

## EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

By Ben Jonson

### Dramatis Personae

KNO'WELL, an old gentleman  
ED. KNO'WELL, his son  
Brainworm , the father's man  
Master STEPHEN, a country gull  
George DOWNRIGHT, a plain squire  
WELLBRED, hsi half-brother  
Justice CLEMENT, an old merry magistrate  
Roger FORMAL, his clerk  
Thomas KITELY, a merchant  
DAME KITELY, his wife  
Mistress BRIDGET, his sister  
Master MATTHEW, the town gull  
Thomas CASH, Kitely's man  
Oliver COB, a water-bearer  
TIB, his wife  
Captain BOBADILL, a Paul's man

Servants, etc.

Scene: London

### Prologue

Though need make many Poets, and some such  
As art, and nature have not bettered much;  
Yet ours, for want, hath not so loved the stage,  
As he dare serve th' ill customs of the age:  
Or purchase your delight at such a rate,  
As, for it, he himself must justly hate.  
To make a child, now swaddled, to proceed  
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard, and weed,  
Past threescore years: or, with three rusty swords  
And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words,  
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars:  
And in the tiring-house bring wounds to scars.  
He rather prays you will be pleased to see  
One such, today, as other plays should be.  
Where neither Chorus wafts you o'er the seas;  
Nor creaking throne comes down, the boys to please;

Nor nimble squib is seen, to make afeared  
The gentlewomen; nor rolled bullet heard  
To say, it thunders; nor tempestuous drum  
Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come;  
But deeds, and language, such as men do use:  
And persons, such as Comedy would choose,  
When she would show an image of the times,  
And sport with human follies, not with crimes.  
Except, we make 'hem such by loving still  
Our popular errors, when we know they're ill.  
I mean such errors as you'll all confess  
By laughing at them, - they deserve no less:  
Which when you heartily do, there's hope left, then,  
You, that have so graced monsters, may like men.

Act 1

Scene 1: A plot before Kno'well's house

Enter KNO'WELL

Kno'well A goodly day toward! And a fresh morning!  
Brainworm!

Enter BRAINWORM.

Call up your young master: bid him rise, sir.  
Tell him, I have some business to employ him.

Brainworm I will sir, presently.

Kno'well But hear you, sirrah,  
If he be' at his book, disturb him not.

Brainworm Well sir.

Exit BRAINWORM

Kno'well How happy, yet, should I esteem myself  
Could I, by any practice, wean the boy  
From one vain course of study he affects.  
He is a scholar, if a man may trust  
The liberal voice of fame in her report,  
Of good account in both our universities,  
Either of which hath favoured him with graces:  
But their indulgence must not spring in me  
A fond opinion that he cannot err.  
Myself was once a student; and, indeed,

Fed with the self-same humour he is now,  
Dreaming on nought but idle poetry,  
That fruitless and unprofitable art  
Good unto none, but least to the professors,  
Which, then, I thought the mistress of all knowledge:  
But since, time and the truth have waked my judgement,  
And reason taught me better to distinguish  
The vain from th' useful learnings.

Enter MASTER STEPHEN

Cousin Stephen!  
What news with you, that you are here so early?

Stephen Nothing, but e'en come to see how you do, uncle.

Kno'well That's kindly done, you are welcome, coz.

Stephen Ay, I know that sir, I would not ha' come else. How do my cousin Edward, uncle?

Kno'well Oh, well coz, go in and see: I doubt he be scarce stirring yet.

Stephen Uncle, afore I go in, can you tell me, an' he have e'er a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting? I would fain borrow it.

Kno'well Why, I hope you will not a hawking now, will you?

Stephen No wusse; but I'll practise against next year uncle: I have bought me a hawk, and a hood, and bells, and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.

Kno'well Oh, most ridiculous.

Stephen Nay, look you now, you are angry, uncle: why you know, an' a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages nowadays, I'll not give a rush for him. They are more studied than the Greek or the Latin. He is for no gallants' company without 'hem. And by gad's lid, I scorn it, aye, so I do, to be a consort for every hum-drum; hang 'hem scroyles, there's nothing in 'hem, i' the world. What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden, I shall keep company with none but the archers of Finsbury? Or the citizens that come a ducking to Islington ponds? A fine jest i' faith! 'Slid, a gentleman mun show himself like a gentleman. Uncle, I pray you be not angry. I know what I have to do, I trow, I am no novice.

Kno'well You are a prodigal absurd coxcomb: go to.  
Nay, never look at me, it's I that speak.  
Take't as you will sir, I'll not flatter you.  
Ha' you not yet found means enow to waste  
That which your friends have left you, but you must

Go cast away your money on a kite,  
And know not how to keep it, when you ha' done?  
Oh it's comely! This will make you a gentleman!  
Well, cousin, well! I see you are e'en past hope  
Of all reclaim. Aye, so, now you are told on it,  
You look another way.

Stephen What would you ha me do?

Kno'well What would I have you do? I'll tell you kinsman:  
Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive -  
That would I have you do: and not to spend  
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,  
Or every foolish brain that humours you.  
I would not have you to invade each place,  
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,  
Till men's affections, or your own desert,  
Should worthily invite you to your rank.  
He that is so respectless in his courses  
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.  
Nor would I you should melt away yourself  
In flashing bravery, lest while you affect  
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,  
A little puff of scorn extinguish it,  
And you be left, like an unsavoury snuff,  
Whose property is only to offend.  
I'd ha' you sober, and contain yourself;  
Not, that your sail be bigger than your boat:  
But moderate your expenses now, at first,  
As you may keep the same proportion still.  
Nor, stand so much on your gentility,  
Which is an airy and mere borrowed thing,  
From dead men's dust and bones, and none of yours  
Except you make or hold it. Who comes here?

Enter a SERVANT

Servant Save you, gentlemen.

Stephen Nay, we do' not stand much on our gentility, friend; yet, you are  
welcome, and I assure you, mine uncle here is a man of a thousand a year  
Middlesex land: he has but one son in all the world; I am his next heir, at  
the common law, Master Stephen, as simple as I stand here. If my cousin die  
- as there's hope he will - I have a pretty living o' my own too, beside,  
hard by here.

Servant In good time, sir.

Stephen In good time, sir? Why! And in very good time, sir. You do not  
flout, friend, do you?

Servant Not I, sir.

Stephen Not you, sir? You were not best, sir; an' you should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly too: go to. And they can give it again soundly too, and need be.

Servant Why, sir, let this satisfy you: good faith, I had no such intent.

Stephen Sir, an' I thought you had, I would talk with you, and that presently.

Servant Good Master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure.

Stephen And so I would, sir, good my saucy companion! An' you were not o' mine uncle's ground, I can tell you; though I do not stand upon my gentility neither in't.

Kno'well Cousin! cousin! Will this ne'er be left?

Stephen Whoreson base fellow! A mechanical serving-man! By this cudgel, and't were not for shame, I would -

Kno'well What would you do, you peremptory gull?  
If you cannot be quiet, get you hence.  
You see, the honest man demeans himself  
Modestly to'ards you, giving no reply  
To your unseasoned, quarrelling, rude fashion:  
And still you huff it with a kind of carriage  
As void of wit as of humanity.  
Go, get you in; fore heaven, I am ashamed  
Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me.

Exit STEPHEN

Servant I pray you, sir. Is this Master Kno'well's house?

Kno'well Yes, marry, it is, sir.

Servant I should enquire for a gentleman, here, one Master Edward Kno'well: do you know any such, sir, I pray you?

Kno'well I should forget myself else, sir.

Servant Are you the gentleman? Cry you mercy, sir: I was required by a gentleman i' the city, as I rode out at this end o' the town, to deliver you this letter, sir.

Kno'well To me, sir! What do you mean? Pray you remember your court'sy.

[Reads]

'To his most selected friend, Master Edward Kno'well.'

What might the gentleman's name be, sir. that sent it? Nay, pray you be covered.

Servant One Master Wellbred, sir.

Kno'well Master Wellbred! A young gentleman? Is he not?

Servant The same sir, Master Kately married his sister: the rich merchant i' the Old Jewry.

Kno'well You say very true. Brainworm!

Enter BRAINWORM

Brainworm Sir.

Kno'well Make this honest friend drink here: pray you, go in.

Exeunt BRAINWORM and SERVANT

This letter is directed to my son:  
Yet I am Edward Kno'well too, and may,  
With the safe conscience of good manners, use  
The fellow's error to my satisfaction.  
Well, I will break it ope - old men are curious -  
Be it but for the style's sake, and the phrase,  
To see if both do answer my son's praises,  
Who is, almost, grown the idolater  
Of this young Wellbred: what have we here? What's this?

Reads the letter

'Why, Ned, I beseech thee; has thou forsworn all thy friends i' the Old Jewry? Or dost thou think us all Jews that inhabit there, yet? If thou dost, come over, and but see our frippery: change an old shirt for a whole smock with us. Do not conceive that antipathy between us and Hogsden; as was between Jews and hogs-flesh. Leave thy vigilant father alone to number over his green apricots, evening, and morning, o' the north-west wall: an' I had been his son, I had saved him the labour, long since, if taking in all the young wenches that pass by at the back-door, and coddling every kernel of the fruit for 'hem, would ha' served. But, pr'ythee, come over to me, quickly, this morning: I have such a present for thee (our Turkey company never sent the like to the Grand Signior). One is a rhymer sir, o' your own batch, your own leaven; but doth think himself Poet-major o' the town: willing to be shown, and worthy to be seen. The other - I will not venture his description with you, till you come, because I would ha' you make hither with an appetite. If the worst of 'hem be not worth your journey, draw your bill of charges, as unconscionable, as any Guildhall verdict will give it you, and you shall be allowed your viaticum.  
From the Windmill.'

From the Bordello, it might come as well;  
The Spittle, or Pict-hatch. Is this the man,  
My son hath sung so, for the happiest wit,  
The choicest brain, the times hath sent us forth?  
I know not what he may be, in the arts;  
Nor what in schools: but surely, for his manners  
I judge him a profane and dissolute wretch:  
Worse, by possession of such great good gifts,  
Being the master of so loose a spirit.  
Why, what unhallowed ruffian would have writ  
In such a scurrilous manner to a friend!  
Why should he think I tell my Apricots?  
Or play th' Hesperian Dragon with my fruit,  
To watch it? Well, my son, I had thought  
You'd had more judgement t'have made election  
Of your companions, than t' have ta'en on trust  
Such petulant, jeering gamesters, that can spare  
No argument or subject from their jest.  
But I perceive affection makes a fool  
Of any man too much the father. Brainworm!

Enter BRAINWORM

Brainworm Sir.

Kno'well Is the fellow gone that brought this letter?

Brainworm Yes, sir, a pretty while since.

Kno'well And where's your young master?

Brainworm In his chamber sir.

Kno'well He spake not with the fellow, did he?

Brainworm No sir, he saw him not.

Kno'well Take you this letter, and deliver it my son, but with no notice  
that I have opened it, on your life.

Brainworm Oh lord, sir, that were a jest, indeed!

Exit BRAINWORM

Kno'well I am resolved, I will not stop his journey,  
Nor practise any violent mean to stay  
The unbridled course of youth in him; for that,  
Restrained, grows more impatient; and, in kind,  
Like to the eager but the generous greyhound,  
Who ne'er so little from his game withheld,  
Turns head and leaps up at his holder's throat.

There is a way of winning, more by love,  
And urging of the modesty, than fear:  
Force works on servile natures, not the free.  
He that's compelled to goodness may be good;  
But 'tis but for that fit: where others drawn  
By softness and example get a habit.  
Then, if they stray, but warn 'hem: and, the same  
They should for virtue' have done, they'll do for shame.

Exit

Scene 2: A room in Kno'well's house

Enter ED. KNO'WELL, BRAINWORM

Ed. Kno'well Did he open it, sayest thou?

Brainworm Yes, o' my word sir, and read the contents.

Ed. Kno'well That scarce contents me. What countenance, pr'ythee, made he i' the reading of it? Was he angry or pleased?

Brainworm Nay, sir, I saw him not read it, nor open it, I assure your worship.

Ed. Kno'well No? How know'st thou, then, that he did either?

Brainworm Marry sir, because he charged me, on my life, to tell nobody that he opened it: which, unless he had done, he would never fear to have it revealed.

Ed. Kno'well That's true: well I thank thee, Brainworm.

Moves to window to read letter

Enter MASTER STEPHEN

Stephen Oh, Brainworm, did'st thou not see a fellow here in a what-sha'-call-him doublet? He brought mine uncle a letter e'en now.

Brainworm Yes, Master Stephen, what of him?

Stephen Oh, I ha' such a mind to beat him - Where is he? Canst thou tell?

Brainworm Faith, he is not of that mind: he is gone, Master Stephen.

Stephen Gone? Which way? When went he? How long since?

Brainworm He is rid hence. He took horse at the street door.

Stephen And I stayed i' the fields! Whoreson scanderbag rogue! Oh that I



had a horse to fetch him back again.

Brainworm Why, you may ha' my master's gelding, to save your longing, sir.

Stephen But I ha' no boots, that's the spite on't.

Brainworm Why, a fine wisp of hay, rolled hard, Master Stephen.

Stephen No faith, it's no boot to follow him, now: let him e'en go, and hang. Pray thee, help to truss me, a little. He does so vex me -

Brainworm You'll be worse vexed when you are trussed, Master Stephen. Best keep unbraced, and walk yourself, till you be cold: your choler may founder you else.

Stephen By my faith, and so I will, now thou tell'st me on't: how dost thou like my leg, Brainworm?

Brainworm A very good leg, Master Stephen! But the woollen stocking does not commend it so well.

Stephen Foh, the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust: I'll have a pair of silk again winter, that I go to dwell i' the town. I think my leg would show in a silk-hose.

Brainworm Believe me, Master Stephen, rarely well.

Stephen In sadness, I think it would: I have a reasonable good leg.

Brainworm You have an excellent good leg, Master Stephen, but I cannot stay to praise it longer now, and I am very sorry for't.

Exit

Stephen Another time will serve, Brainworm. Gramercy for this.

Ed. Kno'well Ha, ha, ha!

ED. KNO'WELL laughs having read the letter

Stephen 'Slid, I hope, he laughs not at me, and he do -

Ed. Kno'well Here was a letter, indeed, to be intercepted by a man's father, and do him good with him! He cannot but think most virtuously both of me and the sender, sure, that make the careful costermonger of him in our 'familiar Epistles'. Well, if he read this with patience, I'll be gelt, and troll ballads for Master John Trundle, yonder, the rest of my mortality. It is true, and likely, my father may have as much patience as another man; for he takes very much physic: and oft taking physic makes a man very patient. But would your packet, Master Wellbred, had arrived at him in such a minute of his patience; then we had known the end of it,

which now is doubtful, and threatens - What! My wise cousin! [Aside] Nay, then, I'll furnish our feast with one gull more to'ard the mess. He writes to me of a brace, and here's one, that's three: Oh for a fourth; Fortune, if ever thou'lt use thine eyes, I entreat thee -

Stephen [Aside] Oh, now I see, who he laughed at. He laughed at somebody in that letter. By this good light, and he had laughed at me -

Ed. Kno'well How now, cousin Stephen, melancholy?

Stephen Yes, a little. I thought, you had laughed at me, cousin.

Ed. Kno'well Why, what an' I had coz, what would you ha' done?

Stephen By this light, I would ha' told mine uncle.

Ed. Kno'well Nay, if you would ha' told your uncle, I did laugh at you, coz.

Stephen Did you, indeed?

Ed. Kno'well Yes, indeed.

Stephen Why, then -

Ed. Kno'well What then?

Stephen I am satisfied, it is sufficient.

Ed. Kno'well Why, be so, gentle coz. And, I pray you let me entreat a courtesy of you. I am sent for, this morning, by a friend i' the Old Jewry to come to him; it's but crossing over the fields to Moorgate: will you bear me company? I protest it is not to draw you into bond, or any plot against the state, coz.

Stephen Sir, that's all one; and 'twere, you shall command me twice so far as Moorgate to do you good, in such a matter. Do you think I would leave you? I protest -

Ed. Kno'well No, no, you shall not protest, coz.

Stephen By my fackins, but I will, by your leave; I'll protest more to my friend than I'll speak of at this time.

Ed. Kno'well You speak very well, coz.

Stephen Nay, not so neither, you shall pardon me; but I speak to serve my turn.

Ed. Kno'well Your turn, coz? Do you know what you say? A gentleman of your sort, parts, carriage, and estimation, to talk o' your turn i' this

company, and to me, alone, like a tankard-bearer, at a conduit! Fie! A wight that, hitherto, his every foot hath left the stamp of a great foot behind him, as every word the savour of a strong spirit - And he - this man, so graced, gilded, or - to use a more fit metaphor - so tin-foiled by nature, as not ten housewives' pewter, again a good time, shows more bright to the world than he! And he - as I said last, so I say again, and still shall say it - this man, to conceal such real ornaments as these, and shadow their glory, as a milliner's wife does her wrought stomacher, with a smoky lawn, or a black cyprus? Oh coz, it cannot be answered, go not about it! Drake's old ship, at Deptford, may sooner circle the world again. Come, wrong not the quality of your desert with looking downward, coz; but hold up your head, so, and let the idea of what you are be portrayed i' your face, that men may read i' your physnomy, 'Here, within this place, is to be seen the true, rare, and accomplished monster, or miracle, of nature', which is all one. What think you of this, coz?

Stephen Why, I do think of it; and I will be more proud, and melancholy, and gentleman-like than I have been, I'll ensure you.

Ed. Kno'well Why, that's resolute Master Stephen! [Aside] Now, if I can but hold him up to his height, as it is happily begun, it will do well for a suburb-humour: we may hap have a match with the city, and play him for forty pound. - Come, coz.

Stephen I'll follow you.

Ed. Kno'well Follow me? You must go before.

Stephen Nay, an' I must, I will. Pray you, show me, good cousin.

Exeunt

Scene 3: The lane before Cob's house

Enter MATTHEW

Matthew I think this be the house - what, ho?

Cob [opening door] Who's there? Oh, Master Matthew! Gi' your worship good-morrow.

