



**BRAVE SPIRITS THEATRE  
ARCHIVE**

REHEARSAL SCRIPT  
*Arden of Faversham*  
2015

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The Lamentable and True Tragedie of **M. Arden of Faversham** in Kent

Adapted and Directed by Dan Crane

V 3.0

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Thomas Arden, Gentleman of Faversham

Franklin, Arden's Friend

Alice Arden, Arden's Wife

Mosbie, Alice's Lover

Susan, Mosbie's Sister

Michael, Arden's Servant

Dick Greene, Arden's Neighbor

Clarke, a Painter

Shakebag, a Murderer

Black Will, a Murderer

Lord Cheiny

A Prentice

A Ferryman

Lord Cheiny's Man,

The Watch

**Prologue**

FRANKLIN

This is the lamentable and true tragedy of Master Thomas Arden of Faversham in Kent, who was most wickedly murdered by the means of his disloyal and wanton wife, who for the love she bore to one Mosbie hired two desperate ruffians Black Will and Shakebag to kill him; Wherein is showed the great malice and dissimulation of a wicked woman, and the insatiable desire of filthy lust and the shameful end of all murders.

We hope you'll pardon this naked tragedy,  
Wherein no filed points are foisted in  
To make it gracious to the ear or eye;  
For simple truth is gracious enough,  
And needs no other points of glossing stuff.

**Scene 1 (1.1)**

*Outside Arden's House.*

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

FRANKLIN

Arden, cheer up thy spirits, and droop no more.  
My gracious Lord, the Duke of Somerset,  
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,  
By letters patent from his Majesty,  
All the lands of the Abbey of Faversham.

ARDEN

Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life;  
And but for thee how odious were this life,  
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,  
Which makes me wish that for this veil of heaven  
The earth hung over my head and covered me.  
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes!  
Love-letters pass 'twixt Mosbie and my wife,  
And they have privy meetings in the town.  
Can any grief be half so great as this?

FRANKLIN

Comfort thyself, sweet friend; it is not strange  
That women will be false and wavering.

ARDEN

Ay, but to dote on such a one as he  
Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable.

FRANKLIN

Why, what is he?

ARDEN

A botcher<sup>1</sup>, and no better at the first,  
Who, by base brokage<sup>2</sup> getting some small stock,  
Crept into service of a nobleman.  
And by his servile flattery and fawning  
Is now become the steward of his house,  
And bravely jets it in his silken gown.

FRANKLIN

No nobleman will countenance such a peasant.

ARDEN

Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loves not me.  
I am by birth a gentleman of blood,  
And that injurious ribald<sup>3</sup>, that attempts  
To violate my dear wife's chastity  
(For dear I hold her love, as dear as heaven)  
Shall on the bed, which he thinks to defile,  
See his dissevered joints and sinews torn.

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<sup>1</sup> One who makes repairs; a cobbler; an unskillful workman.

<sup>2</sup> Ill-favored transaction.

<sup>3</sup> A varlet or knave.

FRANKLIN

Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me  
To ease thy grief and save her chastity:  
Entreat her fair; sweet words are fittest engines  
To race<sup>4</sup> the flint walls of a woman's breast.  
In any case be not too jealous,  
Nor make no question of her love to thee;  
But, as securely, presently take horse,  
And stay with me in London all this term;  
For women, when they may, will not,  
But being kept back, straight grow outrageous.

ARDEN

Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it,  
And call her forth and presently take leave.  
How! Alice!

*Enter Alice.*

ALICE

Husband, what mean you to get up so early?  
Summer nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.  
Had I been wake, you had not risen so soon.

ARDEN

This night, sweet Alice, thou hast killed my heart:  
I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleep.

---

<sup>4</sup> To scratch, i.e. to spark and strike fire.

ALICE

'Tis like I was asleep when I named him,  
For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.

ARDEN

Ay, but you started up and suddenly,  
Instead of him, caught me about the neck.

ALICE

Instead of him? Why, who was there but you?  
And where but one is, how can I mistake?

FRANKLIN

Arden, leave to urge her over-far.

ARDEN

Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream;  
Let it suffice I know thou lovest me well.

ALICE

Now I remember whereupon it came:  
Had we no talk of Mosbie yesternight?

FRANKLIN

Mistress Alice, I heard you name him once or twice.

ALICE

And thereof came it, and therefore blame not me.

ARDEN

I know it did, and therefore let it pass.  
I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.

ALICE

But tell me, do you mean to stay there long?

ARDEN

No longer there till my affairs be done.

FRANKLIN

He will not stay above a month at most.

ALICE

A month? Ay me! Sweet Arden, come again  
Within a day or two, or else I die.

ARDEN

I cannot long be from thee, gentle Alice.  
Franklin and I will down unto the quay<sup>5</sup>,  
For I have certain goods there to unload.  
Meanwhile prepare our breakfast, gentle Alice,  
For yet ere noon we'll take horse and away.

*Exeunt Arden and Franklin.*

---

<sup>5</sup> An artificial bank or landing place built for the loading and unloading of ships.

**Scene 2 (1.1)**

ALICE

Ere noon he means to take horse and away!  
Sweet news is this. O that some airy spirit  
Would in the shape and likeness of a horse  
Gallop with Arden 'cross the ocean,  
And throw him from his back into the waves!  
Sweet Mosbie is the man that hath my heart,  
And he usurps it, having naught but this,  
That I am tied to him by marriage.  
Love is a God, and marriage is but words,  
And therefore Mosbie's title is the best.  
Tush! Whether it be or no, he shall be mine,  
In spite of him, of Hymen, and of rites.

*Enter Michael.*

Here Michael comes, my husband's serving man.  
I hope he brings me tidings of my love.  
Why how now, Michael, whither are you going?

MICHAEL

To fetch my master's bag. I hope you'll think on me.

ALICE

Ay; but, Michael, see you keep your oath,  
And be as secret as you are resolute.

MICHAEL

I'll see he shall not live above a week.



ALICE

On that condition, Michael, here's my hand:  
None shall have Mosbie's sister but thysel.

MICHAEL

I understand the painter here hard by  
Hath made report that he and Sue are sure.

ALICE

There's no such matter. I say that Susan's thine.

MICHAEL

Why, then I say that I will kill my master,  
Or anything that you will have me do.

ALICE

Then tell me, Michael, tidings of my love,  
He that is master of my heart and mind.

MICHAEL

He whom you wot<sup>6</sup> of, Mosbie, Mistress Alice,  
Is come to town, and sends you word by me  
You may not visit him.

ALICE

Not visit him?

MICHAEL

Nor take no knowledge of his being here.

---

<sup>6</sup> Learn, know or be told (of).

ALICE

But tell me, is he angry or displeased?

MICHAEL

It should seem so, for he is wondrous sad.

ALICE

Ask Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath,  
And bid him, if his love do not decline,  
To come this morning but along my door,  
And as a stranger but salute me there.  
This may he do without suspect or fear.

MICHAEL

I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell.

ALICE

Do, and one day fair Susan shall be thine.

*Exit Michael.*

I know he loves me well, but dares not come,  
Because my husband is so jealous.  
And these my narrow-prying neighbors blab,  
Hindering our meetings when we would confer.  
But, if I live, that block shall be removed;  
And, Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stealth,  
Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men,  
Nor Arden's looks; as surely shall he die  
As I abhor him and love only thee.

*Enter Mosbie, with a walking stick.*

Mosbie, my love!

MOSBIE

Away, I say, and talk not to me now.

ALICE

A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.

MOSBIE

Where is your husband?

ALICE

'Tis now high water, and he is at the quay.

MOSBIE

There let him be. Henceforward know me not.

ALICE

Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?  
Is this the fruit thy reconciliation buds?  
Have I for this given thee so many favors,  
Incurred my husband's hate, and, out alas,  
Made shipwreck of mine honor for thy sake?  
And dost thou say 'henceforward know me not'?  
Remember, when I lock'd thee in my closet,  
What were thy words and mine; did we not both  
Decree to murder Arden in the night?  
The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,  
Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,

'Fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,  
Arden to me was dearer than my soul, —  
And shall be still. Base peasant, get thee gone,  
And boast not of thy conquest over me,  
Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery!  
For what hast thou to countenance my love,  
Being descended of a noble house,  
And matched already with a gentleman  
Whose servant thou may'st be! And so farewell.

MOSBIE

Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see  
That which I ever feared, and find too true:  
A woman's love is as the lightning-flame,  
Which e'en in bursting forth consumes itself.  
To try thy constancy have I been strange<sup>7</sup>;  
Would I had never tried, but lived in hope!

ALICE

What need'st thou try me whom thou ne'er found false?  
Nay, Mosbie, let me still enjoy thy love,  
And happen what will, I am resolute.  
My saving husband hoards up bags of gold  
To make himself more rich, and now is he  
Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,  
Then he and Franklin will to London straight.

MOSBIE

To London, Alice? If thou'lt be ruled by me,

---

<sup>7</sup> Disposed to strangeness, i.e. remarkable disposition or nature.

We'll make him sure enough for going there.

ALICE

Ah, would we could!

MOSBIE

I happened on a painter yesternight,  
The only cunning man of Christendom,  
For he can temper poison with his oil,  
That whoso looks upon the work he draws  
Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,  
Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.  
Sweet Alice, he shall draw thy counterfeit,  
That Arden may, by gazing on it, perish.

ALICE

Ay, but Mosbie, that is dangerous,  
For thou, or I, or any other else,  
Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die.

MOSBIE

Ay, but we'll have it covered with a cloth  
And hung up in the study for himself.

ALICE

It may not be, for when the picture's drawn,  
Arden, I know, will come and show it me.

MOSBIE

Fear not; we will have that shall serve the turn.

*Enter Clarke.*

This is the painter here. I'll call him forth.

ALICE

But Mosbie, I'll have no such picture, I.

MOSBIE

I pray thee leave it to my discretion. How! Clarke!

Oh, you are an honest man of your word!

You served me well.

