

4260 And by the millere in he creep^o anon,
 And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak.
 He seyde, "Thou, John, thou swynes-heed,^o awak
 For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.^o
 For by that lord that called is Seint Jame,^o

4265 As^o I have thryes^o in this shorte night
 Swyved the milleres doghter bolt upright,¹
 Whyl thow hast as a coward been agast.^o
 "Ye, false harlot,"^o quod the millere, "hast?
 A! false traitour! false clerk!" quod he,

4270 "Thou shalt be deed, by Goddes dignitee!
 Who dorste^o be so bold to disparage^o
 My doghter, that is come of swich linage?"^o
 And by the throte-bolle^o he caughte Alayn;
 And he hente hym despitously agayn,²

4275 And on the nose he smoot him with his fest^o—
 Doun ran the bloody streem upon his brest.
 And in^o the floor, with nose and mouth tobroke,^o
 They walwe^o as doon two pigges in a poke.
 And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,^o

4280 Til that the miller sporned at a stoon,³
 And doun he fil bakward upon his wyf,
 That wiste^o no thing of this nyce^o stryf,
 For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight^o
 With John the clerk, that waked hadde al night;

4285 And with the fal, out of hir sleep she breyde.^o
 "Help, holy croys of Bromeholm," she seyde,⁴
 "In manus tuas!^o Lord, to thee I calle!
 Awak, Symond! the feend^o is on me falle,^o
 Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but^o deed:

4290 There lyth oon upon my wombe^o and on myn heed.
 Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte."

This John sterte^o up as faste as ever he mighte,
 And graspeth by^o the walles to and fro,
 To finde a staf; and she sterte^o up also,
 And knew the estres^o bet^o than dide this John,
 And by the wal a staf she fond anon,
 And saugh^o a litel shimmering of a light—

4300 For at an hole in shoon the mone bright—
 And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,
 But sikerly^o she niste^o who was who,
 But as^o she saugh a whyt^o thing in hir yë

And whan she gan^o this whyte thing espye,
 She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer,⁵

1. Made love to the miller's daughter (as she lay) flat on her back.
 2. And he (Alan) grabbed him fiercely in return.
 3. Until the miller tripped on a stone.
 4. "Help, holy cross of Bromholm," she said (a famous relic, supposed to be a piece of the true cross of Christ, brought to Bromholm in Norfolk in 1223).
 5. She thought the scholar had worn a nightcap.

crept

swine's-head

great joke

James

So / thrice

afraid

rascal

would dare / dishonor

such (high) birth

Adam's apple

fist

on / smashed

wallow

immediately

Who knew / foolish

little bit

started

Into thy hands

fiend / fallen

am just about

belly

leaped

gropes along

leaped

interior / better

saw

truly / knew not

Except that / white

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23 Adriano ridendo disse: «Lasciagli far, che Idio gli ma-
 24 La donna, parendole avere udito il marito garrire e vider-
 do Adriano, incontanente conobbe là dove stava era e con
 cui: per che, come savia, senza alcuna parola dire subita-
 mente si levò, e presa la culla del suo figliuolo, come che
 punto lume nella camera non si vedesse, per avviso, la
 portò allato al letto dove dormiva la figliuola e con lei si
 coricò; e quasi desta fosse per lo romor del marito, il
 chiamò e domandollo che parole egli avesse con Pinuccio,
 il marito rispose: «Non odi tu ciò ch'è dice che ha fatto
 stanotte alla Niccolosa?»

26 La donna disse: «Egli mente ben per la gola¹, ché con
 la Niccolosa non è egli giaciuto: ché io mi ci coricai io in
 quel punto che io non ho mai poscia potuto dormire²; e tu
 se' una bestia che gli credi. Voi bevete tanto la sera, che
 poscia sognate la notte e andate in qua e in là senza sen-
 tirvi³ e parvi far meraviglie: egli è gran peccato che voi
 non vi fiaccate il collo! Ma che fa egli costri Pinuccio? per
 ché non si sta egli nel letto suo?»

27 D'altra parte Adriano, veggendo che la donna saviamen-
 te la sua vergogna e quella della figliuola ricopriva⁴, dis-
 se: «Pinuccio, io te l'ho detto cento volte che tu non vada
 attorno, ché questo tuo vizio del levarti in sogno e di dire
 le favole che tu sogni per vere ti daranno una volta la
 mala ventura: torna qua, che Dio ti dea la mala notte!»
 28 L'oste, udendo quello che la donna diceva e quello che
 diceva Adriano, cominciò a creder troppo bene che Pinuc-
 cio sognasse: per che, preso per la spalla, lo 'ncominciò

¹ li maledica.

² secondo quanto poteva indovinare, immaginare; secondo la sua opinio-
 ne, congettura: *Comedia*, xxvi 8 sg.: «un suo giardino ... secondo l'avviso
 dell'occhio, corrente per tutte le parti presto, era quadro, di bella grui-
 dezza».

³ Modo corrente di smentire energicamente: II 1,27 n.

⁴ mi coricai qui, nel suo letto (ci), in un momento dopo il quale io non
 ho mai potuto dormire. Nota l'affermazione che si presta all'equivoco, e l'in-
 sistenza su io quasi a dare maggiore forza all'affermazione stessa.

