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This documentary edition has been edited to provide an accurate and transparent transcription of a single copy of the earliest surviving print edition of this play. Further material, including editorial policy and XML files of the play, is available on the EMED website. EMED texts are edited and encoded by Meaghan Brown, Michael Poston, and Elizabeth Williamson, and build on work done by the EEBO-TCP and the Shakespeare His Contemporaries project. This project is funded by a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant from the NEH’s Division of Preservation and Access.

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THE
Old Wives Tale.

A pleasant conceited Comedy,
played by the Queen’s Majesty’s
players.

Written by G. P.

Printed at London by John Danter, and are to
be sold by Ralph Hancock, and John
Hardy. 1595.

The old Wives
Tale.

Enter Antic, Frolic and Fantastic.

Antic.

How now fellow Frantic,
what all a mort? Doth this sadness
become thy madness? What
though we have lost our way
in the woods, yet never hang
the head, as though thou hadst
no hope to live till tomorrow: for Fantastic
and I will warrant thy life tonight for twenty in
the hundred.

Frolic: Antic and Fantastic, as I am
frolic fracion, never in all my life was I so
dead slain. What? to lose our way in the
wood, without either fire or candle so uncomfortable?
O coelum! O terra! O maria! O Neptune!

Fantastic Why makes thou it so strange, seeing
Cupid hath led our young master to the fair Lady
and she is the only Saint that he hath sworn
to serve.

Frolic. What resteth then but we commit
him to his wench, and each of us take his
stand up in a Tree, and sing out our ill fortune
Enter a Smith with a Lantern and Candle.

---

Hear a Dog bark..

---

Enter old woman.

to the tune of O man in desperation.

---

Antic  Desperately spoken fellow Frolic in the dark: but seeing it falls out thus, let us rehearse the old proverb.

Three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men be we.
I in the wood, and thou on the ground,
And Jack sleeps in the tree.

---

Fantastic  Hush a dog in the wood, or a wooden dog, O comfortable hearing! I had even as lief the Chamberlain of the white Horse had called me up to bed.

---

Frolic  Either hath this trotting Cur gone out of his circuit, or else are we near some village,

Enter a Smith with a Lantern and Candle.

which should not be far off, for I perceive the glimmering of a Glow-worm, a Candle, or a Cat’s eye, my life for a half penny. In the name of my own father, be thou Ox or Ass that appearest, tell us what thou art.

---

Smith.  What am I? Why I am Clunch the Smith, what are you, what make you in my territories at this time of the night?

---

Antic  What do we make dost thou ask? why we make faces for fear: such as if thy mortal eyes could behold, would make thee water the long seams of thy side slops, Smith.

---

Frolic  And in faith Sir unless your hospitality do relieve us, we are like to wander with a sorrowful hey ho, among the owlets, and Hobgoblins of the Forest: good Vulcan, for Cupid’s sake that hath cozened us all: befriend us as thou mayest, and command us howsoever, wheresoever, whenever, in whatsoever, for ever and ever.

---

Smith.  Well Masters it seems to me you have lost your way in the wood: in consideration whereof, if you will go with Clunch to his Cottage, you shall have house room, and a good fire to sit by, although we have no bedding to put you in.

---

All.  O blessed Smith, O bountiful Clunch.

---

Smith.  For your further entertainment, it shall be as it may be, so and so.

Hear a Dog bark..

Hark this is Ball my Dog that bids you all welcome in his own language, come take heed for stumbling on the threshold, open door Madge take in guests.

---

Enter old woman.
Old Woman    Welcome Clunch and good fellows all that come with my good man for my good man’s sake

come on sit down here is a piece of cheese and a pudding of my own making.

    Antic:    Thanks Gammer a good example for the wives of our town.

    Frolic:    Gammer thou and thy good man sit lovingly together, we come to chat and not to eat.

    Smith:    Well Masters if you will eat nothing take away: Come, what do we to pass away the time? Lay a crab in the fire to roast for Lambswool; what shall we have a game at Trump or Ruff to drive away the time, how say you?

    Fantastic:    This Smith leads a life as merry as a King with Madge his wife; Sirrah Frolic, I am sure thou art not without some round or other, no doubt but Clunch can bear his part.

    Frolic:    Else think you me ill brought up, so set to it when you will.

    they sing.

Song.

Whenas the Rye reach to the chin,
And chopcherry chopcherry ripe within,
Strawberries swimming in the cream,
And school boys playing in the stream:
Then O, then O, then O my true love said,
Till that time come again,
She could not live a maid.

    Antic:    This sport does well: but methinks Gammer, a merry winter’s tale would drive away the time trimly, come I am sure you are not without a score.

    Fantastic:    I’ faith Gammer a tale of an hour long were as good as an hour’s sleep.

    Frolic    Look you Gammer, of the Giant and the King’s Daughter, and I know not what, I have seen the day when I was a little one, you might have drawn me a mile after you with such a discourse.

    Old woman:    Well, since you be so importunate, my good man shall fill the pot and get him to bed, they that ply their work must keep
good hours, one of you go lie with him, he
is a clean skinned man I tell you, without either
spavin or windgall, so I am content to drive away
the time with an old wife’s winter’s tale.

  *Fantastic:* No better hay in Devonshire, o’ my
wordGammer, I’ll be one of your audience.

  *Frolic:* And I another that’s flat.

