HOLOFERNES SIDES

NATHANIEL Very reverend sport, truly, and done in the

testimony of a good conscience.

HOLOFERNES The deer was, as you know, *sanguis*, in

blood, ripe as the pomewater, who now hangeth

like a jewel in the ear of *caelo*, the sky, the welkin, 5

the heaven, and anon falleth like a crab on the face

of *terra*, the soil, the land, the earth.

NATHANIEL Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets are

sweetly varied, like a scholar at the least. But, sir, I

assure you, it was a buck of the first head. 10

HOLOFERNES Sir Nathaniel, *haud credo*.

DULL ’Twas not a *haud credo*, ’twas a pricket.

HOLOFERNES Most barbarous intimation! Yet a kind of

insinuation, as it were, *in via*, in way, of explication;

*facere*, as it were, replication, or rather, *ostentare*, to 15

show, as it were, his inclination, after his undressed,

unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or

rather unlettered, or ratherest, unconfirmed fashion,

to insert again my *haud credo* for a deer.

DULL I said the deer was not a *haud credo*, ’twas a 20

pricket.

HOLOFERNES Twice-sod simplicity, *bis coctus*!

O thou monster ignorance, how deformed dost thou

look!

NATHANIEL

Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred 25

in a book.

He hath not eat paper, as it were; he hath not drunk

ink. His intellect is not replenished. He is only an

animal, only sensible in the duller parts.

And such barren plants are set before us that we 30

thankful should be—

Which we of taste and feeling are—for those parts

that do fructify in us more than he.

For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet,

or a fool, 35

So were there a patch set on learning, to see him in

a school.

But *omne bene*, say I, being of an old father’s mind:

Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.

DULL

You two are bookmen. Can you tell me by your wit 40

What was a month old at Cain’s birth that’s not

five weeks old as yet?

HOLOFERNES Dictynna, goodman Dull, Dictynna,

goodman Dull.

DULL What is “dictima”? 45

NATHANIEL

A title to Phoebe, to Luna, to the moon.

HOLOFERNES

The moon was a month old when Adam was no

more.

And raught not to five weeks when he came to

fivescore. 50

Th’ allusion holds in the exchange.

DULL ’Tis true indeed. The collusion holds in the

exchange.

HOLOFERNES God comfort thy capacity! I say, th’ allusion

holds in the exchange. 55

DULL And I say the pollution holds in the exchange, for

the moon is never but a month old. And I say besides

that, ’twas a pricket that the Princess killed.

HOLOFERNES Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal

epitaph on the death of the deer? And, to humor 60

the ignorant, call I the deer the Princess killed a

pricket.

NATHANIEL *Perge*, good Master Holofernes, *perge*, so it

shall please you to abrogate scurrility.

HOLOFERNES I will something affect the letter, for it 65

argues facility.

The preyful princess pierced and pricked

a pretty pleasing pricket,

Some say a sore, but not a sore till now made

sore with shooting. 70

The dogs did yell. Put “l” to “sore,” then sorel

jumps from thicket,

Or pricket sore, or else sorel. The people fall

a-hooting.

If sore be sore, then “L” to “sore” makes fifty 75

sores o’ sorel.

Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one

more “L.”

NATHANIEL A rare talent.

DULL*, aside* If a talent be a claw, look how he claws 80

him with a talent.

HOLOFERNES This is a gift that I have, simple, simple—

a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms,

figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions,

revolutions. These are begot in the ventricle 85

of memory, nourished in the womb of *pia mater*,

and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But

the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I

am thankful for it.

NATHANIEL Sir, I praise the Lord for you, and so may 90

my parishioners, for their sons are well tutored by

you, and their daughters profit very greatly under

you. You are a good member of the

commonwealth.

HOLOFERNES *Mehercle*, if their sons be ingenious, 95

they shall want no instruction; if their daughters be

capable, I will put it to them. But *Vir sapis qui pauca*

*loquitur*. A soul feminine saluteth us.

HOLOFERNES *Satis quid sufficit.*

NATHANIEL I praise God for you, sir. Your reasons at

dinner have been sharp and sententious, pleasant

without scurrility, witty without affection, audacious

without impudency, learned without opinion, 5

and strange without heresy. I did converse this

*quondam* day with a companion of the King’s, who

is intituled, nominated, or called Don Adriano de

Armado.

HOLOFERNES *Novi hominem tanquam te.* His humor 10

is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed,

his eye ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general

behavior vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is

too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it

were, too peregrinate, as I may call it. 15

NATHANIEL A most singular and choice epithet.

*Draw out his table book.*

HOLOFERNES He draweth out the thread of his verbosity

finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor

such fanatical phantasimes, such insociable and

point-devise companions, such rackers of orthography, 20

as to speak “dout,” fine, when he should

say “doubt”; “det” when he should pronounce

“debt”—*d*, *e*, *b*, *t*, not *d*, *e*, *t*. He clepeth a calf

“cauf,” half “hauf,” neighbor *vocatur* “nebor”;

*neigh* abbreviated *ne*. This is abhominable—which 25

he would call “abominable.” It insinuateth me of

insanie. *Ne intelligis, domine?* To make frantic,

lunatic.

NATHANIEL *Laus Deo, bone intelligo.*

HOLOFERNES *Bone*? *Bone* for *bene*? Priscian a little 30

scratched; ’twill serve.

*Enter Armado the Braggart, Boy, and Costard.*

NATHANIEL *Videsne quis venit?*

HOLOFERNES *Video, et gaudeo.*

ARMADO *Chirrah*.

