellent and deserve more praise
When through foul mists a brightness it can raise.

Why, there are of the devil's, honest gentlemen,
175 And well descended, keep an open house;
And some o'th'good man's that are arrant knaves.
He hates unworthily that by rote contemns,
For the name neither saves nor yet condemns;
And for her honesty, I have made such proof on't

180 In several forms, so nearly watched her ways,
I will maintain that strict against an army,
Excepting you, my father. Here's her worst:
Sh'as a bold spirit that mingles with mankind,
But nothing else comes near it, and oftentimes
Through her apparel somewhat shames her birth;

185 But she is loose in nothing but in mirth:
Would all Molls were no worse!

ALEXANDER [*aside*]
This way I toil in vain and give but aim

155 **sparkles** implying that his heart is
hardened by sorrow; Sebastian's conduct
strikes it, producing sparks

160 **Many one**...**suspect** many an officer,
when a person is suspected of an offence,
or under surveillance

161 **Forseek** seek thoroughly, to the point of
being weary

169 **Put case** imagine that

174 **of the devil's** those of the devil's party

176 **o'th'good man's** good men; also
married men ('goodman' was title for
married man)

179 **honesty** chastity

180 **nearly** closely

181 **strict** strictly, rigorously

183 **mankind** men; as adjective, denotes
masculine quality in a woman, thus can

also mean 'is somewhat mannish'
184 **But nothing**...**near it** in no other way
does she approach men

188 **give**...**aim** in archery, to guide
one's aim by charting the result of the
previous shot

201 **By**...**courses indirect** i.e., by Sebastian
pretending to court Moll, which will
make his father more favourably inclined
toward Mary

203 **mad** spirited, eccentric; see I.102

208 **spite** in spite of

5.0.1 **Gray's Inn Fields** see 3.307, note

3 **tester** small coin worth sixpence

4 **Marybone Park** near Oxford Street;
named for St Mary-le-Bourne (on the
brook) or St Mary-le-Bonne (the good),

To infamy and ruin: he will fall,
My blessing cannot stay him; all my joys
Stand at the brink of a devouring flood
And will be wilfully swallowed, wilfully!
But why so vain let all these tears be lost?
I'll pursue her to shame, and so all's crossed. *Exit*

SEBASTIAN
He is gone with some strange purpose whose effect
195 Will hurt me little if he shoot so wide
To think I love so blindly. I but feed
His heart to this match to draw on th'other,
Wherein my joy sits with a full wish crowned—
Only his mood excepted, which must change
200 By opposite policies, courses indirect:
Plain dealing in this world takes no effect.
This mad girl I'll acquaint with my intent,
Get her assistance, make my fortunes known:
'Twixt lovers' hearts she's a fit instrument,
205 And has the art to help them to their own.
By her advice, for in that craft she's wise,
My love and I may meet, spite of all spies. *Exit*

*Enter Laxton in Gray's Inn Fields with the
Coachman*

LAXTON Coachman!
COACHMAN Here, sir.
LAXTON [*gives money*] There's a tester more; prithee drive
thy coach to the hither end of Marybone Park—a fit
place for Moll to get in.
COACHMAN Marybone Park, sir?
LAXTON Ay, it's in our way, thou knowest.
COACHMAN It shall be done, sir.
LAXTON Coachman.
COACHMAN Anon, sir.
LAXTON Are we fitted with good frampold jades?
COACHMAN The best in Smithfield, I warrant you, sir.
LAXTON May we safely take the upper hand of any coached
velvet cap or tuftaffety jacket? For they keep a wild
swaggering in coaches nowadays—the highways are
stopped with them.

also playing on 'marybone' for marrow-
bone, marrow considered a seat of
vitality and an aphrodisiac (see 3.199;
note). The park was known as a centre
of prostitution, thus its name evokes the
same juxtaposition of whore and virgin
as does Moll's name; see I.73, note, and
Introduction.

11 **frampold** spirited

12 **Smithfield** famous market for horses and
cattle near London

13 **coached** travelling by coach, which was
newly fashionable

14 **tuftaffety** taffeta with raised, velvety
patterns in different colours from the
ground colour; costly, worn by the
wealthy

COACHMAN My life for yours, and baffle 'em too, sir!
Why, they are the same jades—believe it sir—that have
drawn all your famous whores to Ware.
20 LAXTON Nay, then they know their business; they need no
more instructions.

COACHMAN They're so used to such journeys, sir, I never
use whip to 'em; for if they catch but the scent of a
wench once, they run like devils.
Exit Coachman with his whip

25 LAXTON Fine Cerberus! That rogue will have the start of
a thousand ones, for whilst others trot afoot, he'll ride
prancing to hell upon a coach-horse! Stay, 'tis now
about the hour of her appointment, but yet I see her
not. (*The clock strikes three*) Hark, what's this? One, two
three: three by the clock at Savoy; this is the hour, and
30 Gray's Inn Fields the place, she swore she'd meet me.
Ha, yonder's two Inns-o'-Court men with one wench:
but that's not she; they walk toward Islington out of
my way. I see none yet dressed like her: I must look
for a shag ruff, a frieze jerkin, a short sword, and a
safeguard, or I get none. Why, Moll, prithee make haste
or the coachman will curse us anon.

Enter Moll like a man

MOLL [*aside*] O here's my gentleman! If they would keep
their days as well with their mercers as their hours
with their harlots, no bankrupt would give sevenscore
40 pound for a sergeant's place. For would you know a
catchpole rightly derived: the corruption of a citizen is
the generation of a sergeant. How his eye hawks for
venery! [*To him*] Come, are you ready, sir?

LAXTON Ready? For what, sir?

MOLL Do you ask that now, sir? Why was this meeting
'pointed?

LAXTON
I thought you mistook me, sir.

You seem to be some young barrister;

50 I have no suit in law—all my land's sold,

17 **baffle** shame

18-19 **jades**...**whores** a jade was a worn-
out or mean-tempered horse; whores
were often called jades

19 **Ware** town near London known as site
for sexual rendezvous; see 3.288, note

25 **Cerberus** in classical mythology, three-
headed dog guarding entrance to hell

30 **Savoy** hospital built on site of Savoy
Palace, between the Thames and the
Strand

33 **Islington** suburb north of London used
for outings and sexual meetings

35-6 **shag ruff**...**safeguard** Laxton re-
members Moll much as she was dressed
on her entrance (see 3.180.1), in both
men's and women's garments

38-9 **keep their days** figuratively, pay their
debts

39 **mercers** dealers in textiles, especially
costly silks and velvets

42 **catchpole** sergeant who arrested people

for debt

42-3 **rightly derived**...**sergeant** Moll
summarizes a cycle of downward social
mobility; tradesmen who go bankrupt
because gallants don't pay them become
sergeants, who arrest gallants for debt.

43-4 **hawks for venery** see Epistle.1, note

47 **'pointed** appointed

49 **barrister** lawyer

50 **all my land's sold** perhaps suggests
a parallel between his lack of stones
(testicles), signifying impotence, and his
lack of land, a kind of social impotence

54 **purblind** totally blind

56 **Three Pigeons** tavern in Brentford; see
3.288, note

58 **know me now** know what I really think
of you; in lines 59-60, he thinks she
means carnal knowledge, gained by
having sex with someone

62 **untruss a point** undo a lace (laces
fastened hose to doublet); Laxton may

I praise heaven for't, 't has rid me of much trouble.
MOLL Then I must wake you, sir; where stands the coach?
LAXTON Who's this?—Moll? Honest Moll?
MOLL So young, and purblind? You're an old wanton in
your eyes, I see that.

LAXTON Thou'rt admirably suited for the Three Pigeons at
Brentford. I'll swear I knew thee not.

MOLL I'll swear you did not: but you shall know me now!
LAXTON No, not here: we shall be spied i'faith! The coach
is better; come.

MOLL Stay.
She puts off her cloak and draws

LAXTON
What, wilt thou untruss a point, Moll?

MOLL Yes, here's the point
That I untruss: 't has but one tag, 'twill serve though
To tie up a rogue's tongue!

LAXTON How?

MOLL [*putting down gold*] There's the gold
With which you hired your hackney, here's her pace:
65 She racks hard and perhaps your bones will feel it.
Ten angels of mine own I've put to thine:
Win 'em and wear 'em!

LAXTON Hold, Moll! Mistress Mary—

MOLL Draw, or I'll serve an execution on thee
Shall lay thee up till doomsday.

LAXTON Draw upon a woman? Why, what dost mean, Moll?

MOLL To teach thy base thoughts manners! Thou'rt one of
those
That thinks each woman thy fond flexible whore:

If she but cast a liberal eye upon thee,
Turn back her head, she's thine; or amongst com-
pany,

75 By chance drink first to thee, then she's quite gone,

think, mistakenly, that by starting to
remove her hat or cloak, Moll is trying to
entice him

point sword point

63 **tag** hard end of lace, allowing it to be
threaded through eyelet

65 **hackney** horse for ordinary riding;
prostitute

pace speed; gait (playing on a prosti-
tute's sexual movements)

66 **racks hard** runs fast, shaking the rider

68 **Win 'em and wear 'em** proverbial: take
your chance

69-70 **serve**...**lay thee up** deliver a writ
that will put you in jail or incapacitate
you (using legal language for a threat of
physical force)

70 **doomsday** the day of judgement (playing
on 'execution', 69)

73 **fond** foolishly infatuated

flexible malleable, impressionable

74 **liberal** generous; flirtatious

There's no means to help her. Nay, for a need,
Wilt swear unto thy credulous fellow lechers
That thou'rt more in favour with a lady
At first sight than her monkey all her lifetime.
How many of our sex by such as thou
Have their good thoughts paid with a blasted name
That never deserved loosely or did trip
In path of whoredom beyond cup and lip?
But for the stain of conscience and of soul,
Better had women fall into the hands
Of an act silent than a bragging nothing:
There's no mercy in't. What durst move you, sir,
To think me whorish? A name which I'd tear out
From the high German's throat if it lay ledger there
To dispatch privy slanders against me!
In thee I defy all men, their worst hates
And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts
With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools—
Distressed needlewomen and trade-fallen wives,
Fish that must needs bite or themselves be bitten—
Such hungry things as these may soon be took
With a worm fastened on a golden hook.
Those are the lecher's food, his prey. He watches
For quarrelling wedlocks and poor shifting sisters:
'Tis the best fish he takes. But why, good fisherman,
Am I thought meat for you, that never yet
Had angling rod cast towards me? 'Cause you'll say
I'm given to sport, I'm often merry, jest;
Had mirth no kindred in the world but lust?
O shame take all her friends then! But howe'er
Thou and the baser world censure my life,
I'll send 'em word by thee, and write so much
Upon thy breast, 'cause thou shalt bear't in mind:
Tell them 'twere base to yield where I have conquered.
I scorn to prostitute myself to a man,
I that can prostitute a man to me!
And so I greet thee.

LAXTON Hear me!

77 for a need in a pinch
80 monkey monkeys were ladies' pets
84 cup and lip refers to pledging faith by drinking wine or beer in a betrothal ceremony, as a sign of marital union; figuratively, protests censure of women for having sex with their future husbands before the wedding ceremony (as in fact many women did)
85 But for except for
87 act silent man who has sex with a woman but doesn't talk about it
bragging nothing man who brags of having sex with a woman when he hasn't
89-90 tear...throat To lie in the throat means to lie deliberately, without justification.
90 high German's see 3.382
ledger ambassador
91 privy secret (as in secrets of state, playing on 90)

95 trade-fallen fallen in social rank, from gentry to merchant class; see 3.12-14, note
96 Fish proverbial: "The great fish eat the small." Moll reverses the usual emphasis, making predatory behaviour in women a response to circumstances rather than simply a vice in itself.
100 wedlocks wives
shifting deceiving
102 meat food, punning on 'meet', suitable, and suggesting 'whore'
113 greet as in 'salute'; also, attack
117 Christian If believers confess their sins before death, they are saved from damnation and may expect to enter heaven.
120 rope hanging; figuratively, any punishment
125 familiar a demon or evil spirit supposed to assist a witch
126 gallantly finely; like a gallant

MOLL Would the spirits
Of all my slanderers were clasped in thine,
That I might vex an army at one time!
They fight
LAXTON I do repent me; hold!
MOLL You'll die the better Christian then.
LAXTON I do confess I have wronged thee, Moll.
MOLL Confession is but poor amends for wrong,
Unless a rope would follow.
LAXTON I ask thee pardon.
MOLL I'm your hired whore, sir!
LAXTON I yield both purse and body.
MOLL Both are mine and now at my disposing.
LAXTON Spare my life!
MOLL I scorn to strike thee basely.
LAXTON Spoke like a noble girl, i'faith.
—[Aside] Heart, I think I fight with a familiar, or the ghost of a fencer! She's wounded me gallantly. Call you this a lecherous voyage? Here's blood would have served me this seven year in broken heads and cut fingers, and it now runs all out together! Pox o' the Three Pigeons! I would the coach were here now to carry me to the surgeon's. *Exit*
MOLL If I could meet my enemies one by one thus,
I might make pretty shift with 'em in time,
And make 'em know, she that has wit and spirit
May scorn to live beholding to her body for meat,
Or for apparel, like your common dame
That makes shame get her clothes to cover shame.
Base is that mind that kneels unto her body
As if a husband stood in awe on's wife;
My spirit shall be mistress of this house

127 lecherous voyage sexual adventure
133 make...shift dispose of them nicely
135 to live...for meat to feed herself by selling her body as a prostitute
136 common dame whore, or, ordinary housewife
137 shame...shame shamefully works as a prostitute to buy clothes to cover the 'shame' of her naked body; or, as shamefast (modest, chaste) wife 'earns' her clothes from her husband
139 husband...wife based on patriarchal comparison of the mind, which ideally should rule the body, to a husband, who ideally should rule over his wife; a prostitute allows her body to rule her mind (spirit, conscience)
140 My spirit...mistress cf. 1.38-40, in which 'mind' is figured as 'husband'; here, spirit is feminine and rules the house

As long as I have time in't.
Enter Trapdoor
O
Here comes my man that would be: 'tis his hour.
Faith, a good well-set fellow, if his spirit
Be answerable to his umbles. He walks stiff,
But whether he will stand to't stiffly, there's the point!
H'as a good calf for't, and ye shall have many a woman
Choose him she means to make her head by his calf;
I do not know their tricks in't. Faith, he seems
A man without; I'll try what he is within.
TRAPDOOR [aside]
She told me Gray's Inn Fields 'twixt three and four.
I'll fit her mistress-ship with a piece of service:
I'm hired to rid the town of one mad girl.
She jostles him
—[To her] What a pox ails you, sir?
MOLL He begins like a gentleman.
TRAPDOOR Heart, is the field so narrow, or your eyesight?—
She comes towards him
Life, he comes back again!
MOLL Was this spoke to me, sir?
TRAPDOOR I cannot tell, sir.
MOLL Go, you're a coxcomb!
TRAPDOOR Coxcomb?
MOLL You're a slave!
TRAPDOOR I hope there's law for you, sir!
MOLL Yea, do you see sir?
Turns his hat
TRAPDOOR Heart, this is no good dealing. Pray let me know what house you're of.
MOLL One of the Temple, sir.
Fillips him
TRAPDOOR Mass, so methinks.
MOLL And yet, sometime I lie about Chick Lane.

142 man that would be he who wants to be my manservant
144 umbles edible inward parts of an animal, usually a deer; figuratively, insides
stiff resolute, playing on erection
145 stand to't reference to erection
147 to make her head by his calf choose a husband by his calf, i.e., physical attractiveness
148 tricks stratagems for choosing
151 fit furnish
157 coxcomb fool
158 law for you law to deal with people like you

TRAPDOOR I like you the worse because you shift your lodging so often; I'll not meddle with you for that trick, sir.
MOLL A good shift, but it shall not serve your turn.
TRAPDOOR You'll give me leave to pass about my business, sir?
MOLL Your business? I'll make you wait on me
Before I ha' done, and glad to serve me too!
TRAPDOOR How sir, serve you? Not if there were no more men in England!
MOLL But if there were no more women in England, I hope you'd wait upon your mistress then.
TRAPDOOR Mistress!
MOLL O you're a tried spirit at a push, sir.
TRAPDOOR What would your worship have me do?
MOLL You a fighter?
TRAPDOOR No, I praise heaven, I had better grace and more manners.
MOLL As how, I pray, sir?
TRAPDOOR Life, 't had been a beastly part of me to have drawn my weapons upon my mistress; all the world would 'a' cried shame of me for that.
MOLL Why, but you knew me not.
TRAPDOOR Do not say so, mistress; I knew you by your wide straddle as well as if I had been in your belly.
MOLL Well, we shall try you further; i'th' mean time, we give you entertainment.
TRAPDOOR Thank your good mistress-ship.
MOLL How many suits have you?
TRAPDOOR No more suits than backs, mistress.
MOLL Well, if you deserve, I cast off this next week,
And you may creep into't.
TRAPDOOR Thank your good worship.
MOLL Come, follow me to St Thomas Apostles:
I'll put a livery cloak upon your back
The first thing I do.
TRAPDOOR I follow my dear mistress. *Exeunt*

161 what house which one of the Inns of Court
162 the Temple a lawyer affiliated with the Middle Temple or the Inner Temple (named for the property of the Knights Templar which they leased)
162.1 Fillips him gives him a sharp blow
163 Chick Lane in the suburb of Smithfield, known as a haunt of thieves and ruffians
165 I'll not meddle with you because he fears one from Chick Lane
for that trick because you change lodging
167 shift punning on shift as change of

residence and as trick, device
serve your turn suit your purpose
176 tried proven
at a push in an emergency; playing on 'push' as the sexual act
182 part piece of behaviour
187 straddle walking, standing, or sitting with legs wide apart
as well...in your belly as well as if you were my mother
189 give you entertainment engage you as a servant
195 St Thomas Apostles church located in neighbourhood of clothing shops

Scene 6

The Roaring Girle.

Sc. 6 Enter Mistress Gallipot as from supper, her husband after her

GALLIPOT What, Prue! Nay, sweet Prudence!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT What a pruing keep you! I think the baby would have a teat, it kyes so. Pray be not so fond of me, leave your city humours. I'm vexed at you to see how like a calf you come bleating after me.

GALLIPOT Nay, honey Prue, how does your rising up before all the table show? And flinging from my friends so uncivilly? Fie, Prue, fie! Come.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Then up and ride, i'faith.

GALLIPOT Up and ride? Nay, my pretty Prue, that's far from my thought, duck. Why mouse, thy mind is nibbling at something. What is't? What lies upon thy stomach?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Such an ass as you! Heyday, you're best turn midwife or physician; you're a pothecary already, but I'm none of your drugs.

GALLIPOT Thou art a sweet drug, sweetest Prue, and the more thou art pounded, the more precious.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Must you be prying into a woman's secrets? Say ye?

GALLIPOT Woman's secrets?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT What? I cannot have a qualm come upon me but your teeth waters till your nose hang over it.

GALLIPOT It is my love, dear wife.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Your love is all words; give me deeds! I cannot abide a man that's too fond over me, so cookish! Thou dost not know how to handle a woman in her kind.

GALLIPOT No, Prue? Why, I hope I have handled—

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Handle a fool's head of your own!—Fie, fie!

6.0.1 *as from supper* presumably late afternoon or evening of the same day as scene 5

2 *pruing* pestering; nonce word derived from Prudence

3 *kyes* baby talk for 'cries'

4 *city humours* moods typical of husbands in city comedies, anxious about their wives' marital fidelity

9 *up and ride* exclamation of impatience, with sexual innuendo

12 *lies upon* has upset, with sexual innuendo

15 *drugs* playing on drudge, a menial servant

17 *pounded* as in preparation of medicines; also, refers to the sexual act

19 *secrets* playing on private parts, genitalia

21 *qualm* sudden faintness or feeling of illness

25-6 *words...deeds* proverbial opposition

27 *cookish* like a woman fussing over her cooking

28 *in her kind* in the way she wants

29 *handled* in a sexual way

30 *a fool's head of your own* your own

foolish head (in exasperation)

35 *cotqueans* men that act like housewives

36 *things* concerns; sexual organs

37 *scurvily* meanly

38 *breeds* is pregnant

39 *get beget*

40 *untoward* hard to manage

41 *breeding* bringing up

42 *milch kine* milk cows

43 *take no cold* don't catch cold; don't be cold toward me

44 *As your wit has done* i.e., caught cold, gotten sick

45 *scurvy-grass* spoonwort, an herb growing along the Thames; its juice was used as a remedy for scurvy

46 *a thousand eyes* alludes to Argus, a giant with eyes all over his body, whom Hera commanded to watch over Io when Zeus was enamored of her

47 *silly* simple, helpless

48 *bays* a garland of bay leaves, traditional reward for poetic achievement

49 *affect* love

50 *'Lack* alack, exclamation of despair

51 *shift* trick

60 *Demophon...Phyllis* When Demophon sailed to Athens, promising to return to his wife Phyllis at a certain time, she gave him a box containing an object sacred to Rhea, the goddess of earth, which he was not to open unless he decided not to return. He settled in Cyprus, and Phyllis hanged herself; then he opened the box, was driven mad by its contents, and died by accidentally falling on his own sword.

