

The Tragedy of Richard the Second, Part One

By William Shakespeare

Edited by Michael Egan

The Tragedy of Richard II, Part One

Period written: 1592-3

First known performance: Iowa, April 1973 (Iowa University High School Gymnasium)

Play Summary

1 Richard II is a natural companion and supplement to Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Richard II* (*2 Richard II*). Set in 1387, twelve years before Bullingbrook's usurpation, the action focuses on the key events of Richard's early reign—the growing political tension between him and his uncles, his marriage to the saintly Anne of Bohemia, the imposition of the Blank Charters tax, his leasing of the kingdom to Bushy, Bagot, Green and Scroop (turning England into a 'pelting farm'), Anne's untimely death, the abduction and murder of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. The story climaxes at the Battle of Radcot Bridge where the young king and his minions are defeated by Woodstock's brothers, John of Gaunt and Edmund of Langley.

The Tragedy of Richard the Second, Part One

Dramatis Personae

KING RICHARD *the Second, son of Edward, the Black Prince*

THOMAS OF WOODSTOCK, *Duke of Gloucester
and Lord Protector of England*

JOHN OF GAUNT, *Duke of Lancaster*

EDMUND OF LANGLEY, *Duke of York*

} *Uncles of King
Richard*

EARL OF ARUNDEL, *Lord Admiral of England*

EARL OF SURREY

SIR THOMAS CHENEY, *Attendant on the Duke of Gloucester*

SIR HENRY GREEN

SIR THOMAS SCROOP

SIR EDWARD BAGOT

SIR WILLIAM BUSHY

SIR ROBERT TRESILIAN, *a lawyer, afterward
Lord Chief Justice*

} *Favorites of King
Richard*

NIMBLE, *assistant to Tresilian*

CROSBY

FLEMING

} *Law Officers under
Tresilian*

SIMON IGNORANCE, *Bailiff of Dunstable*

COWTAIL, *a grazier*

A BUTCHER

A FARMER

A SCHOOLMASTER

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S SERVANT

A MAN WHO WHISTLES TREASON

THE LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

THE SHRIEVE (SHERIFF) OF KENT

THE SHRIEVE (SHERIFF) OF NORTHUMBERLAND

SIR WILLIAM LAPOOLE, *Governor of Calais*

THE GHOST OF EDWARD, THE BLACK PRINCE, *King Richard's father and
eldest son of King Edward III*

THE GHOST OF KING EDWARD III, *King Richard's grandfather and father of
his uncles*

ANNE OF BOHEMIA (*Anne a' Beame*), *wife of King Richard and Queen of England*

ELEANOR DE BOHUN, DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER, *wife of Thomas of Woodstock*

DUCHESS OF IRELAND, *niece of the Duke of York, divorced wife of Robert de Vere, a former favorite of King Richard*

FIRST MURDERER

SECOND MURDERER, *assistant to the first*

A SPRUCE COURTIER, *messenger from the King*

CYNTHIA, *truchman of the masque*

A MAID-IN-WAITING, *attendant on the Queen*

A GENTLEMAN MESSENGER

A GUARD

[SIR PIERCE OF] EXTON

Servants, Maids, Courtiers, Law-officers, Soldiers, Archers, Citizens, Knights, and a Horse from Hackney

Scene: ENGLAND, 1387

Act I Scene I

[A noble house near London]

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!

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!

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?

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?

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.

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
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,
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)
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
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,
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:
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,
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.

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,
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.

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
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.

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
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,
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.

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,
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.
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,
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,] and [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.

WOODSTOCK

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

[Exit Exton]

Good Lord Mayor, I do beseech ye prosecute
With your best care a means for all our safeties.
Mischief hath often double practices;

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.
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. [*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?
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
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
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:
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
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.
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.

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
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
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
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.
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.
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,
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.

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
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
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
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!

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
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 omnes

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.

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.
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!

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,
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.
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
(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 already I sit upon the bench with dreadful frowns frightening 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, 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
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,
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.

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,
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,
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
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.
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.

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 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 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, 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!

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 '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 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 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!

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.
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.
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 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.
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 Duchess of Gloucester and the Duchess of Ireland.

KING

Bagot and Green, next to the fair Queen Anne
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;
Give all your welcomes to fair Anne a' Beame.

LANCASTER

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
By oaths and loyal protestations
To which we add a thousand infinites;
But in a word, fair queen, forever welcome!

WOODSTOCK

Let me prevent the rest, for mercy's sake!
If all their welcomes be as long as thine
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!'

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,
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.
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.

KING

I thank ye for your double praise, good uncle.

WOODSTOCK

Ay, ay, good coz, I'm Plain Thomas; by th' rood
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,
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
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.
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,
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,
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!

