

**GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO, JOHN  
FLORIO**

**THE  
DECAMERON  
(DAY 6 TO DAY  
10)**

Джованни Боккаччо

**The Decameron (Day 6 to Day 10)**

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**Giovanni Boccaccio**  
**The Decameron (Day 6 to Day 10) /**  
**Containing an hundred pleasant Novels**

**TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE Sir Phillip Herbert,**

**Knight, Lord Baron of Sherland, Earle of Montgomery,  
and Knight of the most Noble order of the Garter**

*Having (by your Honorable command) translated this Decameron, or Cento Novelle, sirnamed Il Principe Galeotto, of ten dayes severall discourses, grounded on variable and singuler Arguments, happening betweene seaven Noble Ladies, and three very Honourable Gentlemen: Although not attyred in such elegantcy of phrase, or nice curiosity of stile, as a quicker and more sprightly wit could have performed, but in such home-borne language, as my ability could stretch unto; yet it commeth (in all duty) to kisse your Noble hand, and to shelter it selfe under your Gracious protection, though not from the leering eye, and over-lavish tongue of snarling Envy; yet from the power of his blasting poyson, and malice of his machinations.*

**To the Reader**

Bookes (Courteous Reader) may rightly be compared to *Gardens*; wherein, let the painfull Gardiner expresse never so much care and diligent endeavour; yet among the very fairest, sweetest, and freshest Flowers, as also Plants of most precious Vertue; ill favouring and stinking Weeds, fit for no use but the fire or mucke-hill, will spring and sprout up. So fareth it with Bookes of the very best quality, let the Author bee never so indulgent, and the Printer vigilant; yet both may misse their ayme, by the escape of Errors and Mistakes, either in sense or matter, the one fault ensuing by a ragged Written Copy; and the other thorough want of wary Correction. If then the best Bookes cannot be free from this common infirmity; blame not this then, of farre lighter argument, wherein thy courtesie may helpe us both: His blame, in acknowledging his more sufficiency, then to write so grosse and absurdly: And mine, in pardoning unwilling Errors committed, which thy judgement finding, thy pen can as easily correct.

Farewell.

## **The Table**

### **The Dedication.**

### **To the Reader**

#### **THE SIXT DAY, Governed under Madame Eliza**

*Wherein the Discourses or Novels there to bee recounted, doe concerne such persons; who by some witty words (when any have taunted them) have revenged themselves, in a sudden, unexpected and discreet answere, thereby preventing losse, danger, scorne and disgrace, retorting them on the busi-headed Questioners.*

#### **The argument of the first Novell**

*A Knight requested Madame Oretta, to ride behinde him on horsebacke, and promised, to tell her an excellent Tale by the way. But the Lady perceiving, that his discourse was idle, and much worse delivered: entreated him to let her walke on foote againe.*

#### **The Morall**

Reprehending the folly of such men, as undertake to report discourses, which are beyond their wit and capacity, and gaine nothing but blame for their labour.

#### **The argument of the second Novell**

*Cistio a Baker, by a witty answere which he gave unto Messer Geri Spina, caused him to acknowledge a very indiscreet motion, which he had made to the said Cistio.*

#### **The Morall**

Approving, that a request ought to be civill, before it should be granted to any one whatsoever.

#### **The Argument of the third Novell**

*Madam Nonna de Pulci, by a sodaine answere, did put to silence a Bishop of Florence, and the Lord Marshall: having mooved a question to the said Lady, which seemed to come short of honesty.*

#### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared, that mockers doe sometimes meet with their matches in mockery, and to their owne shame.

### **The Argument of the fourth Novell**

*Chichibio, the Cooke to Messer Currado Gianfiliazzi, by a sodaine pleasant answere which he made to his Master; converted his anger into laughter, and thereby escaped the punishment, that Messer meant to impose on him.*

#### **The Morall**

Whereby plainely appeareth, that a sodaine witty, and merry answere, doth oftentimes appease the furious choller of an angry man.

### **The Argument of the fift Novell**

*Messer Forese da Rabatte, and Maister Giotto, a Painter by his profession, comming together from Mugello, scornefully reprehended one another for their deformity of body.*

#### **The Morall**

Whereby may be observed, that such as will speake contemptibly of others, ought (first of all) to looke respectively on their owne imperfections.

### **The Argument of the sixt Novell**

*A young and ingenious Scholler, being unkindly reviled and smitten by his ignorant Father, and through the procurement of an unlearned Vicare; afterward attained to bee doubly revenged on him.*

#### **The Morall**

Serving as an advertisement to unlearned Parents, not to be over-rash, in censuring on Schollers imperfections, through any bad or unbecoming perswasions.

### **The Argument of the seaventh Novell**

*Madame Phillippa, being accused by her Husband Rinaldo de Pugliese, because he tooke her in Adultery, with a young Gentleman named Lazarino de Guazzagliotori: caused her to bee cited before a Judge. From whom she delivered her selfe, by a sodaine, witty, and pleasant answere, and moderated a severe strict Statute, formerly made against women.*

#### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared, of what worth it is to confesse a truth, with a facetious and witty excuse.

### **The Argument of the eighth Novell**

Fresco da Celatico, *counselled and advised his Neece Cesca: That if such as deserved to bee looked on, were offensive to her eyes (as she had often told him;) she should forbear to looke on any.*

#### **The Morall**

In just scorne of such unsightly and ill-pleasing surly Sluts, who imagine none to bee faire or well-favoured, but themselves.

### **The Argument of the ninth Novell**

Signior Guido Cavalcante, *with a sodaine and witty answer, reprehended the rash folly of certaine Florentine Gentlemen, that thought to scorne and flout him.*

#### **The Morall**

Notably discovering the great difference that is betweene learning and ignorance, upon Judicious apprehension.

### **The Argument of the tenth Novell**

Frier Onyon *promised certaine honest people of the Country, to shew them a Feather of the same Phoenix, that was with Noah in his Arke. In sted whereof, he found Coales, which he avouched to be those very coales, wherewith the same Phoenix was roasted.*

#### **The Morall**

Wherein may be observed, what palpable abuses doe many times passe, under the counterfeit Cloake of Religion.

### **THE SEAVENTH DAY, Governed under the Regiment of Dioneus**

*Wherein the Discourses are directed, for the discovery of such policies and deceits, as women have used for beguiling of their Husbands, either in respect of their love, or for the prevention of some blame or scandall; escaping without sight, knowledge, or otherwise.*

### **The Argument of the first Novell**

John of Lorraine *heard one knocke at his doore in the night time, whereupon he awaked his Wife Monna Tessa. Shee made him beleieve, that it was a Spirit which knocked at the doore, and so they arose, going both together to conjure the Spirit with a charme; and afterwards, they heard no more knocking.*



### **The Morall**

Reprehending the simplicity of some sottish Husbands: And discovering the wanton subtilties of some women, to compasse their unlawfull desires.

### **The Argument of the second Novell**

*Peronella hid a young man her Friend and Lover, under a great brewing Fat, uppon the sodaine returning home of her Husband; who tolde her, that he had sold the saide Fat, and brought him that bought it, to carry it away. Peronella replyed, That shee had formerly solde it unto another, who was now underneath it, to see whether it were whole and sound, or no. Whereupon, he being come forth from under it; shee caused her Husband to make it neate and cleane, and so the last buyer carried it away.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared, what hard and narrow shifts and distresses, such as be seriously linked in Love, are many times enforced to undergoe: according as their owne wit, and capacity of their surprizers, drive them to extremities.

### **The Argument of the third Novell**

*Friar Reynard, falling in love with a Gentlewoman, Wife to a man of good account; found the meanes to become her Gossip. Afterward, he being conferring closely with her in her Chamber, and her Husband comming sodainely thither: she made him beleeeve, that he came thither for no other ende; but to cure his God-sonne by a charme, of a dangerous disease which he had by wormes.*

### **The Morall**

Serving as a friendly advertisement to married Women, that Monks, Friars, and Priests may be none of their Gossips, in regard of unavoydable perils ensuing thereby.

### **The Argument of the fourth Novell**

*Tofano in the night season, did locke his Wife out of his house, and she not prevailing to get entrance againe, by all the entreaties shee could possibly use: made him beleeeve that shee had throwne her selfe into a Well, by casting a great stone into the same Well. Tofano hearing the fall of the stone into the Well, and being perswaded that it was his Wife indeede; came forth of his house, and ranne to the Welles side. In the meane while, his Wife gotte into the house, made fast the doore against her Husband, and gave him many reprochfull speeches.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is manifested, that the malice and subtilty of a woman, surpasseth all the Art or wit in man.

### **The Argument of the fift Novell**

*A jealous man, clouded with the habite of a Priest, became the Confessour to his owne Wife; who made him beleeve, that she was deeply in love with a Priest, which came every night, and lay with her. By meanes of which confession, while her jealous Husband watched the doore of his house; to surprise the Priest when he came: she that never meant to doe amisse, had the company of a secret friend who came over the toppe of the house to visite her, while her foolish Husband kept the doore.*

### **The Morall**

In just scorne and mockery of such jealous Husbands, that wil be idle headed upon no occasion. And yet when they have good reason for it, doe least of all suspect any such injury.

### **The Argument of the sixth Novell**

*Madame Isabella, delighting in the company of her affected friend, named Lionello, and she being likewise beloved by Signior Lambertuccio: At the same time as shee had entertained Lionello, she was also visited by Lambertuccio. Her Husband returning home in the very instant; she caused Lambertuccio to runne foorth with a drawne sword in his hand, and (by that meanes) made an excuse sufficient for Lionello to her Husband.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is manifestly discerned, that if Love be driven to a narrow straite in any of his attempts; yet hee can accomplish his purpose by some other supply.

### **The Argument of the seaventh Novell**

*Lodovico discovered to his Mistresse Madame Beatrix, how amourosly he was affected to her. She cunningly sent Egano her Husband into his garden, in all respects disguised like herselfe; while (friendly) Lodovico conferred with her the meane while. Afterward, Lodovico pretending a lascivious allurement of his Mistresse, thereby to wrong his honest Master, instead of her, beateth Egano soundly in the Garden.*

### **The Morall**

Whereby is declared, that such as keepe many honest seeming servants, may sometime finde a knave among them, and one that proves to bee over-sawcy with his Master.

### **The Argument of the Eight Novell**

*Arriguccio Berlinghieri, became immeasurably jealous of his Wife Simonida, who fastened a thred about her great toe, for to serve as a signall, when her amouros friend should come to visite her. Arriguccio findeth the fallacy, and while he pursueth the amorous friend, shee causeth her Maide to lie in her bed against his returne: whom he beateth extreamly, cutting away the lockes of her haire (thinking he had done all this violence to his Wife Simonida:) and afterward fetcheth her Mother and*

*Brethren, to shame her before them, and so be rid of her. But they finding all his speeches to be false; and reputing him to be a drunken jealous foole; all the blame and disgrace falleth on himselfe.*

### **The Morall**

Whereby appeareth, that an Husband ought to be very well advised, when he meaneth to discover any wrong offered by his Wife; except he himselfe doe rashly run into all the shame and reproch.

### **The Argument of the Ninth Novell**

*Lydia, a Lady of great beauty, birth, and honour, being Wife to Nicostratus, Governour of Argos, falling in love with a Gentleman, named Pyrrhus; was requested by him (as a true testimony of her unfeigned affection) to performe three severall actions of her selfe. She did accomplish them all, and imbraced and kissed Pyrrhus in the presence of Nicostratus; by perswading him, that whatsoever he saw, was meereley false.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared, that great Lords may sometime be deceived by their wives, as well as men of meaner condition.

### **The Argument of the tenth Novell**

*Two Citizens of Sienna, the one named Tingoccio Mini, and the other Meucio di Tora, affected both one woman, called Monna Mita, to whom the one of them was a Gossip. The Gossip dyed, and appeared afterward to his companion, according as he had formerly promised him to doe, and told him what strange wonders he had seene in the other world.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein such men are covertly reprehended, who make no care or conscience at all of those things that should preserve them from sinne.

### **THE EIGHTH DAY, Governed under Madame Lauretta**

*Whereon all the Discourses, is, Concerning such Witty deceivings, as have, or may be put in practise, by Wives to their Husbands, Husbands to their Wives, Or one man towards another.*

### **The Argument of the First Novell**

*Gulfardo made a match or wager, with the wife of Gasparuolo, for the obtaining of her amorous favour, in regard of a summe of money first to be given her. The money he borrowed of her Husband, and gave it in payment to her, as in case of discharging him from her Husbands debt. After his returne home from Geneway, he told him in the presence of his wife, how hee had payde the whole summe to her, with charge of delivering it to her Husband, which she confessed to be true, albeit greatly against her will.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared, That such women as will make sale of their honestie, are sometimes overreached in their payment, and justly served as they should be.

### **The Argument of the second Novell**

*A lusty Priest of Varlungo, fell in love with a pretty woman, named Monna Belcolore. To compass his amorous desire, hee left his cloake (as a pledge of further payment) with her. By a subtile sleight afterward, he borrowed a mortar of her, which when hee sent home againe in the presence of her husband, he demanded to have his Cloake sent him, as having left it in pawne for the Morter. To pacifie her Husband, offended that she did not lend the Priest the Morter without a pawne: she sent him backe his Cloake againe, albeit greatly against hir will.*

### **The Morall**

Approving, that no promise is to be kept with such women as will make sale of their honesty for Coine.

### **The Argument of the Third Novell**

*Calandrino, Bruno, and Buffalmaco, being Painters by profession, travailed to the Plaine of Mugnone, to finde the precious stone called Helitropium. Calandrino perswading himselfe to have found it, returned home to his house heavy loaden with stones. His wife rebuking him for his absence, he groweth into anger, and shrewdly beates her. Afterward, when the case is debated by his other friends Bruno & Buffalmaco, all is found to be meere folly.*

### **The Morall**

Reprehending the simplicity of such men, as are too much addicted to credulity, and will give credit to every thing they heare.

### **The Argument of the Fourth Novell**

*The Provost belonging to the Cathedrall Church of Fiesola, fell in love with a Gentlewoman, being a widdow, and named Piccarda, who hated him as much as he loved her. He immagining that he lay with her: by the Gentlewomans Brethren, and the Bishop under whom he served, was taken in bed with her Mayde, an ugly, foule, deformed Slut.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared, how love oftentimes is so powerfull in aged men, and driveth them to such doating, that it redoundeth to their great disgrace and punishment.

### **The Argument of the fift Novell**

*Three pleasant companions, plaid a merry prank with a Judge (belonging to the Marquesate of Ancona) at Florence, at such time as he sat on the bench, & hearing criminall causes.*

#### **The Morall**

Giving admonition, that for the managing of publike affaires, no other persons are or ought to bee appointed, but such as be honest, and meet to sit on the seate of Authority.

### **The Argument of the sixt Novell**

*Bruno and Buffalmano stole a young Brawne from Calandrino, and for his recovery thereof, they used a kinde of pretended conjuration, with Pils made of Ginger and strong Malmesey. But insted of this application, they gave him two pils of a Dogges dates or dousets, confected in Alloes, by meanes whereof they made him beleve, that hee had robd himselfe. And for feare they should report this theft to his Wife, they made him to buy another Brawne.*

#### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared, how easily a plaine and simple man may bee made a foole, when he dealeth with crafty companions.

### **The Argument of the seaventh Novell**

*A young Gentleman being a Scholler, fell in love with a Ladie, named Helena, she being a woman, and addicted in affection unto another Gentleman. One whole night in cold winter, she caused the Scholler to expect her comming, in an extreame frost and snow. In revenge whereof, by his imagined Art and skill, he made her to stand naked on the top of a Tower, the space of a whole day, and in the hot moneth of July, to be Sun-burnt and bitten with Waspes and Flies.*

#### **The Morall**

Serving as an admonition to all Gentlewomen, not to mocke Gentlemen Schollers, when they make meanes of love to them, except they intend to seeke their owne shame by disgracing them.

### **The Argument of the eighth Novell**

*Two neere dwelling Neighbours, the one beeing named Spinelloccio Tavena, and the other Zeppa di Mino, frequenting each others company daily together; Spinelloccio Cuckolded his Friend and Neighbour. Which happening to the knowledge of Zeppa, hee prevailed so well with the Wife of Spinelloccio, that he being lockt up in a Chest, hee revenged his wrong at that instant, so that neyther of them complained of his misfortune.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is approved, that hee which offereth shame and disgrace to his neighbour, may receive the like injury (if not worse) by the same man.

### **The Argument of the Ninth Novell**

*Maestro Simone, an idle headed Doctor of Physicke, was thrown by Bruno and Buffalmaco into a common Leystall of filth: the Physitian fondly beleeving, that (in the night time) he should be made one of a new created company, who usually went to see wonders at Corsica, and there in the Leystall they left him.*

### **The Morall**

Approving, that titles of honour, learning, and dignity, are not alwayes bestowne on the wisest men.

### **The Argument of the tenth Novell**

*A Cicilian Curtezan, named Madam Biancafiore, by her subtle policy deceived a young Merchant called Salabetto, of all his mony he had taken for his wares at Palermo. Afterward, he making shew of coming thither againe with far richer Merchandises then before: made the meanes to borrow a great summe of money, leaving her so base a pawne, as well requited her for her former cousenage.*

### **The Morall**

Approving, that such as meet with cunning Harlots, suffering them selves to be deceyved, must sharpen their wits, to make them requitall in the same kind.

### **THE NINTH DAY, Governed under Madame Æmillia**

Whereon, the Argument of each severall Discourse, is not limited to any one peculiar subject: but everie one remaineth at liberty, to speake of whatsoever themselves best pleaseth.

### **The Argument of the first Novell**

*Madam Francesca, a Widow of Pistoya, being affected by two Florentine Gentlemen, the one named Rinuccio Palermini, and the other Alessandro Chiarmontesi, and she bearing no good will to either of them, ingeniously freed her selfe from both their importunate suites. One of them shee caused to lye as dead in a grave, and the other to fetch him from thence: so neither of them accomplishing what they were enjoyned, failed of their expectation.*

### **The Morall**

Approving, that chaste and honest women, ought rather to deny importunate suiters, by subtle and ingenious means, then fall into the danger of scandall and slander.

### **The Argument of the second Novell**

*Madame Usimbald, Lady Abbess of a Monastery of Nuns in Lombardie, arising hastily in the night time without a Candle, to take one of her Daughter Nunnes in bed with a young Gentleman, whereof she was enviously accused, by certaine of her other Sisters: The Abbess her selfe (being at the same time in bed with a Priest) imagining to have put on her head her plaited vayle, put on the Priests breeches. Which when the poore Nunne perceyved; by causing the Abbess to see her owne error, she got her selfe to be absolved, and had the freer liberty afterward, to be more familiar with her friend, then formerly she had bin.*

### **The Morall**

Whereby is declared, that whosoever is desirous to reprehend sinne in other men, should first examine himselfe, that he be not guiltie of the same crime.

### **The Argument of the third Novell**

*Master Simon the Physitian, by the perswasions of Bruno, Buffalmaco, and a third Companion, named Nello, made Calandrino to beleve, that he was conceived great with childe. And having Physicke ministred to him for the disease: they got both good fatte Capons and money of him, and so cured him, without any other manner of deliverance.*

### **The Morall**

Discovering the simplicity of some silly witted men, and how easie a matter it is to abuse and beguile them.

### **The Argument of the Fourth Novell**

*Francesco Fortarigo, played away all that he had at Buonconvento, and likewise the money of Francesco Aniolliero, being his Master: Then running after him in his shirt, and avouching that hee had robbed him: he caused him to be taken by Pezants of the Country, clothed himselfe in his Masters wearing garments, and (mounted on his horse) rode thence to Sienna, leaving Aniolliero in his shirt, and walked bare-footed.*

### **The Morall**

Serving as an admonition to all men, for taking Gamesters and Drunkards into their service.

### **The Argument of the fifte Novell**

*Calandrino became extraordinarily enamoured of a young Damosell, named Nicholetta. Bruno prepared a Charme or writing for him, avouching constantly to him, that so soone as he touched the Damosell therewith, she should follow him whithersoever hee would have her. She being gone to an appointed place with him, hee was found there by his wife, and dealt withall according to his deserving.*



### **The Morall**

In just reprehension of those vaine-headed fooles, that are led and governed by idle perswasions.

#### **The Argument of the Sixth Novell**

*Two young Gentlemen, the one named Panuccio, and the other Adriano, lodged one night in a poore Inne, whereof one of them went to bed to the Hostes daughter, and the other (by mistaking his way in the darke) to the Hostes wife. He which lay with the daughter, hapned afterward to the Hostes bed, and told him what he had done, as thinking he spake to his owne companion. Discontentment growing betweene them, the mother perceiving her error, went to bed to her daughter, and with discreete language, made a generall pacification.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is manifested, that an offence committed ignorantly, and by mistaking; ought to be covered with good advise, and civill discretion.

#### **The Argument of the seaventh Novell**

*Talano de Molese dreamed, That a Wolfe rent and tore his wives face and throate. Which dreame he told to her, with advise to keep her selfe out of danger; which she refusing to doe, received what followed.*

### **The Morall**

Whereby (with some indifferent reason) it is concluded, that Dreames do not alwayes fall out to be leasings.

#### **The Argument of the Eight Novell**

*Blondello (in a merry manner) caused Guiotto to beguile himselfe of a good dinner: for which deceit, Guiotto became cunningly revenged, by procuring Blondello to be unreasonably beaten and misused.*

### **The Morall**

Whereby plainly appeareth, that they which take delight in deceiving others, do well deserve to be deceived themselves.

#### **The Argument of the Ninth Novell**

*Two young Gentlemen, the one named Melisso, borne in the City of Laiazzo: and the other Giosefo of Antioch, travailed together unto Salomon, the famous King of Great Britaine. The one desiring to learne what he should do, whereby to compasse and winne the love of men. The other*



*craved to be enstructed, by what meanes hee might reclaime an headstrong and unruly wife. And what answeres the wise King gave unto them both, before they departed away from him.*

### **The Morall**

Containing an excellent admonition, that such as covet to have the love of other men, must first learne themselves, how to love: Also, by what meanes such women as are curst and self willed, may be reduced to civill obedience.

### **The Argument of the tenth Novell**

*John de Barolo, at the instance and request of his Gossip Pietro da Trefanti, made an enchantment, to have his Wife become a Mule. And when it came to the fastening on of the taile, Gossip Pietro by saying she should have no taile at all, spoyled the whole enchantment.*

### **The Morall**

In just reproofe of such foolish men, as will be governed by over-light beleefe.

### **THE TENTH DAY, Governed under Pamphilus**

*Whereon the severall Arguments doe Concerne such persons, as other by way of Liberality, or in Magnificent manner, performed any worthy action, for love, favor, friendship, or any other honourable occasion.*

### **The Argument of the First Novell**

*A Florentine knight, named Signior Rogiero de Figiovanni, became a servant to Alphonso, King of Spaine, who (in his owne opinion) seemed but sleightly to respect and reward him. In regard whereof, by a notable experiment, the King gave him a manifest testimony, that it was not through any defect in him, but onely occasioned by the Knights ill fortune; most bountifully recompensing him afterward.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein may evidently be discerned, that Servants to Princes and great Lords, are many times recompenced, rather by their good fortune, then in any regard of their dutifull services.

### **The Argument of the second Novell**

*Ghinotto di Tacco; tooke the Lord Abbot of Clugni as his prisoner, and cured him of a grievous disease, which he had in his stomacke, and afterward set him at liberty. The same Lord Abbot, when hee returned from the Court of Rome, reconciled Ghinotto to Pope Boniface; who made him a Knight, and Lord Prior of a goodly Hospitall.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is declared that good men doe sometimes fall into bad conditions, onely occasioned thereto by necessity: And what meanes are to be used, for their reducing to goodnesse againe.

