

***The Tragedy of Woodstock***  
**or**  
***Richard II, Part One***

**Ascribed to Shakespeare**



**Transcribed and Edited from the Original  
17th Century Manuscript**

**by**

**MICHAEL EGAN**

## ***The Tragedy of Woodstock or King Richard the Second, Part One***

*The Tragedy of Woodstock or King Richard the Second, Part One*, is an anonymous, untitled and incomplete seventeenth century drama of some 51 pages and 2989 lines.

The torn MS is missing a front cover, title and author, a list of *dramatis personae* and part of the final scene. There are no act or scene divisions nor, with one exception, scene locations. It is written in a faded 'secretary hand' with major and minor edits, corrections, marginal comments, deletions and interventions by several other hands using a variety of inks and abbreviations. If the play indeed is his, one of those hands may well be Shakespeare's.

The battered manuscript is owned by the British Library, fols. 161-185 in a hand-bound anthology of 349 pages catalogued as Egerton 1994. It appears to be an edited copy of a popular Elizabethan touring play written ca.1592.

Thirteen editions of uneven quality have appeared since the MS's discovery and original publication by J.O. Halliwell in 1870. The current text, taken from my *The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One, An Acting Edition with Notes and A Short History of the Text* (2017), is the most recent. It is also the only one prepared using digital technology to resolve long-standing legibility issues. Some are quite significant. Details may be found in my annotated study of the play (2006).

At some point the MS's last page was removed, most likely because it depicted Richard II's brief 1388 deposition, the climax of the action. A similar moment in the canonical *Richard II* was also famously removed by royal fiat. I have thus included an extended 'conjectural emendation' winding up the story, in the hopes that completion may lead to more frequent performances of an unjustly neglected and historically important masterpiece.

This text may be performed without permission, though acknowledgments are appreciated.

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**THE TRAGEDY OF WOODSTOCK**

**OR**

**KING RICHARD THE SECOND,  
PART ONE**

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## *Dramatis Personae*

KING RICHARD THE SECOND

*Grandson of Edward III, son of Edward, the Black Prince*

QUEEN ANNE

*Anne a' Beame (Anne of Bohemia), wife of Richard II*

THOMAS OF WOODSTOCK

*Duke of Gloucester, Richard II's senior uncle, and Lord Protector of England*

JOHN OF GAUNT

*Duke of Lancaster, Richard II's second uncle*

EDMUND OF LANGLEY

*Duke of York, Richard II's third uncle*

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

*Wife of Thomas of Woodstock*

DUCHESS OF IRELAND

*Widow of Robert de Vere, Duke of Ireland, Richard II's former homosexual lover*

EARL OF ARUNDEL

*Lord Admiral of England and Councilor to King Richard II*

EARL OF SURREY

*Councilor to King Richard II*

SIR THOMAS CHENEY

*Steward to Thomas of Woodstock*

[SIR PIERCE OF] EXTON

*An Attendant on Woodstock*

SIR HENRY GREEN

*Upstart landowner, court favorite and lover of Richard II*

SIR THOMAS SCROOP

*Upstart landowner and court favorite of Richard II*

SIR EDWARD BAGOT

*Upstart landowner and court favorite of Richard II*

SIR WILLIAM BUSHY

*Upstart landowner and court favorite of Richard II*

SIR ROBERT TRESILIAN

*Scheming lawyer and court favorite of Richard II*

NIMBLE *Assistant to Tresilian*

MASTER SIMON IGNORANCE *Bailiff of Dunstable*  
COWTAIL *A Rich Grazier*

A BUTCHER

A FARMER

A SCHOOLMASTER

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S SERVANT

A MAN WHO WHISTLES TREASON

A SPRUCE COURTIER

THE SPRUCE COURTIER'S HORSE

CYNTHIA *Truchman of the masque*

CROSBY *Firs Law Officer*

FLEMING *Second Law Officer*

THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

THE SHRIEVE (SHERIFF) OF KENT

THE SHRIEVE (SHERIFF) OF NORTHUMBERLAND

THE GHOST OF KING EDWARD III

*Richard II's grandfather*

THE GHOST OF EDWARD, THE BLACK PRINCE

*Richard II's father*

FIRST MURDERER

SECOND MURDERER

A MAID-IN-WAITING *Attendant on the Queen*

A GENTLEMAN MESSENGER

A GUARD

*Servants, Maids, Courtiers, Law-officers, Soldiers, Archers,  
Citizens, Knights*

Scene: ENGLAND, 1387

**Act I**  
**Scene I**

[A noble house near London]

*[Alarum.] Enter hastily at several doors [the] Dukes of Lancaster and York, the Earls of Arundel and Surrey, with napkins on their arms and knives in their hands, and Sir Thomas Cheney with others bearing torches and some with cloaks and rapiers.*

ALL

Lights, lights! Bring torches, knaves! 1

LANCASTER

Shut to the gates!  
Let no man out until the house be search'd!

YORK

Call for our coaches, let's away, good brother!  
Now by th' bless'd saints, I fear we are poison'd all! 5

ARUNDEL

Poison'd, my lord?

LANCASTER

Ay, ay, good Arundel, 'tis high time begone.  
May heaven be bless'd for this prevention.

YORK

God for thy mercy! Would our cousin king  
So cozen us, to poison us in our meat? 10

LANCASTER

Has no man here some helping antidote  
For fear already we have ta'en some dram?  
What thinkest thou, Cheney?  
Thou first brought'st the tidings.  
Are we not poison'd, thinkest thou? 15

CHENEY

Fear not, my lords,

That mischievous potion was as yet unserv'd.  
 It was a liquid bane dissolv'd in wine  
 Which after supper should have been carous'd  
 To young King Richard's health. 20

LANCASTER

Good i' faith! Are his uncles' deaths become  
 Health to King Richard? How came it out?  
 Sir Thomas Cheney, pray resolve [this doubt].

CHENEY

A Carmelite friar, my lord, reveal'd the plot  
 And should have acted it, but touch'd in conscience 25  
 He came to your good brother, the Lord Protector,  
 And so disclos'd it; who straight sent me to you.

YORK

The Lord protect him for it, ay, and our cousin King.  
 High heaven be judge, we wish all good to him.

LANCASTER

A heavy charge, good Woodstock, hast thou had, 30  
 To be Protector to so wild a prince  
 So far degenerate from his noble father,  
 Whom the trembling French the Black Prince call'd,  
 Not of a swart and melancholy brow  
 (For sweet and lovely was his countenance) 35  
 But that he made so many funeral days  
 In mournful France. The warlike battles won  
 At Crécy Field, Poitiers, Artoise and Maine  
 Made all France groan under his conquering arm.  
 But heaven forestall'd his diadem on earth 40  
 To place him with a royal crown in heaven.  
 Rise may his dust to glory! Ere he'd 'a done  
 A deed so base unto his enemy,  
 Much less unto the brothers of his father,  
 He'd first have lost his royal blood in drops, 45  
 Dissolv'd the strings of his humanity  
 And lost that livelihood that was preserv'd  
 To make his (unlike) son a wanton king.



YORK

Forbear, good John of Gaunt! Believe me, brother,  
We may do wrong unto our cousin King: 50  
I fear his flattering minions more than him.

LANCASTER

By the bless'd Virgin, noble Edmund York,  
I'm past all patience. Poison his subjects,  
His royal uncles! Why, the proud Castilian,  
Where John of Gaunt writes King and Sovereign, 55  
Would not throw off their vile and servile yoke  
By treachery so base. Patience, gracious Heaven!

ARUNDEL

A good invoke, right princely Lancaster,  
Calm thy high spleen. Sir Thomas Cheney here  
Can tell the circumstance; pray give him leave. 60

LANCASTER

Well, let him speak.

CHENEY

Tis certainly made known, my reverend lords,  
To your lov'd brother and the good Protector,  
That not King Richard but his flatterers  
(Sir Henry Green, join'd with Sir Edward Bagot, 65  
And that sly machiavel, Tresilian,  
Whom now the King elects for Lord Chief Justice)  
Had all great hands in this conspiracy.

LANCASTER

By blessed Mary, I'll confound them all!

YORK

Your spleen confounds yourself! 70

LANCASTER

By kingly Edward's soul, my royal father,  
I'll be reveng'd at full on all their lives.

YORK

Nay, if your rage break to such high extremes

You will prevent yourself, and lose revenge.

LANCASTER

Why, Edmund, can'st thou give a reason yet 75  
Though we, so near in blood, his hapless uncles,  
(His grandsire Edward's sons, his father's brothers!)  
Should thus be made away? Why might it be  
That Arundel and Surrey here should die?

SURREY

Some friend of theirs wanted my earldom sore. 80

ARUNDEL

Perhaps my office of the Admiralty—  
If a better and more fortunate hand could govern it  
I would 'twere none of mine—  
Yet thus much can I say, and make my praise  
No more than merit: a wealthier prize 85  
Did never yet take harbor in our roads  
Than I to England brought. You all can tell,  
Full three-score sail of tall and lusty ships  
And six great carracks fraught with oil and wines  
I brought King Richard in abundance home, 90  
So much, that plenty hath so stal'd our palates  
As that a tun of high-pric'd wines of France  
Is hardly worth a mark of English money.  
If service such as this done to my country  
Merit my heart to bleed, let it bleed freely. 95

LANCASTER

We'll bleed together, warlike Arundel.  
Cousin of Surrey, princely Edmund York,  
Let's think on some revenge. If we must die,  
Ten thousand souls shall keep us company.

YORK

Patience, good Lancaster. Tell me, kind Cheney, 100  
How does thy master, our good brother Woodstock,  
Plain Thomas?—for by th' rood, so all men call him,  
For his plain dealing and his simple clothing.  
Let others jet in silk and gold, says he,  
A coat of English frieze best pleaseth me. 105

How thinks his unsophisticated plainness  
Of these bitter compounds? Fears he no drug  
Put in his broth? Shall his healths be secure?

CHENEY

Faith, my lord, his mind suits with his habit:  
Homely and plain, both free from pride and envy, 110  
And therein will admit distrust to none.

*Enter [The Duke of Gloucester,] Thomas of Woodstock, in frieze, the Mace [carried before him,] the Lord Mayor [of London,] with [Sir Pierce of] Exton, and others with lights [before] them.*

And see, his Grace himself is come to greet you.  
[By] your leave there, room for my Lord Protector's  
Grace!

YORK AND LANCASTER

Health to your Grace! 115

WOODSTOCK

I salute your healths, good brothers; pray pardon me,  
I'll speak with you anon. Hie thee, good Exton!

*[Exit Sir Pierce of Exton]*

Good Lord Mayor, I do beseech ye prosecute  
With your best care a means for all our safeties.  
Mischiefs hath often double practices; 120  
Treachery wants not his second stratagem.  
Who knows but steel may hit, though poison fail?  
Alack the day, the night is made a veil  
To shadow mischief. Set, I beseech,  
Strong guard and careful to attend the city. 125  
Our Lady help, we know not who are friends,  
Our foes are grown so mighty. Pray be careful.

LORD MAYOR

Your friends are great in London, good my lord.  
I'll front all dangers, trust it on my word.

WOODSTOCK

Thanks from my heart. 130

*[Exit Lord Mayor]*

I swear afore my God,  
I know not which way to bestow myself,  
The time's so busy and so dangerous too.  
Why, how now, brothers? How fares good John o'  
Gaunt? 135  
Thou'rt vex'd, I know. Thou griev'st, kind Edmund  
York.  
Arundel and Surrey, noble kinsmen,  
I know ye all are discontented much,  
But be not so. Afore [my God,] I swear 140  
King Richard loves you all; and credit me,  
The princely gentleman is innocent  
Of this black deed and base conspiracy.  
Speak, speak, how is't with princely Lancaster?

LANCASTER

Sick, Gloucester, sick. We all are weary 145  
And fain we would lie down to rest ourselves,  
But that so many serpents lurk i' the grass  
We dare not sleep.

WOODSTOCK

Enough, enough.  
Good brother, I have found out the disease: 150  
When the head aches, the body is not healthful.  
King Richard's wounded with a wanton humor,  
Lull'd and secur'd by flattering sycophants;  
But 'tis not deadly yet, it may be cur'd.  
Some vein let blood where the corruption lies 155  
And all shall heal again.

YORK

Then lose no time, lest it grow ulcerous.  
The false Tresilian, Green and Bagot  
Run naught but poison, brother, spill them all.

LANCASTER

They guide the nonage King; 'tis they protect him. 160  
Ye wear the title of Protectorship  
But like an under-officer, as though  
Yours were deriv'd from theirs. Faith, you're too  
plain!

WOODSTOCK

In my apparel, you'll say. 165

LANCASTER

Good faith, in all.  
The commons murmur 'gainst the dissolute king,  
Treason is whisper'd at each common table  
As customary as their thanks to heaven.  
Men need not gaze up to the sky to see 170  
Whether the sun shine clear or no, 'tis found  
By the small light should beautify the ground.  
Conceit you me, a blind man thus much sees:  
He wants his eyes to whom we bend our knees.

ARUNDEL

You all are princes of the royal blood 175  
Yet like great oaks ye let the ivy grow  
To eat your hearts out with his false embraces.  
Ye understand, my lord?

WOODSTOCK

Ay, ay, good coz, as if ye plainly said  
Destroy those flatterers and tell King Richard 180  
He does abase himself to countenance them.  
Soft, soft!  
Fruit that grows high is not securely pluck'd,  
We must use ladders and by steps ascend  
Till by degrees we reach the altitude. 185  
You conceit me too? Pray be smooth awhile.  
Tomorrow is the solemn nuptial day  
Betwixt the King and virtuous Anne a' Beame,  
The Emperor's daughter, a right gracious lady  
That's come to England for King Richard's love. 190  
Then, as you love his Grace, and hate his flatterers,  
Discountenance not the day with the least frown,

Be ignorant of what ye know. Afore my God,  
 I have good hope this happy marriage, brothers,  
 Of this so noble and religious princess, 195  
 Will mildly calm his headstrong youth, to see  
 And shun those stains that blurs his majesty.  
 If not, by good King Edward's bones, our royal father,  
 I will remove those hinderers of his health,  
 Though't cost my head. 200

YORK AND LANCASTER

On these conditions, brother, we agree!

ARUNDEL

And I.

SURREY

And I.

LANCASTER

To hide our hate is soundest policy.

YORK

And, brother Gloucester, since it is your pleasure 205  
 To have us smooth our sullen brows with smiles,  
 We'd have you suit your outside to your heart,  
 And like a courtier cast this country habit  
 For which the coarse and vulgar call your Grace  
 By the title of Plain Thomas: yet we doubt not 210  
 Tomorrow we shall have good hope to see  
 Your High Protectorship in bravery.

WOODSTOCK

No, no, good York, this is as fair a sight,  
 My heart in this plain frieze sits true and right.  
 In this I'll serve my King as true and bold 215  
 As if my outside were all trapp'd in gold.

LANCASTER

By Mary, but you shall not, brother Woodstock!  
 What, the marriage-day to Richard and his Queen,  
 And will ye so disgrace the state and realm?  
 We'll have you brave, i' faith! 220

WOODSTOCK

Well, well,  
For your sakes, brothers, and this solemn day,  
For once I'll sumpter a gaudy wardrobe, but 'tis more  
Than I have done, I vow, these twenty years.  
Afore my God, the King could not have entreated me 225  
To leave this habit, but your wills be done.  
Let's hie to court, you all your wishes have;  
One weary day, Plain Thomas will be brave.

*Exeunt*

**Act I**  
**Scene II**

[A house near London]

*Enter [Sir Henry] Green, [Sir Edward] Bagot and [Sir  
Robert] Tresilian, in rage*

TRESILIAN

Nay, good Sir Henry, King Richard calls for you. 1

BAGOT

Prithee, sweet Green,  
Visit his Highness and forsake these passions.

GREEN

'Sblood, I am vex'd, Tresilian, mad me not!  
Thyself and I and all are now undone. 5  
The lords at London are secur'd from harm,  
The plot's reveal'd. Black curses seize the traitor!

BAGOT

Eternal torments whip that Carmelite!

TRESILIAN

A deeper hell than *Limbo Patrum* hold him,  
A fainting villain, confusion crush his soul! 10

BAGOT

Could the false slave recoil, and swore their deaths!

GREEN

Mischief devour him! Had it but ta'en effect  
On Lancaster and Edmund, Duke of York,  
Those headstrong uncles to the gentle King,  
The third brother, plain Thomas, the Protector, 15  
Had quickly been remov'd; but since 'tis thus,  
Our safeties must be car'd for, and 'tis best  
To keep us near the person of the King.  
Had they been dead, we had rul'd the realm and him.

BAGOT

So shall we still, so long as Richard lives. 20  
I know he cannot brook his stubborn uncles.  
Come, think not on't: cheer thee, Tresilian,  
Here's better news for thee: we have so wrought  
With kingly Richard, that by his consent  
You are already mounted on your footcloth 25  
(Your scarlet or your purple, which ye please)  
And shortly are to underprop the name—  
Mark me, Tresilian—of Lord Chief Justice of  
England!

TRESILIAN

[*Aside*] Hum, hum, hum, *legit* or *non legit*? Methinks 30  
already I sit upon the bench with dreadful frowns  
frighting the lousy rascals; and when the jury once  
cries 'Guilty,' could pronounce 'Lord have mercy  
on thee,' with a brow as rough and stern as surly  
Rhadamanth; or, when a fellow talks, cry: 'Take him, 35  
jailor, clap bolts of iron on his heels and hands!'  
[*To Green and Bagot*] Chief Justice, my lords! Hum,  
hum, hum, I will wear the office in his true ornament.

GREEN

But good your Honor, as 'twill shortly be,  
You must observe and fashion to the time 40  
The habit of your laws. The King is young,  
Ay, and a little wanton. So perhaps are we:  
Your laws must not be beadles then, Tresilian,



To punish your benefactors; look to that.

TRESILIAN

How, sir, to punish you, the minions to the King, 45  
The jewels of his heart, his dearest loves?  
'Zounds, I will screw and wind the stubborn law  
To any fashion that shall like you best.  
It shall be law, what I shall say is law,  
And what's most suitable to all your pleasures. 50

BAGOT

Thanks to your Lordship, which is yet to come!

GREEN

Farewell, Tresilian, still be near the court,  
Anon King Richard shall confirm thy state.  
We must attend his Grace to Westminster  
To the high nuptials of fair Anne a' Beame, 55  
That must be now his wife and England's queen.

*Exeunt Green and Bagot*

TRESILIAN

So, let them pass. Tresilian, now bethink thee.  
Hum, Lord Chief Justice!—Methinks already  
I am swell'd more plump than erst I was.  
Authority's a dish that feeds men fat, 60  
An excellent delicate. Yet best be wise,  
No state's secure—without some enemies!  
The dukes will frown; why, I can look as grim  
As John of Gaunt, and all that frown with him.  
But yet until mine office be put on 65  
By kingly Richard, I'll conceal myself,  
Framing such subtle laws that Janus-like  
May with a double face salute them both.  
I'll search my brain and turn the leaves of law:  
Wit makes us great, greatness keeps fools in awe. 70  
My man there, ho! Where's Nimble?

*Enter Nimble*

NIMBLE

As nimble as an eel, sir! Did ye call, sir?

TRESILIAN

Sir!—Look out some better phrase, salute again.

NIMBLE

I know no other, sir, unless you'll be Frenchified and  
let me lay the Monsieur to your charge, or Sweet Signior. 75

TRESILIAN

Neither, 'tis higher yet, Nimble, thou buckram scribe.  
Think once again.

NIMBLE

[*Aside*] Neither Sir, nor Monsieur, nor Signior! What  
should I call him? Trow, he's monstrously translated 80  
suddenly! At first, when we were schoolfellows,  
then I call'd him Sirrah, but since he became my  
master I par'd away the Ah and serv'd him with the  
Sir. What title he has got now, I know not, but I'll try  
further. [*To Tresilian*] Has your Worship any 85  
employment for me?

TRESILIAN

Thou gross uncaput, no, thou speakest not yet.

NIMBLE

[*Aside*] My mouth was open, I'm sure!—If your  
Honor would please to hear me—

TRESILIAN

Ha, Honor, say'st thou? Ay, now thou hittest it, 90  
Nimble.

NIMBLE

[*Aside*] I knew I should wind about ye till I had your  
Honor.

TRESILIAN

Nimble, bend thy knee.

The Lord Chief Justice of England speaks to thee! 95

NIMBLE

The Lord be prais'd! We shall have a flourishing  
commonwealth, sir.

TRESILIAN

Peace, let me speak to thee.

NIMBLE

Yes, anything, so your Honor pray not for me, I care  
not; for now you're Lord Chief Justice, if ever ye cry 100  
'Lord have mercy' upon me, I shall hang for't, sure!

TRESILIAN

No, those fearful words shall not be pronounc'd  
'gainst thee, Nimble.