CLARKE

Why, sir, I'll do it for you at any time,

Provided, as you have given your word,

I may have Susan Mosbie to my wife.

ALICE

*(Aside)* 'Tis pity but he should; he'll use her well.

MOSBIE

Clarke, here's my hand: my sister shall be thine.

CLARKE

Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,

You shall command my life, my skill, and all.

ALICE

Ah, that thou couldst be secret.

MOSBIE

Fear him not.

CLARKE

Let it suffice I know you love him well,  
And fain would have your husband made away.  
Wherein, trust me, you show a noble mind,  
That rather than you'll live with him you hate,  
You'll venture life, and die with him you love.  
The like will I do for my Susan's sake.

ALICE

Yet nothing could enforce me to the deed  
But Mosbie's love. Might I without control  
Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die.  
But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

MOSBIE

Enough, sweet Alice; thy kind words makes me melt.  
Your trick of poisoned pictures we dislike;  
Some other poison would do better far.

ALICE

Ay, such as might be put into his broth,  
And yet in taste not to be found at all.

CLARKE

I know your mind, and here I have it for you.  
Put but a dram of this into his drink,  
Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,  
And he shall die within an hour after.

ALICE

As I am a gentlewoman, Clarke, the next day  
Thou and thy Susan shall be married.

CLARKE

Yonder's your husband. Mosbie, I'll be gone.

*Exit Clarke.*

**Scene 3 (1.1)**

*Here enters Arden, Franklin and Michael.*

ALICE

And in good time.  
Master Mosbie, ask him the question yourself.

MOSBIE

Master Arden, being at London yesternight,  
The Abbey lands, whereof you are now possessed,  
Were offered me on some occasion  
By Master Greene. But are not those lands yours?  
Hath any other interest herein?

ARDEN

Mosbie, that question we'll decide anon.  
Alice, make ready my breakfast, I must hence.

*Exit Alice.*

As for the lands, Mosbie, they are mine  
By letters patents from his Majesty.



But I must have a mandate for my wife;  
They say you seek to rob me of her love.  
Villain, what makes thou in her company?  
They say you seek to rob me of her love.  
She's no companion for so base a groom.

MOSBIE

Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee.  
But rather than I pocket up this wrong—

FRANKLIN

What will you do, sir?

MOSBIE

Revenge it on the proudest of you both.

*Arden snatches away Mosbie's walking stick.*

ARDEN

So, sirrah, you may not wear a sword.  
The statute makes against artificers,  
I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,  
Your tailor's needle, and your pressing iron,  
For this shall go with me. And mark my words,  
You goodman botcher, 'tis to you I speak:  
The next time that I take thee near my house,  
Instead of legs I'll make thee crawl on stumps.

MOSBIE

Ah, Master Arden, you have injured me.  
I do appeal to God and to the world!

FRANKLIN

Why, canst thou deny thou wert a botcher once?

MOSBIE

Measure me what I am, not what I was.

ARDEN

Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,  
A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant!

MOSBIE

Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited  
The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll'n heart,  
Hear me but speak. As I intend to live  
With God and his elected saints in heaven,  
I never meant more to solicit her;  
And that she knows, and all the world shall see.  
'Tis for my sister's sake, her waiting-maid,  
And not for hers. May'st thou enjoy her long.  
Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me,  
If I dishonor her or injure thee.

ARDEN

Mosbie, with these thy protestations  
The deadly hatred of my heart's appeased,  
And thou and I'll be friends, if this prove true.  
As for the base terms that I gave thee late,  
Forget them, Mosbie: I had cause to speak,  
When all the knights and gentlemen of Kent  
Make common table-talk of her and thee.

MOSBIE

Who lives that is not touched with slanderous tongues!

FRANKLIN

Then, Mosbie, to eschew the speech of men,  
Upon whose general bruit<sup>8</sup> all honor hangs,  
Forbear his house.

ARDEN

Forbear it! Nay, rather frequent it more:  
The world shall see that I distrust her not.  
To warn him on the sudden from my house  
Were to confirm the rumor that is grown.

MOSBIE

By my faith, sir, you say true.  
And therefore will I sojourn here a while  
Until our enemies have talked their fill;  
And then, I hope, they'll cease, and at last confess  
How causeless they have injured her and me.

ARDEN

And I will lie at London all this term  
To let them see how light I weigh their words.

*Enter Alice.*

ALICE

Husband, sit down; your breakfast will be cold.

---

<sup>8</sup> Report noised abroad, rumor, or tidings.

ARDEN

Come, Master Mosbie, will you sit with us?

MOSBIE

I cannot eat, but I'll sit for company.

*Arden does not eat.*

ALICE

Husband, why pause ye? Why eat you not?

ARDEN

I am not well; there's something in this broth  
That is not wholesome. Didst thou make it, Alice?

ALICE

I did, and that's the cause it likes not you.  
There's nothing that I do can please your taste.  
You were best to say I would have poisoned you.  
I cannot speak or cast aside my eye,  
But he imagines I have stepped awry.

ARDEN

Why, gentle Mistress Alice, cannot I be ill  
But you'll accuse yourself?

ALICE

Give me a spoon, I'll eat of it myself;  
Would it were full of poison to the brim,  
Then should my cares and troubles have an end.  
Was ever silly woman so tormented!

ARDEN

Be patient, sweet love; I mistrust not thee.

FRANKLIN

Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.

ALICE

Wilt thou to London, then, and leave me here?

Ah, if thou love me, gentle Arden, stay.

Yet, if thy business be of great import

Go, if thou wilt, I'll bear it as I may;

But write from London to me every week,

Nay, every day, and stay no longer there

Than thou must needs, lest that I die for sorrow.

ARDEN

I'll write unto thee every other tide.

And so farewell, sweet Alice, till we meet next.

ALICE

Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so;

And, Master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,

In hope you'll hasten him home, I'll give you this.

*She kisses him.*

FRANKLIN

And if he stay, the fault shall not be mine.

Mosbie, farewell, and see you keep your oath.

MOSBIE

I hope you are not jealous of me now.

ARDEN

No, Mosbie, no; hereafter think of me  
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.

*Exeunt Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*

ALICE

I am glad he is gone; he was about to stay,  
But did you mark me then how I brake off?

MOSBIE

Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed.  
But what a villain is that painter Clarke!

ALICE

Was it not a goodly poison that he gave?  
Why, he's as well now as he was before.

MOSBIE

But had he eaten but three spoonfuls more,  
Then had he died and our love continued.

ALICE

Why, so it shall, Mosbie, albeit he live.

MOSBIE

It is impossible, for I have sworn

Never hereafter to solicit thee,  
Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

ALICE

Thou shalt not need, I will importune thee.  
What, shall an oath make thee forsake my love?  
As if I have not sworn as much myself  
And given my hand unto him in the church!  
Tush, Mosbie; oaths are words, and words is wind,  
And wind is mutable: then, I conclude,  
'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

MOSBIE

Well proved, Mistress Alice; yet by your leave  
I will keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

ALICE

Ay, do, and spare not, his time is but short;  
For if thou be'st as resolute as I,  
We'll have him murdered as he walks the streets.  
In London many alehouse ruffians keep,  
Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.  
They shall be soundly fee'd to pay him home.

*Enter Greene.*

MOSBIE

Alice, what's he that comes yonder? Know'st thou him?

ALICE

Mosbie, be gone. Return to Clarke the painter

To urge him on in our intended drifts.

*Exit Mosbie.*

**Scene 4 (1.1)**

GREENE

Mistress Arden, you are well met.  
I am sorry that your husband is from home,  
When as my purposed journey was to him.  
Yet all my labor is not spent in vain,  
For I suppose that you can full discourse  
And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

ALICE

What is it, Master Greene. If that I may  
Or can with safety, I will answer you.

GREENE

I heard your husband hath the grant of late,  
Confirmed by letters patents from the king,  
Of all the lands of the Abbey of Faversham,  
Generally entitled, so that all former grants  
Are cut off, whereof I myself had one;  
But now my interest by that is void.  
This is all, Mistress Arden; is it true nor no?

ALICE

True, Master Greene; the lands are his in state,  
And whatsoever leases were before  
Are void for the term of Master Arden's life.



GREENE

Pardon me, Mistress Arden, I must speak,  
For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong  
To wring me from the little land I have.  
My living is my life; only that  
Resteth remainder of my portion,  
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,  
And he is greedy-gaping still for gain.  
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,  
So he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch.  
But seeing he hath ta'en my lands, I'll value life  
As careless as he is careful for to get;  
And tell him this from me: I'll be revenged.

ALICE

Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,  
And woe is me that any man should want.  
God knows, 'tis not my fault. But wonder not  
Though he be hard to others, when to me, —  
Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am used.

GREENE

Why, Mistress Arden, can the crabbed churl  
Use you unkindly? Respects he not your birth,  
Your honorable friends, nor what you brought?

ALICE

Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,

I never live good day with him alone.  
When he's at home, then have I froward<sup>9</sup> looks,  
Hard words and blows to mend the match withal.  
Then rides he straight to London; there, forsooth,  
He revels it among such filthy ones  
As counsels him to make away his wife.  
Thus live I daily in continual fear.

GREENE

Now trust me, Mistress Alice, it grieveth me  
So fair a creature should be so abused.  
Why, who would have thought the civil sir so sullen?  
He looks so smoothly. Now, fie upon him, churl!  
And if he live a day, he lives too long.  
That plot of ground which he detains from me,  
I speak it in an agony of spirit,  
Be ruinous and fatal unto him!  
Either there be butchered by his dearest friends,  
Or else be brought for men to wonder at,  
Or there go mad and end his cursed days!  
But frolic, woman! I shall be the man  
Shall set you free from all this discontent;  
And if the churl deny my interest  
And will not yield my lease into my hand,  
I'll pay him home, whatever hap to me.

ALICE

But speak you as you think?

---

<sup>9</sup> Obstinate or willfull.

GREENE

Ay, God's my witness, I mean plain dealing,  
For I had rather die than lose my land.

