Johannes Kepler

and

King Henry III of France

ROBERT LALONDE

Self-published work
Publisher name: Robert Lalonde
First edition: February, 2010
In the public domain

ISBN: 978-0-9783909-3-8

Canadian drama (English) - 21st century

Contact:

robert.lalonde@umontreal.ca
Johannes Kepler

Dramatic characters (13)

Johannes Kepler, astronomer
Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels, court advisor
Katharina Kepler, Johannes' mother
Cristoph Kepler, Johannes' brother
Caleb, Jewish money-lender
Mustapha, Arab merchant
Hobnot, Caleb's servant
Cuddie, Mustapha's servant
Ursula Reinbold, Katharina's neighbor
Urban Kräutlin, surgeon, Ursula's brother
Luther Einhorn, magistrate
Johann Ulrich Aulber, magistrate
Albrecht von Wallenstein, general in the imperial army
Soldiers, Jews, peasants, Arabs, plague-stricken men

Time: 17th century
Places: Bohemia, Austria-Styria, Germanic lands

Act 1. Scene 1. A street in Leonberg. 1601

Enter Ursula Reinbold and Urban Kräutlin

Ursula. Sick to the core.
Urban. Come, sister, enter here, where you may find some remedy in hope at least.

Ursula. What, in that house of humbling and of mumbling? in that Katharina's house?
Urban. Is she not known for herbs and medicines
That healing suns have rarely beheld?
Ursula. We will see whether that can be revealed.
Urban. She comes at a bad time for your disease.

Enter Katharina Kepler

Katharina. What, Ursula? Why do you stand today
Where often you have scorned to set one foot?
Ursula. No soreness after dinner, piercingly
Strong in my bowels, could have in the hours
Of an Antartic night convinced me thus
To greet you at your door, except for this
I suffer under.
Katharina. Is it an inflammation, wringing gout,
A fever sparing no known organ, heats
That speed the unsuspecting fool to death?
Urban. No, none of these.
Ursula. My illness is a secret spy, who comes
And goes in corridors, not seen to peep
In any chamber till his powders blast
Most of the building.
Katharina. Then enter gladly here.
Urban. I will be generous if you succeed.
Ursula. O! O! Relieve these pains,
or let me hear
Thick grass grow silently around my head.
Katharina. Inside my house, the faithful can at last
Behold a miracle none can deny.
Urban. Come, sister, you are safer now.

Exeunt Ursula, Urban, and Katharina

Act 1. Scene 2. A street in Prague. 1601

Enter Johannes Kepler and Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels

Johannes. Yes, on the death of Tycho Brahe named Imperial mathematician in Prague. Matthäus. Who doubts the fox has found his hole?
Johannes. Not for the love and adoration of The goddess of the world, promotion, do I seek to rise, but for astronomy's. Matthäus. I should believe you. Grammar gives us suck With dialectics and with rhetoric To yield us mind and tongue, whose progeny May be obtained as jealous mistresses Reclining wantonly on narrow beds. First music kisses tickling our rapt ears, Then follow her twin sisters rushing in: Arithmetic, geometry- all three You have already slept with, but there is One more you keep in secret from men's eyes: Astronomy the lovely. Johannes. I have; none other merits my cold bed. Matthäus. But yet do you propose to marry her?
Johannes. The sun will sooner turn around the earth, As some have dreamt awake, than my faith fail. Matthäus. Then please our emperor and for yourself You'll finger gold a-plenty, but the world Gains more in that: the knowledge of that world. Johannes. My face is to myself anonymous. If you knew Kepler better, you would not Be Kepler's friend. Know that your Kepler is Subject to sores, scabs, and foul, putried wounds. Like a house dog, I fawn and wag the tail
Whenever pleased; I gnaw on bones and chew
The dry bread of subservience, snap at legs
Of strangers, then come back and fawn once more,
To seek approval and to sniff about
In books the dungheap of hypotheses,
At all times still dependent on the smiles
Of lordships, looking pitiful with tail on ground
Whenever scathingly reproved, to which
More fawning follows, licking of the hand
That strikes, until the puppy wins the prize:
His master's favor, though uncertainly.
Matthäus. But you have that which few dare to possess.
Johannes. One certain purpose I achieve at will:
The power to expose false certitudes.
Matthäus. Then what can worry you?
Johannes. My mother, mean half-skeleton who fights
Against most of her neighbors, bony wolf
In bushes mouthing nightly as she stalks.
Matthäus. An all too common pest in town or court.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 1. Scene 3. A street in Leonberg. 1601

Enter Caleb and Luther Einhorn

Luther. O! Many miseries of my own making may
Be turned away at once with that amount.
Without that sum, I should not live.
Caleb. Because you are a magistrate, I may
Obtain advantages against a cheat.
Luther. Will I be grateful to one whom many freezing in debt have
cursed to find comfortably lying beside his fire?
Caleb. Done.
Luther. Tomorrow?
Caleb. At my house.
Luther. Safe! I revere your scroll, eternal lamp,
And candelabrum.

Enter Urban Kräutlin

Urban. My good best friend, Luther.
Luther. Greet a companion at last better comforted than he miserably was.
Caleb. Money makes him.
Urban. Who is sadder with more money on him?
Luther. This loan cannot be forgotten, Caleb.
Caleb. I do not doubt it, sir.
Urban. Call him a Jew, Caleb, if he forgets you.
Caleb. I will if he remembers.
Luther. Well answered.

Exit Caleb

Safe!
Urban. I'm heartily glad to find you out of an immediate and dangerous debt.
Luther. Shivering on waves of the sea inside an oarless tugboat, Urban, on which I would not condemn unrepentant child murderers when I catch them.
Urban. Very happily resolved. Should we go in to dinner?
Luther. I'll gladly pay for food and drink to friends
And other unknown smilers I may like.
Urban. A Jew creates for us the sun on earth
A second time with money.

Exeunt Luther and Urban

Act 1. Scene 4. A field outside of Leonberg. 1601

Enter Hobnot and Cuddie

Hobnot. Say, Cuddie, should we dance and sing awhile?
Cuddie. Too willingly I laze and doze all day.
Hobnot. I'll string my lute while you blow on your flute.

Cuddie. Right, though I would much rather blow on yours.
Hobnot. Sweet, so would I, while hiding deep in night.
Cuddie. A man may not allow such pleasures to
Be known to spying neighbors loathing them.
Hobnot. (singing
One morning as a child of twelve,
Cuddie. (singing
Hey-ho nostalgia time,
Hobnot. I scratched and yawned, I rose and pissed,
Cuddie. With clog on heel to school we trudged.
Hobnot. The teacher found we could not count,
Cuddie. Hey-ho the doltish clowns,
Hobnot. So nose to ground and arse in air,
Cuddie. He made us add at either end.
Hobnot. On Sunday, boys feign to adore,
Cuddie. Hey-ho the priest and cross;
Hobnot. For man nailed high with arms spread wide,
Cuddie. His snot's on chest when nose is blown.
Hobnot. A youth loves fights with Arab Jews,
Cuddie. Hey-ho Jerusalem,
Hobnot. And lifting skirts with dark veil on,
Cuddie. For mixing seeds should favor peace.
Hobnot. With her hole plugged, one more is sought,
Cuddie. Hey-ho two men in bed,
Hobnot. On sterile ground their seed to spill,
Cuddie. For pleasures rise when planters fall,
Hobnot. All holidays must end some time,
Cuddie. Hey-ho sad roundelay;
Hobnot. We lie in church and rings exchange,
Cuddie. To bring discomfort to our home.
Hobnot. A man comes in to rest or play,
Cuddie. Hey-ho forget that dream;
Hobnot. She'll make him work, complain all day,
Cuddie. Before his bread is dipped in cream.
Hobnot. With pointed breasts she'll scream and cry,
Cuddie. Hey-ho the wind and rain;
Hobnot. We plead with songs to one unique,
Cuddie. False note: same woman everywhere.
Hobnot. Her belly swells with none of ours,
Cuddie. Hey-ho the little brats,
Hobnot. Who feed on cakes while learning rules;
Cuddie. More Hobnots and more Cuddies grow.
Hobnot. All men are knaves, all women whores,
Cuddie. Hey-ho the end is near,
Hobnot. But then so what? We eat and fuck;
Cuddie. That life is best when we ask less.
Hobnot. So ends our madrigal most pastoral.
Cuddie. Airs of the country favored by the few.
Hobnot. Here to assure our entertainment best
Comes forth a kind of Jew or Jew unkind.

Enter Caleb

Caleb. What, loons like pebbles on my path, knaves, kerns, dreary clods in Sunday hats, little folk as thin and pliant as my shoe-laces, though never so useful?
Hobnot. Do we suck out your air?
Caleb. No, all ways are favorable to me, for I, main figure in my tribe, dispensed today a deed of charity likely to be of lasting profit only to myself.
Hobnot. His generosity rises to cast down.
Cuddie. My tongue is blue with cold. I must attend
To a dear brother grieving in his house,
Who nearly died in bed last night alone.
It was so cold that when he blew his nose
It fell away.
Hobnot. Cool ears of usury sleep on warm sheets.
Caleb. I am unlike a huddler with his lambs.
Each day the rich are happier than you are,
For every moment money we caress
To buy rich food, neat clothes, and houses warm
In breadth and influence. Note this at last.
_Hobnot._ We do and groan at it.
_Caleb._ I eat my profits with a lusty mouth,
Enlarge my paunch in mounting piles of flesh,
For I long mightily to gorge and swill.
It makes me happy. Glad I am this day.
Not only am I joyous to eat meat
Beyond all thoughts delicious, but I am
Much gladder still that few men can afford
So fine a dish, although they seem to faint
Quite overburdened in trying to obtain
Once in a year what I consume each meal.
_Hobnot._ No doubt horseradish, cucumber, beets mixed with pike, goose liver, and roasted lamb.
_Caleb._ We smack the lips before your eager face
And drop in privies finer nutriment
Than what appears on envious country plates.
And thus say I to my own glass each night:

"Be great, be greater, greatest, best of all;
In sight of nations triumph as you wish,
Or as you might, or will."
_Cuddie._ He might do it.
_Caleb._ I will go in now, to possess all lands
Once promised me, by Moses written well,
To wealth and fame in the entire world.
_Hobnot._ Ha!
_Caleb._ We will arise and swell,
and, swelling, grow
In exploitation, yet beloved by some,
No Arab in his tent allowed to speak
One word against our growing; otherwise,
In prison he must shrink for speaking ill
Against the powerfullest.
_Cuddie._ Should we hear more?
_Caleb._ This I aver to every Hebrew ear:
"Do not heed the opinions of the great
And bloated only, but of lesser men's,
For small fry bite small enemies to death."
We feed their dreams with plenty.
"For one night,
I slept like Solomon between two whores
With richest garb in palaces of gold."
Smile thankfully materialists I serve.

**Hobnot.** A starving spider's dangling from his web
Is our best lot next to a richer Jew's.

**Caleb.** I am the one called in, for all the rest
Still err in lacking confidence to fight
With tools of war and thought against the foe.

**Hobnot.** He's called in, Cuddie, while we are called out
In frosts to tend our silly sheep in want.

**Caleb.** I sigh and say: "My people, do not fear,
For I with my god will contend with them,
Oppose fools to destruction, so that all
The Christian world with us will arm themselves
To lift the flags of death in mighty fleets."

**Cuddie.** A goodly power favors his estate.

**Caleb.** When we return with force in Palestine,
We will begin to wear the helm and sword
That will make nations tremble in our midst.
Expect the favorites of god, or that
Celestial mushroom governing the world,
To drive men's bones as fragments to our will

Before our thought-usurping caravels.

**Hobnot.** Meanwhile, he cheats.

**Caleb.** I answer to the blind: "Your house is there."
When it is clearly on the other side.

**Cuddie.** And takes their money.

**Caleb.** My money is much dearer than my wife.
If I discover any of it in Your hand, I will stone you to death for it.
I will not pardon here. O, no, I'll wear
A woman's garment first and that you know
Is quite against the habit of our sex,
Or else pull down my father's breeches while
He dozes, contrary to what bestirs My usual prick of mind.

**Hobnot.** Ambition speaks with her own tongue at last.

**Caleb.** I will do this and not a second thing.
I may not plow with one ass and my ox.
I am brought in and may possess all that
I lack in all the earth and heaven, too.
I sit before my house and say: "All this
Is mine, and none may take a dust-ball out
Of it, on pain of gibbering in cells Far smaller than the box where his cats piss."
I am established, like a sheat of stone
Beneath a mighty mansion, soon to be
The praise of nations.
Hobnot. And very dangerous to be dislodged.
Caleb. Receive known prophecies on days of doom.
You'll bury thousands more each day of life
Than all our newborns thriving in the year.
God's finger points at you as men of sin
And vilest lewdness. If you stand with us,
You will be blessed beyond all men above,
In riches, wisdom, gladness, and renown-
Yes, those who love us will be praised and clasped,
With gifts of love received in every house,
Rejoicers dancing in the halls of kings,
While those who hate us will be cursed and spoiled,
With plagues unknown abandoned in the fields,
Contemners idly slipping into graves.

Enter Mustapha

Here is my friend, the one particular,
As only he can be who helps us to Important money.

Mustapha. Friend of my coffers!
Caleb. Friend of my houses!
Mustapha. Friend of my harems and my palaces!
Caleb. Friend of my vessels and commodities!
Hobnot. They worship demons of their own invention.
Mustapha. Have you received my orders?
Caleb. I have and thank you mightily for them.
Cuddie. Good, thank the turbaned thief society
Allows for its own profit.
Caleb. Why should not east with east embrace at last?
Deliberate neglect of Arab art
And science is on the world's puffy cheeks
A scorching black-streaked brand of whorish shame.
Mustapha. Most have in their worst follies and contempt
Forgotten all the lore proud Europe owes
To mathematic figures and designs
First demonstrated on our sapient scrolls.
Caleb. For those we praise you everlastingly.
Mustapha. Remind yourself how well a Persian mind
First calculated more precisely Than thought of in Gregorian calendar
A shorter year adjusted to the sun.
Caleb. Love well the stranger, for you may obtain
From him good merchandise, and he from you
Some money lacking, to our mutual weal
And miracles of fortune in the land.
Throw out your shepherd's crook and follow us.
Hobnot. We are instructed by this fair exchange.
Cuddie. And happier for our betterment to serve
Inspired prophets of commercial love.

Exeunt Caleb, Mustapha, Hobnot, and Cuddie

Act 2. Scene 1. The imperial court in Prague. 1609

Enter Johannes Kepler and Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Matthäus. Astromers who follow errantly
The errant ways of planets look and blink,
But always fail to see what they perceive.
Johannes. In Tycho's papers I have traced more orbs
In true positions than were ever known.
Matthäus. Then arm yourself with incredulity,
To guide the wayfarers back to their house.
Johannes. To them I'll show my new astronomy.
Matthäus. The motions of the planets on your charts
Seem like their second birth, at last to be
Known to intelligent humanity.
Johannes. Copernicus dispelled old Ptolemy's
Night-vapors with his steady centric sun.
Matthäus. But like a janissary in the heat
Of noonday desert dunes you pull down hard
The phantom horses of their epicycles.
Johannes. True, careful measures of triangulation
Between the sun, the earth, and Mars show that
Our planet moves like any other, fast
Whenever near the sun, and slower as
It moves away.
Matthäus. To verify your measures, I will need
Ten lives in prison served with meat and wine.
Johannes. If you are weary of my calculations,
Take pity on the man who verified them seventy times.
Matthäus. I pity enviously.
Johannes. If speeds of planets change as the result
Of one sure force exerted by the sun-
A reasonable supposition-
The sun can never lie exactly at Their center-point.

Matthäus. Then where?
Johannes. The planets court the sun
In an elliptic roundelay, where he Basks at one focal-point.

Matthäus. If proven to be true, may Kepler be Acknowledged as the priest of nature's book.
Johannes. And there is more to tell:
The area swept by any planet's path
Around the sun in equal units of Time is a constant value and the same.

Matthäus. More unsought mysteries by Kepler solved!
What is the nature of this mighty force?
Johannes. We can conjecture that as all the earth Pulls down this stone, the stone in turn pulls up
The earth. Thus, in my new astronomy,
Mechanic reasons are for the first time
Made beautiful and true. But I despair
To fly a bolder course throughout the skies
When my mind's caked in silence of their frosts.

Matthäus. First publish widely, then the wintry sun
Of this world's honor may to your content
Melt them forever.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 2. Scene 2. A street in Leonberg. 1609

Enter Ursula Reinbold and Urban Kräutlin

Ursula. Her pills and herbs make me a little better than I was, but yet much worse.
Urban. On portions of a sumptuous cake, we often find, to taste it all, our best friend sprinkle death.

Ursula. How can I trip her down?
Urban. Her son owes me money. Degenerate quean!

Ursula. Never in my hearing use that word. I once disrobed before men's eyes the filthiest parts of whoredom, now happily transformed by honest virtues and my husband's cudgel into a sweeter form of womanhood.

Urban. Dregs of neighborliness! We swallow familiar filths, undone and forever unhappy.

Ursula. I usually leave her house devoid of pain and wretchedness, and yet, brother, in the end no sweeter than I was.

Urban. A paradox smelling of damnation!
Ursula. What honorable person would not grind
The teeth at this?
Urban. Is patience virtue? Stoic foolishness,
The doting father of Christianity!
Ursula. Some plot I'll simmer in my pot of hate,
Though slow quite dangerous, lest we imbibe
Hell's broth on a kind woman's salver.

Exeunt Ursula and Urban

Act 2. Scene 3. The imperial court in Prague. 1612

Enter Caleb and Hobnot

Caleb. Ten men sit smiling in a room of scorn,
Refusing to pay what they borrowed.
Here, take this cudgel, sir. Knock out the brain
Of my first debtor reeling drunk from there.
Hobnot. Ha! Are you mad?
Caleb. Are you my man or not?
Stand and obey.
Hobnot. I may return to prison for this deed,
Where, for your benefices, I have lain
Twice, or perhaps three times before.
Caleb. Conceal yourself behind that pillar. Go.
Hobnot. I will not do it.

Enter Johannes Kepler and Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels

Matthäus. What's this? A groom sporting a club at court?
Caleb. No, sir, merely his toothpick. Good day to you.
Matthäus. I have once seen that prosperous beard murmuring in the imperial palace.
Caleb. No, sir, you never saw it in your life,
And so we'll go.

Exeunt Caleb and Hobnot

Matthäus. Ha, is it possible? Court debts now die
Dishonored and unmoared and creditors
Sleep not with wives but witches of revenge.
Johannes. As court advisor to the emperor,
You may with profit rail on fools and knaves.
Matthäus. What, will you leave the court?
Johannes. I have to the world given my "Dioptrics" and
I have no more to say.
Matthäus. With your "Dioptrics", we can understand
At last what we behold.
Johannes. A friend speaks kindly.
Matthäus. Your virtual image is much truer than
The world's as we see it.
Johannes. I see with double convex lenses that
You mean to flatter.
Matthäus. To keep you rather.
Our Emperor Rudolph Second of that name
Deposed! His brother, pious in his hate
Of any who denies religious truths,
Elected in his stead! I am a-whirl,
Outside the sway of your controlling sun.
Johannes. The headstrong emperor permits me for
Three hundred thirty guilders every year
And sixty more for firewood to keep my
Position as mathematician in the court
As well as in the district of fair Linz.
Matthäus. At Linz, I'll visit you.
Johannes. At Linz, I'll always welcome best of friends.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 2. Scene 4. A tavern in Linz. 1612

Enter Mustapha and Cuddie carrying a huge jug

Mustapha. A little farther bend the pliant knee
In pain and sorrow.
Cuddie. My master, here I'll sit and breathe awhile.

I lack the strength to fart.
Mustapha. Rest; to restore you faster, drink your fill.
Cuddie. (farting)
O best of recompenses!
Mustapha. You offer incense to a god we see.
As taught by Avicenna and by Paul,
Unwatered wine stuffed bloating may amend.
Cuddie. The better, then, unless the wine is mixed
With some saliva of sweet men of sin.
Mustapha. Strive for your pleasure. Put the heavy jug
Down as our lamp of wisdom. In this land,
I sell luxurious cloth, with licorice,
Dates, raisins, precious spices of all kinds,
And with huge profits hugely drink all day
Wines of the grape, wines of the fig and more.
Why work again if our reward is work?
Cuddie. Ah, ah!
Mustapha. Defeated Rudolph rests, an emperor
Of dust. On the cold ground let him remain.
Drink, boy, for in the passing of a dream,
We'll stink as any king bereft of breath.
Cuddie. Where is our tavern-keeper, master Froth?
Mustapha. Pissing in his sleep below the stairs.
May his wet breeches honor, as ours do,
The holy bread and wine with meat of pork.
Cuddie. On a sad grave praying, may parishioners
Lie drunk on vapors wafted from my corpse.
Mustapha. The pious Christians waste their time in church
With what we do more pleasantly: eat down
Our god with wine.
Cuddie. Because he did not see me in his church,
The parson cursed me bitterly today.
Mustapha. To chatter with a single man each day
Suffices to turn me from all the rest.
Cuddie. Priests will I push off even in my tomb.
Mustapha. Blind piety reproves blind atheists,
And gives them spectacles to see quite clear
What never can be seen. Do not heed them.
Of heaven no one knows a beggar's fart.
Our terror, hope, disdain, indifference
Are fumes; we talk; the day begins; we talk;
Each day is ended with its smoke; we talk.