#### **The Argument of the third Novell**

*Mithridanes envying the life and liberality of Nathan, and travelling thither, with a settled resolution to kill him: chaunceth to conferre with Nathan unknowne. And being instructed by him, in what manner he might best performe the bloody deede, according as hee gave direction, hee meeteth with him in a small Thicket or Woode, where knowing him to be the same man, that taught him how to take away his life: Confounded with shame, hee acknowledgeth his horrible intention, and becommeth his loyall friend.*

### **The Morall**

Shewing in an excellent and lively demonstration, that any especiall honourable vertue, persevering and dwelling in a truly noble soule, cannot be violenced or confounded, by the most politicke attemptes of malice and envy.

#### **The Argument of the fourth Novell**

*Signior Gentile de Carisendi, being come from Modena, tooke a Gentlewoman, named Madam Catharina, forth of a grave, wherein she was buried for dead; which act he did, in regard of his former honest affection to the said Gentlewoman. Madame Catharina remaining there afterward, and delivered of a goodly Sonne: was (by Signior Gentile) delivered to her owne Husband; named Signior Nicoluccio Caccianimico, and the young infant with her.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is shewne, That true love hath alwayes bin, and so still is, the occasion of many great and worthy courtesies.

#### **The Argument of the Fift Novell**

*Madame Dianora, the Wife of Signior Gilberto, being immodestly affected by Signior Ansaldo, to free herselfe from his tedious importunity, she appointed him to performe (in her judgement) an act of impossibility; namely, to give her a Garden, as plentifully stored with fragrant Flowers in January, as in the flourishing moneth of May. Ansaldo, by meanes of a bond which he made to a Magitian, performed her request. Signior Gilberto, the Ladyes Husband, gave consent, that his Wife should fulfill her promise made to Ansaldo. Who hearing the bountifull mind of her Husband; released her of her promise: And the Magitian likewise discharged Signior Ansaldo, without taking any thing of him.*

### **The Morall**

Admonishing all Ladies and Gentlewomen, that are desirous to preserve their chastity, free from all blemish and taxation: to make no promise of yeelding to any, under a compact or covenant, how impossible soever it may seeme to be.

### **The Argument of the Sixt Novell**

*Victorious King Charles, sirnamed the Aged, and first of that Name, fell in love with a young Maiden, named Genevera, daughter to an Ancient Knight, called Signior Neri degli Uberti. And waxing ashamed of his Amorous folly, caused both Genevera, and her fayre Sister Isotta, to be joyned in marriage with two Noble Gentlemen; the one named Signior Maffeo da Palizzi, and the other, Signior Gulielmo della Magna.*

### **The Morall**

Sufficiently declaring, that how mighty soever the power of Love is: yet a magnanimous and truly generous heart, it can by no meanes fully conquer.

### **The Argument of the seaventh Novell**

*Lisana, the Daughter of a Florentine Apothecary, named Bernardo Puccino, being at Palermo, and seeing Piero, King of Aragon run at the Tilt; fell so affectionately enamored of him, that she languished in an extreame and long sicknesse. By her owne devise, and means of a Song, sung in the hearing of the King: he vouchsafed to visite her, and giving her a kisse, terming himselfe also to bee her Knight for ever after, hee honourably bestowed her in marriage on a young Gentleman, who was called Perdicano, and gave him liberall endowments with her.*

### **The Morall**

Wherein is covertly given to understand, that howsoever a Prince may make use of his absolute power and authority, towards Maides or Wives that are his Subjects: yet he ought to deny and reject all things, as shall make him forgetfull of himselfe, and his true honour.

### **The Argument of the Eight Novell**

*Sophronia, thinking her selfe to be the married wife of Gisippus, was (indeed) the wife of Titus Quintus Fulvius, & departed thence with him to Rome. Within a while after, Gisippus also came thither in very poore condition, and thinking that he was despised by Titus, grew weary of his life, and confessed that he had muredred a man, with full intent to die for the fact. But Titus taking knowledge of him, and desiring to save the life of Gisippus, charged himself to have done the bloody deed. Which the murderer himself (standing then among the multitude) seeing, truly confessed the deed. By meanes whereof, all three were delivered by the Emperour Octavius; and Titus gave his Sister in mariage to Gisippus, giving them also the most part of his goods & inheritances.*

### **The Morall**

Declaring, that notwithstanding the frownes of Fortune, diversity of occurrences, and contrary accidents happening: yet love and friendship ought to be preciously preserved among men.

### **The Argument of the Ninth Novell**

*Saladine, the great Soldan of Babylon, in the habite of a Merchant, was honourably received and welcommed, into the house of Signior Thorello d'Istria. Who travelling to the Holy Land, prefixed a certaine time to his Wife, for his returne backe to her againe, wherein, if he failed, it was lawfull for her to take another Husband. By clouding himselfe in the disguise of a Faulkner, the Soldan tooke notice of him, and did him many great honours. Afterward, Thorello falling sicke, by Magicall Art, he was conveighed in one night to Pavia, when his Wife was to be married on the morrow: where making himselfe knowne to her, all was disappointed, and shee went home with him to his owne house.*

### **The Morall**

Declaring what an honourable vertue Courtesie is, in them that truely know how to use them.

### **The Argument of the tenth Novell**

*The Marquesse of Saluzzo, named Gualtiero, being constrained by the importunate solliciting of his Lords, and other inferiour people, to joyne himselfe in marriage; tooke a woman according to his owne liking, called Grizelda, she being the daughter of a poore Countriman, named Janiculo, by whom he had two children, which he pretended to be secretly murdered. Afterward, they being grown to yeres of more stature, and making shew of taking in marriage another wife, more worthy of his high degree and Calling: made a seeming publique liking of his owne daughter, expulsing his wife Grizelda poorely from him. But finding her incomparable patience; more dearely (then before) hee received her into favour againe, brought her home to his owne Pallace, where (with her children) hee caused her and them to be respectively honoured, in despight of all her adverse enemies.*

### **The Morall**

Set downe as an example or warning to all wealthie men, how to have care of marrying themselves. And likewise to poore and meane women, to be patient in their fortunes, and obedient to their husbands.

## THE SIXT DAY

**Governed under the Authority of Madam Eliza, and the Argument of the Discourses or Novels there to be recounted, doe concerne such persons; who by some witty words (when any have checkt or taunted them) have revenged themselves, in a sudden, unexpected and discreet answer, thereby preventing loss, danger, scorne and disgrace, retorting them on the busi-headed Questioners**

### The Induction

The Moone having past the heaven, lost her bright splendor, by the arising of a more powerfull light, and every part of our world began to looke cleare: when the Queene (being risen) caused all the Company to be called, walking forth afterward upon the pearled dewe (so farre as was supposed convenient) in faire and familiar conference together, according as severally they were disposed, & repetition of divers the passed Novels, especially those which were most pleasing, and seemed so by their present commendations. But the Sunne beeing somewhat higher mounted, gave such a sensible warmth to the ayre, as caused their returne backe to the Pallace, where the Tables were readily covered against their comming, strewed with sweet hearbes and odoriferous flowers, seating themselves at the Tables (before the heat grew more violent) according as the Queene commanded.

After dinner, they sung divers excellent Canzonnets, and then some went to sleepe, others played at the Chesse, and some at the Tables: But *Dioneus* and Madam *Lauretta*, they sung the love-conflict betweene *Troylus* and *Cressida*. Now was the houre come, of repairing to their former Consistory or meeting place, the Queene having thereto generally summoned them, and seating themselves (as they were wont to doe) about the faire fountaine. As the Queene was commanding to begin the first Novell, an accident suddenly happened, which never had befalne before: to wit, they heard a great noyse and tumult, among the houshold servants in the Kitchin. Whereupon, the Queene caused the Master of the Houshold to be called, demaunding of him, what noyse it was, and what might be the occasion thereof? He made answer, that *Lacisca* and *Tindaro* were at some words of discontentment, but what was the occasion thereof, he knew not. Whereupon, the Queene commanded that they should be sent for, (their anger and violent speeches still continuing) and being come into her presence, she demaunded the reason of their discord; and *Tindaro* offering to make answer, *Lacisca* (being somewhat more ancient then he, and of a fiercer fiery spirit, even as if her heart would have leapt out of her mouth) turned her selfe to him, and with a scornefull frowning countenance, said. See how this bold, unmannerly and beastly fellow, dare presume to speake in this place before me: Stand by (saucy impudence) and give your better leave to answer; then turning to the Queene, thus shee proceeded.

Madam, this idle fellow would maintaine to me, that Signior *Sicophanto* marrying with *Madama della Grazza*, had the victory of her virginity the very first night: and I avouched the contrary, because shee had been a mother twice before, in very faire adventuring of her fortune. And he dared to affirme beside, that young Maides are so simple, as to loose the flourishing Aprill of their time, in meere feare of their parents, and great prejudice of their amorous friends. Onely being abused by infinite promises, that this yeare and that yeare they shall have husbands, when, both by the lawes of nature and reason, they are not tyed to tarry so long, but rather ought to lay hold upon opportunity, when it is fairely and friendly offered, so that seldome they come maides to marriage. Beside, I have heard, and know some married wives, that have played divers wanton prancks with their husbands, yet

carried all so demurely and smoothly; that they have gone free from publique detection. All which this woodcocke will not credit, thinking me to be so young a Novice, as if I had been borne but yesterday.

While *Lacisca* was delivering these speeches, the Ladies smiled on one another, not knowing what to say in this case: And although the Queene (five and or severall times) commaunded her to silence; yet such was the earnestnes of her spleen, that she gave no attention, but held on still even untill she had uttered all that she pleased. But after she had concluded her complaint, the Queene (with a smiling countenance) turned towards *Dioneus* saying. This matter seemeth most properly to belong to you; and therefore I dare repose such trust in you, that when our Novels (for this day) shall be ended, you will conclude the case with a definitive sentence. Whereto *Dioneus* presently thus replied. Madam, the verdict is already given, without any further expectation: and I affirme, that *Lacisca* hath spoken very sensibly, because shee is a woman of good apprehension, and *Tindaro* is but a puny, in practise and experience, to her.

When *Lacisca* heard this, she fell into a lowd Laughter, and turning her selfe to *Tindaro*, sayde: The honour of the day is mine, and thine owne quarrell hath overthrowne thee in the fielde. Thou that (as yet) hath scarcely learned to sucke, wouldest thou presume to know so much as I doe? Couldst thou imagine mee, to be such a trewant in losse of my time, that I came hither as an ignorant creature? And had not the Queene (looking verie frowningly on her) strictly enjoyned her to silence; shee would have continued still in this triumphing humour. But fearing further chastisement for disobedience, both shee and *Tindaro* were commanded thence, where was no other allowance all this day, but onely silence and attention, to such as should be enjoyned speakers.

And then the Queene, somewhat offended at the folly of the former controversie, commanded Madame *Philomena*, that she should give beginning to the dayes Novels: which (in dutifull manner) shee undertooke to doe, and seating her selfe in formall fashion, with modest and very gracious gesture, thus she began.

***A Knight requested Madam Oretta, to ride behinde him on horse-backe, and promised, to tell her an excellent Tale by the way. But the Lady perceiving, that his discourse was idle, and much worse delivered: entreated him to let her walke on foote againe***

## The First Novell

### **Reprehending the folly of such men, as undertake to report discourses, which are beyond their wit and capacity, and gaine nothing but blame for their labour**

Gracious Ladies, like as in our faire, cleere, and serene seasons, the Starres are bright ornaments to the heavens, and the flowry fields (so long as the spring time lasteth) weare their goodliest Liveries, the Trees likewise bragging in their best adornings: Even so at friendly meetings, short, sweet, and sententious words, are the beauty & ornament of any discourse, savouring of wit and sound judgement, worthily deserving to be commended. And so much the rather, because in few and witty words, aptly suting with the time and occasion, more is delivered then was expected, or sooner answered, then rashly apprehended: which, as they become men verie highly, yet do they shew more singular in women.

True it is, what the occasion may be, I know not, either by the badnesse of our wittes, or the especiall enmitie betweene our complexions and the celestiall bodies: there are scarcely any, or very few Women to be found among us, that well knowes how to deliver a word, when it should and ought to be spoken; or, if a question bee mooved, understands to suite it with an apt answer, such as conveniently is required, which is no meane disgrace to us women. But in regard, that Madame *Pampinea* hath already spoken sufficiently of this matter, I meane not to presse it any further: but at this time it shall satisfie mee, to let you know, how wittily a Ladie made due observation of opportunitie, in answering of a Knight, whose talke seemed tedious and offensive to her.

No doubt there are some among you, who either do know, or (at the least) have heard, that it is no long time since, when there dwelt a Gentlewoman in our Citie, of excellent grace and good discourse, with all other rich endowments of Nature remaining in her, as pittie it were to conceale her name: and therefore let me tell ye, that shee was called Madame *Oretta*, the Wife to Signior *Geri Spina*. She being upon some occasion (as now we are) in the Countrey, and passing from place to place (by way of neighbourly invitations) to visite her loving Friends and Acquaintance, accompanied with divers Knights and Gentlewomen, who on the day before had dined and supt at her house, as now (belike) the selfe-same courtesie was intended to her: walking along with her company upon the way; and the place for her welcome beeing further off then she expected: a Knight chanced to overtake this faire troop, who well knowing Madam *Oretta*, using a kinde and courteous salutation, spake thus unto her.

Madam, this foot travell may bee offensive to you, and were you so well pleased as my selfe, I would ease your journey behinde mee on my Gelding, even so farre as you shall command me: and beside, wil shorten your wearinesse with a Tale worth the hearing. Courteous Sir (replied the Lady) I embrace your kinde offer with such acceptation, that I pray you to performe it; for therein you shall doe me an especiall favour. The Knight, whose Sword (perhappes) was as unsuteable to his side, as his wit out of fashion for any readie discourse, having the Lady mounted behinde him: rode on with a gentle pace, and (according to his promise) began to tell a Tale, which indeede (of it selfe) deserved attention, because it was a knowne and commendable History, but yet delivered so abruptly, with idle repetitions of some particulars three or foure severall times, mistaking one thing for another, and wandering erroneously from the essentiall subject, seeming neere an end, and then beginning againe: that a poore Tale could not possibly be more mangled, or worse tortured in telling, then this was; for the persons therein concerned, were so abusively nicke-named, their actions and speeches so monstrously misshapen, that nothing could appeare to be more ugly.

Madame *Oretta*, being a Lady of unequalled ingenuitie, admirable in judgement, and most delicate in her speech, was afflicted in soule, beyond all measure; overcome with many colde sweates,

and passionate heart-aking qualmes, to see a Foole thus in a Pinne-fold, and unable to get out, albeit the doore stood wide open to him, whereby shee became so sicke; that, converting her distaste to a kinde of pleasing acceptation, merrily thus she spake. Beleeve me Sir, your horse trots so hard, & travels so uneasily; that I entreate you to let me walke on foot againe.

The Knight, being (perchance) a better understander, then a Discourser; perceived by this witty taunt, that his Bowle had run a contrarie bias, and he as farre out of Tune, as he was from the Towne. So, lingering the time, untill her company was neerer arrived: hee left her with them, and rode on as his Wisedome could best direct him.

***Cistio a Baker, by a wittie answer which he gave unto Messer Geri Spina, caused him to acknowledge a very indiscreete motion, which he had made to the said Cistio***



## The Second Novell

### Approving, that a request ought to be civill, before it should be granted to any one whatsoever

The words of Madame *Oretta*, were much commended by the men and women; and the discourse being ended, the Queene gave command to Madam *Pampinea*, that shee should follow next in order, which made her to begin in this manner.

Worthy Ladies, it exceedeth the power of my capacitie, to censure in the case whereof I am to speake, by saying, who sinned most, either Nature, in seating a Noble soule in a vile body, or Fortune, in bestowing on a body (beautified with a noble soule) a base or wretched condition of life. As we may observe by *Cistio*, a Citizen of our owne, and many more beside; for, this *Cistio* beeing endued with a singular good spirit, Fortune hath made him no better then a Baker. And beleeve me Ladies, I could (in this case) lay as much blame on Nature, as on Fortune; if I did not know Nature to be most absolutely wise, & that Fortune hath a thousand eyes, albeit fooles have figured her to bee blinde. But, upon more mature and deliberate consideration, I finde, that they both (being truly wise and judicious) have dealt justly, in imitation of our best advised mortals, who being uncertaine of such inconveniences, as may happen unto them, do bury (for their own benefit) the very best and choisest things of esteeme, in the most vile and abject places of their houses, as being subject to least suspition, and where they may be sure to have them at all times, for supply of any necessitie whatsoever, because so base a conveyance hath better kept them, then the very best chamber in the house could have done. Even so these two great commanders of the world, do many times hide their most precious Jewels of worth, under the clouds of Arts or professions of worst estimation, to the end, that fetching them thence when neede requires, their splendor may appeare to be the more glorious. Nor was any such matter noted in our homely Baker *Cistio*, by the best observation of *Messer Geri Spina*, who was spoken of in the late repeated Novell, as being the husband to Madame *Oretta*; whereby this accident came to my remembrance, and which (in a short Tale) I will relate unto you.

Let me then tell ye, that Pope *Boniface* (with whom the fore-named *Messer Geri Spina* was in great regard) having sent divers Gentlemen of his Court to *Florence* as Ambassadors, about very serious and important businesse: they were lodged in the house of *Messer Geri Spina*, and he employed (with them) in the saide Popes negotiation. It chanced, that as being the most convenient way for passage, every morning they walked on foot by the Church of Saint *Marie d'Ughi*, where *Cistio* the Baker dwelt, and exercised the trade belonging to him. Now although Fortune had humbled him to so meane a condition, yet shee added a blessing of wealth to that contemptible quality, and (as smiling on him continually) no disasters at any time befell him, but still he flourished in riches, lived like a jolly Citizen, with all things fitting for honest entertainment about him, and plenty of the best Wines (both White and Claret) as *Florence*, or any part thereabout yeelded.

Our frolicke Baker perceiving, that *Messer Geri Spina* and the other Ambassadors, used every morning to passe by his doore, and afterward to returne backe the same way: seeing the season to be somewhat hot & soultry, he tooke it as an action of kindnesse and courtesie, to make them an offer of tasting his white wine. But having respect to his own meane degree, and the condition of *Messer Geri*; hee thought it farre unfitting for him, to be so forward in such presumption; but rather entred into consideration of some such meanes, whereby *Messer Geri* might bee the inviter of himselfe to taste his Wine. And having put on him a trusse or thin doublet, of very white and fine Linnen cloath, as also breeches, and an apron of the same, and a white cap upon his head, so that he seemed rather to be a Miller, then a Baker: at such times as *Messer Geri* and the Ambassadors should daily passe by, hee set before his doore a new Bucket of faire water, and another small vessell of *Bologna* earth (as

new and sightly as the other) full of his best and choisest white Wine, with two small Glasses, looking like silver, they were so cleare. Downe he sate, with all this provision before him, and emptying his stomacke twice or thrice, of some clotted flegmes which seemed to offend it: even as the Gentlemen were passing by, he dranke one or two rouses of his Wine so heartily, and with such a pleasing appetite, as might have moved a longing (almost) in a dead man.

*Messer Geri* well noting his behaviour, and observing the verie same course in him two mornings together; on the third day (as he was drinking) he said unto him. Well done *Cistio*, what, is it good, or no? *Cistio* starting up, forthwith replied: Yes Sir, the wine is good indeed, but how can I make you to beleieve me, except you taste of it? *Messer Geri*, eyther in regard of the times quality, or by reason of his paines taken, perhaps more then ordinary, or else, because hee saw *Cistio* had drunke so sprightly, was very desirous to taste of the Wine, and turning unto the Ambassadors, in merriment he saide. My Lords, me thinks it were not much amisse, if we tooke a taste of this honest mans Wine, perhaps it is so good, that we shall not neede to repent our labour.

Heereupon, he went with them to *Cistio*, who had caused an handsome seate to be fetched forth of his house, whereon he requested them to sit downe, and having commanded his men to wash cleane the Glasses, he saide. Fellowes, now get you gone, and leave me to the performance of this service; for I am no worse a skinker, then a Baker, and tarry you never so long, you shall not drinke a drop. Having thus spoken, himselfe washed foure or five small glasses, faire and new, and causing a Viall of his best wine to be brought him: hee diligently filled it out to *Messer Geri* and the Ambassadors, to whom it seemed the very best Wine, that they had drunke of in a long while before. And having given *Cistio* most hearty thanks for his kindnesse, and the Wine his due commendation: many dayes afterwarde (so long as they continued there) they found the like courteous entertainment, and with the good liking of honest *Cistio*.

But when the affayres were fully concluded, for which they were thus sent to *Florence*, and their parting preparation in due readinesse: *Messer Geri* made a very sumptuous Feast for them, inviting thereto the most part of the honourablest Citizens, and *Cistio* to be one amongst them; who (by no meanes) would bee seene in an assembly of such State and pompe, albeit he was thereto (by the saide *Messer Geri*) most earnestly entreated.

In regard of which deniall, *Messer Geri* commaunded one of his servants, to take a small Bottle, and request *Cistio* to fill it with his good Wine; then afterward, to serve it in such sparing manner to the Table, that each Gentleman might be allowed halfe a glasse-full at their down-sitting. The Servingman, who had heard great report of the Wine, and was halfe offended, because he could never taste thereof: tooke a great Flaggon Bottle, containing foure or five Gallons at the least, and comming therewith unto *Cistio*, saide unto him. *Cistio*, because my Master cannot have your companie among his friends, he prayes you to fill this Bottle with your best Wine. *Cistio* looking uppon the huge Flaggon, replied thus. Honest Fellow, *Messer Geri* never sent thee with such a Message to me: which although the Servingman very stoutly maintained, yet getting no other answer, he returned backe therewith to his Master.

*Messer Geri* returned the Servant backe againe unto *Cistio*, saying: Goe, and assure *Cistio*, that I sent thee to him, and if hee make thee any more such answeres, then demaund of him, to what place else I should send thee? Being come againe to *Cistio*, hee avouched that his Maister had sent him, but *Cistio* affirming, that hee did not: the Servant asked, to what place else hee should send him? Marrie (quoth *Cistio*) unto the River of *Arno*, which runneth by *Florence*, there thou mayest be sure to fill thy Flaggon. When the Servant had reported this answer to *Messer Geri*, the eyes of his understanding beganne to open, and calling to see what Bottle hee had carried with him: no sooner looked he on the huge Flaggon, but severely reprovng the sawcinesse of his Servant, hee sayde. Now trust mee, *Cistio* told thee nothing but trueth, for neither did I send thee with any such dishonest message, nor had the reason to yeeld or grant it.

Then he sent him with a bottle of more reasonable competencie, which so soone as *Cistio* saw: Yea mary my friend, quoth he, now I am sure that thy Master sent thee to me, and he shall have his desire with all my hart. So, commaunding the Bottle to be filled, he sent it away by the Servant, and presently following after him, when he came unto *Messer Geri*, he spake unto him after this manner. Sir, I would not have you to imagine, that the huge flaggon (which first came) did any jotte dismay mee; but rather I conceyved, that the small Viall whereof you tasted every morning, yet filled many mannerly Glasses together, was fallen quite out of your remembrance; in plainer tearmes, it beeing no Wine for Groomes or Peazants, as your selfe affirmed yesterday. And because I meane to bee a Skinker no longer, by keeping Wine to please any other pallate but mine owne: I have sent you halfe my store, and heereafter thinke of mee as you shall please. *Messer Geri* tooke both his guifte and speeches in most thankefull manner, accepting him alwayes after, as his intimate Friend, because he had so graced him before the Ambassadors.

***Madame Nonna de Pulci, by a sodaine answere, did put to silence  
a Byshop of Florence, and the Lord Marshall: having moved a  
question to the said Lady, which seemed to come short of honesty***

## The Third Novell

### Wherein is declared, that mockers do sometimes meete with their matches in mockery, and to their owne shame

When Madame *Pampinea* had ended her Discourse, and (by the whole company) the answer and bounty of *Cistio*, had past with deserved commendation: it pleased the Queene, that Madame *Lauretta* should next succeed: whereupon verie chearefully thus she beganne.

