

The moft excellent comedie and tragical romance of

TWO GENTLEMEN OF LEBOWSKI.

As writ by MR. ADAM BERTOCCI,
*Taking infpiration from MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
and the BROTHERS COEN.*



Prefented in FIVE ACTS.

NEW YORK, 2010.

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

CHORUS

GEOFFREY "THE KNAVE" LEBOWSKI

BLANCHE and WOO, two thugs

SIR WALTER of Poland

SIR DONALD of Greece

BRANDT, serving-man of the Big Lebowski

SIR GEOFFREY OF LEBOWSKI, the Big Lebowski

BONNIE LEBOWSKI, his wife

OLIVER, her consort

JACK SMOKE, a cavalier

MAUDE LEBOWSKI, daughter of the Big Lebowski

JOSHUA QUINCE, a pederast

LIAM O'BRIEN, his partner

Two NIHILISTS

PLAYER QUEEN

MISTRESS QUICKLY, hostess of a tavern

KNOX HARRINGTON, a tapestry artist

DOCTOR BUTTS, a physician

PLAYERS for a dance

LAURENCE SELLERS

CLOWN

JAQUES TREEHORN

BROTHER SEAMUS, an Irish monk

A GRAVEDIGGER

Prologue

[Enter CHORUS]

CHORUS

In wayfarer's worlds out west was once a man,
A man I come not to bury, but to praise.
His name was Geoffrey Lebowski called, yet
Not called, excepting by his kin.
That which we call a knave by any other name
Might bowl just as sweet. Lebowski, then,
Did call himself 'the Knave', a name that I,
Your humble chorus, would not self-apply
In homelands mine; but, then, this Knave was one
From whom sense was a burden to extract,
And of the arid vale in which he dwelt,
Also dislike in sensibility;
Mayhap the very search for sense reveals
The reason that it striketh me as most
Int'resting, yea, inspiring me to odes.
(In couplets first, and then a sonnet brave
As prologue to the tale of this the Knave.
Behold him, then, a-tumbling softly down
To pledge his love immortal to the ground.)
We stray now from fair Albion and from France
And see no Queen of bawdy songs and cheers
And in an angel's city take our chance
For stupefying tales to take our ears.
To war on Arab kings acoast we go,
Needing a man of times, though hero not;
Hear me call him not hero; what's in a hero?
Sometimes there's a man, your prologue's thought.
The Knave, though scarcely man of honour'd grace,
Nor hero Olympian, nor yet employ'd,
Was nonetheless for all his time and place,
The man befits the circle he's enjoy'd.
A man of lazy ways, of epic sloth;
But, losing train of thought, I've spake enough!

[He exits.]

1.1

[THE KNAVE's house. Enter THE KNAVE, carrying parcels, and two THUGS. They fight]

BLANCHE

Whither the money, Lebowski? Faith, we are servants of Bonnie; promised by the lady good that thou in turn were good for't.

WOO

Bound in honour, we must have our bond; cursed be our tribe if we forgive thee.

BLANCHE

Let us soak him in the commode, so as to turn his head.

WOO

Aye, and see what vapourises; then he will see what is foul.

[They insert his head into the commode]

BLANCHE

What dreadful noise of waters in thine ears! Thou hast cooled thine head; think now upon drier matters.

WOO

Speak now on ducats else again we'll thee duckest; whither the money, Lebowski?

THE KNAVE

Faith, it awaits down there someplace; prithee let me glimpse again.

WOO

What, thou rash egg! Thus will we drown thine exclamations.

[They again insert his head into the commode]

BLANCHE

Trifle not with the fury of two desperate men. Long has thy wife sealed a bond with Jaques Treehorn; as blood is to blood, surely thou owest to Jaques Treehorn in recompense.

WOO

Rise, and speak wisely, man—but hark;
I see thy rug, as woven i'the Orient,
A treasure from abroad. I like it not.
I'll stain it thus; ever thus to deadbeats.

[He stains the rug]

THE KNAVE

Sir, prithee nay!

BLANCHE

Now thou seest what happens, Lebowski, when the agreements of honourable business stand compromised. If thou wouldst treat money as water, flowing as the gentle rain from heaven, why, then thou knowest water begets water; it will be a watery grave your rug, drowned in the weeping brook. Pray remember, Lebowski.

THE KNAVE

Thou err'st; no man calls me Lebowski. Yet thou art man; neither spirit damned nor wandering shadow, thou art solid flesh, man of woman born. Hear rightly, man!—for thou hast got the wrong man. I am the Knave, man; Knave in nature as in name.

BLANCHE

Thy name is Lebowski. Thy wife is Bonnie.

THE KNAVE

Zounds, man. Look at these unworthiest hands; no gaudy gold profanes my little hand. I have no honour to contain the ring. I am a bachelor in a wilderness. Behold this place; are these the towers where one may glimpse Geoffrey, the married man? Is this a court where mistresses of common sense are hid? Not for me to hang my bugle in an invisible baldric, sir; I am loath to take a wife, or she to take me until men be made of some other mettle than earth. Hark, the seat of my commode be arisen!

WOO

Search his satchel! His words are a fantastical banquet to work confusion upon his enemies. There sits eight pounds of proof within; surely he hides his treasure on his person.

BLANCHE

Villainy! Why this confounded orb, such as men use to play at ninepins; what devilry, these holes in holy trinity?

THE KNAVE

Obviously thou art not a golfer.

BLANCHE

Then thou art a man to carry ball in his sack? Thou varlet, a plague upon your house; I shall return thy orb to earth.

[He drops the ball]

Thy floor cracks in haste, sir; thou art not a man of ample foundation. Woo?

WOO

Speak, friend; I am but of droplets.

BLANCHE

Was this not a man of moneys and repute? Did not Treehorn speak of chalcedony halls,
and three chests of gold, as was hard food for Midas? What think'st thou?

WOO

O undistinguish'd man! We are deceived; this man has put not money in his purse.

THE KNAVE

Weep not for grief of my own sustaining, sir. At least I am house-broken, none to break
the houses of others.

WOO

If dog you are, in time you'll have your day;
Waste time, but Jaques Treehorn will you pay.

[Exeunt severally]

1.2

[The bowling green. Enter THE KNAVE, WALTER and DONALD, to play at ninepins]

WALTER

In sooth, then, faithful friend, this was a rug of value? Thou wouldst call it not a rug among ordinary rugs, but a rug of purpose? A star in a firmament, in step with the fashion alike to the Whitsun morris-dance? A worthy rug, a rug of consequence, sir?

THE KNAVE

It was of consequence, I should think; verily, it tied the room together, gather'd its qualities as the sweet lovers' spring grass doth the morning dew or the rough scythe the first of autumn harvests. It sat between the four sides of the room, making substance of a square, respecting each wall in equal harmony, in geometer's cap; a great reckoning in a little room. Verily, it transform'd the room from the space between four walls presented, to the harbour of a man's monarchy.

WALTER

Indeed, a rug of value; an estimable rug, an honour'd rug; O unhappy rug, that should live to cover such days!

DONALD

Of what dost thou speak, that tied the room together, Knave? Take pains, for I would well hear of that which tied the room together.

WALTER

Didst thou attend the Knave's tragic history, Sir Donald?

DONALD

Nay, good Sir Walter, I was a-bowling.

WALTER

Thou attend'st not; and so thou hast no frame of reference. Thou art as a child, wandering and strutting amidst the groundlings as a play is in session, heeding not the poor players, their exits and their entrances, and, wanting to know the subject of the story, asking which is the lover and which the tyrant.

THE KNAVE

Come to the point, Sir Walter.

WALTER

My point, then, Knave; there be no reason, if sweet reason doth permit, in enlightenment's bower—and reason says thou art the worthier man—

DONALD

Yes, Sir Walter, pray, merrily state the fulcrum of thy argument.

THE KNAVE

My colleague, although unfram'd and unreferenc'd, speaks plain and true. That these toughs are those at fault, we are agreed; that I stand wounded, unrevenged, we likewise are agreed; yet you circle the meanings unconstantly, like blunted burrs, unstuck where they are thrown.

WALTER

I speak of aggression uncheck'd, as crowned heads of state once spoke of Arabia—

DONALD

Arabia! Then we have put a girdle round the earth. Of what does Sir Walter speak?

WALTER

Cast it from thy sievelike books of memory, Sir Donald; thou art out of thy element.

DONALD

Mine element?

WALTER

Wherefore was I curs'd only to minister
To congregations held in deafen'd pits?
I must hobble my speech; of elements, sir,
A doctor of physic did once explain
That all the earth is province elemental,
Sure and steady as the stone-wall foursome
A-holding up the Knave's roof, tied together
By power that we spake on, our traffic
Unmarred by thy rough and idle chatter.
And the complexion of the element
In favour's like the rug that ties the room.
O, a muse of fire the first element,
Airy breath the second; though this wind
May well be yours for all you flap your tongue,
O ill-dispersing wind of misery!
Thou hast no wings, and, liable to plunge,
You fit not fowl; yet foul your interruption,
Fished for facts, yet fish you cannot be;
So water, elemental third, you're not,
How much salt water thrown away in waste.
Of earth, no woman left on earth will have thee,
No man of middle earth will tend thy land,
So walk the plains like to a lonely dragon;
I care not.

THE KNAVE

Good sir, speak plain. I know not these villains, surely would I ne'er traffic with this man of Orient birth who so abused my rug. I have not the facility to present him with the rate of usance and demand money in kind for that which he has spent upon't; so I entreat you, speak plain.

WALTER

I speak the truth; my words are straight and true.
The man of Orient birth is not the issue.

DONALD

The Orient, Sir Walter?

WALTER

I speak, old friend, of truths in desert land.
The hour is nigh to draw line in the sand.

THE KNAVE

Deserts? I had made it plain that he was Orient-man.

WALTER

Though words in haste be only human nature,
'Orient-man' is not preferr'd nomenclature.

THE KNAVE

Give me no further counsel; my griefs cry softer than advertisement.

WALTER

I speak of this other man, Sir Geoffrey of Lebowski. Is not thy name, sir, Geoffrey of Lebowski? To be or not Lebowski, that is the question; I see we still did meet each other's man. Shall we not make amends? A gentleman of high sentence ought to be of unsequestered location, possessed of resources fit to restore a thousand rugs from vile offence. He's not well married that lets his wife a borrower be, such that men gravely offended bespoil another man's rug. Be I wrong?

THE KNAVE

No, but verily—

WALTER

Be I wrong?

THE KNAVE

Yea, but verily—

WALTER

That rug, in faith, tied the room together, did it not?

THE KNAVE

By my heart, a goodly rug.

DONALD

And in most miserable tide did this rogue besmirch it.

WALTER

Prithee, Donald! Thou too eagerly hold'st the mirror up to nature.

THE KNAVE

My mind races; I might endeavour to seek this gentleman Lebowski.

