

# LEWD TALES

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ROBERT E. HOWARD



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# INTRODUCTION

These brief pieces were written by Robert E. Howard purely for his own enjoyment and for that of his friend Tevis Clyde Smith. Howard never sought publication for "Songs of Bastards," "Bastards All!" or "Ancient English Ballade," but simply sent them to Smith, among whose papers they were discovered after Smith's recent death. Obviously quite a lot of work went into these items. Perhaps Howard was working off otherwise-suppressed sexual energy by composing them. The sex element even of a story like "Red Nails" (originally titled "Red Flame of Passion") pales in comparison with these, and next to them the Wild Bill Clanton "spicies" look like Sunday School lessons. One can imagine the reaction of the proper and protective Mrs. Howard had she known of "Songs of Bastards"—or seen it published! Perhaps these pieces remained unsubmitted for fear they would cause scandal, though there were always pseudonyms behind which to conceal oneself. (One can imagine Howard's *own* reaction to seeing these manuscripts published under his real name *here!*)

No doubt the real reason these bits of bawdy ballad and prurient prose are coming to light only now is that no market would have existed for what was essentially museum piece pornography. If Howard was going to write hot sex, he couldn't help but write it in a Howardian manner—with plenty of historical texture and color, in this case much like the Solomon Kane tales that took place in England. Your average porn reader or writer is not liable to be much concerned about such things, but Howard was not average. This is the kind of ribaldry that would arouse both his literary and libidinal appetites. Perhaps you will feel the same way as you read these three brief works, but at any rate the material presented in *Lewd Tales* will provide an amusing glimpse at a hitherto unknown naughty side of Bawdy Bob Howard.

Robert M. Price  
Editor

# SONGS OF BASTARDS

An Idyll

ACT I

Scene 1.

*Enter Sir Hanlo Talltoole*

*Sir Hanlo:* Oh, the years they pass like a bleak jackass, chasing a flock of fillies; and I wish to hell I could sleep with Nell on a couch of roses and lillies. The seagulls fly in a dreaming sky and the hop-toad's smile is bitter; and the turtle dove sings a song of love to the snake and the tiger's litter. In the lure of the woods the bullfrog broods on the songs of Sappho's lovers, and the rattlesnake o'er the dreaming brake, flitters and flies and hovers. Oh, Nell, young Nell, if I were to tell of the thoughts that rise within me, oh, Nell, fair Nell, if I should tell—your husband would come and skin me.

*Enter a Sage*

*Sage:* Nay, say no more! Your inmost thoughts I read! I mark that wandering eye and deep-lined brow. Spit in my face, good sir, and call me cow, if I hit not the mark—a dame you need.

*Sir Hanlo:* 'Tis true, 'tis true—I say to you, I long for a comely lass! In a silken bed or a good woodshed or the deep savannah grass!

*Sage:* Good sir, her name?

*Sir Hanlo:* 'Tis known to fame. 'Tis the queen's young favorite, Nell!

*Sage:* Why, she's the wife of Sir Swearley Knife!

*Sir Hanlo:* Aye, damn his soul to hell!

*Sage:* Good sir, consider ere you rashly act! More comely chins than yours have oft been thwacked! And better men than you have lost their balls; one should take care where one's love wishing falls.

*Sir Hanlo:* I do not care; his wrath I'll dare! My sword's as long as his! If he cross my course I'll call him horse and spit in his homely phiz!

*Sage:* You speak belike a valiant man and true; yet do no thing for which you'd later rue.

*Sir Hanlo:* Let me get Nell where the cuckoo calls for a good long jazzing bout—Sir Swearley then can have my balls, for they'll be worn out!

*Sage:* I go to teach astrology today unto the queen—I tutor her, you know. To Nell I'll make convenient to say some words more fruitful than a song or lay, to make her take the route you'd wish her go.

*Sir Hanlo:* Damn my soul! 'Tis a noble role for a water-blooded sage! I warrant you're a blazing coal when it suits you to engage.

*Sage:* No more; we get along as best we can; and praises pay no debts of any man.

*Sir Hanlo:* I understand. Hold out your hand; there is a pound of gold.



*Sage:* Your Nell's the same as in your bed, most valiant sir and bold.

*Exit Sir Hanlo, singing:* I knocked upon her lattice-soft!  
 When the rising moon was red.  
 Her husband was up in the stable loft  
 With a serving wench, she said.  
 And she laughed with glee as she told to me  
 Of the tears the girl had shed.  
 But she shed more, the perfumed whore!  
 When her husband caught us in bed.

## Scene 2.

A room in the palace of the queen

*Sage:* Look ye, the stars guide all our varied paths—the loves of empresses, the regal wraths of kigns and potentates and knaves and fools, the lives of sailors and of boys in schools. Like iron bands they grip us to our trails, they look with brooding eyes on our weak tales—

*Queen:* Good master, you bring blushes to my face; I'll have a roof put on the squatting-place.

*Sage:* Good mistress, think the stars not to offend; if on the privies money you must spend, mend up the cracks whereby the serving men do view your queenly buttocks now and then.

*Nell:* I told you mistress! Scarce a day is passing, but through a crack some rude rough wight doth reach to pinch a lady-in-waiting on her breech. To me, fair mistress, it is embarrassing.

*Queen:* Tut tut! This is a strong and virile age. Sophistication thins no blood as yet. Red-blooded men must lust and shout and rage, and women be resigned to what they get. When men are strong and lusty, jovial, wild, they must also be brutal, darling child. The day shall come when men be meek and mild, but they are virile now, and undefiled by woman's rule and pale sophistication—take lesson from your sisters of less station. Look to the serving wenches, Nell, my pet, dost ever hear them rant and fume and fret because their lovers lack consideration? Why, men unskirt them in the city streets and their own lovers toss them naked in sheets. Apprentices oft shave their pubic hair and sometimes rape them in the public square. But they have found what you must find, my dear, that jovial men are fond of lusty cheer. The brutal part of men we can endure, when of a lusty master we are sure.