61 *Pan-da-rus...Cres-sida* (She hesitates over unfamiliar words.) Pandarus wasn't Cressida's lover but rather the go-between who assisted her love affair with Troilus; the reference ironically undercuts Laxton's profession of fidelity, and moreover implies that he will not be Mistress Gallipot's lover.

62 *Aeneas...Dido* After Aeneas abandoned Dido to pursue his destiny of founding Rome, she killed herself.

63 *die to thee* become as though dead, with play on die meaning to have an orgasm

64-5 *make more...of thee* be more loving, with ironic meaning of profiting from

GALLIPOT Ha, ha, 'tis such a wasp, it does me good now to have her sting me, little rogue.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Now fie how you vex me! I cannot abide these apron husbands: such cotqueans! You overdo your things; they become you scurvily.

GALLIPOT [aside] Upon my life, she breeds. Heaven knows how I have strained myself to please her night and day. I wonder why we citizens should get children so fretful and untoward in the breeding, their fathers being for the most part as gentle as milch kine. [To her] Shall I leave thee, my Prue?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Fie, fie, fie.

GALLIPOT Though shalt not be vexed no more, pretty kind rogue; take no cold, sweet Prue. Exit

MISTRESS GALLIPOT As your wit has done! Now Master Laxton, show your head: what news from you? [Produces a letter] Would any husband suspect that a woman crying, 'Buy any scurvy-grass', should bring love letters amongst her herbs to his wife? Pretty trick! Fine conveyance! Had jealousy a thousand eyes, a silly woman with scurvy-grass blinds them all.

Laxton, with bays

Crown I thy wit for this: it deserves praise.

This makes me affect thee more, this proves thee wise; 'Lack, what poor shift is love forced to devise? To the point.

She reads the letter

'O Sweet Creature'—a sweet beginning—'pardon my long absence, for thou shalt shortly be possessed with my presence. Though Demophon was false to Phyllis, I will be to thee as Pan-da-rus was to Cres-sida; though Aeneas made an ass of Dido, I will die to thee ere I do so. O sweetest creature, make much of me, for no man beneath the silver moon shall make more of a woman

than I do of thee. Furnish me therefore with thirty pounds—you must do it of necessity for me. I languish till I see some comfort come from thee. Protesting not to die in thy debt, but rather to live so, as hitherto I have and will,

Thy true Laxton ever.'

Alas, poor gentleman! Troth, I pity him.

How shall I raise this money? Thirty pound?

'Tis thirty sure: a three before an O—

I know his threes too well. My childbed linen? Shall I pawn that for him? Then if my mark be known, I am undone! It may be thought My husband's bankrupt. Which way shall I turn? Laxton, what with my own fears, and thy wants, I'm like a needle 'twixt two adamants.

Enter Master Gallipot hastily

GALLIPOT Nay, nay, wife, the women are all up—[Aside] Ha? How? Reading o' letters? I smell a goose, a couple of capons, and a gammon of bacon from her mother out of the country, I hold my life—

Steal—steal—

[He sneaks behind her]

MISTRESS GALLIPOT O beshrew your heart!

GALLIPOT What letter's that? I'll see't.

She tears the letter

MISTRESS GALLIPOT O would thou hadst no eyes to see The downfall of me and thyself! I'm for ever, For ever I'm undone.

GALLIPOT What ails my Prue?

What paper's that thou tear'st?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Would I could tear My very heart in pieces, for my soul Lies on the rack of shame that tortures me Beyond a woman's suffering.

GALLIPOT What means this?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Had you no other vengeance to throw down, But even in height of all my joys—

GALLIPOT Dear woman!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT When the full sea of pleasure and content

73 *an O* zero; also, term for female genitals

74 *childbed linen* bed linen used for confinement and childbirth, sometimes finely embroidered and costly

75 *mark* sign of personal ownership

79 *adamants* hard stones confused with loadstones or magnets; she is pulled two ways, by her attraction to Laxton and her desire to stay married

80 *up risen* from the supper table

83 *hold bet*

84 *steal* his movement as he creeps behind her to read the letter over her shoulder

beshrew your heart common expression, often used lightly, meaning 'devil take

your heart'

85-137 *O would thou hadst no eyes... never!* To deceive her husband, Mistress Gallipot adopts an extravagant style associated with tragedy; in this comic context, the style amounts to parody.

96 *Bedlam* corruption of Hospital of St Mary of Bethlehem in London, which treated the insane; bedlam came to mean any kind of madhouse

97 *child at nurse* The well-to-do customarily sent infants away from home to be suckled by wet nurses.

100 *Hockley Hole* Hockley-in-the-Hole, a village near London

Seemed to flow over me?

GALLIPOT As thou desirest To keep me out of Bedlam, tell what troubles thee! Is not thy child at nurse fallen sick, or dead?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT O no!

GALLIPOT Heavens bless me! Are my barns and houses Yonder at Hockley Hole consumed with fire? I can build more, sweet Prue.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT 'Tis worse, 'tis worse!

GALLIPOT My factor broke? Or is the *Jonas* sunk?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Would all we had were swallowed in the waves, Rather than both should be the scorn of slaves!

GALLIPOT I'm at my wit's end!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT O my dear husband, Where once I thought myself a fixed star Placed only in the heaven of thine arms, I fear now I shall prove a wanderer.— O Laxton, Laxton, is it then my fate To be by thee o'erthrown?

GALLIPOT Defend me, wisdom, From falling into frenzy! On my knees, Sweet Prue, speak! What's that Laxton who so heavy Lies on thy bosom?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT I shall sure run mad!

GALLIPOT I shall run mad for company then. Speak to me— I'm Gallipot, thy husband. Prue! Why, Prue! Art sick in conscience for some villainous deed Thou wert about to act? Didst mean to rob me? Tush, I forgive thee. Hast thou on my bed Thrust my soft pillow under another's head? I'll wink at all faults, Prue; 'las that's no more Than what some neighbours near thee have done before.

Sweet honey Prue, what's that Laxton? O!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

GALLIPOT Out with him!

102 *factor* financial representative

broke ruined financially

Jonas trading vessel in which Gallipot presumably has a financial interest; ironically named, since the cargo of the Biblical *Jonah's* ship was cast overboard in the storm (see *Jonah* 1:5)

106 *fixed star* one which appears to hold the same position, as distinguished from a wandering star or planet, which circles the sun

108 *wanderer* unfaithful, wanton

111 *On my knees* i.e., I beg you

120 *wink* at pretend not to see 'las Alas

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

O, he's born to be my undoer!

This hand which thou call'st thine, to him was given;

To him was I made sure i'th' sight of heaven.

GALLIPOT

I never heard this thunder!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Yes, yes, before

I was to thee contracted, to him I swore.

Since last I saw him, twelve months three times told

The moon hath drawn through her light silver bow;

For o'er the seas he went, and it was said—

But rumour lies—that he in France was dead.

But he's alive! O he's alive! He sent

That letter to me, which in rage I rent,

Swearing with oaths most damnably to have me

Or tear me from this bosom. O heavens save me!

GALLIPOT

My heart will break—shamed and undone for ever!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

So black a day, poor wretch, went o'er thee never!

GALLIPOT

If thou shouldst wrestle with him at the law,

Thou'rt sure to fall; no odd sleight, no prevention.

I'll tell him thou'rt with child.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Um!

GALLIPOT

Or give out

One of my men was ta'en abed with thee.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Um, um!

GALLIPOT

Before I lose thee, my dear Prue,

I'll drive it to that push.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Worse, and worse still!

You embrace a mischief to prevent an ill.

GALLIPOT

I'll buy thee of him, stop his mouth with gold:

Think'st thou 'twill do?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

O me, heavens grant it would!

Yet now my senses are set more in tune,

He writ, as I remember in his letter,

That he in riding up and down had spent,

Ere he could find me, thirty pounds: send that,

Stand not on thirty with him.

GALLIPOT

Forty, Prue.

Say thou the word, 'tis done. We venture lives
For wealth, but must do more to keep our wives.
Thirty or forty, Prue?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Thirty, good sweet;

Of an ill bargain let's save what we can

I'll pay it him with my tears. He was a man,

When first I knew him, of a meek spirit:

All goodness is not yet dried up, I hope.

GALLIPOT

He shall have thirty pound; let that stop all.

Love's sweets taste best when we have drunk down

gall.

*Enter Master Tiltyard and his wife, Master**Goshawk, and Mistress Openwork*

Gods-so, our friends! Come, come, smooth your cheek;

After a storm, the face of heaven looks sleek.

TILTYARD Did I not tell you these turtles were together?

MISTRESS TILTYARD How dost thou, sirrah? Why, sister

Gallipot!—

MISTRESS OPENWORK Lord, how she's changed!

GOSHAWK Is your wife ill, sir?

GALLIPOT Yes indeed, la, sir, very ill, very ill, never worse.

MISTRESS TILTYARD How her head burns; feel how her

pulses work.

MISTRESS OPENWORK Sister, lie down a little: that always

does me good.

MISTRESS TILTYARD In good sadness, I find best ease in that

too. Has she laid some hot thing to her stomach?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT No, but I will lay something anon.

TILTYARD Come, come, fools, you trouble her. Shall's go,

Master Goshawk?

GOSHAWK Yes, sweet Master Tiltyard.

[Talks apart with Mistress Openwork]

Sirrah, Rosamond, I hold my life Gallipot hath vexed

his wife.

MISTRESS OPENWORK She has a horrible high colour indeed.

GOSHAWK We shall have your face painted with the same

red soon at night, when your husband comes from his

rubbers in a false alley; thou wilt not believe me that

his bowls run with a wrong bias?

MISTRESS OPENWORK It cannot sink into me that he feeds

upon stale mutton abroad, having better and fresher at

home.

GOSHAWK What if I bring thee where thou shalt see him

stand at rack and manger?

125 made sure...heaven betrothed, bound
by a precontract (see 1.56-8, note)129 The moon...silver bow The moon
is identified with Diana as huntress;
drawing her bow signifies the passage
of one month.

139 odd sleight clever trick

143 push extremity

151 Stand not on don't refuse on principle
to give him

154 Thirty see 209, note

160 gall bile, signifying bitterness

161 Gods-so corruption of 'by God's soul' or
'God save my soul'

163 turtles turtle-doves, associated with love

173 good sadness in all seriousness

174 hot thing to her stomach as medica-
tion; playing on hot as lustful, thing as

penis, with sexual innuendo

184 rubbers a set of (usually three) games,
playing on rub as sexual movement; in

183-5 Goshawk insinuates, as he has

before, that Openwork is having an affair
false alley bowling alley; figuratively,
false woman or whore185 bowls...bias he bowls with unnatural
crookedness (bowling balls were nor-
mally made to move obliquely), meaning
that he is unfaithful

187 stale mutton mutton is slang for whore

190 stand at rack and manger like a horse
with plenty of food; plainly revealed as
unfaithfulMISTRESS OPENWORK I'll saddle him in's kind and spur him
till he kick again!

GOSHAWK Shall thou and I ride our journey then?

MISTRESS OPENWORK Here's my hand.

GOSHAWK No more.—*[To Tiltyard]* Come Master Tiltyard,
shall we leap into the stirrups with our women and
amble home?

TILTYARD Yes, yes; come wife.

MISTRESS TILTYARD In troth, sister, I hope you will do well
for all this.MISTRESS GALLIPOT I hope I shall. Farewell good sister,
sweet Master Goshawk.

GALLIPOT Welcome, brother; most kindly welcome, sir.

OMNES Thanks, sir, for our good cheer.

Exeunt all but Gallipot and his Wife

GALLIPOT

It shall be so, because a crafty knave

Shall not outreach me, nor walk by my door

With my wife arm in arm, as 'twere his whore.

I'll give him a golden coxcomb: thirty pound.

Tush, Prue, what's thirty pound? Sweet duck, look

cheerly.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Thou art worthy of my heart, thou
buy'st it dearly.*Enter Laxton muffled*LAXTON *[aside]* Uds light, the tide's against me! A pox of
your pothecaryship! O for some glister to set him going!'Tis one of Hercules' labours to tread one of these city
hens, because their cocks are still crowing over them.

There's no turning tail here; I must on.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

O husband, see, he comes!

GALLIPOT

Let me deal with him.

LAXTON Bless you, sir.

GALLIPOT Be you blessed too, sir, if you come in peace.

LAXTON Have you any good pudding-tobacco, sir?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

O pick no quarrels, gentle sir! My husband

Is not a man of weapon, as you are.

He knows all: I have opened all before him

191-2 saddle him...kick again continuing
Goshawk's horse metaphors, meaning
'I'll get back at him for his misdeeds,
using his own methods'193-4 Shall thou...my hand they agree
to have sex, parodying the betrothal
ceremony

197 amble a leisurely horseriding pace

208 coxcomb derogatory term for head,
implying foolishness; Gallipot threatens
to beat Laxton along with paying him
the money209 thirty pound A fancy riding suit cost
twenty pounds; a knighthood purchased
from the king, thirty pounds; a small
cottage, possibly forty pounds.211.1 Enter Laxton muffled Here as in
all his subsequent entrances, Laxton's
concealment suggests that the drubbinghe received from Moll in scene 5 has left
him ashamed, injured, or vulnerable to
creditors because of the ten angels he
lost to her. (Debtors commonly concealed
themselves so as to escape arrest.)212 Uds light corruption of 'by God's light',
a mild oath

213 glister suppository or enema

214 Hercules' labours the twelve ex-
traordinary feats of strength and bravery
performed by the legendary Greek hero
tread copulate with; used of male bird
with female216 turning tail with sexual innuendo on
tail as genitals220 pudding-tobacco compressed tobacco in
rolls resembling a pudding or sausage224 letters the plural implies that their
liaison has been going on for some time

Concerning you.

LAXTON *[aside]* Zounds, has she shown my letters?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Suppose my case were yours, what would you do? 225

At such a pinch, such batteries, such assaults,

Of father, mother, kindred, to dissolve

The knot you tied, and to be bound to him?

How could you shift this storm off?

LAXTON If I know, hang me!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Besides a story of your death was read 230

Each minute to me.

LAXTON *[aside]* What a pox means this riddling?

GALLIPOT

Be wise, sir, let not you and I be tossed

On lawyers' pens: they have sharp nibs and draw

Men's very heart-blood from them; what need you,

sir,

To beat the drum of my wife's infamy,

And call your friends together, sir, to prove

Your precontract, when she's confessed it?

LAXTON Um, sir,—

Has she confessed it?

GALLIPOT Sh'as, faith, to me, sir,

Upon your letter sending.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT I have, I have.

LAXTON *[aside]*

If I let this iron cool, call me slave!

—*[To her]* Do you hear, you dame Prudence? Think't

thou, vile woman,

I'll take these blows and wink?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Upon my knees.—

LAXTON

Out, impudence!

GALLIPOT Good sir—

LAXTON You goatish slaves!—

No wild fowl to cut up but mine?

GALLIPOT Alas, sir,

You make her flesh to tremble: fright her not; 245

She shall do reason, and what's fit.

232-3 tossed | On lawyers' pens financially
drained by fees for prolonged legal
manœuvres

235 beat the drum of make public

236-7 call your friends...precontract

Gallipot imagines Laxton asserting the
legal force of the alleged precontract
by assembling the family members who
witnessed it.

236 friends relatives

240 iron cool reference to the proverb,
'Strike while the iron is hot'; Laxtonwould play along with Mistress Gallipot's
ruse, to blackmail her husband and
extort more money243 goatish lustful; goats were considered
very sexually active

244 wild fowl a term for prostitutes

LAXTON I'll have thee,
Wert thou more common than an hospital
And more diseased—
GALLIPOT But one word, good sir!
LAXTON So, sir.
GALLIPOT Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave, Sir Davy Dapper,
Sir Adam Appleton at one door, and Trapdoor at
another door
ALEXANDER
Out with your tale, Sir Davy, to Sir Adam—
A knave is in mine eye deep in my debt.
SIR DAVY Nay, if he be a knave, sir, hold him fast.
[Sir Alexander talks apart with Trapdoor]
ALEXANDER Speak softly; what egg is there hatching now?
TRAPDOOR A duck's egg, sir; a duck that has eaten a frog.
I have cracked the shell and some villainy or other will
peep out presently. The duck that sits is the bouncing
ramp, that roaring girl, my mistress; the drake that
must tread is your son, Sebastian.
ALEXANDER Be quick.
TRAPDOOR As the tongue of an oyster-wench.
ALEXANDER And see thy news be true.
TRAPDOOR As a barber's every Saturday night. Mad Moll—
ALEXANDER Ah!
TRAPDOOR Must be let in without knocking at your back
gate.
ALEXANDER So.
TRAPDOOR Your chamber will be made bawdy.
ALEXANDER Good!
TRAPDOOR She comes in a shirt of mail.
ALEXANDER How, shirt of mail?
TRAPDOOR Yes, sir, or a male shirt, that's to say, in man's
apparel.
ALEXANDER To my son?
TRAPDOOR Close to your son: your son and her moon will
be in conjunction if all almanacs lie not. Her black
safeguard is turned into a deep slop, the holes of her

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LAXTON Well, if I swallow this wrong, let her thank you.
The money being paid, sir, I am gone;
Farewell. O women, happy's he trusts none!
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Dispatch him hence, sweet husband.
GALLIPOT Yes, dear wife.
Pray, sir, come in; [To Wife] ere Master Laxton part,
Thou shalt in wine drink to him.
MISTRESS GALLIPOT With all my heart.
Exit Gallipot
LAXTON How dost thou like my wit?
Rarely: that wile

247-8 more common...diseased common, meaning sexually available, wanton; hospitals were sometimes associated with venereal disease
254 come near you do you see my point? Be lady corruption of 'by our lady' (the Virgin Mary)
255 wear my clothes clothes marked social rank
256-8 wear not her...put it on figuratively, suggests their intimacy as a couple, his affection for her, and a wife's function as social 'ornament' for her husband
259 complained lodged a complaint (in quasi-legal sense)
264 O women...trusts none proverbial
265 Dispatch him settle the business and send him away
268-71 that wile...deceivers still pictures Mistress Gallipot as Eve, attributing the serpent's guile in the garden of Eden to the woman he beguiled into eating the

15-16 back gate sexual allusion to anal intercourse or *coitus a tergo*
18 bawdy made to look like a bawdy-house or brothel
20 shirt of mail garment made of mail, interlaced metal rings or overlapping plates; a type of armour
25-6 Close to your son...almanacs lie not playing on astrological predictions in almanacs, with sexual innuendo in 'conjunction' (close proximity of heavenly bodies)
27-9 safeguard...codpiece Moll has changed female clothing—safeguard (see 3.180.1, note), upper body or bodice fastened with laces in eyelets or holes, waistcoat, and placket—for male: deep slop or baggy breeches (see 4.89, and title-page woodcut), doublet fastened with buttons and button holes, and codpiece (see Epistle.14-17).

upper body to buttonholes, her waistcoat to a doublet,
her placket to the ancient seat of a codpiece; and you
shall take 'em both with standing collars.
ALEXANDER Art sure of this?
TRAPDOOR As every throng is sure of a pickpocket; as sure
as a whore is of the clients all Michaelmas Term, and
of the pox after the term.
ALEXANDER The time of their tilting?
TRAPDOOR Three.
ALEXANDER The day?
TRAPDOOR This.
ALEXANDER Away, ply it; watch her.
TRAPDOOR As the devil doth for the death of a bawd, I'll
watch her; do you catch her.
ALEXANDER She's fast; here weave thou the nets. Hark—
TRAPDOOR They are made.
ALEXANDER I told them thou didst owe me money: hold it
up, maintain't.
TRAPDOOR Stiffly, as a Puritan does contention. [As in a
quarrel] Fox, I owe thee not the value of a halfpenny
halter!
ALEXANDER Thou shalt be hanged in't ere thou 'scape so!
Varlet, I'll make thee look through a grate!
TRAPDOOR I'll do't presently: through a tavern grate.
Drawer! Pish!
SIR ADAM Has the knave vexed you, sir?
ALEXANDER Asked him my money;
He swears my son received it! O that boy
Will ne'er leave heaping sorrows on my heart
Till he has broke it quite!
SIR ADAM Is he still wild?
ALEXANDER As is a Russian bear.
SIR ADAM But he has left
His old haunt with that baggage.
ALEXANDER Worse still and worse!
He lays on me his shame, I on him my curse.