NIMBLE

Thank ye, my lord. Nay, and you'll stand between me  
and the gallows, I'll be an arrant thief, sure. If I cannot 105  
pick up my crumbs by the law quickly, I'll cast away  
my buckram bags and be a highway lawyer now,  
certainly.

TRESILIAN

Can'st thou remember, Nimble, how by degrees I  
rose, since first thou knew'st me? I was first a 110  
schoolboy—

NIMBLE

Ay, saving your Honor's speech, your worshipful tail  
was whipp'd for stealing my dinner out of my satchel.  
You were ever so crafty in your childhood that I knew  
your Worship would prove a good lawyer! 115

TRESILIAN

Interrupt me not. Those days thou knew'st, I say,  
From whence I did become a plodding clerk,  
From which I bounc'd, as thou dost now, in buckram  
To be a pleading lawyer, and there I stay'd  
Till by the King I was Chief Justice made. 120

Nimble, I read this discipline to thee  
To stir thy mind up still to industry.

NIMBLE

Thank your good lordship.

TRESILIAN

Go to thy mistress, Lady you now must call her,  
Bid her remove her household up to London. 125  
Tell her our fortunes, and with how much peril  
We have attain'd this place of eminence.  
Go and remove her.

NIMBLE

With a *Habeas Corpus* or *Surssararis*, I assure ye.  
And so I leave your lordship, always hoping of your 130  
wonted favor, that when I have pass'd the London.  
Bridge of Affliction I may arrive with you at the  
Westminster Hall of Promotion, and then I care not.

TRESILIAN

Thou shalt. Thou hast an executing look,  
And I will put the ax into thy hand. 135  
I rule the law, thou by the law shalt stand.

NIMBLE

I thank your lordship, and a fig for the rope, then!

*Exeunt*

**Act I**  
**Scene III**

[London, the royal court]

*Sound a sennet. Enter in great state King Richard*  
*[and] Queen Anne, crowned; Lancaster, York,*  
*Arundel and Surrey, Green, Bagot; and Woodstock,*  
*very brave; the Duchesses of Gloucester and Ireland*

Bagot and Green, next to the fair Queen Anne 1  
Take your high places by King Richard's side,  
And give fair welcome to our queen and bride.  
Uncles of Woodstock, York, and Lancaster,  
Make full our wishes, and salute our queen; 5  
Give all your welcomes to fair Anne a' Beame.

I hope, sweet prince, her Grace mistakes us not  
To make our hearts the worser part of us;  
Our tongues have, in our English eloquence,  
Harsh though it is, pronounc'd her welcomes many      10  
By oaths and loyal protestations  
To which we add a thousand infinites;  
But in a word, fair queen, forever welcome!

Let me prevent the rest, for mercy's sake!  
If all their welcomes be as long as thine 15  
This health will not go round this week, by th' Mass!  
Sweet queen and cousin—now I'll call you so—  
In plain and honest phrase, welcome to England!  
Think they speak all in me, and you have seen  
All England cry with joy, 'God bless the Queen!' 20  
And so, afore my God, I know they wish it.  
Only, I fear my duty not misconstrued —  
Nay, nay, King Richard, 'fore God I'll speak the truth!  
Sweet Queen, you've found a young and wanton  
choice, 25  
A wild-head, yet a kingly gentleman,  
A youth unsettled, yet he's princely bred,  
Descended from the royal'st bloods in Europe,  
The kingly stock of England and of France.  
Yet he's a harebrain, a very wag, i' faith. 30  
But you must bear, madam: 'las, he's but a blossom;  
But his maturity, I hope you'll find,  
True English-bred, a king loving and kind.

I thank ye for your double praise, good uncle.

WOODSTOCK

Ay, ay, good coz, I'm Plain Thomas; by th' rood 35  
I'll speak the truth.

QUEEN

My sovereign lord, and you true English peers,  
Your all-accomplish'd honors have so tied  
My senses by a magical restraint  
In the sweet spells of these your fair demeanors, 40  
That I am bound and charm'd from what I was  
My native country I no more remember  
But as a tale told in my infancy,  
The greatest part forgot; and that which is,  
Appears to England's fair Elysium 45  
Like brambles to the cedars, coarse to fine,  
Or like the wild grape to the fruitful vine.  
And, having left the earth where I was bred,  
And English made, let me be Englished.  
They best shall please me shall me English call. 50  
My heart, great King, to you; my love to all!

KING

Gramercy, Nan, thou highly honor'st me.

YORK

And bless'd is England in this sweet accord.

WOODSTOCK

Afore my God, sweet Queen, our English ladies,  
And all the women that this isle contains, 55  
Shall sing in praise of this your memory  
And keep records of virtuous Anne a' Beame,  
Whose discipline hath taught them womanhood?  
What erst seemed well by custom, now looks rude.  
Our women, till your coming, fairest cousin, 60  
Did use like men to straddle when they ride,  
But you have taught them now to sit aside.  
Yet (by your leave) young practice often reels;  
I have seen some of your scholars kick up both  
their heels! 65

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER  
What have you seen, my lord?

                          WOODSTOCK  
Nay, nay, nothing, wife.  
I see little without spectacles, thou know'st.

                          KING  
Trust him not, aunt, for now he's grown so brave  
He will be courting, ay, and kissing too.                                 70  
Nay, uncle, now I'll do as much for you,  
And lay your faults all open to the world!

                          WOODSTOCK  
Ay, ay, do, do.

                          KING  
I'm glad you're grown so careless: now, by my  
crown,   75  
I swear, good uncles York and Lancaster,  
When you this morning came to visit me  
I did not know him in this strange attire.  
How comes this golden metamorphosis  
From homespun huswifery? Speak, good uncle!                                 80  
I never saw you hatch'd and gilded thus.

                          WOODSTOCK  
I am no Stoic, my dear sovereign cousin,  
To make my plainness seem canonical,  
But to allow myself such ornaments  
As might be fitting for your nuptial day   85  
And coronation of your virtuous queen;  
But were the eye of day once clos'd again,  
Upon this back they never more should come.

                          KING  
You have much grac'd the day. But, noble uncle,  
I did observe what I have wonder'd at:   90  
As we today rode on to Westminster,  
Methought your horse, that[s] wont to tread the  
ground  
And pace as if he kick'd it scornfully,

Mount and curvet like strong Bucephalus, 95  
Today he trod as slow and melancholy  
As if his legs had fail'd to bear his load.

WOODSTOCK

And can ye blame the beast? Afore my God,  
He was not wont [to] bear such loads. Indeed,  
A hundred oaks upon these shoulders hang 100  
To make me brave upon your wedding-day.  
And more than that, to make my horse more tire,  
Ten acres of good land are stitch'd up here.  
You know, good coz, this was not wont to be.

KING

In your t'other hose, uncle? 105

GREEN

No, nor his frieze coat, neither!

WOODSTOCK

Ay, ay, mock on. My t'other hose, say ye?  
There's honest plain dealing in my t'other hose.  
Should this fashion last I must raise new rents,  
Undo my poor tenants, turn away my servants, 110  
And guard myself with lace; nay, sell more land  
And lordships too, by th' rood. Hear me, King  
Richard:  
If thus I jet in pride, I still shall lose,  
But I'll build castles in my t'other hose. 115

QUEEN

The King but jests, my lord, and you grow angry.

WOODSTOCK

T'other hose! Did some here wear that fashion  
They would not tax and pill the commons so!

YORK

'Sfoot, he forewarn'd us, and will break out himself.

LANCASTER

No matter, we'll back him, though it grows to blows. 120



WOODSTOCK

Scoff ye my plainness? I'll talk no riddles,  
Plain Thomas will speak plainly: there's Bagot there,  
And Green—

GREEN AND BAGOT

And what of them, my lord?

WOODSTOCK

Upstarts, come down, you have no places there! 125  
Here's better men to grace King Richard's chair,  
If't please'd him grace them so.

KING

Uncle, forbear.

WOODSTOCK

These cuts the columns that should prop thy house.  
They tax the poor, and I am scandal'd for it 130  
That, by my fault, those late oppressions rise  
To set the commons in a mutiny  
That London even itself was sack'd by them!  
And who did all these rank commotions point at?  
Even at these two, Bagot, here, and Green, 135  
With false Tresilian, whom your Grace, we hear,  
Hath made Chief Justice. Well, well, be it so,  
Mischief on mischief sure will shortly flow.  
Pardon my speech, my lord—since now we're all so  
brave 140  
To grace Queen Anne, this day we'll spend in sport;  
But in my t'other hose, I'll tickle them for't.

GREEN

Come, come, ye dote, my lord.

LANCASTER

Dote, sir? Know ye to whom ye speak?

KING

No more, good uncles! Come, sweet Green, ha' done. 145  
[*Aside*] I'll wring them all for this, by England's  
crown! [*To Woodstock*] Why is our Lord Protector

so outrageous?

WOODSTOCK

Because thy subjects have such outrage shown them  
By these, thy flatterers. Let the sun dry up 150  
What th' unwholesome fog hath chok'd the ground  
with.

Here's Arundel, thy ocean's Admiral,  
Hath brought thee home a rich and wealthy prize,  
Ta'en three-score sail of ships and six great carracks, 155  
All richly laden; let those goods be sold  
To satisfy those borrowed sums of coin  
Their pride hath forced from the needy commons:  
To salve which inconvenience I beseech your Grace  
You would vouchsafe to let me have the sale 160  
And distribution of those goods.

KING

Our word, good uncle, is already pass'd,  
Which cannot with our honor be recall'd:  
Those wealthy prizes already are bestow'd  
On these our friends. 165

ALL THE LORDS

On them, my lord?

KING

Yes. Who storms at it?

WOODSTOCK

Shall cankers eat the fruit  
That planting and good husbandry hath nourish'd?

GREEN AND BAGOT

Cankers? 170

YORK AND ARUNDEL

Ay, cankers! Caterpillars!

LANCASTER

Worse than consuming fires  
That eats up all their furies falls upon.

KING

Once more, be still!  
Who is't that dares encounter with our will? 175  
We did bestow them. Hear me, kind uncles:  
We shall ere long be past protectorship.  
Then will we rule ourself, and even till then  
We let ye know those gifts are given to them.  
We did it, Woodstock. 180

WOODSTOCK

Ye have done ill, then.

KING

Ha, dare ye say so?

WOODSTOCK

Dare I? Afore my God, I'll speak, King Richard,  
Were I assur'd this day my head should off.  
I tell ye, sir, my allegiance stands excus'd 185  
In justice of the cause. Ye have done ill,  
The sun of mercy never shine on me  
But I speak truth. When warlike Arundel,  
Beset at sea, fought for those wealthy prizes,  
He did with fame advance the English cross, 190  
Still crying, 'Courage, in King Richard's name!'  
For thee he won them, and do thou enjoy them,  
He'll fetch more honors home. But had he known  
That kites should have enjoy'd the eagle's prize  
The fraught had swum unto thine enemies. 195

KING

So, sir. We'll soothe your vexed spleen, good uncle,  
And mend what is amiss. To those slight gifts,  
Not worth acceptance, thus much more we add:  
Young Henry Green shall be Lord Chancellor,  
Bagot, Lord Keeper of our Privy Seal, 200  
Tresilian, learned in our kingdom's laws,  
Shall be Chief Justice. By them and their directions  
King Richard will uphold his government.

GREEN

Change no more words, my lord, ye do deject

Your kingly majesty to speak to such 205  
Whose homespun judgments, like their frosty beards,  
Would blast the blooming hopes of all your kingdom.  
Were I as you, my lord—

QUEEN

Oh, gentle Green, throw no more fuel on,  
But rather seek to mitigate this heat. 210  
Be patient, kingly Richard, quench this ire.  
Would I had tears of force to stint this fire!

KING

Beshrew the churls that makes my queen so sad,  
But by my grandsire Edward's kingly bones,  
My princely father's tomb, King Richard swears 215  
We'll make them weep these wrongs in bloody tears!  
Come, fair Queen Anne a' Beame. Bagot and Green,  
Keep by King Richard's side.  
[*To the uncles*] But as for you,  
We'll shortly make your stiff obedience bow. 220

*Exeunt King, Queen [and attendants]*

BAGOT

Remember this, my lords:  
We keep the Seal. Our strength you all shall know.

*Exit Bagot*

GREEN

And we are Chancellor. We love you well, think so.

*Exit Green*

YORK

God for His mercy! Shall we brook these braves,  
Disgrac'd and threaten'd thus by fawning knaves? 225

LANCASTER

Shall we, that were great Edward's princely sons,  
Be thus outbrav'd by flattering sycophants?

WOODSTOCK

Afore my God and holy saints, I swear,  
But that my tongue hath liberty to show  
The inly passions boiling in my breast, 230  
I think my overburden'd heart would break!  
What then may we conjecture? What's the cause  
Of this remiss and inconsiderate dealing  
Urg'd by the King and his confederates,  
But hate to virtue, and a mind corrupt 235  
With all preposterous rude misgovernment?

LANCASTER

These prizes ta'en by warlike Arundel  
Before his face are given those flatterers!

SURREY

It is his custom to be prodigal  
To any but to those do best deserve. 240

ARUNDEL

Because he knew you would bestow them well,  
He gave it such as for their private gain  
Neglect both honor and their country's good.

*Wind horns within*

LANCASTER

How now, what noise is this?

YORK

Some posts, it seems, pray heaven the news be good. 245

WOODSTOCK

Amen, I pray for England's happiness.

*Enter Cheney*

Speak, speak, what tidings, Cheney?

CHENEY

Of war, my lord, and civil dissension.  
The men of Kent and Essex do rebel.

WOODSTOCK

I thought no less and always fear'd as much. 250

CHENEY

The shrieves in post have sent unto your Grace  
That order may be ta'en to stay the commons  
For fear rebellion rise in open arms.

WOODSTOCK

Now, headstrong Richard, shalt thou reap the fruit  
Thy lewd, licentious willfulness hath sown. 255  
I know not which way to bestow myself!

YORK

There is no standing on delay, my lords,  
These hot eruptions must have some redress,  
Or else in time they'll grow incurable.

WOODSTOCK

The commons, they rebel; and the King, all careless, 260  
Heaps wrong on wrong, to stir more mutiny.  
Afore my God, I know not what to do!

LANCASTER

Take open arms. Join with the vexed commons,  
And hale his minions from his wanton side.  
Their heads cut off, the people's satisfied. 265

WOODSTOCK

Not so, not so! Alack the day, good brother,  
We may not so affright the tender prince.  
We'll bear us nobly, for the kingdom's safety  
And the King's honor. Therefore, list to me.  
You, brother Gaunt and noble Arundel, 270  
Shall undertake by threats or fair entreaty  
To pacify the murmuring commons' rage;  
And whiles you there employ your service hours,  
We presently will call a parliament  
And have their deeds examin'd thoroughly; 275  
Where, if by fair means we can win no favor,  
Nor make King Richard leave their companies,  
We'll thus resolve for our dear country's good

To right her wrongs, or for it spend our bloods.

LANCASTER

About it, then: we for the Commons, you for the Court. 280

WOODSTOCK

Ay, ay, good Lancaster, I pray be careful.  
Come, brother York, we soon shall right all wrong,  
And send some headless from the court ere long.

*Exeunt omnes*

**Act II**  
**Scene I**

[London, the royal court]

*Trumpets sound. Enter King Richard, Green, Bagot,  
Bushy, Scroop, Tresilian, and others.*

KING

Thus shall King Richard suit his princely train 1  
Despite his uncles' pride. Embrace us, gentlemen.  
Sir [Edward] Bagot, Bushy, Green, and Scroop,  
Your youths are fitting to our tender years,  
And such shall beautify our princely throne. 5  
Fear not my uncles, nor their proudest strength,  
For I will buckler ye against them all.

GREEN

Thanks, dearest lord. Let me have Richard's love,  
And like a rock unmov'd my state shall stand,  
Scorning the proudest peer that rules the land. 10

BUSHY

Your uncles seeks to overturn your state,  
To awe ye like a child, that they alone  
May at their pleasures thrust you from the throne.

SCROOP

As if the sun were forced to decline  
Before his dated time of darkness comes. 15

BAGOT

Sweet King, set courage to authority,  
And let them know the power of majesty.

GREEN

May not the lion roar because he's young?  
What are your uncles but as elephants  
That set their aged bodies to the oak? 20  
You are the oak against whose stock they lean:  
Fall from them once, and then destroy them ever.  
Be thou no stay, King Richard, to their strength  
But as a tyrant unto tyranny,  
And so confound them all eternally. 25

TRESILIAN

Law must extend unto severity  
When subjects dare to brave their sovereign.

KING

Tresilian, thou art Lord Chief Justice now,  
Who should be learned in the laws but thee?  
Resolve us therefore what thou think'st of them 30  
That under title of protectorship  
Seek to subvert their king and sovereign.

TRESILIAN

As of the King's rebellious enemies,  
As underminers of his sacred state,  
[Which] in the greatest prince or mightiest peer 35  
That is a subject to your Majesty  
Is nothing less than treason capital,  
And he a traitor that endeavors it.

KING

Attaint them then, arrest them and condemn them!

GREEN

Hale them to th' block and cut off all their heads, 40



And then, King Richard, claim the government!

KING

See it be done, Tresilian, speedily.

TRESILIAN

That course is all too rash, my gracious lord.

ALL

Too rash? For what?

TRESILIAN

It must be done with greater policy 45  
For fear the people rise in mutiny.

KING

Ay, there's the fear—the commons love them well,  
And all applaud the wily Lancaster,  
The counterfeit relenting Duke of York,  
Together with our fretful uncle Woodstock, 50  
With greater reverence than King Richard's self.  
But time shall come when we shall yoke their necks  
And make them bend to our obedience.

*Bushy reads a book*

How now, what read'st thou, Bushy?

BUSHY

The monument of English Chronicles, my lord, 55  
Containing acts and memorable deeds  
Of all your famous predecessor kings.

KING

What find'st thou of them?

BUSHY

Examples strange and wonderful, my lord,  
The end of treason even in mighty persons: 60  
For here 'tis said your royal grandfather,  
Although but young and under government,  
Took the Protector then, proud Mortimer,

And on a gallows fifty-foot in height  
He hung him for his pride and treachery. 65

KING

Why should our proud Protector then presume  
And we not punish him, whose treason's viler far  
Than ever was rebellious [Mortimer's]?  
Prithee, read on: examples such as these  
Will bring us to our kingly grandsire's spirit. 70  
What's next?

BUSHY

The battle full of dread and doubtful fear  
Was fought betwixt your father and the French.

KING

Read on, we'll hear it.

BUSHY

[*Reading*] Then the Black Prince, encouraging his 75  
soldiers, being in number but 7,750, gave the onset to  
the French king's puissant army, which were  
number'd to 68,000, and in one hour got the victory,  
slew 6,000 of the French soldiers, took prisoners of  
dukes, earls, knights and gentlemen to the number 80  
1,700 and of the common sort, 10,000; so the  
prisoners that were taken were twice so many as the  
Englishmen in number. Besides, the thrice-  
enowned prince took with his own hand King John of  
France and his son prisoners. This was call'd the 85  
Battle of Poitiers, and was fought on Monday,  
the nineteenth of September, 1363, my lord.

KING

A victory most strange and admirable.  
Never was conquest got with such great odds.  
Oh, princely Edward, had thy son such hap, 90  
Such fortune and success to follow him,  
His daring uncles and rebellious peers  
Durst not control and govern as they do.  
But these bright shining trophies shall awake me,  
And, as we are his body's counterfeit, 95

So will we be the image of his mind,  
And die but we'll attain his virtuous deeds.  
What next ensues? Good Bushy, read the rest.

BUSHY

Here is set down, my princely sovereign,  
The certain time and day when you were born. 100

KING

Our birthday, say'st thou? Is that noted there?

BUSHY

It is, my lord.

KING

Prithee, let me hear't,  
For thereby hangs a secret mystery  
Which yet our uncles strangely keeps from us. 105  
On, Bushy.

BUSHY

[*Reading*] Upon the third of April, 1365, was Lord  
Richard, son to the Black Prince, born at Bordeaux.

KING

Stay, let me think awhile. Read it again.

BUSHY

Upon the third of April, 1365, was Lord Richard, son 110  
to the Black Prince, born at Bordeaux.

KING

[*Ironically*] Thirteen sixty-five! [And] what year is  
this?

GREEN

'Tis now, my lord, 1387.

KING

[*Angrily*] By that account, the third of April next 115  
Our age is number'd [two-and-twenty] years!  
Oh, treacherous men that have deluded us,

We might have claim'd our right a twelve-month  
since!

Shut up thy book, good Bushy. Bagot, Green, 120  
King Richard in his throne will now be seen!

*[A knock within. Bagot to the door]*

This day I'll claim my right, my kingdom's due.  
Our uncles well shall know they but intrude,  
For which we'll smite their base ingratitude.

*[Re-enter Bagot]*

BAGOT

Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, my lord, 125  
Sent from the Lord Protector and the peers,  
Doth crave admittance to your royal presence.

KING

Our uncle Edmund? So. Were it not he,  
We would not speak with him; but go, admit him.  
Woodstock and Gaunt are stern and troublesome, 130  
But York is gentle, mild and generous,  
And therefore we admit his conference.