*Sage (aside):* Aye, speaks the mare who never had to feel the bitter quirt, the spur-enarmored heel.

*A lady-in-waiting:* Most kindly mistress, do not frown—should I my lord embrace, because today he knocked me down, and kicked me in the face?

*Queen:* No doubt he had sufficient cause; our husbands' orders are our laws. Our places, dear, are clear defined—obedience and a loving mind, respect and dutiful compliance to all our lords and masters bid us do; if we lift not our voices in defiance, we will not oft be beaten black and blue.

*Sage (aside):* Thus speaks the dame who never felt the wrack of angry faggots laid across her back.

*Nell:* My husband is a hasty lord, but never yet by birth or cord

or flat or fire or toasting bench, has he chastised me yet—

*Queen:* Dear wench—the feeling to Sir Swearley yet is new, of sharing his fair nuptial bed with you. And mark my words—true love you'll never espy till he has given you a blackened eye.

*Sage (aside):* They kiss the whip and hug the bloody chain. Almighty gods, wherein is human gain, if men climb up the eons, rung by rung, dragging the blind and brutish race which clung to that which rankly grows in primal mire—the jungle trail, the spear, the village fire—what gain if when they reach at last the height, they find their women yearning toward the night—aye, if they reach a higher rung at least, and women praise the talon of the beast?

*(Aloud):* Most noble mistress, you have truly spoken. A woman, like a mare, must needs be broken. To rule and rape and slaughter when he can, aye, that's the proper symbol of the man! And Mistress Nell, I know a noble youth—who hath, and this I swear is naught but truth!—a tool that must be measured by an ell!

*All:* The name of this fair youth we beg you tell!

*Sage:* Nay, nay, I'll whisper it to Mistress Nell. *(whispers):* It is Sir Hanlo Talltoole—even now he waits without for you to hear his vow.

*Nell:* My husband is indulgent, meek and kind. He will not know—I go this youth to find. *Exit.*

*Queen:* You all can go likewise. *(Exit all the serving wenches)* I like not staring eyes to watch my lessons in anatomy.

*Sage:* My mistress, there indeed we do agree.

*A Jester singing without:* Let us up in the hills together,  
For the sea-wind blows the sails.  
I have writ in a book of leather  
And sealed it with iron nails.

The pen was a bitter dagger  
And the ink was hard black blood,  
And the drunken letters stagger  
Like drunkards in a flood.

(Here is the scent of heather  
Fresh as a virgin wife.)  
I have nailed the leaves together  
And sealed the book of my life.

Murders, rapes and abortions,  
Cruelty, lust and hate,  
Vileness, theft and extortions,  
Fawning upon the great.

Ride with me ere we sever—  
I will hurl the book in the sea  
And turn my steed forever  
To the wastelands—ride with me!

*Exeunt*

ACT II

Scene 1.

A tavern

*A band of bastards, drunk and singing:* Life is a lot of hooley!

Drink to the stars above!

The bridal sheets are gooey

After a night of love!

*1st Bastard:* Send in a serving girl, mine host—

*2nd Bastard:* That we her luscious breech may toast.

*All:* We'll strip her bare and shave her hair and her modesty we will not spare.

*3rd Bastard:* Nay, we are strong, full-blooded men, for ravishing full able; bring the girls from their bedroom then, and we'll rape them on the table.

*4th Bastard:* Oh, the pride I feel, and the joy I take, when I wave my steel and the servants shake! They know my worth and they know my fist and it wakes my mirth to see them twist and wiggle and writhe when I wrench a wrist or kick a rump or two together their skulls I thump. I pledge my worth in my drinking can, like all my comrades I am a man!

*All:* Drink to our prowess in good brown beer! Never a man or a wench we fear!

*1st Bastard:* For each rape of mine, in bed or heath, I cut a nick in my dagger sheath! By bosom and buttock, lapse and law! It looks like the edges of a saw!

*2nd Bastard:* We have our sport with the serving men; I myself have gelded ten.

*3rd Bastard:* My wife thought to defy me! She met with swift disaster. I nailed her hands together, to show her I am master.

*4th Bastard:* Mine host, send in a serving girl; we'd give her comely rump a twirl.

*Enter a serving girl, trembling.*

*Serving wench:* Have mercy, master, you are strong, and I am young and weak—

*1st Bastard:* Then you must know we do no wrong by torturing the weak.

*All:* We are men, we are men! Brave as a lion in his den! You are weak and must obey, lest we make up our minds to spey—

*Serving wench:* Oh sirs, kind sirs, have mercy, lords!

*2nd Bastard:* Bring scourges, braziers, knives and cords! The strong can do no wrong.

*Serving wench:* Good sirs, I am an honest maid—

*3rd Bastard:* Better be ravished than be speyed. We make of you before we go, a harlot of a speyling—

*Serving wench:* Oh—

*Enter Sir Swearley Knife:* Now damn my soul, what do these varlets here?

*1st Bastard:* Good knight, we only came to drink some beer.

*Sir Swearley:* What are your cursed appetites to me? And what care I if ye drink beer or brine? Out, out on ye, ye common stinking swine! Get out—your faces I care not to see. Host, when I come to your low cursed dive, I've said before, I want it to myself; you low-bred ape, you whore-begotten elf, best heed my orders if you wish to thrive.

*Host:* My lord, I like 'em no better than yourself.

*2nd Bastard:* Good sir, we meant you no offense.

*Sir Swearley:* With such apologies we dispense. (*Strikes all of them in their faces*)

*All:* Good sir, we beg you mercy, sir, your wrath we meant not to incur.

*4th Bastard:* Sir, will you give us not a silver stiver, that we may drink to your bold heart and liver?

*Sir Swearley:* Swine! Satan spawn. Now get you gone. (*Spits in his eye*)

*4th Bastard:* Ha ha! Sir Swearley at his best! I vow, good sir, a noble jest.

*Sir Swearley:* Bah. You hate my very nuts, but to resist you haven't got the guts. Take this and get you forth out of my sight. I have a better business here this night. (*He flings coins on the floor and they all scramble for them*)

*All:* Good sir, we give you many thanks; may many strong sons fill your ranks.

