

Act V, scene i

Sword and Mace carried before them, enter SIMONIDES and the Courtiers.

SIMONIDES

Be ready with your prisoner, we'll sit instantly and rise before eleven, or when we please. Shall we not follow, judges?

FIRST COURTIER

'Tis committed
All to our power, censure, and pleasure, now
The Duke hath made us chief lords of this session;
And we may speak by fits, or sleep by turns.

SIMONIDES

Leave that to us, but, whatso'er we do,
The prisoner shall be sure to be condemned.
Sleeping or waking, we are resolved on that
Before we set upon him?

SECOND COURTIER

Make you question
If not? Cleanthes? And our enemy¹!
Nay, a concealer of his father too,
A vile example in these days of youth.

SIMONIDES

If they were given to follow such examples,
But sure I think they are not; howso'er,
'Twas wickedly attempted, that's my judgment,
And it shall pass while I am in power to sit.
Never by Prince were such young judges made;
But now the cause requires it, if you mark it.
He must make young or none, for all the old ones,
Their fathers², he hath sent a-fishing, and my father's one.
I humbly thank his Highness.

Enter EUGENIA.

¹ our enemy] Shaw ; one Q.

² Their fathers] Q (Her father).

The Old Law

FIRST COURTIER

Widow!

EUGENIA

You almost hit my name no[w], gentlemen;
 You come so wondrous near it, I admire you
 For your judgment.

SIMONIDES

My wife that must be! she!

EUGENIA

My husband goes upon his last hour now.

FIRST COURTIER

On his last legs, I'm sure.

EUGENIA

September the seventeenth,
 I will not bate an hour on't; and tomorrow
 His latest hour's expired.

SECOND COURTIER

Bring him to judgment;
 The jury's panelled and the verdict given
 Ere he appears, we have ta'en course for that.

SIMONIDES

And officers to attach the gray young man,
 The youth of fourscore. Be of comfort, lady;
 We shall no longer bosom January,
 For that I will take order and provide
 For you a lusty April.

EUGENIA

The month that ought, indeed,
 To go before May.

FIRST COURTIER

Do as we have said;
 Take a strong guard and bring him into court.
 Lady Eugenia, see this charge performed
 That, having his life forfeited by the law,
 He may relieve his soul.

EUGENIA

Willingly!

From shaven chins never came better justice
Than these new-touched by reason.

SIMONIDES

What you do, do suddenly, we charge you,
For we purpose to make but a short session.
Ah, new business!

Enter HIPPOLITA.

FIRST COURTIER

The fair Hippolita! Now, what's your suit?

HIPPOLITA

Alas, I know not how to style you yet.
To call you judges doth not suit your years,
Nor heads and brains show more antiquity.
Yet sway yourselves with equity and truth
And I'll proclaim you reverend and repeat,
"Once in my lifetime I have seen grave heads
Placed upon young men's shoulders."

SECOND COURTIER

Hark, she flouts us,
And thinks to make us monstrous.

HIPPOLITA

Prove not so,
For yet, methinks, you bear the shapes of men,
Though nothing more than mercy beautifies³
To make you appear angels. But, if [you] crimson
Your name and power with blood and cruelty,
Suppress fair virtue and enlarge of old vice,
Both against heaven and nature draw your sword,
Make either will or humour turn the soul
Of your created greatness, and in that
Oppose all goodness, I must tell you there
You're more than monstrous. In the very act,
You change yourself to devils.

³ mercy beautifies] Bullen ; meerly beautifeaus Q.

The Old Law

FIRST COURTIER

She's a witch!
Hark, she begins to conjure!

SIMONIDES

Time, you see, is short,
Much business now on foot. Shall I
Give her her answer?

SECOND COURTIER

None upon the bench
More learnedly can do it.

SIMONIDES

Hem, hem, hem! Then list.
I wonder at thine impudence, young huswife,
That thou dar'st plead for such a base offender.
Conceal a father past his time to die!
What son and heir would have done this but he?

FIRST COURTIER

I vow, not I.

HIPPOLITA

Because you are parricides!
And how can comfort be derived from such
That pity not their fathers?

SECOND COURTIER

You are fresh and fair, practise young women's ends; when husbands are
distressed, provide them friends.

SIMONIDES

I'll set him forward for thee without fee,
Some wives would pay for such a courtesy.

HIPPOLITA

Times of amazement, where doth goodness dwell!
I sought for charity, but knock at hell!