29 placket slit at top of skirt or petticoat to allow putting on; a feature typical of women's dress, it came to mean women per se and women's genitals. The word could also mean apron, petticoat, or pocket in a woman's skirt.
30 standing collars high straight collars worn by both sexes
33 whore...Michaelmas Term When law courts were in session, visitors flooded London for legal business and for pleasure, and prostitution was said to increase; Michaelmas Term ran from 9 or 10 October to 28 or 29 November.
35 tilting see 3.0.4, note; with sexual innuendo
42 fast fastened; fixed to the spot
44-52 see 2, note: they resume their ruse
46 Stiffly sexual allusion to erection, playing on 'hold it up', 44
48 halter rope with a noose used for hanging

SIR DAVY My son, Jack Dapper, then shall run with him,
All in one pasture.
SIR ADAM Proves your son bad too, sir?
SIR DAVY As villainy can make him: your Sebastian
Dotes but on one drab, mine on a thousand!
A noise of fiddlers, tobacco, wine, and a whore,
A mercer that will let him take up more,
Dice, and a water-spaniel with a duck; O,
Bring him abed with these! When his purse jingles,
Roaring boys follow at's tail, fencers and ningles—
Beasts Adam ne'er gave name to—these horse-leeches
suck
My son; he being drawn dry, they all live on smoke.
ALEXANDER Tobacco?
SIR DAVY Right; but I have in my brain
A windmill going that shall grind to dust
The follies of my son, and make him wise
Or a stark fool. Pray lend me your advice.
ALEXANDER and SIR ADAM That shall you, good Sir Davy.
SIR DAVY Here's the springe
I ha' set to catch this woodcock in: an action
In a false name—unknown to him—is entered
I'th' Counter to arrest Jack Dapper.
ALEXANDER and SIR ADAM Ha, ha, he!
SIR DAVY Think you the Counter cannot break him?
SIR ADAM Break him?
Yes, and break's heart too, if he lie there long!
SIR DAVY I'll make him sing a counter-tenor, sure.
SIR ADAM No way to tame him like it; there he shall learn
What money is indeed, and how to spend it.

50 grate prison grating, barred window; see Prologue.24, note
51 tavern grate red lattice work of alehouse window
52 Drawer one who draws liquor from the tap in an alehouse or tavern
57 Russian bear imported to England for bear baiting, a popular spectator sport
58 baggage disreputable woman or strumpet
63 drab whore
64 noise group (of musicians)
65 mercer dealer in textiles; see 5.39, note
66 take up more buy more on credit
67 water-spaniel with a duck see 3.413-3
67 Bring him abed let him be delivered of, be rid of; punning on childbirth
68 Roaring boys see 1.73, note
ningles boy favourites or male lovers; satires of this period associate them with other pleasures and fashions enjoyed by gallants (see Sir Davy's list, 7.64-6)
69 Beasts Adam ne'er gave name to those indulging in sexual practices considered 'unnatural', not belonging to the animals in paradise to which Adam gave names
horse-leeches extortioners; whores
72 windmill figuratively, visionary scheme
75 That shall you that shall you have
75-6 springe...woodcock proverbial; snare for catching small birds, such as woodcocks, which are easily caught
76 action legal proceedings, which Sir Davy has instigated using a false name
78 Counter one of two debtors' prisons in London, both named after the streets where they were located, in Cheapside: the Poultry Counter and the Wood Street Counter
79 break him break his will, reform him
81 counter-tenor punning on Counter, a male voice higher than tenor; may also hint at castration, used to produce castrati, high-voiced male singers

SIR DAVY
He's bridled there.
ALEXANDER Ay, yet knows not how to mend it!
85 Bedlam cures not more madmen in a year
Than one of the counters does; men pay more dear
There for their wit than anywhere. A counter,
Why, 'tis an university! Who not sees?
As scholars there, so here men take degrees
90 And follow the same studies, all alike.
Scholars learn first logic and rhetoric;
So does a prisoner. With fine honeyed speech
At's first coming in he doth persuade, beseech
He may be lodged with one that is not itchy,
95 To lie in a clean chamber, in sheets not lousy.
But when he has no money, then does he try
By subtle logic and quaint sophistry
To make the keepers trust him.

SIR ADAM Say they do?

ALEXANDER
Then he's a graduate!

SIR DAVY Say they trust him not?

ALEXANDER
100 Then is he held a freshman and a sot,
And never shall commence; but, being still barred,
Be expelled from the Master's Side to th'Twopenny
Ward,
Or else i'th' Hole be placed.

SIR ADAM When then, I pray,
Proceeds a prisoner?

ALEXANDER When, money being the theme,
105 He can dispute with his hard creditors' hearts
And get out clear, he's then a Master of Arts!
Sir Davy, send your son to Wood Street College;
A gentleman can nowhere get more knowledge.

SIR DAVY
There gallants study hard.

ALEXANDER True: to get money.

SIR DAVY
'Lies by th'heels, i'faith. Thanks, thanks; I ha' sent
110 For a couple of bears shall paw him.

Enter Sergeant Curtalax and Yeoman Hanger

SIR ADAM Who comes yonder?

SIR DAVY
They look like puttocks; these should be they.

ALEXANDER I know 'em;
They are officers. Sir, we'll leave you.

SIR DAVY My good knights,
Leave me; you see I'm haunted now with sprites.

ALEXANDER and SIR ADAM Fare you well, sir.

Exeunt Sir Alexander and Sir Adam

CURTALAX This old muzzle chops should be he by the
fellow's description. [To Sir Davy] Save you, sir.

SIR DAVY Come hither, you mad varlets; did not my man
tell you I watched here for you?

CURTALAX One in a blue coat, sir, told us that in this
120 place an old gentleman would watch for us, a thing
contrary to our oath, for we are to watch for every
wicked member in a city.

SIR DAVY You'll watch, then, for ten thousand! What's
thy name, honesty?

CURTALAX Sergeant Curtalax, I sir.

SIR DAVY
An excellent name for a sergeant, Curtalax;
Sergeants indeed are weapons of the law:
When prodigal ruffians far in debt are grown,
Should not you cut them, citizens were o'erthrown.
130 Thou dwell'st hereby in Holborn, Curtalax?

CURTALAX That's my circuit, sir; I conjure most in that
circle.

SIR DAVY And what young toward whelp is this?

HANGER Of the same litter; his yeoman, sir. My name's
135 Hanger.

84 how to mend it how to cure his spend-thrift habits

87-108 counter... university... knowledge a frequent comparison, between the prisoner's acquisition of survival skills in prison and the scholar's course of study from bachelor's to master's to doctor's degrees

91 logic and rhetoric logic, forms and rules of reasoning; rhetoric, rules derived from classical authors for using language eloquently, to persuade; along with grammar, these comprised the *trivium*, a triad of studies basic to the liberal arts curriculum of the medieval university that continued to shape the Renaissance curriculum

100 freshman beginning student
sot fool

101 commence take the full university degree of master or doctor
barred prevented from graduating, with a pun on prison bars

102-3 Master's Side... th'Twopenny Ward... i'th' Hole in descending order of comfort and expense, the different wards (sections) of debtors' prison; prisoners had to pay for their food and lodging, and as their money ran out, they moved from one ward to the next, 'the Hole' being notorious for filth, misery, and disease

104-5 theme... dispute pedagogical terms; scholars were given 'themes', topics or propositions to be debated or 'disputed' in exercises

110 'Lies by th'heels in irons or the stocks; in jail

111 bears shall paw him figuratively, sergeants who arrested debtors by laying hands on their shoulders; they were sometimes called 'shoulder-clappers'

111.1 Curtalax short, broad sword; as a sergeant, he is an officer of the court who arrests debtors (see III, note)
Yeoman Hanger a yeoman assisted an

official; a hanger was a loop on the belt from which a sword hung (see title-page engraving of Moll) or a short sword hung from a belt; suggests his role as assistant

112 puttocks kites, birds of prey

114 sprites figuratively, sergeants who make bodily arrests, analogous to spirits who take possession of the soul

116 muzzle chops name for a man with prominent nose and jaw, like an animal's muzzle

118 mad foolish

120 One in a blue coat a servant

125 honesty an honest, honourable man

126-8 Curtalax... weapons of the law playing on the sergeant's name; see III.1

130 cut strike sharply, playing on Curtalax

132 circuit... conjure alluding to the magician's action of drawing a circle before conjuring

134 toward bold, or conversely, docile

SIR DAVY Yeoman Hanger.
One pair of shears, sure, cut out both your coats;
You have two names most dangerous to men's
throats.

140 You two are villainous loads on gentlemen's backs;
Dear ware, this Hanger and this Curtalax.

CURTALAX We are as other men are, sir; I cannot see but he
who makes a show of honesty and religion, if his claws
can fasten to his liking, he draws blood. All that live in
the world are but great fish and little fish, and feed upon
one another: some eat up whole men; a sergeant cares
145 but for the shoulder of a man. They call us knaves and
curs, but many times he that sets us on worries more
lambs one year than we do in seven.

SIR DAVY Spoke like a noble Cerberus! Is the action
entered?

HANGER His name is entered in the book of unbelievers.

SIR DAVY What book's that?

CURTALAX The book where all prisoners' names stand; and
155 not one amongst forty when he comes in believes to
come out in haste!

SIR DAVY Be as dogged to him as your office allows you to
be.

CURTALAX and HANGER O sir!

SIR DAVY You know the unthrift Jack Dapper?

CURTALAX Ay, ay, sir, that gull? As well as I know my
yeoman.

SIR DAVY And you know his father too, Sir Davy Dapper?

CURTALAX As damned a usurer as ever was among Jews!
165 If he were sure his father's skin would yield him any
money, he would, when he dies, flay it off and sell it to
cover drums for children at Barthol'mew Fair!

138 One pair of shears proverbial for likeness, sameness

140 villainous regarded as vile, detestable

loads referring to their mode of arrest, grabbing debtors from behind

141 ware metal goods, punning on their names

144-6 All... feed upon one another proverbial; see 5.96, Moll's variation on the same idea

146-7 a sergeant... the shoulder of a man again referring to his mode of arresting debtors; compare III, 140

148 worries like wolves or dogs, seizes the throat of sheep with the teeth

150 Cerberus see 5.25, note; implicitly, compares debtors' prison to hell

152 book of unbelievers the register of prisoners (see 154); the opposite of the book of the faithful entering heaven

157 dogged strict, dutiful; playing on 'Cerberus'

164 As damned a usurer... among Jews Jews were expelled from England in 1290 by Edward I. Though some Jews were living in London at this time, none could have practised usury legally because the

office that regulated Jewish usurers was no longer in existence; Curtalax voices prejudice rather than known practice.

165-7 his father's skin... Barthol'mew Fair Crimes commonly attributed to Jews may reflect a European fascination with the Jewish ritual of circumcision.

At Bartholemew Fair, held in Smithfield on 24 August, St Bartholemew's Day, toys such as drums were sold (see Ben Jonson's comedy, *Bartholemew Fair* [1614]).

168 toads... poison toads were proverbially poisonous

170 Greyhound probably the name of a tavern; the place where Jack Dapper can be found

171 Sa, sa exclamation used by fencers delivering a thrust

172 counter fencing term for circular motion of sword, or, hunting term for going in the opposite direction to the course taken by the game

174 mace... caudle caudle, a warm drink of thin gruel, mixed with wine or ale, was often spiced with mace; pun on mace, the staff carried by sergeants as badge

SIR DAVY [aside] What toads are these to spit poison on
a man to his face! [To them] Do you see, my honest
rascals? Yonder Greyhound is the dog he hunts with:
170 out of that tavern, Jack Dapper will sally. Sa, sa! Give
the counter! On, set upon him!

CURTALAX and HANGER We'll charge him upo'th' back, sir.
SIR DAVY Take no bail; put mace enough into his caudle.
175 Double your files! Traverse your ground!

CURTALAX and HANGER Brave, sir!

SIR DAVY Cry arm, arm, arm!

CURTALAX and HANGER Thus, sir.
SIR DAVY There boy, there boy, away: look to your prey,
my true English wolves and—and so I vanish. Exit 180

CURTALAX Some warden of the sergeants begat this old
fellow, upon my life! Stand close.

HANGER Shall the ambuscado lie in one place?

CURTALAX No, nook thou yonder.
Enter Moll and Trapdoor

MOLL Ralph.
TRAPDOOR What says my brave captain, male and female?
185 MOLL This Holborn is such a wrangling street.

TRAPDOOR That's because lawyers walks to and fro in't!

MOLL Here's such jostling as if everyone we met were
drunk and reeled. 190

TRAPDOOR Stand, mistress, do you not smell carrion?
MOLL Carrion? No, yet I spy ravens.

TRAPDOOR Some poor wind-shaken gallant will anon fall
into sore labour; and these men-midwives must bring
him to bed i'the Counter: there all those that are great
195 with child with debts lie in.

MOLL Stand up.

TRAPDOOR Like your new maypole!

HANGER [to Curtalax] Whist, whew!

of office, with which they made their arrests

175 Double... ground military terms: increase your file (row of soldiers) to double its length (absurd for only two soldiers), move from side to side

176 Brave excellent

177 Cry arm 'be ready for fight' or 'take up arms'

183 ambuscado force lying in ambush (sergeants waited in concealment at alehouses and other locales for debtors they arrested)

184 nook hide in a corner

187 Holborn see 3.306, note

192 ravens referring to lawyers as those who prey on people as ravens eat carrion

193 wind-shaken flawed in the centre, as timber cracked by high winds

194-6 sore labour... lie in comparison of debtors to pregnant women (great with child) in the final stage (sore) of labour who are brought to bed (for delivery) in prison by men-midwives (sergeants), where they lie in (await the birth)

199 Whist, whew whistling sounds, to get his partner's attention

200 CURTALAX [to Hanger] Hump, no!
 MOLL Peeping? It shall go hard, huntsmen, but I'll spoil
 your game. They look for all the world like two infected
 maltmen coming muffled up in their cloaks in a frosty
 morning to London.
 205 TRAPDOOR A course, captain: a bear comes to the stake!
 Enter Jack Dapper and Gull
 MOLL It should be so, for the dogs struggle to be let loose.
 HANGER [to Curtalax] Whew!
 CURTALAX [to Hanger] Hemp!
 MOLL Hark Trapdoor, follow your leader.
 210 JACK DAPPER Gull.
 GULL Master?
 JACK DAPPER Didst ever see such an ass as I am, boy?
 GULL No, by my troth, sir, to lose all your money, yet have
 false dice of your own! Why, 'tis as I saw a great fellow
 215 used t'other day: he had a fair sword and buckler, and
 yet a butcher dry-beat him with a cudgel!
 MOLL and TRAPDOOR Honest sergeant! [To Jack] Fly! Fly,
 Master Dapper, you'll be arrested else!
 JACK DAPPER Run, Gull, and draw!
 220 GULL Run master! Gull follows you!
 Exit Jack Dapper and Gull
 CURTALAX [Moll holding him] I know you, well enough:
 you're but a whore to hang upon any man.
 MOLL Whores then are like sergeants: so now hang you!
 [To Trapdoor] Draw, rogue, but strike not: for a broken
 225 pate they'll keep their beds and recover twenty marks
 damages.
 CURTALAX You shall pay for this rescue! [To Hanger] Run
 down Shoe Lane and meet him!
 TRAPDOOR Shoo! Is this a rescue, gentlemen, or no?
 [Exeunt Curtalax and Hanger]
 MOLL
 230 Rescue? A pox on 'em Trapdoor, let's away;
 I'm glad I have done perfect one good work today.

If any gentleman be in scrivener's bands,
 Send but for Moll, she'll bail him by these hands!

Exeunt

Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave solus

Sc. 1

ALEXANDER
 Unhappy in the follies of a son,
 Led against judgement, sense, obedience,
 And all the powers of nobleness and wit—
 O wretched father!
 Enter Trapdoor
 Now, Trapdoor, will she come?
 TRAPDOOR
 In man's apparel, sir; I am in her heart now,
 And share in all her secrets.
 ALEXANDER Peace, peace, peace.
 Here, take my German watch, hang't up in sight
 That I may see her hang in English for't.
 TRAPDOOR
 I warrant you for that now, next sessions rids her, sir.
 This watch will bring her in better than a hundred
 constables.
 ALEXANDER
 Good Trapdoor, sayst thou so? Thou cheer'st my heart
 After a storm of sorrow. My gold chain, too:
 Here, take a hundred marks in yellow links.
 TRAPDOOR
 That will do well to bring the watch to light, sir,
 And worth a thousand of your headborough's lan-
 terns.
 ALEXANDER
 Place that o' the court-cupboard, let it lie
 Full in the view of her thief-whorish eye.
 TRAPDOOR
 She cannot miss it, sir; I see't so plain
 That I could steal't myself.
 ALEXANDER Perhaps thou shalt, too;

200 **Hump** return signal
 202-3 **infected maltmen** During plague
 times, those who brought malt for sale to
 London returned to the countryside with
 contaminated rags for use as fertilizer,
 and became infected.
 203 **muffled** as debtors often were, to avoid
 arrest
 205 **course** in hunting, the animal being
 pursued (here, Jack Dapper)
stake post to which bear was tethered
 for bear baiting
 206 **dogs** sergeants; compare 134-5
 213-14 **to lose all... false dice** he came pre-
 pared to cheat others, but was cheated
 himself instead
 214-16 **great fellow... dry-beat him with**
a cudgel may allude to an actual
 occurrence at the Fortune Theatre on 26
 February 1610/11, when two butchers
 'abused' some gentlemen
 217 **Honest sergeant** Moll tries to divert the
 sergeant's attention so that Jack Dapper

can escape him.
 222-3 **a whore to hang upon... like ser-**
geants Sergeants cling to debtors'
 shoulders as whores cling to customers;
 cf. III, 140, 146-7.
 224-6 **broken pate... damages** If debtors
 resist arrest, sergeants will claim injury,
 pretend to need recuperation (keep their
 beds), and sue debtors for damages.
 224-5 **broken pate** cut head
 225 **twenty marks** A mark was an amount
 (not a coin), two-thirds of a pound;
 twenty marks was a considerable sum.
 228 **Shoe Lane** street running north from
 Fleet Street to Holborn
 229 **Shoo** expression of mild contempt,
 punning on Shoe Lane
 232 **in scrivener's bands** Scrivener could
 mean notary, or a broker who made
 loans for security; thus a debtor raising
 money to pay off debts might be further
 in debt to a scrivener.
 233 **by these hands** an oath, or a reference

to herself as agent of rescue
 8.5 **in her heart** have her trust
 7 **German watch** the earliest portable
 timekeepers were made in Germany
 around 1500
 8 **in English** under English law
 9 **sessions** court session
 10 **watch** timepiece, punning on ward or
 parish officers who keep the watch at
 night
 12 **gold chain** worn by well-dressed gentle-
 men; perhaps an emblem of his office as
 Justice of the Peace
 13 **a hundred marks** £66 13s. 4d. (a mark
 was an amount worth two-thirds of a
 pound; see I.91); an expensive item
 15 **headborough's** parish police officer or
 constable; they carried lanterns on night
 watch
 16 **court-cupboard** sideboard with three tiers
 of open shelves, used to display silver
 dishes, known as 'plate'

That or something as weighty. What she leaves,
 Thou shalt come closely in and filch away,
 And all the weight upon her back I'll lay.
 TRAPDOOR
 You cannot assure that, sir.
 ALEXANDER No? What lets it?
 TRAPDOOR
 Being a stout girl, perhaps she'll desire pressing;
 Then all the weight must lie upon her belly.
 25 ALEXANDER
 Belly or back, I care not, so I've one.
 TRAPDOOR
 You're of my mind for that, sir.
 ALEXANDER
 Hang up my ruff band with the diamond at it;
 It may be she'll like that best.
 30 TRAPDOOR It's well for her that she must have her choice—
 [Aside] he thinks nothing too good for her!—[To him] If
 you hold on this mind a little longer, it shall be the first
 work I do to turn thief myself: would do a man good to
 be hanged when he is so well provided for!
 ALEXANDER
 35 So, well said! All hangs well; would she hung so too:
 The sight would please me more than all their glister-
 ings.
 O that my mysteries to such straits should run,
 That I must rob myself to bless my son!
 Enter Sebastian with Mary Fitzallard like a page,
 and Moll [dressed as a man]
 40 SEBASTIAN
 Thou hast done me a kind office, without touch
 Either of sin or shame: our loves are honest.
 MOLL
 I'd scorn to make such shift to bring you together
 else.
 SEBASTIAN
 Now have I time and opportunity
 Without all fear to bid thee welcome, love.
 (He kisses Mary)
 MARY
 Never with more desire and harder venture.