Faire assembly, Madame *Pampinea* (not long time since) gave beginning, and Madam *Philomena* hath also seconded the same argument, concerning the slender vertue remaining in our sexe, and likewise the beautie of wittie words, delivered on apt occasion, and in convenient meetings. Now, because it is needlesse to proceede any further, then what hath beene already spoken: let mee onely tell you (over and beside) and commit it to memorie, that the nature of meetings and speeches are such, as they ought to nippe or touch the hearer, like unto the Sheepes nibling on the tender grasse, and not as the sullen Dogge byteth. For, if their biting be answerable to the Dogges, they deserve not to be termed witty jests or quips, but foule and offensive language: as plainly appeareth by the words of Madame *Oretta*, and the merry, yet sensible answer of *Cistio*.

True it is, that if it be spoken by way of answer, and the answerer biteth doggedly, because himselfe was bitten in the same manner before: he is the lesse to bee blamed, because hee maketh payment but with coine of the same stampe. In which respect, an especiall care is to bee had, how, when, with whom, and where we jest or gibe, whereof very many proove too unmindfull, as appeared (not long since) by a Prelate of ours, who met with a byting, no lesse sharpe and bitter, then had first come from himselfe before, as verie briefly I intend to tell you how.

*Messer Antonio d'Orso*, being Byshoppe of *Florence*, a vertuous, wise, and reverend Prelate; it fortuned that a Gentleman of *Catalogna*, named *Messer Diego de la Ratta*, and Lord Marshall to King *Robert* of *Naples*, came thither to visite him. Hee being a man of very comely personage, and a great observer of the choysiest beauties in Court: among all the other *Florentine* Dames, one proved to bee most pleasing in his eye, who was a verie faire Woman indeede, and Neece to the Brother of the saide *Messer Antonio*.

The Husband of this Gentlewoman (albeit descended of a worthie Family) was, neverthelesse, immeasurably covetous, and a verie vile harsh natured man. Which the Lord Marshall understanding, made such a madde composition with him, as to give him five hundred Ducates of Gold, on condition, that hee would let him lye one night with his wife, not thinking him so base minded as to give consent. Which in a greedy avaritious humour he did, and the bargaine being absolutely agreed on; the Lord Marshall prepared to fit him with a payment, such as it should be. He caused so many peeces of silver to be cunningly guilded, as then went for currant mony in *Florence*, and called *Popolines*, & after he had lyen with the Lady (contrary to her will and knowledge, her husband had so closely carried the businesse) the money was duely paid to the cornuted Coxcombe. Afterwards, this impudent shame chanced to be generally knowne, nothing remaining to the wilful Wittoll, but losse of his expected gaine, and scorne in every place where he went. The Bishop likewise (beeing a discrete and sober man) would seeme to take no knowledge thereof; but bare out all scoffes with a well settled countenance.

Within a short while after, the Bishop and the Lord Marshal (alwaies conversing together) it came to passe, that upon Saint *Johns* day, they riding thorow the City, side by side, and viewing the brave beauties, which of them might best deserve to win the prize; the Byshop espied a young married Lady (which our late greevous pestilence bereaved us of) she being named Madame *Nonna de Pulci*, and Cousine to *Messer Alexio Rinucci*, a Gentleman well knowne unto us all. A very goodly beautifull

young woman she was, of delicate language, and singular spirite, dwelling close by S. *Peters* gate. This Lady did the Bishop shew to the Marshall, and when they were come to her, laying his hand uppon her shoulder, he said. Madam *Nonna*, What thinke you of this Gallant? Dare you adventure another wager with him?

Such was the apprehension of this witty Lady, that these words seemed to taxe her honour, or else to contaminate the hearers understanding, whereof there were great plenty about her, whose judgement might be as vile, as the speeches were scandalous. Wherefore, never seeking for any further purgation of her cleare conscience, but onely to retort taunt for taunt, presently thus she replied. My Lord, if I should make such a vile adventure, I would looke to bee payde with better money.

These words being heard both by the Bishop and Marshall, they felt themselves touched to the quicke, the one, as the Factor or Broker, for so dishonest a businesse, to the Brother of the Bishop; and the other, as receiving (in his owne person) the shame belonging to his Brother. So, not so much as looking each on other, or speaking one word together all the rest of that day, they rode away with blushing cheekes. Whereby we may collect, that the young Lady, being so injuriously provoked, did no more then well became her, to bite their basenesse neerely, that so abused her openly.

***Chichibio, the Cooke to Messer Currado Gianfiliazzi, by a sodaine pleasant answer which he made to his Master; converted his anger into laughter, and thereby escaped the punishment, that Messer meant to impose on him***

## The Fourth Novell

### Whereby plainly appeareth, that a sodaine witty and merry answer, doth oftentimes appease the furious choller of an angry man

Madam *Lauretta* sitting silent, and the answer of Lady *Nonna* having past with generall applause: the Queene commanded Madame *Neiphila* to follow next in order; who instantly thus began. Although a ready wit (faire Ladies) doth many times affoord worthy and commendable speeches, according to the accidents happening to the speaker: yet notwithstanding, Fortune (being a ready helper divers wayes to the timorous) doth often tippe the tongue with such a present reply, as the partie to speake, had not so much leysure as to thinke on, nor yet to invent; as I purpose to let you perceive, by a pretty short Novell.

*Messer Currado Gianfiliazzi* (as most of you have both seene and knowen) living alwayes in our Citie, in the estate of a Noble Citizen, beeing a man bountifull, magnificent, and within the degree of Knighthoode: continually kept both Hawkes and Hounds, taking no meane delight in such pleasures as they yeilded, neglecting (for them) farre more serious imployments, wherewith our present subject presumeth not to meddle. Upon a day, having kilde with his Faulcon a Crane, neere to a Village called *Peretola*, and finding her to be both young and fat, he sent it to his Cooke, a *Venetian* borne, and named *Chichibio*, with command to have it prepared for his supper. *Chichibio*, who resembled no other, then (as he was indeede) a plaine, simple, honest merry fellow, having drest the Crane as it ought to bee, put it on the spit, and laide it to the fire.

When it was well neere fully roasted, and gave forth a very delicate pleasing savour; it fortunied that a young Woman dwelling not far off, named *Brunetta*, and of whom *Chichibio* was somewhat enamored, entred into the Kitchin, and feeling the excellent smell of the Crane, to please her beyond all savours, that ever she had felt before: she entreated *Chichibio* verie earnestly, that hee would bestow a legge thereof on her. Whereto *Chichibio* (like a pleasant companion, and evermore delighting in singing) sung her this answer.

*My Brunetta, faire and feat a,  
Why should you say so?  
The meate of my Master,  
Allowes you for no Taster,  
Go from the Kitchin go.*

Many other speeches past betweene them in a short while, but in the end, *Chichibio*, because hee would not have his Mistresse *Brunetta* angrie with him; cut away one of the Cranes legges from the spit, and gave it to her to eate. Afterward, when the Fowle was served up to the Table before *Messer Currado*, who had invited certain strangers his friends to sup with him, wondering not a little, he called for *Chichibio* his Cook; demanding what was become of the Cranes other legge? Whereto the *Venetian* (being a lyar by Nature) sodainely answered: Sir, Cranes have no more but one legge each Bird. *Messer Currado*, growing verie angry, replied. Wilt thou tell me, that a Crane hath no more but one legge? Did I never see a Crane before this? *Chichibio* persisting resolutely in his deniall, saide. Beleeve me Sir, I have told you nothing but the truth, and when you please, I wil make good my wordes, by such Fowles as are living.

*Messer Currado*, in kinde love to the strangers that hee had invited to supper, gave over any further contestation; onely he said. Seeing thou assurest me, to let me see thy affirmation for truth, by other of the same Fowles living (a thing which as yet I never saw, or heard of) I am content to

make prooffe thereof to morrow morning, till then I shall rest satisfied: but, upon my word, if I finde it otherwise, expect such a sound payment, as thy knavery justly deserveth, to make thee remember it all thy life time. The contention ceassing for the night season, Messer *Currado*, who though he had slept well, remained still discontented in his minde: arose in the morning by breake of day, and puffing & blowing angerly, called for his horses, commanding *Chichibio* to mount on one of them; so riding on towards the River, where (earely every morning) he had seene plenty of Cranes, he sayde to his man; We shall see anon Sirra, whether thou or I lyed yesternight.

*Chichibio* perceiving, that his Masters anger was not (as yet) asswaged, and now it stood him upon, to make good his lye; not knowing how he should do it, rode after his Master, fearfully trembling all the way. Gladly he would have made an escape, but hee could not by any possible meanes, and on every side he looked about him, now before, and after behinde, to espy any Cranes standing on both their legges, which would have bin an ominous sight to him. But being come neere to the River, he chanced to see (before any of the rest) upon the banke thereof, about a dozen Cranes in number, each of them standing but upon one legge, as they use to do when they are sleeping. Whereupon, shewing them quickly to Messer *Currado*, he said. Now Sir your selfe may see, whether I told you true yesternight, or no: I am sure a Crane hath but one thigh, and one leg, as all here present are apparant witnesses, and I have bin as good as my promise.

Messer *Currado* looking on the Cranes, and well understanding the knavery of his man, replied: Stay but a little while sirra, & I will shew thee, that a Crane hath two thighes, and two legges. Then riding somewhat neerer to them, he cryed out aloud, Shough, shough, which caused them to set downe their other legs, and all fled away, after they had made a few paces against the winde for their mounting. So going unto *Chichibio*, he said: How now you lying Knave, hath a Crane two legs, or no? *Chichibio* being well-neere at his wits end, not knowing now what answer hee should make; but even as it came sodainly into his minde, said: Sir, I perceive you are in the right, and if you would have done as much yesternight, and had cryed Shough, as here you did: questionlesse, the Crane would then have set down the other legge, as these heere did: but if (as they) she had fled away too, by that meanes you might have lost your Supper.

This sodaine and unexpected witty answere, comming from such a logger-headed Lout, and so seasonably for his owne safety: was so pleasing to Messer *Currado*, that he fell into a hearty laughter, and forgetting all anger, saide. *Chichibio*, thou hast quit thy selfe well, and to my contentment: albeit I advise thee, to teach mee no more such trickes heereafter. Thus *Chichibio*, by his sodaine and merry answer, escaped a sound beating, which (otherwise) his master had inflicted on him.

**Messer Forese da Rabatte, and Maister Giotto, a Painter by his profession, comming together from Mugello, scornfully reprehended one another for their deformity of body**

## The Fift Novell

**Whereby may bee observed, that such as will speake contemptibly of others, ought (first of all) to looke respectively on their owne imperfections**

So soone as Madame *Neiphila* sate silent (the Ladies having greatly commended the pleasant answer of *Chichibio*) *Pamphilus*, by command from the Queene, spake in this manner. Woorthy Ladies, it commeth to passe oftentimes, that like as Fortune is observed divers wayes, to hide under vile and contemptible Arts, the most great and unvailewable treasures of vertue (as, not long since, was well discoursed unto us by Madam *Pampinea*;) so in like manner hath appeared; that Nature hath infused very singular spirits into most misshapen and deformed bodies of men. As hath beene noted in two of our owne Citizens, of whom I purpose to speake in fewe words. The one of them was named *Messer Forese de Rabatte*, a man of little and low person, but yet deformed in body, with a flat face, like a Terrier or Beagle, as if no comparison (almost) could bee made more ugly. But notwithstanding all this deformity, he was so singularly experienced in the Lawes, that all men held him beyond any equall, or rather reputed him as a Treasury of civill knowledge.

The other man, being named *Giotto*, had a spirit of so great excellency, as there was not any particular thing in Nature, the Mother and Worke-mistresse of all, by continuall motion of the heavens; but hee by his pen and pensell could perfectly portraitt; shaping them all so truly alike and resemblable, that they were taken for the reall matters indeede; and, whether they were present or no, there was hardly any possibility of their distinguishing. So that many times it happened, that by the variable devises he made, the visible sence of men became deceived, in crediting those things to be naturall, which were but meerly painted. By which meanes, hee reduced that singular Art to light, which long time before had lyen buried, under the grosse error of some; who, in the mysterie of painting, delighted more to content the ignorant, then to please the judicious understanding of the wise, he justly deserving thereby, to be tearmed one of the *Florentines* most glorious lights. And so much the rather, because he performed all his actions, in the true and lowly spirit of humility: for while he lived, and was a Master in his Art, above all other Painters: yet he refused any such title, which shined the more majestically in him, as appeared by such, who knew much lesse then he, or his Schollers either: yet his knowledge was extreamly coveted among them.

Now, notwithstanding all this admirable excellency in him: he was not (thereby) a jot the handsommer man (either in person or countenance) then was our fore-named Lawyer *Messer Forese*, and therefore my Novell concerneth them both. Understand then, (faire Assemblée) that the possessions and inheritances of *Messer Forese* and *Giotto*, lay in *Mugello*; wherefore, when Holydayes were celebrated by Order of Court, and in the Sommer time, upon the admittance of so apt a vacation; *Forese* rode thither upon a very unsightly Jade, such as a man can can seldome meet with worse. The like did *Giotto* the Painter, as ill fitted every way as the other; and having dispatched their busines there, they both returned backe towards *Florence*, neither of them being able to boast, which was the best mounted.

Riding on a faire and softly pace, because their Horses could goe no faster: and they being well entred into yeeres, it fortun'd (as oftentimes the like befalleth in Sommer) that a sodaine showre of raine over-tooke them; for avoyding whereof, they made all possible haste to a poore Countreymans Cottage, familiarly knowne to them both. Having continued there an indifferent while, and the raine unlikely to cease: to prevent all further protraction of time, and to arrive at *Florence* in due season: they borrowed two old cloakes of the poore man, of over-worn and ragged Country gray, as also two hoodes of the like Complexion, (because the poore man had no better) which did more



mishape them, then their owne ugly deformity, and made them notoriously flouted and scorned, by all that met or overtooke them.

After they had ridden some distance of ground, much moyled and bemyred with their shuffling Jades, flinging the dirt every way about them, that well they might be termed two filthy companions: the raine gave over, and the evening looking somewhat cleare, they began to confer familiarly together. *Messer Forese*, riding a lofty *French* trot, everie step being ready to hoise him out of his saddle, hearing *Giottos* discreete answers to every ydle question he made (for indeede he was a very elegant speaker) began to peruse and surveigh him, even from the foote to the head, as we use to say. And perceiving him to be so greatly deformed, as no man could be worse, in his opinion: without any consideration of his owne misshaping as bad, or rather more unsightly then hee; in a scoffing laughing humour, hee saide. *Giotto*, doest thou imagine, that a stranger, who had never seene thee before, and should now happen into our companie, would beleeeve thee to bee the best Painter in the world, as indeede thou art? Presently *Giotto* (without any further meditation) returned him this answer. Signior *Forese*, I think he might then beleeeve it, when (beholding you) hee could imagine that you had learned your A. B. C. Which when *Forese* heard, he knew his owne error, and saw his payment returned in such Coine, as he sold his Wares for.

**A young and ingenious Scholler, being unkindly reviled and smitten by his ignorant Father, and through the procurement of an unlearned Vicare: afterward attained to be doubly revenged on him**

## The Sixth Novell

### **Serving as an advertisement to unlearned Parents, not to bee over-rash, in censuring on Schollers perfections, through any badde or unbecoming perswasions**

The Ladies smiled very heartily, at the ready answer of *Giotto*; untill the Queene charged Madam *Fiammetta*, that shee should next succeed in order: whereupon, thus she began. The verie greatest infelicity that can happen to a man, and most insupportable of all other, is Ignorance; a word (I say) which hath bin so generall, as under it is comprehended all imperfections whatsoever. Yet notwithstanding, whosoever can cull (graine by graine) the defects incident to humane race; will and must confesse, that wee are not all borne to knowledge: but onely such, whom the heavens illuminating by their bright radiance (wherein consisteth the sourse and well-spring of all science) by little & little, do bestow the influence of their bounty, on such and so manie as they please, who are to expresse themselves the more thankfull for such a blessing. And although this grace doth lessen the misfortune of many, which were over-mighty to bee in all; yet some there are, who by sawcie presuming on themselves, doe bewray their ignorance by theyr owne speeches; setting such behaviour on each matter, and soothing every thing with such gravity, even as if they would make comparison: or (to speake more properly) durst encounter in the Listes with great *Salomon* or *Socrates*. But let us leave them, and come to the matter of our purposed Novell.

In a certaine Village of *Piccardie*, there lived a Priest or Vicar, who beeing meerey an ignorant blocke, had yet such a peremptorie presuming spirite: as, though it was sufficiently discerned, yet hee beguiled many thereby, untill at last he deceyved himselfe, and with due chastisement to his folly.

A plaine Husbandman dwelling in the same Village, possessed of much Land and Living, but verie grosse and dull in understanding; by the entreaty of divers his Friends and Well-willers, something more intelligable then himselfe: became incited, or rather provoked, to send a Sonne of his to the University of *Paris*, to study there as was fitting for a Scholler. To the end (quoth they) that having but this Son onely, and Fortunes blessings abounding in store for him: hee might like wise have the riches of the minde, which are those true treasures indeede, that *Aristippus* giveth us advice to be furnished withall.

His Friends perswasions having prevailed, and hee continued at *Paris* for the space of three yeares: what with the documents he had attayned to, before his going thither, and by meanes of a happie memory in the time of his being there, wherewith no young man was more singularly endued (in so short a while) he attained and performed the greater part of his Studies.

Now, as oftentimes it commeth to passe, the love of a Father (surmounting all other affections in man) made the olde Farmer desirous to see his Sonne: which caused his sending for him with all convenient speede, and obedience urged his as forward willingnesse thereto. The good olde man, not a little joyfull to see him in so good condition and health, and encreased so much in stature since his parting thence: familiarly told him, that he earnestly desired to know, if his minde and body had attained to a competent and equall growth, which within three or foure dayes he would put in practise.

No other helpe had he silly simple man, but Master Vicar must bee the questioner and poser of his son: wherein the Priest was very unwilling to meddle, for feare of discovering his owne ignorance, which passed under better opinion then he deserved. But the Farmer beeing importunate, and the Vicar many wayes beholding to him, durst not returne deniall, but undertooke it very formally, as if he had bene an able man indeede.

But see how Fooles are borne to be fortunate, and where they least hope, there they find the best successe; the simplicitie of the Father, must be the meanes for abusing his Schollerly Son, and a skreene to stand betweene the Priest and his ignorance. Earnest is the olde man to know, what

and how farre his Sonne had profited at Schoole, and by what note he might best take understanding of his answeres: which jumping fit with the Vicars vanity, and a warrantable cloake to cover his knavery; he appoints him but one word onely, namely *Nescio*, wherewith if he answered to any of his demands, it was an evident token, that hee understood nothing. As thus they were walking and conferring in the Church, the Farmer very carefull to remember the word *Nescio*: it came to passe upon a sodaine, that the young man entred into them, to the great contentment of his Father, who prayed Master Vicar, to make approbation of his Sonne, whether he were learned, or no, and how hee had benefited at the University?

After the time of the daies salutations had past betweene them, the Vicar being subtle and crafty, as they walked along by one of the tombs in the Church; pointing with his finger to the Tombe, the Priest uttered these words to the Scholler.

Quis hic est sepultus?

The young Scholler (by reason it was erected since his departure, and finding no inscription whereby to informe him) answered, as well hee might, *Nescio*. Immediately the Father, keeping the word perfectly in his memorie, grewe verie angerly passionate; and, desiring to heare no more demaunds: gave him three or foure boxes on the eares; with many harsh and injurious speeches, tearing him an Asse and Villaine, and that he had not learned any thing. His Sonne was patient, and returned no answer, but plainly perceived, that this was a tricke intended against him, by the malicious treachery of the Priest, on whom (in time) he might be revenged.

Within a short while after, the Suffragane of those parts (under whom the Priest was but a Deputy, holding the benefice of him, with no great charge to his conscience) being abroad in his visitation, sent word to the Vicar, that he intended to preach there on the next Sunday, and hee to prepare in a readinesse, *Bonum & Commodum*, because hee would have nothing else to his dinner. Heereat Master Vicar was greatly amazed, because he had never heard such words before, neither could hee finde them in all his *Breviarie*. Hereupon, he went to the young scholler, whom he had so lately before abused, and crying him mercy, with many impudent and shallow excuses, desired him to reveale the meaning of those words, and what he should understand by *Bonum & Commodum*.

The Scholler (with a sober and modest countenance) made answer; That he had bin over-much abused, which (neverthelesse) he tooke not so impatiently, but hee had already both forgot and forgiven it, with promise of comfort in this his extraordinary distraction, and greefe of minde. When he had perused the Suffraganes Letter, well observing the blushlesse ignorance of the Priest: seeming (by outward appearance) to take it strangely, he cryed out aloud, saying; In the name of Vertue, what may be this mans meaning? How? (quoth the Priest) What manner of demand do you make? Alas, replied the Scholler, you have but one poore Asse, which I know you love deerely, and yet you must stew his genitories very daintily, for your Patron will have no other meat to his dinner. The genitories of mine Asse, answered the Priest? Passion of me, who then shall carrie my Corne to the Mill? There is no remedie, sayde the Scholler, for he hath so set it downe for an absolute resolution.

After that the Priest had considered thereon a while by himselfe, remembring the yearly revennewes, which clearely hee put up into his purse, to be ten times of farre greater worth then his Asse: he concluded to have him gelded, what danger soever should ensue thereon, preparing them in readinesse against his comming. So soone as the Suffragan was there arrived, heavily hee complained to him for his Asse: which kinde of Language he not understanding, knew not what he meant, nor how he should answer. But beeing (by the Scholler) acquainted with the whole History, he laughed heartily at the Priests ignorant folly, wishing that all such bold Bayards (from time to time) might be so served. Likewise, that all ignorant Priests, Vicars, and other Grashoppers of Townes or Villages, who sometimes have onely seene *Partes orationis quod sunt*, not to stand over-much on their owne sufficiency, grounded soly upon their Grammar; but to beware whom they jest withall,

without meddling with Schollers, who take not injuries as dullards doe, least they prove infamous by their disputations.

**Madam Phillippa, being accused by her Husband Rinaldo de Pugliese,  
because he tooke her in Adulterie, with a young Gentleman named  
Lazarino de Guazzagliotori: caused her to bee cited before the Judge.  
From whom she delivered her selfe, by a sodaine, witty and pleasant answer,  
and moderated a severe strict Statute, formerly made against women**

## The Seventh Novell

### Wherein is declared, of what worth it is to confesse a trueth, with a facetious and witty excuse

After that Madame *Fiammetta* had given over speaking, and all the Auditory had sufficiently applauded the Schollers honest revenge, the Queene enjoined *Philostratus*, to proceede on next with his Novell, which caused him to begin thus. Beleeeve me Ladies, it is an excellent & most commendable thing, to speak well, and to all purposes: but I hold it a matter of much greater worth, to know how to do it, and when necessity doth most require it. Which a Gentlewoman (of whom I am now to speake) was so well enstructed in, as not onely it yeelded the hearers mirthfull contentment, but likewise delivered her from the danger of death, as (in few words) you shall heare related.

In the Citie of *Prato*, there was an Edict or Statute, no lesse blameworthy (to speake uprightly) then most severe and cruell, which (without making any distinction) gave strict command; That everie Woman should be burned with fire, whose husband found her in the acte of Adultery, with any secret or familiar friend, as one deserving to bee thus abandoned, like such as prostituted their bodies to publike sale or hire. During the continuance of this sharpe Edict, it fortun'd that a Gentlewoman, who was named *Phillippa*, was found in her Chamber one night, in the armes of a young Gentleman of the same City, named *Lazarino de Guazzagliotori*, and by her owne husband, called *Rinaldo de Pugliese*, shee loving the young Gallant, as her owne life, because hee was most compleate in all perfections, and every way as deerely addicted to her.

