

GENERAL INDEX

To Students and Colleagues	5
General Introduction	6
The History Plays here Presented.....	6
The History of the History Plays.....	8
The Playhouses, Players, and Plays	11
An Expression of Gratitude	19
CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE, <i>EDWARD THE SECOND</i>	20
Introductory Remarks	22
The Text of the Play	33
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, <i>RICHARD THE SECOND</i>	138
Introductory Remarks	140
The Text of the Play	148
PHILIP MASSINGER, <i>THE DUKE OF MILAN</i>	242
Introductory Remarks	244
The Text of the Play	249
JOHN FORD, <i>THE CHRONICLE HISTORY OF PERKIN WARBECK</i>	335
Introductory Remarks	336
The Text of the Play	343
Texts in Context	433
Glossary	447
Bibliography	463
Annotated Bibliography of Useful, Supporting Texts.....	466

To Students and Colleagues

It has always been my hope to see a series of Renaissance drama textbooks featuring “Shakespeare in Context.” Shakespeare has always been the love of my working life. However, the more Renaissance courses I have taught, the more I have felt the need to see The Bard presented in the context of others than himself. After all, Shakespeare wrote in the same developing cultural environment as his fellow dramatists, and many values and themes are shared among playwrights who can conveniently illuminate each other’s interpretations of their culture. I decided to teach “revenge tragedy” one semester quite some time ago, and though I could easily find many single editions of the plays I wanted, I had trouble finding a textbook spanning sufficient time to demonstrate what I had in mind; I had no luck at all finding Shakespeare in any company but his own. This resulted in the volume *Revenge Tragedies*. Later, I had the very same problem with a course on history plays—hence this anthology. I have long wished to help create such a textbook, and finally here it is, spanning from mediaeval English ideas to Elizabeth I and James I, from the beginnings of English history plays by Shakespeare and Marlowe to the point where the old genre is dusted off and revived by John Ford.

I have edited and annotated with the classroom in mind. All notes are footnotes rather than endnotes, and I have possibly sinned on the side of glossing more than strictly necessary in the hopes of avoiding student frustration; also, I have tried to keep my introductory remarks short. At the same time I have attempted to keep my own critical inclinations as neutral as possible; as instructors, we all have our critical preferences, and I myself like to meet my students presenting things my way. But I find it is impossible to introduce the plays without some interpretation. I have also tried to keep the balance between excessive faithfulness to the text and excessive “doctoring” of it. When faced with the choice, I have chosen the longer variation of the text. There is no such thing as *the* final text of any Renaissance playwright’s work, as the plays went through many stages and many hands before they reached publication. Additions in later editions may reflect the playwrights’ intentions or a variation in taste. However, I would like the students using this volume to have the fullest text possible. Non-original stage directions are given, when deemed necessary, in sharp parentheses.

Spelling and punctuation have been mostly modernized to make the reading experience more pleasant—I do enjoy spellings like “murther,” though. This may sometimes yield an extra “foot” in the line of blank verse; please consider the ending “-ed,” for example, as either a syllable in its own right or not, as fits the meter. I have mixed and matched a large variety of Quarto and Folio editions, creating the text I find most readable, comprehensive, and interesting. Other editors of more scholarly volumes should be consulted for thoughts about the merit of various early editions of the plays; I have seen no reason to duplicate their work. -s have been kept as close to the original as possible, but as they are few and far between, I have sometimes taken the liberty of adding to them, again to help the reader. Still, most stage directions are obvious and embedded in the text -- nobody would talk about being on his or her knees if not actually kneeling! The “aside,” though, is a Renaissance convention which may be unfamiliar to 21st century playgoers and readers, and so I have added stage directions for these.

I hope the glossary and context section will be of help.

Bente Videbaek

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The History Plays here Presented

The history or chronicle play grew out of the Mediaeval morality play, which was church sponsored and mainly aimed at teaching its audiences how to live a Christian life in order to attain salvation. The history play is an English phenomenon; we see it in neither Italy nor France, and only in the Romantic period Germany and other northern European countries, interested as they were in history, show us examples that resemble England's. Once the history play and the established morality play joined forces in the 16th century, the playwrights used historical persons as teaching tools and commentators on contemporary situations in order to make politically aimed points. Facts were mixed with fiction in order to make current commentary. The basis was the now popular chronicles, such as those written by Raphael Holinshed and Edward Hale, which fostered national identity and pride under the early Tudors, a relatively new phenomenon. The playwrights relied on their audience's knowledge of basic historical facts; one did not go to the theater to be informed about history, but to see what twists the newest play would show.

History does not lend itself easily to the stage if the playwright sticks to facts. We find events compressed in time, many omitted, and stress placed only on what best serves the play's message. The early plays especially foster nationalism and pride in being English, and the playwrights often use historical facts "creatively" to achieve this effect. In *Richard II*, for example, his role in the peasant revolt is omitted in order not to muddle the picture Shakespeare wants to draw of the monarch who had to be usurped, so the English hero king, Henry V, could become legitimate. Always with audience taste in mind, early history plays have much physical action and much spectacle. Battles are described in detail or represented by a series of single combats and soldiers marching across the stage in battle array.

Great importance is always given to the right to rule and the traits a truly good king must possess. The divine right to rule¹ is often under debate, as we see in *Edward II*, *Richard II*, and *Perkin Warbeck*. Edward and Richard have little to recommend them except being their fathers' sons, while Perkin Warbeck claims that he is the legitimate heir. Sforza of *The Duke of Milan* exemplifies how a ruler should put the country before his own wishes and inclinations to avoid catastrophe.² Shakespeare always shows the country of England as his early history plays' "protagonist"; the audience judges character on how well or badly they treat England, and whether or not they revere their motherland. Traits in a ruler that are always admired and preferred in a king are decisive action with England in mind, the ability to delegate so as not to seem tyrannical, and preferring good advice above flattery. Substance in kingship is always more important than pomp and show. And one should always make sure one's army is paid its salary; a debate was beginning about where true power lies, whether in God's ruler elect or in the one with control of the army.

¹ See glossary: Divine Right of Kings.

² See glossary: King's Two Bodies.

We also often see how betrayal comes about, and how various rulers handle themselves in this situation. Edward II is betrayed by his nobles, who are shocked more by his gifts of land and titles to his minion Gaveston, who is a commoner, than the erotic relationship between king and subject. Edward does not handle himself well in this crisis and takes action only when pressed and forced. His son, who succeeds him, shows much more promise than his father; he is capable of decisive action and kingly behavior. Richard II is also betrayed by his nobles, but his serious transgressions are appropriating possessions that should be inherited and squandering money. He also shows blatant disrespect for England and fails to provide an heir to the throne. He listens to flatterers and will do anything to be the center of attention. Bolingbroke, who usurps him supported by the nobles, clearly commits a mortal sin, but as far as leadership is concerned, he is by far the better king; flattery has no impact on him, and he can delegate and take decisive action. Duke Sforza is betrayed by his best friend Francisco, on whom he has lavished attention and gifts, mostly to atone for having seduced his sister. Sforza fails to see that revenge can be long in the making, and he also fails to put the interests of his country before his excessive devotion to his wife, whom he would rather see murdered than with another man, even should he die. On the one occasion when he leaves court to demonstrate that he is capable of good government, he does so reluctantly, and gives his friend the perfect chance to undermine him and cause catastrophe. In *Perkin Warbeck*, we see King Henry VII betrayed by his most trusted advisor and friend Stanley. Henry demonstrates capable government when he listens to people who report on Stanley, and sees to his former friend's execution; country is placed before friendship and inclination. Perkin himself is betrayed by the king of Scotland, who has promised him support and given him a noblewoman of his own family to wife, only to turn his back on him when persuaded by King Henry. Perkin, like Richard II, prefers words to action, and though they both have long and beautifully worded speeches, they fall short when it comes to true leadership.

The playwrights of our four plays also use their protagonists' relationships to women to characterize them. Edward's queen, Isabella, is clearly jealous of Gaveston, and betrays her husband with no regrets when she gives herself and her son over to Mortimer Junior, the chief rebel. Edward has few kind words for his wife, clearly preferring Gaveston's company. Not even in public does he recognize that a ruler has obligations to at least appear devoted to his wife, showing that he puts his own desires second to kingship. Richard's queen, Isabel, is clearly devoted to him, something that serves to show that there must be something admirable about him. Once usurped, Richard begins to show love for his wife, but she is never a public figure; she is a wife and subordinate, and she is tasked with telling Richard's story when they are forced to separate. In all Shakespeare's early histories, the women place greater importance on their family's survival than on the honor and glory that motivate the men. Sforza's relationship to his wife Marcelia is highly sexually charged, to such a degree that it embarrasses his court and causes his mother and sister to become jealous. Sforza gives Francisco a letter, ordering the death of his wife should he fail to return from his political mission, and murders his wife in a jealous rage when she treats him coldly after having found out his intentions for her. Again we see private desire trumping the greater good. Perkin Warbeck's wife, Katherine, has a devoted admirer, for whom the audience comes to have great pity. She is obedient to her king more than her father when King James wishes her

to marry Perkin. In all things, she is devoted to her husband, and some of his best moments occur in interaction with Katherine, who refuses to leave him after his luck changes. The way these four protagonists treat and think about their significant others serve to characterize them in a most economical fashion.

Through these four plays we see a shift in fashion and audience preferences. Marlowe shows us a portrait of a truly inept king, but does not glorify his country's past, unless Edward III's promise of good leadership is counted, which it should be, despite the brief time we spend with him. Shakespeare takes the idea of statecraft a step further, when he juxtaposes Richard's and Henry's executive styles; we see a shift from the mediaeval mindset into that of the early modern period—and Henry is the father of Prince Hal, later to become England's heroic warrior king! Massinger shows us what a leader should not be, and his portrait of Sforza is a negative example; we have no viable alternative, which shows us how important an heir to the throne really is. Finally, Ford shows us true statecraft in the person of King Henry, who manages to sway King James in the right direction, away from Perkin, towards the best interest of his country.

History plays and the ideas they work with may seem foreign to a modern audience, who often has no idea who all these named nobles are and finds it difficult to tell who is who. But once we accept that we do not need to get to know all the characters but just have to concentrate on the few, significant ones, this genre gives us great insight into what interested the early modern period's audiences, and what problems they liked to see under debate.

The History of the History Plays

The genre of the history play changed and evolved during its period of popularity. Here are a few examples chosen from the abundance of plays available to show how the genre developed, how it was used, and what it could accomplish.

John Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, 1519, can be seen as an embryonic history play. It follows the morality play's established form of naming characters allegorically. In *Everyman*,³ for example, the character of Everyman stands for all Christians that should be living a life with more thought to the hereafter, and we meet characters like Fellowship and Goods, who have not truly been friends and have distracted Everyman from the true path. The neglected characters such as Good Deeds and Knowledge are then sought out and found to be truly willing and able to make a good Christian out of Everyman, resulting in his going to Heaven at play's end. Skelton follows the tradition of naming characters allegorically, but he adds in transparent parallels to contemporary history. The character Magnificence is clearly King Henry VII, England's first Tudor king, and his son, King Henry VIII, on the throne when the play was written and England's first Protestant monarch; Cardinal Wolsey is seen in the character Folly. Magnificence, a trait shown to combine good sense and generosity, is an excellent quality in a king. The character is tempted by representations of political evil and kept on the right path by representations of political virtue. Virtue, of course, triumphs.

³ The playwright is unknown.

The first instance we have of actual historical persons being used on stage is John Bale's *Kyng Johan*, acted in 1538 at Christmas at Thomas Cranmer's estate.⁴ Bale makes use of 400-years-old material in order to comment on Henry VIII's plans to become the head of the English church,

[T]he first history play in English drama was presented in the belief that the reign of King John saw the start of 'the putting down of the bishop of Rome', and so the stage managed to overlay the abstract allegory of personified characters with the more compelling representation of historical figures.

(J. L. Styan, *The English Stage*, p. 72)

Shakespeare later uses the same material in his *The Life and Death of King John*, this time as allegory for the relationships seen among Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, and King Philip of Spain through the characters of King John, Arthur, and King Philip of France.⁵ This practice of using historical figures as allegories for contemporary notables continues as long as the genre of the history play was written and acted.

Norton and Sackville's *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex* is the first English tragedy modeled on the classical genre, Senecan tragedy in particular; it was acted in 1562 and printed in 1565. The subject matter is taken from *The History of the Kings of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1095– c.1155) and is not factual or historical.⁶ The elderly King Gorboduc and his queen have two sons, Ferrex and Porrex, who have a serious falling out over who is to inherit the kingdom. Porrex kills Ferrex, and is in turn killed by his mother in revenge. The Duke of Albany, another character, tries to seize the kingdom, now without a legitimate heir, but civil war breaks out, and chaos results. The main theme of legitimacy of government is clearly a reflection on the consequences for the governed if the reigning monarch fails to give the kingdom an undisputed heir. At the time of performance, Elizabeth I was relatively new on the throne, unmarried, and playing her suitors against each other, probably with the plan never to marry. Before her, her father had left the kingdom in an uncertain state. Henry VIII's only living son by Jane Seymour, his third wife, was crowned at nine years old and reigned only from 1547 to 1553. His eldest daughter by his first wife, Catherine of Aragon whom he divorced, known as Bloody Mary, reintroduced Catholicism to the newly Protestant England, and in her short time on the throne⁷ she created a plethora of Protestant martyrs.⁸ Elizabeth I, Henry's daughter by his second wife, Anne Boleyn, was a Protestant like her father. As the Pope did not recognize Henry's divorce, Elizabeth was declared a bastard and excommunicated by the Catholic church. It is easy to see why legitimate succession was a heated topic at the time of *Gorboduc*'s production.

At the beginning of the genre's popularity, the history presented was always English. Author and playwright Thomas Heywood, who among many other things wrote

⁴ Thomas Cranmer was Archbishop of Canterbury.

⁵ See Glynne Wickham, *A History of the English stages 1300–1660*, vol. 2, p. 36. See also p. 37 for commentary on *Gorboduc*.

⁶ At the time *Gorboduc* was written, the legendary "histories" in *De gestis Britonum* or *Historia regum Britanniae* were still believed to be historical fact.

⁷ 1553–1558.

⁸ See John Fox, *The Acts and Monuments of the Church Containing the History and Sufferings of the Martyrs*, available in two volumes in facsimile from Kessinger Publishing. It is often graphic and disturbing reading.

An apology for actors Containing three briefe treatises. 1 Their antiquity. 2 Their ancient dignity. 3 The true vse of their quality, defending the stage from Puritan attacks by stressing the sound moral lessons gleaned from theatrical performances, praised the history plays for immortalizing English heroes of a bygone era and for promoting national pride. In the 1590s, though, the playwrights began branching out and looking at events in other countries' history for relevant material. Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* belongs in this company.

Christopher Marlowe, whose *Edward II* is the first play in this volume, wrote *The Massacre at Paris* (1592?), which deals with the relatively recent Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, committed on the eve of August 24th, 1572. On this day prominent and influential Huguenots, Calvinist Protestants, in Paris were murdered by Catholic leaders to quash Protestantism and the momentum it was gaining in France; traditionally the massacre is believed to be instigated by Queen Catherine de' Medici, the mother of the reigning King Charles IX. The massacre spread from Paris to the entire country of France, and the estimated number of the murdered varies between 5,000 and 30,000. Naturally, this bloody episode made quite an impression on the English, who had seen their religion change back and forth between Catholicism and Protestantism after Henry VIII decided on a divorce from his first wife. Marlowe shows around two dozen murders on stage during the play!

Ben Jonson also tried his hand at history plays from abroad; his are set in ancient Rome. *Sejanus, His Fall* (acted at the court in 1603), his first attempt, was not successful. It describes the rise and fall of Sejanus, a favorite of the Emperor Tiberius (42 BC–37 AD), who commanded Tiberius's Praetorian Guard. Sejanus gained tremendous political power, especially after Tiberius retired to Capri, when Sejanus gained control of Rome's administration. He became Consul in AD 31, and was accused of conspiracy against Tiberius that same year, which caused his fall and execution. Apart from warning against a king letting others take the reins, the subject matter of *Sejanus* was probably not of great interest to the English theatergoer. When the play was presented at the Globe Theatre in 1604, it was a flop. Jonson tried again with *Catiline His Conspiracy*, describing another Roman sedition, this time Lucius Sergius Catilina's attempt to overthrow the Roman Republic and the power of the Senate in the first century BC. This 1611 play was not a success either, reportedly being booed off the stage. It later became popular, but did not help Jonson build and strengthen his reputation as a great playwright as he apparently had hoped.

Shakespeare's history plays are all based on English soil, as here represented by *Richard II*. Late in his career, after the genre was no longer in vogue, he wrote *All Is True*, later to be known as *The Life of King Henry the Eighth*, 1611, in collaboration with John Fletcher. The fourth performance of this play caused the Globe Theater to burn down when staged cannon fire ignited the thatch. *All Is True* is a celebration of the Tudor dynasty and its contribution to English Protestantism. The play begins with King Henry VIII seeking a divorce from Catherine of Aragon because he, after 24 years, came to see his marriage as illegitimate.⁹ The Pope denied the request. Central to the play is the relationship between Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey, who held the highest possible

⁹ Catherine had been married to Henry's brother Arthur, who died. At the time, marrying a brother's widow was considered incestuous. Still, England needed the political ties to Spain the marriage would bring, and the Pope allowed the the union to take place.

position of any Catholic priest in England and also, as Lord Chancellor, was the king's main advisor. When he failed to negotiate the divorce with the Pope, the Cardinal fell out of favor at the English court and had his titles removed. He was called to London from York to face accusations of high treason, but died on the way of natural causes. The Protestant era was ushered in. Henry married Anne Boleyn in secret and fathered Elizabeth I-to-be. *All Is True* spans the time from Henry's wish for a divorce to Elizabeth's baptism. This play sticks more closely to actual history than any other.

[The play's message] (described in the longest and most detailed stage directions in [Shakespeare's] canon) is one which counsels against putting any faith in specious appearances. Compared to the earlier histories it is episodic, resembling an anthology of morality plays in its successive descriptions of the falls of [the great], and its version of history has a strong tinge of the non-realistic late romances.

(*The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, pp.7–8)

As is true for many Jacobean plays, Shakespeare and Fletcher here give their audiences several peeks at what only the nobility saw: the court masque.¹⁰ Spectacle is heaped on spectacle. We see Henry and his court "crash" a ball disguised as shepherds; the divorce hearings and their imperious preliminaries; the coronation of Anne Boleyn; Catherine's dream vision of six figures in white robes; and Princess Elizabeth's baptism.

Interestingly, John Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* (first published 1634, but probably written between 1629 and 1634) returns to the older approaches of the history plays, using historical figures to comment on contemporary politics.

The Playhouses, Players, and Plays

The Renaissance was an age of extravagance and spectacle, remarkably theatrical in many aspects. The monarch was on display, "on stage" as it were, during his or her progresses of state through England; Elizabeth especially is known for her lavish progresses. Spectacle was also involved in the elaborate public executions of the period, especially in the traitor's punishment,¹¹ where the spectators not only had a visual, gruesome warning against committing the awful crime of treason and the edification of the condemned's last words on the scaffold, but also had an opportunity to admire the craftsmanship of a truly skilled executioner. The theater, of course, was another arena that specialized in display and spectacle.

In 1580, public performances of drama for profit and the idea of playgoing as a pastime were relatively new. There had been performances before, to be sure, in connection with church festivals sponsored by the guilds, in the Tudor hall as entertainment, and in inn-yards, but playhouses erected solely for the purpose of providing the paying public with entertainment were a novelty.

Players did not fit easily into the categories of organized society. They were regarded as vagrants and "masterless men" along with other suspicious characters such as peddlers and tinkers who moved about in an otherwise static society, taking advantage of people, stealing and conniving. Only when a group of players had obtained the patronage

¹⁰ See glossary: Masque.

¹¹ See glossary.

of nobility or royalty as “servants” could they perform without fear of interference by the authorities. Shakespeare, for example, became one of a newly formed company under the Lord Chamberlain’s protection in 1594, and after James I ascended the English throne his company became “The King’s Men.”

When we stop to think about the long list of plays that we still have preserved and the even longer list of lost plays,¹² the numbers are impressive; a comparison is possible between the number of movies produced in a given period and the few that will survive into the future. Which Renaissance plays would survive, however, was much less predictable than the movie comparison may suggest. One reason that we have as many Shakespearean plays as we do is the dedication of members of Shakespeare’s acting company that saw to the publication of the First Folio after his death. A play was usually not printed until it was no longer profitable for the company, and a printed edition might create a small extra profit. Shakespeare’s *Richard II* is an instance in point; it was published in six quartos and finally in the Folio, first with the abdication scene removed, then restored.

The reason for the staggering number of plays was the large number of playgoers and the relatively few theaters. We have documentation enough to figure that the Admiral’s Men of the Rose Theatre put on roughly forty plays in one year, and there is little reason to doubt that the same was true for the other theaters.¹³ The plays had very short runs, and one play was never performed on consecutive days in order not to lose audience support. It is difficult to imagine the pressure on a leading actor who would have had to memorize some 40,000 lines per year. Renaissance theater had its “stars” like we have ours, and the public would often pay to see Burbage, Shakespeare’s leading man, or Kemp, Shakespeare’s early company clown, perform, and would demand to see their favorites. Though prestige might follow noble and royal patronage, the money to be made in order to stabilize a shareholding player’s social position came from the admission fee to the public theaters, so the companies strove to give its public what it wanted.

Playhouses were located in “the liberties,” areas not under the control of London’s Lord Mayor. Few of these could be found within the city walls, all relics of former monasteries. Theaters were generally situated well outside the city walls in the suburbs with a concentration in Southwark on the south bank of the Thames River where the Globe stood. An assembled motley crowd such as a playhouse attracted was regarded as not only noisy and unpleasant, but it also drew unsavory elements:

. . . At plaies, the Nip standeth there leaning like some manerly gentleman against the doore as men go in, and there finding talke with some of his companions, spieth what everie man hath in his purse, and where, in what place, and in which sleeve or pocket he puts the bounge and according to that so he worketh either where the thrust is great within, or else as they come out at the doors.

(Robert Greene, *The second Part of Conny Catching*, 1591)¹⁴

. . . the quality of such as frequent the sayed places, beeing the ordinary places of meetings for all vagrant persons & maisterles men that hang about the Citie, theeves,

¹² See e.g. Alfred Harbage’s *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*.

¹³ See map of playhouses in Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage* p.28-29.

¹⁴ Qtd. in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, Appendix 2, entry 13.

horsestealers, whoremongers, coozeners, connycatching persons, practizers of treason, & other such lyke . . .

(Lord Mayor to Lord Burghley, 3 November 1594 (repeated in petition for abolition of playhouses 28 July 1597 to the Privy Council)¹⁵

A large crowd was also seen as a suspicious and potentially riotous lot, not welcome in good neighborhoods; no wonder performances such as those put on at inns were banned within the city in 1594. To compensate, the public playhouses were licensed, thus situating drama and performance outside the city limits.

Having a playhouse with an entrance where admission could be taken was a great improvement over passing the hat after a performance at an inn-yard; people paid in advance and could not enter without payment. The playhouses were constructed on two models, the square inn-yard and the multi-sided polygon of an animal baiting arena. Both models had galleries with benches, usually three levels, each level protruding over the level beneath and the upmost one thatched;¹⁶ in case of rain, some shelter could be provided here for the people standing around the stage itself. Admission for standing room was the cheapest, a seat on a gallery bench more expensive, and the price rose again for admission to a “Gentleman’s Box” on the first gallery, immediately above and to the sides of the stage, and the “Lord’s Rooms” on the balcony above the stage, seats making sure that the occupant was seen and remarked upon! The Globe galleries could seat some 2,000 people, and, when a popular play was offered, about 1,000 groundlings could be squeezed into the yard. All performances in the public playhouses took place in the afternoon by natural light, which seems foreign to a 21st century playgoer who is accustomed to sitting in darkness, hushed and silent, expecting theater of illusion. The Renaissance audiences were lively lots, buying and consuming food and drink, sometimes fighting, sometimes negotiating with a prostitute for services, and always commenting loudly about the business on stage, whether favorably or the opposite. The audience surrounded the stage area on all sides, and nobody was really far from the stage. Being surrounded by spectators put very different demands on the actors from what we are used to in our contemporary theaters. They would unavoidably have their backs turned to part of the audience, and the spectators would see a “different play” depending on their position in the auditorium.

The stage itself was a platform about five feet tall and about 1,180 square feet in size. It had a trapdoor in the middle to give access to the “hell” beneath from which devils could ascend, sinners could descend, and ghosts could emerge. Above the stage was a gallery with a balcony which was used both as boxes for spectators and as a secondary staging area for scenes such as *Romeo and Juliet*’s balcony scene and for Richard the Second’s entry when challenged by Bolingbrook at Flint Castle; possibly the musicians so many plays call for also found room here. This gallery and the stage itself were covered by “the heavens,” supported by sturdy pillars, from which a trapdoor allowed such figures as Jove to descend to the stage and be elevated again. The Renaissance public playhouse thus resembles the Mediaeval stage, only where the religiously inspired plays had a horizontal arrangement of heaven-earth-hell, the

¹⁵ Ibid. entry 21.

¹⁶ See sketches for the rebuilding of the New Globe in Mulryne and Shewring’s *Shakespeare’s Globe Rebuilt*, pp. 118-119. <http://www.reading.ac.uk/globe/> is another excellent visual resource.

amphitheater's is vertical. The back of the stage was a wall, the *frons scenae*, with three openings, two doors on either side for regular entrances and exits, and a middle aperture, the "discovery space," which could be covered by a painted tapestry or curtain. This was a convenient space from which to "discover" Juliet in her tomb, a tableau like Ferdinand and Miranda's chess game in *The Tempest*, or the fake corpses of the Duchess' family in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. We assume that both "the heavens" and the *frons scenae* were richly decorated; The New Globe certainly has followed this assumption with beautiful result.¹⁷ Behind this wall was the "tiring house" where the actors readied themselves for performance and awaited their cue to enter.

A stage like the Globe's could, of course, not be curtained off like our "picture frame" stages can. This meant no elaborate scene changes were possible. A Renaissance play in a public playhouse would be performed in one continuous action with no act divisions and no intermissions, making for a speedier experience than we are used to in the 21st century. Scenery was minimal, and most of it was painted by the playwright's words. When two people are standing five feet from one another (*Hamlet* I.i) and say that they are unable to see each other, the audience smoothly infers that the time is night. When we are told, "[T]his is the forest of Arden" in *As You Like It* (II.iv), we accept that trees surround the actors and are unsurprised when a lover pins poems onto a convenient tree/support pillar. Those of us who have experienced "theater in the round" will agree that we adapt to the bare stage, the minimal use of props, and the set painted by the dramatist in words with greater ease than might be expected from more modern generations used to spectacular special effects, movies, and theater of illusion.

Props were present, to be sure, and Mr. Henslowe's papers have given us extensive lists of what was to be had. We find few large properties, which were unwieldy and difficult to remove without interrupting the action. Beds, for example, could be presented from the discovery space, but if a character was ill and needed to be closer to the audience to speak, he would be rolled in in a chair. Most props were handheld and left the stage with the actor. Often small props identified the bearer (a "scenic emblem"): a king, of course, needs his crown, his scepter, and his sphere; a jester would carry a bauble; only gentlemen wore swords; Hieronimo's dagger and rope (*Spanish Tragedy* IV.v) mark him as contemplating suicide. But small props could take on large significance. Richards II's mirror and crown take on symbolic significance; The Mower in *Edward II* carries his scythe and becomes an emblem of Death; and the letter written by Sforza in *The Duke of Milan* takes on a life of its own. Every time an original stage direction specifies use of a handprop, it is a good idea to open one's imagination to the symbolic possibilities of that prop.

On the bare, open stage there were only the pillars supporting "the heavens," and so no place for an actor to hide when spying or eavesdropping. The playwright's words often suffice to "hide" the actor—nobody but the audience will be aware of his presence. This leads to a discussion of the conventions that were taken for granted in the Renaissance. One convention we hardly think about and readily accept while experiencing theater in the round is that of place. The bare stage comfortably and seamlessly changes from castle to marketplace to bedchamber by means of the playwright's words. We know we are in a theater watching a play, not truly in the Duke's

¹⁷ See <http://www.reading.ac.uk/globe/>

chamber or a Danish graveyard, but part of the contract we sign when buying our ticket is that we will choose not to credit this knowledge; we allow ourselves to be transported wherever the play takes us. By the same token we accept that when an actor turns from another to deliver “an aside,” only we can hear it; and when an actor declares himself hidden, or in some cases invisible, we believe, but we relish being “in the know.” We also readily accept a few soldiers as representatives of an entire army, and a few skirmishes as an entire battle, something we especially need for the history plays.

What the stage lacked in properties and scenery, it made up for by its lavish use of costumes. Again from Henslowe’s papers we have knowledge of the extensive wardrobe available to the actors, and presumably all performance took place in contemporary dress. The actors probably supplied their own costumes when nothing out of the ordinary was needed, but theater management had outfits to accommodate what the play needed, notably several suits of armor and padding, which were necessary for the actors to remain unhurt during the frequent bouts of enthusiastic swordplay so loved by the audience. Clothing assists in setting the stage: an actor appears in a cloak and boots, and so we know that we are out-of-doors and probably traveling; we see a nightcap and a nightshirt, and we know we are in the presence of a roused sleeper; Hamlet’s black garb signals mourning. Social status is defined by dress: a velvet garment signals a lady, but if she adds cloth of gold or gold lace, she is of the high nobility. Indeed, the Sumptuary Laws¹⁸ set down rules for what fabrics were acceptable for each social class. Only the nobility could wear silk and taffeta, for instance, so such garments were supplied by the theater. Members of different trades were readily identifiable by their garb and accessories; Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* specifies an “apron and rule” for a carpenter (I.i).