DONALD

His name is Lebowski? Verily, ope thine ear; that is thy name, Knave!

THE KNAVE

On good authority; and his nobleness must oblige. His wife taketh up quarrel and borrows, and they bespoil my rug.

WALTER

Marry, sir, my heartstrings do you tug;
They urinate upon thy damnèd rug.

[Exeunt severally]

1.3

[THE BIG LEBOWSKI's castle. Enter THE KNAVE and BRANDT]

BRANDT

My lord is a man of accomplishment of many years, good traveling Knave; I pray you examine these honours and colours, proof of life well-lived. See here, the key to an old city, once defended against man and beast; and there, a commendation for men of business, bestowed not by the twelvemonth but by the mettle of the man.

THE KNAVE

Is that the Queen I see before me, render'd in oil-paints?

BRANDT

Indeed that is Sir Geoffrey of Lebowski, attending the Queen in humble fealty, during her blessed reign; as Queen, I remind you, not as Princess.

THE KNAVE

Faith, an excellent tale.

BRANDT

I have not yet told all; indeed Sir Lebowski did counsel the King himself, it is said, though, alas!, uncaptured in timely artistry.

THE KNAVE

A man of many faculties.

BRANDT

As many as capabilities, yet always one to boost his reach. Here you may glimpse a record of his children.

THE KNAVE

A care-crazed father of a many children; it is a wise father that knows his own child. An excellent list for a man of no doubt excellent issue.

BRANDT

An amiable jest! Nay, I'd call'd his children his, but they come not of his loins, thou understand'st.

THE KNAVE

A cuckold, he?

BRANDT

A most subtle jest! Nay, but children of the inner city, of good promise, resolved to study but without the means. My lord resolves that they will all attend the university.

THE KNAVE

Verily!—Mine own years in the university hath fled my memory, though I recall some happy hours in the homes of various headmasters, the smoking of the pipe, breaking into the armory, and playing at ninepins.

[Enter LEBOWSKI, on a cart. Exit BRANDT]

LEBOWSKI

Marry, sir!—You be Lebowski, I be Lebowski, 'tis a wondrous strange comedy of errors. But I am a man of business, as I imagine you are; tell me what you'd have me do for you.

THE KNAVE

Sir, I possess a rug, that, i' faith, tied the room together—

LEBOWSKI

You sent Brandt a messenger on horseback; he inform'd me. Where is my fitting?

THE KNAVE

They sought thee, these two gentlemen—

LEBOWSKI

I shall repeat; you sent Brandt a messenger on horseback; he inform'd me. Where is my fitting?

THE KNAVE

Then thou art aware 'twas thy rug, sir, that was the target of this crime.

LEBOWSKI

Was it I, sir, who urinated on your rug?

THE KNAVE

Not in person, sir—but if a man is his name, and his reputation his indelible inkstain, surely thy sea of care is tormented; what tongue shall smooth thy name?

LEBOWSKI

Make me to understand, sir, for you are slow of speech as I of step, and I am unsatisfied in motive. When any rug is micturated upon within these city walls, must I stand accountable? Or are you as one of a thousand rogues, fishing for sixpence betwixt another man's pursestrings? Are you a labourer, Master Lebowski, earning that you eat, getting that you wear?

THE KNAVE

Let me not to the marriage of false impressions deny impediments. I am not Master Lebowski; thou art Master Lebowski. I am the Knave, called the Knave. Or His Knaveness, or mayhap Knaver, or mayhap El Knaverino, in the manner of the Spaniard, if brevity be not in thy soul nor wit. A Knave by any other name would abide just as well.

LEBOWSKI

Have you employment, sir? Surely you hope not to pledge fealty nor till the earth in such roughly fashioned armour, invested in thy motley, clad as a jack-a-dandy on a Sunday?

THE KNAVE

I know not; what week-day, friends, is this?

LEBOWSKI

I tire, and cannot tarry; I am more busy than the labouring spider, and dwell on the iron tread as a man of constant pursuits. Thus, I pray you, you this way and I that way.

THE KNAVE

I must protest; the Knave minds. This will not stand, this uncheck'd aggression; for your strength of mighty kings and masters of the earth did not keep your wife from owing, a borrower and a lender being.

LEBOWSKI

My wife is not the issue here. I toil in hopes that she will shed her frivolities, rash and unadvised, and live within her allowance, which is in very ample virtue. Her mortal failures are her burden, as surely as your rug is your burden, and, verily, the burdens of every man be his own, and 'tis in themselves that they be thus or thus. I'll blame none for the loss of my legs. Some man of Orient birth robbed them from me as spoils of war; faith, who stole my legs stole trash, and I sallied forth and achieved in any aspect. Some are born achievers, some achieve greatly, and some have achievement thrust upon 'em. Beseech me not!

THE KNAVE

Ah, a pox upon't!

LEBOWSKI

Indeed! "A pox upon't!" 'Tis your answer to everything. Your merry revels have ended, sir. Condolences. The rogues lost; the rogues have always lost, will always lose, and so it will be tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

[Exit LEBOWSKI; enter BRANDT]

BRANDT

Good Master Lebowski. Did you enjoy meeting my honourable lord?

THE KNAVE

Truly, sir, a gentle marvelous;
He bade me take any rug in the house.

[Exeunt]

1.4

[Outside LEBOWSKI's castle. Enter THE KNAVE (with a Persian rug) and BRANDT]

BRANDT

I pray you, Knave, remember us in future visitations.

THE KNAVE

Faith, surely when next I travel in this neighbourhood, I will call upon his lordship's good honour, and beseech his refreshment.

[Enter BONNIE LEBOWSKI and OLIVER]

BONNIE

[sings]

“With toe-nails of verdant and forester's green
With a hey-nonny-no and a hey-nonny-nonny
Blow thrice on my toe-nails and I'll be thy queen
And ever preserve me as thine, blithe and Bonnie.”

[to THE KNAVE]

I pray you, sir, blow.

THE KNAVE

Marry! But here's a lady of good interest, whose toe-nails are the very green of the common hump, where grass doth grow and where country lovers do foot. Whither shall I blow, maid? For I am but a traveling tumbleweed, and may well be carried by any wind, e'en south.

BONNIE

I mean only the wind in thine own maw in this case; blow, then, serve your turn and cool my hot temper.

THE KNAVE

Sayst thou that I must blow upon thy foot, painted lady?

BONNIE

I ask this deed of you thrice now; and that which a damsel craves constantly is the service of a tongue most moved in capability. Look to my foot; I cannot reach that far. Blow, wind!

THE KNAVE

I fear thy charms. Will not thy consort mind
If I bestow his lady fair my wind?

BONNIE

Nay, there's naught for which Oliver carest;

He mindeth not, for he's a nihilist.

BRANDT

Our court's noble guest must not tarry, Lady Lebowski.

THE KNAVE

Lady Lebowski? Then thou art Bonnie? A merry wife indeed!

BONNIE

And a lady of good housekeeping and agriculture besides, minded to economy and all practicalities. Were thou to bring a gentle cock to mine bed-chamber, I might help him to success for ten shillings.

THE KNAVE

Such a lady of talents I have scarcely seen.

BRANDT

Yes, a most forthright jest! Free of spirit and good generosity, she is the nimble nymph of Neptune, and we mark her with good humour.

BONNIE

Free of spirit but ne'er free for flesh. Were I to regale thee with parts of my humour, I would not bid Brandt hear the play ere he paid a shilling himself.

BRANDT

Hark, a marvelous jest; but, I pray you, we dare not tarry. Come, Knave.

THE KNAVE

Yea, I shall come, and then return with money,
Or lose the labour'd love of fair Bonnie.

[Exeunt]

1.5

[The bowling green. Enter THE KNAVE, WALTER (with a dog), and JACK SMOKE, to play at ninepins]

WALTER

Thy tale is the stuff of dreams, and yet a waking dream of will. I had those words under a spreading tree in Jerusalem.

THE KNAVE

An I were dreaming afore, I care not, but do I dream anew? What manner of beast bringest thou to our nightly sport?

WALTER

Marry, 'tis the remnant of a previous life's nightly sport. That I was once a married man, thou knowest well; that the Lady Cynthia was a great lover of dogs, thou know'st in lesser degree; and the cur abandon'd has a tendency to dine upon chair-leg and oaken table, most retrograde to my lady's desire.

THE KNAVE

Thou speakest in riddles.

WALTER

It hath been my charge to attend this cur ere my Lady Cynthia return ashore from a voyage to the islands, commanded by Sir Martin of Ackerman.

THE KNAVE

Thou bringest a cur to ninepins?

WALTER

I bring naught to ninepins. The dog is not attired by my hand to play at sport, nor do I fetch it ale, nor shall he throw thy bowl-turn in thy stead.

THE KNAVE

Why, this is lunatics! This is mad as a mad dog! Were I a cuckold of such horn, and a wench bade me mind her animal passions on maiden voyages, whilst men of lesser virtue did swim in foreign waters and seek the isle within the brook, marry, I would cry out "Go hang!", and leave the cur to fall where he may. Canst she not board the beast with some gentle farmer or country shepherdess?

WALTER

I pray thee, speak not of marriage; for here a man calleth vinegar the wine he hath not himself imbibed.

The cur is one of consequence, admired
In circles of husbandry, with well-noted
Documentation of his qualities;

And if 'twere spook'd, it might lose hide and hair.
The cur hath parchments—

THE KNAVE

Hark, now bowls Jack Smoke.

WALTER

Thou cross'st the line!

JACK SMOKE

Your pardon, noble sir?

WALTER

Thou cross'st the line, Jack Smoke, O cavalier,
As clearly demarcated in our rules,
In tumbling past the throw. 'Tis play most foul.

JACK SMOKE

But see the pins struck down in fair play's course!
Knave, mark thou mine eight pins; mark it eight.

WALTER

Not eight but l'ouef; you'll mark it nought, O Knave,
And so we carry on to the next frame.

JACK SMOKE

Peace, Sir Walter!

WALTER

Smokey, this be not the foul jungles of the darkest East Orient. This be ninepins. We are bound by laws.

THE KNAVE

Nay, Walter; the quality of mercy is hardly strain'd. But a fraction of his toe tripp'd over the line, not God's line but man's. Of late I have read much of toe-nails, meaningful, I grant thee, but of doubtable value. Suit the punishment to the action, and shame not Smoke in sport.

WALTER

O unrightful judge!
This forfeiture is set in iron law
As drawn by great authority of league.
One roll might well determine that our side
Advance to glory; or be instead retired
As moss upon a tree-stump, while the Smoke
Drifts out to glorious summer. Canst thou hear

The call of robin redbreasts? If robin shall
Restore amends, we must serve justice
Here. Be I wrong?

JACK SMOKE
Yea, but—

WALTER
Be I wrong?

JACK SMOKE
Thy words are hard; I must equivocate.
Put up thy pen, that I may mark it eight.

