**N. TOWN PLAYS 2025, AUDITION PIECE 6: DEN, RAISE-SLANDER, BACKBITER**

DEN Avoid, sirs, and let my lord the bishop come

and sit in the court, the laws for to do,

And I shall go in this place them for to summon

that be in my book – the court ye must come to!

I warn you all here about

that I summon you, all the rout!

Look ye fail for no doubt

at the court to appear.

Kit Cackler and Colette Crane,

Gill Fetis and fair Jane,

Paul Potter and Pernel Prane,

and Philip the good fletcher.

Cok Crane and Davy Drydust,

Lucy Liar and Lettice Littletrust,

Miles the Miller and Coll Crackcrust,

both Bet the Baker and Robin Reed.

And look ye ring well in your purse,

for else your cause may speed the worse,

though that ye sling God’s curse

even at my head!

Fast come away,

both Bart the brewer and Sibyl Sling,

Meg Merryweather and Sabine Spring,

Tiffany Twinkler, fail for nothing;

the court shall be this day!

RAISE-SLANDER Ah! ah! sire, God save you all!

Here is a fair people, in good faith.

Good sirs, tell me what men me call;

I trow ye cannot, by this day.

Yet I walk wide and many way,

but yet where I come I do no good.

To raise slander is all my assay.

Backbiter is my brother of blood.

Did he ought come hither in all this day?

Now would God that he were here.

And by my troth I dare well say

that if we twain together appear,

more slander we two shall rear

within an hour throughout this town

than ever there was this thousand year,

and else I shrew you both up and down!

Now by my troth I have a sight

even of my brother. Lo! where he is

Welcome, dear brother, my troth I plight!

Your gentle mouth let me now kiss,

BACKBITER Gramercy my brother, so have I bliss!

I am full glad we be met this day.

RAISE-SLANDER Right so am I, brother, iwis,

much gladder than I can say.

BACKBITER Hark, Raise-slander, canst thou ought tell

of any new thing that wrought was late?

RAISE-SLANDER Within a short while a thing befell,

I trow thou wilt laugh right well thereat,

for, by troth, right mickle hate,

if it be wist, thereof shall grow.

BACKBITER If I may raise therewith debate,

I shall not spare the seed to sow.

RAISE-SLANDER Sir, in the temple a maid there was

called Maid Mary, the truth to tell.

She seemed so holy within that place,

men said she was fed by holy angels.

She made a vow with man never to deal,

but to live a chaste and clean virgin.

However it be, her womb doth swell,

and is as great as thine or mine.

BACKBITER Yes, that old shrew Joseph, my troth I plight,

was so enamoured upon that maid

that of her beauty when he had sight,

he ceased not till he had her assayed!

RAISE-SLANDER Ah, nay, nay, well worse she hath him payed; some fresh young gallant she loveth well more

that his legs to her hath laid!

And that doth grieve the old man sore.

BACKBITER That old cuckold was evil beguiled

to that fresh wench when he was wed.

Now must he father another man’s child,

and with his toil he shall be fed.

RAISE-SLANDER A young man may do more cheer in bed

to a young wench than may an old.

That is the cause such life is led

that many a man is a cuckold.