



Captain
From *The Phoenix*
By Thomas Middleton

Age Range: Adult, Young Adult

Style: Comedic, Classical

Monologue:

“What lustful passion came aboard of me, that I should marry? Was I drunk? Yet that cannot altogether hold, for it was four a' clock i' th' morning; had it been five, I would ha' sworn it. That a man is in danger every minute to be cast away, without he have an extraordinary pilot that can perform more than a man can do! and to say the truth too, when I'm abroad, what can I do at home? no man living can reach so far: and what a horrible thing 'twould be to have horns brought me at sea, to look as if the devil were i' th' ship! and all the great tempests would be thought of my raising! to be the general curse of all merchants! and yet they likely are as deep in as myself; and that's a comfort. O, that a captain should live to be married! nay, I that have been such a gallant salt-thief, should yet live to be married! What a fortunate elder brother is he, whose father being a rammish ploughman, himself a perfumed gentleman spending the labouring reek from his father's nostrils in tobacco, the sweat of his father's body in monthly physic for his pretty queasy harlot! he sows apace i' th' country; the tailor o'ertakes him i' th' city, so that oftentimes before the corn comes to earing, 'tis up to the ears in high collars, and so at every harvest the reapers take pains for the mercers: ha! why, this is stirring happiness indeed. Would my father had held a plough so, and fed upon squeezed curds and onions, that I might have bathed in sensuality! but he was too ruttish himself to let me thrive under him; consumed me before he got me; and that makes me so wretched now to be shackled with a wife, and not greatly rich neither.”

Play Synopsis:

The Duke of Ferrara is old and nearing death, and needs his son, the Phoenix, to take over from him. The boy is virtuous and wise; however, he has little practical experience of the world, and so his counselors advise the Duke to send his son traveling.

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