WALTER
Nay! I do protest, and draw my sword;
It shall teach thee to disobey my word.
Mark none but none into that bowler's frame,
Else thou shalt enter into a world of pain.
A world of pain, think upon't; unhappy world!
A lake of fire, rich with damnèd souls,
Gulfs of anguish 'twixt vales of agonies.
Mark me; we stand at twisted, jealous gates
Of cast-iron, above which, in vulgar tongue, reads
"Here is a world of pain, thou enterest thus."
My steel before thee, 'tis the last of keys
That might could lock these doors, and keep thee
From this world of pain, or with one flick
Ope its mashing maw, and summon winds
To cast thee down within; an excellent key!
Farewell to earthly delights, farewell to friends,
To fellowships and follies and amends.
The choice to spare thy passage through these trials
Is thine alone; take heed, I entreat thee,
And turn thy back upon this world of pain!

THE KNAVE
Walter, put up thy sword; tarry a moment.

WALTER
Hath this whole world been mired in madness?
Remain ye men of faculty complete,
Of full arithmetic and prudence fair,
Attending to our noble bond and contract?
Or does here stand the last remaining man
To give a fig for rules and order yet,

No noble savage, but a stave unbroken
Who loves the law and bids it no misdeed.
I'll not be bent to lawlessness. Mark it nought, if we be men of honour.

THE KNAVE

Walter, too long we have tarried on public fields; the constable is notified. I pray you,
sheath thy piece.

WALTER

Mark it nought, else I'll none.

JACK SMOKE

Good Sir Walter, speak with reason!

WALTER

Dost thou think I tarry idly? Mark it nought!

JACK SMOKE

Yea, I shall yield, and leave it to your pleasure.
Mark as thou wilt, in full and legal measure.

[Exit JACK SMOKE. WALTER sits]

THE KNAVE

In sooth, Walter, thou hast wounded me horribly.
Jack Smoke is cut of cloth alike my humour;
Peaceable men we, for peaceable times,
And Jack Smoke is a man of soft conscience.

WALTER

That he is conscious, I mark thee; I attend well.
In tender youth I dabbled in a course
To seek and hear moral philosophy.
Encount'ring pacifism on that road,
Though ne'er in Orient jungle, beshrew me; yet
I thought upon't e'en on fields of war.

THE KNAVE

Thou markest that Jack Smoke hath woes of mind.

WALTER

Faith, beyond pacifism?

THE KNAVE

He is a man of fragility, sir, and like to shatter.

WALTER

“Like”; yet I mark not his fragile dust,
Nor saw him break, nor melt, nor cleave in two.
The heated moment passeth, river-tide
Below a bridge in Exeter. Speak, Knave,
Are we not victorious in our sport?
We progress as do rakes; or be I wrong?

THE KNAVE

No, thou speakest true—

WALTER

Be I wrong?

THE KNAVE

No, sir, thy speech is straight and true. But yet thou speakest not, for thou hast not spoken
but brayed, in the manner of an ass.

WALTER

Fair; then I am an ass; let it be writ down that I am an ass. Then, mark well; the Knave
and his partner, an ass, shall play again at ninepins in half a fortnight, their skills match’d
against Joshua Quince and Liam O’Brien. They worry me not; they shall be o’er-pushed
with certitude.

THE KNAVE

An we play again in seven days and seven nights, I pray you, be of good humour.

WALTER

“Be of good humour!” ‘Tis thine answer to everything.
Mark: thy peaceable nature, while conceiv’d
In upright spirit, meant for noble deeds,
May cited be by devils for their purpose.
Mark the Arab king in foreign land,
The base Mesopotamian, who lieth with steed.
Thou present’st to me a wall to hide behind
‘Twas born of truce in fear and frighten’d mind.

THE KNAVE

I pray you, be of good humour.

WALTER

I am as calm as still waters, Knave.

THE KNAVE

As steel waters, I’ll warrant; put up thy
Icy blade! Crack not gory tales of war!

WALTER

My calmness exceeds thine.

THE KNAVE

Be of ease, I pray you! Be of good cheer,
And let us not repeat what happen'd here!

WALTER

My calmness exceeds thine. But hark; here comes a visitor.

[Enter BRANDT]

BRANDT

All hail, good sir, honour'd Lebowski, hail!
'Tis I, one Brandt by name, humble servant still
To he whose name you recognise so well.
Wilt thou tarry with me a moment? Nay—
Fear not—we care not for the rug.
By carriage I would bring you to his lordship
Secluded in his castle's western wing,
Saith none to any man or good counsel,
Despondent to the last; thus I despair.
I call on thine assistance, gentle Knave.

THE KNAVE

Thou hast spoke plain, and I shall be thy guest.
Let us away to take Lebowski's quest.

[Exeunt]

2.1

[LEBOWSKI's castle. Flourish. Enter THE KNAVE, with LEBOWSKI on his deathbed]

LEBOWSKI

Behold stark irony of hours dark.
As night betakes my heart, I cast mine eyes
Back across a lifetime of achievement,
Of challenge met, competitors surmounted,
Of roguish mankind's obstacles o'ercome,
Accomplish'd more than many dare to dream
In idle wishing; yet, remarkably,
Without the use of legs; these cursèd limbs
Imprison me from stature as a man.
But there's the thing, I ask; what is a man?
Be it reason, his faculty, his pose?
His act or expression, his golden fire?
I'd hear your mind, Lebowski; if you would.
What maketh the piece of work of man?

THE KNAVE

Faith, a perplexing question; a man
Might answer true, but I remain no man.
I am a Knave, and thus unlike to know.

LEBOWSKI

Mayhap the measure of a man is found
Not in his store, his pelf, but in the storm
That tests him strong; the stabbing shocks of sin
That fix his courage to the post, and ask
If he be man, in times where men must stand
As Job was ask'd, or Jonah i' the fish,
Ne'er to sit silent, but to be of parts.
If man be man, he wears the mantle well,
Prepared to stand upright—forgive my text—
In tests that render price no virtue deem'd.

THE KNAVE

That maketh a man, in sooth; an a man were to lack those two tests in cause betwixt his
stance, 'twould be no man.

LEBOWSKI

You jest; but clowns can speak in truth. My reeling thoughts yearn for such simple
counsel.

THE KNAVE

I aim to smoke of the pipe, if that betides your lordship's right good health.

LEBOWSKI

Behold my trappings and my suits of woe;
Alas for Bonnie! So loving to her, I;
She is the light broke forth through yonder window,
From which my life is seen anew, the Sun
And Moon in equal measures, shining thus
On souls starved sick for want of luminescence.
And now do women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks; a marvel fair—
But do you take surprise to mark my tears?

THE KNAVE

Harking, nay. If wetness be the cost of love, weep on.

LEBOWSKI

O, it is excellent to have an achiever's strength, but, curious, hath not a strong man a strong heart? Nay—strong men also weep, the justice of the eyes severe, at once the infant, mewing with a woeful ballad. Mark, a messenger did bring me dark counsel ere noontime.

[He gives THE KNAVE the note]

THE KNAVE

I mark thee; 'tis text of rags and tatters.

LEBOWSKI

It is a note of foul and odious tenor,
And hither have they sent it for her ransom.
Of cowardice and folly, not of men;
They who achieve not upon equal play
Nor even sign their names are scarcely men,
But weaklings, venial beggars, sinners all!

THE KNAVE

Most curious and monstrous note this is,
Announcing they have captured Bonnie fair,
And for her safe return we'd surrender
A thousand pounds in pieces broke in eight.
"Instructions following; no punning jests."
A foul, contemptuous deed! I mark thy pain.

LEBOWSKI

Of dark and cruel misdeeds I do know well.

Sir Brandt shall make you known of the details.

[Enter BRANDT]

BRANDT

My lordship's malady—unhappy hour!—
Forbids his action on this vilest act.
He seeks thy services as courier
To grant these thieves their ducats for their spoils
According to their wishes; thou would be
Offered a share in generosity.

THE KNAVE

Faith, a tempting offer; but wherefore doth his lordship seek my qualities?

BRANDT

He hath recall'd thy sorry episode
Of rugs besoil'd, and villains in the murk.
An viewing varlet visages might aid
In rendering them punishèd, he sayst
'Twere best to have that knows the face of sin
And stands to tell the sexton that he sees.

THE KNAVE

Thou sayst his merry wife stands prisoner
Of those who were relieved upon my rug?

BRANDT

What may be true, I say not yes or no
Ere truth be found; in truth, we do not know.

[Exeunt severally]

2.2

[The bowling green. Enter THE KNAVE, WALTER and DONALD, to play at ninepins]

THE KNAVE

A strike, a very palpable strike! O, but Quince can roll straight and true.

WALTER

That he rolleth true, I cannot deny't, but the man rolls not straight, for he is not a man to stand upright. I have it on good authority that he is one of perversions. Two seasons has he idled in prison for exposing his manhood to a pageboy.

THE KNAVE

My lands!

WALTER

When first he came upon the holy wood, he was made to stand in public gallows, and in such great letters as they write "Here is good horse to hire", it was signified on his sign, "Here you may see a pederast."

DONALD

What manner of man be a pederast, Sir Walter?

WALTER

Hold thy tongue, Sir Donald.—Knave, what measure of moneys were thou offer'd?

THE KNAVE

Twenty pounds for mine own, and the matter of the rug forgiven. They may summon me at any hour day or night.

WALTER

An they should call for thee in time of ninepins, and that would hang us.

DONALD

What is like to happen in time of ninepins, Sir Walter?

WALTER

Peace, miserable Donald; life will neither stop nor start at thy command.

THE KNAVE

My purse is as good as filled; here is money found with ease. I submit that the subtle lady may well indeed be her own kidnapper.

DONALD

I'd know thy mind further, Knave.

THE KNAVE

This be not the traffic of hardened thieves,
Nor rug-pissers, nor ruffians o' the night.
Look well upon a lady fair, so happy fair,
Who spurn'd her love for money, glitt'ring gold,
Where, much deprived of ample gifts and treats
Did scheme to steal a greater sum from some.
In owing much to much of men about
She sought devices to discharge her debt.

WALTER

O contemptible shrew!

THE KNAVE

As sure as what was said in Siberia;
"Look well to he whose benefit abounds
And knowest all," as I have tried to say.

DONALD

I am flabbergasted, overbowl'd,
As clumsy and unsettled as a walrus.

WALTER

O pernicious shrew!
His wife's a hobby-horse, deserves a name
As rank as any flax-wench.

DONALD

I be the walrus.

WALTER

Hold thy tongue, Donald! Thy mind is Lenten.
The quality of wealth has sicken'd me.
An had I known that this would come to pass
(O vilest strumpet! Sinner! Painted whore!)
I might have tarried ere accepting service.
War in far-flung jungles, as my friends
Did die face-down in mire and muck and fens!