  *Antic:* Then must I to bed with the good
man, *Bona nox* Gammer, Good night *Frolic*.

  *Smith:* Come on my Lad, thou shalt take
thy unnatural rest with me.

  *Exeunt* Antic and the Smith.

  *Frolic:* Yet this vantage shall we have of
them in the morning, to be ready at the sight
thereof extempore.

  *Old woman:* Now this bargain my Masters
must I make with you, that you will say hum and
ha to my tale, so shall I know you are awake.

  *Both:* Content Gammer that will we do.

  *Old woman:* Once upon a time there was a
King or a Lord, or a Duke that had a fair daughter,
the fairest that ever was; as white as snow,
and as red as blood: and once upon a time his
daughter was stolen away, and he sent all his
men to seek out his daughter, and he sent so
long, that he sent all his men out of his Land.

  *Frolic* Who dressed his dinner then?

  *Old woman:* Nay either hear my tale,
or kiss my tail.

  *Fantastic:* Well said, on with your tale Gammer.

  *Old woman:* O Lord I quite forgot, there
was a Conjurer, and this Conjurer could do
anything, and he turned himself into a great
Dragon, and carried the King’s Daughter away
in his mouth to a Castle that he made of stone,
and there he kept her I know not how long, till
at last all the King’s men went out so long, that
her two Brothers went to seek her. O I forget:
she (he I would say) turned a proper young man
to a Bear in the night, and a man in the day, and
keeps by a cross that parts three several ways,
and he made his Lady run mad: gods me bones
who comes here? Enter the two Brothers.

  *Frolic* Soft Gammer, here some come to tell

your tale for you.
Fantastic: Let them alone, let us hear what they will say.

1. Brother: Upon these chalky Cliffs of Albion
We are arrived now with tedious toil,
And compassing the wide world round about
To seek our sister, to seek fair Delia forth,
Yet cannot we so much as hear of her.

2. Brother: O fortune cruel, cruel and unkind,
Unkind in that we cannot find our sister;
Our sister hapless in her cruel chance:
Soft who have we here.

Enter Senex at the Cross stooping to gather.

1. Brother: Now father God be your speed,
What do you gather there?

Old man: Hips and Haws, and sticks and straws, and things that I gather on the ground my son.

1. Brother: Hips and Haws, and sticks and straws, why is that all your food father?

Old man: Yea son.

2. Brother: Father, here is an Alms penny for me, and if I speed in that I go for, I will give thee as good a Gown of gray as ever thou didst wear.

1. Brother: And Father here is another alms penny for me, and if I speed in my journey, I will give thee a Palmer’s staff of ivory, and a scallop shell of beaten gold.

Old man: Was she fair?

2. Brother: Ay the fairest for white, and the purest for red, as the blood of the Deer, or the driven snow:

Old man Then hark well and mark well, my old spell:
Be not afraid of every stranger,
Start not aside at every danger:
Things that seem are not the same,
Blow a blast at every flame:
For when one flame of fire goes out,
Then comes your wishes well about:
If any ask who told you this good,
Say the white Bear of England’s wood.

1. Brother: Brother heard you not what the old man said:
Be not afraid of every stranger,
Start not aside for every danger:
Things that seem are not the same,
Blow a blast at every flame:
If any ask who told you this good,
Say the white Bear of England’s wood.

2. Brother: Well if this do us any good,
Well fare the white Bear of England’s wood. \[\text{exeunt.}\]

Old man Now sit thee here and tell a heavy tale.
Sad in thy mood, and sober in thy cheer,
Here sit thee now and to thyself relate,
The hard mishap of thy most wretched state.
In Thessaly I lived in sweet content,
Until that Fortune wrought my overthrow;

For there I wedded was unto a dame,
That lived in honor, virtue, love, and fame:
But Sacrapant that cursed sorcerer,
Being besotted with my beauteous love:
My dearest love, my true betrothed wife,
Did seek the means to rid me of my life.
But worse than this, he with his chanting spells,
Did turn me straight unto an ugly Bear;
And when the sun doth settle in the west,
Than I begin to don my ugly hide:
And all the day I sit, as now you see,
And speak in riddles all inspire with rage,
Seeming an old and miserable man:
And yet I am in April of my age.

Enter Venelia his Lady mad; and goes in again.
See where Venelia my betrothed love,
Runs madding all enraged about the woods;
All by his cursed and enchanting spells.

Enter Lampriscus with a pot of Honey.
But here comes Lampriscus my discontented neighbor. How now neighbor, you look toward the ground as well as I, you muse on something.

Lampriscus Neighbor on nothing, but on the matter I so often moved to you: if you do any thing for charity, help me; if for neighborhood or brotherhood, help me: never was one so cumbered as is poor Lampriscus: and to begin, I pray receive this pot of Honey to mend your fare.

Old man: Thanks neighbor, set it down,
Honey is always welcome to the Bear.
And now neighbor let me hear the cause of your coming.

Lampriscus I am (as you know neighbor) a man unmarried, and lived so unquietly
with my two wives, that I keep every year
holy the day wherein I buried them both; the first
was on saint Andrew’s day; the other on saint
Luke’s.

Old man: And now neighbor, you of this
country say, your custom is out: but on with
your tale neighbor.