Cuddie. To weep for Jesus is a vanity,
Because he's dead, with spiders in the dust
Of centuries long buried.
Mustapha. If your religion be
To clasp a willing virgin,
And celebrate your vigor in her blood,
Then I'm religious;
If to deface with love-songs margins of
Hymn-books and snore during the rituals be
Acts of deep piety and songs of grace,
Then I'm religious.
Cuddie. I practice charity as Paul suggests,
For man and woman I love equally
In bed. Why should I not? Both have two arms,
Two legs, and places man can enter deep.
Mustapha. My idle words lack power to describe
Tenacity in camels, or the sway
Of a girl's hips, but this I say to fools
Inside a church: do not stay there, for sleep
Is better, drinking best. In mosques, I strike
My brow on mats and raise my arse in air,
Because I drink too much.
Cuddie. The temple dreamt by lusty Solomon,
The books of angry sages, parables,
Return of prodigals, and miracles
Are wonderful and true, but not above
The urine of a man who has not heard
One word of them.
Mustapha. Truth needs no miracle to be believed.
The caller on my minaret cries out:
"Time for a glass! Drink deeply all day long,
Bowl after bowl until the night arrives,
And then tomorrow morning pray at once
So that you may in joy begin anew."
Cuddie. There is more soul in overflowing cups
Than in all churches, mosques, and synagogues.
Mustapha. As prophets of the tavern once revealed:
"Look elsewhere for a man to combat lust
And heresy, for these my scabbard's pierced,
My falchion limply trailing on the ground,
My horse's bit well fastened to its tail,
And I ride backward as fast as I can."
Cuddie. I never listen to a priest; instead,
I always do whatever I should not.
Mustapha. Physicians warn us of grave illnesses,
So long as to their science we submit;
So does the priest with his disease. I say:
There is more danger in our doctor's pills,
As well as their creators, fabricants,
And sellers than in sleeping hot in sin.
Like fractions multiplied by fractions,
We are diminished cruelly by them.
Cuddie. My parson asks: "Why do you drink so much?
Why are you always at the cards and dice?"
I answer thus:
"I drink because I drank; I'll play because I play."
Mustapha. Beware that only gravediggers for fees
Receive one's body worthy of regard.
If by my death no one has lost,
How can I say in life I won?
To drink too much is folly to the wise.
Cuddie. To drink too little is the lot of fools.
I'll dally with my bottle-neck and cling
Lasciviously to her fat bottom's end.
When am I wiser grown?
Not when my host declares:
"Give him a cup of wine," but when he says:
"Here's Cuddie with another cup of wine."

**Mustapha.** When it is time for prayers, promise to Renounce one thing: the prayers, only those, And you'll fare all the better every day.

**Cuddie.** The table on which stands our pot Is much more precious than the cross, our cork More saintly than his nails, our ruddy wine More satisfying than his ghostly blood.

**Mustapha.** Drink, help your neighbor: Jesus on his cross Did not know more.

**Cuddie.** If God be good, he'll pardon all our sins, If God be bad, he surely is not.

**Mustapha.** If you arrive from heaven, I will heed The stories of your heaven, but if not, I'll kiss Mohammed when he flies back down.

Enter Johannes Kepler

**Cuddie.** What, will a Lutheran in taverns peep On Sunday of all times?

**Johannes.** It seems I must be mocked before I say One word. Where is my brother?

**Cuddie.** Where you should look for him.

**Mustapha.** A Lutheran will to a Papist speak And a Mohammedan in the dark house Of wine and disputation?

**Johannes.** I am united with all Christians in A special bond of love and willingly With all my brethren trade in words of peace.

Contrariwise, our leaders couch no more With old simplicity but with the witch Of trouble and dispute, interpreting Maliciously each Papist word and deed.

**Mustapha.** True, fiery heads in foul Germanic lands With heat and smoke obscure our common path.

Sir, what is your profession? Not divine?

**Johannes.** As chief mathematician of our town, I am expected to yield prophecies; As teacher in the seminary school, I am instructed to make young men wise.

**Mustapha.** For the first, we see folly dressed with robes Of borrowed wisdom; for the second, mouths Of fools make wisdom seem but folly's mask.

**Cuddie.** His brother's near.

**Mustapha.** Let us rejoice in full view of the sun.
After despair of heavy toil: new life.  
*Cuddie.* Our burden's lighter when the profit's known.

Exeunt Mustapha and Cuddie, enter Cristoph Keppler

*Johannes.* How, Cristoph, chewing hard on the tough meat Of the world's faults? Then spread on it for once A little mustard of spiced charity, Unless you hope with moping to be saved. Is it well seen to creep dispiritely, In shabby corners spitting spiteful scorns, With tavern brawling ever entertained, Before each plate full-garnished dinnerless, Unsociably sociable? The inimproved with jangling stupefy The man of purpose in perpetual scales Of interruptedness.  
*Cristoph.* I am unlucky each day of my life. I should in bed remain, to watch the streaks Of the day's sun sweep on the coverlet. As pewterer, I hold more metal in My wares than mettle in my saddened soul.  
*Johannes.* What of our mother?  
*Cristoph.* If to snarl and to mumble over broths Be a poor widow's fortune, she is well.  
*Johannes.* She makes the very heart of charity Seem ugly to her neighbors.  
*Cristoph.* For my part, I fare all the worst By her attentions, as may be divined In my deep wounds and scars. I sleep with trouble daily, without love. By children I am beaten, bitten by Most animals, chased from my house to ponds And back. Last week, I nearly drowned when winds Hurlèd like a constable's incipient wrath My boat, and my neck nearly burnt to ash When mother's busy skillet fell on it. When will you visit her?  
*Johannes.* When I arrive in Leonberg.  
*Cristoph.* The week when Wednesday follows Saturday.

Exeunt Johannes and Cristoph

1615

Enter Caleb and Hobnot

*Caleb.* They owe me money.  
*Hobnot.* I heard of that.
Caleb. Then follow my behests, lest you become Cursed in your dealings with a careless world. There will be blotches on their hands and feet, They will behold their face before a glass And say in deepest fear: "This not not I," They will bend down to defecate and find No hand to wipe themselves in cleanliness. Their loins will burn in full extremity Of itching. Mildews will forever breed On creases of their brow, untouched by mead. There will not be one part of wholesomeness In their entire body, out or in. They will be men accursed of all, but most By their own selves. Like blots or tumescence Cut off as soon as seen or smelt half-way, They will be treated as disease unknown. Their mouth will be well-rounded in an "O", Not knowing any other syllable But that of pain and sorrow. They will lack tools and roads to kill themselves, Without an eye to guide the final blow.

Quite earless to the rushing of a stream, And enemies will laugh to find their griefs Incurable and mounting. Hobnot. Hell is no fable; it lies in your head. Caleb. If they are punished hard, I'll gladly lose My gold with pleasure, like virginity. Hobnot. Yet poverty, we know, is a neglected sister. Caleb. And wealth our most essential mistress: love Her well. She like a goddess makes the lame Winged Atalantas bending to no fruit, Turns fools into well-read philosophers And sages into fools, makes men admire Songs of hoarse ladies like the Orphean lyre, And students of a needless fantasy Into commanding popes. Hobnot. A money-lender who forgets a debt Would seem to us a proven miracle. Caleb. The only miracle man ever saw Is man believing in a miracle. If we eat, copulate, drink, and disturb No one, then our religion's good.

Enter Cristoph Kepler and Urban Kräutlin
Night-treading whisperers of
darkest shame,
Far have I followed you,
possessing tongues
And wits to make the worst of
matters good.
You owe me money, sirs. Bethink
yourselves:
Can you expect to laugh and cog
at this?
_Urban._ I'll pay you when my debts
are reimbursed.
_Caleb._ My money!
_Cristoph._ Dissembling _Urban_, I
paid everything
To all extremities of satisfaction.
_Urban._ A tinsmith baffling me?
_Caleb._ My money!

Enter Johannes Kepler

_Urban._ Pay what is owed. That
would be best for you.
_Cristoph._ I paid what I affirmed I
would.
_Johannes._ The matter of a tavern
reckoning?
_Urban._ Keep your wife warm in
bed.
_Cristoph._ Ho, _Urban_, hear my
harshest diatribe:
You lie. If dogs could lie, your lies
would be
Like those of surgeon-dogs,
pretending to
Amend the sickly each day of
their life.
_Urban._ Confusedly dishonest!
Blockish block!

I loathe a bad comparison much
worse
Than a bad man.
_Caleb._ My money!
_Cristoph._ A fool heeds blows.
_Urban._ I will anoint you king of
kingly fools.

(They fight

_Johannes._ What, Christians
striking hard each other's face
For money? In deep shame desist
for once.
_Caleb._ If blows could either kill
the maddened beasts
Or turn them into grateful
Solomons!
_Cristoph._ O! O! I'm blinded.
_Urban._ That makes me happy.
Enter lying blood
Stung and disfigured!
Yet that's too brief a pain, for I
intend
To spend the rest of my life
hitting you.
_Cristoph._ How firmly yet his
clumps of hair are seized,
No less than the main matter on
his head.
_Urban._ I have felt joy in fixing well
a bone,
But never half so much as
breaking yours.
Taste that and more. Ha, still with
teeth and arms?
_Cristoph._ Yes, happy even in my
death-throes, sir,
Provided I can blister well a face.
Twice-perjured every minute it can speak.

_Johannes._ Enough.

_Urban._ I spy a constable afar, which saves
A cheating fool from further punishment.

Exit Urban

_Caleb._ There goes part of my money.

_Johannes._ It would be best to try another day.

_Caleb._ I'm tamed for once. But let your brother heed:
A lender's mercy will not last beyond
A hungry flea's lifetime in well-washed sheets.

Exit Caleb

_Hobnot._ I begin to tire of that poorest of rich masters.

_Johannes._ Well thought on!

_Hobnot._ But what I wish for I can never know,
Or even care to know at all.

Exit Hobnot

_Johannes._ Here is my handkerchief to wipe some blood
Away from brow and teeth. Henceforth, forbear
Such tricks as quite distract to his despite
A science-minded man by science loved

From furnishing with Brahe's observations
A glorious map of stars, together with
Sure means to calculate precisely
Exact positions of the planets in
The past, the present, and the future.

_Cristoph._ Bad news from Leonberg—no, horrible—
News of our mother's almost certain death
At the stake.

_Johannes._ Hah?

_Cristoph._ She is accused of witchcraft.

_Johannes._ My buttons burst in grief.
To Leonberg! I have been too remiss.

Exeunt Johannes and Cristoph

Act 3. Scene 2. A street in Leonberg. 1615

Enter Ursula Reinbold and Katharina Kepler

_Ursula._ Scorned and debased as a glass-maker's wife!
Scorns will be paid and then in full repaid
With doubled double interest.

_Katharina._ Have you not often prospered with
My potent salves and herbal tonics?
Ursula. I have, as you will find when your tin cup is cruelly melted on your eyes and ears.
Katharina. This is to help one's neighbor! Old shoes should die in closets.
Ursula. As you will find, because your home's in hell.
Katharina. Miserable woman alone, with no one to help.
Ursula. Your kind of help is mostly known to hurt.
Katharina. Bad tempers make it so.
Ursula. Go, old thing; shuffle towards damnation.

Exit Katharina and enter Urban Kräutlin

Urban. The villagers say she is accused of witchcraft.
Ursula. Behold her tongue of accusation, and, with some luck, the whip that waits on sinning.
Urban. I think you have done well.
Ursula. I know I have.
Urban. Her son owes me money.
Ursula. You saw me, bent and grimacing, enter her house with seething belly, when she gave the potion that sickens, since which day every minute is to me a lurking grave.
Urban. No doubt some nasty beverage usually of marvellous benefit to an evilly constituted woman.
Ursula. Not pains as the result of an abortion, as she maliciously suggests. The same concoction lamed Beutelspacher, our worthy foolish schoolmaster. There is more to tell and gape at. Cristoph Frick, the butcher, once felt a painful twitch in his thigh as she casually passed in front of his shop, and this without her even touching him. When he kneeled at her pew, begging for help, immediately the pains were relieved. Hear more: Daniel Schmid, the tailor, once invited her to his house to show with pride his two gurgling bouncing babies. As she looked over their cradle to bless them, they suddenly plopped breathless on that same night. Moreover, I have heard neighbors complain of bewitched livestock, of moaning and of kicking in stables and fields, first noticed in her presence.
Urban. I am no lawyer, but these appear to be the beginning of good indirect evidence.

Enter Johannes Kepler

Johannes. For holy Christian charity and love, Retract the awful accusation.
Ursula. When two suns rise from Western skies.
Johannes. Malicious lies! And for what reason?
Urban. Can a sister lie in such a matter?
Ursula. To defend a mother, you know, is to invite inquiry into her son's habits. Scrupulous authority may find no oil of sainthood painted on your brow and lips.

Re-enter Katharina Kepler

Johannes. O, mother, you are dreadfully threatened.
Katharina. What, menaces? How, monkey turd, by you?
Johannes. Of witchcraft.
Katharina. Ha, witchcraft! Ha! O, slaves, it can be proved by no one, yet I may be quite annulled.

Ursula. I'll be quiet and serenely meditate on my deeds the day you are awfully condemned, redeeming any lesser fault of mine. Truth is a soft bed-light.

Katharina. How have I hurt you?

Ursula. Your breathing harms.

Katharina. She is of Leonberg malice the sorceress, a cat's black companion in evil.

Ursula. A goat is your companion and that our magistrates will discover.

Johannes. Old female babble.

Ursula. They'll probe into every hole in your body to find where the devil pleased you.

Exeunt Ursula and Urban

Johannes. I'll consult all the lawyers I know with those I do not. Do you grieve to give your enemies strength? The innocent smile at lies and innuendoes. This accusation will be dismissed and laughed over foam of beer in October.

Katharina. I once lived with an aunt condemned to death at the stake.

Johannes. Hah?

Katharina. They will recall the day when I asked that my father's skull be disinterred and turned into a drinking vessel- for I had heard in a sermon that a drinking cup in shape of a skull is a pleasant custom of ancient people-, but my request was refused by the gravedigger, since I lacked a form of approval by any figure sufficient in authority.

Johannes. Mere turpitudes!

Katharina. I once drove a cow to death and roasted one side of it for your brother, Henry, who, refusing the dish, said: "Let a fat hungry devil eat it." This son angrily left the house and, to beat back a thin demon into his larger hole, impaled the calf of that cow on the door of its stall.

Johannes. What of Beutelspacher?

Katharina. I never harmed Beutelspacher. He was lamed when leaping over a grave-stone with a heavy basket on his back.

Johannes. I have since childhood heard many neighbors declare these words: "Kätherchen is garrulous, hot-tempered, nasty, quarrelsome, vengeful, inquisitive,
preparing many dangerous potions she knows little of and offering neighbors spoiled beverages from her favorite tin cup."

Katharina. The same was said of my grandmother, a restless and violent bearer of grudges, often ablaze with ferocious hatreds, though sound in matters of religious doctrine.

Johannes. We plummet from the reach of heaven to Pant in the narrow pits of law.

Exeunt Johannes and Katharina

Act 3. Scene 3. A Leonberg hunting lodge. 1615

Enter Urban Kräutlin and Luther Einhorn with muskets

Urban. Tomorrow we will hunt the boar with spears.
Luther. These muskets well may serve for other game.
Urban. If only man could be allowed to use Such instruments of order to prevent The practice of known evils! One I have In mind, a bitter creditor I hate.
Luther. Hold, that can never be.

Enter Caleb

Urban. The cobra rises to stare down two dupes Choked on the poison of high interests.
Luther. You owe him money, too?
Caleb. The world owes me my due, which I will get.
Urban. What, glorying in our fierce miseries?
Caleb. Why do you point a musket on my face When I have saved you? Has not Jewish gold Cut injury away from Christian nets?
Luther. For shame, put down your weapon.
Urban. It is no sin to kill a sinning Jew.
Luther. You still forget I am a magistrate.
Down, lest I study never to have known Your love or your contempts.
Caleb. Is it religious to be courted first For money, then abandoned when men lack?
Luther. You come forth naked. Where in secret cave Or closet darkly lurks your servitor?
Caleb. My man is quite forgotten as he lies I guess not where.
Luther. It may be easily seen that on this night From us you will retrieve but filthy words, In no wise filthy money.
Caleb. The filth returns to man.
Exit Caleb

_Urban_. I have a small request, not to the friend, But to the magistrate.
_Luther_. Your neighbor is a witch, some people say.
_Urban_. That. You will hear my urgent plea, I hope. We understand each other?
_Luther_. Hum, yes, or no; I cannot delve through all, Unless the accusation is prepared With careful study, in full cognizance Of good or bad report, what men have seen Or only thought they saw, what men have heard Or only were told of. To sift away The inadmissible is duty's oath In magistrates of soundest judgment, yours To pick out grains and choose the rightful tares, Preventing poison ere the case is weighed. 
_Urban_. In serious matters, friends can silently Behold each other and know all is well.

Exeunt Urban and Luther

Ho! Ho! Someone within! No man or beast?

Enter Hobnot above

_Hobnot_. Who knocks? What is your wish from our dark house Of questioning and pain?
_Katharina_. O, sir, I beg you- Ha! I have once seen That faceless face of blood.
_Hobnot_. And so have many more: my mother's one, A face that killed her well.
_Katharina_. The Jew's most servile of his serving-men.
_Hobnot_. No more. I left my master to become The worthy village executioner.
_Katharina_. Where is our honored master, kindly judge In matters of deep faith? He must be just In a poor fearful woman's case, or else I am forever in my grave undone.
_Hobnot_. He left an hour ago.

Exit Hobnot above

_Katharina_. Ha! Gone? Ignored and mocked by a dry knave?

Re-enter Hobnot below

_Hobnot_. Some quiet would be seemlier. I have been At tortures all this morning, sounded with
Such cries as must hurt any head of sense.

*Katharina.* O, there you wring me in a frenzied knot.

*Hobnot.* What is the nature of your trouble?

*Katharina.* I am accused of witchraft.

*Hobnot.* You'll surely be burnt to death, at best Stoned shoeless in your shirt.

*Katharina.* Do not quite kill me in my terrible And lonely fears. O! O! O!

*Hobnot.* Limbs fit for mangling, so that justicers May know accomplices of evil life. I'm new yet at this goodly line of work, And will quite humbly take the happy charge As part of my apprenticeship, most glad For the experience.

*Katharina.* What, will they take me soon?

*Hobnot.* Weep on dry pillows; with tomorrow's moon The iron chain must be your bedsheet, which I will prepare and whistle as I wait.

Exit Hobnot, enter Urban Kräutlin and Luther Einhorn

*Urban.* That is the woman, woeful man's worst woe, The drily sapless witch, apt to prick off

With wooden finger honest men to death.

*Katharina.* Sir, do not listen to unhappy man When you know truth is almost always born From the unhappy pit of woman's grief.

*Luther.* I should know reasons to know neither, for I have not studied this bad case as yet.

*Katharina.* A neighbor and his sister only tell Lies to be rid of me.

*Luther.* Go, go; I'll summon you, should there be need.

*Urban.* Will she escape so soon? I challenge you, In presence of this worthy magistrate, To make my sister well.

*Katharina.* Ha! Ha! Ha! Drawing on my withered breast The sharpest of all swords except the tongue Of a deceiving mouth?

*Luther.* Ha! Are you mad? Am I a magistrate Or fellow to the bibbing swaggerer? Is fury your high lord? Reflect how Christ Kissed his dark sweaty post in quietness. Is drunken folly king? Remind yourself How he drank vinegar with broken mouth.
The man wept blood. Will you with wet cheeks laugh?
The man wept blood. Will you with roaring throats
Presume to understand when Rome could not?
_Urban_. O for the belly of Democritus
To keep from bursting at the sight of spleen!
What actor plays not folly, foolishly
Distraught at a fool's fault, or laughingly
Make light of it, applauded by more fools?
I will choose good when charms are cut away.
_Katharina_. No, I refuse, considering well that
To put off evil by a counter-evil is
A witch's game.

Exit Katharina

_Luther_. Illegal matter, sir. Before a court
Of justice threatening and in the eyes
Of a well-thought-of justicer? My ears
Against my will imbibe men's foolishness
In drunken sadness.
_Urban_. You will not find it so
when patience hears,
Like a compliant king, the dangers we
Are daily subject to by women's tricks:

Outside Jerusalem, but deep within
The burning pit of Sodom. For our weal,
Take out from Adam yet another rib;
The first one's rotting in her heart and mind.
_Luther_. More senseless village business all day long!
What sweaty stones of toil we stagger with
To find the little nugget! I'll next teach
My horse some grammar, easier task by far
Than to conceive the reasons of men's pains.

Exeunt Urban and Luther

Act 4. Scene 1. Katharina Kepler's house in Leonberg. 1616

Enter Johannes Kepler and Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels

_Johannes_. I have accused the Reinbold family
Of slander. Is this just?
_Matthäus_. I do not know. Say why you have done this.
_Johannes_. I stab the hand that hits me.
_Matthäus_. Perhaps to be ensnared and glued the worse
With spider-laws, to your own detriment.
Enter Cuddie with a barrel

_Cuddie_. Sir, I'm sent by your mother for a few coins, poor as I am, to say she's in a worse fright and trouble than ever she was.

_Johannes_. Is it the Arab merchant's serving-man?

_Cuddie_. Cuddie, by his own avowal and assurance. In Leonberg, our Arab merchant works, or rests, as firmly and opulently established with us as in many other places of high and low renown. I arrive with comfort for certain griefs easy to be dislodged and with beatitude to anyone with money.