The plays produced on the public stages were significantly different from the Mediaeval performances in themes and topics.¹⁹ Miracle and Morality plays concern themselves with religious instruction, the salvation of the human soul, our realization of our susceptibility to succumb to committing sins and the consequences thereof, and with our awareness of our place in the greater scheme of things. Many passages were rich in comedic elements, but the main focus of even slapstick comedy was the religiously motivated moral message to be sent. Once theatergoing became a commercial enterprise, there was a clear shift in the themes and topics presented. English history plays became a vehicle for patriotism and often glorified the past of the reigning dynasty.²⁰ Moreover, history plays lent themselves to such attractions as battles, spectacle, and military music. As the period progressed, the concept of “kingship” and “government” were frequently debated issues, which were problematized on stage not only in the history plays, but also in other, more abstract contexts such as we find it in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Maid’s Tragedy* and Shakespeare’s *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. Other popular topics were the moral ramifications of private versus public revenge and, in both comedies and tragedies, the issues connected with love and marriage; in most cases room could be found for

¹⁸ “A law regulating expenditure, especially with view to restraining excess in food, dress, equipage, etc.” (O.E.D.)

¹⁹ There is much more to be said on this topic than this introduction has room for. For a brilliant and thorough treatment, see Glynne Wickham’s *A History of the Theatre*.

²⁰ Shakespeare’s *Richard the Third* is an instance in point. The man who saves England from the bloody tyranny of Richard’s rule is Elizabeth’s grandfather!

swordplay or duels with rapiers, and the actors' skills with their weapons did not go unnoticed or uncheered.

Parallel to the adult companies of actors, and giving them strong competition, there existed groups of boy actors, for instance "The Children of the Chapel Royal," who performed once or twice a week. Boy companies had been known since the fourteenth century and were much favored by both Henry VIII and Elizabeth. These boys were connected to a church or school where they were receiving a gentleman's education, which among other things included rhetoric. Performing plays as part of higher education was defensible because the boys learned to

. . . try their voices and confirm [strengthen] their memories; to frame [control] their speech; to conform them to convenient action [suitable behaviour]; to try what metal is in every one, and of what disposition they are of; whereby never any one amongst us, that I know was made the worse, many have been much the better.

(William Gager, qtd. in Styan, *The English Stage*)

Besides acting, the boys received training in singing, dancing, and music, and their training made them so versatile that they attracted the attention of several major playwrights who wrote, sometimes exclusively, for the boy companies; their major strength was light comedy. A skilled boy actor was also in high demand from the adult companies, who needed him to play female parts.²¹

The boys performed indoors, notably at The Blackfriars Theatre, which in the 1580s was regarded as a fashionable place to go and attracted an audience of gentlemen. Once the hall playhouses again were permitted within London city limits in 1599, the boy companies resumed public performance, but adult companies were still barred from performance in the city until 1608, when Burbage and Shakespeare's company took over Blackfriars.²²

The popularity of the children's companies may seem strange to us, but they had a long history of royal favor, there was an aura of the genteel about them not found with adult companies, and once indoor performance was again established, such a theater gave protection against the weather and offered an intimate and sophisticated atmosphere in a small setting. The popularity of playwrights such as Ben Jonson, who favored the boys, certainly added to the attraction, and competition between adults and boys was sometimes fierce.²³ Admission to an indoor or "private" playhouse was higher in price than to a public one, which also served to create a more sophisticated, coterie audience.

Like the outdoor, the indoor playhouse had galleries flanking the stage, but the space in front of it had benches to sit on. The seats nearest to the stage were the most expensive, quite the opposite of the public playhouses, and the auditorium could seat only about 700 if three galleries were available, 600 if two. The balcony above the stage no longer had seating, but it had space for musicians, who played during the interludes

²¹ All roles were played by male actors during the Renaissance; not until the Restoration did an English actress set foot on stage.

²² James Burbage adapted Blackfriars to accommodate adult performance and probably to get winter quarters for his company in 1596, but he was not permitted to bring the adult company in, and so Blackfriars was leased to the boys.

²³ See *Hamlet* II.ii.330 ff.

necessary to trim the wicks of the candles used for illumination²⁴ and to lend mood throughout the play. The stage itself was considerably smaller than that of an outdoor theater, about 400 square feet to about 1200 square feet, and this space was further limited by the practice of having a few extra-paying gallants sit on stools on the stage itself. The trapdoor to “hell” could be found in the stage floor, but from above more and more machinery made more and more elaborate special effects possible, such as “flying.”

The plays written for the private playhouses differ somewhat from those designed for the public ones. The smaller stage and the confined space did not lend themselves well to battle scenes because of their sheer magnitude and noise; now battles of wit took precedence over actual skirmish. Because the daylight convention no longer was necessary as lighting to a great degree could be controlled, the verbal painting of time of day was no longer necessary. Control over light and darkness made it possible to create eerie spectacles and dumb shows, such as we see in Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*, and elaborate masques such as Beaumont and Fletcher’s wedding masque in *The Maid’s Tragedy*, which takes place in the dark of night with only the moon for illumination. The private playhouses offered spectacle, sophisticated dialogue, music, and song, all suitable to the intimate space. But of course many popular plays found themselves transposed from one setting to the other after the adult companies gained access to both types of playhouses and moved favorite plays to the arena they occupied.

But how have these plays been preserved for us? And in what form?²⁵

The playwright’s words were most closely represented in the so-called “foul papers,” which are a challenge for a modern reader as they are in flowing contemporary handwriting, “the secretary hand,” and the spelling is idiosyncratic. This version would have strike-outs, additions, marginal comments, and would generally look like what we consider “a draft.” In *Much Ado About Nothing*, for example, we sometimes find the actor’s name substituted for the character’s name in the speech headings; sometimes, “Clown” is substituted for a character’s name. These “errors” might easily find their way into print. Furthermore, many of the changes brought about by performance will not be found in the “foul papers.”

It is easier to read the next stage, the “fair copy,” but it could be made by a copyist as well as the playwright, and so might perpetuate mistakes and even add more. And whoever copied the “foul papers” would add his own idiosyncratic spelling conceptions to those already present, and sometimes punctuation became an issue as well.

“The book of the play” is the final version, treasured by the company, which contains enough information for the book-keeper—the stage manager—to make performance go smoothly. He marked up this copy to make sure everybody knew what props were needed when, when entrances were to take place, and from which door. Once an actor was on stage, there was no way to help him, except from fellow actors, should he forget his lines. After 1570, when censorship began, the “book of the play,” or the “prompt copy,” had to be approved by the Master of the Revels, who signed the book for the company as proof that nothing in it was offensive. A shorter version than the approved one was in order, but nothing could be added. If the London theaters were closed, for example during outbreaks of the plague, the company might take three or four

²⁴ Usually four trimmings during a performance, splitting the play into five “acts.”

²⁵ Good readings on the preserving and printing of the plays can be found in Gurr and Ichikawa’s *Staging in Shakespeare’s Theatres* and McDonald’s *The Bedford Companion*.

plays and their respective costumes and props on tour; in such a situation the play might well be abbreviated, but the Master of the Revels' signature guaranteed the acceptability of the text.

Once the actors thought the play had lost its audience appeal as a performed text, they might sell it—and so give up all rights—to a printer. The government controlled the Stationers' Company or Register, which regulated all the printers in London; the printer would pay a fee to register his printed copy with this company, after which he could print and reprint as the market dictated. Many title pages of the time, such as the one for *Arden of Feversham* which mentions no author, make this ownership known: "Imprinted at London for Edward White, dwelling at the lyttle north dore of Paules Church at the signe of the Gun. 1592." The printer would use one or more of the copies mentioned above, "foul papers," "fair copy," "book of the play," as a basis for his text.

Printing was a relatively new thing in the Renaissance, and type setting and actual printing was executed by hand and open to variation, as spelling was by no means standardized at the time; especially the setting of type introduced idiosyncratic spelling and punctuation. It is possible through Shakespeare's *Folio* to ascertain which composer²⁶ set a given page because of his preferred spelling or, say, love of the parenthesis or the colon. Because production could be furthered by it, several composers were setting type for the same sheet, and they were doing it in an atmosphere of deafening noise from the hand-operated machinery, ink stains everywhere, and the stench from the leather balls used for applying the ink, which were soaking in human urine to keep them supple.

Many of the variations and errors introduced during all these steps in preserving the text for us have scholars puzzled to this day, and we find this puzzlement reflected in "the war of the footnotes." If we ask ourselves whether we will ever be able to reconstruct the actual text used in the actual playhouse in Renaissance times, the answer must be no; *the* text is a phantom.²⁷

²⁶ The one who placed the metal letters in the wooden frame for printing.

²⁷ See Rosenbaum's "Shakespeare in Rewrite" for an illuminating discussion of this topic.

An Expression of Gratitude

As every editor must, I feel a great debt to the many people who have helped me with this task; who have taught me throughout my career as a student; who as colleagues have discussed Early Modern drama with me; who have been my interesting and interested students. Still, most of all, I acknowledge my debt to those editors whose works I have consulted for this volume, and whose criticism I have profited from.

For *Edward the Second*, special gratitude to Professor Emeritus Douglas Cole of Northwestern University, whose classes I attended whenever I could, and whose book *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy* has inspired me.

For *Richard the Second*, I am deeply indebted to the works of Professor J. L. Styan, also formerly of Northwestern University, with whom I have had innumerable interesting discussions, wonderful classes, and much support. *Shakespeare's Stagecraft* and *The English Stage* are books I have leaned on.

For *The Duke of Milan*, editor Colin Gibson was very helpful—this play is hard to come by, excellent though it is.

For *The Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck*, my thanks go especially to Dr. Peter Ure and Dr. Marion Lomax.

Finally, I cannot express how much I have profited from and enjoyed the works of Dr. Russ McDonald, especially *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*. This slim volume is excellent in itself, but also leads its reader to many other helpful sources.

EDWARD THE SECOND

by

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE



EFFIGY OF EDWARD II.²—From his tomb in Gloucester Cathedral.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Christopher Marlowe is one of those Renaissance playwrights about whom hardly any hard evidence is to hand. There are tantalizing suggestions on record, which lead his biographers to draw tantalizing possible conclusions about what was undoubtedly an exciting life; unfortunately what we do not know must have us preface all our conclusions with “if” and “possibly,” if we wish to remain within the realm of fact.

Marlowe was born in 1564, the son of a shoemaker in Cambridge. What evidence we have consists mainly of records from church and schools attesting to dates of birth and death, attendance, and degrees; in the case of published authors we sometimes—but not always—find an author’s name on the title page; and in Marlowe’s case there are legal documents pertaining to arrests and accusations of heresy. Finally, we find discussions of his character and mentions of events in private papers such as letters or diaries. During his early life, church and school records reveal nothing out of the ordinary about Christopher Marlowe. He went to the King’s School and in 1581 proceeded to attend Cambridge University on a scholarship, studying “divinity,” i.e., theology. Cambridge was the early nursery of the Protestant Reformation and attracted such humanist scholars as Erasmus of Rotterdam, who taught there between 1511 and 1513.

Before 1587, we have evidence of Marlowe’s lengthy absences from school, and in that year a document from the Privy Council²⁸ directs the University to grant Marlowe his M.A. as he had done the Queen “good service” and not, as suspected, defected to the English College at Rheims, which trained Catholics as missionaries in Protestant countries. The English College originally was established at Douai by the Jesuits, who were viewed with particular suspicion in Protestant England, and who established a mission there in 1580. Marlowe’s England was under constant threat of invasion by Catholic powers, and biographers speculate that Marlowe’s “good service” may have been a secret mission of espionage to gather information and possibly deliver information to other, established agents in Rheims. Documents that we do have and which point to Marlowe’s later association with people involved with espionage support this assumption.

An M.A. in “divinity” suggests a career in either church or university, but Marlowe went to London and immersed himself in the culture of the theater and the writing of poetry. Theater as a commercial venture was a relatively new thing, and the demand for entertainment and variety was high. His first play, *Tamburlaine*, a groundbreaking and very successful tragedy in blank verse, was played by the Lord Admiral’s Men, who also performed some of the most famous of Marlowe’s later plays. Many critics see Marlowe’s use of blank verse as the foundation of Elizabethan drama, and also as an inspiration for Shakespeare.

We know that Marlowe was in London in September, 1589, when he was in a street brawl that claimed the life of one participant. Two men involved were associated with Thomas Walsingham of Kent, who was a close relative to Queen Elizabeth’s head of intelligence. Marlowe was arrested but quickly released. Relatively newly found

²⁸ See glossary.

evidence, supporting testimony given by Thomas Kyd, indicates that Marlowe was also possibly engaged in counterfeiting money.²⁹

Thomas Kyd, the author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, and Marlowe were “wryting in one chamber” in 1591 according to Kyd. Kyd was arrested on May 12, 1593, interrogated, and presumably tortured under suspicion of libel against foreigners living in London, and also because papers found in his possession demonstrated “vile hereticall Conceiptes denyng the deity of Jhesus Christe o^r Savio^r.”³⁰ Kyd claimed these papers were Marlowe’s. After Marlowe’s death, Kyd attacked him vituperously, maybe to save himself from further prosecution on the grounds of being an irreligious atheist, and of ridiculing religion.³¹

Marlowe was apparently given to brawling and fighting; in 1592 we have complaints registered by two constables, who were feeling threatened by him, and by his tailor, whom he attacked physically. He was arrested upon Kyd’s testimony on May 20, 1593, and immediately released on bond, but he had to report to the authorities daily, and so had to stay in and around London. He was killed before his case made its way to court.

Marlowe and three companions spent a day at a tavern in Deptford. A quarrel broke out, probably about the tavern bill, and Marlowe attacked one of his companions, Frizer, with the man’s own dagger, wounding him twice. Frizer succeeded in getting his dagger back and wounding Marlowe fatally in the head. Recent scholarship has uncovered suggestions that all three of Marlowe’s companions had a connection to the underground world of espionage, and the killing seems to have been a reunion of spies gone bad.

Contemporary views of Marlowe’s character are contradictory. The Puritans disliked him intensely and maligned him after his death for atheism and immorality, as did some fellow poets. Others praised his great capacity for friendship and his inspired poetry. We have one portrait which is supposedly of Marlowe, but even that may turn out not to have him as its subject after all. What we know of Marlowe’s twenty-nine short years of life is more puzzling than illuminating, and it is to be hoped that more evidence will come to light.

THE PLAY

The Question of History Play or Tragedy

One much-debated issue about *Edward II* is whether this is a history play or a tragedy.³² The Renaissance definition of “tragedy” is loose at best, but can be summed up as “the examination of the fall of great men.” Thus, the protagonist is a human being, most often larger-than-life and of high social standing, but recognizably somebody like the audience, somebody subject to the same temptations as ordinary human beings, somebody whose fall has repercussions beyond the man himself, but it is a fall from

²⁹ See Douglas Cole’s *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy*, pp. 8-9.

³⁰ Quoted in Freeman, *Thomas Kyd: Facts and Problems*.

³¹ See Douglas Cole’s *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy*, esp. pp. 157-58. The term “atheist” was very loosely defined at the time and could be applied to, e.g., a Roman Catholic.

³² The first mention of the play is in the Stationers’ Register, July 1593.

which we can learn. A tragedy has a distinct, unified plot designed to deliver a moral message, and its entire progression aims towards this end.

A history play or chronicle play is based on written historical material, in the case of *Edward II* on Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and thus has some base in historical fact; it is more a stringing together of events than the development of a plot like that of a tragedy. We must bear in mind, however, that history was not then the science it is today, and that the intention behind writing about one's country often was to morally edify the reader. Nationalism was a new concept, and the chronicles sprang from pride in a great national past and present. But reading history is quite different from staging a play. A playwright of chronicle plays found himself with a multitude of historical facts and details that could not hold the interest of a theater audience, and that therefore must be eliminated. Marlowe, for example, compresses time and selects and deselects events very creatively. In order to be successful at the box office, the playwright would also need to keep in mind what his Elizabethan audience expected and desired. Chronicle plays are rich vehicles for spectacle, battles, processions, and splendid costumes; it allows for moving speeches and rapid dialogue, as well as ranting and raving; it can spectacularly present bloodshed and slaughter in various visually interesting forms.³³

However, the protagonist in a history play seems not to be so much the central figure, the king, as the country of England herself. The conflict necessary for dramatic action arises from the "bad husbandry" of the king, from his misuse or abuse of his subjects and his country, A king ought always to remember that he is his kingdom's head, the father of his country, and that the private sphere always must be subordinate to the public good. Should he let personal feelings become his motivation, those subjects who are not flatterers and are dedicated to upholding the *status quo* are sure to point his flaws out to him; if he refuses to listen, there will be repercussions, all for the sake of the kingdom itself.

King Edward fits many of the criteria of the tragic hero, but his story does not gain interest from his fascinating personality or his personal fall. He has few traits that we admire, and our pity for him stems rather from his horrible treatment than from a feeling of Aristotle's "pity and fear" at his end. Holinshed's chronicle history of England describes the death of Edward II as follows:

Wherevpon when [his keepers] sawe that such practices [as keeping the King in the castle sewer and feeding him little or nothing] would not serue their tourne, they came suddenlie one night into the chamber where he laie in bed fast asleepe, and with heaueie featherbeds or a table (as some write) being cast upon him, they kept him down and withal put into his fundament³⁴ a horne, and through the same they thrust vp into his bodie an hot spit, or (as other haue it) through the pipe of a trumpet a plumbers instrument of iron made verie hot, the which passing vp into his intrailles, and being rolled to and fro, burnt the same, but so as no appearance of any wound or hurt outwardlie might be perceiued, His crie did mooue manie within the castell and towne of Berkley to compassion...

(Raphael Holinshed, *The Third Volume of Chronicles*, pp. 341–342, qtd. in the Revels Plays edition)

³³ See the Introduction to Briggs' *Marlowe's Edward II* for a thorough treatment of the subject of chronicle plays.

³⁴ fundament: anus.

The main point of interest for the spectator after Edward's death is, again, the fate of England. Will young Edward III be able to rise above the villainy that prematurely placed him on the throne? Will the young king disregard prideful Mortimer and adulterous Isabella and listen to true advice? The play's end affirms this; England will be in good hands. *Edward II* certainly is more a chronicle play than a true tragedy.

The historical Edward II (1307-1327) is not one of England's best-known kings. His father, Edward I Longshanks, was an athlete, a warrior, a lawmaker, and a leader, a king who succeeded in internal as well as external affairs; he has been called "perhaps the most successful of the mediaeval monarchs"³⁵ with good reason. His conquest of Wales made his son Edward the first Prince of Wales, a title still held by the heir to the English throne; he maintained English holdings in France; he did his utmost to violently subdue Scotland; he was a great builder of castles, many of which may still be seen. Longshanks was not pleased with his "weak-willed and indolent" son,³⁶ who indeed succeeded in losing many of his father's gains in the course of his short reign. Edward II's own son was a warrior king like his grandfather and also a social reformer. During his reign, England's nobility shrunk in number and grew in the size of their land holdings, a middle class began emerging, and the first Speaker for the Commons was elected. The Hundred Years War and the Black Death became his nemeses. Prices rose, inflation soared, and the king's popularity was eroded. Edward II, sandwiched as he was between these two behemoths, is best known for being deposed and for his horrendous demise. Marlowe most probably chose him as his play's protagonist to provide a negative example.

Setting and Characters

Edward II is, of course, set in England, but the Mediaeval society of Edward's time has been replaced by an Elizabethan one with recognizable, Renaissance elements. Marlowe, more than many of his contemporaries, was fond of displaying the breadth and depth of his classical knowledge, and *Edward II* teems with this Renaissance device. In the opening scene of the play we see Piers of Gaveston planning entertainment for the King in the form of Italian masques by night and mythological pageants by day, celebrations no Mediaeval monarch would have enjoyed or been interested in, and there are constant references to classical literature and mythology throughout.

The play also reflects the changing society of the Renaissance, and the possibility for upward mobility is indeed at the heart of the main conflicts. While the historical Edward II did elevate Gaveston, the son of a Gascon knight and thus of no high standing, to Earl of Cornwall in a prodigious social leap, the Mediaeval instance would have been "one of a kind," not a dangerous setting of trends as might be seen in a society undergoing, as it were, social reevaluation of the class system.

The king's ability and right to rule and the establishing of succession were topics debated endlessly, beginning in classical and Biblical times and continuing into the seventeenth century. *Edward II* fits well into this discussion. Elizabeth I never married and thus created great anxiety in the population about who her successor might be. As

³⁵ www.britannia.com/history/monarchs/mon30.html

³⁶ *Royal Panoply*, p. 87.

she advanced in years, thoughts of the possible instability after her demise gave rise to many negative examples in literature, one of them this play. Marlowe consistently invites his audience to draw parallels to 1590s England, be they social, economical, or political. Elizabeth's England was witness to a rising middle class, which finds a parallel in the rise of Gaveston, the Spencers, and Baldock; in this connection Marlowe may also be questioning the sale of knighthoods, something Elizabeth frowned upon, but which James I would later embrace. Economically, Elizabeth's reign had been plagued by war and conflicts. In a period where "female monarch" was somewhat of an oxymoron, and where political theory strongly advised a female ruler to marry or submit to a (male) group of advisors, Elizabeth's and England's prowess at war and her steadfastness in her claim to be married to her people, not to a husband and king, were constantly being tested. The coffers were depleted by the wars with the Continent. In the play, we see Edward II lavishing gifts upon his favorites, though the kingdom is challenged on two fronts; the King of France has occupied English territory, and there is an ongoing war with Scotland.³⁷ The political problem of letting favorites have a large say in decisions was something Elizabeth was accused of, though she never went to such lengths as the play's Edward. The King's poor decisions plunge his England into civil war, the most wasteful and horrendous of wars where no gain is possible because no conquest can take place; this may reflect the fear of factions wrangling for succession as a result of no natural heir having been produced.

As we have seen, one function of the history play, like that of many contemporary plays, was to illuminate its world and offer subtle critique and hints of potential or real problems within the *status quo*. The character of Edward II serves this function well. Marlowe shows us an aging, inept, inefficient ruler, subject to flattery and practicing favoritism. He displays an interesting duality of nature, as does indeed almost every major character in the play. On the one hand, where the state is concerned, he is effeminate and passive, childish and irresponsible; on the other hand, in the private sphere, he is loyal, assertive, and capable of inspiring love and loyalty in his chosen friends. He makes the mistake of letting the private sphere into the public one, of forgetting that the King is first and foremost a king, a man second.³⁸ Edward elevates Gaveston socially, by titles, by marriage, and by a friendship that has a plethora of sexual overtones, thus presenting a threat to the high nobility, who, incidentally, seem more disturbed by Gaveston's leaps in rank than by Edward's openly expressed sexual proclivities.

The first three acts of the play establish Edward as a very problematic ruler indeed; he reacts to both friendship and threats to his authority by lavishing titles and elevated position on all and sundry. Gaveston, returned from banishment, is created

...Lord high Chamberlain
 Chief secretary to the state and [Edward II],
 Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man.
 ...
 [and] lord bishop [of Coventry].

(I.i.154–156;194)

³⁷ At his deposition, the historical Edward II had lost Scotland, Ireland, and Gascony.

³⁸ See glossary: The King's Two Bodies.

The mild protestations of Kent and even of Gaveston himself have no effect on the King, who seems to enjoy displaying his power and belittling both nobility and high clergy. When the nobility in turn displays its power and has Gaveston first banished, then returned in a political power play, Edward thanks them by elevating their positions as well (I.iv.332–364). But favor not based on personal friendship is short-lived in this court, and the King turns on anyone who threatens his beloved Gaveston.

The last two acts alter our view of Edward and makes him the object of our pity, not because he changes or offers a picture of steadfastness under duress, but simply because his adversaries' treatment of him is so abominable that they become the object of audience disgust. Forcing an anointed monarch to abdicate amounts to usurpation, a dreadful sin, and the weight of this burden falls upon Mortimer Junior and the Queen, but not the Prince, who tries his best to save both his father and his uncle. Murdering an anointed monarch is an even more dreadful sin, and Edward's murder can only be viewed as the most horrendous case of regicide on the English stage.

As a character, Edward is undeveloped. He is more a vehicle for Marlowe's moral message than a thoroughly developed human being. As a man, his desire for love and friendship and for a friend's acceptance on an equal basis as an individual go before any other desire, thus making it difficult for Edward to rule effectually; the friend comes before all else. As a monarch, his failing is his disregard for good government. He does have flashes of pride in his status as anointed king, but they are few and far between. Most significantly, he is aware that once a king has been anointed, giving up his crown is not possible for him; kingship is for life, and abdicating or being subjected to usurpation goes against the law of both nature and nations (V.i.97–102).³⁹ This combination of traits creates a figure incapable of being an effective leader of a country, a ruler incapable of subordinating the demands of nature to those of rank.

Queen Isabella, sister to the reigning King of France, tends to capture audience sympathy early in the play. We first meet her exiling herself from the court (I.ii) because Edward so clearly prefers Gaveston's company to hers, and like a good Renaissance woman, who is chaste, silent, and obedient, she is willing to please her lord by absenting herself rather than causing him discomfort. Our sympathy is strengthened in I.iv, where Edward calls her a "French strumpet" (145) and he and Gaveston both imply that she is involved with Mortimer Junior (147–48; 154–55), but by the end of this scene she has already had her first secret encounter with Mortimer, and from this point on she develops towards the willful and devious female stereotype. By IV.iv she leads troops against England in open war; by V.ii her intimate relationship with Mortimer is crystal clear, and she is openly false in her concern for the captive Edward. She writes off her brother-in-law Kent with no qualms, and lets Mortimer manhandle the young Prince. Her prison sentence at play's end is thoroughly deserved.

At the outset, Mortimer Junior, along with the other nobles, appears to be fighting for birthright and for the preservation of traditional values. It is significant that many noblemen in this play are addressed by title rather than by proper name, thus underscoring the significance of the tie between the nobleman and his land as inheritance through primogeniture.⁴⁰ Gaveston's rapid promotion through titles and marriage to a lady high above him in social standing threatens this established way of

³⁹ See glossary: Law.

⁴⁰ See glossary.

life. The nobles emerge as a group with a shared interest rather than as individuals at the beginning of the conflict, but Mortimer Junior soon rises above the others with his demands for first the banishment, then the execution, of Gaveston, later the removal of Spencer and Baldock, and finally for grasping Edward's power. He positively revels in planning the King's death and listening to Lightborn, the murderer, as he lists his credentials and skills. Mortimer's initial concern for his country's welfare gives way to a developing stage Machiavel,⁴¹ obsessed with power, abusing the "royal we," and claiming to be beyond the reach of Fortune (V.iv.48–71). He has become the tyrant he wished to obliterate, and his pride causes his fall. When his severed head is placed on Edward II's bier, trophy-like, it is a fitting end to his career.

Gaveston appears to the nobles to be arrogant, manipulative and power hungry; he receives Edwards many gifts and honors gladly and basks in his place at the King's side, most notably in I.iv, where he is seated next to Edward in Isabella's rightful position. He seems a threat to all estates with which he comes into contact. He threatens the King's ability to govern his country, because his love of Gaveston comes before England; he threatens the established pattern of life and power of the nobility; he is set above the clergy, physically abuses a Bishop, and takes over his estate and, disturbingly, his position in the church (I.i.193–97); he supplants the Queen in her husband's regard and takes her place physically and metaphorically. Initially he gives the impression of being a manipulator and a parasite, yet once in the hands of the rebelling nobility and facing death, Gaveston demonstrates real and deep love and affection for Edward (II.v; III.i). Baldock and Spencer Junior, who in a sense, takes Gaveston's place, also initially strike the audience as cynical parasites and social climbers, but they, too, come to harbor genuine affection for Edward and express pity for his adversity. Both go to their deaths with dignity, expressing love and loyalty to the King. It says something for Edward II that he is capable of inspiring such deep feelings in his chosen friends.

The Mower and Lightborn are both sinister characters reminiscent of Mediaeval Morality Play figures. The Mower is first described as a "gloomy fellow" when seen by the King's party in IV.iv. He shows the pursuers to Edward's hiding place in the Abbey, and finally asks for payment. The Mower becomes an allegorical representation of the Grim Reaper, foreshadowing Edward's death. Lightborn, who is Marlowe's addition to the chronicle material, is an even more disturbing character. His name reminds one of Lucifer's, and he is indeed a satanic, sadistic, seductive creature. When being questioned about his abilities as a murderer in V.iv, he proudly lists various devious and undetectable ways to eliminate a victim, but he indicates that Edward will be killed by an even more spectacular method. Before he murders the King, he practically seduces him with words and almost mesmerizes him. Edward is not persuaded that he is safe, but he does attempt to sleep as Lightborn gloats over his form. Having accomplished his gruesome task, Lightborn asks the witnesses for approval; he is a creature who takes pride in his work. Like Gaveston, Spencer, and Baldock illuminate Edward II's character positively, Lightborn sheds negative light upon Mortimer and shows to what depths he has sunk in his pursuit of power.

The kingdom of England seems thrown into utter chaos after Edward's death. There is no good model for honor and government, only destructive, underhanded,

⁴¹ See glossary.

Machiavellian manipulation. Young Prince Edward, now Edward III, though with Mortimer Junior as Protector, is the only hope for the realm, but for most of the play he seems to be a pawn for his mother and Mortimer. He is initially presented as childlike, distractable, and indecisive. When it is suggested to him that he become King, he repeatedly claims that this is impossible as his father has that role, and he seems unable to fathom what this suggestion might indicate. Disregarding his protests, Mortimer can carry him off stage bodily. Isabella and Mortimer send his uncle Kent to his death before Edward's very eyes, and the Prince is unable to persuade them to desist, letting himself be consoled by a ride in the park with his mother. Once the news of his father's death reaches him, however, Edward III comes into his own, and he instantly demonstrates the ability to let the good of the state take precedence over his private feelings. In V.vi, as Mortimer proclaims himself invulnerable, Edward seeks support from his council, and with their backing he sentences Mortimer to a traitor's death and his pleading mother to the Tower, awaiting trial. At the close of this violent chronicle play, after everything of value has been devalued, the church and nobility defied, and the King shockingly murdered, the young monarch emerges, bringing hope for a brighter future. Chaos will turn to cosmos, and England will be well.

Major Themes

The *de casibus*⁴² tradition has a long history. In Marlowe's England, numerous books were available through which to study what led to the tragic downfall of great figures through history, and "great" was not necessarily synonymous with "morally upright" by any means.⁴³ The fall of great men is certainly a major theme in Marlowe's play.