Exit. Enter EUGENIA, with LISANDER prisoner, [and] a guard.

SIMONIDES

Eugenia, come!
 Command a second guard
 To bring Cleanthes in. We'll not sit long,
 My stomach strives to dinner.

EUGENIA

Now, servants, may a lady be so bold
 To call your power so low?

SIMONIDES

A mistress may;
 She can make all things low, then in that language
 There can be no offense.

EUGENIA

The time's now come
 Of manumissions, take him into bonds,
 And I am then at freedom.

SECOND COURTIER

This the man!
 He hath left of late to feed on snakes,
 His beard's turned white again.

FIRST COURTIER

Is it possible these gouty legs danced lately,
 And shattered in a galliard?

EUGENIA

Jealousy
 And fear of death can work strange prodigies.

SECOND COURTIER

The nimble fencer this, that made me tear
 And traverse 'bout the chamber?

SIMONIDES

Ay, and gave me
 Those elbow healths, the hangman take him for it!
 They had almost fetched my heart out. The Dutch vennie
 I swallowed pretty well, but the half pike

The Old Law

Had almost pepper'd⁴ me. But had I took,
Being swollen, I had cast my lungs out.

Flourish, Enter the Duke.

SECOND COURTIER
Peace! The Duke!

DUKE
Nay, take your seats. Who's that?

SIMONIDES
May it please your Highness,
'Tis old Lisander.

DUKE
And brought in by his wife! A worthy precedent
Of one that no way would offend the law,
And should not pass away without remark.
You had been look'd for long.

LISANDER
But never fit
To die till now, my lord, my sins and I
Have been but newly parted. Much ado
I had to get them leave me, or be taught
That difficult lesson, how to learn to die.
I never thought there had been such an act,
And 'tis the only discipline we are born for.
All studies as are, are but as circular lines
And death the centre where they must all meet.
I now can look upon thee, erring woman,
And not be vexed with jealousy; on young men,
And no way envy their delicious health,
Pleasure and strength, all which were once mine own,
And mine must be their's one day.

DUKE
You have tamed him.

SIMONIDES
And know how to dispose him. That, my liege,

⁴ pepper'd] Bullen ; prepar'd Q.

Hath been before determined. You confess
Yourself of full age?

LISANDER
Yes, and prepared to inherit –

EUGENIA
Your place above!

SIMONIDES
Of which the hangman's strength
Shall put him in possession.

LISANDER
'Tis still
To take me willing and in mind to die,
And such are, when the earth grows weary of them,
Most fit for heaven.

SIMONIDES
The court shall make his mittimus
And send him thither presently.

DUKE
Guard! Away to death with him!

SIMONIDES
In the meantime –

Enter a guard with CLEANTHES, HIPPOLITA weeping after him.

So! See, another person brought to the bar!

FIRST COURTIER
The arch malefactor!

SECOND COURTIER
The grand offender! The most refractory
To all good order! 'Tis Cleanthes,
He –

SIMONIDES
That would have sons grave fathers ere their fathers
Be sent unto their graves.

The Old Law

DUKE

There will be expectation
 In your severe proceedings against him,
 His act being so capital.

SIMONIDES

Fearful and bloody!
 Therefore we charge these women leave the court
 Lest they should swoon to hear it.

EUGENIA

Aye, in expectation
 Of a most happy freedom!

Exit.

HIPPOLITA

Ay, with the apprehension
 Of a most sad and desolate widowhood!

Exit.

FIRST COURTIER

We bring him to the bar.

SECOND COURTIER

Hold up your hand, sir.

CLEANTHES

More reverence to the place than to the persons!
 To the one I offer up a palm
 Of duty and obedience showed [th]us to heaven,
 Imploring justice which was never wanting
 Upon that bench whilst their own fathers sat.
 But unto you, my hand's contracted thus,
 As threatening vengeance against murderers;
 For they that kill in thought, shed innocent blood!
 With pardon to your Highness, too much passion
 Made me forget your presence and the place
 I now am called to.

DUKE

All our Majesty⁵
And power we have to pardon or condemn,
Is now conferr'd on them.

SIMONIDES

And these we'll use
Little to thine advantage.

CLEANTHES

I expect it.
And as to these, I look no mercy from [them]
And much less shown to entreat it. I thus now
Submit me [to] the emblems of your power, I mean
The sword and bench. But, my most reverend judges,
Ere you proceed to sentence, for I know
You have given me lost, will you resolve me one thing?

