ROSALINE SIDES

PRINCESS

Who are the votaries, my loving lords,

That are vow-fellows with this virtuous duke?

MARIA

Lord Longaville is one.

PRINCESS Know you the man? 40

MARIA

I know him, madam. At a marriage feast

Between Lord Perigort and the beauteous heir

Of Jaques Falconbridge, solemnizèd

In Normandy, saw I this Longaville.

A man of sovereign parts he is esteemed, 45

Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms.

Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.

The only soil of his fair virtue’s gloss,

If virtue’s gloss will stain with any soil,

Is a sharp wit matched with too blunt a will, 50

Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills

It should none spare that come within his power.

PRINCESS

Some merry mocking lord, belike. Is ’t so?

MARIA

They say so most that most his humors know.

PRINCESS

Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow. 55

Who are the rest?

KATHERINE

The young Dumaine, a well-accomplished youth,

Of all that virtue love for virtue loved.

Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill;

For he hath wit to make an ill shape good, 60

And shape to win grace though he had no wit.

I saw him at the Duke Alanson’s once,

And much too little of that good I saw

Is my report to his great worthiness.

ROSALINE

Another of these students at that time 65

Was there with him, if I have heard a truth.

Berowne they call him, but a merrier man,

Within the limit of becoming mirth,

I never spent an hour’s talk withal.

His eye begets occasion for his wit, 70

For every object that the one doth catch

The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,

Which his fair tongue, conceit’s expositor,

Delivers in such apt and gracious words

That agèd ears play truant at his tales, 75

And younger hearings are quite ravishèd,

So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

PRINCESS

God bless my ladies, are they all in love,

That every one her own hath garnishèd

With such bedecking ornaments of praise? 80

BEROWNE*, to Rosaline*

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

ROSALINE

Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?

BEROWNE

I know you did.

ROSALINE How needless was it then

To ask the question. 120

BEROWNE You must not be so quick.

ROSALINE

’Tis long of you that spur me with such questions.

BEROWNE

Your wit’s too hot, it speeds too fast; ’twill tire.

ROSALINE

Not till it leave the rider in the mire.

BEROWNE

What time o’ day? 125

ROSALINE The hour that fools should ask.

BEROWNE Now fair befall your mask.

ROSALINE Fair fall the face it covers.

BEROWNE And send you many lovers.

ROSALINE Amen, so you be none. 130

BEROWNE Nay, then, will I be gone

BEROWNE*, to Rosaline* Lady, I will commend you to 185

my own heart.

ROSALINE Pray you, do my commendations. I would

be glad to see it.

BEROWNE I would you heard it groan.

ROSALINE Is the fool sick? 190

BEROWNE Sick at the heart.

ROSALINE Alack, let it blood.

BEROWNE Would that do it good?

ROSALINE My physic says “ay.”

BEROWNE Will you prick ’t with your eye? 195

ROSALINE No point, with my knife.

BEROWNE Now God save thy life.

ROSALINE And yours from long living.

BEROWNE I cannot stay thanksgiving.

ROSALINE

Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Berowne,

Before I saw you; and the world’s large tongue 915

Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,

Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,

Which you on all estates will execute

That lie within the mercy of your wit.

To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain, 920

And therewithal to win me, if you please,

Without the which I am not to be won,

You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day

Visit the speechless sick, and still converse

With groaning wretches; and your task shall be, 925

With all the fierce endeavor of your wit,

To enforce the painèd impotent to smile.

BEROWNE

To move wild laughter in the throat of death?

It cannot be, it is impossible.

Mirth cannot move a soul in agony. 930

ROSALINE

Why, that’s the way to choke a gibing spirit,

Whose influence is begot of that loose grace

Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools.

A jest’s prosperity lies in the ear

Of him that hears it, never in the tongue 935

Of him that makes it. Then if sickly ears,

Deafed with the clamors of their own dear groans

Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,

And I will have you and that fault withal.

But if they will not, throw away that spirit, 940

And I shall find you empty of that fault,

Right joyful of your reformation.