Lampriscus By my first wife, whose tongue wearied
me alive, and sounded in my ears like the
clapper of a great Bell, whose talk was a continual
torment to all that dwelt by her, or lived
nigh her, you have heard me say I had a handsome
daughter.

Old man: True neighbor.

Lampriscus: She it is that afflicts me with her
continual clamors, and hangs on me like a
Burr: poor she is, and proud she is, as
poor as a sheep new shorn, and as proud
of her hopes, as a Peacock of her tail well
grown.

Old man: Well said Lampriscus, you speak
it like an Englishman.

Lampriscus As curst as a wasp, and as froward
as a child new taken from the mother’s teat,
she is to my age, as smoke to the eyes, or as vinegar
to the teeth.

Old man: Holily praised neighbor, as much
for the next.

Lampriscus By my other wife I had a daughter,
so hard favored, so foul and ill faced, that I
think a grove full of golden trees; and the
leaves of Rubies and Diamonds, would not
be a dowry answerable to her
deformity.

Old man: Well neighbor, now you have
spoke, hear me speak; send them to the Well
for the water of life: there shall they find their
fortunes unlooked for; Neighbor farewell.

Lampriscus Farewell and a thousand, and now
goeth poor Lampriscus to put in execution
this excellent counsel.

Frolic Why this goes round without a fiddling
stick; but do you hear Gammer, was this
the man that was a Bear in the night, and a
man in the day?

Old woman: Ay this is he; and this man that
came to him was a beggar, and dwelt upon a
green. But soft, who comes here? O these are the harvestmen; ten to one they sing a song of mowing.

Enter the harvestmen a-singing, with this
Song double repeated
All ye that lovely lovers be, pray you for me,
Lo here we come a-sowing, a-sowing,
And sow sweet fruits of love:
In your sweet hearts well may it prove.

Enter Huanebango with his two-hand sword,
and Booby the Clown.

Fantastic: Gammer, what is he?
Old woman: O this is one that is going to the conjurer, let him alone, hear what he says.
Huanebango Now by Mars and Mercury, Jupiter and Janus, Sol and Saturnus, Venus and Vesta, Pallas and Proserpina, and by the honor of my house Polimackeroepalidus, it is a wonder to see what this love will make silly fellows adventure, even in the wane of their wits, and infancy of their discretion. Alas my friend what fortune calls thee forth to seek thy fortune among brazen gates, enchanted towers, fire and Brimstone, thunder and lightning. Beauty I tell thee is peerless, and she precious whom thou affectest: do off these desires good countryman, good friend run away from thyself; and so soon as thou canst, forget her; whom none must inherit but he that can monsters tame, labors achieve, riddles absolve, loose enchantments, murder magic, and kill conjuring: and that is the great and mighty Huanebango.

Booby: Hark you sir, hark you; First know I have here the flirting feather, and have given the Parish the start for the long stock: Now sir if it be no more but running through a little lightning and thunder, and riddle me riddle me what’s this, I’ll have the wench from the Conjurer if he were ten Conjurers.
Huanebango I have abandoned the Court and honorable company, to do my devoir against this sore Sorcerer and mighty Magician: if this Lady be so fair as she is said to be, she is mine, she is mine, Meus, mea, meum, in contemptum omnium Grammaticorum.
Booby: O falsum Latinum! the fair maid is minum, cum apurtinanantibus gibletes and all.

Huanebango If she be mine, as I assure myself the heavens will do somewhat to reward my worthiness; she shall be allied to none of the meanest gods; but be invested in the most famous stock of Huanebango Polimackeroepiacidus, my Grandfather: my father Pergopolyneo:

my mother, Dionora de Sardinia: famously descended.

Booby: Do you hear sir; had not you a Cousin, that was called Gusteceridis?

Huanebango Indeed I had a Cousin, that sometime followed the Court unfortunately, and his name Bustegusteceridis.

Booby: O Lord I know him well: he is the knight of the neat’s feet.

Huanebango O he loved no Capon better, he hath oftentimes deceived his boy of his dinner, that was his fault good Bustegusteceridis.

Booby: Come shall we go along? Soft, here is an old man at the Cross, let us ask him the way thither. Ho, you Gaffer, I pray you tell where the wise man the Conjurer dwells?

Huanebango Where that earthly Goddess keepeth her abode; the commander of my thoughts, and fair Mistress of my heart.

Old man: Fair enough, and far enough from thy fingering son.

Huanebango I will follow my Fortune after mine own fancy, and do according to mine own discretion.

Old man: Yet give some thing to an old man before you go.

Huanebango Father methinks a piece of this Cake might serve your turn.

Old man: Yea son.

Huanebango Huanebango giveth no Cakes for Alms, ask of them that give gifts for poor Beggars. Fair Lady, if thou wert once shrined in this bosom, I would buckler thee haratantara.

Booby: Father do you see this man, you little think he’ll run a mile or two for such a Cake, or pass for a pudding, I tell you father he has Exit.
kept such a begging of me for a piece of this
Cake, who he comes upon me with a superfantial
substance, and the foison of the earth,
that I know not what he means: If he came
to me thus, and said, my friend Booby or so, why
I could spare him a piece with all my heart; but
when he tells me how God hath enriched me
above other fellows with a Cake: why he
makes me blind and deaf at once: Yet father
here is a piece of Cake for you as hard as the
world goes.

Old man: Thanks son, but list to me,
He shall be deaf when thou shalt not see;
Farewell my son things may so hit,
Thou mayst have wealth to mend thy wit.

