

Love's Labour's Lost

Princess of France	<i>(Turning to Boyet) With what?</i>
Boyet	That which we lovers entitle affected.
Princess of France	Your reason?
Boyet	Why, all his behaviours did make their retire To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire. His face's own margent did quote such amazes That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes. I'll give you Aquitaine and all that is his, And you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.
Princess of France	<i>(Indignant that Boyet should suggest such a thing. She starts to sweep off towards SR, indicating as she says with a degree of sarcasm) Come, to our pavilion. Boyet is disposed.</i>
<i>Princess of France halts and turns once Boyet starts speaking.</i>	
Boyet	But to speak that in words which his eye hath disclosed; I only have made a mouth of his eye, By adding a tongue which I know will not lie. Do you hear, my mad wench?
Maria	No.
Boyet	What, then. Do you see?
Maria	Ay, our way to be gone.
Boyet	You are too hard for me.
<i>They all exit off SR and move over to the cover of the trees near the lower car park.</i>	
Scene 4	Act 3 Scene 1
<i>As the actors exit, seven children shuffle uncertainly onstage from DSR, in a line, moving sideways, with stupid grins on their faces as they pass the departing actors and emerge onto the stage. They continue shuffling sideways, shoulder to shoulder, until they reach CS. They are dressed in all brown costumes (leggings and tops with long sleeves). They are carrying a piece of foliage in each hand. There is a long pause as they each look around, at each other and perhaps smile inanely at the audience. The two at either end of the line each wave shyly at a particular member of the audience and whisper audibly "Hello Mum" and "Hello Dad". Oak, the first speaker (who should be CS) breaks the silence whenever he/she wants to but after a minimum of 10 seconds.</i>	
Oak	What are we doing here?
Beech	Audition for a part, they said.
Birch	Yes, a speaking part, they said!
<i>The trees now break their line and go to different parts of the stage as they continue their conversation.</i>	
Pine	In a Shakespeare play.
Poplar	My Mum said it would be good for me to do this.
Dogwood	So did mine – "experience some culture", she said
Sycamore	Waste less time on Facebook and Snapchat.

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Beech	My Dad just wanted me out of the house.
Oak	Yes, but what are we doing here?
Dogwood	We're props. We're supposed to act like a forest, I think.
Birch	Act like a forest?
Sycamore	Yes, you know <i>(makes the shape of a tree with foliage)</i> . Like a tree.
Pine	It's method acting. Don't you know your Stanislavski?
Beech	I thought he made helicopters.
Oak	But I'm not that kind of actor.
Poplar	What sort are you, then?
Oak	<i>(Really OTT)</i> I'm a classically trained actor, well versed in the works of the Bard. I do all the big parts.
Beech	But not trees?
Oak	<i>(Haughtily)</i> I don't do trees.
Birch	Perhaps you need to branch out...
<i>All the trees apart from Dogwood and Oak groan loudly. Dogwood just looks puzzled.</i>	
Pine	Get back to your roots....
<i>All the trees apart from Dogwood and Oak groan more loudly. Dogwood still looks puzzled.</i>	
Poplar	Take a leaf out of another book....
Beech	Let your sap flow....
<i>All the trees apart from Dogwood and Oak groan really loudly.</i>	
Dogwood	<i>(Small pause, still looking puzzled. Then to audience)</i> Anyone got a pun about bark?
Oak	<i>(Moving SL and with real melodrama)</i> Be to, or not be to. The question that is.
Pine	You what?
Oak	<i>(Getting into it)</i> Romeo, Romeo, art thou wherefore, Romeo?
Poplar	I beg your pardon?
Oak	<i>(With full blown passion)</i> Countrymen, friends, Romans, your ears lend me.
Birch	<i>(Pauses, hands on hips)</i> But you're using all the wrong words.
<i>Oak pauses and looks at the audience. He smiles through gritted teeth, then goes over to Birch (who should be CS at this point), grabs him firmly by the lapels and pulls him towards his face so that they end up inches apart, eyeball to eyeball. There is a dramatic pause as Oak stares into Birch's eyes.</i>	
Oak	<i>(Quietly but with feeling)</i> I'm using all the right words but not necessarily in the right order, I'll give you that. I'll give you that, sunshine.
<i>Oak slaps Birch a couple of times on his downstage cheek as he turns to sheepishly grin at the audience through gritted teeth.</i>	