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.
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,
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!
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
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:
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,
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
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?

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,
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.

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 [*Aside*]

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

LANCASTER [*Aside*]

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

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!
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
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,
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
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.
[*Aside*] I'll wring them all for this, by England's crown!
—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
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,
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

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.

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?

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?
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.

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
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,
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.

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,
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
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.
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
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.

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?

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,
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
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.

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.

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.

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.
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,
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.

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,
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;
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.

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
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.
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.

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.

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?
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.

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
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
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,
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

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,
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,
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:
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.

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.
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 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 1,700 and of the common sort 10,000; so the prisoners that were taken were twice so many as the Englishmen were in number. Besides, the thrice-renowned prince took with his own hand King John of France and his son prisoners. This was call'd the 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,
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,
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.

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 uncle strangely keeps from us.
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 to the Black
Prince, born at Bordeaux.

KING

Thirteen sixty-five? What year is this?

GREEN

'Tis now, my lord, 1387.

KING

By that account, the third of April next
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,
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,
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,
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,
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 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:
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.
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
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.

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 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,
This day shall make you ever fortunate.
The third of April—Bushy, note the time—
Our age accomplish'd, crown and kingdom's mine.

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?

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,
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,
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
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.
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.

[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.

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,
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,
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,
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:
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
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.

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.
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
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
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
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.
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,
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,
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,
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.
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,
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.

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.
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.
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.
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. 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.
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,
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!
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,
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,
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.
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.
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.

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 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, 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
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.]

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?

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 [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 [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.

[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,
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.

GREEN

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

KING

Gramercy, Green.

Trumpets sound [a 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
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
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
(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,
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
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
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.
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:
'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,
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.

[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!
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.

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.

[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.
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
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.
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 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? 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
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,
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.
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
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!
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.

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 Queen, [attended]

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.
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.
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.

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!
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.
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!

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 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 lordships' and King Richard's favor—[or] the Pope's 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 sempstery,
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.

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
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,
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.

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
The 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:
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?

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, 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.
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
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
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,'
We will maintain that bounteous festival.
Tresilian, look to your Blank Charters speedily,
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,
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,
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.

[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?

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 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,
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
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
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, 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 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.

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 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.

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?

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!

TRESILIAN

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

Exit Tresilian

NIMBLE

Goodbye, my lord. We will domineer over the vulgar like so many Saint Georges over the poor dragons. Come, sirs, we are like to have a flourishing common-wealth, i' faith!

Exeunt

Act III Scene II

[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,
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,
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.

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:
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,
'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.

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?

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:
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.
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?

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.
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 [may] these...?

LANCASTER

They appear in shape of obligations.

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,
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:
'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
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?

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?
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.

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—
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.

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
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 ruinate.
I would my death might end the misery
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.

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!
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.

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.

WOODSTOCK

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

SERVANT

I will, my lord. 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.

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.

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.

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?

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.

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 beggarly! Well, I shall earn money to enrich me now and 'tis the first I earn'd, by the rood, this forty year. [*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 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 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 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.

Enter Cheney, Courtier, and Servants

CHENEY

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

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? This is somewhat too coarse, your Grace should be an ostler to this fellow!

[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 a [debt].

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?

COURTIER

Most swift and serious from His Majesty.

WOODSTOCK

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

SERVANT

I thank your Grace.

Exit servant with the horse

WOODSTOCK

Now, sir, your business.

COURTIER

His Majesty commends him to your Grace.

WOODSTOCK

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

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' rood. Then this at court is all the fashion now?

COURTIER

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

WOODSTOCK

This peak doth strangely well become the foot.

COURTIER

This peak the King doth likewise wear, being a 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;
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 different, as for example, the toe a disdainer or spurner, the knee a dutiful and most humble orator, this chain doth, as it were, so toeify the knee and so kneefify the toe, that between both it makes a most methodical coherence, or coherent method.

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.

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
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.
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 omnes

Act III Scene III

[The market square, Dunstable]

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

BAILEY

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

NIMBLE

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

BAILEY

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.

BAILEY

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.

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 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.

BAILEY

Ye shall do well, sir, and for your better aiding, if you can but find out my brother, Master Ignoramus, he 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. [*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.

BAILEY

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

Enter a Farmer, a Butcher, and [COWTAIL,] a Grazier, very hastily

And see, see, here comes some already, all rich 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, 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 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?

BAILEY

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?

BAILEY

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.

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 country of England a sort of black chapters.

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 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.]

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[rnoon] that there were above three-score gentlemen in our 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 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.

[ALL]

Saint Benedicite, what must we do now, trow?

BAILEY

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 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?