Booby: Farewell father, farewell; for I must
make haste after my two-hand sword that is gone
before.

Enter Sacrapant in his study.

Sacrapant: The day is clear, the Welkin
bright and gray,
The Lark is merry, and records her notes;
Each thing rejoiceth underneath the Sky,
But only I whom heaven hath in hate:
Wretched and miserable Sacrapant,
In Thessaly was I born and brought up,
My mother Meroe hight a famous Witch,
And by her cunning I of her did learn,
To change and alter shapes of mortal men.
There did I turn myself into a Dragon,
And stole away the Daughter to the King;
Fair Delia, the Mistress of my heart:
And brought her hither to revive the man,
That seemeth young and pleasant to behold,
And yet is aged, crooked, weak and numb.
Thus by enchanting spells I do deceive,
Those that behold and look upon my face;
But well may I bid youthful years adieu:

Enter Delia with a pot in her hand.
See where she comes from whence my sorrows grow,
How now fair Delia where have you been?

Delia: At the foot of the Rock for running
water, and gathering roots for your dinner
sir.

Sacrapant Ah Delia, fairer art thou than the running
water, yet harder far than steel or

Exeunt omnes.
Enter a Friar with a chine of Beef and a pot of wine.

Exit Friar.

Enter the two Brothers.

Delia: Will it please you to sit down sir.

Sacrapant Ay Delia, sit and ask me what thou wilt, thou shalt have it brought into thy lap.

Delia: Then I pray you sir let me have the best meat from the king of England’s table, and the best wine in all France, brought in by the veriest knave in all Spain.

Sacrapant Delia I am glad to see you so pleasant,

well sit thee down.

Sacrapant Spread table spread; meat, drink and bread

Ever may I have, what I ever crave:

When I am spread, for meat for my black cock,
And meat for my red.

Enter a Friar with a chine of Beef and a pot of wine.

Sacrapant Here Delia, will ye fall to.

Delia Is this the best meat in England?

Sacrapant Yea.

Delia What is it?

Sacrapant A chine of English beef, meat for a king
And a king’s followers.

Delia Is this the best wine in France?

Sacrapant Yea.

Delia What Wine is it?

Sacrapant A cup of neat wine of Orleans,

That never came near the brewers in England.

Delia Is this the veriest knave in all Spain?

Sacrapant Yea.

Delia What is he a Friar?

Sacrapant Yea a Friar indefinite, and a knave infinite.

Delia Then I pray ye sir Friar tell me before you go, which is the most greediest Englishman?

Fryer: The miserable and most covetous Usurer.

Sacrapant Hold thee there Friar,

Exit Friar.

But soft who have we here, Delia away begone.

Delia away, for beset are we,

But heaven or hell shall rescue her for me.

1. Brother Brother, was not that Delia did appear?

Or was it but her shadow that was here?

2. Brother: Sister, where art thou? Delia come again

He calls, that of thy absence doth complain.
Enter the Conjurer; it lightens and thunders, 
The Brother falls down.
Fall 1. Brother. Enter two furies.
He removes a turf, and shows a light in a glass.
Exeunt.

Enter Eumenides the wand’ring Knight, 
and the old man at the cross.

Eumenides Tell me Time, tell me just Time, 
When shall I Delia see? 
When shall I see the lodestar of my life? 
When shall my wand’ring course end with her sight? 
Or I but view my hope, my heart’s delight. 
Father God speed, if you tell fortunes, I pray 
good father tell me mine. 
Old man: Son I do see in thy face, 
Thy blessed fortune work apace; 
I do perceive that thou hast wit,
Exit Old man

Enter Wiggen, Corebus, Churchwarden and Sexton.

Eumenides This man hath left me in a Labyrinth,
He biddeth me give more than all,
Till dead men’s bones come at thy call:
He biddeth me dream of no rest,
Till I repent that I do best.

Wiggen: You may be ashamed, you whoreson scald Sexton and Churchwarden, if you had any shame in those shameless faces of yours, to let a poor man lie so long above ground unburied. A rot on you all, that have no more compassion of a good fellow when he is gone.

Simon: What would you have us to bury him, and to answer it ourselves to the parish?

Sexton: Parish me no parishes, pay me my fees, and let the rest run on in the quarters accounts, and put it down for one of your good deeds a God’s name, for I am not one that curiously stands upon merits.

Corebus: You whoreson sodden-headed sheep’s face, shall a good fellow do less service and more honesty to the parish, and will you not when he is dead let him have Christmas burial.

Wiggen: Peace Corebus, assure as Jack was Jack, the frolic’est franion amongst you, and I Wiggen his sweet sworn brother, Jack shall have his funerals, or some of them shall lie on God’s dear earth for it, that’s once.

Churchwarden Wiggen I hope thou wilt do no more than thou dar’st answer.

Wiggen Sir, sir, dare or dare not, more or less, answer or not answer, do this, or have this.

Sexton Help, help, help, Wiggen sets upon the parish with a Pikestaff.

Eumenides awakes and comes to them.

Eumenides Hold thy hands good fellow.
Corebus  Can you blame him sir, if he take *Jack*’s part against this shake rotten parish that will not bury *Jack*.

Eumenides  Why what was that *Jack*?

Corebus  Who *Jack* sir, who our *Jack* sir? as good a fellow as ever trod upon Neat’s leather.