⁵ senza risentirvi, senza svegliarvi: IV 10,1 n.

⁶ Saviezza simile a ... cf. IX 2,18 n.

a dimenare¹ e a chiamar, dicendo: «Pinuccio, destati, tor-
 nati al letto tuo».
 Pinuccio, avendo raccolto² ciò che detto s'era, cominciò
 a guisa d'uom che sognasse a entrare in altri farnetichi³:
 a fine, l'oste faceva le maggiori risa del mondo. Alla fine,
 di che l'oste dimenare, fece sembante di destarsi e chia-
 pur sentendosi dimenare, disse: «È egli ancora⁴ dî, che tu mi chia-
 mando Adrian disse: «Sì, vienne qua».

30 Adrian disse: «Sì, vienne qua».
 Costui, ingnendosi⁵ e mostrandosi ben sonnaccioso,
 al fine si levò d'allato all'oste e tornossi al letto con Adria-
 no; e venuto il giorno e levatosi, l'oste incominciò a ride-
 re e a farsi beffe di lui e de' suoi sogni. E così d'uno in
 altro motto, acconci i due giovani i lor ronzini⁶ e messe le
 lor valige e bevuto con l'oste, rimontati a cavallo⁷ se ne
 vennero a Firenze, non meno contenti del modo in che la
 cosa avvenuta era, che dello effetto stesso della cosa. E poi
 appresso, trovati altri modi, Pinuccio con la Niccolosa si
 ritrovò, la quale alla madre affermava lui fermamente aver
 sognato; per la qual cosa la donna, ricordandosi dell'a-
 bracciar d'Adriano, sola seco diceva d'aver vegggiato. —

¹ scuotere, scollare: II 5,41 n.

² compreso: I 5,16 n.

³ vaneggiamenti: cf. VIII 3,43 n.

⁴ già: IV 8,17 n.

⁵ dissimulando, fingendo di ignorare tutto quanto era accaduto: II 10,
 18 n.

⁶ avendo i due giovani approntati, sellati i loro ronzini: cf. IX 4,13 n.

per il participio accorciato o assestivo verbale cf. VI 4,6 n.

⁷ «Alle consequenze» (M.).

⁸ d'essere stata sveglia.

'What villainy is this, Pinuccio? I can't think why you should have played me so scurvy a trick, but by all that's holy, I shall pay you back for it.'

Now, Pinuccio was not the wisest of young men, and on perceiving his error, instead of doing all he could to remedy matters, he said:

'Pay me back? How? What could you do to me?'

Whereupon the host's wife, thinking she was with her husband, said to Adriano:

'Heavens! Just listen to the way those guests of ours are arguing with one another!'

Adriano laughed, and said:

'Let them get on with it, and to hell with them. They had far too much to drink last night.'

The woman had already thought she could detect the angry tones of her husband, and on hearing Adriano's voice, she realized at once whose bed she was sharing. So being a person of some intelligence, she promptly got up without a word, seized her baby's cradle, and having picked her way across the room, which was in total darkness, she set the cradle down beside the bed in which her daughter was sleeping and scrambled in beside her. Then, pretending to have been aroused by the noise her husband was making, she called out to him and demanded to know what he was quarrelling with Pinuccio about. Whereupon her husband replied:

'Don't you hear what he says he has done to Niccolosa this night?'

'He's telling a pack of lies,' said the woman. 'He hasn't been anywhere near Niccolosa, for I've been lying beside her myself the whole time and I haven't managed to sleep a wink. You're a fool to take any notice of him. You men drink so much in the evening that you spend the night dreaming and wandering all over the place in your sleep, and imagine you've performed all sorts of miracles: it's a thousand pities you don't trip over and break your necks! What's Pinuccio doing there anyway? Why isn't he in his own bed?'

At which point, seeing how adroitly the woman was concealing both her own and her daughter's dishonour, Adriano came to her support by saying:

'How many times do I have to tell you, Pinuccio, not to wander about in the middle of the night? You'll land yourself in serious trouble one of these days, with this habit of walking in your sleep, and claiming to have actually done the fantastic things you dream about. Come back to bed, curse you!'

When he heard Adriano confirm what his wife had been saying, the host began to think that Pinuccio really had been dreaming after all; and seizing him by the shoulder, he shook him and yelled at him, saying:

'Wake up, Pinuccio! Go back to your own bed!'

Having taken all of this in, Pinuccio now began to thresh about as though he were dreaming again, causing his host to split his sides with laughter. But in the end, after a thorough shaking, he pretended to wake up; and calling to Adriano, he said:

'Why have you woken me up? Is it morning already?'

L 'Yes,' said Adriano. 'Come back here.'

Pinuccio kept up the pretence, showing every sign of being extremely drowsy, but in the end he left his host's side and staggered back to bed with Adriano. When they got up next morning, their host began to laugh and make fun of Pinuccio and his dreams. And so, amid a constant stream of merry banter, the two young men saddled and loaded their horses, and after drinking the health of their host, they remounted and rode back to Florence, feeling no less delighted with the manner than with the outcome of the night's activities.

From then on, Pinuccio discovered other ways of consorting with Niccolosa, who meanwhile assured her mother that he had certainly been dreaming. And thus the woman, who retained a vivid memory of Adriano's embraces, was left with the firm conviction that she alone had been awake on the night in question.