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<p><i>This is a take on a very famous Morecambe and Wise gag. To see how it should be played and delivered, look up Andre Previn, Morecambe and Wise on YouTube. This variant will get laughs so Sycamore needs to time his next line so that the words are not lost.</i></p>	
Sycamore	Guys, I can hear someone coming. We need to spread out and look like a forest.
Pine	Yes, and stand very, very still. So that (<i>indicates audience</i>) this lot think we really are trees.
Poplar	But they know we're not – we've been standing here on stage talking for ages whilst waiting for something to happen.
Dogwood	That's Shakespeare for you!
<p><i>They all spread out and take up "tree" poses. Trees need to remain "frozen" throughout the ensuing dialogue, except as indicated, where they strike a pose in reaction to something said on stage then swiftly revert to being trees once Armado looks at them.</i></p> <p><i>Armado and Moth enter from SR. The musicians need to be in the audience SL, ready to come on and sing when requested by Armado.</i></p>	
Armado	(<i>Beckoning on the singers</i>) Warble, minstrels. (<i>Going a bit OTT</i>) Make pass-i-on-ate my-a sense of-a hearing.
Sound (1 minute)	<i>The singers are in place as Armado finishes prancing around. They sing "Sweet Little Miss Blue Eyes", about two minutes of music.</i>
Armado	Sweet air, good minstrels. Here, for your troubles.
<p><i>Armado puts a small purse of coins in the hand of the lead singer who looks suitably grateful and motions to his fellow singers who quickly gather round. The singer has a firm grip on the purse allowing Armado to turn away with a flourish, thus extending a strong elastic thread that is attached to the purse. The singer is looking at his colleagues when he feels the tension in the elastic at which point he needs to release his grip so that the purse springs back to Armado. Hopefully the elastic/tension will be strong enough to have the purse spring across the gap (1-2 metres) between Armado and the lead singer. If there is only one coin in the purse it should be light enough. The singers then feign surprise and maybe a bit of indignation and exit DSL. All this happens as Armado continues to speak as below. He'll need to pause as and when the audience picks up on the visual gag and then pick up again as if nothing has happened.</i></p>	
Armado	(<i>To Moth</i>) Go give enlargement to the swain and bring him hither. (<i>Purse "pings" back to Armado</i>) I must employ him in a letter to my love.
Moth	Master, will you win your love with a French brawl?
Armado	How meanest thou? Brawling in French?
<p><i>There is a reaction from the trees as they break their freeze and two or three exclaim "Quel coups de poing?". Armado looks at the trees and they "refreeze".</i></p>	
Moth	No, my complete master; you forget your love. Learn her by heart!
Armado	By heart and in heart, boy.
Moth	And out of heart. By heart you love her because your heart cannot come by her. In heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her. And out of heart you love her, being out of heart that you cannot enjoy her.
Armado	I am all these three.

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Moth	<i>(Aside, gestures indicating Armado does go on a bit)</i> And three times as much more and yet nothing at all.
Armado	Fetch hither the swain, he must carry me a letter.
Moth	As swift as lead, sir!
Armado	I say lead is slow!
Moth	You are too swift, sir, to say so Is that lead slow which is fired from a gun?
Armado	He reputes me a cannon and the bullet, that's he, I shoot thee at the swain.
Moth	<i>(Thumping chest, dramatically)</i> Thump, then and I flee.
<i>Moth exits through the CS part of the audience and goes off to find Costard, who needs to be lurking offstage somewhere behind the audience on the SL side of the horseshoe.</i>	
Armado	A most acute juvenal; volable and free of grace! By thy favour, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face; Most rude melancholy, valour gives thee place.
<i>Armado sees Moth and Costard coming back on the SL side of the audience. Costard enters with Moth in pursuit.</i>	
Costard	I, Costard, running out that was safely within Fell over the threshold and broke my shin.
<i>As Costard speaks, he demonstrates by running full tilt across the stage "tripping" over something, performing a perfect forward roll ending up on the ground rubbing his shin.</i>	
Armado	What's done tis done; we will speak no more of it. Sirrah Costard, I give thee thy liberty and in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this. Bear this significant letter.... <i>(hands Costard a letter; Costard takes it in both hands, with reverence, holds it up to all sides of the audience, kisses it gently or whatever other OTT actions the actor wants to interject, with Armado pausing speech during this performance)</i> this letter to the country maid Jaquenetta. <i>(Costard doffs his cap to Armado, clearly expecting payment. Armado puts a coin in the hat)</i> There is remuneration. <i>(Beckoning Moth)</i> Moth, follow.
<i>Armado and Moth exit USR and away from the audience. Costard runs after them, waving a fond farewell with the letter.</i>	
Costard	My sweet ounce of man's flesh! <i>(He turns and wanders back to CS.)</i> Now will I look to his remuneration.
<i>He picks out the coin from his hat, looks at it disdainfully, checks the hat for more coins by turning it upside down and shaking it and then stands CS, holding the coin up in one hand, his hat in the other.</i>	
Costard	Remuneration? <i>(Looks with disdain at the coin, moves freely during the following, perhaps starting at the LHS of the horseshoe and working round it, showing the coin to the audience as he holds a conversation with himself)</i> Tcch! Oh, that's the Latin word for three farthings. 'What's the price of this inkle?' 'One penny' 'No, I'll give you a remuneration'. Why, it carries it. <i>(Gestures USR at departed Armado)</i> Ree-errr-mooooon-errr-rrration! Why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will never buy and sell out of this word!