*Enter York*

BAGOT

He comes, my lord.

KING

Methinks 'tis strange, my good and reverend uncle,  
You and the rest should thus malign against us, 135  
And every hour with rude and bitter taunts  
Abuse King Richard and his harmless friends.  
We had a father that once call'd ye brother,  
A grandsire too that titled you his son,  
But could they see how you have wrong'd King 140  
Richard,  
Their ghosts would haunt ye, and in dead of night  
Fright all your quiet sleeps with horrid fears.  
I pray, stand up, we honor reverend years

In meaner subjects. Good uncle, rise and tell us: 145  
What further mischiefs are there now devis'd  
To torture and afflict your sovereign with?

YORK

My royal lord, even by my birth I swear,  
My father's tomb, and faith to heaven I owe,  
Your uncles' thoughts are all most honorable. 150  
And to that end the good Protector sends me  
To certify your sacred Majesty  
The peers of England now are all assembled  
To hold a parliament at Westminster,  
And humbly crave your Highness would be there 155  
To sit in council touching such affairs  
As shall concern your country's government.

KING

Have they so soon procur'd a parliament?  
Without our knowledge too? 'Tis somewhat strange.  
Yet say, good uncle, we will meet them straight. 160

YORK

The news to all will be most wish'd and welcome.  
I take my leave, and to your Grace I swear  
As I am subject loyal, just and true,  
We'll nothing do to hurt the realm nor you.

KING

We shall believe you, uncle. [*To Bagot*] Go, attend 165  
him.

*Exit York [attended by Bagot.]*

Yes, we will meet them, but with such intent  
As shall dismiss their sudden parliament  
Till we be pleas'd to summon and direct it.  
Come, sirs, to Westminster, attend our state, 170  
This day shall make you ever fortunate.  
The third of April—Bushy, note the time—  
Our age accomplish'd, crown and kingdom's mine!

*Exeunt*

**Act II**  
**Scene II**

[Westminster]

*[Flourish of trumpets. Enter Queen Anne, the Duchess of Ireland, the Duchess of Gloucester, Woodstock with petitions and the Mace, and Sir Thomas Cheney. Enter Lancaster, Arundel and Surrey. The Duke of York meets them in haste.]*

WOODSTOCK

Now, brother York, what says King Richard, ha? 1

YORK

His Highness will be here immediately.

WOODSTOCK

Go, cousin Surrey, greet the parliament,  
Tell them the King is coming, give these petitions  
To th' knight[s] and burgesses o' the lower house 5  
Sent from each several shire of all the kingdom.  
These copies I will keep and show his Highness.  
Pray make haste.

SURREY

I will, my lord.

*Exit Surrey*

QUEEN

Pity King Richard's youth, most reverend uncles, 10  
And in your high proceedings gently use him.  
Think of his tender years; what's now amiss  
His riper judgment shall make good and perfect  
To you and to the kingdom's benefit.

YORK

Alack, sweet queen, you and our lord the King 15  
Have little cause to fear our just proceedings.  
We'll fall beneath his feet and bend our knees,  
So he cast off those hateful flatterers

That daily ruinate his state and kingdom.

WOODSTOCK

Go in, sweet ladies, comfort one another. 20  
This happy parliament shall make all even,  
And plant sure peace betwixt the King and realm.

QUEEN

May heaven direct your wisdoms to provide  
For England's honor and King Richard's good.

YORK

Believe no less, sweet queen. Attend her Highness. 25

*[Exeunt Queen Anne and the Duchesses of Gloucester  
and Ireland]*

ARUNDEL

The King is come, my lords.

WOODSTOCK

Stand from the door, then. Make way, Cheney.

*Sound [a flourish.] Enter King Richard, Bagot, Bushy,  
Green, Scroop and others*

GREEN

Yonder's your uncles, my lord.

KING

Ay, with our plain Protector,  
Full of complaints, sweet Green, I'll wage my crown. 30

BAGOT

Give them fair words and smooth awhile:  
The toils are pitch'd, and you may catch them quickly.

KING

Why, how now, uncle! What, disrob'd again  
Of all your golden rich habiliments?

WOODSTOCK

Ay, ay, good coz, I'm now in my t'other hose, 35  
I'm now myself, Plain Thomas, and by th' rood  
In these plain hose I'll do the realm more good  
Than these that pill the poor to jet in gold.

KING

Nay, be not angry, uncle.

WOODSTOCK

Be you then pleas'd, good coz, to hear me speak, 40  
And view thy subjects' sad petitions.  
See here, King Richard, [whilst] thou livest at ease  
Lulling thyself in nice security,  
Thy wronged kingdom's in a mutiny.  
From every province are the people come, 45  
With open mouths exclaiming on the wrongs  
Thou and these upstarts have impos'd on them.  
Shame is decipher'd on thy palace gate,  
Confusion hangeth o'er thy wretched head,  
Mischief is coming and in storms must fall: 50  
Th' oppression of the poor to heaven doth call.

KING

Well, well, good uncle, these your bitter taunts  
Against my friends and me will one day cease.  
But what's the reason you have sent for us?

LANCASTER

To have your Grace confirm this parliament 55  
And set your hand to certain articles  
Most needful for your state and kingdom's quiet.

KING

Where are those articles?

ARUNDEL

The states and burgesses o' th' parliament  
Attend with duty to deliver them. 60

YORK

Please you ascend your throne, we'll call them in.



KING

We'll ask a question first, and then we'll see them;  
For trust me, reverend uncles, we have sworn  
We will not sit upon our royal throne  
Until this question be resolv'd at full. 65  
Reach me that paper, Bushy. Hear me, princes:  
We had a strange petition here deliver'd us.  
A poor man's son, his father being deceas'd,  
Gave him in charge unto a rich man's hands  
To keep him and the little land he had 70  
Till he attain'd to [one-and-twenty] years.  
The poor revenue amounts but to three crowns,  
And yet th' insatiate churl denies his right  
And bars him of his fair inheritance.  
Tell me, I pray: will not our English laws 75  
Enforce this rich man to resign his due?

WOODSTOCK

There is no let to bar it, gracious sovereign.  
Afore my God, sweet prince, it joys my soul  
To see your Grace in person thus to judge his cause.

YORK

Such deeds as this will make King Richard shine 80  
Above his famous predecessor kings  
If thus he labor to establish right.

KING

The poor man then had wrong, you all confess?

WOODSTOCK

And shall have right, my liege, to quit his wrong!

KING

Then, Woodstock, give us right, for we are wrong'd. 85  
Thou art the rich, and we the poor man's son.  
The realms of England, France, and Ireland  
Are those three crowns thou yearly keep'st from us.  
Is't not a wrong when every mean man's son  
May take his birthright at the time expir'd, 90  
And we, the principal, being now attain'd  
Almost to [two-and-twenty] years of age,

Cannot be suffer'd to enjoy our own,  
Nor peaceably possess our father's right?

WOODSTOCK

Was this the trick, sweet prince? Alack the day, 95  
You need not thus have doubled with your friends.  
The right I hold, even with my heart I render,  
And wish your Grace had claim'd it long ago—  
Thou'dst rid mine age of mickle care and woe.  
And yet I think I have not wrong'd your birthright, 100  
For if the times were search'd I guess your Grace  
Is not so full of years till April next.  
But be it as it will. Lo, here, King Richard,  
I thus yield up my sad protectorship.

*Gives up the Mace*

A heavy burden hast thou ta'en from me. 105  
Long may'st thou live in peace and keep thine own,  
That truth and justice may attend thy throne.

KING

Then in the name of heaven we thus ascend it,  
And here we claim our fair inheritance  
Of fruitful England, France, and Ireland, 110  
Superior Lord of Scotland, and the rights  
Belonging to our great dominions.  
Here, uncles, take the crown from Richard's hand  
And once more place it on our kingly head:  
This day we will be new enthronished. 115

WOODSTOCK

With all our hearts, my lord. Trumpets, be ready.

*Flourish [of trumpets]*

ALL

Long live King Richard, of that name the second,  
The sovereign lord of England's ancient rights!

KING

We thank ye all. [*Seating himself*] So. Now we feel

ourself. 120  
 Our body could not fill this chair till now,  
 'Twas scanted to us by protectorship.  
 But now we let ye know King Richard rules  
 And will elect and choose, place and displace,  
 Such officers as we ourself shall like of. 125  
 And first, my lords, because your age is such  
 As pity 'twere ye should be further press'd  
 With weighty business of the common weal,  
 We here dismiss ye from the council table  
 And will that you remain not in our court. 130  
 Deliver up your staves; and hear ye, Arundel,  
 We do discharge ye of the Admiralty.  
 Scroop, take his office and his place in Council.

SCROOP

I thank your Highness.

YORK

[*To Richard*] Here, take my staff, good cousin. 135  
 York thus leaves thee.  
 Thou lean'st on staves that will at length deceive thee.

LANCASTER

There lie the burden of old Lancaster,  
 And may he perish that succeeds my place!

KING

So, sir, we will observe your humor. 140  
 Sir Henry Green, succeed our uncle York;  
 And Bushy, take the staff of Lancaster.

BUSHY

I thank your Grace: his curses frights not me.  
 I'll keep it to defend your Majesty.

WOODSTOCK

What transformation do mine eyes behold, 145  
 As if the world were topsy-turvy turn'd!  
 Hear me, King Richard!

KING

Plain Thomas, I'll not hear ye.

GREEN

Ye do not well to move his Majesty.

WOODSTOCK

Hence, flatterer, or by my soul I'll kill thee! 150  
Shall England, that so long was governed  
By grave experience of white-headed age,  
Be subject now to rash unskillful boys?  
Then force the sun run backward to the east,  
Lay Atlas' burden on a pigmy's back, 155  
Appoint the sea his times to ebb and flow—  
And that as easily may be done as this!

KING

Give up your Council staff, we'll hear no more.

WOODSTOCK

My staff, King Richard? See, coz, here it is.  
Full ten years' space within a prince's hand, 160  
A soldier and a faithful councilor,  
This staff hath always been discreetly kept;  
Nor shall the world report an upstart groom  
Did glory in the honors Woodstock lost.  
And therefore, Richard, thus I sever it. 165  
There, let him take it, shiver'd, crack'd and broke,  
As will the state of England be ere long  
By [thus] rejecting true nobility.  
Farewell, King Richard. I'll to Plashy, brothers;  
If ye ride through Essex, call and see me. 170  
If once the pillars and supporters quail,  
How can the strongest castle choose but fail?

LORDS

And so will he ere long. Come, come, let's leave  
them.

BUSHY

Ay, ay, your places are supplied sufficiently. 175

*Exeunt the Lords*

SCROOP

Old doting graybeards! 'Fore God, my lord, had they  
not been your uncles, I'd broke my Council staff  
about their heads.

GREEN

We'll have an Act for this. It shall be henceforth  
counted high [treason] for any fellow with a gray 180  
beard to come within forty foot of the court gates!

BAGOT

Ay, or a great-bellied doublet. We'll alter the kingdom  
[presently].

GREEN

Pox on't, we'll not have a beard amongst us. We'll  
[shave the] country and the city too, shall we not, 185  
Richard?

KING

Do what ye will, we'll shield and buckler ye.  
We'll have a guard of archers to attend us,  
And they shall daily wait on us and you.  
Send proclamations straight in Richard's name 190  
T'abridge the laws our late Protector made.  
Let some be sent to seek Tresilian forth.

BAGOT

Seek him? Hang him! He lurks not far off, I warrant.  
And this news come abroad once, ye shall have him  
here [presently.] 195

KING

Would he were come! His counsel would direct you  
well.

GREEN

Troth, I think I shall trouble myself but with a few  
[counselors.] What cheer shall we have to dinner,  
King Richard? 200

KING

No matter what, today. We'll mend it shortly.  
The hall at Westminster shall be enlarg'd,  
And only serve us for a dining room  
Wherein I'll daily feast ten thousand men.

GREEN

An excellent device! The commons has murmur'd       205  
[against us] a great while, and there's no such means  
as meat to stop [their mouths].

SCROOP

'Sfoot, make their gate wider! Let's first filch their  
mon[ey] and bid them to dinner afterwards.

GREEN

'Sblood, and I were not a Councilor, I could find in       210  
[my heart] to dine at a tavern today. Sweet king,  
shall's be merry?

SCROOP

We must have money to buy new suits, my lord. The  
fashions that we wear are gross and stale. We'll go sit  
in Council to devise some new.       215

ALL

A special purpose to be thought upon! It shall be the  
first thing we'll do!

KING

Come, wantons, come. If Gloucester hear of this,  
He'll say our Council guides us much amiss.  
Dismiss the parliament our uncles call'd,       220  
And tell the peers it is our present pleasure  
That each man parts unto his several home.  
When we are pleas'd, they shall have summons sent  
And with King Richard hold a parliament.  
Set forward.       225

GREEN

You of the Council, march before the king;  
I will support his arm.

KING

Gramercy, Green.

*Flourish. Exeunt omnes.*

**Act II**  
**Scene III**

[The Queen's apartment, Westminster]

*Enter Queen [Anne], the Duchess of Gloucester, the  
Duchess of Ireland, and maids with shirts and bands  
and other linen*

QUEEN

Tell me, dear aunt, has Richard so forgot 1  
The types of honor and nobility  
So to disgrace his good and virtuous uncles?

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Madam, 'tis true. No sooner had he claim'd 5  
The full possession of his government,  
But my dear husband and his noble brethren  
Were all dismissed from the Council table,  
Banish'd the court, and even before their faces  
Their offices bestow'd on several grooms.

DUCHESS OF IRELAND

My husband, Ireland, that unloving lord, 10  
God pardon his amiss, he now is dead!  
King Richard was the cause he left my bed.

QUEEN

No more, good cousin. Could I work the means,  
He should not so disgrace his dearest friends.  
Alack the day! Though I am England's queen, 15  
I meet sad hours and wake when others sleep.  
He meets content, but care with me must keep.  
Distressed poverty o'erspreads the kingdom:  
In Essex, Surrey, Kent and Middlesex  
Are seventeen thousand poor and indigent 20

Which I have number'd; and, to help their wants,  
 My jewels and my plate are turn'd to coin  
 And shar'd amongst them. Oh, riotous Richard,  
 A heavy blame is thine for this distress,  
 That dost allow thy polling flatterers 25  
 To gild themselves with others' miseries.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Wrong not yourself with sorrow, gentle queen,  
 Unless that sorrow were a helping means  
 To cure the malady you sorrow for.

QUEEN

The sighs I vent are not mine own, dear aunt. 30  
 I do not sorrow in mine own behalf,  
 Nor now repent with peevish frowardness  
 And wish I ne'er had seen this English shore,  
 But think me happy in King Richard's love.  
 No, no, good aunt, this troubles not my soul: 35  
 'Tis England's subjects' sorrow I sustain.  
 I fear they grudge against their sovereign.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Fear not that, madam, England's not mutinous;  
 'Tis peopled all with subjects, not with outlaws.  
 Though Richard, much misled by flatterers, 40  
 Neglects, and throws his scepter carelessly,  
 Yet none dares rob him of his kingly rule.

DUCHESS OF IRELAND

Besides, your virtuous charity, fair Queen,  
 So graciously hath won the commons' love,  
 As only you have power to stay their rigor. 45

QUEEN

The wealth I have shall be the poor's revenue  
 As sure as 'twere confirm'd by parliament.  
 This mine own industry (and sixty more  
 I daily keep at work) is all their own.  
 The coin I have, I send them; would 'twere more 50  
 To satisfy my fears, or pay those sums  
 My wanton lord hath forc'd from needy subjects,



I'd want myself. Go, let those trunks be fill'd  
With those our labors to relieve the poor.  
Let them be carefully distributed. 55

*Enter Cheney*

For those that now shall want, we'll work again,  
And tell them ere two days [they] shall be furnish'd.

CHENEY

What, is the court removing? Whither goes that trunk?

MAID

'Tis the queen's charity, sir, of needful clothing  
To be distributed amongst the poor. 60

CHENEY

[*Aside*] Why, there's one blessing yet, that England  
hath  
A virtuous queen, although a wanton king.  
Good health, sweet princess! Believe me, madam,  
You have quick utterance for your huswifery. 65  
Your Grace affords good pennyworths, sure, ye  
sell so fast!  
Pray heaven your gettings quit your swift return.

QUEEN

Amen, for 'tis from heaven I look for recompense.

CHENEY

No doubt, fair queen, the righteous powers will quit  
you 70  
For these religious deeds of charity.  
But to my message: [*To Duchess of Gloucester*]  
Madam, my lord the Duke  
Entreats your Grace prepare with him to horse. 75  
He will this night ride home to Plashy House.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Madam, ye hear I'm sent for.

QUEEN

Then begone:  
Leave me alone in desolation.

DUCHESS OF IRELAND

[*To Duchess of Gloucester*] Adieu, good aunt, I'll 80  
see ye shortly there:  
King Richard's kindred are not welcome here.

QUEEN

Will ye all leave me, then? Oh, woe is me,  
I now am crown'd a queen of misery.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Where did'st thou leave my husband, Cheney? 85  
Speak.

CHENEY

Accompanied with the Dukes of York and Lancaster  
Who, as I guess, intends to ride with him,  
For which he wish'd me haste your Grace's presence.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Thou see'st the passions of the Queen are such 90  
I may not too abruptly leave her Highness;  
But tell my lord I'll see him presently.

QUEEN

Saw'st thou King Richard, Cheney? Prithee, tell me,  
What revels keeps his flattering minions?

CHENEY

They sit in Council to devise strange fashions, 95  
And suit themselves in wild and antic habits  
Such as this kingdom never yet beheld:  
French hose, Italian cloaks, and Spanish hats,  
Polonian shoes with peaks a handful long,  
Tied to their knees with chains of pearl and gold. 100  
Their plumed tops fly waving in the air  
A cubit high above their wanton heads.  
Tresilian with King Richard likewise sits  
Devising taxes and strange shifts for money

To build again the hall at Westminster 105  
To feast and revel in; and when abroad they come,  
Four hundred archers in a guard attends them.

QUEEN

Oh, certain ruin of this famous kingdom!  
Fond Richard, thou build'st a hall to feast in  
And starvest thy wretched subjects to erect it! 110  
Woe to those men that thus incline thy soul  
To these remorseless acts and deeds so foul!

*A flourish [within]*

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

The trumpets tell us that King Richard's coming.  
I'll take my leave, fair queen, but credit me,  
Ere many days again I'll visit ye. 115

DUCHESS OF IRELAND

I'll home to Langley with my uncle York,  
And there lament alone my wretched state.

*Exeunt Duchesses*

QUEEN

Bless'd heaven conduct ye both. Queen Anne alone  
For Richard's follies still must [sigh] and groan.

*Exit*

**Act III**

**Scene I**

[London: The Court]

*Sound a sennet. Enter King Richard, Bagot, Bushy,  
Green, Scroop, very richly attired in new fashions;  
and Tresilian [with Blank Charters] whispering with  
the King, a guard of archers after them.*

KING

Come, my Tresilian. 1  
Thus like an emperor shall King Richard reign,  
And you so many kings attendant on him.  
Our guard of archers, keep the doors, I charge ye,  
Let no man enter to disturb our pleasures. 5  
Thou told'st me, kind Tresilian, th'ad'st devis'd  
Blank Charters to fill up our treasury,  
Opening the chests of hoarding cormorants  
That laugh to see their kingly sovereign lack.  
Let's know the means we may applaud thy wit. 10

TRESILIAN

See here, my lord: only with parchment, innocent  
sheepskins. Ye see here's no fraud, no clause, no  
deceit in the writing.

ALL

Why, there's nothing writ!

TRESILIAN

There's the trick on't! 15  
These Blank Charters shall be forthwith sent  
To every shrieve through all the shires of England,  
With charge to call before them presently  
All landed men, freeholders, farmers, graziers,  
Or any else that have ability. 20  
Then in your Highness' name they shall be charg'd  
To set their names and forthwith seal these Blanks.  
That done, these shall return to court again,  
But cartloads of money soon shall follow them.

SCROOP

Excellent, Tresilian! 25

BUSHY

Noble Lord Chief Justice!

BAGOT

Where should his Grace get such a Councilor!

GREEN

Not if his beard were off! Prithee, Tresilian, off with  
it! 'Sfoot, thou see'st we have not a beard amongst us!  
Thou send'st out barbers there to poll the whole 30  
country; 'sfoot, let some shave thee!

BUSHY

'Twould become thee better, i' faith, and make thee  
look more grim when thou sit'st in judgment.

TRESILIAN

I tell ye, gallants, I will not lose a hair [for] my lord  
ships' and King Richard's favor—[or] for the Pope's 35  
revenues!

A GUARD

[By] your leave there, give way to the Queen!