THE KNAVE

I see connection not in argument
'Twixt Bonnie and the wars of Orient.

WALTER

'Tis not connected literally, as rope,
But yet by stardust, thought-string, tears and hope.

THE KNAVE

Look well, my friend; there be no connection.
Take to thy roll, thy play for our selection.

[Enter JOSHUA QUINCE and LIAM O'BRIEN]

QUINCE

Hail, masters! I crave thine able readiness
To be dealt with roughly, as the Sodomites.
For men of sport have noted that our play
In semifinal hour draws on apace.
By Jove! I'll wager well, Liam and me,
To thrash thee soundly at the fair tourney.

THE KNAVE

Yea, well, that be, forsooth, thy opinion, sir.

QUINCE

Well; but be forewarn'd. It reach'd mine ears
That combustible Walter, o'ercome with rage
Did shed good sense, and raise his sword in play.
I fear not such jade's tricks, an seeing ill,
Would snatch the burden from the jealous knight
And pierce his gizzard with the wrongful steel,
Points up, as said of Coriolanus.

THE KNAVE

Zounds!

QUINCE

Thou speakest rightly, sir. No man misdeals with Joshua Quince, by Jesu.

[Exeunt QUINCE and O'BRIEN]

WALTER

Nay, fear him not, nor his unworthy joys.
Recall the tragic tale of the pageboys.

[Exeunt WALTER and DONALD]

THE KNAVE

Here I stand in sole on shrouded stage
To contemplate the ninepins; fitting sport
For men who serve to stand and then to fall.
But soft; a noise is heard. Hark! Who's there?

Speak, if thou wouldst enter; I am no porter.

[Enter MAUDE LEBOWSKI and her VARLET, unidentified. They strike him, and exeunt]

THE KNAVE

Again I am injured; wherefore do I attract
The wrongful slings and arrows of the land?
Who was't, mystery woman, craved my blood?
Who was't struck my jaw for satisfaction?
The fireworks do city lanterns make
And soar I will, down staring with a smile
Upon the place beneath; and seen ahead,
A short-hair'd damsel rides a flying carpet
From Arabian legend; here falls the Knave.
In sooth, I'm weary. Let us have us a song.
'Tis well; for I have song for such occasion,
Reminded to me by befevered dreams
Of man, and what doth maketh mannish mettle
And what fair woman's task be in the battle.

[sings]

"The man in me would undertake brave tasks
With little recompense for which to ask.
In truth, Jove send a woman such as thee
Fain would discover true the man in me."

[Exit]

2.2

[A bridge. Enter THE KNAVE and BRANDT (with a sack of money)]

BRANDT

The eightieth minute passes since their call,
Dispatch'd by emissary rough of speech.
So Knave, I charge thee, heed their every word
And obey all requests that they beseech.
Thy charge is simple: wait here all alone,
Let no man be companion to your quest.
They spoke with crystal clarity; I dare
Not tarry long, lest they think me your friend.
What fate befell thy jaw, m'lord?

THE KNAVE

No mind.

BRANDT

Then take these golden coins to leave behind.
Be wise and well, and heed the villains' plans:
I tell thee that her life is in thy hands.

THE KNAVE

Sir, I attend.

BRANDT

My lord did beseech me repeat that; hark well that her life is in thy hands. Her life is in thy hands, Knave; I will attend thy signal. Take pains. Be perfect. Adieu.

[Exit BRANDT]

THE KNAVE

By troth! A life in hands as rough as mine,
In hands design'd for dissolution harsh.
What doth a Knave awake at witching hours?
But soft. Look sharp. Here's a strangeness indeed.

[Enter WALTER, with a satchel]

WALTER

Hail, good knave! I see you stand to linger.
Take of me this, I bring you here a ringer.

THE KNAVE

What devilry, sir? By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

WALTER

Hours at my store have I spent weighing the motives and sensations of this crime, whirling like the dervish of faraway civilities, to catch how the case was clad. Here in this satchel I have weighed out my mud-stained trousers, my dirty jerkins, foul French hose and assorted motleys.

THE KNAVE

By my life, I see not why thou hast thy soiled vestments.

WALTER

We will not wait upon mine answer; for the answer is weight. It is for the fullness of our pleasure that this very selfsame double look not empty, but in equal scale.

THE KNAVE

Is thy invention to call a hawk a handsaw?

WALTER

It came upon me to think, as if rising from a dream, wherefore it was our lot to settle for a measly twenty pounds.

THE KNAVE

Wherefore the “we”, the “our” in this hour?

WALTER

We could well own the thousand pounds in thy grasp, with no man the wiser. Be I wrong?

THE KNAVE

Yea, I’ll hazard all I have by it. At my word, Walter, this be not a jest.

WALTER

At thy word, Knave, ‘tis. Thou sayst she kidnapped herself.

[Enter several NIHILISTS, below, concealed]

NIHILIST

Who’s there? Stand and unfold yourself.

THE KNAVE

Speak! I come carefully upon the hour. Steer us by the evening star.

NIHILIST

“Us”? Hold thy tongue, or tongues if be ye two;
Your charge was to come in person only you.

THE KNAVE

Nay, I am one man, of several persons.
For each man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being two voices. Speak, friend!

WALTER

Knave, knowest thou the way to examine?

THE KNAVE

Peace, Walter! Thy presence does me ill.
Her life is in our hands; they're like to kill.

WALTER

Naught is bespoil'd; thou art not acting in the manner according to a Knave. This above all: to thine own self be true. Let him speak again.

NIHILIST

Hello there!

WALTER

Seest thou? Naught is bespoil'd. These rank villains are but amateurs.

NIHILIST

Be not rash, unadvised or sudden.
Knave, we shall proceed this time of meeting,
But do not feign, O witnesses above.
Toss down thy coin, to me bescreen'd in night.

WALTER

Pass me the ringer, Knave; we'll hand it down.

THE KNAVE

I love thee, Walter, but thou art a fool.

[They throw down the ringer]

WALTER

Here is thy purse, varlets, thy cheated prize.
The money's ours. Quick, Knave, thy chariot;
We'll bowl in friendship ere the sun arise.
Look sharp! A pox upon't, Knave; let us play at ninepins.

[Exeunt severally]

2.3

[The bowling green. Enter THE KNAVE and WALTER, to play at ninepins]

THE KNAVE

What hast thou done, Walter? What will we tell
The big Lebowsky, who loves his wife so well?
I trust thee not for scheme and subtle gore;
The first thing they do, they'll kill the woman poor!

WALTER

Poor woman! Poor wench! You prattle on, O Knave!
Her captor and her self are the selfsame.
As so thou spake; and so still I believe.
She's no abused victim, but a thief.

THE KNAVE

Thou heardst me wrong; I said in idle thought
She might have selfsame-stole; but whence the proof
And certitude thou hast to light this act?
What if thy certainty is all in vain?
Retain thy state and in consideration check
If majesty has fallen now to folly
In hideous rashness.

WALTER

I do assent
My certitude is one hundred per cent.

[Enter DONALD]

DONALD

The jousts and games of sport continue on;
The looming tourney plans are posted high
And stand recorded in this schedule writ.

WALTER

Donald, hold thy tongue—no, stay, I err.
When do they set our match of open air?

DONALD

Faith, we face Joshua Quince and the Irishman this very Saturday.

WALTER

Saturday! Unhappy fortune. Something was forgotten in the state of office. A calendar, a calendar! Look in the almanac; find a date uncancell'd by destiny. What manner of fool is he that scheduled this date? I did take pains to disclose my unavailability.

DONALD

Marry, 'twas Burkhalter.

WALTER

A German, all slops, or low Dutch; thrice I made him to know that I roll not on Saturday.

DONALD

But posted it be; what's done cannot be undone.

WALTER

They shall unpost it, by my life!

THE KNAVE

I care not, Walter—what of that poor woman?

WALTER

Peace, Knave; she will tire of her little game anon, and wander back in the manner of the punished cur, tail between her legs.

DONALD

Wherefore thou playest not at ninepins on Saturday, Sir Walter?

WALTER

On our most holy Sabbath I am sworn
To keep tradition, form and ceremony.
The seventh and the last day rests the Jew;
I labour not, nor ride in chariot,
Nor handle gold, nor even play the cook,
And sure as Providence I do not roll.
Hath not a Jew rights? Hath not a Jew hands,
Organs, bowling-balls, Pomeranians?
If you schedule us, must you not do right?
If we step o'er the line, do we not mark it nought?
The Sabbath; I'll roll not, God-a-mercy.

THE KNAVE

I'll to my car; I must leave this place.
I tire of these arguments and japes.

DONALD

Stay, Knave; I'd hear of how ye handed off to criminals their accursed spoils.

THE KNAVE

There is naught to tell. All is lost. They did not get their money, and they will kill—

WALTER

Yea, they will kill the woman poor. Alack the day! They will kill the woman poor. Alas, poor woman! They'll kill her well.

DONALD

Walter, how dost thou proceed upon the Sabbath?

WALTER

Knave, I stand surprisèd, gall'd, gull-crack'd.
They will kill none, harm none, say none, do none.
Amateurs they, I'll take it to my grave,
And all Lebowski's money shall be thine. Be I wrong?

THE KNAVE

Walter, thou hast erred.

WALTER

Nay! For thou hast money in our car,
And they have taken linens mine afar!
My ragged hose bespoil'd, my dirty whites,
My breeches and my foulest-smelling tights!

THE KNAVE

Hark! Look now to where my ride was parked.
There it's not; the space is free and dark.

DONALD

Prithee, Walter, who hath thy breeches?

THE KNAVE

Ruined! Poor stolen car in a dead man's space.
My kingdom for a horse to catch these dogs!
The money, gone—mine only transport, gone—
They've robb'd me of that which enriches me
And left me poor indeed! How! How! How! How!
Call up the watch! O villainy, villainy!
O, I am fortune's fool, lost all, lost all!

[Exeunt WALTER and DONALD; enter MAUDE]

THE KNAVE

You there, close-cropped woman all in green.
Be you shapes and tricks or vile apparition,
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?
See you the shameful souls of stridence sick
Plunder'd my argosies most grievously?

MAUDE

Nay, poor clown, you remember me not.
By Maude Lebowski I am called in faith.
I came to you by night in this same place
To be revenged for your ill-gotten prize.
Your jaw was punch'd, your rug whiskèd in haste
Not hours after you had brought it home.
I'd have you be my guest in my abode,
My studio of arts, my academe.

THE KNAVE

Lo, the rug Lebowski gave to me?
Thou art the lady caused me injury.
So I'll with you to see about my carpet,
And hope for fairer wind about my chariot.

[Exeunt]

3.1

[An artist's studio. Enter THE KNAVE and MAUDE]

MAUDE

If by my art, my curious friend, I have
Put the wild notions in a roar, so be't.
What think you on the female form, O Knave?
The woman's part in me so gallantly
Manifests itself within in mine art
Commended by the wise as country work;
I paint only those of my own sex.
The very word is said to bother men,
Discomfort them, encircled in their ring.
It is the very painting of discomfort,
Two legs without a head. I say no thing.