MOLL
 How strange this shows, one man to kiss another. 45
 SEBASTIAN
 I'd kiss such men to choose, Moll;
 Methinks a woman's lip tastes well in a doublet.
 MOLL
 Many an old madam has the better fortune then,
 Whose breaths grew stale before the fashion came:
 If that will help 'em, as you think 'twill do, 50
 They'll learn in time to pluck on the hose too!
 SEBASTIAN
 The older they wax, Moll. Troth, I speak seriously:
 As some have a conceit their drink tastes better
 In an outlandish cup than in our own,
 So methinks every kiss she gives me now 55
 In this strange form is worth a pair of two.
 Here we are safe, and furthest from the eye
 Of all suspicion: this is my father's chamber,
 Upon which floor he never steps till night.
 Here he mistrusts me not, nor I his coming;
 60 At mine own chamber he still pries unto me.
 My freedom is not there at mine own finding,
 Still checked and curbed; here he shall miss his
 purpose.
 MOLL
 And what's your business, now you have your mind,
 sir?
 At your great suit I promised you to come: 65
 I pitied her for name's sake, that a Moll
 Should be so crossed in love, when there's so many
 That owes nine lays apiece, and not so little.
 My tailor fitted her: how like you his work?
 SEBASTIAN
 So well, no art can mend it for this purpose; 70
 But to thy wit and help we're chief in debt,
 And must live still beholding.
 MOLL
 Any honest pity
 I'm willing to bestow upon poor ring-doves.
 SEBASTIAN
 I'll offer no worse play.
 MOLL
 Nay, and you should, sir,

21 **closely** secretly
 22 **all the weight... lay** I'll accuse her of
 stealing what you steal
 23 **lets** hinders
 24 **stout** robust, large
pressing word play on pressing as *peine*
forte et dure, a form of torture in which
 weights were loaded on the accused
 to force them to answer a charge, and
 with reference to the sexual act, the man
 'pressing on' the woman
 26 **so I've one** I don't care, so long as I
 incriminate her one way or the other
 28 **ruff band** small ruff; see 3.209, note
 37 **mysteries** pun on secret practices, and
 technical skills proper to his craft, as in

'secrets of the trade'
 41 **shift** effort, with pun on shift as change
 of clothes (at Sebastian's request, she
 is disguised in order to pass as a male
 musician)
 46 **to choose** by choice
 48 **madam** derisive term for fashionable
 lady, implying affectation
 49 **Whose breaths... the fashion came**
 who aged before male dress for women
 became fashionable
 50 **that dressing as men**
 52 **The older they wax** they'll still get older
 53 **conceit** fancy, notion
 54 **outlandish** foreign, strange
 56 **pair of two** set of two

65 **great suit** earnest pleading
 66 **for name's sake** calling attention to the
 close conjunction of opposing images of
 women as whores and virgins (see I.O.I,
 note; I.73, note; and 5.4, note)
 68 **owes nine lays** meaning uncertain:
 owes probably means owns, and lays can
 mean either wagers (they won prizes in a
 contest) or lodgings (they keep as many
 as nine lodgings for meeting customers)
 72 **still** forever
beholding beholden
 73 **ring-doves** wood-pigeons; figuratively,
 lovers
 74 **play** sport; sexual play

I should draw first and prove the quicker man!

[Draws]

SEBASTIAN

Hold, there shall need no weapon at this meeting;
But 'cause thou shalt not loose thy fury idle,

[Takes down and gives her a viol]

Here, take this viol: run upon the guts
And end thy quarrel singing.

MOLL Like a swan above bridge:

80 For, look you, here's the bridge and here am I.

SEBASTIAN Hold on, sweet Moll.

MARY I've heard her much commended, sir, for one that
was ne'er taught.

85 MOLL I'm much beholding to 'em. Well, since you'll needs
put us together, sir, I'll play my part as well as I can: it
shall ne'er be said I came into a gentleman's chamber
and let his instrument hang by the walls!

SEBASTIAN Why well said, Moll, i'faith; it had been a
shame for that gentleman then, that would have let
90 it hang still, and ne'er offered thee it.

MOLL There it should have been still then for Moll, for
though the world judge impudently of me, I ne'er
came into that chamber yet where I took down the
instrument myself.

95 SEBASTIAN Pish, let 'em prate abroad! Thou'rt here where
thou art known and loved; there be a thousand close
dames that will call the viol an unmannerly instrument
for a woman, and therefore talk broadly of thee, when
you shall have them sit wider to a worse quality.

75 draw first...man provoked by Sebastian's sexual innuendo, Moll draws her sword to defend her honour
76 weapon playing on sword and on weapon as penis
77 loose thy fury idle spend your energy (either aggressive, as in losing an arrow, or sexual) to no purpose
78 run upon the guts pun on running through with a sword, and drawing bow across strings (made of animal guts)
79 swan above bridge alludes to the idea that swans sing just before they die; traditionally, swans drew Venus' chariot, and were also plentiful on the Thames around London
bridge pun on bridge of viol (piece of wood over which strings are stretched) and bridge over a river
85 put us together...play my part part in musical sense, but also implying a sexual encounter
87 let his instrument hang by the walls viols were fashionable instruments, especially for men, and often hung on chamber walls; also, word play on instrument as penis
88-90 it had been a shame...ne'er offered thee it intended as a compliment, implying that not to make sexual overtures to Moll would be the man's loss
92 judge impudently judge me (wrongly) to be forward, sexually aggressive, or, be

impudent in judging me thus
93-4 took down the instrument myself approached a man sexually (Moll is again defending herself against a reputation for wanton behaviour)
96 close secret, close-mouthed
97 call the viol an unmannerly instrument punning on viol/vile/vial (penis), on unmannerly, and on instrument (see 87, 92-4): disapprove of women playing the viol/having sex with men
98 talk broadly disapprove
99 sit wider to a worse quality alluding to woman's position in playing the viol and in having sex: behave more unchastely
101 dream in addition to normal sense, means make melody
102 dream music, melody
103 mistress a woman who governs a family, household, state or territory, or establishment of any kind, having control over and care of children, servants, dependents, etc.
105 sisters ambiguously, female siblings; fellow members of a female religious order; fellow Christians who are female; fellow prostitutes; or, broadly, women who share her position in some sense
106 never comes at doesn't accost anyone, like a prostitute; doesn't profit from anyone
107 th'Burse from Fr. *bourse*, purse: the

MOLL Push, I ever fall asleep and think not of 'em, sir;
and thus I dream.

SEBASTIAN Prithee let's hear thy dream, Moll.

The Song

MOLL

I dream there is a mistress,
And she lays out the money;
She goes unto her sisters,
She never comes at any.

Enter Sir Alexander behind them

She says she went to th'Burse for patterns;
You shall find her at St Kathern's,
And comes home with never a penny.

SEBASTIAN That's a free mistress, 'faith.

ALEXANDER [aside] Ay, ay, ay, like her that sings it; one of
thine own choosing.

MOLL But shall I dream again?

Here comes a wench will brave ye,

Her courage was so great,
She lay with one o' the navy,
Her husband lying i' the Fleet.
Yet oft with him she cavilled;

I wonder what she ails;
Her husband's ship lay gravelled
When hers could hoise up sails.

Yet she began, like all my foes,
To call whore first; for so do those—
A pox of all false tails!

SEBASTIAN Marry, amen, say I!

original name for the Royal Exchange, a financial centre built in 1566 and surrounded by arcades for small shops selling fashionable wares appealing to women; more likely, refers to the New Exchange built in 1609 on the Strand, also with arcades and similar kinds of shops
patterns models or specimens, perhaps of clothing or such fashionable items as were sold at the Burse, or decorative designs on china, carpets, wallpaper

108 St Kathern's dockside district along the Thames in east London, from the Tower of London to Ratcliff, known for alehouses and taverns

110 free generous, magnanimous; noble, gentle; may also imply sexual looseness

114 brave challenge, defy

116 lay with had sex with; playing on 'lying' (117), staying, lodging at

117 the Fleet Fleet Prison, near the junction of Ludgate Hill and Fleet Street

118 cavilled found fault with, quarrelled

119 what she ails what ails her

120 gravelled beached

121 hoise up sails i.e., when she could manage, make progress; sometimes used of prostitutes attracting customers

124 false tails derogatory for sexual partners who are false, fickle; punning on tales, to mean slander, false allegations

ALEXANDER [aside] So say I, too.

MOLL Hang up the viol now, sir; all this while I was in
a dream: one shall lie rudely then, but being awake, I
keep my legs together. A watch; what's a clock here?

ALEXANDER [aside] Now, now, she's trapped!

130 MOLL Between one and two; nay then, I care not. A watch
and a musician are cousin-germans in one thing: they
must both keep time well or there's no goodness in 'em.
The one else deserves to be dashed against a wall, and
t'other to have his brains knocked out with a fiddle-case.

135 What? A loose chain and a dangling diamond!
Here were a brave booty for an evening thief now;
There's many a younger brother would be glad
To look twice in at a window for't,

140 And wriggle in and out like an eel in a sandbag.
O, if men's secret youthful faults should judge 'em,
'Twould be the general'st execution
That e'er was seen in England!

145 There would be but few left to sing the ballads: there
would be so much work, most of our brokers would
be chosen for hangmen—a good day for them!—they
might renew their wardrobes of free cost then!

SEBASTIAN [to Mary]

This is the roaring wench must do us good.

MARY [to Sebastian]

No poison, sir, but serves us for some use,
Which is confirmed in her.

150 SEBASTIAN Peace, peace—
Foot, I did hear him sure, where'er he be.

MOLL

Who did you hear?

SEBASTIAN My father:

'Twas like a sigh of his—I must be wary.

ALEXANDER [aside]

No? Will't not be? Am I alone so wretched

155 That nothing takes? I'll put him to his plunge for't.

SEBASTIAN [aside to Moll and Mary]

Life, here he comes!—[Aloud to Moll] Sir, I beseech
you take it.

128 rudely crudely, immodestly, with
reference to 'dream' as music and the
position of the viol player's legs

132 cousin-germans first cousins, punning
on the 'German watch' (7)

137 brave splendid, fine looking

138 younger brother without paternal
inheritance

140 eel...sandbag sinuously, nimbly

142 general'st execution i.e., more people
would be condemned as criminals, and
executed

144 ballads those that commemorated
prisoners condemned to be hanged;
playing on execution, 142

145-7 brokers...free cost then hangmen
traditionally received their victims'
clothing; if hangmen were brokers
(dealers in second hand clothing) they
could profit greatly because they could

Your way of teaching does so much content me,
I'll make it four pound; here's forty shillings, sir.
I think I name it right. [Aside to Moll] Help me, good
Moll.

—[Aloud] Forty in hand. [Offering money]

MOLL Sir, you shall pardon me,

I have more of the meanest scholar I can teach:

This pays me more than you have offered yet.

SEBASTIAN

At the next quarter,

When I receive the means my father 'lows me,

You shall have t'other forty.

ALEXANDER [aside] This were well now,

Were it to a man whose sorrows had blind eyes;

But mine behold his follies and untruths

With two clear glasses.

[He comes forward]

[To Sebastian] How now?

SEBASTIAN Sir?

ALEXANDER What's he there?

SEBASTIAN

You're come in good time, sir, I've a suit to you;

I'd crave your present kindness.

ALEXANDER What is he there?

SEBASTIAN A gentleman, a musician, sir: one of excellent
fingering—

ALEXANDER Ay, I think so. [Aside] I wonder how they
'scaped her?

SEBASTIAN H'as the most delicate stroke, sir—

ALEXANDER A stroke indeed.—[Aside] I feel it at my heart!

SEBASTIAN Puts down all your famous musicians.

ALEXANDER Ay.—[Aside] A whore may put down a hun-
dred of 'em!

SEBASTIAN Forty shillings is the agreement, sir, between
us; now, sir, my present means mounts but to half
on't.

ALEXANDER And he stands upon the whole.

SEBASTIAN Ay indeed does he, sir.

ALEXANDER And will do still; he'll ne'er be in other tale.

replenish their stock without cost
149 No poison...some use proverbial; also
an example of the Christian doctrine that
everything in creation has a use
151 Foot abbreviation of mild oath, 'God's
foot'
154 Will't not be? won't my scheme work?
155 takes takes effect
put him to his plunge I'll bring this crisis
to a head
161 have more of get more money from
168 What's he there? who is that man
there?
172-85 This series of *doubles entendres*
referring to both musical and sexual
playing could be read as a sequence:
'fingering' (172), 'delicate stroke' (175),
'puts down' (177), 'mounts to' (181),
'stands upon' (183), and 'tale' (185).
172 fingering in playing an instrument; in

thieving; in sexual sense
173 they items displayed to tempt Moll:
watch, chain, diamond
174 'scaped escaped
175 delicate stroke in bowing the viol; in
sexual act
176 stroke...at my heart paralytic stroke
177 Puts down excels; Sir Alexander takes
it in a sexual sense
180 Forty shillings two pounds; could buy
an inexpensive horse
181 mounts but to half only amounts to
half, i.e., twenty shillings instead of the
forty he offered in lines 158 and 160;
possibly playwrights' or scribe's error
183 stands upon insists on; playing on
'mounts' (181) in sexual sense
185 ne'er be in other tale will keep to the
same story (as yours); with pun on tail
as sexual parts

SEBASTIAN Therefore I'd stop his mouth, sir, an I could.
 ALEXANDER Hum, true. There is no other way indeed.—
 [Aside] His folly hardens; shame must needs succeed.—
 [To Moll] Now sir, I understand you profess music.
 190 MOLL I am a poor servant to that liberal science, sir.
 ALEXANDER
 Where is it you teach?
 MOLL Right against Clifford's Inn.
 ALEXANDER Hum, that's a fit place for it; you have many
 scholars?
 MOLL And some of worth, whom I may call my masters.
 195 ALEXANDER [aside] Ay, true, a company of whoremas-
 ters!—[To Moll] You teach to sing, too?
 MOLL Ma'ry, do I, sir.
 ALEXANDER I think you'll find an apt scholar of my son,
 especially for prick-song.
 200 MOLL I have much hope of him.
 ALEXANDER [aside] I am sorry for't, I have the less for that.
 [To Moll] You can play any lesson?
 MOLL At first sight, sir.
 205 ALEXANDER There's a thing called 'The Witch'—can you
 play that?
 MOLL I would be sorry any one should mend me in't.
 ALEXANDER
 Ay, I believe thee. [Aside] Thou has so bewitched my
 son,
 No care will mend the work that thou hast done.
 I have bethought myself, since my art fails,
 210 I'll make her policy the art to trap her.
 Here are four angels marked with holes in them,
 Fit for his cracked companions. Gold he will give her;
 These will I make induction to her ruin,
 And rid shame from my house, grief from my heart.
 —[To Sebastian] Here, son, in what you take content
 215 and pleasure,

Want shall not curb you; [Gives money] pay the
 gentleman
 His latter half in gold.
 SEBASTIAN I thank you, sir.
 ALEXANDER [aside]
 O, may the operation on't end three:
 In her, life; shame in him; and grief in me. Exit
 SEBASTIAN
 Faith, thou shalt have 'em; 'tis my father's gift:
 220 Never was man beguiled with better shift.
 MOLL
 He that can take me for a male musician,
 I cannot choose but make him my instrument
 And play upon him! Exeunt

Enter Mistress Gallipot and Mistress Openwork
 225 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Is then that bird of yours, Master
 Goshawk, so wild?
 MISTRESS OPENWORK A goshawk, a puttock: all for prey!
 He angles for fish, but he loves flesh better.
 230 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Is't possible his smooth face should have
 wrinkles in't, and we not see them?
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Possible? Why, have not many hand-
 some legs in silk stockings villainous splay feet for all
 their great roses?
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Troth, sirrah, thou sayst true.
 235 MISTRESS OPENWORK Didst never see an archer, as thou'st
 walked by Bunhill, look asquint when he drew his bow?
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Yes, when his arrows have flown
 toward Islington, his eyes have shot clean contrary
 240 towards Pimlico.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK For all the world, so does Master
 Goshawk double with me.
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT O fie upon him! If he double once, he's
 not for me.

186 stop his mouth pay him off
 190 liberal science In the seven liberal arts
 of the medieval curriculum, music was
 grouped with arithmetic, geometry, and
 astronomy in the four-part division called
 the quadrivium; see 7.91, note.
 191 Clifford's Inn the oldest of the Inns
 of Chancery, law schools that trained
 lawyers for the court of Chancery;
 located on Fleet Street between Chancery
 Lane and Fetter Street
 199 prick-song an accompanying melody
 written or 'pricked' down, as opposed to
 plainsong, which was improvised; with
 sexual sense
 204 'The Witch' possibly a contemporary
 ballad; implying that Moll has bewitched
 Sebastian (see 207)
 206 mend me excel me; correct me
 210 policy stratagem of posing as a musi-
 cian
 211 angels gold coins worth ten shillings

(see 3.137, note)
 marked with holes making them no
 longer current; thus if Moll tried to pass
 them, she would break the law
 212 cracked Metal was illicitly filed or
 'clipped' from the edges of coins for
 profit; if clipping 'cracked' the circle
 around the sovereign's head embossed on
 the coin, it was no longer legal tender.
 'Cracked' coinage became a metaphor for
 flawed moral conduct and especially for
 women's 'cracked' sexual virtue.
 213 induction initial step, punning on sense
 of prologue to a play
 222-4 He that can take me... play upon
 him Thus Middleton punningly alludes
 to several motifs in this scene: disguise,
 manipulation, and music.
 9.3 puttock kite; see 7.112, note
 8 silk stockings favoured by gallants
 because they showed off the leg better
 than woollen ones

splay feet flat feet that turn outwards
 9 great roses ornamental knots of ribbon in
 the shape of a rose, tied to the shoe (see
 title-page woodcut of Moll)
 12 Bunhill street near Moorfields, marshy
 area north of city walls that, when laid
 out in walks in 1606, became popular
 for summer excursions; also used as
 training ground for city militia, and for
 duels
 asquint sideways
 14-15 Islington... Pimlico He aims toward
 Islington in the north-west (see 5.33,
 note) but he looks toward Pimlico, the
 inn in Hogsden to the north-east. The
 inn's name derives from a Roanoke
 Island place-name, one of a number of
 links connecting Hogsden with tobacco
 and Virginia (Coates).
 17 double with deceive, like the archer in
 13-15

MISTRESS OPENWORK Because Goshawk goes in a shag-ruff
 20 band, with a face sticking up in't which shows like an
 agate set in a cramp-ring, he thinks I'm in love with
 him.
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT 'Las, I think he takes his mark amiss in
 thee.
 25 MISTRESS OPENWORK He has, by often beating into me,
 made me believe that my husband kept a whore.
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Very good.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Swore to me that my husband this
 30 very morning went in a boat with a tilt over it to the
 Three Pigeons at Brentford, and his punk with him
 under his tilt!
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT That were wholesome!
 MISTRESS OPENWORK I believed it; fell a-swearing at him,
 35 cursing of harlots, made me ready to hoise up sail and
 be there as soon as he.
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT So, so.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK And for that voyage, Goshawk comes
 hither incontinently; but sirrah, this water spaniel dives
 40 after no duck but me: his hope is having me at Brentford
 to make me cry quack!
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Art sure of it?
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Sure of it? My poor innocent Open-
 work came in as I was poking my ruff; presently hit I
 45 him i'the teeth with the Three Pigeons. He forswore all,
 I up and opened all, and now stands he, in a shop hard
 by, like a musket on a rest, to hit Goshawk i'the eye
 when he comes to fetch me to the boat.
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Such another lame gelding offered to
 50 carry me through thick and thin—Laxton, sirrah—but
 I am rid of him now.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Happy is the woman can be rid of
 'em all! 'Las, what are your whisking gallants to our
 husbands, weigh 'em rightly, man for man?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Troth, mere shallow things.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Idle, simple things: running heads;
 and yet—let 'em run over us never so fast—we shop-
 keepers, when all's done, are sure to have 'em in our
 55 purse-nets at length, and when they are in, Lord, what
 simple animals they are!
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Then they hang the head—
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Then they droop—
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Then they write letters—
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Then they cog—
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Then deal they underhand with us,
 60 and we must ingle with our husbands abed; and we
 must swear they are our cousins, and able to do us a
 pleasure at Court.
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT And yet when we have done our best,
 all's but put into a riven dish: we are but frumped at
 65 and libelled upon.
 MISTRESS OPENWORK O if it were the good Lord's will there
 were a law made, no citizen should trust any of 'em all!
 Enter Goshawk
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Hush sirrah! Goshawk flutters.
 GOSHAWK How now, are you ready?
 70 MISTRESS OPENWORK Nay, are you ready? A little thing, you
 see, makes us ready.
 GOSHAWK Us? [To Mistress Openwork] Why, must she make
 one i' the voyage?
 MISTRESS OPENWORK O by any means: do I know how my
 husband will handle me?
 GOSHAWK [aside] Foot, how shall I find water to keep these
 two mills going? Well, since you'll needs be clapped
 75 under hatches, if I sail not with you both till all split,
 hang me up at the mainyard and duck me. [Aside] It's
 but liquoring them both soundly, and then you shall see
 their cork heels fly up high, like two swans, when their
 tails are above water and their long necks under water,

20-1 shag-ruff band see 3.209-10, note
 21-2 with a face... cramp-ring an image of
 a small head surrounded by a large ruff;
 small figures carved in agate decorated
 seals, used for sealing letters with wax.
 Cramp rings, charms against illness,
 were distributed by the monarch on
 Good Friday.
 24 mark in archery, a target (continuing
 the archery image of 11-15); in fal-
 conry, a hawk's quarry or prey (playing
 on Goshawk's name)
 26 beating into me repeatedly telling me
 (with suggestion of a bird's beating
 wings)
 30 tilt awning over a boat
 31 Three Pigeons at Brentford inn which
 Laxton suggested for a rendezvous with
 Moll (see 3.288, note; 5.56, note)
 punk whore
 35 hoise up sail get going; compare 8.121,
 note
 39 incontinently immediately
 39-41 water spaniel... cry quack! cf. 'wild
 fowl', 6.244, note

44 poking my ruff when soaked in starch,
 ruffs were pleated by being folded over
 poking sticks, on which they dried
 44-5 hit I him i'the teeth aggressively
 accused him
 46-7 hard by near by
 47 a musket on a rest the barrels of heavy,
 unwieldy muskets were set into forked
 poles driven into the ground
 53 whisking lively, smart
 55, 56 things playing on thing as penis
 56 running heads footmen, lackeys
 59 purse-nets bag-shaped nets the mouths
 of which were drawn together; used
 especially for catching rabbits (conies),
 hence referring to cony-catching (illicitly
 duping naive victims)
 61-2 hang the head... droop become
 dejected; playing on detumescence (to
 get limp)
 64 cog cheat; fawn, wheedle
 66 ingle caress with; cajole (to deceive
 husbands)
 67-8 a pleasure at Court a favour from
 some court official; such claims were

stratagems used by wives having affairs
 with gallants, to deceive husbands
 70 all's... a riven dish riven means broken;
 i.e., our efforts have gone for nothing
 frumped at mocked
 76 little thing i.e., we're almost ready (with
 reference to thing as penis)
 81 handle treat (she claims to need Mistress
 Gallipot with her as protection)
 82 Foot abbreviation of mild oath 'God's
 foot', with play on Fr. *foutre*, to have sex
 82-3 water... mills double entendre for
 having sex; water is figuratively semen
 83-4 clapped under hatches imprisoned on
 a ship; also refers to having sex
 84 split go to pieces; shipwreck
 85 hang me up... duck me traditional
 sailors' punishment
 86 liquoring... soundly making them drunk
 87 cork heels fashionable, and associated
 with women's lightness (wantonness)
 87-9 like two swans... diving to catch
 gudgeons pictures the women in flagrant
 sexual postures, like swans diving for
 small fish

90 diving to catch gudgeons. [To them] Come, come! Oars stand ready; the tide's with us. On with those false faces. Blow winds, and thou shalt take thy husband casting out his net to catch fresh salmon at Brentford.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT I believe you'll eat of a cod's-head of your own dressing before you reach halfway thither.