_Johannes_. I do not want more wine.

_Cuddie_. Horrible apostasy, if I may humbly and regretfully say so, as so many have pronounced kicking and leaping in market-place and houses of merriment. I offer you pardon, clemency, peace, a very great loving hand, a heaven for sinners on earth. Mercy was delivered to David's murdering envious heart, received by Habbakuk, promised to Zachariah, assured by Paul: do you reject it? Our citizens accuse each other, strike each other's neck and occiput, sometimes to death, an irremediable condition in the judgment or hope of many. Some lie for profit, steal for advantages, sleep for pleasure in a neighbor's bed, all these no doubt reprehensible, with speedy and inevitable vengeance often bloodily falling on the perpetrator's caboche. Where is mercy? Here, revealed to you for all times and to your better hope, relief, and amendment, here, away from dissension, towards the ruddy light of light wine, to the shame and freezing of unbelievers. One cup may ease you of most dolors and sorrows, by your own making or not, by your friends' making or not, as it may please any who partake of it, translunar, or daily seen by us in common paths or obscure byways. Who says otherwise? Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead for not purchasing modest repose and companionship and do you refuse? Do you stop your ears from the voice of reconciliation and joy and not leap away from the coffin of no drinking?

_Matthäus_. Here limps your drooping mother.

Enter Katharina Kepler

_Katharina_. More horrors for deathless eld.

_Johannes_. Sit quietly beside your worried son to tell your story.

_Katharina_. A tale of a twelve-year-old girl, Katharina Haller, daughter of a laborer, who jumped in fright on looking at my almost rotted face around a corner of the mercer's shop—why wonder at it when considering
what her parents likely accuse me of?

Cuddie. She swore your venerable mother hit her on the right arm.

Katharina. When I only approached and extended my hand towards the girl's. These lies are infamously supported by her drunken witness, daughter to a brickmaker.

Cuddie. The girl's pains were already assuaged and becalmed when I heard her puling next to the court-house.

Katharina. Pains motivated, I think, by her being forced to carry heavy bags of brick to the kiln, a task she would happily be rid of.

Matthäus. Very probable.

Katharina. The villagers now say that my cup of charity tastes strongly of witchcraft.

Johannes. You have worse news, I can tell.

Katharina. I have done foolishly with foolish intent.

Johannes. What now?

Katharina. I offered Luther Einhorn, magistrate in my case, my best silver cup, should he omit his report to the chancery.

Johannes. Attempt at bribery! A criminal offense!

Katharina. I grant you that and surely will lament this fault till final ashes sink my head.

Matthäus. Now hated even by sensible people.

Johannes. Flee from Leonberg.

Katharina. I will not.

Johannes. Run to my sister's house in Heumaden.

Katharina. No.

Johannes. I say you must.

Katharina. Never.

Johannes. What will convince you?

Katharina. Nothing.

Cuddie. (striking her) A pitiable case.

Johannes. Ha! Are you mad?

Matthäus. He has knocked her senseless to the ground.

Cuddie. Conserve with care my wine of goodness and pity and pay me later, for, by faith in my own judgment, as may be read with many prophets of old, I'll liberate a son and mother from contumelies by guiding her with all niceties of comfort in my cart to Heumaden, where my master intends to be affirmed further and more solidly on the rock of more abundant riches.

Exit Cuddie carrying Katharina

Johannes. I'll follow a fool to save my mother.

Matthäus. And I the wine.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus with the barrel

Act 4. Scene 2. Before Margarete Kepler's house in Heumaden. 1617
Enter Luther Einhorn

*Luther.* (knocking at the door)
Arise, dull Cristoph Kepler, from your lair.
A packaged fly from broken nets of law
May drop away, to die more cruelly,
As desiccated grubs awaiting still
The lazy open tooth that can cut them.

Enter Cristoph Kepler

*Cristoph.* Am I undone?
*Luther.* I have warned, and am left unheeded, sir,
I have with soreness pleaded, and am left
Unheeded, like a Sunday schoolmaster.
*Cristoph.* O, sir, disclose what may or must be done
And I will die your servant in good forms
Of surest law with strict exactitude.
Does this concern my mother?
*Luther.* It does, most awfully.
*Cristoph.* Your errand without guile.
*Luther.* I'm instructed by the superior adviser of the courts to arrest your mother for the crime of witchcraft.
*Cristoph.* Death!
*Luther.* Take heart. If she be guilty, we have her
In blood; if not, she's safe.

*Cristoph.* Snares and troubles! How can I escape?
*Luther.* Speak briefly: have you served a filthy witch In any way?
*Cristoph.* O, never, sir, never, never, never, never, as I hope to live and die as an honest citizen.
*Luther.* That may be doubted from a son's report.
*Cristoph.* My mother surely understands the truth.
*Luther.* I hope that may be hoped for. Know that she Attempted to bribe a just magistrate.
*Cristoph.* Ah, no! This news half poisons heart and blood.
*Luther.* I'm not so loving to her now as once
I was when dressed in robes of innocence
And knew no evil in a woman's heart.
*Cristoph.* What should be done?
*Luther.* Snatch her away from her home, strip her clean,
Until we spy some bones of truth on her.
*Cristoph.* Let it be done.
*Luther.* She's here? I may see her?
*Cristoph.* No no, out on a silly errand.
*Luther.* No doubt to fetch your food and serve your meals.
Let her be promptly sent to me in haste.
*Cristoph.* I am no son if this be left undone.
Luther. I must forewarn you: few accused of this
Of heinous crimes the worst reveal clear truths.
Cristoph. Sir, if there be no other way at all
Of finding out and leading by the hand
In open nakedness shy verity,
Which mirrored goodness hopes for and expects,
Let her be tortured.
Luther. Now you speak kindly, for her sake and yours.
Cristoph. Should she be proven guilty, burn her well.
A guiltless man of crime must never know.
Luther. No covin will be bargained. Let her stand
With truths, or rot on beds of rope with lies.

Exeunt Luther and Cristoph

Matthäus. There is a second defenestration
In Prague: three Papists, good administrators
But worse than devil martyrs in the cause
Against the Lutherans, from windows thrown
Down from a height of fifty feet. Enraged,
Haphazard ragtags of fool-Protestants
Seize cowls of dead-to-worlds Franciscan monks
And coats of Jewish merchants, folded with
No known opinion on each faction's hate,
And murder them in open common streets.
Johannes. Most certainly the start of furious wars.

Enter Cuddie

Matthäus. Here's one who always prances leisurely.-
Now, sir, reveal to us why you are seen
To enter rooms with one hand on your hip
Or buttock and the other on your cup.
Cuddie. I think our buttocks are to body parts
What altars are to hushed divinity.
Matthäus. Why, Cuddie?
Cuddie. Much like a priest I place my hands on them
With bowed head praying that the Jesus from
My friend's tomb enters in my tabernacle.
**Matthäus.** So, sir, you are conscripted in our fights,
We hear. You must be made to lay aside
The cup and laurelled song.
**Cuddie.** Called to the wars? I hope to hang instead.
**Matthäus.** The wreathed bowl upraised will not serve here.
**Cuddie.** Although they cannoneer, I'll snort in bed.
**Matthäus.** No sleep for sluggard shoulders but in dust.

Enter soldiers

**Cuddie.** Am I the magnet to these iron men?
**1 Soldier.** Come live with us in tents.
**Cuddie.** No, rather die with you in bandages.
I will stay here to pray for you most nights,
In moving tributes well remembered.
**2 Soldier.** March in our serried ranks.
**Cuddie.** I had planned nothing more laborious than
To shake off droplets from my sated prick.
**3 Soldier.** Come, shallow belly, or with lead be filled.
**Cuddie.** I'll lie a weeper on my monument
If war-crazed folly urges more than words.
**Johannes.** Poor mouth, of happy laughter choked and stilled.
**Cuddie.** Reveal to me with skill, large sons of Mars,
Why we are fighting. Why must Cuddie die?
Why should my blood gild a pope's golden shoe?
Can we eat crusty pies of Lutherans?
**Johannes.** A light man's jests die in the ears of Mars.
**Cuddie.** I'm wretchedly abused if I must die
Because some kiss a virgin's painted toe.
**Matthäus.** The eyes of childhood guess why we should fight.
**Cuddie.** Should I return, I may keep one or none,
Or worse than all a third above the brow,
A Cyclop mighty only in my wounds.
**Matthäus.** There is no more to say.
**Cuddie.** Thus in their ease and comfort old grey-beards
Wave us to death. You wrinkle, cup in hand,
And buzz before a fire, when we return
With more holes on our face than honeycombs.
**Matthäus.** That must be if it must.
**Cuddie.** To carry lances chapped hands never sought,
And die to please invisibilities?
Be justified by faith and works, and help
The useless epicurian poltroonize.
Matthäus. That may not be.
Cuddie. Bid them, I beg you, sirs, to let me go.
Matthäus. You may not stay.
Cuddie. Where not? Above the earth? Will Cuddie lie
Like any breathless creature underground?
Matthäus. Learn to fight well; that is your present school.
Cuddie. If I behold one naked enemy,
I'll shriek and heavily becrap my seat,
As I do here.
1 Soldier. Foh! Filthy knave!
2 Soldier. Foh! Filthy, stinking knave!
3 Soldier. Beat him, or make him go.
Cuddie. Unhand me, sirs, at once; I am a priest.
2 Soldier. What kind? A nauseating Lutheran?
Cuddie. No, a far holier one, and best to know,
A hairy priest of Bacchus, as you see.
1 Soldier. Give to a coward fool a helmet brave.
3. Soldier. Take him.- Resistance?
Turn him upside-down.
Cuddie. I march with shoe of steel on frightened head.

Exeunt soldiers carrying Cuddie

Johannes. Is this religion? Deadly fooleries!
Matthäus. We smell the horrid, putrifying flesh
Of the three-way-split evangelical Church of the day. What of your post? Quite safe?
Johannes. No, I prognosticate for my own self
Fear, shakings, noise, a heavy tuneless drum,
Not the light heart that often has played with
The jangling music of the popish scorn.
Matthäus. Mathematicians of two emperors
Adhering to the Augsburg bargain, hold,
I hope, but a child's reason in their fear.
Johannes. I often tremble even with my own.
I am denied communion in the church
Of Württemberg.
Matthäus. Why?
Johannes. Because I do not lift my hands and shout
That popes are antichrist. Who should not make
Of his own groaning music, voice, and text?
Matthäus. Plead to the university.
Johannes. To our immodest chancellor I have
Appealed, to be immodestly denied.
Thus I prognosticate for the new year
Of sixteen-nineteen, graceless of all times:
I know a neuter-gendered animal
Resplendent in the roses, looking at
Its enemy. The milky blood that gushed
From our lord's side to all parishioners
Is soured, and we fit meat for butcher knives.
Matthäus. As if we only meant to say we live.
With what defeated sluggish quiescence
Man goes, before the failing of the light,
From sleeping chambers to the wormy bed,
With prayers to undress his bones in sleep!

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus


Enter Cuddie as a soldier

Cuddie. Ho, friends, fools, comrades, fools, companions-in-arms, more fools still! Is Cuddie the soldier expected to charge without arms and naked the enemy alone? Is showing your back backing? Did my mother smile down at me and yield her breast for this?

(An explosion is heard

Ha! Was that the foe or flatulence?
Ho, fellows, friends, acquaintances, friends, citizens, friends, shallow stocks, friends, is Cuddie your whole war? Is one man alone to save your thatched rooftops from fire, spare runaways hiding in your cellars, keep enemies at bay from larder and buttery? A corpse is the silliest sight in all the world. All fools if Cuddie be your redeemer!
Ho, filthy fools-at-arms, filthy madmen-at-arms, filthy vacillators-at-arms, filthy drunkards-at-arms, filthy, filthy, filthy-

Enter soldiers

How are you, great and loving friends?
1 Soldier. Here, take this.
Cuddie. What is this thing?
1 Soldier. A firearm, fool, to kill your enemies.
Cuddie. In my anxieties, I'll shoot at you
More often than on them. Reflect on this:
Is it not safer for us all if I
Be safely shut in prison?
2 Soldier. Right, to be hanged afterwards.
Cuddie. I'll ply my musket instead.
3 Soldier. Aim at the foe, my friend, that would be best.
Cuddie. Well reminded.
1 Soldier. What noise is that? The enemy?
Cuddie. (shooting)
I'll kill them all.
2 Soldier. Ha! Ha! He has shot me on my right thigh.
3 Soldier. Ha! Are you mad?
Cuddie. You were well warned, I guess.

Exeunt 1 and 3 Soldier carrying 2 Soldier, enter Mustapha

O, my master, my fine master, my fine and loving master, great welcome to greatest Mustapha from the trembling mouth of a cursed, weary, famished, bleeding, filthy, dishevelled soldier.

Mustapha. Rise. Do you weep?
Cuddie. Take me away. Rise as my savior still.

Mustapha. My Cuddie loathes the world and seeks to flee.
Cuddie. I'm blinded and cut off in fear and hate.
A poor man's smoky vision of the world
Is necessarily untrue, because
He is not asked to stoke it. Only you,
The rich, can hope to hold its shadowed form.

Mustapha. But you must earn the right to live with me.
Let me first question you politically.
Cuddie. Good students answer what good teachers say.

Mustapha. The old emperor, Matthias, has died. Who succeeded him?
Cuddie. I cannot know; I only bled for him.

Mustapha. Ferdinand the Second, his cousin, elected in Frankfurt last year.
Cuddie. Good.

Mustapha. Who leads the Bohemians?
Cuddie. I cannot know; I only felt their blows.

Mustapha. The Bohemians, conferring royal dignity on Elector Friedrich the Fifth of the Palatinate, son-in-law to James the First of England, are led by Count Henrich Matthias Thurn. Who leads the new emperor's forces?
Cuddie. I bless wise answers in blind confidence.

Mustapha. Emperor Ferdinand the Second has persuaded Maximilian, duke of Bavaria, to lead his forces. The duke's army first entered Linz, on his way to break Bohemia to its knees.
Cuddie. Good.

Mustapha. More matter worthy to be known: Friedrich of Bohemia has been decisively beaten at White Mountain, outside of Prague, and escaped as a winter king to Holland, a battle won by the baron of Tilly over Count Matthias Thurn and Prince Christian Anhalt-Bernberg, while Maximilian of Bavaria has entered Prague, sacking that great city
with his imperial army. And so you see the war is ended, and you almost killed for nothing.

Cuddie. Good.

Mustapha. To refresh your state from utmost penury, I should give you one hundred guilders. Here is the money.

Cuddie. O, my good master!

Mustapha. Yet hold. I begin to waver, even after cursory examination, concerned with the ultimate benefit derivable from my gift.

Cuddie. Why?

Mustapha. In strict philosophical terms, I doubt whether to give you one hundred guilders is the wisest use I can make of them.

Cuddie. One hundred guilders represent superfluous beer-froth on skeptic beard and lips, but death-in-abeyance necessity to me, for, unless I receive one hundred guilders or an equivalent amount, I may not eat today, and, if I quit the wars, I have no place to stay and sleep.

Mustapha. True, Cuddie, but many deep philosophers of east or west may to your detriment affirm that, like a gardener hired in the house of knowledge, I may fructify the use of one hundred guilders to a greater breadth of fortune's trees of happiness than is generally possible in a poorer one.

Cuddie. I agree, master, that the one hundred guilders may be used to better purpose, and yet without them I may starve.

Mustapha. But you have not yet demonstrated why I should give you the one hundred guilders, for my one hundred guilders may prevent a hundred men from starving.

Cuddie. That, too, is doubtful.

Mustapha. It is, Cuddie.

Cuddie. The careful thinker concludes that everything may be doubted: historic observation, moral law, and scientific demonstration, acknowledging no fundamental principle we must obligatorily adhere to.

Mustapha. In a Pyrrhonian sense, or manner of extreme doubting, that statement is doubtful, for if we say: "everything is doubtful," that statement may be doubted.

Cuddie. And therefore we assert that if everything may be doubted, nothing can become doubtful, insofar as doubting that everything is doubtful makes everything certain. Therefore, to promote a greater degree of general happiness, first posited to be doubtful and then not, I should get the one hundred guilders.

Mustapha. I doubt that.

Cuddie. Have we not accepted that if we doubt everything, we doubt nothing?

Mustapha. A false conclusion, Cuddie, because that statement may be doubted as well.
Cuddie. We therefore conclude that the opinion "everything is doubtful" is false, insofar as it may be doubted, and because it is doubted, some things may be true and others false.

Mustapha. I doubt that, too. You will not obtain the one hundred guilders, but food and bed as my new secretary.

Cuddie. My wisest master!

Exeunt Mustapha and Cuddie

Act 4. Scene 5. A street in Heumaden. 1620

Enter Johannes Kepler and Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels

Johannes. My nerves are shot to pieces with concern
And buried in the grave of my sad thoughts.

Matthäus. More on your mother?

Johannes. The chief council of the ducal chancery has ordered her arrest. She is imprisoned at Leonberg, to be diligently examined on forty-nine theological articles while confronted with her accusors. Should she plead not guilty, she will immediately be stretched on the rack, an old woman's body gleaming in a horrid sweat.

Matthäus. To Leonberg! For the supposed witch

I fear much, for you more. To resurrect
Despair and pull him shrieking from his shroud
In joy, the body's recondite perhaps,
Must be the object of our daily work.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 4. Scene 6. A street in Leonberg. 1620

Enter Caleb with a coffer and Luther Einhorn

Caleb. No money?

Luther. No, Jew, I need more time to pay you back.

Caleb. Excuses are the naked beggars whom
Wise dealers spurn with foot.

Luther. You hold me by the throat, stout Hercules,
As firmly as when he Achelous pressed
To earth, and, breaking off his captive horn,
Spread much abundance. So do citizens
Bestow to fruitful-headed usurers,
Of whom I hope you form a company.

Caleb. I'll seize from you securities instead.

Luther. Which pledges will you take?

Caleb. This first.

Luther. My hat?
Caleb. Yes.
Luther. My chain?
Caleb. Yes.
Luther. My shoes?
Caleb. Yes.
Luther. My cloak?
Caleb. Yes.
Luther. My shirt?
Caleb. Yes.
Luther. My breeches?
Caleb. Hum, hah, huh, grr.
Luther. O, slavery and death!

Exit Luther and enter 3 Jews

Caleb. What do you think, my friends? Are these worth much?

(They look at the items

Examine carefully each item: is The hat in fashion nowaways or not?
How heavy is the chain? Is it pure gold?
Can these shoes crush at once insolvent fools?
Can his cloak hold off wintry Austrian winds?
Does his shirt have some stiches here and there?
1 Jew. Tomorrow we will tell.
Caleb. Good.
2 Jew. We understand, resourceful Caleb, why
You flow more fully than you did before.
Caleb. And so do I.
3 Jew. We may yet in Vienna soon admire

A synagogue. Will you not contribute
To that great aim and hope for life in life?
Caleb. A synagogue? Why? To keep sheep in it,
As bushy as your beards, or beds of lice?

(He chases them away
Pay for a synagogue? No, stab me first
On sharpest candelabrum.

Enter 3 beggars

Who are these now?
1 Beggar. A rout of beggars, Caleb. We know you.
Caleb. No, you do not, for otherwise your hands
Would not stretch idly on a holiday.
2 Beggar. Some charity!
3 Beggar. A little charity!
Caleb. What would you do with money?
1 Beggar. If I had money, I would eat today.
Caleb. Put this inside your bag.
1 Beggar. One small coin?
Caleb. Eat that.

Exit 1 Beggar

What would you do?
2 Beggar. Give it to my poor father, so that he
May eat today.
Caleb. Put this inside your bag.
2 Beggar. One small coin?
Caleb. Let him eat that.

Exit 2 Beggar

Caleb. And you?
3 Beggar. I would invest it in a silly scheme,
By which a fool or two a million win,
And thousands more a thousand million lose.
Caleb. I empty coffers in your tiny bag.
3 Beggar. Ha, coins seen copulating in my sight!
Caleb. Take all and may these multiply for all.

Exit 3 Beggar

What do you say, rich beggar, to my proof?
A man needs no religion to be good.

Exit Caleb

Act 5. Scene 1. The court-house in Güglingen. 1621

Enter Johann Ulrich Aulber and Hobnot

Johann. Let us see whether truth can be plucked out,
With help from Hobnot, from a woman's breast,

Our Hobnot, hangman with the finer touch
And style, unknown as yet in Güglingen.
Hobnot. I thank you.
Johann. Of Hobnot many wish they have not heard,
Or most especially felt.
Hobnot. I thank them. Some have named me king of chain
And rope, an emperor in spikes and wheels,
Great captain of strappadoes, doctor of
Most awful suffering, of deep-felt burns
The master and the secretary.
Johann. Deservedly bestowed.
From Leonberg
We have obtained word that a woman swears
Of witchcraft she knows nothing.
Innocence
Uncertainly with hand on lips walks forth.
Hobnot. How, innocence!
Johann. Which may be doubted, as our colleague has,
The probing Einhorn. Howsoever, sir,
Hot irons should plead for or else against.
Hobnot. Here are her sons, I think.