Edward II was first published in 1594 under the title "The troublesome / raigne and lamentable death of / Edward the second, King of / England: with the tragicall / fall of proud Mortimer." In 1598 was added "And also the life and death of *Piers Gaueston, / the great Earle of Cornwall, and mighty / fauorite of king Edward the second, as it was / publicquely acted by the right honourable / the Earle of Pembroke his / seruantes*. These early titles establish that, not once, but three times during this play, we will see the fall of a "great man." Douglas Cole states,

...[m]odern audiences are not inclined to think of the villainous Mortimer as tragic, but for the Elizabethans... there were no moral criteria for tragic figures... Thus Marlowe enlisted both protagonist and antagonist in the tragic paradigm adapted in this play...

(*Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy*, 102–103)

Edward II himself was not included in *The Mirror for Magistrates* edition printed in Marlowe's lifetime; not until the 1610 edition of that work was his fall added to the still-growing list. Several similar fates, such as that of Richard II, were available for Marlowe

⁴² Latin: "Of the falls (of great men)."

⁴³ Interested readers should examine *The Fall of Princes* and *The Mirror for Magistrates*.

to read. The ghost of each fallen great man tells his own story, himself extracting the moral lesson to be learned and giving it in unmistakable terms to the audience. The *Mirror's* shades often call their stories "tragicall examples," and both Edward, Gaveston, and Mortimer provide us with one such.

Edward's fall can be seen as an example or mirror for monarchs to measure themselves against. As God's anointed, the father and head of his country, a king is morally obligated to be a king first, a man second. Deviating from this demand may be seen as constituting a kind of tyranny. King Edward II repeatedly demonstrates the knowledge of the fact of his status as king, especially in V.i where, when asked to surrender his crown, he clings to it and wants it for yet another night (59–63), sees it as a "foul crime" to give it up (98–102), and finally sends it to his son, asking him to "rule / Better than I" (121–22). Edward knows that every man has his destiny, and it is a measure of the character and moral quality of the man how he shapes his life within this destiny, or how he strives against it. Yet Edward repeatedly sets Gaveston above the welfare of the realm with no better reason than that his love for his friend supercedes his care for his country. A clear example is to be found in I.i, where Edward exclaims,

Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,
This isle shall fleet [float] upon the ocean
And wander to the unfrequented Inde [India]
...
Make several kingdoms of this monarchy,
And share it equally amongst you all,
So I may have some nook or corner left
To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.

(48–51; 70–73)

Not only does he demonstrate contempt for the peers of the realm, his advisors, but the importance of the country itself is minimized; even dividing it into smaller sections,⁴⁴ a shocking thought for people living under the rule of primogeniture, is preferable to separation from Gaveston. Edward clearly defies the Law of Nature. His punishment is terrific. Not only is England thrown into a civil war, which the King loses; Edward's treatment in prison and the manner of his death are truly horrifying examples of the consequences of willfully forgetting the demands kingship makes upon the King. Not even a ruler, God's anointed substitute on earth, can defy divine will with impunity.

Gaveston is seen by those outside his relationship with the King as a flattering *parvenu*, therefore a corrupting influence. Edward's love for him blinds him to the rights of the peers and the welfare of the country. The rapidity of his rise through titles and marriage, and the punishments Edward inflicts upon those trying to separate them, most notably the Bishop of Coventry, who is "christened anew" (I.i.188) in the gutter as punishment for having taken the side that wants Gaveston banished, must be deeply disturbing to the audience. The order of established society is threatened by one favorite's influence, and neither nobility nor church is set above Gaveston. The too-great and overwhelming affection between Edward and Gaveston makes them both forget their

⁴⁴ See also *King Lear* and *Henry IV, Part I*. Here, also, the kingdom is divided or plans for division are made; in all such cases, the audience would be apprehensive.

primary duties as monarch and subject; both are punished for their transgressions, Edward naturally more severely than Gaveston.

Even more disturbing is the development of Mortimer from the nobleman defending his rights within the order of society to an adulterous usurper of Machiavellian proportions. While at the beginning of the play Mortimer Junior emerges as a natural leader, albeit a somewhat choleric one, of the offended nobles' legitimately aggrieved party, his direction changes from craving justice to craving power, thus corrupting adherence to the Law of Nature. While Edward is a severely flawed king, still he has the rights of primogeniture and of divine appointment and support.⁴⁵ Mortimer has no right whatsoever to infringe upon, let alone usurp, the King's power. Where Edward mismanages, Mortimer sets aside the entire foundation of monarchy. His Machiavellian manipulations and his pride soon take him beyond the wish to right the wrongs committed against his class; he moves into a state of power hunger that makes him see himself as above every subject of the kingdom (V.vi.11–14), above the Queen (V.iv.48), above the legitimate heir (V.iv.48; V.vi.17), even above the power of Fortune herself (V.iv.69). In fact, in his expression of overweening pride in V.iv.48–71, he joyfully and exultantly claims for himself all the freedoms that he earlier accused Gaveston of abusing. The intimate relationship between him and Isabella, much like that between King Edward and Gaveston, is of secondary importance to the precarious health of the realm and the assaults on the established order that should ensure stability and prosperity. Mortimer's fall is caused by Machiavellian machinations motivated by pride, and it is deserved because of his disregard for the kingdom itself and its dependence on the Law of Nature.

Use of the Stage

History plays in general are visually impressive pieces. Their playwrights were aware of their audience's desire for spectacle, and they provided it in abundance. *Edward II* is no exception. We are shown, in epic fashion, known figures from the country's past, contributing to the growing feeling of nationalism, shared identity as a nation, and pride in the nation's past and present emerging so strongly in the Elizabethan era.⁴⁶

Marlowe does not use a balcony in this play. This may be in order for the play to be capable of being performed in a variety of venues such as great halls and inn yards as well as public theaters, or maybe Marlowe did not want to either stress social strata in a way that could hinder audience interpretation, or suggest the morality play division between heaven and hell, both found referred to on the public stage, above the main play area and below the stage itself. He does, however, make wonderful use of the possibility for procession made possible by the two stage doors. The play opens on Gaveston alone,

⁴⁵ God sends the people the king they deserve according to contemporary theory of kingship. A bad ruler must be what the people merit, and so their duty is to submit to God's will and bear what burden is given them.

⁴⁶ Histories are mostly an Elizabethan phenomenon. Their clear notion of right and wrong, of honor and dishonor, go out of fashion with Elizabeth's death. Jacobean drama complicates and questions these concepts.

just recalled from banishment, then joined by Edward, accompanied by his full court. This mass entry opens ample possibility to display fabulous, colorful costumes, and to establish the social importance of many individuals. Thus we come to appreciate the breaking of this order immediately following. Later in the same scene we have the opportunity to see a Bishop in full regalia being degraded.

The Kings, Queens, and nobles of high standing of the histories make material for great display of wealth and majesty; battle scenes make excitement and a possibility to demonstrate much action with the limited means available to the actors performing massive conflicts. Original stage directions such as the one at the end of III.ii, "*Exeunt. Alarums, excursions, a great fight, and a retreat,*" suggest both sound effects (*alarums*), sorties of small groups of soldiers (*excursions*), probably rushing across the stage in rapid entrances and exits to suggest great numbers, and battle noise off stage to signify "*a great fight.*" The "*retreat*" can take place partly on stage with soldiers, partly off stage through sound effects. All in all this makes for a spectacular end to the scene. Later, between IV.iv and IV.v, we find the direction "*Enter the King, Baldock, and Spencer Junior, flying about the stage.*" These three, by now battle-worn and probably bedraggled, characters can through movement suggest the complete confusion the King's party has been thrown into.

A stark contrast to the pomp of court and church and the excitement of battle are the prison scenes, where we see Edward degraded and murdered. The discussion between his jailors suggests that he is being kept in the castle sewers, thus at a level below ground. An effective entry could be for the imprisoned King to enter through the "Hell" trapdoor in the stage floor, visually demonstrating his degradation. His subsequent interaction with Lightborn might be staged in the discovery space, or at least as far from the spectators as possible in order not to jeopardize the "realism" of the gruesome murder.

Marlowe's *Edward II* gives its performers ample opportunity to satisfy the demands and expectations of an Elizabethan audience. There is spectacle, the excitement of battle, and disturbing violence, all of epic proportions and all well accommodated and supported by the space and staging possibilities of both the Tudor Hall and the public playhouse.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

King Edward the Second

Queen Isabella, his wife, daughter of the King of France

Prince Edward, his son, later Edward the Third

Edmund, Earl of Kent, King Edward the Second's brother

Pierce of Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall

Henry de Beaumont, the King's follower

Guy, Earl of Warwick⁴⁷

Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, the Queen's uncle

Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke

James, the Earl of Pembroke's man

Edmund Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel

Henry, Earl of Leicester

Sir Thomas Berkeley

Roger Mortimer of Chirke (Mortimer Senior)

Roger Mortimer of Wigmore (Mortimer Junior), Nephew of Mortimer Senior, later Lord Protector for Edward the Third

Sir Thomas Gurney, Mortimer Junior's henchman

Sir John Matravis, Mortimer Junior's henchman

Spencer Senior (Hugh le Despenser), Earl of Winchester

Spencer Junior (Hugh le Despenser), son of Spencer Senior, Earl of Wiltshire, later Earl of Gloucester

Lady Margaret de Clare, daughter of the Earl of Gloucester, niece to King Edward the Second, betrothed to Gaveston

Robert Baldock, clerk attending Lady Margaret de Clare

Sir William Trussel

Lightborn, a murderer

Sir John of Hainault, The Marquis of Hainault's brother

Levune, a Frenchman

Rice ap Howell

Mayor of Bristol

Archbishop of Canterbury

Bishop of Coventry

Bishop of Winchester

The Abbot of Neath

Lords, ladies in waiting, a chaplain, three poor men, the herald, the mower, the champion, messengers, soldiers, attendants, monks, servants

⁴⁷ Names and titles underlined will be used as speech headings in the text.

Act I, Scene i⁴⁸

[London⁴⁹]

Enter Gaveston, reading on a letter that was brought him from the King

Gaveston

‘My father is deceased; come, Gaveston,
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend.’
Ah, words that make me surfeit with⁵⁰ delight!
What greater bliss can hap to⁵¹ Gaveston
Than live and be the favourite of a king? 5
Sweet prince, I come. These, these thy amorous lines
Might have enforced me to have swum from France,⁵²
And, like Leander,⁵³ gasped upon the sand,
So thou wouldst smile and take me in thy arms.
The sight of London to my exiled eyes 10
Is as Elysium⁵⁴ to a new-come soul;
Not that I love the city or the men,
But that it harbours him I hold so dear—
The King, upon whose bosom let me die,⁵⁵
And with the world be still at enmity.¹⁵
What need the arctic people love starlight
To whom the sun shines both by day and night?⁵⁶
Farewell, base stooping to the lordly peers!
My knee shall bow to none but to the King.
As for the multitude that are but sparks 20
Raked up in embers of their poverty,⁵⁷
*Tanti!*⁵⁸ I’ll fan first on the wind

⁴⁸ The three contemporary Quartos have no act and scene divisions; these divisions depend on the individual editor’s choice.

⁴⁹ Marlowe’s imbedded stage directions are not as many or as clear as most of his contemporary colleagues’. History plays tend to change location frequently and abruptly, but not always to signal this clearly, as the contents of the play were known to the intended audience. As history can verify locations to some degree, the present editor has decided to give one for each scene in sharp parenthesis; these additions are mine and not found in the original.

⁵⁰ *surfeit with*: have too much of.

⁵¹ *hap to*: happen to.

⁵² Edward I, Edward II’s father, had exiled Gaveston there.

⁵³ Cf. Marlowe’s mythological poem *Hero and Leander*, where Leander, swimming the Hellespont each night to meet his love Hero, eventually drowned. Likening himself to Leander, Gaveston immediately and up front labels his relationship with the King as erotic.

⁵⁴ *Elysium*: the home of the blessed souls in classical mythology.

⁵⁵ See glossary: Die.

⁵⁶ The arctic has perpetual day in the height of summer.

⁵⁷ *Raked... poverty*: banked (together) like a fire to keep their poor heat.

⁵⁸ *Tanti*: (Italian) “So much for them.”

That glanceth at my lips and flieth away.⁵⁹

Enter Three Poor Men

But how now? What are these?

Poor Men

Such as desire your worships service. 25

Gaveston

What canst thou do?

First Poor man

I can ride.

Gaveston

But I have no horses. What art thou?

Second Poor Man

A traveller.

Gaveston

Let me see. Thou wouldst do well 30

To wait at my trencher⁶⁰ and tell me lies at dinnertime,

And as I like your discoursing, I'll have you.

And what art thou?

Third Poor Man

A soldier that hath served against the Scot.⁶¹

Gaveston

Why, there are hospitals⁶² for such as you. 35

I have no war, and therefore, sir, begone.

Third Poor Man

Farewell, and perish by a soldier's hand,

That wouldst reward them with an hospital.

Gaveston [*aside*]

Ay, ay, these words of his move me as much

As if a goose should play the porpentine⁶³ 40

And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast,

But yet it is no pain to speak men fair.

I'll flatter these and make them live in hope.

[*Aloud*] You know that I came lately out of France,

And yet I have not viewed my lord the King.⁴⁵

If I speed well,⁶⁴ I'll entertain⁶⁵ you all.

Poor Men

We thank your worship.

⁵⁹ The wind is much stronger than human breath; thus "fanning the wind" is as useless as courting the multitude.

⁶⁰ *trencher*: i.e., plate; hence server at the dinner table.

⁶¹ During the reigns of Edwards I and II many wars were fought with Scotland.

⁶² *hospitals*: homes for disabled soldiers and the poor.

⁶³ *porpentine*: i.e., porcupine; popular belief had it that this animal could shoot his quills.

⁶⁴ *If... well*: "If things go well for me."

⁶⁵ *entertain*: employ.

Gaveston

I have some business. Leave me to myself.

Poor Men

We will wait here about the court.

Gaveston

Do.

Exeunt [Three Poor Men]

These are not men for me. 50

I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians that, with touching of a string,
May draw the pliant King which way I please.

Music and poetry is his delight;
Therefore I'll have Italian masques⁶⁶ by night, 55

Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows,
And in the day when he shall walk abroad,

Like sylvan nymphs⁶⁷ my pages shall be clad,
My men, like satyrs⁶⁸ grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay.⁶⁹ 60

Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's⁷⁰ shape
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,

Crownets⁷¹ of pearls about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive tree

To hide those parts which men delight to see, 65
Shall bathe him in a spring. And there, hard by,
One like Achtaeon,⁷² peeping through the grove,

Shall by the angry goddess be transformed
And, running in the likeness of an hart,

By yelping hounds pulled down and seem to die. 70
Such things as these best please his majesty.

Here comes my lord the King and the nobles from the Parliament.
I'll stand aside.

Enter [Edward] the King, [the Earl of] Lancaster, Mortimer Senior, Mortimer Junior, Edward Earl of Kent, Guy Earl of Warwick, [Earl of Pembroke, and Attendants]

King Edward

Lancaster!

Lancaster

My lord? 75

⁶⁶ See glossary: Masque.

⁶⁷ This costume, like the ones following, are typical for masques.

⁶⁸ *satyr*: mythological creature, man above the waist, goat below, often found playing a pipe.

⁶⁹ *hay*: old-fashioned country dance.

⁷⁰ *Dian*: Diana, chaste goddess of the hunt.

⁷¹ *Crownets*: here, bracelets.

⁷² A hunter who saw Diana and her nymphs bathing, and was changed into a stag and hunted down as punishment.

Gaveston [*aside*]
 That Earl of Lancaster do I abhor.

King Edward
 Will you not grant me this? [*Aside*] In spite of them
 I'll have my will, and these two Mortimers
 That cross me thus shall know I am displeased.

Mortimer Senior
 If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston. 80

Gaveston [*aside*]
 That villain Mortimer! I'll be his death!

Mortimer Junior
 Mine uncle here, this Earl, and I myself
 Were sworn to your father at his death
 That he should ne'er return into the realm.
 And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath 85
 This sword of mine that should offend your foes
 Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,
 And underneath thy banners march who will.
 For Mortimer will hang his armour up.

Gaveston [*aside*]
*Mort Dieu!*⁷³ 90

King Edward
 Well, Mortimer, I'll make thee rue⁷⁴ these words.
 Beseems it thee to contradict thy King?
 Frown'st thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?
 The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows
 And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff. 95
 I will have Gaveston, and you shall know
 What danger 'tis to stand against your King.

Gaveston [*aside*]
 Well done, Ned!

Lancaster
 My lord, why do you thus incense your peers
 That naturally would love and honour you 100
 But for that base and obscure Gaveston?
 Four earldoms have I besides Lancaster—
 Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester.
 These will I sell to give my soldiers pay
 Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm. 105
 Therefore if he be come, expel him straight.⁷⁵

Kent
 Barons and Earls, your pride hath made me mute,

⁷³ Mort Dieu: French: "God's death!" An oath.

⁷⁴ *rue*: regret.

⁷⁵ *straight*: at once.

But now I'll speak, and to the proof, ⁷⁶ I hope.
 I do remember, in my father's days,
 Lord Percy of the North, being highly moved, 110
 Braved⁷⁷ Mowbery in the presence of the King,
 For which, had not his highness loved him well,
 He should have lost his head. But with his look
 Th'undaunted spirit of Percy was appeased,
 And Mowbery and he were reconciled. 115
 Yet dare you brave the King unto his face?
 Brother, revenge it! And let these their heads
 Preach upon poles⁷⁸ for trespass of their tongues.

Warwick
 O, our heads!

King Edward
 Ay, yours! And therefore I would wish you grant— 120

Warwick
 Bridle thy anger, gentle Mortimer.

Mortimer Junior
 I cannot, nor I will not! I must speak.
 Cousin,⁷⁹ our hands, I hope, shall fend⁸⁰ our heads
 And strike off his that makes you threaten us.
 Come, uncle, let us leave the brainsick King 125
 And henceforth parley with our naked swords.

Mortimer Senior
 Welshry⁸¹ hath men enough to save our heads.

Warwick [*ironically*]
 All Warwickshire will love him for my sake.

Lancaster [*ironically*]
 And northward Gaveston hath many friends.
 Adieu, my lord, and either change your mind, 130
 Or look to see the throne where you should sit
 To float in blood, and at thy wanton head
 The glozing⁸² head of thy base minion⁸³ thrown.

Exeunt Nobles [except Kent]

King Edward
 I cannot brook⁸⁴ these haughty menaces.
 Am I a king and must be overruled? 135

⁷⁶ *to the proof*: in a way that cannot be gainsaid.

⁷⁷ *Braved*: challenged.

⁷⁸ See glossary: Traitor's Punishment.

⁷⁹ Mortimer claims kinship with the King. They were, in fact, very distantly related.

⁸⁰ *fend*: defend.

⁸¹ *Welshry*: i.e., Wales.

⁸² *glozing*; flattering. Literally: to *gloze*: to use smooth empty talk.

⁸³ See glossary: Minion.

⁸⁴ *brook*: tolerate.

Brother, display my ensigns⁸⁵ in the field.
 I'll bandy⁸⁶ with the barons and the earls,
 And either die or live with Gaveston.

Gaveston
 I can no longer keep me from my lord.

[He steps forward and] kneels

King Edward
 What, Gaveston! Welcome! Kiss not my hand. 140
 Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee.
 Why shouldst thou kneel? Knowst thou not who I am?
 Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston!
 Not Hylas⁸⁷ was more mourned of Hercules
 Than thou hast been of me since thy exile. 145

Gaveston
 And since I went from hence, no soul in hell
 Hath felt more torment than poor Gaveston.

King Edward
 I know it. Brother, welcome home my friend.
 Now let the treacherous Mortimers conspire,
 And that high-minded⁸⁸ Earl of Lancaster. 150
 I have my wish in that I joy thy sight,
 And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land
 Than bear the ship that shall transport thee hence.
 I here create thee Lord high Chamberlain,⁸⁹
 Chief secretary to the state and me, 155
 Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man.⁹⁰

Gaveston
 My lord, these titles far exceed my worth!

Kent
 Brother, the least of these may well suffice
 For one of greater birth than Gaveston.

King Edward
 Cease brother, for I cannot brook these words. 160
 Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts,
 Therefore to equal it, receive my heart
 If for these dignities thou be envied,
 I'll give thee more; for but to⁹¹ honour thee

⁸⁵ *ensigns*: standard; heraldic emblems.

⁸⁶ *bandy* exchange blows.

⁸⁷ *Hylas*: the handsome youth Hercules brought with him on his quest for the Golden Fleece. The Naiads fell in love with him because of his beauty and abducted him into the water to live with them. Hercules searched frantically, but found only the echo of Hylas' voice.

⁸⁸ *high-minded*: overly proud.

⁸⁹ *Lord high Chamberlain*: government official responsible for appointing professional men and tradesmen to the court. Also he was responsible for licensing plays and overseeing theaters.

⁹⁰ *King and... Man*: rulers of the Isle of Man were sometimes titled "King."

⁹¹ *but to*: only to.

Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment. 165
 Fear'st thou⁹² thy person? Thou shalt have a guard.
 Want'st⁹³ thou gold? Go to my treasury.
 Wouldst thou be loved and feared? Receive my seal.⁹⁴
 Save or condemn, and in our name command
 Whatso thy mind affects⁹⁵ or fancy likes.⁹⁶ 170
 Gaveston
 It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,
 Which whiles I have, I think myself as great
 As Caesar riding in the Roman streets
 With captive kings at his triumphant car.

Enter the Bishop of Coventry
 King Edward
 Whether goes my lord of Coventry so fast? 175
 Bishop of Coventry
 To celebrate your father's exequies.⁹⁷
 But is that wicked Gaveston returned?
 King Edward
 Ay, priest, and lives to be revenged on thee
 That wert the only cause of his exile.
 Gaveston
 'Tis true, and but for reverence of these robes 180
 Thou shouldst not plod one foot beyond this place.
 Bishop of Coventry
 I did no more than I was bound to do,
 And, Gaveston, unless thou be reclaimed,⁹⁸
 As then I did incense the Parliament,
 So will I now, and thou shalt back to France. 185
 Gaveston
 Saving your reverence,⁹⁹ you must pardon me.
[He takes hold of the Bishop]
 King Edward
 Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,
 And in the channel¹⁰⁰ christen him anew!

⁹² *Fear'st thou*: Do you fear for.

⁹³ *Want'st*: Do you need.

⁹⁴ *seal*: she Seal of the Realm; Edward grants Gaveston powers equal to his own.

⁹⁵ *affects*: likes.

⁹⁶ *fancy likes*: what you have a liking to do; what strikes your fancy.

⁹⁷ *exequies*: funeral rites.

⁹⁸ *reclaimed*: reformed; made tame.

⁹⁹ *Saving... reverence*: "Pardon me," here used ironically.

¹⁰⁰ *channel*: gutter. Sewage ran in open gutters down the street.

Kent
 Ah, brother, lay not violent hands on him!
 For he'll complain unto the see of Rome.¹⁰¹ 190

Gaveston
 Let him complain unto the see of Hell!
 I'll be revenged on him for my exile!

King Edward
 No, spare his life, but seize upon his goods.
 Be thou lord bishop and receive his rents,
 And make him serve thee as thy chaplain. 195
 I give him thee; here, use him as thou wilt.

Gaveston
 He shall to prison and there die in bolts.¹⁰²

King Edward
 Ay, to the Tower, the Fleet,¹⁰³ or where thou wilt.

Bishop of Coventry
 For this offence be thou accursed of God!

King Edward
 Who's there?¹⁰⁴ Convey¹⁰⁵ this priest to the Tower.

Bishop of Coventry True, true! 200
 [Exit Bishop, guarded]

King Edward
 But in the meantime, Gaveston, away,
 And take possession of his house and goods.
 Come, follow me, and thou shalt have my guard
 To see it done and bring thee safe again.¹⁰⁶

Gaveston
 What should a priest do with so fair a house? 205
 A prison may beseem his holiness. *Exeunt*

Act I, Scene ii

[London, near the Palace]

Enter [on one side] both the Mortimers, [on the other] Warwick and Lancaster[, meeting]

Warwick

'Tis true, the bishop is in the Tower,

¹⁰¹ *see of Rome*: The Holy See, the ecclesiastical seat of justice for the Roman Catholic church.

¹⁰² *bolts*: leg irons.

¹⁰³ *Fleet*: The Fleet Prison was a debtor's prison in the Renaissance.

¹⁰⁴ *Who's there*: like "Who waits?" this is a call for servants or attendants.

¹⁰⁵ *Convey*: 1) escort; 2) contemporary slang for "steal."

¹⁰⁶ *bring... again*: bring you safely back.

And goods and body given to Gaveston.

Lancaster
 What! Will they tyrannize upon the church?
 Ah, wicked King! Accursed Gaveston!
 This ground, which is corrupted with their steps
 Shall be their timeless¹⁰⁷ sepulchre or mine. 5

Mortimer Junior
 Well, let that peevish Frenchman guard him sure!
 Unless his breast be sword-proof, he shall die.

Mortimer Senior
 How now, why droops the Earl of Lancaster?

Mortimer Junior
 Wherefore is Guy of Warwick discontent? 10

Lancaster
 That villain¹⁰⁸ Gaveston is made an earl.

Mortimer Senior
 An earl!

Warwick
 Ay, and besides Lord Chamberlain of the realm,
 And Secretary too, and Lord of Man.

Mortimer Senior
 We may not, nor we will not suffer this. 15

Mortimer Junior
 Why post¹⁰⁹ we not from hence to levy men?

Lancaster
 ‘My lord of Cornwall’ now at every word!
 And happy is the man whom he vouchsafes¹¹⁰
 For vailing¹¹¹ of his bonnet one good look.
 Thus, arm in arm, the king and he doth march, 20
 Nay more, the guard upon his lordship waits,
 And all the court begins to flatter him.

Warwick
 Thus leaning on the shoulder of the King
 He nods and scorns and smiles at those that pass.

Mortimer Senior
 Doth no man take exceptions at the slave? 25

Lancaster
 All stomach¹¹² him, but none dare speak a word.

¹⁰⁷ *timeless*: 1) eternal; 2) too-early.

¹⁰⁸ *villain*: 1) miscreant; 2) a pun on “villein,” a person of low birth.

¹⁰⁹ *post*: hurry post haste.

¹¹⁰ *vouchsafes*: favors.

¹¹¹ *vailing*: taking off.

¹¹² *stomach*: resent; also, see glossary: Four Humors.

Mortimer Junior

Ah, that bewrays¹¹³ their baseness, Lancaster.
Were all the earls and barons of my mind
We'd hale him from the bosom of the King,
And at the court gate hang the peasant up 30
Who, swol'n with venom of ambitious pride,
Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

Enter the [Arch]bishop of Canterbury [and an Attendant]

Warwick

Here comes my Lord of Canterbury's grace.

Lancaster

His countenance bewrays he is displeased.

Archbishop of Canterbury [*to Attendant*]

First were his sacred garments rent and torn, 35
Then laid they violent hands upon him. Next
Himself imprisoned and his goods asseized.¹¹⁴
This certify¹¹⁵ the Pope. Away! Take horse! [*Exit Attendant*]

Lancaster

My lord, will you take arms against the King?

Archbishop of Canterbury

What need I? God himself is up in arms 40
When violence is offered to the church.

Mortimer Junior

Then will you join with us that be his peers
To banish or behead that Gaveston?

Archbishop of Canterbury

What else, my lords, for it concerns me near; 45
The bishopric of Coventry is his.

Enter the Queen [Isabella]

Mortimer Junior

Madam, whither walks your majesty so fast?

Queen Isabella

Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,
To live in grief and baleful¹¹⁶ discontent,
For now my lord the king regards me not.
But dotes upon the love of Gaveston. 50
He claps¹¹⁷ his cheeks and hangs about his neck,

¹¹³ *bewrays*: shows.

¹¹⁴ *asseized*: confiscated.

¹¹⁵ *certify*: inform.

¹¹⁶ *baleful*: sorrowful.

¹¹⁷ *claps*: pats.

Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;
 And when I come he frowns, as who should say,
 'Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston.'

Mortimer Senior
 Is it not strange that he is thus bewitched? 55

Mortimer Junior
 Madam, return unto the court again.
 That sly, inveigling¹¹⁸ Frenchman we'll exile
 Or lose our lives; and yet, ere that day come,
 The King shall lose his crown, for we have power
 And courage too to be revenged at full. 60

Archbishop of Canterbury
 But yet lift not your swords against the King.

Lancaster
 No, but we'll lift Gaveston from hence.

Warwick
 And war must be the means, or he'll stay still.¹¹⁹

Queen Isabella
 Then let him stay; for rather than my lord
 Shall be oppressed by civil mutinies, 65
 I will endure a melancholy life
 And let him frolic¹²⁰ with his minion.

Archbishop of Canterbury
 My lords, to ease all this, but hear me speak.
 We and the rest that are his counsellors
 Will meet, and with a general consent 70
 Confirm his banishment with our hands and seals.

Lancaster
 What we confirm the King will frustrate.

Mortimer Junior
 Then may we lawfully revolt from him.

Warwick
 But say, my lord, where shall this meeting be?

Archbishop of Canterbury
 At the new Temple. 75

Mortimer Junior
 Content.

Archbishop of Canterbury
 And in the mean time I'll entreat you all
 To cross to Lambeth, and there stay with me.

Lancaster
 Come then, let's away.

Mortimer Junior Madam, farewell.

¹¹⁸ *inveigling*: 1) deceptive; 2) seductive.

¹¹⁹ *still*: always.

¹²⁰ *frolic*: "play" with sexual overtones.

Queen Isabella
Farewell, sweet Mortimer, and, for my sake,
Forbear to levy arms against the King. 80

Mortimer Junior
Ay, if words will serve. If not, I must. [Exeunt severally¹²¹]

Act I, Scene iii

[The New Temple]
Enter Gaveston and [Edmund] the Earl of Kent.

Gaveston
Edmund, the mighty prince of Lancaster,
That hath more earldoms than an ass can bear,
And both the Mortimers, two goodly men,
With Guy of Warwick, that redoubted¹²² knight,
Are gone towards Lambeth. There let them remain! 5
Exeunt

Act I, Scene iv

[The New Temple]
Enter Nobles [Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, Mortimers Senior and Junior, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Attendants]

Lancaster
Here is the form¹²³ of Gaveston's exile.
May it please your lordship to subscribe your name.
Archbishop of Canterbury
Give me the paper.
Archbishop of Canterbury subscribes, then the others in turn

Lancaster
Quick, quick, my lord, I long to write my name.