*Exit all, including the landlord.*

*Sir Swearley:* My pretty wench, get on yon bench.

*Serving wench:* La, Sir Swearley, you make me blush.

*Sir Swearley:* Oh fie, my girl, obey and hush.

*Serving wench:* My lord, I know not what you mean.

*Sir Swearley:* Beware lest you arouse my spleen. Seek not to act the coquette now with me; the high born dames I meet give that enow.

*Serving wench:* My lord, sir, is a common girl a sow? And has she not a right to flattery? Think you a common girl enjoys such speech: "Lie down, my girl, and bare your pretty breech"? As if she were a very alley whore? Have I no right to ask some gallantry, and some pretensions of respect to me? Have I no right to gentleness—

*Sir Swearley:* No more! I'll pimp and prattle with a high born dame, and sham and lie, pretend to cloak my lust, but do not think that you shall get the same. You raise your skirts to me because you must. This high pretense, these high damn chivalric airs, these window singing, rhyming on the stairs—these things may dames demand in woman-chase to cloak the lust that is the brutal base. But by the gods I will not fop and fawn on such a wench as you from dusk to dawn.

*Serving wench:* My lord, sir, please—

*Sir Swearley:* Upon my knees I pledge each high born dame, till my soul is sore at each perfumed whore and the rules of the sordid game. But I will not kneel on a tavern floor at the feet of a serving wench; my pretty child, you shall sorrow more, an you lie not on that bench. *He lays her on the bench, lifts her dress and parts her legs. She is a blond.*

*Serving wench:* My lord, you do not this of my free will.

*Sir Swearley:* My girl, I'll spank you if you don't lie still.

There now, the joy begins. There, there, don't cry. Your little rump will wiggle with pleasure by and by. (*Aside, meditating between surges*) Now thank the gods, I have an honest wife! What better luck can any man ask of life, than to be sure, with wenches copulating, his wife a friend is not investigating? While with this dainty child I make so free, my wife at home is dreaming now of me. And truth, there is no greater glory than good virtue in a woman or a man.

*Serving wench:* Oh, goodness, sir, oh, love, oh dear! Sir Swearley,



darling, don't stop here! Unbearable pleasure beyond all measure! How can one man bring such good cheer?

*Sir Swearley, sardonically:* Now begin the rewards of sin!

*Serving wench:* Kiss me, sir!

*Sir Swearley:* By spear and spur, shall a knight halt in the fiercest strife, to trade his lance for a broken knife?

*Matthew Mule, singing without:* This is the tale of glory,

This the reward of battle—

A withered beldame's story,

And bleaching bones that rattle.

Knights their grim steeds bestriding,

To all the far world ends;

And bedroom courtiers riding

The wives of absent friends.

## Scene 2.

A room in a high-class tavern

*Sir Hanlo Talltoole and Nell Knife. A yellow dawn steals through the window.*

*Sir Hanlo:* Kissing the lips of the morning, the stars pale out in the east. My heart is grown cold with scorning the ancient mark of the beast. It is here, in my heart's deep cavern, changeless as love and hate—from the cave to the city tavern, it has gripped me close to my Fate. Time nor the times may alter, primitive, hairy and nude—realms and race may falter, back to the solitude. Back to the primal beaches, back to the cave of the ape—ever beyond there reaches a huge and abhorrent shape. His hands are set in my heart strings, his talons sink in my brain; shaking and silent his art sings ever a red refrain. Rise to the top of the ladder, till the constellations gape—out of the reach of the adder—never beyond the ape. He is there, in the abyss brooding, first to roar at your fall—he is there—in the stars intruding, where the sun is a silver ball. Build, consider and fashion, never can you escape—the black blind brutish passion, the lust of the hairy ape.

*Nell:* Sir Hanlo, dear, what are you talking of? And what is there to talk about but love?

*Sir Hanlo:* You are right, my girl—let me kiss that curl. Let me look in your starry eyes. I love not what is in your skull, but what is between your thighs. We have jazzed so fine and cozy since the first of the twilight fell. But now the East grows rosy and I am weary as hell. My testicles ache with weakness from this long jazzing bout; let me take you back to your husband before he finds us out.

*Nell, scornfully:* That gentle fool? That tender lout? If he should come, I'd throw him out! Kissing, and gallantry and all, just like a callow youth at a ball. Bah! Any man so gentle with his wife, is a weak-kneed fool like Sir Swearley Knife.

*Sir Hanlo, aside:* And only the other day, by Harry, they asked me why I did not marry!

*Nell:* Sir Hanlo, I might get a divorce and if I did—?

*Sir Hanlo:* Then call me horse—

*Enter the Sage:* Sir and my lady, hot upon your trail Sir Swearley comes—a warship in full sail!

*Nell:* Stand to't, Sir Hanlo, don't be routed—

*Sir Hanlo:* Sir Swearley's no man to be flouted! I know him better than you may know; before he comes, we'll rise and go!

*Sage:* Hold, owe ye not some pittance slight to me? Is it for nothing I did risk my life?

*Sir Hanlo:* Nay, here is gold.

*Sage:* It is a meager fee, for daring the revenge of Sir Swearley Knife.

*Nell:* Have you no romance in your watered veins? See you all things for gold?

*Sage:* Why, who are you two that I should take pains? Lady, I make so bold, as to assert: if on the rack I lay, I'd have no single glance to waste my way. As for this knight, why he is naught to me, nor am I to him—

*Sir Hanlo:* Enough, enough! Let be! Let us begone ere we are surely tracked—

*Enter Sir Swearley:* And I have caught you in the very act!

*Nell:* My husband!

*Sage:* Truel! Oh, woman's intuition!

*Sir Hanlo:* Hold, learned lord of higher erudition! How came Sir Swearley to find out our secret hiding place?

*Sage:* He paid me gold—I told him—there's the case.

*Sir Hanlo:* Vile traitor! To betray an honest friend!

*Sage:* No men are friends or honest.