Enter Johannes and Cristoph Kepler

Johannes. We come to comfort a dear mother's fears.
Johann. That may not be.
Johannes. Our mother, kept at
gloomy tower gate
On used straw, clapped in chains,
so that to scratch
Becomes a problem in geometry.
Johann. A magistrate upholds no
favorite.
We will examine her beliefs with
care.
Johannes. O, master, this is what
we fear the most.
Johann. Why should you fear if
she be innocent?
Cristoph. We do not doubt or fear
that you will wring
The surest truth from her.
Johann. For Katharina Kepler's
sake I hope
That may be hoped for.
Johannes. More terrors and
afflictions!
Johann. The only prisoners who
need fear are
Those who in fear seek to blot out
clear truth.
Johannes. I'll scrape and wash my
knees in their own blood
Until our duke grants mercy in
this case.
Johann. We will await his answer.

Exeunt Johann and Hobnot

Johannes. A mother groaning in
her senseless chains
With worse than senseless keepers
at her side!
Cristoph. And what consumes my
heart is that they sit
At our expense beside a goodly
fire.
Johannes. And she allowed to
freeze in shadows!
Cristoph. O, every hour we lose
good money.
Johannes. Is it the money that
concerns you most?
Cristoph. No, this: if they cannot
distinguish truth,
We may be stretched and ground
to pasties, too.
Johannes. More arguments to
gargle on with dread!
Cristoph. Let her be tortured for
my money.
Johannes. O, this, O this- I can
sustain no more.
Cristoph. Will you sink now? The
duke may yet disarm
With kindness what these men
prepare for her.
Johannes. True. I conceive, to give
our mother life.
Cristoph. I will see whether I may
yet persuade
With more gold coins her keepers
to be kind
To an old mother, our wet-pated
chick
With open beak uncertain in her
nest.
Johannes. Whose painful
habitation may yet be
More comfortable than that other
house
She is invited in, I mean her grave.
Cristoph. Come, will you go?
Johannes. I will, my Cristoph. So,
to horse with speed!
But what will I think of along the way?

*Cristoph.* Think of lost money every day to spur Your courser on.

*Johannes.* No, I will study to be patient like Old stoics smiling as they grieve in fire.

*Cristoph.* Well thought on!

*Johannes.* I wrote a book of patience of my own.

*Cristoph.* Is it your "Harmony of the worlds"?

*Johannes.* In my "Harmony of the worlds", I show that the cube of the ratio between two planets' distance from the sun equals the square of the ratio between their rotation periods.

*Cristoph.* Good.

*Johannes.* Huh, does the sneering cynic wave his hand? Some say: "The man has ice-floes for a heart, And sciences make him ridiculous,"

But I aver to all who know and love:

To work out pain in thinking of no pain Is sovereign against our melancholy.

*Cristoph.* You think aright.

*Johannes.* I think in mazes to avoid the house Where thinking nothing is my blank despair.

*Cristoph.* You have considered much.

*Johannes.* I plunder on Egyptian silver bowls Where planets are inscribed. Enthusiasm Roars in my mathematic signs like fire. The circle is to a straight line What trumpets are to soldiers, Or holidays to peasants.

My soul is not transformed by Mercury

Arising in the seventh house In quadratures to Mars, But by the writings of Copernicus And Brahe burning, otherwise dark star In dark oblivion lost.

*Cristoph.* High meditations easing our distress!

Exeunt Johannes and Cristoph

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Act 5. Scene 2. A torture-chamber in Güglingen. 1621

Enter Johann Ulrich Aulber and Hobnot

*Johann.* Are all our instruments in readiness?

*Hobnot.* They seem to sweat but to begin new work, The sadder remnants of past prisoners.

*Johann.* Be merciful to truth and not to her, For truth we love, though bloody in her birth.

*Hobnot.* I'll be her midwife.
Johann. The prisoner's accusers keep long hours in our chamber, enduring the cold in hope of nudging her in heat. 
Hobnot. I seem to hear their heavy noiseless steps In haste from wall to wall in the next room. 
Johann. We have studied with diligence the deposition of these accusers and find them convincing here and there in some very indeterminate parts. 
Hobnot. Let the prisoner speak or squeak, so long as she gives birth from the mouth to some little baby-truth a long time blubbering on our bed of ropes. My Berta and I will search her bowels for such a trembling embryo this day, I promise you. 
Johann. I do not doubt that. But who is Berta? 
Hobnot. The name I have given to this gear.

Enter Ursula Reinbold and Urban Kräutlin

Ursula. Is it done? Are we happy? 
Johann. We hourly expect the duke's decision. 
Ursula. Likely to be wise and good, but more especially wise. 
Johann. We recognize in him the sagesst conductor of any dukedoom known in Europe. 
Urban. No doubt. Who will bring us the news? 

Johann. Baron Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels, advisor to the emperor. 
Ursula. A friend to Johannes Kepler, her son. I do not like that. 
Urban. Let him plead. Should pleading carry it, we plead in vain. 
Johann. Hobnot, go see whether this messenger has arrived. 
Hobnot. I will, master.

Enter Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels

I need not go. He comes in haste. 

Matthäus. A letter for you, master Hobnot. 
Johann. Our servant is Hobnot; my name is master Aulber. 
Matthäus. Your pardon, good master Aulber. 
Johann. Give me the letter. 
Matthäus. May its whiteness proclaim new innocence on earth. 
Ursula. No, glorious truth, only that. 
Johann. The duke declares that the opinion of the judicial faculty at the University of Tübingen is upheld in this instance, maintaining that the Kepler woman should be shown instruments of torture in presence of the executionner: the rack and the garotte, the branding irons, needles, pincers, and ropes, every part of his trade, but suffer none of them. 
Matthäus. The duke has spoken.
Johann. The wise are silent.

Exeunt Ursula and Urban

Go, Hobnot; hale with vigor our fearfulest guest. Truth may yet be gleaned, though the ground seems dry and brittle.
Hobnot. Especially after rainfall of the eyes.

Exit Hobnot

Matthäus. Be merciful.
Johann. I'm merciful to her victims, if she had any.
Matthäus. It matters little if a hundred murderers go free, provided innocence's garments lie untouched.
Johann. What if a hundred innocent prisoners choke? They climb on their rope towards a higher justicer. No guilty villain may go free, lest we ruin a good world.
Matthäus. We presume that the guilty are innocent.
Johann. We presume that the innocent are guilty.
Matthäus. Cruelty disguised as justice!
Johann. Injustice disguised as mercy!
Matthäus. Be lenient and expect to your own hopes a tastier pear than clemency, with greater benefits no earthly gardener can devise or guess.

Exit Matthäus, enter Hobnot and Katharina Kepler

Johann. Is it the witch?
Hobnot. It is.
Johann. How many men have you desiccated?
Katharina. I assure you, good master Aulber, none.
Johann. A woman hides truth more earnestly than her bush and buttocks. We see mushroom troops of grooms daily transformed into filthy bits of straw, beggars in your parish streets. We have watched you with horror do this to them.
Katharina. No. I never learned how.
Johann. You may only have intended to hurt them, but to a witch one malicious thought is sufficient for a multitude of good persons to grieve, with loathing of their lives. Stand here. Our authority protects us from the secret wiles of witches and bad women.
Katharina. This cold room I know, where stand even colder men within.
Johann. Your prison garment is too thin. Unless you speak the entire truth at last, you'll soon be warmer, but not in any way you'll like.
Katharina. Ah, my not-to-be-rid-of-never-ending terrors!
Hobnot. Good, good.
Johann. An innocent woman afraid? Come, speak truthfully, so that we may sleep this night for once.
Katharina. What can you wish to know I have not told?
Johann. You have like a mannish sorceress in Ursula Reinbold's belly planted a cruel seed. Release her from sickness.
Katharina. I did not harm her, nor did I ever wish to.
Johann. Did you administer to her and to her neighbors soothing draughts that kill?
Katharina. Never.
Johann. Show her the wheel.
Katharina. Mercy! Ah, ah!
Hobnot. Barbara can break arms and legs, Barbara can like willows bend them.
Katharina. O, mercy!
Hobnot. Barbara can stretch a woman's bones to wires.
Katharina. Ah, ah, ah!
Johann. Admit you slept with Satan.
Katharina. No, no.
Hobnot. Berta can stretch a woman's bones to wires.
Katharina. Ah, ah, ah!
Johann. No more words?
Katharina. I'm stifled in a foggy fear.
Johann. Show her the iron tooth; demonstrate its uses.
Hobnot. If the others do not, Susanna can spur your tongue to miraculous gallops.
Katharina. Ah, ah, ah, ah!
Hobnot. The second wife bites a mother's hopes more sharply than the first. I assure you, iron pierces, and some have wept before my shiny face at the discovery.
Johann. Hobnot can play cruel music on all organs.
Hobnot. May my face drizzle with sweat together with your blood, should truth lie sleeping in a world unknown.
Katharina. Let me catch my breath; I'll say something, say something, something.
Hobnot. Is this not well, master?
Johann. We are winning, Hercules; the hydra of lies is vomiting her away.
Katharina. And yet my something may be your nothing.
Johann. Is witchcraft the most cherished of your sciences?
Katharina. No.
Johann. Tell me the truth and hope.
Katharina. My only hope is not to hope.
Johann. A magistrate, not yet unkind enough,
Adjudges you to repent and cheat our foe,
The always naked tempter of deep lusts,
For otherwise some fearful, horrid pains
Are likely to ensue.
Katharina. The age of iron breathes.
Johann. You will need all your healing salves today.
Katharina. Pull out vein after vein, and flesh from bone,
For I have nothing richer to confess.
Johann. Now, Hobnot, set her free.
Hobnot. Ha!
Johann. Come, are you fainting?
Hobnot. In joy, good master.
Katharina. Free? Free? What is that word?
Johann. Catch the bewildered fool.
Hobnot. I hold her, master.
Johann. Will you both fall? Unsteady?
Hobnot. My master, we have done well, I think. We are today
witnesses to a small part of glory
on this earth, for innocence in not speaking has spoken certainly.
Johann. That may be so.
Hobnot. A triumph for the law!
A triumph for our master Aulber!

Enter Luther Einhorn

Luther. A triumph? How?
Johann. She is released.
Luther. Oh, no!
Johann. She is, Luther; your opinions on this case have to the utmost reach of capable knowledge been proven entirely wrong.
Luther. Ah, ah!
Johann. The duke declares that the trial costs should be paid by the Keplers, the Reinbolds, and by Luther Einhorn. No peer in Austria and Styria can speak with clearer sun-like judgment, overlying all the world except the dark streams of empty Eurebus.
Luther. A second time I'll become a Jew's slave weeping on my oar.
Johann. Well deserved.
Luther. With peace of mind, I'll pocket tribulations,
To pay them back in virtuous meditations.
Johann. Well.

Exit Luther

Katharina. Should I return to Leonberg? I will
Be torn to pieces in my neighbors' love.
Hobnot. Go, or else stay. We love the stench of you, For through your garment's windows justice sits, To look out on the world with confidence.

Exeunt Johann, Hobnot, and Katharina

Act 5. Scene 3. A street in Linz. 1626

Enter Caleb, Mustapha, and Cuddie

Caleb. England first chose to rid itself of our industrious tribes, followed by France and Spain. We are allowed to live in few cities of Europe. But since the beginnning of squirmishes between rival Christian factions and of battles fruitlessly plowing fruitful ground, we rise, we spread. A few hundred in Prague, and then perhaps a few thousand, and then perhaps a few million. Maximilian of Bavaria with his imperial army sacked Prague, but, in his need of money, refused to enter Jew city, since which day, I laugh at fools with bankers and with merchants.

Mustapha. And you no less than most.

Caleb. With millions richer. Daub your lips and chin With grease of Christians' baneful enmity, Fat sausage thick with mustards of despair.

Mustapha. You lend them money for the armements?

Caleb. All these and more, much more. There is no part Of commerce, out or in, I have not probed With golden fingers, to the darkest depts Of her wide buttocks.

Mustapha. Most excellent. While many starve, you swell.

Caleb. To roundnesses unthought of yet by priests.

Mustapha. Some say the hiring of general count Albrecht von Wallenstein in the imperial troops will make of our lasting pains briefer wars.

Caleb. I count on him. Peace I have courted, too, As any page his mistress. Will you leave?

Mustapha. I should, while these bombardments last. Linz is invaded: what else can I say? I am for quiet and my bowl of wine.

Caleb. It is prohibited to you, but I Sin worse in my own creed. Reserve for me A seat in hell if ever you expire.

Mustapha. Our final bargain sealed!

Cuddie. Belief in hell creates a people's hell.

Mustapha. Which Lutherans, denying purgatory, In folly hug and purr to their own breast.
Both flatter us that their true god, unjust
In life, may yet be perfect in the next.
Caleb. Lies are the salad of divinity,
Assuring good digestion of half-truths.
Cuddie. Where will we go, unholy mullah?
Mustapha. I thought at first to France, but now the French
Grow hateful to my placid pagan eyes.
Richelieu, that wily unroman cardinal, defender of his people not faith, encourages Christian the Fourth of Denmark on the Lutheran side to invade Habsburg territories.
But then, my friends, why should I be surprised?
He is a priest: imposture is his guide.
Caleb. The Danish king, we hear, is beaten by the baron of Tilly.
Cuddie. We must escape, if only because of the peasant rebellion.
Mustapha. True, the Fadinger revolts scare me worse than a thousand warring kings.
Caleb. Senseless frights! The peasant troops, we hear, are already slaughtered by count Peppenheim of the imperial forces.
Mustapha. A greater famine likely will ensue.
Caleb. The rich are quiet stoics when men shrink.

Mustapha. Am I banished by Mars' clamor? I care little. In every country there is food and water, and woman with her slit.
Cuddie. I'll bake our dough of sloth and fornication
With goodly relish.

Enter peasants

Hide me, good master. My own kind I sweat
To see in gentlest slumber.
Mustapha. Ho, do not fear. You are my own again.
Cuddie. What are they seeking?
Mustapha. Food, not more men.

(The peasants look inside doors and destroy property)

Cuddie. When peasants enter here, here I do not Exist or know myself, except in turd, Which I will rather banquet on than fight.
Caleb. Turn towards influence your head of paste.
Mustapha. If they recover you, I'll buy you back.
Cuddie. Thanks to my saviors.
Mustapha. Here we find in sick puddles frogs afloat, Cold remnants of what peasants may devour.
Cuddie. Were I a fly in them.

Exeunt peasants
Mustapha. Man is a rusty key, which on the lock
Of peace breaks in his filth and tawdriness.
Caleb. Unless I quite mistake a human face,
Which I so rarely do, these men of stone,
Whose first progenitor Deucalion should
Have dropped in muck and trash, belong in full
To a fair captain quite down on his luck,
Who owes me money. I will follow them,
And then poke at the hive where my thugs stir,
A mightier host no country ever knew,
Who buzz in debtors' ears: "Gaze at the sun
No more, sad zanies, sweat but for the Jew,
But for the Jew on boulders break your nails,
Lest bees in your ease sting a lazy fool
With sharp zeal towards law-courts, jails, and death."

Exit Caleb

Mustapha. Where may I not turn?
Money is adored
In holiest churches, synagogues, and mosques.
Cuddie. Too many fear and loathe a turbaned head.

Mustapha. To those, unlike my usual mode of thought,
I sell the smoke of cooked meat, not the meat.
Cuddie. You do well.
Mustapha. I yield to friends what I from foes I steal.
Cuddie. Again well done.
Mustapha. Give me my old-yet-new Coran, unmarked;
I cringe in finding frantic friends I hate.
Cuddie. Here.

Enter 3 Arabs with clubs

Mustapha. (reading
Infinity of wisdom on one hand!
1 Arab. Mere mockery!
Mustapha. Sir, you disturb profound and lasting dreams
In studious meditation on themselves.
2 Arab. He laughs at us.
Mustapha. He may not curse where kindness shines so clear.

(3 Arab chases Cuddie away, while 1 and 2 Arabs beat Mustapha to death

Re-enter Cuddie

Cuddie. O, my poor master! Killed?
Cuddie is alone. I return a shepherd, poor and needy, forgotten of the world. O, my kind master! I'll raise poisoned sheep to feed all believers. Ha! Ha! Ha!
Ha! Ha! Live, master, with my foul revenges. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Enter Johannes Kepler with a manuscript and violets

**Johannes.** Is dying Austria laughing at her dead?
**Cuddie.** No, laughing loudly when a soldier weeps
For dying comrades willing many times
To die for emperors and dirt.
To whom do you bestow these flowers?
**Johannes.** My mother.
**Cuddie.** Dead?
**Johannes.** Released from her cold dungeon, she survived
For a few months, no more.
**Cuddie.** What are you now?
**Johannes.** As chief mathematician in the court
Of Emperor Ferdinand, I live or die.
**Cuddie.** Prosperity avoids your sight, I fear.
**Johannes.** But what offends worse than neglect in state
My mind is that my pen has caught a cold
And sleeps anidiomatically.
**Cuddie.** In these war-times, what fruitful enterprise
Does not lie in her womb choked and annulled?
**Johannes.** So long as I can read and calculate,
Germanic lands may swill on beer or blood.

**Cuddie.** I think unhappiness has filled our land
Much like Grandazzo's crucifix, which took
Up all the space in the entire church,
So that surprised parishioners had much
To do to find a seat and saw their priest
Smile under Christ's armpits encouragingly.
**Johannes.** I press my face on violets, but my mind
Is shaded strangely with a thousand more.
**Cuddie.** "Have patience," says the stoic as he smiles.
**Johannes.** The stoic seeks tranquillity of mind,
Considering pains unavoidable, though
A likely source of good or good disguised.
**Cuddie.** The epicurian likes me best.
**Johannes.** The epicurian seeks all pleasures and
Avoids all pains as the worst of all crimes.
**Cuddie.** The cynic I hate worse of all.
**Johannes.** The cynic voids his nose at any pain
Or pleasure, each one swerving in the curve
Of time but to the other.
**Cuddie.** Take what is best from these philosophies.
Exit Cuddie carrying Mustapha and enter Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels

Matthäus. Is it Johannes?
Johannes. Johannes, or his ghost.
Matthäus. Where are you going?
Johannes. Where all men go: towards their grave.
Matthäus. But not today, I hope.
Johannes. Towards my mother's and my final womb.
Matthäus. Are these your dear Rudolphine tables?
Johannes. Rudolphine tables will be printed soon
In Ulm at my expense. Lost sailors will
Be glad to read them, lost astronomers
Will bless my memory with better books.
As in a vision I appear to see Hipparchus, Ptolemy, Copernicus, And Brahe living on its frontispiece;
Mine is the visage at the desk below,
Ungrateful coinage scattered right and left,
Not on the table where I labor hard.
Matthäus. Is genius never like himself in grace,
Most happy in his gifts?
Johannes. The tables lack in spirit sustentation
Buoyed in me for stay-at-home voyages.

Matthäus. I'll follow you to dark sides of the pit.
Johannes. Do it like Horus, with one finger on
His placid mouth.
Matthäus. I like him best of all.
Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 5. Scene 4. A street in Regensburg. 1630

Enter general Albrecht von Wallenstein, attended by 1 Soldier

Albrecht. My horse's sweaty hooves are purpurine.
The Lutherans reel backward from our swords
And shields as readily as Calvinists.
While Tilly spurns the Danish king, we tilt
The prince of Transylvania from his horse.
1 Soldier. Our German soldiers laugh to find the Dane
And the Hungarian wading in their gore.
Albrecht. The dukes of Pomerania and of Mecklenburg, Unfortunate in their alliances
With Danes, stand pale, negotiate, and I
Received as the new duke of Mecklenburg!
The faces of their stoutest are compressed
Flat to the bone, some almost featureless,
At best protuberances of hurt flesh,
While others moan suspended like pale pears
On trees from shrunken anklets.
Underneath,
Red juice drips slowly on the leaves and moss,
The ruddy sprinkled on the green and grey,
When we find time to work. Old news and stale.
1 Soldier. Your Ludwig died today, some say.
Albrecht. My favorite, and what a thing he was!
Our soldier, seeking for voluptuousness
Where a sword has already cut it, still
Avoiding at all costs the worst of foes,
His mirror, sits on an old tomb and mopes.
1 Soldier. Place your bruised feet on these soft cushions, sir.
Albrecht. Where frowns our starry advisor?

Enter Johannes Kepler

You?
Johannes. At your command, most potent general.
Albrecht. Well, well.
Johannes. If Rome once honored with a triumph theirs
In reputation, fighting fiercely
And levelling revolted subjects, shamed,
Secure in chains on charriots, why may not
Brave Wallenstein receive equivalent
Rewards for feats few have attempted, none
Accomplished in our times?
Albrecht. My stars reveal I can accomplish more.
Johannes. Few can doubt it.
Albrecht. If only from my stars I could read more!
Disclose again what you from stars can guess.
Johannes. Oh, nothing I have not already told.
Albrecht. Repeat good hopes and better: will I rise?
Johannes. Ha! Will you rise?
Prognostications of Etruscan Tages were not surer to
The citadels of Latium.
Albrecht. Well, well. Yet here we have disease and pests.
Johannes. Oh, all the better.
Aesculapius in The form of a bright golden snake
snuffed out
The plague in Rome: what in our modern times
May not imperial sapience yet devise?
Albrecht. If we could read the stars!
Johannes. How many worried men in Europe wish
They could but read your mind, my general!
There destiny, they say, smiles or else frowns.

*Albrecht.* Some say, I am the main defective hinge
That shuts the door of peace against our face.

*Johannes.* True.

*Albrecht.* If we could read the stars!

*Johannes.* O, I am sick. Hope totters blindly still.

*Albrecht.* Ha, sick, sick as most of your prophecies?

Enter 2 Soldier

Bad news, I fear.

2 *Soldier.* My general, brave Ludwig's dead.

*Albrecht.* Expected, yet no less- I can express
No more, expecting to be understood.