Warwick
But I long more to see him banished hence. 5

Mortimer Junior
The name of Mortimer shall fright the King,

¹²¹ The Queen at one door, the nobles and the Bishop of Canterbury at the other.

¹²² *redoubted*: formidable.

¹²³ *form*: document.

Unless he be declined from¹²⁴ that base peasant.

Enter [Edward] the King and Gaveston [and Kent]

King Edward

What, are you moved that Gaveston sits here?
It is our pleasure; we will have it so.

Lancaster

Your grace doth well to place him by your side, 10
For nowhere else the new Earl is so safe.

Mortimer Senior

What man of noble birth can brook¹²⁵ this sight?
*Quam male conveniunt!*¹²⁶
See what a scornful look the peasant casts.

Pembroke

Can kingly lions fawn on creeping ants? 15

Warwick

Ignoble vassal, that like Phaeton¹²⁷
Aspir'st unto the guidance of the sun!

Mortimer Junior

Their downfall is at hand, their forces down.
We will not thus be faced¹²⁸ and over-peered.¹²⁹

King Edward

Lay hands on that traitor Mortimer! 20

Mortimer Senior

Lay hands on that traitor Gaveston!

Kent

Is this the duty that you owe your King?

Warwick

We know our duties, let him know his peers.

[They lay hold of Gaveston]

King Edward

Whither will you bear him? Stay, or ye shall die!

Mortimer Senior

We are no traitors, therefore threaten not. 25

Gaveston

No, threaten not, my lord, but pay them home.
Were I a king—

¹²⁴ *be...from*: will distance himself from.

¹²⁵ *brook*: tolerate.

¹²⁶ (Latin) How badly matched they are!

¹²⁷ *Phaeton*: son of Helios/Apollo the sun god, who asked his father to drive the chariot of the sun for the day. He lost control of the horses and came crashing towards the earth. To save the earth, Zeus struck him with a thunderbolt that sent him into a river and death.

¹²⁸ *faced*: outfaced.

¹²⁹ *over-peered*: looked down upon.

Mortimer Junior
 Thou, villain! Wherefore talk'st thou of a king,
 That hardly art a gentleman by birth?

King Edward
 Were he a peasant, being my minion, 30
 I'll make the proudest of you stoop to him!

Lancaster
 My lord, you may not thus disparage¹³⁰ us.
 Away, I say, with hateful Gaveston.

Mortimer Senior
 And with the Earl of Kent that favours him.
 [Exeunt Kent and Gaveston, guarded]

King Edward
 Nay, then lay violent hands upon your King! 35
 Here, Mortimer, sit thou in Edward's throne.
 Warwick and Lancaster, wear you my crown.
 Was ever king thus overruled as I?

Lancaster
 Learn then to rule us better, and the realm.

Mortimer Junior
 What we have done, our heart-blood shall maintain. 40

Warwick
 Think you that we can brook this upstart¹³¹ pride?

King Edward
 Anger and wrathful fury stops my speech.

Archbishop of Canterbury
 Why are you moved? Be patient, my lord,
 And see what we your counsellors have done.
 [Gives King Edward the document exiling Gaveston]

Mortimer Junior
 My lords, now let us all be resolute 45
 And either have our will or lose our lives.

King Edward
 Meet you for this, proud over-daring peers?
 Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,
 This isle shall fleet¹³² upon the ocean
 And wander to the unfrequented Inde.¹³³ 50

Archbishop of Canterbury
 You know that I am legate to the Pope.
 On your allegiance to the see of Rome,
 Subscribe as we have done to his exile.

¹³⁰ *disparage*: degrade.

¹³¹ *upstart*: socially "pushy" person, forcing his way up in society; parvenu.

¹³² *fleet*: float.

¹³³ *Inde*: India.

Mortimer Junior	
Curse him if he refuse, and then may we Depose him and elect another king.	55
King Edward	
Ay, there it goes! But yet I will not yield. Curse me. ¹³⁴ Depose me! Do the worst you can.	
Lancaster	
Then linger not, my lord, but do it straight.	
Archbishop of Canterbury	
Remember how the bishop was abused. Either banish him that was the cause thereof, Or I will presently discharge these lords Of duty and allegiance due to thee.	60
King Edward [<i>aside</i>]	
It boots me not to threat. I must speak fair. The legate of the Pope will be obeyed. My lord, ¹³⁵ you shall be Chancellor of the realm; Thou, Lancaster, High Admiral of our fleet; Young Mortimer and his uncle shall be earls, And you, Lord Warwick, President of the North, And thou ¹³⁶ of Wales. If this content you not, Make several kingdoms of this monarchy, ¹³⁷ And share it equally amongst you all, So I may have some nook or corner left To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.	65 70
Archbishop of Canterbury	
Nothing shall alter us. We are resolved.	
Lancaster	
Come, come, subscribe!	75
Mortimer Junior	
Why should you love him, whom the world hates so?	
King Edward	
Because he loves me more than all the world. Ah, none but rude and savage-minded men Would seek the ruin of my Gaveston. You that be noble born should pity him.	80
Warwick	
You that are princely-born should shake him off. For shame, subscribe, and let the lown ¹³⁸ depart.	

¹³⁴ *Curse me*: excommunicate me.

¹³⁵ I.e., the Archbishop of Canterbury.

¹³⁶ Pembroke.

¹³⁷ Dividing the kingdom was seen as a horrendous act in a period that lived by primogeniture; cf. Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Henry IV, Part I*. See glossary: Primogeniture.

¹³⁸ *lown*: clod; lowborn fellow.

Mortimer Senior
 Urge him, my lord.
 Are you content to banish him the realm?

King Edward
 I see I must, and therefore am content. 85
 Instead of ink, I'll write it with my tears. [Subscribes]

Mortimer Junior
 The King is lovesick for his minion.

King Edward
 'Tis done, and now, accursed hand, fall off!

Lancaster
 Give it me. I'll have it published in the streets.

Mortimer Junior
 I'll see him presently¹³⁹ dispatched away. 90

Archbishop of Canterbury
 Now is my heart at ease.

Warwick
 And so is mine.

Pembroke
 This will be good news to the common sort.

Mortimer Senior
 Be it or no, he shall not linger here.
Exeunt Nobles [, all except King Edward]

King Edward
 How fast they run to banish him I love.
 They would not stir, were it to do me good. 95
 Why should a king be subject to a priest?
 Proud Rome that hatchest such imperial grooms,¹⁴⁰
 For these thy superstitious taper-lights,
 Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,¹⁴¹
 I'll fire thy crazed¹⁴² buildings and enforce 100
 The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground,
 With slaughtered priests make Tiber's channel swell
 And banks raised higher with their sepulchers!
 As for the peers that back the clergy thus,
 If I be King, not one of them shall live. 105

Enter Gaveston

Gaveston
 My lord, I hear it whispered everywhere
 That I am banished and must fly the land.

¹³⁹ *presently*: at once.

¹⁴⁰ *grooms*: servants.

¹⁴¹ Marlowe's England had many extreme Protestants that saw the Pope, the Roman Catholic church, and everything they stood for as representing the Antichrist.

¹⁴² *crazed*: ruined.

King Edward
 'Tis true, sweet Gaveston. O, were it false!
 The legate of the Pope will have it so,
 And thou must hence, or I shall be deposed. 110
 But I will reign to be revenged of¹⁴³ them!
 And therefore, sweet friend, take it patiently.
 Live where thou wilt. I'll send thee gold enough,
 And long thou shalt not stay, or if thou dost,
 I'll come to thee. My love shall ne'er decline. 115

Gaveston
 Is all my hope turned to this hell of grief?

King Edward
 Rend not my heart with thy too piercing words.
 Thou from this land, I from my self am banished.

Gaveston
 To go from hence grieves not poor Gaveston,
 But to forsake you, in whose gracious looks 120
 The blessedness of Gaveston remains,
 For nowhere else seeks he felicity.

King Edward
 And only this torments my wretched soul
 That, whether I will or no, thou must depart.
 Be governor of Ireland in my stead 125
 And there abide till fortune call thee home.
 Here, take my picture, and let me wear thine.
 [They exchange miniatures]

O, might I keep thee here as I do this,
 Happy were I! But now most miserable.

Gaveston
 'Tis something to be pitied of a king. 130

King Edward
 Thou shalt not hence! I'll hide thee, Gaveston.

Gaveston
 I shall be found, and then 'twill grieve me more,

King Edward
 Kind words and mutual talk makes our grief greater.
 Therefore, with dumb¹⁴⁴ embracement, let us part.
 Stay, Gaveston, I cannot leave thee thus! 135

Gaveston
 For every look, my lord drops down a tear.
 Seeing I must go, do not renew my sorrow.

King Edward
 The time is little that thou hast to stay,
 And therefore give me leave to look my fill.

¹⁴³ *of*: on.

¹⁴⁴ *dumb*: unspeaking.

But come, sweet friend, I'll bear thee¹⁴⁵ on thy way. | 140
Gaveston

The peers will frown.

King Edward

I pass¹⁴⁶ not for their anger. Come, let's go.

O that we might as well return as go!

Enter Queen Isabella

Queen Isabella

Whither goes my lord?

King Edward

Fawn not on me,¹⁴⁷ French strumpet, get thee gone! 145

Queen Isabella

On whom but on my husband should I fawn?

Gaveston

On Mortimer, with whom, ungentle queen—

I say no more! Judge you the rest, my lord.

Queen Isabella

In saying this, thou wrongst me, Gaveston.

Is't not enough that thou corrupt'st my lord 150

And art a bawd¹⁴⁸ to his affections,¹⁴⁹

But thou must call mine honour into question?

Gaveston

I mean not so. Your grace must pardon me.

King Edward

Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer,

And by thy means is Gaveston exiled. 155

But I would wish thee reconcile the lords,

Or thou shalt ne'er be reconciled to me.

Queen Isabella

Your highness knows it lies not in my power.

King Edward

Away, then! Touch me not! Come, Gaveston.

Queen Isabella

Villain, 'tis thou that robb'st me of my lord. 160

Gaveston

Madam, 'tis you that rob me of my lord.

King Edward

Speak not unto her. Let her droop and pine.

¹⁴⁵ *bear thee*: go with you.

¹⁴⁶ *pass*: care.

¹⁴⁷ *Fawn... me*: Do not try to please me with flattery and abasement.

¹⁴⁸ *bawd*: pander.

¹⁴⁹ *affections*: lust; passions.

Queen Isabella
Wherein, my lord, have I deserved these words?
Witness the tears that Isabella sheds,
Witness this heart that, sighing for thee, breaks, 165
How dear my lord is to poor Isabel!

King Edward
And witness heaven how dear thou art to me.
There weep! For till my Gaveston be repealed,¹⁵⁰
Assure thyself thou com'st not in my sight.
Exeunt Edward and Gaveston

Queen Isabella
O miserable and distressed queen! 170
Would, when I left sweet France and was embarked,
That charming Circe,¹⁵¹ walking on the waves,
Had changed my shape, or at the marriage-day
The cup of Hymen¹⁵² had been full of poison,
Or with those arms¹⁵³ that twined about my neck 175
I had been stifled and not lived to see
The King my lord thus to abandon me.
Like frantic Juno¹⁵⁴ will I fill the earth
With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries,
For never doted Jove on Ganymede 180
So much as he¹⁵⁵ on cursed Gaveston.
But that will more exasperate his wrath.
I must entreat him, I must speak him fair,
And be a means to call home Gaveston.
And yet he'll ever dote on Gaveston, 185
And so am I for ever miserable.

Enter Nobles [Lancaster, Warwick, Pembroke, Mortimers Senior and Junior] to the Queen

Lancaster
Look where the sister of the King of France
Sits wringing of her hands and beats her breast.

Warwick
The King, I fear, hath ill entreated her.¹⁵⁶

Pembroke
Hard is the heart that injures such a saint. 190

¹⁵⁰ *repealed*: called home from banishment.

¹⁵¹ *Circe*: powerful sorceress in Greek Mythology; here Isabella thinks of how she walked on the sea to change the virgin Scylla into a monster.

¹⁵² *Hymen*: god of marriage.

¹⁵³ *those arms*: Edward's arms.

¹⁵⁴ Juno was most jealous when Jupiter preferred his page and cupbearer Ganymede to her.

¹⁵⁵ *he*: i.e., Edward.

¹⁵⁶ *ill entreated her*: treated her badly.

O Lancaster, let him dissuade the King,
 For 'tis against my will he should return.

Warwick
 Then speak not for him. Let the peasant go.

Queen Isabella
 'Tis for myself I speak, and not for him.

Pembroke
 No speaking will prevail, and therefore cease. 220

Mortimer Junior
 Fair Queen, forbear to angle for the fish
 Which, being caught, strikes him that take it dead,
 I mean that vile torpedo,¹⁶¹ Gaveston
 That now, I hope, floats¹⁶² on the Irish seas.

Queen Isabella
 Sweet Mortimer, sit down by me a while, 225
 And I will tell thee reasons of such weight
 As thou wilt soon subscribe to his repeal.

Mortimer Junior
 It is impossible. But speak your mind.

Queen Isabella
 Then thus—but none shall hear it but ourselves. [They talk apart]

Lancaster
 My lords, albeit the Queen win Mortimer, 230
 Will you be resolute and hold with me?

Mortimer Senior
 Not I, against my nephew.

Pembroke
 Fear not. The Queen's words cannot alter him.

Warwick
 No? Do but mark how earnestly she pleads.

Lancaster
 And see how coldly his looks make denial. 235

Warwick
 She smiles. Now, for my life, his mind is changed!

Lancaster
 I'd rather lose his friendship, I, than grant.¹⁶³

Mortimer Junior
 Well, of necessity it must be so.
 My lords, that I abhor base Gaveston
 I hope your honours make no question, 240
 And therefore, though I plead for his repeal,
 'Tis not for his sake, but for our avail,¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ *torpedo*: the electric ray, a fish capable of transmitting electric shocks.

¹⁶² *floats*: 1) in his boat, under sail; 2) as a corpse, drowned.

¹⁶³ I.e., grant that Gaveston should return from banishment.

¹⁶⁴ *our avail*: our good.

Nay, for the realm's behoof¹⁶⁵ and for the King's.

Lancaster
 Fie, Mortimer, dishonour not thyself!
 Can this be true,¹⁶⁶ 'twas good to banish him 245
 And is this true, to call him home again?
 Such reasons make white black and dark night day.

Mortimer Junior
 My lord of Lancaster, mark the respect.¹⁶⁷

Lancaster
 In no respect can contraries be true.

Queen Isabella
 Yet, good my lord, hear what he can allege. 250

Warwick
 All that he speaks is nothing. We are resolved.

Mortimer Junior
 Do you not wish that Gaveston were dead?

Pembroke
 I would he were!

Mortimer Junior
 Why then, my lord, give me but leave to speak.

Mortimer Senior
 But nephew, do not play the sophister.¹⁶⁸ 255

Mortimer Junior
 This which I urge is of a burning zeal
 To mend the King and do our country good.
 Know you not Gaveston hath store of gold
 Which may in Ireland purchase him such friends
 As he will front¹⁶⁹ the mightiest of us all? 260
 And whereas¹⁷⁰ he shall live and be beloved
 'Tis hard for us to work his overthrow.

Warwick
 Mark you but that, my lord of Lancaster.

Mortimer Junior
 But were he here, detested as he is,
 How easily might some base slave be suborned¹⁷¹ 265
 To greet his lordship with a poniard,¹⁷²
 And none so much as blame the murderer,
 But rather praise him for That brave attempt,

¹⁶⁵ *behoof*: gain, benefit.

¹⁶⁶ *true*: correct.

¹⁶⁷ *mark the respect*: think of the special circumstances.

¹⁶⁸ *play the sophister*: lead astray by deceitful arguments. *Sophist*: one who teaches for money; not a true philosopher.

¹⁶⁹ *front*: confront.

¹⁷⁰ *whereas*: while.

¹⁷¹ *suborned*: induced underhandedly.

¹⁷² *poniard*: dagger with a slender, often triangular blade.

Queen Isabella

And when this favour Isabel forgets,
Then let her live abandoned and forlorn.
But see, in happy time my lord the King,
Having brought the Earl of Cornwall on his way,
Is new returned. This news will glad him much, 300
Yet not so much as me; I love him more
Than he can Gaveston. Would he loved me
But half so much, then were I treble blessed.

Enter King Edward, mourning[, attended]

King Edward

He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn.
Did never sorrow go so near my heart 305
As doth the want of my sweet Gaveston;
And could my crown's revenue bring him back,
I would freely give it to his enemies
And think I gained, having bought so dear a friend.

Queen Isabella

Hark how he harps upon his minion! 310

King Edward

My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers.¹⁸¹
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
Ah, had some bloodless Fury rose from hell¹⁸² 315
And with my kingly sceptre struck me dead
When I was forced to leave my Gaveston.

Lancaster

*Diablo!*¹⁸³ What passions call you these?

Queen Isabella

My gracious lord, I come to bring you news.

King Edward

That you have parled¹⁸⁴ with your Mortimer? 320

Queen Isabella

That Gaveston, my lord, shall be repealed.

King Edward

Repealed? The news is too sweet to be true!

Queen Isabella

But will you love me if you find it so?

¹⁸¹ The Cyclops work for Vulcan in his smithy under Mount Aetna, making thunderbolts for Jupiter.

¹⁸² *had... hell*: if only a bloodless Fury had risen from hell. The Furies were spirits who punished and avenged crimes, especially those committed within the family. They resided in the classical hell.

¹⁸³ *Diablo!*: (Spanish) The devil!

¹⁸⁴ *parled*: parleyed.

King Edward
 If it be so, what will not Edward do?

Queen Isabella
 For Gaveston, but not for Isabel. 325

King Edward
 For thee, fair Queen, if thou lov'st Gaveston,
 I'll hang a golden tongue about thy neck,
 Seeing thou hast pleaded with so good success.

Queen Isabella
 No other jewels hang about my neck
 Than these,¹⁸⁵ my lord, nor let me have more wealth 330
 Than I may fetch from this rich treasury.
 O how a kiss revives poor Isabel!

King Edward
 Once more receive my hand, and let this be
 A second marriage 'twixt thyself and me.

Queen Isabella
 And may it prove more happy than the first. 335
 My gentle lord, bespeak these nobles fair¹⁸⁶
 That wait attendance for a gracious look
 And on their knees salute your majesty.

King Edward
 Courageous Lancaster, embrace thy King,
 And as gross vapours¹⁸⁷ perish by the sun, 340
 Even so let hatred with thy sovereign's smile.¹⁸⁸
 Live thou with me as my companion.

Lancaster
 This salutation overjoys my heart.

King Edward
 Warwick shall be my chiefest counsellor.
 These silver hairs will more adorn my court 345
 Than gaudy silks or rich embroidery.
 Chide me, sweet Warwick, if I go astray.

Warwick
 Slay me, my lord, when I offend your grace.

King Edward
 In solemn triumphs and in public shows
 Pembroke shall bear the sword¹⁸⁹ before the King. 350

Pembroke
 And with this sword Pembroke will fight for you.

¹⁸⁵ Probably Edward's arms as he thankfully embraces her.

¹⁸⁶ *bespeak...fair*: speak kindly to these noblemen.

¹⁸⁷ *gross vapours*: foul, heavy air.

¹⁸⁸ See glossary: Sun.

¹⁸⁹ *the sword*; the sword of state, symbolic of the King's power.

King Edward
But wherefore walks young Mortimer aside?
Be thou commander of our royal fleet,
Or if that lofty office like¹⁹⁰ thee not,
I make thee here Lord Marshal of the realm. 355

Mortimer Junior
My lord, I'll marshal so your enemies
As England shall be quiet and you safe.

King Edward
And as for you, Lord Mortimer of Chirke,
Whose great achievements in our foreign war
Deserve no common place nor mean reward, 360
Be you the general of the levied troops
That now are ready to assail the Scots.

Mortimer Senior
In this your grace hath highly honoured me,
For with my nature war doth best agree.

Queen Isabella
Now is the King of England rich and strong, 365
Having the love of his renowned peers.

King Edward
Ay, Isabel, ne'er was my heart so light.

[Enter Beaumont]

Clerk of the crown,¹⁹¹ direct our warrant forth
For Gaveston to Ireland. Beaumont, fly
As fast as Iris¹⁹² or Jove's Mercury.¹⁹³ 370

Beaumont
It shall be done, my gracious lord. [Exit]

King Edward
Lord Mortimer, we leave you to your charge.
Now let us in and feast it royally.
Against¹⁹⁴ our friend the Earl of Cornwall comes
We'll have a general tilt¹⁹⁵ and tournament, 375
And then his¹⁹⁶ marriage shall be solemnized.
For wot¹⁹⁷ you not that I have made him sure¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁰ *like*: please.

¹⁹¹ *Clerk of the crown*: an officer who issues writs of summons to peers in the House of Lords.

¹⁹² Iris, the rainbow, was the gods', especially Juno's, messenger.

¹⁹³ Mercury was Jupiter's messenger, his fleetness shown by the wings on his sandals.

¹⁹⁴ *Against*: in preparation for.

¹⁹⁵ *general tilt*: military exercise on horseback; either two knights with lances try to unhorse each other, or one knight at a time charges a small target.

¹⁹⁶ I.e., Gaveston's.

¹⁹⁷ *wot*: know.

¹⁹⁸ *made him sure*: assured him a legally binding (marriage) contract.

Unto our cousin, the Earl of Gloucester's heir?

Lancaster
Such news we hear, my lord.

King Edward
That day, if not for him, then for my sake, 380
Who in the triumph will be challenger.¹⁹⁹
Spare for no cost. We will requite your love.

Warwick
In this or aught your highness shall command us.

King Edward
Thanks, gentle Warwick. Come, let's in and revel.
Exeunt [all, except Mortimers Senior and Junior]

Mortimer Senior
Nephew, I must to Scotland. Thou stay'st here. 385
Leave²⁰⁰ now to oppose thyself against the King;
Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,
And seeing his mind so dotes on Gaveston,
Let him without controlment have his will.
The mightiest kings have had their minions. 390
Great Alexander loved Hephaestion;²⁰¹
The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept;²⁰²
And for Patroclus stern Achilles drooped.²⁰³
And not kings only, but the wisest men:
The Roman Tully loved Octavius,²⁰⁴ 395
Grave Socrates wild Alchibiades.²⁰⁵
Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible
And promiseth as much as we can wish,
Freely enjoy that vain, light-headed earl,
For riper years will wean him from such toys. 400

Mortimer Junior
Uncle, his wanton humour grieves not me,
But this I scorn, that one so basely born
Should by his sovereign's favour grow so pert
And riot it with the treasure of the realm

¹⁹⁹ King Edward plans to take active part in the tournament.

²⁰⁰ *Leave*: stop; leave off.

²⁰¹ Alexander the Great declared Hephaestion "his Patroclus" in emulation of the intimate friendship between Patroclus and Achilles.

²⁰² Hylas is the handsome youth Hercules brought with him on his quest for the Golden Fleece. The Naiads fell in love with him because of his beauty and abducted him into the water to live with them. Hercules searched frantically, but found only the echo of Hylas' voice.

²⁰³ In the Trojan war, Achilles had withdrawn from the combat. The slaying of his intimate friend Patroclus at the hands of Hector sent him back to combat in search of revenge.

²⁰⁴ *Tully*: Marcus Tullius Cicero, who according to history was not particularly close to Octavius, later Caesar Augustus, adoptive son of Julius Caesar.

²⁰⁵ The Greek philosopher Socrates attempted to redeem the handsome but unprincipled Alchibiades, a young nobleman, though without success.

While soldiers mutiny for want of pay. 405
 He wears a lord's revenue on his back,
 And, Midas-like,²⁰⁶ he jets it²⁰⁷ in the court
 With base outlandish²⁰⁸ cullions²⁰⁹ at his heels,
 Whose proud, fantastic liveries make such show
 As if that Proteus,²¹⁰ god of shapes, appeared. 410
 I have not seen a dapper jack²¹¹ so brisk,
 He wears a short Italian hooded cloak
 Larded²¹² with pearls, and in his Tuscan cap
 A jewel of more value than the crown.
 Whiles other²¹³ walk below, the King and he 415
 From out a window laugh at such as we,
 And flout our train²¹⁴ and jest at our attire.
 Uncle, 'tis this that makes me impatient.
 Mortimer Senior
 But nephew, now you see the King is changed.
 Mortimer Junior
 Then so am I, and live to do him service. 420
 But whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart,
 I will not yield to any such upstart.
 You know my mind. Come uncle, let's away. *Exeunt*

Act II, Scene i

[The Earl of Gloucester's house]
Enter Spencer [Junior] and Baldock

Baldock
 Spencer,
 Seeing that our lord the Earl of Gloucester's dead,
 Which of the nobles dost thou mean to serve?

²⁰⁶ *Midas-like*: as if all gold/golden. By Dionysus, King Midas was given the dubious gift of turning everything he touched into gold.

²⁰⁷ *jets it*: struts about.

²⁰⁸ *outlandish*: foreign.

²⁰⁹ *cullions*: lowly fellows.

²¹⁰ *Proteus*: a shape-changing sea god.

²¹¹ *dapper jack*: fancily dressed fellow.

²¹² *Larded*: lavishly decorated.

²¹³ I.e., other people, noble people.

²¹⁴ *flout our train*: make fun of our attendants.

Spencer Junior	
Not Mortimer, nor any of his side, Because the King and he are enemies.	5
Baldock, learn this of me! A factious lord ²¹⁵ Shall hardly do himself good, much less us. But he that hath the favour of a king May with one word advance us while we live.	
The liberal Earl of Cornwall is the man On whose good fortunes Spencer's hope depends.	10
Baldock	
What, mean you then to be his follower?	
Spencer Junior	
No, his companion, for he loves me well And would have once preferred me ²¹⁶ to the King.	
Baldock	
But he is banished, there's small hope of him.	15
Spencer Junior	
Ay, for a while. But Baldock, mark the end. A friend of mine told me in secrecy That he's repealed and sent for back again; And even now a post came from the court With letters to our lady from the King, And as she read she smiled, which makes me think It is about her lover, Gaveston.	20
Baldock	
'Tis like enough, for since he was exiled She neither walks abroad nor comes in sight. But I had thought the match had been broke off And that his banishment had changed her mind.	25
Spencer Junior	
Our lady's first love is not wavering. My life for thine, she will have Gaveston.	
Baldock	
Then hope I by her means to be preferred, Having read unto her since she was a child. ²¹⁷	30
Spencer Junior	
Then, Baldock, you must cast the scholar off And learn to court it ²¹⁸ like a gentleman. 'Tis not a black coat and a little band, ²¹⁹	

²¹⁵ *A factious lord*: a lord given to sedition.

²¹⁶ *preferred me*: recommended me.

²¹⁷ Marlowe presents Baldock as Margaret's tutor.

²¹⁸ *court it*: behave like a courtier.

²¹⁹ *black... band*: Scholars traditionally dressed in black with a thin band of cloth around the neck.

A velvet-caped cloak, faced before with serge,²²⁰
 And smelling to a nosegay all the day, 35
 Or holding of a napkin in your hand,
 Or saying a long grace at table's end,²²¹
 Or making low legs²²² to a nobleman,
 Or looking downward with your eyelids closed,
 And saying, 'Truly, an't²²³ may please your honour,' 40
 Can get you any favour with great men.
 You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,
 And now and then stab as occasion serves!

Baldock
 Spencer, you know I hate such formal toys²²⁴
 And use them but of mere hypocrisy. 45
 Mine old²²⁵ lord whiles he lived was so precise²²⁶
 That he would take exceptions at²²⁷ my buttons,
 And, being like pins' heads, blame me for the bigness,
 Which made me curate-like in my attire,
 Though inwardly licentious enough 50
 And apt for any kind of villainy.
 I am none of these common pedants, I,
 That cannot speak without *propterea quod*.²²⁸

Spencer Junior
 But one of those that saith *quandoquidem*²²⁹
 And hath a special gift to form a verb.²³⁰ 55

Baldock
 Leave off this jesting. Here my lady comes.

Enter the Lady [Margaret de Clare with letters]

Lady Margaret
 The grief for his exile was not so much
 As is the joy of his returning home.
 This letter came from my sweet Gaveston.
 What needst thou, love, thus to excuse thyself? 60

²²⁰ A... *serge*: a caped cloak has a collar-like part, fitting closely around the neck and covering the shoulders. Spencer implies that Baldock the scholar can only afford expensive velvet for the collar, inexpensive, longer-wearing serge for the cloak.

²²¹ *at table's end*: at the lowest-ranking end of the table.

²²² *making low legs*: bowing deeply, one leg outstretched.

²²³ *an't*: if it.

²²⁴ *toys*: trifles.

²²⁵ *old*: former; i.e., the now dead earl of Gloucester.

²²⁶ *was so precise*: observed formalities rigorously, puritanically.

²²⁷ *take exceptions at*: complain about; be offended by.

²²⁸ *propterea quod* (Latin): Because. At the time probably regarded as a pedantic, prosaic, old-fashioned way of using Latin.

²²⁹ *quandoquidem* (Latin): Because; this is probably the more elegant, poetical, modern way of expression.

²³⁰ *form a verb*: properly conjugate a verb; use correct Latin grammar.

I know thou couldst not come and visit me.
 ‘I will not long be from thee, though I die.’²³¹
 This argues the entire love of my lord.
 ‘When I forsake thee, death seize on my heart.’
 But rest thee here²³² where Gaveston shall sleep. 65
 Now to the letter of my lord the King.
 [*Reads*] He wills me to repair unto the court
 And meet my Gaveston. Why do I stay,
 Seeing that he talks thus of my marriage day?
 Who’s there? Baldock?
 See that my coach be ready; I must hence. 71
[Baldock and Spencer Junior approach]

Baldock
 It shall be done, madam.

Lady Margaret
 And meet me at the park pale²³³ presently. *Exit [Baldock]*
 Spencer, stay you and bear me company,
 For I have joyful news to tell thee of. 75
 My lord of Cornwall is a-coming over
 And will be at the court as soon as we.

Spencer Junior
 I knew the King would have him home again.

Lady Margaret
 If all things sort out as I hope they will,
 Thy service, Spencer, shall be thought upon. 80

Spencer Junior
 I humbly thank your ladyship.