THE KNAVE

I take no awkward pause, nor balk nor stare,
But only ask, askance, what art this is.
I see no ring to mar if I would kiss't,
But only oily painting I might stain.
The Knave deciphers nothing in its image;
Thy work has made a nihilist of me.

MAUDE

In faith, the art is only what you will,
And if the word can poison not your ear
Then you're in luck; some men of lesser stuff
Dislike to hear it, dare not speak its name.
Whereas without a flicker of his eye
A man might speak of King Richard the Third,
Or pose an idle sonnet on his rod,
Or praise the wit of his selfsame Johnson.

THE KNAVE

As Benjamin Jonson, lady?

MAUDE

Let us speak plain and to the purpose. My father bade you take the rug, but that you chose was, in faith, a gift of me to my departed mother, the happiest gift that ever marquess gave, and thus not his to make a rich and precious gift of. But trifles, trifles; let us speak of this supposed kidnapping. It hath the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril.

THE KNAVE

Permit me to explain about the rug—

MAUDE

What cares have you, Lebowski, upon love?

THE KNAVE

Alack, lady, thy question does me vex.

MAUDE

The physicality of making love;
I'd have you tell me if you like it well.
A myth persists on women of my stripe,
That our body politic renders us in hate
Of acts of love; a most injurious lie.
The enterprise can have in it much zest.
But men who walk with satyrs in the morn
And women swimming nightly 'twixt the nymphs
Are punished by Oberon for sin
And do the deed compulsively engaged,
Sans joy, sans love, sans everything.

THE KNAVE

Prithee nay!

MAUDE

So damn'd a soul is Bonnie; I have heard
That lustful creatures sitting at a play
Have by the cunning language of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their infatuations.
I've had these players make their show for you;
Suiting the action to the word indeed.
It shall be called "Log Jamming", because
It hath bared bottom; but hark—the players.
So please your grace, the Prologue is addressed.

*[Enter OLIVER as the PLAYER KARL HUNGUS, BONNIE as the PLAYER WHORE and
a PLAYER QUEEN]*

PLAYER QUEEN

Two women, both alike in beauty,
In fair Verona where we lay our scene,
From broken cable break to new nudity,
Where civil breasts touch civil hands unclean.
The which if you Jaques Treehorn's play attend,

What this fine miss and whore shall strive to mend.

THE KNAVE

She hath rid her prologue like a rough colt.

MAUDE

Such riding you will see the like of, so as to form the beast with two backs. But hark; here is the poor player that struts and frets to play Karl Hungus upon the stage.

OLIVER

I rode to thee dispatched with all speed.
The cable broke, the holding-anchor lost.

THE KNAVE

Marry, I know that man; he is a nihilist.

MAUDE

And is her face familiar to you;
Familiar and by all means vulgar?

BONNIE

Knock, knock! Never at quiet. Here's a man of repair; I should have old turning his key.
Hark to my noble kinswoman, here to travail in a shower brought up by a tempest of the soul.

PLAYER QUEEN

Hast thou, traveler, perform'd to mend the cable that she bade thee?

MAUDE

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THE KNAVE

I wonder if he be to fix the cable.

MAUDE

Be not fatuous, Geoffrey. It matters not
A fig to me if Bonnie be a whore,
Nor that she courts the merry Jaques Treehorn,
To use the happy parlance of our times.
But our good name Lebowsky is such stuff
As dreams are made on for a host of youth
Whose education our foundation builds,
And proud we are indeed of all of them.
My father stole much money from these babes
To pay the thieves to purchase back his wife,
The fornicator, devilry-compulsed,

Hath took my father on her sinful ride.
As for thy rug, I charge thee with a task;
My father's crime too loathsome for police,
His scandal being ruinous to our name,
I bid thee find the money that thou pass'd
These villains and return it to my keep;
I'll pay thee handsomely in fine reward
That thou canst purchase any rug thou wilt.

THE KNAVE

The task is right in purpose and in law,
But wherefore didst thou crack me on my jaw?

MAUDE

Pardons, good Geoffrey. I know of a learned doctor who wilt examine thee. Thou wilt receive no bill. He is an honourable man, and thorough.

THE KNAVE

Thy thought is kind.

MAUDE

See the doctor, he's honourous and thorough;
After thou returnst to thy good borough.

[Exeunt severally]

3.2

[Upon the road. Enter THE KNAVE, sipping a White Russian; opposing, enter BRANDT and LEBOWSKI (on his cart)]

LEBOWSKI

Speak, and speak quickly, foul vagrant!

THE KNAVE

I beseech ye, there is a beverage here.

BRANDT

Our attempts to reach thee have been frantic and numerous, Knave.

LEBOWSKI

Whither my money? They did not receive the money. Thou liest, thou shag-haired villain! Thou odious maggot! Her life was in thy hands!

BRANDT

Verily, this be our concern, Knave.

THE KNAVE

Pray, naught is bespoil'd here—

LEBOWSKI

Naught is bespoil'd? Zeus' noble chariot hath crashed into yonder mount!

THE KNAVE

We, forsooth, the “we” of royalty,
Did drop the money as instructed hence.
But certain things revealed to breaking light,
Occurring not to ye; of nature such
That blaming me will win ye not the lass.

LEBOWSKI

No more; the text is foolish. What are these
New things you prattle of, O blith'ring fool?

THE KNAVE

I speak of information borne anew!
I blither of the new stuff come to light!
Know ye she kidnapped herself? 'Tis true!
A lady happy fair, spurn'd, thou knowest,
In the parlance of our time, ne'er borrower
Nor lender be, to known nymphs and satyrs;
Yet I am well, I am well. She must feed

A wilderness of monkeys; occur'st that?

LEBOWSKI

In faith, Master Lebowsky, it occur'd not.

BRANDT

It had not occur'd to us, Knave.

THE KNAVE

That it occur'st not to ye, I forgive, for ye be privy not to the new stuff; that is why I am charged. As such, might we speak of settling accounts? Mine equerry feareth for mine excises.

LEBOWSKI

Present to him the worst and least wholesome envelope, Sir Brandt.

[BRANDT gives the envelope to THE KNAVE; within, a toe]

O Knave! Since thou hast failed to achieve
The brief and modest task that was thy charge,
Stolen my pelf, and still betray'd my trust,
I've told these varlets thou hast took their prize,
Encouraged them to seize their bond from thee.
With good Sir Brandt as witness to my vow
I promise thee that any harm to Bonnie
Shall visit tenfold time upon thy head.
Ope thy parcel, sinner! See her toe,
Chopp'd off from her and still bepainted green.
Now it is said; 'tis all thou needs must know—
For I will not abide another toe.

[Exeunt severally]

3.3

[A tavern near the bowling green. Enter THE KNAVE and WALTER]

WALTER

My lord, I do deny it is her toe.

THE KNAVE

Whose toe be it, if not my lady's toe?

WALTER

Vexatious problem that, but not of heft.

There's naught to indicate the lady's harm'd.

THE KNAVE

The fresh green paint of fair Miss Bonnie's nail!

WALTER

Marry, sir, nail-painting, rugs and urine.

A man may paint the white toe green, tell her,

Paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come.

THE KNAVE

And where might a man fetch a toe?

WALTER

O toe!

Thou wouldst have a toe? A toe can be obtain'd.

Ways are known, Knave. Thou wilt not like to hear.

I'll have a toe for thee this afternoon

Ere singeth cockerel at three o'clock.

These amateurs would have us soil'd with fear.

THE KNAVE

They'll kill her, Walter, ere they turn on me.

WALTER

Thy stress is great, my friend; thy reason not;

This be a string of crime-craft victimless.

THE KNAVE

But thou hast not explain'd the cursèd toe!

WALTER

I pray you, think no more upon the toe!

[Enter MISTRESS QUICKLY]

MISTRESS QUICKLY

I remind thee, sirs, to acquire and beget a temperance that may give thy voices smoothness, trippingly on the tongue. This tavern be a place of family business.

WALTER

Nay! The Courts considered prior restraint
And smote it thus; I'll speak my chosen piece.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

If patience cannot calm thy storm forthwith
Fain would I bid thee leave my tavern-door.

[Exit MISTRESS QUICKLY]

WALTER

My friends did die face-down in mire and muck
That you and I might trade within these walls.

THE KNAVE

Nay, I'll none; I take my leave without.

[Exit THE KNAVE]

WALTER

Knave, prithee stay! This doth affect our tale!
Our freedom's base! I'm finishing my ale.

[Exit]

3.4

[THE KNAVE's house. THE KNAVE is in his bath]

THE KNAVE

I am conducted to a gentle bath.

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this Knave

Clean from the land?

[Alarums. Enter OLIVER and the two NIHILISTS, bearing a marmot]

Forsooth! This be a place

Of residence, and much a private place.—

O excellent marmot!

OLIVER

Anon, we crave the money, Lebowski.

We speak in neither jest nor fallacy.

We could do such stuff as dreams do feature,

Believing in nothing; empty and void.

Tomorrow if thou hast not the ransom

We shall recourse, and cut off thy Johnson.

[Exeunt severally]

3.5

[The tavern at the bowling green; enter THE KNAVE, WALTER and DONALD, to sit at the bar]

THE KNAVE

My car is found, but treasure none within't,
Although the constable has sworn to find't.
My inquiries of leads led him to mirth
As if my misery and woes to scorn.
O piteous Knave!—My only hope remains
That in his anger, the Lebowski big
Kills me ere these Germans cut my lance.

WALTER

Ridiculous, good Knave. Thou knowest well
That no man makes thee eunuch while I live.
Naught hath changed; these German swine are cruel,
Three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses,
Mere usurpers, tyrants and what's worse.

DONALD

Were't they tyrants, Knave?

WALTER

They meant to geld the lily, Sir Donald!
Split never hairs tonight. Or be I wrong?

THE KNAVE

Nay; not tyrants. Nihilists to a man.
They believe in nothing; nothing will come of't.

WALTER

Nihilists! I am beshrewn. Say what thou wilt
Of fascist tenets, Knave; it seeks to stand
Philosophy and politic, not void.
And let it noted be that wildlife kept,
Amphibious rodent, in domestic walls,
Is retrograde to right and civil laws.

THE KNAVE

Art thou a forester? A woodcutter yet, or shepherd of the flock? Who cares a fig for
th'accursed marmot?

WALTER

I speak only to sympathise, Knave.

THE KNAVE

I need no sympathy, no emotion.
That I need is only my Johnson.

DONALD

Wherefore needest thou thy Johnson, Knave?

WALTER

Be of good cheer, friend. Wouldst thou enter the tourney so sad?

