

BRAVE SPIRITS THEATRE ARCHIVE

REHEARSAL SCRIPT A King and No King 2017

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A King and No King

by Francis Beaumont & John Fletcher

Directed by

Cassie Ash

February - March 2017

1.1 Enter MARDONIUS and BESSUS

MARDONIUS Bessus, the King has made a fair hand on't, has ended the wars at a blow, would my sword had a closed basket hilt to hold wine, and the blade would make knives, for we shall have nothing but eating and drinking.

BESSUS We that are commanders shall do well enough.

MARDONIUS Faith, Bessus, such commanders as thou may. I'll say so much i' thy behalf, and yet thou art valiant enough upon a retreat, I think thou wouldst kill any man that stopp'd thee an thou couldst.

BESSUS But was not this a brave combat, Mardonius?

MARDONIUS Why, didst thou see't?

BESSUS You stood with me.

MARDONIUS I did so, but methought thou winkst at every blow they struck.

BESSUS Well, I believe there are better soldiers than I that never saw two princes fight in lists.

MARDONIUS By my troth, I think so too Bessus, many a thousand.

BESSUS 'Twas bravely done of our king. To take a prince prisoner in the heart of his own country in single combat.

MARDONIUS See how thy blood curdles at this, I think thou wouldst be contented to be beaten in this passion.

BESSUS Let me not live, if I do not think it is a braver piece of service than that I'm so fam'd for.

MARDONIUS Why, art thou fam'd for any valor?

BESSUS Ay, fam'd, ay, I warrant you.

MARDONIUS I am very heartily glad on't. I have been with thee ever since thou cam'st a' th' wars, and this is the first word that ever I heard on't, prithee who fames thee?

BESSUS The Christian world.

MARDONIUS 'Tis heathenishly done of them, in my conscience, thou deserv'st it

30 not.

BESSUS Yes, I ha' done good service.

MARDONIUS I do not know how thou may'st wait of a man in's chamber, or thy agility in shifting a trencher, but otherwise no service good Bessus.

BESSUS You saw me do the service yourself.

MARDONIUS Not so hasty, sweet Bessus, where was it, is the place vanish'd?

BESSUS At Bessus' Desperate Redemption.

MARDONIUS 'Bessus' Desperate Redemption,' where's that?

BESSUS There where I redeemed the day, the place bears my name.

MARDONIUS If I were not a very merrily dispos'd man, what would become of thee? One that had but a grain of choler in the whole composition of his body would send thee of an errand to the worms, for putting thy name upon that field. Did not I beat thee there i' th' head a' th troops with a truncheon, because thou wouldst needs run away with thy company when we should charge the enemy?

BESSUS True, but I did not run.

MARDONIUS Thou knowst, and so do I, thou meanst to fly, and thy fear making thee mistake, thou ran'st upon the enemy, and a hot charge thou gav'st, as I'll do thee right, thou art furious in running away, and I think we owe thy fear for our victory. If

I were the King, and were sure thou wouldst mistake always, and run away upon the enemy, thou shouldst be general by this light.

50 BESSUS You'll never leave this till I fall foul.

MARDONIUS No more such words, dear Bessus, for though I have ever known thee a coward, and therefore durst never strike thee, yet if thou proceedst, I will allow thee valiant, and beat thee.

BESSUS Come, come, our king's a brave fellow.

MARDONIUS He is so, Bessus. I wonder how thou com'st to know it. But if thou wert a man of understanding, I would tell thee he is vainglorious, and humble, and angry, and patient, and merry, and dull, and joyful, and sorrowful, in extremities in an hour. Do not think me thy friend for this, for if I car'd who knew it, thou shouldst not hear it, Bessus. Here he is, with the prey in his foot.

60

1.2 Enter ARBACES and TIGRANES, with attendants

ARBACES Thy sadness, brave Tigranes, takes away

From my full victory. You are free as I.

To be my prisoner, is to be more free

Than you were formerly, and never think

The man I held worthy to combat me

Shall be us'd servilely. Thy ransom is

To take my only sister to thy wife;

A heavy one, Tigranes, for she is

A lady that the neighbor princes send

Blanks to fetch home. I have been too unkind

To her, Tigranes, she but nine year old

I left her, and ne'er saw her since. Your wars

Have held me long. She was a pretty child

Then, I was little better; but now fame

Cries loudly on her, and my messengers

Make me believe she is a miracle;

She'll make you shrink, as I did, with a stroke,

But of her eye, Tigranes.

80 TIGRANES

Is it the course of

Iberia, to use their prisoners thus?

Had Fortune thrown my name above Arbaces,

I should not thus have talk'd: for in Armenia

We hold it base; you should have kept your temper,

Till you saw home again, where 'tis the fashion

Perhaps, to brag.

ARBACES

Be you my witness, earth:

Need I to brag, doth not this captive prince

Speak me sufficiently, and all the acts

That I have wrought upon his suffering land?

Should I then boast? Where lies that foot of ground

Within his whole realm that I have not pass'd

Fighting, and conquering? Far then from me

Be ostentation.

MARDONIUS Indeed this is none.

ARBACES But he shall wrong his and my modesty

That thinks me apt to boast. After an act

Fit for a God to do upon his foe,

A little glory in a soldier's mouth

Is well becoming, be it far from vain.

MARDONIUS It's pity that valor should be thus drunk.

ARBACES I offer you my sister, and you answer

I do insult. A lady that no suit

Nor treasure, nor thy crown could purchase thee,

But that thou foughtst with me.

TIGRANES Though this be worse

Than that you spoke before, it strikes not me.

I would give worlds for ransoms, were they mine,

Rather than have her.

110 ARBACES See if I insult.

That am the conqueror, and for a ransom

Offer rich treasure to the conqueréd,

Which he refuses, and I bear his scorn.

It cannot be self flattery to say

The daughters of your country set by her

Would see their shame, run home, and blush to death

At their own foulness. Nature did her wrong

To print continual conquest on her cheeks,

And make no man worthy for her to take,

But me that am too near her; and as strangely

She did for me. But you will think I brag.

MARDONIUS I do, I'll be sworn. Thy valor and thy passions sever'd would have

made two excellent fellows in their kinds, would one of 'em were away.

TIGRANES Were she as virtuous as she would be thought,

So perfect, that no one of her own sex

Would find a want, had she so tempting fair,

That she could wish it off her damning souls,

I would pay any ransom, twenty times,

Rather than meet her married in my bed.

Perhaps I have a love, where I have fix'd

Mine eyes, not to be mov'd, and she on me,

I am not fickle.

ARBACES Is that all the cause?

Trust me Tigranes, she can do as much

In peace, as I in war; she'll conquer too.

You shall see if you have the power to stand

The force of her swift looks. If you dislike,

I'll send you home with love, and name your ransom

Some other way, but if she be your choice

120

She frees you. To Iberia you must.

TIGRANES Sir, I have learnt a prisoner's sufferance,

And will obey, but give me leave to talk

In private with some friends before I go.

ARBACES Some one await him forth, and see him safe,

But let him freely send for whom he please,

And none dare to disturb his conference:

I will not have him know what bondage is

Till he be free from me.

1.3 Exeunt BESSUS with TIGRANES

This prince, Mardonius,

Is full of wisdom, valor, all the graces

Man can receive.

MARDONIUS And yet you conquer'd him?

ARBACES And yet I conquer'd him, and could have done

Hadst thou join'd with him, though thy name in arms

Be great. Must all men that are virtuous

Think suddenly to match themselves with me?

I conquered him, and bravely; did I not?

MARDONIUS Why you did, and you have talk'd enough on't.

160 ARBACES Talk'd enough. If I had not patience

Above a god, I should be call'd a tyrant

Throughout the world--they will offend to death

Each minute--let me hear thee speak again

And thou art earth again--why this is like

Tigranes' speech, that needs would say, I bragg'd.

He said I boasted; speak, Mardonius,

Did I? He will not answer. O my temper!

I give you thanks above, that taught my heart

Patience, I can endure his silence. What, will none

Vouchsafe to give me audience? Am I grown

To such a poor respect, or do you mean

To break my wind? Speak, speak, so'one one of you,

Or else by Heaven--

1 GENTLEMAN

So please your--

ARBACES

170

180

Monstrous!

I cannot be heard out, they cut me off

As if I were too saucy; I will live

In woods, and talk to trees, they will allow me

To end what I begin. The meanest subject

Can find a freedom to discharge his soul,

And not I; now it is a time to speak,

I hearken.

1 GENTLEMAN

May it please--

ARBACES

I mean not you,

Did not I stop you once?

2 GENTLEMAN I hope your majesty--

ARBACES Thou draw'st thy words

That I must wait an hour, where other men

Can hear in instants.

190 2 GENTLEMAN An't please your majesty--

ARBACES Wilt thou devour me? This is such a rudeness

As yet you never showed me, and I want

Power to command me, else Mardonius

Would speak at my request.

MARDONIUS Truth will offend you.

ARBACES You take all great care what will offend me,

When you dare to utter such things as these.

MARDONIUS You told Tigranes, you had won his land

With that sole arm, propp'd by divinity.

200 Was not that bragging, and a wrong to us

That daily venture lives?

ARBACES O that thy name

Were great as mine, that I might combat thee;

I would through all the regions habitable

Search thee, and having found thee, with my sword

Drive thee about the world, till I had met

Some place that yet man's curiosity

Hath miss'd of. There, there would I strike thee dead.

1 GENTLEMAN The King rages extremely, shall we slink away?

210 2 GENTLEMAN Content. [They go, sneakily]

ARBACES There I would make you know t'was this sole arm.

I grant you were my instruments, and did

As I commanded you, but 'twas this arm

Mov'd you like wheels, it mov'd you as it pleas'd--

Whither slip you now? I had need have temper [They freeze]

That rule such people. I have nothing left

At my own choice, I would I might be private.

Mean men enjoy themselves, but 'tis our curse,

To have a tumult that out of their loves

220 Will wait on us whether we will or no.

Will you be gone? Why here they stand like death,

My word moves nothing.

2 GENTLEMAN Must we go?

1 GENTLEMAN I know not.

ARBACES I pray you leave me, sirs. [Exit GENTLEMEN]

Why now they leave me all, Mardonius.

MARDONIUS Sir, shall I speak?

ARBACES Why you would now think much

To be denied. I will hear you out.

230 MARDONIUS Sir, that I have ever loved you, my sword hath spoken for me, that

I do, if it be doubted, I dare call an oath, a great one, to my witness: an were you not

my king, from amongst men, I should have chose you out to love above the rest, nor can this challenge thanks. For my own sake I should have doted, because I would have lov'd the most deserving man, for so you are.

ARBACES Alas, Mardonius, rise, you shall not kneel;

We all are soldiers, and all venture lives,

And where there is no difference in men's worths,

Titles are jests. Who can out value thee?

MARDONIUS Sir, you did promise you would hear me out.

240 ARBACES And so I will. Speak freely, for from thee

Nothing can come but worthy things and true.

MARDONIUS Though you have all this worth, you hold some qualities that do eclipse your virtues.

ARBACES Eclipse my virtues?

MARDONIUS Yes, your passions, which are so manifold, that they appear even in this: when I commend you, you hug me for that truth; when I speak of your faults, you make a start and fly the hearing. But--

ARBACES When you commend me? O that I should live

To need such commendations. If my deeds

Blew not my praise themselves above the earth,

I were most wretched. Spare your idle praise.

If thou didst mean to flatter, and should'st utter

Words in my praise, that thou thoughtst impudence,

My deeds should make 'em modest.

MARDONIUS How ever you will use me after, yet for your own promise sake, hear me the rest.

ARBACES I will, and after call unto the winds,

For they shall lend as large an ear as I

To what you utter: speak.

MARDONIUS Would you but leave these hasty tempers, which I do not say take from you all your worth, but darken 'em, then you would shine indeed.

ARBACES Well.

MARDONIUS Yet I would have you keep some passions, lest men should take you for a god, your virtues are such.

ARBACES Why now you flatter.

MARDONIUS I never understood the word. Were you no king, and free from these wild moods, should I choose a companion for wit and pleasure, it should be you; or for honest, to interchange my bosom with, it would be you; or valor to defend my reputation, still I would find out you, for you are fit to fight for all the world. Now I have spoke, consider to yourself, find out a use. If so, then what shall fall to me is not material.

ARBACES Is not material? More than ten such lives

As mine, Mardonius, it was nobly said.

Thou hast spoke truth, and boldly, such a truth

As might offend another. I have been

Too passionate, and idle, thou shall see

A swift amendment. It troubles me

That I should use so rough a phrase to thee.

Impute it to my folly, what thou wilt,

So thou wilt pardon me, that thou and I

Should differ thus.

MARDONIUS Why 'tis no matter, sir--

ARBACES Faith but 'tis, but thou dost ever take

All things I do thus patiently, for which

I never can requite thee but with love,

And that thou shalt be sure of. Thou and I

Have not been merry lately: pray thee tell me

Where hadst thou that same jewel in thine ear?

MARDONIUS Why, at the taking of a town.

290 ARBACES A wench, upon my life, a wench, Mardonius--

[Enter BESSUS]

Bessus, I thought you had been in Iberia by this.

BESSUS An't please your majesty, I have a suit.

ARBACES Is't not lousy, Bessus, what is't?

BESSUS I am to carry a lady with me. And if I can prefer her to the Lady

Panthea, your majesty's sister, to learn fashions, as her friends term it, it will be worth something to me.