BAILEY

There is no harm, I warrant ye. What need you fear, 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.

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 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.

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 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?

[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.

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.

BAILEY

Their offenses are most pestiferous. Away with them!

[ALL]

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

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.

BAILEY

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

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 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 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 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 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.

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?

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 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 faggot:
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:
God bless my lord Tresilian!

How like ye this, sir?

SERVINGMAN

Most excellent, i'faith, sir.

NIMBLE

Oh, traitors! Master Bailey, do your authority!

BAILEY

Two most pestiferous traitors! Lay hold of them, 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!

BAILEY

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 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 care not. Away with them!

Exeunt Schoolmaster and Servingman [with Officer]

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

BAILEY

I see there are knaves abroad indeed, sir. I [speak] for mine own [part,] I will do my best to reform the 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 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!

WHISTLER

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

BAILEY

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.

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?

BAILEY

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'?

WHISTLER

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

BAILEY

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 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 and then hang'd!

WHISTLER

Good Master Bailey, be pitiful!

BAILEY

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

Enter Crosby and Fleming

[CROSBY]

Now, Master Bailey, are your Blanks sealed yet?

BAILEY

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 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 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 omnes

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?

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.

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.
Good husbands will make hay while the sun shines,
And so must we, for thus conclude these times:
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.
These Blanks that I have scatter'd in the realm
Shall double his revenues to the crown.

Enter Bushy and Scroop

SCROOP

Now, Lord Tresilian, is this coin come yet?

BUSHY

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

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,
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,
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?

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 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 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.

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.

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!

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.

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

BUSHY

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

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.

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
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!

KING

I dare not, Green, for whilst he keeps i' the country
There is no meddling. He's so well lov'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 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 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 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?

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 come over, who, with a troop of soldiers closely ambush'd in the woods near the house, shall shroud themselves till the masque be ended. Then, the Duke being attach'd, he shall be there ready to receive him, hurry him away to the Thames' side where a ship shall be 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.

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,
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,
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!
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.

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 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.
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,
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? 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!

[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.

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.

GREEN

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

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?

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?

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 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, 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 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!

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.

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 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 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 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 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, 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, 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 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?

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 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, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk,
Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire,
Northamptonshire, Rutlandshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Huntingdonshire, and
Lincolnshire. There's your portion, sir.

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.
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.
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.
Beware, plain Thomas, for King Richard comes
Resolv'd with blood to wash all former wrongs!

Flourish of trumpets, and exeunt omnes

Act IV Scene II

[Plashy House, Essex]

Enter Woodstock and his Duchess with a Gentleman, Cheney, and others

WOODSTOCK

The Queen so sick! Come, come, make haste good 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.
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!
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.

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.
[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,
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.
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,
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.

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
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!

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,
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.
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.

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
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.
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
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,
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,
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.
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?

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,
We will behold their sports in spite of care.

[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,
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.
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,
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.

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.

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,
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
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,
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:
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.
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 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,

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,
And flock to me to back their bold attempts.
Go arm the household, Cheney!

Exit Cheney

Hear me, gentlemen:

'Fore God, I do not like this whispering.
If your intents be honest, show your faces.

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.

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,
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!

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?

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,
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.

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
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.]
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'st my mouth, I say, we'll hear no more!

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.]

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
And mount your horses with all swiftest haste.
The boar is taken, and our fears are past!

[Drums.] *Exeunt omnes*

Act IV Scene III

[Sheen Palace, Richmond]

Enter Crosby, Fleming, and Nimble.

CROSBY

Come, sirs, attend; my lord is coming forth.
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
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.

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,
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 Office,
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,
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?
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,
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?
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
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?

[NIMBLE]

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

[TRESILIAN]

What, for a traitor?

[NIMBLE]

No, my lord, but for a discoverer of the strangest 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 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 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?

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 whisperers, most o' them sleepy knaves. We pull'd them out of Bedfordshire.

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?

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,

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

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 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.

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
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,
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.
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.
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,
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
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.
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.

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.

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,
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,
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, [my] dear friends,
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,
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.
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.

KING

Send post to Calais and bid Lapoole forbear
On pain of life to act our sad decree.
For heaven's love, go, prevent the tragedy!
We have too much provok'd the powers divine,
And here repent thy wrongs, good uncle Woodstock,
The thought whereof confounds my memory.
If men might die when they would point the time,
The time is now King Richard would be gone;
For as a fearful thunderclap doth strike
The soundest body of the tallest oak,
Yet harmless leaves the outward bark untouch'd,
So is King Richard struck. Come, come, let's go.
My wounds are inward. Inward burn my woe!