*Enter the Queen*

KING

Now, Anne a' Beame, how cheers my dearest queen?  
Is't holiday, my love? Believe me, lords,  
'Tis strange to take her from her sempst'ry, 40  
She and her maids are all for housewif'ry.  
Shalt work no more, sweet Nan, now Richard's king,  
And peer and people all shall stoop to him.  
We'll have no more protecting uncles, trust me!  
Prithee, look smooth and bid these nobles welcome. 45

QUEEN

Whom my lord favors must to me be welcome.

KING

These are our Councilors, I tell ye, lady,  
And these shall better grace King Richard's court  
Than all the doting heads that late controll'd us.  
Thou see'st already we begin to alter 50  
The vulgar fashions of our homespun kingdom.  
I tell thee, Nan, the states of Christendom  
Shall wonder at our English royalty.  
We held a Council to devise these suits:

Sir Henry Green devis'd this fashion shoe, 55  
Bushy this peak; Bagot and Scroop set forth  
This kind coherence 'twixt the toe and knee  
To have them chain'd together lovingly;  
And we, as sovereign, did confirm them all.  
Suit they not quaintly, Nan? Sweet queen, resolve me. 60

QUEEN

I see no fault that I dare call a fault.  
But would your Grace consider with advice  
What you have done unto your reverend uncles?  
My fears provoke me to be bold, my lord:  
They are your noble kinsmen, to revoke 65  
The[ir] sentence were—

KING

An act of folly, Nan!  
Kings' words are laws: if we infringe our word,  
We break our law. No more of them, sweet queen.

TRESILIAN

Madam, what's done was with advice enough: 70  
The King is now at years and hath shook off  
The servile yoke of mean protectorship.

BUSHY

His Highness can direct himself sufficient.  
Why should his pleasures then be curb'd by any,  
As if he did not understand his state? 75

KING

They tell thee true, sweet love. Come, ride with me  
And see today my hall at Westminster,  
Which we have builded now to feast our friends.

GREEN

Do, do, good madam. Prithee, sweet king, let's ride  
somewhither and it be but to show ourselves. 'Sfoot, 80  
our devices here are like jewels kept in caskets, or  
good faces in masks that grace not the owners because  
they're obscur'd. If our fashions be not publish'd,  
what glory's in the wearing?

KING

We'll ride through London only to be gaz'd at. 85  
Fair Anne a' Beame, you shall along with us;  
At Westminster shalt see my sumptuous hall,  
My royal tables richly furnished  
Where every day I feast ten thousand men,  
To furnish out which feast I daily spend 90  
Thirty fat oxen and three hundred sheep,  
With fish and fowl in numbers numberless.  
Not all our chronicles shall point a king  
To match our bounty, state, and royalty.  
Or let [all our successors] yet to come 95  
Strive to exceed me, and if they forbid it,  
Let records say, only King Richard did it!

QUEEN

Oh, but my lord, 'twill tire your revenues  
To keep this festival a year together!

KING

As many days as I write 'England's King,' 100  
We will maintain that bounteous festival.  
Send them abroad with trusty officers.  
And Bagot, see a messenger be sent  
To call our uncle Woodstock home to th' court.  
Not that we love his meddling company, 105  
But that the ragged commons loves his plainness,  
And should grow mutinous about these Blanks,  
We'll have him near us. Within his arrow's length  
We stand secure: we can restrain his strength.  
See it be done. Come, Anne, to our great hall, 110  
Where Richard keeps his gorgeous festival.

*Trumpets sound. Exeunt. Manet Tresilian.*

TRESILIAN

Within there, ho!

*Enter Crosby and Fleming*

CROSBY

Your lordship's pleasure?

TRESILIAN

What, are those Blanks dispatch'd?

FLEMING

They're all truss'd up, my lord, in several packets. 115

TRESILIAN

Where's Nimble? Where's that varlet?

*Enter Nimble [in peaked shoes with knee-chains.]*

NIMBLE

As nimble as a morris-dancer, now my bells are on.  
How do ye like the rattling of my chains, my lord?

TRESILIAN

Oh, villain, thou wilt hang in chains for this.  
Art thou crept into the court fashion, knave? 120

NIMBLE

Alas, my lord, ye know I have follow'd your lordship  
without e'er a rag since ye ran away from the court  
once; and I pray let me follow the fashion a little, to  
show myself a courtier.

TRESILIAN

Go, spread those several Blanks throughout the 125  
kingdom,  
And here's commission with the Council's hands  
With charge to every shrieve and officer  
T'assist and aid you. And when they're seal'd and  
sign'd, 130  
See ye note well such men's ability  
As set their hands to them. Inquire what rents,  
What lands, or what revenues they spend by th' year,  
And let me straight receive intelligence.  
Besides, I'd have you use yourselves so cunningly 135  
To mark who grudges or but speaks amiss  
Of good King Richard, myself, or any of his new  
Councilors.  
Attach them all for privy whisperers  
And send them up. I have a trick in law 140



Shall make King Richard seize into his hands  
The forfeiture of all their goods and lands.  
Nimble, take thou these Blanks, and see  
You take especial note of them.

NIMBLE

I'll take the ditty, sir, but you shall set a note to't, 145  
for if any man shall speak but an ill word of anything  
that's written here—

TRESILIAN

Why, ass, there's nothing.

NIMBLE

And would ye have them speak ill of nothing? That's  
strange! But I mean, my lord, if they should but give 150  
this paper an ill word, as to say, 'I will tear this  
paper,' or worse, 'I will rend this paper,' or fouler  
words than that, as to say, 'I will bumfiddle your  
paper,'—if there be any such, I have a black book for  
them, my lord, I warrant ye. 155

TRESILIAN

Be it your greatest care to be severe.  
Crosby and Fleming, pray be diligent.

CROSBY

We shall, my lord.

NIMBLE

But how if we meet with some ignoramus fellows,  
my lord, that cannot write their minds? What shall 160  
they do?

TRESILIAN

If they but set to their marks, 'tis good.

NIMBLE

We shall meddle with no women in the Blanks,  
shall we?

TRESILIAN

Rich widows, none else; for a widow is as much as  
man and wife. 165

NIMBLE

Then a widow's a hermaphrodite, both cut and  
long-tail, and if she cannot write, she shall set her  
mark to it.

TRESILIAN

What else, sir? 170

NIMBLE

But if she have a daughter, she shall set her mother's  
mark to't?

TRESILIAN

Meddle with none but men and widows, sir, I charge  
ye.

NIMBLE

Well, sir, I shall see a widow's mark, then: I ne'er saw  
none yet! 175

TRESILIAN

You have your lessons perfect, now begone:  
Be bold and swift in execution.

NIMBLE

Goodbye, my lord. We will domineer over the vulgar  
like so many Saint Georges over the poor dragons. 180

*Exit Tresilian*

Come, sirs, we are like to have a flourishing common-  
wealth, i' faith!

*Exeunt*

**Act III**  
**Scene II**

[Woodstock's Residence, Plashy House, Essex]

*Enter Woodstock, Lancaster and York.*

WOODSTOCK

Come, my good brothers, here at Plashy House  
I'll bid you welcome with as true a heart  
As Richard with a false, and mind corrupt,  
Disgrac'd our names and thrust us from his court.

LANCASTER

Beshrew him that repines, my lord, for me, 5  
I liv'd with care at court, I now am free.

YORK

Come, come, let's find some other talk. I think not on  
it.  
I ne'er slept soundly when I was amongst them,  
So let them go. This house of Plashy, brother, 10  
Stands in a sweet and pleasant air, i' faith.  
'Tis near the Thames and circled round with trees  
That in the summer serve for pleasant fans  
To cool ye, and in winter strongly break  
The stormy winds that else would nip ye too. 15

WOODSTOCK

And in faith, old York,  
We have all need of some kind wintering:  
We are beset, heaven shield, with many storms.  
And yet these trees at length will prove to be  
Like Richard and his riotous minions: 20  
Their wanton heads so oft play with the winds  
Throwing their leaves so prodigally down,  
They'll leave me cold at last. And so will they  
Make England wretched and, i'th'end, themselves.

LANCASTER

If Westminster Hall devour as it has begun, 25  
'Twere better it were ruin'd lime and stone.

WOODSTOCK

Afore my God, I late was certified  
That at one feast was serv'd ten thousand dishes.

YORK

He daily feasts, they say, ten thousand men,  
And every man must have his dish, at least. 30

WOODSTOCK

Thirty fat oxen and three hundred sheep  
Serve but one day's expenses.

LANCASTER

A hundred scarcely can suffice his guard;  
A camp of soldiers feeds not like those bowmen.

WOODSTOCK

But how will these expenses be maintain'd? 35

YORK

Oh, they say there are strange tricks come forth  
To fetch in money. What they are, I know not.

WOODSTOCK

You've heard of the fantastic suits they wear?  
Never was English king so habited.

LANCASTER

We could allow his clothing, brother Woodstock,  
But we have four kings more, are equal'd with him: 40  
There's Bagot, Bushy, wanton Green, and Scroop,  
In state and fashion without difference.

YORK

Indeed, they're more than kings, for they rule him.

WOODSTOCK

Come, come, our breaths reverberate the wind. 45  
We talk like good divines, but cannot cure  
The grossness of the sin. Or shall we speak  
Like all-commanding wise astronomers  
And flatly say, such a day shall be fair,

And yet it rains, whether he will or no? 50

*Enter Cheney, with Blank Charters*

So may we talk, but thus will Richard do.

LANCASTER

How now, Cheney, what drives thee on so fast?

CHENEY

If I durst, I would say, my lord,  
Tresilian drives me [on haste] so ill:  
I'm still the pursuivant of unhappy news. 55  
Here's blank charters, my lord, I pray behold them  
Sent from King Richard and his Councilors.

WOODSTOCK

Thou mak'st me blank at very sight of them!  
What [are] these?

LANCASTER

They appear in shape of obligations. 60

CHENEY

They are no less. The country's full of them.  
Commissions are come down to every shrieve  
To force the richest subjects of the land  
[To set their hands and forthwith seal these blanks  
That shall confirm a due debt to the King, 65  
And then the bond must afterwards be paid  
As much or little as they please to 'point it. ]

LANCASTER

Oh, strange, unheard-of, vile taxation!

WOODSTOCK

Who is't can help my memory a little?  
Has not this e'er been held a principle: 70  
'There's nothing spoke or done that has not been'?

YORK

It was a maxim ere I had a beard.

WOODSTOCK

'Tis now found false, an open heresy:  
This is a thing was never spoke nor done!  
Blank Charters call ye them? If any age 75  
Keep but a record of this policy—  
I phrase it too, too well, flat villainy—  
Let me be chronicl'd Apostata,  
Rebellious to my God and country both!

LANCASTER

How do the people entertain these Blanks? 80

CHENEY

With much dislike, yet some for fear have sign'd  
them. Others there be refuse and murmur strangely.

WOODSTOCK

Afore my God, I cannot blame them for it:  
He might as well have sent defiance to them.  
Oh, vulture England, wilt thou eat thine own? 85  
Can they be rebels call'd, that now turn head?  
I speak but what I fear, not what I wish.  
This foul oppression will withdraw all duty,  
And in the commons' hearts hot rancors breed  
To make our country's bosom shortly bleed. 90

LANCASTER

What shall we do to seek for remedy?

YORK

Let each man hie him to his several home  
Before the people rise in mutiny,  
And in the mildest part of lenity  
Seek to restrain them from rebellion— 95  
For what can else be look'd for? Promise redress;  
That eloquence is best in this distress.

LANCASTER

York counsels well. Let's haste away.  
The time is sick, we must not use delay.

YORK

Let's still confer by letters. 100

WOODSTOCK

Content, content,  
So friends may parley even in banishment.  
Farewell, good brothers! Cheney, conduct them forth.

*Exeunt all but Woodstock*

Adieu, good York and Gaunt, farewell forever.  
I have a sad presage comes suddenly 105  
That I shall never see these brothers more.  
On earth, I fear, we never more shall meet.  
Of Edward the Third's seven sons we three are left  
To see our father's kingdom ruin.  
I would my death might end the misery 110  
My fear presageth to my wretched country.  
The commons will rebel, without all question,  
And, 'fore my God, I have no eloquence  
To stay this uproar. I must tell them plain,  
We all are struck but must not strike again. 115

*Enter a Servant*

How now? What news?

SERVANT

There's a horseman at the gate, my lord.  
He comes from the King, he says, to see your Grace.

WOODSTOCK

To see me, say'st thou? A' God's name, let him come,  
[So] he brings no Blank Charters with him! 120  
Prithee, bid him 'light and enter.

SERVANT

I think he dares not, for fouling on his feet, my lord.  
I would have had him 'light, but he swears as he's a  
courtier he will not off on's horse' back till the inner  
gate be open. 125

WOODSTOCK

Passion of me, that's strange! I prithee, give him satisfaction, open the inner gate. What might this fellow be?

SERVANT

Some fine fool: he's attir'd very fantastically, and talks as foolishly.

130

WOODSTOCK

Go, let him in, and when you have done, bid Cheney come and speak with me.

SERVANT

I will, my lord. [*To horseman, off-stage*] Come on, sir, ye may ride into my lord's cellar now, and ye will, sir.

*Enter a Spruce Courtier on horseback*

COURTIER

Prithee, fellow, stay and take my horse!

135

SERVANT

I have business for my lord, sir, I cannot.

*Exit Servant*

COURTIER

A rude swain, by heaven! But stay, here walks another. Hear'st-ta thou, fellow, is this Plashy House?

WOODSTOCK

Ye should have ask'd that question before ye came in, sir. But this is it.

140

COURTIER

The hinds are all most rude and gross! I prithee, walk my horse.

WOODSTOCK

I have a little business, sir.



COURTIER

Thou shalt not lose by't. I'll give thee a tester for thy pains. 145

WOODSTOCK

I shall be glad to earn money, sir.

COURTIER

Prithee, do, and know thy duty. Thy head's too saucy.

WOODSTOCK

Cry ye mercy, I did not understand your worship's calling!

COURTIER

The Duke of Gloucester lies here, does he not? 150

WOODSTOCK

Marry, does he, sir.

COURTIER

Is he within?

WOODSTOCK

He's not far off, sir, he was here even now.

COURTIER

Ah, very good. Walk my horse well, I prithee, h'as travel'd hard and he's hot, i' faith. I'll in and speak with the Duke, and pay thee presently. 155

WOODSTOCK

I make no doubt, sir.

*[Exit Courtier]*

Oh, strange  
metamorphosis! Is't possible that this fellow that's  
all made of fashions should be an Englishman? No  
marvel if he know not me, being so brave, and I so  
beggary! Well, I shall earn money to enrich me now,  
and 'tis the first I earn'd, by the rood, this forty year. 160

[Walks the horse]

Come on, sir, you have sweat hard about this haste,  
yet I think you know little of the business! Why so I  
say? You're a very indifferent beast; you'll follow any 165  
man that will lead you. Now truly, sir, you look but  
e'en leanly on it. You feed not in Westminster Hall  
'a-days, where so many sheep and oxen are devour'd.  
I'm afraid they'll eat you shortly, if you tarry amongst  
them! You're prick'd more with the spur than the 170  
provender, I see that. I think your dwelling be at  
Hackney when you are at home, is't not? You know  
not the Duke neither, no more than your master, and  
yet I think you have as much wit as he, i' faith! Say a  
man should steal ye and feed ye fatter, could ye run 175  
away with him lustily? Ah, your silence argues a  
consent, I see! By the Mass, here comes company.  
We had been both taken if we had, I see.

*Re-enter Cheney and Courtier*

CHENEY

Saw ye not my lord at the gate, say ye? Why, I left  
him there but now. 180

COURTIER

In sooth, I saw no creature, sir, only an old groom I  
got to walk my horse.

CHENEY

A groom, say ye! 'Sfoot, 'tis my lord, the Duke! What  
have ye done? [*To Woodstock*] This is somewhat too  
coarse, your Grace should be an ostler to this fellow! 185

COURTIER

I do beseech your Grace's pardon. The error was in  
the mistake [that] your plainness did deceive me.  
Please it your Grace to redeliver.

WOODSTOCK

No, by my faith, I'll have my money first. Promise is  
[debt]. 190

COURTIER

I know your Grace's goodness will refuse it.

WOODSTOCK

Think not so nicely of me. Indeed, I will not!

COURTIER

If so you please, there is your tester.

WOODSTOCK

If so you please, there is your horse, sir.

Now pray you tell me, is your haste to me? 195

COURTIER

Most swift and serious from His Majesty.

WOODSTOCK

What, from King Richard, my dear lord and kinsman?

[*To Servant*] Go, sirrah, take you his horse, lead him  
to the stable, meat him well, I'll double his reward.

There's twelve pence for ye. 200

SERVANT

I thank your Grace.

*Exit servant and Cheney with the horse.*

WOODSTOCK

Now, sir, your business.

COURTIER

His Majesty commends him to your Grace. [*Bows and  
flourishes his hat*]

WOODSTOCK

This same's a rare fashion you have got at court. Of  
whose devising was't, I pray? 205

COURTIER

I assure your Grace, King Richard's council sat three  
days about it!

WOODSTOCK

By my faith, their Wisdoms took great pains, I assure  
ye! The state was well employ'd the whiles, by th'  
road. Then this at court is all the fashion now? 210

COURTIER

The King himself doth wear it, whose most gracious  
Majesty sent me in haste.

WOODSTOCK

[*Indicating Courtier's shoe*] This peak doth strangely  
well become the foot.

COURTIER

This peak the King doth likewise wear, being a 215  
Polonian peak; and me did his Highness pick from  
forth the rest.

WOODSTOCK

He could not have pick'd out such another, I assure  
ye.

COURTIER

I thank your Grace that picks me out so well; 220  
But, as I said, his Highness would request—

WOODSTOCK

But this most fashionable chain, that links as it were  
the toe and knee together?

COURTIER

In a most kind coherence, so it like your Grace, for  
these two parts, being in operation and quality 225  
different, as, for example, the toe a disdainer or  
spurner, the [k-nee] a dutiful and most humble orator,  
this chain doth, as it were, so toeify the [k-nee], and so  
[k-neeify] the toe, that between both it makes a most  
methodical coherence, or coherent method. 230

WOODSTOCK

'Tis most excellent, sir, and full of art. Please ye, walk  
in.

COURTIER

My message tender'd, I will tend your Grace.

WOODSTOCK

Cry ye mercy, have you a message to me?

COURTIER

His Majesty, most affectionately, and like a royal kinsman, entreats your Grace's presence at the court. 235

WOODSTOCK

Is that your message, sir? I must refuse it, then.  
My English plainness will not suit that place,  
The court's too fine for me. My service here  
Will stand in better stead, to quench the fire 240  
Those Blanks have made. I would they were all burnt,  
Or he were hang'd that first devis'd them, sir,  
They stir the country so! I dare not come,  
And so excuse me, sir. If the King think it ill,  
He thinks amiss; I am Plain Thomas still. 245  
The rest I'll tell ye as ye sit at meat.  
Furnish a table, Cheney, call for wine.  
Come, sir, ye shall commend me to the King.  
Tell him I'll keep these parts in peace to him.

*Exeunt*

### **Act III Scene III**

[The market square, Dunstable]

*Enter Master [Simon] Ignorance, the Bailey of Dunstable, Crosby, Fleming, and Nimble, with Blanks. [Officers with bills in attendance.]*

CROSBY

Despatch, good Master Bailey, the market's almost done, you see. 'Tis rumor'd that the Blanks are come and the rich chuffs begin to flock out o' the town already. You have seen the High Shrieve's warrant 1

and the Council's commission, and therefore I charge      5  
ye in the king's name, be ready to assist us.

IGNORANCE

Nay, look ye, sir, be not too pestiferous, I beseech ye.  
I have begun myself and seal'd one of your Blanks  
I know my place and calling, my name is Ignorance  
and I am Bailey of Dunstable. I cannot write nor read,      10  
I confess it, no more could my father, nor his father,  
nor none of the Ignorances this hundred year, I assure  
ye.

NIMBLE

Your name proclaims no less, sir, and it has been a  
most learned generation.      15

IGNORANCE

Though I cannot write, I have set my mark. *Ecce  
signum!* Read it, I beseech ye.

NIMBLE

The mark of Simon Ignorance, the Bailey of  
Dunstable, being a sheep-hook with a tarbox at end  
on't.      20

IGNORANCE

Very right. It was my mark ever since I was an  
innocent and therefore, as I say, I have begun, and  
will assist ye, for here be rich whoresons i' the town,  
I can tell ye, that will give ye the slip and ye look not  
to it.      25

FLEMING

We therefore presently will divide ourselves. You two  
shall stay here whilst we, Master Ignorance, with  
some of your brethren, the men of Dunstable, walk  
through the town noting the carriage of the people.  
They say there are strange songs and libels cast about      30  
the market place against my lord Tresilian and the rest  
of the king's young councilors. If such there be, we'll  
have some aid and attach them speedily.

IGNORANCE

Ye shall do well, sir, and for your better aiding, if you  
can but find out my brother, Master Ignoramus, he 35  
will be most pestiferous unto ye, I assure ye.