2 *Soldier.* My general, the college of electors have
Met, leaving you quite destitute of all,
Abandoned still by folly's emperor.

*Albrecht.* No more a general! How can I live,
Or even die?

*Johannes.* Ha, madness in our stars!

1 *Soldier.* Take comfort, sir.

*Albrecht.* My Ludwig, and my function!
O, why did you not die instead?

Exit 1 Soldier

I'm mad. No? Am I not?

Our Ludwig should be honored.

*Johannes.* I will praise him.

*Albrecht.* A glib tongue you possess, as do your stars,
Tongues that can flatter princes in demise.

*Johannes.* I well may be unapt for elegies
As well as many other practices.

*Albrecht.* In war, he did not own, as many do,
Mars on his tongue, Thersites in his heart.

*Johannes.* No.

*Albrecht.* Can you say more?

*Johannes.* I can, yet I must practice first, I think.
His dog has died, they say. I'll practice skills
With moving epitaphs on his dead dog.

*Albrecht.* Well thought on!

Enter 3 Soldier bearing a dead dog

*Johannes.* O, let me swallow all of Hippocrene
Atop mount Helicon! This is a theme
Few can attempt and fewer yet achieve.

*Albrecht.* A fine beginning!

*Johannes.* Brave Ludwig's dog is dead, our Puff-ball gone!
Bad days, worse nights: the good die with the bad,
The good and bad remain. This was no dog,
But its idea! Puff-ball, when aroused,
Was never heard to growl or bark aloud,
Content with biting hard his master's arse.
He neither pissed nor heavy biscuit dropped
On his good mistress' gown; instead, he played
As soldiers do, his master's, lifting up
His hindlimbs as he briskly marched in tune,
The little warrior with his master's cap.
After explosions flashing right and left,
When his good captain lost his arms and legs,
Still on the ground, Puff-ball pulled at his trunk,
Expecting to see his good master rise
And frolic one more time. When he did not,
Puff-ball stretched on the ground, pretending he
Was dead, as many times he sported thus,
But then he raised his head with sadder eyes
While contemplating his still captain still.
So, lying tristful, this fond dog grew faint,
And, fainting, caught a chill; no longer did
He eat but seemed to mourn beside the dead.

Alone, untended, with foul coat ungroomed,
Puff-ball expired.- What, welling, general?
Albrecht. The breeze blows cold today. At a bad time
Has faithless Ferdinand abandoned me.
Bad emperor-O, worse than bad, O, worse than worst men can
Describe and then expect to be believed!
For Gustav Adolph, king of Sweden comes
For him and his, and Sweden comes for blood.
Johannes. More of that still!
Albrecht. Not sick, Johannes?
Johannes. Yes, sick, and almost dead.
Albrecht. Go bury our dead soldier.

Exeunt Soldiers 2 and 3 bearing the dead dog

Johannes. More and then worse!
Worse and then worst of all!
Albrecht. A good dog, Kepler.
Johannes. True.
Albrecht. A very good dog, my Johannes.

Exit Albrecht


Enter plague-stricken men
White mouths, to suck out knowledge. Live in books, 
So that the worms in them may live on you. 
I measured heavens' circuit; now I read 
For all eternity earth's shadowed round.

(He dies)

1 Man. I saw my brother leap into the fire 
Meant for my cousin's carcass. 
2 Man. This looks like Kepler. 
3 Man. Can scientists be eaten? 
1 Man. I doubt that. 
2 Man. With papers too well stuffed. 
3 Man. Yet what of that? Our mouth is paper, too. 
1 Man. Disguise yourselves as priests and bury him 
For a good fee, my best advice today.

Exeunt plague-stricken men 
bearing Johannes
King Henry III of France

Dramatic characters (16)

Charles IX, king of France
Catherine de Medici, queen mother
Henry of Anjou, duke, later King Henry III
Henry of Guise, duke of Lorraine
Charles of Lorraine, duke of Mayenne
Henry of Navarre, king of Navarre
Henry of Condé, prince and cousin to the king of Navarre
Gaspard de Coligny, admiral of the Huguenot faction
Ludovico Gonzaga, duke of Nevers
Jean-Louis de La Valette, duke of Epernon
Anne de Joyeuse, viscount and later duke of Joyeuse
Pépin, Huguenot scholar
Marie, wife to Pépin
Crudmore, beggar
Turpin, Crudmore’s son
Jacques Clément, Dominican friar
Soldiers, servants, Turpin's woman, the lord of Maurevert, Persephone and her suitors, Caylus' corpse, a shoemaker, a tinker, a water-carrier, and a barrel-maker

Time: 16th century
Place: France

Act 1. Scene 1. The Louvre in Paris. 1572

Enter the duke of Guise and Catherine de Medici

Catherine. Is there no earthquake grumbling deep below To swallow down dark heaven's renegades?
Guise. I'll be your earthquake.
Catherine. Do, do. Earn a queen-mother's gratitude.
Guise. I will devise a plot, whose like on earth Was never seen, or even thought about.
Catherine. Make me your secret bedside book of woe.
Guise. The king proposes marriage with Navarre And his unhappy sister.
Catherine. I know he does.
Guise. The Huguenots may hate that.
Catherine. Who says a woman better can beguile? Men pluck down crown and laurel as they wish.
Guise. I know if Protestants ascend, we fall.
Catherine. Filth of the realm, threat to established ways.
Guise. They killed my father: I should kill them, too: What can be simpler, gracious mother-queen, To understand?
Catherine. The king defends assailants at the fort Of Orange.
Guise. And desecrators of the sacrament
At Rouen, Calvin's merchants rightly dead,
Contempt's demolishers of pyramid
And crosses at the house of razed Gastines.
Catherine. He orders that the governor of Metz
Should make no difference between religion
And novelties. Too lukewarm for my blood!
Guise. I'll marry murder with duplicity,
Whose offspring will in full rejoice your heart.
Catherine. Our prophet of revenge against revolts!
Guise. I will be more than prophet of your joys:
A church-born flayer of apostasy,
A Huguenot, to scare his child asleep,
Will whisper no more: "Devils come for you
In darkness if your eyelids do not shut,"
But rather: "Close your eyes, lest black the Guise
Haul disobedient spirits shrieking to
Fresh open graves."
Catherine. Be secretive; reveal to none your thoughts.
Guise. Am I the Guise? Am I who I must be?
Catherine. It would be tedious and too over-long
Once to thumb over all the catalogues
Of sin that must be answered with their blood.
Guise. Coligny might not have my father's head
Lopped off, but I will do as if he did.
Catherine. Louis of Condé planned to steal away,
While I for peace beseeched, the king at Meaux.
Guise. With dazzled fools I do not often jest.
Catherine. What do you call religion with no thought
On guided penance, priesthood paid for saws
Without due ordination, confirmation,
A stillborn bastard best forgotten still?
Guise. Coligny's mouth is much reformed but not
His purse, as critics may allow when he
Obtains ecclesiastic prebends from
His brother, Châtillon, though dead awhile,
Remuneration to be pocketed from a religion he abhors and loves.
Catherine. My Henry, man at Jarnac in full pride
And savior in the fields of Moncontour,
May be a better son for my conceits,
Against the royal council's hopes of truce
Caressed by Montmorency and de Mesme.
Guise. We'll prove uncertain dreams of peace to be
As halting as mild Gontaut-Biron's gait.
Catherine. God's honor is our cause. The Huguenots
May not be borne. That being done, I'll dream
Of Henry's marriage with the English queen.

Exeunt the Guise and Catherine de Medici

Act 1. Scene 2. Before the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. 1572

Enter King Charles IX, the duke of Anjou, the king of Navarre, and
the prince of Condé, attended by servants

Charles IX. There's feasting on this day among the good:
A marriage-pact between two kingdoms grown.
Navarre. A marriage-bond between religions, too.
Charles IX. At last we clasp our wish and to our state
That wish must be acclaimed as fortunate:
The marriage of my sister, Margaret

Of Valois, and Navarre at Notre-Dame.
Navarre. The tomb of our religious enmities,
And we the figures on the monument,
Together with gisants of peace in France.
Anjou. A catafalque the people in our realm
Religiously expect to kneel before.
Navarre. Love smiles propitiously and without guile.
In golden satin France and Anjou shine,
Like twin suns reigning over Paris streets.
Charles IX. The dazzled bride in purple velvet gown
Embroidered with fresh lilies, gladdening
The sight of her well-wishers!
Navarre. And yet, you know, this celebration is
No sacrament to our reformed religion.
Condé. The bridegroom with his followers will stand
Outside while king and bride rejoice within.

Enter Catherine de Medici and the duke of Guise

Catherine. In honor of your marriage day, Navarre,
I have forgotten black, since all my thoughts
Shine like a cloth of innocence this day.
Charles IX. More benedictions on their happiness!
Navarre. More signs of favor on our amities!
Charles IX. This blessed event, which follows closely
The marriage of Prince Condé to Marie
Of Clèves, loved sister-in-law to the Guise,
Is double binding of our mutual love
And end to all dissensions. Ha, the Guise,
Is it not so?
Guise. So.
Charles IX. We have in our fond heart no greater hope
Of happiness than to behold at last
The old religion with the newer one
Serenely kiss in soft bonds of peace.

Exeunt Charles IX, Catherine de Medici, Anjou, and the Guise, attended

Navarre. We celebrate our newer Paris mass
While muttering in fear inside dark caves.
Condé. The treaty, once a bride at Saint Germain,
Is now a garish whore.
Navarre. The Spanish agents murdered without fear
The count of Egmont and the count of Hoorn.

Condé. Last month, French troops were crushed at Saint Ghislain.
Help our insurgent and despairing friends
Of the Low-Countries in their heady war
Against the miserable tyranny
Of the fierce duke of Alba.
Navarre. I have asked France for money in our wars
At Flanders and obtain the promises
Of money. With foot-soldiers and horsemen
I'll join the prince of Orange.
Condé. We keep as sacraments communion
And baptism-
Navarre. Deny that prayers for the dead refresh
A grimy sinner roaring in his fire.
Condé. Swear that Saint Roch is powerless to cure
Even the milder forms of flatulence.
Navarre. No priests but deacons, not the popish beast
But a consistory.- Can Anjou help?
Condé. The duke of Anjou is a girl-like boy.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé

1572

Enter the duke of Anjou and the duke of Guise
**Guise.** A union born in Satan's head, so that One half of France may burn the other one!  
**Anjou.** Pope Gregory and Francis Alençon  
Are of my mind: an insult to our God,  
A deadly peril to all souls in France.  
**Guise.** My uncle could not from the surly pope Obtain a dispensation for this bond.  
**Anjou.** What can this marriage breed? No son of peace,  
I fear. Margot once slept with me, with you  
As well, some say.  
**Guise.** Peace on forgotten sins!  
**Anjou.** While Huguenots still rage in convent lusts.  
**Guise.** The royal army in red helmets with  
The white cross fierce against the paler heads  
Of Huguenots in bloody fields of France:  
I breathe but in that smoke.  
**Anjou.** The king seduces well Coligny's hopes  
While envying King Philip, envying You, of that liberty which most he lacks.  
**Guise.** No king in his own house, much less the realm.

**Exeunt Anjou and the Guise**


Enter the king of Navarre, the prince of Condé, and admiral Coligny, attended

**Coligny.** We only gain what in a war is won.  
**Navarre.** Behold what in a marriage is obtained.  
**Condé.** What we have won tomorrow may be lost.  
You have but married maybe.  
**Navarre.** A woman, I hope, with a state in peace.  
**Coligny.** What is kept up with power is torn down  
With power. Catholics adore our God  
And yet despise his worshippers to death.  
**Navarre.** The king is lenient.  
**Coligny.** Proceeding from his weakness, which may be  
To their advantage wrought on.  
**Navarre.** If traitors live, we are stout and full-grown.  
Are you not, Condé?  
**Condé.** I am a coach with one wheel. Being moved  
Hurts me the more with those who rest in me.  
**Navarre.** He is of one religion.  
**Condé.** Why should two friends have one religion, or  
One hope? As if we search reality With just one arm?  
**Navarre.** Philosophy!  
**Coligny.** A pretty game no doubt.
Navarre. What do you wish for, nephew?
Condé. But to transform my soul into a Louvre,
Where I am king and courtier, serving all,
Commanding all, both loving and beloved.
Coligny. More of the same.
Navarre. He's ours and noble.
Condé. O, neither noble nor ignoble,
And neither kind nor yet unkind,
Or neither well-taught nor untaught,
A tangle of silk-threads and weeds.
Coligny. His father died religiously.
Condé. I am a changeling to my own self,
Robbed from my bed by strangers I have known.

Enter the lord of Maurevert with an arquebus, above

Navarre. This way, Coligny.
Coligny. Ha, so it is.

(The lord of Maurevert shoots below and exits

Navarre. Ha!
Condé. Oh, Admiral Coligny has been shot.
Navarre. Not dead!
Condé. His left arm is transpierced, and there is more:

One finger blasted off his right hand.
Navarre. I think I spied the lord of Maurevert.
Condé. Charles de Louvriers!
Navarre. A private quarrel.
Condé. Believe so if you can or must.
Navarre. Ho! Send the admiral to surgeons' care.

Exeunt attendants, bearing Coligny

Condé. What times are these! What men command these times!
Navarre. Come. To the Louvre!
Condé. To be shot at again?
Navarre. The honor of the king has been engaged.
He may no more add "traitor" to his name
Than sit below a peasant robber's knee.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé


Enter King Charles IX and the duke of Guise

Charles IX. All that I offer for their benefit
Comes back at me with pain.
Guise. Men's hopes are good when well kept within bounds.
Charles IX. I need no courtier in this second court,
For otherwise a king may not improve
His skill with such excessive courtesies.

*Guise.* I will put you to a good sweat, my king.

*Charles IX.* Consider each ball as a Huguenot
And rap him sorely against my feet.

*Guise.* I need not, knowing well your majesty
Can sharply punish any he can find.

*Charles IX.* I should especially hit those who stray
Outside the confines of the court, whom I
Can never reach.

*Guise.* I'll fetch them back, or crush them as they rest.

*Charles IX.* At our game's end, they'll lie well knocked, I'm sure.

Enter the prince of Condé

*Condé.* O, justice, justice, goodliest majesty!

*Charles IX.* Why?

*Condé.* Some rag of justice for our naked France!
Our admiral Coligny is laid low,
Shot by a Catholic.

*Charles IX.* Ah, no! Two fall assassinated here.
O, it is come, the day of reckoning
And doom in luckless France. Is Condé here
Or a bad dream? On lowliest dung-holes faint.

The musket-ball that struck the face of Mars
Has given us an even sharper blow.
Our sides ache at these news, our honor bleeds.

*Condé.* What peace can Huguenots expect from kings
Who murder us in secret while we feast?

*Charles IX.* Expect a murderer caught and attached,
Tried quickly, stretched to a band's length, until
The foam of every accomplice bleeds
From his pinched mouth, then hear him loudly wail
And hate each inspiration on the wheel.

*Condé.* Our tall Coligny is alive.

*Guise.* Alive?

*Condé.* Yes, duke, on his bed gasping painfully,
A surgeon's shadow over his pale face
As long as this sad day and longer night.

*Charles IX.* Inquiries will be made and suddenly.
Christophe de Thou will know of this event
And render us a full report or die.

*Guise.* Where is Navarre?

*Condé.* Where I am now, at the queen-mother's feet,
For any help in these extremities.

*Charles IX.* How well I am obeyed! Am I a king?
Can majesty's oil shines on a king's brow
When riot-mongers spit on it at will?

Condé. The Huguenots bear swords. This may not pass.

Charles IX. Go, justice you will cut and eat yourself
With satisfaction of all factions' hate.

Condé. In vengeance start to fear that Catholics
Will crush between their teeth a bloody fruit.

Exit Condé

Guise. I should proclaim at once my innocence.

Charles IX. You must and should.

Guise. My liege, this sad event, confusion's worst,
Is quite unlooked for.

Charles IX. Ah, I believe you.

Exeunt Charles IX and the Guise


Enter Catherine de Medici and the duke of Anjou

Catherine. The lord of Maurevert is the duke's man.
Anjou. How is it possible? A subject to
Command and overpeer like a stage-king?

Catherine. A fierce affront to the good king and me!

Anjou. I will remember him. The Guise jumps far
And to an awful precipice he'll sink,
Fit subject to make Crassus laugh in tears
Who barely smiled before.

Catherine. Speak to the king. This must be answered soon.

Anjou. He comes at last and breathing in his haste
For vengeance and redress.

Enter King Charles IX

Catherine. Clouds swell.

Anjou. Strike terror in the valleys without bolts
Of thunder, warning none of your approach.

Catherine. Let mountains rest like smoke and earth like mud.

Charles IX. My eyes are red from weeping and my ears
Hot from my subjects' curses. Honor's lost
Unless I punish in a dreadful sweat
Conspirators against our royal hopes.
I'll hold the scissors while bland Atropos
Cuts off legs with ambition.

Anjou. Some say: "The duke of Guise is much to blame."

Catherine. Although the duke of Guise is much to blame,
The duke of Guise is not an enemy
Of God and us.  

_Anjou_. No? Then I recognize no friend on earth.  

_Catherine_. His enemies are ours, and yet not ours. Because not dead.  

_Anjou_. The Protestants are friends if they obey.  

_Catherine_. I'll belch out swollen toads bespotted with The lard of witches' brew should these be friends.  

No friends at all and that we plainly see  
When Calvin's goats can thrive. To Phlegeton  
With doctrines nurtured in a German cell!  

Do they deny our purgatory? Good. Let them all rot in their created hell. Our Jesus never bled for Protestants.  

_Anjou_. Kill friends instead who live to our dismay.  

_Catherine_. Will you not thunder, king? Return to me, My Theseus. Ariadne, robbed of all, Abandoned on the shore of Naxos, o r Sad Maguelonne, round-bellied without cause, Did not cry out so vainly to the clouds As I do here at court.  

_Charles IX_. I'm in a Zacharian muteness till I hear  

A blood-crazed child of vengeance born of us.  

_Anjou_. Unless I quite mistake his hasty steps, The duke of Guise advances to spur on Death's slower bloody horses of the night.  

Enter the duke of Guise  

_Catherine_. The Guise, you have done well and not done well.  

_Anjou_. One day, I'll prick this hairy basilisk.  

_Guise_. Is Maurevert my own? He is, and yet His hands and eyes are none of mine at all.  

_Anjou_. The Guise equivocates all France to hell.  

_Catherine_. I'm in a tortured frenzy till the foes Lie at our feet on stranger beds asleep.  

_Charles IX_. O, mother, our gashed country's weal and mine, What dreaded scheme of treason would you have A shaken king unwillingly perform? I swim in a dark pool which I can hope Is not the blood of wounded angry France.  

_Guise_. The king of Spain frowns darkly at our sloth.  

_Anjou_. Should we hear further from a purchased duke?
The king of Spain is your good master, not
The king of France.
Guise. The king of Spain and the pope understand,
Promote, and help religion as I do.
Catherine. Hear wisely and speak well, my forward son.
Will you have Philip's cannons at our gates?
To stuff Spain's throat of war the Guise feigns to
Be his entirely, but only so
When Huguenots in shadows subtly lurk
To strike at will against all Catholics.
Guise. These conflicts simmer in confusion's oil
Because the king defends the rotted weed
Of Calvinists in the Low-Countries' dikes.
Anjou. Ha, do you hear, the Guise?
A single word
Against my brother is the lodestone that
Will draw a dagger's point from Anjou's spite.
Catherine. Peace on all sides who think God's favor is
More precious than their bellies!
Protestants
This night must die before they ever rise.
Charles IX. Ha?
Catherine. In wetted bedsheets smother till he breathes
His last Coligny, lest what Christians won
At jubilant Lepanto to our cause
Be lost forever.
Guise. The mighty king of Spain expects our king
To barter his false face for a true mask.
The Protestants in Paris armed and hot
In August: what worse prospect can be seen?
Catherine. Hear: fifty leaders of their faction's worst
Will sleep in their imagined hell tonight.
Anjou. What, slaughters general?
France kiling France?
Catherine. The Guise will lead our troops. See him display
The cross of innocence against Christ's foes.
Guise. I will not bathe except in Calvin's gore.
Charles IX. This must be scanned in council.
Catherine. The council at this moment hears our case
And will no doubt debate their quiet deaths.
The duke of Nevers captures eyes and ears.
Anjou. Too sudden, mother! O, too violent
And hasty-arbitrary to be well!
Catherine. Our deaths are dreamt about by children.
Guise. Tomorrow false Navarre, as spies reveal,
Will no doubt dampen swords in timid blood,
Unless we play as Christ's own soldiers armed.
Anjou. Conjectural, as our own musket-fire!
Catherine. Stay, son.
Charles IX. Do not abandon now a king besieged
By scattered arrows of uncertainty.
Guise. Unless you do and do and do again,
Low-arsed adventurers will peep inside
Your Louvre at night to massacre us all.

Exit the Guise

Catherine. I hear Gonzaga's steps astir with news.
Charles IX. O, misery unknown, unthought about,
Atop in huddles with more miseries!

Enter Ludovico Gonzaga

Catherine. Speak, duke of Nevers, is the council warm?
Does war prevail, or death to our religion?
Gonzaga. The council of the king decides for life
With murder of the fifty leaders you
Disclosed to us as traitors to the state.
Catherine. I have borne sons, among whom is a king.