[They put on masks]

95 GOSHAWK So, so, follow close. Pin as you go.

Enter Laxton muffled

LAXTON Do you hear? [Talks apart with Mistress Gallipot]

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Yes, I thank my ears.

LAXTON I must have a bout with your pothecary-ship.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT At what weapon?

100 LAXTON I must speak with you.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT No!

LAXTON No? You shall!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Shall? Away soused sturgeon, half fish, half flesh!

105 LAXTON Faith, gib, are you spitting? I'll cut your tail, puss-cat, for this.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT 'Las poor Laxton, I think thy tail's cut already! Your worst!

LAXTON If I do not— Exit

GOSHAWK

110 Come, ha' you done?

Enter Master Openwork

[To Mistress Openwork] 'Sfoot, Rosamond, your husband!

OPENWORK

How now? Sweet Master Goshawk! None more welcome!

I have wanted your embracements. When friends meet,

The music of the spheres sounds not more sweet Than does their conference. Who is this? Rosamond?

115 Wife?—[To Mistress Gallipot] How now, sister?

GOSHAWK Silence, if you love me!

OPENWORK

Why masked?

90 **false faces** Masks made of velvet or other silk were worn by women of fashion to protect the complexion from the sun, to shield them from public gaze, or to conceal their identity.

92 **fresh salmon** figuratively, young whores

93 **cod's-head** fool's head, meaning that his plan will fail and expose him for a fool

95 **Pin** possibly, put on your masks

95.1 **muffled** see 6.211.1, note

98 **bout** round of fighting, with sexual implication

103 **soused** pickled, or soaked in liquor; an insult

103-4 **half fish, half flesh** proverbial for neither one thing nor another, referring to his impotence; if he lacks the sexual capacity of a man, he is assumed to be womanish

105 **gib** term for cat, especially male or

castrated cat, used for woman as insult

107-8 **tail's cut already** alluding to his impotence

108 **Your worst!** do your worst (a challenge)

113 **wanted** missed

114 **The music of the spheres** In the Ptolemaic system, the planets, sun, moon, and fixed stars moved in concentric circles around the earth, creating friction which made music normally inaudible to human ears.

118 **a-mumming** Mummings, amateur performances for holiday festivities, were mimed; Mistress Openwork is telling her husband to be silent.

125-7 **Many bad faces... privilege current** Bad women (wicked, unchaste) pass for good because they wear expensive masks, making people think something

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Does a mask grieve you, sir?

OPENWORK It does.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Then you're best get you a-mumming.

GOSHAWK [aside to Mistress Openwork]

'Sfoot, you'll spoil all!

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

May not we cover our bare faces with masks As well as you cover your bald heads with hats?

OPENWORK

No masks; why, they're thieves to beauty, that rob eyes

Of admiration in which true love lies. Why are masks worn? Why good? Or why desired? Unless by their gay covers wits are fired To read the vil'st looks. Many bad faces— Because rich gems are treasured up in cases— Pass by their privilege current; but as caves Damn misers' gold, so masks are beauties' graves. Men ne'er meet women with such muffled eyes, But they curse her that first did masks devise, And swear it was some beldame. Come, off with't.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

I will not!

OPENWORK

Good faces, masked, are jewels kept by sprites. Hide none but bad ones, for they poison men's sights; Show them as shopkeepers do their broidered stuff: By owl-light; fine wares cannot be open enough. Prithee, sweet Rose, come strike this sail.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Sail?

OPENWORK

Ha?

Yes, wife, strike sail, for storms are in thine eyes.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

They're here, sir, in my brows, if any rise.

OPENWORK

Ha, brows? What says she, friend? Pray tell me why Your two flags were advanced: the comedy?

valuable lies behind the mask.

127-8 **as caves... beauties' graves** Just as hoarding gold is morally wrong, so is hiding beauty behind a mask.

131 **beldame** hag

133 **sprites** spirits

135 **stuff** cloth of lesser quality

136 **owl-light** Dim light; drapers and sempsters were said to deceive customers by displaying wares in badly-lit shops.

137 **strike this sail** possibly, remove your mask, and prepare for trouble

139 **in my brows** Referring to a frown; Openwork pretends to think she means horns, conventional symbol of a cuckold.

141 **flags... advanced** Playhouses flew flags when open for performance.

comedy Openwork associates Goshawk's deception with play-acting.

Come, what's the comedy?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Westward Ho.

OPENWORK

How?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

'Tis Westward Ho, she says.

GOSHAWK

Are you both mad?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Is't market day at Brentford, and your ware Not sent up yet?

OPENWORK

What market day? What ware?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

A pie with three pigeons in't—'tis drawn and stays your cutting up.

GOSHAWK

As you regard my credit—

OPENWORK

Art mad?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Yes, lecherous goat! Baboon!

OPENWORK

Baboon? Then toss me in a blanket.

MISTRESS OPENWORK [to Mistress Gallipot]

Do I it well?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT [to Mistress Openwork]

Rarely!

GOSHAWK [to Openwork]

Belike, sir, she's not well; best leave her.

OPENWORK

No,

115 I'll stand the storm now, how fierce soe'er it blow.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Did I for this lose all my friends? Refuse Rich hopes and golden fortunes to be made A stale to a common whore?

OPENWORK

This does amaze me.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

O God, O God! Feed at reversion now? A strumpet's leaving?

120 OPENWORK

Rosamond!

GOSHAWK [aside]

I sweat; would I lay in Cold Harbour.

MISTRESS OPENWORK

Thou hast struck ten thousand daggers through my heart!

OPENWORK

Not I, by heaven, sweet wife.

125 MISTRESS OPENWORK

Go, devil, go! That which thou swear'st by, damns thee!

142 **Westward Ho** cry of boatmen carrying passengers across the Thames; also title of a comedy by Dekker and Webster (1604)

144-5 **Is't market day... up yet** likens the prostitutes supposedly waiting for her husband at Brentford, a market town located on the trade route from London in the south-west of England, to goods for sale (see 3.288, note)

146 **A pie with three pigeons in't** playing on the Three Pigeons Inn, the supposed site of his meeting; pigeons, like ducks (see 38-41) and swans (see 86-8), are terms for prostitutes

147 **stays** waits for

cutting up carving, as of roasted fowl, with sexual implication

150 **goat! Baboon!** both regarded as highly lustful

151 **toss me in a blanket** humiliating

punishment

152 **Do I it well?** is my act convincing?

156 **friends** relatives (alluding to her social rank, supposedly higher than her husband's; see 3.12-14, 343-4, 348-50)

158 **stale** lover whose fidelity is mocked to amuse her rival ('common whore'); decoy

159-60 **Feed at reversion... leaving** Why should I take a whore's leftovers (i.e., Openwork)?

161 **Cold Harbour** neighbourhood near London Bridge known as refuge for the poor and sanctuary for debtors hiding from arrest; also, pun on 'Cold', as remedy for sweating

167 **'S heart** abbreviation for 'God's heart', mild oath

170 **Chelsea** west from London, on the way to Brentford, where Openwork

GOSHAWK [aside to Mistress Openwork]

'S heart, will you undo me?

MISTRESS OPENWORK [to Openwork]

Why stay you here? The star by which you sail Shines yonder above Chelsea; you lose your shore. If this moon light you, seek out your light whore.

OPENWORK

Ha?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Push! Your western pug!

GOSHAWK

Zounds, now hell roars!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

With whom you tilted in a pair of oars This very morning.

OPENWORK

Oars?

MISTRESS OPENWORK

At Brentford, sir!

OPENWORK

Rack not my patience. Master Goshawk, Some slave has buzzed this into her, has he not?— I run a-tilt in Brentford with a woman? 'Tis a lie! What old bawd tells thee this? 'Sdeath, 'tis a lie!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

'Tis one to thy face shall justify All that I speak.

OPENWORK

Ud' soul, do but name that rascal!

MISTRESS OPENWORK

No, sir, I will not.

GOSHAWK [aside]

Keep thee there, girl. [To them] Then!

OPENWORK [to Mistress Gallipot]

Sister, know you this varlet?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Yes.

OPENWORK

Swear true; Is there a rogue so low damned? A second Judas? A common hangman? Cutting a man's throat? Does it to his face? Bite me behind my back? A cur-dog? Swear if you know this hell-hound!

supposedly will meet a prostitute

171 **light... light** pun on light as illumination and as fickle, wanton

172 **western pug** bargeman going westward from London; whore in Brentford, west of London

173 **tilted** pun on tilting as jousting with lances, as the sexual act, and as the boat covered with a tilt (see 30, note)

pair of oars boat rowed by two men

181 **Ud' soul** corruption of 'God bless my soul'

184 **Judas** from Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Christ; a betrayer who seems a friend

186 **Bite... back** backbiter; one who vilifies another behind his back

187 **cur-dog** mongrel; term of contempt

hell-hound allusion to Cerberus, watch-dog of hell (see 5.25, note)

MISTRESS GALLIPOT
In truth I do.
OPENWORK His name?
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Not for the world,
To have you to stab him.
GOSHAWK [aside] O brave girls: worth gold!
OPENWORK
A word, honest Master Goshawk.
Draws out his sword
190 GOSHAWK What do you mean, sir?
OPENWORK
Keep off, and if the devil can give a name
To this new fury, holla it through my ear,
Or wrap it up in some hid character.
I'll ride to Oxford and watch out mine eyes,
195 But I'll hear the Brazen Head speak; or else
Show me but one hair of his head or beard,
That I may sample it. If the fiend I meet
In mine own house, I'll kill him—the street,
Or at the church door—there, 'cause he seeks to untie
200 The knot God fastens, he deserves most to die!
MISTRESS OPENWORK
My husband titles him!
OPENWORK Master Goshawk, pray, sir,
Swear to me that you know him or know him not,
Who makes me at Brentford to take up a petticoat
Besides my wife's.
GOSHAWK By heaven, that man I know not.
MISTRESS OPENWORK
Come, come, you lie!
205 GOSHAWK Will you not have all out?
—[To Openwork] By heaven, I know no man beneath
the moon
Should do you wrong, but if I had his name,
I'd print it in text letters.
MISTRESS OPENWORK Print thine own then;
Didst not thou swear to me he kept his whore?
MISTRESS GALLIPOT
210 And that in sinful Brentford they would commit
That which our lips did water at, sir? Ha?
MISTRESS OPENWORK
Thou spider, that hast woven thy cunning web
In mine own house t'ensnare me: hast not thou

192 **this new fury** Openwork imagines his wife as one of the furies, Greco-Roman goddesses of vengeance who punished those who committed certain serious crimes.
193 **holla** shout
194 **hid character** secret code
194 **watch out mine eyes** stay awake watching, no matter how long
195 **Brazen Head** alluding to the legendary magical bronze head of Brasenose College, Oxford; by making it speak, Friar Bacon tried to wall England with brass, but missed hearing it and failed

197 **the fiend** the one who has supposedly lied about him
200 **The knot God fastens** the marital bond; compare 1.58–60
201 **titles** calls by the right name
203 **take up a petticoat** have sex
208 **text letters** capital letters
212–15 **Thou spider . . . poison** Spiders were associated with craftiness and treachery; cf. 2.239–40.
226 **moles** small pieces of velvet or silk cut in decorative shapes and attached to women's faces to cover blemishes or call

Sucked nourishment even underneath this roof
And turned it all to poison, spitting it
On thy friend's face, my husband—he as 'twere,
215 sleeping—
Only to leave him ugly to mine eyes,
That they might glance on thee?
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Speak, are these lies?
GOSHAWK
Mine own shame me confounds.
MISTRESS OPENWORK No more, he's stung.
220 Who'd think that in one body there could dwell
Deformity and beauty, heaven and hell?
Goodness, I see, is but outside. We all set
In rings of gold, stones that be counterfeit:
I thought you none.
GOSHAWK Pardon me.
OPENWORK Truth, I do.
225 This blemish grows in nature, not in you;
For man's creation stick even moles in scorn
On fairest cheeks. Wife, nothing is perfect born.
MISTRESS OPENWORK
I thought you had been born perfect.
OPENWORK
What's this whole world but a gilt rotten pill?
For at the heart lies the old core still.
230 I'll tell you, Master Goshawk, ay, in your eye
I have seen wanton fire; and then to try
The soundness of my judgement, I told you
I kept a whore, made you believe 'twas true,
235 Only to feel how your pulse beat, but find
The world can hardly yield a perfect friend.
Come, come, a trick of youth, and 'tis forgiven;
This rub put by, our love shall run more even.
MISTRESS OPENWORK
You'll deal upon men's wives no more?
GOSHAWK No. You teach me
A trick for that!
MISTRESS OPENWORK
240 Troth, do not; they'll o'erreach thee.
OPENWORK
Make my house yours, sir, still.
GOSHAWK No.

attention to an attractive feature
229 **gilt rotten pill** some sweetmeats (candies) were decorated with an edible gold covering
237 **trick** habit; deception; prank
238 **rub** obstacle; term in the game of bowls for touch of a bowl against others or unevenness in its passage
239 **deal upon** work on, exploit
239–40 **teach me** | A trick i.e., your own trick has taught me not to
240 **o'erreach** overpower

OPENWORK
Seeing, thus besieged, it holds out, 'twill never fall!
Enter Master Gallipot, and Greenwit like a
summer; Laxton muffled, aloof off
OMNES How now?
GALLIPOT [to Greenwit] With me, sir?
245 GREENWIT You, sir. I have gone snuffling up and down by
your door this hour to watch for you.
MISTRESS GALLIPOT What's the matter, husband?
GREENWIT I have caught a cold in my head, sir, by sitting
up late in the Rose Tavern, but I hope you understand
250 my speech.
GALLIPOT So, sir.
GREENWIT I cite you by the name of Hippocrates Gallipot,
and you by the name of Prudence Gallipot, to appear
upon *Crastino*—do you see—*Crastino Sancti Dunstani*,
this Easter Term, in Bow Church.
255 GALLIPOT Where, sir? What says he?
GREENWIT Bow—Bow Church, to answer to a libel of
precontract on the part and behalf of the said Prudence
and another; you're best, sir, take a copy of the citation:
'tis but twelvenpence.
260 OMNES A citation?
GALLIPOT You pocky-nosed rascal, what slave fees you to
this?
LAXTON Slave? [Comes forward; aside to Goshawk] I ha'
265 nothing to do with you, do you hear, sir?
GOSHAWK [aside to Laxton] Laxton, is't not? What vagary
is this?
GALLIPOT
Trust me, I thought, sir, this storm long ago
Had been full laid, when—if you be remembered—
270 I paid you the last fifteen pound, besides
The thirty you had first—for then you swore—
LAXTON
Tush, tush, sir, oaths—
Truth, yet I'm loath to vex you.—Tell you what:

242.2 **summer** summoner; officer of church court who summoned people to appear there
Laxton muffled see 6.2.11, note
aloof off at a distance
245 **snuffling** speaking through the nose; symptom of venereal disease associated with summoners
247 **What's . . . husband?** Mistress Gallipot addresses her husband, but Greenwit answers
252 **Hippocrates** a Greek physician born about 460 BC and considered the founder of medicine; ironically appropriate for an apothecary
254 **Crastino . . . Dunstani** the day after St Dunstan's Day, which was 19 May: 20 May
255 **Easter Term** session of church court beginning the fifteenth day after Easter and ending after Ascension Day
Bow Church church of St Mary le

Bow, built in the reign of William the Conqueror (1066–1087), named for its bow-shaped stone arches, the first in London; the church court held here was called the Court of Arches
257–8 **libel of precontract** charge of marrying someone who was already betrothed to another by a precontract; see 1.56–8, note
259 **citation** summons (legal document) summoning someone to appear in court
262 **pocky-nosed** pocks or pustules were a symptom of venereal disease, and commonly attacked the nose; see 245, note
fees you to is paying you for
266 **vagary** prank
269 **laid** subsided
270 **last fifteen pound** Not dramatized; Laxton has evidently continued to balk Gallipot since 6.259–60.
274 **Make up . . . an hundred pound** bring

Make up the money I had an hundred pound,
And take your bellyful of her.
275 GALLIPOT An hundred pound?
MISTRESS GALLIPOT
What, a hundred pound? He gets none!
What a hundred pound?
GALLIPOT
Sweet Prue, be calm; the gentleman offers thus:
If I will make the moneys that are past
A hundred pound, he will discharge all courts
280 And give his bond never to vex us more.
MISTRESS GALLIPOT
A hundred pound? 'Las, take, sir, but threescore.
—[Aside to Laxton] Do you seek my undoing?
LAXTON I'll not bate one sixpence.
—[Aside to Mistress Gallipot] I'll maul you, puss, for
spitting.
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Do thy worst!
—[Aloud] Will fourscore stop thy mouth?
LAXTON No.
MISTRESS GALLIPOT You're a slave!
285 Thou cheat; I'll now tear money from thy throat.
Husband, lay hold on yonder tawny-coat.
GREENWIT
Nay, gentlemen, seeing your women are so hot,
I must lose my hair in their company, I see.
[Removes hair-piece]
MISTRESS OPENWORK
His hair sheds off, and yet he speaks not so much
290 In the nose as he did before.
GOSHAWK He has had
The better surgeon. Master Greenwit,
Is your wit so raw as to play no better
A part than a summer's?
GALLIPOT I pray, who plays
295 *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* in this company?

the total sum to a hundred pounds
280 **discharge all courts** Gallipot thinks Laxton threatens other legal actions besides the present one.
281 **give his bond** promise
283 **bate** abate; subtract
285 **stop thy mouth** satisfy you
286 **tear money from thy throat** implies Laxton is lying; compare 5.89–90, note
287 **tawny-coat** Greenwit, who wears a summoner's tawny-coloured livery
288 **hot** angry; implying sexual eagerness; alludes to burning sensations of syphilis
289 **lose my hair** playing on 'hot', 288, note
293 **wit so raw** playing on Greenwit's name
295 *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* Anonymous comedy of 1594 in which a character disguises himself to test the honesty of those he meets; as the action proceeds, the title becomes a catch phrase.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT

Dear husband, pardon me, I did dissemble,
Told thee I was his precontracted wife—
When letters came from him for thirty pound,
I had no shift but that.

GALLIPOT A very clean shift,
But able to make me lousy.—On.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Husband, I plucked—
When he had tempted me to think well of him—
Gilt feathers from thy wings, to make him fly
More lofty.

GALLIPOT O' the top of you, wife. On.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT He, having wasted them, comes now for more,
Using me as a ruffian doth his whore,
Whose sin keeps him in breath. By heaven, I vow,
Thy bed he never wronged more than he does now.

GALLIPOT My bed? Ha, ha, like enough! A shop-board will serve
To have a cuckold's coat cut out upon;
Of that we'll talk hereafter.—[to Laxton] You're a
villain!

LAXTON Hear me but speak, sir, you shall find me none.

OMNES Pray, sir, be patient and hear him.