FIRST COURTIER

So it be briefly questioned.

SECOND COURTIER

Show your honour,
Day spends itself apace.

CLEANTHES

My lords, it shall
Resolve me then. Where are your filial tears,
Your mourning habits, and sad hearts become,
That should attend your fathers' funeral?
Though the strict law, which I will not accuse
Because a subject, snatched away their lives,
It doth not bar you⁶ to lament their deaths;
Or, if you cannot spare one sad suspire,
It doth not bid you laugh them to their graves,
Lay subtle trains to antedate their years,
To be the sooner seized of their estates.
Oh time of age! Where's that Aeneas now,
Who, letting all his jewels to the flames,
Forgetting country, kindred, treasure, friends,
Fortunes, and all things save the name of son,

⁵ our Majesty] Shaw ; one majesty Q.

⁶ you] Shaw ; them Q.

The Old Law

Which you so much forget? Go like Aeneas,
 Who took his bedrid father on his back,
 And with the sacred load, to him no burden,
 Hewed out his way through blood, through fire, through
 Even all the armed streets of bright-burning Troy,
 Only to save a father.

SIMONIDES

We have no leisure now
 To hear lessons read from Virgil, we are past school
 And all this time thy judges.

SECOND COURTIER

'Tis fit that we proceed to sentence.

FIRST COURTIER

You are the mouth,
 And now 'tis fit to open.

SIMONIDES

Justice, indeed,
 Should ever be close-eared and open-mouthed,
 That is, to hear him little and speak much.
 Lo, then, Cleanthes, there's none can be
 A good son and a bad subject, for if Princes,
 Be called the people's fathers, then the subjects
 Are all his sons, and he that flouts the Prince
 Doth disobey his father. There ye are gone.

FIRST COURTIER

And not to be recovered.

SIMONIDES

And again –

SECOND COURTIER

If he be gone once, call him not again.

SIMONIDES

I say again, this act of thine expresses
 A double disobedience. As our Princes
 Are fathers, so they are our sovereigns too,
 And he that doth rebel against sovereignty
 Doth commit treason in the height of degree.

And now thou art quite gone.

FIRST COURTIER

Our brother in commission
 Hath spoke his mind both learnedly and neatly,
 And I can add but little, howsoever
 It shall send him packing.
 He that begins a fault that wants example,
 Ought to be made example for the fault.

CLEANTHES

A fault! No longer can I hold myself
 To hear vice upheld and virtue thrown down.
 A fault! Judge, then, I desire, where it lieth,
 In those that are my judges or in me.
 Heaven stand on my side! Pity love and duty!

SIMONIDES

Where are they, sir? Who sees them but yourself?

CLEANTHES

Not you, and I am sure;
 You never had the gracious eyes to see them.
 You think you arraign me, but I hope
 To sentence you at the bar.

SECOND COURTIER

That would show brave!

CLEANTHES

This were the judgment seat. We know
 The heaviest crimes that ever made up
 Unnaturalness in humanity,
 You are found foul and guilty by a jury
 Made of your fathers' curses which have brought
 Vengeance impending on you, and I now
 Am forced to pronounce judgment of my judges.
 The common laws of reason and of nature
 Condemn you *ipso facto*! You are parricides,
 And if you marry will beget the like⁷,
 Who, when grown to full maturity,
 Will hurry you, their fathers, to your graves⁸.

⁷ the like] Shaw ; the lyar Q.

The Old Law

Like traitors, you take counsel from the living;
 Of upright judgment, you would rob the bench;
 Experience and discretion snatch away
 From the earth's face; turn all into disorder,
 Imprison virtue, and enfranchise vice;
 And put the sword of justice into the hands of
 Boys and madmen.

SIMONIDES

Well, well, have you done, sir?

CLEANTHES

I have spoke my thoughts.

SIMONIDES

Then I'll begin and end.

DUKE

'Tis time I now begin,
 Where your commission ends.
 Cleanthes, you come from the bar.
 Because I know you're severally disposed,
 I here invite you to an object will, no doubt,
 Work in you contrary effects.
 Music!

Music sounds and the old men⁹ appear.

CLEANTHES

Pray heaven I dream not! Sure he moves, talks comfortably
 As joy can wish a man. If he be changed
 Far above from me, he is not ill-treated¹⁰.
 His face doth promise fullness of content
 And glory hath a part in't.