ALICE

Then, Master Greene, be counseled by me:  
Endanger not yourself for such a churl,  
But hire some cutter for to cut him short,  
And here's ten pound to wager them withal.  
When he is dead, you shall have twenty more.  
And the lands whereof my husband is possess'd  
Shall be entitled as they were before.

GREENE

Will you keep promise with me?

ALICE

Or count me false and perjured whilst I live.

GREENE

Then here's my hand, I'll have him so dispatched.  
I'll up to London straight, I'll thither post,  
And never rest till I have compassed it.  
Till then farewell.

ALICE

Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.

*Exit Greene.*

And whosoever doth attempt the deed,  
A happy hand I wish, and so farewell.

*Enter Mosbie and Clarke.*

MOSBIE

Why how now, Alice, tell me if you please  
How have you dealt and tempered with my sister?  
What, will she have my neighbour Clarke or no?

ALICE

What, Master Mosbie! Let him woo himself.  
Think you that maids look not for fair words?  
Go to her, Clarke, she's all alone within.

CLARKE

I thank you, Mistress Arden, I will in.

*Exit Clarke.*

MOSBIE

Now, Alice, Let's hear thy news.

ALICE

This morning, Master Greene – Dick Greene, I mean,  
From whom my husband had the Abbey land –  
Came hither railing for to know the truth,  
Whether my husband had the lands by grant.  
I told him all, whereat he stormed amain  
And swore he would cry quittance with the churl  
And if he did deny his interest,

Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.  
I gave him ten pound to hire knaves  
By some device to make away the churl.  
When he is dead he shall have twenty more  
And reposes his former lands again.  
On this he 'greed, and he is ridden straight  
To London to bring his death about.

MOSBIE

What! To acquaint each stranger to our drifts,  
Chieflly in case of murder! Why, 'tis the way  
To make it open unto Arden's self  
And bring thysel and me to ruin both.  
Forewarned, forearmed; who threats his enemy  
Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.

ALICE

I did it for the best.

MOSBIE

Well, seeing 'tis done, let it pass. I have a drift  
Will quiet all, whatever is amiss.

*Enter Clarke and Susan.*

ALICE

Why how now, Clarke? Have you found me false?  
Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

MOSBIE

What, sister, is it Clarke must be the man?

SUSAN

It resteth in your grant; some words are past,  
And haply we be grown unto a match,  
If you be willing that it shall be so.

MOSBIE

Ah, Master Clarke, it resteth at my grant:  
But, so you'll grant me one thing I shall ask,  
I am content my sister shall be yours.

CLARKE

What is it, Master Mosbie?

MOSBIE

I do remember once in secret talk  
You told me how you could compound by art  
A crucifix empoisoned,  
That whoso look upon it should wax blind  
And with the scent be stifled, that ere long  
He should die poisoned that did view it well.  
I'd have you make me such a crucifix.  
And then I'll grant my sister shall be yours.

CLARKE

Though I am loath, because it toucheth life,  
Yet, rather or I'll leave sweet Susan's love,  
I'll do it, and with all the haste I may.

MOSBIE

'Tis very well; but against when shall I have it?

CLARKE

Within this ten days.

MOSBIE

That will serve the turn.

Now, Alice, let's in and see what cheer you keep.

I hope, now Master Arden is from home,

You'll give me leave to play your husband's part.

ALICE

Mosbie, you know, who's master of my heart,

He well may be the master of the house.

*Exeunt.*

**Scene 5 (2.1)**

Country between Faversham and London.

*Enter at one end Greene, at another, Black Will and Shakebag.*

GREENE

Two villains upon the road, and coming this way.

The one I know not, but he seems a knave

Chiefly for bearing the other company;

For such a slave, so vile a rogue lives not

Again upon the earth. Black Will is his name.

At Boulogne he and I were fellow-soldiers,

Where he played such pranks

As all the camp feared him for his villainy.

I warrant you he bears so bad a mind

That for a crown he'll murder any man.

The fitter is he for my purpose, marry!

BLACK WILL

How now, fellow Dick Greene? Whither away so early?

GREENE

O Will, times are changed: no fellows now,  
Though we were once together in the field;  
Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can.

BLACK WILL

Why, Greene, was not thou and I fellow soldiers at Boulogne, where I was a corporal, and thou but a base mercenary groom? No fellows now! Because you keep some little plot of land? You were glad to call me 'fellow Will,' when I stole the half ox from John the trader, and domineer'd<sup>10</sup> with it amongst good fellows in one night.

GREENE

Ay, Will, those days are past with me.

BLACK WILL

Ay, but they be not past with me, for I keep that same honorable mind still. Good neighbor Greene, you are too proud to be my fellow; but were it not that I see more company coming down the hill, I would be fellows with you once more, and share crowns with you too. But let that pass, and tell me whither you go.

GREENE.

To London, Will, about a piece of service,

---

<sup>10</sup> To revel; feast riotously.



Wherein haply thou mayest pleasure me,  
And in a matter of great consequence.  
Wherein if you'll be secret and profound,  
I'll give you twenty angels for your pains.

BLACK WILL

How? Twenty angels? Give my fellow George Shakebag and me twenty  
angels? And if thou'lt have thy own father slain that thou may'st  
inherit his land, we'll kill him.

SHAKEBAG

Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all thy kin.

GREENE

Well, this it is: Arden of Faversham  
Hath highly wronged me about the Abbey land,  
That no revenge but death will serve the turn.  
Will you two kill him? Here's the angels down,  
And I will lay the platform of his death.

BLACK WILL

Plat<sup>11</sup> me no platforms; give me the money, and I'll stab him as he  
stands pissing against a wall, but I'll kill him.

SHAKEBAG

Where is he?

GREENE

He is now at London, in Aldersgate Street.

---

<sup>11</sup> A plan or map.

SHAKEBAG

He's dead as if he had been condemned by an Act of Parliament, if  
once Black Will and I swear his death.

GREENE

Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,  
Ye shall have twenty more.

BLACK WILL

My fingers itches to be at the peasant. Ah, that I might be set a work  
thus through the year, and that murder would grow to an occupation  
that a man might follow without danger of law. Zounds, I warrant I  
should be warden of the company! Come, let us be going.

*Exeunt*

**Scene 6 (2.2)**

London. A Street near St. Paul's.

*Enter Michael.*

*Then enters Arden and Franklin, who overhear Michael reading the letter.*

MICHAEL

"My duty remembered, Mistress Susan, hoping in God you be in good  
health. This is to certify you that as the turtle true, when she hath lost  
her mate, sitteth alone, so I, mourning for your absence, do walk up  
and down Paul's.

Ah, Mistress Susan, abolish that paltry painter, cut him off by the shins  
with a frowning look, and think upon Michael, who, drunk with the  
dregs of your favor, will cleave as fast to your love as a plaster of pitch  
to a galled horse-back.

Thus hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or rather impetrate<sup>12</sup>  
mercy of your meek hands, I end.

Yours, Michael,  
or else not Michael.'

ARDEN

Why, you paltry knave,  
Stand you here loitering, knowing my affairs,  
What haste my business craves to send to Kent?

FRANKLIN

Faith, friend Michael, this is very ill,  
Knowing your master hath no more but you,  
And do ye slack his business for your own?

ARDEN

Where is the letter, sirrah? Let me see it.

*He takes the letter.*

See, Master Franklin, here's proper stuff:  
Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,  
A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth;  
Sirrah, let me hear no more of this.

*Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*

Wilt thou be married to so base a trull<sup>13</sup>?  
'Tis Mosbie's sister: come I once at home,

---

<sup>12</sup> To supplicate or entreat.

I'll rouse her from remaining in my house.  
Now, Master Franklin, let us go walk in Paul's.

*Exeunt.*

GREENE

The first is Arden, and that's his man,  
The other is Franklin, Arden's dearest friend.

BLACK WILL

Zounds, I'll kill them all three.

GREENE

Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case;  
But stand close, and take you fittest standing.  
And at his coming forth speed him.  
To the Nag's Head, there is this coward's haunt.  
But now I'll leave you till the deed be done.

SHAKEBAG

If he be not paid his own, ne'er trust Shakebag.

*Exit Greene.*

BLACK WILL

Sirrah Shakebag, at his coming forth I'll run him through, and then to  
the Blackfriars, and there take water and away.

---

<sup>13</sup> Trollop, whore.

SHAKEBAG

Why, that's the best; but see thou miss him not.

BLACK WILL

How can I miss him, when I think on the forty angels I must have more?

*Enter Prentice.*

PRENTICE

'Tis very late; I were best shut up my stall, for here will be old filching, when the press comes forth of Paul's.

*Then lets he down his shop-sign, and it breaks Black Will's head.*

BLACK WILL

Zounds, draw, Shakebag, I am almost killed.

PRENTICE

We'll tame you, I warrant.

BLACK WILL

Zounds, I am tame enough already.

*Enter Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*

ARDEN

What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

FRANKLIN

'Tis nothing but some brabbling paltry fray,

Devised to pick men's pockets in the throng.

ARDEN

Is't nothing else? Come, Franklin, let's away.

*Exeunt.*

BLACK WILL

What 'mends shall I have for my broken head?

PRENTICE

Marry, this 'mends, that if you get you not away all the sooner, you shall be well beaten and sent to the Counter.

*Exit Prentice.*

BLACK WILL

Well, I'll be gone, but look to your signs, for I'll pull them down all!  
Shakebag, my broken head grieves me not so much as by this means  
Arden hath escaped.

**Scene 6 (2.2)**

*Enter Greene.*

GREENE

Why, sirs, Arden's as well as I; I met him and Franklin going merrily to the ordinary. I pray thee, how came thy head broke?

BLACK WILL

Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not?

SHAKEBAG

Standing against a stall, watching Arden's coming, a boy let down his shop-sign and broke his head; whereupon arose a brawl, and in the tumult Arden escaped us and passed by unthought on. But forbearance is no acquaintance; another time we'll do it, I warrant thee.