*Sir Swearley:* Make an end! You had betrayed me, sage, likewise, but I suspicioned you and when you climbed the stairs outside I was upon them too.

*Nell:* My lord—

*Sir Swearley:* Speak not to me, you harlot low and vile! Mock not the man you plotted to defile, debase, degrade, dishonor, everything that you made holy by the nuptial ring. What are the married vows to you, you whore, the vows that had their birth in heaven's holy door? Did you not swear to be forever true? Oh, fiends of Hell, look up and shrink from you!

*Sage:* Ha ha ha! Ho ho! Ho ho! Clean as the dew and the melting snow, fair and pure as the rose leaf's life, this good wrong husband, Sir Swearley Knife!

*Sir Swearley:* Is there no honesty or virtue any more? Is the bridal bed no holier than the harlot's open door? Oh, women slink to Hell's own brink, haunted by demons seven, from the holiness of the nuptial rights, granted the husband in heaven!

*Sir Hanlo:* Gabriel, Michael, Moses and all, gave you your wife, I'm sure, with the option on her private parts, as long as the world endure.

*Sir Swearley:* Mock me not, liar and sot! Bastard and whore seducer! I am a saintly man and true, you base low damned traducer!

*Sage:* Boar glares at boar, aye, bull on bull! To take sides I'd be loath! Have on, have on, ye devil's spawn, and the devil take you both!

*Sir Swearley:* The husband's rights are holy; I'll have a vengeance fell, if there be a saint in heaven—

*Sage:* Or a single fiend in Hell!

*Nell:* My lord—

*Sir Swearley:* Speak not to me, you whore! Try the hardness of the

floor! (*Knocks her down*)

*Sir Hanlo:* Boar swine and woman-beater! Out with your blade! The sword in my hand is meeter than the cheek of a maid. (*They fight and Sir Hanlo disarms Sir Swearley*)

*Sir Hanlo:* Light the candle and sound the bell—greet Sir Swearley's soul in Hell. (*Sir Hanlo prepares to run Sir Swearley through*)

*Sage:* Be careful—if the blade should chance to bend upon the spine, why there's a sword to mend.

*Sir Swearley:* Thrust, bastard, thrust! When a wife is false the skies of heaven are Hell's red vaults.

*Nell, springing:* Nay, hold your hand, you bastard! My husband shall not be slain till every drop of the good red blood you spill from my weak vein.

*Sir Hanlo:* What, Nell! This brute, this beast can you still love?

*Nell:* True as the skies that loom so high above—my soul, my heart remains! I gave my body alone to you—my love to Sir Swearley still is true, and true my heart's red veins.

*Sage:* How strange the marvels of anatomy! Oh, woman, lovely woman! Oft I see the miracle of hearts that purely stay—but the vagina's weak and likes to stray.

*Nell:* I did not know till only now, how I loved my noble master! He was so kind and gentle I deemed him foolish, weak; love follows beatings faster, and blows true love may speak! My darling husband I will never be untrue in word or deed again to ye.

*Sir Swearley:* I've ruled you with a gentle rein; I'll teach you now by tears and pain to be a true and obedient wife, as doth become Sir Swearley Knife. I will give you slaps and blows; you will thrive like any rose. (*Exit with Nell*)

*Sir Hanlo:* Why, damn my soul to lower Hell! The minds of women, who can tell?

*Sage:* And so they go to the beast and brute; the high ideals will never suit. Now look ye, if you wish to win their charms, but let them feel the power of your arms.

*Sir Hanlo:* Not for a night with the queen herself, not for a horde of dames! Liar and pander and sot I be, all the villainies bide in me, yet through the sins and the shames of my sordid course I have kept them clean, pure as a virgin wife the last strange lorn ideals that I have held through life. I will not bruise a weaker's flesh for flaming hips or a sunfire mesh. If the women take not unto me, to Hell with them! Most airily!

*Sage:* Dewdrops melt in the flaming day; deadly idealist, go your way.

*Exit Sir Hanlo, singing:* Sunfire caught in the webs of my brain,

(The rising moon is white!)

Phantom forms on the ghostly plain.

(Come to my bed this night!)

Oh, the women smile and a man must live!

My fancy is far and free.

Let them to their husbands their red hearts give

If they give their buttocks to me.

*Sage:* The curtain falls upon the sordid scene; but still the actors on their course career.

*A beggar, singing without:* Now are the stars upbraiding!  
Strange and futile and fading—  
This is a moon-mazed world!  
Ere ever the stars were raiding  
Or the first faint sail unfurled,  
The gods were mazed at the riddle  
And the priests made dreams and lies  
That man should fry on the griddle  
Or ride the horse of the skies.  
And what is life but a vision,  
And what are the rules of the game  
But a cynical high derision  
That laughs at glory and shame?

*Sage:* Take ye the profit and the tainted spoil of treachery and labor, sin and toil! (*He tosses through the window all the money given him by Sir Swearley and Sir Hanlo*) They thought I wished their dirty slimy coins, the profits of a hundred women's loins. Bah! Damn them for a rouse and a sot; I wished them but to pay for what they got—and that, treachery and a debauched wife. Ha ha! This is a crazy jest, this life!

*Exit singing:* Men are toys on a godling's string;  
All of the world is chaff.  
Glory and honor, let them sing:  
I am content to laugh.

*Exeunt.*



# BASTARDS ALL !

## *Line-up*

Sir John Crappo	<i>a knight</i>
Damnbo	<i>a blackamoor</i>
Gowtu	<i>a whoreson</i>
Eve Hotbreech	<i>a serving woman</i>
Lady Joan Waist	<i>a nobleman</i>
Sir Onan Waist	<i>a nobleman</i>
Bet Reddrawers	<i>a prostitute</i>
Dorinda Bareseat	<i>a serving wench</i>
Matthew Mule	<i>a jackass</i>
a servant	<i>a servant</i>

## ACT I

### Scene 1

#### A Tavern in London

*Enter Gowtu*

*Gowtu:* Now, by all living devils and dead gods, may I roast in Hell! What a coil this is! This false knight, this beerkeg, this mole, this ox penis, this mule's rump, this bent rapier, this blunted dagger, this great-belly, this ale guzzler, why, out on him! A curse on him, say I or damn all!