Exeunt omnes

Act V Scene I

[The English fortress at Calais]

Enter Lapoole with a light, after him two Murderers

LAPOOLE

Come, sirs, be resolute. The time serves well
To act the business you have ta'en in hand.
The Duke is gone to rest, the room is voided,
No ear can hear his cries. Be fearless, bold,
And win King Richard's love, with heaps of gold.
Are all your instruments for death made ready?

FIRST MURDERER

All fit to the purpose. See, my lord, here's first a towel with which we do intend to strangle him; but if he strive and this should chance to fail, I'll mall his old maz-zard with this hammer, knock him down like an ox, and after cut's throat. How like ye this?

LAPOOLE

No, wound him not,
It must be done so fair and cunningly
As if he died a common natural death,
For so we must give out to all that ask.

SECOND MURDERER

There is no way then but to smother him.

LAPOOLE

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,
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,
As stern and terrible as the devil himself!

LAPOOLE

'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.

SECOND MURDERER

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

LAPOOLE

Do so.

Exeunt [the] Two Murderers

And yet, by all my fairest hopes, I swear
The boldness of these villains to this murder
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
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,
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
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 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
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.
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
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.
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?
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,
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:
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,
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!
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.

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
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
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
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.
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.

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!
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.

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

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.

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,

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,

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

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?

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

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
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,
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,
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
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.
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.
Out of my better judgment I repent it,
And will reward thy love. Once more, good night.

LAPOOLE

Good rest unto your Grace. [*Aside*] I mean in death.
This dismal night thou breathest thy latest breath.
He sits to write. I'll call the murderers in,
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,
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 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 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.
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 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 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!

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, so. All fine and cleanly: who can say that this man was murder'd now?

Enter Lapoole

LAPOOLE

What, is he dead?

SECOND MURDERER

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

[LAPOOLE]

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.

[LAPOOLE]

'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?

LAPOOLE

Draw all your weapons, soldiers, guard the room!
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
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, 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 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.

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.
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
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,
His friends are sure to die; but if he win,
They fall and we shall rise, whilst Richard's king!

Exit

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,
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?

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?

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!
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,
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.
[*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 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.

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.
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.

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, with the Duchess of Gloucester [weeping], Cheney, and Soldiers

LANCASTER

Go to our tents, dear sister, cease your sorrows.

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.

YORK

Alack, good man,
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.
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,
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.

LANCASTER

If he be dead, by good King Edward's soul,
We'll call King Richard to a strict account
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!

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
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,

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
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,
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
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,
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
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?
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
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,
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
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.

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,
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!]
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.
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.
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!

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,
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.

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!

[KING'S MEN]

Let our drums thunder and begin the fight!

[LORDS' MEN]

Just heaven protect us and defend the right!

Exeunt omnes

Act V Scene IV

[The battlefield]

Alarum. Enter Green and Cheney, armed.

CHENEY

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

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.
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!

They fight. Enter Arundel

[ARUNDEL]

Thou hunt'st a noble game, right warlike Cheney:
Cut but this ulcer off, thou heal'st the kingdom.
Yield thee, false traitor, most detested man,

That settest King Richard 'gainst his reverend uncles
To shed the royal bloods and make the realm
Weep for their timeless desolation.
Cast down thy weapons, for by this my sword
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,
And hale it to the tent of Lancaster.

[Enter King Richard, Bagot, Bushy, Scroop and soldiers]

CHENEY

Stand firm, my lord, here's rescue.

ARUNDEL

Courage, then!
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
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
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!
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.

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.

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 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.

Alarum. Exeunt [bearing the body of Green]

Act V Scene V

[A field near the Lords' camp]

Enter Tresilian and Nimble, disguised.

TRESILIAN

Where art thou, Nimble?

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 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
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.
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
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.

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 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 Antony, assist me, I'll set upon him presently. *[To Tresilian]* My lord, I have thought upon this trick: I must take ye 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 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?

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. 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!

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
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.
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.
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?

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 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 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 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 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, 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 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.

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!

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
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
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.

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.

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!'

SCROOP

'Tis true, my lords, King Richard did require it.

*Re-enter Cheney with King Richard, York, and Officers bearing 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.
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.

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.
Bushy, thou know'st I did command no gall
To our belov'd Protector should befall.

BUSHY

He did, my lords, and we endeavored so.

LANCASTER

Yet is he dead.

KING

Good uncles, I acknowledge my disgrace,
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,
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.
Nor tears, nor blood nor waters in the sea
Can off my kingly brow take that 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?

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.

[*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
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,
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,
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.
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,
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
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
With whom we would be sweetly reconcil'd,
That peace may claim new fruits and harvests mild.
Away, let neither king nor kingdom stand!
Forever now a joyous, happier land.

Exeunt omnes