CROSBY

I'm afraid he will not be found, sir, but we'll inquire.  
Come, fellow Fleming; and Nimble, look to the  
whisperers, I charge ye.

NIMBLE

I warrant ye. 40

*[Exeunt Crosby and Fleming]*

Come, Master Bailey, let your billmen retire till we  
call them, and you and I will here shadow ourselves  
and write down their speeches.

IGNORANCE

Nay, you shall write and I will mark, sir.

*Enter COWTAIL, a rich Grazier, with a Farmer and a  
Butcher, very hastily*

And see, see, here comes some already, all rich 45  
chubbs, by the Mass. I know them all, sir.

FARMER

Tarry, tarry, good neighbors, take a knave with ye!  
What a murrain! Is there a bear broke loose i' the  
town, that ye make such haste from the market?

COWTAIL

A bear? No, nor a lion baited neither. I tell ye, 50  
neighbor, I am more afraid of the bee than the bear.  
There's wax to be us'd today, and I have no seal about  
me. I may tell you in secret, here's a dangerous world  
towards. Neighbor, you're a farmer, and I hope here is  
none but God and good company. We live in such a 55  
state, I am e'en almost weary of all, I assure ye.  
Here's my other neighbor, the butcher, that dwells at

Hockley, has heard his landlord tell strange tidings.  
We shall be all hoisted and we tarry here, I can tell ye.

NIMBLE

They begin to murmur. I'll put them down all for  
whisperers. Master Bailey, what's he that talks so? 60

IGNORANCE

His name is Cowtail, a rich grazier, and dwells here  
hard by at Leighton Buzzard.

NIMBLE

Cowtail, a grazier, dwelling at Leighton Buzzard,  
Master Bailey? 65

IGNORANCE

Right, sir. Listen again, sir.

FARMER

Ah, sirrah? And what said the good knight, your  
landlord, neighbor?

BUTCHER

Marry, he said—but I'll not stand to anything, I tell ye  
that aforehand. He said that King Richard's new  
Councilors (God amend them) had crept into honest  
men's places than themselves were and that the  
King's uncles and the old lords were all banish'd the  
court, and he said flatly we should never have a  
merry world as long as it was so. 70  
75

NIMBLE

[*Aside*] Butcher, you and your landlord will be both  
hang'd for it.

BUTCHER

And then he said that there's one Tresilian, a lawyer,  
that has crept in amongst them and is now a lord,  
forsooth, and he has sent down into every [county]  
of England a sort of black chapters. 80



FARMER

Black chapters? A' God's name, neighbor, out of  
what black book were they taken?

COWTAIL

Come, come, they are Blank Charters, neighbors. I  
heard of them afore, and therefore I made such haste 85  
away. They're sent down to the High Shrieve, with  
special charge that every man that is of any [credit] or  
worship in the country must set their hands and seal to  
them, for what intent I know not. I say no more, I  
smell [something.] 90

FARMER

Well, well, my masters, let's be wise: we are not all  
one man's [sons.] They say there are whispering  
knaves abroad. Let's hie us home, for I assure ye,  
'twas told me where I broke my fast this afte[r]noon]  
that there were above three-score gentlemen in our 95  
shire that had set their hands and seals to those Blank  
Charters already.

COWTAIL

Now God amend them for it, they have given an ill  
example we shall be forc'd to follow.

BUTCHER

I would my wife and children were at Jerusalem with 100  
all the wealth! I'd make shift for one, I warrant them.  
Come, neighbors, let's be gone.

NIMBLE

Step forward with your bills, Master Bailey! Not so  
fast, sirs! I charge ye in the King's name to stand till  
we have done with ye. 105

ALL

Saint Benedicite, what must we do now, trow?

IGNORANCE

Be not so pestiferous, my good friends and neighbors.  
You are men of wealth and credit in the country and

therefore, as I myself and others have begun, I charge  
ye in his Highness' name presently to set your hands 110  
and seals to these Blank Charters.

COWTAIL

Jesu, receive my soul, I'm departed!

FARMER

I'm e'en stroke to at heart too.

BUTCHER

Alas, sir, we are poor men, what should our hands do?

IGNORANCE

There is no harm, I warrant ye. What need you fear, 115  
when ye see Bailey Ignorance has seal'd before ye?

COWTAIL

I pray ye, let us see them, sir.

NIMBLE

Here, ye bacon-fed pudding-eaters, are ye afraid of a  
sheepskin?

COWTAIL

Mass, 'tis somewhat darkly written. 120

FARMER

Ay, ay, 'twas done i'the night, sure.

COWTAIL

Mass, neighbors, here's nothing that I see.

BUTCHER

And can it be any harm, think ye, to set your hands to  
nothing? These Blank Charters are but little pieces of  
parchment. Let's set our marks to them, and be rid of 125  
a knave's company.

FARMER

As good at first as last, we can be but undone.

COWTAIL

Ay, and our own hands undoes us, that's the worst  
on't. Lend's your pen, sir.

BUTCHER

We must all venture, neighbors, there's no remedy. 130

NIMBLE

They grumble as they do it, I must put them down for  
whisperers and grumblers. Come, have you done yet?

COWTAIL

Ay, sir. [*Aside*] Would you and they were sodden for  
my swine!

NIMBLE

Here's wax, then. I'll seal them for ye, and you shall 135  
severally take them off and then deliver them as your  
deeds. [*Seals them*] Come, you boar's grease, take off  
this seal here. So, this is your deed?

FARMER

Faith, sir, in some respect it is and it is not.

NIMBLE

And this is yours? 140

COWTAIL

Ay, sir, against my will, I swear.

NIMBLE

Ox-jaw, take off this seal! You'll deliver your deed  
with a good conscience?

BUTCHER

There 'tis, sir, against my conscience, God's my  
witness. I hope ye have done with us now, sir. 145

NIMBLE

No, ye caterpillars, we have worse matters against ye  
yet. Sirrah, you know what your landlord told ye  
concerning my lord Tresilian and King Richard's new

favorites; and, more than that, you know your own  
speeches. And therefore, Master Bailey, let some of  
your billmen away with them to the High Shrieve's  
presently either to put in bail or be sent up to the court  
for privy whisperers. 150

IGNORANCE

Their offenses are most pestiferous. Away with them!

ALL

Now out, alas, we shall all to hanging, sure! 155

NIMBLE

Hanging? Nay, that's the least on't, ye shall tell me  
that a twelve-month hence else!

*Exeunt Officers with the three men*

Stand close, Master Bailey, we shall catch more of  
these traitors presently.

IGNORANCE

You shall find me most pestiferous to assist ye; and so 160  
I pray ye, commend my service to your good lord and  
master. Come, sir, stand close.

*Enter a Schoolmaster and a Servingman*

SERVINGMAN

Nay, sweet Master Schoolmaster, let's hear't again,  
I beseech ye.

SCHOOLMASTER

*Patientia*, you're a servingman, I'm a scholar. I have 165  
shown art and learning in these verses, I assure ye,  
and yet if they were well search'd they're little better  
than libels. But the carriage of a thing is all, sir: I have  
cover'd them rarely.

SERVINGMAN

'Sfoot, the country's so full of intelligencers that two 170  
men can scarce walk together but they're attach'd for

whisperers.

SCHOOLMASTER

This paper shall wipe their noses, and they shall not  
[say] boo to a goose for't; for I'll have these verses  
sung to their faces by one of my schoolboys, wherein 175  
I'll tickle them all, i' faith. Shalt hear else, but first  
let's look there be no pitchers with ears, nor needles  
with eyes, about us.

SERVINGMAN

Come, come, all's safe, I warrant ye.

SCHOOLMASTER

Mark, then. Here I come over them for their Blank 180  
Charters; [shalt] hear else.

*Will ye buy any parchment knives?*

*We sell for little gain:*

*Whoe'er are weary of their lives*

*They'll rid them of their pain.* 185

*Blank Charters they are call'd—*

*A vengeance on the villain!*

*I would he were both flay'd and bald:*

*God bless my lord Tresilian!*

Is't not rare? 190

NIMBLE

Oh, rascals! They're damn'd three hundred fathom  
deep already!

SCHOOLMASTER

Nay, look ye, sir, there can be no exceptions taken,  
for this last line helps all, wherein with a kind of  
equivocation I say, 'God bless my lord Tresilian.' Do 195  
ye mark, sir? Now here, in the next verse, I run o'er  
all these flatterers i' the court by name. Ye shall see  
else:

*A poison may be Green,  
But Bushy can be no [maggot:]* 200  
*God mend the King and bless the Queen  
And 'tis no matter for Bagot.*

*For Scroop, he does no good;  
But if you'll know the villain,  
His name is now to be understood:* 205  
*God bless my lord Tresilian!*

How like ye this, sir?

SERVINGMAN

Most excellent, i'faith, sir.

NIMBLE

Oh, traitors! Master Bailey, do your authority!

IGNORANCE

Two most pestiferous traitors! Lay hold of them, 210  
I charge ye!

*They are arrested*

SERVINGMAN

What mean ye, sir?

NIMBLE

Nay, talk not, for if ye had a hundred lives they were  
all hang'd. Ye have spoken treason in the ninth degree

SCHOOLMASTER

Treason? *Patientia*, good sir, we spoke not a word! 215

IGNORANCE

Be not so pestiferous, mine ears have heard your  
examinations, wherein you utter'd most shameful  
treason, for ye said, 'God bless my lord Tresilian.'

SCHOOLMASTER

I hope there's no treason in that, sir.

NIMBLE

That shall be tried! Come, Master Bailey: their hands 220  
shall be bound under a horse's belly and sent up to  
him presently. They'll both be hang'd, I warrant them.

SERVINGMAN

Well, sir, if we be, we'll speak more ere we be  
hang'd, in spite of ye.

NIMBLE

Ay, ay, when you're hang'd speak what you will, we 225  
care not. Away with them!

*Exeunt Schoolmaster and Servingman [with Officers]*

Ye see, Master Bailey, what knaves are abroad now  
you are here. 'Tis time to look about, ye see.

IGNORANCE

I see there are knaves abroad indeed, sir. I [speak] for  
mine own [part,] I will do my best to reform the 230  
pestiferousness of the times. And as for example I  
have set my mark to the charters, so will I set mine  
eyes to observe these dangerous cases.

*Enter one a-whistling*

NIMBLE

Close again, Master Bailey, here comes another  
whisperer, I see by som—Oh, villain, he whistles 235  
treason! I'll lay hold of him myself!

*Seizes whistler*

WHISTLER

Out, alas! what do ye mean, sir?

NIMBLE

A rank traitor, Master Bailey! Lay hold on him, for  
he has most erroneously and rebelliously whistled  
treason! 240

WHISTLER

Whistl'd treason? Alas, sir, how can that be?

IGNORANCE

Very easily, sir! There's a piece of treason that flies up and down the country in the likeness of a ballad, and this being the very tune of it, thou hast whistl'd treason.

245

WHISTLER

Alas, sir, ye know I spake not a word!

NIMBLE

That's all one. If any man whistles treason, 'tis as ill as speaking [it.] Mark me, Master Bailey: the bird whistles that cannot speak, and [yet] there be birds in a manner that can speak too. Your raven will call ye [black,] your crow will call ye knave, Master Bailey, *ergo*, he that can whistle can speak, and therefore this fellow hath both spoke and whistl'd [treason.] How say you, Bailey Ignorance?

250

IGNORANCE

Ye have argued well, sir, but ye shall hear me sift him nearer, for I do not think but there are [greater heads in this matter]. And therefore, my good fellow, be not pestiferous, but say and tell the truth, who did set you a-work? Or who was the cause of your whistling? Or did any man say to you, 'Go whistle'?

255

260

WHISTLER

Not any man, woman or child, truly, sir.

IGNORANCE

No? How durst you whistle, then? Or what cause had ye to do so?

WHISTLER

The truth is, sir, I had lost two calves out of my pasture, and being in search for them, from the top of the hill I might spy you two i' the bottom here, and took ye for my calves, sir; and that made me come

265



whistling down for joy, in hope I had found them.

NIMBLE

More treason yet, he take a courtier and a Bailey for  
two calves! To limbo with him, he shall be quarter'd 270  
and then hang'd!

WHISTLER

Good Master Bailey, be pitiful!

IGNORANCE

Why, law ye, sir, he makes a pitiful fellow of a Bailey  
too—away with him! Yet stay awhile, here comes 275  
your fellows, sir.

*Enter Crosby and Fleming*

CROSBY

Now, Master Bailey, are your Blanks sealed yet?

IGNORANCE

They are, sir. And we have done this day most strange  
and pestiferous service, I assure ye, sir.

FLEMING

Your care shall be rewarded. Come, fellow Nimble,  
we must to court about other employments. There are 280  
already thirteen thousand Blanks signed and return'd  
to the shrieves, and seven hundred sent up to the court  
for whisperers, out of all which my lord will fetch a  
round sum, I doubt it not. Come, let's away.

NIMBLE

Ay, ay, we'll follow. Come, ye sheepbiter! Here's 285  
a traitor of all traitors, that not only speaks but has  
whistled treason. Come, come, sir, I'll spoil your  
whistle, I warrant ye!

*Exeunt*

**Act IV**  
**Scene I**

[London, the royal court]

*Enter Tresilian with writings, and a [Servant] with  
bags of money*

TRESILIAN

Sirrah, are the bags seal'd? 1

SERVANT

Yes, my lord.

TRESILIAN

Then take my keys and lock the money in my study  
safe. Bar and make sure, I charge ye. So, begone

SERVANT

I will, my lord. 5

TRESILIAN

So, seven thousand pounds  
From Bedford, Buckingham and Oxford shires,  
These Blanks already have return'd the king.  
So then there's four for me and three for him;  
Our pains in this must needs be satisfied. 10  
Good husbands will make hay while the sun shines,  
So men be rich enough, they're good enough  
Let fools make conscience how they get their coin,  
I'll please the King and keep me in his grace,  
For princes' favors purchase land apace. 15  
These Blanks that I have scatter'd in the realm  
Shall double his revenues to the crown.

*Enter Bushy and Scroop, [attended by archers and  
courtiers]*

SCROOP

Now, Lord Tresilian, is this coin come yet?

BUSHY

King Richard wants money, you're too slack,  
Tresilian. 20

TRESILIAN

Some shires have sent, and more, my lords, will  
follow.  
These sealed Blanks I now have turn'd to bonds,  
And these shall down to Norfolk presently.  
The chuffs with much ado have sign'd and seal'd, 25  
And here's a secret note my men have sent  
Of all their yearly 'states amounts unto,  
And by this note I justly tax their bonds.  
Here's a fat whoreson in his russet slops,  
And yet may spend three hundred pounds by th' year, 30  
The third of which the hogsface owes the King.  
Here's his bond for't, with his hand and seal,  
And so by this I'll sort each several sum:  
The thirds of all shall to King Richard come.  
How like you this, my lords? 35

SCROOP

Most rare, Tresilian. Hang 'em, codsheads. Shall they  
spend money and King Richard lack it?

BUSHY

Are not their lives and lands and livings his? Then  
rack them thoroughly!

TRESILIAN

Oh, my lords, I have set a trick afoot for ye; an' ye 40  
follow it hard and get the king to sign it, you'll be all  
kings by it.

BUSHY

The farming out the kingdom? Tush, Tresilian, 'tis 45  
half granted already, and had been fully concluded  
had not the messenger returned so unluckily from the  
Duke of Gloucester, which a little mov'd the King at  
his uncle's stubbornness. But to make all whole, we  
have left that smooth-fac'd, flattering Green to follow  
him close, and he'll never leave till he has done it, I

warrant ye. 50

SCROOP

There's no question on't; King Richard will betake himself to a yearly stipend, and we four by lease must rent the kingdom.

BUSHY

Rent it, ay, and rack it too, ere we forfeit our leases, and we had them once. 55

*Enter Bagot*

How now, Bagot, what news?

BAGOT

All rich and rare: the realm must be divided presently, and we four must farm it. The leases are a-making and for seven thousand pounds a month the kingdom is our own, boys! 60

BUSHY

'Sfoot, let's differ for no price! And it were seventy thousand pounds a month, we'll make somebody pay for't!

SCROOP

Where is his Highness?

BAGOT

He will be here presently to seal the writings. He's a little angry that the Duke comes not, but that will vanish quickly. On with your soothest faces, ye wenching rascals! Humor him finely, and you're all made by it. 65

*[Sound a flourish.] Enter King Richard, Green, [archers,] and others.*

BUSHY

See, see, he comes, and that flattering hound Green close at his elbow. 70

SCROOP

Come, come, we must all flatter if we mean to live by it.

KING

Our uncle will not come, then?

GREEN

That was his answer, flat and resolute. 75

KING

Was ever subject so audacious?

BAGOT

And can your Grace, my lord, digest these wrongs?

KING

Yes, as a mother that beholds her child  
Dismember'd by a bloody tyrant's sword!  
I tell thee, Bagot, in my heart remains 80  
Such deep impressions of his churlish taunts,  
As nothing can remove the gall thereof  
Till with his blood mine eyes be satisfied.

GREEN

'Sfoot, raise powers, my lord, and fetch him thence  
perforce! 85

KING

I dare not, Green, for whilst he keeps i' the country  
There is no meddling. He's so well belov'd  
As all the realm will rise in arms with him.

TRESILIAN

'Sfoot, my lord, and you'd fain have him, I have a  
trick shall fetch him from his house at Plashy in spite 90  
of all his favorites.

KING

Let's ha't, Tresilian, thy wit must help or all's dash'd  
else.

TRESILIAN

Then thus, my lord: whilst the Duke securely revels i'  
the country, we'll have some trusty friends disguise 95  
themselves like masquers and this night ride down to  
Plashy, and in the name of some near-adjoining  
friends offer their sports to make him merry, which he  
no doubt will thankfully accept. Then in the masque  
we'll [have] it so devis'd, the dance being done and 100  
the room voided, then upon some occasion single the  
Duke alone, thrust him in a masquing suit, clap  
a vizard on his face, and so convey him out of the  
house at pleasure.

SCROOP

How if he cry and call for help? 105

TRESILIAN

What serves your drums but to drown his cries? And  
being in a masque, 'twill never be suspected.

GREEN

Good, i' faith. And to help it, my lord, Lapoole, the  
Governor of Calais, is new ready to receive him, hurry  
him away to the Thames' side where a ship shall be 110  
laid ready for his coming, so clap him under hatches,  
hoist sails, and secretly convey him out o' the realm to  
Calais! And so by this means ye shall prevent all  
mischief, for neither of your uncles nor any of the  
kingdom shall know what's become of him. 115

KING

I like it well, sweet Green; and by my crown  
We'll be in the masque ourself, and so shall you.  
Get horses ready, this night we'll ride to Plashy;  
But see ye carry it close and secretly,  
For whilst this plot's a-working for the Duke, 120  
I'll set a trap for York and Lancaster.  
Go, Tresilian, let proclamations straight be sent  
Wherein thou shalt accuse the dukes of treason,  
And then attach, condemn, and close imprison them.  
Lest the commons should rebel against us, 125  
We'll send unto the King of France for aid,

And in requital we'll surrender up  
 Our forts of Guisnes and Calais to the French.  
 Let crown and kingdom waste, yea life and all,  
 Before King Richard see his true friends fall! 130  
 Give order our disguises be made ready,  
 And let Lapoole provide the ship and soldiers.  
 We will not sleep, by heaven, till we have seiz'd him!

BUSHY

[*Aside to Green*] 'Sfoot, urge our suit again, he will  
 forget it else. 135

KING

These traitors once surpris'd, then all is sure:  
 Our kingdom quiet and your states secure.

GREEN

Most true, sweet king. And then your Grace, as you  
 promis'd, farming out the kingdom to us four, shall  
 not need to trouble yourself with any business. This 140  
 old turkey-cock, Tresilian, shall look to the law, and  
 we'll govern the land most rarely.

KING

So, sir,  
 The love of thee and these, my dearest Green,  
 Hath won King Richard to consent to that  
 For which all foreign kings will point at us. 145  
 And of the meanest subject of our land  
 We shall be censur'd strongly, when they tell  
 How our great father toil'd his royal person  
 Spending his blood to purchase towns in France,  
 And we, his son, to ease our wanton youth, 150  
 Become a landlord to this warlike realm,  
 Rent out our kingdom like a pelting farm,  
 That erst was held, as far as Babylon,  
 The maiden conqueress to all the world.

GREEN

'Sfoot, what need you care what the world talks? 155  
 You still retain the name of king, and if any disturb  
 ye, we four comes presently from the four parts of the

kingdom with four puissant armies to assist you.

KING

You four must be all then, for I think nobody else will  
follow you, unless it be to hanging! 160

GREEN

Why, Richard, King Richard, will ye be as good as  
your word, and seal the writings? 'Sfoot, an' thou  
dost not, and I do not join with thine uncles and turn  
traitor, would I might be turn'd to a toadstool!

KING

Very well, sir. They did well to choose you for their  
orator, that has King Richard's love and heart in  
keeping. Your suit is granted, sir; let's see the  
writings. 165

ALL

They're here, my lord!