*Enter Eve Hotbreech*

*Eve:* Good master, why rantest thou in such manner? Wouldst have the neighbors cry out on thee for a wild man?

*Gowtu:* Look to thy pots and scouring boards, wench. Jangle no scullery cans at me, hussy, lest I set thee above the fire. By faith, I shall give thee a change in cookery, for I gottest thee in the stews, but thou shalt have no stew but roast if thou mince matters with me. By my hilt thou shalt have a hotter breech than thy name implies.

*Enter Sir John Crappo*

*Sir John:* Now, how now, sir? What is forward, good tavern-keeper, good rogue, good whoreson?

*Gowtu:* An it please your lordship, I was about to lesson this saucy wench by giving her a turn above the fire, sir.

*Sir John:* An that were a perversion by nature, good host, since it is the natural destiny of such maids not to burn themselves, but to burn men!

*Eve:* Hadst thou ever burn of me, sir?

*Sir John:* Good wench, patience; 'twould scarce show in a fortnight. *(Kisses her)*

*Eve:* La, Sir John, wast ever a wild rogue, sir.

*Sir John:* Gowtu, a cup of sack. Go in, good wench, there are matters I must discuss with thy master which concern thee not.

*Gowtu:* Aye, sir. *(Aside to Eve)* Make not so free, mistress, be-

cause this whoreson knight averts my wrath; if I bare not thy buttocks to the fire, call me horse!

*Exit Eve*

*Sir John:* Gowtu, I must have your aid in a plan which I have in mind.

*Gowtu:* First, sir knight, what of the ten pound you owe me?

*Sir John:* How now, varlet, go to, Gowtu, go to! Why, thou goat droppings, thou pig hoof, thou knave, thou donkey's tail, thou dungheap, thou vulture's excrement, thou sparrow, thou red-breeched whoreson—oh, for words to tell thee what thou art! Oh, for a vocabulary to impeach thy infamy, to breathe forth thy vileness, to give to all the world the tale of thy dark and sinister knavery! Oh, for a Muslim muezzin whence to bellow forth to all sons of men thy foulness and perfidiousness! Oh, to drag to light all the dark demonry of thy mind—

*Gowtu:* Good sir, bully knight, kind lord, I beg thee, work thyself not into such a state! 'Tis bad for the liver. I did but jest, sir, turn thy battery elsewhere I beg thee.

*Sir John:* Then listen with respect as becometh a whoreson like thyself.

*Gowtu:* I do, sir.

*Sir John:* Look to't. Knowest thou the old badger game?

*Gowtu:* Faith, good sir, 'tis an uncouth beast, a most rude beast, sir—

*Sir John:* Go to, fool! I mean the game—knowest thou, rogue, whereby a dame doth ensnare a man of wealth into her bedroom. Then doth she bare her posterior and halloo 'Rape! Rape!' And one cometh in who doth dub himself her lord and protector, and with many great and valiant oaths, demands to know by what right the wight with her dares attempt to lie with his property. Then doth that gulled wretch, nine times out of ten, say, "Good sir, here is money, say no more about it." Thus is he shaken down for his wad, as the vulgar have it.

*Gowtu:* But what has this to do with my ten pounds, good sir?

*Sir John:* Gowtu, have a care! I am not a man to be bearded—

*Gowtu:* Good sir, leave thy rapier in its stocking. I but spoke in jest; I meant, what to do with the matter in hand?

*Sir John:* Because I have a mind to clothe the old whore with a new petticoat.

*Gowtu:* My wife is in France, sir, and hath a new petticoat.

*Sir John:* Go to, thick pate. I meant not your wife. 'Twas in a way of speaking. Look you, I mean to dress this affair in a new fashion. In a word, I mean to reverse the order and cozen a man by his wife, instead of being cozened by a man and wife.

*Gowtu:* But how come I in this noble plan, kind sir?

*Sir John:* Knoweth thou Sir Onan Waist?

*Gowtu:* Aye, sir, a more valiant whore-master never lived. He hath the longest tool in London, says Bet Reddrawers.

*Sir John:* And his wife, the Lady Joan?

*Gowtu:* That I do, sir, as virtuous and honest a dame as ever parted her legs for the serving man.

*Sir John:* Then attend me closely. She believes me an Eastern sultan.

*Gowtu:* Thou an Eastern sultan? Thou a vizier of Turks? Ho ho! Then were Mohammed a very malt worm and his viceroy a tapster!

*Sir John:* Enough of that. Now mark me, rogue, a dungheap is a

crystal mountain at ten leagues, and a glow worm seen afar may outshine Solomon of the Ebrews. As Sir John Crappo, knight of London, I might find scant favor in my lady's eyes, but as Sultan Ali El Bawdytoole of Turkey and points East I am a figure vested with high and romantic sexual sovereignty. May the Prophet reward E. M. Hull!

*Gowtu*: Wouldst damn thy soul by professing Mohammed, merely to sleep with a wench?

*Sir John*: Why, if thy conscience prick thee, then 'taints an end and thy ten pounds is gone to Hell, as the vulgar have it.

*Gowtu*: Nay, nay, that's a different matter. To turn heathen for a night of jazzery, that were a damnable thing, but money's a different matter, and if thou risk damnation in the paying of thy just debt, doubt not thou shalt be forgiven.

*Sir John*: No more of that. Tonight Lady Joan Waist comes here to hold tryst with Sultan Ali El Bawdytoole. See that she is put in the Elephant Room, with all due curtesy. Later I shall see to't that Sir Onan finds us together. Then we shall see if he will let the matter be bruited about or rather pay a goodly sum.

*Gowtu*: Will he not rather thrust thee through the liver?

*Sir John*: Not he; even Mosloom ambassadors are respected and rank, even in a Hottentot, is a better safeguard than an iron shield—in England.

*Gowtu*: It shall be done sir.