ARBACES Why thou shalt bid her entertain her from me, so thou wilt resolve me one thing.

300 BESSUS If I can.

ARBACES Faith, 'tis a very disputable question, yet I think thou canst decide it.

BESSUS Your majesty has a good opinion of my understanding.

ARBACES I have so good an opinion of it. 'Tis whether thou be valiant.

BESSUS Somebody has traduc'd me to you. Do you see this sword, sir?

ARBACES Yes.

BESSUS If I do not make my back-biters eat it to a knife within this week,

say I am not valiant.

1.4 [Enter a MESSENGER]

MESSENGER Health to your majesty.

310 ARBACES From Gobrius?

MESSENGER Yes, sir.

ARBACES How does he, is he well?

MESSENGER In perfect health.

ARBACES Thank thee for thy good news. [Exit MESSENGER]

BESSUS The King starts back.

MARDONIUS His blood goes back as fast.

BESSUS And now it comes again.

MARDONIUS He alters strangely.

ARBACES The hand of heaven is on me; be it far

From me to struggle.

MARDONIUS This is strange, sir, how do you?

ARBACES Mardonius, my mother--

MARDONIUS Is she dead?

ARBACES Alas, she's not so happy. Thou dost know

How she hath labor'd since my father died

To take by treason hence this loathéd life,

That would but be to serve her. I have pardon'd

And pardon'd, and by that have made her fit

To practise new sins, not repent the old.

She now has hired a slave to come from thence

And strike me here, whom Gobrius sifting out,

Took, and condemn'd, and executed there.

MARDONIUS Sir, let her bear her sins on her own head,

Vex not yourself.

ARBACES What will the world

Conceive of me? With what unnatural sins

Will they suppose me laden, when my life

Is sought by her that gave it to the world?

But yet he writes me comfort here: my sister

He says is grown in beauty, and in grace,

In all the innocent virtues that become

A tender, spotless maid. She stains her cheeks

With mourning tears to purge her mother's ill,

And 'mongst her sacred dew she mingles prayers,

Her pure oblations for my safe return.

MARDONIUS I ne'er saw such sudden extremities. Exeunt all

330

1.5 Enter TIGRANES and SPACONIA

TIGRANES Why, wilt thou have me die, Spaconia,

What should I do? Am I not a slave

To him that conquer'd me?

SPACONIA That conquer'd thee,

Tigranes, he has won but half of thee,

Thy body, but thy mind may be as free

As his, his will did never combat thine

And take it prisoner--

TIGRANES But if he by force

Convey my body hence, what helps it me

Or thee to be unwilling?

SPACONIA O Tigranes,

I know you are to see a lady there,

To see and like, I fear: perhaps the hope

Of her makes you forget me ere we part.

Be happier than you know to wish: farewell.

TIGRANES Spaconia, stay, and hear me what I say:

Part with me thou shalt not. I've paid a captain

That goes unto Iberia from the King,

That he would place a lady of our land

With the King's sister that is offer'd me;

Thither shall you, and being once got in,

Persuade her by what subtle means you can

To be as backward in her love as I.

SPACONIA Can you imagine that a longing maid

When she beholds you, can be pull'd away

With words from loving you?

TIGRANES Dispraise my health,

My honesty, and tell her I am jealous.

SPACONIA Why, I had rather lose you. Can my heart

Consent to let my tongue throw out such words,

And I that ever yet spoke what I thought

Shall find it such a thing at first to lie.

TIGRANES Yet do thy best.

Enter BESSUS

BESSUS What, is your majesty ready?

TIGRANES There is the lady, Captain.

BESSUS Sweet lady, by your leave, I could wish myself more full of

courtship for your fair sake.

SPACONIA Sir, I shall find no want of that.

BESSUS Lady, you must haste, I have received new letters from the King,

that requires more speed than I expected. He will follow me suddenly himself, and

begins to call for your majesty already.

TIGRANES He shall not do so long.

BESSUS Sweet lady, shall I call you to my charge hereafter?

SPACONIA I will not take upon me to govern your tongue, sir, you shall call me what you please. [Exeunt]

2.1 Enter GOBRIUS, BACURIUS, ARANE, PANTHEA, with ATTENDANTS

GOBRIUS My Lord Bacurius, you must have regard

Unto the Queen: she is your prisoner,

'Tis at your peril if she make escape.

400 BACURIUS My lord, I know't, yet shall not shame to say

I sorrow for her.

GOBRIUS So do I, my lord.

I sorrow for her that so little grace

Doth govern her, that she should stretch her arm

Against her king.

ARANE Thou know'st the reason why,

Dissembling as thou art, and wilt not speak.

GOBRIUS There is a lady takes not after you.

Her father is within her, that good man

Whose tears paid down his sins. Mark how she weeps.

ARANE You talk to me as having got a time

Fit for your purpose; but you know I know

You speak not what you think.

GOBRIUS Why, is not all that's past beyond your help?

ARANE I know it is.

GOBRIUS Nay, should you publish it

Before the world, think you 'twill be believ'd?

ARANE I know it would not.

GOBRIUS Nay, should I join with you,

Should we not both be torn? And yet both die

Uncredited?

ARANE I think we should.

GOBRIUS Why then

Take you such violent courses? As for me,

I do but right in saving of the King

From all your plots.

ARANE The King?

GOBRIUS I bade you rest

With patience, and a time would come for me

To reconcile all to your own content.

But by this way you take away my power,

And what was done unknown was not by me,

But you, your urging; being done,

I must preserve mine own. But time may bring

All this to light, and happily for all.

ARANE Accurst be this overcurious brain,

That gave that plot a birth; accurst this womb,

That after did conceive to my disgrace.

2.2 Enter BESSUS and SPACONIA

BESSUS Health to my Lord Protector, from the King these letters, and to your grace, madam, these.

GOBRIUS How does his majesty?

BESSUS As well as conquest by his own means and his valiant

commanders' can make him. Your letters will tell you all.

PANTHEA I will not open mine till I do know

My brother's health; good captain, is he well?

450 BESSUS As the rest of us that fought are.

PANTHEA But how's that, is he hurt?

BESSUS He's a strange soldier that gets not a knock--

PANTHEA I do not ask how strange that soldier is

That gets no hurt, but whether he have one.

BESSUS He had diverse.

PANTHEA And is he well again?

BESSUS Well again, an't please your grace. Why I was run twice through the body, and shot i'th' head with a cross arrow, and yet am well again.

PANTHEA I do not care how thou dost, is he well?

460 BESSUS Not care how I do?

GOBRIUS The King is well, and will be here tomorrow.

PANTHEA My prayers are heard; now I will open mine.

GOBRIUS Bacurius, I must ease you of your charge:

Madam, he has forgiven you freely,

Your own will is your law, be where you please.

ARANE I thank him.

BACURIUS Madam, be wise hereafter.

2.3 [Exit ARANE]

I am glad I have lost this office.

Good Captain Bessus, tell us the discourse

Between Tigranes and our king, and how

We got the victory.

PANTHEA I prithee do,

And if my brother were in any danger,

Let not thy tale make him abide there long,

Before thou bring him off, for all that while

My heart will beat.

BESSUS Madam, let what will beat, I must tell truth, and thus it was: they fought single in lists but one to one-- as for my own part I was dangerously hurt but three days before, else perhaps we had been two to two. I cannot tell, some thought we had, and the occasion of my hurt was this: the enemy had made trenches.

BACURIUS Captain, without the manner of your hurt be much material to this business, we'll hear it some other time.

PANTHEA Ay, I prithee leave it, and go on with my brother.

BESSUS I will, but 'twould be worth your hearing. To the lists they came, and single sword and gauntlet was their fight.

PANTHEA Alas.

BESSUS Without the lists there stood some dozen captains of either side mingled, all which were sworn, and one of those was I. And 'twas my chance to stand near a captain of the enemy's side called Tiribasus, valiant they said he was. Whilst these two kings were stretching themselves, this Tiribasus cast something a scornful look on me, and ask'd me whom I thought would overcome. I smiled, and told him if he would fight with me, he should perceive by the event of that whose king would win. Something he answered, and a scuffle was like to grow, when one Zipetus offer'd to help him. I--

PANTHEA All this is of thyself. I prithee, Bessus,

Tell something of my brother, did he nothing?

BESSUS Why yes, I'll tell your grace. They were not to fight till the word given, which for my own part, by my troth, I was not to give--

500 PANTHEA See, for his own part.

BACURIUS I fear yet this fellow's abus'd with a good report.

BESSUS I, but I--

PANTHEA Still of himself.

BESSUS --cried, give the word, when, as some of them said Tigranes was stooping, but the word was not given then, when one Cosroes of the enemy's part held up his finger to me, which is as much with us marshalists, as 'I will fight with you'. I said not a word, nor made sign during the combat, but that once done--

PANTHEA He slips o'er all the fight.

BESSUS I call'd him to me. 'Cosroes', said I--

510 PANTHEA I will hear no more.

BESSUS No, no, I lie.

BACURIUS I dare be sworn thou dost.

BESSUS 'Captain', said I, 'twas so.

PANTHEA I tell thee, I will hear no further.

BESSUS No, your grace will wish you had.

PANTHEA I will not wish it. What is this, the lady my brother writes to me to

take?

BESSUS An't please your grace, this is she. Charge, will you come nearer

the princess?

520 PANTHEA You're welcome from your country, and this land

Shall show unto you all the kindnesses

That I can make it. What's your name?

SPACONIA Thalestris.

PANTHEA You're very welcome, you have got a letter

To put you to me that has power enough

To place mine enemy here.

BESSUS Madam, I dare pass my word for her truth.

SPACONIA My truth.

PANTHEA Why, Captain, do you think I am afraid she'll steal?

530 BESSUS I cannot tell, servants are slippery; but I dare give my word for her,

and for her honesty. She came along with me, and many favors she did me by the

way; but by this light, none but what she might do with modesty, to a man of my rank.

PANTHEA Why, Captain, here's nobody thinks otherwise.

BESSUS Nay, if you should, your grace may think your pleasure; but I am sure I brought her from Armenia, and in all that way if ever I touch'd any bare on her above her knee, I pray God I may sink where I stand.

SPACONIA Above my knee!

I hope your Grace knows him so well already,

I shall not need to tell you he's vain and foolish.

BESSUS Ay, you may call me what you please, but I'll defend your good name against the world. And so I take my leave of your grace, and of you, my Lord Protector, I am likewise glad to see your lordship well.

BACURIUS O Captain Bessus, I thank you, I would speak with you anon.

BESSUS When you please, I will attend your lordship. Exit

BACURIUS Madam, I'll take my leave too. Exit

PANTHEA Good Bacurius.

GOBRIUS Madam, what writes his majesty to you?

PANTHEA O my lord,

The kindest words, I'll keep 'em whilst I live

Here in my bosom; there's no art in 'em,

They lie disorder'd in this paper, just

As hearty Nature speaks 'em. No maid

Longs more for anything, or feels more heat

And cold within her breast, than I do now,

In hope to see him.

GOBRIUS Yet I wonder much

At this: he writes he brings along with him

A husband for you, that same captive prince.

I think there is no lady can affect

Another prince, your brother standing by;

He does eclipse mens' virtues so with his.

SPACONIA [aside] I know a lady may, and more I fear

Another lady will.

PANTHEA Would I might see him.

GOBRIUS Why so you shall. My businesses are great;

I will attend you when it is his pleasure

To see you, madam.

PANTHEA I thank you, good my lord. Exit GOBRIUS

570 2.4

SPACONIA I do beseech you, madam, send away

Your other women, and receive from me

A few sad words, which set against your joys,

May make 'em shine the more.

PANTHEA Sirs, leave me all. [They go]

SPACONIA I kneel a stranger here to beg a thing

Unfit for me to ask, and you to grant,

'Tis such another strange, ill-laid request,

As if a beggar should entreat a king

To leave his scepter and his throne to him,

And take his rags to wander o'er the world,

Hungry and cold.

PANTHEA That were a strange request.

SPACONIA As ill is mine.

PANTHEA Then do not utter it.

SPACONIA Alas, 'tis of that nature that it must

Be utter'd, ay, and granted, or I die.

I am asham'd to speak it. I shall seem

A strange petitioner, that wish all ill

To them I beg of, ere they give me ought,

Yet so I must. I would you were not fair,

Nor wise, for in your ill consists my good.

If you were foolish, you would hear my prayer;

If foul, you had not power to hinder me:

He would not love you.

PANTHEA What's the meaning of it?

SPACONIA Your brother brings a prince into this land

Of such a noble shape, so sweet a grace,

So full of worth withal, that every maid

That looks upon him gives away herself

To him forever; and for you to have

He brings him. And so mad is my demand,

590

That I desire you not to have this man,

This excellent man, for whom you needs must die,

If you should miss him. I do now expect

You should laugh at me.

PANTHEA Trust me, I could weep

Rather, for I have found in all thy words

A strange disjointed sorrow.

610 SPACONIA 'Tis by me

His own desire too, that you would not love him.

PANTHEA His own desire, why credit me, Thalestris,

I am no common wooer.

SPACONIA 'Tis yet

His own desire, but when he sees your face,

I fear it will not be; therefore I charge you

As you have pity, stop those tender ears

From his enchanting voice, close up those eyes,

That you may neither catch a dart from him,

Nor he from you. I charge you as you hope

To live in quiet, for when I am dead

For certain I shall walk to visit him

If he break promise with me. For as fast

As oaths without a formal ceremony

Can make me, I am to him.