Lady Margaret
 Come, lead the way. I long till I am there. *Exeunt*

Act II, Scene ii

[At Tynemouth Castle]

Enter Edward, the Queen [Isabella], Lancaster, Mortimer [Junior], Warwick, Pembroke, Kent [and] Attendants

King Edward

The wind is good. I wonder why he stays.
 I fear me he is wracked upon the sea.

²³¹ See glossary: Die.

²³² I.e., in her bosom, by her heart.

²³³ *park pale*: the park fence.

Queen Isabella	
Look, Lancaster, how passionate he is, And still his mind runs on his minion.	
Lancaster	
My lord—	5
King Edward	
How now? What news? Is Gaveston arrived?	
Mortimer Junior	
Nothing but Gaveston! What means your grace? You have matters of more weight to think upon. The King of France sets foot in Normandy. ²³⁴	
King Edward	
A trifle! We'll expel him when we please. But tell me, Mortimer, what's thy device ²³⁵ Against the stately triumph ²³⁶ we decreed?	10
Mortimer Junior	
A homely one, my lord, not worth the telling.	
King Edward	
Prithee, let me know it.	
Mortimer Junior	
But seeing you are so desirous, thus it is: A lofty cedar tree, fair flourishing, On whose top branches kingly eagles perch, And by the bark a canker ²³⁷ creeps me up ²³⁸ And gets unto the highest bough of all; The motto: <i>Æque tandem</i> . ²³⁹	15 20
King Edward	
And what is yours, my lord of Lancaster?	
Lancaster	
My lord, mine's more obscure than Mortimer's. Pliny ²⁴⁰ reports there is a flying fish Which all the other fishes deadly hate, And therefore, being pursued, it takes the air; No sooner is it up, but there's a fowl That seizes it. This fish, my lord, I bear. The motto this: <i>Undique mors est</i> . ²⁴¹	25
King Edward	
Proud Mortimer! Ungentle Lancaster! Is this the love you bear your sovereign?	30

²³⁴ This invasion is not historical, but Marlowe's invented device.

²³⁵ *device*: design and/or text; motto, painted on a shield.

²³⁶ *stately triumph*: Gaveston's marriage celebration, first mentioned I.iv.

²³⁷ *canker*: caterpillar; canker worm.

²³⁸ *creeps me up*: comes creeping.

²³⁹ *Æque tandem* (Latin): Finally equal; worm (Gaveston) and eagles (the highest peers) are on a level.

²⁴⁰ Pliny the Elder, who wrote a *Natural History*. The flying fish is not in it.

²⁴¹ *undique mors est* (Latin): Death is everywhere.

Is this the fruit your reconciliation bears?
 Can you in words make show of amity
 And in your shields display your rancorous minds?
 What call you this but private libeling
 Against the Earl of Cornwall and my brother?²⁴² 35

Queen Isabella
 Sweet husband, be content, They all love you.

King Edward
 They love me not that hate my Gaveston
 I am that cedar, shake me not too much!
 And you the eagles, soar ye ne'er so high,
 I have the jesses²⁴³ that will pull you down! 40
 And *Æque tandem* shall that canker cry
 Unto the proudest peer of Brittany!²⁴⁴
 Though thou compar'st him to a flying fish
 And threaten'st death whether he rise or fall,
 'Tis not the hugest monster of the sea 45
 Nor foulest harpy²⁴⁵ that shall swallow him.

Mortimer Junior [*aside to nobles*]
 If in his absence thus he favours him,
 What will he do whenas he shall be present?

Lancaster
 That shall we see. Look where his lordship comes.

Enter Gaveston

King Edward
 My Gaveston! 50
 Welcome to Tynemouth, welcome to thy friend.
 Thy absence made me droop and pine away,
 For as the lovers of fair Danaë.²⁴⁶
 When she was locked up in a brazen tower,
 Desired her more and waxed outrageous,²⁴⁷ 55
 So did it sure with me, and now thy sight
 Is sweeter far than was thy parting hence,
 Bitter and irksome to my sobbing heart.

Gaveston
 Sweet lord and King, your speech preventeth²⁴⁸ mine,

²⁴² I.e., Gaveston; *brother* is a term of endearment.

²⁴³ *jesses*: straps attached to the feet of a trained bird of prey.

²⁴⁴ *Brittany*: i.e., England.

²⁴⁵ *harpy*: mythological abhorrent, winged, female monster, who carried away people, food, or objects.

²⁴⁶ Danaë was locked up in a tower of brass by her father, because a prophesy told that her son would kill him. Zeus, however, visited her in a shower of gold, and she gave birth to Perseus, who eventually made the prophecy come true.

²⁴⁷ *waxed outrageous*: went beyond acceptable behavior in their longing.

²⁴⁸ *preventeth*: anticipates.

Yet have I words left to express my joy. 60
 The shepherd nipped with biting winter's rage
 Frolics not more to see the painted²⁴⁹ spring
 Than I do to behold your majesty.
 King Edward
 Will none of you salute my Gaveston?
 Lancaster 65
 Salute him? Yes! Welcome, Lord Chamberlain.
 Mortimer Junior
 Welcome is the good earl of Cornwall.
 Warwick
 Welcome, Lord Governor of the Isle of Man.
 Pembroke
 Welcome, Master Secretary.
 Kent
 Brother, do you hear them?
 King Edward 70
 Still will these earls and barons use me thus!
 Gaveston
 My lord, I cannot brook these injuries.
 Queen Isabella [*aside*]
 Ay me, poor soul, when these begin to jar!²⁵⁰
 King Edward
 Return it to their throats! I'll be thy warrant.²⁵¹
 Gaveston 75
 Base, leaden²⁵² earls that glory in your birth,
 Go sit at home and eat your tenants' beef
 And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,
 Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low
 As to bestow a look on such as you.
 Lancaster
 Yet I disdain not to do this for you. [*Draws his sword*]
 King Edward 80
 Treason! Treason! Where's the traitor?
 Pembroke
 Here! Here! [*Indicates Gaveston*]
 King Edward
 Convey hence Gaveston! They'll murder him.
 Gaveston
 The life of thee shall salve this foul disgrace.
 Mortimer Junior
 Villain, thy life, unless I miss mine aim! [*Wounds Gaveston*]

²⁴⁹ *painted*: i.e., with flowers.

²⁵⁰ *jar*: quarrel.

²⁵¹ *warrant*: authorization.

²⁵² *leaden*: of lead, i.e., of a base metal, lowly.

Queen Isabella
 Ah, furious Mortimer, what hast thou done? 85

Mortimer Junior
 No more than I would answer²⁵³ were he slain.
[Exit Gaveston, attended]

King Edward
 Yes, more that thou canst answer though he live.
 Dear shall you both²⁵⁴ aby²⁵⁵ this riotous deed.
 Out of my presence! Come not near the court.

Mortimer Junior 90
 I'll not be barred the court for Gaveston.

Lancaster
 We'll hale him by the ears unto the block.

King Edward
 Look to your own heads. His is sure²⁵⁶ enough.

Warwick
 Look to your own crown if you back him thus.

Kent
 Warwick, these words do ill beseem thy years.

King Edward 95
 Nay, all of them conspire to cross me thus.
 But if I live I'll tread upon their heads
 That think with high looks thus to tread me down.
 Come, Edmund, let's away and levy men;
 'Tis war that must abate these barons' pride.
Exit [Edward] the King], Queen Isabella, and Kent]

Warwick 100
 Let's to our castles, for the King is moved.²⁵⁷

Mortimer Junior
 Moved may he be, and perish in his wrath.

Lancaster
 Cousin,²⁵⁸ it is no dealing with him now.
 He means to make us stoop by force of arms,
 And therefore let us jointly here protest²⁵⁹
 To prosecute that Gaveston to the death. 105

Mortimer Junior
 By heaven, the abject villain shall not live.

Warwick
 I'll have his blood or die in seeking it!

²⁵³ *answer*: answer for; take responsibility for.

²⁵⁴ Lancaster and Mortimer Junior, both having their swords drawn (?).

²⁵⁵ *aby*: pay for.

²⁵⁶ *sure*: safe.

²⁵⁷ *moved*: i.e., to anger.

²⁵⁸ *cousin*: this term can indicate both kinship and closeness in friendship.

²⁵⁹ *protest*: swear.

Lancaster

Content. I'll bear my part. Holla! Who's there?²⁶³

[*Enter a Guard*]

Mortimer Junior

Ay, marry,²⁶⁴ such a guard as this doth well.

130

Lancaster

Lead on the way.

Guard

Whither will your lordships?

Mortimer Junior

Whither else but to the King?

Guard

His highness is disposed to be alone.

Lancaster

Why, so he may, but we will speak to him.

135

Guard

You may not in,²⁶⁵ my lord.

Mortimer Junior

May we not?

[*Enter King Edward and Kent*]

King Edward

How now, what noise is this?

Who have we there? Is't you?

[*Going*]

Mortimer Junior

Nay stay, my lord, I come to bring you news.

140

Mine uncle's taken prisoner by the Scots.

King Edward

Then ransom him.

Lancaster

'Twas in your wars. You should ransom him.

Mortimer Junior

And you shall ransom him, or else—

Kent

What, Mortimer, you will not threaten him?

145

King Edward

Quiet yourself. You shall have the broad seal²⁶⁶

To gather for him throughout the realm.

²⁶³ *Who's there*: a call for service.

²⁶⁴ *marry*: by the Virgin Mary, a mild oath.

²⁶⁵ *You... in*: You may not go in.

²⁶⁶ *broad seal*: official document, giving the bearer a license to beg for a specific purpose; begging was otherwise considered an offence.

Lancaster
 Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this.

Mortimer Junior
 My lord, the family of the Mortimers
 Are not so poor but, would they sell our land, 150
 Would levy men enough to anger you.
 We never beg but use such prayers as these.
[Lays a hand on his sword]

King Edward
 Shall I still be haunted²⁶⁷ thus?

Mortimer Junior
 Nay, now you are here alone, I'll speak my mind.

Lancaster
 And so will I, and then, my lord, farewell. 155

Mortimer Junior
 The idle triumphs, masques, lascivious shows,
 And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston
 Have drawn thy treasury dry and made thee weak,
 The murmuring commons overstretched hath.²⁶⁸

Lancaster
 Look for rebellion! Look to be deposed. 160
 Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,
 And lame and poor lie groaning at the gates.
 The wild O'Neil with swarms of Irish kerns²⁶⁹
 Lives uncontrolled within the English pale.²⁷⁰
 Unto the walls of York the Scots made road²⁷¹ 165
 And unresisted drave²⁷² away rich spoils.

Mortimer Junior
 The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas
 While in the harbour ride thy ships unriggered.

Lancaster
 What foreign prince sends thee ambassadors?

Mortimer Junior
 Who loves thee but a sort²⁷³ of flatterers? 170

Lancaster
 Thy gentle Queen, sole sister to Valois,
 Complains that thou hast left her all forlorn.

Mortimer Junior
 Thy court is naked, being bereft of those

²⁶⁷ *haunted*: troubled.

²⁶⁸ The gist of these lines: Having spent all on Gaveston, the King is now overtaxing the common people, who are complaining.

²⁶⁹ *kerns*: foot-soldiers, lightly armed.

²⁷⁰ *the English pale*: area around Dublin, colonized and controlled by the English.

²⁷¹ *made road*: went on a raid.

²⁷² *drave*: took.

²⁷³ *sort*: crowd, flock.

That makes a king seem glorious to the world, I mean the peers whom thou shouldst dearly love. Libels ²⁷⁴ are cast against thee in the street, Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow.	175
Lancaster	
The northern borderers, ²⁷⁵ seeing their houses burnt, Their wives and children slain, run up and down, Cursing the name of thee and Gaveston.	180
Mortimer Junior	
When wert thou in the field with banner spread? But once! And then thy soldiers marched like players With garish robes, not armour, and thyself Bedaubed ²⁷⁶ with gold, rode laughing at the rest, Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest ²⁷⁷ Where women's favours ²⁷⁸ hung like labels ²⁷⁹ down.	185
Lancaster	
And thereof came it that the fleering ²⁸⁰ Scots To England's high disgrace have made this jig: ²⁸¹ <i>Maids of England, sore may you mourn, For your lemans²⁸² you have lost at Bannocks bourne²⁸³ With a heave and a ho.²⁸⁴ What weeneth²⁸⁵ the King of England, So soon to have won Scotland? With a rombelow!²⁸⁶</i>	190
Mortimer Junior	
Wigmore shall fly ²⁸⁷ to see my uncle free.	195
Lancaster	
And when 'tis gone, our swords shall purchase more. If ye may be moved, revenge it as you can. Look next to see us with our ensign ²⁸⁸ spread. <i>Exeunt Nobles [Lancaster and Mortimer Junior]</i>	

²⁷⁴ I.e., on broadsides, large sheet of paper, printed on one side only, usually making a controversy public.

²⁷⁵ *borderers*: men living on the border.

²⁷⁶ *Bedaubed*: ornamented to vulgar excess.

²⁷⁷ *crest*: helmet.

²⁷⁸ *favours*: love tokens, often such personal items as detachable sleeves and gloves.

²⁷⁹ *labels*: the parchment strip used to attach the seal to a document.

²⁸⁰ *fleering*: jeering with a grin.

²⁸¹ *jig*: song mocking a person or event.

²⁸² *lemans*: lovers.

²⁸³ Refers to the bloody battle of Bannockburn between the English and the Scots. This battle historically was after Gaveston's death.

²⁸⁴ Though originally a rowing song refrain, the line also mimics the sound of a sigh.

²⁸⁵ *weeneth*: hopes.

²⁸⁶ Meaningless refrain.

²⁸⁷ *Wigmore shall fly*: I will quickly sell my estate at Wigmore.

²⁸⁸ *ensign*: banners.

King Edward
 My swelling heart for very anger breaks!
 How oft have I been bated by these peers 200
 And dare not be revenged, for their power is great!
 Yet, shall the crowing of these cockerels
 Affright the lion? Edward, unfold thy paws
 And let their lives' blood slake thy fury's hunger!
 If I be cruel and grow tyrannous 205
 Now let them thank themselves and rue too late.

Kent
 My lord, I see your love to Gaveston
 Will be the ruin of the realm and you,
 For now the wrathful nobles threaten wars,
 And therefore, brother, banish him for ever. 210

King Edward
 Art thou an enemy to my Gaveston?

Kent
 Ay, and it grieves me that I favoured him.

King Edward
 Traitor, be gone! Whine thou with Mortimer.

Kent
 So will I, rather than with Gaveston.

King Edward
 Out of my sight and trouble me no more. 215

Kent
 No marvel though thou scorn thy noble peers.
 When I thy brother am rejected thus.

King Edward
 Away! [Exit Kent]

Poor Gaveston that hast no friend but me!
 Do what they can. We'll live in Tynemouth here. 220
 And so I walk with him about the walls,
 What care I though the earls begirt us round?²⁸⁹
 Here comes she that is cause of all these jars.

Enter the Queen [Isabella with] three ladies [Lady Margaret de Clare and two Ladies, Gaveston,] Baldock, and Spencer [Junior]

Queen Isabella
 My lord, 'tis thought the earls are up in arms.

King Edward
 Ay, and 'tis likewise thought you favour 'em. 225

Queen Isabella
 Thus do you still suspect me without cause.

²⁸⁹ *begirt us round*: make a girdle (of troops) around us.

Lady Margaret
Sweet uncle, speak more kindly to the Queen.

Gaveston [*aside to the King*]
My lord, dissemble with her, speak her fair.

King Edward
Pardon me, sweet, I forgot myself.

Queen Isabella
Your pardon is quickly got of Isabel. 230

King Edward
The younger Mortimer is grown so brave²⁹⁰
That to my face he threatens civil wars.

Gaveston
Why do you not commit him to the Tower?

King Edward
I dare not, for the people love him well.

Gaveston
Why then we'll have him privily made away.²⁹¹ 235

King Edward
Would Lancaster and he had both caroused
A bowl of poison to each other's health!
But let them go,²⁹² and tell me what are these?²⁹³

Lady Margaret
Two of my father's servants whilst he lived.
May't please your grace to entertain them²⁹⁴ now. 240

King Edward [*to Baldock*]
Tell me, where wast thou born? What is thine arms?²⁹⁵

Baldock
My name is Baldock, and my gentry
I fetched from Oxford, not from heraldry.²⁹⁶

King Edward
The fitter art thou, Baldock, for my turn.
Wait on me, and I'll see thou shalt not want. 245

Baldock
I humbly thank your majesty.

King Edward
Knowest thou him, Gaveston?

Gaveston
Ay, my lord.
His name is Spencer; he is well allied.²⁹⁷
For my sake let him wait upon your grace.

²⁹⁰ *brave*: forward, brash.

²⁹¹ *privily made away*: killed in secret.

²⁹² *let them go*: enough about them.

²⁹³ I.e., Spencer and Baldock.

²⁹⁴ *entertain them*: take them into service.

²⁹⁵ I.e., coat of arms.

²⁹⁶ *I fetched... heraldry*: Baldock is a scholar, not of the nobility.

²⁹⁷ *well allied*: his family is good.

Scarce shall you find a man of more desert. 250
 King Edward
 Then, Spencer, wait upon me. For his sake
 I'll grace thee with a higher style ere long.²⁹⁸
 Spencer Junior
 No greater titles happen unto me
 Than to be favoured of your majesty.
 King Edward
 Cousin,²⁹⁹ this day shall be your marriage feast. 255
 And Gaveston, think that I love thee well
 To wed thee to our niece, the only heir
 Unto the Earl of Gloucester, late deceased.
 Gaveston
 I know, my lord, many will stomach³⁰⁰ me,
 But I respect neither their love nor hate. 260
 King Edward
 The headstrong barons shall not limit me.
 He that I list³⁰¹ to favour shall be great.
 Come, let's away, and when the marriage ends,
 Have at the rebels and their complices.³⁰² *Exeunt*

Act II, Scene iii

[At Tynemouth Castle]

Enter Lancaster, Mortimer [Junior], Warwick, Pembroke, Kent, [and others]

Kent

My lords, of love to this our native land
 I come to join with you and leave the King,
 And in your quarrel and the realm's behoof³⁰³
 Will be the first that shall adventure³⁰⁴ life.

Lancaster

I fear me you are sent of policy 5
 To undermine us with a show of love.

Warwick

He is your brother, therefore have we cause

²⁹⁸ I.e., King Edward as good as promises to elevate Spencer to the nobility.

²⁹⁹ *Cousin*: i.e., niece.

³⁰⁰ *stomach*: resent.

³⁰¹ *list*: want, wish.

³⁰² *complices*: accomplices; allies.

³⁰³ *the realm's behoof*: the welfare of the realm.

³⁰⁴ *adventure*: risk.

To cast³⁰⁵ the worst and doubt of³⁰⁶ your revolt.
 Kent
 Mine honour shall be hostage of my truth.
 If that will not suffice, farewell my lords. 10
 Mortimer Junior
 Stay, Edmund! Never was Plantagenet³⁰⁷
 False of his word, and therefore trust we thee.
 Pembroke
 But what's the reason you should leave him now?
 Kent
 I have informed the Earl of Lancaster.
 Lancaster
 And it sufficeth. Now, my lords, know this, 15
 That Gaveston is secretly arrived
 And here in Tynemouth frolics with the King.
 Let us with these our followers scale the walls
 And suddenly surprise them unawares.
 Mortimer Junior
 I'll give the onset.
 Warwick And I'll follow thee. 20
 Mortimer Junior
 This tattered ensign of my ancestors,
 Which swept the desert shore of the Dead Sea
 Whereof we got the name of Mortimer,³⁰⁸
 Will I advance upon this castle walls.
 Drums strike alarums! Raise them from their sport, 25
 And ring aloud the knell of Gaveston.
 Lancaster
 None be so hardy as to touch the King,
 But neither spare you Gaveston nor his friends. *Exeunt*

Act II, Scene iv

[In Tynemouth Castle]
 [Alarums.³⁰⁹] *Enter the King [Edward] and Spencer [Junior at opposite doors]*

³⁰⁵ *cast*: expect; "forecast."

³⁰⁶ *doubt of*: be suspicious of.

³⁰⁷ Name used of the royal family founded by Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, on his marriage to Mathilda, Henry I's daughter; the dynasty lasted 1154–1485. Kent is a Plantagenet.

³⁰⁸ The Dead Sea in Latin is *Mortuum Mare*.

³⁰⁹ Alarums: martial sounds; clamor.

King Edward

O tell me, Spencer, where is Gaveston?

Spencer Junior

I fear me he is slain, my gracious lord.

King Edward

No, here he comes! Now let them spoil and kill!

[*Enter*] to them Gaveston [*Queen Isabella. Lady Margaret and Lords*]

Fly, fly, my lords! The earls have got the hold!³¹⁰

Take shipping and away to Scarborough!

Spencer and I will post away by land.

5

Gaveston

O stay, my lord, they will not injure you.

King Edward

I will not trust them, Gaveston. Away!

Gaveston

Farewell, my lord.

King Edward

Lady, farewell.

10

Lady Margaret

Farewell, sweet uncle, till we meet again.

King Edward

Farewell, sweet Gaveston, and farewell, niece.

Queen Isabella

No farewell to poor Isabel, thy Queen?

King Edward

Yes, yes, for Mortimer, your lover's sake.

Queen Isabella

Heaven can witness I love none but you.

15

Exeunt [all except Queen Isabella]

From my embracements thus he breaks away.

O that mine arms could close this isle about,

That I might pull him to me where I would,

Or that these tears that drizzle from mine eyes

Had power to mollify his stony heart 20

That, when I had him, we might never part.

Enter the Barons [Lancaster, Warwick, and Mortimer Junior]. Alarums [within]

Lancaster

I wonder how he scaped.³¹¹

Mortimer Junior

Who's this? The Queen!

³¹⁰ *hold*: fortress.

³¹¹ *scaped*: escaped.

Queen Isabella
 Ay, Mortimer, the miserable Queen,
 Whose pining heart her inward sighs have blasted,
 And body with continual mourning wasted. 25
 These hands are tired with haling³¹² of my lord
 From Gaveston, from wicked Gaveston!
 And all in vain, for when I speak him fair
 He turns away and smiles upon his minion.

Mortimer Junior
 Cease to lament, and tell us where's the King. 30

Queen Isabella
 What would you with the King? Is't him you seek?

Lancaster
 No, madam, but that cursed Gaveston.
 Far be it from the thought of Lancaster
 To offer violence to his sovereign.
 We would but rid the realm of Gaveston. 35
 Tell us where he remains, and he shall die.

Queen Isabella
 He's gone by water unto Scarborough.
 Pursue him quickly, and he cannot scape;
 The King hath left him, and his train is small.

Warwick
 Foreslow³¹³ no time! Sweet Lancaster, let's march! 40

Mortimer Junior
 How comes it that the King and he is parted?

Queen Isabella
 That this your army, going several ways,
 Might be of lesser force, and with the power
 That he intendeth presently to raise
 Be easily suppressed; and therefore be gone. 45

Mortimer Junior
 Here in the river rides a Flemish hoy.³¹⁴
 Let's all aboard and follow him amain.³¹⁵

Lancaster
 The wind that bears him hence will fill our sails.
 Come, come, aboard! 'Tis but an hour's sailing.

Mortimer Junior
 Madam, stay you within this castle here. 50

Queen Isabella
 No, Mortimer, I'll to my lord the King.

³¹² *haling*: dragging.

³¹³ *Foreslow*: waste by slowness.

³¹⁴ *hoy*: small fishing vessel, ideal for the North Sea, much used by the Flemish people.

³¹⁵ *amain*: at full speed.

Mortimer Junior

Nay, rather sail with us to Scarborough. Queen Isabella
You know the King is so suspicious,
As if he hear I have but talked with you
Mine honour will be called in question, 55
And therefore, gentle Mortimer, be gone.

Mortimer Junior

Madam, I cannot stay to answer you,
But think of Mortimer as he deserves.
[Exeunt Lancaster, Warwick, and Mortimer Junior]

Queen Isabella

So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer
As Isabel could live with thee forever. 60
In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,
Whose eyes are fixed on none but Gaveston.
Yet once more I'll importune him with prayers.
If he be strange³¹⁶ and not regard my words,
My son and I will over into France 65
And to the King, my brother, there complain
How Gaveston hath robbed me of his love.
But yet I hope my sorrows will have end
And Gaveston this blessed day be slain. *[Exit]*

Act II, Scene v

[Open country]

Enter Gaveston, pursued.

Gaveston

Yet, lusty lords, I have escaped your hands,
Your threats, your 'larums, and your hot pursuits,
And though divorced from King Edward's eyes
Yet liveth Pierce of Gaveston unsurprised.
Breathing, in hope *malgrado*³¹⁷ all your beards 5
That muster rebels thus against your King,
To see his royal sovereign once again.

Enter the Nobles [Warwick, Lancaster, Pembroke, Mortimer Junior, Soldiers, James, Servants and Attendants]

³¹⁶ *strange*: distant.

³¹⁷ *malgrado*: in spite of.

Warwick

Upon him, soldiers! Take away his weapons.

Mortimer Junior

Thou proud disturber of thy country's peace,
Corrupter of thy King, cause of these broils,³¹⁸ 10
Base flatterer, yield! And were it not for shame,
Shame and dishonour to a soldier's name,
Upon my weapon's point here shouldst thou fall
And welter in thy gore!

Lancaster

Monster of men,

That, like the Greekish strumpet,³¹⁹ trained³²⁰ to arms 15
And bloody wars so many valiant knights.
Look for no other fortune, wretch, than death.
King Edward is not here to buckler³²¹ thee.

Warwick

Lancaster, why talkst thou to the slave?
Go, soldiers, take him hence, for, by my sword, 20
His head shall off. Gaveston, short warning
Shall serve thy turn. It is our country's cause
That here severely we will execute
Upon thy person. Hang him at a bough!

Gaveston

My lord—

Warwick Soldiers, have him away. 25
But for thou wert the favourite of a King,
Thou shalt have so much honour at our hands.

Gaveston

I thank you all, my lords. Then I perceive
That heading is one, and hanging is the other,³²²
And death is all. 30

Enter Earl of Arundel

Lancaster

How now, my lord of Arundel?

Arundel

My lords, King Edward greets you all by me.

Warwick

Arundel, say your message.

Arundel

His majesty

³¹⁸ *broils*: quarrels; fighting.

³¹⁹ *the Greekish strumpet*: Helen of Troy.

³²⁰ *trained*: lured.

³²¹ *buckler*: protect. See note to I.iv.288.

³²² Gentlemen were executed by beheading, common men by hanging.

Hearing that you had taken Gaveston, Entreateth you by me, yet but ³²³ he may See him before he dies; for why, he says, And sends you word, he knows that die he shall. And if you gratify his grace so far He will be mindful of the courtesy.	35
Warwick How now?	
Gaveston [<i>aside</i>] Renowned Edward, how thy name Revives poor Gaveston!	40
Warwick No, it needeth not. Arundel, we will gratify the King In other matters; he must pardon us in this. Soldiers, away with him!	
Gaveston Why, my lord of Warwick, Will not these delays beget my hopes? I know it, lords, it is this life you aim at, Yet grant King Edward this.	45
Mortimer Junior Shalt thou appoint What we shall grant? Soldiers, away with him! [<i>To Arundel</i>] Thus we'll gratify the King: We'll send his head by thee. Let him bestow His tears on that, for that is all he gets Of Gaveston, or else his senseless trunk. ³²⁴	50
Lancaster Not so, my lord, lest he bestow more cost In burying him than he hath ever earned.	
Arundel My lords, it is his majesty's request And in the honour of a king he swears He will but talk with him and send him back.	55
Warwick When, can you tell? Arundel, no. We wot ³²⁵ He that the care of realm remits ³²⁶ And drives his nobles to these exigents ³²⁷ For Gaveston, will, if he seize him once, Violate any promise to possess him.	60
Arundel Then if you will not trust his grace in keep ³²⁸	

³²³ *yet but*: that only.

³²⁴ *trunk*: headless body.

³²⁵ *wot*: know.

³²⁶ *remits*: abandons.

³²⁷ *exigents*: crises; extremities.

³²⁸ *in keep*: having him in custody.

My lords, I will be pledge³²⁹ for his return.

Mortimer Junior
 It is honourable in thee to offer this, 65
 But for we know thou art a noble gentleman,
 We will not wrong thee so,
 To make away³³⁰ a true man for a thief.

Gaveston
 How meanest thou, Mortimer? That is over-base.

Mortimer Junior
 Away, base groom,³³¹ robber of kings' renown! 70
 Question³³² with thy companions and thy mates.

Pembroke
 My lord Mortimer, and you, my lords, each one,
 To gratify the King's request therein,
 Touching the sending of this Gaveston,
 Because his majesty so earnestly 75
 Desires to see the man before his death,
 I will upon mine honour undertake
 To carry him and bring him back again,
 Provided this that you, my lord of Arundel,
 Will join with me.

Warwick
 Pembroke, what wilt thou do? 80
 Cause yet more bloodshed? Is it not enough
 That we have taken him, but must we now
 Leave him on 'Had I wist,'³³³ and let him go?

Pembroke
 My lords, I will not over-woo your honours,
 But if you dare trust Pembroke with the prisoner, 85
 Upon my oath I will return him back.

Arundel
 My lord of Lancaster, what say you in this?

Lancaster
 Why, I say let him go on Pembroke's word.

Pembroke
 And you, Lord Mortimer?

Mortimer Junior
 How say you, my lord of Warwick? 90

Warwick
 Nay, do your pleasures. I know how 'twill prove.

Pembroke
 Then give him me.

³²⁹ *I will be pledge*: I will give my person and life as security, be a hostage.

³³⁰ *make away*: kill.

³³¹ *base groom*: lowly fellow.

³³² *Question*: quarrel.

³³³ *'Had I wist'*: "If only I had known."