This sight was so irkesome to *Rinaldo*, that, being overcom with extreame rage, hee could hardly containe from running on them, with a violent intent to kill them both: but feare of his owne life caused his forbearance, meaning to be revenged by some better way. Such was the heate of his spleene and fury, as, setting aside all respect of his owne shame: he would needs prosecute the rigour of the deadly Edict, which he held lawfull for him to do, although it extended to the death of his Wife. Heereupon, having witnesses sufficient, to approve the guiltinesse of her offence: a day being appointed (without desiring any other counsell) he went in person to accuse her, and required justice against her.

The Gentlewoman, who was of an high and undauntable spirite, as all such are, who have fixed their affection resolutely, and love upon a grounded deliberation: concluded, quite against the counsell and opinion of her Parents, Kindred, and Friends; to appeare in the Court, as desiring rather to dye, by confessing the trueth with a manly courage, then by denying it, and her love unto so worthy a person as he was, in whole arms she chanced to be taken; to live basely in exile with shame, as an eternall scandall to her race. So, before the Potestate, shee made her apparance, worthily accompanied both with men and women, all advising her to deny the acte: but she, not minding them or their perswasions, looking on the Judge with a constant countenance, and a voyce of settled resolve, craved to know of him, what hee demaunded of her?

The Potestate well noting her brave carriage, her singular beautie and praise-worthy parts, her words apparantly witnessing the heighth of her minde: beganne to take compassion on her, and doubted, least shee would confesse some such matter, as should enforce him to pronounce the sentence of death against her. But she boldly scorning all delayes, or any further protraction of time; demanded again, what was her accusation? Madame, answered the Potestate, I am sory to tel you, what needs I must, your husband (whom you see present heere) is the complainant against you, avouching, that he tooke you in the act of adultery with another man: and therefore he requireth, that, according to the rigour of the Statute heere in force with us, I should pronounce sentence against you, and (consequently) the infliction of death. Which I cannot do, if you confesse not the fact, and

therefore be well advised, how you answer me, and tell me the truth, if it be as your Husband accuseth you, or no.

The Lady, without any dismay or dread at all, pleasantly thus replied. My Lord, true it is, that *Rinaldo* is my Husband, and that he found me, on the night named, betweene the Armes of *Lazarino*, where many times heeretofore he hath embraced mee, according to the mutuall love re-plighted together, which I deny not, nor ever will. But you know well enough, and I am certaine of it, that the Lawes enacted in any Countrey, ought to be common, and made with consent of them whom they concerne, which in this Edict of yours is quite contrarie. For it is rigorous against none, but poore women onely, who are able to yeeld much better content and satisfaction generally, then remaineth in the power of men to do. And moreover, when this Law was made, there was not any woman that gave consent to it, neither were they called to like or allow thereof: in which respect, it may deservedly be termed, an unjust Law. And if you will, in prejudice of my bodie, and of your owne soule, be the executioner of so unlawfull an Edict, it consisteth in your power to do as you please.

But before you proceede to pronounce any sentence, may it please you to favour me with one small request, namely, that you would demand of my Husband, if at all times, and whensoever he tooke delight in my company, I ever made any curiosity, or came to him unwillingly. Whereto *Rinaldo*, without tarrying for the Potestate to moove the question, sodainly answered; that (undoubtedly) his wife at all times, and oftner then he could request it, was never sparing of her kindnesse, or put him off with any deniall. Then the Lady, continuing on her former speeches, thus replied. Let me then demand of you my Lord, being our Potestate and Judge, if it be so, by my Husbands owne free confession, that he hath alwaies had his pleasure of me, without the least refusall in me, or contradiction; what should I doe with the over-plus remaining in mine owne power, and whereof he had no need? Would you have mee cast it away to the Dogges? Was it not more fitting for me, to pleasure therewith a worthy Gentleman, who was even at deaths doore for my love, then (my husbands surfetting, and having no neede of me) to let him lye languishing, and dye?

Never was heard such an examination before, and to come from a woman of such worth, the most part of the honourable *Pratosians* (both Lords and Ladies) being there present, who hearing her urge such a necessary question, cryed out all aloud together with one voice (after they had laughed their fill) that the Lady had saide well, and no more then she might. So that, before they departed thence, by comfortable advice proceeding from the Potestate: the Edict (being reputed overcruell) was modified, and interpreted to concerne them onely, who offered injurie to their Husbands for money. By which meanes, *Rinaldo* standing as one confounded, for such a foolish and unadvised enterprize, departed from the Auditorie: and the Ladie, not a little joyfull to bee thus freed and delivered from the fire, returned home with victorie to her owne house.

**Fresco da Celatico, counselled and advised his Neece Cesca: *That if such as deserved to be looked on, were offensive to her eyes, as she had often told him; she should forbear to looke on any***

## The Eighth Novell

**In just scorne of such unsightly and ill-pleasing surly Sluts,  
who imagine none to be faire or well-favoured, but themselves**

All the while as *Philostratus* was re-counting his Novell; it seemed, that the Ladies (who heard it) found themselves much mooved thereat, as by the wanton blood monting up into their cheekes, it plainly appeared. But in the end, looking on each other with strange behaviour, they could not forbear smiling: which the Queene interrupting by a command of attention, turning to Madame *Æmillia*, willed her to follow next. When she, puffing and blowing, as if she had bene newly awaked from sleepe, began in this manner.

Faire Beauties; My thoughts having wandred a great distance hence, and further then I can easily collect them together againe; in obedience yet to our Queene, I shall report a much shorter Novell, then otherwise (perhappes) I should have done, if my minde had beene a little neerer home. I shall tell you the grosse fault of a foolish Damosell, well corrected by a witty reprehension of her Uncle; if shee had bin endued but with so much sence, as to have understood it.

An honest man, named *Fresco da Celatico*, had a good fulsome wench to his Neece, who for her folly and squemishnes, was generally called *Cesca*, or nice *Francesca*. And although she had stature sufficient, yet none of the handsomest, & a good hard favourd countenance, nothing nere such Angelical beauties as we have seen: yet she was endued with such height of minde, and so proud an opinion of her selfe, that it appeared as a custome bred in hir, or rather a gift bestowed on hir by nature (though none of the best) to blame and despise both men and women, yea whosoever she lookt on; without any consideration of her self, she being as unsightly, ill shaped, and ugly faced, as a worse was very hardly to be found.

Nothing could be done at any time, to yeilde her liking or content: moreover, she was so waspish, nice, & squemish, that when she came into the royall Court of *France*, it was hatefull & contemptible to hir. Whensoever she went through the streets, every thing stunke and was noisome to her; so that she never did any thing but stop her nose; as if all men or women she met withall; and whatsoever else she lookt on, were stinking and offensive. But let us leave all further relation of her ill conditions, being every way (indeed) so bad, and hardly becomming any sensible body, that we cannot condemne them so much as we should.

It chanced upon a day, that shee comming home to the house where her Uncle dwelt, declared her wonted scurvy and scornfull behaviour; swelling, puffing, and pouting extreamly, in which humor she sat downe by her Uncle, who desiring to know what had displeased her, said. Why how now *Francesca*? what may the meaning of this bee? This being a solemne festivall day, what is the reason of your so soone returning home? She coily biting the lip, and brideling her head, as if she had bene some mans best Gelding, sprucely thus replied.

Indeede you say true Uncle, I am come home verie earely, because, since the day of my birth, I never saw a City so pestered with unhandsome people, both men and women, and worse this high Holyday then ever I did observe before. I walked thorow some store of streetes, and I could not see one proper man: and as for the women, they are the most misshapen and ugly creatures, that, if God had made me such an one, I should be sory that ever I was borne. And being no longer able to endure such unpleasing sights; you wil not thinke (Uncle) in what an anger I am come home. *Fresco*, to whome these stinking qualities of his Neece seemed so unsufferable, that hee could not (with patience) endure them any longer, thus short and quickly answered. *Francesca*, if all people of our Citie (both men and women) be so odious in thy eyes, and offensive to thy nose, as thou hast often reported to me: bee advised then by my counsell. Stay stil at home, and look upon none but thy selfe

onely, and then thou shalt be sure that they cannot displease thee. But she, being as empty of wit as a pith-lesse Cane, and yet thought her judgement to exceed *Salomons*, could not understand the lest part of hir Uncles meaning, but stood as senselesse as a sheepe. Onely she replyed, that she would resort to some other parts of the country, which if shee found as weakly furnished of handsome people, as heere shee did, shee would conceive better of her selfe, then ever she had done before.

***Signior Guido Cavalcante, with a sodaine and witty answer, reprehended the rash folly of certaine Florentine Gentlemen, that thought to scorne and flout him***



## The Ninth Novell

### Notably discovering the great difference that is between learning and ignorance, upon judicious apprehension

When the Queene perceived, that Madame *Æmillia* was discharged of her Novell, and none remained now to speake next, but onely her selfe, his priviledge alwayes remembred, to whom it belonged to be the last, she began in this manner.

Faire Company, you have this day disappointed me of two Novells at the least, whereof I had intended to make use. Neverthelesse, you shall not imagine mee so unfurnished, but that I have left one in store; the conclusion whereof, may minister such instruction, as will not bee reputed for ydle and impertinent: but rather of such materiall consequence, as better hath not this day past among us.

Understand then (most faire Ladies) that in former times long since past, our Cittie had many excellent and commendable customes in it; whereof (in these unhappy dayes of ours) we cannot say that poore one remaineth, such hath beene the too much encrease of Wealth and Covetousnesse, the onely supplanters of all good qualities whatsoever. Among which lawdable and friendly observations, there was one well deserving note, namely, that in divers places of *Florence*, men of the best houses in every quarter, had a sociable and neighbourly assemblie together, creating their company to consist of a certaine number, such as were able to supply their expences as this day one, and to morrow another: and thus in a kinde of friendly course, each daily furnished the Table, for the rest of the company. Oftentimes, they did honour to divers Gentlemen and strangers, upon their arrivall in our City, by inviting them into their assembly, and many of our worthiest Citizens beside; so that it grew to a customary use, and one especially day in the yeare appointed, in memory of this so loving a meeting, when they would ride (triumphally as it were) on horsebacke thorow the Cittie, sometimes performing Tilts, Tourneyes, and other Martiall exercises, but they were reserved for Feativall dayes.

Among which company, there was one called, *Signior Betto Bruneleschi*, who was earnestly desirous, to procure *Signior Guido Cavalcante de Cavalcanti*, to make one in this their friendly society. And not without great reason: for, over and beside his being one of the best Logitians as those times could not yeeld a better: He was also a most absolute naturall Philosopher (which worthy qualities were little esteemed among these honest meeters) a very friendly Gentleman, singularly well spoken, and whatsoever else was commendable in any man, was no way wanting in him, being wealthy withall, and able to returne equall honours, where he found them to be duly deserved, as no man therein could go beyond him. But *Signior Betto*, notwithstanding his long continued importunitie, could not draw him into their assembly, which made him and the rest of his company conceive, that the solitude of *Guido*, retiring himselfe alwaies from familiar conversing with men: provoked him to many curious speculations: and because he retained some part of the *Epicurean* Opinion, their vulgare judgement passed on him, that his speculations tended to no other end, but onely to finde out that which was never done.

It chanced upon a day, that *Signior Guido* departing from the Church of Saint *Michaell d'Horta*, and passing along by the *Adamari*, so farre as to Saint *Johns* Church, which evermore was his customarie Walke: many goodly Marble Tombes were then about the saide Church, as now adayes are at Saint *Reparata*, and divers more beside. He entring among the Collumbes of Porphiry, and the other Sepulchers being there, because the doore of the Church was shut: *Signior Betto* & his companie, came riding from S. *Reparata*, & espying *Signior Guido* among the graves and tombes, said. Come, let us go make some jests to anger him. So putting the spurs to their horses, they rode apace towards him: and being upon him before he perceived them, one of them said. *Guido* thou

refusest to be one of our society, & seekest for that which never was: when thou hast found it, tell us, what wilt thou do with it?

*Guido* seeing himselfe round engirt with them, sodainly thus replied: Gentlemen, you may use mee in your owne house as you please. And setting his hand on one of the Tombes (which was somewhat great) he tooke his rising, and leapt quite over it on the further side, as being of an agile and sprightly body, and being thus freed from them, he went away to his owne lodging. They stoode all like men amazed, strangely looking one upon another, and began afterward to murmure among themselves: That *Guido* was a man without any understanding, and the answer which he had made unto them, was to no purpose, neither savoured of any discretion, but meerely came from an empty brain because they had no more to do in the place where now they were, then any of the other Citizens, and Signior *Guido* (himselfe) as little as any of them; whereto Signior *Betto* thus replied.

Alas Gentlemen, it is you your selves that are void of understanding: for, if you had but observed the answer which he made unto us: hee did honestly, and (in verie few words) not onely notably expresse his owne wisdom, but also deservedly reprehend us. Because, if wee observe things as we ought to doe, Graves and Tombes are the houses of the dead, ordained and prepared to be their latest dwellings. He tolde us moreover, that although we have heere (in this life) other habitations and abidings; yet these (or the like) must at last be our houses. To let us know, and all other foolish, indiscreete, and unlearned men, that we are worse then dead men, in comparison of him, and other men equall to him in skill and learning. And therefore, while wee are heere among these Graves and Monuments, it may well be said, that we are not farre from our owne houses, or how soone we shall be possessors of them, in regard of the frailty attending on us.

Then every one could presently say, that Signior *Guido* had spoken nothing but the truth, and were much ashamed of their owne folly, and shallow estimation which they had made of *Guido*, desiring never more after to meddle with him so grossely, and thanking Signior *Betto*, for so well reforming their ignorance, by his much better apprehension.

***Fryer Onyon, promised certaine honest people of the Countrey, to shew them a Feather of the same Phoenix, that was with Noah in his Arke. In sted whereof, he found Coales, which he avouched to be those very coals, wherewith the same Phoenix was roasted***

## The Tenth Novell

### Wherein may be observed, what palpable abuses do many times passe, under the counterfeit Cloake of Religion

When all of them had delivered their Novels, *Dioneus* knowing that it remained in him to relate the last for this day: without attending for any solemne command (after he had imposed silence on them, that could not sufficiently commend the witty reprehension of *Guido*) thus he began. Wise and worthy Ladies, although by the priviledge you have granted, it is lawfull for me to speake any thing best pleasing to my self: yet notwithstanding, it is not any part of my meaning, to varrie from the matter and method, whereof you have spoken to very good purpose. And therefore, following your footsteppes, I entend to tell you, how craftily, and with a Rampiar sodainly raised in his owne defence: a Religious Frier of Saint *Anthones* Order, shunned a shame, which two wily companions had prepared for him. Nor let it offend you, if I run into more large discourse, then this day hath bene used by any, for the apter compleating of my Novell: because, if you well observe it, the Sun is as yet in the middest of heaven, and therefore you may the better forbear me.

*Certoldo*, as (perhaps) you know, or have heard, is a Village in the Vale of *Elsa*, and under the authority and commaund of our *Florence*, which although it be but small: yet (in former times) it hath bin inhabited with Gentlemen, and people of especiall respect. A religious Friar of S. *Anthones* Order, named Friar *Onyon*, had long time used to resort thither, to receive the benevolent almes, which those charitably affected people in simplicity gave him, & chiefly at divers daies of the year, when their bounty and devotion would extend themselves more largely then at other seasons. And so much the rather, because they thought him to be a good Pastor of holy life in outward appearance, & carried a name of much greater matter, then remained in the man indeed; beside, that part of the country yeilded far more plentiful abundance of Onyons, then all other in *Tuscany* elsewhere, a kinde of foode greatly affected by those Friars, as men alwaies of hungry & good appetite. This Friar *Onyon* was a man of little stature, red haire, a chearfull countenance, and the world afforded not a more crafty companion, then he. Moreover, albeit he had very little knowledge or learning, yet he was so prompt, ready & voluble of speech, uttering often he knew not what himselfe: that such as were not wel acquainted with his qualities, supposed him to be a singular Rhetoritian, excelling *Cicero* or *Quintilian* themselves; & he was a gossip, friend, or deerely affected, by every one dwelling in those parts. According to his wonted custome, one time he went thither in the month of August, and on a Sunday morning, when all the dwellers thereabout, were present to heare Masse, and in the chiefest Church above all the rest: when the Friar saw time convenient for his purpose, he advanced himselfe, and began to speake in this manner.

Gentlemen and Gentlewomen, you know you have kept a commendable custom, in sending yearly to the poore brethren of our Lord Baron S. *Anthony*, both of your Corne and other provision, some more, some lesse, all according to their power, means, and devotion, to the end that blessed S. *Anthony* should be the more carefull of your oxen, sheep, asses, swine, pigs, and other cattle. Moreover, you have used to pay (especially such as have their names registred in our Fraternity) those duties which annually you send unto us. For the collection whereof, I am sent by my Superior, namely our L. Abbot, & therfore (with Gods blessing) you may come after noone hither, when you shal heare the Bels of the Church ring: then will I make a predication to you; you shall kisse the Crosse, and beside, because I know you al to be most devout servants to our Lord Baron S. *Anthony*, in especiall grace and favor, I wil shew you a most holy and goodly Relique, which I my selfe (long since) brought from the holy Land beyond the seas. If you desire to know what it is, let me tell you, that it is one of the Feathers of the same *Phoenix*, which was in the Arke with the Patriarch *Noah*.

And having thus spoken, he became silent, returning backe to heare Masse. While hee delivered these and the like speeches, among the other people then in the church, there were two shrewde and crafty Companions; the one, named *John de Bragoniero*, and the other, *Biagio Pizzino*. These subtile Fellowes, after they had heard the report of Fryer *Onyons* Relique: although they were his intimate friends, and came thither in his company; yet they concluded betweene themselves, to shew him a tricke of Legierdumaine, and to steale the Feather from him. When they had intelligence of Friar *Onyons* dining that day at the Castle, with a worthy Friend of his: no sooner was he set at the Table, but away went they in all haste, to the Inne where the Fryar frequented, with this determination, that *Biagio* should hold conference with the Friars boy, while his fellow ransackt the Wallet, to finde the Feather, and carry it away with him, for a future observation, what the Friar would say unto the people, when he found the losse of the Feather, and could not performe his promise to them.

The Fryars Boy, whom some called *Guccio Balena*, some *Guccio Imbrata*, and others *Guccio Porco*, was such a knavish Lad, and had so many bad qualities, as *Lippo Topo* the cunning Painter, or the most curious Poeticall wit, had not any ability to describe them. Friar *Onyon* himself did often observe his behaviour, and would make this report among his Friends. My Boy (quoth he) hath nine rare qualities in him, and such they are, as if *Salomon*, *Aristotle*, or *Seneca* had onely but one of them: it were sufficient to torment and trouble all their vertue, all their senses, & all their sanctity. Consider then, what manner of man he is like to be, having nine such rarities, yet voide of all vertue, wit, or goodnes. And when it was demaunded of Friar *Onyon*, what these nine rare conditions were: hee having them all readie by heart, and in rime, thus answered:

*Boyes I have knowne, and seene,  
And heard of many:  
But,  
For Lying, Loytring, Lazinesse,  
For Facing, Filching, Filthinesse;  
For Carelesse, Gracelesse, all Unthriftinesse,  
My Boy excelleth any.*

Now, over and beside all these admirable qualities, hee hath manie more such singularities, which (in favour towards him) I am faine to conceale. But that which I smile most at in him, is that he would have a Wife in every place where he commeth, yea, and a good house to boot too: for, in regard his beard beginneth to shew it selfe, rising thicke in haire, blacke and amiable, he is verily perswaded, that all Women will fall in love with him; and if they refuse to follow him, he will in all hast run after them. But truly, he is a notable servant to mee, for I cannot speake with any one, and in never so great secrecy, but he will be sure to heare his part; and when any question is demanded of me, he standes in such awe and feare of my displeasure: that he will bee sure to make the first answer, yea or no, according as he thinketh most convenient.

Now, to proceede where we left, Friar *Onyon* having left this serviceable youth at his lodging, to see that no bodie should meddle with his commodities, especially his Wallet, because of the sacred things therein contained: *Guccio Imbrata*, who as earnestly affected to be in the Kitchin, as Birds to hop from branch to branch, especially, when anie of the Chamber-maides were there, espyed one of the Hostesses Female attendants, a grosse fat Trugge, low of stature, ill faced, and worse formed, with a paire of breasts like two bumbards, smelling loathsomely of grease and sweate; downe shee descended into the Kitchin, like a Kite upon a peece of Carion. This Boy, or Knave, chuse whither you will style him, having carelesly left Fryar *Onyons* Chamber doore open, and all the holy things so much to be neglected, although it was then the moneth of August, when heate is in the highest predominance, yet hee would needs sit downe by the fire, and began to conferre with this amiable creature, who was called by the name of *Nuta*.

Being set close by her, he told her, that he was a Gentleman by Atturniship, and that he had more millions of Crownes, then all his life time would serve him to spend; beside those which he payed away dayly, as having no convenient imployment for them. Moreover, he knew how to speake, and do such things, as were beyond wonder or admiration. And, never remembring his olde tattered Friars Cowle, which was so snottie and greazie, that good store of kitchin stuffe might have beene boiled out of it; as also a foule slovenly Trusse or halfedoublet, all baudied with bowsing, fat greazie lubberly sweating, and other drudgeries in the Convent Kitchin, where he was an Officer in the meanest credite. So that to describe this sweet youth in his lively colours, both for naturall perfections of body, and artificiall composure of his Garments; never came the fowlest silks out of *Tartaria* or *India*, more ugly or unsightly to bee lookt upon. And for a further addition to his neate knavery, his breeches were so rent betweene his legges, his shooes and stockings had bin at such a mercilesse massacre: that the gallantest *Commandador* of *Castile* (though he had never so lately bin releast out of slavery) could have wisht for better garments, then he; or make larger promises, then he did to his *Nuta*. Protesting to entitle her as his onely, to free her from the Inne and Chamber thralldomes, if she would live with him, be his Love, partaker of his present possessions, and so to succeed in his future Fortunes. All which bravadoes, though they were belcht foorth with admirable insinuations: yet they converted into smoke, as all such braggadochio behaviours do, and he was as wise at the ending, as when he began.

Our former named two craftie Companions, seeing *Guccio Porco* so seriously employed about *Nuta*, was there-with not a little contented, because their intended labour was now more then halfe ended. And perceiving no contradiction to crosse their proceeding, into Friar *Onyons* chamber entred they, finding it ready open for their purpose: where the first thing that came into their hand in search, was the wallet. When they had opened it, they found a small Cabinet, wrapped in a great many foldings of rich Taffata; and having unfolded it, a fine formall Key was hanging thereat: wherewith having unlockt the Cabinet, they found a faire Feather of a Parrots taile, which they supposed to bee the verie same, that he meant to shew the people of *Certaldo*. And truly (in those dayes) it was no hard matter to make them beleieve anything, because the idle vanities of *Ægypt* and those remoter parts, had not (as yet) bin seene in *Tuscany*, as since then they have bin in great abundance, to the utter ruine (almost) of *Italy*.

And although they might then be knowne to very few, yet the inhabitants of the Country generally, understoode little or nothing at all of them. For there, the pure simplicitie of their ancient predecessours still continuing; they had not seene any Parrots, or so much as heard any speech of them. Wherefore the two crafty consorts, not a little joyfull of finding the Feather, tooke it thence with them, and beecause they would not leave the Cabinet empty, espying Char-coales lying in a corner of the Chamber, they filled it with them, wrapping it up againe in the Taffata, and in as demure manner as they found it. So, away came they with the Feather, neither seene or suspected by any one, intending now to heare what Friar *Onyon* would say, upon the losse of his precious Relique, and finding the Coales there placed insted thereof.