Wiggen:  Look you sir, he gave four score and nineteen mourning gowns to the parish when he died, and because he would not make them up a full hundred, they would not bury him; was not this good dealing?

Churchwarden  Oh Lord sir how he lies, he was not worth a halfpenny, and drunk out every penny: and now his fellows, his drunken companions, would have us to bury him at the charge of the parish, and we make many such matches, we may pull down the steeple, sell the Bells, and thatch the chancel: he shall lie above ground till he dance a galliard about the churchyard for *Steven Loach*.

Wiggen:  *Sic argumentaris domine Loach*; and we make many such matches, we may pull down the steeple, sell the Bells, and thatch the chancel: in good time sir, and hang yourselves in the Bell ropes when you have done, *Domine oponens praepono tibi hanc questionem*, whether will you have the ground broken, or your pates broken: first, for one of them shall be done presently, and to begin mine, I’ll seal it upon your coxcomb.

Eumenides  Hold thy hands, I pray thee good fellow be not too hasty.

Corebus  You Capon’s face, we shall have you turned out of the parish one of these days, with never a tatter to your arse, then you are in worse taking than *Jack*.

Eumenides  Faith and he is bad enough: this fellow does but the part of a friend, to seek to bury his friend; how much will bury him?

Wiggen:  Faith, about some fifteen or sixteen shillings will bestowed him honestly.

Sexton:  Ay even thereabouts sir.

Eumenides:  Here hold it then, and I have left me but one poor three half-pence; now do I...
remember the words the old man spake at the
cross; bestow all thou hast, and this is all, till
dead men’s bones comes at thy call, hear hold
it, and so farewell.

Wiggen  God, and all good, be with you sir;
nay you cormorants, I’ll bestow one peal of
Jack at mine own proper costs and charges.
Corebus  You may thank God the long staff
and the bilbo blade, crossed not your coxcomb;
well we’ll to the church stile, and have
a pot, and so trill lill.

Both:  Come let’s go.  

Fantastic:  But hark you gammer, methinks
this Jack bore a great sway in the parish.

Old woman:  O this Jack was a marvelous fellow,
he was but a poor man, but very well beloved:
you shall see anon what this Jack will
come to.

Enter the harvestmen singing, with women
in their hands.

Frolic  Soft, who have we here? our amorous
harvesters.

Fantastic:  Ay, Ay, let us sit still and let them alone.

Here they begin to sing, the
song doubled.

Lo here we come a-reaping, a-reaping,
To reap our harvest fruit,
And thus we pass the year so long,
And never be we mute.  Exeunt.

Enter Huanebango, and Corebus the clown.

Frolic  Soft, who have we here?

Old woman  O this is a choleric gentleman, all
you that love your lives, keep out of the smell
of his two-hand sword: now goes he to the
conjurer.

Fantastic:  Methinks the Conjurer should put
the fool into a Juggling box.

Huanebango  Fee, fa, fum, here is the Englishman,
Conquer him that can, came for his lady bright,
To prove himself a knight,
And win her love in fight.

Corebus  Hoo-haw master Bango are you here?
hear you, you had best sit down here, and
beg an alms with me.

Huanebango  Hence base cullion, here is he that
commandeth ingress and egress with his
weapon, and will enter at his voluntary whosoever
saith no.
A voice and flame of fire: Huanebango
falleth down.

Voice: No.

Old woman So with that they kissed, and spoiled the
edge of as good a two-hand sword, as ever God
put life in; now goes Corebus in, spite of the
conjurer.

Enter the Conjurer, and strike Corebus blind.

Sacrapant Away with him into the open fields,
To be a ravening prey to Crows and Kites:

And for this villain let him wander up and down
In naught but darkness and eternal night.

Corebus Here hast thou slain Huan a slashing knight
And robbed poor Corebus of his sight.

Sacrapant Hence villain hence.
Now I have unto Delia given a potion of
forgetfulness,
That when she comes she shall not know her
Brothers:
Lo where they labor like to Country slaves,
With spade and mattock on this enchanted
ground.
Now will I call her by another name,
For never shall she know herself again,
Until that Sacrapant hath breathed his last.
See where she comes.
Come hither Delia take this goad,
Here hard at hand two slaves do work and dig
for gold,
Gore them with this and thou shalt have enough.

He gives her a goad.

Delia Good sir I know not what you mean.

Sacrapant She hath forgotten to be Delia,
But not forgot the same she should forget:
But I will change her name.
Fair Berecynthia so this Country calls you,
Go ply these strangers wench they dig for gold

Exit Sacrapant.

Delia: O heavens! how am I beholding to

this fair young man.
But I must ply these strangers to their work.
See where they come.

Enter the two Brothers in their shirts with
spades digging.

1. Brother: O Brother see where Delia is.
2. Brother: O Delia happy are we to see thee here.

   Delia: What tell you me of Delia prating swains?
I know no Delia nor know I what you mean,
Ply you your work or else you are like to smart.

   1. Brother: Why Delia knowest thou not thy Brothers here?
We come from Thessaly to seek thee forth,
And thou deceivest thyself for thou art Delia.

   Delia: Yet more of Delia, then take this
and smart:
What feign you shifts for to defer your labor?
Work villains work, it is for gold you dig.