Matthew What! Cob! How dost thou, good Cob? Dost thou inhabit here, Cob?

Cob Ay, sir, I and my lineage ha' kept a poor house, here, in our days.

Matthew Thy lineage, Monsieur Cob, what lineage? What lineage?

Cob Why, sir, an ancient lineage, and a princely. Mine ance'try came from a King's belly, no worse man: and yet no man neither - by your worship's

leave, I did lie in that - but Herring, the king of fish, from his belly I proceed, one o' the monarchs o' the world, I assure you. The first red herring, that was broiled in Adam and Eve's kitchen, do I fetch my pedigree from, by the Harrots' books. His cob was my great-great-mighty-great grandfather.

Matthew Why mighty? Why mighty? I pray thee.

Cob Oh, it was a mighty while ago, sir, and a mighty great cob.

Matthew How know'st thou that?

Cob How know I? Why, I smell his ghost, ever and anon.

Matthew Smell a ghost? Oh unsavoury jest! And the ghost of a herring-cob!

Cob Ay, sir, with favour of your worship's nose, Master Matthew, why not the ghost of a herring-cob, as well as the ghost of rasher-bacon?

Matthew Roger Bacon, thou would'st say?

Cob I say rasher-bacon. They were both broiled o' the coals? And a man may smell broiled meat, I hope? You are a scholar, upsolve me that, now.

Matthew [Aside] Oh raw ignorance! - Cob, canst thou show me of a gentleman, one Captain Bobadill, where his lodging is?

Cob Oh, my guest, sir, you mean?

Matthew Thy guest! Alas! Ha, ha.

Cob Why do you laugh, sir? Do you not mean Captain Bobadill?

Matthew Cob, 'pray thee, advise thyself well: do not wrong the gentleman, and thyself too. I dare be sworn he scorns thy house. He! he lodge in such a base, obscure place as thy house! Tut, I know his disposition so well, he would not lie in thy bed if thou'dst gi' it him.

Cob I will not give it him, though, sir. Mass, I thought somewhat was in't, we could not get him to bed all night! Well, sir, though he lie not o' my bed, he lies o' my bench. An't please you to go up, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloak wrapped about him, as though he had neither won nor lost, and yet, I warrant, he ne'er cast better in his life than he has done tonight.

Matthew Why, was he drunk?

Cob Drunk, sir? You hear not me say so. Perhaps he swallowed a tavern-token, or some such device, sir: I have nothing to do withal. I deal with water, and not with wine. Gi'me my tankard there, ho.

Enter TIB with tankard, and exit

God b'w'you, sir. It's six o'clock; I should ha' carried two turns by this. What ho! My stopple! Come.

Matthew Lie in a water-bearer's house! A gentleman of his havings! Well, I'll tell him my mind.

Cob What Tib, show this gentleman up to the Captain.

Enter TIB with stopple and exit with MATTHEW

Oh, an my house were the brazen-head now! Faith, it would e'en speak, 'Moe fools yet'. You should ha' some now would take this Master Matthew to be a gentleman, at the least. His father's an honest man, a worshipful fishmonger, and so forth; and now does he creep and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town, such as my guest is - Oh, my guest is a fine man - and they flout him invincibly. He useth every day to a merchant's house, where I serve water, one Master Kitley's, i' the Old Jewry; and here's the jest, he is in love with my master's sister, Mistress Bridget, and calls her mistress: and there he will sit you a whole afternoon sometimes, reading o' these same abominable, vile - a pox on 'hem, I cannot abide them - rascally verses, poetry, poetry, and speaking of interludes, 'twill make a man burst to hear him. And the wenches, they do so jeer, and ti-he at him - well, should they do so much to me, I'd forswear them all, by the foot of Pharaoh. There's an oath! How many water-bearers shall you hear swear such an oath? Oh, I have a guest. He teaches me. He does swear the legiblest of any man christened: "By St. George", "the foot of Pharaoh", "the body of me", "as I am a gentleman and a soldier" - such dainty oaths! And withal, he does take this same filthy roguish tobacco, the finest, and cleanliest! It would do a man good to see the fume come forth at's tonnels! Well, he owes me forty shilling - my wife lent him out of her purse, by sixpence a time - besides his lodging. I would I had it. I shall ha'it, he says, the next Action. Helter skelter, hang sorrow, care'll kill a cat, up-tails all, and a louse for the hangman.

Scene 4: a room in Cob's house

BOBADILL is discovered lying on his bench

Bobadill Hostess, hostess.

Enter TIB

Tib What say you, sir?

Bobadill A cup o' thy small beer, sweet hostess.

Tib Sir, there's a gentleman, below, would speak with you.

Bobadill A gentleman! 'odso, I am not within.

Tib My husband told him you were, sir.

Bobadill What, a plague! what meant he?

Matthew [below] Captain Bobadill?

Bobadill Who's there? - Take away the basin, good hostess. - Come up, sir.

Tib He would desire you to come up, sir. You come into a cleanly house, here.

Enter MATTHEW

Matthew 'Save you, sir. 'Save you, Captain.

Bobadill Gentle Master Matthew! Is it you, sir? Please you sit down.

Matthew Thank you, good Captain; you may see I am somewhat audacious.

Bobadill Not so, sir. I was requested to supper last night by a sort of gallants, where you were wished for, and drunk to, I assure you.

Matthew Vouchsafe me, by whom, good Captain.

Bobadill Marry, by young Wellbred and others. Why, hostess, a stool here for this gentleman.

Matthew No haste, sir, 'tis very well.

Exit TIB

Bobadill Body of me! It was so late ere we parted last night, I can scarce open my eyes yet. I was but new risen as you came. How passes the day abroad, sir? You can tell.

Matthew Faith, some half hour to seven: now trust me, you have an exceeding fine lodging here, very neat, and private!

Bobadill Ay, sir. Sit down, I pray you. Master Matthew, in any case, possess no gentleman of our acquaintance, with notice of my lodging.

Matthew Who? I sir? No.

Bobadill Not that I need to care who know it, for the cabin is convenient, but in regard I would not be too popular, and generally visited, as some are.

Matthew True, Captain, I conceive you.

Bobadill For, do you see, sir, by the heart of valour in me - except it be to some peculiar and choice spirits to whom I am extraordinarily engaged, as yourself, or so - I could not extend thus far.

Matthew Oh Lord, sir, I resolve so.

Bobadill I confess, I love a cleanly and quiet privacy above all the tumult and roar of fortune. What new book ha' you there? What! 'Go by, Hieronymo'?

Matthew Ay, did you ever see it acted? Is't not well penned?

Bobadill Well penned? I would fain see all the poets of these times pen such another play as that was! They'll prate and swagger, and keep a stir of art and devices, when, as I am a gentleman, read 'hem, they are the most shallow, pitiful, barren fellows that live upon the face of the earth, again!

Matthew Indeed, here are a number of fine speeches in this book! "Oh eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears" - There's a conceit! "Fountains fraught with tears" - "O life, no life, but lively form of death" - another! - "Oh world, no world, but mass of public wrongs" - a third! - "Confused and filled with murder and misdeeds" - a fourth! Oh, the Muses! Is't not excellent? Is't not simply the best that ever you heard, Captain? Ha? How do you like it?

Bobadill 'Tis good.

Matthew To thee, the purest object to my sense,  
The most refined essence heaven covers,  
Send I these lines, wherein I do commence  
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers.  
If they prove rough, unpolished, harsh and rude,  
Haste made the waste. Thus, mildly, I conclude.

BOBADILL is making him ready all this while

Bobadill Nay, proceed, proceed. Where's this?

Matthew This, sir? A toy o' mine own, in my nonage: the infancy of my Muses! But, when will you come and see my study? Good faith, I can show you some very good things I have done of late. - That boot becomes your leg, passing well, Captain, methinks!

Bobadill So, so; it's the fashion gentlemen now use.

Matthew Troth, Captain, an' now you speak o' the fashion, Master Wellbred's elder brother and I are fall'n out exceedingly: this other day, I happened to enter into some discourse of a hanger which, I assure you, both for

fashion and workmanship was most peremptory-beautiful and gentlemanlike! Yet, he condemned, and cried it down for the most pied and ridiculous that ever he saw.

Bobadill Squire Downright? The half-brother? Was't not?

Matthew Ay, sir, he.

Bobadill Hang him, rook, he! Why, he has no more judgement than a malt-horse. By St. George, I wonder you'd lose a thought upon such an animal: the most peremptory absurd clown of Christendom, this day, he is holden. I protest to you, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I ne'er changed words with his like. By his discourse, he should eat nothing but hay. He was born for the manger, pannier, or pack-saddle! He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly, but all old iron and rusty proverbs! A good commodity for some smith to make hobnails of.

Matthew Ay, and he thinks to carry it away with his manhood still where he comes. He brags he will gi' me the bastinado, as I hear.

Bobadill How! He the bastinado! How came he by that word, trow?

Matthew Nay, indeed, he said cudgel me; I termed it so, for my more grace.

Bobadill That may be: for I was sure it was none of his word. But, when? When said he so?

Matthew Faith, yesterday, they say: a young gallant, a friend of mine, told me so.

Bobadill By the foot of Pharaoh, and 'twere my case now, I should send him a chartel presently. The bastinado! A most proper and sufficient dependence, warranted by the great Caranza. Come hither. You shall chartel him. I'll show you a trick or two you shall kill him with, at pleasure: the first stoccata, if you will, by this air.

Matthew Indeed, you have absolute knowledge i' the mystery, I have heard, sir.

Bobadill Of whom? Of whom ha' you heard it, I beseech you?

Matthew Troth, I have heard it spoken of divers, that you have very rare and un-in-one-breath-utter-able skill, sir.

Bobadill By heaven, no, not I; no skill i' the earth: some small rudiments i' the science, as to know my time, distance, or so. I have professed it more for noblemen, and gentlemen's use, than mine own practice, I assure you. Hostess, accommodate us with another bed-staff here, quickly.

Enter TIB with a puzzled air



Lend us another bed-staff.

Exit TIB

The woman does not understand the words of action. Look you, sir. Exalt not your point above this state, at any hand, and let your poniard maintain your defence, thus.

Enter TIB with bed-staff

Give it to the gentleman, and leave us.

Exit TIB

So, sir. Come on: Oh, twine your body more about, that you may fall to a more sweet comely gentleman-like guard. So, indifferent. Hollow your body more sir, thus. Now, stand fast o' your left leg, note your distance, keep your due proportion of time - Oh, you disorder your point, most irregularly!

Matthew How is the bearing of it, now, sir?

Bobadill Oh, out of measure ill! A well-experienced hand would pass upon you, at pleasure.

Matthew How mean you, sir, pass upon me?

Bobadill Why, thus sir. Make a thrust at me. Come in, upon the answer, control your point, and make a full career at the body. The best-practised gallants of the time name it the passada: a most desperate thrust, believe it!

Matthew Well, come, sir.

Bobadill Why, you do not manage your weapon with any facility or grace to invite me: I have no spirit to play with you. Your dearth of judgement renders you tedious.

Matthew But one venue, sir.

Bobadill Venue! Fie. Most gross denomination, as ever I heard. Oh, the stoccata, while you live, sir. Note that. Come, put on your cloak, and we'll go to some private place, where you are acquainted, some tavern, or so, and have a bit - I'll send for one of these Fencers, and he shall breath you, by my direction; and then I will teach you your trick. You shall kill him with it, at the first, if you please. Why, I will learn you, by the true judgement of the eye, hand, and foot to control any enemy's point i' the world. Should your adversary confront you with a pistol, 'twere nothing, by this hand, you should, by the same rule, control his bullet, in a line: except it were hail-shot, and spread. What money ha' you

about you, Master Matthew?

Matthew Faith, I ha' not past a two shillings, or so.

Bobadill 'Tis somewhat with the least: but, come. We will have a bunch of radish, and salt to taste our wine, and a pipe of tobacco to close the orifice of the stomach; and then we'll call upon young Wellbred. Perhaps we shall meet the Corydon, his brother, there, and put him to the question.

Act 2

Scene 1: The Old Jewry - A Hall in Kitely's house

Enter KITELY, CASH and DOWMRIGHT

Kitely Thomas, come hither,  
There lies a note within upon my desk,  
Here, take my key: it is no matter, neither.  
Where is the boy?

Cash Within, sir, i' the warehouse.

Kitely Let him tell over, straight, that Spanish gold,  
And weigh it, with th' pieces of eight. Do you  
See the delivery of those silver stuffs  
To Master Lucar. Tell him, if he will,  
He shall ha' the grograns at the rate I told him,  
And I will meet him on the Exchange anon.

Cash Good, sir.

Exit

Kitely Do you see that fellow, brother Downright?

Downright Ay, what of him?

Kitely He is a jewel, brother.  
I took him of a child, up, at my door,  
And christened him, gave him mine own name, Thomas,  
Since bred him at the Hospital; where proving  
A toward imp, I called him home, and taught him  
So much as I have made him my cashier,  
And given him, who had none, a surname, Cash:  
And find him in his place so full of faith  
That I durst trust my life into his hands.

Downright So, would not I in any bastard's, brother,  
As, it is like, he is: although I knew

Myself his father. But you said you'd somewhat  
To tell me, gentle brother, what is't? What is't?

Kitely Faith, I am very loath, to utter it,  
As fearing it may hurt your patience:  
But, that I know, your judgement is of strength,  
Against the nearness of affection -

Downright What need this circumstance? Pray you be direct.

Kitely I will not say how much I do ascribe  
Unto your friendship, nor in what regard  
I hold your love; but, let my past behaviour  
And usage of your sister but confirm  
How well I've been affected to your -

Downright You are too tedious, come to the matter, the matter.

Kitely Then, without further ceremony, thus.  
My brother Wellbred, sir, I know not how,  
Of late is much declined in what he was,  
And greatly altered in his disposition.  
When he came first to lodge here in my house,  
Ne'er trust me if I were not proud of him:  
Methought he bare himself in such a fashion,  
So full of man, and sweetness in his carriage,  
And, what was chief, it showed not borrowed in him,  
But all he did became him as his own,  
And seemed as perfect, proper, and possessed  
As breath with life, or colour with the blood.  
But, now his course is so irregular,  
So loose, affected, and deprived of grace,  
And he himself withal so far fall'n off  
From that first place, as scarce no note remains  
To tell men's judgements where he lately stood.  
He's grown a stranger to all due respect,  
Forgetful of his friends, and not content  
To stale himself in all societies,  
He makes my house here common as a mart,  
A theatre, a public receptacle  
For giddy humour and diseased riot;  
And here, as in a tavern or a stews  
He and his wild associates spend their hours  
In repetition of lascivious jests,  
Swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night,  
Control my servants: and indeed what not?

Downright 'Sdeins, I know not what I should say to him i' the whole world!  
He values me at a cracked three-farthings, for aught I see: it will never  
out o' the flesh that's bred i' the bone! I have told him enough, one would

think, if that would serve: but counsel to him is as good as a shoulder of mutton to a sick horse. Well! He knows what to trust to, for George. Let him spend, and spend, and domineer, till his heart ache; an' he think to be relieved by me, when he is got into one o' your city pounds, the Counters, he has the wrong sow by the ear, i' faith, and claps his dish at the wrong man's door. I'll lay my hand o' my halfpenny ere I part with't to fetch him out, I'll assure him.

Kitely Nay, good brother, let it not trouble you, thus.

Downright 'Sdeath, he mads me, I could eat my very spur-leathers, for anger! But, why are you so tame? Why do you not speak to him, and tell him how he disquiets your house?

Kitely Oh, there are divers reasons to dissuade, brother. But, would yourself vouchsafe to travail in it, Though but with plain and easy circumstance, It would both come much better to his sense, And savour less of stomach, or of passion. You are his elder brother, and that title Both gives and warrants you authority; Which, by your presence seconded, must breed A kind of duty in him, and regard: Whereas if I should intimate the least, It would but add contempt to his neglect, Heap worse on ill, make up a pile of hatred That, in the rearing, would come tottering down, And, in the ruin, bury all our love. Nay, more than this, brother, if I should speak He would be ready from his heat of humour, And overflowing of the vapour in him, To blow the ears of his familiars With the false breath of telling what disgraces And low disparagements I had put upon him. Whilst they, sir, to relieve him, in the fable, Make their loose comments upon every word, Gesture, or look, I use; mock me all over, From my flat cap unto my shining shoes: And, out of their impetuous rioting fant'sies, Beget some slander that shall dwell with me. And what would that be, think you? Marry, this: They would give out, because my wife is fair, Myself but lately married, and my sister Here sojourning a virgin in my house, That I were jealous! Nay, as sure as death, That they would say. And how that I had quarrelled My brother purposely, thereby to find An apt pretext to banish them my house.

Downright Mass perhaps so: they're like enough to do it.

Kitely Brother, they would, believe it: so should I,  
Like one of these penurious quack-salvers,  
But set the bills up to mine own disgrace,  
And try experiments upon myself:  
Lend scorn and envy opportunity  
To stab my reputation and good name -

Enter MATTHEW struggling with BOBADILL

Matthew I will speak to him -

Bobadill Speak to him? Away, by the foot of Pharaoh, you shall not, you shall not do him that grace. The time of day, to you, gentleman o' the house. Is Master Wellbred stirring?

Downright How then? What should he do?

Bobadill Gentleman of the house, it is to you: is he within, sir?

Kitely He came not to his lodging tonight, sir, I assure you.

Downright Why, do you hear? You!

Bobadill The gentleman-citizen hath satisfied me, I'll talk to no scavenger.

Exeunt MATTHEW and BOBADILL

Downright How, scavenger? Stay sir, stay.

Kitely Nay, brother Downright.

Downright 'Heart! Stand you away, and you love me.

Kitely You shall not follow him now, I pray you, brother, good faith you shall not: I will overrule you.

Downright Ha? Scavenger? Well, go to, I say little: but, by this good day - God forgive me I should swear - if I put it up so, say I am the rankest cow that ever pissed. 'Sdeins, and I swallow this, I'll ne'er draw my sword in the sight of Fleet Street again, while I live: I'll sit in a barn with madge-howlet, and catch mice first. Scavenger? 'Heart, and I'll go ne'er to fill that huge tumbrel-slop of yours with somewhat; and I have good luck, your Gargantua breech cannot carry it away so.