*Sir John*: See thou to it. *(Exit)*

*Gowtu*: Bah! Here is a mighty coil. If I aid this knight I am like to get steel through the guts. If I aid him not I am like to lose my rightful debts. Out on such a case. Out upon such affairs, say I, and damn all.

*Enter Eve Hotbreech, falling through the tapestries on her all fours.*

*Gowtu*: Ha, harlot, dost plunge so rudely into my presence? Hast forgot what I promised thee?

*Enter Dorinda Bareseat.*

*Dorinda*: I came upon her listening outside, master. Eavesdropping, upon my oath!

*Eve*: I'll remember that shove thou gavest me, she-cat, mare, spy-ling, hussy!

*Gowtu, seizing her*: Shalt remember more than that, I warrant you! Eve eavesdrops, eh, I say Eve's drawers shall drop. There is a goodly blaze in the taproom!

*Eve*: Mercy, master, mercy, I am with child!

*Gowtu*: Liar and sister to all liars! *(Exit with Eve kicking and screaming)*

*Dorinda*: Ha ha! This is a goodly sport! Would the tap boy and hostler were here to see! *(Screams from within)* Ha ha! Squallest thou, hussy? Hast a warm seat, hast thou not? Many men have turned thy clothes about thy waist but few with less pleasure than thou now enjoyest! How thou dost kick thy heels, Eve, and already thy wiggling buttocks are red as a rose.

*Enter Gowtu.*

*Gowtu*: A goodly lesson for the insolent wench. Dorinda, haste to the Elephant Room and put it in goodly shape. *(Exit with Dorinda)*

*Enter Eve.*

*Eve*: Oh, mercy! May he roast in Hell! May each part of him be no colder than my breech is now! Oh, to see him jazz the devil's wife on

a bed of blazing cinders while five million imps prodded him with tridents! But I'll have my vengeance! I overheard what Sir John said to him ere that Satan's cat Dorinda tripped me. I'll circumvent him, and my name and condition be Hotbreech! Where's Bet Reddrawers?

*Exeunt*

Scene 2

A gaming room

*Sir John, Sir Onan, and divers others are seated at a table, gaming.*

*Sir Onan:* Sir John, methinks thou spoke truth when thou saidst my wife was in league with some man to cuckold me. I do regret that I kicked thy rump so sorely.

*Sir John:* Ha, has't come to light?

*Sir Onan:* Only last night I heard her speak in her sleep as follows: "Oh, Ali, if thy tool matches thy bull, thou'rt indeed a bully sultan!"

*Sir John:* Can such things be! Is the Nordic superiority complex a thing of the past, that women cohabit with such vile creatures as sultans, heathen Turks and Ebrews, unicorns and eunuchs! Perish the thought! Call me horse!

*A gamer:* Right willingly! Thou'rt a horse, sir.

*Enter Matthew, a Mule.*

*Matthew:* Say ye so now? Call me horse!

*All:* Out on thee! Thou a horse? Vile imposter, thy ancestors have been jackasses since the days of Noah!

*Matthew:* Aye, he was the first.

*Sir Onan:* Thou a horse? Blarst my eyes! Sooner would I allow Sir John Crappo to be a horse, than thou, base pretender, loathsome ingrate, renegade of a lowbrow race. If thou art even a mule, I am whoreson Dutchman. Thou callest thyself mule in thy haughty pride, when thou art a jackass and a son of jackasses innumerable.

*Matthew:* Even as thou my lord. Then you and I be brothers, and thou'rt the worse jackass of the two, since I wear no horns on my forehead while thou—

*Sir Onan:* Out upon you, sir— *(Rises)*

*Matthew:* Go tol *(Kicks Sir Onan in the belly and exits)*

*Sir Onan, rising:* Had he stayed it had been the worst for him! It had gone hard had I not thwacked him heartily with the flat of my sword. Damn him for a false whoreson knave. A better horse would be Sir John Crappo.

*Sir John:* Think not to ride me, sir, even though I have been to Italy. 'Tis a perversion of nature for a horse to be on top and that is the position I have ever held, sir.

*Sir Onan:* Ha ha! A ready answer, Sir John. Methinks also thou wouldst have been out of place in the court of the popes! Thou'rt a true man! But look to't; my wife is like to be ridden bed-wise by an Eastern stallion and the thought doth but little please me.

*Sir John:* Be at ease, Sir Onan. I have been on the trail, even as the boy scout manual sayeth. I have found that your wife and her lover meet tonight at a tavern in Eastcheap. A tavern kept by one Gowtu, a



worthy man though a whoreson. Go thou and catch them in bed together.

*Sir Onan:* That shall I do, good Sir John. Thou'rt a real friend.

*(Exit)*

*Sir John:* Aye, as the snake to the toad, the hawk to the sparrow. Go to; call me horse.

*Exeunt*

## ACT II

### Scene 1

#### Gowtu's Tavern

*Enter Sir John Crappo, with Gowtu.*

*Sir John:* Good sir, good rogue, good whoreson, is she here? Is my light-o'-love, my heavy-o'-rump, my sheath, my bouncing-mate, is she here?

*Gowtu:* That she is, sir. She came a short while ago, with a heavy veil over her face which she would not remove—that showeth modesty and discretion. She is in the Elephant Room, and blarst my hide, sir, but her voice hath a familiar twang. By my life, when I trod upon her skirt and she called me bastard, I could have sworn I had heard her speak so before.

*Sir John:* Go to. The word had the familiar sound, not the voice. Hadst such a scut as thou gotten close enough to such a lady before as to have her curse thee, damn my legs and tool, thy crown had been broken. So no more. Aid me with my disguise. Faith if I must wear Turkish robes, beard and mustachio, yet I will not so clothe my nether parts. If she recognize the feel of a good English tool then let it be and no more, say I, or damn all!

*Gowtu:* Stand thus and thus, while I make fast these heathen damn whoreson mustachios.

*Enter servant.*

*Gowtu:* And where hast thou been, whoreson?