The simple men and women of the country, who had bin at morning Masse in the Church, and heard what a wonderful Feather they should see in the after noone; returned in all hast to their houses, where one telling this newes to another, and gossip with gossip consulting thereon; they made the shorter dinner, and afterward flocked in maine troopes to the Castle, contending who shold first get entrance, such was their devotion to see the holy feather. Friar *Onyon* having dined, and reposed a little after his wine, he arose from the table to the window, where beholding what multitudes came to see the feather, he assured himselfe of good store of mony. Hereupon, he sent to his Boy *Guccio Imbrata*, that uppon the Bels ringing, he should come and bring the wallet to him. Which (with much ado) he did, so soone as his quarrell was ended in the kitchin, with the amiable Chamber-maid *Nuta*, away then he went with his holy commodities: where he was no sooner arrived, but because his belly was readie to burst with drinking water, he sent him to the Church to ring the bells, which not onely would warme the cold water in his belly, but likewise make him run as gaunt as a Grey-hound.

When all the people were assembled in the Church together, Friar *Onyon* (never distrusting any injurie offered him, or that his close commodities had bin meddled withall) began his predication, uttering a thousand lies to fit his purpose. And when he came to shew the feather of the Phoenix (having first in great devotion finisht the confession) he caused two goodly torches to be lighted, & ducking downe his head three severall times, before hee would so much as touch the Taffata, he opened it with much reverence. So soone as the Cabinet came to be seen, off went his Hood, lowly he bowed downe his body, and uttering especiall praises of the Phoenix, and sacred properties of the wonderfull Relique, the Cover of the Cabinet being lifted uppe, he saw the same to bee full of Coales. He could not suspect his Villaine boy to do this deede, for he knew him not to be endued with so much wit, onely hee curst him for keeping it no better, and curst himselfe also, for reposing trust in such a careles knave, knowing him to be slothfull, disobedient, negligent, and void of all honest understanding or grace. Sodainly (without blushing) lest his losse should be discerned, he lifted his lookes and hands to heaven, speaking out so loude, as every one might easily heare him, thus: O thou omnipotent providence, for ever let thy power be praised. Then making fast the Cabinet againe, and turning himselfe to the people, with lookes expressing admiration, he proceeded in this manner.

Lords, Ladies, and you the rest of my worthy Auditors: You are to understand, that I (being then very young) was sent by my Superiour, into those parts, where the Sun appeareth at his first rising. And I had received charge by expresse command, that I should seeke for (so much as consisted in my power to do) the especiall vertues and priviledges belonging to Porcellane, which although the boyling thereof bee worth but little, yet it is very profitable to any but us. In regard whereof, being upon my journey, and departing from *Venice*, passing along the *Borgo de Grecia*, I proceeded thence (on horseback) through the Realme of *Garbo*, so to *Baldacca*, till I came to *Parione*; from whence, not without great extremity of thirst, I arrived in *Sardignia*.

But why do I trouble you with the repetition of so many countries? I coasted on still, after I had past Saint *Georges Arme*, into *Trussia*, and then into *Bussia*, which are Countries much inhabited, and with great people. From thence I went into the *Land of Lying*, where I found store of the Brethren of our Religion, and many other beside, who shunned all paine and labour, onely for the love of God, and cared as little, for the paines and travailes which others tooke, except some benefit arised thereby to them; nor spend they any money in this Country, but such as is without stampe. Thence I went into the Land of *Abruzzi*, where the men and women goe in Galoches over the Mountaines, and make them garments of their Swines guts. Not farre from thence, I found people, that carried bread in their staves, and wine in Satchels, when parting from them, I arrived among the Mountaines of *Bacchus*, where all the waters run downe with a deepe fall, and in short time, I went on so far, that I found my selfe to be in *India Pastinaca*; where I swear to you by the holy habit which I weare on my body, that I saw Serpents flye, things incredible, and such as were never seene before.

But because I would be loth to lye, so soone as I departed thence, I met with *Maso de Saggio*, who was a great Merchant there, and whom I found cracking Nuts, and selling Cockles by retale. Neverthelesse, al this while I could not finde what I sought for, and therefore I was to passe from hence by water, if I intended to travaile thither, and so in returning back, I came into the *Holy Land*, where coole fresh bread is sold for fourepence, and the hot is given away for nothing. There I found the venerable Father (blame me not I beseech you) the most woorthie Patriarch of *Jerusalem*, who for the reverence due to the habite I weare, and love to our Lord Baron Saint *Anthony*, would have me to see al the holy Reliques, which he had there under his charge: whereof there were so many, as if I should recount them all to you, I never could come to a conclusion. But yet, not to leave you discomforted, I will relate some few of them to you.

First of all, he shewed me the finger of the holy Ghost, so whole and perfect, as ever it was. Next, the nose of the Cherubin, which appeared to Saint *Frances*; with the payring of the naile of a Seraphin; and one of the ribbes of *Verbum caro*, fastened to one of the Windowes, covered with the holy garments of the Catholique Faith. Then he tooke me into a darke Chappel, where he shewed

me divers beames of the Starre that appeared to the three Kings in the East. Also a Violl of Saint *Michaels* sweate, when he combatted with the divell: And the jaw-bone of dead *Lazarus*, with many other precious things beside. And because I was liberall to him, giving him two of the Plaines of *Monte Morello*, in the Vulgare Edition, and some of the Chapters *del Caprezio*, which he had long laboured in search of; he bestowed on me some of his Reliques.

First, he gave me one of the eye-teeth of *Santa Crux*; and a little Violl, filled with some part of the sound of those Belles, which hung in the sumptuous Temple of *Salomon*. Next, he gave mee the Feather of the Phoenix, which was with *Noah* in the Arke, as before I told you. And one of the Wooden Pattens, which the good Saint *Gerrard de Magnavilla* used to weare in his travailes, and which I gave (not long since) to *Gerrardo di Bousy* at *Florence*, where it is respected with much devotion. Moreover, he gave me a few of those Coales, wherewith the Phoenix of *Noah* was roasted; all which things I brought away thence with me. Now, most true it is, that my Superiour would never suffer mee to shew them any where, untill he was faithfully certified, whether they were the same precious Reliques, or no. But perceyving by sundrie Myracles which they have wrought, and Letters of sufficient credence receyved from the reverend Patriarch, that all is true, he hath graunted me permission to shew them, and because I wold not trust any one with matters of such moment, I my selfe brought them hither with me.

Now I must tell you, that the Feather of the same Phoenix, I conveyed into a small Cabinet or Casket, because it should not be bent or broken. And the Coales wherewith the said Phoenix was roasted, I put into another Casket, in all respects so like to the former, that many times I have taken one for another. As now at this instant it hath bin my fortune: for, imagining that I brought the Casket with the feather, I mistooke my self, & brought the other with the coales. Wherein doubtles I have not offended, because I am certaine, that we of our Order do not any thing, but it is ordred by divine direction, and our blessed Patron the Lorde Baron Saint *Anthony*. And so much the rather, because about a senight hence, the Feast of Saint *Anthony* is to bee solemnized, against the preparation whereof, and to kindle your zeale with the greater fervencie: he put the Casket with the Coales into my hand, meaning, to let you see the Feather, at some more fitting season. And therefore my blessed Sonnes and Daughters, put off your Bonnets, and come hither with devotion to looke upon them. But first let me tell you, whosoever is marked by any of these Coales, with the signe of the Crosse: he or she shal live all this yeare happily, and no fire whatsoever shall come neere to touch or hurt them. So, singing a solemne Antheme in the praise of S. *Anthony*, he unveyled the Casket, and shewed the Coales openly.

The simple multitude, having (with great admiration and reverence) a long while beheld them, they thronged in crouds to Fryar *Onyon*, giving him farre greater offerings, then before they had, and entreating him to marke them each after other. Whereupon, he taking the coales in his hand, began to marke their garments of white, and the veyles on the Womens heads, with Crosses of no meane extendure: affirming to them, that the more the Coales wasted with making those great crosses, the more they still encreased in the Casket, as often before hee had made triall.

In this manner, having crossed all the *Certaldanes* (to his great benefit) and their abuse: he smiled at his sodaine and dexterious devise, in mockery of them, who thought to have made a scorne of him, by dispossessing him of the Feather. For *Bragoniero* and *Pizzino*, being present at his Learned predication, and having heard what a cunning shift he found, to come off cleanly, without the least detection, and all delivered with such admirable protestations: they were faine to forsake the Church, least they should have burst with laughing.

But when all the people were parted and gone, they met Friar *Onyon* at his Inne, where closely they discovered to him, what they had done, delivering him his Feather againe: which the yeare following, did yeeld him as much money, as now the Coales had done.

This Novell affoorded equall pleasing to the whole companie, Friar *Onyons* Sermon being much commended, but especially his long Pilgrimage, and the Reliques he had both seene, and brought

home with him. Afterward, the Queene perceiving, that her reigne had now the full expiration, graciously she arose, and taking the Crowne from off her owne head, placed on the head of *Dioneus*, saying. It is high time *Dioneus*, that you should taste part of the charge & paine, which poore women have felt and undergone in their soveraigntie and government: wherefore, be you our King, and rule us with such awefull authority, that the ending of your dominion may yeelde us all contentment. *Dioneus* being thus invested with the Crowne, returned this answer.

I make no doubt (bright Beauties) but you many times have seene as good, or a better King among the Chesse-men, then I am. But yet of a certainty, if you would be obedient to me, as you ought in dutie unto a true King: I should grant you a liberall freedome of that, wherein you take the most delight, and without which, our choisest desires can never be compleate. Neverthesse, I meane, that my government shal be according to mine owne minde. So, causing the Master of the Houshold to be called for, as all the rest were wont to do for conference with him: he gave him direction, for al things fitting the time of his Regiment, and then turning to the Ladies, thus he proceeded.

Honest Ladies, we have alreadie discoursed of variable devises, and so many severall manners of humane industry, concerning the busines wherewith *Licisca* came to acquaint us: that her very words, have ministred me matter, sufficient for our morrowes conference, or else I stand in doubt, that I could not have devised a more convenient Theame for us to talke on. She (as you have all heard) saide, that shee had not anie neighbour, who came a true Virgin to her Husband, and added moreover, that she knew some others, who had beguiled their Husbandes, in very cunning and crafty manner. But setting aside the first part, concerning the prooffe of children, I conceive the second to bee more apte for our intended argument. In which respect, my will is (seeing *Licisca* hath given us so good an occasion) that our discoursing to morrow, may onely concerne such slye cunning and deceits, as women have heeretofore used, for satisfying their owne appetites, and beguiling their Husbandes, without their knowledge, or suspition, and cleanly escaping with them, or no.

This argument seemed not very pleasing to the Ladies, and therefore they urged an alteration thereof, to some matter better suting with the day, and their discoursing: whereto thus he answered. Ladies, I know as well as your selves, why you would have this instant argument altered: but, to change me from it you have no power, considering the season is such, as shielding all (both men and women) from meddling with any dishonest action; it is lawfull for us to speake of what wee please. And know you not, that through the sad occasion of the time, which now over-ruleth us, the Judges have forsaken their venerable benches, the Lawes (both divine and humane) ceasing, granting ample license to every one, to do what best agreeth with the conservation of life? Therefore, if your honesties doe straine themselves a little, both in thinking and speaking, not for prosecution of any immodest deede, but onely for familiar and blamelesse entercourse: I cannot devise a more convenient ground, at least that carrieth apparant reason, for reproofe of perils, to ensue by any of you. Moreover, your company, which hath bin most honest, since the first day of our meeting, to this instant: appeareth not any jot to be disgraced, by any thing either said or done, neither shal be (I hope) in the meanest degree.

And what is he, knowing your choise and vertuous dispositions, so powerfull in their owne prevailing, that wanton words cannot misguide your wayes, no nor the terror of death it selfe, that dare insinuate a distempred thought? But admit, that some slight or shallow judgements, hearing you (perhaps sometimes) talke of such amorous follies, should therefore suspitiously imagine you to be faulty, or else you would bee more sparing of speech? Their wit and censure are both alike, favouring rather of their owne vile nature, who would brand others with their basebred imperfections. Yet there is another consideration beside, of som great injury offered to mine honour, and whereof I know not how you can acquit your selves.

I that have bin obedient to you all, and borne the heavy load of your businesse, having now (with full consent) created mee your King, you would wrest the law out of my hands, and dispose of my authoritie as you please. Forbeare (gentle Ladies) all frivolous suspitions, more fit for them that



are full of bad thoughts, then you, who have true Vertue shining in your eyes; and therefore, let every one freely speake their minde, according as their humors best pleaseth them.

When the Ladies heard this, they made answer, that all should bee answerable to his minde. Whereupon, the King gave them all leave to dispose of themselves till supper time. And because the Sun was yet very high, in regard all the re counted Novels had bin so short: *Dioneus* went to play at the Tables with another of the young Gentlemen, & Madame *Eliza*, having withdrawne the Ladies aside, thus spake unto them. During the time of our being heere, I have often bene desirous to let you see a place somewhat neere at hand, and which I suppose you have never seene, it being called *The Valley of Ladies*. Till now, I could not finde any convenient time to bring you thither, the Sunne continuing still aloft, which fitteth you with the apter leysure, and the sight (I am sure) can no way discontent you.

The Ladies replied, that they were all ready to walk with her thither: and calling one of their women to attend on them, they set on, without speaking a word to any of the men. And within the distance of halfe a mile, they arrived at the *Valley of Ladies*, whereinto they entred by a strait passage at the one side, from whence there issued forth a cleare running River. And they found the saide Valley to bee so goodly and pleasant, especially in that season, which was the hottest of all the yeare; as all the world was no where able to yeeld the like. And, as one of the said Ladies (since then) related to mee, there was a plaine in the Valley so directly round, as if it had beene formed by a compasse, yet rather it resembled the Workmanship of Nature, then to be made by the hand of man: containing in circuite somewhat more then the quarter of a mile, environed with sixe small hils, of no great height, and on each of them stood a little Palace, shaped in the fashion of Castles.

The ground-plots descending from those hils or mountaines, grew lesse and lesse by variable degrees, as wee observe at entering into our Theaters, from the highest part to the lowest, succinctly to narrow the circle by order. Now, concerning these ground-plottes or little Meadowes, those which the Sun Southward looked on, were full of Vines, Olive-trees, Almond-trees, Cherry-trees, and Figge-trees, with divers other Trees beside, so plentifully bearing fruites, as you could not discern a hands bredth of losse. The other Mountaines, whereon the Northerne windes blow, were curiously covered with small Thickets or Woods of Oakes, Ashes, and other Trees so greene and strait, as it was impossible to behold fairer. The goodly plaine it selfe, not having any other entrance, but where the Ladies came in, was planted with Trees of Firre, Cipresse, Laurell, and Pines; so singularly growing in formall order, as if some artificiall or cunning hand had planted them, the Sun hardly piercing through their branches, from the top to the bottome, even at his highest, or any part of his course.

All the whole field was richly spred with grasse, and such variety of delicate Flowers, as Nature yeilded out of her plenteous Store-house. But that which gave no lesse delight then any of the rest, was a small running Brooke, descending from one of the Vallies, that divided two of the little hils, and fell through a Veine of the intire Rocke it selfe, that the fall and murmure thereof was most delightfull to heare, seeming all the way in the descent, like Quicke-silver, weaving it selfe into artificiall workes, and arriving in the plaine beneath, it was there receyved into a small Channell, swiftly running through the midst of the plaine, to a place where it stayed, and shaped it selfe into a Lake or Pond, such as our Citizens have in their Orchards or Gardens, when they please to make use of such a commodity.

This Pond was no deeper, then to reach the breast of a man, and having no mud or soyle in it, the bottome thereof shewed like small beaten gravell, with pretty pibble stones intermixed, which some that had nothing else to do, would sit downe and count them as they lay, as very easily they might. And not onely was the bottome thus apparantly seene, but also such plenty of Fishes swimming every way, as the mind was never to be wearied in looking on them. Nor was this water bounded in with any bankes, but onely the sides of the plain Medow, which made it appeare the more sightly, as it arose in swelling plenty. And alwayes as it super-abounded in his course, least it should overflow disorderly: it fell into another Channell, which conveying it along the lower Valley, ran forth to water other needfull places.

When the Ladies were arrived in this goodly valley, and upon advised viewing it, had sufficiently commended it: in regard the heat of the day was great, the place tempting, and the Pond free from sight of any, they resolved there to bathe themselves. Wherefore they sent the waiting Gentlewoman to have a diligent eye on the way where they entered, least any one should chance to steale upon them. All seven of them being stript naked, into the water they went, which hid their delicate white bodies, like as a cleare Glasse concealeth a Damask Rose within it. So they being in the Pond, and the water nothing troubled by their being there, they found much pretty pastime together, running after the Fishes, to catch them with their hands, but they were over-quicke and cunning for them. After they had delighted themselves there to their owne contentment, and were cloathed with their garments, as before: thinking it fit time for their returning backe againe, least their over-long stay might give offence, they departed thence in an easie pace, dooing nothing else all the way as they went, but extolling the *Valley of Ladies* beyond all comparison.

At the Palace they arrived in a due houre, finding the three Gentlemen at play, as they left them, to whom Madame *Pampinea* pleasantly thus spake. Now trust me Gallants, this day wee have very cunningly beguiled you. How now? answered *Dioneus*, begin you first to act, before you speake? Yes truly Sir, replied Madame *Pampinea*: Relating to him at large, from whence they came, what they had done there, the beautie of the place, and the distance thence. The King (upon hir excellent report) being very desirous to see it; sodainely commaunded Supper to be served in, which was no sooner ended, but they and their three servants (leaving the Ladies) walked on to the *Valley*, which when they had considered, no one of them having ever bin there before; they thought it to be the Paradise of the World.

They bathed themselves there likewise, as the Ladies formerlie had done, and being re-vested, returned backe to their Lodgings, because darke night drew on apace: but they found the Ladies dauncing, to a Song which Madame *Fiammetta* sung. When the dance was ended, they entertained the time with no other discourse, but onely concerning the *Valley of Ladies*, whereof they all spake liberally in commendations. Whereupon, the King called the Master of the Houshold, giving him command, that (on the morrow) dinner should be readie betimes, and bedding to be thence carried, if any desired rest at mid-time of the day.

All this being done, variety of pleasing Wines were brought, Banquetting stuffe, and other dainties; after which they fell to Dauncing. And *Pamphilus*, having receyved command, to begin an especiall dance, the King turned himselfe unto Madame *Eliza*, speaking thus. Faire Lady, you have done me so much honour this day, as to deliver mee the Crowne: in regard whereof, be you this night the Mistresse of the song: and let it be such as best may please your selfe. Whereunto Madam *Eliza*, with a modest blush arising in her face, replied; That his will should be fulfilled, and then (with a delicate voyce) she beganne in this manner.

## The Song

### The CHORUS sung by all

Love, if I can scape free from forth thy holde,  
Beleeve it for a truth,  
Never more shall thy falshoode me enfolde.

When I was young, I entred first thy fights,  
Supposing there to finde a solemne peace:  
I threw off all my Armes, and with delights

Fed my poore hopes, as still they did encrease.  
But like a Tyrant, full of rancorous hate  
Thou tookst advantage:  
And I sought refuge, but it was too late.  
Love, if I can scape free, &c.

But being thus surprized in thy snares,  
To my misfortune, thou madst me her slave;  
Was onely borne to feede me with despaires,  
And keepe me dying in a living grave.  
For I saw nothing dayly fore mine eyes,  
But rackes and tortures:  
From which I could not get in any wise.  
Love, if I can scape free, &c.

My sighes and teares I vented to the winde,  
For none would heare or pittie my complaints;  
My torments still encreased in this kinde,  
And more and more I felt these sharpe restraints.  
Release me now at last from forth this hell.  
Asswage thy rigour,  
Delight not thus in cruelty to dwell,  
Love, if I can scape free, &c.

If this thou wilt not grant, be yet so kinde,  
Release me from these worse then servile bands,  
Which new vaine hopes have bred, wherein I finde;  
Such violent feares, as comfort quite withstands.  
Be now (at length) a little moov'd to pittie,  
Be it nere so little:  
Or in my death listen my Swan-like Dittie.

Love, if I can scape free from forth thy holde,  
Beleeve it for a truth,  
Never more shall thy falshood me enfolde.

After that Madame *Eliza* had made an end of her Song, which shee sealed up with an heart-breaking sigh: they all sate amazedly wondering at her moanes, not one among them being able to conjecture, what should be the reason of her singing in this manner. But the King being in a good and pleasing temper, calling *Tindaro*, commaunded him to bring his Bagge-pipe, by the sound whereof they danced divers daunces: And a great part of the night being spent in this manner, they all gave over, and departed to their Chambers.

### **The End of the Sixth Day**

## The Seventh Day

*When the Assembly being met together, and under the Regiment of Dioneus: the Discourses are directed, for the discoverie of such policies and deceites, as women have used for beguiling of their Husbandes, either in respect of their love, or for the prevention of some blame or scandal, escaping without sight, knowledge or otherwise*

### The Induction to the Dayes Discourses

All the Starres were departed out of the East, but onely that, which we commonly cal bright *Lucifer*, or the Day-Star, gracing the morning very gloriously: when the Master of the household, being risen, went with all the provision, to the *Valley of Ladies*, to make everie thing in due and decent readines, according as his Lord over-night had commanded him. After which departure of his, it was not long before the King arose, beeing awaked with the noise which the carriages made; and when he was up, the other two Gentlemen and the Ladies were quickly readie soone after. On they set towards the *Valley*, even as the Sunne was rising: and all the way as they went, never before had they heard so many sweete Nightingales, and other pretty Birds melodiously singing, as they did this morning, which keeping them company thoroughout the journey, they arrived at the *Valley of Ladies*, where it seemed to them, that infinite Quires of delicate Nightingales, and other Birds, had purposely made a meeting, even as it were to give them a glad welcome thither.

Divers times they walked about the *Valley*, never satisfied with viewing it from one end to the other; because it appeared farre more pleasing unto them, then it had done the precedent day: and because the dayes splendour was much more conforme to the beauty thereof. After they had broken their fast, with excellent Wines and Banquetting stuffe, they began to tune their instruments and sing; because (therein) the sweet Birds should not excell them, the *Valley* (with delicate Echoes) answering all their notes. When dinner time drew neere, the Tables were covered under the spreading trees, and by the goodly Ponds side, where they sate downe orderly by the Kings direction: and all dinner while, they saw the Fishes swimme by huge shoales in the Pond, which sometimes gave them occasion to talke, as well as gaze on them.

When dinner was ended, and the Tables withdrawne, in as jocond manner as before, they renewed againe their hermonious singing. In divers places of this pleasant *Valley*, were goodly field-Beds readily furnished, according as the Master of the Houshold gave enstruction, enclosed with Pavillions of costly stuffes, such as are sometimes brought out of *France*. Such as were so disposed, were licensed by the King to take their rest: and they that would not, he permitted them to their wonted pastimes, each according to their minds. But when they were risen from sleepe, and the rest from their other exercises, it seemed to be more then high time, that they should prepare for talke and conference. So, sitting downe on Turkey Carpets, which were spred abroad on the green grasse, and close by the place where they had dined: the King gave command, that Madam *Æmillia* should first begin, whereto she willingly yeelding obedience, and expecting such silent attention, as formerly had bin observed, thus she began.

***John of Lorraine heard one knocke at his doore in the night time, whereuppon he awaked his Wife Monna Tessa. She made him beleewe, that it was a Spirit which knocked at the doore, and so they arose, going both together to conjure the Spirit with a prayer; and afterwardes, they heard no more knocking***

## The First Novell

### **Reprehending the simplicity of some sottish Husbands: And discovering the wanton subtilties of some women, to compasse their unlawfull desires**

My Gracious Lord (quoth Madame *Æmillia*) it had bene a matter highly pleasing to mee, that any other (rather than my selfe) should have begun to speake of this argument, which it hath pleased you to apoint. But seeing it is your Highnesse pleasure, that I must make a passage of assurance for all the rest; I will not be irregular, because obedience is our cheefe Article. I shall therefore (Gracious Ladies) strive, to speake something, which may bee advantageable to you heereafter, in regard, that if other women bee as fearfull as we, especially of Spirits, of which all our sexe have generally bin timorous (although, upon my credite, I know not what they are, nor ever could meete with any, to tell me what they be) you may by the diligent observation of my Novell: learne a wholsome and holy prayer, very available, and of precious power, to conjure and drive them away, whensoever they shall presume to assault you in any place.