GALLIPOT I am
Muzzled for biting, sir; use me how you will.

LAXTON The first hour that your wife was in my eye,
Myself with other gentlemen sitting by
In your shop tasting smoke, and speech being used
That men who have fairest wives are most abused
And hardly 'scaped the horn, your wife maintained
That only such spots in city dames were stained
Justly, but by men's slanders; for her own part,
She vowed that you had so much of her heart,
No man by all his wit, by any wife
Never so fine spun, should yourself beguile
Of what in her was yours.

299 **shift** Mistress Gallipot refers to her stratagem; her husband takes the word to mean both undergarment and change.

303 **O' the top of you** alluding to the sexual act

305 **ruffian pimp**

306 **keeps him in breath** supports him

308-9 **A shop-board... cut out upon** A shopboard is a counter for displaying goods; a man can be made a cuckold in his own shop if his wife has sex with another man on the shopboard.

313 **Muzzled for biting** I will be quiet and listen to you.

318 **hardly 'scaped the horn** can't really avoid being cuckolded

319-20 **only such spots... men's slanders** city wives should be censured (stained) for unchastity (spots) only if it isn't men's slanders that incriminate them

325 **Irish board game** similar to backgammon, played with dice and counters

326 **bearing** term in both Irish and backgammon for removing pieces at end of game; playing on childbearing

327 **scorned** objected that brave defy

329-31 **laid siege... lust** military metaphors for his aggressive sexual pursuit of her

332 **raked up in dust** like a fire covered with ashes to keep it from burning actively

334-5 **her eye... honestly** She would

GALLIPOT Yet Prue, 'tis well;
Play out your game at Irish, sir. Who wins?

MISTRESS OPENWORK The trial is when she comes to bearing.

LAXTON I scorned one woman, thus, should brave all men,
And—which more vext me—a she-citizen.
Therefore I laid siege to her: out she held,
Gave many a brave repulse, and me compelled
With shame to sound retreat to my hot lust.
Then seeing all base desires raked up in dust,
And that to tempt her modest ears I swore
Ne'er to presume again, she said her eye
Would ever give me welcome honestly;
And—since I was a gentleman—if it run low,
She would my state relieve, not to o'erthrow
Your own and hers; did so. Then seeing I wrought
Upon her meekness, me she set at naught;
And yet to try if I could turn that tide,
You see what stream I strove with. But sir, I swear
By heaven and by those hopes men lay up there,
I neither have nor had a base intent
To wrong your bed. What's done is merriment;
Your gold I pay back with this interest:
When I had most power to do't, I wronged you least.

GALLIPOT If this no gullery be, sir—

OMNES No, no, on my life!

GALLIPOT Then, sir, I am beholden—not to you, wife—
But Master Laxton, to your want of doing ill,
Which it seems you have not. Gentlemen,
Tarry and dine here all.

OPENWORK Brother, we have a jest
As good as yours to furnish out a feast.

GALLIPOT We'll crown our table with it.—Wife, brag no more
Of holding out: who most brags is most whore.

Exeunt

332 **raked up in dust** like a fire covered with ashes to keep it from burning actively

334-5 **her eye... honestly** She would

Enter Jack Dapper, Moll [dressed as a man], Sir Beauteous Ganymede, and Sir Thomas Long
JACK DAPPER But prithee, Master Captain Jack, be plain and perspicuous with me: was it your Meg of Westminster's courage that rescued me from the Poultry puttocks indeed?

MOLL The valour of my wit, I ensure you, sir, fetched you off bravely when you were i' the forlorn hope among those desperates. Sir Beauteous Ganymede here and Sir Thomas Long heard that cuckoo—my man Trapdoor—sing the note of your ransom from captivity.

SIR BEAUTEOUS Uds-so, Moll, where's that Trapdoor?

MOLL Hanged, I think, by this time; a justice in this town, that speaks nothing but 'Make a mittimus, away with him to Newgate', used that rogue like a firework to run upon a line betwixt him and me.

OMNES How, how?

MOLL Marry, to lay trains of villainy to blow up my life: I smelt the powder, spied what linstock gave fire to shoot against the poor captain of the galley-foist, and away slid I my man like a shovel-board shilling. He struts up and down the suburbs, I think, and eats up whores, feeds upon a bawd's garbage.

SIR THOMAS Sirrah Jack Dapper—

JACK DAPPER What sayst, Tom Long?

SIR THOMAS Thou hadst a sweet-faced boy, hail-fellow with thee to your little Gull: how is he spent?

JACK DAPPER Troth, I whistled the poor little buzzard off o' my fist because when he waited upon me at the

10.0.2 **Ganymede** Jove's beloved cupbearer, renowned for his boyish beauty; in the Renaissance, a term for a lover of the same sex

Thomas Long conventional name for carrier of letters, goods, parcels

1 Jack generic name for a man; apparently used for Moll when she wears male clothing

2-3 **Meg of Westminster's courage** alludes to the legendary figure whose biography is a source for this play; see Introduction

3 **Poultry puttocks** officers of debtors' prison called the Poultry; for Poultry, see 7.78, note; for puttocks, see 7.112, note

5-6 **fetched you off** rescued you

6 **i' the forlorn hope** in military language, soldiers chosen to begin the attack; figuratively, persons in a desperate condition

8 **cuckoo** The cuckoo, a migratory bird, arrives in Britain in April and is considered a herald of spring; Trapdoor is first to suspect the sergeants who arrest Jack Dapper (see 7.191-5).

10 **Uds-so** corruption of 'God save my soul'

11 **a justice** Sir Alexander

12-13 **Make a mittimus... Newgate** Proverbial expression for a severe magistrate. Named for its first word *mittimus* (Lat. we

send), a mittimus is a legal warrant to commit someone to jail; Newgate, London's main prison, was used for felons and debtors.

13-14 **firework... a line** a line of gunpowder used as a fuse to set off explosives

16 **trains... to blow up my life** compares Trapdoor, who was planted by Sir Alexander to trap Moll into stealing, with a line of gunpowder used to blow her up (see 13)

16-19 **I smelt the powder... shilling** not dramatized; Moll realized that Trapdoor was tricking her, and dismissed him

17 **linstock** staff with a forked head for holding the match used to light gunpowder in a musket

18 **captain of the galley-foist** derogatory terms; a galley-foist was a barge used by the Lord Mayor of London for state occasions

19 **shovel-board shilling** disk used in playing shuffle-board

20 **eats up** devastates; takes over (as a pimp); has sex with

21 **garbage** whores that pimps have abandoned; play on Ralph, Trapdoor's first name, and raff, trash (see 2.189.1, note)

24 **hail-fellow** on intimate terms

25 **spent** employed

26-7 **whistled... o' my fist** released (falconry term); dismissed

28 **hit me i' the teeth** accused, insulted me

29-30 **painted alderman's tomb... death's head** A coloured effigy of the deceased was placed on an alderman's tomb, along with a death's head as a *memento mori* (heads of guilds were magistrates in city government, next in dignity to the mayor).

34 **squire's places** Reversing the ceremonial position of a knight between two squires, Moll and Dapper walk in the middle with Sir Beauteous and Lord Noland flanking them.

37-8 **boot-halers** marauding soldiers; highwaymen

40 **tassels... handkerchief** handkerchiefs about four inches square with buttons or tassels at each corner were worn, folded, in hats

45 **counter debtors' prison**; see 7.78, note

47.1 **Noland** derived from 'know' or 'noll' (head) and 'land', suggesting power and authority

54 **No tobacco** possibly alludes to James I's well-known opposition to tobacco, as expressed in *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604)

30 **MOLL** What says my little Dapper?

35 **JACK DAPPER** Come, come, walk and talk, walk and talk. MOLL These knights shall have squire's places, belike then. Well, Dapper, what say you?

40 **JACK DAPPER** Sirrah Captain Mad Mary, the gull, my own father—Dapper, Sir Davy—laid these London boot-halers, the catchpoles, in ambush to set upon me. OMNES Your father? Away, Jack!

45 **JACK DAPPER** By the tassels of this handkerchief, 'tis true; and what was his warlike stratagem, think you? He thought, because a wicker cage tames a nightingale, a lowly prison could make an ass of me. OMNES A nasty plot!

50 **JACK DAPPER** Ay: as though a counter, which is a park in which all the wild beasts of the city run head by head, could tame me!

55 **Enter the Lord Noland**
MOLL Yonder comes my Lord Noland.
OMNES Save you, my lord.
LORD NOLAND Well met, gentlemen all: good Sir Beauteous Ganymede, Sir Thomas Long—and how does Master Dapper?
JACK DAPPER Thanks, my lord.
MOLL No tobacco, my lord?
LORD NOLAND No, faith, Jack.

JACK DAPPER My Lord Noland, will you go to Pimlico with us? We are making a boon voyage to that nappy land of spice cakes.

LORD NOLAND Here's such a merry ging, I could find in my heart to sail to the World's End with such company. Come gentlemen, let's on.

JACK DAPPER Here's most amorous weather, my lord.

OMNES Amorous weather? (*They walk*)

JACK DAPPER Is not amorous a good word?

Enter Trapdoor like a poor soldier with a patch o'er one eye, and Tearcat with him, all tatters

TRAPDOOR Shall we set upon the infantry, these troops of foot? Zounds, yonder comes Moll, my whorish master and mistress; would I had her kidneys between my teeth!

TEARCAT I had rather have a cow-heel.

TRAPDOOR Zounds, I am so patched up, she cannot discover me. We'll on.

TEARCAT *Coraggio*, then.

TRAPDOOR Good your honours and worships, enlarge the ears of commiseration, and let the sound of a hoarse military organ-pipe penetrate your pitiful bowels to extract out of them so many small drops of silver as may give a hard straw-bed lodging to a couple of maimed soldiers.

JACK DAPPER Where are you maimed?

TEARCAT In both our nether limbs.

MOLL Come, come, Dapper, let's give 'em something; 'las poor men, what money have you? By my troth, I love a soldier with my soul.

SIR BEAUTEOUS Stay, stay, where have you served?

SIR THOMAS In any part of the Low Countries?

TRAPDOOR Not in the Low Countries, if it please your manhood, but in Hungary against the Turk at the siege of Belgrade.

LORD NOLAND Who served there with you, sirrah?

TRAPDOOR Many Hungarians, Moldavians, Valachians, and Transylvanians, with some Slavonians; and retiring home, sir, the Venetian galleys took us prisoners, yet freed us, and suffered us to beg up and down the country.

JACK DAPPER You have ambled all over Italy then?

TRAPDOOR O sir, from Venice to Roma, Vecchia, Bonogna, Romagna, Bologna, Modena, Piacenza, and Toscana with all her cities, as Pistoia, Volterra, Montepulciano, Arezzo, with the Siennese and diverse others.

MOLL Mere rogues, put spurs to 'em once more.

JACK DAPPER Thou lookest like a strange creature—a fat butter-box—yet speakest English. What art thou?

TEARCAT *Ick, mine here. Ick bin den ruffling Tearcat, den brave soldado. Ick bin dorick all Dutchlant gueresen. Der shellum das meere ine beasa, ine woert gaeb; Ick slaag um strookes on tom cop, dastick den hundred touzun divel halle; frolick, mine here.*

SIR BEAUTEOUS Here, here—[*About to give money*] let's be rid of their jobbering.

MOLL Not a cross, Sir Beauteous. You base rogues, I have taken measure of you better than a tailor can, and I'll fit you as you—monster with one eye—have fitted me.

TRAPDOOR Your worship will not abuse a soldier!

MOLL Soldier?—Thou deservest to be hanged up by that tongue which dishonours so noble a profession.—Soldier, you skeldering varlet?—Hold, stand, there should be a trapdoor hereabouts.

- 56 **Pimlico** an inn and place of entertainment at Hogsden
 57 **boon voyage** prosperous, happy trip; cf. Fr. *bon voyage*
nappy foaming, heady (used of ale); refers to strong ale for which Pimlico was famed
 58 **spice cakes** eaten with ale
 59 **ging gang**
 60 **World's End** a long journey, as far as one could go; several London taverns were so named
 62 **amorous** malapropism for amiable, as suggested by responses in 63-4
 64.2 **Tearcat... all tatters** 'To tear a cat' means to rant like a swaggering hero; he is wearing ragged clothes.
 66-7 **whorish master and mistress** Like Sir Alexander, he confounds the prostitute's supposed lust with the transgression of gender difference attributed to Moll's dress; see 2.1.32-3, 4.1.57-62.
 69 **cow-heel** calf's foot jelly, a jellied broth used as a restorative
 72 **Coraggio** Italian; have courage
 75 **bowels** considered the source of pity, compassion
 85 **Low Countries** England fought the forces

- of Spain, which occupied the present Holland and Belgium, from 1585 to 1587.
 87-8 in Hungary... **Belgrade** Belgrade, capital of Serbia, was seized from Hungarian occupation by Solymán, Sultan of Turkey, in 1522; thus Trapdoor's claim is fallacious.
 90-1 **Hungarians... Slavonians** soldiers from the regions under Hungarian rule
 93 **suffered** allowed
 96-9 **Venice... others** As in 86-8, 90-4, Trapdoor provides many place names, mixing cities with regions indiscriminately, and English with Italian forms (as was common) so as to convince his listeners that he is a widely travelled soldier.
 96 **Vecchia** Civitavecchia, the port of Rome
 96-7 **Bonogna... Bologna** city in Romagna, in northern Italy
 97 **Romagna** region in Italy north of Tuscany
 98 **Volterra** town in Tuscany
 99 **Siennese** inhabitants of Siena, city in

- Tuscany
 102 **butter-box** contemptuous term for a Dutchman
 103-6 As Dekker advises in *The Gull's Hornbook* (1609), those who fear arrest should pretend to be from a country at peace with England, so that they cannot be examined by a magistrate; hence, Tearcat's pretence of being a native Dutch speaker. His speech isn't meant to be strictly understood. It means roughly: I, my lord? I am the ruffling Tearcat, the brave soldier. I have travelled through all Dutchland. [He is] the greater scoundrel who gives an angry word. I beat him directly on the head, that you take out a hundred thousand devils. [Be] merry, sir.
 109 **jobbering** jabbering
 110 **cross** coin with cross stamped on one side
 111-12 I'll fit you Moll echoes the same well-known line from *The Spanish Tragedy* as Sebastian did (2.1.44); also plays on 'tailor' in 110-12.
 112 **monster with one eye** may refer to stage convention of representing the devil as one-eyed
 116 **skeldering** begging, sponging, swindling

Pulls off his patch
 TRAPDOOR The balls of these glaziers of mine—mine eyes—shall be shot up and down in any hot piece of service for my invincible mistress.

JACK DAPPER I did not think there had been such knavery in black patches as now I see.

MOLL O sir, he hath been brought up in the Isle of Dogs, and can both fawn like a spaniel and bite like a mastiff, as he finds occasion.

LORD NOLAND [*to Tearcat*] What are you, sirrah? A bird of this feather too?

TEARCAT A man beaten from the wars, sir.

SIR THOMAS I think so, for you never stood to fight.

JACK DAPPER What's thy name, fellow soldier?

TEARCAT I am called by those that have seen my valour, Tearcat.

OMNES Tearcat?

MOLL A mere whip-jack, and that is, in the commonwealth of rogues, a slave that can talk of sea-fight, name all your chief pirates, discover more countries to you than either the Dutch, Spanish, French, or English ever found out; yet indeed all his service is by land, and that is to rob a fair, or some such venturous exploit. Tearcat—foot, sirrah, I have your name, now I remember me, in my book of horners: horns for the thumb, you know how.

TEARCAT No indeed, Captain Moll—for I know you by sight—I am no such nipping Christian, but a mauderer upon the pad, I confess; and meeting with honest Trapdoor here, whom you had cashiered from bearing arms, out at elbows under your colours, I instructed him in the rudiments of roguery, and by my map made him sail over any country you can name, so that now he can mauder better than myself.

118 **glaziers eyes**, in cant (thieves' jargon)

122 **patches** referring to their clothes; playing on patches meaning fools, clowns

123 **Isle of Dogs** peninsula in the Thames; reportedly, the king's hounds were kept there

134 **whip-jack** rogue who masquerades as a former sailor, wandering, begging, and thieving

141 **book of horners** plays on the hornbook, consisting of a paper on which the alphabet and other rudiments of literacy were written, covered with a thin sheet of transparent horn and mounted on wood; used for teaching small children
horns for the thumb piece of horn shaped like a thimble to protect thumb from knife blade when thief cuts purse

144 **nipping** He who cuts the purse is called the nip.

144-5 **mauderer upon the pad** wanderer on the road

146-7 **cashiered from bearing arms** military terms for dismissing from service

147 **out at elbows** proverbial for being poor, destitute

under your colours in your service

155 **cant** speak in the jargon of vagabonds and rogues; dialogue is largely in cant to 238

156 **upright man** first or second in the hierarchy of rogues named in cant, who dominate lesser rogues and have their choice of women; tall, large, loud-voiced men who carry truncheons and travel together in all-male groups

158 **wild rogue** thief travelling in a large group that meets in barns at night to have sex and plan robberies

angler companion of upright man, who uses a long staff with a hook to angle (fish) through open windows for goods to steal

159 **ruffler** first or second in the hierarchy; much like upright man (see 156, note)

163 **doxy** general term for adult, sexually available woman who might also be a prostitute or pickpocket

166 **by the solomon** by the mass

167-8 **kinchin mort... wild dell** Ranks in the hierarchy of female rogues:

kinchin mort, female infant carried on

JACK DAPPER So then, Trapdoor, thou art turned soldier now.

TRAPDOOR Alas, sir, now there's no wars, 'tis the safest course of life I could take.

MOLL I hope then you can cant, for by your cudgels, you, sirrah, are an upright man. 155

TRAPDOOR As any walks the highway, I assure you.

MOLL And Tearcat, what are you? A wild rogue, an angler, or a ruffler? 160

TEARCAT Brother to this upright man, flesh and blood, ruffling Tearcat is my name, and a ruffler is my style, my title, my profession.

MOLL Sirrah, where's your doxy?—Halt not with me.

OMNES Doxy, Moll? What's that?

MOLL His wench. 165

TRAPDOOR My doxy? I have, by the solomon, a doxy that carries a kinchin mort in her slate at her back, besides my dell and my dainty wild dell, with all whom I'll tumble this next darkmans in the strommel, and drink ben booze, and eat a fat gruntling-cheat, a cackling-cheat, and a quacking-cheat. 170

JACK DAPPER Here's old cheating!

TRAPDOOR My doxy stays for me in a boozing ken, brave captain.

MOLL He says his wench stays for him in an ale-house. [*To Trapdoor and Tearcat*] You are no pure rogues. 175

TEARCAT Pure rogues? No, we scorn to be pure rogues; but if you come to our libken, or our stalling-ken, you shall find neither him nor me a queer cuffin.

MOLL So, sir, no churl of you. 180

TEARCAT No, but a ben cove, a brave cove, a gentry cuffin.

LORD NOLAND Call you this canting?

JACK DAPPER Zounds, I'll give a schoolmaster half a crown a week and teach me this pedlar's French.

mother's back in a sheet; mort, mother who belongs sexually to one man; dell, teen-age girl or virgin; wild dell, either born on the road, or a servant or young woman of gentle birth forced into a wandering or criminal life by circumstances.