King Edward	
I long to hear an answer from the barons Touching my friend, my dearest Gaveston. Ah Spencer, not the riches of my realm Can ransom him! Ah, he is marked to die. I know the malice of the younger Mortimer, Warwick, I know, is rough, and Lancaster Inexorable, and I shall never see My lovely Pierce, my Gaveston, again. The barons overbear me with their pride.	5
Spencer Junior	
Were I King Edward, England's sovereign, Son to the lovely Eleanor of Spain, ³⁴⁷ Great Edward Longshanks' issue, would I bear These braves, ³⁴⁸ this rage, and suffer uncontrolled These barons thus to beard me ³⁴⁹ in my land, In mine own realm? My lord, pardon my speech. Did you ³⁵⁰ retain your father's magnanimity, ³⁵¹ Did you regard the honour of your name, You would not suffer ³⁵² thus your majesty Be counterbuffed ³⁵³ of your nobility. Strike off their heads and let them preach on poles! No doubt such lessons they will teach the rest As by their preachments they will profit much And learn obedience to their lawful King.	10 15 20
King Edward	
Yea, gentle Spencer, we have been too mild, Too kind to them, but now have drawn our sword, And if they send me not my Gaveston We'll steel it ³⁵⁴ on their crest and poll their tops. ³⁵⁵	25
Baldock	
This haught ³⁵⁶ resolve becomes your majesty, Not to be tied to their affection ³⁵⁷ As though your highness were a schoolboy still	30

³⁴⁷ Eleanor of Castile, married to Edward I Longshanks, so nicknamed because of his extraordinarily long legs.

³⁴⁸ *braves*: insults.

³⁴⁹ *beard me*: pull me by the beard, i.e., insult.

³⁵⁰ *Did you*: if you did/had.

³⁵¹ *magnanimity*: high courage.

³⁵² *suffer*: permit.

³⁵³ *counterbuffed*: beaten back.

³⁵⁴ *steel it*: use steel, swords.

³⁵⁵ *poll... tops*: lop their heads off.

³⁵⁶ *haught*: proud, noble.

³⁵⁷ *Not... affection*: not to bow to what they might affect/want.

And must be awed and governed like a child.

Enter Hugh Spencer [Senior], an old man, father to the young Spencer [Junior], with his truncheon³⁵⁸ and soldiers

Spencer Senior

Long live my sovereign, the noble Edward.
In peace triumphant, fortunate in war.

King Edward

Welcome, old man. Com'st thou in Edward's aid?
Then tell thy prince of whence and what thou art. 35

Spencer Senior

Lo, with a band of bowmen and of pikes,
Brown bills³⁵⁹ and targeteers,³⁶⁰ four hundred strong,
Sworn to defend King Edward's royal right
I come in person to your majesty. 40
Spencer, the father of Hugh Spencer there,
Bound to your highness everlastingly
For favours done in³⁶¹ him unto us all.

King Edward

Thy father, Spencer?

Spencer Junior True, an it like³⁶² your grace.
That pours in lieu of³⁶³ all your goodness shown
His life, my lord, before your princely feet. 45

King Edward

Welcome ten thousand times, old man, again!
Spencer, this love, this kindness to thy King
Argues thy noble mind and disposition.
Spencer, I here create thee Earl of Wiltshire,³⁶⁴
And daily will enrich thee with our favour 50
That, as the sunshine, shall reflect o'er thee.
Beside, the more to manifest our love,
Because we hear Lord Bruce³⁶⁵ doth sell his land,
And that the Mortimers are in hand withal,³⁶⁶
Thou shalt have crowns of us t'outbid the barons; 55
And Spencer, spare them not, but lay it on!
Soldiers, a largess!³⁶⁷ And thrice welcome all.

³⁵⁸ truncheon: baton signifying that he is an officer.

³⁵⁹ *Brown bills*: halberds, a combination of pike and axe, bronzed to prevent rusting.

³⁶⁰ *targeteers*: foot soldiers carrying shields.

³⁶¹ *in*: through.

³⁶² *an it like*: if it may please.

³⁶³ *in lieu of*: in recompense for.

³⁶⁴ Spencer Junior is the recipient of the earldom.

³⁶⁵ *Lord Bruce*: William de Bruce, an impoverished nobleman who was selling his estate.

³⁶⁶ *in hand withal*: in the process of buying the land.

³⁶⁷ *largesse*: extra payment.

Spencer Junior

My lord, here comes the Queen.

Enter the Queen [Isabella] and [Prince Edward] her son, and Levune, a Frenchman

King Edward

Madam, what news?

Queen Isabella

News of dishonour, lord, and discontent.

Our friend Levune, faithful and full of trust, 60

Informeth us by letters and by words

That Lord Valois our brother, King of France,

Because your highness hath been slack in homage,

Hath seized Normandy into his hands.

These be the letters, this the messenger. 65

King Edward

Welcome Levune. Tush, sib,³⁶⁸ if this be all,

Valois and I will soon be friends again.

But to my Gaveston! Shall I never see,

Never behold thee now? Madam, in this matter

We will employ you and your little son. 70

You shall go parley with the King of France.

Boy, see you bear you bravely³⁶⁹ to the King

And do your message with a majesty.

Prince Edward

Commit not to my youth things of more weight

Than fits a prince so young as I to bear. 75

And fear not, lord and father, Heaven's great beams

On Atlas' shoulder³⁷⁰ shall not lie more safe

Than shall your charge committed to my trust.

Queen Isabella

Ah boy, this towardness³⁷¹ makes thy mother fear

Thou art not marked to many days on earth. 80

King Edward

Madam, we will that you with speed be shipped,

And this our son. Levune shall follow you

With all the haste we can dispatch him hence.

Choose of your lords to bear you company

And go in peace. Leave us in wars at home. 85

Queen Isabella

Unnatural wars, where subjects brave their King.

God end them once!³⁷² My lord, I take my leave

³⁶⁸ *sib*: sibling; usually used for a kinswoman, here for "wife."

³⁶⁹ *bear... bravely*: behave properly, nobly.

³⁷⁰ Atlas is a giant who carries the heavens on his shoulder in classical mythology.

³⁷¹ *towardness*: (premature) readiness.

³⁷² *once*: once and for all.

To make my preparation for France.

[Exit Queen Isabella and Prince Edward]

Enter Lord Arundel

King Edward

What, Lord Arundel, dost thou come alone?

Arundel

Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead. 90

King Edward

Ah, traitors! Have they put my friend to death?

Tell me, Arundel, died he ere thou cam'st,

Or didst thou see my friend to take his death?

Arundel

Neither, my lord, for as he was surprised,³⁷³
Begirt with weapons and with enemies round, 95

I did your highness' message to them all,

Demanding him of them, entreating, rather,

And said upon the honour of my name

That I would undertake to carry him

Unto your highness and to bring him back. 100

King Edward

And tell me, would the rebels deny me that?

Spencer Junior

Proud recreants!³⁷⁴

King Edward

Yea, Spencer, traitors all.

Arundel

I found them at the first inexorable.

The earl of Warwick would not bide³⁷⁵ the hearing,
Mortimer hardly; Pembroke and Lancaster 105

Spake least. And when they flatly had denied,

Refusing to receive me pledge³⁷⁶ for him.

The earl of Pembroke mildly thus bespake:

'My lords, because our sovereign sends for him

And promiseth he shall be safe returned, 110

I will this undertake, to have him hence

And see him redelivered to your hands.'

King Edward

Well, and how fortunes³⁷⁷ that he came not?

³⁷³ *surprised*: captured.

³⁷⁴ *recreants*: betrayers.

³⁷⁵ *bide*: abide.

³⁷⁶ *me pledge*: me as hostage.

³⁷⁷ *fortunes*: does it happen.

Despite of times, despite of enemies.
 Spencer Junior
 My lord, here is a messenger from the barons
 Desires access unto your Majesty.
 King Edward
 Admit him near. 150

Enter the Herald from the Barons, with his coat of arms

Herald
 Long live King Edward, England's lawful lord!
 King Edward
 So wish not they, I wis,³⁸⁶ that sent thee hither.
 Thou com'st from Mortimer and his complices.
 A ranker³⁸⁷ rout of rebels never was.
 Well, say thy message. 155

Herald
 The barons up in arms by me salute
 Your highness with long life and happiness,
 And bid me say as plainer³⁸⁸ to your grace
 That, if without effusion of blood
 You will this grief have ease and remedy,³⁸⁹ 160
 That from your princely person you remove
 This Spencer as a putrefying branch
 That deads³⁹⁰ the royal vine, whose golden leaves
 Empale³⁹¹ your princely head, your diadem,
 Whose brightness such pernicious upstarts dim. 165
 Say they, and lovingly advise your grace
 To cherish virtue and nobility,
 And have old servitors³⁹² in high esteem,
 And shake off smooth, dissembling flatterers.
 This granted, they, their honours, and their lives 170
 Are to your highness vowed and consecrate.

Spencer Junior
 Ah traitors, will they still display their pride?
 King Edward
 Away! Tarry no answer, but be gone!
 Rebels! Will they appoint their sovereign
 His sports, his pleasures, and his company? 175

³⁸⁶ *I wis*: I know.

³⁸⁷ *ranker*: fouler; more indecent.

³⁸⁸ *plainer*: complainant.

³⁸⁹ *You will... remedy*: if you will have ease of and remedy for.

³⁹⁰ *deads*: kills.

³⁹¹ *Empale*: encircle.

³⁹² *old servitors*: nobility, high ranking peers, of long standing.

Yet ere thou go, see how I do divorce
 Spencer from me (*embraces Spencer*). Now get thee to thy lords,
 And tell them I will come to chastise them
 For murdering Gaveston. Hie thee, get thee gone.
 Edward with fire and sword follows at thy heels. [Exit Herald]
 My lords, perceive you how these rebels swell?³⁹³ 181
 Soldiers, good hearts, defend your sovereign's right,
 For now, even now, we march to make them stoop!
 Away! *Exeunt*

Act III, Scene ii

[Battlefield, Boroughbridge]
*Alarums, excursions,*³⁹⁴ *a great fight, and a retreat. Enter [Edward] the King, Spencer [Senior] (the father), Spencer [Junior] (the son), and the Noblemen of the King's side*

King Edward

Why do we sound retreat? Upon them, lords!
 This day I shall pour vengeance with my sword
 On those proud rebels that are up in arms
 And do confront and countermand³⁹⁵ their King.

Spencer Junior

I doubt it not, my lord. Right will prevail. 5

Spencer Senior

'Tis not amiss, my liege, for either part
 To breathe a while. Our men with sweat and dust
 All choked well near, begin to faint for heat,
 And this retire³⁹⁶ refresheth horse and man.

Spencer Junior

Here come the rebels.

Enter the Barons, Mortimer [Junior], Lancaster, [Kent], Warwick, Pembroke, [with others]

Mortimer Junior

Look, Lancaster, 10

Yonder is Edward among his flatterers.

Lancaster

And there let him be

³⁹³ *swell*: i.e., with pride.

³⁹⁴ *excursions*: sorties by small groups of fighting men. These are probably seen running across the stage to simulate a great battle.

³⁹⁵ *countermand*: oppose.

³⁹⁶ *retire*: strategic retreat; "breathing space."

Till he pay dearly for their company.

Warwick
And shall, or Warwick's sword shall smite in vain.

King Edward
What, rebels, do you shrink and sound retreat? 15

Mortimer Junior
No, Edward, no. Thy flatterers faint and fly.

Lancaster
Thou'd best betimes³⁹⁷ forsake them and their trains,³⁹⁸
For they'll betray thee, traitors as they are.

Spencer Junior
Traitor on thy face, rebellious Lancaster!

Pembroke
Away, base upstart!³⁹⁹ Brav'st thou nobles thus? 20

Spencer Senior
A noble attempt and honourable deed
Is it not, trow ye,⁴⁰⁰ to assemble aid
And levy arms against your lawful King?

King Edward
For which ere long their heads shall satisfy⁴⁰¹
T'appease the wrath of their offended King. 25

Mortimer Junior
Then, Edward, thou wilt fight it to the last,
And rather bathe thy sword in subjects' blood
Than banish that pernicious company?

King Edward
Ay, traitors all! Rather than thus be braved,
Make England's civil towns huge heaps of stones 30
And ploughs to go about our palace gates.

Warwick
A desperate and unnatural resolution.
Alarum to the fight!⁴⁰²
Saint George⁴⁰³ for England and the barons' right!

King Edward
Saint George for England and King Edward's right! 35
[*Exeunt severally.*⁴⁰⁴ *Alarums*]

³⁹⁷ *betimes*: in good time; as soon as possible.

³⁹⁸ *trains*: intrigues.

³⁹⁹ *upstart*: parvenu; a person pushing his way up through the ranks of society.

⁴⁰⁰ *trow ye*: do you think.

⁴⁰¹ *satisfy*: atone.

⁴⁰² *Alarum...fight!*: a call to battle!

⁴⁰³ England's patron saint—but not until Edward III's reign.

⁴⁰⁴ *severally*: i.e., by opposite doors; see glossary: Playhouse, Public or Outdoor.

Enter Edward [and his Followers with Spencers Senior and Junior, Baldock, and Levune,] with the Barons [including Kent, Warwick, Lancaster, and Mortimer Junior] captive

King Edward

Now, lusty⁴⁰⁵ lords, now, not by chance of war
But justice of the quarrel and the cause,
Vailed⁴⁰⁶ is your pride. Methinks you hang the heads,
But we'll advance⁴⁰⁷ them, traitors! Now 'tis time
To be avenged on you for all your braves 40
And for the murder of my dearest friend,
To whom right well you knew our soul was knit,
Good Pierce of Gaveston, my sweet favourite.
Ah rebels, recreants,⁴⁰⁸ you made him away!⁴⁰⁹

Kent

Brother, in regards of thee and of thy land 45
Did they remove that flatterer from thy throne.

King Edward

So sir, you have spoke. Away, avoid our presence! [Exit Kent]
Accursed wretches, was't in regard of us
When we had sent our messenger to request
He might be spared to come and speak with us, 50
And Pembroke undertook for his return,
That thou, proud Warwick, watched the prisoner,⁴¹⁰
Poor Pierce, and headed⁴¹¹ him against law of arms?
For which thy head shall overlook⁴¹² the rest
As much as thou in rage outwent'st the rest! 55

Warwick

Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces.
'Tis but temporal⁴¹³ that thou canst inflict.

Lancaster

The worst is death, and better die than live,
Than live in infamy under such a king!

King Edward [to Spencer Senior]

Away with them, my lord of Winchester! 60
These lusty leaders, Warwick and Lancaster,
I charge you roundly, off with both their heads.
Away!

⁴⁰⁵ *lust*: strong.

⁴⁰⁶ *Vailed*: humbled.

⁴⁰⁷ *advance*: set them higher (on poles for display).

⁴⁰⁸ *recreants*: betrayers.

⁴⁰⁹ *you... away*: you killed him.

⁴¹⁰ *watched the prisoner*: kept watch over the prisoner.

⁴¹¹ *headed*: beheaded.

⁴¹² *overlook*: sit higher than.

⁴¹³ I.e., of this world, on the body; the punishment does not last into eternity or affect the soul.

Warwick
 Farewell, vain world.

Lancaster Sweet Mortimer, farewell.
 [*Exeunt Warwick and Lancaster, guarded, with Spencer [Senior]*]

Mortimer Junior
 England, unkind to thy nobility, 65
 Groan for this grief! Behold how thou art maimed.

King Edward
 Go, take that haughty Mortimer to the Tower,
 There see him safe bestowed. And for the rest
 Do speedy execution on them all!
 Be gone! 70

Mortimer Junior
 What, Mortimer, can ragged⁴¹⁴ stony walls
 Immure thy virtue⁴¹⁵ that aspires to heaven?
 No, Edward, England's scourge, it may not be!
 Mortimer's hope surmounts his fortune far. [*Exit guarded*]

King Edward
 Sound drums and trumpets! March with me, my friends! 75
 Edward this day hath crowned him king anew. [*Exit attended*]
 [*Spencer Junior, Levune, and Baldock remain*]

Spencer Junior
 Levune, the trust that we repose in thee
 Begets⁴¹⁶ the quiet of King Edward's land;
 Therefore be gone in haste, and with advice⁴¹⁷
 Bestow that treasure on the lords of France,⁴¹⁸ 80
 That therewith all enchanted, like the guards
 That suffered Jove to pass in showers of gold
 To Danaë,⁴¹⁹ all aid may be denied
 To Isabel the Queen, that now in France
 Makes friends, to cross the seas with her young son 85
 And step into his father's regiment.⁴²⁰

Levune
 That's it these barons and the subtle Queen
 Long levelled at.⁴²¹

Baldock Yea, but Levune, thou seest
 These barons lay their heads on blocks together.⁴²²

⁴¹⁴ *ragged*: rough.

⁴¹⁵ *virtue* is what makes a man noble and manly.

⁴¹⁶ *Begets*: is crucial to.

⁴¹⁷ *with advice*: with great care.

⁴¹⁸ *Bestow... France*: Give sufficient bribes to the French lords.

⁴¹⁹ See note to II.ii.53.

⁴²⁰ *regiment*: rule; kingship.

⁴²¹ *levelled at*: aimed for.

⁴²² Baldock picks up *levelled* above to make a grim joke: The barons will be leveled (i.e., made equal) through decapitation.

What they intend the hangman⁴²³ frustrates clean. 90
 Levune
 Have you no doubts, my lords. I'll clap so close⁴²⁴
 Among the lords of France with England's gold
 That Isabel shall make her plaints in vain,
 And France shall be obdurate with her tears.
 Spencer Junior
 Then make for France amain.⁴²⁵ Levune, away! 95
 Proclaim King Edward's wars and victory. *Exeunt*

Act IV, Scene i

[Near the Tower of London]

Enter Edmund [, Earl of Kent]

Kent

Fair blows the wind for France. Blow, gentle gales,
 Till Edmund be arrived for England's good!
 Nature, yield to my country's cause in this.
 A brother? No, a butcher of thy friends.
 Proud Edward, dost thou banish me thy presence? 5
 But I'll to France and cheer the wronged Queen,
 And certify what Edward's looseness⁴²⁶ is.
 Unnatural King, to slaughter noblemen
 And cherish flatterers. Mortimer, I stay⁴²⁷
 Thy sweet escape. Stand gracious,⁴²⁸ gloomy night,
 To his device.⁴²⁹ 10

Enter Mortimer [Junior], disguised

Mortimer Junior

Holla! Who walketh there? Is't you, my lord?

⁴²³ *hangman*: common term for executioner.

⁴²⁴ *I'll... close*: I will be so effective.

⁴²⁵ *amain*: at once; with full strength.

⁴²⁶ *looseness*: 1) incompetence; 2) lustfulness.

⁴²⁷ *stay*: wait.

⁴²⁸ *Stand gracious*: be benign.

⁴²⁹ *device*: plan.

Kent

Mortimer, 'tis I.
But hath thy potion⁴³⁰ wrought so happily?⁴³¹

Mortimer Junior

It hath, my lord. The warders all asleep, 15
I thank them, gave me leave to pass in peace.
But hath your grace got shipping unto France?

Kent

Fear it not. *Exeunt*

Act IV, Scene ii

[Paris, the French court]

Enter the Queen [Isabella] and her son [Prince Edward]

Queen Isabella

Ah boy, our friends do fail us all in France.
The lords are cruel, and the King unkind.⁴³²
What shall we do?

Prince Edward

Madam, return to England

And please my father well, and then a fig⁴³³
For all my uncle's friendship here in France. 5
I warrant you, I'll win his highness quickly;
A⁴³⁴ loves me better than a thousand Spencers.

Queen Isabella

Ah boy, thou art deceived at least in this,
To think that we can yet be tuned together.⁴³⁵
No, no, we jar too far. Unkind Valois! 10
Unhappy Isabel! When France rejects,
Whither, o whither dost thou bend thy steps?

*Enter Sir John of Hainault*⁴³⁶

Sir John

Madam, what cheer?

Queen Isabella

Ah, good Sir John of Hainault,

⁴³⁰ I.e., sleeping potion.

⁴³¹ *happily*: well.

⁴³² *unkind*: unnatural, not brotherly; see glossary: Kind.

⁴³³ *a fig*: the gesture of thrusting the thumb between the two first fingers, an obscene gesture.

⁴³⁴ A: he.

⁴³⁵ *tuned together*: the king and Queen cannot be "tuned" like an instrument; they will always "jar" (l. 10).

⁴³⁶ Hainault is situated in Flanders, Belgium.

	Never so cheerless nor so far distressed.	
Sir John	I hear, sweet lady, of the King's ⁴³⁷ unkindness, But droop not, madam; noble minds contemn ⁴³⁸ Despair. Will your grace with me to Hainault And there stay time's advantage ⁴³⁹ with your son? How say you, my lord? Will you go with your friends And shake off all our fortunes equally? ⁴⁴⁰	15 20
Prince Edward	So pleaseth the Queen my mother, me it likes. ⁴⁴¹ The King of England, nor the court of France Shall have me ⁴⁴² from my gracious mother's side Till I be strong enough to break a staff, ⁴⁴³ And then have at the proudest Spencer's head.	25
Sir John	Well said, my lord.	
Queen Isabella	O my sweet heart, how I do moan thy wrongs, Yet triumph in the hope of thee, my joy. Ah sweet Sir John, even to the utmost verge Of Europe or the shore of Tanais ⁴⁴⁴ Will we with thee. To Hainault, so we will. The Marquis ⁴⁴⁵ is a noble gentleman; His grace, I dare presume, will welcome me. But who are these?	30
<i>Enter Edmund [Earl of Kent] and Mortimer [Junior]</i>		
Kent	Madam, long may you live. Much happier than your friends in England do.	35
Queen Isabella	Lord Edmund, and Lord Mortimer alive! Welcome to France. [<i>To Mortimer Junior</i>] The news was here, my lord, That you were dead or very near your death.	
Mortimer Junior	Lady, the last was truest of the twain;	

⁴³⁷ I.e., of France.

⁴³⁸ *contemn*: look down upon, condemn.

⁴³⁹ *stay... advantage*: wait for a propitious time.

⁴⁴⁰ *shake off... equally*: i.e., distance us from the French equally.

⁴⁴¹ *So... it likes*: If it is acceptable to the Queen, it pleases me.

⁴⁴² *shall have me*: i.e., have me removed.

⁴⁴³ *break a staff*: 1) fight with quarter-staves; 2) fight with a lance. Both meanings are possible here.

⁴⁴⁴ The river Don.

⁴⁴⁵ *Marquis*: the title corresponds to that of count.

But Mortimer, reserved for better hap, ⁴⁴⁶ Hath shaken off the thraldom of the Tower, [To Prince Edward] And lives t'advance your standard, good my lord.	40
Prince Edward	
How mean you, an ⁴⁴⁷ the King my father lives? No, my lord Mortimer, not I, I trow.	
Queen Isabella	
“Not,” son? Why not? I would it were no worse. But gentle lords, friendless we are in France.	45
Mortimer Junior	
Monsieur le Grand, a noble friend of yours, Told us at our arrival all the news, How hard the nobles, how unkind the King Hath showed himself. But, madam, right makes room ⁴⁴⁸ Where weapons want, ⁴⁴⁹ and though a many friends Are made away ⁴⁵⁰ as Warwick, Lancaster, And others of our party and faction, Yet have we friends, assure your grace, in England Would cast up caps and clap their hands for joy To see us there, appointed ⁴⁵¹ for our foes.	50 55
Kent	
Would all were well, and Edward well reclaimed, ⁴⁵² For England's honour, peace, and quietness.	
Mortimer Junior	
But by the sword, my lords, it must be deserved. ⁴⁵³ The King will ne'er forsake his flatterers.	60
Sir John	
My lords of England, sith ⁴⁵⁴ the ungentle King Of France refuseth to give aid of arms To this distressed Queen his sister here, Go you with her to Hainault. Doubt ye not ⁴⁵⁵ We will find comfort, money, men, and friends Ere long to bid the English king a base. ⁴⁵⁶ How say, young Prince? What think you of the match? ⁴⁵⁷	65

⁴⁴⁶ *reserved... hap*: preserved for a better fortune.

⁴⁴⁷ *an*: if.

⁴⁴⁸ *makes room*: makes a way.

⁴⁴⁹ *want*: are insufficient.

⁴⁵⁰ *made away*: killed.

⁴⁵¹ *appointed*: ready for battle.

⁴⁵² *reclaimed*: subdued; kept in place.

⁴⁵³ *deserved*: earned.

⁴⁵⁴ *sith*: since.

⁴⁵⁵ *Doubt ye not*: do not fear.

⁴⁵⁶ *bid... base*: expression from the children's game "Prisoner's Base." The child "tagged" when away from his base becomes a captured prisoner.

⁴⁵⁷ *match*: game.

Prince Edward
 I think King Edward will outrun us all.

Queen Isabella
 Nay, son, not so, and you must not discourage
 Your friends that are so forward in your aid. 70

Kent
 Sir John of Hainault, pardon us, I pray.
 These comforts that you give our woeful Queen
 Bind us in kindness all at your command.

Queen Isabella
 Yea, gentle brother,⁴⁵⁸ and the God of Heaven
 Prosper your happy motion,⁴⁵⁹ good Sir John. 75

Mortimer Junior
 This noble gentleman, forward in arms,
 Was born, I see, to be our anchor-hold.
 Sir John of Hainault, be it thy renown
 That England's Queen and nobles in distress
 Have been by thee restored and comforted. 80

Sir John
 Madam, along,⁴⁶⁰ and you, my lord, with me,
 That England's peers may Hainault's welcome see. [Exeunt]

Act IV, Scene iii

[The Palace, London]

Enter [Edward] the King, [Arundel], the two Spencers, with others

King Edward
 Thus, after many threats of wrathful war,
 Triumpheth England's Edward with his friends;
 And triumph Edward⁴⁶¹ with his friends uncontrolled.
 [To Spencer Junior] My lord of Gloucester, do you hear the news?

Spencer Junior
 What news, my lord? 5

King Edward
 Why man, they say there is great execution
 Done through the realm. My lord of Arundel,
 You have the note,⁴⁶² have you not?

⁴⁵⁸ I.e., brother-in-law.

⁴⁵⁹ *motion*: proposal.

⁴⁶⁰ *along*: come along.

⁴⁶¹ I.e., may Edward triumph.

⁴⁶² *note*: official report.

Arundel [*produces a document*]
 From the lieutenant of the Tower, my lord.

King Edward [*takes the document and gives it to Spencer Junior*]
 I pray, let us see it. What have we there? 10
 Read it, Spencer.
*Spencer [Junior] reads their names*⁴⁶³
 Why so. They barked apace⁴⁶⁴ a month ago,
 Now, on my life, they'll neither bark nor bite.
 Now, sirs, the news from France; Gloucester, I trow⁴⁶⁵
 The lords of France love England's gold so well 15
 As Isabella gets no aid from thence.
 What now remains? Have you proclaimed, my lord,
 Reward for them can bring in Mortimer?

Spencer Junior
 My lord, we have, and if he be in England,
 'A will be had⁴⁶⁶ ere long, I doubt it not. 20

King Edward
 'If,' dost thou say? Spencer, as true as death
 He is in England's ground. Our port-masters
 Are not so careless of their King's command.

Enter a Post

How now, what news with thee? From whence come these?

Messenger
 Letters, my lord, and tidings forth of France 25
 To you, my lord of Gloucester, from Levune.

King Edward
 Read.

Spencer Junior [*reads*]
 'My duty to your honour premised⁴⁶⁷ *et cetera*. I have, according to
 instructions in that behalf dealt with the King of France his lords,
 and effected that the Queen, all discontented and discomforted, is 30

⁴⁶³ The text of the play does not give the names. Holinshed's chronicle lists them as "The Lord William Tuchet, the Lord William Fitzwilliam, the Lord Warren de Lisle, the Lord Henry Bradborne, and the Lord William Chenie, barons, with John Page, an esquire, were drawn and hanged at Pomfret. And then shortly after, Roger Lord Clifford, John Lord Mowbray, and Sir Gosein d'Eevill, barons, were drawn and hanged at York. At Bristol in like manner were executed Sir Henry de Willington and Sir Henry Montford, baronets. And at Gloucester, the Lord John Gifford and Sir William Elmbridge, knight. And at London, the Lord Henry Teies, baron. At Winchelsea, Sir Thomas Culpepper, knight. At Windsor, the Lord Francis de Aldham, baron. And at Canterbury, the Lord Bartholomew de Badelismere and the Lord Bartholomew de Ashbornham, barons. Also at Cardiff, in Wales, Sir William Fleming, knight, was executed. Divers were executed in their counties, as Sir Thomas mandit and others." I am indebted to Charles R. Forker for this list.

⁴⁶⁴ *barked apace*: 1) they barked like eager dogs on a scent; 2) they embarked rapidly (on treason).

⁴⁶⁵ *I trow*: I believe.

⁴⁶⁶ *'A will be had*: he will be captured.

⁴⁶⁷ *My duty... premised*: My duty is a premise for my following report.

gone. Whither? If you ask, with Sir John of Hainault, brother to the marquis, into Flanders. With them are gone Lord Edmund and the Lord Mortimer, having in their company divers⁴⁶⁸ of your nation, and others; and as constant⁴⁶⁹ report goeth, they intend to give King Edward battle in England sooner than he can look for them. This is all the news of import.⁴⁷⁰ 35

Your honour's in all service, Levune.'

King Edward

Ah, villains, hath that Mortimer escaped?
With him is Edmund gone associate?
And will Sir John of Hainault lead the round?⁴⁷¹ 40
Welcome, a⁴⁷² Gods name, madam and your son;
England shall welcome you and all your rout.⁴⁷³
Gallop apace bright Phoebus⁴⁷⁴ through the sky,
And dusky night, in rusty iron car,⁴⁷⁵
Between you both, shorten the time, I pray, 45
That I may see that most desired day
When we may meet these traitors in the field.
Ah, nothing grieves me but my little boy
Is thus mislead to countenance⁴⁷⁶ their ills.
Come, friends, to Bristol, there to make us strong; 50
And, winds, as equal⁴⁷⁷ be to bring them in
As you injurious were to bear them forth. [Exeunt]

Act IV, Scene iv

[Near Harwich⁴⁷⁸]

Enter the Queen [Isabella], her son [Prince Edward], Edmund [Earl of Kent], Mortimer [Junior], and Sir John [of Hainault, with Soldiers]

⁴⁶⁸ *divers*: several (persons).

⁴⁶⁹ *constant*: trustworthy.

⁴⁷⁰ *import*: importance.

⁴⁷¹ *round*: dance.

⁴⁷² *a*: in.

⁴⁷³ *rout*: crowd.

⁴⁷⁴ *Phoebus*: the sun god Apollo.