There dwelt sometime in *Florence*, and in the street of Saint *Brancazio*, a woollen Weaver, named *John* of *Lorrayne*; a man more happy in his Art, then wise in any thing else beside: because, favouring somewhat of the *Gregorie*, and (in very deede) little lesse then an Ideot; Hee was many times made Captain of the Woollen-Weavers, in the quarters belonging to *Santa Maria Novella*, and his house was the Schoole or receptacle, for all their meetings and assemblies. He had divers other petty Offices beside, by the dignity and authority whereof, hee supposed himselfe much exalted or elevated, above the common pitch of other men. And this humour became the more tractable to him, because he addicted himselfe oftentimes (as being a man of an easie inclination) to be a benefactor to the holy Fathers of *Santa Maria Novella*, giving (beside his other charitable Almes) to someone a paire of Breeches, to another a Hood, and to another a whole habit. In reward whereof, they taught him (by heart) many wholsome prayers, as the *Pater noster* in the vulgar tongue; the Song of Saint *Alexis*; the Lamentations of Saint *Bernard*, the Hymne of Madame *Matilda*, and many other such like matters, which he kept charily, and repeated usually, as tending to the salvation of his soule.

This man, had a very faire and lovely wife, named *Monna Tessa*, the daughter of *Manuccio della Cuculia*, wise and well advised; who knowing the simplicity of her Husband, and affecting *Frederigo di Neri Pegolotti*, who was a comely young Gentleman, fresh, and in the floure of his time, even as she was, therefore they agreed the better together. By meanes of her Chamber-maid, *Frederigo* and shee met often together, at a Countrie Farme of *John* of *Lorraynes*, which hee had neere to *Florence*, and where she used to lodge all the Summer time, called *Camerata*, whether *John* resorted somtimes to Supper, and lodge for a night, returning home againe to his City house the next morning; yet often he would stay there longer with his owne companions.

*Frederigo*, who was no meane man in his Mistresses favor, and therefore these private meetings the more welcome to him; received a summons or assignation from her, to be there on such a night, when hir husband had no intent of comming thither. There they supped merrily together, and (no doubt) did other things, nothing appertaining to our purpose, she both acquainting, and well instructing him, in a dozen (at the least) of her Husbands devout prayers. Nor did shee make any account, or *Frederigo* either, that this should be the last time of their meeting, because (indeede) it was not the first: and therefore they set down an order and conclusion together (because the Chambermaide must be no longer the messenger) in such manner as you shall heare.

*Frederigo* was to observe especially, that alwayes when hee went or came from his owne house, which stood much higher then *John* of *Lorraynes* did, to looke upon a Vine, closely adjoyning to her house, where stood the scull of an Asses head, advanced upon an high pole; & when the face thereof

looked towards *Florence*, he might safely come, it being an assured signe, that *John* kept at home. And if he found the doore fast shut, he should softly knocke three severall times, and thereon bee admitted entrance. But if the face stood towards *Fiesola*; then he might not come, for it was the signe of *Johns* being there, and then there might be no meddling at all.

Having thus agreed upon this conclusion, and had many merry meetings together: one night above the rest, where *Frederigo* was appointed to suppe with *Monna Tessa*, who had made ready two fat Capons, drest in most dainty and delicate manner: it fell out so unfortunately, that *John* (whose Kue was not to come that night) came thither very late, yet before *Frederigo*, wherewith she being not a little offended, gave *John* a slight supper, of Lard, Bacon, and such like coarse provision, because the other was kept for a better guest. In the meane time, and while *John* was at supper, the Maide (by her Mistresses direction) had conveyed the two Capons, with boyled Egges, Bread and a Bottle of Wine (all folded up in a faire cleane table cloth) into her Garden, that had a passage to it, without entering into the house, and where shee had divers times supt with *Frederigo*. She further willed the Maide, to set all those things under a Peach-tree, which adjoynd to the fields side: but, so angry she was at her husbands unexpected comming, that shee forgot to bid her tarrie there, till *Frederigoes* comming; and to tell him of *Johns* being there: as also, to take what he found prepared readie for his Supper.

*John* and she being gone to bed together, and the Maide likewise, it was not long after, before *Frederigo* came, and knocking once softly at the doore, which was very neere to their lodging Chamber, *John* heard the noise, and so did his wife. But to the end, that *John* might not have the least scruple of suspition, she seemed to be fast asleepe; and *Frederigo* pausing a while, according to the order directed, knockt againe the second time. *John* wondering thereat very much, jogd his wife a little, and saide to her: *Tessa*, hearest thou nothing? Me thinkes one knocketh at our doore. *Monna Tessa*, who was better acquainted with the knocke, then plaine honest meaning *John* was, dissembling as if shee awaked out of a drowsie dreame, saide: Alas Husband, dost thou know what this is? In the name of our blessed Ladie, be not affraid, this is but the Spirit which haunts our Countrey houses, whereof I have often told thee, and it hath many times much dismayed me, living heere alone without thy comfort. Nay, such hath bin my feare, that in divers nights past, so soone as I heard the knockes: I was feigne to hide my selfe in the bedde over-head and eares (as we usually say) never daring to be so bold, as to looke out, untill it was broad open day. Arise good wife (quoth *John*) and if it be such a Spirit of the Countrey, as thou talkest of, never be affraid; for before we went to bed, I said the *Telucis*, the *Intemerata*, with many other good prayers beside. Moreover, I made the signe of the Crosse at every corner of our bed, in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, so that no doubt at all needs to be made, of any power it can have to hurt or touch us.

*Monna Tessa*, because (perhaps) *Frederigo* might receive some other suspition, and so enter into distaste of her by anger or offence: determined to arise indeede, and to let him covertly understand, that *John* was there, and therefore saide to her husband. Beleeve me *John*, thy counsell is good, and every one of thy words hath wisdom in it: but I hold it best for our owne safety, thou being heere; that wee should conjure him quite away, to the end he may never more haunt our house. Conjure him Wife? Quoth *John*, By what meanes? and how? Bee patient good man (quoth *Tessa*) and I will enstruct thee. I have learned an excellent kinde of conjuration; for, the last weeke, when I went to procure the pardons at *Fiesola*, one of the holy recluse Nuns, who (indeede *John*) is my indeered Sister and Friend, and the most sanctimonious in life of them all; perceiving me to be troubled and terrified by Spirits; taught me a wholesome and holy prayer, and protested withall, that shee had often made experiment thereof, before she became a Recluse, & found it (alwayes) a present helpe to her. Yet never durst I adventure to essay it, living heere by my selfe all alone: but honest *John*, seeing thou art heere with me, we will go both together, and conjure this Spirit. *John* replied, that he was very willing; and being both up, they went fayre and softly to the doore, where *Frederigo* stode still without, and was growne somewhat suspitious of his long attendance.

When they were come to the doore, *Monna Tessa* said to *John*: Thou must cough and spet, at such time as I shall bid thee. Well (quoth *John*) I will not faile you. Immediately she beganne her prayer in this manner.

*Spirit, that walkst thus in the night,  
Poore Countrey people to affright:  
Thou hast mistane thy marke and ayme,  
The head stood right, but John home came,  
And therefore thou must packe away,  
For I have nothing else to say:  
But to my Garden get the gone,  
Under the Peach-tree stands alone,  
There shalt thou finde two Capons drest,  
And Egges laide in mine owne Hennes nest,  
Bread, and a Bottle of good wine,  
All wrapt up in a cloath most fine.  
Is not this good Goblins fare?  
Packer and say you have your share;  
Not doing harme to John or me,  
Who this night keepes me companie.*

No sooner had she ended her devoute conjuring prayer, but she saide to her husband: Now *John*, cough and spet: which *John* accordingly did. And *Frederigo*, being all this while without, hearing her witty conjuration of a Spirit, which he himselfe was supposed to be, being ridde of his former jealous suspicion: in the midst of all his melancholy, could very hardly refraine from laughing, the jest appeared so pleasing to him: But when *John* coughed and spet, softly he said to himselfe: When next thou spetst, spet out all thy teeth.

The woman having three severall times conjured the Spirite, in such manner you have already heard; returned to bed againe with her husband: and *Frederigo*, who came as perswaded to sup with her, being supperlesse all this while; directed by the words of *Monna Tessa* in hir praier, went into the Garden. At the foot of the Peach-tree, there he found the linnen cloth, with the two hot Capons, Bread, Egges, and a Bottle of Wine in it, all which he carried away with him, and went to Supper at better leysure. Oftentimes afterward, upon other meetings of *Frederigo* and she together, they laughed heartily at her enchantment, and the honest beleefe of silly *John*.

I cannot deny, but that some do affirme, that the Woman had turned the face of the Asses head towards *Fiesola*, and a Country Travailer passing by the Vine, having a long piked staffe on his necke; the staffe, (by chance) touched the head, and made it turne divers times about, & in the end faced *Florence*, which being the cal for *Frederigoes* comming, by this meanes he was disappointed. In like manner some say, that *Monna Tessaes* prayer for conjuring the Spirit, was in this order.

*Spirit, Spirit, go thy way,  
And come againe some other day,  
It was not I that turnd the head,  
But some other. In our Bed  
Are John and I: Go from our dore,  
And see thou trouble us no more.*

So that *Frederigo* departed thence, both with the losse of his labour & supper. But a neighbour of mine, who is a woman of good yeares, told me, that both the one and other were true, as she her selfe



heard, when she was a little Girle. And concerning the latter accident, it was not to *John of Lorryne*, but to another, named *John de Nello*, that dwelt at *S. Peters Gate*, and of the same profession as *John of Lorryne* was. Wherefore (faire Ladies) it remaineth in your owne choice, to entertain which of the two prayers you please, or both together if you will: for they are of extraordinary vertue in such strange occurrences, as you have heeretofore heard, and (upon doubt) may prove by experience. It shall not therefore be amisse for you, to learne them both by hart, for (peradventure) they may stand you in good sted, if ever you chance to have the like occasion.

***Peronella hid a young man her friend and Lover, under a great brewing Fat, upon the sodaine returning home of her Husband; who told her, that hee had solde the saide Fat, and brought him that bought it, to carry it away. Peronella replied, that shee had formerly solde it unto another, who was nowe underneath it, to see whether it were whole and sound, or no. Whereupon, he being come forth from under it; she caused her Husband to make it neate and cleane, and so the last buyer carried it away***

## The Second Novell

**Wherein is declared, what hard and narrow shifts and distresses, such as bee seriously linked in Love, are many times enforced to undergo: According as their owne wit, and capacitie of their surprizers, drive them to in extremities**

Not without much laughter and good liking, was the Tale of Madame *Æmillia* listened unto, and both the prayers commended to be sound and soveraigne: but it being ended, the King commaunded *Philostratus*, that hee should follow next in order, whereupon thus he began.

Deare Ladies, the deceites used by men towards your sexe, but especially Husbands, have bene so great and many, as when it hath sometime happened, or yet may, that husbands are requited in the self-same kinde: you need not finde fault at any such accident, either by knowledge thereof afterward, or hearing the same reported by any one; but rather you should referre it to generall publication, to the end, that immodest men may know, and finde it for trueth, that if they have apprehension and capacity; women are therein not a jote inferiour to them. Which cannot but redound to your great benefite, because, when any one knoweth, that another is as cunning and subtile as himselfe; he will not be so rashly adventurous in deceite. And who maketh any doubt, that if those sleights and trickes, whereof this dayes argument may give us occasion to speake, should afterwarde be put in execution by men: would it not minister just reason, of punishing themselves for beguiling you, knowing, that (if you please) you have the like abilitie in your owne power? Mine intent therefore is to tell you, what a woman (though but of meane quality) did to her husband, upon a sodaine, and in a moment (as it were) for her owne safety.

Not long since, there lived in *Naples*, an honest meane man, who did take to Wife, a fayre and lustie young Woman, being named *Peronella*. He professing the Trade of a Mason, and shee Carding and Spinning, maintained themselves in a reasonable condition, abating and abounding as their Fortunes served. It came to passe, that a certayne young man, well observing the beauty and good parts of *Peronella*, became much addicted in affection towards her: and by his often and secret sollicitations, which he found not to be unkindely entertaigned; his successe proved answerable to his hope, no unindifferencie appearing in their purposes, but where her estate seemed weakest, his supplies made an addition of more strength.

Now, for their securer meeting, to stand cleare from all matter of scandal or detection, they concluded in this order between themselves. *Lazaro*, for so was *Peronellaes* Husband named, being an earely riser every morning, either to seeke for worke, or to effect it being undertaken: this amorous friend being therewith acquainted, and standing in some such convenient place, where hee could see *Lazaroes* departure from his house, and yet himselfe no way discerned; poore *Lazaro* was no sooner gone, but presently he enters the house, which stood in a verie solitarie street, called the *Avorio*. Many mornings had they thus met together, to their no meane delight and contentation, till one especiall morning among the rest, when *Lazaro* was gone forth to worke, and *Striguario* (so was the amorous young man named) visiting *Peronella* in the house: upon a very urgent occasion, *Lazaro* returned backe againe, quite contrary to his former wont, keeping foorth all day, and never comming home till night.

Finding his doore to be fast lockt, and he having knockt softlie once or twice, he spake in this manner to himselfe. Fortune I thanke thee, for albeit thou hast made mee poore, yet thou hast bestowed a better blessing on me, in matching me with so good, honest, & loving a Wife. Behold, though I went early out of my house, her selfe hath risen in the cold to shut the doore, to prevent the entrance of theeves, or any other that might offend us. *Peronella* having heard what her husband

sayde, and knowing the manner of his knocke, said fearfully to *Striguario*. Alas deare friend, what shall wee doe? I am little lesse then a dead Woman: For, *Lazaro* my Husband is come backe again, and I know not what to do or say. He never returned in this order before now, doubtlesse, hee saw when you entred the doore; and for the safety of your honour and mine: creepe under this brewing Fat, till I have opened the doore, to know the reason of his so soone returning.

*Striguario* made no delaying of the matter, but got himselfe closelie under the Fat, and *Peronella* opening the doore for her husbands enterance, with a frowning countenance, spake thus unto him. What meaneth this so early returning home againe this morning? It seemeth, thou intendest to do nothing to day, having brought backe thy tooles in thy hands. If such be thine intent, how shall we live? Where shal we have bread to fill our bellies? Dooest thou thinke, that I will suffer thee to pawne my gowne, and other poore garments, as heeretofore thou hast done? I that card and spinne both night and day, till I have worne the flesh from my fingers; yet all will hardly finde oyle to maintaine our Lampe. Husband, husband, there is not one neighbour dwelling by us, but makes a mockerie of me, and tels me plainly, that I may be ashamed to drudge and moyle as I do; wondering not a little, how I am able to endure it; and thou returnest home with thy hands in thy hose, as if thou hadst no worke at all to do this day.

Having thus spoken, she fell to weeping, and then thus began again. Poore wretched woman as I am, in an unfortunate houre was I borne, and in a much worse, when I was made thy Wife. I could have had a proper, handsome young man; one, that would have maintained mee brave and gallantly: but, beast as I was, to forgoe my good, and cast my selfe away on such a beggar as thou art, and whom none wold have had, but such an Asse as I. Other women live at hearts ease, and in jollity, have their amorous friends and loving Paramours, yea, one, two, three at once, making their husbands looke like a Moone cressent, whereon they shine Sun-like, with amiable lookes, because they know not how to helpe it: when I (poore foole) live heere at home a miserable life, not daring once to dreame of such follies, an innocent soule, heartlesse and harmelesse.

Many times, sitting and sighing to my selfe: Lord, thinke I, of what mettall am I made? Why should not I have a Friend in a corner, as well as others have? I am flesh and blood, as they are, not made of brasse or iron, and therefore subject to womens frailty. I would thou shouldest know it husband, and I tell it thee in good earnest; That if I would doe ill, I could quickly finde a friend at a neede. Gallants there are good store, who (of my knowledge) love me dearely, and have made me very large and liberall promises, of Golde, Silver, Jewels, and gay Garments, if I would extend them the least favour. But my heart will not suffer me, I never was the daughter of such a mother, as had so much as a thought of such matters: no, I thanke our blessed Ladie, and S. *Friswid* for it: and yet thou returnest home againe, when thou shouldst be at Worke.

*Lazaro*, who stode all this while like a well-beleeving Logger-head, demurely thus answered. Alas good Wife! I pray you bee not so angry, I never had so much as an ill thought of you, but know wel enough what you are, and have made good prooffe thereof this morning. Understand therefore patiently (sweet Wife) that I went forth to my work as dayly I use to do, little dreaming (as I thinke you doe not) that it had bene Holy-day. Wife, this is the Feast day of Saint *Galeone*; whereon we may in no wise worke, and this is the reason of my so soone returning. Neverthelesse (deare Wife) I was not carelesse of our Houshold provision: For, though we worke not, yet we must have foode, which I have provided for more then a moneth. Wife, I remembred the brewing Fat, whereof wee have little or no use at all, but rather it is a trouble to the house, then otherwise. I met with an honest Friend, who stayeth without at the doore, to him I have sold the Fat for ten *Gigliatoes*, and he tarrieth to take it away with him.

How Husband? replied *Peronella*, Why now I am worse offended then before. Thou that art a man, walkest every where, and shouldst be experienced in worldly affaires: wouldst thou bee so simple, as to sell such a brewing Fat for ten *Gigliatoes*? Why, I that am a poore ignorant woman, a house-Dove, sildome going out of my doore: have sold it already for twelve *Gigliatoes*, to a very

honest man, who (even a little before thy comming home) came to me, we agreed on the bargaine, and he is now underneath the Fat, to see whether it be sound or no. When credulous *Lazaro* heard this, he was better contented then ever, and went to him that taried at the doore, saying. Good man, you may goe your way, for, whereas you offered me but ten *Gigliatoes* for the Fat, my loving wife hath sold it for twelve, and I must maintaine what shee hath done: so the man departed, and the variance ended.

*Peronella* then saide to her husband. Seeing thou art come home so luckily, helpe me to lift up the Fat, that the man may come foorth, and then you two end the bargaine together. *Striguario*, who though he was mewed up under the tubbe, had his eares open enough; and hearing the witty excuse of *Peronella*, tooke himselfe free from future feare: and being come from under the Fat, pretending also, as if he had herd nothing, nor saw *Lazaro*, looking round about him, said. Where is this good woman? *Lazaro* stepping forth boldly like a man, replied: Heere am I, what wold you have Sir? Thou? quoth *Striguario*, what art thou? I ask for the good wife, with whom I made my match for the Fat. Honest Gentleman (answered *Lazaro*) I am that honest Womans Husband, for lacke of a better, and I will maintaine whatsoever my Wife hath done.

I crie you mercie Sir, replied *Striguario*, I bargained with your Wife for this brewing Fat, which I finde to be whole and sound: only it is uncleane within, hard crusted with some dry soile upon it, which I know not well how to get off, if you will be the meanes of making it cleane, I have the money heere ready for it. For that Sir (quoth *Peronella*) take you no care, although no match at all had beene made, what serves my Husband for, but to make it cleane? Yes forsooth Sir, answered sily *Lazaro*, you shall have it neate and cleane before you pay the mony.

So, stripping himselfe into his shirt, lighting a Candle, and taking tooles fit for the purpose; the Fat was whelmed over him, and he being within it, wrought untill he sweated, with scraping and scrubbing. So that these poore Lovers, what they could not accomplish as they wold, necessity enforced them to performe as they might. And *Peronella*, looking in at the vent-hole, where the Liquor runneth forth for the meshing; seemed to instruct her husband in the businesse, as espying those parts where the Fat was fowlest, saying: There, there *Lazaro*, tickle it there, the Gentleman payes well for it, and is worthy to have it: but see thou do thy selfe no harme good Husband. I warrant thee Wife, answered *Lazaro*, hurt not your selfe with leaning your stomacke on the Fat, and leave the cleansing of it to me. To be breefe, the Brewing Fat was neatly cleansed, *Peronella* and *Striguario* both well pleased, the money payde, and honest meaning *Lazaro* not discontented.

***Friar Reynard, falling in love with a Gentlewoman, Wife to a man of good account; found the meanes to become her Gossip. Afterward, he being conferring closely with her in her Chamber, and her Husband coming sodainly thither: she made him beleieve, that he came thither for no other end; but to cure his God-sonne by a charme, of a dangerous disease which he had by Wormes***

## The Third Novell

### **Serving as a friendly advertisement to married women, that Monks, Friars, and Priests may be none of their Gossips, in regard of unavoydable perilles ensuing thereby**

*Philostratus* told not this Tale so covertly, concerning *Lazaros* simplicity, and *Peronellaes* witty policy; but the Ladies found a knot in the rush, and laughed not a little, at his quaint manner of discoursing it. But upon the conclusion, the King looking upon Madam *Eliza*, willed her to succede next, which as willingly she granted, and thus began. Pleasant Ladies, the charme or conjuration wherewith Madam *Æmillia* laid her night-walking Spirit, maketh me remember a Novell of another enchantment; which although it carrieth not commendation equall to the other, yet I intend to report it, because it suteth with our present purpose, and I cannot sodainly be furnisht with another, answerable thereto in nature.

You are to understand then, that there lived in *Siena*, a proper young man, of good birth and well friended, being named *Reynard*. Earnestly he affected his neere dwelling neighbour, a beautifull Gentlewoman, and wife to a man of good esteeme: of whom hee grew halfe perswaded, that if he could (without suspition) compasse private conference with her, he should reach the height of his amorous desires. Yet seeing no likely meanes wherewith to further his hope, and shee being great with childe, he resolved to become a Godfather to the childe, at such time as it should be brought to Christening. And being inwardly acquainted with her Husband, who was named *Credulano*; such familiar entercourses passed betweene them, both of *Reynards* kinde offer, and *Credulanoes* as courteous acceptance, that hee was set downe for a Gossippe.

*Reynard* being thus embraced for Madam *Agnesiaes* Gossip, and this proving the onely colourable meanes, for his safer permission of speech with her, to let her now understand by word of mouth, what long before she collected by his lookes and behaviour: it fell out no way beneficiall to him, albeit *Agnesia* seemed not nice or scrupulous in hearing, yet she had a more precious care of her honour. It came to passe, within a while after (whether by seeing his labour vainly spent, or some other urgent occasion moving him thereto, I know not) *Reynard* would needs enter into Religion, and whatsoever strictnesse or austeritie hee found to be in that kinde of life, yet he determined to persevere therein, whether it were for his good or ill. And although within a short space, after he was thus become a Religious Monke, hee seemed to forget the former love which he bare to his gossip *Agnesia*, and divers other enormous vanities beside: yet let me tell you, successe of time tutord him in them againe; and, without any respect to his poore holy habite, but rather in contempt thereof (as it were) he tooke an especiall delight, in wearing garments of much richer esteeme, yet favoured by the same Monasticall profession, appearing (in all respects) like a Court-Minion or Favourite, of a sprightly and Poeticall disposition, for composing Verses, Sonnets, and Canzons, singing them to sundry excellent instruments, and yet not greatly curious of his company, so they were some of the best, and Madame *Agnesia* one, his former Gossip.

But why doe I trouble my selfe, in talking thus of our so lately converted Friar, holy Father *Reynard*, when they of longer standing, and reputed meerely for Saints in life, are rather much more vile then hee? Such is the wretched condition of this world, that they shame not (fat, soggie, and nastie Abbey-lubbers) to shew how full fedde they live in their Cloysters, with cherry cheekes, and smooth shining lookes, gay and gaudy garments, far from the least expression of humility, not walking in the streets like Doves: but high-crested like Cockes, with well cramd gorges. Nay, which is worse, if you did but see their Chambers furnished with Gally-pots of Electuaries, precious Unguents,

Apothecary Boxes, filled with various Confections, Conserves, excellent Perfumes, and other goodly Glasses of artificiall Oyles and Waters: beside Rundlets and small Barrels full of Greeke Wine, *Muscattella*, *Lachrime Christi*, and other such like most precious Wines, so that (to such as see them) they seeme not to bee Chambers of Religious men; but rather Apothecaries Shoppes, or appertaining to Druggists, Grocers, or Perfumers.