169 **darkmans night strommel** straw

170 **ben booze** good drink

170-1 **gruntling-cheat... quacking-cheat** cheat means thing; gruntling-cheat, pig; cackling-cheat, chicken; quacking-cheat, duck

172 **old great**, abundant

173 **boozing ken** alehouse

178 **libken** sleeping place
stalling-ken house for receiving stolen goods

179-81 **queer cuffin... gentry cuffin** cuffin means man; queer cuffin, churl or Justice of the Peace; gentry cuffin, gentleman

181 **a ben cove, a brave cove** cove means man or fellow; ben cove, good fellow; brave cove, gentleman

184 **pedlar's French** underworld slang

185 TRAPDOOR Do but stroll, sir, half a harvest with us, sir, and you shall gabble your bellyful.
 MOLL [to Trapdoor] Come you rogue, cant with me.
 SIR THOMAS Well said, Moll.—[To Trapdoor] Cant with her, sirrah, and you shall have money—else not a penny.
 190 TRAPDOOR I'll have a bout if she please.
 MOLL Come on, sirrah.
 TRAPDOOR Ben mort, shall you and I heave a booth, mill a ken, or nip a bung? And then we'll couch a hogshead under the ruffmans, and there you shall wap with me, and I'll niggle with you.
 195 MOLL Out, you damned impudent rascal! [Hits and kicks him]
 TRAPDOOR Cut benar whids, and hold your fambles and your stamps!
 200 LORD NOLAND Nay, nay, Moll, why art thou angry? What was his gibberish?
 MOLL Marry, this, my lord, says he: 'Ben mort'—good wench—'shall you and I heave a booth, mill a ken, or nip a bung?'—shall you and I rob a house, or cut a purse?
 205 OMNES Very good!
 MOLL 'And then we'll couch a hogshead under the ruffmans',—and then we'll lie under a hedge.
 TRAPDOOR That was my desire, captain, as 'tis fit a soldier should lie.
 210 MOLL 'And there you shall wap with me, and I'll niggle with you',—and that's all.
 SIR BEAUTEOUS Nay, nay, Moll, what's that wap?
 JACK DAPPER Nay, teach me what niggling is; I'd fain be niggling.
 215 MOLL Wapping and niggling is all one: the rogue my man can tell you.
 TRAPDOOR 'Tis fadoodling, if it please you.
 SIR BEAUTEOUS This is excellent; one fit more, good Moll.
 220 MOLL [to Tearcat] Come, you rogue, sing with me.
The Song
 A gage of ben Rome-booze
 In a boozing ken of Rome-ville

TEARCAT
 Is benar than a caster,
 Peck, pannam, lap, or popler
 Which we mill in Deuce-a-ville.
 225 MOLL and TEARCAT
 O, I would lib all the lightmans,
 O, I would lib all the darkmans,
 By the solomon, under the ruffmans,
 By the solomon, in the harmans,
 TEARCAT
 And scour the queer cramp-ring,
 And couch till a palliard docked my dell,
 So my boozy nab might skew Rome-booze well.
 230 MOLL and TEARCAT
 Avast to the pad, let us bing,
 Avast to the pad, let us bing.
 OMNES Fine knaves, i'faith.
 235 JACK DAPPER The grating of ten new cart-wheels, and the grunting of five hundred hogs coming from Romford market cannot make a worse noise than this canting language does in my ears. Pray, my Lord Noland, let's give these soldiers their pay.
 240 SIR BEAUTEOUS Agreed, and let them march.
 LORD NOLAND [gives money] Here, Moll.
 MOLL [to Trapdoor and Tearcat] Now I see that you are stalled to the rogue and are not ashamed of your professions: look you, my Lord Noland here, and these gentlemen, bestows upon you two, two bords and a half: that's two shillings sixpence.
 245 TRAPDOOR Thanks to your lordship.
 TEARCAT Thanks, heroical captain.
 250 MOLL Away.
 TRAPDOOR We shall cut ben whids of your masters and mistress-ship wheresoever we come.
 MOLL [to Trapdoor] You'll maintain, sirrah, the old justice's plot to his face?
 255 TRAPDOOR Else trine me on the cheats: hang me!
 MOLL Be sure you meet me there.
 TRAPDOOR Without any more maundering, I'll do't.—
 Follow, brave Tearcat.

185 harvest season
 192-5 Ben mort...niggle with you Modestly avoiding 'wap' and 'niggle', Moll translates this speech: see 202-5, 207-12. Wap and niggle both mean to have sex, the implications of which anger her at 196-7.
 198-9 Cut...stamps speak better words, and hold your hands and legs
 218 fadoodling nonce word, euphemism for having sex
 219 fit part of poem or song; strain of music
 221-34 Moll translates the song, excepting the last two lines, at 264-74. A literal

translation follows: A quart pot of good wine in an ale-house of London is better than a cloak, meat, buttermilk (or whey) or porridge which we steal in the country. O I would lie all the day, I would lie all the night, by the mass, under the woods (or bushes), by the mass in the stocks, and wear bad bolts (or fetters), and lie till a rogue lay with my wench, so my drunken head might quaff wine well. Away to the highway, let us be off, etc.
 231 palliard rogue, often Irish or Welsh, who wears patched clothing and travels

with a wife and forged marriage document; may feign disease to draw pity
 237 Romford town north-east of London that held a famous hog market every Tuesday (perhaps playing on 'Rome-ville')
 244 stalled to the rogue initiated as rogues
 246 bords shillings
 251 cut ben whids speak good words
 253-7 Moll and Trapdoor join forces against Sir Alexander, looking ahead to the denouement in scene 11
 255 trine me on the cheats hang me on the gallows

TEARCAT *I prae, sequor*; let us go, mouse.
Exeunt they two, manet the rest
 260 LORD NOLAND Moll, what was in that canting song?
 MOLL Troth, my lord, only a praise of good drink, the only milk which these wild beasts love to suck, and thus it was:
 A rich cup of wine,
 O it is juice divine!
 265 More wholesome for the head
 Than meat, drink, or bread;
 To fill my drunken pate,
 With that, I'd sit up late;
 By the heels would I lie,
 Under a lousy hedge die,
 Let a slave have a pull
 At my whore, so I be full
 Of that precious liquor—
 270 and a parcel of such stuff, my lord, not worth the opening.
Enter a Cutpurse very gallant, with four or five men after him, one with a wand
 275 LORD NOLAND What gallant comes yonder?
 SIR THOMAS Mass, I think I know him: 'tis one of Cumberland.
 280 FIRST CUTPURSE Shall we venture to shuffle in amongst yon heap of gallants, and strike?
 285 SECOND CUTPURSE 'Tis a question whether there be any silver shells amongst them, for all their satin outsides.
 OMNES Let's try!
 MOLL Pox on him, a gallant? Shadow me, I know him: 'tis one that cumbers the land indeed. If he swim near to the shore of any of your pockets, look to your purses!
 290 OMNES Is't possible?
 MOLL This brave fellow is no better then a foist.
 OMNES Foist? What's that?
 295 MOLL A diver with two fingers: a pickpocket. All his train study the figging-law, that's to say, cutting of purses and foisting. One of them is a nip: I took him once i'the twopenny gallery at the Fortune; then there's a cloyer, or snap, that dogs any new brother in that trade, and snaps will have half in any booty. He with the wand is

259 *I prae, sequor* Lat. go first, I will follow; a phrase from a play by Terence, Latin writer taught in grammar school
 276.1 *gallant* smartly dressed
 276.2 *wand* light walking stick or riding switch
 278-9 *Cumberland* country in north-west England, probably chosen for the wordplay at 285-6
 281 *strike* pick a pocket or cut a purse
 283 *silver shells* money
 289 *foist* pickpocket
 292 *figging-law* cant for strategies used by cutpurses and pickpockets
 293 *foisting* picking pockets
 294 *twopenny gallery at the Fortune* gallery

that cost two pennies for admission; for a description of the Fortune, see 2.19-24, note
 294-6 *cloyer...any booty* thief who accompanies any novice, and divides booty with him
 296-303 *He with the wand...hand presently* The stale has two jobs: he distracts a victim while another thief robs him, and he uses his wand to steal rings while bargaining for silver dishes at a goldsmith's shop.
 302 *caduceus* the wand or staff with two serpents twined around it carried by Mercury, messenger of the gods and protector of thieves
 304 *smoked* seen, identified as thieves

both a stale, whose office is to face a man i'the streets whilst shells are drawn by another, and then with his black conjuring rod in his hand, he, by the nimbleness of his eye and juggling stick, will in cheaping a piece of plate at a goldsmith's stall, make four or five rings mount from the top of his caduceus and, as if it were at leap-frog, they skip into his hand presently.
 300 SECOND CUTPURSE Zounds, we are smoked!
 OMNES Ha?
 305 SECOND CUTPURSE We are boiled, pox on her; see Moll, the roaring drab!
 FIRST CUTPURSE All the diseases of sixteen hospitals boil her! Away!
 MOLL Bless you, sir.
 310 FIRST CUTPURSE And you, good sir.
 MOLL Dost not ken me, man?
 FIRST CUTPURSE No, trust me, sir.
 MOLL Heart, there's a knight, to whom I'm bound for many favours, lost his purse at the last new play i'the Swan—seven angels in't: make it good, you're best; do you see? No more.
 315 FIRST CUTPURSE A synagogue shall be called, Mistress Mary: disgrace me not; *pocas palabras*, I will conjure for you. Farewell. [Exeunt Cutpurses]
 MOLL Did not I tell you, my lord?
 LORD NOLAND I wonder how thou camest to the knowledge of these nasty villains?
 320 SIR THOMAS And why do the foul mouths of the world call thee Moll Cutpurse? A name, methinks, damned and odious.
 MOLL
 Dare any step forth to my face and say,
 'I have ta'en thee doing so, Moll'? I must confess,
 In younger days, when I was apt to stray,
 I have sat amongst such adders, seen their stings—
 330 As any here might—and in full playhouses
 Watched their quick-diving hands, to bring to shame
 Such rogues, and in that stream met an ill name.
 When next, my lord, you spy any one of those—
 335 So he be in his art a scholar—question him,
 Tempt him with gold to open the large book

306 *boiled* same as smoked, 304, note
 312 *ken* know
 315-16 *i'the Swan* playhouse on the south bank of the Thames; the only extant contemporary drawing of a London theatre depicts the interior of the Swan
 316 *angels* gold coins worth ten shillings; see 3.137, note
 318 *synagogue* meeting at which thieves choose officers, deal with business, etc.
 319 *pocas palabras* common Spanish phrase meaning few words
 320 *conjure* appeal on your behalf; beseech
 330 *adders* poisonous snakes; figuratively, criminals, wicked people
 335 *So* so long as

Of his close villainies; and you yourself shall cant
Better than poor Moll can, and know more laws
Of cheaters, lifters, nips, foists, puggards, curbers,
With all the devil's blackguard, than it is fit
Should be discovered to a noble wit.
I know they have their orders, offices,
Circuits, and circles, unto which they are bound,
To raise their own damnation in.

JACK DAPPER How dost thou know it?

MOLL As you do: I show it you, they to me show it.
Suppose, my lord, you were in Venice.

LORD NOLAND Well.

MOLL If some Italian pander there would tell
All the close tricks of courtesans, would not you
Hearken to such a fellow?

LORD NOLAND Yes.

MOLL And here,

Being come from Venice, to a friend most dear
That were to travel thither, you would proclaim
Your knowledge in those villainies, to save
Your friend from their quick danger: must you have
A black ill name because ill things you know?
Good troth, my lord, I am made Moll Cutpurse so.
How many whores in small ruffs and still looks?
How many chaste whose names fill slander's books?
Were all men cuckolds, whom gallants in their scorns
Call so, we should not walk for goring horns.
Perhaps for my mad going, some reprove me;
I please myself, and care not else who loves me.

OMNES A brave mind, Moll, i'faith.

SIR THOMAS Come, my lord, shall's to the ordinary?

LORD NOLAND Ay, 'tis noon sure.
MOLL Good my lord, let not my name condemn me to
you or to the world; a fencer, I hope, may be called a
coward: is he so for that? If all that have ill names in
London were to be whipped and to pay but twelvecence

337 close secret
339 cheaters those who win money by
using false dice
lifters those who steal valuable items
such as plate (silver dishes), jewels,
velvet, etc.
nips cutpurses
foists pickpockets
puggards thieves of an unspecified type
curbers thieves who use hooks to steal
goods out of open windows
340 the devil's blackguard attendants black
in character and dress who guard the
devil (a parody of courtiers attending the
sovereign)
343-4 Circuits... raise their own damnation
in Magicians drew circles within which
they raised spells.
346-54 Suppose... you know? Allusion to
Thomas Coryate's questionable defence
of himself for providing information on

Venetian courtesans in *Coryate's Crudities*
(1611)
348 close tricks secret stratagems
355 I...so I am given a bad reputation
because I know about evil doings.
358-9 cuckolds...horns horns were the
sign of a cuckold; see 3.218, note
360 mad going eccentric behaviour
365 name reputation
369-70 beadle...constable's The beadle,
a minor officer of the parish church,
punished petty offenders, usually by
whipping them. Moll's point is that many
people have bad reputations who, like
her, don't deserve them; if they all were
punished and fined, beades would grow
rich.
372 tickling pleasing
11.4 close secretly
8 the Sluice an embankment along the

apiece to the beadle, I would rather have his office than
a constable's.
JACK DAPPER So would I, Captain Moll: 'twere a sweet
tickling office, i'faith. *Exeunt*

*Enter Sir Alexander Wengrave, Goshawk and
Greenwit, and others*

ALEXANDER My son marry a thief! That impudent girl
Whom all the world stick their worst eyes upon!

GREENWIT How will your care prevent it?

GOSHAWK 'Tis impossible!
They marry close; they're gone, but none knows
whither.

ALEXANDER O gentlemen, when has a father's heart-strings
Held out so long from breaking?

Enter a Servant

—Now what news, sir?

SERVANT They were met upo'th' water an hour since, sir,
Putting in towards the Sluice.

ALEXANDER The Sluice? Come gentlemen,
'Tis Lambeth works against us.

GREENWIT And that Lambeth
Joins more mad matches than your six wet towns
'Tixt that and Windsor Bridge, where fares lie
soaking.

ALEXANDER Delay no time, sweet gentlemen: to Blackfriars!
We'll take a pair of oars and make after 'em.

Enter Trapdoor

TRAPDOOR Your son and that bold masculine ramp, my mistress,
Are landed now at Tower.

ALEXANDER Heyday, at Tower?

TRAPDOOR I heard it now reported. *[Exit]*

south side of the Thames protecting
Lambeth Marsh, swampy open country
west of Southwark, from flooding; a
landing place for those going to Lambeth
9-10 Lambeth... | Joins more mad
matches Couples could be married
secretly outside of their home parishes
in London by clergy in Lambeth.
10-11 six wet towns... Windsor Bridge
possibly refers to several towns on the
banks of the Thames that were popular
for sexual rendezvous
12 Blackfriars Blackfriars Stairs was a
landing stage on the north (city) side of
the Thames, presumably the one closest
to Sir Alexander's house.
14 ramp vulgar, ill-behaved woman; cf. 7.8,
note
15 Tower at either the wharf or the landing
stages at the Tower of London

ALEXANDER Which way, gentlemen,
Shall I bestow my care? I'm drawn in pieces
Betwixt deceit and shame.

Enter Sir Guy Fitzallard

SIR GUY Sir Alexander.
You're well met, and most rightly served;
My daughter was a scorn to you.

Say not so, sir.

ALEXANDER A very abject she, poor gentlewoman!—
Your house has been dishonoured! Give you joy, sir,
Of your son's gaskin-bride; you'll be a grandfather
shortly

To a fine crew of roaring sons and daughters:
'Twill help to stock the suburbs passing well, sir.

ALEXANDER O, play not with the miseries of my heart!
Wounds should be dressed and healed, not vexed, or
left

Wide open to the anguish of the patient,
And scornful air let in; rather let pity
And advice charitably help to refresh 'em.

SIR GUY Who'd place his charity so unworthily,
Like one that gives alms to a cursing beggar?
Had I but found one spark of goodness in you
Toward my deserving child, which then grew fond
Of your son's virtues, I had eased you now;
But I perceive both fire of youth and goodness
Are raked up in the ashes of your age,
Else no such shame should have come near your
house,
Nor such ignoble sorrow touch your heart.

ALEXANDER If not for worth, for pity's sake assist me!

GREENWIT You urge a thing past sense; how can he help you?
All his assistance is as frail as ours,
Full as uncertain where's the place that holds 'em.
One brings us water-news, then comes another
With a full-charged mouth like a culverin's voice,
And he reports the Tower: whose sounds are truest?

GOSHAWK In vain you flatter him. Sir Alexander—

21 A very abject she Sir Guy sarcastically
mimics Sir Alexander's scorn for his
daughter.

22 dishonoured by Sebastian's supposed
marriage to Moll

23 gaskin-bride Gaskins were wide, knee-
length breeches; as in 'codpiece daugh-
ter' (4.100), it is implied that male
clothing makes Moll part man.

25 suburbs towns outside London where the
city had no jurisdiction and crime could
flourish

30 refresh restore, heal

SIR GUY I flatter him? Gentlemen, you wrong me grossly.
GREENWIT [*aside to Goshawk*]
He does it well, i'faith.

SIR GUY Both news are false,
Of Tower or water: they took no such way yet.

ALEXANDER O strange: hear you this, gentlemen? Yet more
plunges!

SIR GUY They're nearer than you think for, yet more close,
Than if they were further off.

ALEXANDER How am I lost
In these distractions!

SIR GUY For your speeches, gentlemen,
In taxing me for rashness, for you all,
I will engage my state to half his wealth,
Nay, to his son's revenues, which are less,
And yet nothing at all till they come from him,
That I could, if my will stuck to my power,
Prevent this marriage yet, nay, banish her
For ever from his thoughts, much more his arms!

ALEXANDER Slack not this goodness, though you heap upon me
Mountains of malice and revenge hereafter!
I'd willingly resign up half my state to him,
So he would marry the meanest drudge I hire.

GREENWIT [*to Sir Alexander*]
He talks impossibilities, and you believe 'em!

SIR GUY I talk no more than I know how to finish;
My fortunes else are his that dares stake with me.
The poor young gentleman I love and pity;
And to keep shame from him—because the spring
Of his affection was my daughter's first,
Till his frown blasted all—do but estate him
In those possessions which your love and care
Once pointed out for him, that he may have room
To entertain fortunes of noble birth,
Where now his desperate wants casts him upon her;
And if I do not, for his own sake chiefly,
Rid him of this disease that now grows on him,
I'll forfeit my whole state, before these gentlemen.

GREENWIT [*to Sir Alexander*]
Troth, but you shall not undertake such matches;

34 which who (i.e., Mary)

45 culverin's large cannon's
46 reports punning on report, meaning to
fire a gun

49 He does it well Sir Guy plays his part in
the trick (making Sir Alexander believe
that Sebastian has married Moll).

51 plunges dilemmas, playing on Sebastian's
supposed travels by water; cf. 8.155;
note

56 engage...his wealth pledge my estate to
the value of half Sir Alexander's wealth

57 Nay, to his son's...less i.e., Sir Guy

stands to lose more
58 nothing... come from him Sebastian
won't have any money unless his father
gives or bequeaths it to him.
68 My fortunes else...dares stake with me
I'll wager my wealth to anyone who will
stand by me in my pledge (to end the
supposed marriage).
71 his affection Sebastian's, for Mary
72 his frown Sir Alexander's
estate him give or bequeath to him
76 her Moll
80 matches agreements

We'll persuade so much with you.
 ALEXANDER [to Sir Guy] Here's my ring; [Gives ring]
 He will believe this token. Fore these gentlemen
 I will confirm it fully: all those lands
 My first love 'lotted him, he shall straight possess
 In that refusal.
 85 SIR GUY If I change it not,
 Change me into a beggar!
 GREENWIT Are you mad, sir?
 SIR GUY 'Tis done!
 GOSHAWK Will you undo yourself by doing,
 And show a prodigal trick in your old days?
 ALEXANDER 'Tis a match, gentlemen.
 SIR GUY Ay, ay, sir, ay!
 90 I ask no favour, trust to you for none;
 My hope rests in the goodness of your son. Exit
 GREENWIT [aside to Goshawk]
 He holds it up well yet.
 GOSHAWK [aside to Greenwit]
 Of an old knight, i'faith.
 ALEXANDER
 Cursed be the time I laid his first love barren,
 Wilfully barren, that before this hour
 95 Had sprung forth fruits of comfort and of honour;
 He loved a virtuous gentlewoman.
 Enter Moll [dressed as a man]
 GOSHAWK
 Life, here's Moll!
 GREENWIT
 Jack!
 GOSHAWK
 How dost thou, Jack?
 MOLL How dost thou, gallant?
 ALEXANDER
 Impudence, where's my son?
 MOLL Weakness, go look him!
 ALEXANDER
 Is this your wedding gown?
 100 MOLL The man talks monthly:
 Hot broth and a dark chamber for the knight;
 I see he'll be stark mad at our next meeting. Exit
 GOSHAWK
 Why sir, take comfort now, there's no such matter;

82 he Sebastian (when Sir Guy tells him of his father's pledge)
 84 'lotted allotted straight immediately
 85 change it not if I don't change Sebastian's marriage to Moll
 87 undo yourself by doing reverse your position, or, ruin your finances, by making this agreement
 88 prodigal trick . . . old days alludes to the parable of the prodigal son (cf. 2.1.118, note); like him, Sir Alexander might squander his wealth in this agreement
 92 holds it up well keeps it going; see 49

98 Jack! generic name for man, addressed to Moll; see 10.1, note
 99 Impudence implies her boldness in appearing before him, her immodesty in dressing as a man, and her supposed sexual misconduct
 look look for
 100 monthly plays on links between the moon, its monthly cycle, menstruation, and madness
 101 Hot broth and a dark chamber common remedies for the agitations of mad people, intended to calm them

No priest will marry her, sir, for a woman
 Whiles that shape's on: an it was never known,
 Two men were married and conjoined in one!
 Your son hath made some shift to love another.
 ALEXANDER
 Whate'er she be, she has my blessing with her:
 May they be rich and fruitful, and receive
 Like comfort to their issue as I take
 In them. H'as pleased me now, marrying not this,
 Through a whole world he could not choose amiss.
 GREENWIT
 Glad you're so penitent for your former sin, sir.
 GOSHAWK
 Say he should take a wench with her smock-dowry:
 No portion with her but her lips and arms?
 ALEXANDER
 Why, who thrive better, sir? They have most blessing,
 Though other have more wealth, and least repent:
 Many that want most know the most content.
 GREENWIT
 Say he should marry a kind youthful sinner?
 ALEXANDER
 Age will quench that; any offence but theft
 And drunkenness, nothing but death can wipe away;
 Their sins are green even when their heads are grey.
 Nay, I despair not now, my heart's cheered, gentlemen:
 No face can come unfortunately to me.
 Enter a Servant
 Now sir, your news?
 SERVANT Your son with his fair bride
 Is near at hand.
 ALEXANDER Fair may their fortunes be!
 GREENWIT
 Now you're resolved, sir, it was never she?
 ALEXANDER
 I find it in the music of my heart.
 Enter Moll [in female dress] masked, in Sebastian's
 hand, and Sir Guy Fitzallard
 See where they come.
 GOSHAWK A proper lusty presence, sir.
 ALEXANDER
 Now has he pleased me right. I always counselled him
 To choose a goodly personable creature:
 Just of her pitch was my first wife, his mother.