KING

View them, Tresilian, then we'll sign and seal them  
Look to your bargain, Green, and be no loser, for if  
ye forfeit or run behind-hand with me, I swear I'll  
both imprison and punish ye soundly. 170

GREEN

Forfeit, sweet king? 'Sblood, I'll sell their houses ere  
I'll forfeit my lease, I warrant thee. 175

KING

If they be stubborn, do, and spare not. Rack them  
soundly and we'll maintain it. Remember ye not the  
proviso enacted in our last parliament, that no statute,  
were it ne'er so profitable for the commonwealth,  
should stand in any force 'gainst our proceedings? 180

GREEN

'Tis true, my lord: then what should hinder ye to  
accomplish anything that may best please your kingly  
spirit to determine?



KING

True, Green, and we will do it, in spite of them. Is't  
just, Tresilian? 185

TRESILIAN

Most just, my liege. These gentlemen here, Sir Henry  
Green, Sir Edward Bagot, Sir William Bushy, and Sir  
Thomas Scroop, all jointly here stand bound to pay  
your Majesty, or your deputy, wherever you remain,  
seven thousand pounds a month for this your 190  
kingdom; for which your Grace, by these writings,  
surrenders to their hands all your crown lands,  
lordships, manors, rents, taxes, subsidies, fifteens,  
imposts, foreign customs, staples for wool, tin, lead,  
and cloth; all forfeitures of goods or lands confiscate, 195  
and all other duties that is, shall, or may appertain to  
the king or crown's revenues; and for non-payment  
of the sum or sums aforesaid, your Majesty to seize  
the lands and goods of the said gentlemen above  
named, and their bodies to be imprisoned at your 200  
Grace's pleasure.

KING

How like you that, Green? Believe me, if you fail, I'll  
not favor ye a day.

GREEN

I'll ask no favor at your hands, sir. Ye shall have your  
money at your day, and then do your worst, sir! 205

KING

'Tis very good. Set to your hands and seals. Tresilian,  
we make you our deputy to receive this money. Look  
strictly to them, I charge ye.

TRESILIAN

If the money come not to my hands at the time  
appointed, I'll make them smoke for't. 210

GREEN

Ay, ay, you're an upright justice, sir, we fear ye not.  
Here, my lord, they're ready, sign'd and seal'd.

TRESILIAN

Deliver them to his Majesty all together, as your  
special deeds.

ALL

We do, with humble thanks unto his Majesty, that 215  
makes us tenants to so rich a lordship.

KING

Keep them, Tresilian; now will we sign and seal to  
you. Never had English subjects such a landlord.

GREEN

Nor never had English king such subjects as we four,  
that are able to farm a whole kingdom and pay him 220  
rent for't.

KING

Look that ye do. We shall expect performance  
speedily. There's your indenture, sign'd and seal'd,  
which as our kingly deed we here deliver.

GREEN

Thou never did'st a better deed in thy life, sweet 225  
bully! Thou [may'st] now live at ease: we'll toil for  
thee, and send thy money in tumbling.

KING

We shall see your care, sir. Reach me the map, [that]  
we may allot their portions, and part the realm  
amongst them equally. You four shall here by us 230  
divide yourselves into the nine-and-thirty shires and  
counties of my kingdom, parted thus. Come stand by  
me and mark those shires assign'd ye. Bagot, thy lot  
betwixt the Thames and sea thus lies: Kent, Surrey,  
Sussex, Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, 235  
Somersetshire, Devonshire, Cornwall. Those parts are  
thine as [amply,] Bagot, as the crown is mine.

BAGOT

All thanks, love, duty to my princely sovereign.

KING

[*To Bagot*] Bushy from thee shall stretch his  
government over these [lands] that lie in Wales, 240  
together with our counties of Gloucester, Worcester,  
Hereford, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire.  
[*To Bushy*] There's thy lot.

BUSHY

Thanks to my king that thus hath honor'd me.

KING

Sir Thomas Scroop, from Trent to Tweed thy lot is 245  
parted thus: all Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire,  
Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Northumberland.  
Receive thy lot, thy state and government.

SCROOP

With faith and duty to your Highness' throne.

KING

Now, my Green, what have I left for thee? 250

GREEN

'Sfoot, and you'll give me nothing, then good night,  
landlord! Since ye have serv'd me last, and I be not  
the last shall pay your rent, ne'er trust me!

KING

I kept thee last, to make thy part the greatest. See here,  
sweet Green, These shires are thine, even from the 255  
Thames to Trent thou here shalt lie, i' the middle of  
my land.

GREEN

That's best i' the winter. Is there any pretty wenches  
in my government?

KING

Guess that by this: thou hast London, Middlesex, 260  
Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire,  
Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire,

Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Rutlandshire,  
 Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Huntingdonshire, and  
 Lincolnshire. There's your portion, sir. 265

GREEN

'Slid, I will rule like a king amongst them,  
 And thou shalt reign like an emperor over us.

KING

Thus have I parted my whole realm amongst ye;  
 Be careful of your charge and government.  
 And now to attach our stubborn uncles. 270  
 Let warrants be sent down, Tresilian,  
 For Gaunt and York, Surrey and Arundel,  
 Whilst we this night at Plashy suddenly  
 Surprise plain Woodstock. Being parted thus,  
 We shall with greater ease arrest and take them. 275  
 Your places are not sure while [they] have breath,  
 Therefore pursue them hard: those traitors gone,  
 The staves are broke the people lean upon,  
 And you may guide and rule [them] at your pleasures.  
 Away to Plashy, let our masque be ready. 280  
 Beware, plain Thomas, for King Richard comes  
 Resolv'd with blood to wash all former wrongs!

*Exeunt*

#### **Act IV Scene II**

[Plashy House, Essex]

*Enter Woodstock and his Duchess with a Gentleman,  
 Cheney, and others [prepared for a journey]*

WOODSTOCK

The Queen so sick! Come, come, make haste good 1  
 wife,  
 Thou'lt be belated sure, 'tis night already!  
 On with thy cloak and mask! To horse, to horse!

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Good troth, my lord, I have no mind to ride. 5  
I have been dull and heavy all this day,  
My sleeps were troubled with sad dreams last night,  
And I am full of fear and heaviness.  
Pray, let me ride tomorrow.

WOODSTOCK

What, and the Queen so sick? Away, for shame! 10  
Stay for a dream? Thou'st dreamt, I'm sure, ere this!

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Never so fearful were my dreams till now.  
Had [they] concern'd myself, my fears were past;  
But you were made the object of mine eye,  
And I beheld you murder'd cruelly. 15

WOODSTOCK

Ha, murder'd?  
Alack, good lady, did'st thou dream of me?  
Take comfort, then, all dreams are contrary.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

Pray God it prove so, for my soul is fearful,  
The vision did appear so lively to me. 20  
[Methought] as you were ranging through the woods  
An angry lion with a herd of wolves  
Had in an instant round encompass'd you;  
When to your rescue, 'gainst the course of kind,  
A flock of silly sheep made head against them, 25  
Bleating for help, 'gainst whom the forest king  
Rous'd up his strength, and slew both you and them.  
This fear affrights me.

WOODSTOCK

Afore my God, thou'rt foolish, I'll tell thee all thy  
dream. 30  
Thou know'st last night we had some private talk  
About the Blanks the country's tax'd withal,  
Where I compar'd the state as now it stands,  
Meaning King Richard and his harmful flatterers,  
Unto a savage herd of ravening wolves, 35

The Commons to a flock of silly sheep  
 Who, whilst their slothful shepherd careless stood  
 Those forest thieves broke in, and suck'd their blood.  
 And this thy apprehension took so deep,  
 The form was portray'd lively in thy sleep. 40  
 Come, come, 'tis nothing. What, are her horses ready?

CHENEY

They are, my lord.

WOODSTOCK

Where is the gentleman that brought this message?  
 Where lies the Queen, sir?

GENTLEMAN

At Sheen, my lord, most sick, and so much alter'd 45  
 As those about her fears her sudden death.

WOODSTOCK

Forfend it, heaven! Away, make haste, I charge ye.  
 [To *Duchess*] What, weeping now? Afore my God,  
 thou'rt fond! Come, come, I know thou art no augurer  
 of ill. Dry up thy tears. This kiss, and part. Farewell! 50

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

That farewell from your lips to me sounds ill.  
 Where'er I go, my fears will follow still.

WOODSTOCK

See her to horseback, Cheney.

*Exeunt Duchess and the rest. Manet Woodstock.*

'Fore my God, 'tis late,  
 And but th' important business craves such haste, 55  
 She had not gone from Plashy House tonight.  
 But woe is me, the good Queen Anne is sick  
 And, by my soul, my heart is sad to hear it.  
 So good a lady, and so virtuous,  
 This realm for many ages could not boast of. 60  
 Her charity hath stay'd the commons' rage  
 That would ere this have shaken Richard's chair

Or set all England on a burning fire  
And 'fore my God I fear when she is gone  
This woeful land will all to ruin run. 65

*Enter Cheney*

How now, Cheney, what, is thy lady gone yet?

CHENEY

She is, my lord, with much unwillingness,  
And 'tis so dark I cannot blame her Grace.  
The lights of heaven are shut in pitchy clouds  
And flakes of fire run tilting through the sky 70  
Like dim ostents to some great tragedy.

WOODSTOCK

God bless good Anne a' Beame; I fear her death  
Will be the tragic scene the sky foreshows us.  
When kingdoms change, the very heavens are  
troubled. 75  
Pray God King Richard's wild behavior  
Force not the powers of heaven to frown upon us.  
My prayers are still for him. What think'st thou,  
Cheney,  
May not plain Thomas live a time to see 80  
This state attain her former royalty?  
'Fore God, I doubt it not! My heart is merry,  
And I am suddenly inspir'd for mirth.  
Ha, what sport shall we have tonight, Cheney?

CHENEY

I'm glad to see your Grace addicted so, 85  
For I have news of sudden mirth to tell ye  
Which, till I heard ye speak, I durst not utter:  
We shall have a masque tonight, my lord.

WOODSTOCK

Ha, a masque say'st thou? What are they, Cheney?

CHENEY

It seems, my lord, some country gentlemen, 90  
To show their dear affection to your Grace,

Proffer their sports this night to make you merry.  
Their drums have call'd for entrance twice already.

WOODSTOCK

Are they so near? I prithee, let them enter.  
Tell them we do embrace their loves most kindly. 95  
Give order through the house that all observe them.

*Exit Cheney*

We must accept their loves, although the times  
Are no way suited now for masques and revels.  
What ho, within there!

*Enter [a] Servant*

SERVANT

My lord? 100

WOODSTOCK

Prepare a banquet, call for lights and music.

*Exit Servant*

They come in love, and we'll accept it so.  
Some sports does well, we're all too full of woe.

*Enter Cheney*

CHENEY

They're come, my lord.

WOODSTOCK

They all are welcome, Cheney. Set me a chair, 105  
We will behold their sports in spite of care.

*Cheney sets a chair. A flourish of cornets, then a great  
shout and winding of horns. Enter Cynthia*

CYNTHIA

From the clear orb of our ethereal sphere  
Bright Cynthia comes to hunt and revel here.



The groves of Calydon and Arden Woods  
 Of untam'd monsters, wild and savage herds, 110  
 We and our knights have freed, and hither come  
 To hunt these forests, where we hear there lies  
 A cruel tusked boar, whose terror flies  
 Through this large kingdom, and with fear and dread  
 Strikes her amazed greatness pale and dead. 115  
 And, having view'd from far these towers of stone,  
 We heard the people midst their joy and moan  
 Extol to heaven a faithful prince and peer  
 That keeps a court of love and pity here.  
 Reverend and mild his looks: if such there be, 120  
 This state directs, great prince, that you are he;  
 And ere our knights to this great hunting go,  
 Before your Grace they would some pastime show  
 In sprightly dancing. Thus they bade me say,  
 And wait an answer to return or stay. 125

WOODSTOCK

Nay, for heaven's pity, let them come, I prithee.  
 Pretty device, i'faith! Stand by, make room there!  
 Stir, stir, good fellows, each man to his task,  
 We shall have a clear night, the moon directs the  
 masque. 130

*Music. Enter King Richard, Green, Bushy [and]  
 Bagot, like Diana's knights, led in by four other  
 knights in green, with horns about their necks and  
 boar-spears in their hands*

WOODSTOCK

Ha, country sports, say ye? 'Fore God, 'tis courtly.  
 A general welcome, courteous gentlemen,  
 And when I see your faces, I'll give each man more  
 particular.  
 If your entertainment fail your merit, 135  
 I must ask pardon: my lady is from home  
 And most of my [attendants] waiting on her.  
 But we'll do what we can to bid you welcome.  
 Afore my God, it joys my heart to see  
 Amidst these days of woe and misery 140  
 Ye find a time for harmless mirth and sport.

But 'tis your loves, and we'll be thankful for't.  
 Ah, sirrah, ye come like knights to hunt the boar  
 indeed;  
 And heaven he knows we had need of helping hands, 145  
 So many wild boars roots and spoils our lands  
 That England almost is destroy'd by them.  
 [I care not if King Richard hear me speak it:]  
 I wish his Grace all good, high heaven can tell,  
 But there's a fault in some, alack the day: 150  
 His youth is led by flatterers much astray.  
 But he's our king and God's great deputy,  
 And if ye hunt to have me second ye  
 In any rash attempt against his state,  
 Afore my God, I'll ne'er consent unto it. 155  
 I ever yet was just and true to him,  
 And so will still remain. What's now amiss  
 Our sins have caus'd, and we must bide heaven's will.  
 I speak my heart: I am Plain Thomas still.  
 Come, come, a hall, and music there! Your dance 160  
 being done,  
 A banquet stands prepar'd to bid you welcome.

*Music. They dance. Enter Cheney*

WOODSTOCK

How now, Cheney, is this banquet ready?

CHENEY

There is no time, I fear, for banqueting, my lord!  
 I wish your Grace be provident, 165

*A drum [heard] afar off*

I fear your person is betray'd, my lord.  
 The house is round beset with armed soldiers!

WOODSTOCK

Ha, soldiers?  
 Afore my God, the commons all are up, then.  
 They will rebel against the King, I fear me, 170  
 And flock to me to back their bold attempts.  
 Go arm the household, Cheney!

*Exit Cheney. The Players privately confer*

Hear me, gentlemen!  
'Fore God, I do not like this whispering.  
If your intents be honest, show your faces. 175

KING  
Guard fast the doors and seize him presently!  
This is the cave that keeps the tusked boar  
That roots up England's vineyards uncontroll'd.  
Bagot, arrest him! If for help he cry,  
Drown all his words with drums confusedly. 180

WOODSTOCK  
Am I betray'd?

BAGOT  
Ye cannot 'scape, my lord, the toils are pitch'd  
And all your household fast in hold ere this.  
Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester,  
Earl of Cambridge and of Buckingham, 185  
I here arrest thee in King Richard's name  
Of treason to the crown, his state and realm.

WOODSTOCK  
I'll put in bail, and answer to the law.  
Speak, is King Richard here?

ALL  
No, no, my lord! Away with him! 190

WOODSTOCK  
Villains, touch me not!  
I am descended of the royal blood,  
King Richard's uncle, his grandsire's son,  
His princely father's brother!  
Becomes it princes to be led like slaves? 195

KING  
Put on a vizard! Stop his cries!

WOODSTOCK

Ha, who bids them so? I know that voice full well.  
Afore my God, false men, King Richard's here!  
Turn thee, thou headstrong youth, and speak again!  
By thy dead father's soul, I charge thee, hear me, 200  
So heaven may help me at my greatest need,  
As I have wish'd thy good and England's safety.

BAGOT

You're still deceiv'd, my lord, the King's not here.

BUSHY

On with his masquing suit, and bear him hence!  
We'll lead ye fairly to King Richard's presence. 205

WOODSTOCK

Nay, from his presence to my death you'll lead me;  
And I am pleas'd I shall not live to see  
My country's ruin, and his misery.  
Thou hear'st me well, proud king, and well may'st  
boast 210  
That thou betray'd'st me here so suddenly,  
For had I known thy secret treachery,  
Nor thou, nor these thy flattering minions,  
With all your strengths had wrong'd plain Woodstock  
[thus.] 215  
But use your wills. Your uncles, Gaunt and York,  
Will give you thanks for this; and the poor  
[commons,] when they shall hear of these your unjust  
[proceedings]—

KING

Stop's mouth, I say, we'll hear no more! 220

WOODSTOCK

Good heaven, forgive me, pray ye forbear [awhile,]  
I'll speak but one word more, indeed I [will.]  
Some man commend me to my virtuous wife,  
Tell her her dreams have ta'en effect indeed:  
By wolves and lions now must Woodstock [bleed.] 225

KING

Deliver him to Lapoole—the ship lies ready.  
Convey him o’er to Calais speedily,  
There use him as we gave directions.  
Sound up your drums, our hunting sports are done,  
And when you’re past the house, cast by your habits 230  
And mount your horses with all swiftest haste.

*Exeunt*

**Act IV**  
**Scene III**

[Sheen Palace, Richmond]

*Enter Crosby, Fleming, and Nimble.*

CROSBY

Come, sirs, attend; my lord is coming forth. 1  
The High Shrieves of Kent and Northumberland  
With twenty gentlemen are all arrested  
For privy whisperers against the state,  
In which I know my lord will find some trick 5  
To seize their goods, and then there’s work for us.

NIMBLE

Nay, there will be work for the hangman first; then we  
rifle the goods and my lord seizes the lands. If these  
seven hundred whisperers that are taken come off  
lustily, he’ll have the devil and all shortly. 10

*Enter Tresilian with the Shrieves of Kent and  
Northumberland [guarded by] Officers*

FLEMING

See, see, they’re coming.

TRESILIAN

Call for a marshal there! Commit the traitors!

SHRIEVE OF KENT

We do beseech your Honor, hear us speak.

TRESILIAN

Sir, we'll not hear ye, the proof's too plain against ye.  
Becomes it you, sir, being Shrieve of Kent, 15  
To stay the Blanks King Richard sent abroad,  
Revile our messengers, refuse the Charters,  
And spurn like traitors 'gainst the King's decrees?

SHRIEVE OF KENT

My lord, I plead our ancient liberties  
Recorded and enroll'd in the king's Crown Offic 20  
Wherein the men of Kent are clear discharg'd  
Of fines, fifteens, or any other taxes,  
Forever given them by the Conqueror.

TRESILIAN

You're still deceiv'd. Those Charters were not sent  
To abrogate your ancient privilege, 25  
But for his Highness' use they were devis'd  
To gather and collect amongst his subjects  
Such sums of money as they well might spare,  
And he in their defense must hourly spend.  
Is not the subjects' wealth at the King's will? 30  
What, is he lord of lives and not of lands?  
Is not his high displeasure present death?  
And dare ye stir his indignation so?

SHRIEVE OF NORTHUMBERLAND

We are free-born, my lord, yet do confess  
Our lives and goods are at the King's dispose, 35  
But how, my lord, like to a gentle prince,  
To take or borrow what we best may spare,  
And not, like bond-slaves, force it from our hands.

TRESILIAN

Presumptuous traitors, that will we try on you.  
Will you set limits to the King's high pleasure? 40  
Away to prison! Seize their goods and lands!

SHRIEVE OF KENT

Much good may it do ye, my lord, the care is ta'en;  
As good die there as here abroad be slain.

SHRIEVE OF NORTHUMBERLAND

Well, God forgive both you and us, my lord.  
Your hard oppressions have undone the state 45  
And made all England poor and desolate.

TRESILIAN

[*To Officers*] Why suffer ye their speech? To prison,  
hie!  
There let them perish, rot, consume, and die!

*Exeunt [Officers] with the Shrieves*

Art thou there, Nimble? 50

NIMBLE

I am here, my lord; and since your lordship is now  
employ'd to punish traitors, I am come to present my-  
self unto you.

TRESILIAN

What, for a traitor?

NIMBLE

No, my lord, but for a discoverer of the strangest 55  
traitor that was ever heard of, for by [the] plain  
arithmetic of my capacity, I have found out the very  
words a traitor spoke that has whistl'd treason.

TRESILIAN

How is that, whistle treason?

NIMBLE

Most certain, my lord, I have a trick for't. If a carman 60  
do but whistle, I'll find treason in it, I warrant ye.

TRESILIAN

Thou'rt a rare statesman, Nimble, thou'st a reaching  
head.

NIMBLE

I'll put treason into any man's head, my lord, let him  
answer it as he can. And then, my lord, we have got 65  
a schoolmaster that teaches all the country to sing  
treason, and like a villain he says God bless your  
lordship!