2. Brother Peace brother peace, this vile enchanter
Hath ravished Delia of her senses clean,
And she forgets that she is Delia.

   1. Brother Leave cruel thou to hurt the miserable;
Dig brother dig, for she is hard as steel.

     Here they dig and descry the light under a little hill.

   2. Brother Stay brother what hast thou descried?

   Delia Away and touch it not, it is some thing, that
my Lord hath hidden there. she covers it again.

Enter Sacrapant.

   Sacrapant Well said, thou pliest these Pioneers
well, go get you in you laboring slaves.
Come Berecynthia, let us in likewise,
And hear the Nightingale record her notes.

Exeunt omnes.

Enter Zantippa the cursed Daughter to the well,
with a pot in her hand.

   Zantippa Now for a husband, house and home,
God send a good one or none I pray God: My
father hath sent me to the well for the water of
life, and tells me if I give fair words I shall
have a husband.

     Enter the foul wench to the well for water with a
pot in her hand.

But here comes Celanta my sweet sister, I’ll
stand by and hear what she says.

   Celanta My father hath sent me to the well
for water, and he tells me if I speak fair, I shall
have a husband and none of the worst: Well
though I am black I am sure all the world will
not forsake me, and as the old proverb is
though I am black, I am not the devil.

   Zantippa Marry gup with a murrain, I know
Here she strikes her Pitcher against her sister’s, and breaks them both and goes her way.

Celanta: I think this be the curstest quean in the world, you see what she is, a little fair, but as proud as the devil, and the veriest vixen that lives upon God’s earth. Well I’ll let her alone, and go home and get another Pitcher, and for all this get me to the well for water.

Exit.

Enter two Furies out of the Conjurers Cell and lays Huanebango by the well of life.

Enter Zantippa with a Pitcher to the Well.

Zantippa Once again for a husband, and in faith Celanta I have got the start of you; Belike husbands grow by the Well side; now my father says I must rule my tongue: why alas what am I then? a woman without a tongue, is as a soldier without his weapon; but I’ll have my water and be gone.

Here she offers to dip her Pitcher in, and a head speaks in the Well.

Head: Gently dip, but not too deep, For fear you make the golden bird to weep, Fair maiden white and red, Stroke me smooth, and comb my head, And thou shalt have some cockle-bread.

Zantippa What is this, fair maiden white and red, Comb me smooth, and stroke my head: And thou shalt have some cockle-bread.

Cockle callest thou it boy, faith I’ll give you cockle-bread.

She breaks her Pitcher upon his head, then it thunders and lightens, and Huanebango rises up: Huanebango is deaf and cannot hear.

Huanebango Phylyda phylerydos, Pamphylyda floryda flortos, Dub dud a dub, bounce quoth the guns, with a sulphurous huff snuff: Waked with a wench, pretty peat, pretty love, and my sweet pretty pigsney;
Just by thy side shall sit surnamed great Huanebango

Safe in my arms will I keep thee, threat Mars or thunder Olympus.

Zantippa Foh, what greasy groom have we here? He looks as though he crept out of the backside of the well; and speaks like a Drum perished at the West end.

Huanebango O that I might but I may not, woe to my destiny therefore;

Kiss that I clasp but I cannot, tell me my destiny wherefore?

Zantippa Whoop now I have my dream, did you never hear so great a wonder as this? Three blue beans in a blue bladder, rattle bladder rattle.

Huanebango I’ll now set my countenance and to her in prose, it may be this rim ram ruff, is too rude an encounter.
Let me fair Lady if you be at leisure, revel with your sweetness, and rail upon that cowardly Conjurer, that hath cast me or congealed me rather into an unkind sleep and polluted my Carcase.

Zantippa: Laugh, laugh Zantippa, thou hast thy fortune, a fool and a husband under one.

Huanebango Truly sweet heart as I seem, about some twenty years, the very April of mine age.

Zantippa: Why what a prating Ass is this?

Huanebango: Her Coral lips, her crimson chin,
Her silver teeth so white within:
Her golden locks her rolling eye,
Her pretty parts let them go by:
Hey ho hath wounded me,
That I must die this day to see.

Zantippa By gog’s bones thou art a flouting knave,
Her Coral lips, her crimson chin: ka wilshaw.

Huanebango True my own and my own because mine, and mine because mine ha ha: Above a thousand pounds in possibility, and things fitting
thy desire in possession.

Zantippa The Sot thinks I ask of his lands,
Lob be your comfort, and Cuckold be your
destiny: Hear you sir; and if you will have
us, you had best say so betime.

Huanebango True sweetheart and will royalize
thy progeny with my pedigree. Exeunt omnes.

Enter Eumenides the wand’ring Knight.

Eumenides Wretched Eumenides, still unfortunate,
Enviéd by fortune, and forlorn by Fate;
Here pine and die wretched Eumenides.
Die in the spring, the April of my age?
Here sit thee down, repent what thou hast done
I would to God that it were ne’er begun.

Enter Jack.

Jack: You are well overtaken sir.
Eumenides Who’s that?
Jack: You are heartily well met sir.
Eumenides Forbear I say, who is that which pincheth me?
Jack: Trusting in God good Master Eumenides,
that you are in so good health as all your
friends were at the making hereof: God give
you God morrow sir, lack you not a neat
handsome and cleanly young Lad, about the age
of fifteen or sixteen years, that can run
by your horse, and for a need make your Mastership’s
shoes as black as ink, how say you sir.