HOLOFERNES *Quare* “chirrah,” not “sirrah”? 35

ARMADO Men of peace, well encountered.

HOLOFERNES Most military sir, salutation.

BOY*, aside to Costard* They have been at a great feast

of languages and stolen the scraps.

COSTARD*, aside to Boy* O, they have lived long on the 40

almsbasket of words. I marvel thy master hath not

eaten thee for a word, for thou art not so long by the

head as *honorificabilitudinitatibus*. Thou art easier

swallowed than a flapdragon.

BOY*, aside to Costard* Peace, the peal begins. 45

ARMADO*, to Holofernes* Monsieur, are you not

lettered?

BOY Yes, yes, he teaches boys the hornbook.—What is

*a*, *b* spelled backward, with the horn on his head?

HOLOFERNES *Ba*, *pueritia*, with a horn added. 50

BOY *Ba*, most silly sheep, with a horn.—You hear his

learning.

HOLOFERNES *Quis, quis,* thou consonant?

BOY The last of the five vowels, if you repeat them; or

the fifth, if I. 55

HOLOFERNES I will repeat them: *a*, *e*, *i*—

BOY The sheep. The other two concludes it: *o*, *u*.

ARMADO Now by the salt wave of the Mediterraneum,

a sweet touch, a quick venue of wit! Snip, snap,

quick and home. It rejoiceth my intellect. True 60

wit.

BOY Offered by a child to an old man—which is

wit-old.

HOLOFERNES What is the figure? What is the figure?

BOY Horns. 65

HOLOFERNES Thou disputes like an infant. Go whip thy

gig.

BOY Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip

about your infamy—*unum cita*—a gig of a cuckold’s

horn. 70

COSTARD An I had but one penny in the world, thou

shouldst have it to buy gingerbread! Hold, there is

the very remuneration I had of thy master, thou

halfpenny purse of wit, thou pigeon egg of discretion.

*He gives him money.* O, an the heavens were 75

so pleased that thou wert but my bastard, what a

joyful father wouldest thou make me! Go to, thou

hast it *ad dunghill*, at the fingers’ ends, as they say.

HOLOFERNES Oh, I smell false Latin! *Dunghill* for

*unguem*. 80

ARMADO Arts-man, preambulate. We will be singuled

from the barbarous. Do you not educate youth at

the charge-house on the top of the mountain?

HOLOFERNES Or *mons*, the hill.

ARMADO At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain. 85

HOLOFERNES I do, *sans question*.

ARMADO Sir, it is the King’s most sweet pleasure and

affection to congratulate the Princess at her pavilion

in the posteriors of this day, which the rude

multitude call the afternoon. 90

HOLOFERNES “The posterior of the day,” most generous

sir, is liable, congruent, and measurable for

“the afternoon”; the word is well culled, chose,

sweet, and apt, I do assure you, sir, I do assure.

ARMADO Sir, the King is a noble gentleman, and my 95

familiar, I do assure you, very good friend. For

what is inward between us, let it pass. I do beseech

thee, remember thy courtesy; I beseech thee apparel

thy head. And among other important and most

serious designs, and of great import indeed, too— 100

but let that pass; for I must tell thee, it will please his

Grace, by the world, sometimes to lean upon my

poor shoulder and with his royal finger thus dally

with my excrement, with my mustachio—but,

sweetheart, let that pass. By the world, I recount no 105

fable! Some certain special honors it pleaseth his

Greatness to impart to Armado, a soldier, a man of

travel, that hath seen the world—but let that pass.

The very all of all is—but sweetheart, I do implore

secrecy—that the King would have me present the 110

Princess, sweet chuck, with some delightful ostentation,

or show, or pageant, or antic, or firework.

Now, understanding that the curate and your sweet

self are good at such eruptions and sudden breaking

out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you 115

withal to the end to crave your assistance.

HOLOFERNES Sir, you shall present before her the Nine

Worthies.—Sir Nathaniel, as concerning some

entertainment of time, some show in the posterior

of this day, to be rendered by our assistance, the 120

King’s command, and this most gallant, illustrate,

and learned gentleman, before the Princess—I say,

none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.

NATHANIEL Where will you find men worthy enough to

present them? 125

HOLOFERNES Joshua, yourself; myself; and this gallant

gentleman, Judas Maccabaeus. This swain, because

of his great limb or joint, shall pass Pompey

the Great; the page, Hercules—

ARMADO Pardon, sir—error. He is not quantity 130

enough for that Worthy’s thumb; he is not so big as

the end of his club!

HOLOFERNES Shall I have audience? He shall present

Hercules in minority. His enter and exit shall be

strangling a snake; and I will have an apology for 135

that purpose.

BOY An excellent device. So, if any of the audience

hiss, you may cry “Well done, Hercules, now thou

crushest the snake.” That is the way to make an

offense gracious, though few have the grace to do it. 140

ARMADO For the rest of the Worthies?

HOLOFERNES I will play three myself.

BOY Thrice-worthy gentleman!

ARMADO*, to Holofernes* Shall I tell you a thing?

HOLOFERNES We attend. 145

ARMADO We will have, if this fadge not, an antic. I

beseech you, follow.

HOLOFERNES *Via*, goodman Dull. Thou hast spoken no

word all this while.

DULL Nor understood none neither, sir. 150

HOLOFERNES *Allons*! We will employ thee.

DULL I’ll make one in a dance, or so; or I will play on

the tabor to the Worthies and let them dance the

hay.

HOLOFERNES Most dull, honest Dull. To our sport! 155

Away.