GREENE

I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow,  
And let us bethink us on some other place  
Where Arden may be met with handsomely.  
Remember how devoutly thou hast sworn  
To kill the villain; think upon thine oath.

BLACK WILL

Tush, I have broken five hundred oaths!  
But wouldst thou charm me to affect this deed,  
Tell me of gold, my resolution's fee.  
I tell thee Greene, the forlorn traveler,  
Whose lips are glued with summer's parching heat,  
Ne'er longed so much to see a running brook  
As I to finish Arden's tragedy.  
Seest thou this gore that cleaveth to my face?  
From hence ne'er will I wash this bloody stain,  
Till Arden's heart be panting in my hand.

GREENE

Why, that's well said; but what sayeth Shakebag ?

SHAKEBAG

I cannot paint my valor out with words,

But, give me place and opportunity,  
Such mercy as the starved lioness,  
When she is dry sucked of her eager young,  
Shows to the prey that next encounters her,  
On Arden so much pity would I take.

GREENE

So should it fare with men of firm resolve.  
And now, sirs, seeing that this accident  
Of meeting him in Paul's hath no success,  
Let us bethink us of some other place  
Whose earth may swallow up this Arden's blood.

*Enter Michael.*

See, yonder comes his man: and know you what?  
The foolish knave's in love with Mosbie's sister,  
And for her sake, whose love he cannot get,  
The villain hath sworn the slaughter of his master.  
We'll question him, for he may stead us much.  
How now, Michael, whither are you going?

MICHAEL

My master hath new supped,  
And I am going to prepare his chamber.  
How now, Master Shakebag! What, Black Will!  
God's dear lady, how chance your face is so bloody?

BLACK WILL

Go to, sirrah, there is a chance in it; this sauciness in you will make  
you be knocked.



MICHAEL

Nay, an you be offended, I'll be gone.

GREENE

Stay, Michael, you may not escape us so.

Michael, I know you love your master well.

MICHAEL

Why, so I do; but wherefore urge you that?

GREENE

Because I think you love your mistress better.

MICHAEL

So think not I; but say, i'faith, what, if I should?

SHAKEBAG

Come to the purpose, Michael; we hear

You have a pretty love in Faversham.

MICHAEL

Why, have I two or three, what 's that to thee!

BLACK WILL

You deal too mildly with the peasant. Thus it is:

'Tis known to us that you love Mosbie's sister;

We know besides that you have ta'en your oath

To further Mosbie to your mistress' bed,

And kill your master for his sister's sake.

Now, sir, a poorer coward than yourself

Was never fostered in the coast of Kent:

How comes it then that such a knave as you  
Dare swear a matter of such consequence?

GREENE

Ah, Will.

BLACK WILL

Tush, give me leave, there's no more but this:  
Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all;  
And hadst thou or should'st thou utter it,  
We'll send thee roundly to the devil of hell.  
And therefore thus: I am the very man  
To give an end to Arden's life on earth;  
Thou but a member but to whet the knife.  
Thy office is but to appoint the place,  
And train thy master to his tragedy;  
Mine to perform it when occasion serves.  
Then be not nice<sup>14</sup>, but here devise with us  
How and what way we may conclude his death.

SHAKEBAG

So shalt thou purchase Mosbie for thy friend,  
And by his friendship gain his sister's love.

GREENE

So shall thy mistress be thy favorer,  
And thou disburdened of the oath thou made.

---

<sup>14</sup> Uncertain or overly critical.

MICHAEL

Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,  
Sith you have urged me so apparently  
That I have vowed my master Arden's death,  
I will deliver over to your hands.  
This night come to his house at Aldersgate:  
The doors I'll leave unlock'd against you come.  
No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,  
But on your left hand shall you see the stairs  
That leads directly to my master's chamber;  
There take him and dispose him as ye please.  
Now it were good we parted company;  
What I have promised, I will perform.

BLACK WILL

Should you deceive us, 'twould go wrong with you.

MICHAEL

I will accomplish all I have revealed.

BLACK WILL

Come, let 's go drink: choler makes me as dry as a dog.

*Exeunt Will, Greene, and Shakebag. Michael alone.*

MICHAEL

Thus feeds the lamb securely on the down,  
Whilst through the thicket of an arbor brake  
The hunger-bitten wolf o'er pries his haunt

And takes advantage for to eat him up.  
Ah, harmless Arden, how hast thou misdome,  
That thus thy gentle life is leveled at?  
The many good turns that thou hast done to me,  
Now must I quittance with betraying thee.  
Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once.  
Let pity lodge where feeble women lie,  
I am resolved, and Arden needs must die.

*Exit Michael.*

**Scene 7 (3.1)**

A Room in Franklin's House at Alder's gate.

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

ARDEN

No, Franklin, no: if fear or stormy threats,  
If love of me or care of womanhood,  
If fear of God or common speech of men  
Might join repentance in her wanton thoughts,  
No question then but she would turn the leaf  
And sorrow for her dissolution;  
But she is rooted in her wickedness,  
Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed.  
Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,  
And reprehension makes her vice to grow  
As Hydra's head that 'plenished by decay.  
Her faults, methink, are painted in my face,  
For every searching eye to over-read;  
And Mosbie's name, a scandal unto mine,

Is deeply trenched in my blushing brow.  
Ah, Franklin, Franklin, when I think on this,  
My heart's grief rends my other powers  
Worse than the conflict at the hour of death.

FRANKLIN

Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament:  
She will amend, and so your griefs will cease.

ARDEN

My house is irksome; there I cannot rest.

FRANKLIN

Then stay with me in London, go not home.

ARDEN

Then that base Mosbie doth usurp my room  
And makes his triumph of my being thence.  
At home or not at home, where'er I be,  
Here, here it lies, ah Franklin, here it lies  
That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

*Enter Michael.*

FRANKLIN

Forget your griefs a while; here comes your man.

ARDEN

What a-clock is 't, sirrah?

MICHAEL

Almost ten.

ARDEN

See, see, how runs away the weary time!  
Come, Master Franklin, let us all to bed.

FRANKLIN

I pray you, go before. I'll follow you.

*Exeunt Arden and Michael. Franklin alone.*

Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy!  
What pity moving words, what deep-fetched sighs,  
What grievous groans and over-lading woes  
Accompanies this gentle gentleman!  
Sometimes he seeketh to beguile his grief  
And tells a story with his careful tongue;  
Then comes his wife's dishonor in his thoughts  
And in the middle cutteth off his tale,  
Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.  
So woe-begone, so inly charged with woe,  
Was never any lived and bore it so.

*Enter Michael.*

MICHAEL

My master would desire you come to bed.

FRANKLIN

Is he himself already in his bed?

MICHAEL

He is, and fain would have the light away.

*Exit Franklin. Michael alone.*

Conflicting thoughts, encamped in my breast,  
Awake me with the echo of their strokes,  
And I, a judge to censure either side,  
Can give to neither wished victory.  
My master's kindness pleads to me for life  
With just demand, and I must grant it him.  
My mistress she hath forced me with an oath,  
For Susan's sake, the which I may not break.  
For that is nearer than a master's love.  
That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,  
And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem,  
Have sworn my death, if I infringe my vow,  
A dreadful thing to be considered of.  
Methinks I see them with their bolstered hair  
Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,  
And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,  
Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths,  
Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,  
Art mangled by their direful instruments.  
Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,  
And pitiless Black Will cries: 'Stab the slave!  
The peasant will detect the tragedy!  
The wrinkles in his foul death-threatening face

Gapes open wide, like graves to swallow men.  
My death to him is but a merriment,  
And he will murder me to make him sport.  
He comes, he comes! Ah. Master Franklin, help!  
Call on the neighbors, or we are but dead!

*Enter Franklin and Arden.*

FRANKLIN

What dismal outcry calls me from my rest?

ARDEN

What hath occasioned such a fearful cry?  
Speak, Michael, hath any injured thee?

MICHAEL

Nothing, sir; but as I fell asleep,  
I had a fearful dream that troubled me,  
And in my slumber thought I was beset  
With murderer thieves that came to rifle me.  
My trembling joints witness my inward fear.  
I crave your pardons for disturbing you.

ARDEN

So great a cry for nothing I ne'er heard.  
Michael, are the doors fast locked and all things safe?

MICHAEL

I cannot tell; I think I locked the doors.



ARDEN

I like not this, but I'll go see myself.  
Ne'er trust me but the doors were all unlocked:  
This negligence not half contenteth me.  
Get you to bed, and if you love my favor,  
Let me have no more such pranks as these.  
Come, Master Franklin, let us all to bed.

FRANKLIN

Ay, by my faith. The air is very cold.  
Michael, farewell. I pray thee dream no more.

*Exeunt.*

**Scene 8 (3.2)**

Outside Franklin's house.

*Enter Will, Greene, and Shakebag.*

SHAKEBAG

Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,  
And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth,  
In which sweet silence such as we may triumph.  
The lazy minutes linger on their time,  
As loath to give due audit to the hour,  
Till in the watch our purpose be complete  
And Arden sent to everlasting night.  
Greene, get you gone, and linger here about,  
And at some hour hence come to us again,  
Where we will give you instance of his death.

GREENE

Speed to my wish, whose will so e'er says no,  
And so I'll leave you for an hour or two.

*Exit Greene.*

BLACK WILL

I tell thee, Shakebag, would this thing were done.  
I am so heavy that I can scarce go;  
This drowsiness in me bodes little good.

SHAKEBAG

How now, Will? Become a Puritan?  
Nay, then let's go sleep, when bugs and fears  
Shall kill our courages with their fancy's work.

BLACK WILL

Why, Shakebag, thou mistakes me much,  
And wrongs me too in telling me of fear.  
Were't not a serious thing we go about,  
It should be slipped till I had fought with thee,  
To let thee know I am no coward, I.  
I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.

SHAKEBAG

Why, thy speech bewrayed an inly kind of fear.  
Go forward now in that we have begun,  
And afterwards attempt me when thou darest.