Eumenides Alas pretty Lad, I know not how to
keep myself, and much less a servant, my
pretty boy, my state is so bad.

Jack: Content yourself, you shall not be
so ill a Master but I’l be as bad a servant: Tut
sir I know you though you know not me; Are
not you the man sir, deny it if you can sir, that
came from a strange place in the land of Catita,
where Jackanapes flies with his tail in his
mouth, to seek out a Lady as white as snow,
and as red as blood; ha, ha, have I touched you
now.

Eumenides I think this boy be a spirit,
How knowest thou all this?

Jack: Tut are not you the man sir, deny it
if you can sir, that gave all the money you had
to the burying of a poor man, and but one
three half-pence left in your purse: Content
you sir, I’ll serve you that is flat.

  Eumenides  Well my Lad since thou art so importunate,
I am content to entertain thee, not as a
servant; but a copartner in my journey. But
whither shall we go for I have not any money
more than one bare three half-pence.

    Jack:  Well Master content yourself,
for if my divination be not out, that shall be
spent at the next Inn or alehouse we come to:
for master I know you are passing hungry;
therefore I’ll go before and provide dinner until
that you come, no doubt but you’ll come
fair and softly after.

  Eumenides  Ay, go before, I’ll follow thee.
  Jack:  But do you hear master, do you
know my name?

  Eumenides  No I promise thee not yet.
  Jack:  Why I am Jack.

  Eumenides  Jack, why be it so then.

  Enter the Hostess and Jack, setting meat on the
table, and Fiddlers came to play; Eumenides
walketh up and down, and will
eat no meat.

  Hostess  How say you sir, do you please to sit
down?

  Eumenides  Hostess I thank you, I have no great
stomach.

  Hostess  Pray sir, what is the reason your master
is so strange, doth not this meat please him.

  Jack:  Yes Hostess, but it is my master’s fashion
to pay before he eats, therefore a reckoning
good hostess.

  Hostess  Marry shall you sir presently.

  Exit.

  Eumenides  Why Jack what dost thou mean,
thou knowest I have not any money: therefore
sweet Jack tell me what shall I do.

  Jack:  Well master look in your purse.

  Eumenides  Why faith it is a folly, for I have no
money.

  Jack:  Why look you master, do so much for me.

  Eumenides  Alas Jack my purse is full of money.

  Jack:  Alas, master, does that word belong
to this accident? why methinks I should have
Exeunt omnes.

Enter Corebus and Celanta the foul wench, to the well for water.

A head comes up with ears of Corn, and she combs them in her lap.

A head comes up full of gold, she combs it into her lap.

Eumenides Thanks my fine eloquent hostess.

Jack: But hear you master, one word by the way, are you content I shall be halves in all you get in your journey?

Eumenides I am Jack, here is my hand.

Jack: Enough master, I ask no more.

Eumenides Come Hostess receive your money, and I thank you for my good entertainment.

Hostess You are heartily welcome sir.

Eumenides Come Jack whither go we now?

Jack: Marry master to the conjurer’s presently.


Enter Corebus and Celanta the foul wench, to the well for water.

Corebus Come my duck come: I have now got a wife, thou art fair, art thou not?

Celanta My Corebus the fairest alive, make no doubt of that.

Corebus Come wench, are we almost at the well.

Celanta Ay Corebus we are almost at the Well now, i’ll go fetch some water: sit down while I dip my pitcher in.

Voice: Gently dip: but not too deep;
For fear you make the golden beard to weep.

A head comes up with ears of Corn, and she combs them in her lap.

Fair maiden white and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head:
And thou shalt have some cockle-bread.
Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear thou make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maid, white, and red,
Comb me smooth, and stroke my head;
And every hair, a sheaf shall be,
And every sheaf a golden tree.

A head comes up full of gold, she combs it into her lap.

Celanta Oh see Corebus I have combed a great deal of gold into may lap, and a great deal of corn.
Corebus Well said wench, now we shall have just enough, God send us coiners to coin our gold: but come shall we go home sweet heart?

Celanta Nay come Corebus I will lead you.

Corebus So Corebus things have well hit,
Thou hast gotten wealth to mend thy wit. 

Enter Jack and the wand'ring knight.

Jack: Come away master come,

Eumenides Go along Jack, I’ll follow thee,

Jack, they say it is good to go cross-legged, and say his prayers backward: how sayest thou?

Jack; Tut never fear master, let me alone, here sit you still, speak not a word. And because you shall not be enticed with his enchanting speeches; with this same wool I’ll stop your ears: and so master sit still, for I must to the Conjurer.

Enter the Conjurer to the wand’ring knight.

Sacrapant How now, what man art thou that sits so sad
Why dost thou gaze upon these stately trees,
Without the leave and will of Sacrapant?
What not a word but mum,
Then Sacrapant thou art betrayed.

Enter Jack invisible, and taketh off Sacrapant’s wreath from his head, and his sword out of his hand.

Sacrapant What hand invades the head of Sacrapant?

What hateful fury doth envy my happy state?
Then Sacrapant these are thy latest days,
Alas my veins are numbed, my sinews shrink,
My blood is pierced, my breath fleeting away,
And now my timeless date is come to end:
He in whose life his actions hath been so foul,

Now in his death to hell desends his soul.

He dieth.