PANTHEA Then be fearless,

For if he were a thing 'twixt God and man,

I could gaze on him (if I knew it sin

To love him) without passion. Dry your eyes,

I will not hinder you. But I perceive

You are not what you seem. Rise, rise, Thalestris.

If your right name be so.

SPACONIA Indeed it is not.

Spaconia is my name; but I desire

Not to be known to others.

PANTHEA Why, by me

You shall not, I will never do you wrong.

What good I can, I will. You are welcome hither.

In company you wish to be commanded,

But when we are alone, I shall be ready

To be your servant. [Exeunt]

2.5 Enter FOUR HICKS

HICK 1 Come, come, run, run, run.

HICK 2 We shall outgo her.

HICK 3 One were better be hang'd, than carry women out fiddling to these shows.

HICK 4 Is the King hard by?

	what ab	undance of people here is.
650	HICK 4	Let's take our places quickly, we shall have no room else.
	HICK 2	The man told us he would walk afoot through the people.
	HICK 3	Ay, marry, did he.
	HICK 1	Our shops are well look'd to now.
	HICK 2	S'life, yonder's my master, I think.
	HICK 4	No, 'tis not he.
		Enter two WIVES and PHILIP
	WIFE 1	Lord, how fine the fields be, what sweet living 'tis in the country.
	WIFE 2	Ay, poor souls, God help 'em; they live as contentedly as one of us.
	WIFE 1	My husband's cousin would have had me gone into the country last year,
660	wert thou ever there?	
	WIFE 2	Ay, poor souls, I was amongst 'em once.
	WIFE 1	And what kind of creatures are they, for love of God?
	WIFE 2	Very good people, God help 'em.
	WIFE 1	Wilt thou go with me down this summer, when I am brought abed?
	WIFE 2	Alas, 'tis no place for us.
	WIFE 1	Why, prithee?
	WIFE 2	Why, you can have nothing there: there's nobody cries 'brooms'.
	WIFE 1	No?
	WIFE 2	No truly, nor 'milk'.
670	WIFE 1	Nor milk, how do they?

You heard he with the bottles say, he thought we should come too late,

HICK 1

WIFE 2 They are fain to milk themselves i'th' country.

WIFE 1 Good Lord: but the people there I think will be very dutiful to one of us?

WIFE 2 Ay, God knows will they, and yet they do not greatly care for our husbands.

WIFE 1 Do they not, alas? In good faith I cannot blame them, for we do not greatly care for them ourselves. Philip, I pray choose us a place.

PHILIP There's the best, forsooth.

WIFE 1 By your leave, good people, a little.

HICK 1 What's the matter?

680 PHILIP I pray my friend do not thrust my mistress so, she's with child.

HICK 2 Let her look to herself then.

HICK 3 How now, goodman squitterbreech, why do you lean so on me?

PHILIP Because I will.

HICK 3 Will you, sir saucebox? [Strikes PHILIP]

WIFE 1 Look if one have not struck Philip! Come hither Philip, why did he strike

thee?

PHILIP For leaning on him.

WIFE 1 Why didst thou lean on him?

PHILIP I did not think he would have struck me.

690 WIFE 1 As God save me law, thou art as wild as a buck, there is no quarrel, but thou art at one end or other of it.

HICK 3 It's at the first end then; for he will never stay the last.

WIFE 1 Well stripling, I shall meet with you.

HICK 3 When you will.

WIFE 1 I'll give a crown to meet with you.

HICK 3 At a bawdy house.

WIFE 1 Ay, you are full of your roguery; but if I do meet you, it shall cost me a

fall.

HICKS 1, 2, 4 The King, the King, the King! Now, now, now!

700 Enter ARBACES, TIGRANES, MARDONIUS, and others

ALL God preserve your majesty!

ARBACES I thank you all. Now are my joys at full,

When I behold you safe, my loving subjects.

By you I grow, 'tis your united love

That lifts me to this height.

All the account that I can render you

For all the love you have bestowed on me,

All your expenses to maintain my war,

Is but a little word-- you will imagine

'Tis slender payment-- yet 'tis such a word

As is not to be bought without our bloods:

'Tis peace.

ALL God preserve your majesty.

ARBACES See, all good people, I have brought the man,

Whose very name you fear'd, a captive home.

Behold him, 'tis Tigranes; in your hearts

Sing songs of gladness, and deliverance.

WIFE 1 Out upon him.

WIFE 2 How he looks.

720 HICKS 3 & 4 Hang him, hang him, hang him.

MARDONIUS These are sweet people.

TIGRANES Sir, you do me wrong,

To render me a scornéd spectacle

To common people.

ARBACES It was far from me

To mean it so. If I have ought deserv'd,

My loving subjects, let me beg of you

Not to revile this prince, in whom there dwells

All worth of which the nature of a man

730 Is capable. Valor beyond compare,

The terror of his name has stretch'd itself

Wherever there is sun. And yet for you,

I fought with him single, and won him too.

ALL The Lord bless your majesty.

TIGRANES So, he has made me amends now, with a speech in commendations

of himself.

ARBACES If there be any thing in which I may

Do good to any creature, here speak out,

For I must leave you, and it troubles me,

Thus my occasions for the good of you,

Are such as calls me from you. When there is

A want of any thing, let it be known

To me, and I will be a father to you.

God keep you all.

Exeunt nobles

ALL God bless your majesty.

HICK 1 Come, shall we go, all's done.

HICK 4 Ay, for God's sake, I have not made a fire yet.

HICK 2 Away, away, all's done.

HICK 3 Content. Farewell, Philip.

750 WIFE 1 Away, you haltersack you.

HICK 1 Philip will not fight, he's afraid on's face.

PHILIP I, marry am I afraid of my face?

HICK 3 Thou wouldst be, Philip, if thou saw'st it in a glass; it looks like a visor.

Exeunt HICKS

- WIFE 1 You'll be hang'd, sirrah. Come, Philip, walk afore us homeward; did not his majesty say he had brought us home peas for our money?
- WIFE 2 Yes, marry, did he.
- WIFE 1 They are the first I heard on this year, by my troth, I long'd for some of 'em; did he not say we should have some?
- 760 WIFE 2 Yes, and so we shall anon, I warrant you, have everyone a peck brought home to our houses.

 [Exeunt]

3.1 Enter ARBACES and GOBRIUS

ARBACES My sister take it ill!

GOBRIUS Not very ill,

Something unkindly she doth take it, sir,

To have her husband chosen to her hands.

ARBACES Why, Gobrius, tell her; I must have her know

My will, and not her own must govern her.

What, will she marry with some slave at home?

GOBRIUS O she is far from any stubbornness,

You much mistake her. But when you behold her,

You will be loath to part with such a jewel.

ARBACES To part with her, why Gobrius, art thou mad?

She is my sister.

GOBRIUS Sir, I know she is.

But It were pity to make poor our land

With such a beauty, to enrich another.

ARBACES Pfft, will she have him?

780 GOBRIUS I think she will, sir.

ARBACES 'Tis fit. I will not hear her say she's loath.

GOBRIUS [Aside] Heaven bring my purpose luckily to pass,

You know 'tis just. [To him] Sir, she'll not need constraint,

She loves you so.

ARBACES How does she love me? Speak.

GOBRIUS She loves you more than people love their health

That live by labor.

ARBACES She is not like her mother then?

GOBRIUS O no, when you were in Armenia,

I durst not let her know when you were hurt:

For at the first on every little scratch,

She kept her chamber, wept, and would not eat

Till you were well; and many times the news

Was so long coming, that before we heard

She was as near her death, as you your health.

ARBACES Alas poor soul, but yet she must be rul'd;

I know not how I shall requite her well,

I long to see her; have you sent for her,

To tell her I am ready?

800 GOBRIUS Sir, I have.

3.2 Enter TIGRANES and BACURIUS

BACURIUS Sir, here's the Armenian king.

ARBACES He's welcome.

BACURIUS And the Queen Mother and the Princess wait without.

ARBACES Good Gobrius bring them in, [Exit GOBRIUS]

Tigranes, you will think you are arriv'd

In a strange land, where mothers cast to poison

Their only sons; think you you shall be safe?

810 TIGRANES Too safe I am, sir.

Enter GOBRIUS, ARANE, PANTHEA, SPACONIA, MARDONIUS, and BESSUS

ARANE As low as this I bow to you, and would

As low as to my grave, to show a mind

Thankful for all your mercies.

ARBACES O stand up,

And let me kneel; the light will be asham'd

To see observance done to me by you.

ARANE You are my king.

ARBACES You are my mother; rise.

As far be all your faults from your own soul,

As from my memory.

ARANE Longer to stay

Were but to draw eyes more attentively

Upon my shame. That power that kept you safe

From me preserve you still. Exit

ARBACES Your own desires shall be your guard.

PANTHEA Now let me die:

Since I have seen my lord the King return

In safety, I have seen all good that life

Can show me; I have ne'er another wish.

GOBRIUS Why does not your majesty speak?

ARBACES To whom?

GOBRIUS To the Princess.

PANTHEA Alas, sir, I am fearful, you do look

On me, as if I were some loathéd thing

That you were finding out a way to shun.

MARDONIUS Sir, you should speak to her.

ARBACES Ha?

PANTHEA I know I am unworthy, yet not ill,

Arm'd with which innocence here I will kneel,

Till I am one with earth, but I will gain

Some words, and kindness from you.

TIGRANES Will you speak, sir?

ARBACES Speak, am I what I was?

What art thou that dost creep into my breast,

And dar'st not see my face? Show forth thyself.

Up, and be gone, if thou beest love, be gone,

Or I will tear thee from my wounded flesh.

I know thou fear'st my words, away.

850 TIGRANES O misery, why should he be so slow,

There can no falsehood come of loving her,

Though I have given my faith; she is a thing

Both to be lov'd and serv'd beyond my faith.

I would he would present me to her quickly.

PANTHEA Will you not speak at all, are you so far

From kind words? Say something, though it be

Poison'd with anger that may strike me dead.

MARDONIUS Have you no life at all? For manhood's sake,

Let her not kneel, and talk neglected thus;

A tree would find a tongue to answer her.

ARBACES You mean this lady, lift her from the earth;

Why do you let her kneel so long? Alas,

Madam, your beauty uses to command,

And not to beg; what is your suit to me?

It shall be granted, yet the time is short,

And my affairs are great. But where's my sister?

I bade she should be brought.

MARDONIUS What, is he mad?

ARBACES Gobrius, where is she?

870 GOBRIUS Sir.

ARBACES Where is she, man?

GOBRIUS Who, sir?

ARBACES Who, hast thou forgot? My sister.

GOBRIUS Your sister, sir?

ARBACES Some one that has a wit, answer; where is she?

BACURIUS Do you not see her there?

ARBACES Where?

BACURIUS There.

ARBACES There, where?

880 MARDONIUS S'light there, are you blind?

ARBACES Which do you mean, that little one?

BACURIUS No, sir.

ARBACES No, sir, why do you mock me? I can see

No other here but that petitioning lady.

BACURIUS That's she.

ARBACES Away.

GOBRIUS Sir, it is she.

ARBACES 'Tis false.

MARDONIUS Is it?

As hell, by Heaven as false as hell,

My sister. Is she dead? If it be so,

Speak boldly to me, for I am a man,

And dare not quarrel with divinity,

But do not think to cozen me with this.

I see you all are mute, and stand amaz'd,

Fearful to answer me.

GOBRIUS Do not mistake,

And vex yourself for nothing; for her death

Is a long life of yet, I hope. 'Tis she.

900 ARBACES It cannot be.

TIGRANES

Pssht, this is tedious;

I cannot hold, I must present myself.

And yet the sight of my Spaconia

Touches me, as a sudden thunderclap

Does one that is about to sin.

ARBACES

Away,

No more of this; here I pronounce him traitor,

The direct plotter of my death that names,

Or thinks her for my sister. 'Tis a lie.

She is no kin to me, nor shall she be;

If she were any, I create her none.

Come, and answer me, he that is boldest now:

Is that my sister?

MARDONIUS

O this is fine.

BESSUS

No, marry, is she not, an't please your majesty. I never thought she

was, she's nothing like you.

MARDONIUS

Thou shouldst be hang'd.

PANTHEA

Sir, I will speak but once. By the same power

You make my blood a stranger unto yours

920

910

You may command me dead, and so much love

A stranger may importune, pray you do.

If this request appear too much to grant,

Adopt me of some other family

By your unquestion'd word.

ARBACES I will hear no more.

Why should there be such music in a voice,

And sin for me to hear it? All the world

May take delight in this, and 'tis damnation

For me to do so; you are fair, and wise,

And virtuous I think, and he is bless'd

That is so near you as your brother is.

But you are naught to me but a disease.

Let me not hear you speak again; yet so

I shall but languish for the want of that,

The having which would kill me. I'll not toil

My body, and my mind too, rest thou there,

Here's one within will labor for you both.

PANTHEA I would I were past speaking.

GOBRIUS Fear not, madam,

The king will alter, 'tis some sudden change,

And you shall see it end some other way.

PANTHEA Pray God it do.

TIGRANES Though she to whom I swore be here, I cannot

Stifle my passion longer. If my father

Should rise again disquieted with this,

And charge me to forbear, yet it would out.

930

Madam, a stranger, and a prisoner, begs

To be bid welcome.

PANTHEA

You are welcome, sir,

950

I think, but if you be not, 'tis past me

To make you so, for I am here a stranger,

Greater than you. We know from whence you come,

But I appear a lost thing, and by whom

Is yet uncertain, found here in the court,

And only suffer'd to walk up and down,

As one not worth the owning.