BLACK WILL

And if I do not, heaven cut me off!  
But let that pass, and show me to this house,  
Where thou shalt see I'll do as much as Shakebag.

SHAKEBAG

This is the door; but soft, methinks 'tis shut.  
The villain Michael hath deceived us.

BLACK WILL

Soft, let me see, Shakebag; 'tis shut indeed.  
Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slave will hear.

*They knock upon the door. A silence.*

Shakebag.

It will not be. The white-livered peasant  
Is gone to bed, and laughs us both to scorn.

BLACK WILL

Ne'er let this sword assist me when I need,  
But rust and canker after I have sworn,  
If I, the next time that I meet the hind,  
Lop not away his leg, his arm, or both.

SHAKEBAG

And let me never draw a sword again,  
If I, the next time that I meet the slave,  
Cut not the nose from off the coward's face  
And trample on it for this villainy.

BLACK WILL

Shakebag, let's seek out Greene, and in the morning  
We'll front him as they pass to Rainham Down,  
A place well fitting our black stratagem.

*Exeunt.*

**Scene 9 (3.5)**

Arden's House at Feversham.

*Mosbie alone.*

MOSBIE

Disturbed thoughts drive me from company  
And dry my marrow with their watchfulness.  
Continual trouble of my moody brain  
Feebles my body by excess of drink.  
But whither doth contemplation carry me?  
The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells,  
Is hedged behind me that I cannot back  
But needs must on, although to danger's gate.  
Then, Arden, perish thou by that decree;  
For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up  
To make my harvest nothing but pure corn.  
And for his pains I'll hive him up a while,  
And after smother him to have his wax:  
Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.  
Then is there Michael and the painter too,  
Chief actors to Arden's overthrow;  
Who, when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat,

They'll fright me by detecting of his end.  
I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone  
To make these curs pluck out each other's throat,  
And then am I sole ruler of mine own.  
Yet Mistress Arden lives; but she's myself,  
And holy Church rites makes us two but one.  
But what for that? I may not trust you, Alice:  
You have supplanted Arden for my sake,  
And will extirpen<sup>15</sup> me to plant another.  
'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed,  
And I will cleanly rid my hands of her.

*Enter Alice.*

But here she comes, and I must flatter her.  
How now, Alice? What, sad and passionate?

ALICE

Ah, Mosbie!

MOSBIE

Ungentle Alice, 'tis thy policy  
To forge distressful looks to wound a breast  
Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad.  
It is not love that loves to anger love.

ALICE

It is not love that loves to murder love.

---

<sup>15</sup> To pull or pluck up by the roots.

MOSBIE

How mean you that?

ALICE

Thou knowest how dearly Arden loved me.

MOSBIE

And then?

ALICE

Conceal the rest, for 'tis too bad,  
Lest that my words be carried with the wind,  
And published in the world to both our shames.  
I pray thee, Mosbie, let our springtime wither;  
Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.  
Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed between us,  
For how I blush and tremble at the thoughts!

MOSBIE

What, are you changed?

ALICE

Ay, to my former happy life again,  
From title of an odious strumpet's name  
To honest Arden's wife, not Arden's honest wife.  
Ha, Mosbie! 'tis thou has rifled me of that,  
And made me slanderous to all my kin;  
Even in my forehead is thy name engraven,  
A mean artificer, that low-born name.

MOSBIE

Let me repent the credit I have lost.  
I have neglected matters of import  
That would have stated me above thy state.  
I left the marriage of an honest maid,  
Whose dowry would have weighed down all thy wealth;  
Whose beauty and demeanor far exceeded thee.  
This certain good I lost for changing bad,  
And wrapped my credit in thy company.  
Thou art not fair, I viewed thee not till now;  
Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not;  
And now the rain hath beaten off thy gilt,  
Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit.

ALICE

Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true,  
That Mosbie loves me not but for my wealth.  
Nay, hear me speak, Mosbie, a word or two;  
I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.  
Look on me, Mosbie, or I'll kill myself:  
Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.  
If thou cry war, there is no peace for me;  
Upon thee will I chiefly meditate,  
And hold no other sect but such devotion.  
Wilt thou not look? Is all thy love o'erwhelmed?  
Wilt thou not hear? What malice stops thine ears?  
Why speaks thou not? What silence ties thy tongue?  
Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is,  
And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,  
And spoke as smoothly as an orator,

When I have bid thee hear or see or speak,  
And art thou sensible in none of these?  
Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault,  
And I deserve not Mosbie's muddy looks.

MOSBIE

O no, I am a base artificer:  
My wings are feathered for a lowly flight.  
Mosbie? Fie! No, not for a thousand pound.  
Make love to you? Why, 'tis unpardonable;  
We beggars must not breathe where gentles are.

ALICE

Sweet Mosbie is as gentle as a king,  
And I too blind to judge him otherwise.  
Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands,  
Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns;  
So, whatsoe'er my Mosbie's father was,  
Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

MOSBIE

Ah, how you women can insinuate,  
And clear a trespass with your sweet-set tongue!  
I will forget this quarrel, gentle Alice,  
Provided I'll be tempted so no more.

ALICE

Then with thy lips seal up this new-made match.

MOSBIE

Were Arden's date completed and expired;



Till then my bliss is mixed with bitter gall.

ALICE

Ah, would it were! Then comes my happy hour.  
Come, let us in to shun suspicion.

MOSBIE

Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee.

*Exeunt.*

**Scene 10 (3.6)**

Country near Rochester.

*Enter Greene, Will and Shakebag.*

SHAKEBAG

Come, Will, see thy tools be in a readiness!  
Is not thy powder dank, or will thy flint strike fire?

BLACK WILL

Then ask me if my nose be on my face,  
Or whether my tongue be frozen in my mouth.  
Zounds, here's a coil!  
I pray thee, Shakebag, let this answer thee,  
That I have took more purses in this down  
Than e'er thou handled'st pistols in thy life.

SHAKEBAG

Ay, haply thou has picked more in a throng,

But should I brag what booties I have took  
I think the overplus that's more than thine  
Would mount to a greater sum of money  
Then either thou or all thy kin are worth.  
Zounds, I hate them as I hate a toad  
That carry a muscado in their tongue,  
And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand.

BLACK WILL

O Greene, intolerable!  
It is not for mine honor to bear this.

*They fight.*

GREENE

While you stand striving on these terms of manhood,  
Arden escapes us, and deceives us all.

SHAKEBAG

Why, he begun.

BLACK WILL

And thou shalt find I'll end;  
I do but slip it until better time.

GREENE

I pray you, sirs, I'll leave you for this time,  
But brawl not when I am gone in any case.  
Now, sirs, be sure to speed him when he comes,  
And in that hope I'll leave you for an hour.

*Exit Greene.*

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

ARDEN

Come, Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.

FRANKLIN

Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more;  
This fighting at my heart makes short my wind.

ARDEN

Come, we are almost now at Rainham Down:  
Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way;  
I would you were in state to tell it out.

SHAKEBAG

Stand close, Will, I hear them coming,

*Enter Lord Cheiny with his man.*

BLACK WILL

Stand to it, Shakebag, and be resolute.

L. CHEINY.

Is it so near night as it seems,  
Or will this black-faced evening have a shower?  
What, Master Arden? You are well met,  
I have longed this fortnight's day to speak with you:  
You are a stranger, man, in the Isle of Sheppy.

ARDEN

My good Lord Cheiny!  
Your honors' always! Bound to do you service.

L. CHEINY.

Come you from London, and ne'er a man with you?

ARDEN

My man 's coming after, but here's  
My honest friend that came along with me.

L. CHEINY.

My Lord Protector's man I take you to be.

FRANKLIN

Ay, my good lord, and highly bound to you.

L. CHEINY.

You and your friend come home and sup with me.

ARDEN

I beseech your honor pardon me;  
I have made a promise to a gentleman,  
My honest friend, to meet him at my house;  
The occasion is great, or else would I wait on you.

L. CHEINY.

Will you come to-morrow and dine with me,  
And bring your honest friend along with you;  
I have divers matters to talk with you about.

ARDEN

To-morrow we'll wait upon your honor.

L. CHEINY.

What! Black Will? For whose purse wait you?

Thou wilt be hanged in Kent, when all is done.

BLACK WILL

Not hanged, God save your honor;

I am your beadsman, bound to pray for you.

L. CHEINY.

I think thou ne'er said'st prayer in all thy life.

Here is a crown; now leave this kind of life;

If thou be'st tainted for a penny-matter,

And come in question, surely thou wilt truss.

Come, Master Arden, let us be going;

Your way and mine lies four miles together.

*Exeunt.*

*Black Will and Shakebag alone.*

BLACK WILL

The devil break all your necks at four miles' end!

Zounds, I could kill myself for very anger!

His lordship chops me in,

Even when my dag was leveled at his heart.

I would his crown were molten down his throat.

SHAKEBAG

Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck.

Did ever man escape as thou hast done?  
Well, I'll discharge my pistol at the sky,  
For by this bullet Arden might not die.

*Hi discharges his pistol into the air.*

*Exeunt.*

***(Possible Intermission)***

**Scene 11 (4.1)**

Arden's house at Faversham.

*Enter Arden, Alice, Franklin, and Michael*

ARDEN

See how the hours, the guardant of heaven's gate,  
Have by their toil removed the darksome clouds.  
The season fits. Come, Franklin, let 's away.

ALICE

I thought you did pretend some special hunt,  
That made you thus cut short the time of rest.

ARDEN

It was no chase that made me rise so early,  
But, as I told thee yesternight, to go  
To the Isle of Sheppy, there to dine with my Lord Cheiny;  
For so his honor late commanded me.

ALICE

The time hath been, would God it were not past,  
That honor's title nor a lord's command

Could once have drawn you from these arms of mine.  
But my deserts or your desires decay,  
Or both; yet if true love may seem desert,  
I merit still to have thy company.

FRANKLIN

Why, I pray you, sir, let her go along with us.  
I am sure his honor will welcome her  
And us the more for bringing her along.