Kitely Oh do not fret yourself thus, never think on't.

Downright These are my brother's consorts, these! These are his cam'rades, his walking mates! He's a gallant, a cavaliero too, right hangman cut! Let me not live, and I could not find in my heart to swinge the whole ging of 'hem, one after another, and begin with him first. I am grieved it should

be said he is my brother, and take these courses. Well, as he brews, so he shall drink, for George, again. Yet, he shall hear on't, and that tightly too, and I live, i' faith.

Kitely But, brother, let your reprehension, then,  
Run in an easy current, not o'er high  
Carried with rashness or devouring choler;  
But rather use the soft persuading way,  
Whose powers will work more gently, and compose  
Th' imperfect thoughts you labour to reclaim:  
More winning, than enforcing the consent.

Downright Ay, ay, let me alone for that, I warrant you.

Bell rings

Kitely How now? Oh, the bell rings to breakfast.  
Brother, I pray you go in, and bear my wife  
Company till I come; I'll but give order  
For some despatch of business to my servants -

Exit DOWNRIGHT  
COB passes by with his tankard

Kitely What Cob? Our maids will have you by the back, i'faith, for coming so late this morning.

Cob Perhaps so, sir, take heed somebody have not them by the belly, for walking so late in the evening.

Exit COB

Kitely Well, yet my troubled spirit's somewhat eased,  
Though not reposed in that security  
As I could wish: but, I must be content.  
Howe'er I set a face on't to the world,  
Would I had lost this finger, at a venture,  
So Wellbred had ne'er lodged within my house.  
Why't cannot be, where there is such resort  
Of wanton gallants and young revellers  
That any woman should be honest long.  
Is't like that factious beauty will preserve  
The public weal of chastity, unshaken,  
When such strong motives muster and make head  
Against her single peace? No, no. Beware,  
When mutual appetite doth meet to treat,  
And spirits of one kind and quality  
Come once to parley in the pride of blood,  
It is no slow conspiracy that follows.  
Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time

Had answered their affections, all the world  
Should not persuade me but I were a cuckold.  
Marry, I hope they ha' not got that start;  
For opportunity hath baulked 'hem yet,  
And shall do still, while I have eyes and ears  
To attend the impositions of my heart.  
My presence shall be as an iron bar  
'Twixt the conspiring motions of desire:  
Yea, every look or glance mine eye ejects  
Shall check occasion, as one doth his slave  
When he forgets the limits of prescription.

Enter DAME KITELY and BRIDGET

Dame Kately Sister Bridget, pray you fetch down the rosewater above in the closet.

Exit BRIDGET

Sweetheart, will you come in, to breakfast?

Kately [Aside] An' she have overheard me now?

Dame Kately I pray thee, good muss, we stay for you.

Kately [Aside] By heaven, I would not for a thousand angels!

Dame Kately What ail you sweetheart, are you not well? Speak good muss.

Kately Troth, my head aches extremely, on a sudden.

Dame Kately [Putting her hand to his forehead] Oh, the Lord!

Kately How now? What?

Dame Kately Alas, how it burns! Muss, keep you warm, good truth it is this new disease! There's a number are troubled withal! For love's sake, sweetheart, come in, out of the air.

Kately [Aside] How simple, and how subtle are her answers! A new disease, and many troubled with it! Why, true: she heard me, all the world to nothing.

Dame Kately I pray thee, good sweetheart, come in; the air will do you harm, in troth.

Kately [Aside] The air! She has me i' the wind! Sweetheart! - I'll come to you presently: 'twill away, I hope.

Dame Kately Pray heaven it do.

Exit DAME KITELY

Kitely A new disease? I know not, new, or old,  
But it may well be called poor mortals' plague;  
For, like a pestilence, it doth infect  
The houses of the brain. First, it begins  
Solely to work upon the fantasy,  
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air  
As soon corrupts the judgement; and from thence  
Sends like contagion to the memory:  
Still each to other giving the infection;  
Which, as a subtle vapour spreads itself  
Confusedly through every sensive part,  
Till not a thought or motion in the mind  
Be free from the black poison of suspect.  
Ah, but what misery' is it to know this?  
Or, knowing it, to want the mind's erection,  
In such extremes? Well, I will once more strive,  
In spite of this black cloud, myself to be,  
And shake the fever off, that thus shakes me.

Exit

Scene 2: Moorfields

Enter BRAINWORM like a maimed sub-officer

Brainworm 'Slid, I cannot choose but laugh, to see myself translated thus,  
from a poor creature to a creator; for now must I create an intolerable  
sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace: and yet the lie to  
a man of my coat is as ominous a fruit as the fico. Oh sir, it holds for  
good polity ever to have that outwardly in vilest estimation that inwardly  
is most dear to us. So much for my borrowed shape. Well, the troth is, my  
old master intends to follow my young, dry foot, over Moorfields to London  
this morning: now I, knowing of this hunting-match, or rather conspiracy,  
and to insinuate with my young master - for so must we that are blue-  
waiters and men of hope and service do, or perhaps we may wear motely at  
the year's end, and who wears motley, you know - have got me afore, in this  
disguise, determining here to lie in ambuscado, and intercept him in the  
mid-way. If I can but get his cloak, his purse, his hat, nay, anything, to  
cut him off, that is to say his journey, veni, vidi, vici, I may say with  
Captain Caesar I am made for ever, i' faith. Well, now must I practise to  
get the true garb of one of these lance-knights, my arm here, and my -  
Young master! and his cousin, Master Stephen, as I am true counterfeit man  
of war, and no soldier!

Moves away

Enter ED. KNO'WELL and STEPHEN



Ed. Kno'well So sir, and how then, coz?

Stephen 'Sfoot, I have lost my purse, I think.

Ed. Kno'well How? Lost your purse? Where? When had you it?

Stephen I cannot tell. Stay!

Brainworm [Aside] 'Slid, I am afeared, they will know me, would I could get by them.

Ed. Kno'well What? Ha' you it?

Stephen No, I think I was bewitched, I -

Ed. Kno'well Nay, do not weep the loss, hang it, let it go.

Stephen Oh, it's here: no, and it had been lost, I had not cared, but for a jet ring Mistress Mary sent me.

Ed. Kno'well A jet ring? Oh, the poesy, the poesy?

Stephen Fine, i' faith! 'Though fancy sleep, my love is deep.' Meaning that though I did not fancy her, yet she loved me deeply.

Ed. Kno'well Most excellent!

Stephen And then, I sent her another, and my poesy was: 'The deeper, the sweeter, I'll be judged by St. Peter.'

Ed. Kno'well How, by St. Peter? I do not conceive that!

Stephen Marry, St. Peter, to make up the metre.

Ed. Kno'well Well, there the saint was your good patron, he helped you at your need: thank him, thank him.

Brainworm [Aside] I cannot take leave on 'hem, so I will venture, come what will. [Comes forward.] Gentlemen, please you change a few crowns for a very excellent good blade, here? I am a poor gentleman, a soldier, one that in the better state of my fortunes scorned so mean a refuge, but now it is the humour of necessity to have it so. You seem to be gentlemen well affected to martial men, else I should rather die with silence than live with shame: however, vouchsafe to remember it is my want speaks, not myself. This condition agrees not with my spirit -

Ed. Kno'well Where hast thou served?

Brainworm May it please you, sir, in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungaria, Dalmatia, Poland, where not, sir? I have been a poor servitor by

sea and land any time this fourteen years, and followed the fortunes of the best commanders in Christendom. I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo, once at the relief of Vienna; I have been at Marseilles, Naples, and the Adriatic gulf, a gentleman-slave in the galleys, thrice, where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both the thighs, and yet, being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance, nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

Stephen How will you sell this rapier, friend? [Takes it in his hand.]

Brainworm Generous sir, I refer it to your own judgement; you are a gentleman, give me what you please.

Stephen True, I am a gentleman, I know that friend: but what though? I pray you say, what would you ask?

Brainworm I assure you, the blade may become the side or thigh of the best prince in Europe.

Ed. Kno'well Ay, with a velvet scabbard, I think.

Stephen Nay, and't be mine, it shall have a velvet scabbard, coz, that's flat; I'd not wear it as 'tis, and you would give me an angel.

Brainworm At your worship's pleasure, sir; [STEPHEN examines the blade] nay, 'tis a most pure Toledo.

Stephen I had rather it were a Spaniard! But tell me, what shall I give you for it? An' it had a silver hilt -

Ed. Kno'well Come, come, you shall not buy it; hold, there's a shilling fellow, take thy rapier.

Stephen Why, but I will buy it now, because you say so, and there's another shilling, fellow. I scorn to be outbidden. What, shall I walk with a cudgel, like Higginbottom? And may have a rapier, for money?

Ed. Kno'well You may buy one in the city.

Stephen Tut, I'll buy this i' the field, so I will; I have a mind to't, because 'tis a field rapier. Tell me your lowest price.

Ed. Kno'well You shall not buy it, I say.

Stephen By this money, but I will, though I give more than 'tis worth.

Ed. Kno'well Come away, you are a fool.

Stephen Friend, I am a fool, that's granted; but I'll have it, for that word's sake. Follow me, for your money.

Brainworm At your service, sir.

Exeunt

Scene 3: Another Part of Moorfields

Enter KNO'WELL

Kno'well I cannot lose the thought, yet, of this letter  
Sent to my son; nor leave t' admire the change  
Of manners and the breeding of our youth  
Within the kingdom since myself was one.  
When I was young, he lived not in the stews  
Durst have conceived a scorn and uttered it  
On a grey head; age was authority  
Against a buffoon, and a man had, then,  
A certain reverence paid unto his years,  
That had none due unto his life. So much  
The sanctity of some prevailed for others.  
But, now, we all are fall'n; youth from their fear,  
And age from that which bred it, good example.  
Nay, would ourselves were not the first, even parents,  
That did destroy the hopes in our own children;  
Or they not learned our vices in their cradles  
And sucked in our ill customs with their milk.  
Ere all their teeth be born or they can speak  
We make their palates cunning! The first words  
We form their tongues with are licentious jests!  
Can it call "whore"? cry "bastard"? Oh, then kiss it,  
A witty child! Can 't swear? The father's darling!  
Give it two plums. Nay, rather than 't shall learn  
No bawdy song, the mother' herself will teach it!  
But this is in the infancy; the days  
Of the long coat: when it puts on the breeches,  
It will put off all this. Ay, it is like,  
When it is gone into the bone already.  
No, no, this dye goes deeper than the coat,  
Or shirt, or skin. It stains unto the liver,  
And heart, in some. And, rather, than it should not,  
Note what we fathers do! Look how we live!  
What mistresses we keep! At what expense,  
In our sons' eyes! Where they may handle our gifts,  
Hear our lascivious courtships, see our dalliance,  
Taste of the same provoking meats with us,  
To ruin of our states! Nay, when our own  
Portion is fled, to prey on their remainder,  
We call them into fellowship of vice!  
Bait 'hem with the young chambermaid to seal!  
And teach 'hem all bad ways to buy affliction!

This is one path! But there are millions more  
In which we spoil our own with leading them.  
Well, I thank heaven, I never yet was he  
That travelled with my son, before sixteen,  
To show him the Venetian courtesans;  
Nor read the grammar of cheating I had made  
To my sharp boy, at twelve, repeating still  
The rule "Get money, still, get money, boy;  
No matter by what means; money will do  
More, boy, than my lord's letter". Neither have I  
Dressed snails, or mushrooms, curiously before him,  
Perfumed my sauces, and taught him to make 'hem;  
Preceding still, with my grey gluttony,  
At all the ordinaries; and only feared  
His palate should degenerate, not his manners.  
These are the trade of fathers, now! However  
My son, I hope, hath met within my threshold  
None of these household precedents, which are strong  
And swift to rape youth to their precipice.  
But let the house at home be ne'er so clean -  
Swept, or kept sweet from filth, nay, dust and cobwebs -  
If he will live abroad with his companions  
In dung and leystalls, it is worth a fear.  
Nor is the danger of conversing less  
Than all that I have mentioned of example.

Enter BRAINWORM disguised as before

Brainworm [Aside] My master! Nay, faith have at you: I am fleshed now, I have sped so well. - Worshipful sir, I beseech you, respect the estate of a poor soldier; I am ashamed of this base course of life - God's my comfort - but extremity provokes me to't, what remedy?

Kno'well I have not for you, now.

Brainworm By the faith I bear unto truth, gentleman, it is no ordinary custom in me, but only to preserve manhood. I protest to you, a man I have been, a man I may be, by your sweet bounty.

Kno'well 'Pray thee, good friend, be satisfied.

Brainworm Good sir, by that hand you may do the part of a kind gentleman, in lending a poor soldier the price of two cans of beer - a matter of small value. The king of heaven shall pay you, and I shall rest thankful. Sweet worship -

Kno'well Nay, and you be so importunate -

Brainworm Oh, tender sir, need will have his course. I was not made to this vile use! Well, the edge of the enemy could not have abated me so much:

it's hard when a man hath served in his prince's cause, and be thus. [He weeps] Honourable worship, let me derive a small piece of silver from you, it shall not be given in the course of time, by this good ground, I was fain to pawn my rapier last night for a poor supper, I had sucked the hilts long before, I am a pagan else: sweet honour.

Kno'well Believe me, I am taken with some wonder,  
To think a fellow of thy outward presence  
Should, in the frame and fashion of his mind,  
Be so degenerate and sordid-base!  
Art thou a man? And sham'st thou not to beg?  
To practise such a servile kind of life?  
Why, were thy education ne'er so mean,  
Having thy limbs, a thousand fairer courses  
Offer themselves to thy election.  
Either the wars might still supply thy wants,  
Or service of some virtuous gentleman,  
Or honest labour; nay, what can I name,  
But would become thee better than to beg?  
But men of thy condition feed on sloth,  
As doth the beetle on the dung she breeds in,  
Not caring how the mettle of your minds  
Is eaten with the rust of idleness.  
Now, afore me, whate'er he be that should  
Relieve a person of thy quality,  
While thou insist'st in this loose desperate course,  
I would esteem the sin not thine, but his.

Brainworm Faith sir, I would gladly find some other course, if so -

Kno'well Ay, you'd gladly find it, but you will not seek it.

Brainworm Alas sir, where should a man seek? In the wars, there's no ascent by desert in these days, but - and for service, would it were as soon purchased as wished for. The air's my comfort. [Sighs] I know what I would say -

Kno'well What's thy name?

Brainworm Please you, Fitzsword, sir.

Kno'well Fitzsword?  
Say that a man should entertain thee now,  
Wouldst thou be honest, humble, just, and true?

Brainworm Sir, by the place and honour of a soldier -

Kno'well Nay, nay, I like not these affected oaths;  
Speak plainly man: what thinkst thou of my words?

Brainworm Nothing, sir, but wish my fortunes were as happy as my service should be honest.

Kno'well Well, follow me, I'll prove thee if thy deeds Will carry a proportion to thy words.

Brainworm Yes, sir, straight, I'll but garter my hose.

Exit KNO'WELL

Oh that my belly were hooped now, for I am ready to burst with laughing! Never was bottle or bagpipe fuller. 'Slid, was there ever seen a fox in years to betray himself thus? Now shall I be possessed of all his counsels, and, by that conduit, my young master. Well, he is resolved to prove my honesty; faith, and I am resolved to prove his patience: Oh, I shall abuse him intolerably. This small piece of service will bring him clean out of love with the soldier, forever. He will never come within the sign of it, the sight of a cassock, or a musket-rest again. He will hate the musters at Mile End for it to his dying day. It's no matter, let the world think me a bad counterfeit, if I cannot give him the slip at an instant: why, this is better than to have stayed his journey! Well, I'll follow him. Oh, how I long to be employed.

Exit

Act 3

Scene 1: The Old Jewry. a room in the Windmill Tavern

Enter MATTHEW, WELLBRED and BOBADILL

Matthew Yes faith, sir, we were at your lodging to seek you, too.

Wellbred Oh, I came not there tonight.

Bobadill Your brother delivered us as much.

Wellbred Who? My brother Downright?

Bobadill He. Master Wellbred, I know not in what kind you hold me, but let me say to you this: as sure as honour, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation to throw the least beam of regard upon such a -

Wellbred Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother.

Bobadill I protest to you, as I have a thing to be saved about me, I never saw any gentlemanlike part -

Wellbred Good Captain, faces about, to some other discourse.

Bobadill With your leave, sir, and there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St. George.

Matthew Troth, nor I, he is of a rustical cut, I know not how; he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion -

Wellbred Oh, Master Matthew, that's a grace peculiar but to a few; quos aequus amavit Jupiter.

Matthew I understand you, sir.

Wellbred No question, you do, or you do not, sir.

ED. KNO'WELL enters with STEPHEN

Ned Kno'well! By my soul, welcome; how dost thou sweet spirit, my genius. 'Slid I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better, while I live, for this, my dear fury. Now, I see there's some love in thee! [In a lower voice] Sirrah, these be the two I writ to thee of. Nay, what a drowsy humour is this now? Why dost thou not speak?

Ed. Kno'well Oh, you are a fine gallant, you sent me a rare letter!

Wellbred Why, was't not rare?

Ed. Kno'well Yes, I'll be sworn, I was ne'er guilty of reading the like; match it in all Pliny or Symmachus's epistles, and I'll have my judgement burned in the ear for a rogue: make much of thy vein, for it is inimitable. But I marle what camel it was that had the carriage of it, for doubtless he was no ordinary beast that brought it!

Wellbred Why?

Ed. Kno'well Why, sayst thou? Why dost thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning - the sober time of the day too - could have mista'en my father for me?

Wellbred 'Slid, you jest, I hope?

Ed. Kno'well Indeed, the best use we can turn it to is to make a jest on't, now; but I'll assure you, my father had the full view o' your flourishing style, some hour before I saw it.

Wellbred What a dull slave was this! But, sirrah, what said he to it, i' faith?