SPACONIA

O, I fear

Tigranes will be caught, he looks, methinks,

As he would change his eyes with her.

960 TIGRANES

Why do you turn away, and weep so fast,

And utter things that misbecome your looks?

Can you want owning?

SPACONIA

O, 'tis certain so.

TIGRANES

Acknowledge yourself mine--

ARBACES

How now?

TIGRANES

And then see if you want an owner--

ARBACES

They are talking.

TIGRANES

Nations shall own you for their queen.

ARBACES

Tigranes, art not thou my prisoner?

970 TIGRANES I am.

ARBACES And who is this?

TIGRANES She is your sister.

ARBACES She is so.

MARDONIUS Is she so again? That's well.

ARBACES And how dare you then offer to change words with her?

TIGRANES Dare do it, why you brought me hither, sir,

To that intent.

ARBACES Perhaps I told you so.

If I had sworn it, had you so much folly

To credit it? The least word that she speaks

Is worth a life. Rule your disorder'd tongue,

Or I will temper it.

SPACONIA Bless'd be that breath.

TIGRANES You talk to me as if I were a prisoner

For theft. My tongue be temper'd? I must speak

If thunder check me, and I will.

ARBACES You will.

SPACONIA Alas, my fortune.

TIGRANES Do not fear his frown, dear madam, hear me.

990 ARBACES Fear not my frown? But that 'twere base in me

To fight with one I know I can o'ercome,

Again thou shouldst be conqueréd by me.

MARDONIUS He has one ransom with him already, methinks 'twere good to fight

double, or quit.

ARBACES Away with him to prison. Now, sir, see

If my frown be regardless. Why delay you?

Seize him, Bacurius.

TIGRANES Touch me not.

ARBACES Help there.

1000 TIGRANES Away.

1 GENTLEMAN It is in vain to struggle.

2 GENTLEMAN You must be forc'd.

BACURIUS Sir, you must pardon us, we must obey.

TIGRANES 'Tis tyranny, Arbaces. Thou mightst as well

Search in the depth of winter through the snow

For half starv'd people, to bring home with thee

To show 'em fire, and send 'em back again,

As use me thus.

ARBACES Let him be close, Bacurius.

[Exeunt TIGRANES, guarded]

SPACONIA I ne'er rejoic'd at any ill to him,

But this imprisonment.

GOBRIUS You will not let your sister

Depart thus discontented from you, sir?

ARBACES By no means, Gobrius. You did kneel to me,

Whilst I stood stubborn and regardless by,

And like a god incensed, gave no ear

To all your prayer. Behold, I kneel to you.

Show a contempt as large as was my own,

And I will suffer it, yet at the last forgive me.

PANTHEA O you wrong me more in this,

Than in your rage you did: you mock me now.

ARBACES Never forgive me then, which is the worst

Can happen to me.

PANTHEA If you be in earnest,

Stand up, and give me but a gentle look,

And two kind words, and I shall be in heaven.

ARBACES Rise you then too. Here I acknowledge thee

My hope, the only jewel of my life,

The best of sisters, dearer than my breath,

A happiness as high as I could think;

And when my actions call thee otherwise,

Perdition light upon me.

PANTHEA This is better

Than if you had not frown'd, it comes to me

Like mercy at the block, and when I leave

To serve you with my life, your curse be with me.

ARBACES Then thus I do salute thee, [Kiss her] and again

To make this knot the stronger. [Kiss again] Paradise

Is there. It may be you are still in doubt;

This, this third kiss blots it out. [Kiss again] I wade in sin,

And foolishly entice myself along.

Take her away, see her a prisoner

In her own chamber, closely, Gobrius.

PANTHEA Alas, sir, why?

ARBACES I must not say the answer, do it.

MARDONIUS This is better and better.

PANTHEA Yet hear me speak.

ARBACES I will not hear you speak;

Away with her, let no man think to speak

For such a creature: for she is a witch,

A poisoner, and a traitor.

GOBRIUS Madam, this office grieves me.

ARBACES Bessus, go you too. Go without a word.

Exeunt all but ARBACES and MARDONIUS

Why should you that have made me stand in war

Like Fate itself, cutting what threads I pleas'd,

Decree such an unworthy end of me,

And all my glories? What am I alas,

That you oppose me? Incest is in me

Dwelling already, and it must be holy

That pulls it thence; where art, Mardonius?

MARDONIUS Here, sir.

ARBACES I prithee bear me; my legs

Refuse to bear my body.

MARDONIUS So I shall. Exeunt

3.3.1 Enter BESSUS

BESSUS They talk of fame. Some will say they could be content to have it, but that it is to be achieved with danger, but my opinion is otherwise: for if I might stand still in cannon proof, and have fame fall upon me, I would refuse it. My reputation came principally by thinking to run away, which nobody knows but Mardonius, and I think he conceals it to anger me. Before I went to the wars, I came to the town a young fellow without means or parts to deserve friends; and my empty guts persuaded me to lie, and abuse people for my meat, which I did, and they beat me. Then would I fast two days, till my hunger cried out on me, 'rail still'; then methought I had a monstrous stomach to abuse them again, and did it. In this state I continued till they hung me up by th' heels and beat me with haslet sticks, as if they would have roast me, and have cozen'd somebody with me for venison. After this, God call'd an aunt of mine, that left two hundred pounds in a cousin's hand for me, who, taking me to be a gallant young spirit, rais'd a company for me with the money, and sent me into Armenia with 'em. Away I would have run from them, but that I could get no company, and alone I durst not run. I was never at battle but once, and there I fled with my whole company amongst my enemies, and overthrew 'em. Now

1080

the report of my valor is come over before me, and they say I was a raw young fellow, but now I am improv'd. A plague of their eloquence, 'twill cost me many a beating.

And Mardonius might help this to if he would, for now they think to get honor of me, and all the men I have abus'd call me freshly to account, worthily as they call it, by the way of challenge.

1090

3.3.2 Enter a GENTLEMAN

GENTLEMAN Good morrow, Captain Bessus.

BESSUS Good morrow, sir.

GENTLEMAN I come to speak with you.

BESSUS You are very welcome.

GENTLEMAN From one that holds himself wronged by you some three years since. Your worth, he says, is fam'd, and he nothing doubts but you will do him right, as beseems a soldier.

BESSUS A pox on 'em, so they cry all.

GENTLEMAN And a slight note I have about me for you, for the delivery of which you must excuse me.

BESSUS 'Tis a challenge, sir, is it not?

GENTLEMAN 'Tis an inviting to the field.

BESSUS An inviting? O cry you mercy, what a complement he delivers it with! He might as agreeably to my nature present me poison with such a speech.

[Reading] um um um reputation, um um um call you to an account, um um um forc'd to this, um um um with my sword, um um um like a gentleman, um um um dear to

me, um um um satisfaction. 'Tis very well, sir, I do accept it, but he must await an answer this thirteen weeks.

1110 GENTLEMAN Why, sir, he would be glad to wipe off his stain as soon as he could.

BESSUS Sir, upon my credit I am already engag'd to two hundred and twelve, all which must have their stains wip'd off, if that be the word before him.

GENTLEMAN Sir, if you be truly engaged but to one, he shall stay a competent time.

BESSUS Upon my faith, sir, to two hundred and twelve, and I have a spent body too much bruis'd in battle, so that I cannot fight, I must be plain with you, above three combats a day. All the kindness I can do him, is to set him resolutely in my roll the two hundred and thirteenth man, which is something. For I tell you, I think there will be more after him than before him, I think so; pray ye commend me to him, and tell him this.

GENTLEMAN I will, sir, good morrow to you. Exit

BESSUS Good morrow, good sir. Certainly my safest way were to print myself a coward, with a discovery how I came by my credit, and clap it upon every post: I have received above thirty challenges within this two hours, marry, all but the first I put off with engagement, and by good fortune this first is no madder of fighting than I, so that that's reserv'd. Who's there? 'Tis my Lord Bacurius, I fear all is not well betwixt us.

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3.3.3 Enter BACURIUS

BACURIUS Now, Captain Bessus, I come about a frivolous matter, caus'd by as idle a report: you know you were a coward.

BESSUS Very right.

BACURIUS And wrong'd me.

BESSUS True, my lord.

BACURIUS But now people will call you valiant, desertlessly I think, yet for their satisfaction, I will have you fight with me.

BESSUS O my good lord, my deep engagements.

BACURIUS Tell not me of your engagements, Captain Bessus; it is not to be put off with an excuse. For my own part, I am none of the multitude that believe your conversion from coward.

BESSUS My lord, I seek not quarrels, and this belongs not to me, I am not to maintain it.

BACURIUS Who then, pray?

BESSUS Bessus the Coward wrong'd you.

BACURIUS Right.

BESSUS And shall Bessus the Valiant, maintain what Bessus the Coward

did?

BACURIUS I prithee leave these cheating tricks, I swear thou shalt fight with me, or thou shalt be beat extremely, and kick'd.

BESSUS Since you provoke me thus far, my lord, I will fight with you; and by my sword it shall cost me twenty pounds, but I will have my leg well a week sooner purposely.

BACURIUS Your leg, why what ails your leg? I'll do a cure on you, stand up.

BESSUS My lord, this is not noble in you.

BACURIUS What dost thou with such a phrase in thy mouth? I will kick thee out of all good words before I leave thee.

BESSUS My lord, I take this as a punishment for the offence I did when I was a coward.

BACURIUS When thou wert? Confess thyself a coward still, or by this light, I'll beat thee into sponge.

BESSUS Why I am one.

BACURIUS Are you so, sir, and why do you wear a sword then? Come, unbuckle, quick.

BESSUS My lord.

BACURIUS Unbuckle I say, and give it me, or as I live, thy head will ache extremely.

BESSUS It is a pretty hilt, and if your lordship take an affection to it, with all my heart, I present it to you for a New Year's gift.

BACURIUS I thank you very heartily, sweet Captain, farewell.

BESSUS One word more, I beseech your lordship to render me my knife again.

BACURIUS Marry by all means, Captain; cherish yourself with it, and eat hard, good Captain. Adieu, dear Captain.

BESSUS I will make better use of this than of my sword. A base spirit has this vantage of a brave one; it keeps always at a stay, nothing brings it down, not beating. I remember I promis'd the King that I would make my backbiters eat my sword to a knife. How to get another sword I know not, nor know any means left for me to maintain my credit but impudence. Therefore will I outswear him and all his followers, that this is all is left uneated of my sword.

3.4 Enter MARDONIUS

MARDONIUS I'll move the King, he is most strangely alter'd. He has followed me through twenty rooms, and ever when I stay to await his command, he blushes like a girl, and looks upon me as if modesty kept in his business, so turns away from me, but if I go on, he follows me again. See, here he is. His very enemies, I think, whose wounds have bred his fame, if they should see him now, would find tears in their eyes.

1190 ARBACES I cannot utter it, I dare not speak:

Darkness is in my bosom, and there lies

A thousand thoughts that cannot brook the light.

MARDONIUS How do you, sir?

ARBACES Why very well, Mardonius; how dost thou?

MARDONIUS Better than you, I fear.

ARBACES I hope thou art; for to be plain with thee,

Thou art in hell else: secret scorching flames,

That far transcend earthly material fires,

Art crept into me, and there is no cure.

MARDONIUS Sir, either I mistake, or there is something hid that you would utter

to me.

ARBACES So there is, but yet I cannot do it.

MARDONIUS Out with it, sir, if it be dangerous I shall not shrink to do you

service, I shall not esteem my life a weightier matter than indeed it is. Let me but

know what I shall do for you.

ARBACES It will not out. Were you with Gobrius,

And bade him give my sister all content

The place affords, and give her leave to send

And speak to whom she please?

1210 MARDONIUS Yes, sir, I was.

ARBACES And did you to Bacurius say as much

About Tigranes?

MARDONIUS Yes.

ARBACES That's all my business.

MARDONIUS O say not so,

You had an answer of all this before,

Besides, I think this business might be utter'd

More carelessly.

ARBACES Come, thou shalt have it out. I do beseech thee

By all the love thou hast profess'd to me,

To see my sister from me.

MARDONIUS Well, and what?

ARBACES That's all.

MARDONIUS That's strange, shall I say nothing to her?

ARBACES Not a word.

But if thou lovest me, find some subtle way

To make her understand by signs.

MARDONIUS But what, what should I make her understand?

ARBACES O Mardonius, for that I must be pardon'd.

Bear her this ring then, and on more advice

Thou shalt speak to her. Tell her I do love

My kindred all; wilt thou?

MARDONIUS Is there no more?

ARBACES O yes: and her the best;

Better than any brother loves his sister.

That's all.

MARDONIUS Methinks this need not have been delivered with such caution. I'll

do it.

ARBACES There is more yet. Wilt thou be faithful to me?

MARDONIUS Sir, if I take upon me to deliver it after I hear it, I'll pass through

fire to do it.

ARBACES I love her better than a brother ought;

Dost thou conceive me?

MARDONIUS I hope I do not, sir.

ARBACES No, thou art dull. Kneel down before her,

And ne'er rise again, till she will love me.

MARDONIUS Why, I think she does.

ARBACES But better than she does, another way;

As wives love husbands.

MARDONIUS Why, I think there are few wives that love their husbands better

than she does you.