But never yet my heart leapt up as now,
A moment's grace. I thank the count of Retz-
Gonzaga. Armand de Clermont and Teligny rose
And threatened, Jean de Morvillier was heard
To weep for those who slap his cheeks and neck-
Catherine. To cut to pieces all the heretics!
France, henceforth pray to me, a holier Joan,
Defending patriots and the only church.
Anjou. To strike preventively is safest still.
Catherine. Must a fond mother's robes sweep on the filth
Of palace floors with pleadings? Are you mine?
Charles IX. King Francis was by Spanish enemies
Clapped up in shame, I, by my family:
Who are more dangerous to a king's rest?
To kill them is a lively death to me,
Not to kill them a kind of deadly life.
Then kill them all. Let not one man be left
To blame me for this crime, a loathed one,
Well cogitated to please handsomely
Mere strangers: a pope and a king of Spain.
Catherine. My own and king!
Charles IX. The white cross bleeds already in my heart
And belly's core.

Exeunt Charles IX, Catherine de Medici, Anjou, and Gonzaga

Act 2. Scene 1. A street in Paris. 1572

Enter Turpin and a woman, fondling each other

Turpin. Some stolen beauty in these turpitudes!

Enter Crudmore and exit the woman

Should I quit fornication's hidden nest?
Crudmore. No, do it all the time, do it before
My face. Be carnal-minded and then live.
Go. Mortify at once timidity,
Kill coyness in her bud, dive like the bee
In open blossoms, stick there till you drop
In heavy sweetness. Be my son again.

Turpin. I'm strangely tempted by your ordinance.
Crudmore. To live alone is death; new pillowmates
Obtain if you cannot detain them long.

Let no one chide and rail before your face:
"You frigger much too rarely, Turpin." No,
Do it in every garden, every room,
Do it in muck, do it in sun or rain,
Explore the pit some feign they cannot taste
With man's strong juices and with strenuous strokes.
Do it until you blister.

Turpin. I'll be a woman's fool if I submit.

Crudmore. Ah, better far to whimper as her fool
Than with a bell and cap to entertain
A king in your own follies and despair.
Firk her and fuck her, too. Firk him as well.
The foul and soiled ones are despised by worse:
Do it likewise with them, more often, for
Most dally trifling even better still.

Turpin. I should be taking notes.

Crudmore. Go. Glory in the flesh.
What else have you?
Be rich in red drops, heavier with thick hair
On hairless bosom. Let her Tethys-like
Spread silver beads of sweat on brow and breast,
Permit her to lie over you, thick mount
In forestry of unexplored desire.
Be hers, let her be yours, become her cunt,
Let her possess a phallus, crucify
Each body's needs with every pleasure known.
While soldiers daily hear a woman weep,
I hear mine laugh in tears and willingly.
Turpin. Ha! Do you always follow these conceits?
Crudmore. My calling is to foutre twice a day,
Three times before mass. Hear: I go to church
To moon or doze, I go to bed to work.
Confound a priest: do it behind church-doors,
On straw-piles and on grass, do it with him
As well, should he rise as temptation's son.
Turpin. I am too timid for this gear, I think.
Crudmore. Be daring: fornicate with anyone
You can. A little more than ten is good.
Be sexed like pastures of prevented goats.
Proliferate like moss: who will judge you?
The saints?
Should you not rather judge the saints instead?
Turpin. I feel much bolder now.
Crudmore. Good fornication is the body's house
Of glory. In the Paphian temple lie,
A phallic Jesus smiling at our deeds,
Between two thighs, the only happy place,
No other heaven for us but for that,
No happier hour can here be spent at all:
Three gates of Venus open half the night,
Which all the women and most men adore,
Except perverted blots, shame of our kind,
Priests with their juiceless tribes.
Do as they do,
Be faithful to your pleasures, high or low,
And not another's, if you love yourself.
Turpin. Yet preachers swear lust finds his punishment
In his own wind.
Crudmore. Serve Venus in her works, or warp condemned,
A slave to other people's appetite.
How can a man or woman copulate
Most of the time and live unhappily?
If you are fortunate in languid loves,
You may with luck be happy in all things.
Do we own organs just for show, or use?
Is it not wiser to fall lowly on
Our knees inside fanes of idolatry
Where our reward is known to any fool?
Turpin. It is.
Crudmore. To watch a woman languishing in vain
Is hell's and purgatory's course of pain.
Let her light fan blow your uncertain lust
Afire with longing.
Turpin. These are new sermons.
Crudmore. Be dissolute, no matter what priests say.
Men frown in hearing once what most, had they
The means, would do a thousand times each day.
Turpin. I will forget my curate.
Crudmore. No eye remembers passing friends who leave.
Turpin. I'll get a woman now.
Crudmore. I plant, she waters, and the flower's joy,
In awe of your own body and of hers
Or his, not of the spirit, nothing worth
Except philosophers'. But this is yours,
This yours, that yours as well, and all is yours
That can be felt on you and you on her.
The rest is gewgaw.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Enter two Catholic soldiers while the bell of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois rings

1 Soldier. Before the morning light bleeds on the panes
Of house and church, some Protestants will know
Whether our purgatory is to be
Their prison or our fable. Otherwise,
Pack them like onions straight in rows to hell.
2 Soldier. We bait and stab.
1 Soldier. We rail and foin.
2 Soldier. We force them to their knees, in blood abashed,
To pay due homage to our virgin swords
If not to our transcendent virgin's foot.
1 Soldier. Eschew all forms of dalliance until the knaves
Rot on forgotten grounds.
2 Soldier. I will forget the body of a girl
In these assaults and aim at man alone.
1 Soldier. From highest turrets fling the caitiffs down.
2 Soldier. Bartholomew day is a feast of joy.

Enter a Huguenot citizen

Huguenot. What bell is that?
1 Soldier. No white cross on his hat.
2 Soldier. No red one on his breast.
1 Soldier. Indulgence is a stranger quite unknown
And tolerance a fabler to be mocked.
Huguenot. Indulgences we laugh at, honored sirs,
With medals, pictures, statues of old saints,
Who need no trash in heaven as they sing.
2 Soldier. Thrust him for that jest.
Huguenot. Am I in danger? Ha? Ha? Will you hurt
A man unarmed, one whom you do not know?
1 Soldier. Yes.
2 Soldier. Bind him.
Huguenot. Will you, because I cannot kneel and pray
To your Jerome and lion, do me harm?
1 Soldier. On this Bartholomew day, we enjoy
To watch foes bleeding on the stony ground
While puffing out their shortest, latest breath.
2 Soldier. Less talking and more stabbing.
Huguenot. Ha! Ha! Despair and death!

Enter Crudmore

2 Soldier. One of our own.
Crudmore. Who is the prisoner?
2 Soldier. A man condemning his own life away.
Crudmore. A Protestant?
1 Soldier. He boasts of it.

Crudmore. Here, take my crutch; beat him to death with it.
2 Soldier. No, daggers are quite sharper.
Crudmore. Give me no coins today: melt them instead,
Together with all metals you can find,
For rapiers, larger swords, and cutlasses,
To wound to death protesting Protestants.
1 Soldier. A beggar famous for his charity!
2 Soldier. True ignorance can offer sound advice.
Huguenot. A sober-minded man, intent to gain
In my despair his heaven with our hell.
2 Soldier. (stabbing him to death There in a stream of blood-drops as we speak.
1 Soldier. Will you earn money, Crudmore? Throw him down
Into the thickened Seine, white mud with black.

Exit Crudmore, bearing the Huguenot citizen

2 Soldier. Municipal authorities have shut
The city gates to keep the Huguenots
Inside, while thousands of their soldiery
Outside our barriers blink and worry still.
1 Soldier. More prizes for this day all Catholic!

Enter above in Coligny's bedchamber the servants of the Guise

1 Servant. The admiral is sleeping.
2 Servant. Not deep enough for me.

Enter below the duke of Guise

Guise. Come, is it done?
1 Servant. Not yet.
2 Servant. We lose time talking.
1 Servant. Do it. I'm still a virgin in this work.
2 Servant. (stabbing Coligny I can prick well a man in bed.
1 Servant. This I will do.

(Coligny is thrown down; the Guise kicks him

Guise. Our country's murderer will always be
Alive to my despite. Take him away.
I will slice off his head at leisure and
Send the red trophy to Pope Gregory.
As for the trunk, street-urchins begging in
The shadows of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois
Can surely invent worse outrages
Than soldiers of Picardie ever can.

Exeunt the Guise, servants, and soldiers, bearing Coligny

Act 2. Scene 3. A street in Paris. 1572

Enter Pépin and Marie

Pépin. Coligny assassinated in his bed on Béthisy street! My friend, Pierre de la Ramée, syllogism's son, gone to visit Aristotle!
Marie. Coligny's lieutenants spiked to death at the Louvre!
Pépin. Our soldiers locked out!
Marie. And we locked in!
Pépin. How can I escape?
Marie. Men with a white band on their left arm stripped Polisson's body of his best clothes.
Pépin. And farther down the street the Laviterne house with mutilated, men, women, and infants swimming with closed eyes in a new Seine!
Marie. Thanks to our dearest Catholic neighbor, Froissy, who hid us both in his cellar, we escape for a time their justice. Working humanity!
Pépin. I owe him money.
Marie. A leper's money will be fondled on
And kissed. Ha! Ha! Who comes?
Pépin. We'll hide in mud like swallows.

Exeunt Pépin and Marie, enter the duke of Guise and servants chasing a Huguenot citizen
Guise. Death to our God should he escape unhurt!
1 Servant. We hold him.
2 Servant. Dang him to purgatory at long last.
Guise. Crush out his head-piece like the rotted pear
Of his religion.
1 Servant. (crushing him
Done.
Guise. Till now, I never hated Luther's fools
Since first I held and sucked Megaera's breast.
To Saint-Germain-des-Prés with wings of love,
That small Geneva of lost heretics,
For greater slaughters and new hope in France!

Exeunt the Guise and soldiers, bearing the Huguenot citizen

Navarre. Dissimulate. I am
Navarre no more
And you no shirtless prince of Condé. Stare,
Blink, slaver, speak as they expect or wish.

Enter King Charles IX, attended

Charles IX. Today we spare all princes of the blood.
Condé. Why should you, sir? Most of our friends are dead.
Charles IX. Provided you convert.
Navarre. Some oil on our pale foreheads or else blood!
Condé. A cruel choice!
Charles IX. Do you accept?
Navarre. A king's word on it.
Condé. A prince's, too.

Enter Catherine de Medici

Catherine. Do they agree?
Charles IX. They do.
Catherine. Then welcome bleeding to God's grace and ours.
Charles IX. Attend the king and prince.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé, guarded

Catherine. Navarre and Condé left alive for us
Serve as a counterweight to help pull down
The heaven-pointing engines of the Guise.
Charles IX. I heard the populace yell out: "The Guise
And our religion!" None spoke well of me.
Catherine. Navarre and Condé in our house of peace!
Charles IX. And yet thoughts burn in me, a visionless
White fire, not understood, with devils born
Each minute in my belly torturing.
We hold the door to terrors and afflictions.
Catherine. Our way is lurid with great sorrows till
We sleep in the right place and nakedly.

(The bell of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois stops ringing)

A silence in sleeps of forgetfulness!
To our affairs.- Do you attend?
Not here?
My Henry fondles secretly Marie,
The prince of Condé's wife. A mother can
Win him away from that distracting spell.

Exeunt Charles IX and Catherine de Medici

Act 2. Scene 5. A street in Paris. 1572

Enter Pépin and Marie

Pépin. The Seine is sick with corpses.
Marie. We will be quite unable for a while
To swallow any fish or weed from it.
Pépin. Friends move without moving towards Chaillot and Auteil.
Marie. In a broth of bones and macerated flesh.
Pépin. You have attended but distractedly a scholar's explanations, excellent in scarcity of elocutionary digressions, on the most likely reasons underlying our disasters.
Marie. True, the only conflict women care about is the war against wrinkles.
Pépin. Is that not Crudmore and a Catholic?

Enter Crudmore and Turpin

Crudmore. Not Crudmore and a Catholic except To ardent well-armed Catholics I know.
Pépin. You have converted, I hear, so many times from one to the other that you can no longer know who you are.
Turpin. My father, I think.
Crudmore. And father of my son, I hope.
Marie. You are remorseless tyrants to your wife
And mother if you ever doubt her faith.
Crudmore. She has abandoned me to my own self.  
Once a good scholar, now a begging slave.  
Pépin. No better prospects?  
Crudmore. I deserve no better house than none at all, for I’m tireless in shunning work.  
Turpin. So am I, since first we rowed and swam away from England’s tide of persecution against honest vagrancy.  
Marie. Are you lame, too?  
Crudmore. No more than I or you.  
To imitate his father. It can draw some tears and pieces from the tender ones.  
Turpin. I am rewarded with the first by love  
And with the second by more belly-food.  
Pépin. I can get both from mine.  
Turpin. I should take her away from you, then, sir.  
Marie. I would not follow you for heaven’s prize.  
Turpin. That’s my bed.  
Pépin. More soldiers!

Exeunt Pépin and Marie and enter two Catholic soldiers  

1 Soldier. More often than I pissed.  
2 Soldier. Your tale makes mine all the more stiffer still.  
1 Soldier. Stay, vagrant cur, are you a Catholic?  

Crudmore. Well proven to a holier man than you.  
2 Soldier. He means the pope, I guess.  
1 Soldier. And you?  
Turpin. His son.  
2 Soldier. Go.  
Crudmore. We thank you, sirs.

Exeunt the Catholic soldiers  

Turpin. No luck today.  
Crudmore. Some disembowelled Huguenot houses may yet flow with eatables.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin  

Act 2. Scene 6. The Louvre in Paris. 1572

Enter King Charles IX and the duke of Guise  

Charles IX. An end to massacres!  
Duke, by our throne  
And scepter never in our life forsworn,  
Let fresher gallows rise on Paris streets  
To dissuade the killers. - Nevers!-Where  
Is Nevers? Send that duke and Angoulême  
To promulgate on every parish wall  
That rioters will hang, a kingly oath  
With a sincere and truest verity
Declared, to be most strictly followed here.

*Guise.* The pope, well pleased, engraves to Europe's joy Commemorative medals of our deeds:
Avenging angels striking down with swords
The heinous enemies of God and France.

*Charles IX.* They say four thousand of our citizens
Swell in the streets and fields for kites, or move
With lifeless life in the undrinkable Seine, while King Philip, almost never seen
To smile or wink, with pleasure loudly laughs.

*Guise.* Your guard protected ably Walsingham.

*Charles IX.* What of the infidel at Montargis?

*Guise.* Renée of France is saved.

*Charles IX.* I meant to kill some traitors—was that not
What the queen-mother said? or do I dream?—
Yes, traitors, not a single Protestant.

*Guise.* You see how bitterly the common rout
In Paris hate to death all Huguenots.

*Charles IX.* You killed Coligny?

*Guise.* And Landry, the great bowler, in an hour,
Who lost his life and all his bowling-pins.

*Charles IX.* A pleasant savor to a dead rat's tooth.

Enter Catherine de Medici

O, mother, far more than your fifty slain!

Exit Charles IX

*Catherine.* Thanks to the king, some Huguenots still live.

*Guise.* His clemency is cruel.

*Catherine.* A brace of Luther's stooges hide at Mons,
About eight-hundred freezing in pale fear,
To be surprised as soon as they reach France
By the resourceful duke of Longueville.

*Guise.* He will not fail unless he loses breath.

*Catherine.* Breathe life into religion's panting corpse.

*Guise.* Resistance still in La Rochelle, Sancerre,
And Sommières must at all costs be cut off
And brought down branchless in our zealous fire.
The Protestant with self-love marries, breeds
Cool confidence, who, with unshriven feet,
Stroll casually to an eternal fire.
Where should invented prayers lead except
To pack hell with more souls?
Inspired heads,
Who need no priest to pardon,
gargle texts
From springs of their own making,
promulgate
As if Paul whispers nightly in their ears
Interpretations, as if angels sing
With such a voice of power in their house
That one could swear they eat their bread with Christ.
*Catherine.* What from such doctrines is expected but
At the last trumpet to see bodies ripped
With shrieks from their grave-clothes, led off like slaves
Towards the lonely house of deathless death?
Onward with mercy for all souls in France!

Exeunt Catherine de Medici and the Guise

**Act 2. Scene 7. Before the gates of La Rochelle. 1572**

Enter the duke of Anjou, Ludovico Gonzaga, the king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé, attended

**Anjou.** Do these confederates with scorn refuse
Armand of Gontaut as their governor?
Then raise a siege till every citizen
Of La Rochelle is shot or stabbed to death.

**Gonzaga.** Rebellion will be pinched in winter time.
**Anjou.** The duke of Aumale swears he will have blood
Or La Rochelle most loyal to the king.
**Gonzaga.** His promises are well-aimed musket-balls.
**Anjou.** How many hardy soldiers stand with us?
**Gonzaga.** Twenty-eight thousand.
**Anjou.** How many soldiers crouch in fear with them?
**Gonzaga.** One thousand soldiers with two thousand more
Inured for fighting.
**Anjou.** My brother, Francis Alençon, intends
This stormy day to be their last or his.
**Gonzaga.** His cannons roar against their fainting ears.
**Anjou.** Then, La Rochelle, beg for our clemency.
**Gonzaga.** The duke of Guise to reinforce our troops!

Enter the duke of Guise and Charles of Lorraine

**Guise.** Why is not La Rochelle a hole of blood?
**Anjou.** The Guise, we have not yet begun to try
Our mighty forces in this heady fight.
**Gonzaga.** What of the other cities in revolt?
**Guise.** My brother knows and loves the latest news.
Charles. In anguish Sommières sweats to be besieged
By troops of Montmorency. Say what we
Must do until the wives of La Rochelle
Gnaw grievingly their finger-nails and arms
On dust-heaps for lost husbands, fathers, sons.
Anjou. Wait for the duke of Aumale's coming with
His potent force at dawn.
Guise. Can they be starved?
Gonzaga. My spies reveal some of their men begin
To chew on their house-rats.
Anjou. Bring to my tent Jean-Louis de La Valette,
A gentleman I wish to know more of.
Two men with me to welcome Aumale well!

Exit Anjou, attended

Guise. Do you not waver at these strong assaults?
Navarre. No, duke. We are remorseless Catholics.
Condé. And what we were before we never knew.
Guise. Well.

Exeunt the Guise and Charles

Gonzaga. Come, will you follow Mars' only son?
Navarre. We must.

Condé. We will and must because our will is such.

Exeunt Gonzaga, Navarre, and Condé

Act 4. Scene 1. The king's castle at Plessis-les-Tours. 1577

Enter Jean-Louis de La Valette and Anne de Joyeuse

Valette. Damville, to please his wife, is now declared
A traitor to religion and the state.
Joyeuse. He's ours and welcome.
Valette. What is prepared today for our delight?
Joyeuse. A royal feast with meat of every kind,
Known and unknown, with artichoke and corn,
With carrot, cauliflower, squash, and bean,
With onion, lettuce, watercress, and leek.
Valette. No coriander?
Joyeuse. With coriander, too, besprinkled well
With ginger, cinnamon, and parsley.
Valette. And to our view?
Joyeuse. A masque of spring-leaved women dressed as men
In color of rapt fools. They will perform
Forbiddenly in dark Sicilian dales,
Where you will wish yourself transformed into
A mouse to see what men postiche can do.

Valette. The king in pink and silver suit enjoys
Such goodly not ungodly joys.

Enter King Henry III

Henry III. I have conceived a ploy, where Anjou's faith
Will be much darkened in the people's hearts
Forever, if I live.

Valette. Ah, what?

Henry III. No, later, Jean-Louis.
There seems to be
Some jolly banqueting in readiness.

Joyeuse. I have devised for my renowned king
A fitly entertainment that should please.
Here is a poet to prepare our ears
For what our eyes may readily swoon in.

Enter Pépin

Pépin. Now welcome, gentle feasters all.
In titillating candlelight,
We will italianize the French,
Feast palates, eyes, and ears,
Out of her hellish crevices
Receive a new Persephone
In floral pageants never seen,
Where you will wish yourself
An actor in the fairy scene,
Both man and woman in a trice,
To know the pleasures of each sex,
Where everyone declares: "Love is no sin."

Henry III. Call for my mother and my queen in white.

Joyeuse. Ah, highest majesty, can this be wise?

Henry III. Call them, I say. My mother likes a masque
Or four, though rarely quite so bold and true.

Exit Joyeuse

Valette. I stiffen as I sit in hope of love.

Henry III. Already too susceptible, Jean-Louis,
To spill youself before the rightful time.

Re-enter Joyeuse with Catherine de Medici

Good mother, sit, to hear some country fare.

Catherine. A pastoral?

Henry III. You'll think yourself astride shy Daphne's lap.
Where is my modest queen?

Joyeuse. No doubt at prayers still, my goodly liege.

Henry III. The better, then, perhaps.

Enter Persephone, followed by her suitors

Pépin. Persephone is followed by
A round of suitors very bold.

(They whisper to her and make signs of their intentions
All hope to fertilize their love
In bosky regions moist and hot.

(A suitor takes her by the hand and covers her
An instrument her choice presents
To please a girl as she expects.

(A second suitor provides a dildo
No Dido is this helpful boy,
Though burning in an obvious fire,
But a good dildo he provides,
Such that boy-women should apply
To majesties alive at front and back.

*Catherine.* Courtly extravagance!

Exit Catherine de Medici

(The suitors enter the bushes with Persephone
Thus ends the better to begin our masque.

Exit Pépin

*Henry III.* I am invited to rehearse in there.