ALICE

No, begged favor merits little thanks.  
If I should go, our house would run away,  
Or else be stolen; therefore I'll stay behind.

ARDEN

Nay, see how mistaking you are! I pray thee, go.

ALICE

No, no, not now.

ARDEN

Then let me leave thee satisfied in this,  
That time nor place nor persons alter me,  
But that I hold thee dearer than my life.

ALICE

That will be seen by your quick return.

ARDEN

And that shall be ere night, and if I live.

Farewell, sweet Alice, we mind to sup with thee.

*Exit Alice.*

FRANKLIN

Come, Michael, are you ready?

MICHAEL

By your patience, I am not ready, for I have lost my purse, with six and thirty shillings in it.

FRANKLIN

Why, I pray you, let us go before,  
Whilst he stays behind to seek his purse.

ARDEN

Go to, sirrah, see you follow us to the Isle of Sheppy  
To my Lord Cheiny's, where we mean to dine.

*Exeunt Arden and Franklin. Michael alone.*

MICHAEL

So, fair weather after you, for before you lies Black Will and Shakebag.  
They'll be your ferrymen to long home.

*Enter Clarke the painter.*

But who is this? The painter, my co-rival, that would needs win  
Mistress Susan.



CLARKE

How now, Michael? How doth my mistress and all at home?

MICHAEL

Who? Susan Mosbie? She is your mistress, too?

CLARKE

Ay, how doth she and all the rest?

MICHAEL

All's well but Susan; she is sick.

CLARKE

Sick? Of what disease?

MICHAEL

Of a great fever.

CLARKE

A fear of what?

MICHAEL

A great fever.

CLARKE

A fever? God forbid!

MICHAEL

Yes, faith, and of a lurdan<sup>16</sup> too, as big as yourself.

---

<sup>16</sup> A loafer or lazy vagabond.

CLARKE

O, Michael, the spleen prickles you.  
Go to, you carry an eye over Mistress Susan.

MICHAEL

I' faith, to keep her from the painter.

CLARKE

Why more from a painter than from a serving creature like yourself?

MICHAEL

Because you painters make but a painting table of a pretty wench, and  
spoil her beauty with blotting.

CLARKE

What mean you by that?

MICHAEL

Why, that you painters paint lambs in the lining of wench'es'  
petticoats, and we serving-men put horns to them to make them  
become sheep.

CLARKE

Such another word will cost you a cuff or a knock.

MICHAEL

What, with a dagger made of a pencil? Faith, 'tis too weak, and  
therefore thou too weak to win Susan.

CLARKE

Would Susan's love lay upon this stroke.

*He breaks Michael's head.*

*Enter Mosbie, Greene and Alice.*

ALICE

I'll lay my life, this is for Susan's love.  
Stayed you behind your master to this end?  
Have you no other time to brabble in  
But now when serious matters are in hand?  
Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised?

CLARKE

Ay, here it is; the very touch is death.

ALICE

Then this, I hope, if all the rest do fail,  
Will catch Master Arden,  
And make him wise in death that lived a fool.

GREENE

Black Will and Shakebag I have placed near Sheppy,  
Close watching Arden's coming; let's to them  
And see what they have done.

*Exeunt.*

**Scene 12 (4.2)**

The Kentish Coast opposite the Isle of Sheppy.

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

ARDEN

Oh, ferryman, where art thou?

*Enter the Ferryman.*

FERRYMAN

Here, here, go before to the boat, and I will follow you.

ARDEN

We have great haste; I pray thee, come away.

FERRYMAN

Fie, what a mist is here!

FRANKLIN

This mist, my friend, is mystical,  
Like to a good companion's smoky brain,  
That was half drowned with new ale overnight.

FERRYMAN

'Twere pity but his skull were opened to make more chimney room.

FRANKLIN

Friend, what's thy opinion of this mist?

FERRYMAN

I think 'tis like to a curst wife in a little house, that never leaves her husband till she have driven him out at doors with a wet pair of eyes; then looks he as if his house were a-fire, or some of his friends dead.

FRANKLIN

Speaks thou this of thine own experience?

FERRYMAN

Perhaps, ay; perhaps, no: for my wife is as other women are, that is to say, governed by the moon.

FRANKLIN

By the moon? How, I pray thee?

FERRYMAN

Ay, she hath influences and eclipses.

FRANKLIN

Why, then, by this reckoning you sometimes play the man in the moon?

FERRYMAN

Ay, but you had not best to meddle with that moon, lest I scratch you by the face with my bramble-bush.

ARDEN

I am almost stifled with this fog; come, let's away.

FRANKLIN

And, sirrah, as we go, let us have some more of your bold yeomanry.

FERRYMAN

Nay, by my troth, sir, but flat knavery.

*Exeunt.*

**Scene 13 (4.3)**

Another place on the coast.

*Here enters Will at one door and Shakebag at another.*

SHAKEBAG

Oh, Will, where art thou?

BLACK WILL

Here, Shakebag, almost in hell's mouth, where I cannot see my way for smoke.

SHAKEBAG

I pray thee speak still that we may meet by the sound, for I shall fall into some ditch or other, unless my feet see better than my eyes. But sirrah Will, what horses are those that passed?

BLACK WILL

Why, didst thou hear any?

SHAKEBAG

Ay, that I did.

BLACK WILL

My life for thine, 'twas Arden, and his companion, and then all our  
labor's lost.

SHAKEBAG

Nay, say not so, for if it be they, they may haply lose their way as we  
have done, and then we may chance meet with them.

BLACK WILL

Come, let us go on like a couple of blind pilgrims.

*Shakebag falls into a ditch.*

SHAKEBAG

Help, Will, help, I am almost drowned.

*Enter the Ferryman.*

FERRYMAN

Who is't that calls for help?

BLACK WILL

'Twas none here, 'twas thou thyself.

FERRYMAN

I came to help him that called for help. Why, how now? Who is this  
that's in the ditch? You are well enough served to go without a guide  
such weather as this.

BLACK WILL

Sirrah, what companies hath passed your ferry this morning?

FERRYMAN

None but a couple of gentlemen, that went to dine at my Lord  
Cheiny's.

BLACK WILL

Shakebag, did not I tell thee as much.

FERRYMAN

Why, sir, will you have any letters carried to them?

BLACK WILL

No, sir; get you gone.

FERRYMAN

Did you ever see such a mist as this?

BLACK WILL

No, nor such a fool.

FERRYMAN

What's his name, I pray you, sir?

SHAKEBAG

His name is Black Will.

FERRYMAN

I hope to see him one day hanged upon a hill.

*Exit Ferryman.*



SHAKEBAG

See how the sun hath cleared the foggy mist,  
Now we have missed the mark of our intent.

*Enter Greene, Mosbie and Alice.*

MOSBIE

Black Will and Shakebag, what make you here?  
What, is the deed done? Is Arden dead?

BLACK WILL

What could a blinded man perform in arms?  
Saw you not how till now the sky was dark,  
That neither horse nor man could be discerned?

GREENE

Have they escaped you, then, and passed the ferry?

SHAKEBAG

Ay, for a while; but here we two will stay,  
And at their coming back meet with them once more.  
Zounds, I was ne'er so toiled in all my life  
In following so slight a task as this.

MOSBIE

How cam'st thou so befouled?

BLACK WILL

With making false footing in the dark;  
He needs would follow them without a guide.

ALICE

Here's to pay for a fire and good cheer:  
Get you to Faversham to the Flower-de-luce,  
And rest yourselves until some other time.

GREENE

Let me alone; it most concerns my state.

BLACK WILL

Ay, Mistress Arden, this will serve the turn,  
In case we fall into a second fog.

*Exeunt Greene, Will and Shakebag.*

MOSBIE

These knaves will never do it, let us give it over.

ALICE

First tell me how you like my new device:  
Soon, when my husband is returning back,  
You and I both marching arm in arm,  
Like loving friends, we'll meet him on the way,  
And boldly beard and brave him to his teeth.  
When words grow hot and blows begin to rise,  
I'll call those cutters forth your tenement,  
Who, in a manner to take up the fray,  
Shall wound my husband Hornsby to the death.

MOSBIE

A fine device! Why, this deserves a kiss.

*Exeunt.*

**Scene 14** (4.4)

The open country near Faversham.

*Enter Franklin, Arden and Michael.*

ARDEN

Now that our horses are gone home before,  
My wife may haply meet me on the way,  
For God knows she is grown passing kind of late,  
And greatly changed from  
The old humor of her wonted forwardness,  
And seeks by fair means to redeem old faults.

FRANKLIN

Happy the change that alters for the best;  
But see in any case you make no speech  
Of the cheer we had at my Lord Cheiny's,  
Although most bounteous and liberal,  
For that will make her think herself more wronged  
In that we did not carry her along,  
For sure she grieved that she was left behind.

ARDEN

Come, Franklin, let us strain to mend our pace,  
And take her unawares playing the cook.  
For I believe she'll strive to mend our cheer.

FRANKLIN

Why, there's no better creatures in the world,  
Than women are when they are in good humors.

*Enter Alice and Mosbie.*

ARDEN

Who is that? Mosbie? What, so familiar?  
Injurious strumpet, and thou ribald knave,  
Untwine those arms.

ALICE

Ay, with a sugared kiss let them untwine.

ARDEN

Ah, Mosbie! Perjured beast! Bear this and all!

MOSBIE

And yet no horned beast; the horns are thine.

FRANKLIN

O monstrous! Nay, then it is time to draw.

*A fight, and Mosbie is injured.*

ALICE

Help, help! They murder my husband.

*Enter Black Will and Shakebag.*

SHAKEBAG

Zounds, who injures Master Mosbie?

*Shakebag is injured.*

Help, Will! I am hurt.

MOSBIE

I may thank you, Mistress Arden, for this wound.

*Exeunt Mosbie, Will, and Shakebag.*

ALICE

Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee?  
Ah, jealous harebrained man, what hast thou done!  
When we, to welcome thee with intended sport,  
Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,  
Thou hurt'st thy friend whose thoughts were free from harm:  
All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,  
Both done but merrily to try thy patience.