ARBACES Thou wilt not understand me: is it fit

This should be utter'd plainly? Take it then

Naked as it is: I would desire her love

Lasciviously, lewdly, incestuously,

To do a sin that needs must damn us both,

And thee too. Dost thou understand me now?

MARDONIUS Yes. There's your ring again; what have I done

Dishonestly in my whole life, name it,

That you should put so base a business to me?

ARBACES Didst thou not tell me thou wouldst do it?

MARDONIUS Yes, if I undertook it; but if all

My hairs were lives, I would not be engag'd

In such a cause to save my last life.

ARBACES O guilt, how poor, and weak a thing art thou!

This man that is my servant, whom my breath

Might blow about the world, might beat me here

Having his cause, whilst I, press'd down with sin

Could not resist him. Dear Mardonius,

It was a motion misbeseeming man.

And I am sorry for it.

MARDONIUS Pray God you may be so. You must understand, nothing that you can utter can remove my love and service from my prince. But otherwise, I think I shall not love you more. For you are sinful, and if you do this crime, you ought to have no laws. For after this it will be great injustice in you to punish any offender for any crime. For myself, I find my heart too big, I feel I have not patience to look on whilst you run these forbidden courses. I shall find a dwelling amongst some people, where though our garments perhaps be coarser, we shall be richer far within, and harbor no such vices in 'em. God preserve you, and mend you.

1280 ARBACES Mardonius, stay Mardonius, for though

My present state require nothing but knaves

To be about me, such as are prepar'd

For every wicked act, yet who does know

But that my loathéd fate may turn about,

And I have use of honest men again.

I hope I may, I prithee leave me not.

Enter BESSUS to them

BESSUS An't please your majesty, there's the knife.

2017

ARBACES What knife?

1290 BESSUS The sword is eaten.

MARDONIUS Away you fool, the King is serious,

And cannot admit your vanities.

ARBACES No, let him stay, Mardonius, let him stay,

I have occasions with him very weighty,

And I can spare you now.

MARDONIUS Sir--

ARBACES Why, I can spare you now.

BESSUS Mardonius, give way to the state affairs.

MARDONIUS Indeed, you are fitter for his present purpose. *Exit*

1300 ARBACES Bessus, I should employ thee. Wilt thou do't?

BESSUS Do for you, by this air, I will do any thing without exception, be it

a good, bad, or indifferent thing.

ARBACES Do not swear.

BESSUS By this light, but I will:

Any thing whatsoe'er.

ARBACES But I shall name a thing

Thy conscience will not suffer thee to do.

BESSUS I would fain hear that thing.

ARBACES Why, I would have thee get my sister for me.

Thou understands me: in a wicked manner.

BESSUS O you would have about with her? I'll do't,

I'll do't i' faith.

ARBACES Wilt thou, dost make no more on't?

BESSUS More, no, why, is there any thing else?

If there be, tell me, it shall be done.

ARBACES Hast thou no greater sense of such a sin?

Thou art too wicked for my company,

Though I have hell within me, and mayst yet

Corrupt me further. Pray thee, answer me

How do I show to thee after this motion?

BESSUS Why, your Majesty looks as well in my opinion as ever you did since you were born.

ARBACES But thou appear'st to me after thy grant

The ugliest, loathed, detestable thing

That I have ever met with. Thou hast eyes

Like flames of sulphur, which methinks do dart

Infection on me, and thou hast a mouth

Enough to take me in, where there do stand

Four rows of iron teeth.

BESSUS I feel no such thing, but 'tis no matter how I look, I'll do your business as well as they that look better, and when this is dispatch'd, if you have a

ARBACES My mother, Heaven forgive me to hear this,

mind to your mother, tell me, and you shall see I'll set it hard.

I am inspir'd with horror. I hate thee

Worse than my sin, which if I could come by,

Should suffer death eternal, ne'er to rise

In any breast again. Know I will die

Ere I will deal by such an instrument.

Thou art too sinful to employ in this.

If there were no such instruments as thou,

We kings could never act such wicked deeds.

Away I say; I will not do this sin. Exit BESSUS

I'll press it here till it do break my breast;

It heaves to get out, but thou art a sin,

And spite of torture, I will keep thee in. [Exit]

4.1 Enter GOBRIUS, PANTHEA, SPACONIA

GOBRIUS Have you written, madam?

PANTHEA Yes, good Gobrius.

1350 GOBRIUS And with a kindess, and such winning words

As may provoke him at one instant feel

His double fault, your wrong, and his own rashness?

PANTHEA I have sent words enough, if words may win him

From his displeasure, and such words I hope

As shall gain much upon his goodness, Gobrius.

GOBRIUS Good lady, be not fearful, he loves you,

I know it, and I hope I need not further

Win you to understand it.

PANTHEA I believe it,

Howsoever I am sure I love him dearly,

So dearly, that if anything I write

For my enlarging, should beget his anger,

Heaven be a witness with me, and my faith

I had rather live entomb'd here.

GOBRIUS You shall not feel a worse stroke than your grief,

I am sorry 'tis so sharp. I kiss your hand,

And this night will deliver this true story

With this hand to your brother.

Exit

PANTHEA Peace go with you,

You are a good man; my Spaconia

Why are you ever sad thus?

SPACONIA O dear lady!

PANTHEA Prithee discover not a way to sadness,

Nearer than I have in me; our two sorrows

Work like two eager hawks, who shall get highest.

How shall I lessen thine? For mine, I fear,

Is easier known than cured.

SPACONIA Noblest lady,

You make me more a slave still to your goodness,

I will be bold, since you will have it, so

To ask a noble favor of you.

PANTHEA Speak it, 'tis yours, for from so sweet a virtue

No ill demand has issue.

SPACONIA Then ever virtuous, let me beg your will

In helping me to see the Prince Tigranes,

With whom I am equal prisoner, if not more.

PANTHEA Reserve me to a greater end, Spaconia;

Bacurius cannot want so much good manners

As to deny your gentle visitation,

Though you came only with your own command.

SPACONIA I know they will deny me, gracious madam,

Being a stranger, and so little fam'd.

PANTHEA More than my word, Spaconia, you shall carry,

For fear it fail you.

SPACONIA Dare you trust a token?

Madam, I fear I am grown too bold a beggar.

PANTHEA You are a pretty one, and trust me, lady,

It joys me I shall do a good to you,

Though to myself I never shall be happy.

Here take this ring, and from me as a token

Deliver it; I think they will not stay you.

So all your own desire go with you, lady.

SPACONIA And sweet peace to your grace.

PANTHEA Pray God I find it. Exeunt

4.2 Enter TIGRANES, in prison

TIGRANES Fool that I am, I have undone myself,

And with my own hand turned my fortune 'round,

That was a fair one. O Spaconia,

1410 Why did I plant thee 'twixt the sun and me,

To make me freeze thus? Why did I prefer her

To the fair princess? O thou fool, thou fool,

Thou family of fools. Poor Spaconia,

She that forgot the greatness of her grief

And with thee left her liberty, her name

And country. You have paid me equal, Heavens,

And sent my own rod to correct me with:

Lay it on, Justice, till my soul melt in me

For my unmanly, beastly, sudden doting

Upon a new face; after all my oaths.

Enter BACURIUS and SPACONIA

BACURIUS Lady,

1420

Your token I acknowledge, you may pass.

There is the King.

SPACONIA I thank your lordship for't. Exit BACURIUS

TIGRANES She comes, shame hide me ever from

Her; would I were buried, or so far remov'd

Light might not find me out: I dare not see her.

SPACONIA Nay, never hide yourself; for were you hid

Where Earth hides all her riches, near her center,

My wrongs without more day would light me to you:

I must speak ere I die. Thou'rt false, false prince,

I live to see it. Poor Spaconia lives

To tell thee thou art false, and then no more.

She lives to tell thee thou art more unconstant

Than all ill women ever were together;

Thy faith as firm as raging overflows

That no bank can command; and as lasting

As boys' gay bubbles blown in the air, and broke.

The wind is fix'd to thee. Thou art all

That all good men must hate, and if thy store

Shall tell succeeding ages what thou wert,

O let it spare me in it, lest true lovers

In pity of my wrongs burn thy black legend,

And with their curses shake thy sleeping ashes.

TIGRANES Oh, oh.

SPACONIA The Destinies I hope have pointed out

Our ends alike, that thou may'st die for love,

Though not for me. For this assure thyself,

The Princess hates thee deadly, and will sooner

Be won to marry with a bull, and safer,

Then such a beast as thou art. He's asham'd,

Alas, I have been too rugged. Dear my lord,

I am sorry I have spoken anything,

Indeed I am, that may add more restraint

To that too much you have. Good sir, be pleas'd

To think it was a fault of love, not malice;

And do as I will do: forgive it, Prince.

I do, and can forgive the greatest sins

To me you can repent of; pray believe me.

TIGRANES O my Spaconia! O thou virtuous woman!

1460

1440

1450

SPACONIA No more, the King, sir.

4.3 Enter ARBACES, BACURIUS, and MARDONIUS

ARBACES Have you been careful of our noble prisoner

That he want nothing fitting for his greatness?

BACURIUS I hope his grace will 'quite me for my care, sir.

ARBACES 'Tis well. Royal Tigranes, health.

TIGRANES More than the strictness of this place can give, sir,

I offer back again to great Arbaces.

ARBACES We thank you, worthy prince, and pray excuse us

We have not seen you since your being here;

I hope your noble usage has been equal

With your own person.

TIGRANES I thank you.

My usage here has been the same it was

Worthy a royal conquerour.

ARBACES What lady is that, Bacurius?

BACURIUS One of the Princess' women, sir.

1480 ARBACES I fear'd it: why comes she hither?

BACURIUS To speak with the Prince Tigranes.

ARBACES From whom, Bacurius?

BACURIUS From the Princess, sir.

ARBACES I knew I had seen her.

MARDONIUS His fit begins to take him now again. 'Tis a strange fever and 'twill shake us all anon, I fear; would he were well cur'd of this raging folly.

ARBACES I see there's truth in no man, nor obedience,

But for his own ends. Why did you let her in?

BACURIUS It was your own command to bar none from him.

Beside, the Princess sent her ring, sir,

For my warrant.

ARBACES A token to Tigranes did she not?

Sirrah, tell truth.

BACURIUS I do not use to lie, sir,

'Tis no way I eat or live by, and I think

This is no token, sir.

ARBACES I'm trifled with.

BACURIUS Sir.

ARBACES I know it, as I know thee to be false.

1500 MARDONIUS Now the clap comes.

BACURIUS You never knew me so, sir, I dare speak it,

And durst a worse man tell me, though my better.

MARDONIUS 'Tis well said, by my soul.

ARBACES Sirrah, you answer as you had no life. I say openly this woman carries letters, by my life I know she carries letters, this woman does it. I have found it out, this woman carries letters.

MARDONIUS If this hold 'twill be an ill world for bawds, chambermaids, and postboys. I thank God I have none but his letters patents, things of his own inditing.

ARBACES Prince, this cunning cannot do it.

1510 TIGRANES What, sir, I reach you not.

ARBACES It shall not serve your turn, Prince.

TIGRANES Serve my turn, sir?

ARBACES Ay, sir, it shall not serve your turn.

TIGRANES Be plainer, good sir.

ARBACES This woman shall carry no more letters back to your love Panthea, by heaven, she shall not, I say she shall not.

MARDONIUS This would make a saint swear like a soldier.

TIGRANES This beats me more, king, than the blows you gave me.

ARBACES Take 'em away both, and together let 'em be prisoners, strictly and closely kept, or sirrah, your life shall answer it; and let nobody speak with 'em hereafter.

BACURIUS Well, I am subject to you, and must endure these passions.

SPACONIA This is the imprisonment I have look'd for always, and the dear

place I would choose. Exit BACURIUS, TIGRANES and SPACONIA

MARDONIUS Sir, have you done well now?

ARBACES Dare you reprove it?

MARDONIUS No.

ARBACES You must be crossing me.

MARDONIUS I have no letters, sir, to anger you,

But a dry sonnet of my corporal's

To an old saddler's wife, and that I'll burn, sir.

'Tis like to prove a fine age for the ignorant.

ARBACES How dar'st thou so often forfeit thy life,

Thou know'st 'tis in my power to take it.

MARDONIUS Yes, and I know you won-not, or if you do, you'll miss it quickly.

ARBACES Why?

MARDONIUS Who shall then tell you of these childish follies when I am dead?

Who shall put to his power to draw those virtues out of a flood of humours where they are drown'd, and make 'em shine again? No, cut my head off. Do, kill me. Then you may talk, and be believed, and grow, and have your too self-glorious temper rot into a dead sleep, and the kingdom with you, till foreign swords be in your throats, and slaughter be everywhere about you like your flatterers. Do, kill me.

ARBACES Prithee, be tamer, good Mardonius,

Thou know'st I love thee, nay, I honor thee.

Believe it, good old soldier, I am all thine.

4.4 Enter GOBRIUS

MARDONIUS There comes a good man, love him too, he's temperate. You may live to have need of such a virtue: rage is not still in fashion.

1550 ARBACES Welcome, good Gobrius.

GOBRIUS My service, and this letter to your grace.

ARBACES From whom?

GOBRIUS From the rich mine of virtue and all beauty,

Your mournful sister.

ARBACES She is in prison, Gobrius, is she not?

GOBRIUS She is, sir, till your pleasure do enlarge her,

Which on my knees I beg. O 'tis not fit

That all the sweetness of the world in one

Should live thus cloister'd up.