Ed. Kno'well Nay, I know not what he said; but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.

Wellbred What? What?

Ed. Kno'well Marry, that thou art some strange dissolute young fellow, and I a grain or two better, for keeping thee company.

Wellbred Tut, that thought is like the moon in her last quarter, 'twill change shortly; but sirrah, I pray thee be acquainted with my two hang-byes here; thou wilt take exceeding pleasure in 'hem if thou hear'st 'hem once go: my wind instruments, I'll wind 'hem up - but what strange piece of silence is this? The sign of the dumb man?

Ed. Kno'well Oh, sir, a kinsman of mine, one that may make your music the fuller, and he please, he has his humour, sir.

Wellbred Oh, what is't? What is't?

Ed. Kno'well Nay, I'll neither do your judgement nor his folly that wrong, as to prepare your apprehension: I'll leave him to the mercy o'your search, if you can take him, so.

Wellbred Well, Captain Bobadill, Master Matthew, pray you know this gentleman here, he is a friend of mine, and one that will deserve your affection. [To MASTER STEPHEN] I know not your name sir, but I shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.

Stephen My name is Master Stephen, sir, I am this gentleman's own cousin, sir, his father is mine uncle, sir, I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman.

Bobadill [To ED. KNO'WELL] Sir, I must tell you this, I am no general man, but for Master Wellbred's sake - you may embrace it, at what height of favour you please - I do communicate with you; and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts - I love few words.

Ed. Kno'well And I fewer, sir. I have scarce enow, to thank you.

Matthew [To MASTER STEPHEN] But are you indeed, sir, so given to it?

Stephen Ay, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Matthew Oh, it's only your fine humour, sir, your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir: I am melancholy myself divers times, sir, and then do I no more but take pen, and paper presently, and overflow you half a score, or a dozen of sonnets, at a sitting.

Ed. Kno'well [Aside] Sure, he utters them then, by the gross.

Stephen Truly sir, and I love such things out of measure.

Ed. Kno'well I' faith, better than in measure, I'll undertake.

Matthew Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study, it's at your service.



Stephen I thank you, sir, I shall be bold, I warrant you; have you a stool there, to be melancholy upon?

Matthew That I have, sir, and some papers there of mine own doing, at idle hours, that you'll say there's some sparks of wit in 'hem, when you see them.

Wellbred [Aside] Would the sparks would kindle once, and become a fire amongst 'hem, I might see self-love burnt for her heresy.

Stephen Cousin, is it well? Am I melancholy enough?

Ed. Kno'well Oh ay, excellent!

Wellbred Captain Bobadill: why muse you so?

Ed. Kno'well He is melancholy, too.

Bobadill Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honourable piece of service was performed, tomorrow being St. Mark's day, shall be some ten years, now.

Ed. Kno'well In what place, Captain?

Bobadill Why, at the beleag'ring of Strigonium, where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen, as any were in Europe, lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, gentlemen, it was the first but the best leager that ever I beheld with these eyes, except the taking in of - what do you call it, last year, by the Genoways? - but that, of all other, was the most fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was ranged in, since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and soldier.

Stephen 'So, I had as lief as an angel, I could swear as well as that gentleman!

Ed. Kno'well Then you were a servitor at both it seems! At Strigonium? And what-you-call't?

Bobadill Oh Lord, sir! By St. George, I was the first man, that entered the breach; and, had I not effected it with resolution, I had been slain, if I had had a million of lives.

Ed. Kno'well 'Twas pity, you had not ten; a cat's, and your own, i' faith. But, was it possible?

Matthew [Aside to STEPHEN] 'Pray you, mark this discourse, sir.

Stephen [To MATTHEW] So, I do.

Bobadill I assure you upon my reputation, 'tis true, and yourself shall confess.

Ed. Kno'well You must bring me to the rack first.

Bobadill Observe me judicially, sweet sir, they had planted me three demi-culverins just in the mouth of the breach; now, sir, as we were to give on, their master-gunner - a man of no mean skill and mark, you must think - confronts me with his linstock, ready to give fire; I, spying his intendment, discharged my petrionel in his bosom, and with these single arms my poor rapier ran violently upon the Moors that guarded the ordnance, and put 'hem pell-mell to the sword.

Wellbred To the sword? To the rapier, Captain.

Ed. Kno'well Oh, it was a good figure observed, sir! But did you all this, Captain, without hurting your blade?

Bobadill Without any impeach, o' the earth: you shall perceive sir. [Shows his rapier] It is the most fortunate weapon that ever rid on gentleman's thigh: shall I tell you, sir? You talk of Morglay, Excalibur, Durindana, or so? Tut, I lend no credit to that is fabled of 'hem, I know the virtue of mine own, and therefore I dare the boldier maintain it.

Stephen I marle whether it be a Toledo or no?

Bobadill A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir.

Stephen I have a countryman of his, here.

Matthew Pray you, let's see, sir: yes faith, it is!

Bobadill This a Toledo? Pish.

Stephen Why do you pish, Captain?

Bobadill A Fleming, by heaven, I'll buy them for a guilder apiece, an I would have a thousand of them.

Ed. Kno'well How say you, cousin? I told you thus much.

Wellbred Where bought you it, Master Stephen?

Stephen Of a scurvy rogue soldier - a hundred of lice go with him! He swore it was a Toledo.

Bobadill A poor provant rapier, no better.

Matthew Man, I think it be, indeed, now I look on't better.

Ed. Kno'well Nay, the longer you look on't, the worse. Put it up, put it up.

Stephen Well, I will put it up, but by - [Aside] I ha' forgot the Captain's

oath, I thought to ha' sworn by it - an' ere I meet him -

Wellbred Oh, it is past help now, sir, you must have patience.

Stephen Whoreson coney-catching rascal! I could eat the very hilts for anger!

Ed. Kno'well A sign of good digestion! You have an ostrich stomach, cousin.

Stephen A stomach? Would I had him here, you should see an' I had a stomach.

Wellbred It's better as 'tis: come, gentlemen, shall we go?

Enter BRAINWORM disguised as before

Ed. Kno'well A miracle, cousin, look here! Look here!

Stephen Oh, God's lid, by your leave, do you know me, sir?

Brainworm Ay sir, I know you, by sight.

Stephen You sold me a rapier, did you not?

Brainworm Yes, marry, did I sir.

Stephen You said, it was a Toledo, ha?

Brainworm True, I did so.

Stephen But, it is none?

Brainworm No sir, I confess, it is none.

Stephen Do you confess it? Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confessed it. By God's will, and you had not confessed it -

Ed. Kno'well Oh cousin, forbear, forbear.

Stephen Nay, I have done, cousin.

Wellbred Why, you have done like a gentleman, he has confessed it, what would you more?

Stephen Yes, by his leave, he is a rascal, under his favour, do you see?

Ed. Kno'well [Aside to WELLBRED] Ay, by his leave, he is, and under favour: a pretty piece of civility! Sirrah, how dost thou like him?

Wellbred Oh, it's a most precious fool, make much on him: I can compare him to nothing more happily than a drum; for everyone may play upon him.

Ed. Kno'well No, no, a child's whistle were far the fitter.

Brainworm Sir, shall I entreat a word with you.

They move apart

Ed. Kno'well With me, sir? You have not another Toledo to sell, ha' you?

Brainworm You are conceited, sir; your name is Master Kno'well, as I take it?

Ed. Kno'well You are i' the right; you mean not to proceed in the catechism, do you?

Brainworm No sir, I am none of that coat.

Ed. Kno'well Of as bare a coat, though; well, say sir.

Brainworm Faith sir, I am but servant to the drum extraordinary, and indeed, this smoky varnish being washed off, and three or four patches removed, I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father, Brainworm.

Ed. Kno'well Brainworm! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blown thee hither in this shape?

Brainworm The breath o' your letter, sir, this morning: the same that blew you to the Windmill, and your father after you.

Ed. Kno'well My father?

Brainworm Nay, never start, 'tis true, he has followed you over the fields, by the foot, as you would do a hare i' the snow.

Ed. Kno'well Sirrah, Wellbred, what shall we do sirrah? My father is come over, after me.

Wellbred Thy father? Where is he?

Brainworm At Justice Clement's house here in Coleman Street, where he but stays my return; and then -

Wellbred Who's this? Brainworm?

Brainworm The same, sir.

Wellbred Why how, i' the name of wit com'st thou transmuted, thus?

Brainworm Faith, a device, a device; nay, for the love of reason, gentlemen, and avoiding the danger, stand not here, withdraw, and I'll tell you all.

Wellbred But, art thou sure he will stay thy return?

Brainworm Do I live, sir? What a question is that?

Wellbred We'll prorogue his expectation then, a little: Brainworm, thou shalt go with us. Come on, gentlemen. Nay, I pray thee, sweet Ned, droop not: 'heart, and our wits be so wretchedly dull that one old plodding brain can outstrip us all, would we were e'en pressed to make porters of, and serve out the remnant of our days in Thames Street, or at Custom House quay, in a civil war against the carmen.

Brainworm Amen, amen, amen, say I.

Exeunt

Scene 2: The Old Jewry. Kitely's warehouse

Enter KITELY and CASH

Kitely What says he, Thomas? Did you speak with him?

Cash He says he will expect you, sir, within this half hour.

Kitely Has he the money ready, can you tell?

Cash Yes, sir, the money was brought in last night.

Kitely Oh, that's well: fetch me my cloak, my cloak.

Exit CASH

Stay, let me see, an hour to go and come;  
Ay, that will be the least: and then 'twill be  
An hour before I can dispatch with him;  
Or very near: well, I will say two hours.  
Two hours? Ha? Things never dreamed of yet  
May be contrived, ay, and effected too,  
In two hours' absence: well, I will not go.  
Two hours; no, fleeing opportunity,  
I will not give your subtlety that scope.  
Who will not judge him worthy to be robbed,  
That sets his doors wide open to a thief,  
And shows the felon where his treasure lies?  
Again, what earthy spirit but will attempt  
To taste the fruit of beauty's golden tree,  
When leaden sleep seals up the dragon's eyes?  
I will not go. Business, go by, for once.  
No, beauty, no; you are of too good caract

To be left so, without a guard, or open!  
Your lustre too'll inflame, at any distance,  
Draw courtship to you, as a jet doth straws,  
Put motion in a stone, strike fire from ice,  
Nay, make a porter leap you with his burden!  
You must be then kept up, close, and well-watched,  
For, give you opportunity, no quicksand  
Devours or swallows swifter! He that lends  
His wife, if she be fair, or time, or place;  
Compels her to be false. I will not go.  
The dangers are too many. And, then, the dressing  
Is a most main attractive! Our great heads,  
Within the city, never were in safety  
Since our wives wore these little caps: I'll change 'hem,  
I'll change 'hem, straight, in mine. Mine shall no more  
Wear three-piled acorns, to make my horns ache.  
Nor will I go. I am resolved for that.

Enter CASH, with cloak

Carry' in my cloak again. Yet, stay. Yet, do too.  
I will defer going, on all occasions.

Cash Sir. Snare, your scrivener, will be there with th' bonds.

Kitely That's true! Fool on me! I had clean forgot it,  
I must go. What's a clock?

Cash Exchange time, sir.

Kitely [Aside] 'Heart, then will Wellbred presently be here, too,  
With one or other of his loose consorts.  
I am a knave, if I know what to say,  
What course to take, or which way to resolve.  
My brain, methinks, is like an hour-glass,  
Wherein my' imaginations run like sands  
Filling up time; but then are turned, and turned:  
So that I know not what to stay upon,  
And less to put in act. It shall be so.  
Nay, I dare build upon his secrecy,  
He knows not to deceive. - Thomas!

Cash Sir.

Kitely [Aside] Yet not, I have bethought me, too, I will not. -  
Thomas, is Cob within?

Cash I think he be, sir.

Kitely [Aside] But he'll prate too, there's no speech of him.

No, there were no man o' the earth to Thomas,  
If I durst trust him; there is all the doubt.  
But, should he have a chink in him, I were gone,  
Lost i' my fame for ever: talk for th' Exchange.  
The manner he hath stood with, till this present,  
Doth promise no such change! What should I fear then?  
Well, come what will, I'll tempt my fortune, once. -  
Thomas - you may deceive me, but, I hope -  
Your love, to me, is more -

Cash Sir, if a servant's  
Duty, with faith, may be called love, you are  
More than in hope, you are possessed of it.

Kitely I thank you, heartily, Thomas; gi' me your hand:  
With all my heart, Good Thomas. I have, Thomas,  
A secret to impart, unto you - but  
When once you have it, I must seal your lips up:  
So far, I tell you, Thomas.

Cash Sir, for that -

Kitely Nay, hear me, out. Think, I esteem you, Thomas,  
When I will let you in, thus, to my private.  
It is a thing sits nearer to my crest  
Than thou art ware of, Thomas. If thou should'st  
Reveal it, but -

Cash How? I reveal it?

Kitely Nay,  
I do not think thou would'st; but if thou should'st,  
'Twere a great weakness.

Cash A great treachery. Give it no other name.

Kitely Thou wilt not do 't, then?

Cash Sir, if I do, mankind disclaim me ever.

Kitely [Aside] He will not swear, he has some reservation,  
Some concealed purpose, and close meaning, sure:  
Else, being urged so much, how should he choose  
But lend an oath to all this protestation?  
He's no precisian, that I am certain of.  
Nor rigid Roman Catholic. He'll play  
At fayles and tick-tack, I have heard him swear.  
What should I think of it? Urge him again,  
And by some other say? I will do so. -  
Well, Thomas, thou hast sworn not to disclose;

Yes, you did swear?

Cash Not yet, sir, but I will, Please you -

Kitely No, Thomas, I dare take thy word.  
But; if thou wilt swear, do, as thou think'st good;  
I am resolved without it; at thy pleasure.

Cash By my soul's safety then, sir, I protest.  
My tongue shall ne'er take knowledge of a word  
Delivered me in nature of your trust.

Kitely It's too much, these ceremonies need not,  
I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.  
Thomas, come hither, near: we cannot be  
Too private in this business. So it is -  
[Aside] Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture -  
I have of late, by divers observations -  
[Aside] But whether his oath can bind him, yea, or no;  
Being not taken lawfully? Ha? Say you?  
I will ask counsel ere I do proceed -  
Thomas, it will be now too late to stay,  
I'll spy some fitter time soon, or tomorrow.

Cash Sir, at your pleasure?

Kitely I will think. And, Thomas,  
I pray you search the books 'gainst my return,  
For the receipts 'twixt me, and Traps.

Cash I will, sir.

Kitely And, hear you, if your mistress' brother, Wellbred,  
Chance to bring hither any gentlemen,  
Ere I come back; let one straight bring me word.

Cash Very well, sir.

Kitely To the Exchange; do you hear?  
Or here in Coleman Street, to Justice Clement's.  
Forget it not, nor be not out of the way.

Cash I will not, sir.

Kitely I pray you have a care on't.  
Or whether he come, or no, if any other,  
Stranger or else, fail not to send me word.

Cash I shall not, sir.



Kitely Be't your special business  
Now, to remember it.

Cash Sir. I warrant you.

Kitely But, Thomas, this is not the secret, Thomas,  
I told you of.

Cash No, sir. I do suppose it.

Kitely Believe me, it is not.

Cash Sir. I do believe you.

Kitely By heaven, it is not, that's enough. But, Thomas,  
I would not you should utter it, do you see,  
To any creature living, yet, I care not.  
Well, I must hence. Thomas, conceive this much:  
It was a trial of you when I meant  
So deep a secret to you, I mean not this,  
But that I have to tell you, this is nothing, this.  
But, Thomas, keep this from my wife, I charge you,  
Locked up in silence, midnight, buried here.  
[Aside] No greater hell, than to be slave to fear.

Exit

Cash "Locked up in silence, midnight, buried here."  
Whence should this flood of passion, trow, take head? Ha?  
Best dream no longer of this running humour,  
For fear I sink! The violence of the stream  
Already hath transported me so far  
That I can feel no ground at all! But soft  
Oh, 'tis our water-bearer: somewhat has crossed him, now.

Enter COB

Cob Fasting days? What would you tell me of fasting days? 'Slid, would they  
were all on a light fire for me. They say the whole world shall be consumed  
with fire one day, but would I had these ember-weeks and villainous Fridays  
burnt in the meantime, and then -

Cash Why, how now Cob, what moves thee to this choler? Ha?

Cob Collar, Master Thomas? I scorn your collar, ay sir, I am none o' your  
cart-horse, though I carry and draw water. An' you offer to ride me, with  
your collar or halter either, I may hap show you a jade's trick, sir.

Cash Oh, you'll slip your head out of the collar? Why, goodman Cob, you  
mistake me.

Cob Nay, I have my rheum, and I can be angry as well as another, sir.

Cash Thy rheum, Cob? Thy humour, thy humour? Thou mistak'st.

Cob Humour? Mack, I think it be so, indeed: what is that humour? Some rare thing, I warrant.

Cash Marry, I'll tell thee, Cob: it is a gentlemanlike monster, bred in the special gallantry of our time by affectation, and fed by folly.

Cob How? Must it be fed?

Cash Oh ay, humour is nothing if it be not fed. Didst thou never hear that? It's a common phrase, "Feed my humour."

Cob I'll none on it: humour, avaunt, I know you not, begone. Let who will make hungry meals for your monstership, it shall not be I. Feed you, quoth he? 'Slid, I ha' much ado to feed myself; especially on these lean rascally days, too; and't had been any other day but a fasting day - a plague on them all for me - by this light, one might have done the commonwealth good service, and have drowned them all i' the flood, two or three hundred thousand years ago. Oh, I do stomach them hugely! I have a maw now, and 'twere for Sir Bevis his horse, against 'hem.

Cash I pray thee, good Cob, what makes thee so out of love with fasting days?

Cob Marry, that which will make any man out of love with 'hem, I think: their bad conditions, and you will needs know. First, they are of a Flemish breed, I am sure on't, for they ravin up more butter than all the days of the week, beside; next, they stink of fish and leek-porridge miserably: thirdly, they'll keep a man devoutly hungry all day, and at night send him supperless to bed.