*Servant:* A-slapping the pretty wenches' posteriors, master. These new fangled hoop-skirts do be a boon for we apprentices, sir. We do work in pairs and while one do accost our victim from the front, the other do make an attack from the rear, and the front-most one pushing against her hoops, then do her skirts fly up in the rear, and he behind doth most heartily smack her exposed sitting quarters. Oh, sirs, 'tis rare sport!

*Sir John:* And one I would investigate further.

*Gowtu:* Knave, thou pimp, thou sot, knowest thou not that hoop-skirts are not yet invented, no not in my lifetime or thine?

*Servant:* Then pity the apprentices, and call me horse, for we have been slapping rumps some hundred years ahead of our time! *(Exit)*

*Sir John:* Bear not too hard on the lad. These be troublous times. There is that wench Bet who is surnamed Reddrawers, yet she wore never drawers in her life nor any other wench in merrie England, these garments of the Devil having not yet made their appearance. How now,

rogue, look I not the part? Faith, thou valiant bastard, am I not the swine Sultan in very likeness? Blarst my hide and thine, but I'll carry it off in a bold manner, a very Saint Damnu's manner! An I am a true man and a valiant one, Lady Joan shall imagine she has all Islam between her thighs. For look you, I mean to have some sport before Sir Onan come. On thy honor, Gowtu, how look I?

*Gowtu:* An it please you, like hell, sir.

*Sir John:* Fair enough. The Sultan of Turkey is one of Hell's own, therefore he must look the part of it, and I of him. Lead on to the Elephant Room. There's fair sport to be had tonight; an I catch thee peeking through the keyhole, I'll be sultan in truth and make thee a eunuch before my lady's eyes.

*Exeunt*

Scene 2

The Elephant Room

*A veiled woman. Enter Sir John.*

*Sir John:* How now, my gazelle, my Western waterfall, my songbird of love? By Mohammed, thou'rt more beautiful than all the houris!

*Veiled Woman:* Good Ali, how thou dost sling the bull!

*Sir John:* By the hide of the Prophet, thy voice doth sound strangely!

*Veiled Woman:* 'Tis my love for thee, Ali. Tell me, Ali, how many women hast thou in thy harem in Turkey?

*Sir John:* Oh, a scant matter, by my hilt. Some ten thousand, be-like. 'Tis of no event. They shall wait on thee, they shall come and go at thy beck and call and if it pleaseth thee, thou shalt have them beaten with rods.

*Veiled Woman:* Speak not of rods. It doth remind me of what may chance if my husband find us here. He is a choleric man and one heavy-handed.

*Sir John:* Then good Lady Joan, forget the sort of rods thy husband, firm man, hath laid across thy comely buttocks betimes, and set thy mind to another kind of rod, one more handsome, yea, and pleasing to a tender woman.

*Veiled Woman:* It is for my love of this rod that I have aforetime gotten the other.

*Sir John:* Forget it. Gaze on this! (*Brings it forth*) Canst thy husband match it with any rod, yea, either in hand or in pants?

*Veiled Woman:* 'Tis in truth a goodly dagger!

*Sir John:* And I would sheathe it in a fair scabbard.

*Veiled Woman:* Such a sheath there is beneath my dress.

*Sir John, feeling beneath her skirt:* I find it so. Lady Joan, curse me, but thy joyfeel hath a cursed familiar touch.

*Veiled Woman:* Sir, you wrong me. Wert ever in the navy?

*Sir John:* No, by my faith.

*Veiled Woman:* Or in the Royal Orchestra?

*Sir John:* Not I.

*Veiled Woman:* Then, not being Joan Waist's husband, and being in neither of these, it's certain thou never hadst hand on Joan Waist's privates.

*Sir John:* I am content. Wilt thou not lift that veil that I may feast my eyes?

*Veiled Woman:* Hadst not rather I should lift my dress that thou mightest feast thy balls?

*Interlude.*

*Sir John:* Thy hips are springy as any man might ask and—  
*Rapping from without.*

*Veiled Woman:* We are undone! It is my husband!

*Sir John:* Enter!

*Enter Sir Onan, with Gowtu, Dorinda Bareseat, Eve Hotbreech and Lady Joan Waist.*

*Sir John:* Hell's high horses! What means this?

*Gowtu:* Sir John, we are undone!

*Lady Joan:* Sir John?

*Sir Onan:* Aye, Sir John! Not Ali El Bawdytoole, but the sot, pimp and gambler, Sir John Crappo! Now thou seest what thou wouldst have held between thy knees this night—aye, this knight! Besmirching thy husband's honor, thou strumpet!

*Lady Joan:* Oh, thou wretch, thou ingrate, thou whoreson! To so deceive a trusting woman! Out upon thee! *(Tears off his disguise)* Rogue, I will tear out thine eyeballs! And the balls whereby thou hadst cozened me likewise.

*Sir John:* Hands off, woman! Let me come to straight of this! Who is this wench in the veil? *(Jerks off her veil)* Bet Reddrawers!

*Eve Hotbreech:* Aye, Bet Reddrawers! As likely a girl as was ever bare-breeched across her master's lap for harlotry.

*Sir John:* Bah, as vile a trull as ever master rewarded for villainy—and that master the Devil. What means this, strumpet?

*Bet:* Good sir, 'tis for love I bear you.

*Sir John:* A likely tale.

*Bet:* Aye, sir, as likely as any you'll find beneath any petticoat. You should know, sir.

*Lady Joan:* Thou villain host, why lettest thou such things be?

*Gowtu:* Your ladyship, I knew her not.

*Bet:* Thou liest. Thou wert my master aforetime.

*Gowtu:* Aye, aforetime, and sought to turn thee from thy evil ways, by cuffing, toasting, birching and—

*Bet:* Lair and brother of liars! Thou wert one of the first ten thousand men who—

*Lady Joan:* Enough. 'Tis offensive in the extreme. That I should fall among such low people! Sultan—bah!

*Sir John:* Gowtu, I'll geld thee for this.

*Gowtu:* Rather spey this wench—Eve Hotbreech. She it was who betrayed us.

*Eve:* That did I and right merrily. First I sought out Bet Reddrawers and acquainted her with her task, then I met Lady Joan as she came hither and enticed her into another room, whither I led Sir Onan when he came all a-rage.