THE KNAVE

A pox upon the tourney! And thee, Walter!
I might have escaped this with few pains
But for the shock of stench upon my rug.
Now I am cursed with damages tenfold
In seeking counsel from so great an ass.

WALTER

“A pox upon the tourney,” he declares.
Come, then, Donald; we’ll leave him as he fares.

[Exeunt WALTER and DONALD]

THE KNAVE

O, that mine two, two solid friends would leave
Me to resolve myself on what to do.
Two noble kinsmen, nay?—Another ale.
Why, then, the Russian White my only drink;
Let’s drink together friendly and embrace.

[Enter the CHORUS]

CHORUS

What sayst thou, Mistress Quickly? Hast thou a goodly beverage, brewed of sarsaparilla-root?

MISTRESS QUICKLY

[without]

As brewed in the city of the base Indian.

CHORUS

Ay, there’s a good one. How fares the Knave?

THE KNAVE

So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

CHORUS

Such a day, I mark thee, whereupon the winter of our discontent is ne'er made glorious summer. A gentleman wiser than myself did say that on some such days, thou exits, pursued by a bear, and on others, the bear exits, pursued by you.

THE KNAVE

By my troth, a good philosophy. Was't of the Orient?

CHORUS

Nay, far from it. I mark well thy fashion, good Knave.

THE KNAVE

And I thy fashion, stranger.

CHORUS

Many thanks.

If I may crave a boon, may I request
That thine ungracious mouth be less profane,
Spoke less in cursing word, and more in craft?

THE KNAVE

What dost thou speak upon, O damned fool?

CHORUS

I jest; well-spoken, Knave. Be of good ease;
Exeunt now, the tumbling tumbleweeds.

[Exeunt]

3.6

[MAUDE's studio. Enter THE KNAVE and MAUDE, with KNOX HARRINGTON]

THE KNAVE

What manner of man is this pilgrim strange,
Who sits upon my lady's couch and laughs
As if in private humour of his own.
What is thy trade; what secret craft is thine?

KNOX HARRINGTON

You know. 'Tis nothing much to look upon,
Matters of no import. A bit of this;
A little bit of that; O, how I laugh!

MAUDE

Geoffrey, thou hast not seen doctor skill'd
Whose studio I asked thee to attend.
Hast thou heard news of money yet recouped?

THE KNAVE

In sooth, I must confess I was waylaid
And fear I must resign the charge at hand;
Oliver hath persuaded me to rest.

MAUDE

He is a hired player and a fool,
An actor poor, unexcellent musician,
Who'd play abductor for this fiendish plot.
Thou knowest well this woman is in health,
No more a victim than she mother'd me.

THE KNAVE

This case perplexes me in complex course,
With many ins and many outs and strands.

KNOX HARRINGTON

Most mirthful! I'll titter thus upon't.

THE KNAVE

Beshrew me, who is this gentleman, Maude? What manner of man be he, to parlay in thy parlour?

MAUDE

Knox Harrington, the tapestry artist. Geoffrey, thou hast not seen the doctor, and I fear for thy bruise.—Enter, doctor!

[Enter DOCTOR BUTTS]

MAUDE

I would not be to blame for pains delay'd.
And yea, he is an honourable man, and thorough.
Examine him, good doctor, as thou wilt.

DOCTOR BUTTS

Do slide thy shorts down, Master Lebowski.

THE KNAVE

'pon my life, I was stricken on the jaw.

DOCTOR BUTTS

I understand; but thou must slide thy shorts.

MAUDE

Come, Geoffrey. While the good doctor examines,
I'd have a song, if it pleases thee.

THE KNAVE

[sings]

"Imagination setteth in
To maketh man to wish to sing,
Hey-nonny-no, looking out my back door;
Bother me tomorrow
For today I buy no sorrows.
Hey-nonny-no, looking out my back door."

[Exeunt severally]

4.1

[A playhouse. Enter THE KNAVE, WALTER and DONALD, to hear the PLAYERS]

WALTER

Come, Knave; I'd hear the balance of thy tale.
Inside thy car didst thou detect some trace
By villains left, who deprived it of goods?
No ghost of guilt, identity betray'd
By careless thieves who cover'd not their tracks?

THE KNAVE

I found a document, so roughly writ
It troubled me to make good sense of it.
Of school-days' friendship, childhood innocence,
A paper writ in study by some churl
Of youth not born under a rhyming planet.
'Twas lesser verse composed and badly hewn,
Concern'd the King of France, and purchased land,
And though I am a weakish speller, I
Detected errors mark'd throughout in hand
Of headmaster despair'd, in ink so red
At first the Knave had thought that he had bled.

WALTER

In faith, I will examine me this text
And see if by its hand its maker's traced.
Hark; here's the name of its rude author,
One Laurence Sellers, living in the north.
He liveth near a tavern, in and out
Reputed for the searing of beefsteak.

DONALD

Those be fine beefsteaks, Walter.

WALTER

Hold thy tongue, Donald; I've not said all.
The varlet is a youth whose father stands
A titan in the world of hired players,
A playwright, Arthur Digby Sellers call'd.
His plays renowned throughout the continent,
Bulk of the series, Knave, and no lightweight.
How tragic that his son doth prove a dunce!
An north we proceed, once concluded be
The merriment of this performance piece—

DONALD

Then might we dine on beefsteaks, in and out?

WALTER

Hold thy tongue, Donald, I pray thee; thou art a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to thy wit. Yea, we shall brace the kid; he shall be o'er-pushed with certitude. We shall take what moneys he hath not spent, and yea, we shall be near the place of good repute, to feast on beefsteaks, have some ales and merry jests. Our troubles be over, Knave.

[Exeunt]

4.2

[Outside a castle in the north. Enter THE KNAVE, WALTER and DONALD]

THE KNAVE

Alack! Regard this finest car without;
The child hath spent the bulk of money mine
On yon conveyance, like a corvette ship
To sail on simpler waters than I swim.

WALTER

Not so; such goods seem costly, but in sooth,
The vehicle's but three or four percent
Of all thy gains ill-gotten that may stand,
Depending on the trappings. Donald, hold;
We'll speak with young Laurence, and circle swift.
Ho, squire Laurence! Reveal thyself and chat.

[Enter LAURENCE]

WALTER

Thy father suffers problems with his health
And writes no more—a shame on it, say I,
For on a level personal his works
Were muse to me; I was a man to love
The early episodes birth'd of his quill.
Thou art a writer, Laurence, as I've read,
Though one of orthography correctèd.
[He raises the document]
Thou art a lad of years mayhap fifteen,
At once a lad and coming to a man
Who's wise, I trust, to welcome not police,
Constabulary actions being harsh.
Is this thy parchment, Laurence? Tell me true.
Is this thy parchment, Laurence? Tell me plain.

THE KNAVE

Be quick, Sir Walter! Ask of chattels bought.
Ask if that fine corvette without be his.

WALTER

Is this thy parchment, Laurence? Home-work thine?

THE KNAVE

We know that well, Sir Walter! His it be!
Whither the money, varlet, mewling spawn?

WALTER

Demand him nothing. What we know, we know.
From this time forth he never will speak word.
Hark, Laurence, hast thou studied of a place
Of Orient jungles?

THE KNAVE

Walter, prithee nay!
Zounds, Sir Walter! No more talk of this.

WALTER

Youth, thou art entering a world of pain.
We know this document is home-work thine,
And that thou stealest cars—

THE KNAVE

And monies too!

WALTER

And monies, and this is thy home-work, boy.
Wherefore silence? What impudence is this?
Thou art killing thy father, Laurence! O!
This hath no end; he never will speak word.
I take thy parchment back, and turn to plans
Of secondary contingency. Look well.
Behold thy car, the corvette, crimson-stain'd,
And see what befalls sinners evermore.
[He raises his sword, and smites the car]
This befalleth when thou firk'st a stranger 'twixt the buttocks, Laurence! Understand'st thou? Dost thou attend me? Seest thou what happens, Laurence? Seest thou what happens, Laurence? Seest thou what happens, Laurence, when thou firk'st a stranger 'twixt the buttocks?!

[Enter CLOWN]

This be what befalleth, Laurence! This be what befalleth, Laurence!

CLOWN

What hast thou wrought, thou man of province strange?
The corvette be my purchase yester-week;
Alas! My car, admired, baby mine.
My car hath shuffled off this mortal coil.

WALTER

Marry, an honest blunder; I knew this not to be thine.

CLOWN

I maketh thee to shuffle off this mortal coil, man! Nay, I'll be revenged in proper recompense, suiting the punishment to the action, the action to the punishment; I maketh thy car to shuffle off this mortal coil!

[He raises his sword, and smites THE KNAVE's car]

THE KNAVE

No! Thou hast trespass'd wrongly; that be not Sir Walter's conveyance, but mine own!

CLOWN

I maketh thy car to shuffle off this mortal coil! I maketh thy accursed car to shuffle off this mortal coil!

DONALD

Faith! I sit within, and cringe in fear;
What fools these mortals be that tarry here!

[Exeunt]

4.3

[The castle of JAQUES TREEHORN. Enter THE KNAVE]

THE KNAVE

Here I stand on quarters unfamiliar,
A pad of land of quality unspoil'd,
Having dined on beefsteak on the journey
In and out; and whereupon Sir Walter
Tender'd his apologies remorseful,
Hoping that I might have made it home,
Wond'ring still if Laurence may have crack'd.
Upon my homeward coming I was met
Harshly by these ruffians of note
Who've trafficked in my house; I like them not.

[Enter BLANCHE and WOO]

BLANCHE

Again we meet, Lebowski, who thou art;
And yea, we know of which Lebowski art
Thy deadbeat frame.

WOO

So do attend, O sprite;
Thou dealest not with fools this wicked night.

[Exit BLANCHE and WOO. Flourish. Enter JAQUES TREEHORN]

JAQUES TREEHORN

Good Knave, my thanks for travels thou hast made;
By Jaques Treehorn I am called in name.
I bid thee welcome to my humble home
And beg thee take a beverage of thy choice.

THE KNAVE

The brew of whitest Russia I would sip
If thou hast rum. How fares thy working trade?

JAQUES TREEHORN

A playwright and theatre-man am I,
With tendrils dipp'd in lakes of many stripes,
In printed words, in dumb-show and in court.

THE KNAVE

Which be "Log Jamming"?

JAQUES TREEHORN

Thou readest my regret;
The playhouse is a place of disrepair.
When rude mechanicals may gather nights
To play in interludes most amateur,
We cut the very wheat from our fair crop
And make poor sport of spectacle and tale,
With no more tears in the performing of't.
Thy brain hath in the function of its power
The zone where faith is firmly fix'd in love,
Richer than all thy tribe in other parts.

THE KNAVE

On thee, mayhap.

JAQUES TREEHORN

The brightest heaven of invention
May yet compass wonders fit for devils
In greatest fair effects of future hopes.
Such plays may well transport us all beyond
This ignorant present.