1560 ARBACES Prithee, stand up, 'tis true she is too fair,

And all these commendations but her own.

Would thou hadst never so commended her,

Or I ne'er liv'd to have heard it, Gobrius.

GOBRIUS Good sir, read her letter.

ARBACES Alas, she would be a' liberty,

And there be thousand reasons, Gobrius,

That will deny it.

Which, if she knew, she would contentedly

Be where she is and bless her virtue for it.

1570 GOBRIUS Then, good sir, for her satisfaction

Send for her, and with reason make her know

Why she must live thus from you.

ARBACES I will.

Go bring her to me.

Exeunt

[Poss. intermission]

4.5 Enter BESSUS and TWO SWORDMEN

BESSUS You're very welcome both, gentlemen o' th' sword.

I have been curious in the searching of you,

Because I understood you wise and valiant persons.

1580 SWORD 1 We understand ourselves, sir.

BESSUS Nay, gentlemen, and my dear friends o' th' sword,

No complement I pray, but to the cause

I hang upon, which in few, is my honor.

SWORD 2 You cannot hang too much, sir, for your honor,

But to your cause, be wise, and speak truth.

BESSUS My sorest business is, I have been kick'd.

SWORD 2 How far, sir?

BESSUS Not to flatter myself in it, all over,

My sword forc'd, but not lost; for discreetly

I render'd it, to save that imputation.

SWORD 1 It showed discretion the best part of valor.

SWORD 2 Brother, this is a pretty case, pray ponder on't,

Our friend here has been kick'd.

SWORD 1 He has so, brother.

SWORD 2 Sorely, he says. Now had he sit down here

Upon the mere kick, it had been cowardly.

SWORD 1 I think it had been cowardly indeed.

SWORD 2 But our friend has redeem'd it, in delivering

His sword without compulsion; and that man

That took it of him, I pronounce a weak one,

And his kicks nullities.

He should have kick'd him after the delivery,

Which is the confirmation of a coward.

SWORD 1 Brother, I take it you mistake the question.

For say that I were kick'd--

SWORD 2 I must not say so, nor I must not hear it spoke by th' tongue of man.

You kick'd dear brother, you are merry.

SWORD 1 But put the case I were kick'd.

SWORD 2 Let them put it that are things weary of their lives, and know not

honor: put case you were kick'd?

SWORD 1 I do not say I was kick'd.

BESSUS Nay, gentlemen; good sir, to th' question.

SWORD 1 Why then I say, suppose your boy kick'd, Captain.

SWORD 2 The boy may be suppos'd, he's liable; but kick my brother?

SWORD 1 A foolish forward zeal, sir, in my friend;

But to the boy, suppose the boy were kick'd?

BESSUS I do suppose it.

SWORD 1 Has your boy a sword?

BESSUS Surely no, I pray.

SWORD 1 Suppose a sword too.

BESSUS I do suppose it.

SWORD 1 You grant your boy was kick'd then.

SWORD 2 By no means, Captain, let it be suppos'd still; this word 'grant'

makes not for us.

SWORD 1 I say this must be granted.

SWORD 2 This must be granted, brother?

SWORD 1 Ay, this must be granted.

SWORD 2 Still, the 'must'--

SWORD 1 I say this must be granted.

1630 SWORD 2 Give me the must again; again; brother, you palter.

BESSUS Nay, look you, gentlemen.

SWORD 2 In a word I ha' done.

SWORD 1 A tall man, but untemperate; 'tis great pity. Once more, suppose the

boy kick'd.

SWORD 2 Forward.

SWORD 1 And being throughly kick'd, laughs at the kicker.

SWORD 2 So much for us; proceed.

SWORD 1 And in this beaten scorn, as I may call it,

Delivers up his weapon: where lies the error?

1640 BESSUS It lies i' th' beating, sir, I found it

Four days since.

SWORD 2 The error, and a sore one,

As I take, lies in the thing kicking.

BESSUS I understand that well, 'tis sore indeed, sir.

SWORD 1 That is according to the man that did it.

SWORD 2 There springs a new branch: whose was the fool?

BESSUS A lord's.

SWORD 1 The cause is mighty, but had it been two lords,

And both had kick'd you, if you laugh'd, 'tis clear.

1650 BESSUS I did laugh,

But how will that help me, gentlemen?

SWORD 1 Yes, it shall help you, if you laugh'd aloud.

BESSUS As loud as a kick'd man could laugh, I laugh'd, sir.

SWORD 1 My reason now: the valiant man is known

By suffering and contemning, you have

Enough of both, and you are valiant.

SWORD 2 If he be sure he has been kick'd enough.

Embrace him brother, this man is valiant,

I know it by myself he's valiant.

1660 SWORD 1 Captain, thou art a valiant gentleman

To abide upon't, a very valiant man.

BESSUS My equal friends o' th' sword, I must request your hands to this.

SWORD 2 'Tis fit it should be.

BESSUS Am I clear, gentlemen?

SWORD 1 Sir, when the world has taken notice what we have done, make

much of your body, for I'll pawn my steel men will be coyer of their legs hereafter.

BESSUS I must request you go along, and testify to the Lord Bacurius,

whose foot has struck me, how you find my cause.

SWORD 2 We will, and tell that lord he must be rul'd,

Or there be those abroad will rule his lordship. Exeunt

4.6 Enter ARBACES at one door, GOBRIUS and PANTHEA at another

GOBRIUS Sir, here's the Princess.

ARBACES Leave us then alone. [Exit GOBRIUS]

For the main cause of her imprisonment

Must not be heard by any but herself.

You are welcome, sister, and I would to God

I could so bid you by another name,

If you above love not such sins as these.

1680 Circle my heart with thoughts as cold as snow

To quench these rising flames that harbor here.

PANTHEA Sir, does it please you, I should speak.

ARBACES Please me,

Ay, more than all the art of music can,

And yet it is not fit thou shouldst be heard.

PANTHEA I am the first that ever had a wrong

So far from being fit to have redress,

That 'twas unfit to hear it. I will back

To prison rather, than disquiet you,

And wait till it be fit.

ARBACES No, do not go,

For I will hear thee. But I do beseech thee

Do not come nearer to me, for there is

Something in that that will undo us both.

PANTHEA Alas, sir, am I venom?

ARBACES Yes, to me.

PANTHEA Sir, this is that I would: I am of late,

Shut from the world, and why it should be thus

Is all I wish to know.

1700 ARBACES Why, credit me

Panthea, credit me that am thy brother,

Thy loving brother, that there is a cause

Sufficient. Wilt thou but credit this;

By heaven, 'tis true, believe it if thou canst.

PANTHEA Children and fools are ever credulous;

And I am both, I think, for I believe.

If you dissemble, be it on your head.

I'll back unto my prison; yet methinks

I might be kept in some place where you are,

For in myself I find, I know not what

To call it, but it is a great desire

To see you often.

ARBACES Fie, you come in a step, what do you mean

Dear sister, do not so. Alas, Panthea,

Where I am, would you be, why that's the cause

You are imprison'd, that you may not be

Where I am.

PANTHEA Then I must endure it, sir, God keep you.

ARBACES Nay, you shall hear the cause in short. I've lost

The only difference betwixt man and beast:

My reason.

PANTHEA Heaven forbid.

ARBACES Nay it is gone,

Each sudden passion throws me as it lists,

And overwhelms all that oppose my will.

I have beheld thee with a lustful eye.

My heart is set on wickedness, to act

Such sins with thee, as I have been afraid

To think of. If thou dar'st consent to this,

(Which I beseech thee do not) thou may'st gain

Thy liberty, and yield me a content.

If not, thy dwelling must be dark, and close

Where I may never see thee, for God knows,

That laid this punishment upon my pride,

Thy sight at some time will enforce my madness.

1730

PANTHEA Far be it from me to revile the King.

But it is true, that I should rather choose

To search out death, that else would search out me,

And in a grave sleep with my innocence,

Than welcome such a sin. Peace enter you again.

ARBACES Farewell, and good Panthea, pray for me,

Thy prayers are pure, that I may find a death,

However soon before my passions grow

That they forget, what I desire is sin.

PANTHEA Sir, I will pray for you; yet you shall know

It is a sullen fate that governs us.

For I could wish as heartily as you

I were no sister to you. I should then

Embrace your lawful love sooner than health.

1750 ARBACES Couldst thou affect me then?

PANTHEA So perfectly

That as it is, I ne'er shall sway my heart

To like another.

ARBACES Is there no step

To our full happiness, but these mere sounds

'Brother' and 'sister'?

PANTHEA There is nothing else,

But these, alas, will seperate us more

Than twenty worlds betwixt us.

1760 ARBACES I have liv'd

To conquer men, and now am overthrown

Only by words, 'brother' and 'sister'. Where

Have those words dwelling, I will find 'em out

And utterly destroy them, but they are

Not to be grasp'd. Let 'em be men or beasts,

And I will cut 'em from the earth; or towns,

And I will raze 'em, and then blow 'em up.

PANTHEA But 'tis not in the power of any force

Or policy to conquer them.

1770 ARBACES Panthea,

What shall we do? Shall we stand firmly here,

And gaze our eyes out?

PANTHEA Would I could do so,

But I shall weep out mine. Sir, I disturb you,

And myself too; 'twere better I were gone.

I will not be so foolish as I was.

ARBACES Stay, we will love just as becomes our births,

No otherwise. Brothers and sisters may

Walk hand in hand together; so will we.

1780 Come nearer. Is there any hurt in this?

PANTHEA I hope not.

ARBACES Faith there's none at all.

And tell me truly now, is there not one

You love above me?

PANTHEA No, by Heaven.

ARBACES Yet you sent unto Tigranes, sister.

PANTHEA True, but for another. For the truth --

ARBACES No more,

I'll credit thee; I know thou canst not lie,

Thou art all truth.

PANTHEA But is there nothing else

That we may do, but only walk? Methinks

Brothers and sisters lawfully may kiss.

ARBACES And so they may, Panthea, so will we. [Kiss]

And kiss again too [kiss]; we were scrupulous

And foolish, but we will be so no more. [Kiss]

PANTHEA If you have any mercy, let me go

To prison, to my death, to anything.

I feel a sin growing upon my blood,

1800 Worse than all these, hotter I fear than yours.

ARBACES That is impossible. What should we do?

PANTHEA Fly, sir, for God's sake.

ARBACES So we must, away;

Sin grows upon us more by this delay.

5.1 Enter MARDONIUS and LIGONES

MARDONIUS Sir, the King has seen your commission, and believes it, and freely

by this warrant gives you leave to visit Prince Tigranes, your noble master.

LIGONES I thank his grace.

MARDONIUS But is the main of all your business ended in this?

1810 LIGONES I have another, but a worse; I am asham'd it is a business--

MARDONIUS You serve a worthy person; you may employ me if you please,

without your purse. Such offices should ever be their own rewards.

LIGONES I am bound to your nobleness.

MARDONIUS I may

Have need of you, and then this courtesy,

If it be any, is not ill bestowed.

But may I civilly desire the rest?

I shall not be a hurter, if no helper.

LIGONES Sir, you shall know I have lost a foolish daughter,

And with her all my patience, pilfer'd away

By a mean captain of your king's.

MARDONIUS Stay there, sir.

If he have reach'd the noble worth of captain,

He may well claim a worthy gentlewoman.

LIGONES I grant all that too. But this wretched fellow

Reaches no further than the empty name

That serves to feed him. Were he valiant,

Or had but in him any noble nature,

That might hereafter promise him a good man,

My cares were something lighter, and my grave

A span yet from me.

MARDONIUS By description

I should now guess him to you. It was Bessus,

I dare almost with confidence pronounce it.

LIGONES 'Tis such a scurvy name as Bessus, and now I think 'tis he.

MARDONIUS 'Captain' do you call him? Your daughter was not mad, sir?

LIGONES No, would she had been, the fault had had more credit. I would do

something.

MARDONIUS I would fain counsel you, but to what I know not. He's so below a

beating, that to hang him were to cast away a rope. He's such an airy, thin, unbodied

coward, that no revenge can catch him.

LIGONES I would see him, but I shall have no patience.

MARDONIUS 'Tis no great matter if you have not. 'Tis no news to him to have a

leg broke, or a shoulder out. Draw not your sword, if you love it, for on my

conscience his head will break it; we use him i' th' wars like a ram to shake a wall

withal. Here comes the very person of him; do as you shall find your temper, I must

leave you. Exit MARDONIUS

1850

1840

5.2 Enter BESSUS and the SWORDMEN

LIGONES Is your name Bessus?

BESSUS Men call me Captain Bessus.

LIGONES Then, Captain Bessus, you are a rank rascal, a dirty frozen slave, and with the favor of your friends here, I will beat you.

SWORD 2 Pray, use your pleasure, sir.

LIGONES [Beating him] Thus, Captain Bessus, thus; thus twinge your nose, thus kick, and thus tread you.

BESSUS I do beseech you yield your cause, sir, quickly.

1860 LIGONES Indeed I should have told you that first.

BESSUS I take it so.

SWORD 1 Captain, 'a should indeed, he is mistaken.

LIGONES Sir, you shall have it quickly, and more beating:

You have stol'n away a lady, Captain Coward,

And such a one-- Beats him.

BESSUS Hold, I beseech you, hold sir,

I never yet stole any living thing that had a tooth about it.

LIGONES Sirrah, that quits not me. Where is this lady?

Do that you do not use to do: tell truth.

Or by my hand, I'll beat your captain's brains out,

Wash 'em, and put 'em in again, that will I.