LEONIDES

Oh, my son!

DUKE

You that can claim acquaintance with these lads,

⁸ your graves] Shaw ; their graves Q.

⁹ *The old men*] Q (*Sons and the old men*).

¹⁰ ill-treated] Shaw ; ill intreated Q.

Talk freely!

SIMONIDES

I can see none there that's worth one hand to you from me.

DUKE

These are thy judges, and by their grave law
I find thee clear, but these delinquents guilty.
You must change places, for 'tis so decreed
Such just pre-eminence hath thy goodness gain'd;
Thou art the judge now, they the men arraign'd.

FIRST COURTIER

Here's fine dancing, gentlemen!

SECOND COURTIER

Is thy father amongst them?

SIMONIDES

Oh, a pox! I saw him the first thing I looked on.
Alive again! 'Slight, I believe now a father
Hath as many lives as a mother.

CLEANTHES

'Tis full as blessed as 'tis wonderful!
Oh, bring me back to the same law again,
I'm fouler than all these! Seize on me, officers,
And bring me to new sentence.

[DUKE]¹¹

What's all this?

CLEANTHES

A fault not to be pardoned!
Unnaturalness is but sun's shadow to it.

SIMONIDES

I am glad of that; I hope the case may alter
And I turn judge again.

DUKE

Name your offense.

¹¹ DUKE] attribué à CLEANTHES dans Q.

The Old Law

CLEANTHES

That I should be so vile
As once to think you cruel.

DUKE

Is that all?
'Twas pardoned ere confessed. You that have sons,
If they be worthy, here may challenge them.

CREON

I should have one amongst them, had he had grace
To have retained that name.

SIMONIDES

I pray you, father.

Kneels.

CREON

That name I know
Hath been long since forgot.

SIMONIDES [*Aside*]

I find but small comfort in remembering it now.

DUKE

Cleanthes, take your place with these grave fathers
And read what in that table is inscribed.
Now set these at the bar,
And read, Cleanthes, to the dread and terror
Of disobedience and unnatural blood.

CLEANTHES

*It is decreed by the grave and learned council of Epire, that no son and heir shall
be held capable of his inheritance at the age of one-and-twenty, unless he be at
that time as mature in obedience, manners, and goodness.*

SIMONIDES

Sure, I shall never be at full age then, though I live to an hundred years, and that's
nearer by twenty than the last statute allowed.

FIRST COURTIER

A terrible act!

CLEANTHES

Moreover is enacted that all sons aforesaid, whom either this law, or their own grace, whom it shall reduce into the true method of duty, virtue, and affection, relate their trial and approbation from Cleanthes, the son of Leonides, –
From me, my lord?

DUKE

From none but you as fullest. Proceed, sir.

CLEANTHES

Whom for his manifest virtues, we make such judge and censure of youth, and the absolute reference of life and manners.

SIMONIDES

This is a brave world! When a man should be
Selling land, he must be learning manners.
Is it not, my masters?

Enter EUGENIA.

EUGENIA

What's here to do? My suitors at the bar?
The old band shines again, oh miserable!

*She swoons*¹².

DUKE

Read the law over to her, 'twill awake her.
'Tis one deserves small pity.

CLEANTHES

Lastly, it is ordained that all such wives now whatsoever that shall design the[ir] husbands' death to be soon rid of them and entertain suitors in their husbands' lifetime –

SIMONIDES

You had best read that a little louder,
For if anything, that will bring her to herself again, and find her tongue.

CLEANTHES

¹² *She swoons*] Q (*She sounds*).

The Old Law

Shall not presume, on the penalty of our heavy displeasure, to marry within ten years after.

EUGENIA

That law's too long by nine years and a half;
I'll take my death upon't, so shall most women.

CLEANTHES

And those incontinent women so offending, to be judge[d] and censured by Hippolita, wife to Cleanthes.

EUGENIA

Of all the rest, I'll not be judge[d] by her.

Enter HIP[POLITA].

CLEANTHES

Ah, here she comes. Let me prevent thy joys,
Prevent them but in part and hide the rest,
Thou hast not strength enough to bear them else.

HIPPOLITA

Leonides!

She faints.

CLEANTHES

I feared it all this while.
I knew 'twas past thy power, Hippolita.
What contrariety is in women's blood?
One faints for spleen and anger, she for grace.