*Joyeuse.* In Saint Priapus' temple I should kneel.
*Valette.* And I officiating as the priest,
With Aretino as my prayer-book,
A bedpost as my pulpit and my charge
With bread and wine invited to be free
And charitable to all men of faith.

Exeunt Henry III, de La Valette, and Joyeuse

Act 4. Scene 2. The king's castle at Navarre. 1578

Enter the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé

*Navarre.* In southern parts, our troops continue to
Attack their castles, sack their churches, rob
Their merchants, rape their nuns, and massacre
Defenceless citizens and farmer's sons
Wherever they are found.
*Condé.* A stew of mayhem poisoning our lips
As soon as we sip it. Who should now choose
Our side when reading these atrocities?
*Navarre.* There is no honest treaty possible
With Catholics, whose Jesus is their hate.
Condé. None with the debonnaire girl-king at least,
In rosy vapors dancing with his sweets,
Wan ministers of his voluptuousness.
Navarre. A foutred king cannot be bold with men.
Condé. Then let us raise far pricklier implements
Than those King Henry's fork is rubbed against:
No ranks of poles but battle-axe and pike.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé


Enter King Henry III and Catherine de Medici

Catherine. No love remaining in a brother's eye?
Henry III. Does not the colored beetle hungrily
Bore in the kernel of his king and France?
Catherine. Fit brothers are discovered in the ranks
Of favorites of kings!
Henry III. Francis of Espinay, lord of Saint Luke-
Catherine. Francis of Espinay, lord of Saint Luke,
Should be rid of.
Henry III. How! He has done some signal services
To France no courtier can attempt as yet.
Catherine. Kings have loved minions and these minions have
Been often prized above his treasury,
But never yet a wasp invaded hives
To rule in them as if he were a king.
Henry III. A mother always wishes to be rid
Of any love or friend except herself.
Catherine. Henry of Saint-Sulpice, base badger, fed
On courtly honey.
Henry III. Yet Jacques de Caylus' cousin bled with me
At La Rochelle and in a quarrel was
Found stung to death for me two years ago.
Catherine. Arch-minions I can hate.
Henry III. All will prove true to France and to her king.

Enter Anne de Joyeuse

Joyeuse. My liege, there is a duel ended that
Will mar our joys awhile.
Catherine. Ha, minions in a duel!
Henry III. Who dares to fight against express commands
Of his own king?
Joyeuse. My liege-lord, Jacques de Caylus-
Henry III. Is Jacques de Caylus challenged?
Joyeuse. No, Jacques de Caylus is already hit.
Henry III. By whom?
Joyeuse. Three knights defending your high royalty
Have fought against three knights defending I
Do not know why your brother.
Henry III. No!
Catherine. I dreamt it would be so.
Henry III. Who fought for me?
Catherine. O! What intrigues are these, Joyeux? Vile grubs
Intent on spoiling loving brothers' meats?
Joyeuse. Among your majesty's defendants in
This mighty duel Maugiron in arms.
Henry III. What happened to my friendly Maugiron?
Joyeuse. Louis de Maugiron is dead.
Henry III. Ah, no! And Caylus?

Enter servants carrying Caylus' corpse

Joyeuse. Dead after thirty hours in agony.
Henry III. Ah, no! He bears more wounds than I have ears
To be obeyed. And loyal Livarot?
Joyeuse. Hurt but still living.
Henry III. Two dead for me, and I have nothing gained
From the exchange but wringing of grieved hands.

Joyeuse. On Anjou's side, dead are rash Schomberg and
Hot Ribérac, but Enraguet will live.

Enter Jean-Louis de La Valette

Valette. The duke of Anjou has departed from
Our amiable court.
Catherine. No!
Henry III. Again?
Catherine. My son! See what a king's contempt achieves.
Valette. With Bussy, Simier, Cangé-
Joyeuse. No blood of worth in any of these three
To feed a dying horse-fly!
Henry III. Where?
Valette. To Angers.
Henry III. Where he will plot.
Valette. Then on to the Low-Countries, it is said.
Henry III. Where the chief cockerel will in good time
Stand on his perch to spy for fox or wolf
Inside his territory and then cluck
His hens towards some grains to hatch revolts.

Exeunt Henry III, Catherine de Medici, de la Valette, and Joyeuse,
with servants bearing Caylus' corpse


1579
Enter Marie and Crudmore

*Marie.* Stabbed in his cellar, Crudmore.

*Crudmore.* Forever dead! Unholy is the hand That strikes for holiness. More violent deaths For Jewish fables!

*Marie.* He brought me important money at the end from the king's banquets and other twirlahoos.

*Crudmore.* Well thought on!

*Marie.* He pleased me with a deal of conversation, too. Where is he now? I can very well see him conversing with Paul and Augustine about matters of deep doctrine. He might have eaten honeyless locusts with the Baptist, slept with his bobbing Savior in the tempest, or gorged till vomiting on miraculous fish and bread.

*Crudmore.* Doubtless, if offered the chance.

*Marie.* How he would have enjoyed to be at Cana's feast, with all that wine flowing! On a lazy Sunday forenoon, I often saw him smack his lips at the mere thought of it, reaching for yet another can or bottle.

*Crudmore.* I joined him happily in those celebrations.

*Marie.* I remember how angry he became on hearing Herod's story, how he thundered, and how gladly he would have pulled at that tyrant's beard with no meed to hope for in return, provided no armed retainer of his stood by. And Judas! O, how Pépin's fists shook in anger at the only traitor. O, how he punched, kicked, and generally pummeled the picture of that awful dissenter! "Give me a poniard," he would command, and, hacking at our old barn-house door which burnt in last year's fire, he seemed to destroy Judas' face on it, pierced with so many holes that one could very well pity that door. He used a flail, too.

*Crudmore.* Commendable piety!

*Marie.* On the first Easter morning, we understand that though Jesus had predicted that in three days he would rise in glory, no apostle stood before his grave—perhaps because they had a more important meeting elsewhere. In any case, my Pépin often declared: "I would have stood there and waited, Marie. I would have asked you that very morning to prepare for me a heavy basket of pullets and bread, intending to breathe in my Savior's temporary home all day long and all the rest of the week if need be." Had he been Catholicly given, my husband would have much enjoyed to be received in the king's Order of the Holy Spirit for their silver-doved collars, often repeating to all his friends that the Holy Spirit was his favorite ghost.
Crudmore. He was also carnally given, I hear.
Marie. Extremely so, quite adept to know
That pleasure costing less than money to
Yield and worth more than money to receive.
Crudmore. Revered for poetry, too.
Marie. Some said his poems, taken at first flush,
Could outdo Homer's in brave martial feats,
Sad Virgil's in lone shepherd's fruitless loves,
Though true it is those who opined that way
Were friends of his, some drunk, or even mad.
Crudmore. I saw him quite affected by a play
Once in the palace-house of Burgundy
At the recondite death of Portia's nurse.
Marie. The author was his friend; that was his way
Of being courteous. In most instances,
He chortled at the most pathetic parts,
Was often asked to leave the theater
Even by vulgar fools. He only wept
During Good Friday, as if chewed on by
The fish he was consuming.

Exit Marie and enter Turpin

Turpin. More luck today.
Crudmore. You received alms at the Bordeleau farm?
Turpin. No charity, and yet this neighbor I
Can like today and afterwards all week.
Crudmore. Why?
Turpin. These eggs were his this morning.
Crudmore. You stole his eggs?
Turpin. I did.
Crudmore. Bad, son. You should not take away your neighbor's eggs.
Turpin. Why not?
Crudmore. What if he stole yours?
Turpin. He would never do it, having so many of his own.
Crudmore. Who is the woman I found sleeping on your bed?
Turpin. His wife.
Crudmore. You stole his wife away?
Turpin. No, she walked to my bed by herself.
Crudmore. Bad, son, very bad. You should not take away a man's wife.
Turpin. Why not?
Crudmore. What if he seduced yours?
Turpin. After I'm done, he can have her back.
Crudmore. They'll call you evil-nurtured and I shamed,
In dust-heaps grieving, as some fathers do
A hundred times at least each day they live.

Turpin. No matter as for that.

Crudmore. Can you not keep her?

Turpin. No. Women are a loose yoke.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 4. Scene 5. A field of war outside La Fère. 1580

Enter the prince of Condé and Huguenot soldiers

Condé. The soldiers in La Fère deny the rights Of my authority? Good, for this show, I may with one blast kill religiously All my opponents on a single day. 1 Soldier. Some may be hiding in these darkened shrubs. 2 Soldier. No matter. We are stiff for anything A pack of anguished coward hinds may lift With which to threaten in their senseless fear. Condé. Picardie's widows will forever mourn Man's needless obdurate ness.

Enter Catholic soldiers

They charge. 2 Soldier. Down towards their imagined purgatory.

Condé. Then cross them, not with holy water but With their own blood.- Come, folly's images, Graves hunger for your bones.

(They fight

Exeunt retreating Condé and Huguenot soldiers, enter Jean-Louis de La Valette and Anne de Joyeuse

Valette. Here's joy of fighting and some winning prize I understand. Joyeuse. Where is the prince? I think I should be heel To toe against a rebel slave and win. Valette. Inside this house, I think, for certain locked. Joyeuse. Then hack all doors with battle-ax and knife, With elbows and with fingers if they fail.

Re-enter Condé with more Huguenot soldiers

Valette. A trick to spoil us! Joyeuse. My teeth against his own and one of us To die most valiantly!

(They fight. Condé strikes Joyeuse down and Hugenots soldiers strike down Valette

Enter more Catholic soldiers
2 Soldier. Ha, ha, escape, my lord, or die today.
Condé. Retreat! Retreat! We may not stand and live.

Exeunt Condé and Huguenot soldiers

1 Catholic Soldier. Both dead?
2 Catholic Soldier. Neither, but the viscount of Joyeuse lost some teeth and part of his jaw.

Exeunt Catholic soldiers bearing de La Valette and Joyeuse


Enter King Henry III and Ludovico Gonzaga

Henry III. For his unquestioned valor, my good friend, Jean-Louis de La Valette of Languedoc, Created on this day the duke of Epernon! Gonzaga. O, well deserved! He almost killed outright In combats close with renegades perplexed The prince of Condé.

Henry III. Thanks to those sharp encounters, Condé flies To Germany, where may he ever hide By faith alone, afraid of our stout arms

In Luther's faithless churches. Gonzaga. The duke of Joyeuse, we are pleased to learn From his physicians, out of danger stands At last, although with seven fewer teeth And badly knit jaw-bones, preventing speech.

Henry III. The duke of Joyeuse is at once declared Lord admiral of France.

Exit Gonzaga and enter Jean-Louis de La Valette

Henry III. No lingering limp? Valette. What if I had? With one leg I would ride The vessel of our country's purposes And jettison superfluous shipmates. May I discover on a surgeon's knife No pity till our wars at last are done.

Henry III. Where is Joyeuse? Valette. Behind me in position, never yet In loyalty towards his lovely king.

Enter Anne de Joyeuse

Henry III. Ha, can you speak, duke? Valette. I doubt it, my good liege. Henry III. Yet try again.
Joyeuse. Hermagh dfgèis davô.
Henry III. I thank you, duke.
Valette. Ha! Did you understand him?

Henry III. I did. Did I not, Joyeuse?

Joyeuse. Rfijd fhèio vèviwer firi.

Henry III. Let them complain of super-minions: mine are precious to the happiness of France.

Exeunt Henry III, de La Valette, and Joyeuse


Enter Catherine de Medici and Ludovico Gonzaga

Gonzaga. Since losing Antwerp, Anjou is a sponge Seeped heavily with hard-to-be-dislodged Despair, worse than a mildew to help ills Which filled with dust the mouth of our last king.

Catherine. Since first I heard William of Orange choose The duke of Anjou as the mighty sovereign Of the Low-Countries, I have seldom smiled In thinking of my plight. A son of mine, After the signing at Plessis-les-Tours, Approved by all but Holland and Zeeland, Protector of a state against the king Of Spain! I had for him prepared a match With the prevaricating English queen, Which must not be believed or thought of now.

Gonzaga. The king with news from the duke of Brabant!

Enter King Henry III

Catherine. I do not like your face today, my son.

Henry III. It will not hide away from you this night.

Catherine. O, ominous! May terror press my heart To stop its needless, hapless hammering Before a word too terrible to know Hits my pale ears.

Henry III. Grief speaks with a mouth full of stones.

Catherine. I'm a trapped rabbit sniffing anxiously At the dull-yellow muscled back of a Serene and ready python.

Henry III. My brother, duke of Anjou, is no more.

Catherine. O, I am struck.

Henry III. Our rebel brother dead!

Catherine. O, O, the serpent springs and wraps itself Three times around my live-dead body's form, Where I may live imprisoned in its folds For many hours still.
Henry III. Some calmness at these sorrows, mother, for
He died of a disease none could prolong,
And is transformed, some would aver, into
A son of heaven, far more blessed in
That name than any son of yours can be.
Catherine. Ah, ah, ah, ah! I am for shrieking half
The day in bed and all the night beneath
This kindest of all grounds.
Henry III. Griefs rise and face the day. No help from tears
Can be obtained and little from such cries.
Catherine. Ah, let me lose both voice and life at once.
Gonzaga. Believe in God.
Acknowledge that this death Is good for him and thereby to us all.
Henry III. Gonzaga, to her chamber gently lead
My mother, to be watched, examined, drugged
To angel stillness by our best physicians.
Catherine. I know the woeful in their greater dole.
Ah, will Navarre be king? I am a child
With sharp knives playing on her future griefs.

Exeunt Catherine de Medici and Gonzaga and enter Jean-Louis de La Valette

Valette. My liege, this saddest of afflictions-
What can compare to a dear brother's end?
I'm lost in things to say, I ruminate
With moaning pain. Ulysses on his raft,
When Neptune's anger blew on Ino's veil,
Could not be more distraught than I am now
At these unwelcome news.
Henry III. Our Epernon is now our colonel-general,
The martial head of all the infantry.
Valette. A prize I thought beyond my farthest ken!
Henry III. My enemies include the Protestants,
But also Catholics, thanks to the Guise.
You have been witness to my female acts:
Now look and wonder at my maler ones.
I wish to be a king, and all of France
Will feel and know about a king's intent.

Exeunt Henry III and de La Valette

Act 4. Scene 8. A field of war outside Coutras. 1587
Enter the king of Navarre, the prince of Condés, and soldiers

_Navarre._ The king jumps on his war-horse to attack Our forces at the German borderline.

_Condé._ The Guise to be commander of his troops!

_Navarre._ The treaty of Nemours with that duke's league, Containing edicts never read or known Against reformed religion, which they name Abhorrent heresy, enjoining all Our pastors in a day to leave the realm, Makes me worse than I was towards Rome's fools, A man complete in dolor and in hate.

_Condé._ We'll meet them there.

_Navarre._ In thankfulness of his exploits, the king With terror yields Verdun, Saint Diziers, Toul, And Châlons: all of these in a duke's name.

_Condé._ Sixtus, head of their superstitious church, Declares a bull in scorn of Salic law, Negating your pretention to the crown Of France forever.

_Navarre._ King Henry has refused to promulgate That silly bull, for which I'll gratefully Hug him with my most potent arms of war.

_Condé._ Will the intrigues of Spain, a foreigner, Dictate to us in an unhallowed league?

_Navarre._ No, no, as all of France will know about And with wide-ranging terrors feel amain.

Enter a soldier bearing an unconscious Anne de Joyeuse

This is or was the duke of Joyeuse's trunk.

_Condé._ He lives.

_Navarre._ But should he, prince? Some say his massacre Of at the least eight hundred Huguenots In June at Saint Eloi displeased his king, For whom he dared to storm with arms Coutras.

_Condé._ He dies at the fierce battle of Coutras.

Exeunt Condé and a soldier bearing Joyeuse

_Navarre._ A prisoner of war, though massacrér Of ours, should be well treated. In our chests, He yields a banquet of ten hostages:
One hundred thousand écus.- Let them sink.

Re-enter Condé

Condé. Done.
Navarre. The duke of Joyeuse dead! Announce this bit Of news to our French king and laugh awhile.
Condé. With his loved brother, Claude, of Saint Sauveur
The lord, joined in one common lonely grave.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé


Enter the duke of Guise, Charles of Lorraine, and soldiers

Guise. Is Vimory achieved and sorrowing?
Charles. The Swiss are routed backward to their pits.
Guise. More yielding to my will! Bid citizens
To open. We will at our leisure take
Her in great joy.

Exit one soldier

The burgrave of Dohna and de la Marck,
The boiling duke of Bouillon, melt in beer

As witnesses of rising fortunes of the Guise.
I will protect the eastern front against
Invasions of the harried German hosts.
Charles. What of the king?
Guise. The king is confident he can prevent
The joining of Swiss-German armies with
Discouraged plowboys prodded by Navarre.
Charles. Elizabeth of England and the king
Of Denmark bellow on their poor investments.

Enter a second soldier

Where are the horseless reiters?
2 Soldier. Retreated to the castle of Auneau.
Guise. There groaning will they sorely beat their hands
And sweat to find an angry duke of Guise.
Does France lack ground for graves? When they behold
Our arms, with hasty fingers Germany
Will rake up shallow pits to hide her fear.

Exeunt the Guise, Charles, and the second soldier

Act 4. Scene 10. A field of war outside Auneau. 1587
Enter the first and third soldiers of the Guise's army

1 Soldier. The duke is much incensed.
3 Soldier. In such conditions far away at night
Brave soldiers run.
1 Soldier. Too late! He comes.

Enter the duke of Guise and Charles of Lorraine

Guise. I trimphed at Auneau and did the king
Choose to negotiate with enemies? Charles. A true word, brother.
Guise. Ha, cheated of a triumph by this king!
Charles. The German troops convinced to go back home
By Henry's payments in Swiss mercenaries!
Guise. To Paris, where this Henry will much rue
His treason of a duke. My league ascends,
Whose purpose is to rear and to promote
Supremacies of Rome, the only church,
In all affairs of state, States-General
To be the head of finance and taxation.
I have well thought on this. A case is made
Of Henry as usurper to the crown,
At all costs necessary to let slip
The Salic law in favor of Navarre.

I can be king as a descendant of Old Charlemagne and then establish for
All times a Holy Inquisition in
The land of France, to cure religion's head
With stronger potions than our pastors can.
Charles. O, O, my brother, you reach overfar-
Guise. As high as to a crown, first earth's then heaven's.
Charles. Well.

Exeunt the Guise, Charles, and soldiers


Enter Crudmore and Turpin

Crudmore. The people of Paris, Catholic in their hatred, under the influence of the Committee of Sixteen, show dissatisfaction at the king's failure to defeat the Calvinists.
Turpin. I can enjoy a popular uprising.
Crudmore. The Guise arrives to be acclaimed by us,
And, it is feared, to challenge mightily
Inside his palace walls a king reproved:
Confusion's masterpiece when friends fight friends.
Turpin. Good.
Crudmore. Raise barricades and towers when the powerfullest meet.
Turpin. Better still.

Enter a shoemaker and a tinker

Shoemaker. Leave nothing at the Louvre except a roaring queen-mother. We'll plunder it. Some say good paintings can be found There and some comfortable chairs.
We'll whisk away with joy a few from those
Who have too many.
Tinker. Prosperous houses in Paris and in the suburbs weep through windows and smoke with rage through doors.
Shoemaker. I can look askance at this king and hiss. Hit a king's face and make him moan.
Tinker. In foulest clothes and with a mouth decayed
We'll do it and then laugh outlandishly.
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
Shoemaker. Burn him with his bedfellows. He goes forbiddingly the fruitless path, in behind-part ways, thoroughly on the barren side.
Turpin. Is this no sweet revolution? The weaver will obtain an ocean of yarn, the shoemaker a realm of shoe-laces, the tinker a wilderness of pans, the rope-maker work for a hundred men!

Crudmore. When men die, more women are available.
Turpin. A barricaded baroness, a kept cony-cunted countess, an undoused duchess!
White arses, ours! Unsnood your hair and all
The rest besides. A man can plant in there.
O, wrap your legs on either side and tap
My arse with either heel for deeper thrusts
And brisker stirring! Open doorless rooms
To man and let him smiling lie with you.
Crudmore. A hanging matter,
Turpin.
Turpin. Because they lose some wad inside their twat,
Must Turpin lose his neck?
Tinker. You know women, sir?
Turpin. Am I of straw, or angel without sex?
I have with women often tussled, sir.
They like to fuss in clean shirts.
Crudmore. Be well aware: the mildest woman's needs
Will leave a brave man gasping on his floor.
Shoemaker. Beauty deceives and laughing mouths are sepulchres.
Did I not see you in my daughter's room
At dawn with a broad hat below your eyes?
Turpin. That twelve-year old no higher than my hip
Who goes to bed with men as often as
A whore cajoles or sickly drunkards piss?
Shoemaker. O, basest slave! What son-in-law is this?
Say, father of this prize I never sought
To find and to my shame must be thought of,
Have you once touched church-door?
Crudmore. When I was drunk and heaved my meal on it.
Tinker. Hold, sirs, fight kings with other enemies
Of all the people.- Ha! Look there: a sight
I love above an eager mother spread
Across my bed: the duke of Guise well armed.
Crudmore. Watch this duke rise like sunlight stained with cloud.
Alecto's deadly nipple has he pressed
For milk to make our makeshift king lose half
His shirt in shreds and fragments of breast-bones
Together with his life.