BESSUS There was a lady, sir, I must confess,

Once in my charge. The Prince Tigranes gave her

To my guard for her safety; how I us'd her,

She may herself report, she's with the Prince now.

I did but wait upon her like a groom,

Which she will testify I am sure.

LIGONES This is most likely, sir, I ask you pardon,

And am sorry I was so intemperate.

But I know your goodness can forget

Twenty beatings. You must forgive me.

BESSUS Yes, there's my hand, go where you will, I shall think you a valiant fellow for all this.

LIGONES My daughter is a whore.

I feel it now too sensible; yet I will see her,

Discharge myself of being mother to her,

And then back to my country, and there die.

Farewell, Captain.

Exit LIGONES

BESSUS Farewell, sir, farewell, commend me to the gentlewoman, I pray.

1890 SWORD 1 How now, Captain? Bear up, man.

BESSUS Gentlemen o' th' sword, your hands once more, I have been kick'd again, but the foolish fellow is penitent, has ask'd me mercy, and my honor's safe.

SWORD 1 There be our hands again.

Exeunt

5.3 Enter LIGONES and BACURIUS

BACURIUS Sir, your authority is good, and I am glad it is so. Yonder is your king, I'll

leave you. Exit

Enter TIGRANES and SPACONIA

LIGONES There he is indeed,

1900

And with him my disloyal child.

TIGRANES I do perceive my fault so much, that yet

Methinks thou shouldst not have forgiven me.

LIGONES Health to your majesty.

TIGRANES What! Good Ligones, welcome; what business brought thee hither?

LIGONES Several businesses.

My public business will appear by this:

I have a message to deliver, which

1910 If it please you so to authorize, is

An embassage from th' Armenian state,

Unto Arbaces, for your liberty.

The offer's there set down, please you to read it.

TIGRANES [Reading] There is no alteration happened

Since I came thence?

LIGONES None, sir, all is as it was.

TIGRANES And all our friends are well?

LIGONES All very well.

SPACONIA Though I have done nothing but what was good,

I dare not see my mother. It was fault

Enough not to acquaint her with that good.

LIGONES Madam, I should have seen you.

SPACONIA O good sir, forgive me.

LIGONES Forgive you, why I am no kin to you, am I?

SPACONIA Should it be measur'd by my mean deserts,

Indeed you are not.

LIGONES Thou couldst prate unhappily

Ere thou couldst go, would thou couldst do as well.

And how does your custom hold out here?

1930 SPACONIA What do you mean?

LIGONES Do you take money? Are you come to sell sin yet? Perhaps I can help you to liberal clients. Or has not the King cast you off yet? O thou vile creature, whose best commendation is that thou art a young whore. I would thy father had liv'd to see this; or rather would I had died ere I had seen it. Why did'st not make me acquainted when thou wert first resolv'd to be a whore? I would have seen thy hot lust satisfied more privately. I would have kept a dancer, and a whole consort of musicians in mine own house, only to fiddle thee.

SPACONIA Sir, I was never whore.

TIGRANES Ligones, I have read it, and like it,

1940 You shall deliver it.

LIGONES Well, sir, I will.

But I have private business with you.

TIGRANES Speak, what ist?

LIGONES How has my age deserv'd so ill of you,

That you can pick no strumpets in the land,

But out of my breed?

TIGRANES Strumpets, good Ligones?

LIGONES My daughter

Might have been spar'd, there were enough beside.

1950 TIGRANES May I not prosper, but she's innocent

As morning light for me, and I dare swear,

For all the world.

LIGONES Why is she with you then?

Why do you keep her with you? For your queen

I know you do contemn her, so should I

And every subject else think much at it.

TIGRANES Let 'em think much, but 'tis more firm than earth

Thou seest thy Queen there.

LIGONES Then have I made a fair hand, I call'd her whore. If I shall speak now as

her mother, I cannot choose but greatly rejoice that she shall be a queen, but if I

should speak to you as a statesman, she were more fit to be your whore.

TIGRANES Get you about your business to Arbaces,

Now you talk idly.

LIGONES Yes, sir, I will go.

Shall she be a queen, now by my troth 'tis fine,

I'll dance out of all measure at her wedding:

Shall I not, sir?

TIGRANES

Yes, marry, shalt thou.

1970 LIGONES Good God preserve you, you are an excellent king.

SPACONIA Farewell, good mother.

LIGONES Farewell, sweet virtuous daughter;

I never was so joyful in my life,

That I remember. Shall she be a queen? Exit

TIGRANES Come, my dear love.

SPACONIA But you may see another

May alter that again.

TIGRANES I know I have

The passions of a man, but if I meet

1980 With any subject that shall hold my eyes

More firmly than is fit, I'll think of thee,

And run away from it. Let that suffice. Exeunt

5.4 Enter BACURIUS and a servant

BACURIUS Three gentlemen without to speak with me?

SERVANT Yes, sir.

BACURIUS Let them come in.

SERVANT They are enter'd, sir, already.

Enter BESSUS and SWORDMEN

1990 BACURIUS Now fellows, your business, are these the gentlemen?

BESSUS My lord, I have made bold to bring these gentlemen, my friends o' th' sword, along with me.

BACURIUS What come they for, good Captain Stockfish?

BESSUS It seems your lordship has forgot my name.

BACURIUS No, nor your nature neither, though they are things fitter, I confess, for anything than my remembrance, or any honest man's. What shall these billets do, be piled up in my woodyard?

BESSUS Your lordship holds your mirth still, God continue it. But for these gentlemen, they come--

2000 BACURIUS To swear you are a coward, spare your book, I do believe it.

BESSUS Your lordship still draws wide. They come to vouch under their valiant hands, I am no coward.

BACURIUS Men of most valiant hands, is this true?

SWORD 2 It is so most renowned.

SWORD 1 We have examined from your lordship's foot there to this man's head, the nature of the beatings, and we do find his honor is come off clean, and sufficient. This as our swords shall help us.

BACURIUS You are much bound to your bilbo-men. 'Twere good you would think some way to gratify them, they have undergone a labour for you, Bessus, would have puzzled Hercules, with all his valor.

SWORD 2 Your lordship must understand we are no men o'th'law, that take pay for our opinions: it is sufficient we have clear'd our friend.

BACURIUS Yet here is something due, which I as touch in conscience will discharge, Captain. I'll pay this rent for you.

BESSUS Spare yourself, my good lord; my brave friends arm at nothing but the virtue.

BACURIUS Be not so modest, I will give you something.

BESSUS They shall dine with your lordship, that's sufficient.

BACURIUS [Beating them] Something in hand the while, ye rogues, ye apple-squires.

Do you come hither with your bottled valor, your windy froth, to limit out my beatings?

SWORD 1 I do beseech your lordship.

SWORD 2 O good lord.

BACURIUS 'Sfoot, what a bevy of beaten slaves are here! Get me a cudgel, sirrah, and a tough one.

[Exit SERVANT]

SWORD 2 More of your foot, I do beseech your lordship.

BACURIUS You shall, you shall, dog, and your fellow beagle.

SWORD 1 'A this side, good my lord.

BACURIUS Off with your swords, for if you hurt my foot, I'll have you flayed, you rascals.

SWORD 1 Mine's off my lord.

SWORD 2 I beseech your lordship stay a little, my strap's tied to my codpiece point.

Now, when you please.

BACURIUS Captain, these are your valiant friends, you long for a little too?

BESSUS I am very well, I humbly thank your lordship.

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT Here's a good cudgel, sir.

BACURIUS It comes too late, I am weary. Prithee, do thou beat 'em.

SWORD 2 My lord, this is foul play i'faith, to put a fresh man upon us. Men are but men.

BACURIUS That jest shall save your bones, up with your rotten regiment, and be gone.

I had rather thresh than be bound to kick these rascals till they cried hold. Bessus, you may put your hand to them now, and then you are quit. Farewell. As you like this, pray visit me again, 'twill keep me in good breath.

[Exeunt BACURIUS and SERVANT]

SWORD 2 Has a devilish hard foot, I never felt the like.

SWORD 1 Nor I, and yet I'm sure I ha' felt a hundred.

BESSUS Why, well enough I warrant you, you can go.

SWORD 2 Yes, God be thanked, but I feel a shrewd ache, sure he has sprang my huckle bone.

SWORD 1 Captain, we must request your hands now to our honors.

BESSUS Yes marry, shall ye, and then let all the world come, we are valiant to ourselves, and there's an end.

SWORD 1 Nay, then we must be valiant. O my ribs.

SWORD 2 O my small guts, a plague upon these sharp-toed shoes, they are murderers.

Exeunt

5.5 Enter ARBACES with his sword drawn

ARBACES It is resolv'd, I bore it whilst I could,

I can no more. Hell, open all thy gates,

2060 And I will through them; if they be shut,

I'll batter 'em, but I will find the place

Where the most damn'd have dwelling. Ere I end,

Amongst them all they shall not have a sin,

But I may call it mine. I must begin

With murder of my friend, and so go on

To an incestuous ravishing, and end

My life and sins with a forbidden blow

Upon myself.

Enter MARDONIUS

2070 MARDONIUS What tragedy is near?

That hand was never wont to draw a sword,

But it cried dead to something.

ARBACES Mardonius,

Have you bid Gobrius come?

MARDONIUS How do you, sir?

ARBACES Well; is he coming?

MARDONIUS Why, sir, are you thus?

Why does your hand proclaim a lawless war

Against yourself?

2080 ARBACES Thou answerest me one question with another.

Is Gobrius coming?

MARDONIUS Sir, he is.

ARBACES 'Tis well.

MARDONIUS Sir, I have mark'd--

ARBACES Mark less, it troubles you and me.

MARDONIUS You are more variable than you were.

ARBACES It may be so. I prithee, get thee gone.

MARDONIUS Sir, I will speak.

ARBACES Will ye?

2090 MARDONIUS It is my duty.

I fear you will kill yourself. I am subject,

And you shall do me wrong in't; 'tis my cause,

And I may speak.

ARBACES Thou art not train'd in sin,

It seems, Mardonius. Kill myself, by Heaven.

There is a method in man's wickedness,

It grows up by degrees; I am not come

So high as killing of myself, there are

A hundred thousand sins 'twixt me and it

Which I must do.

MARDONIUS I am sorry 'tis so ill.

ARBACES True sorrow is alone, grieve by thyself.

MARDONIUS I pray you let me see your sword put up

Before I go; I'll leave you then.

ARBACES Why so?

What folly is this in thee? Is it not

As apt to mischief as it was before?

Can I not reach it, thinkst thou? These are toys

For children to be pleas'd with, and not men.

Now I am safe, you think. Wilt thou now leave me?

MARDONIUS God put into your bosom temperate thoughts.

I'll leave you though I fear. Exit

5.6 Enter GOBRIUS

GOBRIUS There is the King, now it is ripe.

ARBACES Draw near, thou guilty man,

That art the author of the loathedst crime

Five ages have brought forth, and hear me speak

Curses incurable. Thou hast broke my heart.

2120 GOBRIUS How, sir? Have I preserv'd you from a child,

From all the arrows malice or ambition

Could shoot at you, and have I this for pay?

ARBACES Thou knowst the evils thou hast done to me:

Dost thou remember all those witching letters

Thou sentst unto me to Armenia,

Fill'd with the praise of my beloved sister,

Where thou extollst her beauty? What had I

To do with that, what could her beauty be

To me? And thou didst write how well she lov'd me,

Dost thou remember this, so that I doted

Something before I saw her.

GOBRIUS This is true.

ARBACES Is it, and when I was return'd, thou knowst

Thou didst pursue it, till thou woundst me into

Such a strange, and unbeliev'd affection,

As good men cannot think on.

GOBRIUS This I grant, I think I was the cause.

ARBACES A further condemnation will not need:

Prepare thyself to die.

2140 GOBRIUS Why, sir, to die?

ARBACES Why wouldst thou live? Was ever yet offender

So impudent, that had a thought of mercy

After confession of a crime like this?

Get out I cannot, where thou hurlst me in,

But I can take revenge, that's all the sweetness

Left for me.

GOBRIUS Now is the time, hear me but speak.

ARBACES If thou hast hope that there is yet a prayer

To save thee, turn, and speak it to yourself.

2150 GOBRIUS Sir, you shall know your sins before you do 'em.

Know you kill your father.

ARBACES How?

GOBRIUS You kill your father.

ARBACES My father? Though I know it for a lie

Made out of fear to save thy stained life,

The very reverence of the word comes 'cross me,

And ties mine arm down.

Enter ARANE

ARANE Turn thee about,

I come to speak to thee, thou wicked man.

Hear me thou, tyrant.

ARBACES I will turn to thee.

Hear me, thou strumpet. I have blotted out

The name of mother, as thou hast thy shame.

ARANE My shame? Thou hast less shame than anything:

Why dost thou keep my daughter in a prison?

Why dost thou call her sister, and do this?

ARBACES Cease thou, strange impudence, and answer quickly

If thou contemn'st me, this will ask an answer,

2170 And have it.

ARANE Help me, gentle Gobrius.

ARBACES Guilt dare not help guilt, though they grow together

In doing ill. Think not of help, answer.

ARANE I will, to what?

ARBACES Tell me who I am,

Whose son I am, without all circumstance.

Be thou as hasty as my sword will be

If thou refusest.

ARANE Why, you are his son.

2180 ARBACES His son?

Swear, swear, thou worse than woman damn'd.

ARANE By all that's good you are.