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<i>Costard is now USR as Berowne comes bounding through the audience DSR and hails Costard</i>	
Berowne	My good knave Costard, exceedingly well met!
<i>This next bit of dialogue needs to be tightly cued and rapidly delivered.</i>	
Costard	<i>(Coming towards Berowne)</i> Pray you, sir, how much carnation ribbon may a man buy for a remuneration?
Berowne	What is a remuneration?
Costard	Marry, sir, halfpenny farthing.
Berowne	Why, then, three-farthing worth of silk
Costard	<i>(To audience)</i> I thank your worship. God be with you! <i>(He dashes off into the audience DSR)</i>
Berowne	<i>(Calling after him)</i> Stay, slave; I must employ thee. <i>(Costard reappears from the audience)</i> As thou wilt win my favour, do one thing for me.
Costard	When?
Berowne	This afternoon?
Costard	I will do it, sir. Fare you well! <i>(He dashes off again into the audience DSR)</i>
Berowne	<i>(Calling after him)</i> Thou knowest not what it is!
Costard	<i>(From the audience)</i> I shall know, sir, when I have done it.
Berowne	<i>(Frustrated)</i> Why, villain, thou must know first!
Costard	<i>(Appearing again from the audience DSR and bowing in mock courtesy)</i> I will come to your worship tomorrow morning.
Berowne	It must be done this afternoon. Hark, slave, it is but this. The Princess comes to hunt here in the park and in her train is a gentle lady, Rosaline they call her. Ask for her and to her white hand commend this sealed up counsel <i>(Hands Costard a letter which he tucks about his person)</i> . There's thy guerdon. <i>(Hands Costard a shilling)</i> Go!
Costard	<i>(Doesn't look at coin but says in disgust)</i> Guerdon! Tcch! <i>(Looks at coin with glee)</i> O sweet guerdon! <i>(Kisses coin. Gesticulates offstage in the USR direction that Armado departed)</i> Better than a ree-moon-err-ration! Eleven-pence farthing better! I will do it, sir. <i>(Holding up the shilling high, lovingly)</i> Guerdon! <i>(Holding the farthing much lower and with indifferent disgust)</i> Remuneration! <i>(Spits in mock disgust, then exits rapidly through audience DSR)</i>
Berowne	<i>(Free movement around the stage and this is real rapid-fire delivery, quite commedia dell'arte style)</i> And I, forsooth, in love, a wimpled, whining, wayward boy. This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, regent of love-rhymes, liege of all loiterers and malcontents, king of codpieces and great general of trotting paritors. I seek a wife, <i>(very small pause)</i> a woman that is like a German clock, still a-repairing, ever out of frame and never going aright. To love that whitely wanton with a velvet brow, to sigh for her, to watch for her, to pray for her! Go to! It is a plague that Cupid will impose for my neglect of his almighty dreadful little might. Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan. Some men must love my lady and some Joan. <i>(Exits USR)</i>

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<i>The trees come out of their poses and shake their arms and legs. They gather together CS.</i>	
Sycamore	What on earth was that all about?
Oak	Half-penny farthings, (<i>mimicking Costard</i>) reeee-mooooon-errrrrration and letters?
Dogwood	Just plot devices to keep (<i>indicates audience</i>) this lot on their toes.
Pine	Confused, more like. (<i>Picks on audience member</i>) Especially him/[her].
Poplar	Not many jokes though, were there.
Beech	No mention of trees, either.
Dogwood	But I've thought up a pun about bark!
Other trees	(<i>In unison, arms folded</i>) Go on then.
Dogwood	How do you identify a dogwood tree?
Other trees	(<i>In unison, arms still folded</i>) We don't know. How do you identify a dogwood tree?
Dogwood	By its bark!! (<i>Laughs uproariously at own joke</i>)
Birch	Is that the best you could come up with?
Dogwood	(<i>Really getting into this gag telling business</i>) How do trees access the internet?
Oak	Go on.....
Dogwood	They log on!! (<i>More laughter from Dogwood</i>) Where do saplings go to learn?
Sycamore	Tell me.....
Dogwood	Elementree school! (<i>Fits of giggles</i>) What do you get if you cross a tabby cat with a lemon tree?
Pine	I know I'm going to regret this but.....
Dogwood	A sour puss!!
Oak	(<i>Indicating Dogwood</i>) Someone get a chainsaw and lop off his branches.
Beech	Especially that bit wagging around near his mouth.
<i>Two deer (a stag with horns and a doe) appear in the USR area (having come down from the bin at the top of the lower car park) and start to munch on the long grass under the trees, in view of the audience. The deer are children dressed in suitable costumes that ensure the child's head is clearly visible and made up to look like a stag or doe's head, so the audience can see the panic in the chase, the nonchalance in the grass eating, etc.</i>	
Sycamore	(<i>Spotting the deer</i>) Hey, guys, time to scarper. There's deer heading this way and they eat anything in sight. And that might be our leaves.
Oak	Perhaps we can leave Dogwood here, then.
Pine	As a sacrifice.
Beech	To the God of bad tree jokes.
<i>Trees exit DSR and head back to tented area.</i>	