⁴⁷⁵ *car*: chariot.

⁴⁷⁶ *countenance*: endorse.

⁴⁷⁷ *equal*: capable.

⁴⁷⁸ The Queen historically landed at Harwich, but the fighting following the landing took place further west, near Bristol.

Queen Isabella

Now, lords, our loving friends and countrymen,
Welcome to England all. With prosperous winds
Our kindest friends in Belgia⁴⁷⁹ have we left
To cope with friends at home—a heavy case,⁴⁸⁰
When force to force is knit, and sword and glaive⁴⁸¹ 5
In civil broils makes kin and countrymen
Slaughter themselves in others, and their sides
With their own weapons gored.⁴⁸² But what's the help?
Misgoverned kings are cause of all this wrack,⁴⁸³
And Edward, thou art one among them all 10
Whose looseness hath betrayed thy land to spoil
And made the channels⁴⁸⁴ overflow with blood.
Of thine own people patron shouldst thou be,
But thou—

Mortimer Junior Nay madam, if you be a warrior,
Ye must not grow so passionate in speeches. 15
Lords, sith that⁴⁸⁵ we are by sufferance⁴⁸⁶ of Heaven
Arrived and armed in this prince's right,
Here for our country's cause swear we to him
All homage, fealty, and forwardness.⁴⁸⁷
And for the open wrongs and injuries 20
Edward hath done to us, his Queen, and land,
We come in arms to wreak⁴⁸⁸ it with the sword,
That England's Queen in peace may repossess
Her dignities and honours, and withal
We may remove these flatterers from the King, 25
That havocs⁴⁸⁹ England's wealth and treasury.

Sir John

Sound trumpets, my lord, and forward let us march.
Edward will think we come to flatter him.

Kent

I would he never had been flattered more! [Trumpets. Exeunt]

⁴⁷⁹ Hainault is situated in Belgium.

⁴⁸⁰ *heavy case*: mournful circumstances.

⁴⁸¹ *glaive*: 1) lance; 2) sword; 3) bill (a combination of ax and pike).

⁴⁸² The gist of the passage is that in civil war one's enemy is so like oneself that wounding him is like inflicting wounds upon oneself.

⁴⁸³ *wrack*: destruction.

⁴⁸⁴ *channels*: gutters.

⁴⁸⁵ *sith that*: since.

⁴⁸⁶ *sufferance*: sanction.

⁴⁸⁷ *forwardness*: zeal.

⁴⁸⁸ *wreak*: avenge.

⁴⁸⁹ *That havocs*: that lays waste.

Act IV, Scene v

[Near Bristol]

[*Alarums and excursions.*] Enter [Edward] the King, Baldock and Spencer [Junior], flying about the stage

Spencer Junior

Fly, fly, my lord! The Queen is overstrong.
Her friends do multiply, and yours do fail.
Shape we our course to Ireland, there to breathe.⁴⁹⁰

King Edward

What, was I born to fly and run away,
And leave the Mortimers conquerors behind? 5
Give me my horse, and let's reinforce our troops,
And in this bed of honour die with fame.

Baldock

Oh no, my lord, this princely resolution
Fits not the time. Away! We are pursued! *Exeunt*

Act IV, Scene vi

[Near Bristol]

[Enter] Edmund [Earl of Kent] with a sword and target⁴⁹¹

Kent

This way he fled, but I am come too late.
Edward, alas, my heart relents for thee.
Proud traitor Mortimer, why dost thou chase
Thy lawful King, thy sovereign, with thy sword?
[To himself] Vile wretch, and why hast thou, of all unkind,⁴⁹² 5
Borne arms against thy brother and thy King?
Rain showers of vengeance on my cursed head,
Thou God, to whom in justice it belongs
To punish this unnatural revolt.
Edward, this Mortimer aims at thy life; 10
O fly him, then! But Edmund, calm this rage!
Dissemble or thou diest, for Mortimer
And Isabel do kiss while they conspire;
And yet she bears the face of love, forsooth.
Fie on that love that hatcheth death and hate! 15

⁴⁹⁰ *to breathe*: to have breathing space.

⁴⁹¹ *target*: round shield.

⁴⁹² *of all unkind*: of all that is unnatural.

Edmund, away! Bristol to Longshank's⁴⁹³ blood
Is false. Be not found single for suspect,⁴⁹⁴
Proud Mortimer pries near into thy walks.

Enter the Queen [Isabella], Mortimer [Junior], the young Prince [Edward], and Sir John of Hainault [with Soldiers]

Queen Isabella

Successful battles gives the God of kings
To them that fight in right and fear his wrath. 20
Since then successfully we have prevailed,
Thanks be Heaven's great architect and you.
Ere farther we proceed, my noble lords,
We here create our well-beloved son,
Of⁴⁹⁵ love and care unto his royal person, 25
Lord Warden of the realm; and sith the Fates⁴⁹⁶
Have made his father so infortunate,
Deal you, my lords, in this, my loving lords,
As to your wisdoms fittest seems in all.

Kent

Madam, without offence, if I may ask, 30
How will you deal with Edward in his fall?

Prince Edward

Tell me, good uncle, what Edward do you mean?

Kent

Nephew, your father. I dare not call him King.

Mortimer Junior

My lord of Kent, what need these questions?
'Tis not in her controlment,⁴⁹⁷ nor in ours, 35
But as the realm and Parliament shall please,
So shall your brother be disposed of.
[*Aside to Queen Isabella*] I like not this relenting mood in Edmund.
Madam, 'tis good to look to him betimes.⁴⁹⁸

Queen Isabella [*aside to Mortimer*]

My lord, the mayor of Bristol knows our mind? 40

Mortimer Junior [*aside to Queen Isabella*]

Yea, madam, and they scape not easily
That fled the field.

Queen Isabella Baldock is with the King,

⁴⁹³ Edward I.

⁴⁹⁴ *Be not... suspect*: Don't be found alone; that will make you suspicious.

⁴⁹⁵ *Of*: out of; from.

⁴⁹⁶ *Fates*: the three goddesses controlling destiny. The youngest presides over man's birth, holding a distaff, the middle one spins the life thread of man, while the oldest cuts it at death.

⁴⁹⁷ *in her controlment*: under her control; in her power.

⁴⁹⁸ *betimes*: at once.

A goodly chancellor, is he not, my lord?⁴⁹⁹
 Sir John
 So are the Spencers, the father and the son.
 Kent [*aside*]
 This, Edward, is the ruin of the realm. 45

Enter Rice ap Howell and the Mayor of Bristol, with Spencer [Senior] (the father) [prisoner, and Attendants]

Rice ap Howell
 God save Queen Isabel and her princely son!
 Madam, the Mayor and citizens of Bristol,
 In sign of love and duty to this presence,⁵⁰⁰
 Present by me this traitor to the state,
 Spencer, the father to that wanton Spencer, 50
 That, like the lawless Catiline of Rome⁵⁰¹
 Revelled in England's wealth and treasury.

Queen Isabella
 We thank you all.

Mortimer Junior Your loving care in this
 Deserveth princely favour and rewards.
 But where's the King and the other Spencer fled? 55

Rice ap Howell
 Spencer the son, created earl of Gloucester,
 Is with that smooth-tongued scholar Baldock gone
 And shipped but late for Ireland with the King.

Mortimer Junior
 Some whirlwind fetch them back, or sink them all!
 They shall be started⁵⁰² thence, I doubt it not. 60

Prince Edward
 Shall I not see the King my father yet?

Kent [*aside*]
 Unhappy Edward, chased from England's bounds!

Sir John
 Madam, what resteth?⁵⁰³ Why stand ye in a muse?⁵⁰⁴

Queen Isabella
 I rue my lord's ill fortune, but, alas,
 Care of my country called me to this war. 65

Mortimer Junior
 Madam, have done with care and sad complaint.

⁴⁹⁹ The Queen is sarcastic here.

⁵⁰⁰ *this presence*: i.e., royal presence.

⁵⁰¹ Catilina, a Roman nobleman who conspired against the Roman Republic unsuccessfully.

⁵⁰² *started*: driven from their lair.

⁵⁰³ *resteth*: remains to be done.

⁵⁰⁴ *in a muse*: in a brown study.

Your King hath wronged your country and himself,
 And we must seek to right it as we may.
 Meanwhile, have hence this rebel to the block.
 [To Spencer Senior] Your lordship cannot privilege⁵⁰⁵ your head! 70

Spencer Senior
 Rebel is he that fights against his prince!
 So fought not they that fought in Edward's right.

Mortimer Junior
 Take him away! He prates. [Exit Spencer Senior, guarded]
 You, Rice ap Howell,
 Shall do good service to her majesty,
 Being of countenance⁵⁰⁶ in your country here 75
 To follow these rebellious runagates.⁵⁰⁷
 We in meanwhile, madam, must take advice
 How Baldock, Spencer, and their complices
 May in their fall be followed to their end. Exeunt

Act IV, Scene vii

[The Abbey of Neath, Glamorganshire]

Enter the Abbot [of Neath,] Monks, [King] Edward, Spencer [Junior], and Baldock
 [, the latter three disguised]

Abbot of Neath
 Have you no doubt, my lord, have you no fear.
 As silent and as careful will we be
 To keep your royal person safe with us,
 Free from suspect⁵⁰⁸ and fell⁵⁰⁹ invasion 5
 Of such as have your majesty in chase,
 Yourself and those your chosen company,
 As danger of this stormy time requires.

King Edward
 Father, thy face should harbour no deceit.
 O hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,
 Pierced deeply with sense of my distress, 10
 Could not but take compassion of my state.
 Stately and proud, in riches and in train,⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁵ *privilege*: make an exception for.

⁵⁰⁶ *of countenance*: of good reputation.

⁵⁰⁷ *runagates*: renegades.

⁵⁰⁸ *suspect*: fear.

⁵⁰⁹ *fell*: cruel.

⁵¹⁰ *train*: following.

Whilom⁵¹¹ I was, powerful and full of pomp,
 But what is he⁵¹² whom rule and empery⁵¹³
 Have not in life or death made miserable? 15
 Come Spencer, come Baldock, come, sit down by me.
 Make trial now of that philosophy
 That in our famous nurseries of arts⁵¹⁴
 Thou sucked'st from Plato⁵¹⁵ and from Aristotle.⁵¹⁶
 Father, this life contemplative is Heaven; 20
 O that I might this life in quiet lead!
 But we, alas, are chased; and you, my friends,
 Your lives and my dishonour they pursue.
 Yet, gentle monks, for treasure, gold, nor fee,
 Do you⁵¹⁷ betray us and our company. 25

Monk

Your grace may sit secure, if none but we
 Do wot⁵¹⁸ of your abode.

Spencer Junior

Not one alive. But shrewdly I suspect
 A gloomy⁵¹⁹ fellow in a mead⁵²⁰ below.
 'A gave a long⁵²¹ look after us, my lord, 30
 And all the land, I know, is up in arms,
 Arms that pursue our lives with deadly hate.

Baldock

We were embarked for Ireland, wretched we,
 With awkward winds and sore tempests driven,
 To fall on shore and here to pine in fear 35
 Of Mortimer and his confederates.

King Edward

Mortimer! Who talks of Mortimer?
 Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,
 That bloody man? Good father, on thy lap
 Lay I this head, laden with mickle⁵²² care. 40
 O might I never open these eyes again,
 Never again lift up this drooping head,
 O never more lift up this dying heart!

⁵¹¹ *Whilom*: before; once.

⁵¹² *what is he*: what ruler is there.

⁵¹³ *emperry*: empire.

⁵¹⁴ I.e., universities.

⁵¹⁵ Greek philosopher, important i. a. for his Theory of Ideas,

⁵¹⁶ Greek philosopher, the father of logic and spanning a wide range of subjects, from zoology to poetics.

⁵¹⁷ *Do you*: Do not you. The "not" is found in the *nor* of line 24.

⁵¹⁸ *wot*: know.

⁵¹⁹ *gloomy*: sullen, dangerous looking.

⁵²⁰ *mead*: meadow.

⁵²¹ *long*: examining, scrutinizing.

⁵²² *mickle*: much.

Spencer Junior

Look up, my lord. Baldock, this drowsiness
Betides⁵²³ no good. Here even we are betrayed! 45

Enter, with Welsh hooks,⁵²⁴ Rice ap Howell [and soldiers,] a Mower, and the Earl of Leicester

Mower

Upon my life, those be the men ye seek.

Rice ap Howell

Fellow, enough. My lord, I pray be short.
A fair commission warrants what we do.⁵²⁵

Leicester [*aside*]

The Queen's commission, urged by Mortimer!
What cannot gallant Mortimer with the Queen? 50

Alas, see where he⁵²⁶ sits and hopes unseen
T'escape their hands that seek to reave⁵²⁷ his life.

Too true it is, *Quem dies vidit veniens superbum,
Hunc dies vidit fugiens iacentem.*⁵²⁸

But Leicester, leave to grow so passionate! 55
[*Aloud*] Spencer and Baldock, by no other names⁵²⁹

I arrest you of high treason here.

Stand not on titles, but obey th'arrest;

'Tis in the name of Isabel the Queen.

[*To King Edward*] My lord, why droop you thus? 60

King Edward

O day! The last of all my bliss on earth,

Centre of all misfortune. O my stars!

Why do you lour⁵³⁰ unkindly on a king?

Comes Leicester, then, in Isabella's name

To take my life, my company, from me? 65

Here, man, rip up this panting breast of mine,

And take my heart in rescue of my friends!

Rice ap Howell

Away with them!

Spencer Junior It may become thee yet

To let us take our farewell of his grace.

⁵²³ *Betides*: means; portends.

⁵²⁴ Welsh hooks: 1) pikes with cross pieces below the blade; 2) hooked farming implements for cutting brush.

⁵²⁵ These two sentences can be addresses to either the King or the Earl of Leicester.

⁵²⁶ King Edward.

⁵²⁷ *reave*: bereave him of.

⁵²⁸ *Quem... iacentem*: (Latin) "Whom the rising sun / shines on in triumph, the setting sun / may wash in the long shadows of woe." Seneca, *Thyestes*, ll.601–603, trans, David R. Slavitt.

⁵²⁹ *by no... names*: without mentioning ranks and titles.

⁵³⁰ *lour*: glower; frown.

Abbot of Neath
 My heart with pity earns⁵³¹ to see this sight. 70
 A king to bear these words and proud commands!

King Edward
 Spencer!
 Ah sweet Spencer, thus then must we part?

Spencer Junior
 We must, my lord, so wills the angry Heavens.⁵³²

King Edward
 No, so will hell and cruel Mortimer! 75
 The gentle Heavens have not to do in this.

Baldock
 My lord, it is in vain to grieve or storm.
 Here humbly of your grace we take our leaves,
 Our lots are cast. I fear me, so is thine.

King Edward
 In heaven we may, in earth never shall we meet. 80
 And Leicester, say, what shall become of us?

Leicester
 Your majesty must go to Killingworth.⁵³³

King Edward
 ‘Must’! ‘Tis somewhat hard when kings ‘must’ go.

Leicester
 Here is a litter⁵³⁴ ready for your grace
 That waits your pleasure, and the day grows old. 85

Rice ap Howell
 As good be gone as stay and be benighted.

King Edward
 A litter hast thou? Lay me in a hearse
 And to the gates of hell convey me hence!
 Let Pluto’s⁵³⁵ bells ring out my fatal knell
 And hags howl for my death at Charon’s⁵³⁶ shore, 90
 For friends hath Edward none but these, and these,⁵³⁷
 And these must die under a tyrant’s sword.

Rice ap Howell
 My lord, be going, care not for these,
 For we shall see them shorter by the heads.

⁵³¹ *earns*: grieves deeply.

⁵³² *so wills... heavens*: the angry heavens will have it so.

⁵³³ Kenilworth Castle.

⁵³⁴ *litter*: covered couch, usually for one passenger, carried by two or more bearers.

⁵³⁵ The King of the Underworld.

⁵³⁶ The ferryman, who ferries the souls of the dead across the river Acheron to the Underworld.

⁵³⁷ There are two groups (*these*) of friends, the monks and Spencer and Baldock, who are referred to again in the next line.

King Edward	
Well, that shall be shall be. Part we must.	95
Sweet Spencer, gentle Baldock, part we must.	
Hence, feigned weeds! [<i>He throws away his disguise</i>]	
Unfeigned are my woes!	
Father, farewell. Leicester, thou stay'st for me,	
And go I must. Life, farewell, with my friends! ⁵³⁸	
<i>Exeunt [King] Edward and Leicester</i>	
Spencer Junior	
O is he gone? Is noble Edward gone?	100
Parted from hence, never to see us more?	
Rend, ⁵³⁹ sphere of heaven, and fire, forsake thy orb, ⁵⁴⁰	
Earth, melt to air! Gone is my sovereign,	
Gone, gone alas, never to make return.	
Baldock	
Spencer, I see our souls are fleeted hence. ⁵⁴¹	105
We are deprived the sunshine ⁵⁴² of our life.	
Make for a new life, man! Throw up thy eyes,	
And heart and hand to Heaven's immortal throne,	
Pay nature's debt with cheerful countenance.	
Reduce we all our lessons unto this:	110
To die, sweet Spencer, therefore live we all!	
Spencer, all live to die, and rise to fall.	
Rice ap Howell	
Come, come, keep these preachments till you come to the place appointed. ⁵⁴³ You and such as you are have made wise work in England. Will your lordships away?	115
Mower [<i>to Rice ap Howell</i>]	
Your worship, I trust, will remember me? ⁵⁴⁴	
Rice ap Howell	
Remember thee, fellow? What else? Follow me to the town. [<i>Exeunt</i>]	

Act V, Scene i

[Kenilworth Castle]

⁵³⁸ Spencer and Baldock are as dear to Edward as life itself.

⁵³⁹ *Rend*: be torn apart.

⁵⁴⁰ *fire... orb*: either 1) may the fire forsake the sun; or 2) may the *coelum igneum*, the sphere of fire, be extinguished. Both are cataclysmic events.

⁵⁴¹ *are fleeted hence*; have flown from us.

⁵⁴² See glossary: Sun.

⁵⁴³ *the place appointed*: i.e., the place of execution. Here the condemned often made edifying speeches.

⁵⁴⁴ I.e., with reward.

Enter [Edward] the King [crowned,] Leicester, with the Bishop [of Winchester] for the crown,⁵⁴⁵ [Trussel, and Attendants]

Leicester

Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament.
Imagine Killingworth Castle were your court
And that you lay for pleasure here a space,⁵⁴⁶
Not of compulsion or necessity.

King Edward

Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me, 5
Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows,
For kind and loving hast thou always been.
The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
But not of kings. The forest deer, being struck,
Runs to an herb that closes up the wound.⁵⁴⁷ 10
But when the imperial lion's⁵⁴⁸ flesh is gored,
He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw,
And highly scorning that the lowly earth
Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air.⁵⁴⁹
And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind 15
The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb,
And that unnatural Queen, false Isabel,
That thus hath pent⁵⁵⁰ and mewed⁵⁵¹ me in a prison.
For such outrageous passions cloy⁵⁵² my soul,
As⁵⁵³ with the wings of rancour and disdain 20
Full often am I soaring up to heaven
To plain me to the gods against them both.
But when I call to mind I am a king,
Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs
That Mortimer and Isabel have done. 25
But what are kings when regiment⁵⁵⁴ is gone
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule, I bear the name of King.
I wear the crown, but am controlled by them,
By Mortimer and my unconstant Queen, 30
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy

⁵⁴⁵ I.e., to transport the crown to London.

⁵⁴⁶ *Imagine... / And that... a space*: Imagine ... you have taken up residence here for a while voluntarily.

⁵⁴⁷ *an herb... the wound*: popular belief held that wounded animals, eating the herb dittany, a herbaceous plant, would be healed.

⁵⁴⁸ *imperial lion*: lions are often used as an analogy for kings. See glossary: Great Chain of Being.

⁵⁴⁹ *mounts... the air*: stands on his hind legs; rears.

⁵⁵⁰ *pent*: penned up, like a tame animal.

⁵⁵¹ *mewed me*: *mew* = cage for keeping hunting birds during molting.

⁵⁵² *cloy*: overfill.

⁵⁵³ *As*: that.

⁵⁵⁴ *regiment*: royal authority.

Whilst I am lodged within this cave of care,
 Where sorrow at my elbow still attends
 To company⁵⁵⁵ my heart with sad laments,
 That bleeds within me for this strange exchange⁵⁵⁶ 35
 But tell me, must I now resign my crown
 To make usurping Mortimer a king?
 Bishop of Winchester
 Your grace mistakes; it is for England's good
 And princely Edward's right we crave the crown.
 King Edward
 No. 'Tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head, 40
 For he's a lamb, encompassed by wolves,
 Which in a moment will abridge his life.
 But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown,
 Heavens turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire!
 Or, like the snaky wreath of Tisiphon,⁵⁵⁷ 45
 Engirt⁵⁵⁸ the temples of his hateful head!
 So shall not England's vine be perished,
 But Edward's name survive though Edward dies.
 Leicester
 My lord, why waste you thus the time away?
 They stay⁵⁵⁹ your answer. Will you yield your crown? 50
 King Edward
 Ah Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook⁵⁶⁰
 To lose my crown and kingdom without cause,
 To give ambitious Mortimer my right,
 That like a mountain overwhelms my bliss,
 In which extreme my mind here murdered is. 55
 But what the heavens appoint I must obey.
 Here, take my crown! The life of Edward too! [Takes off the crown]
 Two kings in England cannot reign at once.
 But stay awhile; let me be King till night,
 That I may gaze upon the glittering crown; 60
 So shall my eyes receive their last content,
 My head, the latest⁵⁶¹ honour due to it,
 And jointly both yield up their wished right⁵⁶²
 Continue ever, thou celestial sun,
 Let never silent night possess this clime! 65

⁵⁵⁵ *company*: accompany.

⁵⁵⁶ *exchange*: shift in fortune.

⁵⁵⁷ Tisiphone, one of the Furies, an avenging goddess of revenge against crime committed, especially, within the family. She is often depicted with snakes for hair.

⁵⁵⁸ *Engirt*: encircle.

⁵⁵⁹ *stay*: wait for.

⁵⁶⁰ *How... brook*: how difficult it is for me to bear.

⁵⁶¹ *latest*: last.

⁵⁶² *their wished right*: the right they both covet.

Stand still you watches of the element!⁵⁶³
 All times and seasons rest you at a stay⁵⁶⁴
 That Edward may be still fair England's King.
 But day's bright beams doth vanish fast away,
 And needs I must resign my wished crown. 70
 Inhuman creatures, nursed with tiger's milk,⁵⁶⁵
 Why gape you for your sovereign's overthrow?
 My diadem,⁵⁶⁶ I mean, and guiltless life?
 See, monster, see, I'll wear my crown again. [Puts on the crown]
 What? Fear you not the fury of your King? 75
 But hapless Edward, thou art fondly⁵⁶⁷ led.
 They pass⁵⁶⁸ not for thy frowns as late⁵⁶⁹ they did,
 But seek to make a new-elected king,
 Which fills my mind with strange, despairing thoughts,
 Which thoughts are martyred with endless torments. 80
 And in this torment comfort find I none
 But that⁵⁷⁰ I feel the crown upon my head;
 And therefore let me wear it yet a while.

Trussel
 My lord, the Parliament must have present news,
 And therefore say, will you resign or no? *The King rageth*

King Edward
 I'll not resign, but whilst I live be King! 86
 Traitors, begone, and join you with Mortimer.
 Elect, conspire, install, do what you will!
 Their blood and yours shall seal⁵⁷¹ these treacheries!

Bishop of Winchester
 This answer we'll return, and so farewell. 90
 [Bishop of Winchester and Trussel begin to leave]

Leicester [*aside to King Edward*]
 Call them again, my lord, and speak them fair,
 For if they go the Prince shall lose his right.

King Edward
 Call thou them back. I have no power to speak.

Leicester
 My lord, the King is willing to resign.

Bishop of Winchester
 If he be not, let him choose— 95

⁵⁶³ *watches... element*: orbiting planets and/or heavenly bodies. *Element*: sky.

⁵⁶⁴ *stay*: standstill.

⁵⁶⁵ The tiger was seen as a most ferocious and dangerous beast.

⁵⁶⁶ *diadem*: crown.

⁵⁶⁷ *fondly*: foolishly.

⁵⁶⁸ *pass*: care.

⁵⁶⁹ *late*: lately.

⁵⁷⁰ *But that*: except when.

⁵⁷¹ *seal*: make an end to; close.

King Edward

O would I might! But Heavens and earth conspire
To make me miserable. Here, receive my crown.
Receive it? No, these innocent hands of mine
Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime.
He of you all that most desires my blood 100
And will be called the murderer of a king,
Take it! What, are you moved? Pity you me?
Then send for unrelenting Mortimer
And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear, 105
Yet stay, for rather than I will look on them,
Here, here! [*He resigns the crown*] Now, sweet God of Heaven,
Make me despise this transitory pomp,
And sit for aye⁵⁷² enthronized in heaven.
Come, death, and with thy fingers close my eyes, 110
Or, if I live, let me forget myself.

Bishop of Winchester

My lord—

King Edward

Call me not lord! Away, out of my sight!
Ah, pardon me, grief makes me lunatic.
Let not that Mortimer protect⁵⁷³ my son. 115
More safety is there in a tiger's jaws
Than his embracements. Bear this to the Queen,
Wet with my tears and dried again with sighs.

[*He gives a handkerchief*]

If with the sight thereof she be not moved,
Return it back and dip it in my blood. 120
Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I. Yet how have I transgressed
Unless it be with too much clemency?

Trussel

And thus most humbly do we take our leave.
[*Exeunt The Bishop of Winchester and Trussel with the crown*]

King Edward

Farewell. I know the next news that they bring 125
Will be my death, and welcome shall it be;
To wretched men death is felicity.

[*Enter Berkeley with a letter for Leicester*]

⁵⁷² *for aye*: for ever.

⁵⁷³ *protect*: be Regent for; be Lord Protector for.

Leicester
 Another post.⁵⁷⁴ What news brings he?

King Edward
 Such news as I expect. Come, Berkeley, come,
 And tell thy message to my naked breast. 130

Berkeley
 My lord, think not a thought so villainous
 Can harbour in a man of noble birth.
 To do your highness service and devoir⁵⁷⁵
 And save you from your foes, Berkeley would die.

Leicester [*reading*]
 My lord, the council of the Queen commands 135
 That I resign my charge.

King Edward
 And who must keep me now? [*To Berkeley*] Must you, my lord?

Berkeley
 Ay, my most gracious lord, so 'tis decreed.

King Edward [*taking the letter*]
 By Mortimer, whose name is written here.
 Well may I rend his name that rends my heart! [*Tears the letter*]
 This poor revenge has something⁵⁷⁶ eased my mind. 141
 So may his limbs be torn, as is this paper!
 Hear me, immortal Jove, and grant it too.

Berkeley
 Your grace must hence with me to Berkeley straight.

King Edward
 Whither you will; all places are alike. 145
 And every earth is fit for burial.

Leicester [*to Berkeley*]
 Favour him, my lord, as much as lieth in you.⁵⁷⁷

Berkeley
 Even so betide my soul⁵⁷⁸ as I use him.

King Edward
 Mine enemy hath pitied my estate,⁵⁷⁹
 And that's the cause that I am now removed. 150

Berkeley
 And thinks your grace that Berkeley will be cruel?

⁵⁷⁴ *post*: messenger.

⁵⁷⁵ *devoir*: duty.

⁵⁷⁶ *something*: to some degree.

⁵⁷⁷ *Favour... in you*: Treat him as well as it is in your power to do.

⁵⁷⁸ *betide my soul*: may my soul be treated.

⁵⁷⁹ *estate*: condition.

King Edward

I know not, but of this am I assured,
That death ends all, and I can die but once.
Leicester, farewell.

Leicester

Not yet, my lord. I'll bear you⁵⁸⁰ on your way.

Exeunt 155

Act V, Scene ii

[London. The Royal Palace]

Enter Mortimer [Junior] and Queen Isabella

Mortimer Junior

Fair Isabel, now have we our desire.
The proud corrupters of the light-brained King
Have done their homage to the lofty gallows,
And he himself lies in captivity.
Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm. 5
In any case, take heed of childish fear,
For now we hold an old wolf by the ears,
That, if he slip,⁵⁸¹ will seize upon us both,
And gripe the sorer, being griped himself.⁵⁸²
Think therefore, madam, that imports us much⁵⁸³ 10
To erect⁵⁸⁴ your son with all the speed we may,
And that I be Protector over him,
For our behoof⁵⁸⁵ will bear the greater sway
Whenas⁵⁸⁶ a king's name shall be underwrit.

Queen Isabella

Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel, 15
Be thou persuaded that I love thee well,
And therefore, so⁵⁸⁷ the prince my son be safe
Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,
Conclude against his father what thou wilt,
And I myself will willingly subscribe. 20

Mortimer Junior

First would I hear news that he were deposed,

⁵⁸⁰ *bear you*: accompany you.

⁵⁸¹ *slip*: gets loose.

⁵⁸² *being... himself*: and hurt the more, being hurt himself; *gripe*: seize.

⁵⁸³ *imports us much*: it is important to us.

⁵⁸⁴ *erect*: establish.

⁵⁸⁵ *behoof*: advantage.

⁵⁸⁶ *Whenas*: when.

⁵⁸⁷ *so*: on condition that.

And then let me alone⁵⁸⁸ to handle him.

Enter Messenger [with letters, then the Bishop of Winchester with the crown]

Letters! From whence?

Messenger From Killingworth, my lord.

Queen Isabella How fares my lord the King?

Messenger In health, madam, but full of pensiveness.⁵⁸⁹ 25

Queen Isabella Alas, poor soul, Would I could ease his grief.
Thanks, gentle Winchester. [*To Messenger*] Sirrah,⁵⁹⁰ be gone.
[Exit Messenger]

Bishop of Winchester The King hath willingly resigned his crown.

Queen Isabella O happy news! Send for the Prince, my son.