*Gowtu:* And he broke my crown.

*Eve:* Good enough.

*Bet:* Grumble not, good Sir John. Didst I not give thee a more rollicking workout than this haughty lady could have done? Didst I not pitch bravely?

*Dorinda:* Aye, that you did, as we all could tell watching from the

door. Methinks riding thee would be harder than riding a wild mare. How his buttocks did nobly vault ceiling-ward at each plunge and caper.

*Sir John:* Wenches, peace. 'Tis newness of the thing that lends charm, not violence alone. Had I plucked out a hair from my beard for each time I've ridden thee, my face would be as bare as thy buttocks were yest'een when the hangman flogged thee through the streets for bawdiness.

*Lady Joan:* Let us hence. This is a low crowd.

*Sir John:* And so goeth my hope of wealth.

*Gowtu:* And my ten pounds to Hell.

*Eve:* But my vengeance is consummated.

*Gowtu:* Thy vengeance, hussy! Thou'lt pay dear for thy vengeance an I be a true man! I'll see to it that thou squat above a fire hotter than Bet Reddrawers' private members.

*Eve:* 'Tis a thing impossible. But I care not.

*Dorinda:* Sir Onan, dost thou not remember me? Dost thou not remember our first meeting?

*Sir Onan:* Aye, I caught you in a privy and you squealed like the very Devil when I got it in. By my oath, I lifted you off your feet at each surge.

*Gowtu:* Yet they say one cannot get the clap in a privy! My oath!

*Lady Joan:* Thou beast, to mention such things before me! Art thou a low serving-varlet to be lurking about a squatting-place to see a serving-maid unskirted?

*Sir Onan:* Strumpet! Darest thou my anger? Give thanks that I lead thee not through the streets stark naked sitting a jackass bakward! But I will be gentle. Sir John, here is pen and ink. Joan, lift thy skirts

*Lady Joan:* What, wouldst expose thy wife's nakedness before this base gathering? And to this vile knight?

*Sir Onan:* By my oath, when he was Sultan thou wert eager enough to expose thyself to him. Is he any less, being a downright Englishman? No more! No more! Lift thy dress, hussy, or it shall go hard with you. *(She obeys)* Now, Sir John, write thus across her buttocks: Sultan Ali El Bawdytoole, by this hand, Sir John Crappo. Good! 'Tis enough. An appropriate place for such names. Now, Joan, I mean to red this legend to thee each night lest thou forget thy infamy. The wenches that undress thee for thy bath will enjoy this goodly jest, and any women that go with thee to the privies.

*Lady Joan:* My lord, 'tis a foul shame you put upon me.

*Sir Onan:* Enough. Thou hadst fouled my honor, hussy, aye, put smirch upon a righteous and upright name. And an upright man, aye, as upright as my penis was the night I raped seven serving-maids in a row. But what of this false knight, this ox rump, this whoreson, this bull, this boar, this excretion, this sewer, this swine—shall I not castrate him?

*Sir John:* An thou geld me, call me horse! Mayhap I be out at the knee and with less broad pieces in my purse than of yore, yet let it not be said Sir John Crappo's rapier is rusted with desuetude. Go to, varlets. Ye gabble here like a bunch of naked wenches in a privy. Out, out! My patience is at an end! I have been cozened, tricked, cheated and swindled! Is there no honesty among men? By my oath, things were different in other days!

*A rapping from without.*

*Gowtu:* Enter.



*Enter Damnbo, a blackamoor, clad in the vestments of a harem slave.*

*Sir Onan:* How now?

*Damnbo:* Mistuh Crappo, what you-all want me to do, suh?

*Lady Joan:* Who is this creature? A negro? I have seen one such before.

*Sir John:* A friend of mine, a high lord of Nubia.

*Lady Joan:* Is't so? And is it true such men are black all over, even to their private parts?

*Sir John:* Lord Damnbo, out with thy tool. (*Damnbo obeys*)

*Lady Joan:* Oh, mercy, 'tis as noble a penis as I ever laid eyes upon!

*Bet Reddrawers:* A new thrill! My lord, I salute thee!

*Eve Hotbreech:* Look ye! Only look!

*Dorinda Bareseat:* La, la! The maiden's fondest wish and greatest delight!

*Lady Joan:* Good sir, come into the other room.

*Bet Reddrawers:* Thou shalt not enjoy him alone, lady or not!

*Dorinda Bareseat:* I saw him first, by my breech!

*Eve Hotbreech, screaming and struggling:* Master, let me go, I say! I have as much right as anybody! (*Exit all the women and Damnbo*)

*Sir Onan:* Damnny my soul! And who is the varlet?

*Sir John:* Oh, a hand I found working on the wharfs and took into my employ. The women must ever look for a new thrill. Let us to the bawdy-house.

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# ANCIENT ENGLISH BALLADE

Oh, come, friend Dick, go whoring with me!  
The summer moon is ripe.  
The trees dream by the crescent lea,  
The ships sail on the silver sea—  
Oh, come, good Dick, go whoring with me!  
For life is a lot of tripe.

Over the waste we 'ull go in haste,  
And over the barren down.  
There's many a whore that waits by her door  
In the streets of the seaport town.

There's many a white rump ripe, Dick,  
In the tavern and the town;  
Girls that are rosy and white, Dick,  
To fill your soul with delight, Dick,  
And surely you have the right, Dick,  
So over the hill and down!

They have given their bloomers to charity  
For them they will need no more.  
They wiggle their hips along the quay  
And the outbound sailors roar,  
They wiggle their hips at the port-bound ships  
And the seamen swim to the shore.

We will join the dames in their blithesome games  
And add to their natural heat,  
And they will be true to us, Dick,  
And the Asiatic fleet.

I know the girl for you, Dick,  
She will wake in you a song,  
For seventy million Frenchmen  
Can't be wrong.

The moon dreams on the silver lea,  
Each star, gold wings unfurls;  
The moon road carves the ivory sea.  
Come, let us go to our girls.