DUKE

Of sons and wives, we see the worst and best;
May¹³ future ages yield Hippolitas
Many, but few like thee, Eugenia.
Let no Simonides henceforth have a fame,
But all blest sons live in Cleanthes' name.

Music.

Ha, what strange kind of melody was that?

¹³ May] Q (My).

Yet give it entrance, whatsoe'er it be.
This day is all devout to liberty.

Enter Clown and Wench, the rest with the old women, the Clown's wife. Music, and a bride's cake to the wedding.

CLOWN
Fiddlers, crowd on, crowd on; let no man lay a block in your way. Crowd on, I say!

DUKE
Stay the crowd awhile, let's know the reason
Of this jollity.

CLEANTHES
Sirrah, do you know where you are?

CLOWN
Yes, sir, I am here, now here, and now here again, sir.

LISANDER
Your hat's too high-crowned: the Duke in presence.

CLOWN
The Duke? As he is my sovereign, I do give him two crowns for it, and that's equal change all the world over. As I am lord of the day, being my marriage day the second, I do advance bonnet. Crowd on afore!

LEONIDES
Good sir, a few words if you'll vouchsafe 'em,
Or will you be forced?

CLOWN
Forced? I would the duke himself would say so!

DUKE
I think he dares, sir, and does. If you stay not,
You shall be forced.

CLOWN
I think so, my lord, and good reason too. Shall not I stay when your Grace says I shall? I were unworthy to be a bridegroom in any part of your Highness' dominions then. Will it please you to taste of the wedlock courtesy?

The Old Law

DUKE

Oh, by no means, sir. You shall not deface
So fair an ornament for me.

CLOWN

If your Grace be pleased to be cakated, say so.

[DUKE]¹⁴

And which might be your fair bride, sir?

CLOWN

This is my two-for-one that must be *uxor uxoris*,
The remedy *doloris*, and the very *syceum amoris*.

DUKE

And hast thou any else?

CLOWN

I have an older, my lord, for other uses.

CLEANTHES

My lord, I do observe a strange decorum here.
These that do lead this day of jollity,
Do march with music and most mirthful cheeks;
Those that do follow, sad and woefully,
Nearer the 'haviour of a funeral
Than a wedding.

DUKE

'Tis true, pray expound that, sir.

CLOWN

As the destiny of the day falls out, my lord, one goes out to wedding, another goes to hanging. And your Grace, in the due consideration, shalt find 'em much alike; the one hath the ring upon her finger, the other a halter about her neck. "I take thee Beatrice," says the bridegroom. "I take thee Agatha," says the hangman. And both say together, "to have and to hold till death do part us."

DUKE

This is not yet plain enough to my understanding.

CLOWN

¹⁴ DUKE] attribué à CLOWN dans Q.

If further your Grace examine it, you shall find I show myself a dutiful subject and obedient to the law. Myself, with these my good friends and your good subjects, our old wives whose days are ripe and their lives forfeit to the law: only myself, more forward than the rest, am already provided of my second choice.

DUKE

Oh, take heed, sir; you'll run yourself into danger
If the law finds you with two wives at once.
There's a shrewd premunire.

CLOWN

I have taken leave of the old, my lord; I have nothing to say to her: she's going to sea. Your Grace knows whither better than I do. She has a strong wind with her; it stands full in her poop. When you please, let her disemboque.

COOK

And the rest of her neighbours with her whom we present to the satisfaction of your Highness' law.

CLOWN

And so we take our leaves and leave them to your Highness. Crowd on!

DUKE

Stay, stay, you are too forward. Will you marry
And your wife yet living?

CLOWN

Alas, she'll be dead before we can get to church, if your Grace would set her in the way. I would dispatch her, I have a venture on it which would return me, if your Highness would make a little more haste, two for one.

DUKE

Come, my lords, we must sit again. Here's a case
Craves a most serious censure.

COOK

Now they shall be dispatched out of the way.

CLOWN

I would they were gone [at] once. The time goes away.

DUKE

Which is the wife unto the forward bridegroom?

The Old Law

AGATHA

I am, and it please your Grace.

DUKE

Trust me, a lusty woman, able-bodied,
And well-blooded cheeks.

CLOWN

Oh, she paints, my lord. She was a chamber-maid once and learned it of her lady.

DUKE

Sure, I think she cannot be so old.

AGATHA

Truly, I think so too, and please your Grace.

CLOWN

Two to one with your Grace of that: she's threescore by the book.

LEONIDES

Peace, sirrah, you're too loud!