110 issue children
 114 smock-dowry dowry consisting only of her smock (undergarment)
 115 portion dowry
 119 sinner unchaste woman
 120-2 Age will quench that . . . heads are grey Sir Alexander first says that unchastity stops as one grows older, then reverses himself by claiming that, like all sins except thieving and drunkenness, it persists till death.
 129 lusty gaily dressed; merry; lustful
 132 pitch height

SEBASTIAN
 Before I dare discover my offence, [Kneels]
 I kneel for pardon.
 ALEXANDER My heart gave it thee
 135 Before thy tongue could ask it—
 Rise; thou hast raised my joy to greater height
 Than to that seat where grief dejected it.
 [Sebastian rises]
 Both welcome to my love and care for ever!
 Hide not my happiness too long: all's pardoned;
 Here are our friends. Salute her, gentlemen.
 140 They unmask her
 OMNES
 Heart, who? This Moll!
 ALEXANDER
 O my reviving shame! Is't I must live
 To be struck blind? Be it the work of sorrow
 Before age take't in hand!
 SIR GUY Darkness and death!
 145 Have you deceived me thus? Did I engage
 My whole estate for this?
 ALEXANDER You asked no favour,
 And you shall find as little: since my comforts
 Play false with me, I'll be as cruel to thee
 As grief to father's hearts.
 MOLL Why, what's the matter with you,
 150 'Less too much joy should make your age forgetful?
 Are you too well, too happy?
 ALEXANDER With a vengeance!
 MOLL
 Methinks you should be proud of such a daughter—
 As good a man as your son!
 ALEXANDER O monstrous impudence!
 MOLL
 You had no note before, an unmarked knight;
 155 Now all the town will take regard on you,
 And all your enemies fear you for my sake.
 You may pass where you list, through crowds most
 thick,
 And come off bravely with your purse unpicked!
 You do not know the benefits I bring with me:
 No cheat dares work upon you with thumb or knife,
 160 While you've a roaring girl to your son's wife!

133 discover my offence confess my fault, playing on unmasking Moll as his bride
 141 Heart shortened form of 'God's heart', a mild oath
 This Moll! Several meanings are possible: Moll's female identity is confirmed (this is Moll), or questioned (this is Moll?), or her appearance in female dress is simply distinguished from that in male dress (this Moll).
 148 I'll be as cruel to thee I'll seize your estate because you haven't kept your part of our agreement.
 150 'Less unless
 153 monstrous impudence Monstrous recalls

ALEXANDER
 A devil rampant!
 SIR GUY Have you so much charity
 Yet to release me of my last rash bargain,
 And I'll give in your pledge?
 ALEXANDER No, sir, I stand to't:
 165 I'll work upon advantage, as all mischiefs
 Do upon me.
 SIR GUY Content, bear witness all then,
 His are the lands, and so contention ends.
 Here comes your son's bride 'twixt two noble friends.
 Enter the Lord Noland and Sir Beauteous
 Ganymede, with Mary Fitzallard between them,
 the Citizens and their Wives with them
 MOLL [to Sir Alexander]
 Now are you gulled as you would be: thank me for't,
 I'd a forefinger in't. 170
 SEBASTIAN Forgive me, father;
 Though there before your eyes my sorrow feigned,
 This still was she for whom true love complained.
 ALEXANDER
 Blessings eternal and the joys of angels
 Begin your peace here to be signed in heaven!
 How short my sleep of sorrow seems now to me,
 175 To this eternity of boundless comforts
 That finds no want but utterance and expression.
 —[To Lord Noland] My lord, your office here appears
 so honourably,
 So full of ancient goodness, grace, and worthiness,
 I never took more joy in sight of man
 180 Than in your comfortable presence now.
 LORD NOLAND
 Nor I more delight in doing grace to virtue
 Than in this worthy gentlewoman, your son's bride,
 Noble Fitzallard's daughter, to whose honour
 And modest fame I am a servant vowed;
 185 So is this knight.
 ALEXANDER Your loves make my joys proud.
 —[To Servant] Bring forth those deeds of land my care
 laid ready—
 [Servant fetches deeds]
 And which, old knight, thy nobleness may challenge,
 Joined with thy daughter's virtues, whom I prize now,

Sir Alexander's first account of Moll (see 2.1.130-2, note; 132-3, note); for impudence, see 99, note.
 154 note distinction unmarked unnoticed
 158 come off escape
 160 No cheat . . . thumb or knife No thief dares cut your purse; see 10.141, note.
 162 devil rampant Playing on ramp, an abusive term used of Moll (see 7-8, note) and rampant, rearing on the hind legs to show fierceness, used of animals in heraldic emblems; indicates Sir Alexander's outrage at including Moll in his family lineage, signified by

the heraldic emblems on a coat of arms.
 164 your pledge your ring (given to him, 81); your promise to give your estate to Sebastian
 169 would be wish to be
 170 forefinger as in the proverbial 'finger in the pie', with sexual implications
 174 signed in heaven refers to wedding ceremony; see 1.82, note.
 179 ancient venerable, old-fashioned
 181 comfortable cheering
 188 challenge lay claim to (in the sense of take credit for, because he negotiated Sir Alexander's pledge of an estate to Sebastian)

As dearly as that flesh I call mine own.
—[To Mary] Forgive me, worthy gentlewoman, 'twas
my blindness:

When I rejected thee, I saw thee not;
Sorrow and wilful rashness grew like films
Over the eyes of judgement, now so clear
I see the brightness of thy worth appear.

MARY

Duty and love may I deserve in those,
And all my wishes have a perfect close.

ALEXANDER

That tongue can never err, the sound's so sweet.
Here, honest son, receive into thy hands
The keys of wealth, possessions of those lands
Which my first care provided; they're thine own.
Heaven give thee a blessing with 'em! The best joys
That can in worldly shapes to man betide
Are fertile lands and a fair fruitful bride,
Of which I hope thou'rt sped.

SEBASTIAN

I hope so too, sir.

MOLL

Father and son, I ha' done you simple service here.

SEBASTIAN

For which thou shalt not part, Moll, unrequited.

ALEXANDER

Thou art a mad girl, and yet I cannot now
Condemn thee.

MOLL

Condemn me? Troth an you should, sir,
I'd make you seek out one to hang in my room:
I'd give you the slip at gallows and cozen the people.
[To Lord Noland] Heard you this jest, my lord?

LORD NOLAND

What is it, Jack?

MOLL

He was in fear his son would marry me,
But never dreamt that I would ne'er agree!

LORD NOLAND

Why? thou hadst a suitor once, Jack; when wilt
marry?

MOLL

Who, I, my lord? I'll tell you when i'faith:
When you shall hear
Gallants void from sergeants' fear,

193 films morbid growths
201 first the estate he originally planned to give
205 sped provided
206 simple service a modest expression for 'I have served you well'
208-9 Thou...thee Sir Alexander shifts to the more familiar forms.
208 mad see I.102, note
209 an if
210 room place (she would find a substitute)
217-24 When you shall hear...married parodies a form of religious prophecy that lists sins or social evils and makes their eradication the condition for the coming of God's final judgement, or reaching salvation, as line 225 indicates

218 sergeants' fear fear of being arrested for debt
219 Honesty chastity, with primary reference to women
220 manned escorted or ruled (by husbands)
221 Cheaters...coached thieves with enough money for boots to walk or ride horseback with, but not enough for the luxury of a coach
222 Vessels...broached In Christian thought, the body is the vessel (container) of the spirit (1 Thess. 4); when women aren't too soon penetrated—in marriage, or by rape—then Moll will marry.
223 varied changed
225 doomsday see 217-24, note

Honesty and truth unslandered,
Woman manned but never pandered,
Cheaters booted but not coached,
Vessels older ere they're broached;
If my mind be then not varied,
Next day following, I'll be married.

LORD NOLAND

This sounds like doomsday.

MOLL

Then were marriage best,
For if I should repent, I were soon at rest.

ALEXANDER

In troth, thou'rt a good wench; I'm sorry now
The opinion was so hard I conceived of thee:
Enter Trapdoor

Some wrongs I've done thee.

TRAPDOOR

Is the wind there now?

'Tis time for me to kneel and confess first,
For fear it come too late and my brains feel it.
—[To Moll] Upon my paws I ask you pardon, mistress.

MOLL

Pardon? For what, sir? What has your roguishness done
now?

TRAPDOOR

I have been from time to time hired to confound you,
By this old gentleman.

MOLL

How?

TRAPDOOR

Pray forgive him;
But may I counsel you, you should never do't.
Many a snare to entrap your worship's life
Have I laid privily—chains, watches, jewels—
And when he saw nothing could mount you up,
Four hollow-hearted angels he then gave you,
By which he meant to trap you, I to save you.

ALEXANDER

To all which, shame and grief in me cry guilty.
—[To Moll] Forgive me; now I cast the world's eyes
from me,

And look upon thee freely with mine own.
I see the most of many wrongs before thee
Cast from the jaws of Envy and her people,
And nothing foul but that. I'll never more
Condemn by common voice, for that's the whore

225-6 marriage...at rest alluding to proverb 'Marry in haste and repent at leisure' (Tilley M196)
229 Is the wind there has the situation changed?
232 paws dog-like, emphasizing his contribution
234 confound ruin, destroy
239 mount you up hang you on the gallows
240 hollow-hearted angels four coins 'marked with holes in them' (see 8.211-14 and note), thus 'hollow-hearted' in no longer being current, i.e., legally exchangeable as money
246 Envy malice, ill will
248 voice opinion; rumour

That deceives man's opinion, mocks his trust,
Cozens his love, and makes his heart unjust.

MOLL

Here be the angels, gentlemen: they were given me
As a musician; I pursue no pity—
Follow the law, and you can cuckold me, spare not;
Hang up my viol by me, and I care not!

ALEXANDER

So far I'm sorry, I'll thrice double 'em
To make thy wrongs amends.
Come, worthy friends, my honourable lord,
Sir Beauteous Ganymede, and noble Fitzallard,
And you, kind gentlewomen, whose sparkling pres-
ence

Are glories set in marriage, beams of society,
For all your loves give lustre to my joys;
The happiness of this day shall be remembered
At the return of every smiling spring;
In my time now 'tis born, and may no sadness
Sit on the brows of men upon that day,
But as I am, so all go pleased away!

[Exeunt]

Epilogue

A painter, having drawn with curious art
The picture of a woman—every part
Limned to the life—hung out the piece to sell.
People who passed along, viewing it well,
Gave several verdicts on it: some dispraised
The hair, some said the brows too high were raised,
Some hit her o'er the lips, misliked their colour,
Some wished her nose were shorter, some the eyes
fuller;

252 pursue seek

253 cuckold Set me in a cucking stool, a chair into which women who vocally challenged male authority (designated 'scolds') were strapped, then publicly immersed several times in water; a legal punishment and social ritual.

Epilogue.1 curious skilful, elaborate

3 limned painted; portrayed
to the life in a lifelike way

6 brows eyebrows

7 hit her o'er the lips criticized the lips

13 open at stall at an open stall, stand

15 doubt suspect, fear

17 mean involving people of low social

rank; in a literary sense, unadorned,
modest

18 person character, i.e., Moll

21 weighs so light is considered so trivial,
playing on light as wanton

22-6 book...eye unfit probably refers
to a pamphlet by Samuel Rid taking
issue with Dekker's pamphlet *The Bel-
man* (1608), an exposé of the London
underworld

24 nips and foists cutpurses and pickpock-
ets; cf. 10.327-41

28 humorous afflicted with unsettled

Others said roses on her cheeks should grow,
Swearing they looked too pale, others cried no.
The workman, still as fault was found, did mend it,
In hope to please all; but, this work being ended,
And hung open at stall, it was so vile,
So monstrous and so ugly, all men did smile
At the poor painter's folly. Such we doubt
Is this our comedy: some perhaps do flout
The plot, saying, 'tis too thin, too weak, too mean;
Some for the person will revile the scene,
And wonder that a creature of her being
Should be the subject of a poet, seeing,
In the world's eye, none weighs so light; others look
For all those base tricks published in a book—
Foul as his brains they flowed from—of cutpurses,
Of nips and foists, nasty, obscene discourses,
As full of lies, as empty of worth or wit,
For any honest ear or eye unfit.

And thus,
If we to every brain that's humorous
Should fashion scenes, we, with the painter, shall,
In striving to please all, please none at all.
Yet for such faults, as either the writers' wit
Or negligence of the actors do commit,
Both crave your pardons: if what both have done
Cannot full pay your expectation,
The Roaring Girl herself, some few days hence,
Shall on this stage give larger recompense;
Which mirth that you may share in, herself does woo
you,
And craves this sign: your hands to beckon her to
you.
Finis

humours, fanciful, capricious
31-3 writers'... Both the two playwrights
in collaboration, Dekker and Middleton

35-6 The Roaring Girl...larger recompense
Probably refers to the appearance of
Mary Frith, the figure on whom Moll is
based, singing and playing a lute on the
stage of the Fortune in man's clothing,
probably at a performance of this play
several months before it was published
(see Introduction).

37 Which mirth...share in so that you may
share in this mirth

38 this sign applause

The Roaring Girl.

THE PARTS

Adult Males

ALEXANDER (524 lines): Jack Dapper or Sir Thomas or Cutpurses (Sc. 10); Tearcat; Coachman (Sc. 5)
 LAXTON (264 lines): Curtalax or Hanger; Tailor (Sc. 4); Porter (Sc. 4); Tearcat; Cutpurses (Sc. 10); Tiltyard or Sir Guy or Lord Noland or Sir Beauteous or Sir Thomas or Others (Sc. 11) or Servants (Sc. 11)
 SEBASTIAN (246 lines): Curtalax or Hanger or Jack Dapper; Coachman (Sc. 5); Cutpurse (Sc. 10) or Jack Dapper; Tearcat; Sir Thomas
 TRAPDOOR (217 lines): Neatfoot; Tailor (Sc. 4); Porter (Sc. 4); Coachman (Sc. 5); Cutpurses (Sc. 10)
 GALLIPOT (155 lines): Neatfoot or Sir Davy or Curtalax or Hanger or Sir Adam or Jack Dapper or Gentlemen (Sc. 2) or Servingmen (Sc. 2); Porter (Sc. 4); Tailor (Sc. 4); Coachman (Sc. 5); Sir Thomas or Tearcat; Cutpurses (Sc. 10) or Sir Thomas; Tearcat or Sir Thomas
 GOSHAWK (136 lines): Curtalax or Hanger; Gentlemen or Servingmen (Sc. 2); Servants (Sc. 3); Porter (Sc. 4); Tailor (Sc. 4); Coachman (Sc. 5); Sir Thomas; Tearcat; Cutpurses (Sc. 10); Servants or Others (Sc. 11)
 OPENWORK (110 lines): Neatfoot or Sir Davy or Curtalax or Hanger or Sir Adam or Gentlemen (Sc. 2) or Servingmen (Sc. 2); Servants (Sc. 3); Porter (Sc. 4); Tailor (Sc. 4); Curtalax or Hanger or Sir Davy; Coachman (Sc. 5); Tearcat or Sir Thomas; Cutpurses (Sc. 10) or Sir Thomas
 SIR DAVY (79 lines): any but Sebastian, Alexander, Sir Adam, Goshawk, Laxton, Gentlemen (Sc. 2), Greenwit, Neatfoot, Servingmen (Sc. 2), Trapdoor, Curtalax, Hanger
 JACK DAPPER (69 lines): Alexander or Sebastian or Sir Guy or Gallipot or Neatfoot or Sir Davy or Tailor (Sc. 4) or Porter; Coachman (Sc. 5); Others or Servant (Sc. 11)
 SIR GUY (58 lines): Neatfoot or Laxton or Sir Adam or Sir Davy or Curtalax or Hanger or Gentlemen (Sc. 2) or Servingmen (Sc. 2); Jack Dapper or Curtalax or Hanger or Cutpurses (Sc. 10) or Sir Thomas; Fellow (Sc. 3); Servants (Sc. 3); Porter (Sc. 4); Tailor (Sc. 4); Curtalax or Hanger or Sir Davy or Jack Dapper; Coachman (Sc. 5); Sir Thomas or Cutpurses (Sc. 10) or Jack Dapper
 GREENWIT (48 lines): Curtalax or Hanger; Porter (Sc. 4); Tailor (Sc. 4); Coachman (Sc. 5); Sir Thomas or Tearcat; Cutpurses (Sc. 10) or Sir Thomas; Tearcat or Sir Thomas
 CURTALAX (35 lines): any but Hanger, Sir Adam, Sir Davy, Trapdoor, Jack Dapper
 NEATFOOT (34 lines): any but Sebastian, Alexander, Sir Davy, Sir Adam, Goshawk, Laxton, Gentlemen (Sc. 2), Greenwit, Servingmen (Sc. 2)
 LORD NOLAND (29 lines): Neatfoot; Sir Adam; Sir Davy; Gentlemen or Servingmen (Sc. 2); Laxton; Jack Dapper;

Servants (Sc. 3); Fellow (Sc. 3); Tailor (Sc. 4); Porter (Sc. 4); Coachman (Sc. 5); Curtalax or Hanger
 SIR ADAM (20 lines): any but Sebastian, Alexander, Sir Davy, Goshawk, Laxton, Gentlemen (Sc. 2), Greenwit, Neatfoot, Servingmen (Sc. 2), Trapdoor, Curtalax, Hanger
 SIR THOMAS (13 lines): any but Jack Dapper, Sir Beauteous, Lord Noland, Trapdoor, Tearcat, Cutpurses (Sc. 10)
 TILTYARD (10 lines): Neatfoot or Sir Adam or Sir Davy or Curtalax or Hanger or Laxton or Gentlemen (Sc. 2) or Servingmen (Sc. 2); Fellow (Sc. 3); Porter (Sc. 4); Tailor (Sc. 4); Coachman (Sc. 5); Jack Dapper or Curtalax or Hanger; Sir Thomas or Tearcat; Cutpurses (Sc. 10) or Sir Thomas or Jack Dapper; Tearcat or Sir Thomas
 SIR BEAUTEOUS (8 lines): Laxton or Neatfoot or Sir Adam or Sir Davy or Gentlemen (Sc. 2) or Servingmen (Sc. 2); Servants (Sc. 3); Fellow (Sc. 3); Tailor (Sc. 4); Porter (Sc. 4); Coachman (Sc. 5); Curtalax or Hanger
 HANGER (6 lines): any but Curtalax, Sir Adam, Sir Davy, Trapdoor, Jack Dapper

Adult males not listed in *Dramatis Personae*

TEARCAT (34 lines): any but Jack Dapper, Sir Beauteous, Sir Thomas, Lord Noland, Trapdoor
 TAILOR (Sc. 4; 16 lines): any but Sebastian, Alexander
 CUTPURSES (Sc. 10; 14 lines): any but Jack Dapper, Sir Beauteous, Sir Thomas, Lord Noland
 COACHMAN (Sc. 5; 11 lines): any but Laxton
 FELLOW (Sc. 3; 8 lines): any but Openwork, Laxton, Goshawk, Greenwit, Jack Dapper
 GENTLEMEN (Sc. 2; 7 lines): any but Alexander, Sir Davy Dapper, Sir Adam, Goshawk, Laxton, Sebastian, Greenwit, Neatfoot, Servingmen (Sc. 2)
 PORTER (Sc. 4; 3 lines): any but Sebastian, Alexander
 OTHERS (Sc. 11; 1 line): any but Alexander, Sebastian, Goshawk, Greenwit, Servant (Sc. 11), Sir Guy, Lord Noland, Sir Beauteous, Gallipot, Openwork, Tiltyard, Trapdoor
 SERVINGMEN (Sc. 2; no lines): the same, excluding themselves, including Gentlemen (Sc. 2)
 SERVANTS (Sc. 3; no lines): any but Gallipot, Tiltyard
 SERVANT (Sc. 11; no lines): any but Alexander, Sebastian, Goshawk, Greenwit, Sir Guy, Lord Noland, Sir Beauteous, Gallipot, Openwork, Tiltyard, Trapdoor

Boys

MOLL (547 lines): none
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT (217 lines): none
 MISTRESS OPENWORK (154 lines): none
 MARY (36 lines): Gull
 GULL (16 lines): Mary
 MISTRESS TILTYARD (16 lines): none

Most crowded scene: Sc. 11, 17 characters