Cash Indeed, these are faults, Cob.

Cob Nay, and this were all, 'twere something, but they are the only known enemies to my generation. A fasting day no sooner comes, but my lineage goes to rack, poor cobs they smoke for it, they are made martyrs o' the gridiron, they melt in passion: and your maids too know this, and yet would have me turn Hannibal, and eat my own flesh and blood: my princely coz [He pulls out a red herring], fear nothing; I have not the heart to devour you, and I might be made as rich as King Cophetua. Oh, that I had room for my tears, I could weep salt water enough, now, to preserve the lives of ten thousand of my kin. But I may curse none but these filthy Almanacs, for an 'twere not for them, these days of persecution would ne'er be known. I'll be hanged, an' some fishmonger's son do not make of 'hem; and puts in more fasting days than he should do, because he would utter his father's dried stock-fish and stinking conger.

Cash 'Slight, peace, thou'lt be beaten like a stock-fish, else: here is Master Matthew. Now must I look out for a messenger to my master.

Exit with COB

Enter WELLBRED, ED. KNO'WELL, BRAINWORM, BOBADILL, MATTHEW and STEPHEN

Wellbred Beshrew me, but it was an absolute good jest, and exceedingly well carried!

Ed. Kno'well Ay, and our ignorance maintained it as well, did it not?

Wellbred Yes faith, but was't possible thou should'st not know him? I forgive Master Stephen, for he is stupidity itself!

Ed. Kno'well 'Fore God, not I, and I might have been joined patten with one of the seven wise masters, for knowing him. He had so writhen himself into the habit of one of your poor infantry, your decayed, ruinous, wormeaten gentlemen of the round, such as have vowed to sit on the skirts of the city, let your provost and his half-dozen of halbadiers do what they can; and have translated begging out of the old hackney pace to a fine easy amble, and made it run as smooth off the tongue as a shove-groat shilling. Into the likeness of one of these reformados had he moulded himself so perfectly, observing every trick of their action, as varying the accent, swearing with an emphasis, indeed all, with so special and exquisite a grace, that, hadst thou seen him, thou wouldst have sworn he might have been sergeant-major, if not lieutenant-colonel to the regiment.

Wellbred Why, Brainworm, who would have thought thou hadst been such an artificer?

Ed. Kno'well An artificer! An architect! Except a man had studied begging all his lifetime, and been a weaver of language from his infancy, for the clothing of it! I never saw his rival.

Wellbred Where got'st thou this coat, I marle?

Brainworm Of a Houndsditch man, sir. One of the devil's near kinsmen, a broker.

Wellbred That cannot be, if the proverb hold; for a crafty knave needs no broker.

Brainworm True sir, but I did need a broker, ergo.

Wellbred Well put off - no crafty knave, you'll say.

Ed. Kno'well Tut, he has more of these shifts.

Brainworm And yet where I have one, the broker has ten, sir.

Enter CASH

Cash Francis, Martin, ne'er a one to be found, now? What a spite's this?

Wellbred How now, Thomas? Is my brother Kitely, within?

Cash No sir, my master went forth e'en now: but Master Downright is within. Cob, what Cob! Is he gone too?

Wellbred Whither went your master? Thomas, canst thou tell?

Cash I know not, to Justice Clement's, I think, sir. Cob!

Exit CASH

Ed. Kno'well Justice Clement, what's he?

Wellbred Why, dost thou not know him? He is a city magistrate, a justice here, an excellent good lawyer and a great scholar; but the only mad, merry, old fellow in Europe! I showed him you the other day.

Ed. Kno'well Oh, is that he? I remember him now. Good faith, and he has a very strange presence, methinks; it shows as if he stood out of the rank from other men: I have heard many of his jests i' the university. They say, he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.

Wellbred Ay, or wearing his cloak of one shoulder, or serving of God: anything indeed, if it come in the way of his humour.

CASH goes in and out calling

Cash Gasper, Martin, Cob! 'Heart, where should they be, trow?

Bobadill Master Kitely's man, 'pray thee vouchsafe us the lighting of this match.

Cash Fire on your match, no time but now to vouchsafe? Francis, Cob!

Bobadill Body of me! Here's the remainder of seven pound, since yesterday was seven-night. 'Tis your right Trinidado! Did you never take any, Master Stephen?

Stephen No truly, sir; but I'll learn to take it now, since you commend it so.

Bobadill Sir, believe me, upon my relation, for what I tell you, the world shall not reprove. I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself nor a dozen gentlemen before, of my knowledge, have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world for the space of one and

twenty weeks, but the fume of this simple only. Therefore, it cannot be but 'tis most divine! Further, take it in the nature, in the true kind so, it makes an antidote, that, had you taken the most deadly poisonous plant in all Italy, it should expel it, and clarify you with as much ease as I speak. And, for your green wound, your Balsamum, and your St. John's wort are all mere gulleries, and trash to it, especially your Trinidado: your Nicotian is good too. I could say what I know of the virtue of it, for the expulsion of rheums, raw humours, crudities, obstructions, with a thousand of this kind; but I profess myself no quacksalver. Only, thus much, by Hercules, I do hold it, and will affirm it, before any prince in Europe, to be the most sovereign and precious weed that ever the earth tendered to the use of man.

Ed. Kno'well This speech would ha' done decently in a tobacco-trader's mouth!

Enter CASH with COB

Cash At Justice Clement's, he is: in the middle of Coleman Street.

Cob Oh, oh!

Bobadill Where's the match I gave thee? Master Kitely's man?

Cash Would his match and he and pipe and all were at Santo Domingo! I had forgot it.

Exit

Cob By God's me, I marle what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco! It's good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of smoke and embers: there were four died out of one house last week with taking of it, and two more the bell went for yesternight, one of them, they say, will ne'er scape it: he voided a bushel of soot yesterday, upward and downward. By the stocks, an' there were no wiser men than I, I'd have it present whipping, man or woman that should but deal with a tobacco-pipe; why, it will stifle them all in the end, as many as use it; it's little better than ratsbane or rosaker.

BOBADILL beats COB with a cudgel

All Oh, good Captain, hold, hold.

Bobadill You base cullion, you.

Enter CASH

Cash Sir, here's your match. Come, thou must needs be talking, too, thou'rt well enough served.

Cob Nay, he will not meddle with his match, I warrant you: well it shall be a dear beating, and I live.

Bobadill Do you prate? Do you murmur?

Ed. Kno'well Nay, good Captain, will you regard the humour of a fool? Away, knave.

Wellbred Thomas, get him away.

Exit CASH with COB

Bobadill A whoreson filthy slave, a dung-worm, an excrement! Body o' Caesar, but that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I'd ha' stabbed him to the earth.

Wellbred Marry, the law forbid, sir.

Bobadill By Pharaoh's foot, I would have done it.

Stephen [Aside] Oh, he swears admirably! By Pharaoh's foot! Body o' Caesar! I shall never do it, sure, upon mine honour, and by St. George, no, I ha' not the right grace.

Matthew Master Stephen, will you any? By this air, the most divine tobacco that ever I drunk!

Stephen None, I thank you, sir. Oh, this gentleman does it, rarely too! But nothing like the other. [MASTER STEPHEN is practising to the post] By this air, as I am a gentleman: by -

Brainworm [Pointing at STEPHEN] Master, glance, glance! Master Wellbred!

Exeunt BOBADILL and MATTHEW

Stephen As I have somewhat to be saved, I protest -

Wellbred You are a fool: it needs no affidavit.

Ed. Kno'well Cousin, will you any tobacco?

Stephen I sir! Upon my reputation -

Ed. Kno'well How now, cousin!

Stephen I protest, as I am a gentleman, but no soldier, indeed -

Wellbred No, Master Stephen? As I remember your name is entered in the Artillery Garden?

Stephen Ay sir, that's true: cousin, may I swear, as I am a soldier, by

that?

Ed. Kno'well Oh yes, that you may. It's all you have for your money.

Stephen Then, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, it is divine tobacco!

Wellbred But soft, where's Master Matthew? Gone?

Brainworm No, sir, they went in here.

Wellbred Oh, let's follow them: Master Matthew is gone to salute his mistress in verse. We shall ha' the happiness to hear some of his poetry now. He never comes unfurnished. Brainworm?

Stephen Brainworm? Where? Is this Brainworm?

Ed. Kno'well Ay, cousin, no words of it, upon your gentility.

Stephen Not I, body of me, by this air, St. George, and the foot of Pharaoh.

Wellbred Rare! Your cousin's discourse is simply drawn out with oaths.

Ed. Kno'well 'Tis larded with 'hem. A kind of French dressing, if you love it.

Exeunt

Scene 3: Coleman Street. A room in Justice Clement's house

Enter KITELY and COB

Kitely Ha? How many are there, sayest thou?

Cob Marry sir, your brother, Master Wellbred.

Kitely Tut, beside him: what strangers are there, man?

Cob Strangers? Let me see, one, two; mass I know not well, there are so many.

Kitely How? So many?

Cob Ay, there's some five or six of them, at the most.

Kitely [Aside] A swarm, a swarm,  
Spite of the devil, how they sting my head  
With forked stings, thus wide, and large! - But, Cob,  
How long hast thou been coming hither, Cob?

Cob A little while, sir.

Kitely Didst thou come running?

Cob No, sir.

Kitely [Aside] Nay, then I am familiar with thy haste!  
Bane to my fortunes: what meant I to marry?  
I, that before was ranked in such content,  
My mind at rest too, in so soft a peace,  
Being free master of mine own free thoughts,  
And now become a slave? What? Never sigh,  
Be of good cheer, man: for thou art a cuckold,  
'Tis done, 'tis done! Nay, when such flowing store,  
Plenty itself falls in my wife's lap,  
The cornucopiae will be mine, I know. - But, Cob,  
What entertainment had they? I am sure  
My sister and my wife would bid them welcome! Ha?

Cob Like enough, sir, yet, I heard not a word of it.

Kitely No: their lips were sealed with kisses, and the voice  
Drowned in a flood of joy at their arrival,  
Had lost her motion, state, and faculty.  
Cob, which of them was't that first kissed my wife?  
My sister, I should say. My wife, alas  
I fear not her: ha? Who was it, say'st thou?

Cob By my troth, sir, will you have the truth of it?

Kitely Oh ay, good Cob: I pray thee, heartily.

Cob Then, I am a vagabond, and fitter for Bridewell than your worship's  
company, if I saw anybody to be kissed, unless they would have kissed the  
post in the middle of the warehouse; for there I left them all at their  
tobacco, with a pox.

Kitely How? Were they not gone in, then, ere thou cam'st?

Cob Oh no, sir.

Kitely Spite of the devil! What do I stay here, then? Cob, follow me.

Exit

Cob Nay, soft and fair, I have eggs on the spit; I cannot go yet, sir. Now  
am I for some five and fifty reasons hammering, hammering revenge: oh, for  
three or four gallons of vinegar to sharpen my wits. Revenge: vinegar  
revenge: vinegar and mustard revenge; nay, and he had not lien in my house,  
'twould never have grieved me, but being my guest, one, that I'll be sworn,



my wife has lent him her smock off her back while his one shirt has been at washing; pawned her neckerchers for clean bands for him; sold almost all my platters to buy him tobacco; and he to turn monster of ingratitude and strike his lawful host! Well, I hope to raise up an host of fury for't: here comes Justice Clement.

Enter CLEMENT, KNO'WELL and FORMAL

Clement What's Master Kately gone? Roger?

Formal Ay, sir.

Clement 'Heart o' me! What made him leave us so abruptly? - How now, sirrah? What make you here? What would you have, ha?

Cob And't please your worship, I am a poor neighbour of your worship's -

Clement A poor neighbour of mine? Why, speak poor neighbour.

Cob I dwell, sir, at the sign of the Water-tankard, hard by the Green Lattice: I have paid scot and lot there any time this eighteen years.

Clement To the Green Lattice?

Cob No, sir, to the parish: marry, I have seldom scaped scot-free at the Lattice.

Clement Oh, well! What business has my poor neighbour with me?

Cob And't like your worship, I am come to crave the peace of your worship.

Clement Of me knave? Peace of me, knave? Did I e'er hurt thee? Or threaten thee? Or wrong thee? Ha?

Cob No, sir, but your worship's warrant for one that has wronged me, sir: his arms are at too much liberty, I would fain have them bound to a treaty of peace, an' my credit could compass it with your worship.

Clement Thou goest far enough about for't, I'm sure.

Kno'well Why, dost thou go in danger of thy life for him, friend?

Cob No sir; but I go in danger of my death every hour by his means: an' I die within a twelve-month and a day, I may swear by the law of the land that he killed me.

Clement How? How knave? Swear he killed thee? And by the law? What pretence? What colour hast thou for that?

Cob Marry, and't please your worship, both black, and blue; colour enough, I warrant you. I have it here, to show your worship. [Shows his bruises]

Clement What is he that gave you this, sirrah?

Cob A gentleman and a soldier, he says he is, o' the city here.

Clement A soldier o' the city? What call you him?

Cob Captain Bobadill.

Clement Bobadill? And why did he bob and beat you, sirrah? How began the quarrel betwixt you: ha? Speak truly knave, I advise you.

Cob Marry, indeed, and please your worship, only because I spake against their vagrant tobacco as I came by 'hem, when they were taking on't, for nothing else.

Clement Ha? You speak against tobacco? Formal, his name.

Formal What's your name, sirrah?

Cob Oliver, sir, Oliver Cob, sir.

Clement Tell Oliver Cob he shall go to the jail, Formal.

Formal Oliver Cob, my master, Justice Clement, says, you shall go to the jail.

Cob Oh, I beseech your worship, for God's sake, dear Master Justice.

Clement Nay, God's precious: and such drunkards and tankards as you are, come to dispute of tobacco once; I have done! Away with him.

Cob Oh, good Master Justice, sweet old gentleman.

Kno'well Sweet Oliver, would I could do thee any good: Justice Clement, let me entreat you, sir.

Clement What? A threadbare rascal! A beggar! A slave that never drunk out of better than pisspot metal in his life! And he to deprave and abuse the virtue of an herb so generally received in the courts of princes, the chambers of nobles, the bowers of sweet ladies, the cabins of soldiers! Roger, away with him, by God's precious - I say, go to.

Cob Dear Master Justice; let me be beaten again, I have deserved it: but not the prison, I beseech you.

Kno'well Alas, poor Oliver!

Clement Roger, make him a warrant. He shall not go: I but fear the knave.

Formal Do not stink, sweet Oliver, you shall not go, my master will give you a warrant.

Cob Oh, the Lord maintain his worship, his worthy worship.

Clement Away, dispatch him.

Exeunt FORMAL and COB

How now, Master Kno'well! In dumps? In dumps! Come, this becomes not.

Kno'well Sir, would I could not feel my cares -

Clement Your cares are nothing! They are like my cap, soon put on, and as soon put off. What? Your son is old enough to govern himself: let him run his course, it's the only way to make him a staid man. If he were an unthrift, a ruffian, a drunkard, or a licentious liver, then you had reason; you had reason to take care; but, being none of these, mirth's my witness, an' I had twice so many cares as you have, I'd drown them all in a cup of sack. Come, come, let's try it. I muse, your parcel of a soldier returns not all this while.

Exeunt

Act 4

Scene 1: A room in Kitely's house]

Enter DOWNRIGHT and DAME KITELY

Downright Well sister, I tell you true: and you'll find it so, in the end.

Dame Kitely Alas brother, what would you have me to do? I cannot help it: you see, my brother brings 'hem in here, they are his friends.

Downright His friends? His fiends. 'Slud, they do nothing but haunt him up and down like a sort of unlucky sprites, and tempt him to all manner of villainy that can be thought of. Well, by this light, a little thing would make me play the devil with some of 'hem; and 'twere not more for your husband's sake than anything else, I'd make the house too hot for the best on 'hem: they should say, and swear, hell were broken loose ere they went hence. But, by God's will, 'tis nobody's fault but yours; for, an' you had done as you might have done, they should have been parboiled, and baked too, every mother's son, ere they should ha' come in, e'er a one of 'hem.

Dame Kitely God's my life! Did you ever hear the like? What a strange man is this! Could I keep out all them, think you? I should put myself against half a dozen men, should I? Good faith, you'd mad the patient'st body in the world to hear you talk so, without any sense, or reason!

Enter MISTRESS BRIDGET, MASTER MATTHEW, and BOBADILL; followed, at a little

distance by WELLBRED, STEPHEN, ED. KNO'WELL and BRAINWORM

Bridget Servant, in troth, you are too prodigal  
Of your wit's treasure thus to pour it forth  
Upon so mean a subject as my worth?

Matthew You say well, mistress; and I mean as well.

Downright Hoy-day, here is stuff!

Wellbred Oh, now stand close: pray heaven she can get him to read: he  
should do it of his own natural impudency.

Bridget Servant, what is this same, I pray you?

Matthew Marry, an elegy, an elegy, an odd toy -

Downright To mock an ape withal. Oh, I could sew up his mouth, now.

Dame Kately Sister, I pray you let's hear it.

Downright Are you rhyme-given, too?

Matthew Mistress, I'll read it, if you please.

Bridget Pray you do, servant.

Downright Oh, here's no foppery! Death, I can endure the stocks better.

Exit

Ed. Kno'well What ails thy brother? Can he not hold his water at reading of  
a ballad?

Wellbred Oh, no; a rhyme to him is worse than cheese, or a bagpipe. But,  
mark, you lose the protestation.

Matthew Faith, I did it in a humour; I know not how it is; but, please you  
come near, sir. This gentleman has judgement, he knows how to censure of a -  
pray you sir, you can judge.

Stephen Not I, sir: upon my reputation, and by the foot of Pharaoh.

Wellbred Oh, chide your cousin for swearing.

Ed. Kno'well Not I, so long as he does not foreswear himself.

Bobadill Master Matthew, you abuse the expectation of your dear mistress  
and her fair sister: fie, while you live, avoid this prolixity.

Matthew I shall, sir: well, incipere dulce.

Ed. Kno'well How! Insipere dulce? A sweet thing to be a fool, indeed.