ARBACES Then art thou all that ever was known bad. Now is

The cause of all my strange misfortunes come to light.

What reverence expects thou from a child

To bring forth, when thou hast offended Heaven,

Thy husband, and the land? Adulterous witch,

I know now why thou wouldst have poison'd me:

I was thy lust which thou wouldst have forgot.

Plagues rot thee, as thou liv'st, and such diseases

As use to pay lust, recompence thy deed.

GOBRIUS You do not know why you curse thus.

ARBACES Too well.

You are a pair of vipers, and behold

The serpent you have got.

ARANE You spend your rage

And words in vain, and rail upon a guess.

Hear us a little.

ARBACES No I will never hear, but talk away

2200 My breath and die.

GOBRIUS Why, but you are no bastard.

ARBACES How's that?

ARANE Nor child of mine.

ARBACES Still you go on in wonders to me.

GOBRIUS Pray be more patient,

I may bring comfort to you.

ARBACES I will kneel,

And hear with the obedience of a child.

GOBRIUS First, know our last king, your supposed father

Was old and feeble when he married her,

And almost all the land as she, past hope

Of issue from him.

ARBACES Therefore she took leave

To play the whore, because the King was old.

Is this the comfort?

ARANE What will you find out

To give me satisfaction, when you find

How you have injur'd me. Let fire consume me, If ever I were whore.

2220 GOBRIUS

Forbear these starts,

Or I will leave you wedded to despair,

As you are now.

ARBACES

Bring it out, good father,

I'll lie, and listen here as reverently

As to an angel. If I breathe too loud,

Tell me, for I would be as still as night.

GOBRIUS

Our King, I say was old, and this our Queen

Desired to bring an heir, but yet her husband

She thought was past it, and to be dishonest

2230

I think she would not. But yet her cunning

Found out this way: she feign'd herself with child,

And posts were sent in haste throughout the land,

And God was humbly thank'd in every church.

ARANE

I feign'd then to grow bigger, and perceiv'd

This hope of issue made me fear'd, and brought

A far more large respect from every man,

And saw my power increase, and was resolv'd,

Since I believ'd I could not have't indeed,

At least I would be thought to have a child.

2240 ARBACES

Do I not hear it well; nay, I will make

No noise at all; but pray you to the point, Quick as you can.

GOBRIUS

Now when the time was full,

She should be brought abed. I had a son

Born, which was you. This the Queen hearing of,

Mov'd me to let her have you, and such reasons

She showed me as she knew would tie

My secrecy. She swore you should be king,

And to be short, I did deliver you

Unto her, and pretended you were dead.

That night, the Queen feign'd hastily to labor,

And by a pair of women of her own,

Which she had charm'd, she made the world believe

She was deliver'd of you. You grew up

As the King's son, till you were six year old.

Then did the King die, and did leave to me

Protection of the realm, and contrary

To his own expectation, left his queen

Truly with child, indeed of the fair Princess

Panthea.

ARANE

Then I could have torn my hair,

And did alone to him, yet durst not speak

In public, for I knew I should be found

2260

2250

A traitor, and my talk would have been thought

Madness or anything rather than truth.

This was the only cause why I did seek

To poison you, and he to keep you safe.

GOBRIUS And this the reason why I sought to kindle

Some spark of love in you to fair Panthea,

That she might get part of her right again.

ARBACES Panthea then is not my sister.

ARANE No.

ARBACES But can you prove this?

GOBRIUS If you will give consent.

ARBACES Why I will have them all that know it rack'd

To get this from 'em. All that waits without

Come in, what e'er you be, come in, and be

Partakers of my joy.

5.7 Enter MARDONIUS, BESSUS, BACURIUS, and others

O you are welcome.

Mardonius, the best news, nay, draw no nearer

They all shall hear it: I am found no king.

MARDONIUS Is that so good news?

ARBACES Yes, the happiest news that e'er was heard.

MARDONIUS Indeed, 'twere well for you, if you might be a little less obey'd.

ARBACES On, call the Queen.

MARDONIUS Why she is there.

ARBACES The Queen, Mardonius, Panthea is the Queen,

And I am plain Arbaces, go someone,

She is in Gobrius' house. Since I saw you

There are a thousand things deliver'd to me

You little dream of.

MARDONIUS So it should seem.

ARBACES Why do you keep your hats off, gentlemen,

Is it to me? I'good faith it must not be:

I cannot now command you, but I pray you,

For the respect you bore me when you took

Me for your king, each man clap on his hat

At my desire.

2300 MARDONIUS We will. But you're not found

So mean a man, but that you may be cover'd

As well as we, may you not?

ARBACES O not here,

You may, but not I, for here is my father in presence.

MARDONIUS Where?

ARBACES Why there. O pardon me, dear father,

For all the idle, and unreverent words

That I have spoke in idle moods to you.

I am Arbaces, we all fellow subjects,

Nor is the Queen Panthea now my sister.

BESSUS Why if you remember, fellow subject Arbaces, I told you once she

was not your sister, I say she look'd nothing like you.

ARBACES I think you did, good Captain Bessus.

Enter LIGONES

MARDONIUS Sir, here's Ligones,

The agent for the Armenian king.

LIGONES We must have our king again, and will.

ARBACES I knew that was your business, you shall have

Your king again, and have him so again

2320 As never king was had. Go one of you

And bid Bacurius bring Tigranes hither,

And bring the lady with him, that Panthea,

The Queen Panthea, sent me word this morning

Was brave Tigranes' mistress.

LIGONES 'Tis Spaconia.

ARBACES Ay, ay, Spaconia.

LIGONES She is my daughter.

ARBACES She is so. I could now tell anything

I never heard; your king shall go so home

As never man went.

MARDONIUS Shall he go on's head?

ARBACES He shall have chariots easier than air

That I will have invented; and ne'er think

He shall pay any ransom. And thyself

That art the messenger shall ride before him

On a horse cut out of an entire diamond,

That shall be made to go with golden wheels,

I know not how yet.

LIGONES Why I shall be made

Forever. They belied this king with us

And said he was unkind.

ARBACES And then thy daughter,

She shall have some strange thing, we'll have the kingdom

Sold utterly, and put into a toy

Which she shall wear about her carelessly

Somewhere or other.

Enter PANTHEA

See the virtuous Queen.

Behold the humblest subject that you have

Kneel here before you.

PANTHEA Why kneel you to me

That am your vassal?

ARBACES Grant me one request.

PANTHEA Alas, what can I grant you?

What I can I will.

ARBACES That you will please to marry me,

If I can prove it lawful.

PANTHEA Is that all?

More willingly, than I would draw this air.

2360 ARBACES I'll kiss this hand in earnest.

MARDONIUS Sir, Tigranes is coming, though he made it strange to see the

Princess any more.

ARBACES The Queen, thou mean'st.

Enter TIGRANES and SPACONIA

O my Tigranes, pardon me,

Tread on my neck, I freely offer it,

And if thou be'st so given, take revenge,

For I have injur'd thee.

TIGRANES No, I forgive,

And rejoice more that you have found repentance,

Than I my liberty.

ARBACES May'st thou be happy

In thy fair choice, for thou art temperate.

You owe no ransom to the state, know that.

I have a thousand joys to tell you of,

Which yet I dare not utter, till I pay

My thanks to Heaven for 'em. Will you go

With me, and help me? Pray you do.

TIGRANES I will.

2380 ARBACES

Take then your fair one with you. And you, Queen

Of goodness, and of us, O give me leave

To take your arm in mine. Come everyone

That takes delight in goodness, help to sing

Loud thanks for me, that I am prov'd no king.

That pulls it thence; where art, Mardonius?

MARDONIUS Here, sir.

ARBACES I prithee bear me; my legs

Refuse to bear my body.

MARDONIUS So I shall. Exeunt

3.3.1 Enter BESSUS

BESSUS They talk of fame. Some will say they could be content to have it, but that it is to be achieved with danger, but my opinion is otherwise: for if I might stand still in cannon proof, and have fame fall upon me, I would refuse it. My reputation came principally by thinking to run away, which nobody knows but Mardonius, and I think he conceals it to anger me. Before I went to the wars, I came to the town a young fellow without means or parts to deserve friends; and my empty guts persuaded me to lie, and abuse people for my meat, which I did, and they beat me. Then would I fast two days, till my hunger cried out on me, 'rail still'; then methought I had a monstrous stomach to abuse them again, and did it. In this state I continued till they hung me up by th' heels and beat me with haslet sticks, as if they would have roast me, and have cozen'd somebody with me for venison. After this, God call'd an aunt of mine, that left two hundred pounds in a cousin's hand for me, who, taking me to be a gallant young spirit, rais'd a company for me with the money, and sent me into Armenia with 'em. Away I would have run from them, but that I could get no company, and alone I durst not run. I was never at battle but once, and there I fled with my whole

company amongst my enemies, and overthrew 'em. Now the report of my valor is come over before me, and they say I was a raw young fellow, but now I am improv'd.

A plague of their eloquence, 'twill cost me many a beating. And Mardonius might help this to if he would, for now they think to get honor of me, and all the men I have abus'd call me freshly to account, worthily as they call it, by the way of challenge. Upon my credit I am already engag'd to two hundred and twelve. Certainly my safest way were to print myself a coward, with a discovery how I came by my credit, and clap it upon every post: I have received above thirty challenges within this two hours, marry, all but the first I put off with engagement, and by good fortune this first is no madder of fighting than I, so that that's reserv'd. Who's there? 'Tis my Lord Bacurius, I fear all is not well betwixt us.

I'll dance out of all measure at her wedding:

Shall I not, sir?

TIGRANES Yes, marry, shalt thou.

LIGONES Good God preserve you, you are an excellent king.

SPACONIA Farewell, good mother.

LIGONES Farewell, sweet virtuous daughter;

I never was so joyful in my life,

That I remember. Shall she be a queen? Exit

TIGRANES Come, my dear love.

SPACONIA But you may see another

May alter that again.

TIGRANES I know I have

The passions of a man, but if I meet

With any subject that shall hold my eyes

More firmly than is fit, I'll think of thee,

And run away from it. Let that suffice. Exeunt

5.4 Enter BACURIUS and BESSUS with SWORDMEN

BACURIUS Now fellows, your business, are these the gentlemen?

BESSUS My lord, I have made bold to bring these gentlemen, my friends o' th' sword, along with me.

BACURIUS What come they for, good Captain Stockfish?

- BESSUS It seems your lordship has forgot my name.
- BACURIUS No, nor your nature neither, though they are things fitter, I confess, for anything than my remembrance, or any honest man's. What shall these billets do, be piled up in my woodyard?
- BESSUS Your lordship holds your mirth still, God continue it. But for these gentlemen, they come--
- BACURIUS To swear you are a coward, spare your book, I do believe it.
- BESSUS Your lordship still draws wide. They come to vouch under their valiant hands, I am no coward.
- BACURIUS Men of most valiant hands, is this true?
- SWORD 2 It is so most renowned.
- SWORD 1 We have examined from your lordship's foot there to this man's head, the nature of the beatings, and we do find his honor is come off clean, and sufficient. This as our swords shall help us.
- BACURIUS You are much bound to your bilbo-men. 'Twere good you would think some way to gratify them, they have undergone a labour for you, Bessus, would have puzzled Hercules, with all his valor.
- SWORD 2 Your lordship must understand we are no men o'th'law, that take pay for our opinions: it is sufficient we have clear'd our friend.
- BACURIUS Yet here is something due, which I as touch in conscience will discharge,

 Captain. I'll pay this rent for you.

BESSUS Spare yourself, my good lord; my brave friends arm at nothing but the virtue.

BACURIUS Be not so modest, I will give you something.

BESSUS They shall dine with your lordship, that's sufficient.

BACURIUS [Beating them] Something in hand the while, ye rogues, ye apple-squires.

Do you come hither with your bottled valor, your windy froth, to limit out my beatings?

SWORD 1 I do beseech your lordship.

SWORD 2 O good lord.

BACURIUS 'Sfoot, what a bevy of beaten slaves are here!

SWORD 2 More of your foot, I do beseech your lordship.

BACURIUS You shall, you shall, dog, and your fellow beagle.

SWORD 1 'A this side, good my lord.

BACURIUS Off with your swords, for if you hurt my foot, I'll have you flayed, you rascals.

SWORD 1 Mine's off my lord.

SWORD 2 I beseech your lordship stay a little, my strap's tied to my codpiece point.

Now, when you please.

BACURIUS Captain, these are your valiant friends, you long for a little too?

BESSUS I am very well, I humbly thank your lordship.

BACURIUS That jest shall save your bones, up with your rotten regiment, and be gone.

I had rather thresh than be bound to kick these rascals till they cried hold. Bessus, you may put your hand to them now, and then you are quit. Farewell. As you like this, pray visit me again, 'twill keep me in good breath.

[Exit BACURIUS]

SWORD 2 Has a devilish hard foot, I never felt the like.

SWORD 1 Nor I, and yet I'm sure I ha' felt a hundred.

BESSUS Why, well enough I warrant you, you can go.

SWORD 2 Yes, God be thanked, but I feel a shrewd ache, sure he has sprang my huckle bone.

SWORD 1 Captain, we must request your hands now to our honors.

BESSUS Yes marry, shall ye, and then let all the world come, we are valiant to ourselves, and there's an end.

SWORD 1 Nay, then we must be valiant. O my ribs.

SWORD 2 O my small guts, a plague upon these sharp-toed shoes, they are murderers.

Exeunt