TRESILIAN

Thou'rt a most strange discoverer! Where are these  
traitors? 70

NIMBLE

All in prison, my lord. Master Ignorance, the Bailey  
of Dunstable, and I, have taken great pains about  
them. Besides, here's a note of seven hundred whis-  
perers, most o' them sleepy knaves. We pull'd them  
out of Bedfordshire. 75

TRESILIAN

Let's see the note. Seven hundred whispering traitors?  
Monstrous villains! We must look to these:  
Of all the sort, these are most dangerous  
To stir rebellion 'gainst the King and us.  
What are they, Crosby? Are the rebels wealthy? 80

CROSBY

Fat chuffs, my lord, all landed men. Rich farmers,  
graziers and such fellows that, having been but a little  
pinch'd with imprisonment, begin already to offer  
their lands for liberty.

TRESILIAN

We'll not be nice to take their offers, Crosby, 85  
Their lands are better than their lives to us,  
And without lands they shall not ransom lives.  
Go, sirs, to terrify the traitors more,  
Ye shall have warrants straight to hang them all;  
Then, if [they] proffer lands and put in bail 90  
To make a just surrender speedily,  
Let them have lives, and after, liberty.  
But those that have nor lands nor goods to pay,  
Let them be whipp'd, then hang'd. Make haste, away.



NIMBLE

Well, then, I see my whistler must be whipp'd: he has 95  
but two calves to live on, and has lost them too. And  
for my schoolmaster, I'll have him march about the  
market place with ten dozen of rods at his girdle the  
very day he goes a-feasting, and every one of his  
scholars shall have a jerk at him. 100

*Enter Bagot*

TRESILIAN

Away and leave us. Here comes Sir Edward Bagot.

NIMBLE

Come, sirs.

*Exeunt Nimble, Crosby, and the others*

BAGOT

Right happily met, my lord Tresilian.

TRESILIAN

You're well return'd to court, Sir Edward,  
To this sad house of Sheen, made comfortless 105  
By the sharp sickness of the good Queen Anne.

BAGOT

King Richard's come, and gone to visit her.  
Sad for her weak estate, he sits and weeps.  
Her speech is gone. Only at sight of him  
She heav'd her hands and clos'd her eyes again, 110  
And whether alive or dead is yet uncertain.

*Enter Bushy*

TRESILIAN

Here comes Sir William Bushy. What tidings, sir?

BUSHY

The King's a widower, sir. Fair Anne a' Beame  
Hath breath'd her last farewell to all the realm.

TRESILIAN

Peace with her soul, she was a virtuous lady. 115  
How takes King Richard this her sudden death?

BUSHY

Fares like a madman: rends his princely hair,  
Beats his sad breast, falls groveling on the earth  
All careless of his state, wishing to die  
And even in death to keep her company. 120  
But that which makes his soul more desperate,  
Amidst this heat of passion, weeping comes  
His aunt, the Duchess, Woodstock's hapless wife,  
With tender love [and comfort,]  
At sight of whom his griefs again redoubled, 125  
Calling to mind the lady's woeful state,  
As yet all ignorant of her own mishap.  
He takes her in his arms, weeps on her breast,  
And would have there reveal'd her husband's fall  
Amidst his passions, had not Scroop and Green 130  
By violence borne him to an inward room,  
Where still he cries to get a messenger  
To send to Calais to relieve his uncle.

BAGOT

I do not like those passions.  
If he reveal the plot we all shall perish. 135  
Where is the Duchess?

BUSHY

With much ado we got her leave the presence  
With an intent in haste to ride to Plashy.

TRESILIAN

She'll find sad comforts there. Would all were well.  
A thousand dangers round enclose our state. 140

BAGOT

And we'll break through, my lord, in spite of fate.  
Come, come, be merry, good Tresilian.

*Enter King [Richard,] Green and Scroop*

Here comes King Richard, all go comfort him.

SCROOP

My dearest lord, forsake these sad laments.  
No sorrows can suffice to make her live. 145

KING

Then let sad sorrow kill King Richard too,  
For all my earthly joys with her must die  
And I am kill'd with cares eternally,  
For Anne a' Beame is dead, forever gone!  
She was too virtuous to remain with me, 150  
And heaven hath given her higher dignity.  
Oh, God, I fear even here begins our woe:  
Her death's but chorus to some tragic scene  
That shortly will confound our state and realm.  
Such sad events black mischiefs still attend, 155  
And bloody acts, I fear, must crown the end.

BAGOT

Presage not so, sweet prince, your state is strong.  
Your youthful hopes with expectation crown;  
Let not one loss so many comforts drown.

KING

Despair and madness seize me! Oh, dear friends, 160  
What loss can be compar'd to such a queen?  
Down with this house of Sheen! Go, ruin all,  
Pull down her buildings, let her turrets fall!  
Forever lay it waste and desolate,  
That English king may never here keep court, 165  
But to all ages leave a sad report,  
When men shall see these ruin'd walls of Sheen  
And sighing say, here died King Richard's queen.  
For which we'll have it wasted lime and stone  
To keep a monument of Richard's moan. 170  
Oh, torturing grief!

BUSHY

Oh, dear my liege, all tears for her are vain oblations,  
Her quiet soul rests in celestial peace.  
With joy of that, let all your sorrows cease.



For so we must give out to all that ask. 15

SECOND MURDERER

There is no way then but to smother him.

LAPPOOLE

I like that best; yet one thing let me tell ye:  
Think not your work contriv'd so easily  
As if you were to match some common man.  
Believe me, sirs, his countenance is such, 20  
So full of dread and lordly majesty,  
Mix'd with such mild and gentle 'havior,  
As will (except you be resolv'd at full)  
Strike you with fear even with his princely looks.

FIRST MURDERER

Not and he look'd as grim as Hercules, 25  
As stern and terrible as the devil himself!

LAPPOOLE

'Tis well resolv'd. Retire yourselves awhile:  
Stay in the next withdrawing chamber there,  
And when I spy the best advantage for ye, I'll call  
ye forth. 30

SECOND MURDERER

Do but beckon with your finger, my lord, and like  
vultures we come flying and seize him presently.

LAPPOOLE

Do so.

*Exeunt [the] Two Murderers*

And yet, by all my fairest hopes, I swear  
The boldness of these villains to this murder 35  
Makes me abhor them and the deed forever.  
Horror of conscience with the King's command  
Fights a fell combat in my fearful breast.  
The King commands his uncle here must die,  
And my sad conscience bids the contrary 40  
And tells me that his innocent blood thus spilt

Heaven will revenge. Murder's a heinous guilt,  
 A seven-times crying sin. Accursed man!  
 The further that I wade in this foul act  
 My troubled senses are the more distract, 45  
 Confounded and tormented past my reason.  
 But there's no lingering: either he must die  
 Or great King Richard vows my tragedy.  
 Then 'twixt two evils 'tis good to choose the least:  
 Let danger fright faint fools, I'll save mine own 50  
 And let him fall to black destruction.

*He draws the curtains*

He sleeps upon his bed. The time serves fitly,  
 I'll call the murderers in. Sound music there,  
 To rock his senses in eternal slumbers.

*Music within*

Sleep, Woodstock, sleep. Thou never more shalt 55  
 wake.  
 This town of Calais shall forever tell,  
 Within her castle walls plain Thomas fell.

*Exit Lapoole. Thunder and lightning. Enter the Ghost  
of the Black Prince*

FIRST GHOST

Night, horror, and th'eternal shrieks of death  
 Intended to be done this dismal night 60  
 Hath shook fair England's great cathedral,  
 And from my tomb elate at Canterbury  
 The ghost of Edward the Black Prince is come  
 To stay King Richard's rage, my wanton son.  
 Thomas of Woodstock, wake! Thy brother calls thee. 65  
 Thou royal issue of King Edward's loins,  
 Thou art beset with murder! Rise and fly,  
 If here thou stay, death comes and thou must die.  
 Still dost thou sleep? Oh, I am naught but air!  
 Had I the vigor of my former strength 70  
 When thou beheld'st me fight at Crécy Field,  
 Where, hand-to-hand, I took King John of France

And his bold sons my captive prisoners,  
 I'd shake these stiff supporters of thy bed  
 And drag thee from this dull security. 75  
 Oh, yet for pity, wake! Prevent thy doom!  
 Thy blood upon my son will surely come,  
 For which, dear brother Woodstock, haste and fly,  
 Prevent his ruin and thy tragedy, oh!

*Thunder. Exit Ghost. Enter the Ghost of Edward the  
 Third*

SECOND GHOST

Sleep'st thou so soundly and pale death so nigh? 80  
 Thomas of Woodstock, wake, my son, and fly!  
 Thy wrongs have rous'd thy royal father's ghost  
 And from his quiet grave King Edward's come  
 To guard thy innocent life, my princely son.  
 Behold me here: sometime fair England's lord, 85  
 Seven warlike sons I left; yet, being gone,  
 [Not] one succeeded in my kingly throne.  
 Richard of Bordeaux, my accursed grandchild,  
 Cut off your titles to the kingly state  
 And now your lives and all would ruinate: 90  
 Murders his grandsire's sons—his father's brothers!—  
 Becomes a landlord to my kingly titles,  
 Rents out my crown's revenues, racks my subjects  
 That spent their bloods with me in conquering France,  
 Beheld me ride in state through London streets, 95  
 And at my stirrup lowly footing by  
 Four captive kings to grace my victory.  
 Yet that nor this his riotous youth can stay,  
 Till death hath ta'en his uncles all away.  
 Thou fifth of Edward's sons, get up and fly! 100  
 Haste thee to England, close and speedily!  
 Thy brothers York and Gaunt are up in arms;  
 Go join with them, prevent thy further harms.  
 The murderers are at hand—awake, my son!  
 This hour foretells thy sad destruction. 105

*Exit Ghost*

WOODSTOCK

Oh, good angels, guide me! Stay, thou blessed spirit,  
Thou royal shadow of my kingly father,  
Return again! I know thy reverend looks:  
With thy dear sight once more recomfort me,  
Put by the fears my trembling heart foretells 110  
And here is made apparent to my sight  
By dreams and visions of this dreadful night.  
Upon my knees I beg it. Ha, protect me, heaven!  
The doors are all made fast: 'twas but my fancy.  
All's whist and still, and nothing here appears 115  
But the vast circuit of this empty room.  
Thou blessed hand of mercy, guide my senses!  
Afore my God, methought as here I slept,  
I did behold in lively form and substance  
My father Edward and my warlike brother 120  
Both gliding by my bed, and cried to me  
To leave this place, to save my life, and fly.  
Lighten my fears, dear Lord! I here remain  
A poor old man, thrust from my native country,  
Kept and imprison'd in a foreign kingdom. 125  
If I must die, bear record, righteous heaven,  
How I have nightly wak'd for England's good,  
And yet to right her wrongs would spend my blood.  
Send thy sad doom, King Richard, take my life,

*Enter Lapoole and the Murderers*

I wish my death might ease my country's grief. 130

LAPOOLE

[*Aside to Murderers*] We are prevented. Back, retire again—  
He's risen from his bed. What fate preserves him?  
[*To Woodstock*] My lord, how fare you?

WOODSTOCK

Thou can'st not kill me, villain! 135  
God's holy angel guards a just man's life  
And with his radiant beams as bright as fire  
Will guard and keep his righteous innocence.  
I am a prince, thou dar'st not murder me!



LAPOOLE  
Your Grace mistakes, my lord. 140

WOODSTOCK  
What art thou? Speak!

LAPOOLE  
Lapoole, my lord, this city's governor.

WOODSTOCK  
Lapoole, thou art King Richard's flatterer.  
Oh, you just gods, record their treachery,  
Judge their foul wrongs that under show of friendship 145  
Betray'd my simple, kind intendiments!  
My heart misgave it was no time for revels  
When you like masquers came disguis'd to Plashy  
Join'd with that wanton king to trap my life—  
For that I know's the end his malice aims at. 150  
This castle, and my secret sending hither,  
Imports no less. Therefore, I charge ye tell me,  
Even by the virtue of nobility,  
And partly, too, on that allegiance  
Thou ow'st the offspring of King Edward's house, 155  
If aught thou know'st to prejudice my life,  
Thou presently reveal, and make it known.

LAPOOLE  
Nay, good my lord, forbear that fond suspicion.

WOODSTOCK  
I tell thee, Poole, there is no less intended.  
Why am I sent thus from my native country, 160  
But here at Calais to be murdered?  
And that, Lapoole, confounds my patience.  
This town of Calais, where I spent my blood  
To make it captive to the English king,  
Before whose walls great Edward lay encamp'd 165  
With his seven sons, almost for fourteen months;  
Where the Black Prince, my brother, and myself,  
The peers of England, and our royal father,  
Fearless of wounds, ne'er left till it was won—  
And was't to make a prison for his son? 170

Oh, righteous heavens, why do you suffer it?

LAPOOLE

Disquiet not your thoughts, my gracious lord.  
There is no hurt intended, credit me,  
Although a while your freedom be abridg'd.  
I know the King: if you would but submit 175  
And write your letters to his Majesty,  
Your reconciliation might be easily wrought.

WOODSTOCK

For what should I submit or ask his mercy?  
Had I offended, with all low submission  
I'd lay my neck under the blade before him 180  
And willingly endure the stroke of death.  
But if not so, why should my fond entreaties  
Make my true loyalty appear like treason?  
No, no, Lapoole, let guilty men beg pardons;  
My mind is clear. And I must tell ye, sir, 185  
Princes have hearts like pointed diamonds  
That will in sunder burst afore they bend,  
And such lives here, though death King Richard  
[send!]  
Yet fetch me pen and ink, I'll write to him, 190  
Not to entreat, but to admonish him  
That he forsake his foolish ways in time  
And learn to govern like a virtuous prince,  
Call home his wise and reverend counselors,  
Thrust from his court those cursed flatterers 195  
That hourly works the realm's confusion.  
This counsel if he follow may in time  
Pull down those mischiefs that so fast do climb.

LAPOOLE

Here's pen and paper, my lord, will't please ye write?

WOODSTOCK

Anon I will. Shut to the doors and leave me. 200  
Goodnight, Lapoole, and pardon me, I prithee,  
That my sad fear made question of thy faith.  
My state is fearful, and my mind was troubled  
Even at thy entrance with most fearful visions

Which made my passions more extreme and hasty 205  
Out of my better judgment I repent it,  
And will reward thy love. Once more, good night.

LAPPOOLE

Good rest unto your Grace. [*Aside*] I mean in death.  
This dismal night thou breath'st thy latest breath.  
He sits to write. I'll call the murderers in, 210  
To steal behind and closely strangle him.

*Exit Lapoole*

WOODSTOCK

So help me, heaven, I know not what to write,  
What style to use, nor how I should begin.  
My method is too plain to greet a king.  
I'll nothing say to excuse or clear myself, 215  
For I have nothing [done] that needs excuse,  
But tell him plain, though here I spend my blood,

*Enter both the Murderers*

I wish his safety and all England's good.

FIRST MURDERER

Creep close to his back, ye rogue, be ready with the  
towel, when I have knock'd him down, to strangle 220  
him.

SECOND MURDERER

Do it quickly whilst his back is towards ye, ye damn'd  
villain; if thou let'st him speak but a word, we shall  
not kill him.

FIRST MURDERER

I'll watch him for that. Down [on] your knees and 225  
creep, ye rascal.

WOODSTOCK

Have mercy, God! My sight o' the sudden fails me.  
I cannot see my paper,  
My trembling fingers will not hold my pen.

A thick congealed mist o'erspreads the chamber. 230  
I'll rise and view the room.

SECOND MURDERER

Not too fast for falling!

[*Strikes him*]

WOODSTOCK

What villain hand hath done a deed so bad,  
To drench his black soul in a prince's blood?

FIRST MURDERER

Do ye prate, sir? Take that and that! Zounds, put the 235  
towel about's throat and strangle him quickly, ye  
slave, or by the heart of hell, I'll fell thee too!

SECOND MURDERER

'Tis done, ye damn'd slave. Pull, ye dog, and pull thy  
soul to hell in doing it, for thou hast kill'd the truest 240  
subject that ever breath'd in England.

FIRST MURDERER

Pull, rogue, pull! Think of the gold we shall have for  
[doing it], and then let him and thee go to the devil  
together. Bring in the featherbed and roll him up in  
that till he be smother'd and stifled, and life and soul  
press'd out together. Quickly, ye hellhound! 245

SECOND MURDERER

Here, here, ye cannibal! Zounds, he kicks and sprawls!  
Lie on's breast, ye villain!

FIRST MURDERER

Let him sprawl and hang. He's sure enough for  
speaking. Pull off the bed now, smooth down his hair  
and beard. Close his eyes and set his neck right: why, 250  
so. All fine and cleanly: who can say that this man  
was murder'd now?

*Enter Lapoole*

LAPPOOLE

What, is he dead?

SECOND MURDERER

As a door-nail, my lord. What will ye do with his  
body? 255

LAPPOOLE

Take it up gently, lay him in his bed;  
Then shut the door, as if he there had died.

FIRST MURDERER

It cannot be perceived otherwise, my lord. Never was  
murder done with such rare skill. At our return, we  
shall expect reward, my lord. 260

LAPPOOLE

'Tis ready told. Bear in the body, then return and take  
it.

*Exeunt Murderers with the body*

Within there, ho!

*Enter Soldiers*

SOLDIERS

My lord?

LAPPOOLE

Draw all your weapons, soldiers, guard the room! 265  
There's two false traitors enter'd the Duke's chamber,  
Plotting to bear him thence, betray the castle,  
Deliver up the town and all our lives  
To the French forces that are hard at hand  
To second their attempts. Therefore stand close, 270  
And as they enter, seize them presently.  
Our will's your warrant: use no further words  
But hew them straight in pieces with your swords.

SOLDIER

I warrant ye, my lord, and their skins were scal'd with

brass, we have swords will pierce them. Come, sirs, 275  
be ready.

*[Re-enter] the Two Murderers*

FIRST MURDERER

Come, ye miching rascal, the deed's done and all  
things perform'd rarely. We'll take our reward, steal  
close out o' the town, buy us fresh geldings, spur, cut 280  
and ride till we are past all danger, I warrant thee.

LAPPOOLE

Give their reward there! Quick, I say!

SOLDIER

Down with the traitors! Kill the villains!

FIRST and SECOND MURDERERS

Hell and the devil! Zounds! Hold, ye rascals!

*They kill the Murderers*

LAPPOOLE

Drag hence their bodies, hurl them in the sea:  
The black reward of death's a traitor's pay. 285

*Exeunt Soldiers with their bodies*

So, this was well perform'd. Now who but we  
Can make report of Woodstock's tragedy?  
Only he died a natural death at Calais—  
So must we give it out, or else King Richard  
Through Europe's kingdoms will be hardly censur'd. 290  
His headstrong uncles, York and Lancaster,  
Are up, we hear, in open arms against him;  
The gentlemen and commons of the realm,  
Missing the good old duke, their plain protector,  
Break their allegiance to their sovereign lord 295  
And all revolt upon the barons' sides;  
To help which harm, I'll o'er to England straight,  
And with th'old troops of soldiers ta'en from Calais,  
I'll back King Richard's power. For should he fail,

And his great uncles get the victory, 300  
His friends are sure to die; but if he win,

*Exeunt*

**Act V**  
**Scene II**

[Near King Richard's camp]

*Drums. March within. Enter Tresilian and Nimble  
with armor*

TRESILIAN

These proclamations we have sent abroad, 1  
Wherein we have accus'd the dukes of treason,  
Will daunt their pride and make the people leave  
them.  
I hope no less, at least. Where art thou, Nimble? 5

NIMBLE

So loaden with armor I cannot stir, my lord.

TRESILIAN

Whose drums were those that beat even now?

NIMBLE

King Richard's drums, my lord: the young lords are  
pressing soldiers.

TRESILIAN

Oh, and do they take their press with willingness? 10

NIMBLE

As willing as a punk that's press'd on a feather-bed—  
they take their [pressing] apiece with great patience.  
Marry, the lords no sooner turn their backs but they  
run away like sheep, sir,

TRESILIAN

They shall be hang'd like dogs for't! 15  
What, dares the slaves refuse their sovereign?

NIMBLE

They say the proclamation's false, my lord,  
And they'll not fight against the King's friends.

TRESILIAN [*Aside*]

So, I fear'd as much. And since 'tis come to this,  
I must provide betime and seek for safety, 20  
For now the King and our audacious peers  
Are grown to such a height of burning rage  
As nothing now can quench their kindled ire  
But open trial by the sword and lance;  
And then, I fear, King Richard's part will fail. 25  
[*To Nimble*] Nimble, our soldiers run, thou sayest?

NIMBLE

Ay, by my troth, my lord, and I think 'tis our best  
course to run after [them], for if they run now, what  
will [they] do when the battle begins? If we tarry here 30  
and the King's uncles catch us, we are sure to be  
hang'd. My lord, have ye no trick of law to defend us?  
No demur or writ of error to remove us?

TRESILIAN

Nimble, we must be wise.

NIMBLE

Then let's not stay to have more wit beaten into our  
heads; I like not that, my lord. 35

TRESILIAN

I am a man for peace, and not for war.

NIMBLE

And yet they say you have made more wrangling i'  
the land than all the wars has done these seven years.

