

Boaz.

And what say'st thou?

Suitor.

My lord, he speaks the truth;
For I have lost mine axe, and I demand
Either the price or else another axe.
And if he cannot give me back the axe,
Nor pay the price for which I purchased it,
The law is plain, and what the law approves,
There is no blame in my demanding it.

Boaz.

Will ye abide by that which I decide,
Not clinging to the letter of the law,
But making justice mate with equity?

Debtor.

My lord, I trust thy judgment, for I know
Thou art a just and honorable man.

Suitor.

My lord, I would not do my neighbor harm;
And if thou canst discover any way
By which my losses may be satisfied,
I will abide by that which thou decidest.

Boaz.

Hear then what I decide. The loss is clear,
And there is no dispute nor question of it;
Therefore the owner must be satisfied,
And he that caused the loss must make it good.
But since that he is poor, and cannot pay
The loss in money, this is my decree.
One day in seven he shall work for thee,
And, whatsoever thou requirest, do,
Until thou hast the value of the axe.
And since he is an honest laborer,
As all men know who dwell in Bethleñem,
I count three days enough to satisfy
The debt, and after that he shall be free.

Debtor.

My lord, I thank you.

Suitor.

So, my lord, do I,
And gladly will abide by thy decree.

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

(Enter two women.)

First woman.

Justice, my lord, do justice unto me.

Second woman.

Justice, my lord, is all I ask of thee.