It is no disgrace to them to be Gowty; because when other men know it not, they alledge, that strict fasting, feeding on grosse meates (though never so little,) continuall studying, and such like restraints from the bodies freer exercise, maketh them subject to many infirmities. And yet, when any one of them chanceth to fall sicke, the Physitian must minister no such counsell to them, as Chastity, Abstinence from voluptuous meats, Discipline of the body, or any of those matters appertaining to a modest religious life. For, concerning the plaine, vulgar, and Plebeian people, these holy Fathers are perswaded, that they know nothing really belonging to a sanctimonious life; as long watching, praying, discipline and fasting, which (in themselves) are not able, to make men look leane, wretched, and pale. Because Saint *Dominicke*, Saint *Fraunces*, and divers other holy Saints beside, observed the selfesame religious orders and constitutions, as now their carefull successors do. Moreover, in example of those fore-named Saints, who went wel cloathed, though they had not three Garments for one, nor made of the finest Woollen excellent cloath: but rather of the very coarsest of all other, and of the common ordinary colour, to expell cold onely, but not to appear brave or gallant, deceyving thereby infinite simple credulous soules, whose purses (neverthesse) are their best pay-masters.

But leave we this, and returne wee backe to vertuous Fryar *Reynard*, who falling againe to his former appetites; became an often visitant of his Gossip *Agnesia*, and now hee had learned such a blushlesse kinde of boldnesse; that he durst be more instant with her (concerning his privie sute) then ever formerly he had bin, yea, even to sollicite the enjoying of his immodest desires. The good Gentlewoman, seeing her selfe so importunately pursued, and Fryar *Reynard* appearing now (perhappes) of sweeter and more delicate complexion, then at his entrance into Religion: at a set time of his secret communing with her; she answered him in as apt tearmes, as they use to do, who are not greatly squeamish, in granting matters demanded of them.

Why how now Friar *Reynard*? quoth shee, Doe God-fathers use to move such questions? Whereto the Friar thus replyed. Madam, when I have laide off this holy habite (which is a matter very easie for mee to do) I shall seeme in your eye, in all respects made like another man, quite from the course of any Religious life. *Agnesia*, biting the lip with a pretty smile, said, O my faire Starres! You will never bee so unfriendly to me. What? You being my Gossip, would you have me consent unto such a sinne? Our blessed Lady shield mee, for my ghostly Father hath often told me, that it is utterly unpardonable: but if it were, I feare too much confiding on mine owne strength. Gossip, Gossip, answered the Friar, you speake like a Foole, and feare (in this case) is wholly frivolous, especially, when the motions mooved by such an one as my selfe, who (upon repentance) can grant you pardon and indulgence presently. But I pray you let mee aske you one question, Who is the nearest Kinsman to your Son; either I, that stood at the Font for his Baptisme, or your Husband that begot him? The Lady made answeare, that it was her Husband. You say very true Gossip, replyed the Friar, and yet notwithstanding, doth not your Husband (both at boord and bed) enjoy the sweet benefit of your company? Yes, said the Lady, why shold he not? Then Lady (quoth *Reynard*) I, who am not so neere a Kinsman to your Sonne, as your Husband is, why may ye not afford mee the like favour, as you do him? *Agnesia*, who was no Logitian, and therefore could not stand on any curious answer, especially being so cuningly moved; beleevd, or rather made shew of beleeving, that the Godfather said nothing but truth, and thus answered. What woman is she (Gossip) that knoweth how to answer your strange speeches? And, how it came to passe, I know not, but such an agreement passed betweene them, that, for once onely (so it might not infrindge the league of Gossip-ship, but that title to countenance their further intent) such a favour should be affoorded, so it might stand cleare from suspition.

An especiall time being appointed, when this amorous Combate should be fought in loves field, Friar *Reynard* came to his Gossips house, where none being present to hinder his purpose, but onely the Nursse which attended on the child, who was an indifferent faire & proper woman: his holy brother that came thither in his company (because Friars were not allowed to walke alone) was sent aside with her into the Pigeon loft, to enstruct her in a new kinde of *Pater noster*, lately devised in their holy Convent. In the meane while, as Friar *Reynard* and *Agnesia* were entring into hir chamber, she leading her little son by the hand, and making fast the doore for their better safety: the Friar laide by his holie habit, Cowle, Hood, Booke, and Beads, to bee (in all respects) as other men were. No sooner were they thus entred the Chamber, but her husband *Credulano*, being come into the house, and unseen of any, staid not till he was at the Chamber doore, where hee knockt, and called for his Wife.

She hearing his voice: Alas Gossip (quoth she) what shall I do? My Husband knocketh at the doore, and now he will perceiue the occasion of our so familiar acquaintance. *Reynard* being stript into his Trusse and straite Strouses, began to tremble and quake exceedingly. I heare your Husbands tongue Gossip, said he, and seeing no harme as yet hath bin done, if I had but my garments on againe; wee would have one excuse or other to serve the turne, but till then you may not open the doore. As womens wits are sildome gadding abroad, when any necessitie concerneth them at home: even so *Agnesia*, being sodainly provided of an invention, both how to speake and carry her selfe in this extremitie, saide to the Friar. Get on your garments quickly, and when you are cloathed, take your little God-son in your armes, and listning wel what I shall say, shape your answers according to my words, and then refer the matter to me. *Credulano* had scarcely ended his knocking, but *Agnesia* stepping to the doore said: Husband, I come to you. So she opened the doore, and (going forth to him) with a chearefull countenance thus spake. Beleeve me Husband, you could not have come in a more happy time, for our young Son was sodainly extreemly sicke, and (as good Fortune would have it) our loving Gossip *Reynard* chanced to come in; and questionlesse, but by his good prayers and other religious paynes, we had utterly lost our childe, for he had no life left in him.

*Credulano*, being as credulous as his name imported, seemed ready to swoune with sodaine conceit: Alas good wife (quoth he) how hapned this? Sit downe sweet Husband said she, and I wil tell you al. Our child was sodainly taken with a swooning, wherein I being unskilful, did verily suppose him to be dead, not knowing what to doe, or say. By good hap, our Gossip *Reynard* came in, and taking the childe up in his armes, said to me. Gossip, this is nothing else but Wormes in the bellie of the childe, which ascending to the heart, must needs kill the child, without all question to the contrary. But be of good comfort Gossip, and feare not, for I can charme them in such sort, that they shall all die, and before I depart hence, you shall see your Son as healthfull as ever. And because the manner of this charme is of such nature, that it required prayer and exorcising in two places at once: Nurse went up with his Holye Brother into our Pigeon loft, to exercise their devotion there, while we did the like heere. For none but the mother of the childe must bee present at such a mystery, nor any enter to hinder the operation of the charme; which was the reason of making fast the Chamber doore. You shall see Husband anon the Childe, which is indifferently recovered in his armes, and if Nurse and his holy Brother were returned from theyr meditations; he saith, that the charme would then be fully effected: for the child beginneth to looke chearefull and merry.

So deerely did *Credulano* love the childe, that hee verily beleaved, what his Wife had saide, never misdoubting any other treachery: and, lifting up his eyes, with a vehement sigh, said. Wife, may not I goe in and take the child into my armes? Oh no, not yet good husband (quoth she) in any case, least you should overthrow all that is done. Stay but a little while, I will go in againe, and if all bee well, then will I call you. In went *Agnesia* againe, making the doore fast after her, the Fryar having heard all the passed speeches, by this time he was fitted with his habite, and taking the childe in his armes, he said to *Agnesia*. Gossip methought I heard your Husbands voice, is hee at your Chamber doore? Yes Gossip *Reynard* (quoth *Credulano* without, while *Agnesia* opened the doore, and admitted him entrance) indeede it is I. Come in Sir, I pray you, replied the Friar, and heere receive your childe of

mee, who was in great danger, of your ever seeing him any more alive. But you must take order, to make an Image of waxe, agreeing with the stature of the childe, to be placed on the Altar before the Image of S. *Frances*, by whose merites the childe is thus restored to health.

The childe, beholding his Father, made signes of comming to him, rejoycing merrily, as young infants use to do; and *Credulano* clasping him in his armes, wept with conceite of joy, kissing him infinitely, and heartily thanking his Gossip *Reynard*, for the recovery of his God-son. The Friars brotherly Companion, who had given sufficient enstructions to the Nurse, and a small purse full of Sisters white thred, which a Nunne (after shrift) had bestowed on him, upon the husbands admittance into the Chamber (which they easily heard) came in also to them, and seeing all in very good tearmes, they holpe to make a joyfull conclusion, the Brother saying to Friar *Reynard*: Brother, I have finished all those foure Jaculatory prayers, which you commanded me.

Brother, answered *Reynard*, you have a better breath then I, and your successe hath proved happier then mine, for before the arrivall of my Gossip *Credulano*, I could accomplish but two Jaculatory prayers onely. But it appeareth, that we have both prevailed in our devout desires, because the childe is perfectly cured. *Credulano* calling for Wine and good cheare, feasted both the Friars very jocondly, and then conducting them forth of his house, without any further intermission, caused the childs Image of waxe to be made, and sent it to be placed on the Altar of Saint *Frances*, among many other the like oblations.

***Tofano in the night season, did locke his wife out of his house, and shee not prevailing to get entrance againe, by all the entreaties she could possiblie use: made him beleieve that she had throwne her selfe into a Well, by casting a great stone into the same Well. Tofano hearing the fall of the stone into the Well, and being perswaded that it was his Wife indeed; came forth of his house, and ran to the Welles side. In the meane while, his wife gotte into the house, made fast the doore against her Husband, and gave him many reproachfull speeches***



## The Fourth Novell

### Wherein is manifested, that the malice and subtilty of a Woman, surpasseth all the Art or Wit in man

So soone as the King perceyved, that the Novell reported by Madame *Eliza* was finished: hee turned himselfe to Madame *Lauretta*, and told her it was his pleasure, that she should now begin the next, whereto she yeelded in this manner. O Love: What, and how many are thy prevailing forces? How straunge are thy foresights? And how admirable thine attempts? Where is, or ever was the Philosopher or Artist, that could enstruct the wiles, escapes, preventions, and demonstrations, which sodainly thou teachest such, as are thy apt and understanding Schollers indeede? Certaine it is, that the documents and eruditions of all other whatsoever, are weak, or of no worth, in respect of thine: as hath notably appeared, by the remonstrances already past, and whereto (worthy Ladies) I wil adde another of a simple woman, who taught her husband such a lesson, as shee never learned of any, but Love himselfe.

There dwelt sometime in *Arezzo* (which is a faire Village of *Tuscany*) a rich man, named *Tofano*, who enjoyed in marriage a young beautifull woman, called *Cheta*: of whom (without any occasion given, or reason knowne to himselfe) he became exceeding jealous. Which his wife perceyving, she grew much offended thereat, and tooke it in great scorne, that she should be servile to so vile and slavish a condition. Oftentimes, she demanded of him, from whence this jealousie in him received originall, he having never seene or heard of any; he could make her no other answer, but what his owne bad humour suggested, and drove him every day (almost) to deaths doore, by feare of that which no way needed. But, whether as a just scourge for this his grosse folly, or a secret decree, ordained to him by Fortune and the Fates, I am not able to distinguish: It came so to passe, that a young Gallant made meanes to enjoy her favour, and she was so discreetly wise in judging of his worthinesse; that affection passed so farre mutually betweene them, as nothing wanted, but effects to answere words, suited with time and place convenient, for which order was taken as best they might, yet to stand free from all suspicion.

Among many other evill conditions, very frequent and familiar in her husband *Tofano*; he tooke a great delight in drinking, which not only he held to be a commendable quality, but was alwaies so often solicited thereto: that *Cheta* her selfe began to like and allow it in him, feeding his humor so effectually, with quaffing and carowsing, that (at any time when she listed) she could make him bowsie beyonde all measure: and leaving him sleeping in this drunkennesse, would alwayes get her selfe to bed. By helpe heereof, she compassed the first familiarity with her friend, yea, divers times after, as occasion served: and so confidently did she builde on her husbands drunkennesse, that not onely shee adventured to bring her friend home into her owne house; but also would as often go to his, which was some-what neere at hand, and abide with him there, the most part of the night season.

While *Cheta* thus continued on these amorous courses, it fortunied, that her slye suspicious husband, beganne to perceive, that though shee drunke very much with him, yea, untill he was quite spent and gone: yet she remained fresh and sober still, and thereby imagined strange matters, that he being fast asleepe, his wife then tooke advantage of his drowsinesse, and might – and so forth. Beeing desirous to make experience of this his distrust, hee returned home at night (not having drunke any thing all the whole day) dissembling both by his words and behaviour, as if he were notoriously drunke indeede. Which his Wife constantly beleeving, saide to her selfe: That hee had now more neede of sleepe, then drinke; getting him immediately into his warme bed; and then going downe the staires againe, softly went out of doores unto her Friends house, as formerly she had used to do, and there shee remained untill midnight.

*Tofano* perceiving that his Wife came not to bed, and imagining to have heard his doore both open and shut: arose out of his bed, and calling his Wife *Cheta* divers times, without any answer returned: hee went downe the staires, and finding the doore but closed too, made it fast and sure on the inside, and then got him up to the window, to watch the returning home of his wife, from whence shee came, and then to make her conditions apparantly knowne. So long there he stayed, till at the last she returned indeede, and finding the doore so surely shut, shee was exceeding sorrowful, essaying how she might get it open by strength: which when *Tofano* had long suffered her in vaine to approve, thus hee spake to her. *Cheta, Cheta*, all thy labour is meere lost, because heere is no entrance allowed for thee; therefore return to the place from whence thou camest, that all thy friends may judge of thy behaviour, and know what a night-walker thou art become.

The woman hearing this unpleasing language, began to use all humble entreaties, desiring him (for charities sake) to open the doore and admit her entrance, because she had not bin in any such place, as his jelous suspicion might suggest to him: but onely to visit a weak & sickly neighbour, the nights being long, she not (as yet) capeable of sleepe, nor willing to sit alone in the house. But all her perswasions served to no purpose, he was so settled in his owne opinion, that all the Town should now see her nightly gading, which before was not so much as suspected. *Cheta* seeing, that faire meanes would not prevaile, shee entred into roughe speeches and threatnings, saying: If thou wilt not open the doore and let me come in, I will so shame thee, as never base man was. As how I pray thee? answered *Tofano*, what canst thou do to me?

The woman, whom love had inspired with sprightly counsell, ingeniously enstructing her what to do in this distresse, stearely thus replied. Before I will suffer any such shame as thou intended towards mee, I will drowne my selfe heere in this Well before our doore, where being found dead, and thy villanous jealousie so apparantly knowne, beside thy more then beastly drunkenesse: all the neighbours will constantly beleieve, that thou didst first strangle me in the house, and afterwarde threw me into this Well. So either thou must flie upon the supposed offence, or lose all thy goodes by banishment, or (which is much more fitting for thee) have thy head smitten off as a wilfull murtherer of thy wife; for all will judge it to be no otherwise. All which wordes, mooved not *Tofano* a jot from his obstinat determination: but he still persisting therein, thus she spake. I neither can nor will longer endure this base Villanie of thine: to the mercy of heaven I commit my soul, and stand there my wheele, a witnesse against so hard-hearted a murtherer.

No sooner had she thus spoke, but the night being so extreemly dark, as they could not discern one another; *Cheta* went to the Well, where finding a verie great stone, which lay loose upon the brim of the Well, even as if it had beene layde there on purpose, shee cried out aloud, saying. Forgive me faire heavens, and so threw the stone downe into the Well. The night being very still & silent, the fal of the great stone made such a dreadfull noise in the Well; that he hearing it at the Windowe, thought verily she had drowned her selfe indeede. Whereupon, running downe hastily, and taking a Bucket fastened to a strong Cord: he left the doore wide open, intending speedily to helpe her. But she standing close at the doores entrance, before he could get to the Wels side; she was within the house, softly made the doore fast on the inside, and then went up to the Window, where *Tofano* before had stood talking to her.

While he was thus dragging with his Bucket in the Well, crying and calling *Cheta*, take hold good *Cheta*, and save thy life: she stood laughing in the Window, saying. Water should bee put into Wine before a man drinkes it, and not when he hath drunke too much already. *Tofano* hearing his Wife thus to flout him out of his Window, went back to the doore, and finding it made fast against him: he willed hir to grant him entrance. But she, forgetting all gentle Language, which formerly she had used to him: in meere mockery and derision (yet intermixed with some sighes and teares, which women are saide to have at command) out aloud (because the Neighbours should heare her) thus she replied.

Beastly drunken Knave as thou art, this night thou shalt not come within these doores, I am no longer able to endure thy base behaviour, it is more then high time, that thy course of life should bee publicquely known, and at what drunken houres thou returnest home to thy house. *Tofano*, being a man of very impatient Nature, was as bitter unto her in words on the other side, which the Neighbours about them (both men and Women) hearing; looked forth of their Windowes, and demanding a reason for this their disquietnesse, *Cheta* (seeming as if she wept) sayde.

Alas my good Neighbours, you see at what unfitting houres, this bad man comes home to his house, after hee hath lyen in a Taverne all day drunke, sleeping and snorting like a Swine. You are my honest witnesses, how long I have suffered this beastlinesse in him, yet neyther your good counsell, nor my too often loving admonitions, can worke that good which wee have expected. Wherefore, to try if shame can procure any amendment, I have shut him out of doores, until his drunken fit be over-past, and so he shall stand to coole his feet.

*Tofano* (but in very uncivill manner) told her being abroad that night, and how she had used him: But the Neighbours seeing her to be within the house, and beleeving her, rather then him, in regard of his too wellknowne ill qualities; very sharply reprovved him, gave him grosse speeches, pittying that any honest Woman should be so continually abused. Now my good Neighbours (quoth she) you see what manner of man he is. What would you thinke of me, if I should walk the streets thus in the night time, or be so late out of mine owne house, as this dayly Drunkard is? I was affraid least you would have given credit to his dissembling speeches, when he told you, that I was at the Welles side, and threw something into the Well: but that I know your better opinion of me, and how sildome I am to be seene out of doores, although he would induce your sharper judgement of me, and lay that shame upon me, wherein he hath sinned himselfe.

The Neighbours, both men and Women, were all very severely incensed against *Tofano*, condemning him for his great fault that night committed, and avouching his wife to be vertuous and honest. Within a little while, the noise passing from Neighbour to Neighbour, at the length it came to the eares of her Kindred, who forthwith resorted thither, and hearing how sharply the Neighbours reprehended *Tofano*: they tooke him, soundly bastanadoed him, and hardly left any bone of him unbruised. Afterward, they went into the house, tooke all such things thence as belonged to hir, taking hir also with them to their dwelling, and threatning *Tofano* with further infliction of punishment, both for his drunkennesse, and causlesse jealousy.

*Tofano* perceyving how curstly they had handled him, and what crooked meanes might further be used against him, in regard her Kindred & Friends were very mightie: thought it much better, patiently to suffer the wrong already done him, then by obstinate contending, to proceed further, and fare worse. He became a suter to her Kindred, that al might be forgotten and forgiven, in recompence whereof; he would not onely refraine from drunkennesse, but also, never more be jelous of his wife. This being faithfully promised, and *Cheta* reconciled to her Husband, all strife was ended, she enjoyed her friends favour, as occasion served, but yet with such discretion, as it was not noted. Thus the Coxcombe foole, was faine to purchase his peace, after a notorious wrong sustained, and further injuries to bee offered.

**A jealous man, clouded with the habite of a Priest, became the Confessour to his owne Wife; who made him beleeve, that she was deeply in love with a Priest, which came every night, and lay with her. By meanes of which confession, while her jealous Husband watched the doore of his house; to surprize the Priest when he came: she that never meant to do amisse, had the company of a secret Friend, who came over the toppe of the house to visite her, while her foolish Husband kept the doore**

## The fift Novell

**In just scorne and mockery of such jealous Husbands, that  
will be so idle headed upon no occasion. And yet when they  
have good reason for it, do least of all suspect any such injury**

Madam *Lauretta* having ended her Novell, and every one commended the Woman, for fitting *Tofano* in his kinde; and, as his jealousie and drunkennesse justly deserved: the King (to prevent all losse of time) turned to Madame *Fiammetta*, commaunding her to follow next: whereuppon, very graciously, shee beganne in this manner.

Noble Ladies, the precedent Novell delivered by Madame *Lauretta*, maketh me willing to speake of another jealous man; as being halfe perswaded, that whatsoever is done to them by their Wives, and especially upon no occasion given, they doe no more then well becommeth them. And if those grave heads, which were the first instituters of lawes, had diligently observed all things; I am of the minde, that they would have ordained no other penalty for Women, then they appointed against such, as (in their owne defence) do offend any other. For jealous husbands, are meere insidiators of their Wives lives, and most diligent pursuers of their deaths, being lockt up in their houses all the Weeke long, imployed in nothing but domesticke drudging affayres: which makes them desirous of high Festivall dayes, to receive some little comfort abroad, by an honest recreation or pastime, as Husbandmen in the fields, Artizans in our Citie, or Governours in our judiciall Courtes; yea, or as our Lord himselve, who rested the seaventh day from all his travailes. In like manner, it is so willed and ordained by the Lawes, as well divine as humane, which have regard to the glory of God, and for the common good of every one; making distinction betweene those dayes appointed for labour, and the other determined for rest. Whereto jealous persons (in no case) will give consent, but all those dayes (which for other women are pleasing and delightfull) unto such, over whom they command, are most irksome, sadde and sorrowful, because then they are lockt up, and very strictly restrained. And if question were urged, how many good women do live and consume away in this torturing hell of affliction: I can make no other answeere, but such as feele it, are best able to discover it. Wherefore to conclude the proheme to my present purpose, let none be over rash in condemning women: for what they do to their husbands, being jealous without occasion; but rather commend their wit and providence.

Somtime (faire Ladies) there lived in *Arimino*, a Merchant, very rich in wealth and worldly possessions, who having a beautifull Gentlewoman to his wife, he became extreemly jelous of her. And he had no other reason for this foolish conceit; but, like as he loved hir dearly, and found her to be very absolutely faire: even so he imagined, that although she devised by her best meanes to give him content; yet others would grow enamored of her, because she appeared so amiable to al. In which respect, time might tutor her to affect some other beside himselfe: the onely common argument of every bad minded man, being weake and shallow in his owne understanding. This jelous humor increasing in him more and more, he kept her in such narrow restraint: that many persons condemned to death, have enjoyed larger libertie in their imprisonment. For, she might not bee present at Feasts, Weddings, nor goe to Church, or so much as to be seen at her doore: Nay, she durst not stand in her Window, nor looke out of her house, for any occasion whatsoever. By means whereof, life seemed most tedious and offensive to her, and she supported it the more impatiently, because shee knew her selfe not any way faulty.

Seeing her husband still persist in this shamefull course towards her; she studied, how she might best comfort her selfe in this desolate case: by devising some one meane or other (if any at all were

to bee founde) whereby he might be requited in his kind, and wear that badge of shame whereof he was now but onely affraid. And because she could not gain so small a permission, as to be seene at any window, where (happily) she might have observed some one passing by in the street, discerning a little parcell of her love: she remembred at length, that, in the next house to her Husbonds (they both joyning close together) there dwelt a comely young proper Gentleman, whose perfections carried correspondencie with her desires. She also considered with her selfe, that if there were any partition wall; such a chinke or cranny might easily be made therein, by which (at one time or other) she should gaine a sight of the young Gentleman, and finde an houre so fitting, as to conferre with him, and bestow her lovely favour on him, if he pleased to accept it. If successe (in this case) proved answerable to her hope, then thus she resolved to outrun the rest of her wearisome dayes, except the frensie of jealousie did finish her husbands loathed life before.