FRANKLIN

Marry, God defend me from such a jest!

ALICE

Could'st thou not see us friendly smile on thee,  
When we joined arms, and when I kissed his cheek?  
Did'st thou not hear me cry 'they murder thee'?  
Called I not help to set my husband free?  
No, ears and all were witched; ah me accursed  
To link in liking with a frantic man!

ARDEN

But is it for truth that neither thou nor he  
Intended'st malice in your misdemeanor?

ALICE

The heavens can witness of our harmless thoughts.

ARDEN

Then pardon me, sweet Alice, and forgive this fault;  
Forget but this and never see the like.  
Impose me penance, and I will perform it,  
For in thy discontent I find a death,  
A death tormenting more than death itself.

ALICE

Nay, had'st thou loved me as thou dost pretend,  
Thou wouldst have marked the speeches of thy friend,  
Who going wounded from the place, he said  
His skin was pierced only through my device;  
And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault,  
Thou would'st have followed him, and seen him dressed,  
And cried him mercy whom thou hast misdome:  
Ne'er shall my heart be eased till this be done.

ARDEN

Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy will,  
Whate'er it be. For that I injured thee,  
And wronged my friend, shame scourgeth my offence;  
Come thou thyself, and go along with me,  
And be a mediator 'twixt us two.

FRANKLIN

Why, Master Arden! Know you what you do?  
Will you follow him that hath dishonored you?

ALICE

Why, canst thou prove I have been disloyal?

ARDEN

I pray thee, gentle Franklin, hold thy peace:  
I know my wife counsels me for the best.  
I'll seek out Mosbie where his wound is dressed,  
And salve this hapless quarrel if I may.

*Exeunt Arden and Alice, Franklin behind.*

**Scene 15 (5.1)**

A Street in Faversham.

*Enter Will, Shakebag and Greene.*

BLACK WILL

Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in killing a man?

GREENE

I think we shall never do it; let us give it over.

SHAKEBAG

Nay, Zounds! We'll kill him, though we be hanged at his door for our  
labor.

*Enter Alice.*

GREENE

Hence, Will! Here comes Mistress Arden.

ALICE

How missed you of your purpose yesternight?

GREENE

'Twas 'long of Shakebag, that unlucky villain.

SHAKEBAG

Thou dost me wrong; I did as much as any.

ALICE

Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,  
For every drop of his detested blood  
I would have crammed in angels in thy fist,  
And kissed thee, too, and hugged thee in my arms.

BLACK WILL

Patient yourself, we cannot help it now.  
Greene and we two will dog him through the fair,  
And stab him in the crowd, and steal away.

*Enter Mosbie.*

ALICE

It is impossible; but here comes he  
That will, I hope, invent some surer means.  
Sweet Mosbie, hide thy arm, it kills my heart.

MOSBIE

Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favor.

ALICE

Ah, say not so; for when I saw thee hurt,  
I could have took the weapon thou let'st fall,



And run at Arden; for I have sworn  
That these mine eyes, offended with his sight,  
Shall never close till Arden's be shut up.  
Last night I rose and walked about the chamber,  
And twice or thrice I thought to have murdered him.

MOSBIE

What, in the night? Then had we been undone.

ALICE

Why, how long shall he live?

MOSBIE

Faith, Alice, no longer than this night.  
Black Will and Shakebag, will you two perform  
The complot that I have laid?

BLACK WILL

Ay, or else think me a villain.

GREENE

And rather than you shall want, I'll also help.

MOSBIE

You, Master Greene, shall single Franklin forth,  
And hold him with a long tale of strange news,  
That he may not come home till supertime.  
I'll fetch Master Arden home, and we like friends  
Will play a game or two at tables here.

ALICE

But what of all this? How shall he be slain?

MOSBIE

Why, Black Will and Shakebag locked i'the other room  
Shall at a certain watchword given rush forth.

BLACK WILL

What shall the watchword be?

MOSBIE

'Now I take you'; that shall be the word:  
But come not forth before in any case.

BLACK WILL

I warrant you. But who shall lock me in?

ALICE

That will I do; thou'st keep the key thyself.

MOSBIE

Come, Master Greene, go you along with me.  
See all things ready, Alice, against we come.

ALICE

Take no care for that; send you him home.

*Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.*

*Alice leads Black Will and Shakebag into the house.*

And if he e'er go forth again, blame me.

Come, Black Will, that in mine eyes art fair;  
Next unto Mosbie do I honor thee;  
Instead of fair words and large promises  
My hands shall play you golden harmony:  
How like you this? Say, will you do it, sirs?

BLACK WILL

Such words would make one kill a thousand men!

ALICE

Here would I stay and still encourage you;  
But that I know how resolute you are.

BLACK WILL

Tush, get you gone; 'tis we must do the deed.  
When this door opens next, look for his death.

*Exeunt Will and Shakebag.*

ALICE

Ah, would he now were here that it might open!

**Scene 16 (5.1)**

*Here enters Michael.*

MICHAEL

Mistress, my master is coming hard by.

ALICE

Who comes with him?

MICHAEL

Nobody but Mosbie.

ALICE

That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables, and when thou hast done,  
stand before that door.

MICHAEL

Why so?

ALICE

Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

MICHAEL

What? Shall he die tonight?

ALICE

Ay, Michael.

MICHAEL

But shall not Susan know it?

ALICE

Yes, for she'll be as secret as ourselves.

MICHAEL

That's brave. I'll go fetch the tables.

ALICE

But, Michael, hark to me a word or two:  
When my husband is come in, lock the street-door.

He shall be murdered, or the guests come in.

*Exit Michael.*

*Enter Arden and Mosbie.*

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosbie home?  
Although I wished you to be reconciled,  
'Twas more for fear of you than love of him.

MOSBIE

Master Arden, methinks your wife would have me gone.

ARDEN

No, good Master Mosbie; women will be prating.  
Alice, bid him welcome; he and I are friends.

ALICE

You may enforce me to it, if you will,  
But I had rather die than bid him welcome.

MOSBIE

(Aside) Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble!

ARDEN

Now he is here, you will not serve me so.  
Alice, I pray you be not angry or displeased.  
You are welcome, Master Mosbie; will you sit down?

MOSBIE

Pardon me, Master Arden; I'll away.

ARDEN

I pray thee, Mosbie, let her prate her fill.

ALICE

The doors are open, sir, you may be gone.

MICHAEL

(Aside) Nay, that's a lie, for I have locked the doors.

ARDEN

Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine, I'll make them friends;  
Why, Alice! How can I do too much for him  
Whose life I have endangered without cause.

ALICE

'Tis true; and, seeing 'twas partly through my means,  
I am content to drink to him for this once.  
Here, Master Mosbie! And I pray you, henceforth  
Be you as strange to me as I to you.  
Your company hath purchased me ill friends,  
And I for you, God knows, have undeservedly  
Been ill spoken of in every place;  
Therefore henceforth frequent my house no more.

MOSBIE

I'll see your husband in despite of you.  
Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by heaven,  
Thou ne'er shalt see me more after this night.

ARDEN

Tush, I'll have no such vows made in my house.

ALICE

Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear;  
And, on that condition, Mosbie, pledge me here.

MOSBIE

Ay, as willingly as I mean to live.

ARDEN

Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet?

ALICE

It will by then you have played a game at tables.

ARDEN

Come, Master Mosbie, what shall we play for?

MOSBIE

Three games for a French crown, sir, and please you.

ARDEN

Content.

*They play at the tables.*

*Enter Will and Shakebag.*

BLACK WILL

Can he not take him yet? What a spite is that?

ALICE

Not yet, Will; take heed he see thee not.

BLACK WILL

I fear he will spy me as I am coming.

MICHAEL

To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.

MOSBIE

One ace, or else I lose the game.

ARDEN

Marry, sir, there 's two for failing.

MOSBIE

Ah, Master Arden, 'now I can take you.'

*Then Will pulls him down with a towel.*

ARDEN

Mosbie! Michael! Alice! What will you do?

BLACK WILL

Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing else.

MOSBIE

There's for the pressing iron you told me of.

*Stabs him.*

SHAKEBAG

And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve.



*Stabs him.*

ALICE

What! Groan thou? Nay, then give me the weapon!  
Take this for hindering Mosbie's love and mine.

*She stabs him.*

MICHAEL

O, mistress!

BLACK WILL

Ah, that villain will betray us all.

MOSBIE

Tush, fear him not; he will be secret.

MICHAEL

Why, dost thou think I will betray myself?

BLACK WILL

Shift for yourselves; we two will leave you now.

ALICE

First lay the body in the other room.

SHAKEBAG

We have our gold; Mistress Alice, adieu;  
Mosbie, farewell, and Michael, farewell too.

*BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG exit with the body.*

**Scene 17 (5.1)**

*Knocking is heard. Enter Susan.*

SUSAN

Mistress, the men are at the doors.

Hearken, they knock: what, shall I let them in?

ALICE

Michael, go thou and bear them company.

*Exit Michael.*

And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.

SUSAN

The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not out.

ALICE

But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood!

The more I strive, the more the blood appears!

*Here enters Mosbie.*

MOSBIE

How now? What's the matter? Is all well?

ALICE

Ay, well, if Arden were alive again;

In vain we strive, for here his blood remains.

MOSBIE

Why, strew rushes on it, can you not?  
This wench doth nothing: fall unto the work.

ALICE

'Twas thou that made me murder him.

MOSBIE

What of that?

ALICE

Nay, nothing, Mosbie, so it be not known.

MOSBIE

Keep thou it close, and 'tis impossible.

ALICE

Ah, but I cannot! Was he not slain by me?  
My husband's death torments me at the heart.

MOSBIE

It shall not long torment thee, gentle Alice;  
I am thy husband, think no more of him.

*Here enters Greene, Franklin, and Michael.*

GREENE

How now, Mistress Arden? Why do you weep?