Wellbred What, do you take incipere in that sense?

Ed. Kno'well You do not? You? This was your villainy, to gull him with a mot.

Wellbred Oh, the benchers' phrase: pauca verba, pauca verba.

Matthew Rare creature, let me speak without offence,  
Would God my rude words had the influence  
To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,  
Then should'st thou be his prisoner, who is thine.

Ed. Kno'well This is in Hero and Leander.

Wellbred Oh, ay! Peace, we shall have more of this.

Matthew Be not unkind and fair, misshapen stuff  
Is of behaviour boisterous and rough.

Wellbred How like you that, sir?

MASTER STEPHEN answers with shaking his head

Ed. Kno'well 'Slight, he shakes his head like a bottle, to feel and there  
be any brain in it!

Matthew But observe the catastrophe, now,  
And I in duty will exceed all other,  
As you in beauty do excel love's mother.

Ed. Kno'well Well, I'll have him free of the wit-brokers, for he utters  
nothing but stol'n remnants.

Wellbred Oh, forgive it him.

Ed. Kno'well A filching rogue? Hang him. And, from the dead? It's worse  
than sacrilege.

WELLBRED, ED. KNO'WELL and STEPHEN come forward

Wellbred Sister, what ha' you here? Verses? Pray you, let's see. Who made  
these verses? They are excellent good!

Matthew Oh, Master Wellbred, 'tis your disposition to say so sir. They were  
good i' the morning; I made 'hem, extempore, this morning.

Wellbred How? Extempore?

Matthew I would I might be hanged else; ask Captain Bobadill. He saw me write them at the - pox on it! - the Star, yonder.

Brainworm Can he find in his heart to curse the stars, so?

Ed. Kno'well Faith, his are even with him: they ha' cursed him enough already.

Stephen Cousin, how do you like this gentleman's verses?

Ed. Kno'well Oh, admirable! The best that ever I heard, coz!

Stephen Body o' Caesar! They are admirable! The best, that ever I heard, as I am a soldier.

Enter DOWNRIGHT

Downright I am vexed, I can hold ne'er a bone of me still! Heart! I think, they mean to build and breed here!

Wellbred Sister, you have a simple servant here, that crowns your beauty with such encomiums and devices: you may see what it is to be the mistress of a wit that can make your perfections so transparent that every blear eye may look through them, and see him drowned over head and ears in the deep well of desire. Sister Kitely, I marvel you get you not a servant that can rhyme and do tricks, too.

Downright Oh monster! Impudence itself! Tricks?

Dame Kitely Tricks, brother? What tricks?

Bridget Nay, speak, I pray you, what tricks?

Dame Kitely Ay, never spare any body here; but say, what tricks?

Bridget Passion of my heart! Do tricks?

Wellbred 'Slight, here's a trick vied, and revied! Why, you monkeys, you? What a caterwauling do you keep? Has he not given you rhymes and verses and tricks?

Downright Oh, the fiend!

Wellbred Nay, you - lamp of virginity, that take it in snuff so! Come, and cherish this tame "poetical fury," in your servant, you'll be begged else, shortly, for a concealment: go to, reward his muse. You cannot give him less than a shilling, in conscience, for the book he had it out of, cost him a teston, at least. How now, gallants? Master Matthew? Captain? What? All sons of silence? No spirit?

Downright Come, you might practise your ruffian tricks somewhere else, and

not here, I wuss; this is no tavern nor drinking-school, to vent your exploits in.

Wellbred How now! Whose cow has calved?

Downright Marry, that has mine, sir. Nay, boy, never look askance at me, for the matter; I'll tell you of it; aye, sir, you and your companions, mend yourselves, when I ha done.

Wellbred My companions?

Downright Yes sir, your companions, so I say. I am not afraid of you, nor them neither: your hang-byes here. You must have your poets and your potlings, your soldados, and foolados, to follow you up and down the city, and here they must come to domineer and swagger. Sirrah, you, ballad-singer, and slops, your fellow there, get you out; get you home: or, by this steel, I'll cut off your ears, and that presently.

Wellbred 'Slight, stay, let's see what he dare do: cut off his ears? Cut a whetstone. You are an ass, do you see? Touch any man here, and by this hand, I'll run my rapier to the hilts in you.

Downright Yea, that would I fain see, boy.

They all draw, and they of the house make out to part them

Dame Kately Oh Jesu! Murder. Thomas, Gaspar!

Bridget Help, help, Thomas.

Enter CASH and SERVANTS

Ed. Kno'well Gentlemen, forbear, I pray you.

Bobadill Well, sirrah, you, Holofernes: by my hand, I will pink your flesh full of holes with my rapier for this; I will, by this good heaven!

They offer to fight again, and are parted

Nay, let him come, let him come, gentlemen, by the body of St. George, I'll not kill him.

Cash Hold, hold, good gentlemen.

Downright You whoreson, bragging coystril.

Enter KITELY

Kitely Why, how now? What's the matter? What's the stir here? Whence springs this quarrel? Thomas! Where is he? Put up your weapons, and put off

this rage. My wife and sister, they are the cause of this. - What, Thomas?  
Where is this knave?

Cash Here, sir.

Wellbred Come, let's go: this is one of my brother's ancient humours, this.

Stephen I am glad, nobody was hurt by his ancient humour.

Exeunt WELLBRED, STEPHEN, ED. KNO'WELL, MATTHEW, BOBADILL and  
BRAINWORM

Kitely Why, how now, brother, who enforced this brawl?

Downright A sort of lewd rakehells, that care neither for God nor the  
devil! And, they must come here to read ballads and roguery and trash! I'll  
mar the knot of 'hem ere I sleep, perhaps: especially Bob, there: he that's  
all manner of -

Bridget Brother, indeed, you are too violent,  
Too sudden in your humour; and, you know  
My brother Wellbred's temper will not bear  
Any reproof, chiefly in such a presence,  
Where every slight disgrace he should receive  
Might wound him in opinion and respect.

Downright Respect? What talk you of respect 'mong such  
As ha' nor spark of manhood nor good manners?  
'Sdeins I am ashamed to hear you! Respect?

Exit

Bridget Yes, there was one a civil gentleman,  
And very worthily demeaned himself!

Kitely Oh, that was some love of yours, sister!

Bridget A love of mine? I would it were no worse, brother!  
You'd pay my portion sooner, than you think for.

Dame Kitely Indeed, he seemed to be a gentleman of an exceeding fair  
disposition, and of very excellent good parts!

Exeunt DAME KITELY and BRIDGET

Kitely [Aside] Her love, by heaven! My wife's minion!  
Fair disposition? Excellent good parts?  
Death, these phrases are intolerable!  
Good parts? How should she know his parts?  
His parts? Well, well, well, well, well, well!



It is too plain, too clear. - Thomas, come hither.  
What, are they gone?

Cash Ay, sir, they went in.  
My mistress, and your sister-

Kitely Are any of the gallants within?

Cash No, sir, they are all gone.

Kitely Art thou sure of it?

Cash I can assure you, sir.

Kitely What gentleman was that they praised so, Thomas?

Cash One, they call him Master Kno'well, a handsome young gentleman, sir.

Kitely [Aside] Ay, I thought so: my mind gave me as much.  
I'll die, but they have hid him i' the house,  
Somewhere; I'll go and search. - Go with me, Thomas.  
Be true to me, and thou shalt find me a master.

Exeunt

Scene 2: the lane before Cob's house

Enter COB

Cob [Knocking] What Tib, Tib, I say!

Tib [Within] How now, what cuckold is that knocks so hard?

She opens the door

Oh, husband, is't you? What's the news?

Cob Nay, you have stunned me, i' faith! You ha' gi'en me a knock o' the  
forehead, will stick by me! Cuckold? 'Slid, cuckold?

Tib Away, you fool, did I know it was you that knocked? Come, come, you may  
call me as bad, when you list.

Cob May I? Tib, you are a whore.

Tib You lie in your throat, husband.

Cob How, the lie? And in my throat too? Do you long to be stabbed, ha?

Tib Why, you are no soldier, I hope?

Cob Oh, must you be stabbed by a soldier? Mass, that's true! When was Bobadill here? Your captain? That rogue, that foist, that fencing Burgullian? I'll tickle him, i' faith.

Tib Why, what's the matter? Trow!

Cob Oh, he has basted me, rarely, sumptuously! But I have it here in black and white, [Pulls out his warrant] for his black, and blue: shall pay him. Oh, the Justice! The honestest old brave Trojan in London! I do honour the very flea of his dog. A plague on him though, he put me once in a villainous filthy fear; marry, it vanished away, like the smoke of tobacco; but I was smoked soundly first. I thank the devil, and his good angel, my guest. Well, wife, or Tib - which you will - get you in, and lock the door, I charge you, let nobody in to you; wife, no body in, to you: those are my words. Not Captain Bob himself, nor the fiend in his likeness; you are a woman; you have flesh and blood enough in you to be tempted; therefore, keep the door shut upon all comers.

Tib I warrant you, there shall nobody enter here without my consent.

Cob Nor with your consent, sweet Tib; and so I leave you.

Tib It's more than you know, whether you leave me so.

Cob How?

Tib Why, sweet.

Cob Tut, sweet, or sour, thou art a flower, [Kissing her] Keep close thy door, I ask no more.

Exeunt

Scene 3: a room in the Windmill Tavern

Enter ED. KNO'WELL, WELLBRED, STEPHEN and BRAINWORM disguised as before

Ed. Kno'well Well, Brainworm, perform this business, happily, and thou makest a purchase of my love, forever.

Wellbred I' faith, now let thy spirits use their best faculties. But, at any hand, remember the message to my brother; for there's no other means to start him.

Brainworm I warrant you, sir, fear nothing: I have a nimble soul has waked all forces of my phant'sie, by this time, and put 'hem in true motion. What you have possessed me withal, I'll discharge it amply, sir. Make it no question.

Wellbred Forth, and prosper, Brainworm.

Exit BRAINWORM

Faith, Ned, how dost thou approve of my abilities in this device?

Ed. Kno'well Troth, well, howsoever; but it will come excellent, if it take.

Wellbred Take, man? Why, it cannot choose but take, if the circumstances miscarry not; but, tell me, ingenuously, dost thou affect my sister Bridget, as thou pretend'st?

Ed. Kno'well Friend, am I worth belief?

Wellbred Come, do not protest. In faith, she is a maid of good ornament and much modesty; and, except I conceived very worthily of her, thou shouldest not have her.

Ed. Kno'well Nay, that I am afraid will be a question yet, whether I shall have her, or no?

Wellbred 'Slid, thou shalt have her; by this light, thou shalt.

Ed. Kno'well Nay, do not swear.

Wellbred By this hand, thou shalt have her: I'll go fetch her, presently. Point but where to meet, and as I am an honest man I'll bring her.

Ed. Kno'well Hold, hold, be temperate.

Wellbred Why, by - what shall I swear by? Thou shalt have her, as I am -

Ed. Kno'well 'Pray thee, be at peace, I am satisfied. And do believe, thou wilt omit no offered occasion to make my desires complete.

Wellbred Thou shalt see, and know, I will not.

Exeunt

Scene 4: the Old Jewry

Enter FORMAL and KNO'WELL

Formal Was your man a soldier, sir?

Kno'well Ay, a knave, I took him begging o' the way  
This morning, as I came over Moorfields!  
Oh, here he is! Yo' have made fair speed, believe me:  
Where, i' the name of sloth, could you be thus -

Enter BRAINWORM, disguised as before

Brainworm Marry, peace be my comfort, where I thought I should have had so little comfort of your worship's service.

Kno'well How so?

Brainworm Oh, sir! Your coming to the city, your entertainment of me, and your sending me to watch - indeed, all the circumstances either of your charge or my employment are as open to your son as to yourself!

Kno'well How should that be? Unless that villain, Brainworm, Have told him of the letter, and discovered All that I strictly charged him to conceal? 'Tis so!

Brainworm I am partly o' the faith 'tis so indeed.

Kno'well But how should he know thee to be my man?

Brainworm Nay, sir, I cannot tell; unless it be by the black art! Is not your son a scholar, sir?

Kno'well Yes, but I hope his soul is not allied  
Unto such hellish practices. If it were,  
I had just cause to weep my part in him,  
And curse the time of his creation.  
But where didst thou find them, Fitzsword?

Brainworm You should rather ask, where they found me, sir; for I'll be sworn I was going along in the street thinking nothing, when, of a sudden, a voice calls, "Master Kno'well's man!" another cries "Soldier!" and thus half a dozen of 'hem, till they had called me within a house where I no sooner came but they seemed men, and out flew all their rapiers at my bosom, with some three or fourscore oaths to accompany 'hem, and all to tell me I was but a dead man if I did not confess where you were, and how I was employed, and about what; which, when they could not get out of me - as I protest they must ha' dissected and made an anatomy o'me first, and so I told 'hem - they locked me up into a room i' the top of a high house, whence, by great miracle, having a light heart, I slid down by a bottom of packthread into the street, and so scaped. But, sir, thus much I can assure you, for I heard it while I was locked up, there were a great many rich merchants and brave citizens' wives with 'hem at a feast, and your son, Master Edward, withdrew with one of 'hem, and has pointed to meet her anon at one Cob's house, a water-bearer that dwells by the wall. Now, there, your worship shall be sure to take him, for there he preys, and fail he will not.

Kno'well Nor, will I fail to break his match, I doubt not.  
Go thou, along with Justice Clement's man,  
And stay there for me. At one Cob's house, say'st thou?

Brainworm Ay sir, there you shall have him.

Exit KNO'WELL

[Aside] Yes? Invisible? Much wench, or much son? 'Slight, when he has stayed there three or four hours, travailing with the expectation of wonders, and at length be delivered of air. Oh, the sport that I should then take, to look on him, if I durst! But now I mean to appear no more afore him in this shape. I have another trick to act yet. Oh, that I were so happy as to light on a nupson, now, of this Justice's novice. - Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.

Formal Not a whit, sir. 'Pray you, what do you mean, sir?

Brainworm I was putting up some papers -

Formal You ha' been lately in the wars, sir, it seems.

Brainworm Marry have I, sir, to my loss: and expense of all, almost -

Formal Troth sir, I would be glad to bestow a pottle of wine o'you, if it please you to accept it -

Brainworm Oh, sir -

Formal But to hear the manner of your services, and your devices in the wars, they say they be very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories, or sees at Mile End.

Brainworm No, I assure you, sir, why, at any time when it please you I shall be ready to discourse to you all I know: [Aside] and more too, somewhat.

Formal No better time than now, sir; we'll go to the Windmill: there we shall have a cup of neat grist, we call it. I pray you, sir, let me request you to the Windmill.

Brainworm I'll follow you, sir, [Aside] and make grist o' you, if I have good luck.

Scene 5: Moorfields

Enter MATTHEW, ED. KNO'WELL, BOBADILL and STEPHEN

Matthew Sir, did your eyes ever taste the like clown of him, where we were today, Master Wellbred's half-brother? I think the whole earth cannot show his parallel, by this daylight.

Ed. Kno'well We were now speaking of him: Captain Bobadill tells me he is

fall'n foul o' you, too.

Matthew Oh, ay, sir, he threatened me with the bastinado.

Bobadill Ay, but I think I taught you prevention this morning, for that - You shall kill him, beyond question: if you be so generously minded.

Matthew Indeed, it is a most excellent trick! [Fences]

Bobadill Oh, you do not give spirit enough to your motion; you are too tardy, too heavy! Oh, it must be done like lightning, hay? [He practises at a post]

Matthew Rare Captain!

Bobadill Tut, 'tis nothing, and't be not done in a punto!

Ed. Kno'well Captain, did you ever prove yourself upon any of our masters of defence, here?

Matthew Oh, good sir! Yes, I hope, he has.

Bobadill I will tell you, sir. Upon my first coming to the city, after my long travail, for knowledge - in that mystery only - there came three or four of 'hem to me, at a gentleman's house, where it was my chance to be resident at that time, to entreat my presence at their schools, and withal so much importuned me that - I protest to you as I am a gentleman - I was ashamed of their rude demeanour, out of all measure. Well, I told 'hem that to come to a public school, they should pardon me, it was opposite, in diameter, to my humour, but, if so they would give their attendance at my lodging, I protested to do them what right or favour I could, as I was a gentleman, and so forth.

Ed. Kno'well So, sir, then you tried their skill?

Bobadill Alas, soon tried! You shall hear, sir. Within two or three days after, they came; and, by honesty, fair, sir, believe me, I graced them exceedingly, showed them some two or three tricks of prevention, have purchased 'hem since a credit to admiration! They cannot deny this; and yet now they hate me, and why? Because I am excellent, and for no other vile reason on the earth.

Ed. Kno'well This is strange, and barbarous! As ever I heard!

Bobadill Nay, for a more instance of their preposterous natures but note, sir: they have assaulted me some three, four, five, six of them together, as I have walked alone in divers skirts i' the town, as Turnbull, Whitechapel, Shoreditch, which were then my quarters, and since upon the Exchange, at my lodging, and at my ordinary: where I have driven them afore me the whole length of a street, in the open view of all our gallants,

pitying to hurt them, believe me. Yet all this lenity will not o'ercome their spleen: they will be doing with the pismire, raising a hill, a man may spurn abroad, with his foot, at pleasure. By myself, I could have slain them all, but I delight not in murder. I am loath to bear any other than this bastinado for 'hem; yet, I hold it good polity not to go disarmed, for though I be skilful, I may be oppressed with multitudes.

Ed. Kno'well Ay, believe me, may you sir; and, in my conceit, our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so.

Bobadill Alas, no: what's a peculiar man to a nation? Not seen.

Ed. Kno'well Oh, but your skill, sir!

Bobadill Indeed, that might be some loss; but who respects it? I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal; I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself; but, were I known to Her Majesty and the Lords - observe me - I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of her subjects in general, but to save the one half, nay, three parts of her yearly charge, in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And, how would I do it, think you?

Ed. Kno'well Nay, I know not, nor can I conceive.