TRESILIAN

This battle will revenge their base exclams.  
But hear'st thou, Nimble, I'll not be there today. 40  
One man amongst so many is no maim,  
Therefore I'll keep aloof till all be done.  
If good, I stay; if bad, away I run.



Nimble, it shall be so. I'll neither fight nor die,  
But thus resolv'd, disguise myself and fly. 45

NIMBLE

'Tis the wisest course, my lord, and I'll go put off  
mine armor that I may run lustily too.

*Exeunt*

**Act V**  
**Scene III**

[Radcot Bridge]

*Enter with drum and colors York, Lancaster, Arundel  
[and] Surrey, Cheney, and Soldiers, with the Duchess  
of Gloucester [weeping]*

LANCASTER

Go to our tents, dear sister, cease your sorrows. 1  
We will revenge our noble brother's wrongs,  
And force that wanton tyrant to reveal  
The death of his dear uncle, harmless Woodstock,  
So traitorously betray'd. 5

YORK

It was an easy task to work on him,  
His plainness was too open to their view.  
He fear'd no wrong because his heart was true.  
Good sister, cease your weeping, there's none here  
But are as full of woe and touch'd as near. 10  
Conduct and guard her, Cheney, to the tent  
Expect to hear severest punishment  
On all their heads that have procur'd his harms,  
Struck from the terror of our threatening arms.

DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER

May all the powers of heaven assist your hands, 15  
And may their sins sit heavy on their souls,  
That they in death this day may perish all  
That traitorously conspir'd good Woodstock's fall.

If he be dead, by good King Edward's soul,  
We'll call King Richard to a strict account 20  
For that, and for his realm's misgovernment.

*Exit the Duchess of Gloucester escorted by Cheney*

You peers of England, rais'd in righteous arms  
Here to re-edify our country's ruin,  
Join all your hearts and hands never to cease  
Till with our swords we work fair England's peace!      25

ARUNDEL

Most princely Lancaster, our lands and lives  
Are to these just proceedings ever vow'd.

SURREY

Those flattering minions that o’erturns the state  
This day in death shall meet their endless fate!

YORK

Never such vipers were endur'd so long                    30  
To grip and eat the hearts of all the kingdom!

LANCASTER

This day shall here determinate all wrongs.  
The meanest man tax'd by their foul oppressions  
Shall be permitted freely to accuse,  
And right they shall have to regain their own, 35  
Or all shall sink to dark confusion!

*Drums sound within*

ARUNDEL

How now, what drums are these?

*Enter Cheney*

CHENEY

To arms, my lords! The minions of the King  
Are swiftly marching on to give ye battle!

LANCASTER

They march to death then, Cheney. Dare the traitors       40  
Presume to brave the field with English princes?

YORK

Where is King Richard? He was resolv'd but lately  
To take some hold of strength, and so secure him.

CHENEY

Knowing their states were all so desperate,               45  
It seems they have persuaded otherwise,  
For now he comes with full resolve to fight.  
Lapoole this morning is arriv'd at court  
With the Calais soldiers and some French supplies  
To back this now-intended enterprise.

LANCASTER

Those new supplies have spurr'd their forward hopes       50  
And thrust their resolutions boldly on  
To meet with death and sad destruction.

*Drums sound*

YORK

Their drums are near. Just heaven, direct this deed  
And, as our cause deserv's, our fortunes speed.

*They march about. Then enter with drum and colors  
King Richard, Bagot, Bushy, Green, Scroop, Lapoole,  
and Soldiers. They march about also.*

KING

Although we could have easily surpris'd,               55  
Dispers'd and overthrown your rebel troops  
That draw your swords against our sacred person,  
The highest God's anointed deputy,  
Breaking your holy oaths to heaven and us,  
Yet of our mild and princely clemency               60  
We have forborne, that by this parliament  
We might be made partaker of the cause  
That mov'd ye rise in this rebellious sort.

LANCASTER

Hast thou, King Richard, made us infamous  
By proclamations false and impudent? 65  
Hast thou condemn'd us in our absence too  
As most notorious traitors to the crown?  
Betray'd our brother Woodstock's harmless life,  
And sought base means to put us all to death?  
And dost thou now plead doltish ignorance 70  
Why we are [banded] thus in our defense?

GREEN

Methinks your treasons to his Majesty,  
Raising his subjects 'gainst his royal life,  
Should make ye beg for mercy at his feet.

KING

You have forgotten, uncle Lancaster, 75  
How you in prison murdered cruelly  
A friar Carmelite because he was  
To bring in evidence against your Grace  
Of most ungracious deeds and practices.

LANCASTER

And you, my lord, remember not so well 80  
That by that Carmelite at London once,  
When at a supper, you'd have poison'd us.

YORK

For shame, King Richard, leave this company  
That like dark clouds obscure the sparkling stars  
Of thy great birth and true nobility. 85

ARUNDEL

Yield to your uncles! Who but they should have  
The guidance of your sacred state and council?

BAGOT

Yield first your heads, and so he shall be sure  
To keep his person and his state secure.

KING

And, by my crown, if still you thus persist, 90

Your heads and hearts ere long shall answer it.

ARUNDEL

Not till ye send for more supplies from France,  
For England will not yield ye strength to do it.

YORK

Thou well may'st doubt their loves, that lost their  
[hearts!] 95  
Ungracious prince, cannot thy native country  
Find men to back this desperate enterprise?

LANCASTER

His native country? Why, that is France, my lords!  
At Bordeaux was he born, which place allures  
And ties his deep affections still to France. 100  
Richard is English blood, not English born.  
Thy mother travel'd in unhappy hours  
When she at Bordeaux left her heavy load.  
The soil is fat for wines, not fit for men,  
And England now laments that heavy time. 105  
Her royalties are lost, her state made base,  
And thou no king but landlord now become  
To this great state that terror'd Christendom.

KING

I cannot brook these braves. Let drums sound death,  
And strike at once to stop this traitor's breath! 110

BAGOT

Stay, my dear lord; and once more hear me, princes.  
The King was minded, ere this brawl began,  
To come to terms of composition.

LANCASTER

Let him revoke the proclamations,  
Clear us of all supposed crimes of treason, 115  
Reveal where our good brother Gloucester keeps  
And grant that these pernicious flatterers  
May by the law be tried, to quit themselves  
Of all such heinous crimes alleg'd against them,  
And we'll lay down our weapons at thy feet. 120

KING

Presumptuous traitors!

ALL

Traitors!

KING

Again we double it: rebellious traitors!

Traitors to heaven and us! Draw all your swords

And fling defiance to those traitorous lords!

125

KING'S MEN

Let our drums thunder and begin the fight!

LORDS' MEN

Just heaven protect us and defend the right!

*Exeunt*

**Act V**  
**Scene IV**

[The battlefield]

*Alarum. Enter Green and Cheney, armed*

CHENEY

Stand, traitor! For thou can'st not 'scape my sword.

1

GREEN

What villain fronts me with the name of traitor?

Was't thou, false Cheney? Now, by King Richard's  
love,

I'll tilt thy soul out for that base reproach.

5

I would thy master and the late Protector

With both his treacherous brothers, Gaunt and York,  
Were all oppos'd with thee, to try these arms:

I'd seal't on all your hearts!

*Alarum*

CHENEY

This shall suffice to free the kingdom from thy  
villainies! 10

*They fight. Enter Arundel*

ARUNDEL

Thou hunt'st a noble game, right warlike Cheney!  
To shed the royal bloods and make the realm  
Weep for their timeless desolation. [*To Green*]  
Cast down thy weapons, for by this my sword 15  
We'll bear thee from this place, alive or dead.

GREEN

Come both, then! I'll stand firm and dare your worst!  
He that flies from it, be his soul accurs'd!

*They fight and Green is slain*

ARUNDEL

So may the foes of England fall in blood!  
Most dissolute traitor! Up with his body, Cheney, 20  
And hale it to the tent of Lancaster.

*Enter King, Bagot, Bushy, Scroop and soldiers*

CHENEY

Stand firm, my lord, here's rescue.

ARUNDEL

We'll bear his body hence, in spite of them.

*They fight. To them enter Lancaster, York and Surrey  
and beats them all away. Manet the King [with  
Green's corpse]*

KING

Oh, princely youth, King Richard's dearest friend!  
What heavy star this day had dominance 25  
To cut off all thy flow'ring youthful hopes?  
Prosper, proud rebels, as you dealt by him,  
Hard-hearted uncles, unrelenting churls,

That here have murder'd all my earthly joys!  
 Oh, my dear Green, wert thou alive to see 30  
 How I'll revenge thy timeless tragedy  
 On all their heads that did but lift a hand  
 To hurt this body, that I held so dear!  
 Even by this kiss and by my crown, I swear.

*Alarum within. Re-enter Bagot, Bushy and Scroop to  
 the King*

BAGOT  
 Away, my lord, stand not to wail his death! 35  
 The field is lost; our soldiers shrink and fly:  
 Lapoole is taken prisoner by the lords.  
 Hie to the Tower: there is no help in swords.

SCROOP  
 Still to continue war were childishness:  
 Their odds a mountain, ours a molehill is. 40

BUSHY  
 Let's fly to London and make strong the Tower.  
 Loud proclamations post throughout the camp  
 With promise of reward to all that take us.  
 Get safety for our lives, my princely lord,  
 If here we stay, we shall be all betray'd. 45

KING  
 Oh, my dear friends, the fearful wrath of heaven  
 Sits heavy on our heads for Woodstock's death.  
 Blood cries for blood; and that almighty hand  
 Permits not murder unreveng'd to stand.  
 Come, come, we yet may hide ourselves from worldly 50  
 strength,  
 But heaven will find us out, and strike at length.  
 Each lend a hand to bear this load of woe  
 That erst King Richard lov'd and tender'd so.

*Exeunt*



**Act V**  
**Scene V**

[A field near the Lords' camp]

*Enter Tresilian and Nimble, disguised.*

TRESILIAN

Where art thou, Nimble? 1

NIMBLE

As light as a feather, my lord. I have put off my  
[shoes] that I might run lustily. The battle's lost and  
[the young lords] prisoners. What shall we do, my  
lord? Yonder's a [stream.] We may run along that and 5  
ne'er be seen, I warra[nt.]

TRESILIAN

I did suspect no less, and so 'tis fall'n:  
The day is lost and dash'd are all our hopes.  
King Richard's taken prisoner by the peers.  
Oh, that I were upon some steepy rock 10  
Where I might tumble headlong to the sea  
Before those cruel lords do seize on me!

NIMBLE

Oh, that I were transform'd into a mouse, that I [might  
creep] into any hole i' the house and I car'd not.!

TRESILIAN

Come, Nimble, 'tis no time to use delay. 15  
I'll keep me in this poor disguise awhile  
And so, unknown, prolong my weary life.

*Retreat sounds within*

In hope King Richard shall conclude my peace.  
Hark, hark, the trumpets call the soldiers back:  
Retreat is sounded! Now the time serves fit 20  
And we may steal from hence. Away, good Nimble!

NIMBLE

Nay, stay my lord! 'Slid, and ye go that way,  
[farewell;] but an' you'll be rul'd by me, I have  
thought of a [trick] that ye shall 'scape them all  
most bravely. 25

TRESILIAN

Bethink thyself, good Nimble. Quickly, man!

NIMBLE

I'll meditate, my lord, and then I'm for ye.  
[Aside] Now, Nimble, show thyself a man of valor!  
Think of thy fortunes: 'tis a hanging matter if thou  
conceal him. Besides, there's a thousand marks for 30  
him that takes him, with the dukes' favors, and free  
pardon. Besides, he's but a coward, he would ne'er  
have run from the battle else. Saint T Antony, assist  
me! I'll set upon him presently. [To Tresilian] My  
lord, I have thought upon this trick: I must take ye 35  
prisoner.

TRESILIAN

How, prisoner?

NIMBLE

There's no way to 'scape else. Then must I carry ye to  
the King's uncles, who presently condemns ye for a 40  
traitor, sends ye away to hanging, and then 'God bless  
my lord Tresilian!'

TRESILIAN

Wilt thou betray thy master, villain?

NIMBLE

Ay, if my master be a villain. You think 'tis nothing  
for a man to be hang'd for his master? You [heard]  
not the proclamation? 45

TRESILIAN

What proclamation?

NIMBLE

Oh, sir, all the country's full of them—that whosoever  
sees you [and] does not presently take ye and bring ye  
to the Lords shall be hang'd for his labor. Therefore,  
no more words, lest I raise the whole camp upon ye. 50  
Ye see one of your own swords of justice drawn over  
ye, therefore go quietly lest I cut your head off and  
save the hangman a labor.

TRESILIAN

Oh, villain!

NIMBLE

No more words. Away, sir! 55

*Exeunt*

**Act V**  
**Scene VI**

[The Lords' camp]

*Sound a retreat, then a flourish, and enter victoriously  
with drums and colors Lancaster, Arundel,  
Surrey, Cheney and Soldiers with Lapoole, Bushy  
and Scroop as prisoners*

LANCASTER

Thus princely Edward's sons, in tender care 1  
Of wanton Richard and their father's realm,  
Have toil'd to purge fair England's pleasant field  
Of all those rancorous weeds that chok'd the grounds  
And left her pleasant meads like barren hills. 5  
Who is't can tell us which way Bagot fled?

ARUNDEL

Some say to Bristowe, to make strong the castle.

LANCASTER

See that the port's belay'd. He'll fly the land,  
For England hath no hold can keep him from us.

Had we Tresilian hang'd, then all were sure. 10  
Where slept our scouts, that he escap'd the field?

CHENEY

He fled, they say, before the fight began.

LANCASTER

Our proclamations soon shall find him forth,  
The root and ground of all these vile abuses.

*Enter Nimble with Tresilian bound and guarded*

LANCASTER

How now, what guard is that? What traitor's there? 15

NIMBLE

The traitor now is ta'en,  
I here present the villain,  
And if ye needs will know his name,  
God bless my lord Tresilian!

CHENEY

Tresilian, my lord, attach'd and apprehended by his 20  
man!

NIMBLE

Yes, and it please ye, my lord, 'twas I that took him.  
I was once a trampler in the law after him, and I thank  
him he taught me this trick, to save myself from 25  
hanging.

LANCASTER

Thou'rt a good lawyer, and hast remov'd the cause  
from thyself fairly.

NIMBLE

I have remov'd it with a *Habeas Corpus*, and then I  
took him with a *Surssararis*, and bound him in this 30  
bond to answer it. Nay, I have studied for my  
learning, I can tell ye, my lord. There was not a stone  
between Westminster Hall and Temple Bar but I have  
told them every morning.

ARUNDEL

What moved thee, being his man, to apprehend him?

NIMBLE

Partly for these causes: first, the fear of the 35  
proclamation, for I have plodded in Plowden and  
can find no law that doth protect this traitor from your  
Graces' justice. And second, for the money promis'd,  
and third, because he did most treacherously  
command the murder of the Duke of Gloucester, 40  
Thomas of Woodstock.

*Hands a parchment to Lancaster*

LANCASTER

Oh, 'tis a warrant for my brother's death!

NIMBLE

Aye, writ of my Lord Chief Injustice here.

LANCASTER

[*Reading*] 'See thou no marks nor violence show 45  
upon him, that we may say he naturally died.' [*To*  
*Tresilian*] Oh, scoundrel, for this shalt thou most  
violent and unnaturally die!

*Shows parchment to Surrey and Arundel*

SURREY

Oh, monstrous!

ARUNDEL

Thou false traitor and injurious villain,  
To hell's eternal torments art thou damn'd! 50

TRESILIAN

Great lords, I plead the ancient privilege of law  
To put in bail and appeal the charge.

LANCASTER

By Heav'n, we'll hear no more, the proof's too plain.  
Away with him to Radcot Castle and death's pain.

TRESILIAN  
Mercy, great Lancaster! Oh, help me, Nimble! 55

NIMBLE  
God bless my lord Tresilian.

*Exit Tresilian with Soldiers*

LANCASTER  
Now, Bushy, freely speak thy mind.  
What dost thou know of noble Gloucester's death?

BUSHY  
I ever honor'd and rever'd the worthy Duke.  
'Twas Bagot, Scroop, Tresilian and the rest 60  
Contriv'd against my Lord Protector's life.

SCROOP  
Nay, by Lapoole was he most cruelly kill'd.

LAPOOLE  
Not so, my lords, at Callice was our watch  
Deceiv'd by murd'ers that his Majesty did send,  
Who chok'd the goodly kind old man. Yet still 65  
I do repent that in my rage I slew  
The villains both and cast their bloody limbs  
From off the battlements into the sea.

ARUNDEL  
So art thou doubly damn'd, Lapoole,  
For Woodstock's bloody death and theirs. 70

LAPOOLE  
But yet have mercy lords, it was the King  
Commanded us. It is the King who is to blame.

LANCASTER  
King Richard did decree it, sayest thou?  
We'll fetch him in.

CHENEY  
The Duke of York attends him. I'll be their conduct. 75

*Exit Cheney*

LAPOOLE

His Majesty did order Woodstock's death.

BUSHY

Aye, 'twas the King. 'Beware, plain Thomas,'  
Thus said he, 'for Richard comes  
To wash away with blood all former wrongs!'  
'Tis true, my lords, King Richard did require it. 80

*Re-enter Cheney with King Richard, York, and  
Officers bearing the crown and sceptre. Scroop and  
Bushy kneel*

KING

I pray you, mock me not. You see I am a king in  
chains.

*They rise*

YORK

King Richard, though our prisoner, art thou still  
The first of princely Edward's royal blood,  
And we your faithful subjects, staunch and true. 85  
Nay, coz, turn not thy kingly face away,  
We yet do bear the sad and heavy death  
Of Thomas Woodstock, thy kind uncle and our kin.

KING

I am so weary, sirs [*He sits.*] I mourn him also, uncle,  
God rest good Gloucester's soul. 90

LANCASTER

Stand up, Richard. These traitors here maintain  
That you decreed thy father's brother's death.  
Here is thy warrant with Tresilian's seal.

KING

Why then they lie, 'twas done without my wish,  
For Gloucester's grievous death I urg'd it not. 95  
Bushy, thou know'st I did command no gall

To our belov'd Protector should befall.

BUSHY

He did, my lords, and we endeavor'd so.

LANCASTER

Yet is he dead.

KING

Good uncles, I acknowledge my disgrace, 100  
I did neglect my duty in that case.

YORK

Your duty, nephew? Aye, and what of ours,  
Whose honor and allegiance thus are torn  
Betwixt our murder'd kinsman and our king?

KING

I am thy kinsman, uncle, and your king, 105  
And with thee grieve most sore for Woodstock's  
death.  
But, uncle York, and you most noble peers,  
Anointed am I still with holy oil,  
Thy coronation oaths, my crown, and scepter royal. 110  
Nor tears, nor blood nor waters in the sea  
Can off my kingly brow take them from me.

ARUNDEL

He is our king, whom we may not depose,  
Lest harshly plucking we destroy fair England's rose.

YORK

What says our brother Lancaster? 115

LANCASTER

Edmund, I do believe he wish'd no harm,  
We'll pardon him as God shall pardon us  
That righteously have sought to cleanse this land.  
Besides, Tresilian and Lapoole hath both confess'd;  
To end the matter here methinks 'tis best. 120  
[*To Soldiers*] See execution's done, take him away.  
The sable night of death shall close his day.



*Lapoole is taken away*

Although of Woodstock's murder you're acquit,  
Thy kingdom, Richard, must be set aright,  
For all the Commons and assembl'd peers 125  
In univocal clamor do require it. Take off his chains.

KING

[*To Soldier*] Thank you, sir. What must I do, my  
lords?

ARUNDEL

Dismiss these baneful flatterers your court,  
Cancel the proclamations of our treachery, 130  
Receive us back into your Council's heart.  
Then all shall be as it first was before,  
And thy bright crown and kingdom we'll restore.

KING

Hear all, we do revoke our royal word,  
Vacate the proclamations and abjure the charge, 135  
Recall our uncles Lancaster and York,  
And to our Council re-admit these earls.  
[*To Bushy and Scroop*] With Bagot art thou now  
dismiss'd the court,  
Remov'd from office and thy powers revok'd. 140  
Come not again near to us by ten mile.

SURREY

The Commons beg revocation of the Charters, sir.

KING

We do repent us now of those Blank Charters,  
Repeal the law, and further here proclaim  
We grieve most sore the death of our Protector, 145  
Good, plain and loving Thomas, villainously slain.

*Lancaster hands him the crown*

Redeem'd, restored and renew'd, we vow  
In fresh humility our realm to crown  
With justice, truth and amity of God.

No more a pelting farm, yet once again 150  
An England that's a royal seat of kings.  
God save the soul of Thomas Woodstock!

ALL

God save the soul of Thomas Woodstock!

KING

And now, my lords, to Windsor, if you will,  
For there awaits, we hear, the commons and the peers 155  
With whom we would be sweetly reconcil'd,  
That peace may claim new fruits and harvests mild.  
Away! Let neither king nor kingdom rest  
Until, like Woodstock, we be plainer dressed.

*Exeunt omnes*