MOSBIE

Because her husband is abroad so late.

A couple of ruffians threatened him yesternight,  
And she, poor soul, is afraid he should be hurt.

GREENE

Is't nothing else? Tush, he'll be here anon.

ALICE

Ah, Master Greene, did you see my husband lately?

GREENE

I saw him walking behind the Abbey even now.

ALICE

I do not like this being out so late.

Master Franklin, where did you leave my husband?

FRANKLIN

Believe me I saw him not since morning.

Fear you not, he'll come anon; meantime

You may do well to bid his guests sit down.

ALICE

Ay, so they shall; I pray you, sit you there.

Nay masters, be content, I'll have my will.

Master Mosbie, sit you in my husband's seat.

*They take their seats.*

MICHAEL

Susan, shall thou and I wait on them?

SUSAN

*(Aside to Michael)* I fear me, Michael, all will be betrayed.

MICHAEL

*(Aside to Susan)* Tush, so it be known that I shall marry thee in the morning, I care not though I be hanged ere night. But to prevent the worst, I'll buy some rats-bane.

SUSAN

*(Aside to Michael)* Why, Michael, wilt thou poison thyself?

MICHAEL

*(Aside to Susan)* No, but my mistress, for I fear she'll tell.

SUSAN

*(Aside to Michael)* Tush, Michael, fear not her, she's wise enough.

MOSBIE

Sirrah Michael, give's a cup of beer.

Mistress Arden, here's to your husband.

ALICE

My husband!

FRANKLIN

What ails you, woman, to cry so suddenly?

ALICE

Ah, neighbors, a sudden qualm came o'er my heart;

My husband being forth torments my mind.

I know something 's amiss, he is not well;

Or else I should have heard of him ere now.

MOSBIE

*(Aside)* She will undo us through her foolishness.

GREENE

Fear not, Mistress Arden, he's well enough.

ALICE

Tell not me; I know he is not well:  
He was not wont for to stay thus late.  
Good Master Franklin, go and seek him forth,  
And if you find him, send him home to me,  
And tell him what a fear he hath put me in.

FRANKLIN

*(Aside)* I like not this; I pray God all be well.  
I'll seek him out, and find him if I can.

MICHAEL

Alas, 'tis very late, good gentlemen,  
And there are many false knaves abroad,  
And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

MOSBIE

Faith, friend Michael, and thou sayest true.  
Therefore I pray thee let's forth, and lend's a light.

*Exeunt Franklin, Mosbie, and Greene.*

ALICE

*(To Michael)* Michael, bring them to the doors, but do not stay;  
You know I do not love to be alone.

*Exit Michael*

Go, Susan, and bid thy brother come:  
But wherefore should he come? Here is naught but fear;  
Stay, Susan, stay, and help to counsel me.

SUSAN

Alas, I counsel! Fear frights away my wits.

*They open the side door and look upon Arden.*

ALICE

See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies.  
Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore.

SUSAN

My brother, you, and I shall rue this deed.

ALICE

Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,  
And let our salt tears be his obsequies.

*Here enters Mosbie and Greene.*

MOSBIE

How now, Alice, whither will you bear him?

ALICE

Sweet Mosbie, art thou come? Then weep that will:  
I have my wish in that I joy thy sight.

GREENE

Well, it behooves us to be circumspect.

MOSBIE

Ay, for Franklin thinks that we have murdered him.

ALICE

Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life.

We'll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

**Scene 18 (5.1)**

*Here enters Michael.*

MICHAEL

O mistress, Lord Cheiny and all the watch  
Are coming towards our house with wondrous haste.

ALICE

Make the door fast; let them not come in.

MOSBIE

Tell me, sweet Alice, how shall I escape?

ALICE

Out at the back door, over the pile of wood,  
And for one night lie at the Flower-de-luce.

MOSBIE

That is the next way to betray myself.



GREENE

Alas, Mistress Arden, the watch will take me here,  
And cause suspicion, where else would be none.

ALICE

Why, take that way that Master Mosbie doth;  
But first convey the body to the fields.

MOSBIE

Until to-morrow, sweet Alice, now farewell:  
And see you confess nothing in any case.

GREENE

Be resolute. Mistress Alice, betray us not,  
But cleave to us as we will stick to you.

*Exeunt Mosbie and Greene with the body.*

ALICE

Now, let the judge and juries do their worst:  
My house is clear, and now I fear them not.

SUSAN

As we went, it snowed all the way.  
Which makes me fear our footsteps will be spied.

ALICE

Peace, fool, the snow will cover them again.

*Knocking is heard.*

Hark, hark, they knock! Go, Michael, let them in.

*Here enters Lord Cheiny and the Watch.*

How now, Lord Cheiny, have you brought my husband home?

L. CHEINY

'Tis said he came into your house an hour ago.

ALICE

You are deceived; it was a Londoner.

L. CHEINY

Mistress Arden, know you not one that is called Black Will?

ALICE

I know none such: what mean these questions?

L. CHEINY

I have the Council's warrant to apprehend him.

ALICE

Why, dear my lord, think you I harbor any such?

L. CHEINY

We are informed that here he is,  
And therefore pardon us, for we must search.

ALICE

Ay, search, and spare you not, through every room:  
Were my husband at home, you would not offer this.

*Here enters Franklin.*

Master Franklin, what mean you come so sad?

FRANKLIN

Arden, thy husband and my friend, is slain.

ALICE

Ah, by whom? Master Franklin, can you tell?

FRANKLIN

I know not; but behind the Abbey  
There he lies murdered in most piteous case.

L. CHEINY

But, Master Franklin, are you sure 'tis he?

FRANKLIN

I am too sure; would God I were deceived.

ALICE

Find out the murderers, let them be known.

FRANKLIN

Ay, so they shall. Come you along with us.

ALICE

Wherefore?

FRANKLIN

Know you this hand-towel and this knife?

SUSAN

Ah, Michael, through this thy negligence  
Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.

MICHAEL

I was so afraid I knew now what I did:  
I thought I had thrown them both into the well.

ALICE

It is the pig's blood we had to supper.  
But wherefore stay you? Find out the murderers.

L. CHEINY

I fear me you'll prove one of them yourself.

ALICE

I one of them? What mean such questions?

FRANKLIN

I fear me he was murdered in this house  
And carried to the fields; for from that place  
Backwards and forwards may you see  
The print of many feet within the snow.  
And look about this chamber where we are,  
And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;  
For in his slipper did I find some rushes,  
Which argues he was murdered in this room.

L. CHEINY

Look in the place where he was wont to sit.  
See, see! His blood! It is too manifest.

ALICE

It is a cup of wine that Michael shed.

MICHAEL

Ay, truly.

FRANKLIN

It is his blood, which, strumpet, thou hast shed.  
But if I live, thou and thy 'complices,  
Which have conspired and wrought his death, shall rue it.

ALICE

Ah, Master Franklin, God and heaven can tell  
I loved him more than all the world beside.  
But bring me to him, let me see his body.

FRANKLIN

Bind that villain and Mosbie's sister too;  
And one of you go to the Flower-de-luce,  
And seek for Mosbie, and apprehend him too.

*They bring in Arden's body.*

L. CHEINY

See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies;  
Confess this foul fault and be penitent.

ALICE

Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say?  
The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds;  
This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth

Speaks as it falls, and asks me why I did it.  
Forgive me, Arden: I repent me now,  
And, would my death save thine, thou should'st not die.  
Rise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy love,  
And frown not on me when we meet in heaven:  
In heaven I'll love thee, though on earth I did not.  
Leave now to trouble me with worldly things,  
And let me meditate upon my savior Christ,  
Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed.

*She reveals the cursed painted crucifix and looks upon it.  
Nothing happens.*

L. CHEINY

Mistress Arden, you are now going to God,  
And shall be, by the law, condemned to die.

*Enter Mosbie and Greene, bound.*

L. CHEINY

Say, Mosbie, what made thee murder him?

FRANKLIN

Study not for an answer; look not down:  
His purse and girdle found at thy bed's head  
Witness sufficiently thou didst the deed;  
It bootless is to swear thou didst it not.

MOSBIE

How long shall I live in this hell of grief?  
Convey me from the presence of that strumpet.

ALICE

Ah, but for thee I had never been a strumpet.  
What cannot oaths and protestations do,  
When men have opportunity to woo?  
I was too young to sound thy villainies,  
But now I find it and repent too late.

L. CHEINY

But 'tis not thou alone must needs repent.

GREENE

I hired Black Will and Shakebag, ruffians both,  
And they and I have done this murderous deed.

FRANKLIN

Those ruffians shall not escape; I will up to London,  
And get the council's warrant to apprehend them.

SUSAN

Ah, gentle brother, wherefore should I die?  
I knew not of it till the deed was done.

MICHAEL

And if your brother and my mistress  
Had not promised me you in marriage,  
I had ne'er given consent to this foul deed.

SUSAN

Seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my hope.

MICHAEL

Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

L. CHEINY

Leave to accuse each other now,  
And listen to the sentence I shall give.  
Bear Mosbie and his sister to London straight,  
Where they in Smithfield must be executed;  
Bear Mistress Arden unto Canterbury,  
Where her sentence is she must be burnt;  
Michael in Faversham must suffer death.  
To speedy execution with them all!

ALICE

Let my death make amends for all my sins.

MOSBIE

Fie upon women! This shall be my song.  
But bear me hence, for I have lived too long.

*Exeunt.*

### **Epilogue**

FRANKLIN

Thus have you seen the truth of Arden's death.  
As for the ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will,  
The one took sanctuary, and, being sent for out,  
Was murdered in Southwark as he passed  
To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.  
Black Will was burned in Flushing on a stage;  
Greene was hanged at Ospinge in Kent;  
The painter fled and how he died we know not.  
But this above the rest is to be noted:



Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground  
Which he by force and violence held from Greene;  
And in the grass his body's print was seen  
Two years and more after the deed was done.

*End of Play.*