Bobadill Why thus, sir. I would select nineteen more, to myself, throughout the land: gentlemen they should be of good spirit, strong, and able constitution. I would choose them by an instinct, a character, that I have; and I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as your punto, your reverso, your stoccata, your imbrocata, your passada, your montanto, till they could all play very near, or altogether as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field, the tenth of March, or thereabouts, and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not, in their honour, refuse us. Well, we would kill them: challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man, his twenty a day, that's twenty score; twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand; forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up, by computation. And this, will I venture my poor gentlemanlike carcass to perform - provided there be no treason practised upon us - by fair and discreet manhood, that is, civilly by the sword.

Ed. Kno'well Why, are you so sure of your hand, Captain, at all times?

Bobadill Tut, never miss thrust, upon my reputation with you.

Ed. Kno'well I would not stand in Downright's state, then, an' you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London.

Bobadill Why, sir, you mistake me! If he were here now, by this welkin, I would not draw my weapon on him! Let this gentleman do his mind; but I will bastinado him, by the bright sun, wherever I meet him.

Matthew Faith, and I'll have a fling at him, at my distance.

Ed. Kno'well God's so', look, where he is: yonder he goes.

DOWNRIGHT walks over the stage

Downright What peevish luck have I, I cannot meet with those bragging rascals?

Exit

Bobadill It's not he? Is it?

Ed. Kno'well Yes faith, it is he.

Matthew I'll be hanged, then, if that were he.

Ed. Kno'well Sir, keep your hanging good for some greater matter, for I assure you that was he.

Stephen Upon my reputation, it was he.

Bobadill Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone so; but I can hardly be induced to believe it was he, yet.

Ed. Kno'well That I think, sir.

Enter DOWNRIGHT

But see, he is come again!

Downright Oh, Pharaoh's foot, have I found you? Come, draw, to your tools: draw, gipsy, or I'll thrash you.

Bobadill Gentleman of valour, I do believe in thee, hear me -

Downright Draw your weapon, then.

Bobadill Tall man, I never thought on it till now - body of me - I had a warrant of the peace served on me even now as I came along, by a water-bearer; this gentleman saw it, Master Matthew.

Downright 'Sdeath, you will not draw, then?

He beats him, and disarms him  
MATTHEW runs away



Bobadill Hold, hold, under thy favour, forbear.

Downright Prate again, as you like this, you whoreson foist, you. You'll control the point, you? Your consort is gone? Had he stayed, he had shared with you, sir.

Exit

Bobadill Well, gentlemen, bear witness, I was bound to the peace by this good day.

Ed. Kno'well No faith, it's an ill day, Captain, never reckon it other; but say you were bound to the peace, the law allows you to defend yourself: that'll prove but a poor excuse.

Bobadill I cannot tell, sir. I desire good construction in fair sort. I never sustained the like disgrace, by heaven, sure I was struck with a planet thence, for I had no power to touch my weapon.

Ed. Kno'well Ay, like enough, I have heard of many that have been beaten under a planet: go, get you to a surgeon.

Exit BOBADILL

'Slid, an' these be your tricks, your passadas, and your montantos, I'll none of them. Oh, manners! That this age should bring forth such creatures! That nature should be at leisure to make' hem! Come, coz.

Stephen Mass, I'll ha' this cloak.

Ed. Kno'well God's will, 'tis Downright's.

Stephen Nay, it's mine now, another might have ta'en it up, as well as I. I'll wear it, so I will.

Ed. Kno'well How! an' he see it, he'll challenge it, assure yourself.

Stephen Ay, but he shall not ha' it. I'll say, I bought it.

Ed. Kno'well Take heed you buy it not too dear, coz.

Exeunt

Scene 6: a room in Kitely's house

Enter KITELY, WELLBRED, DAME KITELY, and BRIDGET

Kitely Now, trust me brother, you were much to blame,  
T' incense his anger, and disturb the peace

Of my poor house, where there are sentinels  
That every minute watch to give alarms  
Of civil war, without adjection  
Of your assistance or occasion.

Wellbred No harm done, brother, I warrant you: since there is no harm done. Anger costs a man nothing; and a tall man is never his own man till he be angry. To keep his valour in obscurity is to keep himself, as it were, in a cloak-bag. What's a musician unless he play? What's a tall man unless he fight? For, indeed, all this my wise brother stands upon absolutely, and that made me fall in with him so resolutely.

Dame Kitely Ay, but what harm might have come of it, brother?

Wellbred Might, sister? So might the good warm clothes your husband wears be poisoned, for anything he knows: or the wholesome wine he drunk, even now, at the table -

Kitely [Aside] Now, God forbid: Oh me. Now, I remember,  
My wife drunk to me, last; and changed the cup;  
And bade me wear this cursed suit today.  
See, if heavn' suffer murder undiscovered!  
[Aloud] I feel me ill; give me some mithridate,  
Some mithridate and oil, good sister, fetch me;  
Oh, I am sick at heart! I burn, I burn.  
If you will save my life, go, fetch it me.

Wellbred Oh, strange humour! My very breath has poisoned him.

Bridget Good brother, be content, what do you mean? The strength of these extreme conceits will kill you.

Dame Kitely Beshrew your heart-blood, brother Wellbred, now,  
For putting such a toy into his head.

Wellbred Is a fit simile a toy? Will he be poisoned with a simile? Brother Kitely, what a strange and idle imagination is this? For shame, be wiser. Oh my soul, there's no such matter.

Kitely Am I not sick? How am I then not poisoned? Am I not poisoned? How am I then so sick?

Dame Kitely If you be sick, your own thoughts make you sick.

Wellbred His jealousy is the poison he has taken.

BRAINWORM enters disguised like Justice Clement's man Formal

Brainworm Master Kitely, my master, Justice Clement, salutes you, and desires to speak with you with all possible speed.

Kitely No time but now? When I think I am sick? Very sick! Well, I will wait upon his worship. - Thomas! Cob! [Aside] I must seek them out, and set 'hem sentinels till I return. - Thomas! Cob! Thomas!

Exit

Wellbred [Takes BRAINWORM aside] This is perfectly rare, Brainworm! But how got'st thou this apparel of the Justice's man?

Brainworm Marry, sir, my proper fine pen-man would needs bestow the grist o' me at the Windmill, to hear some martial discourse; where so I marshalled him that I made him drunk with admiration! And, because, too much heat was the cause of his distemper, I stripped him stark naked as he lay along asleep, and borrowed his suit to deliver this counterfeit message in, leaving a rusty armour and an old brown bill to watch him till my return, which shall be when I ha' pawned his apparel, and spent the better part o' the money, perhaps.

Wellbred Well, thou art a successful merry knave, Brainworm; his absence will be a good subject for more mirth. I pray thee, return to thy young master, and will him to meet me and my sister Bridget at the Tower instantly; for here, tell him, the house is so stored with jealousy there is no room for love to stand upright in. We must get our fortunes committed to some larger prison, say; and than the Tower I know no better air; nor where the liberty of the house may do us more present service. Away.

Exit BRAINWORM

Enter KITELY, CASH following

Kitely Come hither, Thomas. Now my secret's ripe,  
And thou shalt have it: lay to both thine ears.  
Hark what I say to thee. I must go forth, Thomas.  
Be careful of thy promise, keep good watch,  
Note every gallant, and observe him well,  
That enters in my absence to thy mistress:  
If she would show him rooms, the jest is stale;  
Follow 'hem, Thomas, or else hang on him,  
And let him not go after; mark their looks;  
Note, if she offer but to see his band,  
Or any other amorous toy about him;  
But praise his leg; or foot; or if she say  
The day is hot, and bid him feel her hand  
How hot it is; Oh, that's a monstrous thing!  
Note me all this, good Thomas, mark their sighs,  
And, if they do but whisper, break 'hem off:  
I'll bear thee out in it. Wilt thou do this?  
Will thou be true, my Thomas?

Cash As truth's self, sir.

Kitely Why, I believe thee. Where is Cob, now? Cob!

Exit

Dame Kitely He's ever calling for Cob! I wonder, how he employs Cob, so!

Wellbred Indeed, sister, to ask how he employs Cob is a necessary question for you, that are his wife, and a thing not very easy for you to be satisfied in. But this I'll assure you, Cob's wife is an excellent bawd, sister, and oftentimes your husband haunts her house - marry, to what end I cannot altogether accuse him: imagine you what you think convenient. But I have known fair hides have foul hearts, ere now, sister.

Dame Kitely Never said you truer than that, brother; so much I can tell you for your learning. Thomas, fetch your cloak and go with me, I'll after him presently.

Exit CASH

I would to fortune, I could take him there, i' faith. I'd return him his own, I warrant him.

Exit

Wellbred So, let 'hem go. This may make sport anon. Now, my fair sister-in-law, that you knew, but how happy a thing it were to be fair, and beautiful?

Bridget That touches not me, brother.

Wellbred That's true; that's even the fault of it; for, indeed, beauty stands a woman in no stead, unless it procure her touching. But, sister, whether it touch you or no it touches your beauties; and I am sure they will abide the touch; an' they do not, a plague of all ceruse, say I: and it touches me too, in part, though not in the - Well, there's a dear and respected friend of mine, sister, stands very strongly and worthily affected toward you, and hath vowed to inflame whole bonfires of zeal at his heart in honour of your perfections. I have already engaged my promise to bring you where you shall hear him confirm much more. Ned Kno'well is the man, sister. There's no exception against the party. You are ripe for a husband; and a minute's loss to such an occasion is a great trespass in a wise beauty. What say you, sister? On my soul he loves you. Will you give him the meeting?

Bridget Faith, I had very little confidence in mine own constancy, brother, if I durst not meet a man; but this motion of yours savours of an old knight-adventurer's servant a little too much, methinks.

Wellbred What's that, sister?

Bridget Marry, of the squire.

Wellbred No matter if it did, I would be such an one for my friend - but see! who is returned to hinder us?

Enter KITELY

Kitely What villainy is this? Called out on a false message?  
There was some plot! I was not sent for. Bridget,  
Where's your sister?

Bridget I think she be gone forth, sir.

Kitely How! Is my wife gone forth? Whither, for God's sake?

Bridget She's gone abroad with Thomas.

Kitely Abroad with Thomas? Oh, that villain dours me.  
He hath discovered all unto my wife!  
Beast that I was to trust him: whither, I pray you,  
Went she?

Bridget I know not, sir.

Wellbred I'll tell you, brother,  
Whither I suspect she's gone.

Kitely Whither, good brother?

Wellbred To Cob's house, I believe; but, keep my counsel.

Kitely I will, I will: to Cob's house? Doth she haunt Cob's?  
She's gone a' purpose, now, to cuckold me  
With that lewd rascal, who, to win her favour,  
Hath told her all.

Exit

Wellbred Come, he's once more gone.  
Sister, let's lose no time; th' affair is worth it.

Exeunt

Scene 7: a street

Enter MATTHEW and BOBADILL

Matthew I wonder, Captain, what they will say of my going away? Ha?

Bobadill Why, what should they say? But as of a discreet gentleman? Quick,

wary, respectful of nature's fair lineaments: and that's all.

Matthew Why, so. But what can they say of your beating?

Bobadill A rude part, a touch with soft wood, a kind of gross battery used, laid on strongly, borne most patiently: and that's all.

Matthew Ay, but, would any man have offered it in Venice, as you say?

Bobadill Tut, I assure you, no. You shall have there your Nobilis, your Gentilezza, come in bravely upon your reverse, stand you close, stand you firm, stand you fair, save your reticato with his left leg, come to the asalto with the right, thrust with brave steel, defy your base wood! But, wherefore do I awake this remembrance? I was fascinated, by Jupiter, fascinated; but I will be unwitched, and revenged by law.

Matthew Do you hear? Is't not best to get a warrant, and have him arrested and brought before Justice Clement.

Bobadill It were not amiss, would we had it.

Enter BRAINWORM, disguised as FORMAL

Matthew Why, here comes his man, let's speak to him.

Bobadill Agreed, do you speak.

Matthew Save you, sir.

Brainworm With all my heart, sir.

Matthew Sir, there is one Downright hath abused this gentleman and myself, and we determine to make our amends by law; now, if you would do us the favour to procure a warrant to bring afore your master, you shall be well considered, I assure you, sir.

Brainworm Sir, you know my service is my living, such favours as these, gotten of my master, is his only preferment, and therefore you must consider me, as I may make benefit of my place.

Matthew How is that, sir?

Brainworm Faith, sir, the thing is extraordinary, and the gentleman may be of great account, yet, be what he will, if you will lay me down a brace of angels in my hand, you shall have it, otherwise not.

Matthew How shall we do, Captain? He asks a brace of angels - you have no money?

Bobadill Not a cross, by fortune.

Matthew Nor I, as I am a gentleman, but twopence, left of my two shillings in the morning for wine and radish: let's find him some pawn.

Bobadill Pawn? We have none to the value of his demand.

Matthew Oh, yes. I'll pawn this jewel in my ear, and you may pawn your silk stockings, and pull up your boots, they will ne'er be missed: it must be done, now.

Bobadill Well, an' there be no remedy, I'll step aside, and pull 'hem

Matthew Do you hear, sir? We have no store of money at this time, but you shall have good pawns: look you, sir, this jewel and that gentleman's silk stockings, because we would have it dispatched ere we went to our chambers.

Brainworm I am content, sir; I will get you the warrant presently. What's his name, say you? Downright?

Matthew Ay, ay, George Downright.

Brainworm What manner of man is he?

Matthew A tall big man, sir; he goes in a cloak, most commonly, of silk russet, laid about with russet lace.

Brainworm 'Tis very good, sir.

Matthew Here, sir, here's my jewel.

Bobadill And, here are stockings.

Brainworm Well, gentlemen, I'll procure you this warrant presently, but who will you have to serve it?

Matthew That's true, Captain: that must be considered.

Bobadill Body o' me, I know not! 'Tis service of danger!

Brainworm Why, you were best get one o' the varlets o' the city, a sergeant. I'll appoint you one, if you please.

Matthew Will you, sir? Why, we can wish no better.

Bobadill We'll leave it to you, sir.

Exeunt BOBADILL and MATTHEW

Brainworm This is rare! Now will I go pawn this cloak of the Justice's man's at the brokers, for a varlet's suit, and be the varlet myself; and get either more pawns or more money of Downright for the arrest.

Exit

Scene 8: The Lane before Cob's House

Enter KNO'WELL

Kno'well Oh, here it is, I am glad: I have found it now. Ho! Who is within, here?

Knock COB'S door

Tib [Within] I am within sir, what's your pleasure?

Kno'well To know who is within, besides yourself.

Tib Why, sir, you are no constable, I hope?

Kno'well Oh! Fear you the constable? Then I doubt not  
You have some guests within deserve that fear,  
I'll fetch him straight.

TIB opens

Tib O' God's name, sir.

Kno'well Go to. Come, tell me, is not young Kno'well, here?

Tib Young Kno'well? I know none such, sir, o' mine honesty!

Kno'well Your honesty? Dame, it flies too lightly from you:  
There is no way but fetch the constable.

Tib The constable? The man is mad, I think.

Exit. Slams the door

Enter DAME KITELY and CASH

Cash Ho, who keeps house, here?

Kno'well Oh, this is the female copesmate of my son?  
Now shall I meet him straight.

Dame Kately Knock, Thomas, hard.

Cash Ho, good wife?

TIB opens door a crack

Tib Why, what's the matter with you?



Dame Kitely Why, woman, grieves it you to ope' your door?  
Belike you get something to keep it shut.

Tib What mean these questions, 'pray ye?

Dame Kitely So strange you make it? Is not my husband here?

Kno'well Her husband!

Dame Kitely My tried husband, Master Kitely.

Tib I hope he needs not to be tried here.

Dame Kitely No, dame, he does it not for need, but pleasure.

Tib Neither for need nor pleasure is he here.

Kno'well This is but a device to baulk me withal.

Enter KITELY, muffled in his cloak

Soft, who is this? 'Tis not my son, disguised?

Dame Kitely [She spies her husband come: and runs to him]  
Oh, sir, have I forestalled your honest market?  
Found your close walks? You stand amazed, now, do you?  
I' faith, I am glad, I have smoked you yet at last!  
Where is your jewel trow? In, come, let's see her -  
Fetch forth your housewife, dame - if she be fairer,  
In any honest judgement, than myself,  
I'll be content with it; but, she is change,  
She feeds you fat, she soothes your appetite,  
And you are well? Your wife, an honest woman,  
Is meat twice sod to you, sir? Oh, you treachour!

Kno'well She cannot counterfeit thus plausibly.

Kitely Out on thy more than strumpet's impudence!  
Steal'st thou thus to thy haunts? And have I taken  
Thy bawd and thee, and thy companion,  
[Pointing to KNO'WELL]  
This hoary-headed lecher, this old goat,  
Close at your villainy, and would'st thou 'scuse it  
With this stale harlot's jest, accusing me?  
[To him] Oh, old incontinent, dost not thou shame,  
When all thy powers in chastity is spent,  
To have a mind so hot? And to entice  
And feed th' enticements of a lustful woman?

Dame Kitely Out, I defy thee, I, dissembling wretch!

Kitely Defy me, strumpet. [Indicates CASH] Ask they pandar, here,  
Can he deny it? Or that wicked elder?

Kno'well Why, hear you, sir.

Kitely Tut, tut, tut: never speak.  
Thy guilty conscience will discover thee.

Kno'well What lunacy is this, that haunts this man?

Kitely Well, good wife B-A-'-D, Cob's wife; and you,  
That make your husband such a hoddy-doddy;  
And you, young apple-squire; and old cuckold-maker;  
I'll ha' you every one before a justice.  
Nay, you shall answer it; I charge you go.

Kno'well Marry, with all my heart, sir; I go willingly.  
Though I do taste this as a trick put on me  
To punish my impertinent search; and justly:  
And half forgive my son for the device.

Kitely Come, will you go?

Dame Kitely Go? To thy shame, believe it.

Enter COB

Cob Why, what's the matter here? What's here to do?

Kitely Oh, Cob, art thou come? I have been abused,  
And i' thy house. Never was man so, wronged!

Cob 'Slid, in my house? My Master Kitely? Who wrongs you in my house?