Walking from one roome to another, thorough every part of the house; and no wall escaping without diligent surveying; on a day, when her Husband was absent from home, she espyed in a corner very secret, an indifferent cleft in the Wall, which though it yeilded no full view on the other side, yet she plainly perceived it to be an handsome Chamber, and grew more then halfe perswaded, that either it might be the Chamber of *Philippo* (for so was the neighbouring young Gentleman named) or else a passage guiding thereto. A Chambermaid of hers, who compassioned her case very much; made such observance, by her Mistresses direction, that she found it to be *Philippoes* bed Chamber, and where alwayes he used to lodge alone. By often visiting this rift or chinke in the Wall, especially when the Gentleman was there; and by throwing in little stones, flowers, and such like things, which fell still in his way as he walked: so farre she prevailed, that he stepping to the chinke, to know from whence they came; shee called softly to him, who knowing her voyce, there they had such private conference together, as was not any way displeasing to either. So that the chinke being made a little larger; yet so, as it could not be easily discerned: their mouthes might meete with kisses together, and their hands folded each in other; but nothing else to be performed, for continuall feare of her jelous husband.

Now the Feast of Christmasse drawing neere, the Gentlewoman said to her Husband; that, if it stood with his liking: she would do such duty as fitted with so solemne a time, by going earely in a morning unto Church, there to be confessed, and receive her Saviour, as other Christians did. How now? replied the jealous Asse, what sinnes have you committed, that should neede confession? How Husband? quoth she, what do you thinke me to be a Saint? Who knoweth not, I pray you, that I am as subject to sinne, as any other Woman living in the world? But my sins are not to be revealed to you, because you are no Priest. These words enflamed his jealousie more violently then before, and needes must he know what sinnes she had committed, & having resolved what to do in this case, made her answer: That hee was contented with her motion, alwaies provided, that she went to no other Church, then unto their owne Chappel, betimes in a morning; and their own Chaplaine to confesse her, or some other Priest by him appointed, but not any other: and then she to returne home presently againe. She being a woman of acute apprehension, presently collected his whole intention: but seeming to take no knowledge thereof, replied, that she would not swerve from his direction.

When the appointed day was come, she arose very earely, and being prepared answerable to her owne liking, to the Chappell shee went as her Husband had appointed, where her jealous Husband (being much earlier risen then she) attended for her comming: having so ordred the matter with his Chaplaine, that he was cloathed in his Cowle, with a large Hood hanging over his eyes, that she should not know him, and so he went and sate downe in the Confessors place. Shee being entred into the Chappell, and calling for the Priest to heare her confession, he made her answer: that he could not intend it, but would bring her to another holy Brother, who was at better leysure then hee. So to her Husband he brought her, that seemed (in all respects) like the Confessor himselfe: save onely his Hood was not so closely veyled, but shee knew his beard, and said to her selfe. What a mad world is this, when jealousie can metamorphose an ordinary man into a Priest? But, let me alone with him, I meane to fit him with that which he lookes for.

So, appearing to have no knowledge at all of him, downe she fell at his feete, and he had conveyed a few Cherry stones into his mouth, to trouble his speech from her knowledge; for, in all things els, he thought himselfe to be sufficiently fitted for her. In the course of her confession, she declared, that she was married to a most wicked jealous Husband, and with whom she lead a very hatefull life. Neverthelesse (quoth she) I am indifferently even with him, for I am beloved of an Holie Fryar, that every night commeth and lyeth with me. When the jealous Husband heard this, it stabbed him like a dagger to the heart, and, but for this greedy covetous desire to know more; he would faine have broke off confession, and got him gone. But, perceiving that it was his wisest course, he questioned further with his wife, saying: Why good Woman, doth not your husband lodge with you? Yes Sir, quoth she. How is it possible then (replied the Husband) that the Friar can lodge there with you too?

She, dissembling a farre fetcht sigh, thus answered. Reverend Sir, I know not what skilfull Art the Fryar useth, but this I am sure, every doore in our house will flye open to him, so soone as he doth but touch it. Moreover, he told me, that when he commeth unto my Chamber doore, he speaketh certaine words to himselfe, which immediately casteth my Husband into a dead sleepe, and, understanding him to bee thus sleepily entranced: he openeth the doore, entreth in, lieth downe by me, and this every night he faileth not to do. The jealous Coxcomb angrily scratching his head, and wishing his wife halfe hangd, said: Mistresse, this is very badly done, for you should keepe your selfe from all men, but your husband onely. That shall I never doe, answered shee, because (indeed) I love him dearly. Why then (quoth our supposed Confessor) I cannot give you any absolution. I am the more sory Sir, said she, I came not hither to tell you any leasings, for if I could, yet I would not, because it is not good to fable with such Saint-like men as you are. You do therein (quoth hee) the better, and surely I am very sory for you, because in this dangerous condition, it will bee the utter losse of your soule: neverthelesse, both for your husbands sake and your owne, I will take some paines, and use such especiall prayers in your name, which may (perchance) greatly avayle you. And I purpose now and then, to send you a Novice or young Clarke of mine, whom you may safely acquaint with your minde, and signifie to me, by him, whether they have done you good, or no: and if they prove helpefull, then will we further proceed therein. Alas Sir, said she, never trouble your selfe, in sending any body to our house; because, if my Husband should know it, he is so extreemly jelous, as all the world cannot otherwise perswade him, but that he commeth thither for no honest intent, and so I shall live worse then now I do. Fear not that, good woman, quoth he, but beleve it certainly, that I will have such a care in this case, as your Husband shall never speake thereof to you. If you can doe so Sir, sayde she, proceed I pray you, and I am well contented.

Confession being thus ended, and she receiving such pennance as hee appointed, she arose on her feete, and went to heare Masse; while our jealous Woodcocke (testily puffing and blowing) put off his Religious habite, returning home presently to his house, beating his braines al the the way as he went, what meanes he might best devise, for the taking of his wife and the Friar together, whereby to have them both severely punished. His wife being come home from the Chappell, discerned by her Husbands lookes, that he was like to keepe but a sory Christmasse: yet he used his utmost industry, to conceale what he had done, & which she knew as well as himself. And he having fully resolved, to watch his own street doore the next night ensuing in person, in expectation of the Friars comming, saide to his Wife. I have occasion both to suppe and lodge out of my house this night, wherefore see you the streete doore to be surely made fast on the inside, and the doore at the middest of the staires, as also your own Chamber doore, and then (in Gods name) get you to bed. Whereto she answered, that all should be done as hee had appointed.

Afterward, when she saw convenient time, she went to the chink in the Wall, and making such a signe as shee was woont to doe: *Phillippo* came thither, to whom she declared all her mornings affayres, & what directions her husband had given her. Furthermore she saide, certaine I am, that he will not depart from the house, but sit and watch the doore without, to take one that comes not heere.

If therefore, you can climbe over the house top, and get in at our gutter Window, you and I may conferre more familiarly together. The young Gentleman being no dullard, had his lesson quickly taught him; and when night was come, *Geloso* (for so must wee tearme the Cocke-braind husband) armes himselfe at all points, with a browne Bill in his hand, and so he sits to watch his owne doore. His Wife had made fast all the doores, especially that on the midst of the stayres, because he should not (by any means) come to her Chamber; and so, when the houre served, the Gentleman adventured over the house top, found the gutter Window, and the way conducting him to her Chamber, where I leave them to their further amorous conference.

*Geloso*, more then halfe mad with anger, first, because hee had lost his supper: next, having sitten almost all the night (which was extreemely cold and windie) his Armour much molesting him, and yet he could see no Friar come: when day drew neere, and hee ashamed to watch there any longer; conveighed himselfe to some more convenient place, where putting off his Armes, and seeming to come from the place of his Lodging; about the ninth houre, he found his doore open, entred in, & went up the stayres, going to dinner with his Wife. Within a while after, according as *Geloso* had ordred the businesse, a youth came thither, seeming to be the Novice sent from the Confessor, and he being admitted to speake with her, demanded, whether shee were troubled or molested that night passed, as formerly she had bin, and whether the partie came or no? The Woman, who knew well enough the Messenger (notwithstanding all his formall disguise) made answer: That the party expected, came not: but if hee had come, it was to no purpose; because her minde was now otherwise altred, albeit she changed not a jote from her amorous conclusion.

What should I now further say unto you? *Geloso* continued his watch many nights afterward, as hoping to surprize the Friar at his entrance, and his wife kept still her contented quarter, according as opportunitie served. In the conclusion, *Geloso* being no longer able to endure his bootlesse watching, nor some (more then ordinary) pleasing countenance in his wife: one day demaunded of her (with a very stearne and frowning brow) what secret sinnes shee had revealed to the ghostly Father, upon the day of her shrift? The Woman replied, that she would not tell him, neyther was it a matter reasonable, or lawfull for her to doe. Wicked Woman, answered *Geloso*: I knowe them all well enough, even in despite of thee, and every word that thou spakest unto him. But Huswife, now I must further know, what the Fryar is, with whom you are so farre in love, and (by meanes of his enchantments) lyeth with you every night; tell me what and who he is, or else I meane to cut your throate.

The Woman immediately made answer, it was not true, that she was in love with any Fryar. How? quoth *Geloso*, didst thou not thou confesse so much to the Ghostly Father, the other day when thou wast at shrift? No Sir, sayde she, but if I did, I am sure he would not disclose it to you, except hee suffered you to bee there present, which is an Article beyonde his dutie. But if it were so, then I confesse freely, that I did say so unto him. Make an end then quickly Wife (quoth *Geloso*) and tell mee who the Friar is. The Woman fell into a hearty laughter, saying. It liketh me singularly well, when a wise man will suffer himselfe to be ledde by a simple Woman, even as a Sheepe is to the slaughter, and by the hornes. If once thou wast wise, that wisdom became utterly lost, when thou felst into that divellish frensie of jealousie, without knowing anie reason for it: for, by this beastlike and no manly humor, thou hast eclipsed no meane part of my glory, and womanly reputation.

Doest thou imagine Husband, that if I were so blinded in the eyes of my head, as thou art in them which should informe thine understanding; I could have found out the Priest, that would needs bee my Confessor? I knew thee Husband to be the man, and therefore I prepared my wit accordingly, to fit thee with the foolish imagination which thou soughtest for, and (indeed) gave it thee. For, if thou hadst beene wise, as thou makest the world to beleve by outward apparance, thou wouldest never have expressed such a basenesse of minde, to borrow the coulour of a sanctified cloake, thereby to undermine the secrets of thine honest meaning Wife. Wherefore, to feede thee in thy fond suspition, I was the more free in my Confession, and tolde thee truely, with whom, and how heinously I had transgressed. Did I not tell thee, that I loved a Fryar? And art not thou he whom I love, being a Fryar,

and my ghostly Father, though (to thine owne shame) thou madst thy selfe so? I said moreover, that there is not any doore in our house, that can keepe it selfe shut against him, but (when he pleaseth) he comes and lies with me. Now tell me Husband, What doore in our house hath (at any time) bin shut against thee, but they are freely thine owne, & grant thee entrance? Thou art the same Friar that confest me, and lieth every night with me, and so often as thou sentst thy young Novice or Clarke to me, as often did I truly returne thee word, when the same Fryar lay with me. But (by jealousye) thou hast so lost thine understanding, that thou wilt hardly beleeeve all this.

Alas good man, like an armed Watchman, thou satst at thine owne doore all a cold Winters night, perswading mee (poore silly credulous woman) that, upon urgent occasions, thou must needs suppe and lodge from home. Remember thy selfe therefore better heereafter, become a true understanding man, as thou shouldst bee, and make not thy selfe a mocking stocke to them, who knoweth thy jealous qualities, as well as I do, and be not so watchfull over me, as thou art. For I sweare by my true honesty, that if I were but as willing, as thou art suspitious: I could deceive thee, if thou hadst an hundred eyes, as Nature affords thee but two, and have my pleasures freely, yet thou be not a jot the wiser, or my credit any way impaired.

Our wonderfull wise *Geloso*, who (very advisedly considred) that he had wholly heard his wives secret confession, and dreamed now on no other doubt beside, but (perceiving by her speeches) how hee was become a scorne to al men: without returning other answer, confirmed his wife to bee both wise and honest, and now when he hadde just occasion to be jealous indeede, hee utterly forswore it, and counted them all Coxcombes that would be so misguided. Wherefore, she having thus wisely wonne the way to her owne desires, and he reduced into a more humane temper: I hope there was no more neede, of clambring over houses in the night time like Cats, nor walking in at gutter Windowes, but all abuses were honestly reformed.

***Madame Isabella, delighting in the company of her affected Friend, named Lionello, and she being likewise beloved by Signior Lambertuccio: At the same time as shee had entertained Lionello, shee was also visited by Lambertuccio. Her Husband returning home in the very instant: shee caused Lambertuccio to run forth with a drawne sword in his hand, and (by that meanes) made an excuse sufficient for Lionello to her husband***



## The Sixth Novell

**Wherein is manifestly discerned, that if Love be driven to a narrow straite in any of his attempts, yet hee can accomplish his purpose by some other supply**

Wondrously pleasing to all the company, was the reported Novell of Madame *Fiammetta*, every one applauding the Womans wisdom, and that she had done no more, then as the jealous foole her husband justly deserved. But shee having ended, the King gave order unto Madame *Pampinea*, that now it was her turne to speake, whereupon, thus she began. There are no meane store of people who say (though very false and foolishly,) that Love maketh many to be out of their wits, and that such as fall in Love, do utterly loose their understanding. To mee this appeareth a very ydle opinion, as already hath beene approved by the related discourses, and shall also bee made manifest by another of mine owne.

In our City of *Florence*, famous for some good, though as many bad qualities, there dwelt (not long since) a Gentlewoman, endued with choice beauty and admirable perfections, being wife to Signior *Beltramo*, a very valiant Knight, and a man of great possessions. As oftentimes it commeth to passe, that a man cannot alwayes feede on one kind of bread, but his appetite will be longing after change: so fared it with this Lady, named *Isabella*, she being not satisfied with the delights of her Husband; grew enamoured of a young Gentleman, called *Lionello*, compleate of person and commendable qualities, albeit not of the fairest fortunes, yet his affection every way sutable to hers. And full well you know (faire Ladies) that where the mindes irreciprocally accorded, no dilligence wanteth for the desires execution: so this amorous couple, made many solemne protestations, untill they should bee friended by opportunity.

It fortun'd in the time of their hopefull expectation a Knight, named Signior *Lambertuccio*, fell likewise in love with *Isabella*: but because he was somewhat unsightly of person, and utterly unpleasing in the eye, she grew regardlesse of his frequent solicitings, and would not accept either tokens, or letters. Which when hee saw, (being very rich and of great power) hee sought to compasse his intent by a contrary course, threatning her with scandall and disgrace to her reputation, and with his associates to bandie against her best friends. She knowing what manner of man he was, and how able to abuse any with infamous imputations, wisely returned him hopefull promises, though never meaning to performe any, but onely (Lady-like) to flatter and foole him therewith.

Some few miles distant from *Florence*, *Beltramo* had a Castle of pleasure, and there his Lady *Isabella* used to live all Summer, as all other doe the like, being so possessed. On a day, *Beltramo* being ridden from home, and she having sent for *Lionello*, to take the advantage of her Husbands absence; accordingly he went, not doubting but to winne what he had long expected. Signior *Lambertuccio* on the other side, meeting *Beltramo* riding from his Castle, and *Isabella* now fit to enjoy his company: gallops thither with all possible speede, because hee would bee no longer delayed. Scarcely was *Lionello* entred the Castle, and receiving directions by the waiting woman, to her Ladies Chamber: but *Lambertuccio* galloped in at the Gate, which the woman perceiving, ranne presently and acquainted her Lady with the comming of *Lambertuccio*.

Now was shee the onely sorrowfull woman of the world; for nothing was now to bee feared, but stormes and tempests, because *Lambertuccio*, spake no other, then Lightning and Thunder, and *Lionello*, (being no lesse affraide then shee) by her perswasion crept behind the bed, where he hid himselfe very contentedly. By this time *Lambertuccio* was dismounted from his Courser, which he fastened (by the bridle) to a ring in the wall, and then the waiting woman came to him, to guide him to her Lady and Mistresse: who stood ready at the staires head, graced him with a very acceptable welcome, yet marvelling much at his so sodaine comming. Lady (quoth he) I met your Husband upon

the way, which granting mine accesse to see you; I come to claime your long delayed promise, the time being now so favourable for it.

Before he had uttered halfe these words, *Beltramo*, having forgot an especiall evidence in his Study, which was the onely occasion of his journey, came gallopping backe againe into the Castell Court, and seeing such a goodly Gelding stand fastened there, could not readily imagine who was the owner thereof. The waiting woman, upon the sight of her Masters entring into the Court, came to her Lady, saying: My Master *Beltramo* is returned backe, newly alighted, and (questionlesse) comming up the staires. Now was our Lady *Isabella*, ten times worse affrighted then before, (having two severall amorous suters in her house, both hoping, neither speeding, yet her credite lying at the stake for either) by this unexpected returne of her Husband. Moreover, there was no possible meanes, for the concealing of Signior *Lambertuccio*, because his Gelding stood in the open Court, and therefore made a shrewde presumption against her, upon the least doubtfull question urged.

Neverthesse, as womens wits are alwayes best upon sudden constraints, looking forth of her window, and espying her Husband preparing to come up: she threw her selfe on her day Couch, speaking thus (earnestly) to *Lambertuccio*. Sir, if ever you loved mee, and would have me faithfully to beleieve it, by the instant safety both of your owne honour, and my life, doe but as I advise you. Forth draw your Sword, and, with a stearne countenance, threatning death and destruction: run downe the staires, and when you are beneath, say. I sweare by my best fortunes, although I misse of thee now heere, yet I will be sure to finde thee some where else. And if my Husband offer to stay you, or moove any question to you: make no other answeare, but what you formerly spake in fury. Beside, so soone as you are mounted on horsebacke, have no further conference with him, upon any occasion whatsoever; to prevent all suspition in him, of our future intendments.

*Lambertuccio* sware many terrible oathes, to observe her directions in every part, and having drawne forth his Sword, grasping it naked in his hand, and setting worse lookes one the businesse, then ever nature gave him, because he had spent so much labour in vaine; he failed not in a jot of the Ladies injunction. *Beltramo* having commanded his horse to safe custody, and meeting *Lambertuccio* descending downe the staires, so armed, swearing, and most extreemely storming, wondring extraordinarily as his threatning words, made offer to imbrace him, and understand the reason of his distemper. *Lambertuccio* repulsing him rudely, and setting foote in the stirrup, mounted on his Gelding, and spake nothing else but this. I sweare by the fairest of all my fortunes, although I misse of thee heere: yet I will be sure to find thee some where else, and so he gallopped mainely away.

When *Beltramo* was come up into his wives Chamber, hee found her cast downe upon her Couch, weeping, full of feare, and greatly discomforted; wherefore he said unto her, What is hee that Signior *Lambertuccio* is so extreemely offended withall, and threatneth in such implacable manner? The Lady arising from her Couch, and going neere to the Beds, because *Lionello* might the better heare her; returned her Husband this answeare. Husband (quoth she) never was I so dreadfully affrighted till now; for, a young Gentleman, of whence, or what he is, I know not, came running into our Castle for rescue, being pursued by Signior *Lambertuccio*; with a weapon ready drawne in his hand. Ascending up our stayres, by what fortune, I know not, he found my chamber doore standing open, finding me also working on my Sampler, and in wonderfull feare and trembling.

Good Madame (quoth hee) for Gods sake helpe to save my life, or else I shall be slaine heere in your Chamber. Hearing his pittious cry, and compassionating his desperate case; I arose from my worke, and in my demaunding of whence, and what he was, that durst presume so boldly into my bed-chamber: presently came up Signior *Lambertuccio* also, in the same uncivill sorte, as before I tolde you, swaggering and swearing, where is this traiterous villaine? Heereupon, I stept (somewhat stoutly) to my Chamber doore, and as hee offered to enter, with a womans courage I resisted him, which made him so much enraged against mee, that when hee saw mee to debarre his entrance; after many terrible and vile oathes and vowes, hee ranne downe the stayres againe, in such like manner as you chaunced to meete him.

Now trust mee deare wife (said *Beltramo*) you behaved your selfe very well and worthily: for, it would have beene a most notorious scandall to us, if a man should bee slaine in your bed-chamber: and Signior *Lambertuccio* carryed himselfe most dishonestly, to pursue any man so outrageously, having taken my Castle as his Sanctuary. But alas wife, what is become of the poore affrighted Gentleman? Introth Sir (quoth she) I know not, but (somewhere or other) heereabout hee is hidden. Where art thou honest friend? said plaine meaning *Beltramo*; Come forth and feare not, for thine enemy is gone.

*Lionello*, who had heard all the fore-passed discourse, which shee had delivered to her Husband *Beltramo*, came creeping forth amazedly (as one now very fearefully affrighted indeede) from under the further side of the bedde, and *Beltramo* saide to him, What a quarrell was this, between thee and furious *Lambertuccio*? Not any at all Sir, replied *Lionello*, to my knowledge, which verily perswadeth me; that either he is not well in his wits, or else he mistaketh me for some other; because, so soone as he saw me on the way, somewhat neere to this your Castle, he drew forth his Sword, and swearing an horrible oath, said. Traitor thou art a dead man. Upon these rough words, I stayed not to question the occasion of mine offending him: but fled from him so fast as possibly I could; but confesse my selfe (indeede) over-bold, by presuming into your Ladies bed chamber, which yet (equalled with her mercie) hath bin the onely meanes at this time, of saving my life.

She hath done like a good Lady, answered *Beltramo*, and I do verie much commend her for it. But, recollect thy dismayed spirits together, for I will see thee safely secured hence, afterward, looke to thy selfe so well as thou canst. Dinner being immediately made ready, and they having merrily feasted together: he bestowed a good Gelding on *Lionello*, and rode along with him to *Florence*, where he left him quietly in his owne lodging. The selfe-same Evening (according as *Isabella* had given enstruction) *Lionello* conferred with *Lambertuccio*: and such an agreement passed betweene them, that though some rough speeches were noised abroad, to set the better colour on the businesse; yet all matters were so cleanly carried, that *Beltramo* never knew this queint deceitfull policy of his Wife.

***Lodovico discovered to his Mistresse Madame Beatrix, how amorously he was affected to her. She cunningly sent Egano her Husband into his garden, in all respects disguised like herselfe, while (friendly) Lodovico conferred with her in the meane while. Afterward, Lodovico pretending a lascivious allurement of his Mistresse, thereby to wrong his honest Master, insted of her, beateth Egano soundly in the Garden***

## The Seventh Novell

**Whereby is declared, that such as keepe many honest  
seeming servants, may sometime finde a knave among  
them, and one that proves to be over-sawcy with his Master**

This so sodaine dexterity of wit in *Isabella*, related in verie modest manner by Madame *Pampinea*, was not onely admired by all the company; but likewise passed with as generall approbation. But yet Madam *Philomena* (whom the King had commanded next to succede) peremptorily sayde. Worthy Ladies, if I am not deceived; I intend to tell you another Tale presently; as much to be commended as the last.

You are to understand then, that it is no long while since, when there dwelt in *Paris* a *Florentine* Gentleman, who falling into decay of his estate, by over-bountifull expences; undertooke the degree of a Merchant, and thrived so well by his trading, that he grew to great wealth, having one onely sonne by his wife, named *Lodovico*. This Sonne, partaking somewhat in his Fathers former height of minde, and no way inclineable to deale in Merchandize, had no meaning to be a Shop-man, and therefore accompanied the Gentlemen of *France*, in sundry services for the King; among whom, by his singular good carriage and qualities, he happened to be not meanly esteemed. While thus he continued in the Court, it chanced, that certaine Knights, returning from *Jerusalem*

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