Bishop of Winchester Further, ere this letter was sealed, Lord Berkeley came, 30
So that he⁵⁹¹ now is gone from Killingworth,
And we have heard that Edmund laid a plot
To set his brother free; no more but so,⁵⁹²
The Lord of Berkeley is so⁵⁹³ pitiful
As Leicester that had charge of him before. 35

Queen Isabella Then let some other be his guardian.
[Exit the Bishop of Winchester]

Mortimer Junior Let me alone. Here is the privy seal.⁵⁹⁴
Who's there?⁵⁹⁵ Call hither Gurney and Matrevis.
To dash⁵⁹⁶ the heavy-headed⁵⁹⁷ Edmund's drift⁵⁹⁸
Berkeley shall be discharged, the King removed,⁵⁹⁹ 40
And none but we shall know where he lieth.

⁵⁸⁸ *let me alone*: leave it to me.

⁵⁸⁹ *pensiveness*: melancholy.

⁵⁹⁰ Sirrah: address to people of lower social standing, a form of "sir."

⁵⁹¹ I.e., the King.

⁵⁹² *no more but so*: in short.

⁵⁹³ *so*: as.

⁵⁹⁴ *privy seal*: royal seal.

⁵⁹⁵ This is a call to attendants for service.

⁵⁹⁶ *dash*: spoil.

⁵⁹⁷ *heavy-headed*: slow in the head, stupid.

⁵⁹⁸ *drift*: plot.

⁵⁹⁹ *removed*: moved to a different location.

Queen Isabella
 But Mortimer, as long as he survives,
 What safety rests for us or for my son?
 Mortimer Junior
 Speak, shall he presently⁶⁰⁰ be dispatched and die?
 Queen Isabella
 I would he were, so it were not by my means. 45

Enter Matrevis and Gurney

Mortimer Junior
 Enough.
[He speaks to Gurney and Matrevis apart]
 Matrevis, write a letter presently
 Unto the lord of Berkeley from ourself⁶⁰¹
 That he resign the King to thee and Gurney,
 And when 'tis done, we will subscribe our name. 50

Matrevis
 It shall be done, my lord.

Mortimer Junior Gurney.
 Gurney My lord?

Mortimer Junior
 As thou intendest to rise by Mortimer,
 Who now makes Fortune's wheel⁶⁰² turn as he please,
 Seek all the means thou canst to make him⁶⁰³ droop
 And neither give him kind word nor good look. 55

Gurney
 I warrant you, my lord.

Mortimer Junior
 And this above the rest, because we hear
 That Edmund casts⁶⁰⁴ to work his liberty,
 Remove him still from place to place by night,
 Till at the last he come to Killingworth, 60
 And then from thence to Berkeley back again.
 And by the way⁶⁰⁵ to make him fret the more
 Speak curstly⁶⁰⁶ to him, and in any case
 Let no man comfort him if he chance to weep,
 But amplify his grief with bitter words. 65

⁶⁰⁰ *presently*: at once.
⁶⁰¹ Mortimer uses "the royal we."
⁶⁰² See glossary: Fortune.
⁶⁰³ I.e., King Edward.
⁶⁰⁴ *casts*: schemes.
⁶⁰⁵ *by the way*: along the way.
⁶⁰⁶ *curstly*: with harsh words.

Matrevis

Fear not, my lord, we'll do as you command.

Mortimer Junior

So now away! Post thitherwards amain.⁶⁰⁷

Queen Isabella

Whither goes this letter? To my lord the King?

Commend me humbly to his majesty

And tell him that I labour all in vain

To ease his grief and work his liberty.

70

And bear him this as witness of my love. [She gives a token or ring]

Matrevis

I will, madam.

Exeunt Matrevis and Gurney

Enter the young Prince [Edward], and [Edmund] the Earl of Kent talking with him

Mortimer Junior [*aside to the Queen*]

Finely dissembled! Do so still, sweet Queen.

Here comes the young Prince with the Earl of Kent.

Queen Isabella [*aside to Mortimer*]

Something he whispers in his childish ears.

75

Mortimer Junior [*aside*]

If he have such access unto the prince

Our plots and stratagems will soon be dashed.

Queen Isabella [*aside*]

Use Edmund friendly as if all were well.

Mortimer Junior

How fares mine honourable lord of Kent?

Kent

In health, sweet Mortimer. [*To the Queen*] How fares your grace?

80

Queen Isabella

Well, if my lord your brother were enlarged.⁶⁰⁸

Kent

I hear of late he hath deposed himself.⁶⁰⁹

Queen Isabella

The more my grief.

Mortimer Junior And mine.

Kent

Ah, they do dissemble.

Queen Isabella

Sweet son, come hither, I must talk with thee.

Mortimer Junior [*to Kent*]

Thou, being his uncle and the next of blood,

Do look to be Protector over the Prince.

85

⁶⁰⁷ *Post... amain*: hurry there with all speed.

⁶⁰⁸ *enlarged*: set free.

⁶⁰⁹ *deposed himself*: abdicated voluntarily.

Kent
 Not I, my lord. Who should protect the son
 But she that gave him life? I mean the Queen.

Prince Edward
 Mother, persuade me not to wear the crown.
 Let him⁶¹⁰ be King; I am too young to reign. 90

Queen Isabella
 But be content, seeing it his highness' pleasure.

Prince Edward
 Let me but see him first, and then I will.

Kent
 Ay, do, sweet nephew.

Queen Isabella
 Brother, you know it is impossible.

Prince Edward
 Why? Is he dead?

Queen Isabella No, God forbid. 95

Kent
 I would those words proceeded from your heart.

Mortimer Junior
 Inconstant Edmund, dost thou favour him
 That⁶¹¹ wast a cause of his imprisonment?

Kent
 The more cause have I now to make amends.

Mortimer Junior [*to the Queen*]
 I tell thee 'tis not meet that one so false 100
 Should come about the person of a prince.
 [*To Prince Edward*] My lord, he hath betrayed the King, his brother,
 And therefore trust him not.

Prince Edward
 But he repents and sorrows for it now.

Queen Isabella
 Come son, and go with this gentle lord and me. 105

Prince Edward
 With you I will, but not with Mortimer.

Mortimer Junior
 Why, youngling,⁶¹² 'sdain'st⁶¹³ thou so of Mortimer?
 Then I will carry thee by force away.

Prince Edward
 Help, uncle Kent, Mortimer will wrong me!
 [*Mortimer Junior exits, carrying Prince Edward, while Kent tries to prevent him*]

⁶¹⁰ I.e., King Edward II.

⁶¹¹ *That*: you who.

⁶¹² *youngling*: young one, "stripling."

⁶¹³ *'sdain'st*: do you disdain.

Queen Isabella
 Brother Edmund, strive not, we are his friends. 110
 Isabel is nearer⁶¹⁴ than the Earl of Kent.

Kent
 Sister, Edward is my charge! Redeem him!⁶¹⁵

Queen Isabella
 Edward is my son, and I will keep him.

Kent
 Mortimer shall know that he hath wronged me.
 [Aside] Hence will I haste to Killingworth Castle 115
 And rescue aged Edward from his foes,
 To be revenged on Mortimer and thee.⁶¹⁶
Exeunt [on one side Queen Isabella, Kent on the other]

Act V, Scene iii

[At Kenilworth Castle]
Enter Matrevis and Gurney with the King [Edward II and Soldiers]

Matrevis
 My lord, be not pensive, we are your friends,
 Men are ordained to live in misery.
 Therefore come. Dalliance dangereth⁶¹⁷ our lives.

King Edward
 Friends, whither must unhappy⁶¹⁸ Edward go?
 Will hateful Mortimer appoint no rest? 5
 Must I be vexed like the nightly bird
 Whose sight is loathsome to all winged fowls?⁶¹⁹
 When will the fury of his mind assuage?⁶²⁰
 When will his heart be satisfied with blood?
 If mine will serve, unbowel⁶²¹ straight this breast 10
 And give my heart to Isabel and him.
 It is the chiefest mark they level at.⁶²²

Gurney
 Not so, my liege; the Queen hath given this charge

⁶¹⁴ *nearer*: nearer in blood, as she is the Prince's mother.

⁶¹⁵ *Redeem him!*: Give him back!

⁶¹⁶ I.e., Queen Isabella.

⁶¹⁷ *dalliance dangereth*: delay endangers.

⁶¹⁸ *unhappy*: unfortunate.

⁶¹⁹ The owl, a night hunter, supposedly torments its prey, making all birds fear it.

⁶²⁰ *assuage*: be assuaged.

⁶²¹ *unbowel*: rip open.

⁶²² *level at*: aim for.

Matrevis

'Twixt theirs and yours shall be no enmity.
Come, come away. Now put the torches out.
We'll enter in by darkness to Killingworth.

Enter Edmund [, Earl of Kent]

Gurney

How now, who comes there?

Matrevis

Guard the King sure! It is the Earl of Kent. 50

King Edward

O gentle brother, help to rescue me!

Matrevis

Keep them asunder! Thrust in the King!

Kent

Soldiers, let me but talk to him one word.

Gurney

Lay hands upon the earl for this assault!

Kent

Lay down your weapons! Traitors, yield the King! 55

[Soldiers seize Kent]

Matrevis

Edmund, yield thou thyself or thou shalt die!

Kent

Base villains, wherefore do you gripe⁶²⁹ me thus?

Gurney

Bind him, and so convey him to the court.

Kent

Where is the court but here? Here is the King,
And I will visit him. Why stay⁶³⁰ you me? 60

Matrevis

The court is where Lord Mortimer remains.
Thither shall your honour go. And so farewell.

Exeunt Matrevis and Gurney with [Edward] the King

Kent

O, miserable is that commonweal⁶³¹ where lords
Keep courts and kings are locked in prison!

Soldier

Wherefore stay we? On, sirs, to the court. 65

Kent

Ay, lead me whither you will, even to my death,
Seeing that my brother cannot be released. *Exeunt*

⁶²⁹ *gripe*: seize.

⁶³⁰ *stay*: hinder.

⁶³¹ *commonwealth*: body politic; see glossary.

Act V, Scene iv

[The Royal Palace, London]

Enter Mortimer [Junior], alone [with a letter]

Mortimer Junior

The King must die, or Mortimer goes down.

The commons now begin to pity him.

Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death

Is sure to pay for it when his son is of age,

And therefore will I do it cunningly.

5

This letter, written by a friend of ours,

Contains his death, yet bids them save his life.

[*Reads*] '*Edwardum occidere nolite timere[,] bonum est.*'

'Fear not to kill the King, 'tis good he die.'

But read it thus, and that's another sense:

10

'*Edwardum occidere nolite[,] timere bonum est.*'

'Kill not the King, 'tis good to fear the worst.'

Unpointed⁶³² as it is, thus shall it go,

That, being dead,⁶³³ if it chance to be found,

Matrevis and the rest may bear the blame,

15

And we be quit⁶³⁴ that caused it to be done.

Within this room is locked the messenger

That shall convey it and perform the rest.

And by a secret token that he bears

Shall he be murdered when the deed is done.

20

[*Calling*] Lightborn, come forth!

[*Enter Lightborn*]

Art thou as resolute as thou wast?

Lightborn

What else, my lord? And far more resolute.

Mortimer Junior

And hast thou cast⁶³⁵ how to accomplish it?

Lightborn

Ay, ay, and none shall know which way he died.

25

Mortimer Junior

But at his looks, Lightborn, thou wilt relent.

⁶³² *Unpointed*: without punctuation; the present editor has added commas to the Latin to bring out the two meanings.

⁶³³ *being dead*: when Edward is dead.

⁶³⁴ *quit*: unblamed.

⁶³⁵ *cast*: made plans.

Lightborn
 Relent? Ha, ha! I use much⁶³⁶ to relent.

Mortimer Junior
 Well, do it bravely⁶³⁷ and be secret.

Lightborn
 You shall not need to give instructions,
 'Tis not the first time I have killed a man. 30
 I learned in Naples how to poison flowers,
 To strangle with a lawn⁶³⁸ thrust through the throat,
 To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point,
 Or, whilst one is asleep, to take a quill
 And blow a little powder in his ears, 35
 Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.
 But yet I have a braver way than these.

Mortimer Junior
 What's that?

Lightborn
 Nay, you shall pardon me. None shall know my tricks.

Mortimer Junior
 I care not how it is, so it be not spied.⁶³⁹ 40
 Deliver this to Gurney and Matrevis. [He gives him the letter]
 At every ten miles' end thou hast a horse.
 Take this [gives a token]. Away, and never see me more.

Lightborn
 No?

Mortimer Junior
 No, 45
 Unless thou bring me news of Edward's death.

Lightborn
 That will I quickly do. Farewell, my lord. [Exit]

Mortimer Junior
 The Prince I rule, the Queen I do command,
 And with a lowly conge⁶⁴⁰ to the ground
 The proudest lords salute me as I pass. 50
 I seal,⁶⁴¹ I cancel, I do what I will.
 Feared am I more than loved; let me be feared,
 And when I frown, let all the court look pale!
 I view the Prince with Aristarchus'⁶⁴² eyes,

⁶³⁶ *I use much*: As if I were really used to.

⁶³⁷ *bravely*: with bravoura.

⁶³⁸ *lawn*: linen thread.

⁶³⁹ *spied*: detected.

⁶⁴⁰ *conge*: bow.

⁶⁴¹ *seal*: use the royal seal.

⁶⁴² *Aristarchus*: famed and strict grammarian and schoolteacher in Alexandria; his name came to be a synonym for severity.

Whose looks were as a breeching⁶⁴³ to a boy. 55
 They thrust upon me the protectorship
 And sue to me for⁶⁴⁴ that that I desire.
 While at the council table, grave enough,
 And not unlike a bashful Puritan,⁶⁴⁵
 First I complain of imbecility,⁶⁴⁶ 60
 Saying it is *onus quam gravissimum*,⁶⁴⁷
 Till being interrupted by my friends,
Suscepi that *provinciam*,⁶⁴⁸ as they term it,
 And to conclude, I am Protector now.
 Now is all sure! The Queen and Mortimer 65
 Shall rule the realm, the King, and none rule us.
 Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance,
 And what I list⁶⁴⁹ command, who dare control?
Maior sum quam posit fortuna nocere.⁶⁵⁰
 And that this be the coronation day, 70
 It pleaseth me and Isabel, the Queen. *Trumpets within*
 The trumpets sound. I must go take my place.

*Enter the young King [Edward III], the Archbishop [of Canterbury],
 Champion,⁶⁵¹ Nobles, [and] Queen [Isabella]*

Archbishop of Canterbury

Long live King Edward by the grace of God,
 King of England and Lord of Ireland!

Champion

If and Christian, Heathen, Turk, or Jew 75
 Dares but affirm that Edward's not true King,
 And will avouch his saying⁶⁵² with his sword,
 I am the Champion that will combat him.

Mortimer Junior

None comes. Sound, trumpets! *[Trumpets sound]*

King Edward III

Champion, here's to thee.
[Drinks a toast and gives the Champion his goblet]

Queen Isabella

Lord Mortimer, now take him to your charge. 80

⁶⁴³ *breeching*: beating, whipping.

⁶⁴⁴ *sue to me for*: implore me to take.

⁶⁴⁵ *Puritan*: someone too modestly precise; see glossary: Puritan.

⁶⁴⁶ *imbecility*: weakness; infirmity.

⁶⁴⁷ *onus*... *gravissimum* (Latin): A too-heavy burden.

⁶⁴⁸ *Suscepi*... *provinciam* (Latin): I have taken on (that) office.

⁶⁴⁹ *list*: wish to.

⁶⁵⁰ *Maior*... *nocere* (Latin): I am too mighty for Fortune to harm me.

⁶⁵¹ *Champion*: warrior ready to defend the new King against any challengers against him on Coronation Day.

⁶⁵² *avouch his saying*: back up his claim.

Enter Soldiers with the Earl of Kent, prisoner

Mortimer Junior

What traitor have we there with blades and bills?⁶⁵³

Soldier

Edmund, the Earl of Kent.

King Edward III What hath he done?

Soldier

'A would have taken the King away perforce
As we were bringing him to Killingworth.

Mortimer Junior

Did you attempt his rescue, Edmund? Speak!

85

Kent

Mortimer, I did. He is our King.
And thou compell'st this Prince to wear the crown.

Mortimer Junior

Strike off his head! He shall have martial law!

Kent

Strike off my head? Base traitor, I defy thee!

King Edward III

My lord, he is my uncle and shall live.

90

Mortimer Junior

My lord, he is your enemy and shall die!

Kent

Stay, villains!

King Edward III

Sweet mother, if I cannot pardon him,
Entreat my Lord Protector for his life!

Queen Isabella

Son, be content. I dare not speak a word.

95

King Edward III

Nor I, and yet methinks I should command;
But seeing I cannot, I'll entreat for him.
My lord, if you will let my uncle live,
I will requite it when I come of age.

Mortimer Junior

'Tis for your highness' good, and for the realm's.
[*To Soldiers*] How often shall I bid you bear him hence?

100

Kent

Art thou King? Must I die at thy command?

Mortimer Junior

At our command. Once more, away with him.

Kent

Let me but stay and speak! I will not go!

⁶⁵³ *blades and bills*: swords and halberds.

Either my brother or his son is King, 105
 And none of both them⁶⁵⁴ thirsts for Edmund's blood.
 And therefore, soldiers, whither will you hale me?⁶⁵⁵
They hale Edmund [, Earl of Kent[, away and carry him to be beheaded
 King Edward III [*to the Queen*]
 What safety may I look for at his hands
 If that my uncle shall be murdered thus?
 Queen Isabella 110
 Fear not, sweet boy, I'll guard thee from thy foes.
 Had Edmund lived, he would have sought thy death.
 Come son, we'll ride a-hunting in the park.
 King Edward III
 And shall my uncle Edmund ride with us?
 Queen Isabella
 He is a traitor. Think not on him. Come! *Exeunt*

Act V, Scene v

[Berkeley Castle]
Enter Matrevis and Gurney

Matrevis
 Gurney, I wonder the King dies not,
 Being in a vault up to the knees in water,
 To which the channels⁶⁵⁶ of the castle run,
 From whence a damp continually ariseth
 That were enough to poison any man, 5
 Much more a king, brought up so tenderly.
 Gurney
 And so do I, Matrevis. Yesternight
 I opened but the door to throw him meat,⁶⁵⁷
 And I was almost stifled with the savour.
 Matrevis 10
 He hath a body able to endure
 More than we can inflict, and therefore now
 Let us assail his mind another while.
 Gurney
 Send for him out thence, and I will anger him.

⁶⁵⁴ *none of both them*: neither of them.

⁶⁵⁵ *hale me*: make me go.

⁶⁵⁶ *channels*: sewers.

⁶⁵⁷ *meat*: food.

Matrevis

But stay, who's this?

Enter Lightborn [with the letter]

Lightborn My Lord Protector greets you. [*Gives the letter*] 15

Gurney

What's here? I know not how to conster⁶⁵⁸ it.

Matrevis

Gurney, it was left unpointed for the nonce⁶⁵⁹

[*Reading*] '*Edwardum occidere nolite timere—*,'

That's his meaning.

Lightborn [*showing token*]

Know you this token? I must have the King.

Matrevis

Ay, stay a while, thou shalt have answer straight. 20

[*To Gurney*] This villain's sent to make away the King.

Gurney [*to Matrevis*]

I thought as much.

Matrevis [*to Gurney*] And when the murder's done,

See how he must be handled for his labour.

*Pereat iste.*⁶⁶⁰ Let him have the King.

[*To Lightborn*] What else? Here is the keys. This is the lake.⁶⁶¹ 25

Do as you are commanded by my lord.

Lightborn

I know what I must do. Get you away,

Yet be not far off. I shall need your help.

See that in the next room I have a fire,

And get me a spit, and let it be red hot. 30

Matrevis

Very well.

Gurney

Need you anything besides?

Lightborn

What else? A table and a feather bed.

Gurney

That's all?

Lightborn

Ay, ay. So when I call you, bring it in.⁶⁶² 35

⁶⁵⁸ *conster*: translate; construe.

⁶⁵⁹ *for the nonce*: for that particular purpose.

⁶⁶⁰ *Pereat iste* (Latin): Let him perish.

⁶⁶¹ *lake*: underground sewer pit.

⁶⁶² *bring it in*: bring in all of it.

Matrevis

Fear not you that.

Gurney

Here is a light to go into the dungeon.

[*Gurney gives a light and exits with Matrevis*]

Lightborn

So, now must I about this gear.⁶⁶³ Ne'er was there any

So finely handled as the King shall be. [*He opens the dungeon*]

Foh! Here's a place indeed, with all my heart!⁶⁶⁴ 40

[*Enter King Edward from the dungeon*⁶⁶⁵]

King Edward

Who's there? What light is that? Wherefore comes thou?

Lightborn

To comfort you and bring you joyful news.

King Edward

Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy looks.

Villain, I know thou com'st to murder me.

Lightborn

To murder you, my most gracious lord? 45

Far is it from my heart to do you harm.

The Queen sent me to see how you were used,
For she relents⁶⁶⁶ at this your misery.

And what eyes can refrain from shedding tears
To see a king in this most piteous state? 50

King Edward

Weepst thou already? List a while to me,
And then thy heart, were it as Gurney's is,
Or as Matrevis', hewn from the Caucasus,⁶⁶⁷
Yet will it melt ere I have done my tale.

This dungeon where they keep me is the sink 55
Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.

Lightborn

O villains!

King Edward

And there in mire and puddle have I stood
This ten days' space, and lest that I should sleep
One plays continually upon a drum. 60

⁶⁶³ *gear*: job.

⁶⁶⁴ *Here's... heart*: What a horrible place this is!

⁶⁶⁵ *dungeon*: this might be located under the trap door in the floor, in the discovery space, or behind one of the stage doors.

⁶⁶⁶ *relents*: feels tenderly.

⁶⁶⁷ *Caucasus*: wild mountain range between the Black and Caspian Seas.

They give me bread and water, being a king,⁶⁶⁸
 So that for want of sleep and sustenance
 My mind's distempered, and my body's numbed,
 And whether I have limbs or no I know not.
 O, would my blood dropped out from every vein, 65
 As doth this water from my tattered robes.
 Tell Isabel the Queen I looked not thus
 When for her sake I ran at tilt⁶⁶⁹ in France
 And there unhorsed the Duke of Cleremont,
 Lightborn
 O speak no more, my lord, this breaks my heart. 70
[A bed is brought on stage⁶⁷⁰]
 Lie on this bed and rest yourself a while.
 King Edward
 These looks of thine can harbour nought but death.
 I see my tragedy written in thy brows.
 Yet stay a while; forbear thy bloody hand,
 And let me see the stroke before it comes, 75
 That even then when I shall lose my life,
 My mind may be more steadfast on my God.
 Lightborn
 What means your highness to mistrust me thus?
 King Edward
 What means thou to dissemble with me thus?
 Lightborn
 These hands were never stained with innocent blood, 80
 Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.
 King Edward
 Forgive my thought for having such a thought.
 One jewel have I left; receive thou this. *[Gives a jewel]*
 Still fear I, and I know not what's the cause,
 But every joint shakes as I give it thee. 85
 O, if thou harbour'st murder in thy heart,
 Let this gift change thy mind and save thy soul!
 Know that I am a king. O, at that name
 I feel a hell of grief. Where is my crown?
 Gone, gone! And do I remain alive?⁶⁷¹ 90
 Lightborn
 You're overwatched,⁶⁷² my lord. Lie down and rest.

⁶⁶⁸ *being a king*: though I am a king.

⁶⁶⁹ *ran at tilt*: took part in jousting in a tournament.

⁶⁷⁰ Probably, most easily, thrust out from the discovery space.

⁶⁷¹ *And... alive?*: as Edward well knows, a king's crown is only passed on at the King's death.

⁶⁷² *overwatched*: tired out with sleeplessness.

Lightborn
 Tell me, sirs, was it not bravely done? 115
 Gurney
 Excellent well. Take this for thy reward!
Then Gurney stabs Lightborn [to death]
 Come, let us cast the body in the moat
 And bear the King's to Mortimer, our lord.
 Away! *Exeunt [with the bodies]*

Act V, Scene vi

[The Royal Palace, London]
Enter Mortimer [Junior] and Matrevis

Mortimer Junior
 Is't done, Matrevis, and the murderer dead?
 Matrevis
 Ay, my good lord; I would it were undone.
 Mortimer Junior
 Matrevis, if thou now growest penitent,
 I'll be thy ghostly father;⁶⁷⁵ therefore choose
 Whether thou wilt be secret in this 5
 Or else die by the hand of Mortimer.
 Matrevis
 Gurney, my lord, is fled, and will, I fear,
 Betray us both. Therefore let me fly.
 Mortimer Junior
 Fly to the savages!⁶⁷⁶
 Matrevis
 I humbly thank your honour. *[Exit]*
 Mortimer Junior
 As for myself, I stand as Jove's huge tree,⁶⁷⁷ 11
 And others are but shrubs compared to me.
 All tremble at my name, and I fear none,
 Let's see who dare impeach me for his death!

Enter the Queen [Isabella]

Queen Isabella
 Ah, Mortimer, the King my son hath news 15

⁶⁷⁵ *ghostly father*: spiritual advisor, confessor.

⁶⁷⁶ *to the savages*: to the end of the world; beyond civilized land.

⁶⁷⁷ *Jove's huge tree*: the oak.

His father's dead, and we have murdered him.
Mortimer Junior
What if he have? The King is yet a child.
Queen Isabella
Ay, ay, but he tears his hair and wrings his hands
And vows to be revenged upon us both. 20
Into the council chamber he is gone
To crave the aid and succour of his peers.⁶⁷⁸
Ay me, see where he comes, and they with him.
Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.

Enter the King [Edward III] with the Lords [and Attendants]

A Lord
Fear not, my lord. Know that you are a king!
King Edward III [*to Mortimer Junior*]
Villain!
Mortimer Junior How now, my lord? 25
King Edward III

Think not that I am frightened with thy words!
My father's murdered through thy treachery,
And thou shalt die, and on his mournful hearse
Thy hateful and accursed head shall lie
To witness to the world that by thy means 30
His kingly body was too soon interred!

Queen Isabella
Weep not, sweet son.
King Edward III
Forbid not me to weep! He was my father!
And, had you loved him half so well as I,
You could not bear his death thus patiently. 35
But you, I fear, conspired with Mortimer.

A Lord [*to Mortimer Junior*]
Why speak you not unto my lord the King?
Mortimer Junior
Because I think it scorn⁶⁷⁹ to be accused.
Who is the man dare say I murdered him?

King Edward III
Traitor, in me my loving father speaks 40
And plainly saith, 'twas thou that murd' red'st him.

Mortimer Junior
But hath your grace no other proof than this?
King Edward III
Yes, if this be the hand of Mortimer. [Shows letter]

⁶⁷⁸ *his peers*: i.e., the peers of the realm.

⁶⁷⁹ *I think it scorn*: I scorn.

Mortimer Junior [*aside*]
 False Gurney hath betrayed me and himself.

Queen Isabella [*aside*]
 I feared as much. Murder cannot be hid. 45

Mortimer Junior
 'Tis my hand. What gather you by this?

King Edward III
 That thither thou didst send a murderer.

Mortimer Junior
 What murderer? Bring forth the man I sent.

King Edward III
 Ah Mortimer, thou knowest that he is slain,
 And so shalt thou be too. (*To Attendants*) Why stays he here? 50
 Bring him unto a hurdle,⁶⁸⁰ drag him forth!
 Hang him, I say, and set his quarters up!⁶⁸¹
 But bring his head back presently to me.

Queen Isabella
 For my sake, sweet son, pity Mortimer!

Mortimer Junior
 Madam, entreat not. I will rather die 55
 Than sue for life unto a paltry boy.

King Edward III
 Hence with the traitor, with the murderer!

Mortimer Junior
 Base Fortune, now I see that in thy wheel
 There is a point to which, when men aspire,
 They tumble headlong down. That point I touched, 60
 And, seeing there was no place to mount up higher,
 Why should I grieve at my declining fall?
 Farewell, fair Queen, weep not for Mortimer
 That scorns the world and, as a traveler,
 Goes to discover countries yet unknown. 65

King Edward III
 What! Suffer you the traitor to delay?
 [*Exit Mortimer Junior, guarded*]

Queen Isabella
 As thou received'st thy life from me,
 Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer.

King Edward III
 This argues that you spilt my father's blood,
 Else would you not entreat for Mortimer. 70

Queen Isabella
 I spill his blood? No!

⁶⁸⁰ *hurdle*: a wooden sled or frame used to drag criminals to the place of execution.

⁶⁸¹ See glossary: Traitor's Punishment.

King Edward III
 Ay, madam, you, for so the rumour runs.

Queen Isabella
 That rumour is untrue; for loving thee
 Is this report raised on poor Isabel.

King Edward III
 I do not think her so unnatural. 75

A Lord
 My lord, I fear me it will prove too true.

King Edward III
 Mother, you are suspected for his death,
 And therefore we commit you to the Tower
 Till further trial⁶⁸² may be made thereof.
 If you be guilty, though I be your son, 80
 Think not to find me slack or pitiful.

Queen Isabella
 Nay, to my death, for too long have I lived
 Whenas my son thinks to abridge my days.

King Edward III
 Away with her! Her words enforce these tears,
 And I shall pity her if she speak again. 85

Queen Isabella
 Shall I not mourn for my beloved lord?
 And with the rest accompany him to his grave?

A Lord
 Thus, madam; 'tis the King's will you shall hence.

Queen Isabella
 He hath forgotten me. [*To Attendants*] Stay! I am his mother.

A Lord
 That boots not.⁶⁸³ Therefore, gentle madam, go. 90

Queen Isabella
 Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this grief.
 [*Exit Queen Isabella, guarded*]

[*Enter a Lord of Mortimer Junior's guards with his head*]

A Lord
 My lord, here is the head of Mortimer.

King Edward III
 Go fetch my father's hearse where it shall lie,
 And bring my funeral robes. [*Exeunt Attendants*]
 Accursed head!
 Could I have ruled thee then as I do now, 95
 Thou hadest not hatched this monstrous treachery.

⁶⁸² *trial*: enquiry.

⁶⁸³ *That boots not*: that does not help you.

Here comes the hearse.

[Enter Attendants with King Edward II's hearse and his son's funeral robes]

Help me to mourn, my lords.

Sweet father, here unto thy murdered ghost
I offer up this wicked traitor's head,
And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes
Be witness of my grief and innocency!

[Exeunt]

100

FINIS

Imprinted at London for William Jones, and are to be
sold at his shop, near unto Holborn Conduit. 1594.