Enter the duke of Guise, Charles of Lorraine, and Paris citizens

Guise. The Committee of Sixteen has this morning welcomed me
with joy and thankfulness. Stand sturdily and with piked ranks beside religion, brave people of Paris. Should King Henry fly from his shaky Louvre, the Committee of Sixteen will take complete control of the government.
Shoemaker. The Guise! The Guise! The Guise as our new king!
Has any seen two rainbows east and west?
Charles. A king? Oh, no, my brother cannot aim
So high. Is he the Guise or Icarus?
Guise. Before the pale-faced king, I will demand
Instead and sooner than he ever wished
Debates and parleys in States-General,
To be imposed at Blois, and force the loon
To love his people and religion's cause.
Paris citizens. The Guise! The Guise! The marked one! Stamped by God!
Charles. Go, take up staves and swords, neglected hinds.
This day may yet be warm for some of us.
Shoemaker. We'll make a monarch blush outside his skin.
Turpin. Should he resist and puke before our arms,
We'll mash him to a powder small enough
To load a famished baby sparrow’s back.
Charles. We’ll blow the palace rooftop on his crown.
Crudmore. I hope he signed his will.
Guise. Prepare yourselves for slaughters in our streets
And mayhem in our houses. Big with care
On your behalf, religion will give birth
To graces martyred France has never known.
I will convince the barren king, or die,
To love his people as a monarch should,
To hug religion as a leader must.
My horse will wade in blood up to its hough
Until these resolutions are achieved.
Shoemaker. The Guise! The one man for religion’s sake!
Tinker. The Guise! The Guise! He will provide the path,
Work for poor starving patience pining still.
Charles. No doubt.

Exeunt the Guise, Charles, and Paris citizens

Turpin. Will this revolt be wisely carried forth?
Crudmore. Walk out the door: a fool will speak to you.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 5. Scene 2. The Louvre in Paris. 1588

Enter King Henry III and Jean-Louis de La Valette

Henry III. Let not the Guise arrive in Paris now.
Valette. He’s here.
Henry III. I greatly sweat at these unwelcome news,
So much against our will. He comes enforced
And with him come revolt and turpitudes.
I peep at windows, spying on each troop
Assembled, as if meaning to make his
Our palaces, our might, the crown of France.
I stain my shirts with creeping out at night
To hear the ruder commoners make sport
At our delights, in expectation that
Most sour the Guise will push out wantonness
And love-acts from the throne. Well, let them puff
Their cheeks and stare. The duke of Joyeuse, dead
On my behalf, as head of Normandy
You may henceforth replace, and take as well
His post as admiral in all of France.
Valette. More honors on a grateful subject's head!
Henry III. Prevent the worst. The Paris multitude
In rage and hunger pilfer bakers' shops
And strut towards the Louvre.
Valette. The poorest feed on half-ripe musts of wheat
In fields like sand for dryness.
Spades they use,
Some with the flesh of officers on them.
Henry III. What, do they rise already?
Valette. Their barricades are up.
Henry III. Sleak water-line before the cataract.
Valette. Most carry rocks from lack of bread and clubs
Instead of meat, adorned with noble blood.
Henry III. I dance in quarries. Ha!
Where can we leap?

Enter Catherine de Medici

Catherine. The Guise is standing just outside our gate.
Henry III. Swiss guards spar up the door.
Catherine. His sword-thrusts fan them down.
Henry III. French guards stab any stranger entering.
Catherine. French guards fly off to fields or join his side.
Henry III. Behold a fruitless king, of uses lopped.

Catherine. O, thought beyond belief in any dream!
Will Catholic the Guise drop a French crown
On Protestant Navarre's ungracious head?
Henry III. No, rather on his own.
Catherine. How!
Henry III. "King Charlemagne's descendant authored him,"
Would-be usurpers say, who speak all good
Of him, all ill to barren France and us.
Catherine. O, slave! Will he deny the Salic law?
Henry III. The treble string is broken and we play Disordered tunes of woe.

Enter Ludovico Gonzaga

A boon! The prince of Condé is deceased.
Greet cheerfully Picardie's governor.
Gonzaga. O, fly, my liege.
Henry III. Ha?
Gonzaga. The Guise with multitudes of breakers shakes
Our stoutest fortressed door with wave on wave
That levels all.
Henry III. My mettle rusts with this corrosive.
Catherine. Fools sleep in tempests.
Henry III. To Blois!
Valette. In blasts of violent whirlwinds caught in fire!
Exit de La Valette

*Henry III.* Will majesty hit his knees in despair,
Keen in the kitchen with his scullions? No.
An ungraved carcass will kiss with sweet breath
Before a king consents to his demands.
*Catherine.* A king and a queen-mother must like rats
Escape at night through secret water-ways.
*Henry III.* Kiss patience till we rise with her. The night
And silence are for any business fit.
I will embrace humiliation like
My filthy shirt, but yet, if I survive,
Pay back the duke of Guise in coins of blood.

Exeunt Henry III, Catherine de Medici, and Gonzaga

1588

Enter the shoemaker and the tinker

*Shoemaker.* Compel and annoy.
*Tinker.* Convey the wealthy from the world.
*Shoemaker.* They skip, they jump.
*Tinker.* Those who survive will find some hot days dark
In noble people's blood.

*Shoemaker.* Here's one of them.

Enter Jean-Louis de La Valette

*Tinker.* Are you of the king's party?
*Valette.* And mine. (he shoots the tinker
*Tinker.* O, I am hit!
*Shoemaker.* Ha?

Exit de La Valette, enter Crudmore and Turpin

*Crudmore.* In every street, hear the authentic voice
Of tragedy. Both high and low resound
In diapasons of despair and death.
*Turpin.* I'm glad to play the coward on this day.
*Crudmore.* Can you speak, fellow?
*Tinker.* I'll never fatten in this world again.
*Turpin.* See how he sweats and glares.
*Tinker.* Bleeding is thirsty work.
(he dies
*Turpin.* He faints. May he forget to die today.
*Crudmore.* Life with slow crutches sighs and moves away.
*Shoemaker.* A single friend so soon away!
*Crudmore.* He kisses the breast of forgetfulness.

Enter the duke of Guise and Charles of Lorraine, attended
Guise. The city has been won and mine it is.
Charles. We enter in a Louvre without a king.
Guise. New posts mine to bestow or to withhold!
Charles. The governor of the Bastille, by you Appointed, and some others all in joy,
With praises thank you everlastingly.
Guise. I do much more than help my helpful friends:
I hurt my enemies, who should thank me,
Because thanks to my care, not one of them
Now suffer in this world.
Charles. None better, brother, by Christ's blood approved.
Guise. Some die, some are transformed unwillingly
To friends, most beat their pillows in their sleep.
Charles. Some have a king forgotten in these frays.
The present eye the present man attends.
Guise. The frightened king negotiates and fears.
Charles. The duke of Epernon, who once held hands
With majesty disgraced, has run away,
Pushed off as governor of Normandy
And admiral of France on your advice.

Guise. Who is that white man some mourn darksomely?
Charles. No doubt a Catholic hurt in our cause.
Turpin. The frost is warm next to this piece of flesh.
Guise. A mass and honored burial!
Crudmore. O, true, a mass of earth is all he has.
Turpin. I will pronounce his eulogy, and then
Perhaps obtain his shoes for summer months.

Exeunt Crudmore, Turpin, and the shoemaker bearing the tinker

Guise. Onward to Blois, where I will greet a king
And ply him to my will.
Charles. Will you, unknown to fear, court danger still?
Guise. She is a wife who promised to obey.
Charles. Discard that whore. To Lyon I must go.
To an affrighted king and queen you are
As welcome as the day to murderers.
Guise. Tut, brother, tut. There is no king in France,
Except a man asleep on cotton balls.
I doze in hell until I earn a crown.

Exeunt the Guise and Charles, attended
Act 5. Scene 4. The king's castle at Blois. 1588

Enter above King Henry III and Catherine de Medici

_Henry III._ I'll plan a murder none will soon forget._ Catherine._ Ha, is this wise? Their league is well beloved._ Henry III._ I will hear mass and then devise a scene Of treason witches never dreamt about, Which should save France from worse calamities. Hear, mother, hear: I wish to be a king. A lewd negotiator with the Guise And Calvinists is not and never was. A king I'll be or die, I promise you._ Catherine._ I have crossed and re-crossed on all non-roads Of France for Christ, from southeast to north-west, Smiled willingly at hostile rebel heads For peace and our advantage, and is this My only recompense for these travails? _Henry III._ What fool will follow virtue long despised? A woman is most potent with her tongue, But yet to argue with Navarre, to plead With treason's scar faced child of woe and death! How have we fared in this? Chased from the Louvre Like serfs from mighty households! _Catherine._ The Guise! The point where blessed religion's shoe Most pinches, to the halting of our plots._ Henry III._ The Guise can swallow many houses down, To leave us naked in a heathen wind._ Catherine._ Forced to attack our friends while we possess So many popeless enemies of truth! The anger of Latona's offspring never fell So monstrously on boasting Niobe. O, sick! May an old woman's miseries Heave proud the Guise into the lowest house Sin plunges lofty sinners on this earth. I have become an empty music box, Bereft of speeches apt to please a king._ Henry III._ In Venus' temple have I laughed or sung. Now watch a subtle Vulcan in his net Ensnare a traitor to religion's pact Of promised love between all Christian lands.
Catherine. Well cut. Now you must sew.

Exit Catherine the Medici and enter two guardsmen

Henry III. Repeat again how bad a man the Guise
Has been, now is, will be, then blacken all
Conjectures with improbabilities,
So that his solid figure may become
A pencilled lerry easy to deface.
1 Guard. A king once fought the Protestants with friends.
2 Guard. A king once reigned in Paris.
Henry III. More fuel to my hate.

Enter the duke of Guise

How, unattended, duke?
Guise. Who is the Guise? A coward beggar slave,
Or one who forces kings to sigh and yield
Against their will? In private study rooms
Adjoining royal chambers let us talk.
Henry III. Ascend to royalty: we are for you.
Guise. Well said. The Guise will not step down again.

Exit the Guise

Henry III. He'll never crumple bedsheets in this world.

Such an unheard-of murder may set off
Inside my Louvre a keg of murderous
And universal powder. What of that?
The one may be, the other is. Prepare.

Re-enter above the duke of Guise

Guise. I should resign as your lieutenant-general.
Henry III. Agreed. A traitor may resign his post.
Guise. Base traitors to a kingly traitor are
Allowed and just to all the commoners.
Henry III. Take hold of him.
Guise. Ha, slave! Where is my brother cardinal?
Henry III. On bloody knees prepared to follow you.
Guise. A king and so unkingly?
Henry III. A king at last with power. Stab the duke
Into the center of a traitor's heart.

(The guardsmen stab the Guise

Guise. O! O! I hear no music. (he dies
Henry III. His brother cardinal we'll ship to hell
With blasted sails. Let him in torment dance
On pikes of his own escort till I come.
1 Guard. We will oblige, my liege.
Henry III. Arrest the duke's son, too, but spare his life.

2 Guard. My liege, he's caught.

Henry III. In the meantime, to help religion's cause,
I will with Mayenne and Navarre debate.

Exeunt Henry III and guardsmen bearing the Guise

Act 5. Scene 5. The king's castle at Plessis-les-Tours. 1589

Enter Ludovico Gonzaga and Jean-Louis de La Valette

Gonzaga. Since the defeat of their armada on
Large-bellied English waters in one meal,
Their eighty vessels salted and prepared
With fifteen thousand dead to season it,
We may yet breathe awhile, from Spanish sway
Released, France unsubordinated still.

Valette. May we remain so ever from their spells.

Gonzaga. The king has written to Charles of Lorraine.
Charles of Lorraine is not to be appeased.

Valette. The king is vehemently and with tears
Of rage cried out against by moderates.

We hear of Paris riots of such scope
That few with money dare to enter it.

Enter King Henry III

Henry III. My mother's dead. A king may thereby rise
The brighter in his hopeful subjects' eyes
From her red clouds unburdened. No good deed
But as a stranger's hated to the end!

Gonzaga. Despised by the most hateful.

Henry III. The parliament of Paris has drawn up
A charge of murder on their rightful king.
I will at once join forces with Navarre
In open war against their league and state.
Where is our former execration?

Gonzaga. In the adjoining chamber.

Henry III. Admit the king. We totter should he fail.

Gonzaga. At once, my liege.

Exeunt Gonzaga and de La Valette, enter the king of Navarre

Navarre. A foe may stand and yet with kindness be
Received in a king's palace by the fire
Of a new-risen day.
Henry III. You are Navarre, our loving brother king.

Navarre. Say what Navarre must do to earn the more such welcome kindness from the king of France.

Henry III. Against Charles of Lorraine, hot brother to The Guise, raise arms, heap infamy, kill friends, Help enemies: this must be shaped and fixed, Or else be hated by a king of wrath.

Navarre. Clasp arms and hands on friendship long delayed.

Henry III. Two kings kiss gently at Plessis-les-Tours.

Navarre. The worse for Charles and hateful factions' spite.

Henry III. Hay in the rack for horses, swords in sheaths For men! Such promises of loyalty Are bits and trappings that will bear us on. Do Protestants own charters from our saints To cog and mesh with traitors? I think not.

Two kings rule on a chessboard, set to take With our white army spurning at the false Entire ranks of pawns and bishops, when Each king holds true. If I die in this fray And if you choose a right religion's course,

The crown of France is yours. Reflect on that.

Exeunt Henry III and Navarre


Enter a water-carrier and a barrel-maker

Water-carrier. Those for whom I once carried water, I drown.

Barrel-maker. I put in coffins those I served with storing drink.

Water-carrier. I bring to houses no water but torches instead.

Barrel-maker. No wine in my barrels except men's blood.

Water-carrier. Will you join our religious procession, to mar, deface, murder, dispossess?

Barrel-maker. Gladly and with renewed hope in humankind.

Water-carrier. Some ceremony here! Extinguish my candle.

Barrel-maker. So may a king expire.

Enter Crudmore and Turpin carrying a heavy bag

Ha! Some gain while we attempt not to lose.

Turpin. Here's some good achieved.

Crudmore. While Rome quaked at the coming of Caesar's rebel army, beasts abandoned forest lairs to roam with citizens. But

Enter Charles of Lorraine, attended with soldiers

Charles. The people speak with wisdom, sign assured That only goodness rises from this strife. Water-carrier. A second Guise! Barrel-maker. A newer Guise to the despair of Huguenots! Charles. May the king, false as any Protestant, Under your curses droop without resource. For Henry's younger brother, of the Guise Avenger, it pertains to act as head Of our religious league. Tracts are dispersed. The Sorbonne says it is a holy deed And full of piety to kill a king. I will add more. A pope's bull is declared, To free the cardinal of Bourbon and The archbishop of Lyon, or else die In excommunication. Henry, king In sinning only, reads his high command. A pope's involved. The king no more directs His cheerful sodomies, but wears a coat Of mail to satisfy a Paris crowd, For otherwise, he will inside his Louvre Smoke in the blood of friends and family. Barrel-maker. A second Guise for the extermination of Protestants! Charles. Infected blood I'll swallow if we shun To beat a king back to his joyless bed Of joy.

Exeunt Charles, the water-carrier, the barrel-maker, and soldiers, enter Jacques Clément

Turpin. Look, father, a white man who blackens men's souls. Jacques. Why do you say so, son? Is not a Jacobin the truest son of
the Church, one who by the eyes
and by the ears hooks sinners
otherwise destined to sink
unconsciously into the stupid
realm, nothing but sighs and
roaring, no sweetness except to be
honeyed in the muck of scared
ones, housed by tenants whose
rent is loss of flesh and blood to
lusty turnspits, roasting arms and
legs as often as we cut nails?
Turpin. Certainly he is.
Jacques. Does not the Church love
the poor?
Turpin. Too much, for without
doubt her prosperity keeps me as
I am.
Jacques. In no manner as you are.
Are you no thief? What bag are
you holding? Stolen goods from
the deceased?
Turpin. As true as I am I.
Jacques. A Dominican monk can
like a white hound easily sniff out
rich wares. You must return these
cheerfully.
Turpin. Ha? But oh, reflect a little,
monk beyond all measure
monkish: their owners' mouths,
stuffed with turf, can never
reclaim such worthwhile goods.
Jacques. Are they not stolen
nonetheless? Do not dead people
leave regretfully behind to their
willing sorrow living sons,
daughters, mothers, fathers,
uncles, aunts, great-aunts,
together with sons-in-laws and
daughters-in-law and more
perhaps, who probably have a far
more justifiable claim to this
property than you can ever
produce in a court of law?
Turpin. True. We cheat people of
their rightful prize.
Jacques. Then you must give back
these goods to me. I'll discover
their owners and cede the items
to them.
Turpin. What if the owners are
richer than I am?
Jacques. An irrelevant and
irreverent notion, son! Objects
legally belong to their possessors.
Poverty gives you no honest claim
to other persons' properties.
Turpin. No?
Jacques. Who ever heard of
honest filching? At no period and
in no country has human society
condoned stealing. A thief is
unwelcome in every land, at any
time.
Turpin. I regret that.
Jacques. You should rejoice in it.
Let us return to the beginning, to
the initial philosophic banquet
noted scholars in every age have
joyfully tasted, even to
gourmandizing, as if you were
first son or pupil of deeply
searching Socrates: is not
goodness good?
Turpin. Not if I starve by it.
Jacques. Primordial error of
irreligious inconsideration! I tell
you truly: though pinched
Erisichton-like in stringy throes of
starvation, you are not allowed to
rob.
Turpin. I would be wise to quit this dialogue rather than my life.
Jacques. Defy Mammon's burdensome sack by burying it in my arms.
Crudmore. Not to any monk impudently pretending to a knowledge we cannot see or he can understand.
Jacques. Unfortunate son of an unfortunate father! Will you feast on merchandise that is not yours to covet, much less hold?
Turpin. Yes, dancing all night with Bordeaux' best and naked firecrackers.
Jacques. You fiddle towards damnation. I see two hungry ants feeding in a bag of refuse, whose top the unobserving servant ties up, and all has suddenly been transformed to a darkness perfect to fatten in and choke.
Crudmore. I recognize your Lethean mouth, dullness, forgetting half the sentence before it is completed. Marked impudence of these religious beards, Who bluster to impose their dreams on us!
Jacques. May God's eye of punishment find you bare in street or forest, in court or field, suspended above you always like a sword, wider, darker, cleaner, and sharper than Damocles' in terror.

Turpin. You have drawn them, father, exactly as they miserably are, domineering slaves who can in no fashion serve the commonalty.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 5. Scene 7. The king's castle at Saint Cloud. 1589

Enter King Henry III and two guardsmen

Henry III. I will confess to nothing. Should a king Not enter Paris if he wishes? Ha! I should. Fetch me a chaplain, heaven's door Without the key, with Mammon's gold-bar locked.

1 Guard. My good liege, do you wander?.
Henry III. Infertile, dazed, infertile!

1 Guard. Your majesty, a monk approaches here.

Henry III. O! Bid him enter and speak well of me.

Enter Jacques Clément

1 Guard. Approach, consoling friar.

Henry III. Fall on your knees, king.

1 Guard. Should we not search the monk?

Henry III. King, fall on unrepenting head.

Jacques. The duke of Guise once wore a cloth of gold, But now he wears a coat of green; The duke of Guise commanded men of gold, Now all men's servants tread his muddy face.

Henry III. Behold the great example of the world, The proud, the valiant, and the over-bold, Forever vanished in a puff of breath.

A king's command has done it.

Jacques. A king's command has chopped religion's head.

Henry III. His wax is spent and smoky honor stinks.

Jacques. The lodestar of our firmament, damp cloth To blot out heretics: is he quite gone?

Henry III. Demolished kingdoms were his flags of peace.

Jacques. Our temple has become a naked man Aflame, his flesh with vilest daggers torn And lusting.

Henry III. Give him love-lies-a-bleeding.

Jacques. Fair-weather atheist, captured easily While strutting happily beneath the sun!

Henry III. A happy sleep seduces piety.

Jacques. You are to blame if men in Paris sin.

Henry III. One fewer sinner have I pushed away.

Jacques. A false friend is a rich mat covering A rotten hole.

Henry III. Great men have always greatly been disgraced.

I am my own apocrypha, unread.

Even my truths are lies.

Jacques. Repent.

Henry III. My apple rotting on a growing branch!

Jacques. Atone or die.

Henry III. When poor men die, friends do not notice it.

Jacques. Will crime stand, ever boasting? Mere man kills The Guise and does he smile and shrug at it?

Henry III. A man is cured of wounds, but never praise.

Jacques. Ha! Is your mind at ease?

Henry III. The fumes of Phlegeton are purer.
Jacques. I have met many devils: Far-from-God, Forgot-Christ, Shredder-of-Gospel Pages, Happy Negligence, Lazy Presumption, Atheist Trap, all of them cheerful and pleasant, whose breath I shake away.

Henry III. Men moan; the moon returns.

Jacques. The sun shines brightly in the night of crimes. Show signs of faith, create a wonder, God!

Henry III. Upturning eyeballs, friar? Wishing for Imagined marvels that astonish fools?

Jacques. Faith owns a dagger, still too cool and neat.

(Jacques stabs the king)

Am I invisible? God needs no man to defend him.

1 Guard. Hack him to fragments.

(The guardsmen kill Jacques)

Wished-for demise! We could have searched the fool. Consider our offense, for some will say The monk should have been questioned. Raise the dead, Attorney of our loyalty and faith.- Refused, and rightly so. Let us instead Submit to questioning, agree, and live.

Exeunt guardsmen bearing King Henry III and Jacques