Kitely Marry, young lust in old; and old in young, here:  
Thy wife's their bawd, here have I taken 'hem.

Cob How? Bawd? Is my house come to that? Am I preferred thither?

He falls upon his wife and beats her

Did I charge you to keep your doors shut, Is'bel? And do you let 'hem open  
for all comers?

Kno'well Friend, know some cause before thou beat'st thy wife,  
This's madness, in thee.

Cob Why? Is there no cause?

Kitely Yes, I'll show cause before the Justice, Cob:  
Come, let her go with me.

Cob Nay, she shall go.

Tib Nay, I will go. I'll see an' you may be allowed to make a bundle o' hemp o' your right and lawful wife thus, at every cuckoldly knave's pleasure. Why do you not go?

Kitely A bitter quean. Come, we'll ha' you tamed.

Exeunt

### Scene 9: A Street

Enter BRAINWORM disguised as a city-sergeant

Brainworm Well, of all my disguises yet, now am I most like myself: being in this sergeant's gown. A man of my present profession never counterfeits till he lays hold upon a debtor, and says, he rests him; for then he brings him to all manner of unrest. A kind of little kings we are, bearing the diminutive of a mace, made like a young artichoke, that always carries pepper and salt in itself. Well, I know not what danger I undergo by this exploit; pray heaven, I come well off.

Enter MATTHEW and BOBADILL

Matthew See, I think, yonder is the varlet, by his gown.

Bobadill Let's go in quest of him.

Matthew 'Save you, friend, are you not here by appointment of Justice Clement's man?

Brainworm Yes, an't please you, sir: he told me two gentlemen had willed him to procure a warrant from his master, which I have about me, to be served on one Downright.

Matthew It is honestly done of you both; and see where the party comes you must arrest: serve it upon him quickly, afore he be aware -

Bobadill Bear back, Master Matthew.

Enter STEPHEN in Downright's cloak

Brainworm Master Downright, I arrest you i' the Queen's name, and must carry you afore a justice, by virtue of this warrant.

Stephen Me, friend? I am no Downright, I. I am Master Stephen, you do not well to arrest me, I tell you, truly: I am in nobody's bonds nor books, I, would you should know it. A plague on you heartily for making me thus afraid afore my time.

Brainworm Why, now are you deceived, gentlemen?

Bobadill He wears such a cloak, and that deceived us: but see, here a comes, indeed! This is he, officer.

Enter DOWNRIGHT

Downright Why, how now, signior gull! Are you turned filcher of late? Come, deliver my cloak.

Stephen Your cloak, sir? I bought it, even now, in open market.

Brainworm Master Downright, I have a warrant I must serve upon you, procured by these two gentlemen.

Downright These gentlemen? These rascals! [Raises his cudgel]

Brainworm Keep the peace, I charge you, in her Majesty's name.

Downright I obey thee. What must I do, officer?

Brainworm Go before Master Justice Clement, to answer what they can object against you, sir. I will use you kindly, sir.

Matthew Come, let's before, and make the Justice, Captain -

Bobadill The varlet's a tall man! Afore heaven!

Exeunt MATTHEW and BOBADILL

Stephen Sir, I bought it, and I'll keep it.

Downright You will.

Stephen Ay, that I will.

Downright Officer, there's thy fee, arrest him.

Brainworm Master Stephen, I must arrest you.

Stephen Arrest me, I scorn it. There, take your cloak, I'll none on't.

Downright Nay, that shall not serve your turn, now, sir. Officer, I'll go with thee to the Justice's: bring him along.

Stephen Why, is not here your cloak? What would you have?

Downright I'll ha' you answer it, sir.

Brainworm Sir, I'll take your word; and this gentleman's, too, for his appearance.

Downright I'll ha' no words taken. Bring him along.

Brainworm Sir, I may choose to do that: I may take bail.

Downright 'Tis true, you may take bail, and choose at another time: but you shall not, now, varlet. Bring him along, or I'll swinge you. [Raises cudgel]

Brainworm Sir, I pity the gentleman's case. Here's your money again.

Downright 'Sdeins, tell not me of my money, bring him away, I say.

Brainworm I warrant you he will go with you of himself, sir.

Downright Yet more ado?

Brainworm [Aside] I have made a fair rash on't.

Stephen Must I go?

Brainworm I know no remedy, Master Stephen.

Downright Come along, afore me, here. I do not love your hanging look behind.

Stephen Why, sir, I hope you cannot hang me for it. Can he, fellow?

Brainworm I think not, sir. It is but a whipping matter, sure.

Stephen Why, then, let him do his worst, I am resolute.

Exeunt

## Act 5

Scene 1: Coleman Street. a hall in Justice Clement's house

Enter CLEMENT, KNO'WELL, KITELY, DAME KITELY, TIB, CASH, COB and SERVANTS

Clement Nay, but stay, stay, give me leave - my chair, sirrah. You, Master Kno'well, say you went thither to meet your son.

Kno'well Ay, sir.

Clement But who directed you thither?

Kno'well That did mine own man, sir.

Clement Where is he?

Kno'well Nay, I know not, now; I left him with your clerk: and appointed him to stay here for me.

Clement My clerk? About what time was this?

Kno'well Marry, between one and two, as I take it.

Clement And what time came my man with the false message to you, Master Kitely?

Kitely After two, sir.

Clement Very good; but, Mistress Kitely, how that you were at Cob's?

Dame Kitely An' please you, sir, I'll tell you. My brother, Wellbred, told me that Cob's house was a suspected place -

Clement So it appears, methinks - but, on.

Dame Kitely And that my husband used thither, daily.

Clement No matter, so he used himself well, mistress.

Dame Kitely True sir, but you know what grows by such haunts, often times.

Clement I see rank fruits of a jealous brain, Mistress Kitely; but did you find your husband there, in that case, as you suspected?

Kitely I found her there, sir.

Clement Did you so? That alters the case. Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there.

Kitely Marry, that did my brother Wellbred.

Clement How? Wellbred first tell her? Then tell you, after? Where is Wellbred?

Kitely Gone with my sister, sir, I know not whither.

Clement Why, this is a mere trick, a device; you are gulled in this most grossly, all! Alas, poor wench, wert thou beaten for this?

Tib Yes, most pitifully, and't please you.

Cob And worthily, I hope, if it shall prove so.

Clement Ay, that's like, and a piece of a sentence.

Enter a SERVANT

How now, sir? What's the matter?

Servant Sir, there's a gentleman i' the court without, desires to speak with your worship.

Clement A gentleman? What's he?

Servant A soldier, sir, he says.

Clement A soldier? Take down my armour, my sword, quickly: a soldier speak with me! Why, when knaves? [He arrns himself] Come on, come on, hold my cap there, so; give me my gorget, my sword. Stand by, I will end your matters, anon - Let the soldier enter.

Enter BOBADILL and MATTHEW  
Exit SERVANT

Now, sir what ha you to say to me?

Bobadill By your worship's favour -

Clement Nay, keep out, sir, I know not your pretence; you send me word, sir, you are a soldier; why, sir, you shall be answered, here, here be them have been amongst soldiers. Sir, your pleasure.

Bobadill Faith, sir, so it is, this gentleman and myself have been most uncivilly wronged and beaten by one Downright, a coarse fellow, about the town, here, and for mine own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humour of quarrelling, he hath assaulted me in the way of my peace, despoiled me of mine honour, disarmed me of my weapons, and rudely laid me along in the open streets when I not so much as once offered to resist him.

Clement Oh, God's precious! Is this the soldier? Here, take my armour off quickly, 'twill make him swoon, I fear; he is not fit to look on't, that will put up a blow.

Matthew An't please your worship, he was bound to the peace.

Clement Why, and he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they?

Enter SERVANT

Servant There's one of the varlets of the city, sir, has brought two gentlemen, her: one, upon your worship's warrant.

Clement My warrant?

Servant Yes, sir. The officer says procured by these two.

Clement Bid him come in.

Exit SERVANT

Set by this picture.

Enter DOWNRIGHT, STEPHEN and BRAINWORM disguised as a city sergeant

What, Master Downright! Are you brought at Master Freshwater's suit, here?

Downright I' faith, sir. And here's another brought at my suit.

Clement What are you, sir?

Stephen A gentleman, sir. Oh, uncle!

Clement Uncle? Who? Master Kno'well.

Kno'well Ay, sir! This is a wise kinsman of mine.

Stephen God's my witness, uncle, I am wronged here monstrously, he charges me with stealing of his cloak, and would I might never stir if I did not find it in the street, by chance.

Downright Oh, did you find it, now? You said, you bought it, erewhile.

Stephen And you said I stole it; nay, now my uncle is here, I'll do well enough, with you.

Clement Well, let this breathe a while; you, that have cause to complain, there, stand forth: had you my warrant for this gentleman's apprehension?

Bobadill Ay, an't please your worship.

Clement Nay, do not speak in passion so: where had you it?

Bobadill Of your clerk, sir.

Clement That's well! An' my clerk can make warrants, and my hand not at 'hem! Where is the warrant? Officer, have you it?

Brainworm No, sir, your worship's man, Master Formal, bid me do it, for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge.

Clement Why, Master Downright, are you such a novice to be served, and never see the warrant?

Downright Sir. He did not serve it on me.

Clement No? How then?



Downright Marry, sir, he came to me and said he must serve it, and he would use me kindly, and so -

Clement Oh, God's pity, was it so, sir? He must serve it? Give me my long-sword there, and help me off; so. Come on, sir varlet, I must cut off your legs, sirrah.

BRAINWORM kneels; he flourishes over him with his long-sword

Nay, stand up, I'll use you kindly; I must cut off your legs, I say.

Brainworm [Kneeling again] Oh, good sir, I beseech you; nay, good Master Justice.

Clement I must do it; there is no remedy. I must cut off your legs, sirrah, I must cut off your ears, you rascal, I must do it; I must cut off your nose, I must cut off your head.

Brainworm Oh, good your worship.

Clement Well, rise, how dost thou do, now? Dost thou feel thyself well? Hast thou no harm?

Brainworm No, I thank your good worship, sir.

Clement Why, so! I said, I must cut off thy legs, and I must cut off thy arms, and I must cut off thy head; but I did not do it: so, you said you must serve this gentleman with my warrant, but you did not serve him. You knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you must? Sirrah, away with him to the jail, I'll teach you a trick for your must, sir.

Brainworm Good sir, I beseech you, be good to me.

Clement Tell him he shall to the jail, away with him, I say.

Brainworm Nay, sir, if you will cornmit me, it shall be for committing more than this: I will not lose, by my travail, any grain of my fame certain.

Throws off his disguise

Clement How is this!

Kno'well My man, Brainworm!

Stephen Oh yes, uncle. Brainworm has been with my cousin Edward and I all this day.

Clement I told you all there was some device!

Brainworm Nay, excellent Justice, since I have laid myself thus open to you, now stand strong for me; both with your sword and your balance.

Clement Body o' me, a merry knave! Give me a bowl of sack: if he belong to you, Master Kno'well, I bespeak your patience.

Brainworm That is it I have most need of. Sir, if you'll pardon me, only; I'll glory in all the rest of my exploits.

Kno'well Sir, you know I love not to have my favours come hard from me. You have your pardon; though I suspect you shrewdly for being of counsel with my son against me.

Brainworm Yes, faith, I have, sir; though you retained me doubly this morning, for yourself: first, as Brainworm; after, as Fitzsword. I was your reformed soldier, sir. 'Twas I sent you to Cob's upon the errand without end.

Kno'well Is it possible! Or that thou should'st disguise thy language so, as I should not know thee?

Brainworm Oh, sir, this has been the day of my metamorphosis! It is not that shape alone that I have run through today. I brought this gentleman, Master Kitely, a message too, in the form of Master Justice's man, here, to draw him out o' the way, as well as your worship: while Master Wellbred might make a conveyance of Mistress Bridget to my young master.

Kitely How! My sister stol'n away?

Kno'well My son is not married, I hope!

Brainworm Faith, sir, they are both as sure as love, a priest, and three thousand pound, which is her portion, can make 'hem: and by this time are ready to bespeak their wedding supper at the Windmill, except some friend, here, prevent 'hem, and invite 'hem home.

Clement Marry, that will I. I thank thee for putting me in mind on't. Sirrah, go you, and fetch 'hem hither, upon my warrant. Neither's friends have cause to be sorry if I know the young couple, aright. Here, I drink to thee, for thy good news. But, I pray thee, what hast thou done with my man Formal?

Brainworm Faith, sir, after some ceremony past, as making him drunk, first with story and then with wine - but all in kindness - and stripping him to his shirt, I left him in that cool vain, departed, sold your worship's warrant to these two, pawned his livery for that varlet's gown, to serve it in; and thus have brought myself, by my activity, to your worship's consideration.

Clement And I will consider thee in another cup of sack. Here's to thee, which having drunk off, this is my sentence. Pledge me: thou hast done, or assisted to nothing, in my judgement, but deserves to be pardoned for the wit o' the offence. If thy master, or any man here, be angry with thee, I

shall suspect his ingine, while I know him for't. How now? What noise is that?

Enter SERVANT

Servant Sir, it is Roger come home.

Clement Bring him in, bring him in.

Enter FORMAL in a suit of armour

What! Drunk, in arms against me? Your reason, your reason for this.

Formal I beseech your worship to pardon me. I happened into ill company by chance, that cast me into a sleep, and stripped me of all my clothes -

Clement Well, tell him I am Justice Clement, and do pardon him; but what is this to your armour! What may that signify?

Formal And't please you, sir, it hung up i' the room where I was stripped; and I borrowed it of one o' the drawers, to come home in, because I was loath to do penance through the street i' my shirt.

Clement Well, stand by a while.

Enter ED. KNO'WELL, WELLBRED, and BRIDGET

Who be these? Oh, the young company, welcome, welcome. Gi' you joy. Nay, Mistress Bridget, blush not; you are not so fresh a bride, but the news of it is come hither afore you. Master Bridegroom, I ha' made your peace, give me your hand: so will I for all the rest, ere you forsake my roof.

Ed. Kno'well We are the more bound to your humanity, sir.

Clement Only, these two have so little of man in 'hem, they are no part of my care.

Wellbred Yes, sir, let me pray you for this gentleman, he belongs to my sister the bride.

Clement In what place, sir?

Wellbred Of her delight, sir, below the stairs, and in public: her poet, sir.

Clement A poet? I will challenge him myself, presently, at extempore.  
Mount up thy Phlegon muse, and testify  
How Saturn, sitting in an ebon cloud,  
Disrobed his podex white as ivory,  
And through the welkin thundered all aloud.

Wellbred He is not for extempore, sir; he is all for the pocket-muse.  
Please you command a sight of it.

Clement Yes, yes, search him for a taste of his vein.

They search MATTHEW's pockets

Wellbred You must not deny the Queen's Justice, sir, under a writ o'  
rebellion.

Clement What! All this verse? Body o' me, he carries a whole realm, a  
commonwealth of paper, in's hose! Let's see some of his subjects!

Unto the boundless Ocean of thy face,  
Runs this poor river charged with streams of eyes.

How? This is stol'n.

Ed. Kno'well A parody! A parody! With a kind of miraculous gift to make it  
absurder than it was.

Clement Is all the rest, of this batch? Bring me a torch; lay it together,  
and give fire. Cleanse the air. Here was enough to have infected the whole  
city if it had not been taken in time! See, see, how our Poet's glory  
shines! Brighter and brighter! Still it increases! Oh, now it's at the  
highest: and now it declines as fast. You may see. Sic transit gloria  
mundi.

Kno'well There's an emblem for you, son, and your studies!

Clement Nay, no speech, or act of mine be drawn against such, as profess it  
worthily. They are not born every year, as an alderman. There goes more to  
the making of a good poet than a sheriff, Master Kitely. You look upon me!  
Though I live i' the city here, amongst you, I will do more reverence to  
him, when I meet him, than I will to the major out of his year. But, these  
paper-pedlars! These ink-dabblers! They cannot expect reprehension or  
reproach. They have it with the fact.

Ed. Kno'well Sir, you have saved me the labour of a defence.

Clement It shall be discourse for supper; between your father and me, if he  
dare undertake me. But, to dispatch away these, you sign o' the soldier and  
picture o' the poet, but both so false, I will not ha' you hanged out at my  
door till midnight - while we are at supper, you two shall penitently fast  
it in my court, without; and, if you will, you may pray there that we may  
be so merry within as to forgive or forget you when we come out. Here's a  
third, because we tender your safety, shall watch you, he is provided for  
the purpose. Look to your charge, sir.

Stephen And what shall I do?

Clement Oh, I had lost a sheep, an he had not bleated! Why, sir, you shall give Master Downright his cloak: and I will entreat him to take it. A trencher and a napkin you shall have, i' the buttery, and keep Cob and his wife company, here; whom I will entreat first to be reconciled: and you to endeavour with your wit to keep 'hem so.

Stephen I'll do my best.

Cob Why, now I see thou art honest, Tib, I receive thee as my dear and mortal wife again.

Tib And I you, as my loving and obedient husband.

Clement Good complement! It will be their bridal night, too. They are married anew. Come, I conjure the rest to put off all discontent. You, Master Downright, your anger; you, Master Kno'well, your cares; Master Kitley and his wife, their jealousy.

"For, I must tell you both, while that is fed,  
Horns i' the mind are worse than o' the head."

Kitley Sir, thus they go from me, kiss me, sweetheart.

"See what a drove of horns fly in the air,  
Winged with my cleansed, and my credulous breath!  
Watch 'hem, suspicious eyes, watch, where they fall.  
See, see! On heads, that think they've none at all!  
Oh, what a plenteous world of this will come!  
When air rains horns, all may be sure of some."

I ha' learned so much verse out of a jealous man's part in a play.

Clement 'Tis well, 'tis well! This night we'll dedicate to friendship, love, and laughter. Master bridegroom, take your bride, and lead; every one, a fellow. Here is my mistress - Brainworm! To whom all my addresses of courtship shall have their reference. Whose adventures, this day, when our grandchildren shall hear to be made a fable, I doubt not but it shall find both spectators and applause.