Jack: Oh Sir are you gone: now I hope we shall have some other coil. Now master how like you this; the Conjurer he is dead, and vows never to trouble us more. Now get you to your fair Lady, and see what you can do with her: Alas he heareth me not all this while; but I will help that.

He pulls the Wool out of his ears.

Eumenides How now Jack, what news?

Jack: Here master, take this sword and dig
He digs and spies a light.

Eumenides  How now Jack, what is this?

Jack: Master, without this the Conjurer could do nothing, and so long as this light lasts, so long doth his art endure, and this being out, then doth his art decay.

Eumenides  Why then Jack I will soon put out this light.

Jack: Ay master, how?

Eumenides  Why with a stone I’ll break the glass, and then blow it out.

Jack: No master you may as soon break the Smith’s Anvil, as this little vial; nor the biggest blast that ever Boreas blew, cannot blow out this little light; but she that is neither maid, wife, nor widow. Master, wind this horn; and see what will happen.

He winds the horn.

Here enters Venelia and breaks the glass, and blows out the light, and goeth in again.

Jack: So master, how like you this; this is she that ran madding in the woods, his betrothed love that keeps the cross, and now this light being out, all are restored to their former liberty. And now master to the Lady that you have so long looked for.

He draweth a curtain, and there Delia sitteth asleep.

Eumenides  God speed fair maid sitting alone there is once.

God speed fair maid; there is twice: God speed fair maid, that is thrice.

Delia: Not so good sir, for you are by.

Jack: Enough master, she hath spoke, now I will leave her with you.

Eumenides  Thou fairest flower of these western parts: Whose beauty so reflecteth in my sight, As doth a Crystal mirror in the sun: For thy sweet sake I have crossed the frozen Rhine, Leaving fair Po, I sailed up Danuby, As far as Saba whose enhancing streams, Cuts twixt the Tartars and the Russians,

These have I crossed for thee fair Delia:
Then grant me that which I have sued for long.

Delia  Thou gentle knight, whose fortune is so good:
To find me out, and set my brothers free,
My faith, my heart, my hand, I give to thee.

Eumenides  Thanks gentle Madam: but here comes Jack, thank him, for he is the best friend that we have.

Enter Jack with a head in his hand.

Eumenides  How now Jack, what hast thou there?
Jack:  Marry master, the head of the conjurer.
Eumenides  Why Jack that is impossible, he was a young man.
Jack:  Ah master, so he deceived them that beheld him: but he was a miserable, old, and crooked man; though to each man’s eye he seemed young and fresh, for master; this Conjurer took the shape of the old man that kept the cross: and that old man was in the likeness of the Conjurer. But now master wind your horn.  

He winds his horn.

Enter Venelia, the two brothers, and he that was at the cross.

Eumenides  Welcome Ærestus, welcome fair Venelia,
Welcome Thelea, and Calypha both,
Now have I her that I so long have sought,
So saith fair Delia, if we have your consent.

1. Brother:  Valiant Eumenides thou well deservest
To have our favors: so let us rejoice,
That by thy means we are at liberty.
Here may we joy each in other’s sight,
And this fair Lady have her wand’ring knight.
Jack:  So master, now ye think you have done: but I must have a saying to you;
know you and I were partners, I to have half in all you got.
Eumenides  Why so thou shalt Jack.
Jack:  Why then master draw your sword,
part your Lady, let me have half of her presently.

Eumenides  Why I hope Jack thou dost but jest, I promised thee half I got, but not half my Lady.
Jack:  But what else master, have you not gotten her, therefore divide her straight, for I
He offers to strike and Jack stays him.

Jack: Nay neither more nor less Master, but even just half.

Eumenides: Before I will falsify my faith unto my friend, I will divide her, Jack thou shalt have half.

1. Brother: Be not so cruel unto our sister gentle Knight.

2. Brother: O spare fair Delia she deserves no death.

Eumenides: Content yourselves, my word is past to him, therefore prepare thyself Delia for thou must die.

Delia: Then farewell world, adieu

Eumenides: He offers to strike and Jack stays him.

Jack: Stay Master, it is sufficient I have tried your constancy: Do you now remember since you paid for the burying of a poor fellow.

Eumenides: Ay very well Jack.

Jack: Then Master thank that good deed, for this good turn, and so God be with you all.

Eumenides: Jack leaps down in the ground.

Delia: Then farewell world, adieu

Eumenides. Jack what art thou gone?

Then farewell Jack.

Come brothers and my beauteous Delia, Erestus and thy dear Venelia: We will to Thessaly with joyful hearts.

All: Agreed, we follow thee and Delia.

Exeunt omnes.

Fantastic: What Gammer, asleep?

Old woman: By the Mass son ’tis almost day, and my windows shuts at the Cock’s crow.

Frolic Do you hear Gammer, methinks this Jack bore a great sway amongst them.

Old woman: O man, this was the ghost of the poor man, that they kept such a coil to bury, and that makes him to help the wand’ring knight so much: But come let us in, we will have a cup of ale and a toast this morning and so depart.

Fantastic: Then you have made an end of your tale Gammer?
Old woman: Yes faith: When this was done I took a piece of bread and cheese, and came my way, and so shall you have too before you go, to your breakfast.

FINIS.

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1595.
1. **955 (19-a)**: The regularized reading *Celanta* is amended from the original *Zelanto*. 