COOK

Take heed, Gnothos, if you move the Duke's patience; 'tis an edge tool: but a word
and a blow, he cuts off your head.

CLOWN

Cut off my head? Away, ignorant! He knows it costs more in the hair; he does not
use to cut off many such heads as mine. I will talk to him too. If he cut off my
head, I'll give him my ears. I say my wife is at full age for the law. The clerk shall
take his oath and the church-book shall be sworn too.

DUKE

My lords, I leave this censure to you.

LEONIDES

Then, first, this fellow does deserve punishment
For offering up a lusty, able woman
Which may do service to the commonwealth,
Where the law craves one impotent and useless.

CREON

Therefore, to be severely punished
For thus attempting a second marriage

His wife yet living.

LISANDER

Nay, to have it trebled,
That even the day and instant when he should mourn
As a kind husband to her funeral,
He leads a triumph to the scorn of it,
Which unseasonable joy ought to be punished
With all severity.

BUTLER

The fiddles will be in a foul case too, by and by.

LEONIDES

Nay, further, it seems he has a venture
Of two for one at his second marriage,
Which cannot be but a conspiracy
Against the former.

CLOWN

A mess of wise old men!

LISANDER

Sirrah, what can you answer to all these?

CLOWN

Ye are good old men and talk as age will give you leave. I would speak with the youthful Duke himself; he and I may speak of things that shall be thirty of forty years after you are dead and rotten. Alas, you are here today and gone to sea tomorrow.

DUKE

In truth, sir, then I must be plain with you.
The law that should take away your old wife from you,
The which I do perceive was your desire,
Is void and frustrate, so for the rest.
There has been since another parliament
Has cut it off.

CLOWN

I see your Grace is disposed to be pleasant.

DUKE

Yes, you might perceive that, I had not else

The Old Law

Thus dallied with your follies.

CLOWN

I'll talk further with your Grace when I come back from church. In the meantime, you know what to do with the old women.

DUKE

Stay, sir, unless in the meantime you mean
I cause a gibbet to be set up in your way,
And hang you at your return.

AGATHA

Oh, gracious Prince!

DUKE

Your old wives cannot die today by any
Law of mine. For aught I can say to 'em
They may, by a new edict, bury you.
And then, perhaps, you pay a new fine too.

CLOWN

This is fine, indeed!

AGATHA

Oh, gracious Prince, may he live a hundred years more!

COOK

Your venture is not like to come in today, Gnothos.

CLOWN

Give me the principal back.

COOK

Nay, by my troth, we'll venture still, and I'm sure we have as ill a venture of it as you, for we have taken old wives of purpose, where that we had thought to have put away at this market and now we cannot utter a pennyworth.

DUKE

Well, sirrah, you were best to discharge
Your new charge, and take your old one to you.

CLOWN

Oh music! No music, but prove most doleful trumpets;
Oh bride! No bride, but thou mayest prove a strumpet;

Oh venture! No venture, I have for one now none;
 Oh wife! Thy life is sav'd when I hoped it had been gone.
 Case up your fruitless strings; no penny, no wedding;
 Case up thy maidenhead; no priest, no bedding.
 Avaunt my venture; it can ne'er be restored,
 Till Ag, my old wife, be thrown overboard.
 Then, come again, old Ag, since it must be so,
 Let bride and venture with woeful music go.

COOK

What for the bride's cake, Gnothos?

CLOWN

Let it be mouldy, now 'tis out of season;
 Let it grow out of date, current and reason;
 Let it be chipped and chopped, and given to chickens,
 No more is got by that than William Dickens
 Got by his wooden dishes!
 Put up your plums as fiddlers put up pipes,
 The wedding dashed, the bridegroom
 Weeps and wipes!
 Fiddlers, farewell, and now, without perhaps,
 Put up your fiddles as you put up scraps!

LISANDER

This passion has given some satisfaction yet,
 My lord, I think you'll pardon him now
 With all the rest, so they live honestly
 With the wives they have.

DUKE

Oh, most freely! Free pardon to all!

COOK

Ay, we have deserved our pardons if we can live honestly with such reverend
 wives that have no motion in 'em but their tongues.

AGATHA

Heaven bless your Grace, you're a just Prince.

CLOWN

All hopes dashed, the clerk's duties lost;
 Venture gone, my second wife divorced;
 And which is worse, the old one come back again!