THE KNAVE

Faith, an excellent dream;
But I still read Ben Jonson manually.

JAQUES TREEHORN

Ay, there's the rub. I pray thee, Knave, to hear
The purpose of my night's invitation
As brought thee to my seat. Where is Bonnie?

THE KNAVE

O irony; I thought that thou couldst know.

JAQUES TREEHORN

My mind is slate and sky-dark; the lady
Only ran off to flee her debt to me,
A bond, a sizable bond.

THE KNAVE

But she ran not!

JAQUES TREEHORN

I know thy troubles, Knave, the tangled web
Woven upon the practice to deceive.

An thou robbest her husband, I care not.
How goes the world, that I am thus encountered
With clamorous demands of broken bonds
And the detention of long-since-due debts?

THE KNAVE

Well spoke; but sir, there many facets be.
The parties of interest are of scope
And multitude in number. What's for me,
What of the Knave, if he retains thy gold?

JAQUES TREEHORN

The tenth part of the plunder shall be thine;
But drink thou from thy goblet, ere it warms.

THE KNAVE

I'll drink your health, good Jaques, as a friend
For greatly is thy jib-cut most admired.
The Knave carouses to thy fortune, Treehorn.
But hark! O venom! What betides my drink,
That makes me swoon? The drink. I am poisoned.
The treacherous White Russian in my hand.

[He falls]

And all the Knave e'er wanted was his rug
As spoken of, which tied the room together.
Look sharp! Darkness overtakes the Knave,
Of blacker shade than cattle's secret parts
On moonless nights in Devonshire. I fall.
It hath no bottom, not this taste of sin;
I drop to see condition that I'm in.

[Exeunt severally]

4.4

[THE KNAVE's house. Enter THE KNAVE]

THE KNAVE

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Methought I waked to find I could be bound in a satchel of infinite space, only to trip upon a cloud, to fall eight miles high and tear my mind on a jagged sky. Most peculiar.

Then was I found by night-watch constable,
Who liked my jerkin not, and told me thus,
And cast me from his beach community.
And eagles gazed upon with every eye;
And O, I hate the cursèd eagles, man.

[Enter MAUDE]

It is my lady friend, it is my love.

MAUDE

Come, thou spirit that tends on mortal thoughts,
Come lie with me under the greenwood tree
And know the heat of a luxurious bed
And in our faults by lies we'll flattered be.

THE KNAVE

My Maude is now the queen of special ladies,
Attired in a robe that is mine own.

[They kiss, and lay down]

MAUDE

Speak of thyself, O Geoffrey, while we sleep.

THE KNAVE

Let me present my life-time as a Knave,
Though little stands to tell; but tarry soft.
I'd tell thee how, in youth, I did author
A statement in Port Huron, ere the turn
When it emerg'd in compromised draft.
Or how, in fair Seattle, I and six
Were charg'd conspirators against the King;
Yea, that was me; and sixfold other men.
I turn'd attention briefly to the lute
And fife, and tour'd with men of speed and sound,
Who asses were; now I do nothing much,
Mayhap a bit of this, a bit of that.
I play at ninepins on the village green

And tour the town, and think on wilder days.
My house is sacked by Jaques Treehorn's men
Who thought to seek thy father's money here;
A case of great complexity we glimpse,
With many ins and outs, as I have said.

[MAUDE arranges herself upon the floor]

MAUDE

The money's the foundation's, not the man's.
My father hath no money of his own;
The wealth was his inheritance to tend
And pompously he claims it as his crop.
O vanity of Father! Fierce extremes
Of personality he built so as to seem
The wide world's emperor; and hence the whore,
So purchased as to sate his glory-thirst.

THE KNAVE

Wherefore thy strange position on the floor?

MAUDE

I crave a young conception in my womb,
And seat me thus to better take thy seed.

THE KNAVE

Increase thy chance of bearing me a child?
But I a father poorly made would be!

MAUDE

Nay, I seek no partner in this babe;
I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Our comedy ends not with marriage-bed,
I'll live unpartner'd, and unbotherèd.

THE KNAVE

Marry! Then thou wouldst have a child of bastard blood, without a father, as thou thyself might well have wished to have no father; but now I think upon thy father, and lo, new stuff doth come to light breaking forth. My thinking on thy sorry case had become most up-tightened, and I am altogether govern'd by humours. Quickly, away! I must to Sir Walter.

[Exeunt]

[The road. Enter THE KNAVE]

THE KNAVE

I wait upon the coming of Sir Walter
Who, on my dispatch, flew him to emerge
That we might seek the Castle of Lebowski
And right these monstrous wrongs ere evensong.
[Enter BROTHER SEAMUS]
Who's there?

BROTHER SEAMUS

Be still! I'll harm thy person not.
'Tis I, the Brother Seamus, Irish monk—
A man the finer having seen thee work,
A snitch and snoop for private clientele,
A dirk; a man who seeketh for to find.

THE KNAVE

That's well; but keep thee from my lady friend.

BROTHER SEAMUS

I never tempted her with word too large;
I knew her not thy special lady fair.

THE KNAVE

She's not my special lady but my friend;
I help'd her swell her womb. Who hired thee?
Art thou a servant of Lebowski state,
Or Jaques Treehorn, or some goblin damned?

BROTHER SEAMUS

I travel on the charge of sons of knights,
A job of wand'ring daughters from the north.
The lady Bonnie's falsely bonny bred.
Her name be Fawn, a girl of Moorhead born,
Whose parents wish her back with broken hearts;
This past twelvemonth she fled the family farm
And I'm to show her paintings of the land.

THE KNAVE

The lady's love for paint is plain to see,
But she hath seen Karl Hungus, and is like
To not exchange it for pastoral life.

BROTHER SEAMUS

Alack the day! O fairest damsel lost!
It is a false steward that steals a master's daughter.
Mayhap we might our slim resources pool,
Exchange our facts in noble courtesy,
In friendship and professionalism.

THE KNAVE

Nay, for thou art none the finer man.
Away, sirrah; my ride approacheth nigh.
And stay away from special lady mine,
Or lady friend, as I would have it writ.

[Exit BROTHER SEAMUS; enter WALTER (with dog)]

WALTER

Thy messenger decreed emergency
And so I broke my vows of Sabbath pure,
For this the holy day of resting be
For gentle Jews; now state thy purpose, Knave.

THE KNAVE

We must away to old Lebowsky's house
To press him on the matter of this case.
We botch'd his payoff to the villains vile
That night, and in his anger, though he yell'd,
He visited no harm upon my head
Nor render'd my weak body punishèd.

WALTER

Mayhaps the gentle soul's catharsis lay
In shouting at thee.

THE KNAVE

Nay; a game's afoot.
He knows I am a fool; I do agree,
But why wouldst he me charge to save his wife?
Methinks the man despised his lady fair
And plotted ill to profit from her loss
And in his sinning sought to make a show.
I'll tell thee this; he gave me no true gold
Nor jewels, nor any treasure of accord
To toss the thieves; nor effort has he made
To have of me the haul from him I stole.
Methinks the money that we thought was lost
Was never thus, but weight like laundries thine:

Our ringer was a ringer for the same
In odious Lebowsky's rotten game.

WALTER

I mark thee, and pay tribute to thy wits,
Deduction noble made, but all the same
Must query quick the nature of this crime
That leads me out of doors on Sabbath eve.

THE KNAVE

Sir Walter, prithee cease; thou art no Jew.
Of Papists born in Poland was thy line.

WALTER

Thou knowest I converted ere I wed
The Lady Cynthia.

THE KNAVE

But that is past;
Five twelvemonths cross'd the sky since thou were wed.

WALTER

'Tis true, I have in oath and court of law
Made a divorce betwixt Cynthia and me,
But doth equivocation turn a heart?
When justice calls a Jew into the court
Must not a Jew emerge? Is he anew?
May I no more of libraries borrow,
Or push my cart, or be my selfsame man?
The Hebrew turns not Christian; he is rock.

THE KNAVE

Thy sickness for fair Cynthia is sad;
Thou carest for her cur, though are not wed,
And still her synagogue thou dost attend.
Thou livest in the most accursed past.

WALTER

Forsooth! Three thousand years of history,
Traditions beauteous from Moses on:
Thou speakest damnèd truth, and speakest well,
I am a man to live in bygone past!
But let's away; the big Lebowsky waits,
And fate rewards no man who hesitates.

[Exeunt]

5.1

[LEBOWSKI's castle. Flourish. Enter THE KNAVE, WALTER and BONNIE]

THE KNAVE

Look well on Bonnie, something like the sun.
She hath been in her cups, and singing brave
Converting all her sounds of woe into
Hey-nonny-nonny; hark.

BONNIE

Long live the city of the meadows! Let us have a song.

[sings]

“But when I came to Lebowski estate
With hey, ho, the fountain doth rain
I used my car to batter the gate
For the Knave abideth every day.
And when I came, alas! to wive
With hey, ho, the fountain doth rain
By swaggering could I constantly thrive
For the Knave abideth every day.”

[Exit BONNIE; enter BRANDT]

BRANDT

Thine eyes deceive thee not; the lady lives,
No longer vanished; what's lost is found.
She left to see the palmer at the springs
And told no man that she would go away.
Good Knave, I pray thee, bother not my lord,
For he is angry; prithee, who is this?

WALTER

I'll tell thee who I am; a veteran, I,
A soldier of the honour-giving field
Of mire and muck and fens; we'll have thy lord.

[Exit BRANDT; enter LEBOWSKI on his cart]

LEBOWSKI

Beshrew me! That my door be darken'd thus
By this foul cheat who found me not my bride.

THE KNAVE

Whither the money, Lebowski?

WALTER

A thousand pounds from young achievers robb'd!
O rude and vilest villain! Coward cursed!
A most notable coward of no quality
Whose tongue outvenoms all the worms of Nile.
Thou art as loathsome as a toad, thou vice,
A bolting-hutch of beastliness, thou mite,
Thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool!

LEBOWSKI

Thou hast thy history and I have mine.
I say that thou hast stole my thousand pounds.

WALTER

O wound! I wouldst not dream to filch thy wealth.

THE KNAVE

Thou art a villain, human parakeet!
Thou thought thy wife vanish'd, and thought it well!
Thou hadst met me and thought my mettle right
To be thy pawn, a man of ill repute
Who circles not amidst men of good square,
That thou might use to shuffle gold about.

LEBOWSKI

Well? Art thou not a man of no regard,
A greasy tallow husk of failèd flesh?

THE KNAVE

Perchance.

WALTER

Tush, tush; let's speak of him instead.
An infinite and endless liar, he.
I've seen my share of spines a-damaged;
This sinner stands to walk most capably.
Stand now, O villain! Up upon thy feet!

LEBOWSKI

Step back, I prithee; stay not close to me.

WALTER

I bid thee walk afoot, if thou be man!

