

COUNTESS I will now hear. What say you of this
gentlewoman?

CLOWN Madam, the care I have had to even your
content I wish might be found in the calendar of
my past endeavors.

COUNTESS What does this knave here? *To Clown.* Get
you gone, sirrah. The complaints I have heard of
you I do not all believe. 'Tis my slowness that I do 10
not, for I know you lack not folly to commit them
and have ability enough to make such knaveries
yours.

CLOWN 'Tis not unknown to you, madam, I am a poor
fellow. 15

COUNTESS Well, sir.

CLOWN No, madam, 'tis not so well that I am poor,
though many of the rich are damned. But if I may
have your Ladyship's good will to go to the world,
Isbel the woman and I will do as we may. 20

COUNTESS Wilt thou needs be a beggar?

CLOWN I do beg your good will in this case.

COUNTESS In what case?

CLOWN In Isbel's case and mine own. Service is no heritage,
and I think I shall never have the blessing of 25
God till I have issue o' my body, for they say bairns
are blessings.

COUNTESS Tell me thy reason why thou wilt marry.

CLOWN My poor body, madam, requires it. I am driven
on by the flesh, and he must needs go that the devil 30
drives.

COUNTESS Is this all your Worship's reason?

CLOWN Faith, madam, I have other holy reasons, such
as they are.

COUNTESS May the world know them? 35

CLOWN I have been, madam, a wicked creature, as you
and all flesh and blood are, and indeed I do marry
that I may repent.

COUNTESS Thy marriage sooner than thy wickedness.

CLOWN I am out o' friends, madam, and I hope to have
friends for my wife's sake. 40

COUNTESS Such friends are thine enemies, knave.

CLOWN You're shallow, madam, in great friends, for the
knaves come to do that for me which I am awear of. 45
He that ears my land spares my team and gives
me leave to in the crop; if I be his cuckold, he's my
drudge. He that comforts my wife is the cherisher
of my flesh and blood; he that cherishes my flesh
and blood loves my flesh and blood; he that loves
my flesh and blood is my friend. *Ergo*, he that 50
kisses my wife is my friend.

COUNTESS Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed and
calumnious knave?

CLOWN A prophet I, madam, and I speak the truth the
next way: 60
Sings. For I the ballad will repeat
Which men full true shall find:
Your marriage comes by destiny;
Your cuckoo sings by kind.

COUNTESS Get you gone, sir. I'll talk with you more
anon. 65