The Old Law

Such voyages are made now-a-days. I will weep two salt
 Of our nose, besides these two fountains of fresh water.
 Your Grace had been more kind to your young subjects.
 Heaven bless and mend your laws that they do
 Not gull your poor countrymen [in this] fashion. But I am not
 The first by forty that has been undone by the law;
 'Tis but a folly to stand upon terms.
 I take my leave of your Grace, as well as mine eyes will give me leave. I would
 they had been asleep in their beds when they opened 'em to see this day! Come,
 Ag, come, Ag.

[*Exeunt*].

CREON
 Were not you all my servants?

COOK
 During your life, as we thought, sir, but our young master turned us away.

CREON
 How headlong [a] villain wert thou in thy ruin!

SIMONIDES
 I followed the fashion, sir, as other young men did.
 If you were¹⁵ as we thought you had been,
 We should ne'er have come for this, I warrant you.
 We did not feed, after the old fashion, on beef
 And mutton and such like.

CREON
 Well, what damage or charge you have run
 Yourselves into by marriage, I cannot help,
 Nor deliver you from your wives: them you must keep.
 Yourselves shall again retain to me.

ALL
 We thank your lordship for your love, and must thank ourselves for our bad
 bargains.

[*Exeunt*].

DUKE

¹⁵ were] Shaw ; have Q.

Cleanthes, you delay the power of law
 To be inflicted on these misgovern'd men
 That filial duty have so far transgressed.

CLEANTHES

My lord, I see a satisfaction
 Meeting the sentence, even preventing it,
 Beating my words back in their utterance.
 See, sir, there's salt sorrow bringing forth fresh
 And new duties, as the sea propagates.
 The elephants have found their joints too. Why,
 Here's humility able to bind up
 The punishing hands of the severest masters,
 Much more the gentle fathers'.

SIMONIDES

I had ne'er thought to have been brought so low as my knees again, but, since
 there's no remedy, – Fathers, reverend fathers, as you ever hope to have good sons
 and heirs, a handful of pity! We confess we have deserved more than we are
 willing to receive at your hands, though sons can never deserve too much of their
 fathers, as shall appear afterwards.

CREON

And what way can you decline your feeding now?
 You cannot retire to beefs and muttoms, sure.

SIMONIDES

Alas, sir, you see a good pattern for that! Now we have laid by our high and lusty
 meats and are down to our mary bones already.

CREON

Well, sir, rise to virtues! We'll bind¹⁶ you now;
 You that were too weak yourselves to govern,
 By others shall be governed.

LISANDER

Cleanthes, I meet your justice with reconciliation.
 If there be tears of faith in woman's breast,
 I have received a myriad which confirms me
 To find a happy renovation.

¹⁶ bind] Shaw ; bound Q.

The Old Law

CLEANTHES

Here's virtue's throne,
 Which I'll embellish with my dearest jewels
 Of love and faith, peace and affection!
 This is the altar of my sacrifice,
 Where daily my devoted knees shall bend.
 Age-honoured shrine! Time still so love you
 That I so long may have you in mine eye,
 Until my memory lose your beginning.
 For you, great Prince, long may your fame survive,
 Your justice and your wisdom never die!
 Crown of your crown, the blessing of your land,
 Which you reach to her from your regent's hand!

LEONIDES

Oh, Cleanthes, had you with us tasted
 The entertainment of our retirement,
 Feared and exclaimed on in your ignorance,
 You might have sooner died upon the wonder
 Than any rage or passion for our loss.
 A place at hand we were all strangers in;
 So sphered about with music, such delights,
 Viands, and attendance, and, once a day
 So cheered with a royal visitant,
 That oftentimes waking, our unsteady fantasies
 Would question whether we yet lived or no,
 Or had possession of that paradise
 Where angels be the guard.

DUKE

Enough, Leonides,
 You go beyond the praise. We have our end,
 And all is ended well. We have now seen
 The flowers and weeds that grew about our court.

SIMONIDES

If these be weeds, I'm afraid I shall wear none so good again as long as my father
 lives.

DUKE

Only this gentleman we did abuse
 With our own bosom; we seemed a tyrant
 And he, our instrument. Look, 'tis Cratilus,
 The man that you suppos'd had now been travell'd,

Which we gave leave to learn to speak
And bring us foreign languages to Greece.
All's joyed, I see. Let music be the crown
And set it high: "the good needs fear no law;
It is his safety, and the bad man's awe."

Finis.