[He casts LEBOWSKI from his chair; LEBOWSKI falls]

THE KNAVE

O, he hath fallen!

WALTER

'pon my life, I might have sworn he had his sea-legs.

THE KNAVE

Thou art a fool and of thee I despair.

We must away; let's help him to his chair.

[They set him back into his cart. Exeunt]

5.2

[The bowling green. Enter THE KNAVE and WALTER]

WALTER

No doubt we'll see some armour'd conflict yet,
Some battle fare unto the morning's war.
But fighting in the arid desert be
A diff'ring beast from skirmishes as I
Experienced in jungles canopied.
That was a soldier's war, by Jove, whereas
This thing shall be a walk as soft as cake.
I had me but my bow and quiver set,
No heavy horse; 'twas I and good Sir Charles,
'Twere face to face and eye to eye opposed.

[Enter DONALD]

That be combat, forsooth; the man in black,
An adversary worthy on the mount.

DONALD

Walter, pray, who be attired in black?

WALTER

Hold thy tongue, Donald—I speak of men,
Not eaters of the fig in motley clad
Affirming to ride bareback in reverse.
These men be none of worth, and I'll have none.

[Enter QUINCE and O'BRIEN]

QUINCE

Thou dunce, thou varlet; whence this day of rest?
To bowl on Sabbath matters not to me
And fools me not; it may deceive the leaguesmen,
But none of woman born fools Joshua.
Thy games of mind are fit for childrens' spoils,
And laughable; my act is but delayed,
For if I will not have thee Saturday
I'll surely have my way with thee mid-week.
This Wednesday thou and I a-courting go;
Think well on it!

[Exeunt QUINCE and O'BRIEN]

WALTER

By my life, he cracks.

THE KNAVE

Think not on him till Wednesday, for the game;
Our worries stretch to higher fruit than he.
Look well; the nihilists approach our green
And bring Greek fire to our quiet lot.
My burning car doth hotly scorch the earth!
The weary moon hath shone upon our park
And lit the burnt husk of my fiery car!

[Alarums. Enter OLIVER and the NIHILISTS]

THE KNAVE

It hath finally been done. They made my car to shuffle off the mortal coil.

OLIVER

We want that money, Lebowsky, else we be poisonous and kill thy forlorn queen.

THE KNAVE

Ye have not th'accursed girl, ye ninnies! We know ye never had so comely a maid.

DONALD

Be these the tyrants, Sir Walter?

WALTER

Nay! These nihilists be, and none to fear.
But few of any sort, and none of name.

OLIVER

We would have the money in any case, else we visit much grievous damage upon your persons.

WALTER

Nay! Thou hast no hostage to avenge:
Thy ransom there is none but we shall pay!
We'll not obey that know not ransom's rules,
Ye cabbage-fed foul sons of ugly curs!

FIRST NIHILIST

Verily did his consort give her toe
In hopes of seeking gold a thousandfold.

SECOND NIHLIST

It is not fair; 'tis foul but never fair!

WALTER

And wherefore 'fair', when ye be nihilists?
Wherefore the nihilist weeps and cries for 'fair'?
Thy dispute is of infants, weeping woes,
Spoke as an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Believing in nothing.

THE KNAVE

Walter, pray be still.
Good nihilist, the money never was;
Yon big Lebowsky gave me empty wares,
So take thy quarrel up his lordship's way.

WALTER

And I request my breeches ere we part!

DONALD

In sooth, I fear they'll hurt us ere we fly.

WALTER

Not so! They cowards be, and amateurs.

OLIVER

'Tis well; we'll take what minor gold ye have
In doublets thine, and all's well that ends well.

WALTER

Fie on thee! What's mine is ever mine.

THE KNAVE

Nay, let's end cheaply; four sixpence I hold.

DONALD

And eighteen further in my saddlebag.

OLIVER

The gold, anon! Or I'll be set on thee.

WALTER

What's mine is mine; lay on, nihilist,
And damn'd be he that nine-toed woman kiss'd!

[They fight]

DONALD

Alas, my lord, I cannot fight; for God's sake, pity my case. I shall never be able to fight a blow. O Lord, my heart!

OLIVER

[to WALTER]

I firk thee! I firk thee! Verily I firk thee!

WALTER

We bleed on both sides. Have at you now!

OLIVER

I firk thee!

[They fight, and the NIHILISTS die]

WALTER

Ever thus to haters of Jewry!

[DONALD falls]

DONALD

O, I am slain!

THE KNAVE

Hark, hark! Man down! Walter, they shot him thus!

WALTER

No, Knave; no bowstring ever arrow left.
His heart is weak; a heart easily daunted.
Hear, hear how dying Sir Donald doth groan!

DONALD

O, I die, Lebowski;
The potent fervor quite o'er-crows my spirit.
Thou hast my dying voice; the rest is silence.

[He dies]

WALTER

Alas, sweet friend! Now we shall mourn for thee,
O could our mourning ease our misery!

[Exeunt, carrying DONALD]

5.3

[A churchyard. Enter THE KNAVE, WALTER and a GRAVEDIGGER carrying a spade and a pickaxe]

GRAVEDIGGER

I greet ye, an ye are the men bereaved,
And mark ye well to escort the remains
Of your late friend to fields Elysian.
Look to the urn; let's settle now the fee.

WALTER

The urn is well, but we demand it not;
We seek to send the ashes scatter-shot.

GRAVEDIGGER

'Twas said, but ashes must be given ye
In a receptacle of quality.
'Tis coroner's quest law; will it suffice?
For this receptacle be humbly priced.

THE KNAVE

Might men of modest means who need thine urn
Be borrowers of it till our return?

WALTER

Sorrow and grief hath vanquish'd not our powers;
We are not saplings weak in tragic hours.
Come, good Knave; to market we shall send,
A jar we'll buy to honour fallen friends.

[Exeunt]

5.4

[A cliffside. Enter THE KNAVE and WALTER, with a jar of clay]

WALTER

Words, words, words. I'll speak.

A glooming peace this morning with it brings:

The sun, for sorrow, will not show his head.

We come here to have talk of these sad things;

Of Donald, he who in his life bowlèd.

He was a straight and true bowler, and a virtuous man. He was of our sort, a man who loved the woods free from peril of the envious court. And he loved bowling well. He knew the pebbles on the hungry beach. And yea, he was a bowler most avid. And a fair friend, who never can be old. He died as did so many of his generation, ere his time. In Thy wisdom, Lord, Thou didst take him, as Thou took so many bright flowering young men, i' the jungles of the Orient. These young men gave their lives, and Donald too; Donald who loved to play at ninepins.

And so, Sir Donald, in fairest accordance

With what your wishes last well might have been,

We make commitment of your last remains

To the deep bosom of the ocean buried,

A peaceful progress to the ocean, which

You loved so well. Now cracks a bowler's heart.

[He scatters the ashes]

Good night, sweet prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

THE KNAVE

But soft! The sorrow's wind hath strewn the ash

And cover'd me in that we came to spill.

WALTER

Alack! Blown winds and crackèd cheeks! Raged! Blown!

THE KNAVE

Thou art an ass! A stupefying ass!

WALTER

Apologies.

THE KNAVE

Thou hast ruin'd all again!

Thou makest all a travesty of pain!

WALTER

'Twas accident! I meant not for the breeze.

THE KNAVE

Thy statement, man! The stuff on jungle war.
What signifies thy foreign conflict here?
What signifies thy deadly-standing speech?
I'll have no more; thou art a raging fool.

WALTER

I stand before thee tainted with remorse, and beg thy mercy; I am overcome. A pox
upon't, Knave; let us play at ninepins.

[Exeunt]

5.5

[The tavern near the bowling green. Enter THE KNAVE and MISTRESS QUICKLY]

THE KNAVE

I'll have two ales of oat-brew, hostess fair.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

Anon. My fondest wishes for the sport
In tourney celebrated on the morrow.

THE KNAVE

I give thee thanks.

MISTRESS QUICKLY

And I thee sadder thoughts,
My heart wept when I heard of Donald's fall.

THE KNAVE

'Tis well; sometimes thou exits in pursuit
Of bear, and sometimes he doth pursue thee.

[Enter CHORUS]

But here's the man of whom I had these words!
I wonder'd if he'd cross my path again.

CHORUS

I dare not miss the semifinal games.
How fares my good and noble friend the Knave?

THE KNAVE

Thou knowest; strikes and gutters, ups and downs.

CHORUS

Marry, be of ease, O gentle Knave;
I know thou wilt.

THE KNAVE

Thou know'st. The Knave abideth.

[Exeunt all but CHORUS]

Epilogue

CHORUS

“The Knave abideth.” I dare speak not for thee, but this maketh me to be of good comfort; I deem it well that he be out there, the Knave, being of good ease for we sinners. I hope he proveth well in the tourney.
If we shadows have offended,
Think but this and all is mended,
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And all wrapp’d up be this idle theme,
A noble and a pretty story-dream
Made me laugh to overtake the band,
Parts, in sooth; and others less so scann’d.
I did not like to see Sir Donald go,
But then, the fellow wise is like to know
That on the way’s a little Lebowski
Perpetuating human comedy
Down through the generations; westward on,
Across the sands of time—but heed my song;
I ramble again, and so must take my leave,
And hope thou liked my tale of the good Knave.
If we be friends, I’ll catch thee down the trail
And we shall share sarsaparilla ale.
For never was a story of more glee
Than this of Geoffrey and the big Lebowski.

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Bertocci is an award-winning filmmaker and screenwriter. His films have played all across America, with stops in Canada, England and Australia. He is a proud graduate of the film program at Northwestern University, with a minor in English literature.

Two Gentlemen of Lebowski marks his first and probably last entry into the burgeoning field of Shakespeare / Coen Brothers mashup; his previous splashes in pop culture parody are based in a galaxy far, far away. Successes include the animated spoof *Run Leia Run* starring Will Butler of Arcade Fire, the morbidly complete Web site “The Chopped-Off Hands of *Star Wars*” and the indie-hipster dramedy (with lightsabers) *Brooklyn Force*.

While not poking fun at the work of more talented people, he works as a Final Cut Pro editor and digital artist for film and video while continuing to create his own short films and shop around his spec feature screenplays. Those looking to explore his work in those areas are encouraged to visit his professional portfolio:

www.adambertocci.com

ABOUT THE PLAY

Two Gentlemen of Lebowski is fan fiction and in no way affiliated with the creators of *The Big Lebowski*. No ownership is assumed; no infringement is intended.

Groups wishing to perform the work (heaven knows why) are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the guidelines posted on the play’s Web site.

ABOUT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), or His Shakeness, or Shaker, or El Shakerino if you’re not into the whole brevity thing, was a playwright, poet, actor and urban achiever. He is widely regarded as the finest writer in the English language and a key contributor to the development of Western language and philosophy, though, you know, that’s just, like, your opinion, man.

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